

Nourishing a Community

BY BARBI WALKER

Food. It nourishes the body and can nourish the soul. Four local female chefs know this and the rewards of nourishing a community.

Arizona has a variety of female chefs making everything from sweet pastry delights to mouth-watering south-of-the-border sizzling salsas, and they are as passionate about their food as they are in their eco-cooking practices.



L: Pavle Milic, co-owner of FnB and R: Charleen Badman

Arizona native chef Charleen Badman of FnB restaurant in Scottsdale believes so strongly about using only local ingredients that she includes an abundance of Arizona wines on their menu.

"It's very important that we are buying from local vendors," Badman said of her commitment to buying locally. She says the relationship with local growers, producers and suppliers is very important to the community.

Badman was recently asked to be part of a visiting chef program by Taylor Jones, assistant principal of Arcadia Neighborhood Learning Center (ANLC) elementary school in Scottsdale. Badman rallied local troupes of organic growers, like McClendon's Select and Maya's Farm at South Mountain, to feed the 500 plus K-8 school children and staff.

While Badman was talking to the kids about the value of fresh produce, she noticed what they were really offered for lunch.

"Everything they were eating was processed food," Badman said. She was amazed to learn the school wasn't using the produce grown in the school's garden to make healthy lunches.

Badman proposed to the Assistant Principal Jones the idea of a fresh homemade lunch for the kids using the produce from the school's garden. Jones, a passionate foodie herself, agreed.

"Our goal was to supplement our cafeteria food with produce from the gardens, but there is a state law that prohibits us from doing that," Jones said. That didn't stop Badman. "She didn't blink an eye," Jones said. Badman improvised, using the catering license from her restaurant, she prepared the food off-site at FnB.



"It wasn't the typical cafeteria experience. The kids ate with their teachers and peers," Jones said. "They exchanged pleasantries and talked about the food they were eating. I think just taking a break and relaxing over food had a huge impact on the kids and teachers." In fact, Jones said the school nurse reported it was the quietest day all year.

"I did make an impact," Badman said. "And for what I spend on an event like Devour Phoenix, I can do this six times a year." Devour Phoenix is a city-wide, non-profit coalition of select, independent restaurants that come together with Local First Arizona to promote local business and cultural diversity.

Badman's love of healthy food and community spirit is ingrained in her, and she wants other chefs to take up the task. Badman says that if every chef would take on one pet project like the one she did at ANLC, many people's lives would be changed. Jones says Badman is ANLC's own guardian angel.

"The kids cheered when they heard she was coming back," Jones said of Badman's return to teach the kids how to make homemade pressed olive oil. "I've never seen anyone get so excited about olive oil before."

Badman will be at ANLC on May 23, the last day of school, with olives and olive oil from the Queen Creek Olive Mill [which was featured in Green Living AZ's November 2011 issue].



Barbara Fenzl

Female chefs aren't the only ones looking to change the way kids eat at school. Famous TV reality show and chef Jamie Oliver, of Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution, has challenged many school boards to change school lunches. In fact, Badman and her experience at ANLC was featured on Oliver's Web site. But long time chef and culinary educator Barbara Fenzl says female chefs notice that kids aren't eating well in school because so many chefs are also moms.

Fenzl had the honor of knowing and working with famous female chefs Julia Child and Simone Beck, both whom changed the American food scene. Fenzl, a Certified Culinary Professional

(CCP), studied at LeCordon Bleu® in London and at Ecole Lenôtre in Paris and is the owner of Les Gourmettes Cooking School in Phoenix. She believes in supporting women in the food industry and has established a scholarship for young women through the Careers through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP). She says being a head chef at a restaurant typically is a young and single woman's game, and historically [and currently] there are fewer female chefs than men in the restaurant business.



Suzana Davila

Suzana Davila is owner and head chef of the highly praised Café Poca Cosa in Tucson and has been working in the kitchen since she was a child at her father's restaurant. The café's menu changes daily and Davila uses as much local produce as possible in her authentic Mexican menu. But don't expect to find your typical gut bomb deep-fried chimichanga at Café Poca Cosa. Davila loves to browse the

farmers' markets for fresh and seasonal produce and incorporate her findings to bring authentic, fresh Sonoran cooking to her customers.

If your taste buds and eco sensibilities are looking for somewhere farther north, then head to Garland's Lodge in Sedona.

The lodge became a homestead in the early 1900s and the current owners, Gary and Mary Garland, have made this beautiful spot into an eco dream. This peaceful bed and breakfast serves delicious gourmet meals made with fruits and vegetables grown in the organic garden just behind the main house.



Amanda Stine

Chef Amanda Stine oversees the delectable menu. She uses herbs, fruits and vegetables from the organic garden and will not budge when it comes to using seasonal produce.

"She doesn't do apples until it's apple time," Garland says. Stine started her career cooking in Wyoming but ended up at Garland's where she and the Garlands collaborated on the inn's cookbook, "Sharing the Garland's Lodge."

By taking their love of cooking and their passion for nutritious food into the community, Charleen Badman, Suzana Davila and Amanda Stine have turned FnB, Café Poca Cosa and Garland's Lodge into successful restaurants that employ Arizonans; open people's minds to nutritious and locally based food; and they, along with Barbara Fenzl, serve as role models for young women looking for a way to follow their passions and make a difference in people's lives.

That is what 'sustainability' is really all about – socially, environmentally and economically beneficial practices that make Arizona a better place to live. ■

SOURCES

cafepocacosatucson.com
ccapinc.org
devourphoenix.org
garlandslodge.com

fnbrestaurant.com
jamieoliver.com
Les Gourmettes Cooking
School | 602-240-6767

Barbi Walker is a freelance writer and an award-winning journalist. Barbi lives in Phoenix with her husband and young son.

Nominate your favorite female chef on
[facebook.com/greenlivingazmag](https://www.facebook.com/greenlivingazmag)



**PRICKLY
PEAR**

PRICKLY PEAR PUREE

All Natural, 100% whole fruit puree, no water added,
The most powerful prickly pear drink in the world!

NATURE'S ANTI-INFLAMMATORY THAT IS CHANGING LIVES

- ✓ Reduced aches and pains
- ✓ Balanced LDL and triglycerides
- ✓ Relief from swollen joints and muscles
- ✓ Anti-oxidants for energy boost



Chronic inflammation is dangerous!

In 2004, TIME magazine ran an astonishing story about inflammation and its destructive effect on the body's health.

Try A 1 Month Supply Today For Only \$59.95

WWW.PRICKLYPEAR.COM 480-414-9024

