

Beard House

THE MAGAZINE OF THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION

Food Glorious Food

FORGET SEX, FOOD SELLS

SAN FRANCISCO'S TOWER OF POWER

WORSHIPPING SACRED FOODS

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 1

BeardBites

Food in the Ivory Tower

From Nutrition to Culture, NYU's New Food Studies Program Offers a Bounty of Options

DOES ESCOFFIER'S *GUIDE CULINAIRE* belong in the canon? A ground-breaking new program at New York University seems to suggest it does. NYU is the first school in the country to offer professional training and instruction at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral level in the emerging new academic field of food studies. "Our goal is nothing short of revolutionizing the way food professionals learn to approach their careers," says Dr. Marion Nestle, chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies. "People do not choose food in a vacuum, so we should not be teaching nutrition or food management without emphasizing the cultural, economic, and health issues that affect food distribution, preparation, and consumption."

Recognizing that many people for whom an advanced food studies degree would be attractive do not have traditional university-preparatory educations—e.g., chefs who began their apprenticeships at a very early age—remarkable provisions have been made for accepting students without high school or equivalent diplomas. After maintaining a B average in several undergraduate courses, these students will be able to fully matriculate into a degree program. "This arrangement is nothing short of a miracle," says Clark Wolf, a New York-based restaurant consultant who chaired the program's Advisory Committee. "It opens a world of opportunity for people in our industry."

One of the unique characteristics of the program is the breadth of study. All students take core courses from the areas of

food science, food preparation, food management, food in culture, and nutrition. Dr. Amy Bentley, a food historian specializing in the social history of food in the United States, heads the undergraduate program. "Food was undeveloped as an area of study because traditionally it was a domestic issue," explains Bentley. "History was about wars. Now food is seen as a way to study history."

NYU seems to be giving students what they want. Yvette Fromer, who began the master's program in September and who is currently working part time at The

about cuisine and what makes food so important." So far the program seems to have fulfilled her needs.

Classes are held in the School of Education building, the focal point of which is a new professional teaching kitchen designed by Manhattan-based architect Richard Lewis. "The kitchen is terrific," says Fromer. "It's a great environment to experiment and learn about food." Dr. Nestle agrees, noting that the new kitchen has also provided an enormous draw for prospective students and adjunct instructors.



James Beard Foundation, was looking for something more than a cooking class. "I wanted something beyond the pots and pans of cooking," Fromer says. "I was looking for a deeper, more intellectual approach and cultural understanding

For more information, contact the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University, 35 W. 4th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10012-1172; telephone (212) 998-5580, fax (212) 995-4194.