

Opening Remarks

**Eat, Drink and Be Savvy: The Food and Beverage Beat**

April 7, 2004

**GOURMET - Jocelyn Zuckerman, Senior Features Editor**

Thank you. As she said, I'm the articles editor of *Gourmet* which, as I'm sure you all know, is a monthly food and travel magazine. We just celebrated our 60th anniversary in 2001, so we've been around for a while. Our circulation is just under a million.

In my new capacity I will be doing "big picture" things at the magazine, looking at all of the text, I'll continue to assign a lot of the feature articles and essays and travel stories.

I've also been working for the past couple of months on some kitchen design sections which we'll continue to do so you can keep that in mind. And I did edit the "Good Living" section for about three years, I handed that over to Cheryl Brown about three months ago, and you should probably write down that name Cheryl Brown because the "Good Living" section is probably the best outlet for most of you to get products, personalities, places into the magazine.

And incase you don't know, the emails at Condé Nast are really easy, my email is [Jocelyn\\_Zuckerman@gourmet.com](mailto:Jocelyn_Zuckerman@gourmet.com), so you can just look at the masthead and look at anybody's name that you want to contact and just do their first name-underscore-last name @ gourmet.com.

OK, I'm just going to go through some bullet points about the way we work, the things we like to get from you, the things we don't like to get and then you can follow up with questions afterwards. The first thing is to know the lead time which is pretty obvious but a lot of times it seems that people don't. We'll be closing our June issue next week, so we're about six weeks ahead in closing the magazine. In terms of planning we're usually about anywhere from three to six months ahead. We also often shoot and do our photography, if it's something seasonal or if it's a travel story in a particular destination that has different seasons and we want it to run in the summer, we'll often shoot it a year ahead, so that's something to keep in mind.

You should also know the special issues that we do. Sometimes people call me up and they say, "Can I get an editorial calendar?" which I don't give out. We generally don't know because we often are coming up with special issues just a couple of months ahead of time. But the standard ones that we always do which you should keep in mind are: May is the Travel issue, July is generally the Produce issue, October is the Restaurant issue and March is the Special City issues which we've been doing for the past four years, starting with Paris and then San Francisco and then Rome and then this year we did New York City, so we'll be doing another city next March but I can't tell you what city it is. Also, definitely familiarize yourselves with the publication, it can be pretty annoying if somebody calls up and says, "I think you should do a story on this person or this restaurant," and I say, "Well, actually, we just did that last month." Or if they say, "This would be perfect for this section of the magazine," and I say, "We haven't had that section for six months." So definitely familiarize yourself with the different sections of the magazine: the "Good Living" section, we now have a pretty good size "Drinks" section which features wine and different alcoholic products and beer, the "Good Living: Travel" section and then again for the special issues there are generally sections that go in there – in the October issue we do the "Country Ride Restaurant Roundup". Also in the

Restaurant issue we'll generally do a piece on restaurant design, we'll do all different facets of restaurants from design to the different people who work in the restaurants. As you know we only do two reviews a month, one in New York and one in California in addition to the road food which can be anywhere in the states. So if you have a small restaurant in New York and you know it's not a contender to be in the review you might want to think of some way to position it in the Restaurant issue. And also going back to what I mentioned about "Good Living" before is that "Good Living" is comprised of a bunch of small items so you'd have a much better chance of placing an item in "Good Living". We'll often cover restaurants if there's something quirky about a restaurant that might be something that we would pick up in "Good Living".

The other place you might think about placing your items is in "Kitchen Notebook" at the back of the magazine where we sometimes feature special products, kitchen tools or special ingredients. Also, I'm not sure how many of you work with restaurants or how many of you work with food products but we often open that section with a chef who comes to visit our kitchen to show our cooks how to demonstrate something. So that's another place where you might be able to get a chef in.

Just to let you know ahead of time, we don't do any sort of press trips, we also don't take any sort of freebies. We'll occasionally go to a "Friends and Family" opening of a restaurant, but when we go out on our own we don't want somebody trying to give us a free meal. We can't accept it anyway, so it just makes it less of an argument if you don't try to offer it to us.

Another thing is that the tagline of *Gourmet* is "The Magazine of Good Living", so we're really a magazine about things that taste good. We're not terribly interested in low-carb products or any of the latest diet fads so you should probably think about a different magazine if that's the sort of product you're looking to place.

When you're pitching something it always helps to tie it to something newsy or if you can tie it to a bigger trend. I'm saying that on the one hand, on the other hand I get sort of annoyed when people send me a list of story ideas, you know, they've sort of figured out exactly the way I'm going to do this story in the magazine. That's my job. You can tell me the news or tell me about the product and then leave it to us to figure out how to package it into the magazine.

Another thing about *Gourmet* is that we don't cover anything that we haven't tested. That goes for a jar of mustard to a hotel to a restaurant to a new food processor. We have ten cooks in our test kitchens who develop our recipes and they try out everything. So if you have a food product, again, the place to send that would be the "Good Living" section, send a sample to Cheryl Brown and she'll get it to our cooks and they'll test it and then she would get back in touch with you if it were something that she were interested in.

Same goes for new pots, new knives, you should send those to Cheryl Brown as well and our cooks would need to test anything like that. We don't do anything just on spec. We also won't cover a travel destination or hotel without having sent somebody that we trust to check it out.

We don't do a ton of personalities, but the Restaurant issue is one exception; we occasionally do a chef profile or two. And also in "Good Living" sometimes if you've got a really quirky character, if you represent a restaurant and you can find somebody in the kitchen or somebody who's working on the floor who's just got an amazing story, that might be a way to get your restaurant in as a mention along with the story about that

person. So think about the people behind the scenes as well as the front man or the chef. Exclusives can be a little touchy but that's just something I think you have to be completely up front about. If we think we're getting an exclusive and it ends up in *Bon Appétit* the month before or the same month we're not pleased. So if you can be totally honest when you're talking about exclusives and even beyond exclusives if you can be totally honest if you're pitching to our competition, which is mainly *Food and Wine* and *Bon Appétit*, occasionally *Travel + Leisure* in the travel department and *Martha Stewart*, just be honest about where else this might appear because we might put some energy into shooting something and writing the story and then we find out it's going to be in this other magazine, we'll just drop it. So it'll just end up with a lot of frustration on our end will probably come back to haunt you.

In terms of getting in touch with me, I just don't have time to field a bunch of calls during the day and have people go on and on about their product, so it's best if you send me an email or send me a letter. I read all my emails and I read all my mail, that way I'll at least be familiar with it, that way if you want to follow up with a phone call and say, "I sent you this email," then I'll say, "Oh yeah, I remember that's something that I am interested in" or "that's something that I don't think we would be interested in." And when you're sending your email or your letter try to get the point across in the first paragraph if you can, just because we get lots of mail and just to have to sift all the way down and "Oh, it's a new restaurant. That's what they're telling me about." Try to be straight to the point. Again, we're doing more drinks coverage, more doing more kitchen design coverage if you want to keep that in mind. And I don't know how many of you sponsor industry studies of any sort, but I like to get those, sometimes they spark an idea for a story at my end.

And on a personal note, I'm interested in doing more stories about political and social aspects of food production and consumption. We do a lot of that in the Produce issue, as you might have noticed in the July issue, it's where we talk a lot about farmers and we talk about more political kinds of issues. But I'm very interested in bringing more stories like that to the magazine, so if you have something or somebody who might be involved in something like that, you can get in touch with me about that.

Okay, thanks!