Auguste Escoffier: King of Chefs
1846-1935

Auguste Escoffier, “The Chef of Kings and The King of Chefs,” was born in the Riviera town of Villeneuve-Loubet, France, on October 28, 1846. His career in cookery began at the age of 12 when he entered into apprenticeship in his uncle’s restaurant, in Nice.

Escoffier went on to another apprenticeship at the age of 19, this time working in Paris. Escoffier’s talents were in the service of cooking and his customers. Among those customers were kings, heads of state, and many stars of the London and Paris Opera. His career is legendary, in terms of the hotels in which he worked (among them the Savoy and Carlton of London), the contributions that he made to the aesthetics of gastronomy, and, perhaps most important, the revolutionary changes he made in upgrading the culinary arts.

Before Escoffier’s time, the Grande Cuisine was laden with excess — overly complicated recipes, ponderously extravagant dinners, sauces and garnishes that disguised main ingredients nearly beyond recognition. In accordance with his admonition “above all, keep it simple,” Escoffier developed a new gastronomic philosophy, a sense of finely honed and highly refined simplicity in dining, ideals that have been espoused by the finest chefs of the 20th century.

Escoffier’s contributions to the culinary arts range far beyond those innovations that are immediately apparent to the eyes and palate of the connoisseur. He created the brigade system, eliminating the chaotic, unpleasant atmosphere that once reigned in hotel and restaurant kitchens. Repulsed by the foul language and lack of concern for cleanliness all too common in 19th-century kitchens, Escoffier established sanitation standards and instilled in his subordinates a real respect for the wholesomeness of the food they served. He was one of the earliest chefs of note to have a sincere interest in preserving the nutritional value of the foods he prepared and served. Escoffier also had an expertise in food science and was a pioneer in food preservation and in developing sauces that could be bottled for the homemaker.

Escoffier promoted the belief that food service professionals at all levels should be dedicated to improving their skills and general knowledge through education. He wrote numerous articles and books on cookery, the most famous of his works being Le Guide Culinaire and A Guide to Modern Cookery.

On February 12th, 1935, a few days after the death of his wife, Escoffier died at his home, La Villa Fernand, 8 bis Avenue de la Costa, Monte Carlo, in his 89th year. He is buried in the family vault at Villeneuve-Loubet.

Les Amis d’Escoffier Society of New York, Inc.
Les Amis d’Escoffier Society Foundation, Inc.
VISION

To continue the standards of haute cuisine and culinary tradition established by Auguste Escoffier by marryng the resources of respected culinary professionals and enthusiasts in the sharing of common culinary experiences, and also recognizing achievement in, and providing support of, culinary education through scholarships for students.

MISSION STATEMENT

Haute cuisine and fine dining, as we know them today, trace their origins to the work of Auguste Escoffier, “The Chef of Kings” and “The King of Chefs.” To preserve and nurture these twin traditions, Les Amis d’Escoffier Society of New York, Inc., and Les Amis d’Escoffier Society Foundation, Inc. — a non-profit organization — steadfastly pursue these major goals:

◆ To enhance the art of fine dining by supporting culinary education through scholarships to student chefs.
◆ To educate members in the appreciation of haute cuisine and fine wines by holding truly Epicurean dinners stressing classic preparation, appealing presentation and traditional service. Experts comment on the food and wine served.

HISTORY

In 1936, a group of epicures, many of them former pupils of Auguste Escoffier, gathered at The Waldorf=Astoria to discuss the formation of what was to become the nation’s foremost fraternity of dedicated gastronomes, Les Amis d’Escoffier Society of New York, Inc. Membership consists of chefs de cuisine, hotel executives, restaurateurs and business executives.

Now a major institution in the culinary world, the Society gathers monthly for epicurean dinners and holds an annual dinner, Le Dîner de Printemps (Spring Dinner) or Le Dîner d’Automne (Fall Dinner), to provide opportunities for its members’ delight and edification and also generate gains in the perfection of the art of fine dining.

Between courses during each dinner, leading food and wine professionals comment on each dish and the wine with which it is served. To make the dinners an educational experience for amateurs and professionals alike, food is assessed for its preparation, texture, presentation and service. Observations are made concerning the wine, suitability for the dish with which it was paired, composition, origin and the background of its producers.

An adjunct to the Society is Les Amis d’Escoffier Society Foundation, Inc., founded on March 16, 1955, in New York City, by Joseph Donon, Claudius Philippe, Robert Audelan, Albert Simard, Herman Rusch, Raymond Bosquer and Edward Grenier as a non-profit, charitable organization that provides scholarships for students of the culinary arts. The organization holds an annual fundraiser, a grand reception to raise additional monies for the Foundation’s Scholarship Fund.

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Our Members Are . . .
◆ Chefs de Cuisine
◆ Food and Beverage Directors
◆ Catering Directors
◆ Hoteliers
◆ Restaurateurs
◆ Club Managers
◆ Business Executives representing the Hospitality Industry and Higher Education

Membership is open to anyone employed in the food and beverage industry. Membership includes a certificate of membership and a medal, regular mailings, and invitations to monthly dinner meetings. Members receive discounts to most of the organization’s events.

Membership Offers . . .
◆ Monthly Dinner Meetings with Speakers
◆ Educational Seminars
◆ Annual Award Dinners
◆ Golf Outing
◆ Networking Opportunities

Events . . .
An upcoming events calendar is published and members are notified of all monthly and special events via direct mail. Members and non-members are invited to attend our annual dinners and other events open to the public. Non-members can follow us on Facebook or our website.