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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Les Dames d'Escoffier International Announces Its
2017 Grande Dame Award Winner LIDIA BASTIANICH**

Joins Joan Nathan, Alice Waters, and Marcella Hazan in Honor

LOUISVILLE, KY (June 20, 2017) – Les Dames d'Escoffier International's (LDEI) prestigious Grande Dame Award will be presented to Lidia Bastianich, an Emmy award winning public television host, best-selling cookbook author, restaurateur, and owner of a flourishing food and entertainment business. Bastianich is a member of the New York Chapter of LDEI and believes deeply in the cultural richness and diversity of America and in the concept of food as a recipe for peace.

LDEI's Grande Dame Award honors a lifetime of outstanding professional achievement, excellence, and charitable/community contributions within the culinary industry and is bestowed biennially. Bastianich, fourteenth recipient of this international honor, will receive the award at the Gala Dinner at the Annual Conference in Newport Beach, CA, on Saturday, October 28, 2017.

Among her many accolades, "Lidia's Italy" was awarded Best Cooking Television Series by the Beard Foundation and "Lidia Celebrates America" was nominated for Outstanding Documentary.

Bastianich, recognized for giving freely of her time and knowledge, participates in philanthropic, community-service activities and special events on behalf of several foundations and Public Television. She is a founding member of Women Chefs and Restaurateurs and is on the board of the Arrupe College, a higher education program founded by the Loyola University of Chicago for underprivileged students. She has helped raise funds for United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and has served as co-chair of charity events and benefits throughout her career.

She has mentored a generation of young people and continues to be a force in applying the highest standards to every detail of her many businesses. Her status as ambassador of Italian cuisine in America also tells the story of the Italian American and represents every immigrant experience in this country. Lidia has been named one of New York's most influential business women by *Crain's* and was recognized as "Humanitarian of the Year" at the National Italian American Foundation's 34th Anniversary Gala in Washington, DC.

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LDEI is an international organization of women leaders who create a supportive culture in their communities to achieve excellence in the food, fine beverage, and hospitality professions. Over 2,200 members in 38 chapters provide leadership, educational opportunities and host philanthropic events within their communities. Visit LDEI.org or on [Facebook at Les Dames d'Escoffier Int'l](#).