



Best man for guard duty? Could be a woman



Photo courtesy of Michael Saad International

When you think of a bodyguard, whom do you picture? Probably a hulking guy in a dark suit protectively flanking the celebrity while cautiously scanning the crowd. By now, we're all familiar with bodyguards and think we can pick them out in a crowd; but can we?

Top security and executive protection professionals say the fastest-growing demand they are seeing is for women, often because they play against that stereotype and are able to "blend" in better with the surroundings and have greater access.

"In general, women are much more tactful. Over the years, bodyguards have transitioned from the 400-pound bodyguard to female bodyguards providing the covert and 'extra-eye' type of security," says Michael Saad, CEO of Michael Saad International, a Dubai-based personal security firm.

Elijah Shaw, CEO of Icon Services Corp., an executive protection, security and training firm in Saint Paul, Minn. agrees. "Women have the ability to blend in more to the environment ... making them less intrusive to an executive who may feel stifled under the watchful eye of male protectors."

More clients are requesting women to provide executive protection, Saad says. "Entertainers, corporate executives, heads of state in another country, the spectrum of our client base is a whole lot different than what it was just 10 years ago, and with that we're seeing different needs."

For men and women alike, there is no "typical" height and weight requirement, says Shaw, whose company provides services for high-profile clients such as singers Usher, 50 Cent and Mick Jagger. "With that said, being size proportionate as well as fit is important."

Female bodyguards also may have a logistical edge. "Consider the female CEO who has to go to the ladies' room. Unless the threat is very high, male coverage of that protectee ends at the door, creating a potential security risk," Shaw says. "In some countries, male interaction with female clients is so restricted because of religious or cultural norms that many of the effective executive protection protocols could only be successfully carried out by a female protective agent."

While selecting a career as a bodyguard may seem a natural choice for a Navy SEAL or someone with a law enforcement background, those aren't necessarily requirements; however, candidates with these backgrounds make up a majority of bodyguards and may have an edge. Criminal justice majors are also increasingly interested in the field.

"Weapons and martial arts backgrounds ... equalize the playing field against an adversary who often has the advantage of planning and surprise," says Shaw. "Both would be recommended, particularly for women, as it also equalizes them with their male counterparts. This means that women with a law enforcement or military background have an advantage

in securing employment, but there are also many programs in the private sector that teach those same skills."

While women have made strides in the career, just 10 percent of Icon's attendees are women.

"Many think executive protection is all about shooting and being menacing, when the essence of it is problem solving and verbal judo, two traits that are gender neutral," Shaw says.

Saad says potential bodyguards should also bring realistic expectations to the job; if your main motivation to becoming a bodyguard is replicating the movie, "The Bodyguard," where the



Attendees at the ICON Services' Celebrity and VIP Protection training complete their morning run. Photo by Elijah Shaw

star falls in love with her bodyguard, you're not the right candidate.

"Just to be next to somebody famous is not enough. If you come into this job and think you're going to be doing something else, you're not a good candidate," Saad says. "It's a lot of waiting around; it's a lot of surveilling areas for potential threats."



Female trainees at the ICON Services security firm work out with kettle balls. Photo by Elijah Shaw



Bird-watching on a whole new level

Ordinary objects, extraordinary art

'Frontier mom' rustles up a fruitful career

Experimenting with science and sustenance



Cover photos: Top: "Phillis" by Elizabeth Colomba; center, food styling by the authors of "Ideas in Food"; bottom right, the rise of female bodyguards; bottom left, "Pioneer Woman" Ree Drummond. Unity is a celebration of food, art and culture. Published six times per year, Unity is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an e-mail to unity@thompsonhospitality.com.





Forensic ornithologist Carla Dove at her microscope. Dove directs the National Museum of Natural History's Feather Identification Lab. Photo by Jim DiLoreto, Smithsonian Institution



Marcy Heacker, Carla Dove, James Whatton and Faridah Dahlan make up the Feather Lab Team and are shown here comparing feathers with bird specimens in the Smithsonian's collections. Photo by Chip Clark, Smithsonian Institution

Bird-watching on a whole new level

From a small plastic sandwich bag, Carla Dove carefully removes a brown glob. To the untrained eye, the glob would seem worthless, but to Dove, a forensic ornithologist and director of the National Museum of Natural History's Feather Identification Lab, the glob could hold valuable information on tracking and, possibly, eradicating the Burmese pythons that have threatened wildlife in the Florida Everglades.

Several years ago, the National Park Service requested assistance when wildlife biologists noticed an increase in the numbers and size of the non-native pythons in the Everglades. After their initial discussion, wildlife biologists at Everglades National Park have sent samples of stomach contents from captured pythons to the lab for analysis, hoping that by identifying the types of species the snakes are feeding on, the NPS can develop targeted eradication measures.

"We have learned that the non-native python is eating all sorts of birds including some endangered species such as the wood stork," Dove says. "This research helps justify the eradication of this snake in the park and underscores the potential hazards that non-native, invasive animals have on the natural ecosystem."

Growing up in rural Virginia, Dove hiked, camped and went fishing with her father and brothers, so pursuing a career combining her love of nature was a great fit. "I first got interested in ornithology at a local community college, where I was a first-generation college student," Dove recalls. After completing her associate's and bachelor's degrees, she moved back to Virginia, where she landed a job as museum technician in the Division of Birds at the Smithsonian.

"That is where I met a mentor who shaped the rest of my career, Roxie Laybourne, who was busy identifying bird strikes using feather microscopy in the Feather Lab. Roxie

guided me through my M.S. and Ph.D. at George Mason University while I continued to work," Dove says. "Eventually, the workload was too much for one person and I was hired as an assistant to Roxie. After she passed away in 2003, I inherited the duties of the feather lab. We now have four full-time employees who make up the feather lab team."

Since the 1960s, the Feather Lab has curated the nation's largest collection of feathers for comparative research. The lab identifies bird species involved in plane strikes. By identifying the birds, the Feather Lab can provide information that airport safety officials can use to deter them.

The 2009 landing of US Airways 1549 into the Hudson River in New York brought attention to the lab, but Dove points out that this was not the lab's first time in the spotlight. "We have been involved in crashes that have caused fatalities so we are aware of the attention that these events bring. Fortunately, there were no fatalities in this case, but birds as large as Canada geese can definitely bring down a large passenger plane, (such) as when this species caused the (1995) crash of an AWACS plane in Alaska that killed 24 people," Dove says.

The most gratifying part of her career? "We all agree that the most fulfilling part of our jobs is the thanks that we receive (almost on a weekly basis) from the folks in the field who rely on our identifications to improve aviation safety," Dove says. "We recently received a very special thank you from the U.S. Air Force folks in Afghanistan. They actually had an American flag flown on a sortie in recognition of the Feather Lab for our assistance in identifying the bird strikes that occur to the U.S. aircraft in the region. It was a very humbling moment for all of us."

Ordinary objects, extraordinary art



Maren Hassinger

Imagine walking into a posh art gallery filled with beautiful people listening to smooth jazz and enjoying delicious hors d'oeuvres. After surveying the room, you might be surprised to see plastic bags, wire rope, concrete, tree branches and leaves as the featured artwork for the evening. What may be even more surprising, however, is that these materials you see every day have been morphed into stunning abstract sculptures. Maren Hassinger, 64, has taken this style, inspired by minimalist abstraction, that has been featured in more than 120 group shows and solo exhibitions.

Hassinger earned her master's in fiber arts in 1972 at the University of California, Los Angeles. The International Association of Art Critics awards recipient has been featured at the Museum of Modern Art, and been reviewed in *Art in America*, *The New York Times* and *ARTnews*. Hassinger has also received grants from the Gottlieb Foundation, and Joan Mitchell Foundation, among others. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Hassinger currently resides in Maryland where she is director of the Rienart School of Sculpture at Maryland Institute College of Art.

It takes a keen eye to find the potential for art in organic materials. "There are opportunities for sculpture everywhere," says Hassinger. "In a field, in a room, on a stage, in the street, on the ceiling, in front of a camera, (among others). Every place inspires a different response." This outlook is common for artists who draw inspiration from minimalist abstraction. The term minimalist is used to designate anything that is spare or stripped to its essentials. The art form's "more is less and less is more" approach originated in New York in the 1960s. Hassinger possesses the unique ability to turn the ordinary into art. "When I get my hands on the material, I already know what to do with it. I can already see what the material is going to be," she explains.

This ability is showcased in her "Love" collection. The focal point: pink plastic shopping bags inflated by human breath. Love notes are inside the bags, which are assembled to create structures and decorate rooms. The "Love Room" piece of the collection uses the bags to cover the floor and ceiling of a room, and the surrounding white walls are turned pink due to the light reflected



"Love Room" by Maren Hassinger
Photo by Dan Myers

from the bags. The fact that the bags are inflated with human breath is of great significance to Hassinger. "I discovered that in the Bible, there is a reference to wind and the garden. Wind in nature is biblically considered the breath of life; it indicates God's presence," Hassinger notes. "In that sense I felt that I was connecting with some spiritual presence of the Earth."

While much of her time is spent directing the art program at The Maryland Institute of Art, Hassinger recently worked on a sculpture that pays tribute to legendary artist Romare Bearden. The sculpture is on display through March 2012 at the Studio Museum in Harlem, N.Y.



A different point of view

Unity presents three female artists who add to the celebration of Women's History Month through their creativity. Although each artist is unique, all three push the limits of the viewer's perception through their paintings and photographic lens.

LISA CUSCUNA

A video artist and photographer for 25 years, Lisa Cuscuna has always tried to influence the human eye to look at things with a different perspective. Her creations of multidimensional images prompt one to look beyond the obvious and ordinary. Cuscuna has dedicated herself to painting and making composite photographic images with a new perspective by juxtaposing clouds with land, water and sky. Indeed, her piece, "From One Place to Another," does just that. Its portal allows the viewer to "travel from one vista of daylight to the outer image of sunset in the distance." We are prompted to see a transparent prism within another image in "Just Before Fall." The gentle pastels of grass and faraway trees provide an aura of tranquility.

Cuscuna believes that "looking beyond the obvious and the ordinary is something that can help us all attain greater heights in our careers." In creating these images she believes she has offered the general population inspiration to look beyond what is apparent.

The media work of Cuscuna is on display in various installations around the world, including The American Museum of Natural History in New York and the International Olympic Committee museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.



"From One Place to Another," top, and "Just Before Fall," above, by Lisa Cuscuna

ELIZABETH COLOMBA

Elizabeth Colomba was born on the outskirts of Paris. She recalls informing her mother that she wanted to be a painter at the age of 6. Her abilities were confirmed when she presented her dad with her version of a van Gogh masterpiece as a gift for Father's Day. In the late nineties, Colomba moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in painting and storyboarding and worked on several Hollywood feature films.



"Seated" by Elizabeth Colomba

Colomba describes her work as "revisiting the classics of the Flemish school, while achieving a collision between tradition and modernity" with her use of black female or male figures. Colomba's piece, "Phillis," chosen for *Unity's* cover, is her version of Phillis Wheatley in the latter part of her life. Wheatley is widely known as the first published African-American female poet. The rich red of her dress and two roses provide a striking contrast to the bold cocoa brown of her skin and walls. Wheatley's dress, Colomba explains, "symbolizes her vibrant, passionate life." "Seated" portrays an elderly black woman reflecting on her life as a slave and, subsequently, as a free woman. There seems to be a calm sense of resolve in her expression. A quiet image of a woman in "The Cup" illustrates that she has "decisively entered the next phase of her life, leaving her shawl behind." Colomba



"The Cup" by Elizabeth Colomba

notes that her use of yellow in this piece is associated with "eternity and faith and the color blue with spiritual life."

Colomba is inspired by the likes of Sargent, Caravaggio and Degas and their influence is reflected in her paintings. It is her desire to challenge the viewer's perceptions of her subjects. Colomba has exhibited her paintings in Los Angeles, New York City and Switzerland.

TORRANCE YORK

Torrance York earned a master's of fine arts in photography from Rhode Island School of Design and a bachelor's degree from Yale. At 10, she was the top gymnast in her age group and had already won numerous area competitions. York maintains that, practicing, refining and reworking to get the timing of her childhood gymnastic routines influenced her fascination with the preciseness of the GPS (Global Positioning System). She is equally fascinated with landscapes and using her camera to shape a new environment.

York is attracted to obscure visual details that take on central roles in her photographs. Her artistic focus shifts to include more of the surrounding environment and horizon line, although a concise focal point remains crystal clear and the rest of the scene is blurred. York's fascination with road marks led her to create a body of work called Road Works. "Spill," from that series, includes GPS coordinates of the point from which it was photographed. It is, simply, an image of "an exploration of marks on roads and simple accidents such as the spilling of white paint." This photograph confirms York's belief that seeing things from a different perspective



"Untitled" by Torrance York



"Spill" by Torrance York

can change one's understanding of the subject and its relationship to a larger context.

York celebrates her children's creativity and imagination in "Chalk Drawings: Untitled Yellow", which grew out of the Road Works series. She photographed "evidence" of her children's free play from their chalk drawings. York states, "My process does require that I slow life down and explore the world around me. In this way, I join with artists in valuing that time to reflect and create a response to my environment."

York has won numerous awards for her photography and continues to give back to her community in different ways. She teaches in an after-school program in Norwalk, Conn., and serves on the Board of the Educational Video Center in New York City, where she previously taught documentary video to youth.

'Frontier' mom rustles up a fruitful career



Ree Drummond

Nobody does a better job introducing Ree Drummond than, well, Ree Drummond. On her blog, "The Pioneer Woman," she describes herself as "a desperate housewife" who lives in the country, where she channels Lucille Ball, Vivien Leigh and Ethel Merman.

And this is not just any blog; it's one that garners 23 million visitors per month. The wife of a cattle rancher, whom she affectionately calls "Marlboro Man," 42-year-old

Drummond welcomes readers to her "frontier," also known as the family's ranch in Pawhuska, Okla., and chronicles their daily life, from homeschooling to hound dogs to her thoughts on Hollywood. These tidbits have earned her multiple Weblog awards, including top prize – Weblog of the Year – for several years running.

The impetus for her blog was a few hours she spent alone in 2006. Marlboro Man had taken their four children to work cattle with him, affording Drummond uninterrupted time at the computer to begin posting her thoughts. She's said that she never imagined it would take off as it has. But it's the serendipitous nature of the blog and Drummond's life that account for her popularity. She never planned to marry a cattle rancher – her plans included law school in Chicago, a path for which she'd been bred – but then met her husband. She never planned to start a blog, but her posts allow other women to imagine that they, too, might meet the man of their dreams and take the road less traveled.

In "Black Heels to Tractor Wheels," a New York Times bestseller published in 2011, Drummond tells the story of changing her life's path. It's not Drummond's first foray into writing beyond the blog. She has posted a plethora of recipes on her site over the years, and in 2009, she published her first cookbook "The Pioneer Woman Cooks," another best-seller.

When The Food Network caught wind of Drummond's cookbook and her brand of ranch cooking, it invited her to host a daytime series on the network. Her show, "Pioneer Woman," debuted in August 2011 and showed Drummond whipping up chicken-fried steak with mashed potatoes and gravy.

With all of her successes, Drummond has nonetheless remained humble. When she spoke to The New Yorker earlier this year about inspiring other women, she posed the question to all of her blog visitors out there: "If this can happen to me, who knows what you might be capable of doing?"



BBQ Jalapeño Poppers

Important: Wear gloves when working with fresh jalapeños.

- 18 fresh jalapeños
- 18 slices thin bacon, cut into halves
- One 8-ounce package cream cheese
- Bottled barbecue sauce
- ½ cup grated cheddar cheese
- Toothpicks
- 1 green onion, sliced

Preheat the oven to 275 degrees.

Cut jalapeños in half lengthwise (see warning above). Keep the stems intact.

They look prettier that way.

With a spoon, scrape out the seeds and light-colored membranes. (The heat comes from the seeds and membranes, so if you can handle the sizzle, leave some of them intact.)

In a bowl, combine the cream cheese, cheddar cheese and chopped green onion. Mix together gently.

Stuff each hollowed jalapeño half with the cheese mixture.

Wrap bacon slices around each half, covering as much of the surface as you can. Be careful not to stretch the bacon too tightly around the jalapeño because the bacon will contract as it cooks.

Brush the surface of the bacon with your favorite barbecue sauce. Chutney or apricot jelly works well, too.

Secure the jalapeños with toothpicks and pop them in the oven for 1 hour, or until the bacon is sizzling.

Serve hot or at room temperature.

Yield: 36 poppers

Helpful hint: Make three times more than you think you'll need.

Experimenting with science and sustenance



Aki Kamozaawa

If you've visited a bookstore, online or brick and mortar, lately you know the cooking category is well populated with TV or other well-known chefs, regional or international cuisine, low calorie or food type such as desserts, cocktails or breads. Beyond those familiar categories, husband and wife chefs Aki Kamozaawa and H. Alexander Talbot make their own way, blending science, presentation and taste in a style that's uniquely theirs.

Quite simply, "Ideas in Food" isn't your mother's cookbook. Indeed, while they published a hardcover edition, "Ideas in Food: Great Recipes and Why They Work," in 2010 to rave reviews, the couple share ideas, techniques and recipes in their blog, <http://ideasinfood.com>, and on Twitter. "We didn't plan to become experts in our field or specialize in food science; we simply did what we had to do to become better and we shared what we learned," Aki says. "Sharing is the most important part of what we do. We came up in a culinary world that changed its mentality from one of secrecy, where chefs protected their special dishes, to one where we all understand that working together makes us all better."

Exploring not only the boundaries of the kitchen, but also science, the couple have been featured on the Cooking Channel's "Foodography" and

Food Network's "The Food Detectives," and wrote the Kitchen Alchemy column in Popular Science magazine. Together, they teach amateur and professional chefs the techniques they have pioneered and perfected.

While increasing numbers of women are pursuing careers as chefs, they are still outnumbered by men. In her experience, Aki says the discrepancy isn't because women lack skills or commitment; rather, women make different choices once they start

"We are both creative in different ways," Aki says. "We push each other to do things we're not necessarily comfortable with in order to keep learning more."

Aki says Alex is the more experimental of the two while she tends to be more analytical. "I tend to be the 'voice of reason' so to speak, which is not always the more fun role, but is always a necessary one."

Food styling is another area where Aki and Alex are second to none.



Presentation is a powerful tool in the dining experience. Here, tomato salad featuring clear Roquefort, nasturtium leaves and chives is spotlighted.

Recently, their blog featured juxtaposed bleached lamb bones against burnt bones that created an interesting balance. "We think food is beautiful and our photography focuses on making the most of the ingredients we have at hand. Making charcoal is current trend in kitchens, born as part of the philosophy of making the most out of your ingredients," Aki says, noting that some cooks use the

carbonized ingredients for presentation while others cook with them. "We find inspiration everywhere. It's not about a particular place or memory; it's all of our experiences put together that make us who we are and let us find beauty and meaning," Aki says.

Photography courtesy of "Ideas in Food," Aki Kamozaawa and H. Alexander Talbot

The couple are parents of a preschool-age daughter, Amaya. Aki and Alex met in 1997 at Clio in Boston, and bring complementary strengths from kitchen to table, creating a fusion greater than the sum of its parts. While neither has a background in science (Alex has a bachelor's degree in English from Colby College; Aki is a graduate of the New England Culinary Institute), they dove in to learn how different compounds could be used in innovative ways.

Two hip bones from a lamb are pictured presented different ways. The first was soaked in hydrogen peroxide to bleach it, while the second was charred to a deep ebony. "There is beauty to be found in contrasts within similarities," Aki Kamozaawa says.



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