

Summer 2010

Intern Turns Hobby into Career Focus

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Recommended Citation

Thompson, Beth Rogers (2010) "Intern Turns Hobby into Career Focus," *Linfield Magazine*: Vol. 7 : No. 1 , Article 15.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol7/iss1/15

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Intern turns hobby into career focus

Luck, personal connections and love of what you're doing. That's Julie Rylander's formula for landing the perfect internship.

For Rylander '10, it began last summer at the International Pinot Noir Celebration on campus. She had asked to take photos of the food but was allowed to photograph the entire event.

"It was amazing being back in the kitchens and meeting the chefs — I met some really great people that weekend," she said.

One of them was Peter Szymczak, managing editor of *Northwest Palate*, a Portland-based magazine of food, wine and travel. He asked to see some of her IPNC shots and, after reviewing them, wanted to run them in a future issue.

Then, during fall semester, travel writer John Gottberg Anderson visited Linfield. "I asked him how food writing in magazines worked, as I've always been interested in food writing and photography," Rylander said. "He recommended that I contact someone he knew at *Northwest Palate*. I realized, 'Hey! I know someone at *Northwest Palate*, too!' I sent Peter an email asking if they took interns. He immediately replied and said they'd love to have me as an intern, so we set it up."

Rylander's four-month internship involved two issues of the magazine, and she continues to do photography and writing for it. Eight of her photos were published, and more will appear in the summer issue.

Long an avid reader of food magazines, Rylander began focusing on food photography in 2006 after moving to California. "I didn't know a soul there, and to give myself something to do, I started taking pictures and blogging."

She also was interested in linguistics, especially how people choose words and make other decisions, which she saw as a natural fit with the economics major. She continued taking photos throughout college.

Despite a continuing interest in economics, she said, "If I could do anything, it would be food photography and writing. This internship has helped to make that a possible career, whereas before it was really a nebulous 'I wish' concept.

"I had a whole 10-year-plan sketched out, all these steps I thought I had to do to have a successful and financially rewarding career. I mentioned to my boyfriend that I wished I could just take pictures of food for the rest of my life. His reply was simply, 'Then why don't you?'"

With diploma in hand, Rylander plans to continue taking photos and writing. She is pursuing freelance opportunities that opened up as a result of her internship.

She most enjoys photographing small plates of artfully arranged food. And yes, she does get to eat it afterward. 🍷



This food is an example of the elegant dishes Julie Rylander, top, loves to photograph. She took this photo at a restaurant in Seattle. It is lightly seared albacore tuna on a beet salad, topped with two whole chives.

“If I could do anything, it would be food photography and writing.”

– Beth Rogers Thompson