



## La Cocina gives emerging food businesses ingredients for success

by Tami Yu

San Francisco has always been an incubator of food entrepreneurs. So it's no surprise to see the ambitious La Cocina Community Kitchen assisting budding low-income food businesses. The nonprofit organization, located in the city's Mission District, provides the tools and services that a start-up culinary venture requires, but at a much lower cost than it would normally take.



Photo: Victor Wong

Just over a year old, La Cocina has nurtured over a dozen program participants who have needed an affordable professional kitchen to expand their small, woman-owned businesses. With the fiscal support of The Women's Foundation of California and private donors, the 4,400 square foot commercial kitchen has been stocked with every type of food preparation equipment imaginable. La Cocina also provides technical training and marketing support to those who need it.

Guisell Osorio of Sabores del Sur and Veronica Salazar of El Huarache Loco. Both sell at the Alemany Market.

Like all staff members at La Cocina, Program Coordinator Caleb Zigas recognizes the difficulties in starting a food-related business. "The benefit of an organization like this lies in our ability to make food and business work together in a sustainable way," Zigas explains.

"We are looking for the 'hidden entrepreneurs', the women who make food that tastes like home for the communities and sub-communities within the Bay Area," says Zigas. "The work we are most interested in not only creates a viable business but also encourages entrepreneurs to use their food to connect to a larger community." It's this aspect of the program that people most often experience when they are in the kitchen or tasting the food, he explains.

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Many of the participants began simply by cooking food in their own homes. Most of the women, like Yumna McCann, have used the familiar dishes of their own cultures to create a bridge to their lives in the Bay Area. A native South African, McCann missed the savory pies from her mother's kitchen, so she launched her company Mystipied. She now runs a very successful business, with accounts such as Rainbow Grocery.

"La Cocina is a great program offering guidance to start-up businesses," McCann says. "The most amazing thing for me has been the opportunity to meet industry professionals such as Barb Stuckey, Traci Des Jardins, Patricia Unterman and Rob Zaborny." Barb Stuckey is a SFPFS member and Vice President of Marketing at Mattson, Inc.



Photo: Noel Barnhurst

The Food Society is currently establishing a mentorship program, matching its members with La Cocina participants. "The partnership," says SFPFS member John Birdsall, "shows that our members value a thriving local food scene and honor the life histories of the La Cocina entrepreneurs."

SFPFS member and Principal of Torani Syrups & Flavors Lisa Lucheta has seen her involvement come full circle. One of the early volunteers, she feels fortunate to have had La Cocina participants help her with her business. "I'm pleased to share my experience through the mentoring program," Lucheta says. "I expect it to be a mutually rewarding experience and look forward to learning from someone with an entrepreneurial spirit in the early stages of her business."

For more information or if you'd like to get involved, visit [www.lacocinasf.org](http://www.lacocinasf.org) or call 415-824-2729. ♦

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## from the annual events chair



Dear member:

Ship Ahoy! Mark your calendar now to join us on August 13, 2006 from noon to 4 p.m. aboard the USS Hornet Museum for our annual barbecue and fundraiser for our community services efforts. This year's theme is Barbecue on the Bay.

You'll have fun catching up with old friends and meeting some new ones while helping contribute to a worthy cause. The beneficiary of this year's event is the culinary program of The Alameda Boys & Girls Club. This program is designed to educate teens on nutrition, safety in the kitchen and meal preparation using seasonal ingredients. Money raised by members will go towards kitchen equipment and sending the teens to visit local farms.

Once aboard, you will spend the afternoon sipping wine, spirits and soft drinks and tasting foods prepared by SavorCalifornia.com, as well as restaurants, caterers and gourmet food producers from Alameda, the East Bay and beyond.

In between tastes, take a guided tour of the ship and learn about her history. As you explore the many gastronomic delights, you will be entertained with a performance by Dance/10 and



Photo: Dan Nguyen

Alameda Boys & Girls Club culinary students compete in Junior Chef Salad Competition. Visit [www.alamedabgc.org](http://www.alamedabgc.org) to learn more.

serenaded by the flamenco guitar sounds of Thomas Michaud. And, of course, make sure to stop by the tables showing off generous raffle prizes donated by members, caring individuals and companies.

I look forward to seeing you on the USS Hornet for our Barbecue on the Bay, the Food Society's biggest social event of the year.

Tickets are \$40.00 for members, \$50.00 for guests. Invitations will be mailed in July. For raffle donations, contact Community Giving Chair Thy Tran, at [thy@wanderingspoon.com](mailto:thy@wanderingspoon.com) or 415-722-7893.

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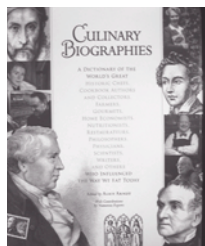


Photo: Noel Barnhurst



## Culinary Movers and Shakers: a new book of biographies recognizes those who shaped the way we now eat

by Sonia Fuentes



Today's celebrity chefs and culinary figures are ubiquitous, and details of their lives and work are often well documented.

Yet, at a time when

information about nearly everything is abundant, there's a dearth of facts about historic culinarians, those who influenced the modern palate. So culinary historian Alice Arndt, along with other experts she's met over the last 25 years, compiled a dictionary of 200 of the world's most influential characters — some infamous, others imaginary — in the history of food. The result, five years in the making, is *Culinary Biographies*, a comprehensive reference book for food professionals in all fields. "I really needed the book," says Arndt.

Entries span the centuries, beginning with Pythagoras (sixth century BC) and ending with the beloved Julia Child. The scope of the subjects' professions and interests is impressive; among them are teachers,

writers, artists, culinary ambassadors, physicians and entrepreneurs. Photos, art or reproduced documents accompany each one to two-page bio.

Some of the culinarians listed are better known for accomplishments other than those associated directly with food, although they played significant roles in its development. Cato (234 – 149 BC), the Roman politician who wrote "De Agri Cultura, On Farming," a farming handbook, included recipes for breads and cakes and tips for making wine. James Buchanan Brady (1856 – 1917), on the other hand,

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made his mark on culinary history by being an expert gourmand. His dinner often included no less than 12 courses. Legend has it that Brady tasted Sole Meuniere while in France and liked it so much he dispatched a spy to the restaurant to procure the recipe for reproduction in America.

Even fictitious characters show up along the way. Aunt Sammy, a radio personality developed by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1926, offered up 15-minute segments where she passed on household tips, recipes and seasonal menus. Women throughout the country read identical scripts, lending their regional accents to the character. Aunt Sammy, understood to be a relative of Uncle Sam, became so popular that the USDA published a cookbook of "her" recipes.

Photo: Noel Barnhurst



Along with the general and categorical indexes and a list of significant texts is a geographical index indicating that many of the individuals profiled had at one time or another lived in the U.S. Arndt explains in her introduction that, "Our intention to make our roster of biographees as international as possible has run up against the fact that many cultures, less individualistic than those of the West, generally do not record the names of individuals involved with food."

Although Arndt says that this project was a challenging one, she's already thinking about

possible future projects, which include a series of regional biographies from the Americas and Europe.

Arndt is the author of *Seasoning Savvy: How to Cook with Herbs, Spices, and Other Flavorings*. She splits her time between Houston and San Francisco, where her daughter lives with her family, and where she is a charter member of Culinary Historians of Northern California.

*Culinary Biographies*, edited by Alice Arndt; Yes Press, Inc. (hardcover, 418 pp., \$48.00). ♦



Photo: Mark MacLane

**Cheryl Forberg, R.D.** recently moved back to Napa after spending the last seven years in Los Angeles. She is currently working on her second anti-aging book, which will be published by Rodale. Cheryl is the consulting dietitian to NBC's weight loss reality show, "The Biggest Loser" and just completed The Biggest Loser Calorie Counter book, which will be published in October, also by Rodale.

**Laxmi Hiremath**, author of *The Dance of Spices: Classic Indian Cooking for Today's Home Kitchen* (Wiley), was recognized by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade for her success in food entrepreneurship and invited to be a guest speaker at the Fancy Food Show in Chicago. **COPIA: The American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts** recently featured her as "The Goddess of Indian Vegetarian Cooking."

**Janice Nieder** recently co-wrote an interview with Hubert Keller, chef-owner of Fleur de Lys, for *Runners World* magazine. The article, "Chef-owner Hubert Keller cuts the fat from classic French cooking, and gains a running habit," explained Keller's change of lifestyle after working on recipes for Dr. Dean Ornish's book, *Eat More, Weigh Less*.

In addition to releasing yet another book last month (see *Stirring appetites*), **Marlena Spieler** is scheduled to help judge the World Cheese Awards in London in June. She attended the World Gourmand Awards in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May.

**Caleb Zigas**, program coordinator for La Cocina Community Kitchen, reports that one of their businesses in incubation, Sabores del Sur, has begun selling empanadas, alfajores and Equator Estates Coffee at the Alemany Farmers' Market. La Cocina also had a food booth at San Francisco's annual Carnival featuring Chaac Mool Yucatecan Food and Estrellita's Snacks. (See feature article).

**Jeff Davis** is organizing another great Food Fete press event on Monday, July 10 in New York City. He invites members who either own or represent gourmet food companies to participate. Contact [jeff@foodfete.com](mailto:jeff@foodfete.com) or visit [www.foodfete.com](http://www.foodfete.com).



Photo: Noel Barnhurst

**Shuna Fish Lydon** is consulting at Poulet in Berkeley in their desserts department. She's specializing in simple, pretty cakes and seasonal fruit offerings. She encourages everyone to stop in. Visit [www.pouletdeli.com](http://www.pouletdeli.com).

After shooting on assignment in Italy last year for Fosters Wine Estates, cookbook and advertising photographer **Chris Shorten** completed shoots for several of their Australian wines earlier this year. Other recent assignments have included photography for the Mango and Honey Boards for **Fleishman-Hillard**, and for their Mirassou wine business. In addition, Chris shot ice creams for **Context Marketing's** California Milk Advisory Board account. Coming up are photo shoots for Sara Lee and two new cookbooks.

In addition to teaching her own classes at *Cooking With Julie* in Napa, **Julie Logue-Riordan, C.C.P.** is now teaching culinary classes at **COPIA: The American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts**. "The classes give me an opportunity to meet people from all over who share an interest in learning more about what they are eating and how best to prepare it," she says. Her classes were featured recently in the Napa Valley Register.

**Syndi Seid**, founder & director of Advanced Etiquette in San Francisco, was featured on Fox station's "Trading Spouses" as an etiquette coach. The opportunity arose when one of the traded moms thought the manners of the sons in her traded family needed some polishing. Syndi invites members to view her video tip on "How to Host A Power Lunch," as featured on [www.bnet.com](http://www.bnet.com).

**Susan Faigen** reports that **California Vegetable Specialties (CVS)** was a Gold Sponsor of the 2006 Napa Valley Mustard Festival earlier this year, participating in all of the main events and sampling over 20 cases of California Endive. Not long afterward, an Associated Press reporter interviewed CVS President **Richard Collins** and wrote a feature article subtitled "California Farmer Grows Endive in the Dark." It was picked up by the Washington Post and ABCnews.com. Rich was also featured as "The Unknown Grower" in the April online magazine of Melissa's/World Variety Produce.

**Patricia Schneider** has started her own wine and food marketing and PR business in Larkspur. Her clients include California Fresh Apricots, California Asparagus Commission, Pomegranates, Hawaiian Tropical Fruit, CleanFish, Marilyn Merlot and Halewood Romania Wines. "My passion is wine and food, and work with green start-ups that involves taste and social responsibility."

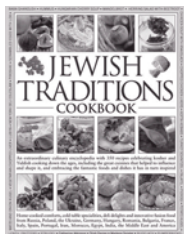
We've learned that both **Laura Werlin** and **Janet Fletcher** have new books in the works. Janet's is taking her to Calabria this summer for research. There's no word of their precise subjects or working titles, but wouldn't you bet that each might at least make mention of cheese? ♦



Photo: Noel Barnhurst



## Stirring appetites: Recent books by members



The Jewish Traditions Cookbook by **Marlena Spieler** has just hit the shelves. It's an extraordinary culinary encyclopedia that features more than 1400 photographs. We honestly don't know how Marlena does it, but we congratulate her again! The Jewish Traditions Cookbook, by Marlena Spieler; Anness Publishing Limited (hardcover, 512 pp., \$39.99).



**Bryant Terry** and Anna Lappe's new book, *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen*, was released in April. Its foreword is by Eric Schlosser. Bryant and Anna "wanted to explode the misconception that healthy, local, sustainable, food — what we call 'Grub' — is only for affluent, aging boomers," he said. "Our favorite aspects of the book are the suggested musical playlists, poetry and artwork that accompany each menu, and the handy how-to's for creating an urban, organic kitchen." Visit [www.eatgrub.org](http://www.eatgrub.org). *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen*, by Bryant Terry and Anna Lappe; Tarcher (paperback, 256 pp., \$18.95)



**Chef Andrew Hunter's** latest book, *The Reality Diet*, came out in May. It's written by Miami cardiologist Dr. Steven A. Schnur with menus and recipes developed by Andrew. Dr. Dean Edell, author of *Eat, Drink and Be Merry*, and host of the nationally syndicated "Dr. Dean Edell Show," calls it "a diet book that will stand the test of time." He writes, "This is one diet book I can highly recommend." *The Reality Diet*, by Steven A. Schnur, M.D.; Avery (hardcover, 432 pp., \$24.95).

Send publication notices to Pam Elder at [pelder@culinaryforum.com](mailto:pelder@culinaryforum.com). ♦

Photo: Noel Barnhurst



trends

## Looking at the foodie in the mirror

by Bob Kenney



Photo: Matthew Stewart

Those of us working in the food world may think we know what a "foodie" is. After all, many of us are self-proclaimed foodies. But what, really, defines a foodie and who are they?

As part of a national consumer study we conducted early this year, Context Marketing took a closer look at the food-involved consumer. We threw out a fairly broad net as to who qualified as a foodie. Those we included answered "yes" to four out of five qualifying questions: Do you read food magazines like *Bon Appetit* or *Food & Wine*? Go to specialty food stores like Whole Foods? Watch food shows on TV? Cook your own meals more than three times a week? Are you curious about trying new foods?

What surprised us was that so many people — nearly half of our 302-person sample — qualified under these admittedly broad qualifications. Are all of them hard-core foodies? Perhaps not, but the finding illustrates the degree to which food has become part of our culture. Here are some of our discoveries:

Foodies are as likely to be male as female. We found 43 percent of those who qualified as foodies in our equally divided audience sample were male. In the age group that scored highest on the questions we used as criteria — 35 to 44 — the balance was almost evenly split between male and female.

Foodies are an educated and affluent group. Overall, 78 percent had at least some college education and 40 percent had household incomes of \$100,000 and above, versus

68 percent and 22 percent respectively for the non-foodie group.

Foodies consume media as avidly as they do food. They are far more likely to watch TV news programs and read newspapers than non-foodies. They also are twice as likely to read the newspaper food pages and ten times more likely to read food magazines

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Foodies are as likely to be male as female...are an educated and affluent group.

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than non-foodies. In addition, foodies are 25 percent more likely to read nutrition labels.

Foodies have information anxiety. Not surprisingly, they are better informed on most food issues and tend to be a source of information to others. However, this knowledge does not necessarily reassure them. Foodies are twice as likely than non-foodies to report that they worry about food issues like genetic modification, mad cow disease, mercury in fish and trans fat.

While this survey was not meant to be definitive, it does show the degree to which food involvement on a social and recreational level has permeated our society. It helps explain the growing respect given to artisan food producers and top chefs and restaurateurs, not to mention the proliferation of specialty food stores. We look forward to conducting more research into this very interesting and highly influential group later this year. ♦



**SAN FRANCISCO PROFESSIONAL FOOD SOCIETY EVENTS**

**June**

27 Traveling Table. Ristorante Amoroma, 360 Park Street, Moraga. 7 p.m. \$35 SFPFS members and guests. Visit [www.sfpfs.com](http://www.sfpfs.com) for details, or call 415-665-3663.

**August**

13 Annual Barbeque. USS Hornet Museum, Alameda. Noon – 4 p.m. \$40 SFPSF members, \$50 guests. Visit [www.sfpfs.com](http://www.sfpfs.com) for details.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**June**

23 SummerTini, annual benefit for the CHEFS (Conquering Homelessness through Employment in Food Service) program. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. 6-8 p.m. Visit [www.ecs-sf.org/dev/summertini.pdf](http://www.ecs-sf.org/dev/summertini.pdf) for information.

26 Bay Gourmet Forum, a program of the Commonwealth Club of California presents: An Evening of Seasonal California Cuisine with French and Italian Twists. RNM Restaurant, 598 Haight Street, San Francisco. 6:30 p.m. \$68 Commonwealth Club members, \$78 nonmembers. Visit [www.commonwealthclub.org](http://www.commonwealthclub.org) for details.



**GETTING AN EDUCATION**

Members Thy Tran, Sharon Smith and Carole Saville (upper left) take in a ham lesson at Oliveto Cafe and Restaurant at the salumi tasting Roundtable. A delicious snack awaits (upper right). A captive audience (lower left) at the McEvoy Ranch tour. A McEvoy ranch hand (lower right) guards the precious olive tree saplings. (Photos upper left and right: Dede Sampson; Photos lower left and right: Jennie Schacht)

Photo: Noel Barnhurst



*Dish is looking for volunteers. We need help assigning photography and putting together the calendar section. And we can always use contributors. Interested?*

*For more information, contact Ana Schwartzman at [ana@anaschwartzman.com](mailto:ana@anaschwartzman.com)*

Check us out online! The SFFFS Web site ([www.sfefs.com](http://www.sfefs.com)) is a resource for upcoming events, job listings and information on member services and ways to get involved.



## SAN FRANCISCO PROFESSIONAL FOOD SOCIETY

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