

CURRICULUM VITAE

JULIA M. USHER
405 Newport Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119
(314) 960-2712

EMPLOYMENT:

2008-2026

Julia M. Usher, LLC, Founder/Owner

St. Louis, MO

Culinary Content Creator and Educator

- Distinguished as James Beard Food Journalism Award finalist (2008) for *Prep School* column in *Sauce*, a monthly feature focused on cooking and baking instruction.
- Published two cookbooks (*Cookie Swap*, 2009, and *Ultimate Cookies*, 2011), one of which earned three Cordon d' Or Cookbook Awards in 2010.
- Published two e-books and 13 e-books derived from the above cookbooks.
- Published 16-video DVD instructional cookie decorating series (2013) and interactive app (2014).
- Released special Hallmark gift-giving edition of *Cookie Swap* (2014).
- Delivered more than 200 cookie decorating events, book signings, classes, and lectures between 2009 and 2014, with seven international appearances in 2014 alone. Since then, Julia has been invited to share her techniques across the globe. She has taught master-level cookie art workshops in Canada, Italy, England, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Kuwait, Australia, Japan, and China, among other countries, and currently averages a handful of significant international appearances per year.
- Made 50-plus local and national TV and radio appearances between 2009 and 2011, many involving baking and decorating demonstrations.
- Distinguished as headline presenter at CookieCon (2012 and 2019), the first cookie decorating convention in the United States.
- Distinguished as headline presenter at the Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show (OSSAS), the nation's largest juried cake competition, in 2013, and at I Encontro de Designers de Cookies (Brazil) and Cookie'sCool (Italy), the first two international cookie decorating conventions, in 2014.
- Earned *Cake Masters* Cookie Artist of the Year Award (2013) and Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show (OSSAS) Medal of Honor (2014) for dedication to furthering the instruction and art of sugar craft.
- Launched YouTube channel (2013), successfully growing it to over 116,000 subscribers in year one (nearly 400,000 by 2019) and earning YouTube's Silver Play Button Award (2014).
- Founded *Cookie Connection* (2013), the world's first online community focused on instruction in the art of cookie decorating. With over 17,500 members from more than 50 countries, and more than 2 million views per month, it is the largest online community of its kind offering tutorials, live chats, interviews, and member forums.
- Founded *Julia M. Usher's Cookie Art Competition*TM (2013), which is now the world's largest online juried cookie decorating competition and the first to showcase 3-D cookies. In July 2019, Julia's 3-D cookie competition was filmed for a Food Network documentary.
- In addition to judging her own competition, Julia has judged, or served as head judge of, numerous other cookie competitions (roughly four per year), including the annual *Cake Masters Magazine* Awards, her *Cookie Connection* Cookiers' Choice Awards, the *D'licious Magazine* and *Cake Collaborator Magazine* Awards, and those at SoFlo Cake & Candy Expo, Show Me Sweets, CookieCon, Jersey Shore Cake & Cookie Convention, Canada's Baking and Sweets Show, and the upcoming National Pastry Conference.
- Filmed a 9-hour series of 3-D cookie decorating master classes in partnership with EduK in Brazil, one of the world's largest e-learning sites (2015). The course is currently available online in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- Launched the JULIA line of cookie stencils and accessories in partnership with Stencil Ease/Confection Couture Stencils (2016), growing it into the second largest confectionery stencil business in the United States by 2018, and now the largest in 2026.

- Licensed her proprietary 3-D cookie decorating techniques to Japan Salonaise Association (2021) and began distribution of her techniques through licensed instructors in Japan and other Asian markets.
- For her pioneering work in 3-D cookies and online instruction, Julia has been recognized as both Edible Artists Global Academy Association (EAGAA) US and International Sugar Artist of the Year (2016), *Cake Masters Magazine* Cookie Icon (2017), and TASTE Breakout Foodie of the Year (2019). She was also recognized by *The Spruce Eats* for having the best online cookie decorating classes (2020), and was one of ten sugar artists worldwide nominated for Global Sugar Hero by the Australian Cake Artists & Decorators Association (ACADA) in 2021, 2022, and 2023.
- More recently, Julia has continued to earn topmost industry recognitions, including ACADA's Global Sugar Hero (2024), American Cake Awards' Industry Icon of the Year (2024), and *D'licious Magazine* Awards' Best Online Community for *Cookie Connection* (2025).

- 2005-2008 **Recipes for a Sweet Life, Founder/Owner** St. Louis, MO
Part-Time Freelance Food Writer, Stylist, and Culinary Educator
- Served as Contributing Editor to *Chocolatier*. Also a monthly columnist for St. Louis-based *Sauce* magazine.
 - Contributed recipes, text, and/or styled food to over thirty magazine articles in first two years as freelancer. Key credits include a cover for *Better Homes and Gardens*; feature stories for *Bon Appétit*, *Fine Cooking*, and *Yankee* magazines; and multiple single-subject dessert and entertaining articles for *Chocolatier* and *Mary Engelbreit's Home Companion*.
- 2006-2007 **Forward Research** St. Louis, MO
Marketing Research Associate
- Employed part-time in qualitative market research in the companion animal health industry. Primary responsibilities include project management, research design, discussion guide development, and strategic analysis of results for Fortune 500 pharmaceutical clients.
- 2005-2006 **Metaphase Design Group, Inc.** Clayton, MO
Business Development and Market Research
- Spearheaded industrial design firm's internal public relations efforts through a coordinated design award campaign. Secured the most design awards the firm had seen in its 15-year history.
 - Developed analytic tool to assist in prioritization of client prospects and generated target client punch list for sales team.
 - Designed qualitative consumer research protocols and conducted focus groups to gauge consumer acceptance of new product prototypes in healthcare, consumer products, and durable household goods industries.
 - Served as project manager and key client liaison with major household goods manufacturer. Worked with collaborative client-design firm team to develop a next generation upright vacuum cleaner to be marketed in September 2006.
- 1996-2005 **AzucArte** St. Louis, MO
Owner
- Founded and managed day-to-day operations of high-end bakery, specializing in custom-made wedding cakes and other handcrafted desserts.
 - Featured locally in *St. Louis*, *St. Louis Bride*, and *Seasons* magazines and on KSDK Channel 5, KMOV Channel 4, and KTVI Fox 2 News.
 - Featured nationally in *Pastry Art & Design*, *Chocolatier*, *Elegant Bride*, *Bride's*, *Grace Ormonde Wedding Style and Marriage*, *Mary Engelbreit's Home Companion*, *Modern Bride*, and [Vera Wang on Weddings](#), among other regional magazines.
 - Featured pastry chef at the James Beard House (NY, NY) for 2000 millennium celebration.
 - Developed extensive pastry and baking curricula, taught in-house and at Viking Culinary Arts Center, Kitchen Conservatory, Center of Contemporary Arts, Dierbergs,

and Missouri Botanical Gardens.

- 1987-1995 **Bain & Company** San Francisco, CA
Case Team Leader, Consultant Boston, MA
Corporate Strategy:
- Collaborated with senior executives of Fortune 500 companies to optimize corporate strategies and operations in health care, telecommunications, financial services, and manufacturing industries.
 - Experienced in task force management, cost reduction, process reengineering, market assessment and business plan development.
 - Identified more than \$300 M in company value and managed teams in excess of 90 personnel, over three-year period.
- Human Resources Development:**
- Invited to serve as trainer at Associate Consultant Training Program.
 - Designed and implemented Pre-New Consultant Training Program, adapted and rolled out to 23 worldwide Bain offices. Led training instruction in head office.
- 1991-1992 **Ariat International, Inc.** San Carlos, CA
Consultant
- Performed primary market analysis for business plan for start-up venture in footwear industry. Drafted key components of business plan and secured first round financing in conjunction with co-founders.
- 1991-1992 **Suzanne's Muffins** Palo Alto, CA
Consultant
- Evaluated strategic and financial benefits of augmenting retail operations with mail order business. Advised owner to consolidate back-of-house operations to achieve scale efficiencies and to consider controlled expansion of existing operations.
- 1984-1987 **General Electric Company**
Nuclear Energy Business Operation San Jose, CA
Software Integration Test Engineer, Equipment Engineer, Plant Safety Systems Engineer and Reactor Systems Design Engineer
- Granted Manager's Recognition Award for exceptional contribution toward expediting power plant start-up.
 - Graduated first in Edison Advanced Engineering Training Program.

EDUCATION:

- 1995-1996 **Cambridge School of Culinary Arts** Cambridge, MA
- Graduated as valedictorian with Professional Chef Certificate, following ten-month course covering savory and baking basics as well as classical and provincial French, Italian, Asian, regional American, and nouvelle cuisine.
 - Awarded M.F.K. Fisher Award for outstanding culinary achievement.
- 1990-1992 **Stanford Graduate School of Business** Stanford, CA
- Master of Business Administration degree.
 - Graduated as Arjay Miller Scholar (top 10% of class).
 - Received full merit-based scholarship from Bain & Company.
- 1986-1987 **University of California** Berkeley, CA
- Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree.
 - Graduated with highest honors with full merit-based scholarship from General Electric.
- 1980-1984 **Yale College** New Haven, CT
- Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree.

- Graduated summa cum laude with distinction in major.
- Received Henry Prentiss Becton Engineering Prize for outstanding student performance (first in engineering class).
- Awarded Yale Science and Engineering Association grant for undergraduate research.
- Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Tau Beta Pi, and Sigma Xi honor societies.

**NOTABLE
AWARDS:**

- James Beard Food Writing Award finalist (2008).
- Three-time Cordon d' Or Food Writing Award winner (2009).
- *Cake Masters Magazine* Cookie Award winner (2013), the first recipient of this award.
- OSSAS Medal of Honor (2014).
- EAGAA US Sugar Artist of the Year (2016).
- EAGAA International Sugar Artist of the Year (2016).
- *Cake Masters Magazine* Cookie Icon (2017), the first recipient of this award.
- TASTE Breakout Foodie of the Year (2019), for exceptional YouTube instructional videos.
- *The Spruce Eats*' Best Online Cookie Decorating Classes (2020).
- ACADA Global Sugar Hero nominee (2021, 2022, 2023).
- ACADA Global Sugar Hero winner (2024).
- *D'licious Magazine* Awards Cookie Artist of the Year finalist (2024).
- American Cake Awards Industry Icon of the Year (2024).
- *D'licious Magazine* Awards Best Online Community (2025).

**VOLUNTEER
LEADERSHIP:**

- Australian Cake Artists & Decorators Association, Ambassador and Advisor to Board of Directors (2025-2026).
- International Association of Culinary Professionals, Board of Directors (2008-2014), Treasurer (2011-2012), Vice President (2012-2013), President (2013-2014).
- Culinary Institute of St. Louis at Hickey College, Board of Directors (2009-2018).
- Les Dames d'Escoffier International, Founding Member of St. Louis Chapter, Scholarship Committee (2011-2013).
- St. Louis Culinary Society, former three-term President and two-term Program Chair.
- St. Louis Friends of James Beard, former Secretary and Public Relations Coordinator.

MEMBERSHIPS: International Association of Culinary Professionals, Les Dames d'Escoffier International, St. Louis Culinary Society, St. Louis Friends of James Beard, Yale and Stanford Alumni Associations.

**SITES AND
SOCIAL:**

- [Cookie Connection](#) (17,500 members)
- www.juliausher.com
- [Confection Couture Stencils](#)
- [YouTube](#) (424,000 subscribers)
- [Facebook](#) (333,000 followers)
- [Pinterest](#) (130,200 followers)
- [Instagram](#) (47,400 followers)

REFERENCES: Furnished upon request.

