Seizing every opportunity

The more Chris Porcaro ’16 learns about the hospitality industry the more excited he is about his future career opportunities.

“There are so many different paths you can take within the industry. It’s not like you only have one job opportunity, and then you have to stay there,” he says. “It’s cool to hear about all the different fields alumni go into.”

The rising sophomore is determined to try out as many of these pathways as he can while he’s a student at the School of Hotel Administration. Operations, finance, real estate—he’s interested in it all. Taking a holistic approach to learning about the industry, Chris is taking a wide variety of classes and plans to spend each of his summer internships in a different hospitality sector (and hopefully a different country). He spent this summer working in the recreation department of the Marco Island Marriott Beach Resort, Golf Club, and Spa in Florida.

Chris served as a program manager for the 88th Annual Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC), and he hopes to be an HEC director by his junior year and managing director of HEC when he’s a senior. He also plans to pursue a minor in real estate. Outside the classroom, Chris stays just as busy, serving as a Hotel School Ambassador; participating in the Cornell Ski Club; and being active with his fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi. Chris is also a Cornell Traditions Fellow.

Thanks to the financial aid he receives, Chris doesn’t have to worry about getting a job while he’s on campus. This gives him the time and flexibility to pursue the classes and activities that interest him most. However, during breaks in the academic year, he returns to his roots in Shoemakersville, PA and works in the ice cream shop started by his grandfather. The Kwik Shoppe—now run by Chris’s father—is where Chris’s enthusiasm for the hospitality and service industry first started.

“As a kid, I loved wiping down the tables and talking to the customers,” Chris remembers. “I was in the service industry, and I didn’t even realize it.”

While in high school, Chris attended the three-week Summer College, where he took his first hospitality business classes and fell in love with Cornell and the School of Hotel Administration. With one SHA year now under his belt, Chris is enjoying every minute and eagerly anticipating where this exciting, diverse, global industry will take him.