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October 6, 2008 12:30 PM

There is nothing like a Dame

Posted by [Nancy Leson](#)

Seattle's got a lot of Dames -- culinary professionals affiliated with [Les Dames d'Escoffier International](#). You may even know a few by name. Names like [Fran Bigelow](#) (maybe you've eaten her chocolates?), [Gina Batali](#) (famously seen slicing salumi in Pioneer Square), [Braiden Rex-Johnson](#) (a frequent Seattle Times contributor who [riffed on "oyster wines"](#) in Sunday's Pacific Northwest magazine) or [Lisa Dupar](#) (who's catered a local event or two -- hundred thousand). And maybe you even know this grand Dame:



She's Marcella Rosene -- founder of [Pasta & Co.](#) and editor of "[Cooking with Les Dames D'Escoffier](#): at Home with the Women Who Shape the Way We Eat and Drink" -- published this month by Seattle's own [Sasquatch Books](#) (\$35). This is a big, gift-worthy tome, with recipes from Dames past and present, including the aforementioned locals as well as internationally acclaimed Big

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Name Dames, among them: M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, Alice Waters and Marcella Hazan. Edited by Rosene with help from Pat Mozersky (who founded Ma Maison Cooking School), it's a compilation tips, beverage pairings and stories, and most notably of recipes these Dames make at home for their family and friends.

So, what is Les Dames D'Escoffier? And what does this organization comprised of more than 1300 professional women -- working in various fields of food, beverage and hospitality -- do? Named to honor French chef [Auguste Escoffier](#), Les Dames was founded during the era of "women's liberation" as a way to open doors for women in the all-too-male-centric culinary world.

Chapters across the U.S. and Canada have raised nearly \$4 million for scholarships and grants -- going primarily to young women striving for careers in the food and beverage industries. In the past decade, Seattle's chapter has distributed over \$100,000 for educational programs, community projects and culinary scholarships here in Washington State. But just like girlfriends everywhere, Les Dames also get together to eat, drink, schmooze and have fun.


Speaking of which: the [local Dames](#) are hosting their [annual fundraising benefit](#) Thursday, October 16 at 6 p.m. at [Kathy Casey Food Studios](#) in Ballard, celebrating the debut of their cookbook. Tickets (\$110 per person) include a copy of the cookbook and an opportunity to rub elbows with Rosene and Co. (and taste the recipes of) the Seattle Dames whose house favorites are included in the book.

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