

THE FOOD JOURNAL

Dedicated to pursuing food history and supporting culinary collections at the Los Angeles Public Library



Azerbaijan Dinners

By Richard Foss, CHSC Speakers Bureau Committee Chair



Feride and her daughter Meltem show off traditional dress of Azerbaijan

In September and October the Culinary Historians had two members-only dinners of the cuisine of Azerbaijan made by Feride Buyuran, author of *Pomegranates And Saffron: A Culinary Journey to Azerbaijan*. The venue was Feride's home, and she and her daughter Meltem greeted visitors wearing traditional Azerbaijani costumes and escorting us to the beautifully lit rear patio. The menu was different each time, but included over a dozen items

such as chilled yogurt soup with herbs and chickpeas, multiple salads, rice pilaf topped with lamb stewed with dried fruit and chestnuts, and four kinds of homemade breads. Feride came out between courses to explain not only the individual dishes, but also food traditions and politeness at the table. She and her helpers also demonstrated traditional dances and encouraged CHSC members to join in. The evening finished with homemade Baku-style baklava, an array of dried fruits and nuts, and tea with homemade rose petal and sour cherry jam.



Don Corbett passes a plate of saffron rice

Upcoming Programs at the Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium:

February 11, 2017

Andy Coe

"Feeding Hungry Americans: Diets of the Great Depression"

March 11, 2017

George Geary

"Famous Eateries of Hollywood's Golden Age"

April 8, 2017

Neela Paniz and Nandita Godbole

"Ancient Cuisine, Modern Interpretations"

May 13, 2017

To be announced

June 10, 2017

Andy Smith

"A History of Food, Health and Nutrition in America"



Charles Perry
CHSC President

Cold Burgers of the Depression

When the sandwich was invented in the late 18th century, it was just a utilitarian way of eating meat without the need for plates and forks. But the idea was an irresistible blank slate, and within a century a Glasgow caterer boasted that he made 100 kinds of sandwiches. The first edition of Fannie Farmer's *The Boston Cooking-School Cookbook* (1896) described 16 sandwiches, most of them forgotten (lettuce-mayonnaise, Swiss cheese-walnut, sliced ginger, fig paste with peanuts, quince jelly with walnuts). As we know, the invention of novel sandwiches has never ceased.

Two inventions were particularly important. In the late 1890s, the club sandwich emerged from the Saratoga Clubhouse in upstate New York. It introduced the double-decker concept of three pieces of bread (preferably toast) with two fillings. For a long time, the recipe was the one we still know: chicken or turkey and bacon on the first level, lettuce and mayonnaise (and after a while sometimes tomato) on the second. Inevitably, cooks elaborated the possibilities, most of which have fallen by the wayside.

The other was the idea of putting the hamburger patty -- previously served on a plate like Salisbury steak -- between two pieces of bread. I'm not going to venture into the

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Nancy Zaslavsky
CHSC Vice President,
Programs

Program Notes

The fall season opened with Feride Buyuran in September's "Food of Azerbaijan: From the Silk Road to Today" where she masterfully guided us through the cuisine's evolution. October's program, "L.A. Craft Brew," was moderated by John Verive and starred a panel of local experts on the evolution of Los Angeles' rapidly growing field of local, small-scale breweries. Thank you to Joan Nielsen who chaired the program and the following day's annual members party, a craft beer fest at Three Weavers Brewing in Inglewood. Patric Kuh spoke in November on, "Tracing Flavor Through Charitable Cookbooks" as a fine introduction to his new book, *Finding the Flavors We Lost: From Bread to Bourbon, How Artisans Reclaimed American Food*. I moderated December's program, "A Journey Through Vietnamese Cuisine" with author Kim Fay and Chef Kimmy Tang—it was a perfect opportunity to ask every question I had about the country's flavorful dishes, both ancient and contemporary fusion. All of these wonderful programs were videotaped and can be viewed on the CHSC website, chscsite.org.

Please let me remind you that CHSC now solicits sponsorships for costs we accrue each year as our new fundraising tool. Members, please consider helping with ongoing expenses besides your annual membership, such as: Newsletter printing: \$500 (2 times per year); Program videotape for website: \$350 (8 times per year); Hospitality reception expenses: \$200 (8 times per year); and Directory (yearly) printing: \$800 (1 time per year).

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Nancy Zaslavsky: Program Notes Continued from Page 1

To sponsor one of these items—or part of one, or something else—please contact Madeleine Beaumont who helps with tax-deductible sponsorship questions, as we are a 501 c(3) organization. Contact Madeleine for payment with a credit card or mail your check to Donna Chaney, CHSC Treasurer.

We gratefully announce your sponsorship in a newsletter such as **Charles Perry's \$500 sponsorship** of any expense, and **Arthur Everett's \$350 sponsorship** towards a program videotaping, and a generous member's **\$300 anonymous sponsorship**.



Have you read Marie Kondo's bestseller, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*? Spring-cleaning season is around the corner, time to discard unloved cookbooks and tidy bookshelves. Please donate volumes to CHSC for our used cookbook sales during some program receptions and yearly at the Hollywood Farmers Market. Contact Librarian Ani Boyadjian, aboyad@lapl.org or 213-228-7223 for drop-off information.

The Autry Museum of the American West is currently presenting "Flavors: Historic California," a culinary series of thematic pop-up dinners combining ingredients of heritage livestock, such as Churro sheep and Longhorn cattle, with indigenous California plants like cactus buds, tepary beans and mesquite flour to further the conversation on the future of farming. Tickets include plates from farm-to-table food stations, access to the California Continued galleries, and meet-and-greet with chefs, farmers, and food historians. Experience a unique taste that will take you back in time. theautry.org/events/special-events/flavors-historic-california



The California Bear-Chef first appeared in the *Pan-Pacific Cook Book*, 1915.



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The Culinary Historians of Southern California

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Gluten Free and Allergen Friendly Expo
February 11-12, 2017
Del Mar Fairgrounds, San Diego
gfafexpo.com



The largest exposition of its kind in the United States, featuring specialty food product vendors, classes for nutritional cooking and educational demonstrations to meet the dietary needs of the celiac community, those with food sensitivities, autoimmune/inflammatory diseases, and autism.

LA Cookie Con & Sweets Show
February 18-19, 2017
Los Angeles Convention Center
lacoookiecon.com



The biggest convention on the West Coast for all things sweet, salty and savory in the world of baking. Features workshops, demos, sampling, decorating contests, a cosplay competition and a kids zone. Celebrity pastry chefs include Duff Goldman and Ron Ben-Israel.

All-Star Chef Classic
March 8-11, 2017
L.A. Live, Los Angeles
allstarchefclassic.com



A 4-day event of dining experiences, including a Masters Dinner Series. Also offers 2 strolling events with savory offerings, unlimited beer and wine in an open-market setting. Chef talent includes Chris Cosentino, Ludo LeFebvre, Curtis Stone, Dahlia Narvaez, Hugh Acheson, Sherry Yard, Jon Shook, Vinny Dotolo and many others.

California Wine Festival
Orange County, April 21-22, 2017
Santa Barbara, July 13-15, 2017
californiawinefestival.com



Wine, food, music, sea and sun create the quintessential wine tasting experience. California's best wineries pour vintage red and white wines, regional top chefs and specialty food purveyors serve gourmet appetizers along with live music and a beachside view. Some events are limited to 300 ticket-holders.

Simply diVine
March 25, 2017
Los Angeles LGBT Center, Los Angeles
simplydivinela.org



Premier food and wine event for LGBT people and their allies. Sample food and drink from L.A.'s most popular restaurants, food trucks, wineries, distilleries, breweries, and more. All proceeds support the Center's programs and services. Co-chaired by Chef Susan Feniger, HGTV's David Bailey, Pavilions' Laurie Deddens and Sotheby's Jory Burton.

The Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society & The Association for the Study of Food and Society Annual Conference
June 14-17, 2017
Occidental College, Los Angeles
oxyfoodconference.org



Supports scholarship on the theme, "Migrating Food Cultures: Engaging Pacific Perspectives on Food and Agriculture" through presentations, panel sessions, roundtables and workshops. Includes discussions of how agricultural and food mesh with environmental, social, cultural, and historical resources as well as examinations of people, places, innovation, food production and consumption.

National Dutch Oven Gathering
June 17, 2017
Rancho Jurupa Park, Riverside
www.nationaldog.org



Over 100 cast iron Dutch oven cooks from across America gather together and cook in the same Dutch ovens that tamed the country from the Revolutionary War through the Lewis and Clark expedition and are still used by outdoor enthusiasts and Scouts today. Features classes, goodie bags, entertainment, competitions and a huge evening pot luck dinner for those who contribute a side dish to share.

Reflecting upon the headlines of 2016, we saw a lot of focus upon technology and food.

Some innovations were expensive and interesting, like robot waiters in restaurants in Asia, delivery drones that corporations are implementing into their businesses, portable gluten testers for those with special dietary concerns and the continuing evolution of smart kitchens.

But other developments were more dubious and haven't yet caught on with the mass public. For example, pizza-ordering temporary tattoos raised questions about how much personal data customers would be willing to submit. The demand for cute food emojis seemed like a winner as well, though they haven't been very functional or widely accepted as of today. Even rainbow-colored bagels and 3D-printed food products are starting to lose their sense of novelty.

It'll be interesting to see what emerges this year. There's no shortage of new food-related projects begging for Kickstarter funds and other support, and no one knows what new products or technologies will become a bestselling hit, but I believe that food science literacy is on the rise, despite the long-standing and inherent skepticism between chefs and scientists. There may be some positive outcomes to emerge from experiments being conducted in America and abroad that will forever change how we experience food and restaurants. Here's to our continued progress. Welcome to a new year!

Sharon Tani

Sharon Tani



Who invented edible underwear?

Edible undies were born late one night in early 1970s Chicago, when young entrepreneurs David Sanderson and Lee Brady were sitting around sharing apple-flavored wine — and other substances — with some

friends. "Puff the Magic Dragon put the idea in our mind," Sanderson recalls. "I remembered my older brother used to say, 'eat my shorts.' Like 'buzz off.' We said, 'Let's make shorts you can eat!'"

They found an edible film that had been originally designed to wrap frozen turkeys, and fashioned licorice-laced briefs they called Candy pants. The product was both edible and wearable, but they never seriously expected it to be eaten or worn. They assembled samples in a spare bedroom and put them on display in a friend's boutique. A student at the Univ. of Indiana bought the first pair. Her school newspaper published an article, and the Associated Press picked up the story. Orders started flooding in. How popular were Candy pants? At one point in 1976, they were selling \$150,000 of edible underwear a month. They bought a 7,000 sq. ft. historic mansion with a grand staircase and a ballet studio.

Source: Gideon Brower. (2015, February 13). An unofficial history of edible underwear. [KCRW's Good Food Blog]. Summarized with the author's permission: <http://blogs.kcrw.com/goodfood/2015/02/an-unofficial-history-of-edible-underwear/>



The Culinary Historians of Southern California

<http://chscsite.org>



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Gourmet Ghosts

by James T. Bartlett

I was sitting in Jones on Santa Monica Boulevard when the bartender told me about the history of the place. Back when it was called Ports, Michelangelo Antonioni, Warren Beatty, Julie Christie, Robert Redford and Francis Ford Coppola all came in — though probably not at the same time.

Then he mentioned they had a resident ghost.

There was even a particular table where he, she, or it seemed to cause havoc — regular spillages, broken glasses, dropped food — and security camera footage (of course now lost) of an unexplained incident in the store room.



Invisible Irma

I wasn't an amateur Ghost-buster or a big believer in psychics, but as a journalist my antennae started twitching; maybe it would make a fun Halloween article for the *LA Weekly* or even the *LA Times*.

Years later I was regularly investigating old newspaper microfiches at the Central Library and launching *Gourmet Ghosts 2*, my

second collection of stories about haunted bars, restaurants and hotels in and around the Los Angeles area.

When a hotel or restaurant is 100 years old, they've hosted countless thousands — maybe even millions — of guests, and not all of them were good or happy people. In fact, it turned out that many of the "ghost" stories I was told had their roots in murder, mystery and suicide.

But not all of them.

Of course there's the fabulous Magic Castle in Hollywood, which is famous for its own ghost "Invisible Irma." She plays the piano for tips and is more Disney than the devil, but nevertheless the Castle's Milt Larsen told me two convincing stories about other ghosts — a former bar tender and a guest magician — that have been seen there too.

You may also have heard of Charlie Chaplin still spending time at his favorite table in old school Musso & Frank's, the smell of Orson Welles' cigars by his old table at Ma Maison (now a fancy bakery), and it's said that the wonderful Tam O'Shanter in Los Feliz still hosts Walt Disney

Charles Perry: Cold Burgers of the Depression
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poisonously contentious question of where and when this happened. What interests me is the fact that in the 1930s, hamburger patties were sometimes served *cold* -- and in particularly fussy club sandwiches.

In 1939 the well-known food writer Louis P. de Gouy published his *Sandwich Manual for Professionals*, which offered more than a dozen club sandwich recipes using hamburger patties as if they were sliced roast beef. Here are some of Louis' ideas, in case you feel like trying them:

- *Burger and watercress layer, egg salad-lettuce layer.
- *Burger and chopped bacon layer (cold, of course), Swiss cheese and lettuce.
- *Burger with mustard and pickles layer, pineapple and lettuce; this one served on rye.
- *Burger and shredded pineapple layer, with tomato and lettuce, on raisin bread.
- *Burger and sauerkraut layer; tomato, bacon and lettuce (a combination which sounds perfectly fine on its own, if you ask me), on pumpernickel.
- *Burger and sliced egg layer, marmalade and lettuce layer, nut bread.
- *Burger and lettuce, chicken salad and lettuce, on white.
- *Burger and ham slice, potato salad with walnuts and lettuce; on rye.
- *Burger with hot fried tomatoes and lettuce, string bean salad and lettuce.
- *Burger and cress, layer of cream cheese, raspberry jam and lettuce, on raisin bread.
- *Burger and bean salad layer; marmalade, walnuts and cress; orange date bread.
- *Burger with Liederkranz cheese; tongue, tomato and lettuce, on pumpernickel or rye.

(you can even reserve his old table, though he apparently often preferred to sit at the bar).

I wanted to discover some lesser-known tales too, and wasn't surprised when I learned in interviews that many business owners — and veteran staff — apparently find it hard to hand over the reins, even if they've gone to that great eaterie in the sky.

There's Consuela Castillo de Bonzo, still reigning over Olvera Street from her balcony at La Golondrina, and "mama" Encarnación Gomez is still giving out sweet treats at the El Carmen tequila bar on West 3rd Street — to say nothing of Hank Holzer, who still hangs out at his famous dive in the Stillwell Hotel, and guitarist Gino D'Auri and owner Clark Allen at flamenco spot El Cid. At Tom Bergin's on Fairfax, Tom still appears so regularly that it's hard for the new owner to keep nighttime cleaning crews!

January 2017 saw the 70th anniversary of the brutal murder of Elizabeth Short — better known as "The Black Dahlia" — and, as arguably the most famous (unsolved) murder in L.A. history, it's no surprise that her ghost has been claimed by many bars, as well as the Biltmore Hotel (the last place she was seen alive).



Black Dahlia martini, Biltmore Hotel

Rather dubiously, the Biltmore even has a drink named for her — ingredients include vodka, Chambord black raspberry liqueur and Kahlua — while The Basement in Santa Monica, a hidden bar under The Victorian event venue, has Delia's Elixir (bourbon, agave, raspberries and lemon).

After hearing strange footsteps and drawers and doors opening and slamming in the wee hours while they were closing up (often alone), the Basement's staff felt a celebratory cocktail might be a good idea.

Just in case.



Originally from London, James has been living in Los Angeles since 2004. *Gourmet Ghosts 2*, his second murder/mystery/ghost/food and drink guide to L.A.'s bars, restaurants and hotels, is now available on Amazon and at stores across town. He'll also be giving a talk on "True Crime & Real Love" at the LA Breakfast Club on February 8th — more details at www.gourmetghosts.com



Thank you to our generous Angels, Benefactors & Patrons

The Culinary Historians of Southern California acknowledges the generosity of members who have joined or renewed at the Angel, Benefactor and Patron levels. Your gift allows our organization to enhance member services and increase our support of the culinary collections of The Central Library.

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Craft Brew Panel (l to r): Rich Marcelllo, Naga Reshi, John Michael Verive, Laurie Porter, Brian Schmitz

What a fun weekend! On Saturday October 8, CHSC presented "L.A. Craft Brew, a panel on the evolution of Los Angeles brewing" at the Los Angeles Public Library. This lively thirst-quenching discussion was moderated by beer writer John Michael Verive

and featured brewers from the Los Angeles County Brewers Guild, including Rich Marcelllo of Strand Brewing Co. in Torrance, Naga Reshi of Dry River Brewing in downtown Los Angeles, Laurie Porter of Smog City Brewing in Torrance and Brian Schmitz of Lucky Luke Brewing Co. in Palmdale.

On the following Sunday, the annual CHSC Members Only Potluck Party, "A Craft Beer Brunch," was held at the Three Weavers Brewery Company in Inglewood. Guests enjoyed recipes (many from a 1963 "Beer Party USA" booklet) including Sweet and Spicy Beer Nuts, Beer-bequed Spareribs, Shrimp Dunk USA, Ale Baked Bean Pot, Chocolate Stout Cake and more. The event's Silent Auction offered many wonderful items and helped CHSC raise \$945. (Thanks go to Don Corbett for arranging the Silent Auction and to Joan Nielsen, chair and organizer of both events). See you next year!



CHSC Annual Members Only Potluck Party: (left) guests enjoying delicious food and good company, (top) an excellent variety of gifts for the Silent Auction event

Gifts for Lovers of Food History

by Sharon Tani, CHSC Newsletter Editor

Valentine's Day is fast approaching. Are you looking for an unusual gift for your food lover? Here are the most interesting ones we could find: some local adventures, some destinations in distant lands and a few that can be had via the internet. It's sure to please the person who seems to have everything.

The Pan Am Experience

Relive the glamour of 1970's luxury air travel by booking a seat with Air Hollywood, the world's largest aviation-themed film studio. Twice a month, they recreate the Pan Am Experience aboard their Pan Am 747 replica airplane interior, complete with meals and drinks based upon original menus, flight attendants in period clothing, and an "in-flight" trivia game that can win you a Pan Am travel bag. panamexperience.com



Photo credit: Daniel Sliva / Air Hollywood

Bunyadi, The Naked Restaurant

Tired of your boring restaurant routine? Spice it up by dining in the nude. Lollipop, a company specializing in creative experiences, has created a pop-up restaurant in London that encourages diners to sit in candlelight on wood furniture, eat organic food, use edible cutlery and become liberated from electronics, pretense and apparently, food stains on your necktie. Self-conscious? No photography is allowed and the waiting list is a mile long so you have time to hit the gym starting today! They also have a bamboo-partitioned area for those who can't part with clothing, but what's the point of that at a naked restaurant? www.thebunyadi.com

Solo Per Due

If the idea of dining amongst naked strangers turns your stomach, how about a trip to the world's smallest restaurant in Vacone, Italy, with only one table, two seats and your server's undivided attention? Solo Per Due, which translates to "just for two," is housed in a 19th century building on the grounds of a Roman villa once belonging to the Latin poet, Horace. The Italian menu changes daily and is based upon fresh seasonal and regional ingredients. Personalized fireworks displays, flower arrangements, and a day rental of Ferrari cars are also available. www.soloperdue.com

Wizard's Tea

As the 20th anniversary of the first Harry Potter book's release arrives this year, Bed-and-Breakfast Llety Cynin in South Wales, Great Britain, is creating a year-long celebration. According to their website, months were spent researching and testing the themed-menu which includes creations inspired by the books series, such as chocolate frogs, treacle tarts, hot butterbeer and Hagrid's birthday cake. The menu is intended for adults as well as children and their location includes a wooded walk and expanded hotel amenities. www.lletycynin.co.uk

Adopt a Sheep

Help support the pastoral traditions of making artisanal organic cheese products by adopting a sheep. Marcelli Formaggi's Abruzzo Pantry has created this program to preserve their ancient local breed of Sopravissana Sheep, who thrive in the highest mountain range of Abruzzo, Italy, and live on their farm, which was founded in 1977. Adopters receive a gift box with a certificate, 2 award-winning sheep milk cheeses, woolen trek socks, regional pasta, olive oil, tomato sauce, pesto, mountain honey and a one-day voucher to stay on the family's bioagriturismo farm. marcelliformaggi.com



Salt Cave

Ever fantasized about immersing yourself in cooking's most important ingredient? The Salt Cave Santa Barbara provides holistic health and medicinal spa treatments made from the purest Himalayan Pink Salt. Visitors can relax in zero gravity chairs inside a man-made cave surrounded by 200 million year old crystals imported from the sea beds of the Khewra Salt Range in mountainous northern Pakistan. Relax and breathe in microsalt particles or take a yoga class. Eating inside the cave isn't allowed, but they do sell gourmet cooking salt in their gift shop to take home. saltcavesb.com



Get Your Kicks

Be the envy of your neighborhood by donning a pair of Nike Chicken & Waffle Dunks or Vans Burger Slip-Ons. Get nostalgic with a pair of retro Chuck Taylor's Converse but this time in all-over hamburger greatness. All three shoe brands have been releasing limited edition sneakers with creative food themes for the past few years, but they're in high demand and sell out quickly. The most popular pairs aren't easy to score without serious money and some internet searching savvy, but it can be done and you gotta admit that they're pretty damn cool. www.eater.com/2016/5/24/11760618/food-sneakers-nike-vans



Photo credit: LustMexico.com

Final Fantasy XV

In all the history of this popular Xbox role-playing video game, this latest version is being critically acclaimed for its achievement in rendering delicious visuals graphics of food. While players lead Prince Noctis and his friends on a quest to defend his homeland, and battle monsters, the game has a rich food focus. Players must search for camp ingredients, select tantalizing meals in restaurants and develop recipes with the Prince's guard, Ignis, who serves as the chef of the group. You may be left with a growling stomach, but the shared meals in this virtual space are keeping players coming back for seconds. www.xbox.com/en-US/games/final-fantasy-xv

Mr. and Mrs. La Cienega

by Carole Rosner

Coming into prominence at the end of Prohibition in the 1930s, a small section of streets along the eastern edge of Beverly Hills was nicknamed Restaurant Row. Home to numerous upscale restaurants and swinging nightclubs, La Cienega Boulevard, between Wilshire and San Vicente, was the place to be and to be seen when dining in Los Angeles. Some of the area's more popular restaurants of the time included Lawry's Prime Rib, Tail O'The Cock, The Fish Shanty, and Ming Room.



Bernie and Janet Tohl

One of the most successful restaurateurs on La Cienega was Bernard Tohl, who from 1947 to 1987 opened thirteen restaurants. Known as "Mr. and Mrs. La Cienega," Bernie and Janet Tohl believed the key to success was in real estate, and they found their success on this small eastern edge of Beverly Hills. The Captain's Table was the first one to open, and the list of Tohl restaurants included the Blue Boar Tavern, Casa Cugat, Alan Hale's Lobster Barrel and Islander. At one time the Tohls operated four restaurants simultaneously on Restaurant Row.

The Captain's Table opened around 1948 and is remembered for its white dinner jacketed waiters, leather booths, and dark wood interiors. The place was fancy, decorated with east coast antiques, ships' wheels, custom painted murals, and stained glass.

The Tohls were the first people in the country to fly-in live Maine lobsters to California to serve fresh for their diners. Janet and Bernie would drive to LAX each night around 2am to pick up the delivery of lobsters from various airlines. It took some time for the Tohls to figure out how to keep the lobsters alive for many hours, but they did, and thus created the first cold water tanks in the business.

Dinners at the Captain's Table were pricey for the time, but full of variety. A 1 1/2 pound fresh Maine lobster dinner was \$3.95. Other "Famous Shore Dinners" were the Cape Cod Scallops for \$2.75, the Planked Rainbow Trout Amandine for \$3.50, and Sautéed or French Fried Frog Legs for \$3.75.

"Dad's favorite restaurant was always the Captain's Table, which is where he really started the fine dining experience here on La Cienega," David Tohl, one of the Tohls' three sons explained. "Because he started it, he worked all of the jobs and it was here that he really learned the business end of it. It was the only restaurant where he actually worked at all the jobs. After that he had managers working for him, but was at the

restaurants pretty much every night. His success stemmed from that restaurant and to the end it was his favorite."

At 385 No. La Cienega sat Islander, one of the Tohls most unique restaurants. Opened in 1959, this Polynesian themed dinner spot served around 1,000 people a night in its heyday. The spare ribs, rumaki, and unique tropical drinks were always a hit.

Dining at the Islander was an adventure. "We used to give people rickshaw rides around the block as we had three or four rickshaws out front at all times. People lined up for this experience. The big sign out front with the huge flaming torch caught a lot of attention as well as the entry lagoon which you had to walk over. The entire building was elevated one floor above the sidewalk so the entrance sequence took you into another world, up a ramp lined with alabaster shells, tiki gods, and palm trees," Jeffrey Tohl, another son, said.

There were also live capuchin monkeys and toucan birds living in a controlled environment within the restaurant. "They never got loose," Jeffrey said. An engineer helped develop an artificial rainforest, complete with thunder and lightning storms that were controlled by a button by the hostess stand. There was also nightly entertainment such as fire dancers and hula dancers.



Excerpt from the Islander Restaurant menu

Bernie and Janet would research, travel, and create new concepts all the time. "We'd try something. If it worked, great. If not, we'd close the doors, remodel and reopen," Janet said.

The last of the Tohl restaurants, Alan Hale's Lobster Barrel, closed in 1987. Although Ma Maison and Spago opened and defined a new era in fine dining along Restaurant Row, we thank the Tohls for all the great memories.

Carole Rosner is a native Angelino who enjoys cheesy comfort food, beautifully decorated desserts, secret neighborhood eateries, and easy to follow dinner recipes. Her lemon coconut squares are always a hit, the oldest cookbook she owns is from 1937, and she's a fan of competitive cooking shows.



CHSC Annual Book Sale

by Ani Boyadjian, CHSC Library Liaison

The CHSC annual cookbook sale was held at the Hollywood Farmer's Market on Sunday, December 4, 2016. The previous year's book sale was held in August and the heat was quite oppressive. The crisp and cool December weather was a welcome respite, and allowed us to bring out our holiday offerings just in time for folks preparing their holiday menus.

Very special thanks to Madeleine Beaumont, who not only helped throughout the duration of the sale, but spent countless hours in the Science Department closed stacks sorting through materials by topic and picking out best candidates weeks beforehand. Madeleine also served as cashier along with Stella Mittelbach, who also worked the sale with us. Special thanks also go to Sandeep Gupta, for helping before, during and after. Thanks also to CHSC members, including Don Corbett and Donna Chaney, who helped us that day.

We hauled out 38 boxes (as opposed to the over 100 last

year), and made a total of \$580. It was much more manageable, and we had lots of great titles from which to choose. I'd also like to thank my brother-in-law, Vrej Kevorkian, for letting us borrow his truck and for doing a lot of the heavy lifting. We have great volunteers and are so appreciative of everyone's help—it would be impossible to do it without everyone's assistance.

All in all, it was a tidy sum and a whole lot easier than last year. A KCRW photographer stopped by and chatted with us, and later donated quite a few nice cookbooks for next year's sale.

Farmer's Market goes also got to learn about the CHSC (we passed out quite a few brochures) and services of the Los Angeles Public Library, and this great opportunity at outreach is what it's all about.





My lifetime--and career- have paralleled the rapid changes in our food system over the past forty years. After we became certified organic at Restaurant Nora, it made me think about how far we'd come. Before World War II, there was no such thing as organic food. All food was organic. Food was just food- plants, grains, meats, and dairy that we could all recognize or grow. There were no long lists of ingredients on packages that you couldn't pronounce, much less have an idea what they did to your body or the environment. In 1938, the USDA's *Yearbook of Agriculture* was called *Soils and Men*, and it remains a handbook of organic farming today, but back then that was the norm.

In 1941, twenty million Americans planted Victory Gardens to support food production during World War II- the kind of garden Michelle Obama planted at the White House. People learned to grow food to help sustain their families and to dig root cellars to store vegetables and to make pickles and preserves. In 1942, Rodale published *Organic Farming and Gardening* magazine, and in 1943-the year I was born-Sir Albert Howard, a British mycologist and agricultural researcher, published a classic text on soil fertility and was founder of the organic farming movement, farming that creates the healthiest and most nutritious and sustainable soils.

But World War II changed everything, including the foods we eat. All the chemicals developed during the war, and the industry that created them, had to be turned to some sort of domestic use, which became, in part, chemical fertilizers and later pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides. Subsequently, as big agriculture grew, the use of pesticides and herbicides swept the nation, and chemicals were used to preserve our foods, feed our farm animals, and pollute the entire ecosystem right down to our stomachs. Diverse varieties of vegetables disappeared as big food industries decided what would be the most convenient, and least perishable, to sell in supermarkets. In eighty years, we lost 90 percent of the variety of our food seeds. Housewives became convinced the processed foods were more convenient and tasty, and they were spoon-fed recipes that required canned and packaged foods. The food system degraded into the horror of a supermarket I encountered in Washington, D.C., when I first arrived from Europe and couldn't find anything that resembled real, fresh, unaltered food except some lifeless iceberg lettuce and tasteless tomatoes.

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In 1971, Alice Waters opened Chez Panisse. Rodale Press started an organic certification program in California, which grew in the 1970s to other states, creating standards for people to know where their food came from and if it was free from chemicals. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) was organized in 1972, which added political clout to organic farming, and California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) was created in 1973 to provide standards for organic food. The Oregon Tilth certification agency started in 1974. It was 1976 when I started the Tabard Inn.

In 1978, Governor Jerry Brown of California signed the Direct Marketing Act, which made farmers' markets legal. (Imagine: it was illegal to sell produce directly to consumers before then!) This began to change the way people related to their food, and got to know where it came from, and provided a means of encouragement and support to small farmers. The Organic Food Act was signed into California law in 1979, the year I opened Restaurant Nora.

Earlier in my book, I talked about the significant events of the 1980s and the groundbreaking passage of the 1990 farm bill. Over the course of the ten years after the farm bill first laid the groundwork for organic standards, the U.S. government finally announced its new organic standards. The conventional food lobby is very strong, and so it had been a real struggle to put meaningful standards into play. Initially, the USDA had proposed allowing bioengineered crops, sewage sludge, and irradiation on organic production, which was hardly in keeping with the philosophy of tending the land to nurture its health. It is some measure of how popular the organic movement had become by then that the USDA was inundated with more than 300,000 consumers complaining about the regulations. In October 2002, when the final National Organic Standards were implemented, those "big three" exceptions had been removed. Finally, there was a nationally recognized set of standards so the consumers could understand what "organic" meant, and it spurred the growth of the market for organic produce.

As the owner of the first certified organic restaurant in the country, I was invited to speak at the press conference held by the Environmental Working Group in front of a room filled with politicians and environmental experts. I was intimidated speaking to a crowd,

My Organic Life by Nora Pouillon



but I was thrilled that the standards had finally been established and the public could understand the vast difference between conventional and organic food. It was a huge validation of my efforts and of the organic foods movement as a whole.

Organic foods became more widely available and more in demand. Sales of organic foods grew from twelve billion dollars in 2004 to thirty-two billion dollars in 2012. One of the great effects of this growth is that the price of organics is going down. It's always been a problem that the organic food has been seen to be elite- much more expensive and mainly available to people with money. To have it more widely available to more people at a lower cost is a great step forward, and I'm all in favor of having organic foods available at large commercial stores like Walmart and Costco, because that's where people shop. It's great if you can shop for local produce at farmers' markets, but if you can't, the more organics that are available, the better. I still think, however, that if you can buy both local and organic- this is the best option.



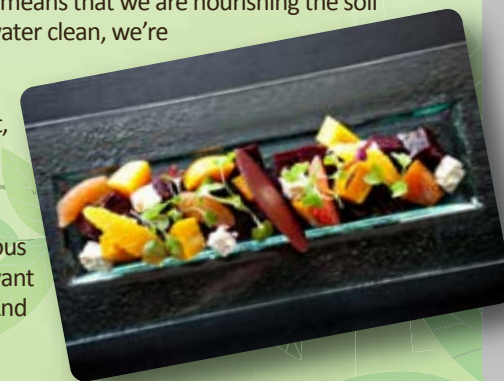
At the same time, we need to reconsider what we spend our money on. Most of the inexpensive food available in the United States is not of good quality. It is less healthy, it is not high in nutritional value, and it is grown for quantity, not quality. It is also high in animal fat and refined carbohydrates and low in fiber and has contributed to our obesity epidemic and other health problems. It's bad for our

health problems. It's bad for our health and for the environment. Organic foods and produce benefit our health and help to preserve biodiversity. Paying more for these items supports farmers who keep our environment clean, protects the health of farmworkers, and helps to sustain rural communities. In the long run, "cheap" food has a staggering cost. I always say that I prefer to spend my money on food now rather than medical bills later.

Today, some 78 percent of families buy some organic foods now and then, but sales of organic foods and beverages still represent only 4.2 percent of all food sold in the United States. Less than 1 percent of all American crops are organic, so we have a long way to go. Someday, we can hope to be like Europe, where fully 25 percent of all agricultural land is certified organic. We are steadily moving in that direction, and the latest bill, from 2014, was a real win for the organic movement, in that it provides money for research and certification programs and to develop the science and technical assistance to transition farmers, support organic growers, and help grow the organic sector overall. This farm bill dramatically expands opportunities for organic farmers. The government is responding, at last, to consumer demands for food that is healthy and hazard-free.

Of course, every successful movement has a backlash, and the organic movement is no exception. In 2012, the media made one of their occasional nutritional pronouncements. "Organic Foods Not Healthier," read headlines around the world. A Stanford University meta-study on organic versus conventional produce was ripe for misinterpretation. It claimed that eating organic doesn't give you health benefits, but the scientists just measured nutrients in the foods without taking a look at pesticide residue or antibiotic resistance, both of which have been proven to be harmful to our health. Numerous studies are also coming out that show that pesticides have adverse effects on our hormones and may be contributing to obesity.

To me, "healthy" means that we aren't spraying toxic chemicals on the food that we eat, we aren't dousing agricultural workers with those pesticides, and we aren't poisoning the earth and its vital microorganisms with chemicals. "Healthy" means that we are nourishing the soil with compost, we're keeping the water clean, we're preserving the earth for future generations, and we are treating nature and our bodies with respect, not reckless disregard. "Healthy" means foods that are picked ripe and bursting with flavor and nutritional value, that are so delicious that children and adults alike will want to eat their fruits and vegetables. And more fruits and vegetables, we do know, mean better health.



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Nora Pouillon is a pioneer and champion of organic, environmentally conscious cuisine. Born in Vienna, Austria, Nora came to the United States in the late 1960s. In 1999, Restaurant Nora (www.noras.com) in Washington D.C. became the first certified organic restaurant in the United States, a feat accomplished by few since.

Nora has consulted and developed recipes for Walnut Acres and Fresh Fields (now Whole Foods), and is a partner in Blue Circle Foods, a supplier of both fresh and frozen sustainable seafood.

Nora is the author of *Cooking with Nora*, a seasonal menu cookbook that was a finalist for the Julia Child Cookbook Award. Over the years, Nora has received awards from many culinary and organic organizations. In 2009, she was the first recipient of the Genesis Award from Women Chefs and Restaurateurs, which recognizes a woman who has achieved a true "first" in the culinary profession. In October of 2011, Chefs Collaborative inducted her into their Pioneers Table.

To much acclaim, Nora's memoirs titled *My Organic Life: How A Pioneering Chef Changed the Way We Eat Today* was published by Knopf in early 2015.

