



PHOTOS BRANDON DAVIS

Raise a Glass to Women in Food & Beverage

At the upcoming Celebration of Women in Sports on March 20, the spotlight transcends athletic achievement, shining on women who excel in their endeavors across multiple domains. In the afternoon, the club's Main Lobby transforms into a marketplace showcasing the entrepreneurial spirit of local women-owned businesses. And, before the sport-focused panel discussion starts in the Ballroom, a sophisticated wine pairing experience features curated selections from regional wineries, perfectly complemented by light bites crafted by MAC's culinary stars April Ramos and Shelby Page-Wilson.

As they prepare for the event, *The Winged M* talked with the chefs about their own inspirations and successes.

The Winged M: What's your approach to creating the perfect food/beverage pairing?

April Ramos: Hearing creators' narratives behind their creations help make a more meaningful pairing and further the story. I do my research, consider what's in season,

understand member expectations, and push their boundaries as well as mine.

Shelby Page-Wilson: I push myself to try different and interesting recipes or cooking approaches. I enjoy making things that I'm unfamiliar with.

WM: What's one goal or dream you've had for yourself that you've accomplished?

SPW: Twenty years ago, when I started working here at the club, I knew that I wanted to become the pastry chef when the opportunity arose. I was fortunate enough to realize that dream almost 10 years ago.

AR: Every successful food event where everyone leaves satisfied or impressed is an accomplishment.

WM: In honor of the Celebration of Women in sports, do you have a favorite sport to watch or play, or a favorite female athlete?

SPW: I played softball when I was young, and I wanted to play baseball but was told it was only for boys. Here we are many years



▲ Shelby Page-Wilson and April Ramos

later, and women are still being shut out of that sport.

AR: In the sport that is life, my mom is my favorite athlete. From her, I have learned to be kind, work hard, help others, and to have a good sense of humor.

Featured Winery: Balsall Creek

Nestled in the Chehalem Mountains AVA, Balsall Creek Vineyards is a unique family-owned wine business that embodies Oregon's winemaking tradition. Founded in 2021 by MAC members Jon and Lesli Owens, the winery is a true family endeavor — their son James Owens, daughter Emily Yensen, and son-in-law Zac Yensen all play active roles in the business.

"We collectively draft goals and execute the plans to reach them, which means we don't just work with each other, but we get to celebrate the successes together, too," says Emily Yensen, Director of Marketing & Sales.

Even beyond the family business, the Owens have always been collaborative and community-oriented. They've made their mark as part of the MAC community for more than 30 years. Lesli coached gymnastics and then was part of the Tennis program for two decades, while Emily grew up playing volleyball for the club and as an adult has been active in the committee system, serving as House Committee chair in 2022.

The family's passion for winemaking runs deep, too, fueled by a profound appreciation for the Willamette Valley and their experiences visiting wine regions across the world. Their 20-acre vineyard, situated just miles from where Jon's ancestors first settled in 1850, is a testament to their commitment to sustainable practices, such as utilizing organic farming methods and solar energy.

"One of the things that makes Balsall Creek so special is the variety of wines we grow on our relatively small estate," Yensen notes. With six different varietals planted, the winery currently produces eight distinct wines, with plans to add more. While Pinot Noir and Chardonnay anchor their portfolio, Balsall Creek also cultivates some unique varietals.

At the upcoming Celebration of Women in Sports, their 2022 Aligoté will take center stage. Lesli points out that Aligoté is the third-most grown grape in Burgundy after Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, so it's



▲ Lesli Owens and Emily Yensen

no surprise that it grows beautifully in the Willamette Valley. "This crisp and refreshing wine is delicious and approachable, both to wine newbies and longtime connoisseurs," she adds. Its popularity is evident — in 2024, it became their most-sold white wine and second best-selling wine overall.

MAC members can taste it, along with selections from other local winemakers, alongside thoughtfully curated light bites by Ramos and Wilson, at the Celebration of Women in Sports on Thursday, March 20.

Celebration of Women in Sports

5:30-7:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 20

Register at themac.com
with code **CAE0320**.

RESTAURANT HOURS

Sports Pub: Monday-Friday 6 a.m.-10:30 p.m.,
Saturday 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m., and Sunday 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Joe's: Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.,
and Sunday 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

1891: Friday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and Tuesday-Saturday 4-9:30 p.m.

Reservations are recommended but not required for 1891. Minors are allowed in 1891 during lunch service and in the East Room only for dinner service. Visit themac.com/dining to make a reservation and for the most up-to-date hours