Life is service. The one who progresses is the one who gives his fellow men a little more—a little better service.

— Ellsworth M. Statler



# Hall 2011



# INVESTMENT INTERN MEINIG NATIONAL SCHOLAR LEADER | HOTELIE

Cornell University School of Hotel Administration

> From networking with Wall Street execs to teaching the poor on far continents, Jennifer Davis '12 takes every opportunity to reach out, learn, and grow. As an intern at HVS Consulting and investment banking giant UBS, she's made great investments in her own future. Talking real estate with the big league, valuing every moment... sure signs of a Hotelie.

JENNIFER DAVIS CLASS OF '12

Jennifer is just one of the people of the Cornell School of Hotel Administration—driving the industry forward for nearly 100 years. The First. The Future.

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#### Inside

#### Hotelie

#### Fall 2011

Published twice annually by the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University.

#### Michael D. Johnson, Dean

Managing Editor: Jeanne M. Griffith Class Notes Coordinator: Ruth Devine Production Assistant: Susan Walter Design: Douglas Harp and Jen Fisher, Harp and Company Graphic Design

Please send address changes to hotelsociety@sha.cornell.edu.

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Printed by Cayuga Press on recycled paper 11/11 11.8M

#### On the cover:

J. W. "Bill" Marriott, Jr. enjoys a remark from his daughter, Debbie Harrison, during their visit to campus on Sept. 23. In addition to this discussion with students in the MMH program, Marriott, his daughter, and her husband, Ron Harrison, shared a discussion of the hotel industry with the freshman class and the many others who filled the house for the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series. Photo by Jon Reis Photography.



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# **Cornell Now**

or 146 years, Cornell University has provided unimagined access and opportunity to society's exceptional thinkers and doers, regardless of sex, race, religion, or circumstances. It has admitted a great diversity of highly able students, taught them practical subjects, and exposed them to profound and far-reaching ideas. It has attracted a remarkable community of scholars to its faculty and postdoctoral ranks: great teachers, brilliant innovators, and relentless explorers. And the campus has grown, and grown, to provide the facilities needed to enable this marvelous enterprise.

As our sesquicentennial anniversary in 2015 draws nearer, the university is more committed than ever to the ideals

"Cornell's aid program gave me the opportunity to attend the university I love and study a subject I'm passionate about. It has allowed me the freedom to shape my career based on what I dream to do and embark on a rewarding career without the stress of student loan debt." — Ellease Bender '12

and purposes to which our founders, Ezra Cornell and Andrew Dickson White, gave form on this great hill between the gorges. Our policy of needblind admission has been extended to ensure that students with family income under \$75,000 graduate debt-free. For families earning less than \$120,000, this policy now caps loan debt at \$3,000 per year. This policy opens Cornell's doors to many wonderful students who never could have come here in the past. It ensures that our student body is the most richly varied, talented, and aspiring cohort that it can possibly be. Not surprisingly, it also places a heavy burden on our operating budget.

Cornell is also in the midst of a major undertaking to renew the faculty, replacing the one-third who have been retiring in the past five years and the second third who will retire in the next decade or so. Some of these replacements are being made preemptively so that new faculty members can learn from those with the most wisdom and experience before they retire. Here in SHA, we are competing against top business programs as well as other hospital-

> ity programs to attract outstanding faculty members. We have gone to great lengths and expense to hire such excellent candidates, and we must expand our resources for further recruitment.

> Cornell has also been undergoing a number of needed and overdue building projects, with many colleges renovating existing spaces and creating new ones. Recently completed projects include the Physical Sciences Building; Art, Architecture, and Planning's Milstein Hall; the addition to the Johnson Art Museum:

the new wing on Human Ecology's Martha Van Rensselaer Hall; and the tower that we added onto Statler Hall. Other major projects are under construction or on the drawing boards, and as I write this, Cornell is bidding aggressively on the opportunity to build a technology campus in New York City.

In order to support the expense of these efforts to meet the future on our own terms, another great undertaking,



Cornell's capital campaign, has been extended in duration and scope. With a new name, Cornell Now, the campaign has a new deadline, December 2015, and a new goal: \$4.75 billion.

For our school, the new target is \$120 million. Thanks to the great generosity of our alumni and friends who have contributed to this effort so far. we expect to have received \$80 million in gifts and commitments by the end of 2011, putting us on track to reach this very ambitious, but very much needed, total. We are greatly heartened by our recent fundraising successes, including a record-breaking year for the annual fund. Nearly 1,100 individuals contributed to the total of \$1.3 million. We will be asking many more of you to join in this group effort this year and going forward, and we will welcome gifts of any size. It is especially important, in my view, that our new and recent graduates give back what they can through the annual fund. It proves that one need not give a million dollars to make a difference and creates a habit of what alum Chuck Feeney '56 calls "giving while living."

Student financial aid remains the most essential need we have in struggling to achieve a balanced budget. Plainly stated, we need another \$200 million in scholarship endowment to fully meet our current, known financial aid obligation. Future need is very hard to predict as so many middle-class families struggle to stay on their feet in the present economy. This is an area of real concern. and I thank Miranda Tsao, P'12 and Phil and Yeechin Liao, P '12; Andy Crowley '68; Barbara Foote Shingleton '75; the Ralph and Jean Kanders Foundation and Alan '87 and Julie Kanders: Tim. MPS '88 and Karen Dick; Steve Goldman '83 and Lesli Henderson: Robert Hecker, MPS '87 and Rob Stiles '83; Dale Okonow '78; Simon '83 and Jeri '83 Turner; Kevin '76 and Mary '76 Fitzpatrick, Marc and Lisa Cummins, P '13; and Lucinda Servis '49 for their leadership in endowing or supplementing scholarship funds this year.

We received tremendously helpful bridging support this year and last year from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, which awarded us \$1 million in currentuse funds for scholarships. The Hilton Foundation stepped in at a time when our endowment payout was significantly depressed by the state of the stock market, and their generosity allowed us to provide nearly full tuition support to 13 deserving students this year and a "After learning about Cornell's holistic approach to financial aid, I came to believe that I could realistically attend an Ivy League institution. It is not only an honor but also a feeling of empowerment to be given such great opportunities. I hope one day to have the opportunity to impact the lives of future Cornellians in the same way that my life has been impacted." — Ruben Ortega, Jr. '13

similar number last year. We expressed our appreciation for that gift and the worldwide philanthropic legacy of the Hilton Foundation and family last May in presenting them with the Cornell Icon of the Industry Award. To read more about their exemplary service to humanity, please see the article that begins on page 8.

One major need that has been difficult to fill is the creation of new professorship endowments. During the last fiscal year, we were delighted and most fortunate to receive a gift commitment to establish the John and Melissa Ceriale Professorship in Hospitality Human Resources, and I want to extend again my warmest thanks to John and Melissa for their visionary gift. The feature article beginning on page 14 describes the program that the Ceriales' generosity will support. Earlier in the campaign, Skip Sack '61 funded a professorship in food and beverage management, which we have since awarded to Professor Michael Lynn. We continue to seek to attract funding for at least three more endowed professorships to continue to build the activities and prominence of our faculty.

"Hospitality management programs aren't found in many universities in general, and thanks to the financial aid I receive, I am able to learn from one of the best in the world. Attending Cornell would simply not be possible for me without financial aid, and every day I am thankful for the opportunities I am given here."
Matt Glodz '14 Brad Stone '77 recently became the first donor to fund a faculty renewal fellowship. This fellowship will allow us to hire faculty now for future rather than current vacancies. Our hope is to identify four more alumni or friends with the capacity and interest to provide additional fellowships.

A special thanks to the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation for providing funding for the renovation of the west side of Statler Hall. This project, which will be undertaken and completed next summer, will create the Marriott Student Learning Center. More information about this project can be found on page 7.

In addition to Cornell's upcoming sesquicentennial, we are looking forward to celebrating our school's 90th anniversary in 2012. After so many years, we are not only still here, but we are still the best in the world—and continually aiming to remain so. Your investment in Cornell Now is important for so many reasons. I hope you will make your mark, large or small, on this vital campaign so that we can continue to provide the best in hospitality leadership through learning.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Johnson Dean and E. M. Statler Professor of Hotel Administration

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# Newsmakers

Kinsell president of IHG Americas



Kirk Kinsell, MPS '80

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) in June promoted Kirk Kinsell, MPS '80 to the position of president for the Americas. Kinsell has been a member of IHG's senior leadership team since 2002 and was named to the IHG Board and Executive Committee in 2010. Prior to this appointment, he had served since 2007 as president for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, a role in which he had responsibility for 700 hotels consisting of over 121,000 rooms and operating under six IHG brands as franchised, managed, and owned properties. Previous to that appointment he was senior vice president and chief development officer for IHG in the Americas, responsible for unit growth across all brands and franchise, management contracts, and real estate development activities sponsored on behalf of the company. In 2003, Kinsell co-led the launch of Hotel Indigo.

In 1995 and 1996, Kinsell served as president of the franchise division at ITT Sheraton, where he led the creation of the Four Points Hotels concept. In 1997, he became president and COO of Avado Brands, which during his tenure operated more than 220 high-growth branded restaurants. More recently, he served as president and CEO of Micell Technologies, which under his leadership was recognized as the 2001 Entrepreneurial Company of the Year for North Carolina. From 1988 to 1995 he served as senior vice president of franchise for Holiday Inn Worldwide, a predecessor of InterContinental Hotels Group. In that capacity he led the launch of Holiday Inn Express.

Kinsell was just honored this November as the Cornell MMH Outstanding Alumnus of the Year at the tenth annual Cornell MMH Reception at the InterContinental, New York Times Square.

#### Arabia is Sunstone's CFO, EVP

John Arabia '91

became Sun-

Investors' chief

financial officer

vice president of

corporate strat-

appointment, he

served as man-

egy in April.

Prior to this

and executive

stone Hotel



John Arabia '91

aging director of Green Street Advisors' real estate research team. Arabia joined Green Street in 1997 and was instrumental in creating the firm's lodging research platform. As a result of his efforts, Green Street Advisors was awarded the title of "Best Independent Research Firm" by *Institutional Investor* for the lodging and gaming sector in 2005, 2006, and 2007. In 2007, he was named one of *Institutional Investor*'s "20 Rising Stars." In 2008, Arabia won the *Wall Street Journal*'s "Best on the Street" award in the hotel and gaming category.

Prior to joining Green Street, Arabia was a consulting manager at EY Kenneth Leventhal and was largely responsible for the firm's West Coast lodging consulting practice, which specialized in hotel market studies, valuation, and acquisition due diligence. He started his hotel career in 1987, working various entry-level operating positions at the Anaheim Marriott.

#### Hunsberger promoted to EVP



Chris Hunsberger '81

began his career with Four Seasons in 1981 at the Pierre, which was then a Four Seasons hotel. In January 2008, he was promoted to senior vice president for operations in the Americas. He continues to be based out of Washington, D.C.

#### Brodsky new Sheraton global VP

#### Noah Brodsky '02

**Chris Hunsberger** 

'81 has been

appointed to a

newly created

executive vice

for product and

president

innovation.

Hunsberger

position at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.



Noah Brodsky '02

was promoted in July to vice president of global brand management for Starwood's most global brand, Sheraton Hotels and Resorts. Brodsky has been with

Starwood for four years and rejoins the Sheraton brand after three years in Starwood's strategic initiatives group, where he spearheaded several food and beverage initiatives as an active member of the company's food and beverage global council. Prior to this, Brodsky served as the director of portfolio management for the Sheraton brand, where he helped develop the original blueprints for the Sheraton revitalization plan and the recalibration of all Sheraton properties worldwide. He started in the hotel industry delivering room service at the Statler Hotel on campus; he then performed operations roles for Four Seasons in Maui and Costa Rica. He first joined Starwood on the Four Points by Sheraton brand team as an MBA intern while at Harvard Business School.

#### O'Neill heads Penn State's SHM

John O'Neill '84 recently took

as director of

Pennsvlvania

State Univer-

sity's School of

Management.

He has been a

the Penn State

Hospitality

member of

the reins



John O'Neill '84

faculty since 2001; his research focuses on strategic management, lodging management and development, real estate valuation, work-life balance in the lodging industry, and hotel branding. From 1994 to 2001 he rose through the professorial ranks at Johnson and Wales University. He was a visiting faculty member at Novgorod State University in Russia in 2000 and an adjunct faculty member at the University of Rhode Island in 1997. He has also worked in industry, notably as a senior associate for Coopers and Lybrand from 1991 to 1994; director of hotel market planning for Holiday Inn Worldwide from 1990 to 1991; manager and senior manager of hotel development planning for Marriott Corporation from 1988 to 1990; consultant and senior consultant for Laventhol and

Horwath from 1985 to 1988; and front office manager and housekeeping manager for the Hyatt Corporation from 1984 to 1985. He has been a consultant for dozens of companies and is the recipient of several awards, including a favorite professor award from Penn State, the Teacher of the Year Award from Johnson and Wales, and excellence awards from the Marriott and Hyatt Corporations. In addition to his Cornell degree, he earned a master's degree in real estate at New York University in 1994 and a PhD degree in business administration at the University of Rhode Island in 1999.

#### Jorge Boone cruises to SVP

Jorge Boone '98, MBA '04 joined World Travel Holdings, the nation's largest cruise retailer, as senior vice president of partner brands in October. Prior to this appointment, he served as senior vice president of business development for Wyndham Worldwide and RCI, the world's largest timeshare exchange platform. In that position, Boone was responsible for all of the company's partnerships, product development, and business-to-business operations across North America. Prior to RCI, he was vice president of acquisitions and development for Starwood Hotels and Resorts, responsible for the development of mixed-use projects including timeshare, fractional, and hotels for its upscale and luxury brands.

World Travel Holdings features a portfolio of private label brands including nearly every U.S. airline, major hotel chain, and online travel agency. The company's owned brands include Cruises Only, Cruises.com, and Cheap Cruises, among others. Home-based brands in the World Travel Holdings portfolio include CruiseOne and Cruises, Inc.

#### Weissenberg goes global at Deloitte



Deloitte and Touche announced in early October the promotion of Adam Weissenberg '85 to global travel, hospitality, and leisure (THL) leader. Weissen-

Adam Weissenberg '85

berg has worked for the company for 20 years, the past six of them as U.S. THL leader, with a concurrent tenure from May to October 2011 as global hospitality leader. He serves as vice chairman of the U.S. THL sector and advisory partner on the client accounts of four leading corporations, including two of the largest hotel companies in the United States. Prior to this role, he served as the national managing partner of the THL sector for Deloitte's consumer business industry practice and the lead client service partner for several major hotel companies. He began his career at Marriott International and then Aramark Corporation. He later earned an MBA in accounting and finance from Columbia University. At Cornell, Weissenberg represents Deloitte as a member of the Center for Hospitality Research Advisory Board.

#### Arnold named Rosewood VP

Rosewood Hotels and Resorts announced in June the appointment of **Paul Arnold '99** as vice president of development for the Middle East, Africa, and the Indian Ocean. In his new position, he is leading Rosewood's expansion initiatives within the regions and providing support for development activities in Europe. Arnold joined Rosewood following 12 years working with Ernst

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and Young, seven of them in their Dubai office, where he helped establish and eventually became responsible for leading Ernst and Young's real estate, hospitality, and leisure advisory services practice across the Middle East and North Africa region. He began his career by serving in operational roles at several U. S. hotel properties.

#### Coolidge makes his mark

Michael Coolidge '97 has been appointed senior vice president of Watermark Capital Partners. Most recently he served as vice president for real estate and development at Hyatt Hotels Corporation. From 1997 to 2009 he served in a number of development, acquisition, and asset management positions with increasing responsibilities at Sage Hospitality Resources in Denver. His earlier experience included asset management and hotel operations positions at the Trump Taj Mahal Casino and Resort in Atlantic City and the Sagamore Resort in Lake George, New York. He is a member of the SHA's Young Alumni Advisory Committee.

#### Faiola accepts chair at Purdue

Norman A. Faiola '81, MPS '89 is the White Lodging Services Center Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Purdue University Calumet. Before moving to Purdue Calumet this fall, Faiola was chair of the Department of Hospitality Management in the College of Human Ecology at Syracuse University. He also was an associate dean of the college and had served as professor and chair of the Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management at Syracuse.

At Syracuse he was the highest royalty-producing faculty member. In 1991 Faiola received a patent for the Rapi-Kool, a device that rapidly cools food to help prevent the growth of bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. He developed a wireless temperature monitoring system for refrigeration, hot-holding, and cooking equipment in 1991. He received his doctorate from Syracuse University.

#### Ngonzi speaks at Caucus



Liz Ngonzi, MMH '98 spoke on a panel during the recent Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 41st Annual Legislative Conference on Sept. 23. The panel, entitled

Liz Ngonzi, MMH '98

"The Matthew Effect: Bridging the Economic Gap," explored the divide between rich and poor that continues to widen in the United States and offered participants real-life examples of pathways to success across economic lines. Ngonzi advised small businesses in the black community to join together to improve buying power. The session was part of the Emerging Leaders Series, geared toward African American college students and early career professionals. The three-day Annual Legislative Conference attracts over 10,000 participants to Washington, D.C.

In 2001, Ngonzi founded Amazing Taste, LLC, a values-led boutique consulting firm that connects nonprofit organizations with corporations, foundations, and philanthropists to jointly achieve their strategic objectives through fundraising events, online and mobile marketing campaigns, and educational activities. She is an authority on women in leadership, fundraising, hospitality management, social entrepreneurship, and the African Diaspora market. She has spoken at numerous academic and industry conferences. Born in Uganda, she received her primary and secondary education at the United Nations International School.

#### **ICHRIE** honors Angelo



Rocco Angelo '58

Dean Michael Johnson presented Rocco Angelo '58 with the Howard B. Meek Award at the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education

(ICHRIE) conference in July. The Meek Award recognizes lifetime contributions and outstanding service to hospitality education and to ICHRIE; it is the highest individual recognition that an ICHRIE member can receive. As an undergraduate, Angelo received valuable guidance and encouragement from Dean Meek, who convinced him to apply to Cornell in the first place. Although Angelo retired from full-time service in 1998, he retains the title of associate dean of Florida International University's Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, where he has been a faculty member since 1981. In addition to his Cornell degree, Angelo holds an MBA from the University of Miami. II

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# Marriott Foundation funds student learning center

he J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation has committed \$3 million to the School of Hotel Administration to name the Marriott Student Learning Center. The new center will reconfigure the school's Nestlé Library and George B. Mallory '54 Student Lounge into a facility designed to enhance student learning in the digital age.

As SHA integrates its traditional library services with those of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management, the space currently occupied by book stacks and periodicals will be transformed into the interactive Marriott Center, Reference librarians will still be available to assist students onsite. The student center will feature flexible work areas for collaborative learning and independent study; small group meeting spaces, with

smart board technology for group presentations; and fixed and mobile computing resources for accessing information digitally. It will also have space for relaxing and socializing and will include limited food and beverage options.

Woods Bagot, one of the world's leading architectural firms, has been selected to design the new facility. Construction will begin in spring 2012; the center will open in fall 2012.

"The Marriott family has had an active relationship with the school since the 1950s, and we are grateful to have their incredible gift as we create a student center for the 21st century," said Michael D. Johnson, dean and E. M. Statler Professor.

The Marriott Foundation, which focuses its giving in the areas of education, vouth, and human services, is one of the largest donors in the school's history. Both the foundation and Marriott International made contributions in 1989 to name the J. Willard Marriott Executive Education Center. which is adjacent to the Statler Hotel at Cornell.

"Through our foundation, the Marriott family has tried to make a difference in the world by supporting causes and organizations that share our ideals. Cornell University and its School of Hotel Administration certainly fit that standard," said J. W. "Bill" Marriott, Jr. "The school's mission of 'hospitality leadership through learning' reflects a commitment to improving the hospitality industry through continuous professional growth. The Marriott Company and Foundation share that same commitment."



try to have a moment with him. Marriott was the first recipient of the school's Cornell Icon of the Industry Award in 2009.



J. W. "Bill" Marriott, Jr. acknowledges the cheers of a packed Statler Auditorium during his appearance in the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series on Sept. 23. The students responded with a rousing standing ovation when told of the Marriott Foundation's gift for a new student learning center in Statler Hall. With Marriott onstage are his daughter, Debbie Harrison, Marriott International's senior vice president of government affairs, and her husband, Ron Harrison, the company's global officer for architecture and construction.

#### Photos by Jon Reis Photography

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# This year's Icon Award winners: Dedicated to humanity

illiam P. Magee, Jr. was working as a plastic surgeon in Norfolk, Va. in 1982 when he was invited to accompany a group of doctors to the Philippines to operate on children who were suffering from cleft lips and cleft palates. When they arrived, the volunteers were prepared to perform the surgery on 40 children, but were overwhelmed when 300 showed up in the arms of tearful parents begging for help.

Magee remembers clearly a woman who brought her eight-year-old daughter and a bunch of bananas to offer as a gift to the volunteer surgeons to repair the girl's cleft palate when they returned. But the doctors would not be coming back. Wracked with guilt and emotion, Magee and his wife, Kathy, a nurse who was on the trip, decided to take on the medical mission themselves with a group of friends in Norfolk, and immediately launched Operation Smile.

After returning to the Philippines annually for six years, the charity moved into Liberia and Kenya and then



Lack of access to safe water and sanitation remains a major challenge for developing countries and multiplies devastation in impoverished communities. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has a long history of increasing access to clean water in poor, water-stressed regions of Africa, Mexico, and India. Here, women in Ghana draw water from a well drilled with Hilton Foundation funding.

#### Photos courtesy of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

gradually expanded to a few more countries. But the volunteers were still turning away hundreds of children whose disfiguring facial deformities

would condemn them to lives as social recluses. Then in 1996, the organization received its largest gift ever— \$1 million—as the first recipient of the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize.

"A million dollars at that moment in time was transformational to us," Magee recalled. "Not only could we build the infrastructure that would give us the reliability and capacity to make sure that we could deliver the highestquality service, but it also branded us as an organization that was right at the top." As a result of the award, Operation Smile began a significant expansion overseas. It now works in 60 countries and has provided more than 200,000 free surgical procedures for children and young adults born with facial deformities.

#### **Touching millions of lives**

Since its creation in 1944 by the founder of Hilton Hotels Corporation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has evolved into one of the nation's most influential foundations and has awarded nearly \$1 billion in grants, including \$100 million in 2010 alone. (A private family foundation, it has never been affiliated with Hilton Hotels

"What gives me the greatest joy about this is knowing that what we're doing here at the foundation touches millions of lives and helps make this a better world."

> Corporation.) The annual Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, first given to Operation Smile, is now the largest humanitarian award in the world at its current value of \$1.5 million.

The Los Angeles-based Hilton Foundation funds major initiatives to improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people throughout the world. Using the last will and testament of the late Conrad N. Hilton as a guide, the foundation invests most of its funding in ten priority areas, including providing safe drinking water for people in developing countries, caring for vulnerable children, preventing blindness and empowering the visually impaired, and ending chronic homelessness in Los Angeles County.

"What gives me the greatest joy about this is knowing that what we're doing here at the foundation touches millions of lives and helps make this a better world," said Steven M. Hilton, Conrad's grandson, who is now the family foundation's president and chief executive officer. "I believe there's a strong spiritual side to what we do. I really feel

> that we are doing God's work, and I find that incredibly rewarding."

For that work, the School of Hotel Administra-

tion honored the Hilton family and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in June as the recipients of the 2011 Cornell Icon of the Industry Award. Presented at a gala dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria in



Hotel legend Conrad N. Hilton also founded a philanthropic empire, now led by his descendents, that has had profound global impact.

Hotelie

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#### lcons

Manhattan, the award recognized the Hilton family for their achievements as international leaders in the hospitality industry and honored the foundation for its philanthropic work.

### From empire builder to humanitarian

Conrad Hilton, a native of New Mexico, entered the hotel business at the age of 31 after working as a clerk, trader, theatrical manager, speculator, politician, and banker. Drawn to Texas because of its booming oil industry, he arrived in Cisco in 1919 intending to buy a bank—but instead purchased the run-down Mobley Hotel.

He soon acquired hotels across Texas and then extended his reach nationally, first buying the Sir Francis Drake in San Francisco, then properties in Long Beach and Albuquerque. In 1946, Hilton Hotels Corporation became a public company, and the following year became the first hotel company to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange. And in 1953, the company opened the Castellana Hilton in Madrid, launching what would become a growing presence overseas.

"I think what was unique about Conrad Hilton was that he was so talented and brilliant as a business person," Steven Hilton said. "His unique strength was not just the hotel operations—dealing with the food and beverage staff and front desk and marketing. While he understood those operating activities, his expertise was in being able to find hotels that were undervalued, buy them at really good prices, and then implement effective operating systems that could be applied to them."

As his hotel empire grew, Conrad, whose mother was a devout Catholic, began giving more of his money to educational institutions, churches, hospitals, and an organization that had influenced him since his childhood, the Catholic Sisters. After establishing his foundation, Hilton guided his philanthropy on his belief that travel would improve understanding among people, a conviction expressed in the hotel chain's motto: World Peace Through International Trade and Travel.

When he died at the age of 91, Hilton bequeathed virtually all of his wealth—in the form of Hilton Hotels stock—to the foundation. His son Barron remained at the helm of the corporation, eventually tripling the number of hotel properties to 300, and later followed in his father's footsteps by also pledging to donate essentially all of his personal fortune to the foundation. When he announced that commitment in 2007, Barron contributed \$1.2 billion to the foundation, which earned him

## "This is their lot in life — to give back and serve."



Hilton Foundation support has enabled the Perkins School for the Blind to start dozens of schools overseas. Here, a teacher works with a student in the Dominican Republic.

fifth-place ranking on *Business Week*'s list of the 50 top American givers.

With assets of approximately \$2 billion, the foundation has followed Conrad's belief that because his hotel empire had become international, his charitable initiatives should also be international in reach, helping the most destitute throughout the world without discrimination of any kind. As a result, in recent years more than half of the foundation's grants have supported international work.



Steven Hilton (right) visits the family of Mathew (center), a ten-year-old boy with multiple disabilities.

#### **Global impact**

When Tostan, an organization based in Senegal that empowers African communities, received the \$1.5 million Hilton Humanitarian Prize in 2007, it was able to build on its work to end female genital cutting and child marriages. The prize contributed to more than doubling the number of villages in the West African country that abandoned the practice, reaching millions in nearly 5,000 communities. The grassroots movement to halt the practice involved all segments of society in Senegal, including men, women, religious leaders, and youth, and has expanded into seven other African countries.

"This is a practice that had lasted for 2,200 years," said Molly Melching, Tostan's founder and executive director. "There was very little hope of people abandoning it. Tostan [whose name means "breakthrough" in Wolof] was able to contribute to that through education, facilitating dialogue, and supporting the people to hold public declarations to end the practice."

Hilton Foundation funding has allowed other organizations based in the United States to expand their operations overseas. The Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Mass., where Helen Keller studied in the late nineteenth century, was able to start dozens of schools for the blind and provide training for teachers around the world as a result of more than \$65 million in support from Hilton, one of the largest commitments in the foundation's history. Before the foundation's initial grant in 1989, Perkins was working in only eleven countries to develop programs and schools for blind or visually impaired children; it has since helped establish nearly 100 schools in 65 countries.

"If Helen Keller had been born in China in the year 2000, she would not have gone to school," said Steven Rothstein, the president of Perkins. "Today in China there are 27 schools. Because of our work with the Hilton Foundation and others as well, thousands of children who are blind or who are deaf-blind have been educated. The story has been replicated in Africa and in many other countries."

As a proactive grantmaker, the foundation seeks out the organizations and projects it chooses to support, focusing on areas where there is substantial need and then making long-term commitments. Besides the monetary awards, another benefit of becoming part of the foundation's fold is the opportunity to collaborate with other nonprofits working on similar issues. Recipients of the Humanitarian Prize, for example, meet every year to explore how they can form partnerships on projects. No matter who is at the helm of the foundation, the Hilton family will continue to have a central influence on its philanthropy.

. . . . . . .

One collaboration that grew out of the relationships developed through the foundation occurred in Haiti right after the earthquake in 2010. At the time, volunteers from Operation Smile were working in the country when Humanitarian Prize recipient Partners In Health, which brings medical care to the world's poor, asked the surgeons to work with them in treating earthquake victims, particularly for crush injuries. And when Operation Smile launched operations in Senegal in 2009, Tostan helped the organization identify patients who needed the cleft palate surgeries, provided translation services, and assisted with logistics in securing housing and operating rooms for the doctors and staff.

"The bottom line is that none of that would have happened without the Hiltons honoring and bringing like-minded organizations together," Magee said.

#### **Ending chronic homelessness**

Closer to its headquarters, the foundation helped convene a group of city stakeholders to create a comprehensive plan that would end chronic homelessness within five years in Los Angeles, which in the United States is second only to

## Carrying philanthropy to the fourth generation

#### by Sherrie Negrea

Like his great-grandfather Conrad Hilton, Justin H. McAuliffe '10 has developed a passion for philanthropy. The ideal of serving others is what attracted him to the School of Hotel Administration and what has led him to help others, whether it is children abandoned in a Chinese orphanage or struggling entrepreneurs who need a bank loan.

After graduating from high school in Greenwich, Conn., McAuliffe chose to attend Cornell because of his interest in the hotel industry, tourism, and economics. "The school really spoke to me from the standpoint of its servicebased focus," he said. "Whether you're in the hospitality industry or any other industry, what you do is provide a service. What we learned at the end of the day is how to serve one another, which is a good lesson to take away." His path toward a career in the hospitality industry took a detour, however, when he landed a job in the New York City office of the Grameen Bank, an institution founded in Bangladesh that provides small loans to the poor. At the bank, McAuliffe worked on marketing and distributing a film, about the bank's microfinance program, that was created to raise awareness of Grameen's services to women living below the poverty line in the United States.

McAuliffe left the bank last April to join his brother, Hilton McAuliffe, in launching Hotel Supply Services, a company that provides brand-name health and wellness products to hotel guests. The company is initially targeting hotels in Brazil and parts of Southeast Asia, where American business travelers would be ideal customers for the amenities packages.

McAuliffe has already become active in the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation through the Generations in Giving program, which is designed to engage younger Hilton family members in philanthropy. In his senior year at Cornell, McAuliffe attended a retreat on grantmaking for the program held at the Nevada ranch of his grandfather, Barron Hilton, the former chairman of Hilton Hotels. McAuliffe's mother. Hawley, who is Barron's daughter, has been a member of the foundation's board of directors since 2006. (She and her husband, Jack, also sit on the school's Dean's Advisory Board.)

Through the program, McAuliffe is entrusted with annually donating discretionary funds to charities of his choice. Through the program he has given grants to Grameen and a film project about slavery in India. New York City in the size of its homeless population. Since 1992, the foundation has donated \$35 million to the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a New York City-based organization that opened an office in Los Angeles because of its Hilton Foundation funding. Over the next two decades, CSH, with support from the foundation, helped catalyze the development of 2,300 permanent supportive housing units with onsite comprehensive services in Los Angeles, thereby contributing to a drop in chronic homelessness in the city.

"What's been good about the Hilton Foundation is the long-term relationship," said Deborah DeSantis, president and chief executive officer of the Corporation for Supportive Housing. "If you're in the nonprofit world, typically your funding is year-toyear, and 'long-term' is just several years. I think the Hilton Foundation has demonstrated that homelessness is not something that you can solve overnight; it's a complicated issue, and it really involves addressing systems that are very fragmented and in many ways dysfunctional. It takes time to make those systems right."

#### Preparing the fourth generation

As the third generation of the Hilton family is now overseeing the foundation, the philanthropy is looking to the future by cultivating an interest in charitable work among younger family members. In 2005, the foundation's board of directors launched Generations in Giving, which organizes retreats on grantmaking and allows family members to designate discretionary funds to charities of their choice. "The goal is to help educate them in doing thoughtful philanthropy, knowing that some of them will eventually be the future leaders of this foundation," said Steven Hilton, who joined the foundation in 1983.

No matter who is at the helm of the foundation, the Hilton family will continue to have a central influence on its philanthropy. "This is their lot in life—to give back and serve," Magee said. "They do a lot of things that people aren't even aware of. That's their dedication and passion. They're very humble, honest, and giving human beings."

"One thing I'm pretty passionate about is nonconventional forms of charity," McAuliffe said. "I'm really a big fan of grassroots innovation and things like micro-loans, where you are allocating funds directly to the people they are supposed to help."

Helping the disadvantaged is not something new for McAuliffe. During the summer after tenth grade, he volunteered for a nonprofit called China Care and worked in an orphanage in a coal-mining region in China. Because the orphanage was understaffed, McAuliffe and the other volunteers spent most of their time playing with the orphans and providing some physical contact with the children.

When he returned home, McAuliffe petitioned the Hilton Foundation for a grant to help the children in a staterun orphanage, who tend to be older and suffer from disabilities. The funding awarded by the foundation was used to place many of the children in the orphanage in private foster care.



Cornell President David Skorton poses with the McAuliffe family as they arrive for the Cornell Icon and Innovator Awards Dinner last June at the Waldorf-Astoria. The Hilton family and Conrad N. Hilton Foundation were honored that evening with the Cornell Icon of the Industry Award. From left, the McAuliffes are: Justin '10; his mother, Hawley; his brother, Hilton; and his father, Jack.

Steven M. Hilton, the foundation's president and chief executive officer, has high hopes for McAuliffe's future with the philanthropy. "I do think that Justin is very much involved in these issues, and it seems like he has the type of compassionate heart that would fit well with the foundation."

McAuliffe views his participation in the Generations in Giving program as a starting point for becoming more active in the foundation. For now, he hopes to keep learning about strategic grantmaking through the program's retreats and seminars.

"I think that the work the foundation does is incredible," he says. "I feel really lucky to be involved in any regard."

#### **Industry Focus**

by Jeannie Griffith

# SHA and ILR set a course

ight across Statler Drive from the Statler Hotel sits a school that, like our own, is the oldest and best of its kind in the country, if not the world. Its mission, to prepare workplace leaders, inform employment and labor policy, and improve working lives, offers a logical complement to the School of Hotel Administration's mission to ready students for leadership in the hospitality and tourism industry.

At least, that's what David Sherwyn, BSILR '86, JD '89, a professor of law in the School of Hotel Administration, and Richard Hurd, associate dean for external relations and a professor of labor studies in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, have thought since they first proposed in 1995 creating a jointly taught course, focused on improving labor relations in the hospitality industry, and offering it to students of both schools.

As often happens with really new ideas, this one took a while to get traction. The man who was then campus president of the United Auto Workers, which represents some Cornell employees, raised concern in ILR that the course would teach management types how to beat back an organizing campaign. "The ILR School has a longstanding policy of not teaching unionbusting," explained Hurd. "If we are teaching students how to behave in an organizing campaign, I suppose from some perspectives you might see that as teaching management how to defeat unions as opposed to how to address the issue of unionization."



Richard Hurd elaborates on Canadian vs. U.S. labor practices while Paul Wagner listens.

Photos by Jon Reis Photography

# for common ground



John Ceriale

#### Enter the champions

Interestingly, it was a union organizer who helped resurrect the idea of the course nearly ten years later. And in a magnificent response from the management side, a hotel owner and manager has now championed the goal of increasing collaboration between the two schools by endowing a professorship and eventually, he hopes, raising the funds to grow this initiative into a center for hospitality labor studies.

The union organizer in question is not just any union organizer, but Bruce Raynor, BSILR '72, "the most successful private-sector organizer in the past 30 years," in the words of fellow organizer Richard Bensinger. Raynor first made his name in the Textile Workers Union of America's campaign against J. P. Stevens, which was dramatized in the 1979 hit film *Norma Rae*. (His character was played by Ron Leibman.) Likewise, the hotel owner who is backing this effort is not just any hotel owner, but John Ceriale, whom Sherwyn described as "one of the most powerful, if not *the* most powerful, hoteliers in the world." As the founder of Prospect Advisors, Ceriale is the exclusive hotel advisor to Blackstone Real Estate Advisors. Among other deals, he was involved in Blackstone's 2007 acquisition of Hilton Hotels. He and his wife, Melissa, this year established the John and Melissa Ceriale

Professorship in Hospitality Human Resources. The professorship will be awarded to an SHA faculty member, but the gift is intended to benefit both schools.

When Raynor endorsed Hurd and Sherwyn's idea of creating a joint SHA/ILR about labor relations," said Hurd. "They didn't come into their jobs with any kind of background in what labor relations was all about."

Raynor and two prominent fellow ILR alumni, Paul Salvatore '81 and Ken Kahn '69, went to Harry Katz, who had become dean of ILR after the initial proposal for the course was shot down. "They said, 'Let's talk about a conference, a class... it's time," recalled Sherwyn, who had also spoken to Katz.



ILR students Deborah Cho '12 and Casey Sweeney '13

labor relations course in 2004, he was a Cornell trustee and the president of UNITE, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees. In July of that year, UNITE merged with HERE, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, to form UNITE HERE, and Raynor started to pay more attention to the labor situation in hotels.

"When he confronted the hotel industry as a labor representative, Bruce was struck by the observation that hotel management did not know very much As Sherwyn explains it, Katz risked inciting a fair degree of controversy by approving the course, but he came out strongly in favor of it. "Harry deserves a ton of credit, because it was gutsy. But it was an easy sell to our administration. Michael [Johnson, SHA's dean] and Steve [Carvell, associate dean for academic affairs] said, 'We're a heavily unionized industry and we don't have a course dedicated to labor relations, so this is great—let our students hear the whole story.' They jumped right in, and

#### **Industry Focus**

on we went." And so HADM 4810/ILR 4060, Labor Relations in the Hospitality Industry, was added to the curriculum in 2006.

Ceriale worked his way up through the ranks of hotel operations and describes himself as a "hard-core operator." He started at the bottom, spent years as a general manager, from limited-service to luxury brands, and ended up, after several decades, as senior vice president of operations for Westin Hotels North America. Along the way, he learned a lot about the people who worked for him, and he factored in their needs while keeping an eye on his profit margin. a social contract—to do the right thing as it relates to working hard, productivity, honesty, service. It's a two-way street."

Ceriale and Raynor got to know each other when UNITE and HERE merged in 2004. When the need arose in 2008 to find a new speaker to present a management perspective to the students, Raynor, who has been a regular guest speaker since the course began, invited Ceriale to join him. Ceriale was hooked. And the students, naturally, bit right into the opportunity to discuss hotel labor issues with two such extraordinary figures. collective bargaining. The SHA students have taken Sherwyn's class in business and hospitality law, which covers the basics of union organizing and the various organizing systems. "The ILRies are better at that aspect, but they don't know about the hotel industry. They don't know about RevPAR, they don't know about ADR, and they have no idea that hotels are often owned and operated by different entities." said Sherwyn. "In the first class, we have the ILR students meet together and come up with the ten or 15 things that the SHA students should know about labor relations, and we have the SHA students get together and come up with the ten or 15 things that the ILR students

> should know about the hotel industry. Then they discuss it back and forth, so they educate each other." And so the conversation begins.

> From the beginning, a key concept for the course was that the students would spend the semester working on an organizing simulation developed by Hurd and Sherwyn. The course is still structured this way, with some students taking roles as management and others as labor organizers. When one team is campaigning, the



Paul Wagner, at the far end of the room, raises his hand to respond to a statement by Michael Szapor '12. Listening down the table are Margaret Baum '11, Amy Ryan '11, Richard Bensinger, and David Sherwyn.

"I don't really have a stand; I am just on the side of what is right," he explained. "I believe in defined benefits, and many people in American business don't. As managers and owners we have certain responsibilities, as a social contract inherent in America, to try to do the right thing. We have moved away from that as a country. Employees also have

#### Learning from one another

A key point of the course is for the students, half from SHA and half from ILR, to learn to understand and respect each other's positions before they graduate and start playing for keeps. The ILR students come into the class having taken one course each in labor and employment law and in remaining students act as the hotel employees who must decide whether or not to join a union. Operating within a scenario that provides a reason for workers to organize, the students run an organizing campaign and conduct a bargaining session between labor and management.



Julianna Gjonaj '12, Alison Gruber '11, and Robert Patrizzo, ILR '11 consider Bruce Raynor's position.

When the course was taught last spring, Sherwyn and Hurd ran three separate simulations using the same scenario: a change of ownership at a struggling Poconos resort that raises the fear of upsetting job changes among its longtime employees. The students were divided into three groups half union, half management—operating under three different sets of rules or guiding principles. One group campaigned under the rules for traditional Instead of holding an election, this group was given one week to try to convince the "employees" to sign cards authorizing the union. The third group followed the Ethical Principles for Union Organization, which were written by Richard Bensinger, former director of organizing for the national AFL-CIO, and Dick Schubert, a former president of Bethlehem Steel, as a proposed means to make the organizing process fair to all. Professor; Harry Katz, ILR's Kenneth F. Kahn Dean and Jack Sheinkman Professor of Collective Bargaining; Paul Wagner, A&S '86, JD '90, a labor and employment lawyer and adjunct professor of law in SHA; Hurd; and Sherwyn, who moderated the roundtable.

Students assigned to be presenters opened the discussion on designated topics, starting with the question of whether unions are needed in the

"I want Cornell to be the place where people want to go for help when there are issues between labor and management in our industry—and not just in the hotel business, but in all areas of hospitality and tourism."

secret-ballot elections as dictated by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), a process seen by labor as being heavily weighted in favor of management. Another operated according to the rules of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), a proposed, and so far unsuccessful, amendment to the NLRA that is seen as being very favorable to labor.

#### Bringing the issues to the table

Last April the students had the privilege of debating the merits of these systems in a roundtable discussion with Bensinger; Ceriale; Raynor; Michael Johnson, dean of the School of Hotel Administration and E. M. Statler hospitality industry and continuing with a review of their experiences with each of the organizing systems they had examined. Ceriale and Raynor sat next to each other at the roundtable, trading compliments, good-natured gibes, and serious debating points and giving the students a few kindly worded but pointed reality checks.

#### **Industry Focus**

One straightforward comment from Amy Ryan '11—"I think that it is important to have the choice of a union just to keep management in check"-raised an issue that others invoked repeatedly during the two-and-a-half-hour roundtable.

Raynor was the first to respond, noting, "The fact is that a housekeeper who works in Dallas. Phoenix. or Atlanta has a poverty-level job with virtually no benefits. A housekeeper who cleans the same rooms at the same hotel compabenevolence decided, 'We should pay more here,' but because they want to keep the union out of the hotel."

Ceriale acknowledged the importance of Ryan's observation and added, "The threat of organizing is a powerful, powerful tool that helps managers treat employees better. It puts pressure on management to create a more structured and more competitive work environment, and it has had a major effect on the hotel industry. When you're searching for profit, you find it in effi-

> ciencies, productivity, and wages. This is one of the issues that causes so much tension. I think in a perfect world, we wouldn't want any unions—if management was benevolent and always would do the right thing, and if there was something we called a right amount of profit. But it doesn't work that way."

Ceriale's ability to see both sides of hotel labor issues has served him well in negotiating with unions. "I just happened over the years to build great relationships with unions all over the world," he said in a later conversation. "That comes easily to me; I have an innate ability to represent both sides. I just trust them, and they trust me. Negotiating with the unions is like negotiating with your spouse: it's about com-

mon ground. If you go into negotiating wanting to win, you might think you win, but you always lose."

In one of the roundtable's more entertaining moments, Raynor shared an anecdote with the students that illustrated that innate sense: "This guy [Ceriale] was a GM, at a union hotel,

and there was a strike next door by the union at another hotel. The pickets stayed out for 13 weeks, picketing next door. John fed them. John had his people feed them three meals a day while they were picketing. Now, why did he do that? He's a good guy...but the picketers were also out there at 5:30 in the morning, clanging pots and pans, waking up his guests. He decided that by feeding them, they wouldn't do that."

"You know, InterContinental never sued me for doing that, either," Ceriale responded with his ever-present good humor. "They had the right to do that."

Good-humored though he is, Ceriale is very serious about the need for better understanding and cooperation between owners, their employees, and the unions that operate within the hotel industry. He expresses fear that continuing on the present course will destroy the notion of service in all but the most expensive hotels. As he said to the class, "I've loved hotels since the first time I ever walked into one. I dislike the management-labor battle in the hospitality industry in major cities; it's not good for our industry. It has left us with the concept of select service in four-star hotels. Select service sounds good, but what it really means is less service from fewer people."

As Ceriale sees it, a major issue that drives owners and operators to reduce staff is the loss of job flexibility that results from overly restrictive work rules. "It's not a fight about wages, healthcare, or some kind of pension; it's about flexibility. It's about being able to employ who you want to employ when you want to employ them in a job that you want them to do. Seniority is a cornerstone of unionism, but it isn't a good concept. I think employers have an obligation to pay a living wage, provide healthcare, and provide some kind of retirement benefits, but they don't have an obligation to let unions tell them how to operate their hotels."

nies in Washington, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, or Boston is in a middle-class or a lower-middle-class job with benefits, because those cities have a strong union presence. Even in the non-union hotels in those cities, the workers' wages are much highernot because management in their

Richard Bensinger and David Sherwyn

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#### **Opening vistas**

The whole point of the class that Sherwyn and Hurd teach is, of course, to encourage future owners and managers, on the one side, and union organizers or human resource executives, on the other, to find ways to come together for the good not only of employees but the industry as a whole. There is evidence that this experience is opening vistas for the students. "One thing that has happened accidentally is that the students who take this class get interested in classes from the other college," noted Hurd. "We like to think that this is a catalyst that will increase the overlap between the two schools and increase faculty collaboration. John's support and involvement increase the likelihood that this is going to work."

In addition to the personal monetary commitment that Ceriale has made with his wife to create a professorship, he is asking friends and associates to contribute to the initiative to increase interchange between SHA and ILR, and he hopes to persuade the unions to participate. "I want Cornell to be the place where people want to go for help when there are issues between labor and management in our industry—and not just in the hotel business, but in all



Bruce Raynor and John Ceriale

areas of hospitality and tourism. I see this as becoming as big as the real estate program; maybe there is a minor in this someday."

In the near term and on a more modest level, Hurd and Sherwyn would like to use some of the income from the Ceriale gift to take their class to New York City to experience union activity firsthand. Another goal is to expand internship opportunities, possibly with students from both schools paired to work together. Sherwyn is also excited about the continuing value of being able to turn to Ceriale as an expert resource.

"This financial commitment to Cornell is wonderful and obviously means a lot to all of us, but I look at it also as something that's more important, which is this commitment to us as a school," said Sherwyn. "Along with putting his name on the professorship, John has made a time commitment, a thought commitment, and an intellectual commitment, and these are all tremendous resources. This isn't someone giving back to the school that made him. Giving back is wonderful, but this is something different. This is someone who didn't go to school here but has found our school to be the right school to support. This is looking forward. His gift, his vision is not going to be successful if only the negotiators and the labor lawyers benefit. The key is for our students who are the future CEOs to benefit. If John can get both management and labor to take a more holistic view, that will be the greatest measure of his success."



Ellease Bender '12, Annie Mulcahy '11, and Thomas Horan, ILR '11 react to a statement from John Ceriale.

# Behind the scenes at HEC

n a brisk morning last April, I headed across the engineering quad toward Statler Hall, feeling nervous and eager about the day ahead of me. I had spent 18 hours at the school the day before, and today, Saturday, would be no different. In fact, I had spent hundreds of hours over the months since school began in planning every aspect of the function I had been assigned for Hotel Ezra Cornell, the Closing Cocktail. As I approached Statler Hall's front doors, realization set in: the time had come, and tonight I would execute my menu and serve it to more than 300 guests.

I took a deep breath and entered the building. It was five o'clock in the morning. On any other day, the school would be empty and quiet at this hour, but not today.

Students hurried past me in the hallways, communicating important instructions into walkie talkies, delivering supplies back and forth between the school and the hotel, and transporting provisions to the food labs. Students who had been working round-the-clock were passed out on the couches in the Beck Center. Others were fueling up on coffee and sugar in an effort to keep energy high. When I reached the food labs, students were already hard at work preparing the Saturday breakfast buffet; some of them had been in the kitchen since three a.m. I got my recipe packet and todo list from the executive chef, Lindsey Brous '12, and prepared to spend the day baking more than 700 bitesized desserts.

As I set up my station, I thought back to my first days in the HEC organization, when, as a new transfer student to the school, I did not know anyone and could not possibly have imagined that I would soon play an integral part in bringing HEC 86 to life.



Clockwise, from left: Senior lecturer Giuseppe Pezzotti '84, MMH '96 "spins platters" at the Closing Cocktail; the HEC board, from left: front: Willis Cheng '11, managing director, Diana Delli Santi '11, F&B director, Hannah Greenberg '11, program director, Morgan May '11, F&B service director, Lindsey Brous '12, executive chef, Christine Seliga '11, guest services director, Casey Francis '11, procurement director, Katie Tomechko '11, business affairs director, Javier Rodriguez '12, marketing director, Harryette Kim '12, human resources director, and back: Dean Michael Johnson,

#### Photos by Zachary Ruben '11

#### An 86-year tradition

Since students began running HEC in1926, it has evolved into a three-day conference where hundreds of Hotelies showcase what they have learned while educating and entertaining industry professionals. Every aspect of the conference—from marketing efforts to food and beverage service to interior design—is headed by students.

The HEC board of directors, a group appointed at the end of each school year by the previous year's board members, begins preparing for the next HEC during the summer. These students lead the efforts in food and beverage services, procurement, marketing, communications, rooms operations, guest services, conference programming, human resources, design, and business affairs.

In the fall, the board hires department assistants and managers and recruits volunteers for function teams, giving the entire student body a chance to get involved at a variety of different levels and positions within the organization and almost half of all students do. Each department works from then until HEC weekend on specific projects, tasks, and other assignments to create an exciting and memorable event. When the official HEC theme is released in September, it's all the buzz around SHA. Throughout the year, students make crucial decisions about how to weave the chosen theme into a conference that incorporates a variety of educational and enjoyable events, such as roundtable discussions, industry presentations, case studies and student/ business collaborations, culinary affairs and demonstrations, and social gatherings.

The week leading up to HEC is one of the most exciting and highly anticipated times that an SHA student experiences at Cornell. During that last



Lauren Gretzula '11, design director, Annie Marlow '11, rooms director, Alix Morris '11, communications director, and Adam Dennett '11, operations director; overhead view of the Silk Road dinner; Matthew Chen '13; Ellie Proctor '11 cuts up in the kitchen with chef Robert White; late Thursday night, the program team reviews the weekend's schedule: from left, Kate Adie '13, Hannah Greenberg '11, director, Kathleen Hodge '13, and Chad Wemischner '13; Hannah Greenberg '11, director, Kathleen Hodge '13, and Chad Wemischner '13; Hannah Greenberg '11 introduces a speaker





From left, top: Willis Cheng '11, HEC 86 managing director; happy guests at the Gala Dinner, from left, Stephen Lewandowski, Dean Michael Johnson and Jill Kobus Johnson, Drew Nieporent '77 (behind them), Kevin '76 and Mary '76 Fitzpatrick, Mary and Lee '69 Pillsbury, Russ Galbut '74, and Joni and Bob '73 Alter. Bottom: A line-up of bartenders, including Maryam Ahmed '11, third from right, and Nicole Valentino '12, second from right; Ian Banger '08 and Mark McCarthy '87, MMH '98 grapple over the sizeable "winnings" from the Cornell Hospitality Business Plan Competition. Facing page: Brandon Ho '12 puts finishing touches on a table setting for the Gala Dinner

week, most of the students involved would agree that schoolwork takes a back seat to all-things-HEC. Students work nonstop to finalize the big and small details—anything and everything from placing final food orders to updating the HEC website pages to preparing the guest rooms at the Statler Hotel.

When the first day of HEC finally arrives, the feeling in the air is an indescribable mix of excitement, a bit of anxiety, and an eagerness to get the weekend underway. This air of anticipation is alive throughout the weekend, making it an even more magical and memorable experience for everyone involved.

#### My HEC experience

HEC 86 opened on Thursday, April 7, 2011. Like everyone else, I went to my classes that day, but I could not pay attention in any of them. It was hard not to think about my long to-do list and the numerous big tasks ahead of me. I wondered if I could even pull it off.

The weekend began with the traditional Opening Cocktail event, where guests were welcomed to the school and introduced to the theme of HEC 86, "Global Hospitality: The Core of International Business."

Inside the food labs, things were chaotic. As the back-of-house team gathered and prepared ingredients, guests migrated from the Opening Cocktail reception to observe the action. The labs got so crowded that it became almost impossible for the chefs to move beyond their small stations to collect necessary ingredients and equipment. At the same time, though, it was exciting to see the kitchen so lively and to engage with alumni and other industry professionals.

Beyond the food labs, other students worked diligently as well. Design team members moved from space to space, decorating walls, tables, and seating areas to match each event's theme. Food and beverage service team members practiced service styles and completed the room set-ups and breakdowns for each culinary affair. Human resource managers handed out nametags and uniforms to arriving students and collected them as they left. Guest services



Clockwise, from top left: Rebecca Foxman '11 serves guests from a makeshift food line in Statler Auditorium during "Secrets of a Restaurant Chef," a cooking demonstration by Stephan Lewandowski, executive chef of Tribeca Grill, and Drew Nieporent '77, owner of Myriad Restaurant Group; Katherine Kies '11, center, makes her way to the podium to accept the Joseph Drown Prize during the Gala Dinner; Stephan Lewandowski and

managers oversaw the hotel check-in process and tended to the needs of guests. The program team attended every event, introducing speakers to crowds, guiding guests to their seats, and distributing programs and information packets.

As the weekend progressed and one event after another went off without a hitch, I came to realize how far the students in the organization had come in just a few months. I watched a fellow back-of-house function manager go from a timid, unconfident cook to a takecharge foodservice professional over the course of the year. I saw a girl on the design team break down and question her own abilities just hours before her event was set to start; her teammates came to the rescue and helped her re-evaluate the situation and fix the minor "hiccups."

From these moments and others, I could see the direct effect that HEC had on students, testing their leadership skills and instilling the importance of teamwork and strong group dynamics that are necessary in the hospitality environment. HEC transforms students into hospitality leaders and professionals.

By the day of my event, I had already logged about 32 hours of prep time in the kitchens. I was tired, but my enthusiasm was still high. As busy as I was, I still made sure to break out of the kitchen often to scope out the events going on around the school. Some highlights of the weekend included a keynote speech from Marriott Lodging International's Edwin Fuller, a panel discussion, "Exploring Emerging Markets," led by five top industry leaders, and a culinary demonstration given by Myriad Restaurant Group's Drew Nieporent '77 and Tribeca Grill's Stephen Lewandowski.

I also made sure to stop by fellow students' events, including the impressive Gala Banquet. Three hours before the start of my own event, I stepped out of the food labs to look over the balcony above the Park Atrium and watch the Gala team put their final touches on the Caribbean-inspired meal and plate each dish with great precision and care. It was fascinating to watch the composure of the students as they sent each dish down the line, one person carefully placing the garnish, the next drizzling sauce on the food, and the last wiping smudges and drips from the plate rims.



Drew Nieporent '77 share "Secrets of a Restaurant Chef"; panelists for Building Brands Across Borders included, from left, Stephen Haggerty '90, global head of real estate and development for Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, Gerald Lawless, executive chairman of the Jumeirah Group, and Nancy Johnson, executive vice president and chief development officer for Carlson Hotels Worldwide; Danielle Foster '12 in a meeting of the board of directors of HEC 87

Finally, the moment I had waited for all year arrived. My desserts for the Closing Cocktail were heading down the hall on trays held high by student servers.

Minutes later, still dressed in my chef's whites, I descended the stairs into the Park Atrium. I couldn't believe my eyes. The space had been transformed to look like a modern hotel lobby, with cocktail tables, soft-seating couches and benches, and vibrantly colored drapery and floral arrangements. As I made my way through the crowd, I could see guests enjoying my desserts, which were beautifully displayed on tiered trays all around the room.

In that moment, I realized the true power of the HEC experience. It unites students, industry leaders, and alumni over a shared passion and dedication for the hospitality industry. It provides the perfect arena for educational, leisure, and networking opportunities. And it continues the legacy of one of the proudest, longest-standing traditions at the School of Hotel Administration.

As I stood in the Park Atrium in the middle of my event that night, I knew I stood there a much better hospitality professional and leader than I had been when I started this crazy journey. I, just like all these other students, had now made my own mark on the HEC legacy.

And I couldn't wait to do it all over again for HEC 87.

**Danielle Foster** transferred to the School of Hotel Administration in 2010 from the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse



University and is working toward a BS in hotel administration with a concentration in marketing. This year,

she serves as the communications director for HEC 87.

To learn more about HEC and what goes on behind the scenes to make it all happen, visit the HEC Behind the Scenes Blog (www.hotelezracornell. wordpress.com) as well as the main website (www.hotelezracornell.com).

Register today for HEC 87: Life is Service Innovation, happening April 12–15, 2012: http://register.hotelezracornell.com.

#### Outreach

# Deconstructing the electronic confronted with a pared-down budg

equivalent of a five-foot-high tower of research was the first of many challenges facing a team of MMH students who signed on to assist the New York State Regional Tourism Task Force in its efforts to develop and market its diverse regions and abundant attractions.

Under the guidance of Bill Carroll, senior lecturer in services marketing, and Rob Kwortnik, associate professor of services marketing, MMH '11 students Katy Crump, Stephan Eberhart, Andi Grossman, Mari Kam, Alex Svyriadis, and Grace Park mapped and analyzed the preferences, perceptions, and experiences of visitors to the state of New York. What they learned and the conclusions they reached could well change the way that the state funds its tourism efforts.

"We gave them everything we had from the last five years," explained Edward Muhl, Regional Tourism Task Force coordinator for the New York State Department of Economic Development. The 43 documents handed over included tourism surveys and economic impact, visitation, and brandtracking studies. "I said, 'Okay, now let's see what sense we can make of this,"" recalled Kwortnik. Confronted with a pared-down budget, the New York State Division of Tourism knew it had to get more strategic in allocating its limited resources and marketing the state. A Regional Tourism Task Force, composed of 30 tourismindustry stakeholders and decisionmakers, was created to assess the situation and make a series of recommendations to the chairman of Empire State Development, New York State's economic development agency.

Members included representatives from different regions, city and county convention and tourist bureaus, destination marketing organizations, and statewide tourism trade associations, along with state legislators Margaret Markey (D., 30th Assembly District), chairwoman of the Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development, and Betty Little (R., 45th Senate District), chairwoman of the Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks, and Recreation Committee, as well as Tim Zagat, founder of the Zagat guides and a member of the Governor's Tourism Advisory Council.

The genesis of the project was "a desire to work with our stakeholders in a more efficient way and to convey a consistent message," explained task force member Edward Maitino,

#### by Katherine Anderson



managing director of Empire State Development's Division of Marketing, Advertising, and Tourism. "We were looking for a more holistic approach."

Muhl contacted Carroll early on in the process. The two had worked together several years ago on a joint state and student effort to assist the Saratoga Springs Bed and Breakfast Association. Partnering with the school again was Muhl's first choice. "Based on our past experience and Cornell's reputation the fact that this is one of the best hospitality schools in the world—we felt that this project would lend itself very well to Cornell."

The task force specifically wanted to work with a group with no preconceived notions. "We knew that whatever research project we undertook had to be completely objective, not bought and paid for," said Muhl. "Cornell fit the bill."

"We knew this was going to be a big project with lots of moving parts," recalled Kwortnik, "so we wanted to make sure we could pull together a team where we were pretty confident in the skill sets of the participants. These were not just students; they were masterslevel students who could easily handle this project and the analytics involved."



The most prevalent misconception among potential tourists is that the entire state of New York is, like Fifth Avenue, too expensive

## The group conducted their research under the auspices of the school's Hospitality Industry Practicum, which

Hospitality Industry Practicum, which Kwortnik characterized as "an adhoc, turbo-charged, team-based independent study." He added "The practicum was created with just this kind of quasi-consulting and highimpact project in mind."

Those who benefit from a practicum are asked to help fund the project. "The donation offsets the direct cost of the work itself," explained Kwortnik. "It also ensures that the companies and organizations that approach us for help know this a serious undertaking that will demand considerable student and faculty time."

It was a classic win-win scenario, according to Carroll. "The state gained valuable information to better manage its reduced tourism marketing budget, and the students gained a greater understanding of the complexities of developing and administering a government-affiliated tourism market research project."

What began as a relatively short-term effort quickly morphed into a much larger project. "It grew from a potential externship to a whole semester, then to a yearlong commitment," recalled



Crump, a Fort Worth native who is now e-marketing coordinator for Sabre Hospitality Solutions in Southlake, Texas.

All of the students already had a strong background in marketing and tourism. Prior to joining the Cornell com-

mnity, Svyriadis worked in his native Greece for Starwood Hotels and Inter-Continental Hotels. "I was born and raised in hotels: they were my playground," said Svyriadis, whose father is a partner in Greece's Electra Palace hotel chain.

participated in a management training program at Starwood Europe before coming to Cornell "to hone my analytic and marketing skills."

Park, whose working title for the project was "engagement manager," is an architect by training, specializing in



The team, from left: Bill Carroll, Mari Kam, Grace Park, Stephan Eberhart, Andi Grossman, Katy Crump, Alex Svyriadis, and Rob Kwortnik

The first step was to wade through the pile of state reports to understand and assess the value of what was there and to identify any information gaps. The team divided up the work by visitor profile and task. For instance, Grossman focused on the 62-county website analysis, and Kam and Crump on the "I Love New York" brand, segmentation studies on familiarity, and information from other states. Economic studies fell under Svyriadis's purview, and Eberhart concentrated on New York State tourism websites. "Bill and I oversaw the process," said Kwortnik. "But these guys were the ones who dug in to make sense out of all of this."

"Grace Park was project manager, and the rest of us agreed to get our hands dirty with the data," said Eberhart, who earned a degree in hospitality from the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne and then restaurant and retail design. Past clients include New York's Essex House Hotel, a palace in Turkey, Royal Caribbean's Oasis of the Sea promenade, and Giorgio Armani retail stores. "I managed the workflow. I made sure everyone had enough to do and that no one was overwhelmed," recalled Park, the group's sole New Yorker.

In addition to grappling with the data supplied by the state, the group consulted academic research on consumer travel behavior, regional, county, and city websites, and relevant social media platforms. The team also looked at case studies from "best practice" states like Virginia and Florida. Kam, who returned to her native Honolulu after graduation to take a position as strategic marketing manager at Hotels and Resorts of Halekulani, also gathered relevant information about Oregon's tourism marketing efforts during a visit to Portland.



Along with many charts and graphs, the students produced several word clouds to depict the perceptions of survey respondents. "We asked participants to give us the three words that come to mind when they think of New York City, and when they think of New York state," explained Mari Kam, MMH '11. The more a word was mentioned, the larger it appears in the cloud. "Word clouds gave us an excellent tool for analyzing the content of their feelings and associations."

The team was asked to focus chiefly on the behavior, perceptions, and preferences of what Muhl characterized as "the 80 million people who live within a five-hour drive of New York," and they were also tasked with filling in any information gaps. "What was missing was the consumer's or traveler's perspective," noted Muhl.

The team's primary research addressed two questions: Do travelers have different perceptions of New York and motivations to visit for a leisure trip based on distance from and familiarity with the state? When making decisions about visiting New York, what criteria do travelers use, and how do they use them?

In order to produce valid and useful answers, the students developed a targeted and time-limited survey that yielded rich data. In just one week, they collected over 1,414 responses using email blasts and the "I Love New York" website and Facebook page.

The credibility of the survey results depended on one main factor. "Did we have a representative sample or not? The answer was a decided yes," noted Grossman, who now holds the position of brand marketing manager for the Wyndham Hotel Group's Days Inn in Parsippany, New Jersey. The demographics of the team's sampling neatly matched that of the state's previous visitation profile study.

"We could go back and say, 'We are pretty confident that this information is valid," remarked Kwortnik. "That was a powerful conclusion, because if you're in a political environment, the ability to take that survey and step up in front of a group, some of whom may be resistant to change, and say, 'This is a very representative sample of those contacting the state of New York for tourism information,' is critically important."

The survey findings revealed, among other things, that in general, the state is perceived very positively as a leisure tourism destination. Most visitors think it's a beautiful, exciting, fun, and diverse destination. But other results indicated areas of concern, including the single biggest, if still relatively lowlevel, objection to traveling to New York: the perception, across the board, that it is too expensive. "People think the entire state is expensive," remarked Park. "We expected that people would think that about New York City, but not New York state." The group also updated the results of an earlier study that revealed that the vast majority of travelers associate the "I Love New York" brand exclusively with New York City. According to the team's research, only 13 percent of travelers associated "I Love New York" with the entire state.

But perhaps the team's most significant finding was that respondents were more familiar with attractions and events than with counties and cities. This discovery has potentially significant ramifications in a state where tourism dollars have traditionally been allocated to counties and cities, not regions.

New York's 62 counties are divided up into eleven tourism regions that have long functioned more or less independently. Of these, some, like the Hudson Valley, Adirondacks, Finger Lakes and Greater Niagara region, are well known and thriving; others are relatively unknown and underutilized. "There has been a loose connection between marketing strategies across the state," noted Muhl. "Some of our stakeholders have great brands; others have grown stale." Muhl was quick to add that "the research done by the Cornell students bore this out."

At the conclusion of their labors. the MMH team produced a 157-page report brimming with detailed analyses of existing studies and summaries of all of their own primary and secondary research and survey results. Although the report included a recommendations section, Kwortnik was quick to point out that "the team was not in a decisionmaking position. In fact, we were a little leery about making a recommendation." Their qualms about overstepping their bounds notwithstanding, the team advocated using an affordable New York message as well as redesigning the "I Love New York" web page and reallocating resources to focus on regions.

"Our role was to be objective and to provide input for the task force's recommendations, and that report will land in the legislature or on the governor's desk," said Kwortnik. "What they needed was the fuel to do the thinking. That's what the team provided. It started a conversation."

"We probably gave some ammunition that can be used by the state tourism office to rethink the ways funds are distributed," agreed Carroll. "And we probably gave some ammunition to those county officials who have to cut budgets back. They can say, 'Look, this is the way it is."

In May the students presented their results to an audience made up of a cross-section of public- and private-sector tourism industry representatives, including regional tourism association leaders and a state legislator. "They were dazzled by what this team did," said Kwortnik. "They were unbelievably impressed with not just how poised and polished the students were under pressure, but how quickly they had put their report together." Maitino concurred. "It was one of the most professional presentations we had seen to date."

"After the students presented in front of the task force, Tim Zagat got up and stated, 'We just received the equivalent of \$100,000 worth of services," recalled Kwortnik. "Immediately afterwards, we got an email from one of the stakeholders on the task force asking, 'How can we sign up for your research help?" added Carroll. "We were also gratified that the state really wanted to know if it had been a two-way street—a good learning experience for the students."

The task force's final report, due out by year's end, will use the Cornell team's hard data to argue that New York's tourism industry would benefit from promoting stronger identities for the state's eleven tourism regions. "Whenever you get a large group together, there are going to be disagreements," commented Maitino. "Cornell gave us the knowledge to put the spotlight on regions. It's bullet-proof, premiere research." "This was a high-visibility project that will fundamentally change the way that New York is marketed as a travel destination," added Muhl. "The study results identified several key opportunities for the state to enhance its tourism marketing efforts. We received benefits and suggestions that weren't anticipated, that went beyond the original objectives and were very valuable."

Carroll and Kwortnik hope that the work they did with the tourism project team will become the basis for future Hospitality Industry Practicum courses. "It's a fabulous learning experience for students," noted Carroll. "It gets them connected with the industry and faculty members through a meaningful project."

During an interview last May, Carroll joked that it would be easy to recognize the tourism project team at graduation. "You'll know them all because, when they come in in their caps and gowns, they're all going to be wearing their 'I Love New York' buttons."



Morning comes quietly on Mirror Lake in New York's Adirondacks region, a far cry from the image many people have of New York



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# Crossing the gulf to

by Christina Heggie '10

The mojitos were fresh, the jazz hot, and the lights low. Laughter mingled with the sounds of ice against crystal, taffeta against crinoline, and rolling steel clicking against the pockets of a roulette wheel. Enter the Intercontinental, the most elegant hotel in Havana, circa 1956. Gangsters and literati, Hollywood icons and heads of state, globe-trotting beaux mondes and American oil executives all made themselves at home inside this venerable 1930 landmark.

BITE



Che Guevara appears everywhere in Trinidad

Previous page: The Hotel Nacional's regal entrance

#### Photos by Christina Heggie '10

See more photos at www.christinaheggie.com.

Havana's nightclub scene was electric, the brothels were bustling, and criminal and corporate syndicates were draining the life out of the economy. Fulgencio Batista, the U.S.-backed dictator, took his cut of the country's profits. Cuba was so accommodating to the American mafia that they had taken over the entire Intercontinental Hotel for a summit in 1946. This great hotel, like the nation itself, has survived many decades of cultural occupation.

This past spring, I snatched the opportunity to discover this faded beauty for myself, spending a week exploring Cuba with Nattie Trisarnsri, MMH '09. With Nattie's fluency in Spanish, we quickly immersed ourselves in the Cuban culture—food, people, cities, hotels, and more. In six days, we traveled to three major destinations: Trinidad, the third-oldest city in Cuba and the historic heart of the sugar cane industry; Santa Clara, home to the memorial of Fidel Castro's close comrade in arms, Che Guevara; and, of course, Havana, the storied capital.

Our tour of the former Intercontinental Hotel was guided by Rosa, a woman whose personal history has been intertwined with that of the hotel since she started working there in the early 1960s as a voluntaria, or militia volunteer. It was here, we learned, that Fidel Castro created and headquartered his revolutionary cell, the July 26th Movement. After he came to power in 1959, the Intercontinental was nationalized, along with nearly all privately owned businesses, and renamed the Hotel Nacional de Cuba. In the early 1960s, as Cuban-U.S. relations grew increasingly tense, the Nacional, which stands on a rise just yards from Havana harbor, was transformed into a watch post from which volunteer militia searched the northern seas for signs of attack from Uncle Sam.

After taking us past the marble patio and a jazz band playing softly by the fountain, Rosa led us down into the dank tunnels that permeate the hill under the hotel. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, voluntarios occupied these tunnels, 24 hours a day, for weeks on end. As we felt our way slowly through the tunnel, crouching down to avoid the damp mud ceiling, Rosa paused alongside a smudged display case of memorabilia and indicated an old coverall folded inside. We barely caught her whispers as she told us that this aging piece of canvas was the uniform she had worn when she helped guard the hotel nearly 50 years ago.

Following the crisis, Rosa became a professor of Cuban history at the Universidad de Havana. Although she retired years ago, she has had to continue working to supplement her government-set pension of \$8 per month. Thus, she has returned to the place where much of her generation's future was formed—a place that witnessed Castro's final days in alliance with the United States and the genesis of Cuba's partnership with the Soviet Union. She ended our tour with a quiet gracias and a small smile that appeared at odds with the strength sparking in her eyes. Nattie and I walked slowly away from our tour, pondering what stories Rosa did not-or could not-tell.



A vendor offers homemade cakes of dulce de leche on a street in Trinidad's center

#### Our arrival in **Cuba**

We landed in Havana after a bit too adventurous of a flight from Cancun on a World War II-era Russian aircraft. (Never fly on planes that feature wooden floors and "escape ropes.") The Havana airport was built in the 1930s-and it feels about that old. Bustling with Cubans and foreign tourists alike, the airport seemed similar to others in some ways, yet there were confusing oddities. For example, several people were pushing trolleys laden with tires. We learned only later that the tires needed to keep Cubans' 50-year-old American cars rolling must be purchased in the United States and brought into the countryillegally, though openly.

Havana's streets accosted us with dust, noise, and heat. The buildings and infrastructure of the city stretched impressively around the Port of Havana, traversed by both modern highways and bumpy dirt roads. And yes, the old cars offer all the anachronistic allure that the travel articles report. We had only a few hours in Havana, so we bid her mysteries *hasta pronto*, knowing that we would soon return.

#### **Trinidad**

Our first destination was Trinidad, a beautiful village on the southern coast of Cuba that had served as the center of the sugar cane industry for most the nineteenth century. Trinidad's vibrantly colored buildings, ornate churches, and stately monuments reflect its culturally and monetarily rich history. Yet once the sugar cane growers moved to a new part of the island in the late 1800s, activity in Trinidad slowed to the peaceful pace that it sleepily follows today.

In Trinidad, our first stop was, quite naturally, the town's only branded hotel, the 31-room Iberostar Grand Hotel. Because of government restrictions, most of the hotels in the country, including the Nacional in Havana, are currently managed by Gran Caribe Hotel Group. An enterprise of Cuba's Ministry of Tourism, Gran Caribe owns and operates nearly 20 hotels in the country, though joint ventures are allowed with foreign hotel operating companies, as in the case of the Iberostar Grand. These partnerships range from Iberostars to Sol Melias, though none, of course, are American-based companies. Regardless



Math time in a Trinidad school





Santa Clara has one of the best cigar factories in Cuba, where nearly 100 employees each produce between 80 and 150 cigars a day. A portion of these, however, find their way into pockets and onto the black market.

Neighborhood life in Santa Clara

#### **Particular** hospitality

of their nationality, all foreign companies must comply with strict rules governing everything from management structure to hourly wages.

In the bar of the Iberostar Grand Hotel we met Juan Marco, who was serving aged local rums and freshly rolled cigars to the guests. During his five-year tenure at the hotel, Juan has been able to observe closely the management structure of Cuban hotels. He explained to us that all foreign-operated hotels in Cuba must have two general managers: one foreign, one local, with the Cuban manager retaining power over final decisions. (To operate a hotel or any business venture in Cuba as a foreign entity,

you must accept a 49-51 ownership structure, and the majority share is always held by the government.) Strikingly, each GM is paid according to his or her home country's compensa-

tion standards. In this case, the foreigner receives the average salary for a Spanish GM, while the Cuban manager receives the equivalent of \$30 per month. However, Juan, an average waiter, quickly told us that he earns only two dollars less per month than his general manager. With room rates on a par with the European market, Juan easily rattled off the math: 140 euros per room per night in a 31-room hotel with 70 percent average occupancy equals a little more than €3,000 per day, over \$4,000. Costs are mostly subsidized, with each employee receiving less than one dollar per day. "The rest of the money goes to..." He drifted off with a shrug far more politically suggestive than apathetically complacent. He smiled, but the smile didn't reach his eyes.

The hotel business is performing well in Cuba. The Iberostar chain, for example, is doubling the size of its Trinidad property and adding a pool. Significant development is occurring in Santiago

Pondering how different life might have been if we had been pursuing a hotel career in Cuba instead of in the United States, Nattie and I wandered along the quiet cobblestone roads to our evening abode: a local casa *particular*. Essentially spare bedrooms in people's homes, casas particulares dot every corner of Cuba. We stayed in these accommodations throughout our travels, searching out the best ones in each town through guidebooks and local recommendations. The reservations system is quite flexible—visitors can call ahead or walk up to any casa, knock on the door, and request a room. Checkin takes place at the dining room table. The only question the owner might ask

> us, before giving us a set of keys to their home, was if we'd like to join them for dinner that evening.

Despite the rigidity of the government's

economic structure, Cuban hospitality sings quietly throughout the country. While economic structures and political mandates may feed an ongoing international brouhaha, local Cubans maintain a friendly equanimity through it all. A people accustomed to violent upheavals and political challenges, many Cubans

"Despite the rigidity of the government's economic structure, Cuban hospitality sings quietly throughout the country."

> de Cuba, as the Spanish chain is also building a 340-room hotel as just one of several existing projects. These developments are not being marketed, at least not to the United States. Should you visit www.iberostar.com, you will find no links to Cuban hotels. However, a Google search quickly brings up results for Iberostars in cities across Cuba.



exemplify an inherent contentment and happiness, offering a genuine smile and an open door to all. This culture's cornerstones of trust and hospitality are showcased in the *casa particular* system, as I would describe Cuban hospitality as imbued with warmth, openness, and cheerful entrepreneurship. I learned much about the culture through the Cuban people I met, especially Alberto and Elena, quiet owners of our *casa* in Trinidad.

Alberto and Elena open their home to visitors daily. Located just off one of the "main" cobblestone roads, this slim *casa* with stately doors spread into a spacious abode. Elena welcomed us with cold mango juice, cooing sweetly as she bustled around to get us settled in. After "check-in," she ushered us into our guest room, proudly showing us the miniature fridge-cum-minibar that came complete with quite capitalistic prices.

One evening out on the patio, after an exquisitely simple dinner of chicken, steaming rice, fresh vegetables, and ripe mango, we asked Alberto about his perspectives on Cuba's government and the American people. Pensively leaning back in his rocking chair, he told us that he had spent his childhood living under a dictator—until Fidel Castro came to save his people. This comment made us pause—how often do we condemn Fidel Castro as the ideologue who has ruined Cuba? Many Cubans, especially those who can remember



Trinidad

Batista, take a different view. Although Cubans may never be prosperous, many are content. Alluding to the Castro revolution that overthrew Cuba's previous dictator, Alberto shared with us that, to him, Fidel is a hero. "He has made Cuba suc-

#### World Views

cessful," he said. "Although there are poor people everywhere in the world, in Cuba, our poor people have resources." And he's right. Regardless of the weak state of the Cuban economy, everyone has access to free healthcare, education, and housing. He shared a truly patriotic (though somewhat misinformed) perspective on Cuba's position in the world, claiming that Cuba would be the most important country in the next decade and that the United States is powerless to have any impact on Cuba. When asked, he said that Americans are welcome in Cuba, both for their tourism dollars and for the fact that they are, from his perspective, politically inconsequential.

Our conversation drifted up toward the night stars, accompanied by the smoke from Alberto's cigar. It's not conversation easily forgotten, as Alberto saw life in Cuba from a drastically different perspective than those held in the Western world.

#### Santa Clara

After three days in Trinidad, time had seemed to stop—but our next travel destination called. We boarded the foreigners-only bus again, part of a modern bus system run by China at the behest of the Castro government. (Buses traverse the country, providing the main



Laundry hangs outside a casa particular in Old City Havana

mode of transportation, but locals are restricted to the local bus company, whose buses are older, less reliable, and slower.) We were on our way to Santa Clara, Cuba's third-largest city. Home to 210,000 people and several prominent universities, Santa Clara is also a magnet for pilgrims who journey here to honor the memory of Che Guevara.

The Monumento Ernesto Che Guevara's sloping green lawns (luxuriously maintained despite the dead heat of summer), vast square, and 22-foot-tall statue were dwarfed, in my perspective, by the magnitude of the tiny museum tucked underground. There, childhood photographs and well thumbed philosophy books show a different side of a person dismissed by some Western governments as a terrorist. Watching the tourists-the majority of them Cubanthe emotion we saw filling their faces conveyed respect, not aggression. Once again we were observing the age-old truth that there is almost always another perspective from which to view an issue. It's often easier to ignore a less palatable view of the truth, but doing so only weakens the supports under our own opinions.

Our residence in Santa Clara was one of the best *casas* in the city. Perched on the top floor overlooking the city center, the home's rooftop and terrace provided unrivaled views of this bustling city. We appreciated the location less, however, when we were woken up each morning at seven o'clock to the sounds of hundreds of citizens singing a Che Guevara tribute in the city square directly beneath our window. The music was beautiful, the timing less so.

Our *casa* was presided over by Pedro, who had owned the building pre-Castro and converted it into a casa in the late 1990s. We had finally discovered someone who could fully explain the *casa particular system*. As Pedro explained it, the system of *casas particulares* emerged in the late 1990s, when Cuba's economy had fallen into a turbulent downward spiral after trade relations with the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991—a time quietly referred to now as the Special Period. In an attempt to



Christina and Nattie sample chocolate frio at Havana's famous chocolate shop

revitalize the economy, the government slowly began easing restrictions on entrepreneurship and private business ownership. Fidel's government could no longer afford to subsidize the country's economy to the same extent, which meant that individuals had to resort to their own ingenuity. This change marked the first of many new approaches that have gradually occurred under the influence of Fidel's brother, Raul. The economic reforms have continued: for example, the number of self-employment licenses has doubled since 2010, and as of this past September, Cubans are now allowed to own cars for the first time in 52 years.

The general *casa particular* system is fairly simple. A casa is limited to having two rooms occupied at any time. Licenses range from \$270 to \$400 per month and are tightly regulated. Room prices are fixed and range from \$30 to \$35 per night—a significantly lower rate than the chain hotels charge, as the 2009 average daily rate was \$175. In addition to being much more affordable, this style of accommodation allows travelers to dine and live with local Cubans. And with a licensing requirement, guests are guaranteed a certain level of quality—which is often better than the local hotel.

Pedro understands the system well. He uses every trick he knows to draw revenue, including listing with TripAdvisor.com, where you can find the reviews he persistently solicits from every visitor. We left Santa Clara and Pedro with a newfound appreciation for the tenacity and entrepreneurship that underlie the seemingly laid-back Cuban personality.

#### Havana

Our journey culminated in Havana. Since its establishment in the sixteenth century by the Spaniards, the capital has witnessed incursions from warriors and writers, dignitaries and dictators. Currently home to 2.1 million people, Cuba's cultural strengths thrive here through prestigious universities, museums, jazz bars, and endless food, music, people, and beauty.

The hotel scene in Cuba's capital, to us, proved to be the highlight. In addition to the Hotel Nacional, Havana is home to Hotel Ambos Mundos, where Ernest Hemingway lived during his time in Cuba. He was notoriously always found at the bar downstairs, and visitors can still see his hotel room today, left in its original condition.

Other parts of Havana offered a different type of charm. The old city is full of stately edifices, worn down through time but still whispering of a glamorous past. The renovated, historic areas are pristine and tourist-friendly, the central square filled with street vendors, musicians, and visitors. Wealthy Havana residents, government officials, and international tourists are everywhere juxtaposed with street beggars and ordinary locals. Elegant cigar shops open onto cobblestones kept clean by hard-working street sweepers, and elderly street sellers often rest on the marble steps of landmark buildings touting Cuba's achievements.

On our last evening in Cuba, we found ourselves wandering back to the Hotel Nacional. Sitting on the patio as the afternoon sun sank slowly into the Gulf of Mexico, we reflected on the blur of the past week. Out of our many experiences, three key takeaways emerged:

- The Cuban culture offers a **unique hospitality of trust and warmth**, as the people happily welcome guests into their homes across the country. This hospitality will need guidance and safeguarding as tourism to Cuba greatly increases over the next ten years.
- The Cuban people possess an innate entrepreneurship and drive that enables them to both survive and thrive under a restrictive government and a downtrodden economy—a characteristic that predicts significant growth potential in a free market.
- The Cuban country includes a **rich history and natural landscape** that offer significant tourism opportunities across many travel interests—tourism experiences around Caribbean history and religion, local music and arts, or Cuban cuisine could be a few options out of many.

Havana's Hotel Nacional, which was finally restored in 1992, stands as a symbol of Cuba's spirit of hospitality, which has endured and even found new expression within a century marked by American financial exploitation and cultural insensitivity and by government corruption and repression. As the U.S. government continues to ease restrictions on travel to Cuba, it seems only a matter of time until the country will once again be flooded with American influence and the changes that will bring. As leaders in the hospitality industry, we have the responsibility to participate and lead in that change in a way that respects, preserves, and strengthens the culture of Cuba. Let's do our best to do it right. II

t the age of 15, Rishika Uttamchandani visited Cornell for the first time and instantly fell in love with the campus. Traveling from her home in Hong Kong, she found the nineteenth-century buildings and lush scenery so different from home that she decided to enroll in Cornell's Summer College the next year.

Because of her interest in hospitality and her experience working in hotels in Hong Kong and Guam, Uttamchandani chose the course in hotel operations management geared for high school "I had a bit of a culture shock," she said, while taking a break as the course was winding down in July. "But once I got over that, I really liked the course. As much as I've worked at hotels and gained experience from hotels, I thought I didn't learn as much as I did coming here."

Now in its fourth year, Hotel Operations Management: Tactics for Profitability has become one of the most popular of the 24 courses offered in Cornell's Summer College. With a waiting list of 20 students, the three-week course last

# High school juniors and seniors. After arriving in

juniors and seniors. After arriving in Ithaca at the end of last June, she quickly found herself immersed in an intense schedule, spending eight hours a day in classes and office meetings as she and 80 other high school students learned to manage their own hotels.



Reneta '84, MPS '01 and Mark '86, MMH '98 McCarthy celebrate the last day of class

summer attracted high school juniors and seniors from eight countries, including China, Hong Kong, Panama, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey, in addition to those from the United States.

The success of the course stems from the dedication and enthusiasm of its instructors, Reneta '84, MPS '01 and Mark '86, MMH '98 McCarthy, whose lives have been intertwined with the School of Hotel Administration since they were undergraduates 30 years ago. In 1993, they met while working at the Statler Hotel on campus; Reneta was the director of rooms, while Mark, whose father and two younger siblings also graduated from SHA, was the front office manager.



Clara Kim, Hannah Smith, Scrubs Ting, and Maxwell Rappaport (standing) race the clock to finish their final analysis

By the time they married in 1998, Reneta, who specializes in hotel and casino operations, and Mark, an authority on personal business computing, were teaching at the school. "We love the school," Reneta said. "It is our life. We don't have kids. We have students."

In 2008, Reneta decided to join forces with Mark, who had already been teaching in Cornell's Summer College, to design a new version of the course offered by SHA. Collaborating together for the first time, they changed its focus from business communications to hotel operations. And they adopted a hotel management-simulation program developed by Mark Talbert, senior lecturer in information systems, to afford the students a hands-on approach to operating a hotel.

"We wanted students to have an excellent understanding of the hospitality industry," Mark McCarthy said. "We wanted them to understand team dynamics and we wanted them to understand how you could utilize business computing. This was designed to be an exposure and a way to stretch them beyond what they had been asked to do in their high school curriculums and in most college curriculums."

At the start of the session, the students were assigned to four-member groups and asked to produce two reports: a memo outlining a strategy for taking over an unprofitable hotel and a business report on how to manage the hotel successfully. While working on the computer program, the students learned to manage bookings from three market segments—business, leisure, and group—and to manipulate rate categories for their hotel rooms, ranging from \$70 to \$110. Each day the students, who lived in dormitories on campus, attended lectures on the U.S. lodging industry, yield management, and hotel organizational structure. They also worked in the Binenkorb Computer Center in Statler Hall several times a day, brushing up on their computer skills while learning how to close rates and juggle expenses for an imaginary 250-room downtown hotel that had been taken over by the Bank of Syracuse.

"They keep it very intensive, which is a good thing—I love it," said Rebecca Hallac, a 17-year-old from Scarsdale, NewYork who was drawn to the course because of her interest in travel and hotels. "For me it's amazing—I get to stay in the lab and really learn."

On Day 13 of the course, the students were hunched over computers, trying to figure out how to make their simulated

#### "As much as I've worked at hotels and gained experience from hotels, I thought I didn't learn as much as I did coming here."

hotels earn \$70,000 a week. Brandon Lane, a 17-year-old from Princeton, New Jersey, had targeted the entertainment budget as an expense that could be cut to increase his hotel's weekly profits, which stood at \$69,000. Should his hotel offer live music every night or just have a piano player in the lobby? As he looked at his entertainment costs, Lane considered the downside of reducing the budget: "You can't reduce it too much, or it will affect the hotel's occupancy," he said.

After Summer College, Lane flew to Denver for a three-week internship at Sage Hospitality, a company that operates 60 hotels across the country. With the course at Cornell and the experience of working in three hotels and a restaurant, the summer provided him with both an academic and a hands-on introduction to the hospitality industry.

"I'm hoping I'll be able to see what in the hospitality industry I'm interested in and whether I'll pursue it," he said. "And I'll be able to use what I've learned here and apply it there."

For students like Lane who are interested in pursuing a career in hospitality, the course offers a taste of what SHA is like and whets their interest in applying. This fall, 29 graduates of the Summer College program matriculated at the school, either as freshmen or as transfer students. "They came from programs over the past three years, but it's still an amazing number, especially when you consider that the incoming freshman class is 175 students," Reneta said. "It seems that Summer College is a significant conduit in terms of recruiting students into the hotel school."

As he enters his senior year, Lane says he will definitely apply to Cornell, preferably as an early-decision candidate. "I'd really like to get into this school," he said. "It's just such a nice place."

Learning about the hospitality industry and SHA is not the only benefit of the course. Mark hopes that it also teaches the high school students the skills they need to succeed in college. "I think what we do is present a very realistic picture of the nature of the work that they'll go through when they get to college," he said. "We don't coddle them. One of our slogans for the course is, 'This is summer college—not summer camp.' And we tell them that on Day One, when their parents are here."

Despite the intense workload and the long hours in class, Rebecca Hallac, who also wants to apply to SHA, said the instructors kept the course entertaining and that she couldn't wait to attend each morning's lecture to see what the McCarthys would teach her. "The reason I love this and the reason it opened up my eyes is because of the professors," she said. "They really are incredible. They teach in a way that's fun and understandable."



In four years, Reneta and Mark McCarthy have made Hotel Operations Management: Tactics for Profitability one of the most popular courses offered in Cornell's Summer College.

## Summer internships: Opportunity 101

very summer, Hotelies continue their journey to the top of the hospitality industry through real-world internships. From New York City to the Bahamas to Hong Kong, students tested their leadership skills this summer in the food and beverage, real estate, and hotel operations industries. A combination of Cornell credentials, connections, talent, and determination keep Hotelies ahead of the game.

Bridget Cohn '13 knew exactly where she wanted to work and set out to create her own internship. When George Markantonis, president and managing director of Atlantis Bahamas, appeared with Sol Kerzner, the founder, chairman and CEO of Kerzner International, as part of the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series in fall 2010, she made sure to introduce herself to him. "After meeting him at the DDLS, I emailed George constantly," Cohn said. "I knew I wanted to work with Atlantis LIVE. It's a unique program that brings together music and hotels, one of the only resorts that do this."

A month later, the phone rang with Markantonis on the line. After interviewing and securing a work permit, Cohn flew to the Atlantis Bahamas to work on events featuring Jerry Seinfeld, Miss Teen USA, Jordin Sparks, Jason Derullo, and Jimmy Fallon. Her advice to others with an ideal internship in mind comes straight out of the Hotelie playbook: "Put yourself out there and pursue your dream," she said. "Don't be afraid to take advantage of the alumni directory and the DDLS. This was just the beginning!"

According to the "2010 Summer Work Experience Report," a survey of 469 SHA undergraduate students, 70 percent of those summer jobs were found through networking connections. "The economic crisis has increased the importance of networking to find

> jobs," said Molly deRoos, director of career management. "Students need to take a multipronged approach to find the internships they want."

Jennifer Davis '12 made different use of her Cornell connections. Faced with the intense competition of investment banking in New York City, the first thing she did was ask for advice from someone who had been there. "An experienced upperclassman



Twelve Hotelies currently work full-time in Avero's New York office. Included in this photo with interns Matthew Green '12 and Lindsey Brous '12 are, from left: (front) Katherine Kies '11, Cathy Popp '10, and Zoe Hartman '07, and (back) Lucas Jones '11, Robert Nieporent '09, Christopher Ager '09, and Gregory Peppel '07.

#### The Student Experience

told me how the industry works," she said. "Over 700 people apply for a single job. People in HR scan through these applications and pull names. Credentials and GPA are essential, of course, but even more important is for someone to pull your resume from the stack." To better her odds of getting a second and third look, Davis networked in New York City during the fall of her junior year—job-shadowing, coldcalling, and emailing alumni.

In early February, her efforts paid off. She was offered a position at UBS, an investment banking company that operates in more than 40 countries. "I'm a senior this year, and I'll be paying it forward," she said with a laugh.

But connections are just the beginning. "One mentor gave me this great advice—internships are ten-week interviews," Davis said. "Investment to interact with executive directors who empowered her to take on projects. "Twenty-one years old, and here I was preparing an entire book-length IPO pitch and listening in on conversations with the CEO. It was wonderful and difficult."

Each intern also had a "mentorship pod" that offered career advice over coffee or dinner. Davis's mentors were Hotelies. They set up networking happy hours and offered to call clients about career options. "Some students focus more on partying over the summer, but if you want to be successful, you have to work hard," she said. After completing her "ten-week interview," Davis now has an offer to work for UBS after graduation and can look forward to a much less stressful senior year.

Surrounded by interns from MIT, Princeton, Columbia, Harvard, and

> Yale, Davis differentiated herself through her minor in real estate finance. "Most of the interns in my group had no background in real estate," Davis said. "My bosses enjoyed working with me because I already knew how the industry worked."

> "Cornell School of Hotel Administration students are set apart from other students because of their hospitality background and strong business focus," said deRoos. "They are world travelers with work experi-

ence and entrepreneurs with great ideas, and they turn out to be so much more than the employer expected." Jennifer Davis '12 A strong business and hospitality education helped Lindsey Brous '1

education helped Lindsey Brous '12 and Matthew Green '12 fully live up to the Hotelie reputation during their ten-week internships at Avero, a consulting company that helps restaurants make better operational decisions.

"I have been recruiting Hotelies for many years, and there is no comparison out there," said Fidaije Nesimi, director of human resources at Avero. "These interns are bright, hardworking, analytical, and truly passionate about the hospitality industry."

"Interns were allowed to run with ideas," said Brous. "Avero knows exactly what we know through our Cornell education, and they expect to utilize interns fully." Prepared through classes such as business computing and Hotel Ezra Cornell, this year's interns analyzed scenarios such as how a casino conference might affect the surrounding restaurants, down to the small details like which tables in a restaurant might not perform up to par.

"Hotelies who have interned with Avero have always shown tremendous initiative," said account manager Robert Nieporent '09. "Merely completing the task is not adequate—they extrapolate

banking has a reputation for kicking your butt. I'd work 80-plus-hour weeks and be up until four a.m. delivering books to our clients." Although summer analysts are at the bottom of the totem pole, she also had many opportunities





Lindseybelle Photography

out to the next steps and determine how they can be of greater assistance beyond what you asked for."

Although Matthew Green has been involved with the hotel industry since he was twelve years old, this internship was the first big-city test of his leadership skills. "Cornell is close-knit like my home community in Kingston, Jamaica, while New York City is more cutthroat." Green felt at home in Avero's "fun, closeknit culture," however. With a huge kitchen, a cooking contest, and a culinary tour of New York City, Avero gave interns chances to cultivate close ties while also exploring the industry. CEO Damian Mogavero even asked Green to give a presentation on Jamaican coffee. After presentation assignments in almost every one of his Cornell classes, Green was prepared to bring a piece of his culture to Avero executives.

"Before this internship, I wanted to find a job in Jamaica, because I'm a very family-oriented person," he said. "But now I can go anywhere in the world. I realize how many opportunities are out there."

On the other side of the world, Jonathan Sit '13 tested his endurance and leadership skills at the Four Seasons Hong Kong in 2010. He spent the first five weeks of his internship there cleaning rooms. "Of course, I was disappointed at first," he said, "but I gained knowledge I never would have."

His role was flipped for the last three weeks of his internship, and he became supervisor to the same staff he had just spent weeks scrubbing with, many of whom were older than he is. "It was awkward at first, but it was a learning experience in leadership," he said. "As a supervisor, you have five floors all to yourself. It was a huge lesson on thinking independently."

This past summer Sit returned to the Four Seasons to intern at Caprise, which he described as Hong Kong's only French restaurant with three Michelin stars. "The standard was so high for me as a server," he said. "To guests, you are a staff member, not an intern. There's no excuse to mess up. I learned what it takes to run a threestar restaurant." For next year's



Jonathan Sit '13

challenge, Sit aims to tackle another aspect of the hospitality industry, either marketing or real estate.

As undergraduates buckle down for another year of studies, they also begin their search for summer jobs. Alumni have the opportunity to help connect and cultivate these future leaders of the hospitality industry.

"The Cornell alumni network is such an important tool," said Cohn. "When alumni make themselves available for career guidance, internship support, and campus visits, they open the door to so many possibilities." H



Matthew Green '12 and Lindsey Brous '12

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Celebration panelists (from left) Linda Choong '90 of the National Basketball Association, and Jon Daniels '99 of the Texas Rangers Winners of the 2011 "BIG Idea" Competition

Harris Rosen '61, receives a standing ovation at the banquet honoring him as Cornell Entrepreneur of the Year 2011

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### The learning of entrepreneurship

or Neil Tarallo, the new executive director of the Pillsbury Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship (PIHE), entrepreneurship is not just about starting a business: it's a way of thinking, a way of life, a philosophy. He emphasizes that entrepreneurship is not an inborn trait, but a learned behavior that can be taught. As such, entrepreneurship can be approached as an academic discipline through a combination of course work and experiential learning opportunities. Tarallo has big plans for entrepreneurship education here, and he is busily putting them into practice.

At the core of this effort is the PIHE staff and an academic team that includes senior lecturer Susan Fleming, adjunct assistant professor Adam Klausner, and lecturer James Quest '56, who has also served as an entrepreneur in residence. The team is being joined by two executives in residence for 2011-12: Jacob Wright, president and CEO, Action Companies, and Elizabeth Ngonzi, MMH '98, founder of Amazing Taste, LLC. Rounding out the team will be the students themselves, as Tarallo wants to create a student advisory board in addition to the PIHE's existing advisory board, which has strong alumni representation.

The support of Lee Pillsbury '69 has been the "icing on the cake," as Tarallo put it. "As I discussed my plans with Lee, he said simply that he wants to see us give our students as many opportunities as possible to learn about and experience entrepreneurship. His support is instrumental in creating this vision of a two-facet approach."

Tarallo and the PIHE team are analyzing and developing two approaches to entrepreneurship education simultaneously. For the classroom, he is planning an academic concentration in hospitality entrepreneurship for 2012. The team has reviewed all current courses to ensure consistency throughout the curriculum and consider ways to expand course offerings. For the practice element, he is always looking for ways for students to participate in entrepreneurial activities. "We want to make sure our students have as many opportunities as possible to put this classroom learning into practice," he said. "Because being an entrepreneur is a behavior, PIHE supports the classroom by giving our students opportunities to try out that behavior."

The two-facet approach to entrepreneurship is a natural for Tarallo, who studied entrepreneurship at Syracuse University and operated his own businesses, including a quick-print shop and the well regarded Ithaca Photo stores of a previous era. He participated in developing SU's top-ranked entrepreneurship program.

Tarallo is clear that he hopes to hear about entrepreneurial activity from students and alumni. "We want to know who is starting a business and how they are doing," he said. "Not only are we interested in how well our graduates are doing, but we also consider this to be one measurement for the success of our program." Eventually, Tarallo wants the PIHE to maintain a database of students and alumni who have launched businesses, with a goal of connecting current students with those business operators. "We want to create an incubator for entrepreneurial opportunity," he said.

The PIHE program will reach beyond campus with Empowerment through Entrepreneurship, a program that Tarallo pioneered at Syracuse and has moved to Cornell. A new course will allow students to study South African entrepreneurial activity and then study for six weeks at Stellenbosch University, near Cape Town. During



Neil Tarallo

that time, the students will form teams to work with disadvantaged entrepreneurs in the townships. "We have now been invited to expand the program to Rwanda," he said.

Another program that Tarallo has brought to Cornell is the Entrepreneurship Boot Camp for Disabled Veterans (EBV), a multi-university program that he brought to Syracuse in 2007. Cornell has already hosted 20 veterans in EBV for a week of training. The program also gives the participants mentors for the next couple of years.

The new concentration in entrepreneurship will look not just at for-profit startups but also for entrepreneurial activities within corporations and opportunities for social entrepreneurship. Tarallo promises that the development process will be "truly student-driven": "Students are our customers, and we want to make sure that we create opportunities and programming that take advantage of what they really want."



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### Cornell University School of Hotel Administration **Upcoming Events**



*Save the Dates* 2011 - 2012

Left Photo: Steve Hilton, Robert Steel, New York City Deputy Mayor, David Marriott, Andrew Tisch '71; Middle Photo: Dean Michael Johnson, Princess Padmaja Kumari Mewar, Lisa Hilton, Steve Hilton; Right Photo: 3rd Annual Cornell Icon & Innovator Awards Dinner, The Waldorf=Astoria New York

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*March 6, 2012 The Ritz-Carlton Berlin* 

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January 17, 2012 Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai

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> June 5, 2012 New York City

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Cornell University School of Hotel Administration

### A message from the president

ver the past decade, the Cornell Hotel Society has been faced with unprecedented paradigm shifts in the economy and the social landscape. The first is the Great Recession: the second is the advent of social networking. Both have transformed the way we live as well as the role the CHS plays in our lives. Over the past year I have had the opportunity to visit many of our 60 chapters, attend a number of the more than 100 events we host annually, and of course meet with hundreds of our alumni from around the world. The energy, enthusiasm, and loyalty of our members for this society has never been stronger, and the value that bond creates has never been more important for all of us.

Our executive board has been equally motivated in outlining a vision for the future and the respective initiatives needed to maintain the value of CHS membership. At the beginning of 2011, we defined a three-year plan focused around our commitment to further develop chapter programming, member benefits, chapter financial assistance, job placement, internships and mentoring, and industry-faculty partnerships. It also includes an enhanced communications plan for our society leadership, the SHA dean's office, and our alumni; it also addresses leadership accountability and training and our membership drive and scholarship fundraising.

Each of these efforts is well underway. and I am pleased to report that chapter programming is robust and that support has been provided for the faculty road show, student and alumni hiring, and the creation of new member benefits. Quarterly calls are taking place with the executive board, the dean's office, and CHS regional VPs and chapter presidents. "Letters from the President" are now being sent to welcome incoming and graduating students to the Society and to congratulate new lifetime members. Our individual and chapter membership



President David Skorton cuts up with the Birtha family—Jack (Class of 2026), Roxana, and Mark '94—at the 2011 Cornell Icon and Innovator Awards Dinner

drives were successful, raising funds for student scholarships, HEC contributions, leadership training, and chapter financial assistance.

The next year will usher in many new programs. Regan Taikatsadaporn '93, our first vice president, has worked closely with our collegiate CHS chapter to develop a mentoring program and increase communications with our future alumni. Liv Gussing '92, our second vice president, is working on an updated member survey that will roll out in 2012. We will be implementing a long-overdue automatic dues payment program requiring just one sign-up. New programs focused on social media and networking platforms are also being developed to usher in an evolution of our beloved alumni database.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to honor the passing of one of our most endearing alums, George Bantuvanis '51, who served on the executive board for decades. His large shoes were filled earlier this year by Steve Lipinski '72, who has done a great job managing our finances as treasurer. Recently Erin Rodriguez was promoted and we have had the pleasure of

welcoming Nickie Fredenburg to our family as alumni affairs coordinator. She and Christine Natsios '85, director of alumni affairs, continue to work tirelessly to address everyone's needs day in and day out.

The strength of the Cornell Hotel Society has always come from its membership. The executive board has merely steered the ambition, motivation, and passion of our collective alumni to better the visibility, connectivity, and legacy of the School of Hotel Administration. Members of the Cornell Hotel Society truly share a unique bond that supports relationships regardless of years or miles of separation. Once again, I urge you to be involved. It has only been through the participation, inspiration, and leadership of our members that the Society has endured for 85 years to become the icon of alumni organizations and the "original social network."

Best wishes,

Mark Birtho

Mark Birtha '94 President, Cornell Hotel Society markbirtha@msn.com

### CHS Europe, Middle East, and Africa celebrates 50 years

embers and guests of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa region of the Cornell Hotel Society traveled to New York City and Ithaca in early May to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the European chapter. As has long been the tradition, the three-day gathering combined business, education, and lots of conviviality centered around great food and wine.

The program started with a visit to New York City on May 5, with accommodations at the New York Helmsley Hotel. A busy day started with educational visits to two special hotels, beginning with the Smyth, a Thompson operation co-owned by **Stephen Brandman '85**, who was the first president of the London chapter. The group then moved on to a cobbled street in Soho to visit

<image>

Sonja Cacic gets a warm official welcome from Dean Johnson

Photos by Ivica Cacic, MMH '98

the Crosby Street Hotel, operated by Firmdale, which specializes in individually designed boutique hotels.

Two blocks from the Smyth, the group visited Ground Zero. The power of that experience was magnified by the fact that President Barack Obama was due to lay a wreath there later that day to commemorate those who died in the attacks of September 11, 2001 and to mark the end of Osama bin Laden, who had been killed on May 2.

After a traditional New York deli lunch and browsing around the Soho area, we were generously welcomed to a tea tasting by John Harney '56 and son Michael '77, master tea blenders, at their magnificent tea store. Our hosts explained the entire process of producing fine teas, from selecting crops to post-harvest processing.

Hotel manager François Luigi, IMHI '92 hosted a cocktail reception with wonderful hors d'oeuvres at Setai Fifth Avenue. Thanks to Philippe Bijaoui, IMHI '92 for arranging this splendid get-together. With an early bus departure the next morning, this was no late evening, though.

On arrival at the Statler Hotel, we received a grand welcome from Statler general manager **Rick Adie '75**, Dean Michael Johnson, food and beverage manager **Nicole Boosembark-Baker '02**, and human resources director **Rick Kuhar '86**. After a fast check-in, everyone moved on to the hotel's Taylor Room for a Mexican fajita buffet.

A hectic program awaited us for the next two days, starting with the CHS membership meeting, then an interesting update on the Center for Hospitality Research, a tour of the school, and then a bus ride to a reception and dinner at the Aurora Inn, where we enjoyed a spectacular sunset over Cayuga Lake. Banfi provided the excellent wines. After dinner, we returned to the hotel for an afterglow in the Regent Lounge.

Saturday started with an educational program, Contemporary Topics in Hospitality Management. Dean Johnson moderated a panel featuring SHA faculty members Cathy Enz, Bill Carroll, and Jan deRoos '78, MS '80, PhD '94 speaking on pricing dynamics in Europe, recent trends in distribution, and trends in lodging, capital, and transaction markets, respectively. Then we were off on a sightseeing trip to the Ithaca gorges and Taughannock Falls, with lunch at the historic Taughannock Farms Inn next to the falls. The inn is owned by Susan Baker Sheridan '78, MPS '80 and her husband, Tom. The afternoon ended with free time on campus and visits to the Johnson Art Museum, the Cornell Plantations, and the Cornell bookstore.

A spectacular evening awaited us at the Statler Hotel, with a cocktail reception, gala dinner, and Deiv's



Michael Harney '77 pours while John '56 supervises at Harney and Son's Fine Teas

Scholarship Auction. The reception, in the Taylor Room, was hosted by the dean and his wife, Jill Kobus Johnson. An Evening in Verona was the theme of dinner in Taverna Banfi, an event hosted by none other than EMEA member **Michael Cortelletti, MMH '99**. Dinner was followed by an afterglow in the Regent Lounge or, for the daring, a stroll in Collegetown. Thanks to all the participants from CHS chapters in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East region and to our U.S. friends from earlier EMEA events who joined us again. Sincere thanks to Dean Michael Johnson for inviting us to celebrate this great event at our alma mater, and thanks to alumni director **Christine Natsios '85** for her help in organizing the event. Also great thanks to Philippe, who did a great job as our omnipresent chief organizer and coordinator.



Happy gang: Deiv Salutskij '71, Ivica Cacic, MMH '98, Jan Willem den Ridder '80, his wife, Laura, Philippe Bijaoui, IMHI '92, and Estelle den Ridder



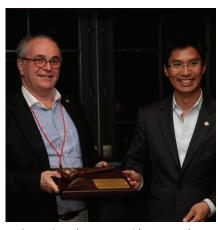
Arenda Weishaupt and Douglas Gordon '52



**Christine Natsios '85** with **Wolf Wagschal, PDP '96** and his fiancée, Monica Babilon



Mario Kiefer, PDP '74, and Véronique Poitrault, MPS '82



Deiv receives the past president's gavel from CHS first vice president Regan Taikitsadaporn '93



Bill Melvin '70 and Michael Cortelletti, MMH '99



Gisela Kreuzig and Tina Salutskij enjoyed exploring the many sights at Cornell and beyond



Hans Weishaupt '64, past Statler GM



Ezekiel (Ziggy) Hacohen '63 and Bill Eaton '61

#### Alumni News

### **Chapter events**



#### **CHS** Leadership

CHS hosted its third Leadership Orientation at the Aria Resort and Casino in Las Vegas at the end of June. Leadership from Latin America and New England participated in the one-day program, created to share best practices and review tools to succeed as a chapter. Alumni bonded while exchanging ideas. Participants included representatives from New England, Mexico, Central America, and South America. From left: Alison Cassorla '03, Mexico; Daniel Sternfels '76, Central America; Guido Salvatori, MMH '02, South America; Hans Pfister '95, regional VP for Mexico and Central and South America; Christine Natsios '85, SHA Alumni Affairs; and Mark Birtha '94, president, CHS. (Not pictured: Catherine Killian Tang '80, New England)

#### Arabian Gulf



**Paul Leimbacher, MMH '09** and **Megan Malone '06** fly the Cornell banner at the Arabian Hotel Investment Conference.

The Arabian Hotel Investment Conference, held this year from April 30 to May 2 in Dubai, provided a perfect setting to showcase the various educational programs offered at SHA and to answer questions from visitors. For the school, the event was also an opportunity to gather fellow alumni from the region and beyond, as well as to connect with other hoteliers. On that occasion. Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts generously hosted a gala dinner for alumni and invited guests at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management.

Beijing



The Beijing chapter gathered with alumni from Hong Kong, Singapore, and other parts of China on March 23 for a dinner with Professor Sherri Kimes. The event was held in connection with the opening cocktail of the China Hotel Development and Financing Conference.



Eleven Beijing Hotelies mingled with 19 alumni of the Stanford Graduate School of Business at a summer Family Brunch on June 25 at the home of **Denis Fasquelle, IMHI '97** and his wife, Nicole Chang, Stanford GSB '94. Everybody had a great time. From left, back row: David Peng, father of Jane Peng, **Brayno Braynov '13, Lulu Jiang '12, Jennifer Tom '00**, Denis Fasquelle, **Jane (Jing) Peng '09**, Nicole Chang. Front row: **Vanessa Tang '10**, Ying Yin Shi, MPS '05, **Connie (Xiangni) Bian '01, Pauline (Xiao) Li '12, Chris (Hing Sing) Tang '07** 

#### Bermuda



The Bermuda chapter enjoyed wine and cheese and a spectacular setting at The Reefs last May.

The Bermuda chapter held its first official gathering in quite some time on May 17. David Dodwell, MMH '08 hosted the group at the beautiful Reefs Club for wine and cheese and a tour. The group looks forward not only to hosting several of these gatherings on an annual basis, but also to inviting all Bermuda-based Cornell alumni to join them for their next function.

The chapter also welcomes Greg Bodenlos '10, Audrey Smatt, and Steve Martin '78 to their board.

#### Northern California

Fifteen Hotelies, friends, and family spent the morning of June 19 at Glide, San Francisco's soup kitchen, making over 500 sandwiches. This event marked the Northern California chapter's first San Francisco volunteer event in many years. The chapter will further its philanthropic efforts with its Silent Auction during December's holiday event, raising funds for the Gail Minsky Scholarship Fund and various local charities. Please find out how you may support the chapter by contacting any chapter board member.

The CHS NorCal Summer Intern Event took place July 26 at E&O Trading Company. Chris Hemmeter '86, owner of E&O Trading Company Restaurant and Quest Hospitality Ventures, kindly hosted the group at his wonderful establishment. His intern, Vincent Cusma '13, came up with the idea for the gathering and was instrumental in rounding up all the Hotelies working as interns in the area. This was an opportunity for them to connect with each other, network with local alums, and learn more about what's happening on campus. It was also an opportunity for them to get to know the six chapter board members who were there. Miranti Ojong '02 organized the event with help from Meli James 'oo.

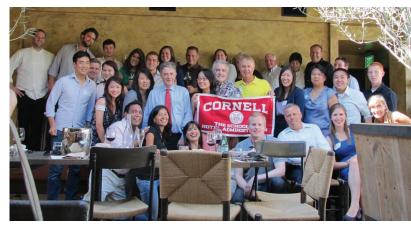
San Francisco's North Beach has a new restaurant, the Park Tavern, and the chapter enjoyed an exclusive preopening tour there on August 31. The group enjoyed canapes from chef Jennifer Puccio, a signature Cornell cocktail, and wine from the Regal Wine Company. The Park Tavern's Anna Marlowe spoke to the group, along with Rivera Public Relations, about restaurant PR.

#### Chicago



Members of the Northern California chapter held a Summer Intern Event on July 26.

#### Southern California



A great crowd turned out to see Giuseppe Pezzotti '84, MMH '96 lead a "Culinary Journey at Mezze Los Angeles" on July 17. Mezze is the debut eatery from the newly formed Real Restaurant Group, led by chef Micah Wexler '04, Michael Kassar '04, Matt Bendik '05, and David Koral.



The summer barbecue hosted by **Michael '82** and Michele **Medzigian** has become a popular annual tradition for the Chicago chapter. This year's party took place on July 9.



D.C./Baltimore's Restaurant Symposium and State of the Industry panelists, from left: Geoff Tracy, Gary Thompson, **Jay Treadwell '61**, Phyllis Richman, and **David Moran '88** 

#### D.C./Baltimore

This past May, the Washington, D.C./Baltimore chapter hosted its first annual Restaurant Symposium and State of the Industry event. Its aim was to examine, from various perspectives, the state of the restaurant business, one of the fastest-growing service segments of the hospitality industry. Jay Treadwell '61, managing partner of the Optimum Group, moderated the symposium. Panel members included chef Geoff Tracy, Lynne Breaux of the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington, former Washington Post critic Phyllis Richman, Gary Thompson, SHA professor of services operations management, and Clyde's managing director. David Moran '88. The event was held at Clyde's of Gallery Place.

The symposium was a great success. Hotelies and other industry professionals net-

worked at this gorgeous venue while discussing the recession and the economy, industry challenges, lessons learned, and blogs and social media, and looked ahead at what the industry might expect. In the end, creativity and resiliency seemed to be two of the greatest factors cited for past and future success. The industry association is projecting 3.9 percent restaurant growth in the region for 2011 and 5.7 percent revenue growth for hotel restaurants in particular.

#### Finland, Russia, and the Baltics Jukka Laitamäki, MS '89, PhD

'90, a professor at New York University's Tisch Center, presented an excellent talk on creative leadership in boutique hotels to the members of the Finland, Russia, and the Baltics chapter on August 19. Deiv Salutskij '71 hosted the breakfast meeting at the Hotel Seurahuone in



Longtime friends **Tom Pedulla '60**, Jay Messer, and **Skip Sack '61** savor a special evening held in Skip's honor.

Helsinki. Sebastian Björksten, IMHI '98, Jere Talonen, IMHI '97, Mikael (Micke) Swanljung, MPS '81, Esko Paalasmaa '76, Veikko Vuoristo, Heikki Vanhanen, GMP '03, new member Karl von Ramm, MMH '10, of Estonia, Kent Nadbornik '69, and Martti Palonperä '77, MPS '94 were present.

Micke had to rush from that meeting to host a lunch for the Dalai Lama at the Bourse Club, of which he is the chairman. The Dalai Lama wanted to meet with Finland's top financial society and chose the club as the best venue for that purpose. He gave a talk on ethics in business to 190 club members.

#### **Central Florida**

The Central Florida chapter went bowling April 7 and discovered some new talent. Paulene Kawasjee '04 and Larry Stuart '76 turned out to be the Pin Queen and King of Central Florida! Many local alumni showed up for this event, and the group was especially happy to welcome **Tom '58** and Mary Ann **Chevoor**.

#### South Florida

More than 115 SHA alumni and friends gathered at the Viceroy Miami hotel on April 30 to honor **Burton M. "Skip" Sack '61** as the Cornell Hotel Society Southeast Regional Hotelie of the Year. The CHS South Florida chapter hosted the successful event.

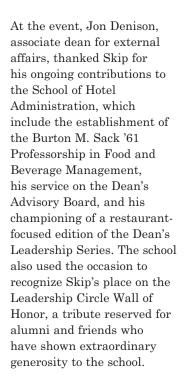
Among the many speakers who paid tribute to Skip were his close friends **Bob Samuels '60**, Jay Messer, and **Tom Pedulla '60**. Tom said, "Skip exemplifies what a Hotelie should be. The world would be a better place if we had more Skip Sacks, because Skip would prefer to do things for people and causes rather than boast about the things he does for them."



Micke Swanljung, MPS '81 greets the Dalai Lama on August 19 at the Helsinki Bourse Club, where His Holiness gave a talk on business ethics.



Cool shoes: The Central Florida chapter celebrates Larry Stuart '76 and Paulene Kawasjee '04's triumphs on the lanes.



"The CHS South Florida chapter board was honored to recognize Skip Sack for his contributions to our school, the community, and the food and beverage industry," said William Balinbin '04, CHS South Florida president. "It took a little wrestling, but we were able to convince Skip, eternally humble, to accept this award."

#### Brian Connors '97, the

evening's master of ceremonies, also conducted a lively auction that raised money for the South Florida chapter scholarship fund.

#### Georgia

The Georgia chapter kicked off 2011 on February 24 with a happy hour event at the SweetWater Brewing Company. Twenty-five Hotelies gathered to catch up while sampling a variety of ales and porter. New chapter president **Meri Goldstein '04** organized the event.



**Bryan Esposito '01**, Adam Maclennan '06, Rodolfo Carlos '05, and Courtney Esposito '01 enjoy the Georgia chapter's first gathering of the year at SweetWater Brewery.

On May 21, 50 Georgia Hotelies, along with their families, were treated to a very special lunch and tour of the Serenbe Community south of Atlanta. Serenbe is a thousand-acre national model for the future of balanced development in the United States-focusing on land preservation, agriculture, energy efficiency, green building, walkability, highdensity building, arts and culture, and community living for multiple generations.



Georgia chapter president Meri Goldstein '04 and Serenbe event host Garnie Nygren '05

After the group dined on the Serenbe Inn's famous fried chicken, host **Garnie Nygren** '**o5** presented the story of how she, her parents, and her two sisters transformed the original 60 acres and farmhouse into the multi-use development it is today. For the complete story, please visit *www.serenbecommunity.com*. This was the first of what the group hopes will become an annual family event on the CHS-GA calendar.

Seventeen Hotelies gathered on August 3 at Taco Mac at Perimeter for the first InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) Hotelie Lunch. In attendance were: Andrew Hairetis '92; Bumjoo Maclennan, MMH '05; Carolyn Carter, MPS '91; Christian Hempell '96; David Mei '94; Jeff Garber '92; Karen Gilbride 'oo; Leah Corgel, MMH '09; Matt Walker '02; Michell Lee '01: Radium Yan. MMH '10; Rodolfo Carlos, MMH '05; Stephanie Ochs '99; Travis Ray '94; Wen Yu '05; Yosung Chang, MMH '07; and Kristin Sander '99. Kristin was visiting from IHG's Denham, U.K. office and joined the group for lunch. It was a great opportunity to get acquainted and share some embarrassing and memorable stories from the hotel school. On August 11, incoming students Austin Hulse '15, Carolyn Ralph '13, and their parents were the guests of honor at a lunch gathering of 20 people at the Mellow Mushroom restaurant in Brookhaven. After a welcome from chapter



New students Austin Hulse '15 (on left) and Carolyn Ralph '13 (center) were guests of honor at the Georgia chapter's annual welcome event. With them, from left, are Nicolle Wiggins '14, Adam Dennett '11, Ben Gatchell '11, Meri Goldstein '04, and Robert Mandelbaum '81.

president Meri Goldstein '04, the alumni in attendance shared their favorite and least favorite memories of Ithaca and wished the new Hotelies the best of success in school.

#### Atlanta Lodging Outlook

A record crowd of 400 Atlanta area hotel industry professionals attended the 13th annual Atlanta Lodging Outlook breakfast seminar on September 7. This year's event was held at the InterContinental Hotel in Buckhead and was hosted by **Brian Ettelman '87**, director of catering.



Seventeen Hotelies swap stories at the first IHG Hotelie Lunch.



Mark Woodworth '77 speaks at the Atlanta Lodging Outlook seminar. Dean Michael Johnson (right) moderated the panel discussion.

Atlanta Lodging Outlook is organized by the Georgia chapter with promotional assistance from the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Georgia Hotel and Lodging Association. The seminar is designed to provide hotel owners and operators with the information they need to prepare their marketing plans and budgets for the upcoming year.

This year Dean Michael Johnson served as moderator for the event. Joining Dean Johnson from Ithaca was Jon Denison, associate dean for external affairs.

Meri Goldstein '04 welcomed the attendees and then turned the proceedings over to Dean Johnson, who made opening comments and moderated a panel of local area experts:

- Roger Tutterow, PhD, professor of economics with Mercer University
- Mark Vaughan, executive vice president of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Tim Hart, executive vice president of TravelClick
- Mark Woodworth '77, president of PKF Hospitality Research

Proceeds from the event help support the Georgia chapter's scholarship fund. With the record attendance level, the chapter will be able to contribute \$10,000 to the fund this year.

#### Hawaii

CHS Hawaii hosted a Cinco de Mayo event at the Kahala Hotel and Resort with the help of Ryan Donn 'oo, who recently moved to the islands as managing director of Trinity Investments. Over 35 people were there to enjoy the "Kahalagaritas" and "Mexi-wai'i" pupus. Everyone flocked to the sites being run throughout the evening, as views of the Presidential and Imperial suites were not to be missed. Among the partiers were Hotelies Ron Watanabe '69, Buck Laird '64, Jennifer Chun, MPS '95, Dave Berry '59, Kim Hehir '94, Tom Riley '79, Steve Jhang, Julie Morikawa '01, Kazuaki Nakano, MPS '83, and other Cornell alumni Stephen Lee '87 (A&S), Ted Garduque, M Arch '75, Michael Leineweber. B Arch '69, and Matthew Meyers.

On July 27, the chapter was pleased to host a conference, "The Billboard Effect: Online Travel Agent Impact on Non-OTA Reservation Volume," with the Pacific



Over 120 people filled the Molokai Ballroom at the Sheraton Waikiki for CHS Hawaii's conference, "The Billboard Effect."

Asia Travel Association at the Sheraton Waikiki. The event drew over 120 attendees from across the Hawaii hospitality industry. SHA associate professor Chris Anderson presented the results of his research on what he has termed the billboard effect. William Koo, chief marketing strategist for Castle Resorts, also spoke.

#### London

On July 12, CHS London toured the future site of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. The 20 members, friends, and family who came along included some alumni who had recently moved to London and a few others who hadn't participated in a while. Led by a guide, the group followed a tow path in the formerly industrial Lower Lea valley to get a good view

#### Hong Kong



Team Big Red triumphed again at the 2011 Stanley International Dragonboat Championships in Hong Kong. Gold Bowl Champions in the mixed division, from left, back row: Nigel Summers, IMHI '94; Yi Kai Tan '06 (A&S); Phillip Q. Hu '07; Howard Ho '05; Keir MacPherson '05; Noel Merainer '00; front row: Nicole Chan '04; Margaret Hwang, Darlena Yue Zhai '07, Claire Hao, MMH '08, and Yvette Jong '02



Cinco de Mayo at the Kahala Hotel and Resort



Hotelies and friends relax after a tour of the newly opened Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong, the World's Highest Hotel. From left, back row: Brandon Tsai; Otto Rincon '01; Pete Wu, MMH '01; Younghwa Kim; Aaron Park '99; Howard Ho '05; Su-Chien Lin '04; front row: Christa Chi '09; Jhorna Rincon '02; Yvette Jong '01; Lei Zhou '10; Vanessa Tang '10; Amanda Lam '96; Robert Allender '75; Ada Lo '92, MPS '93; and Gary Lam '90



CHS London toured the new W London Leicester Square on May 18.

of the main venues, including the Olympic Stadium, the Basketball and Handball Arenas, the Velodrome, and the Aquatics Center, which are all complete or near completion.

This project is reclaiming over 2.5 square kilometers of contaminated land and transforming it into an attractive area designed for life in the 21st century, with a strong focus on sustainability and legacy. Over 95 percent of materials from necessary demolition are being reused in construction projects.

The London 2012 Olympic games will result in a major economic transformation of East London, including infrastructure improvements such as new transport links throughout the city and new housing (for example, the Athlete's Village will become permanent housing for key workers such as teachers and nurses after the Games), plus retail and technology. In the period leading up to the Games, thousands of jobs have been created and the government is focusing on instilling a sense of British culture, sports involvement, and volunteering in the community.

On September 27, CHS London members were treated to a champagne reception and tour of the new five-star Corinthia Hotel. The group enjoyed the opportunity to tour the grand public space and luxurious bedrooms, and were grateful to the staff for their generous hospitality. They were thrilled to welcome new alumni and a few recent graduates of the SHA's General Managers Program to London.



London's 2012 Olympic Stadium as seen by a group from CHS London on July 12



On September 7, a group of Hotelies active in the hotel investment sector enjoyed a networking opportunity organized by the chapter to coincide with the first Hotel Investment Conference Europe. The private cocktail reception was hosted by **Cris Broderick '98** at the newly restored Savoy Hotel.



Boston Lodging Pulse panelists, from left, front row: Chris Muller, MPS '85, PhD '92, dean, BU School of Hospitality Administration; Andrea Foster '96; Bill O'Donnell; Adam Medros; back row: Erik Browning '96; Tim Hart; Reed Woodworth '84; Bradford Hudson '93, professor, BU SHA; Barry Bloom '86, MBA '01, associate professor, BU SHA

#### **New England**

The New England chapter of CHS hosted their first annual Boston Lodging Pulse on September 27. This panel provided expert perspectives on emerging trends impacting hotel profitability for the coming year and beyond.

The event was co-hosted with Boston University's School of Hospitality Administration, where Christopher Muller, MPS '85, PhD '92, is dean. The full house, consisting of alumni from both programs and local industry leaders, heard economic forecasts for the region, as compared to national averages, and engaged in a lively Q&A. The event was followed by a reception.

#### **Central New York**



Twenty-seven members of CHS Central New York got together on July 8 at the Onondaga Golf and Country Club in Fayetteville to meet Dean Johnson and his wife, Jill, at a reception hosted by **Steven '86 and Josh '93 Wells**. Chapter president **Becky Burns, MPS '82** helped the Wells brothers organize the event and was the evening's emcee.

#### Norway



Leif Evensen '66, past president of CHS Norway, presents honorary membership in the Cornell Hotel Society to **Olav Thon**, owner of Thon Hotels, the largest hotel chain in Norway, on June 8. Olav, who is also the largest hotel owner in Brussels, has over the years generously supported the chapter's Young Hotelier of the Year award and now also supports the Hotelier of the Year award. Thon Hotels has sent executives to Cornell for many years to attend the General Managers Program.

Olav relates that J. Willard Marriott, the late founder of Marriott Hotels, was a good friend and an inspiration to him in developing his own chain. Olav visited Mr. Marriott in Washington, D.C., and Marriott was his guest in Norway.



From left, Tarje Hellebust, GM of the Radisson Blu Hotel Plaza, and Hotelier of the Year award winner Nina Askvik, Radisson Blu Hotel NORGE, pose with Ådne Skurdal, president of CHS Norway, at the Serviceforum 2011 gala in Stavanger.

For the second year, CHS Norway collaborated with Serviceforum in March to award the prestigious Hotelier of the Year award during the conference's gala dinner. This year's winner, Nina Askvik from Radisson Blu Hotel Norge, received a scholarship covering all expenses related to participating in last June's General Manager's Program in Ithaca. Representing the Norway chapter on the jury were Ådne Skurdal,

president; Nils Korsvoll '09, vice president; and Kjersti Ringholm, GMP '08. Serviceforum is an event run by the students at the Norwegian School of Hotel Administration in Stavanger.

#### Oregon

On a perfect summer evening, CHS Oregon got together for a fresh summer pasta and some of **Court** Carrier, MPS '76's wine ("hardly any deaths so far!") at the home of Brad, B Arch '83, MS '96 and Ellie, B Arch '91 Wellstead. A special treat was chatting with John Scrugham '13 and incoming freshman Brittany Scrugham '15. Also attending were: Marina Roukalova '07, Sasha '89 and Laura Lacey, Court, MPS '76 and Kathy Carrier, Nicole Davis, MMH '96, her husband, James Guinn, and their daughter, Aurelia Davis-Guinn, Class of '35.

#### Philadelphia/New Jersey

#### **Rocky Mountain**

On July 28, approximately 70 Hotelies from across the region turned out for an evening reception in honor of Dean Michael Johnson at the Magnolia Hotel Denver. The event was graciously hosted by Eric Holtze, MMH '04 of Stout Street Hospitality. Dean Michael Johnson addressed the group and provided an update about what's going on back in Ithaca. Bud Saunders '45 was honored for his many years of service to the chapter, and the group was joined by several current SHA students who were home for the summer break. The crowd was lively and all seemed to enjoy themselves.

On September 17, over 50 Hotelies shared an intimate evening and a delicious meal in the home of **Debbie '75 and Ed '73 Mace**. Special guests included **Peter Rainsford '68, MS '70, PhD '74** and his wife, Fran, as well as **Mark '73, MBA '74** and Jutta **Bromberg** 



Members of the Philadelphia/New Jersey chapter celebrated Cornell Hockey's ECAC semifinal win against Dartmouth at Dock's Oyster House in Atlantic City in March. From left, Maureen Dougherty; Frank Dougherty '87, Dock's owner and host; Tyler Lavin, MMH '10; unknown; Jeff Vasser, CEO of the Atlantic Convention and Visitors Bureau, who brought the ECAC Championship to Atlantic City; Vickie Littler '96, chapter president; Jeanne Quain; Russ Urban '81 and his son, Chase '15; Bill Quain '74; and two unidentified guests. and Kathleen Ziegler, wife of the late John Ziegler '62. Past chapter president Reggie Gray '73 led a group of cyclists on a ride along Vail's Gore Valley trail and Kim Edwards 'o2 took a small, brave group for a hike along one of Vail's scenic trails. Several enjoyed a round of golf organized by the Maces. John Ziegler's memory was honored by the group and a toast by past chapter president Bill Caruso '70. The next generation of Hotelies joined the crowd, including Todd '89 and Lauren Harris's son Walker, age ten months.

#### Singapore



The Cornell MMH in Asia CHS Singapore Welcome Reception drew a happy crowd of more than 60 MMH alumni and MMH '12 students to the newly opened Fullerton Bay Hotel on May 26. Professor Chris Chan, dean of the Cornell-Nanyang Institute, hosted the event.

#### Tokyo

Team Sawayanagi, headed by Tomohiko Sawayanagi, MMH '98, took the team trophy at the Tokyo chapter's Big Red Cup event on June 24. The individual prize went to an AAP alum, Shin Sakurai '93. The match and the dinner party that followed were both held at the Prince Park Tower, with 44 in attendance. Host for the event was Hirohide Abe, MPS '93, president of the Tokyo chapter. His fellow organizers were Naoko Oku, MMH 'o8, Toshio Omiyama, MMH '96, Shingo Sakai, MMH '08, Tomohiko Sawayanagi, Chiaki Tanuma, MPS '80, and his assistant, Noriko Konuma. H



A lively and energetic crowd of 70 turned out for the Rocky Mountain chapter's July 28 reception with Dean Johnson at the Magnolia Hotel.

#### Seattle-Northwest



At a March 3 event at the Seattle World Trade Center, the Seattle-Northwest chapter helped **Ben Justus '08** raise over \$20,000 for EGBOK Mission, which is currently working in Cambodia to connect young adults with their potential as hospitality professionals. From left: **Mitch Mayers** '09, **Ray Manning '07**, **Samantha Noonan '03**, **Robbie Fritz '08**, **Andrew Dawson '03**, **Ben Justus**, **Ting Phonsanam '95**, **Jackie Murphy** '09, Megan Scott, and **Mitzi Fritz '76**.



The Prince Park Tower was the scene of the Tokyo chapter's Big Red Cup bowling competition in June. Seventeen Hotelies competed, and 44 gathered for dinner afterwards, including Hiroshi Mizohara, commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency.

#### Vancouver



**Stephen Darling '79** hosted a CHS reception for Cayuga's Waiters last January at his home in Vancouver. The chapter raised over \$2,000 to help offset travel costs for the Waiters' annual trip. The students also received accommodations at the Fairmont Hotel in exchange for a few performances for their guests, and John O'Neill, P '14 provided complimentary rooms for them at the Westin Resort and Spa at Whistler. Three Hotelies sang with the group last year: **Thomas Charbonnier '12, Sam Leonard '11,** and **Michael Millas '12**.

### Remembrance

Arthur Wladis '39	January 14, 2011
Wells M. Tanner '42	April 18, 2011
Kenneth I. Zeigler '42	May 18, 2011
Mary Ann O'Connell Willis '46	April 11, 2011
Joseph W. Barclay '47	April 21, 2011
Robert D. Flickinger '47	May 5, 2011
R. Davis Cutting '48	September 9, 2010
Thomas T. Rollinson '48,	
MBA '50	January 26, 2011
Minor C. Bond '49	March 29, 2011
George T. Bird '49	April 30, 2011
Henry J. Purchase '50	April 9, 2011
John F. Wieser '50	May 21, 2011
Richard L. Verkouteren '51	January 10, 2011
Alan Rose '52	August 23, 2011
George R. Hollis '54	September 3, 2010
George A. Mills '54	May 26, 2011
David C. Dorf '55	June 7, 2011
Lane Montesano '56	August 22, 2011
William C. Speidel '57	September 18, 2011
H. Reed Muller '58	March 21, 2011
Lane P. Montesano '59	August 22, 2011
Carol Erdman Merkle '61	December 28, 2010
Frank A. Richmond '61	September 1, 2011
Peter K. Binder '66	September 19, 2011
Thomas R. Lutz '71	October 13, 2008
Daniel R. Fleck '71	March 3, 2011
Hans-Joachim Kurzawa '71	November 24, 2010
Dennis G. Michael '72, MS '74	March 17, 2011
Jerome Fein '73	August 27, 2011
John R. Bramble '75	May 22, 2011

Ronald N. Winarick '78	June 25, 2011
Simon H. Milton, MPS '85	April 11, 2011
Dwight A. Scholl '86	February 24, 2011
Maureen L. Ahern Peterson,	
MPS '88	June 25, 2011
Christopher R. Taylor '90	June 9, 2011
Brice R. Phillips (Hon.)	July 1, 2011



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My favorite Greek poet is Konstantinos Kavafis, a fellow Alexandria-born Greek, and I always reread his poem, *Ithaki*, before I leave on a visit to a new place.

urne

pray that the road is long, full of adventure, full of knowledge. The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops, the angry Poseidon—do not fear them:

When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,

You will never find such as these on your path

if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine

emotion touches your spirit and your body.

This was going to be my first real visit to the island of Ithaki, and I was quite excited. I'd been there before, by yacht, for a few hours only, from nearby Cephalonia, but never actually for a long stay, so it was like a new journey for me. And a journey planned at the last moment.

In early June of 2010 I got a call from a good friend in the States, Dr. Susan Heuck Allen. A visiting scholar at Brown University and formerly a professor of archaeology at Smith College and Yale University, Susan is a great friend of Greece. She was calling to get details about some recent discoveries about the Palace of Odysseus (or Ulysses, in Latin) on the island of Ithaki. I remembered having seen a report about the discovery on local TV the day before.

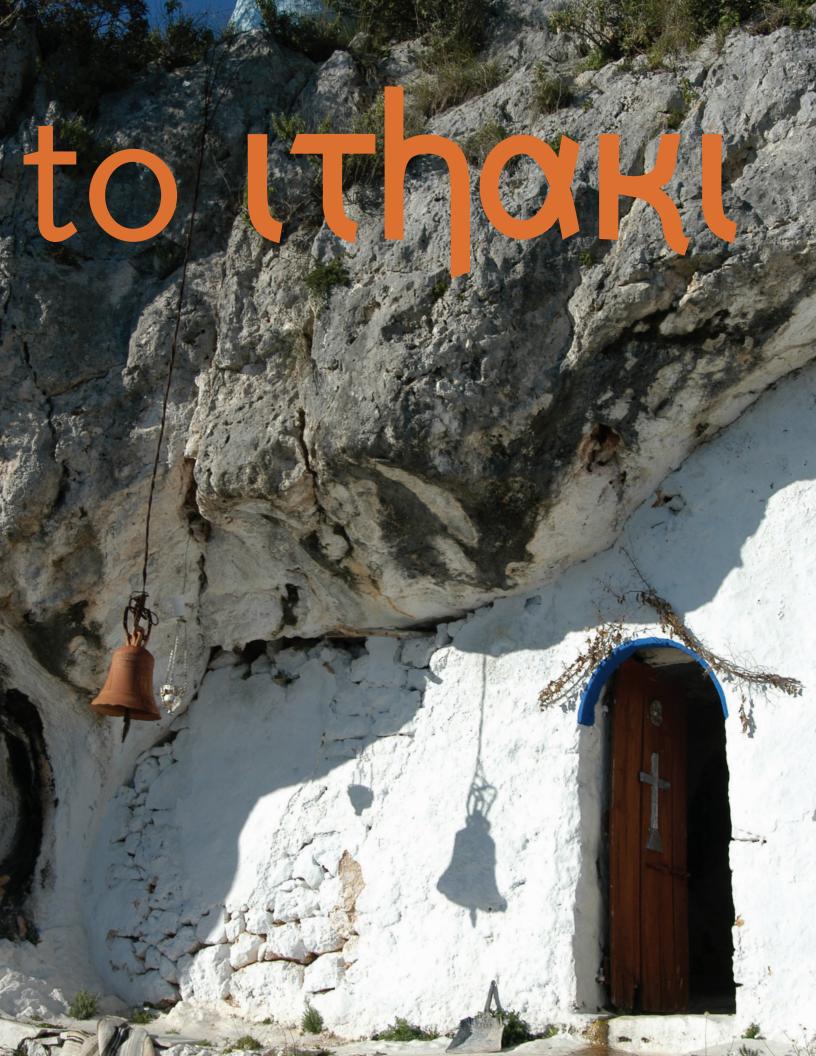


The stone ruins in the foreground are believed to be part of the palace of Odysseus, who, according to Homeric legend, sailed from his island home to command the Pan Hellenic armies in the war against Troy. The site commands a mountain slope in Aghios (Saint) Athanassios.

#### Photos by Stavros "Delas" Dellaportas

Faceing page: The Church of Panagia (the Virgin Mary) Spiliotisa, built into the side of a mountain southwest of Vathy

outposts



#### Outposts



The Korina Gallery Hotel in Vathy

The next day, some good friends in Athens phoned me. They were going to Ithaki for a long weekend, and they invited me to join them. I took a day off from the office and left with them on Friday morning. Thursday night I opened my Kavafi book:

#### The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,

the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,

if you do not carry them within your soul,

if your soul does not set them up before you.

We drove from Athens to Patras in northwest Peloponnesus, where we boarded the Ionian Sea ferry. After a brief stop in Cephalonia, we disembarked in Ithaki. Pray that the road is long, that the summer mornings are many, when, with such pleasure, with such joy, you will enter ports seen for the first time; stop at Phoenician markets and purchase fine merchandise, mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony, and sensual perfumes of all kinds, as many sensual perfumes as you can; visit many Egyptian cities, to learn and learn from scholars. One cannot but be impressed with the natural beauty of the island. Unlike our rocky and bare Aegean islands in the east, Ithaki and the Ionian Isles on the west coast of Greece are green, with plenty of pines and olive trees, including one that is claimed to be at least 1,500 years old. The island is about 45 square miles in area, with a little more than 3,000 local inhabitants, who in the summer become 5.000.

Ithaki is an independent municipality of the Cephalonia

Prefecture and lies off the northeast coast of Cephalonia. The capital, Vathy, has one of the world's largest natural harbors. The island has been inhabited since the second millennium B.C.E., and ruins have been discovered dating back to 1300-1500 B.C.E., about the time when Homer wrote his epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The Romans occupied Ithaki in the second century B.C.E., and the island later became part of the Byzantine



Replica of an artifact found at the School of Homer location. The symbols carved in the original rock are believed to represent a ship with Odysseus and other figures from the legend of the Odyssey.

Empire. The Normans ruled it in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and after a short but brutally barbaric Ottoman rule, the Venetians kicked out the Ottoman Turks and brought civility and the Renaissance to the island. France took over in 1797, the Russians in 1798, and France again in 1807; the British came to stay in 1809.

In 1815, Ithaki became a state of the United States of the Ionian Islands, an amical protectorate of the United Kingdom. In 1864, Ithaki, along with the rest of the Ionian Isles, was finally reunited with "Mother" Greece, a mark of cordiality and generosity from the United Kingdom to Greece and her new king, the very anglophilic George I.

Always keep Ithaca in your mind. To arrive there is your ultimate goal. But do not hurry the voyage at all. It is better to let it last for many years, and to anchor at the island when you are old, rich with all you have gained on the way, not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

Scholars generally accept modern day Ithaki as Homer's Ithaki, but they are hard-pressed to present any archaeological proof that Ithaki is indeed the island kingdom that Odysseus left in order to join King Agamemnon, his brother Menelaus, the hero Achilles, and the Pan Hellenic armies in Argos. Odysseus fought in Troy, survived the ten-year war, and returned, after ten more years, to his loyal wife, Penelope, his son, Telemachus, and his beloved royal palace.



Nikos Markatos sells handmade souvenirs in his store in Vathy



Kotsos "Habaris" Lekatsas travels around Stavros by motorbike with companion Tourtouroula



Stelios Paxinos cultivates the Delamonas vineyard in Anoghi, 500 meters above the sea



Two professors of archaeology from the University of Ioannina, Theodoros Papadopoulos and his wife, Litsa Kontorli-Papadopoulou, now claim to have discovered the Odysseus Palace after digging in the northern part of Ithaki for 16 years. Their finds are in Aghios (Saint) Athanassios, near the School of Homer location, in the foothills of North Exogis, where building residues were visible for many years. The area had been dug by Greek and foreign archaeologists before: well known names like Volgraff, Heurtley, Wasson, and Kyparissis.

A fountain found in the complex was dated by Professor Jost Knauss, a specialist in ancient hydraulic works from the Technical University of Munich, to be of the Mycenaean era (1300-1200 B.C.E.), similar to underground springs found in Mycenae and Tiryns, in the Argolis region of the Peloponnese, that were used to provide water to the inhabitants during wars.

Artifacts were also found in Linear One writing, which dates to that time, and one of them—with carved symbols representing a ship with Odysseus, the Siren, Scylla, and Odysseus's companion at the moment of the transformation from man to pig—was published in the reputable German archaeological journal *Cadmus*. The finds include pottery from the second millennium B.C.E., crushed stone vases, a Minoan figurine, bronze pins, a lamp, and a gold foil with a representation of Odysseus and his ship, wrapped in Scylla's tentacles.

With a grant from the University of Ioannina, the two Greek archaeologists were able to purchase all the land around the discovery site and close the area around it, but they need serious funding to protect the site from vandals and continue the excavation.

Left: Bobby the fisherman hauls in his catch in Vardiola

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.

Without her you would have never set out

on the road.

She has nothing more to give you.

Unfortunately, the present economic situation in Greece, and at the Ministry of Civilization in particular, is not encouraging for excavation subsidies. They hope that the international interest their finds have generated will bring some foreign funds to assist them in unearthing the many treasures that still lie hidden. My weekend in Ithaki was very enjoyably spent riding with travel agent Stavros "Delas" Dellaportas, who took these beautiful photos. We went all over the island in his SUV and saw the excavations inside and out, the lovely bays and beaches, the mountain village squares, and the amazing new villas that are available now for sale at rates approaching the highest real estate prices in Athens.

Small, traditional hotels are available, one of them a five-star, a few of them four-stars, and many of them excellent three-stars. Local zoning law forbids building hotels of more than 50 rooms, and the locals intend to preserve this law; they don't want their island to be spoiled by tourism development.



Ithaki's 95-year-old former Philharmonic director enjoys the afternoon in Cafenio, a local café



A cow named Penelope grazes at the Kathara Monastery, overlooking Vathy Bay



Vathy Bay as seen from Kounouvatou-Milli

I did not expect to be so pleasantly surprised by this beautiful island with its very warm and hospitable people, fellow Greeks like myself, but with so much more finesse and gentility handed down to them from their Venetian years.

Ithacans now realize that something wonderful is about to happen to their island and hope that the long lost palace of their beloved King Odysseus will finally bring some real present-day prosperity to their lives, along with all the ancient glory they have inherited from him. They hope and wish that this time, though, they won't have to wait... for another ten-year Odyssey!

#### And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not

#### deceived you.

Wise as you have become,

with so much experience, you must already have understood

what Ithacas mean. 🖽



Evan A. Pezas '72

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Evan A. Pezas '72 is director of marketing at tourgreece, one of the best and largest incoming travel organizations in Greece (www.tourPan Hellenic (Greece and Cyprus) chapter of the Cornell Hotel Society, and the Class of '72 class notes columnist for Hotelie magazine.

Photographer Stavros "Delas" Dellaportas is the third-generation proprietor of Delas Travel (www.ithaca.com.gr), a local travel agency that deals with tourism, shipping, and real estate in Ithaki.

Facing page: Boats appear to be suspended over the crystalline waters of Polis Bay





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### Where are the class notes?

The class notes are password-protected. To view them, click on the "Alumni version" link and log in here:

www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/about/pubs/chsmag/