

Jocelyn McAuley
and Michelle Phillips

Cook, Shoot, Type, Experiment

Food bloggers share their passion. STORY BY MOLLY TEMPLETON • PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER

Like most places these days, Eugene has its fair share of blogs. One blog-tracking site lists 76 Eugene blogs; LiveJournal shows 46; real-time blog search engine Technorati, 27. Of course, this doesn't track every blog in town. Eugene is rich in music and personal blogs, but as this is a food section, we're interested in one thing: food bloggers. There's a small handful of local folks who blog about food and cooking; two in particular are consistently food-centric, informative and definitely entertaining.

They're also both scientists.

Jocelyn McAuley, 31, got her bachelor's degree in biology at the UO, has spent the last 10 years in Eugene and currently works at the UO's Westerfield Lab. She posts (as "McAuliflower") two or three times a week at Brownie Points (www.browniepointsblog.com), writing about topics from making your own marshmallows (see recipe, page 17) to a Harry Potter-inspired breakfast recipe to her Fourth of July post. That post described painting flags on tuna

sandwiches using food coloring. "First Amendment variation," reads the bottom of the post, "Decorate your all American white bread with the flag and toast before slathering on the tuna. Even better is to whip out your blowtorch and burn the edges ... because you can."

McAuley began her blog in November 2004 after coming across a personal food blog while researching how to use ground-up dried pomegranate seeds. "It wasn't a company, and it was a

person's voice. It was really interesting, because it was their journal of all the recipes they had been doing. My first thought was, 'I should have been doing this already! How do I start?'" Her first food-centric entry (after a brief introductory post) was about her disappointment with East 19th St. Café's fries, which she called "an unfortunate failed fryer incident that is being perpetuated in the name of 'a signature style.'"

McAuley says her blog "came out of realizing I had a cooking style of trying to find the ultimate version of a recipe." These days, she doesn't have time to make the same recipe over and over for two months, but the blog is still "a great way to not lose your notes from the kitchen." And, perhaps, to let other people benefit from those notes: Brownie Points gets about 2,000 visitors each day.

Michelle Phillips, 29, is a Ph.D. candidate in biology at the UO. Her blog, The Accidental Scientist (accidentalscientist.blogspot.com), began last September. She'd been admiring the food photography on blogs like Delicious Days (www.deliciousdays.com) and getting into cooking after a few grad school years when, she says, "I didn't eat anything unless it came from a box and I could microwave it." The gorgeous pictures online made Phillips think food blogging could be fun. Beautiful fresh grapes brought in by a coworker inspired her first post, complete with pictures.

Phillips' posts often blend recipes with anecdotes from her life, all written in a jaunty, playful style. Earlier this month, she wrote a sweet, clever post in the form of a recipe that was actually about her recent engagement. "Take female and male rock climbers and mix together in 1 beautiful state park over high heat," the "instructions" section began. As for her interest in food photography, "I've been known to save the leftovers and make them all pretty on the

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If there's one thing true about most bloggers, it's that they like to read other blogs.

Here are a few of Michelle and Jocelyn's food-focused favorites from across the blogosphere, with their explanations why.



MICHELLE PHILLIPS:

"Oh, that's tough!" Phillips wrote when asked for just three favorites. Her picks:

Lucillian Delights (lucillian.blogspot.com): For both her original recipes, great photography, and because she's become such a close friend.

Kuidaore (brandoesq.blogspot.com): For her exquisite photos and her wonderfully rich writing.

I'm Mad and I Eat (madeater.blogspot.com): For her great food commentary and liberal slant on politics.

JOCELYN MCAULEY:

Nordljus (www.nordljus.co.uk/en): This site houses a stunning collection of pastry fantasies that occupy my wish list. Keiko, the site's author, dares to seek out those amazingly structured, layered, convoluted desserts that one would imagine finding in a pâtisserie in Paris, and then shares the beautiful results with us. Her site is ruled by the concept of amazing food looking just as good as it tastes.

101 Cookbooks (www.101cookbooks.com): Heidi resides in the Bay area, and perfectly sums up the concept of her food blog: "The premise this site was built on is best summed up in two sentences: When you own more than 100 cookbooks, it is time to stop buying, and start cooking. This site chronicles a cookbook collection, one recipe at a time." She brings the fresh perspective of seasonal cooking combined with cute ideas (like making homemade Girl Scout Cookies!) that I always wish I had thought of.

Eggbeater (eggbeater.typepad.com/shuna): Shuna brings a wonderful perspective to her posts about food. Having worked as a pastry chef in some of America's highest rated restaurants (Chez Panisse, French Laundry, Citizen Cake), she manages to let these gems of insight sneak out that really resonate with me. My latest favorite posting is her musing on butterscotch (eggbeater.typepad.com/shuna/2006/06/butterscotch.html), a flavor that seems to have been lost from the hands of our cooks and taken over by processing plants.

