



Les Dames d'Escoffier
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

Ideibirmingham.org

Fall 2021

President's Note

Dear Dames,

It's been a full year since I became president, and I couldn't be more proud of such a dynamic, growing chapter. We just accepted 14 more Dames, increasing our number to a total of 87 members! We've certainly caused International to take special notice of our chapter thanks to our amazing newsletter team and our annual Southern Soirée fundraiser, Champagne & Fried Chicken. I recently was contacted by some members of the Atlanta chapter inquiring about our event. They're planning to attend this October.

Thanks to our astute treasurer, Jennifer Yarbrough, we're close to funding a major endowment, which will perpetuate a grant or scholarship on its own. We were able to award an additional entrepreneur grant this year thanks to our "extra-curricular" events at Pepper Place Market. We look forward to continuing our presence there with our September takeover (see page 9) and another Valentine's sweets offering.

I'm really looking forward to our new partnership with the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama by supporting them

continued on page 11, see Letter

Champagne & Fried Chicken set for Oct. 3



By Susan Swagler

We're gearing up for our Champagne & Fried Chicken drive-through picnic again! It will be Sunday, October 3, 2021, from 3-5 p.m. at Pepper Place.

With the pandemic still happening, we decided our drive-through approach was safer than an in-person gala, says Chapter President Kathy G. Mezrano. Besides, she adds, "our last Champagne & Fried

continued on page 2, see Fundraiser



Fundraiser, continued from page 1

Chicken was such a grand success!"

Indeed, last year's event was both special and record-breaking, so we'll do much the same this time.

We'll offer chicken baskets as well as a vegetarian option again. We'll have a fun, energetic drive-through with live music. We'll offer cocktail kits, too (and some fancy ice).

We'll bring back our popular raffles—offering 12 \$100 gift certificates to some of Birmingham's most beloved restaurants—many owned by our own Dames. We are asking that every Dame commit to selling at least four \$25 raffle tickets.

And like last year, we will toast our newest members and our collective success at the end of the 3 to 5 p.m. pick-up window.

A few things, though, will be different.

We're planning on more baskets—from the 250 last year to 350 this year.

We're going to tighten up that drive-through line since we learned

last year we don't need that much space or time; we're very efficient! Kathy G. says, "Rebel promises to bring her bullhorn to keep the line moving!!"

We're going to tweak our low-contact event a bit and make it even more friendly. "We'll add on-site picnic tables for those who would like to park and enjoy the music and camaraderie," says Kathy G.

To comply with nonprofit fundraising rules, we will not have an online store, and we're using some specific wording to talk about our event. We will offer our baskets as "gifts" in return for "donations." There will be options for "premiums"—online cooking classes, our curated monthly Spotify dinner playlists—for an additional donation.

We will have a sleeker, easier-to-navigate ticketing site using a platform built especially for non-profits; it's called Give Lively. The platform is free for nonprofits, and we will be able to use this for

in-person events, too, when those are appropriate again, says Chapter Treasurer Jennifer Yarbrough.

We will make our check-in process easier for those Dames doing that important job.

One thing that will not change: It will take all of us to pull this off again. Kathy G. will assign teams like she did last year. That worked so well! Nearly every one of us showed up to volunteer last year, and when we did, our guests saw exactly how committed we are to funding the future of food in Alabama.

It's a great thing to be able to say to our sponsors that we have 100 percent member participation in our fundraiser, says Martha Johnston, who along with Idie Hastings heads up the sponsorship part of our event. Besides, Kathy G adds, "It's such a joy to see all our Dames working together to provide more grants and scholarships to women in our industry!"

In the meantime, we continue to look for sponsors and gather gift certificates for our raffles. This is a job for everyone! If you can get a sponsor, let Martha Johnston know. If you can get a gift certificate, let Charbett Cauthen know.

Figure out how YOU can contribute to make this year's event even more successful than the last one. Then get ready to work the most fun picnic we've ever had. There will be champagne for us at the end to toast a job so well done.



Fundraiser Sponsorship Update *as of August 31, 2021

Methuselah Level:
David & Bethy Heath
Morgan Stanley

Jeroboam Level:



Medical Properties Trust



Magnum Level:



*continued on
page 4*

Fundraiser Sponsorship Update

Bottle Level:



**Julie & Eric Helmers
and Philippe Lathrop
& Judy Crittenden**



**Sloss Sisters in honor
of Caroline Lowrey Sloss**
Cathy Sloss Jones,
Carolyn Ratliff &
Leigh Sloss-Corra



**Lumpkin
Development**

Martha Johnston

Champagne & Fried Chicken 2021 is produced in partnership with:



Louis Graffeo



IACP Conference Comes to Birmingham

by Leigh Sloss-Corra

It's no surprise that the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) has chosen Birmingham for its upcoming annual conference—to be held at Pepper Place and Sloss Furnaces October 22-24, 2021—given the large and talented food community the area has.

Founded by Julia Child, Jacques Pepin, Nathalie Dupree, and Martin Yan, the 43-year-old IACP organization expects 300 of its over 3000 members to attend the conference, which will offer three packed days of programs and excursions, food, festivities and of course the famous IACP Awards Ceremony, often referred to as the “Golden Globes of Food.”

The committee planning the event is being led by IACP President, Dame Nancy Hopkins, and board member Chadwick Boyd, with major assistance by Birmingham LDEI members Cathy Sloss Jones, CEO of Sloss Real Estate, and Leigh Sloss-Corra, executive director of the Market at Pepper Place. Dames Idie Hastings and Pardis Stitt have also been involved in the planning, and many more will join as the date approaches.

Birmingham Dames who've been closely involved with IACP include Martha Johnston who served as IACP president, Sherron Goldstein who launched her culinary teaching career with IACP's help, and Mary-Frances Heck who is nominated for an award this year.

Publishing giants Hearst, Hoffman Media, and Meredith will be partnering for the event, along with the City of Birmingham, Alabama Media Group, and Alabama

Newscenter. Alabama Tourism is the presenting sponsor for the 2021 conference, with the Birmingham Visitors Bureau and PNC Bank joining national sponsors Kerrygold, Niman Ranch, Cosmic Crisp, and more to come.

The weekend will kick off on Friday, October 22 with workshops and excursions during the day. The VIP reception will be held at Dame Idie and Chef Chris Hastings' Hot & Hot Fish Club from 4-5pm, with a welcome by Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin, and a showcase Eat-in-the-Streets Experience and Retail Crawl around Pepper Place from 5-7pm.

The evening will include live music, cookbook signings, cooking demos, and a presentation by the new winners of FoodTech Stars. Birmingham Dames will host a Hospitality Tent, offering conference attendees restaurant/bar recommendations and tips for what to see and eat in Birmingham. After the Opening Night Kickoff Party, IACPers can dine in some of the area's top restaurants or join a bar crawl where they'll explore top spots owned/overseen by Dames Laura Newman, Rachael Roberts, Jessica Bennett, and Kristen Farmer Hall.

Saturday morning, from 7-9:30am, attendees will attend a Market breakfast at Dame Idie and Chef Chris Hastings' OvenBird, and explore the Market at Pepper Place, where many Dames and LDEI award winners are vendors and purveyors.

The Morning Keynote, “My Sweet Home Alabama,” will begin at 10 a.m. at Sloss Furnaces and sessions will continue there all day, with ce-

lebrity cooking demos and conversations on the Alabama Tastemaker Stage at Pepper Place scheduled Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The IACP awards ceremony will be hosted by comedian Roy Wood Jr. and held outdoors at Sloss Furnaces that evening, followed by an after party at Back 40 Beer.

Sunday morning breakfast will be held at Jones Valley Teaching Farm's new education center, followed by the Sunday keynote, biscuit revival brunch and afternoon sessions back at Sloss Furnaces. Those who choose to stay an extra day can travel by bus to Marion, AL, in the Black Belt, on Monday, October 25, for a special biscuit experience with renowned chef Scott Peacock.

This is the first major food conference to come to Alabama, and Dames and community leaders think it's about time. There is a clear Covid-19 protocol that will continue to be updated, including showing vaccination status, Covid-19 testing, mask-wearing indoors, and social distancing. IACP organizers have designed all receptions and larger sessions and events to be held outside.

IACP Conference registration opens September 8, 2021, and Birmingham Dames can look forward to being a big part of it. More details can be found at iacpculinary.com.

A Team Approach to Our Chapter's Social Media

By Susan Swagler

We've all been invited to shape the narrative of our chapter. Actually, it was a SignUpGenius invitation. And co-chairs of the Social Media committee, Ashley McMakin and Sidney Fry, sent it out at the end of April.

For several years, these two Dames have headed up this committee, and it's a really big job. They both are talented and savvy about this sort of thing, and we've been lucky to have them. But, again, it's a lot! So, they had the great idea to share the duties of posting, and, as it turns out, the invitation they sent came with a bunch of tips on how we all can improve our individual social media efforts—while helping the chapter spread some good news.

They invited each member to step up and sign up for a week of posting on our social media outlets—currently Instagram and Facebook. Here's a link to that SignUpGenius: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050a4faea62fa75-social>

As of this writing, October, November and December are wide open.

As Ashley said in her initial email, "This will be SUPER SIMPLE and should only take about an hour of your time for that entire week. One hour for the year from each member will have a HUGE IMPACT on our social media presence! We need more followers. By posting more consistently, I think we can all make a 'buzz' on Instagram and Facebook."



Inviting each LDEI Birmingham member to participate in posting to our social media accounts will help us spread our good news.

She outlined three objectives of our social media content:

1. Promote who we are: Founded in 2013, the Birmingham chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International is a supportive network of women leaders in food, beverage, hospitality and all arts related to the table. We share a mission of education, advocacy, mentoring and philanthropy

2. Promote our mission of philanthropy:

• Scholarships: Birmingham LDEI offers annual educational scholarships female applicants at two-year colleges and four-year universities pursuing culinary-related degrees in pastry arts, farming, beverage management, hospitality management, nutrition and dietetics, agriculture and more. We also support high school ProStart programs.

• Entrepreneur Awards: The mission of LDEI is to mentor and support women working in the food, culinary and hospitality industries. Our chapter assists female-owned businesses in the industry with a cash award of up to \$5,000 to help them expand and enhance their businesses.

3. Promote our outreach efforts. We currently partner with the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama, we will be working with The WellHouse, we have a group of women we mentor, and we regularly serve our communities as judges for food contests and as speakers in local schools.

We also can promote the individual work/success of our members in the context of helping our communities.

PLEASE NOTE: This last one is a little tricky. As a nonprofit, we cannot promote our members' businesses on our chapter's social media. Anything that looks like advertising is a no-no! That would be providing an individual member with something of value using the organization's resources. So, anything that looks like advertising is off limits.

However, if a member is doing something for the greater good of the community, we can post about that. For example, we cannot post about the grand opening of Raquel Ervin's Eat at Panoptic café, but if Raquel donates meals to nurses at Children's Hospital we can share that news. We can repost Sidney Fry's awesome, healthy Instagram posts because they are not related to a business—she isn't selling anything or charging for her content—hence it's not advertising; there is no monetary gain for her. Likewise, when Sonthe Burge helps produce 30,000 cookies for the annual Greek Festival, we can post about that. She's volunteering, and there is no monetary value going to her. Please touch base with Susan Swagler (susan@swagler.net) if you have any questions about this part.

Going back to Ashley's original message, your responsibilities for the week are:

- Minimum of 3 posts in your week and 3-6 stories. The more the better!
- Posts do best around 8 p.m. Sunday-Thursday.
- Always link (share) the Instagram post to Facebook.

As far as content, "Here are some suggestions," she says, "but be creative!"

- Introduce yourself. Who you are, what your job in hospitality is, and why you are a Dame.
- Spotlight one of our scholarship winners or our entrepreneur grant winners or a local charity.
- Use our newsletter! This content is already written and edited! (Our newsletters are all online, and pulling content from them is very easy!)
- Post a recipe from a reputable source.

Then, she says, be sure to engage with our followers by:

- Checking and responding to messages on Facebook and Insta.
- "Like" any comments and reply to any fun comments.
- Go through and "like" some other posts of local businesses or local food blogs, other LDEI chapters, etc. so that we show LDEI Bham is interested and engaged in our community.
- Seek out new followers (follow local food interests/women/organizations in our community).
- Always link to Facebook (using the share button on Instagram).
- Stories—try to post a few stories of anything behind the scenes going on that week (our volunteer days at the Food Bank are great for this).
- Always hashtag your posts with the following hashtags, along with others that pertain to your post:

#ldeibirmingham
#womeninfood
#bhamfood
#womenempowerment
#lesdamesintl
#bhamfood
#culinaryscholarships
#womeninbusiness
#revbham

Culinary school partners
@/# jeffstatecollege
@/# lawsonstatecc
@/# wallacestate

NOTE: These all are great tips to improve your individual posting efforts after your week is done!

Someone on the social media committee can talk you through setting up your phone with our chapter Instagram account to post more easily (you'll just need to remember to toggle back and forth between that one and your own). Please refer to her original email from 4/30/21 (or contact Ashley or Susan directly) for the passwords to our Dropbox and Instagram accounts.

"Thank you all so much for being willing to jump in and help," Ashley says. "I really think we can 'make waves' if we all put in just a tiny amount of time. Birmingham needs to know more about how awesome we are!"

LDEI Birmingham Elects Two New Officers ...

by Jan Walsh

At the annual meeting on Sunday, August 15, LDEI Birmingham elected two new officers to replace out-going members of the board. Sidney Fry will replace Treasurer Jennifer Yarbrough and Charbett Cauthen will replace Vice President of Programs Jan Gautro.

Sidney Fry, MS, RD, is a two-time James Beard Award-winning food and nutrition writer and editor. Her current position as digital marketing advisor at Morgan Stanley adds another layer to overall wellness,

with an attentive focus on financial health. She also works as a freelance food and nutrition writer and acts as editorial nutrition advisor for MyFitnessPal where she maintains a regular column called “Ask the RD.”

Charbett Cauthen is a community and social services professional and hospitality consultant for city and private clubs. She is an experienced



club manager with a demonstrated history of working in the events services industry. Her background includes sales, public relations, management, marketing, project management, and event planning in luxury brands and markets. She is a UAB graduate and was the Top Sales producer for 12 years with ClubCorp and Presidents Club 100.



... and Welcomes 14 New Members

- Jessica Bennett, bar manager of Avine Cavista & Social in downtown Birmingham.
- Clara Darling, faculty instructor, RD, chef, and the director of the Food Labs and Wellness Kitchen at Samford University.
- Rebecca Lemelin Gann, the founder of Epicurated Concepts specializing in culinary events and experiences and the creative director of Southern Culinary + Creative, an event company specializing in virtual concepts.
- Frances “Fanoula” Gulas, founder and owner of The Greek Kouzina and has co-chaired the dessert portion of the Annual Greek Festival in Birmingham for 7 years, producing more than 25,000 items for the festival each year.
- Emily Nabors Hall, recipe developer and food stylist at Meredith Corporation and owner of The Breakup Cookie, LLC
- Eileen Hallmark, eastern regional manager of Martine’s Wines
- Wesley Powell Lassen, owner of The Cook Store since 1999, providing the Birmingham community with a space for those who have a passion for cooking and food.
- Nancey Legg, founder and owner of Better Kombucha since 2015.
- Erin Mooney, co-owner of Tre Luna Catering Company and Tre Luna Bar and Kitchen, as well as Moon-Walker Inc., a consulting company that currently manages the kitchen at Bradford Health Services.
- Susan Notter, corporate export pastry chef with the Swiss company Felchlin.
- Audrey Pannell, vice president of public relations and digital media for STYLE Advertising
- Crystal Peterson, co-owner and general manager of Yo’ Mama’s Restaurant in downtown Birmingham.
- Laura Halpin Rinsky, the program coordinator and a faculty member of the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management program at Lawson State Community College.
- Sara Walker, general manager of Tre Luna Catering Company and partner in Moon-Walker, Inc., a consulting and food services management company.

LDEI Market Takeover Returns to Pepper Place

by Leigh Sloss-Corra

For the 5th year in a row, the Market at Pepper Place is teaming up with the Birmingham chapter of LDEI in September to shine a spotlight on top women in food in Birmingham.

During the “Les Dames Market Takeover,” the Market devotes the entire month to promoting female chefs, culinary instructors, and cookbook authors who are LDEI members. Member Dames use the opportunity to build awareness of LDEI’s mission, and sell tickets to the upcoming annual fundraiser in October.

Each week, a different theme will highlight specialties of particular Dames, and offer LDEI a spot at the popular Saturday market to promote the organization and sell items made by Dames related to that week’s theme. The Market will promote the event every week to its newsletter and social media audience of almost 100K followers.

This year’s Les Dames Market Takeover will run September 4th-September 25th, with member Dames on hand at the Market each Saturday, from 7 a.m.-noon, promoting and selling tickets for the Champagne & Fried Chicken picnic fundraiser, to be held at Pepper Place on Sunday, October 3, from 3-5 p.m. This year’s themes will be:

- 9/4: Picnics and Parties, spotlighting Dames who cater, make BBQ and put on fun events
- 9/11: International Food Week, spotlighting Dames with world cuisine roots and specialties—Italian, Greek, Israeli, Lebanese, Mexican, and Venezuelan
- 9/18: Healthy Food Week, spotlighting dietitians and wellness members.



Above: Dames Aimee Castro, LaCrista Hutchinson, Pat Terry, and Mary Grace Viado greeted guests at the LDEI tent, which offered a variety of treats for sale (like El ZunZún’s chips and salsa, at right) during the month-long September 2020 takeover last year.



- 9/25: Sweet Treats Week, spotlighting Dames who are pastry chefs and bakers, and others who will donate a baked specialty.
- For a list of Dames being featured, and to read the interviews with each of them, fans should subscribe to the Market’s newsletter, and follow the social media posts

@marketatpepperplace and @ldeibirmingham. Join us and post on your own social channels, using the hashtag #womeninfood. Urge your family and friends to come every week, and support the female leaders of our amazing LDEI food community. See you there!

Elevate Your Tailgate with Wine, Beer, and Hard Seltzer

By Alexis Douglas,
certified sommelier

Do y’all ever forget there are other tasty adult beverages that aren’t WINE? As a wine fanatic/ professional sommelier, sometimes I even neglect to look outside my wine bubble! Why haven’t I ever written about beer? Can I write up hard seltzer and be taken seriously? And why haven’t I put “Certified Cicero-ne” (basically, beer sommelier) after my name in addition to sommelier? Elevate your tailgate this fall with a few of my latest faves in the wine, beer, and (gasp!) hard seltzer categories:



Stone Brewing Co. “Buenaveza” Salt & Lime Lager, Escondido, CA (and Richmond, VA) \$14.99/12 pk, Hop City
Built for tacos, the salt and lime are not perceivable, but simply and brilliantly add to the balance of this refreshing, clean pale-golden lager. This is the beer that inspired me to write about beer...it’s that good.

Yellowhammer Brewing “Mic Czech” Czech-style Pilsner, Huntsville. AL \$9.99/6 pk, Hop City
The colorful ombre label caught my eye...then the clever name... and then I took it home and tried it. Whoa! Medium-bodied, sweet malty caramel notes (yet still dry)



and subtle spicy hops. Delicate enough to drink and enjoy solo, but paired with food and friends: even better.

Monday Night Brewing “Narwater” Craft Hard Seltzer, Atlanta, GA (and Birmingham, AL!) \$16.99/12 pk, Hop City
Made with real fruit and naturally fermented, these seltzers come in unique assorted flavors: Blueberry/ Raspberry, Mango/ Guava, Key Lime/ Cherry and Grapefruit/ Pineapple, and a new Lemonade as well. If you visit the Birmingham location downtown (called “Monday Night Social Club”), you can get this super fun sparkler served to you FROZEN in a pouch! Not to mention, the brewery is basically an 80’s-inspired art museum that serves incredible tacos, guac and



breakfast burritos. They also have adorable merch...BONUS! SHOP-PING! Oh, and their beer is pretty good, too (they were recently named “3rd best brewery” in the country by Beer Connoisseur).

Garciarevalo “Casamaro” Verdejo, Rueda, Spain \$12.99, Hop City
I discovered this organically-grown, vegan Sauvignon-Blanc lookalike (taste-alike?) at Ocean; they currently offer it by the glass. Fresh, lively, and delightful with notes of pink grapefruit, guava and saline... awesome with fried seafood or goat cheeses!



Gobelsburg “Cistercien” Rosé, Österreich, Austria \$15.99, Piggly Wiggly
From one of my all-time favorite producers (their Gruner Veltliner is one of my go-to everyday quaffers), this pink drink made from a blend of Zwiegelt, St. Laurent and Pinot Noir is super sophisticated. Dry and elegant, pretty floral notes and a hint of spice make it a great transitional drink for fall; pair with charcuterie



and football (remember, elevate your tailgate).

Chemistry Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, OR \$18.99, Piggly Wiggly
With fabulous depth of flavor, telltale Pinot Noir silkiness and velvety texture, this sexy, generous Pinot is incredible for the price point! A collaboration of the sommelier-and-collector-loved Chehalem and Stoller Wineries. Serve slightly chilled with grilled burgers and dogs, chicken, or pork tenderloin.



Letter, continued from page 1

with a fundraiser at their facility in the spring of 2022. In turn, they’ve offered to provide a grant or scholarship in their name to one of our chosen recipients.
We also look forward to developing a program teaching nutrition and healthy food preparation to the women and girls at Well-house, a safe harbor for victims of sexual abuse. We’re fortunate to have strong leadership with

our dietitians to guide this program.
After a year of Covid, which we are still fighting, we’ve remained a resilient chapter, raising more revenue that the previous year, giving more grants, becoming more active in the community. I am overjoyed to be a part of Les Dames d’Escoffier Birmingham, and I’m humbled to be your president.

Hugs and gratitude,
Kathy G Mezrano

.....Events Calendar.....

Saturday, September 7	7:00-noon Pepper Place Market	Dames Takeover Pepper Place: Picnics & Parties
Saturday, September 11	7:00-noon Pepper Place Market	Dames Takeover Pepper Place: International Foods
Saturday, September 11	4:00-6:00 p.m.	Birmingham Art Walk Tour, visiting Neon Moon, Queens Park, and Atomic Bar
Saturday, September 18	7:00-noon Pepper Place Market	Dames Takeover Pepper Place: Healthy Foods
Sunday, September 25	7:00-noon Pepper Place Market	Dames Takeover Pepper Place: Sweet Treats
Sunday, October 3	3:00-5:00 p.m. Pepper Place Market	Champagne & Fried Chicken fundraiser and new member reception
October 14-17	San Antonio, TX	LDEI International Conference
October 22-24	Birmingham, AL	International Association of Culinary Professionals Conference

From the Farm: Fall Vegetables are on the Horizon

by Margaret Ann Snow

The first things that come to mind when I think about fall are sweet potatoes and winter squashes. Winter squash is typically planted in late spring in Alabama and grows throughout the summer then is harvested in August or early September. We store it and eat it throughout the autumn months. On Snow's Bend we grow spaghetti, delicata, kabocha, sweet dumpling, but the favorite by far is butternut, especially paired with arugula.

For a couple of seasons now, I have been working through Mary-Frances Heck's cookbook entitled *Sweet Potatoes: Roasted, Loaded, Fried, and Made Into Pie*. It has sweet potatoes doing things I didn't know were possible, like Maple Sticky Buns and Chocolate Babka.

Another Dame highly suggested the recipe with sausages and lentils in the book. It is prepared in one pot with a bit of white wine tying the flavors together, creating a satisfying meal that I now cook multiple times throughout the fall and winter. Each sweet potato harvest, I look forward to trying new recipes from this cookbook shelf staple.

The second thing I imagine is a pot of greens simmering on the stove with bacon and vinegar, a few turnip roots and some pinkeye purple hull peas (frozen in the summer). In early fall we use turnip and/or mustard greens. They have the sharp flavor that I love. Late fall we use sweet, silky smooth collard greens. Last fall I followed a recipe from *Six Seasons* by Josh McFadden that used parmesan rind in place of pork and it may well have converted me.

Along with greens, the fall brings



Maple Sticky Buns that Dame Margaret Ann Snow prepared from Dame Mary-Frances Heck's book, *Sweet Potatoes: Roasted, Loaded, Fried, and Made Into Pie*

loads of root vegetables. There are the familiar radishes, turnips, carrots, and beets from spring, but also some of the 'winter' radishes such as watermelon and daikon (we like the purple and green daikon varieties) and rutabaga. Rutabaga can sometimes have a bad reputation, but fresh from the ground it is superb!

Fall is the best time for broccoli and cauliflower in Alabama. We have grown it in the spring before without much luck, and when we have had a good harvest the flavor is bitter from the heat. When the weather turns cooler, however, the flavor becomes sweeter. This will happen with crops such as carrots, kale, and collards as well. It is a defense mechanism. The plants prepare for cold temperatures by converting carbohydrates, which freeze more easily, into sugars, which don't, making them sweeter. The sweet-

est carrots are always harvested in winter.

For fall planting, we are busy filling our high tunnels with greens. On a cold winter day, we can walk into them, and it will feel like springtime. Spinach is one crop we have found does better in the field in winter, though we will place row cover over it on the coldest nights. We also plant sorrel in the field. Sorrel is one of our children's favorite crops. It has a sour flavor, much like a lemon head candy, but is a leafy green. It is quickly becoming a customer favorite at the market and in CSA boxes.

The fall planted greens make the most beautiful and delicious salads; dark green spinach, bright green sorrel, deep red Treviso, frilly frisee, pea tendrils, multi-colored lettuces, and arugula. I love these greens with a citrus vinaigrette (garlic, lemon



Above: Sweet potato gnocchi with white and orange sweet potatoes. Right: Varieties of winter greens, which are good options for fall planting.

juice, olive oil, and salt) and a nice blue cheese.

In the fall we also plant what we call 'over-wintered' crops. These are crops that are planted in the fall, to establish their roots and settle in, then they are dormant during the winter. When spring comes, they are ready to take off. Over-wintered crops include strawberries, garlic, some onions, leeks, fava beans, and some flowers. They should be well mulched and fertilized (organically) in fall and again in spring. Asparagus should also be planted in fall, but remember that it is only planted one time and that you cannot harvest it for the first year or two.



Summer Happenings in Birmingham

May 20, 2021: Sol Y Luna
Birmingham Dames met with The World Games 2022 executive team to discuss possibilities for member participation in the food venues. Dame Aimee Castro, co-owner of Sol Y Luna, graciously hosted the event.



June 14, 2021: Chocolate >
A chocolate workshop presented by renowned pastry chef Susan Notter was organized by Dame Jasmine Smith. Notter, currently working to help train the USA Culinary Olympic Pastry Team, introduced us to Swiss chocolates from Felchlin.



< June 24, 2021: Panoptic
Dame Raquel Ervin hosted an open house at her new restaurant. Dames enjoyed tasting items from the menu and having a “cool” beverage.



< July 22, 2021: Charcuterie and Wine Tasting
Dames enjoyed a fun gathering at Smiley Brothers Specialty Foods in Pelham. Dames sampled hand-selected charcuterie and wines as well as appetizers and cheesecake brought by organizer, Dame Joy Smith.

..... Dames Recommend

An Epic Road Trip to the American West

Susan Swagler

Early this summer, my husband and I headed out West for what turned out to be an epic desert adventure. Bryce Canyon was our inspiration; it had been on my bucket list for a bit. (It did not disappoint. There is nothing on earth quite like Bryce with its many thousands of colorful and ancient hoodoos and cliffs that range from white to pink to orange to deep red.) But that was just one waypoint. We decided to see all the national parks in Utah—the “Mighty Five.”

Starting with Arches and then Canyonlands, we made our way down the state through Capitol Reef to Bryce and then to Zion. We added the North Rim of the Grand Canyon at the end just for kicks. I’ve detailed this trip (with our day-by-day itinerary, places to stay, things to eat and much more planning) on my blog—savor.blog—so I won’t go into those details here.

I’d rather share the surprises we found when we veered off the national park trail.

First of all, we discovered a love for slot canyons that we never knew existed. We decided on a whim to visit Little Wild Horse Canyon on our way to Goblin Valley State Park. Turns out, Goblin Valley was a hellish nightmare to hike, but Little Wild Horse was a dream.

This fun slot was not at all technical (even young kids can do it), but it was absolutely beautiful. There’s a trailhead (with a vault toilet and map). This slot is narrow enough to know you are in a slot, but it’s not so narrow that it’s uncomfortable. And the colors are amazing!



Anasazi Petroglyph Trail in Utah

It widens into a larger canyon, and you can continue to a longer loop or turn around and come back the way you came—double the slot!

After a fantastic couple of hours, my husband asked, “Do you want to go to another? And I said, “Yes, I certainly do.”

So, a few days later we found ourselves headed down 52 miles (round trip!) of washboard dirt road called Hole in the Rock Road in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument to hike Peek-a-Boo and Spooky Gulch slot canyons.

Once at the trailhead, getting to the slot canyons required a two-mile hike along the rim and down some short cliffs and across desert dunes following well-spaced trail markers called cairns. Peek-a-Boo and Spooky with their tight and twisty, beautiful and wavy, red and purple walls, were worth the effort. (They require almost zero technical

skill or know-how other than some rock-scrambling skills and a tricky entry into Peek-a-Boo.)

Peek-a-Boo is a tight slot that corkscrews back on itself. The photos were fantastic! The hardest part was just getting into this slot; you chimney up about 10 (challenging) feet to the entrance using shallow hand and foot holds (or have your strong hiking partner unceremoniously haul you up; that works). After that, it’s just awesome in the truest sense of that word, as you twist and turn through what feels like a giant stone playground. At the end of Peek-a-Boo, you’ll hike across about a half mile of desert to get to Spooky, which is an even tighter slot that narrows to about a foot wide in spots—leave any claustrophobia in the car.

People with smaller builds do better here ... just saying. If you take your backpack, you’ll need to take it off and carry it above

your head at times because it’s that narrow. There are some tricky parts where you must work out how to navigate around boulders or short descents (wear clothes you don’t care about; they will get torn) and there’s a knotted rope you’ll use to get down a 6-foot drop. Other than that, it’s just thrillingly narrow and very beautiful. We spent about four (truly delightful) hours here.

Two other places deserve mention, and we found them after we discovered what a zoo Zion is this summer. (It seemed that all of America wanted to go someplace and decided that Zion was that place.) We had planned two days there, but we skipped the second day in favor of some less-crowded destinations.

Anasazi Valley Petroglyph Trail (Tempi’po’op pronounced: tumpee poo oop, in Santa Clara is a family-friendly hike that winds through the desert, past the ruins of an Anasazi farmstead (built about 1,000 years ago) to the top of a hill where we climbed amongst a tumble of boulders to see (up close!!) some incredibly well-preserved ancient petroglyphs.

These were carved into the desert varnish on the rocks by Ancestral Puebloans. Lots of the art—from small bear claw images to snakes to bighorn sheep and geometric shapes—is quite accessible without bouldering; you can just walk along the rim trail and see plenty.

Snow Canyon State Park is a gem (Condé Nast Traveler named it the “Best State Park” in Utah.) We spent most of a day at this colorful park with its red petrified dunes and red and white Navajo sandstone cliffs and black lava flows. The park is located in the 62,000-acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, established to protect the federally listed



Little Wild Horse Canyon in Utah

desert tortoise and its habitat.

The trails are well-marked with signs and cairns. A series of shiny metal markers attached to the seemingly endless petrified dunes help you navigate those huge formations. So smart!

There’s a short slot canyon here (yay!), and you can climb down into lava tubes left by an extinct volcano (why not?). The landscape at Snow Canyon is otherworldly, and a hike through the sagebrush-scented desert dotted with wildflowers and surrounded

by soaring red cliffs is lovely in so many ways. There were times we were the only hikers as far as we could see.

The pandemic has required us to pivot so many times in the past many months. This trip out West actually was not our first choice; we had wanted to go to Europe and had been saving for that. But our Utah adventure turned out to be one of the best, most enjoyable things we’ve ever done. And, in the end, it was a fun, memorable reminder to remain open to possibilities.

Les Dames Went to the Movies at Sidewalk

by Leigh Sloss-Corra

If the past year has taught us anything, it's been the value of a good film—for information, entertainment, escapism, and wonder.

This year's Sidewalk Film Festival returned to downtown Birmingham with a socially-distanced, masked, in-person, six-day event and LDEI was there to introduce, watch, and toast this year's food-focused program.

"Ottolenghi and the Cakes of Versailles" is a documentary that follows the London-based Israeli chef, Yotam Ottolenghi, dubbed "the most influential cookbook writer in the world," as he produces food fit for the Sun King himself for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Gala in 2018 inspired by an exhibition about Versailles.

Dame Donna Cornelius previewed the film and had this to say about it: "Yotam Ottolenghi put together a crack team of international pastry chefs to reflect the then-modern techniques used by Versailles cooks. Using the palace gardens, fountains, and images of Louis XIV as inspiration, the chefs created a cocktail fountain, pastry swans filled with orange blossom and brown sugar cream, an all-white mousse cake with floral and other garden motifs, and an edible garden tableau. Ottolenghi points out that in its time, Versailles was the 'equivalent of Disney Land.' Everything was over the top, decadent, and excessive."

Donna continues, "The film doesn't ignore the role of hunger during this time, however, and how women marched to protest



the women shortage." This echoes the outreach work of LDEI today, as our chapter volunteers at the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama regularly and has awarded grants to non-profits that work to end hunger in our city.

The film was screened at the historic Lyric Theatre on Sunday, August 29, at 6:15pm. Dame Telia Johnson offered attendees pre-packaged servings of her signature chocolate cake. Dame Alexis Douglas and new member, Dame Eileen Hallmark, shared tastes of a new collection of wines being offered by a partner distributor. Other Dames helped with the reception before the screening,

and then joined festival organizers onstage to share information about LDEI and our upcoming Champagne & Fried Chicken fundraiser in October, and to introduce the film.

This is the fourth year LDEI has sponsored food-focused documentaries at the festival. The sponsorship offers a fun way to elevate the importance of food with a new audience, to share LDEI's mission and brand, and promote the fundraiser. No other organization has done as much to promote food in film as LDEI Birmingham. For those who missed it at the festival, "Ottolenghi and the Cakes of Versailles" will be available this fall on Hulu.

LDEI Birmingham sponsored the Sidewalk Film Fest's food film for the fourth year. The film was shown at the historic Lyric Theatre on Sunday, August 29.

Mary Grace Viado, corporate executive chef for Village Taverns, was the Cal-Mex category winner at CADAIRY-2GO competition held at the CIA at Copia in Napa. She prepared Mexi-Cali Shrimp Scampi with Homemade Arepas during the Facebook Live competition on July 28. There were 60 contestants who competed in 3 categories.



Joy Smith, the chef and owner of Sorelle Catering, has opened Sorelle Café in Homewood. The grab-and-go café features breakfast, lunch, and dinner items. Seating is available for eating at the café or lingering at the Sorelle Pie Counter. <https://www.facebook.com/Sorelle1000>



Christiana Roussel has announced the debut of a new column for a suite of hyper-local Birmingham-based magazines. The column will focus on destinations within a drive or a single flight from Birmingham. She will explore the South's best in terms of where to eat, drink, sleep, and DO!



Christiana also wrote about fellow Dames Leigh Sloss-Corra and Geri-Martha O'Hara as part of her FOODIES 2021 story for *Birmingham Home & Garden* magazine. "These women continue to inspire and delight with their passion for all things food-centric in the Magic City."

Jennifer Yarbrough and her husband, Ralph, were featured in the July 2021 issue of **Alabama Retailer**. The article's focus was on their customer-centric business and how Crestline Bagel has evolved to three stores where customers enjoy gathering as well as having the option to order online via an app and get delivery.



Leigh Sloss-Corra has been accepted to the Leadership Birmingham 2021-22 Program. She and 49 other leaders will begin the program in September. The purpose of Leadership Birmingham is to "ensure that leaders in the community are educated about current issues and challenges in the region."



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P.O. Box 43542
Birmingham, Alabama 35243

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Newsletter committee members:
Martha Johnston (co-chair),
Rachel West (co-chair), Donna Cornelius, Leigh Sloss-Corra, Margaret Ann Snow, Susan Swagler, and Jan Walsh.