

WOMEN

In Business

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



Destiny Dudley Deras

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR LINE OF WORK AND WHAT GOT *you* STARTED?

"I first got into wine in 2003; I was living in the mountains of North Carolina and working at a restaurant in a little town called Banner Elk. Unbeknownst to me at the time, it was a Wine Spectator Award restaurant and through the course of necessity, I started learning about their list and about wine presentation. Pretty instantly I had that lightbulb moment when I realized I had found my niche & "this is what I want to do with the rest of my life." At the time, I was 23 years old, and I was challenged by a lot of people about my age, "what can I possibly know?" so it advanced my desire to get a formal education.

I started training through The Court of Masters & Society of Wine Educators, then eventually moved out to the Willamette Valley to learn how to make wine. After working in the industry as a sales manager and assistant winemaker, I eventually landed here on the Oregon coast & didn't really know what I was going to do. I had been helping a friend who was a private chef and started focusing more on food and then eventually started my own catering business. Then everything bloomed a year ago, when I was offered this opportunity to start a brick and mortar, where I could meld my love of food, my love of wine, my knowledge, my relationships, and kind of bring all of that to its fruition here in the form of CHĒZ (cheese)."



WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WOULD TELL OTHER women GOING INTO YOUR LINE OF WORK?

“I would tell other women in my line of business:

- Make sure you have a support group/person & surround yourself with people who encourage/believe in you **NO MATTER WHAT**.
- Build a room in your business space that is “your space,” where you can close the door and have a moment to yourself (and cry, if needed).
- Make yourself a priority in your business. That's something that I've personally struggled with in my business. I've constantly always put my money, energy & focus back into my business to continue growing and continue functioning. I think it's really, really important as business owners in general, to really prioritize yourself in the beginning of setting up your business, and **PAY YOURSELF!**
- Hang-up a picture of an empowering woman who inspires you and who has struggled to get where they are/were. I have my RBC commemorative plate hanging in the restaurant and when people see that, you immediately know if they are “your” people. It allows you the ability to know who you can talk to on a real level & gives you the unconscious reminder that “if she could, I can!”
- Remember that there are people out there that will never understand what you're going through. Specifically, as a woman in this industry! Don't let them see you sweat. Just keep grinding and do your thing. Keep smiling. Put on your lipstick. Throw on some fun earrings. Ultimately, find your thing that makes you feel good about yourself and do it **EVERY.SINGLE.DAY.**”

HOW DID YOU MANAGE POWER STRUCTURES & IMPOSTER SYNDROME EARLY IN YOUR CAREER VS. LATER IN *your* CAREER?

"I've been a small business owner for five years. Before that I was involved in small business, in some leadership capacity, for 20+ years of my life and it's a constant struggle, that others/society makes sure we suffer through. Impostor syndrome is a serious thing; It's real, and for some of us, it's something we never get over. It's just kind of... and I hate the adage, "fake it till you make it". As a female starting in the wine industry at the age of 23, Imposter syndrome is the thing that drove me to become a Sommelier & to get my certifications. There was a 60 year old, very affluent man who would come into my wine shop & made me feel so inadequate. I remember my first week working there he annoyingly challenged me with "what credibility do you have? Who are you? Why should I drink what you suggest? What do you know about wine? You've never been to Burgundy. You've never been to Bordeaux. Have you even had Chateau Margaux? Do you even know what these things are? DO you even know what a Sommelier is? You will NEVER be one!" And honestly, I hadn't/didn't. But it inspired me to! So now, 21 years later, I've drank those wines, I've gotten those accolades, I've been to those places and I've pretty much done it all, when it comes to wine; But I still, every.single.day, have to look at myself in the mirror and tell myself that I belong here. I think that's something that some of us will always struggle with. It's just a matter of not letting it get you down and not letting it take over. It can't be the loudest voice in your head...and that comes with time and experience."

TELL US A PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN YOUR CAREER *you* ARE MOST PROUD OF?

I'd have to say my biggest accomplishment was meeting my partner Phil, getting married and finding my forever person; which has always been a primary goal. I'm from the south so we're raised in a way that: you go to school, you graduate, you go to college, you get married, you have kids, white picket fence, two dogs, you know... the American Dream! For me, I always felt like in order for me to achieve the ultimate goal of life, I had to find my person. Strangely, that's what brought me to Seaside in a weird way. I came here to get away from my career, to ground myself and then to find my next pivot moment, where my goal was to find my person.

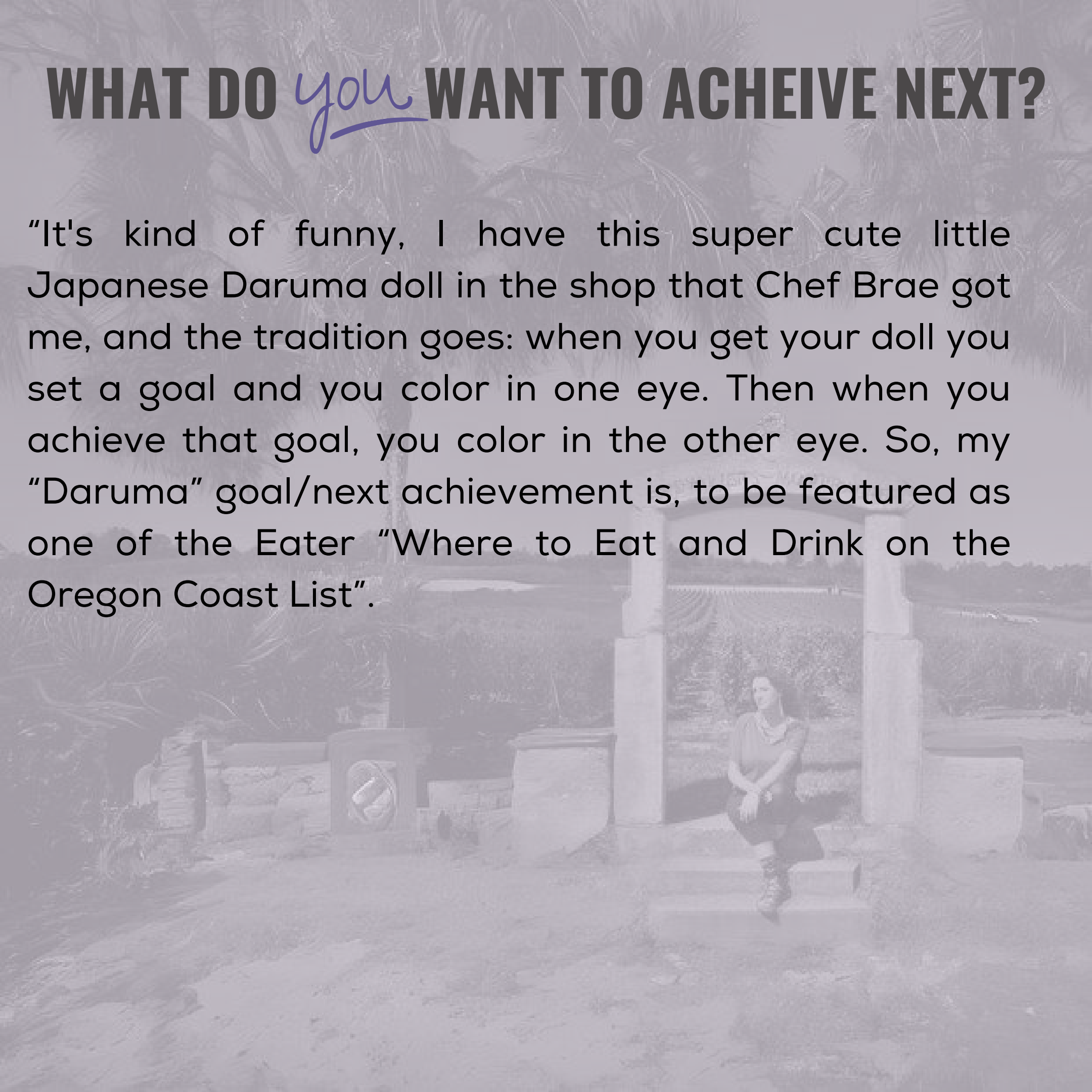
Funny story... a week after moving to Seaside, I was at Bell Buoy buying seafood for dinner and the guy behind the counter was like, "Oh, you're new to town". And I was like, "I just moved here" and he asked, "move here to meet yourself a surfer?" And I was like, "that's like such a random thing to say to somebody, absolutely not, I don't date surfers, what are you talking about?".

So apparently, joke's on me... About two and a half weeks later, I met my husband (who happens to be a surfer) and had just moved back to Seaside; which solidified my life here and finally allowed me to set roots somewhere. If it wasn't for that, I probably wouldn't be doing this and would have likely continued on my flighty lifestyle. By meeting my husband & setting roots in Seaside, it's allowed me to do what I'm doing and to fulfill what I always perceived as "my dream."



WHAT DO *you* WANT TO ACHEIVE NEXT?

"It's kind of funny, I have this super cute little Japanese Daruma doll in the shop that Chef Brae got me, and the tradition goes: when you get your doll you set a goal and you color in one eye. Then when you achieve that goal, you color in the other eye. So, my "Daruma" goal/next achievement is, to be featured as one of the Eater "Where to Eat and Drink on the Oregon Coast List".



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"Advice for women? Go for it. Do your thing. Don't hold back" - Lori Lum

"Be strong, yet willing to take chances" - Julie Lum