

Hotelie

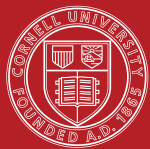
Spring Semester 2013

The Art
of Teaching



TRENDSETTER | MAKEOVER ARTIST
Grace personified
COSMOPOLITAN | HOTELIE

GRACE LEO, CLASS OF '77



Cornell University
School of Hotel Administration

With a style all her own, Grace Leo '77 stepped out front in Europe's designer hotel movement and made her name synonymous with refinement, artistic flair, and perfect attention to detail. A hotel vice president just three years after graduation, she founded her own company five years later. From the Champs Elysées to the Côte d'Azur, from Ireland to the West Indies, she has revived classic luxury properties to grand acclaim with A Touch of Grace. Independence, ambition, and charming savoir-faire... sure signs of a Hotelie.

Grace 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.

Learn more at hotelschool.cornell.edu

Table of Contents

Hotelie

Spring semester 2013

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 Coordinator: Susan Walter
Design: Marc Rubin Associates

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

Cornell University is an equal-opportunity,
affirmative-action educator and employer.

Printed by Cayuga Press on recycled paper
6/13 13M

Hotelie

On the cover: Kate Walsh, MPS '90,
associate professor of management
and organizational behavior.

Photo by Jon Reis

Meet the new American traveler

50

Social entrepreneurs

40

Leading Off

- 2 Our sesquicentennial challenge**

Red All Over

- 4 Newsmakers**
8 Authors
10 Campus

Insights from Innovators

- 12 The changing space of online booking**
Cindy Estis Green '79 and SHA prof Chris Anderson discuss trends in the online marketplace

The Art of Teaching

- 16 Take a seat in the classrooms**
of three of our most outstanding educators:
Dave Sherwyn, Kate Walsh, and Bill Carroll

Hotelies Afield

- 30 Taj + Cornell**
Taj's best people get something special: a chance at an MMH degree, all expenses paid
- 36 The business of changing the world**
Meet eight alumni entrepreneurs who have made a business of helping humanity

World Views

- 52 Meet the new American traveler**
Peter Yesawich '72, MS '74, PhD '76 explains us by the numbers

Center/Institute News

- 56 Entrepreneurship boot camp**
A new Pillsbury Institute program helps disabled vets reset their lives

Executive Education

- 57 Digital marketing now a virtual reality**

Alumni News

- 60 CHS president's letter**
62 Chapter events
71 Remembrance
72 Class notes

Outposts

- 92 Rising above his comfort zone**
Bryan Dunn '14 sees life from a whole new angle while interning high in the Atacama Desert of Chile

Our sesquicentennial challenge



Cornell's strategic plan, published three years ago, set faculty renewal as the principal goal leading up to the university's sesquicentennial in 2015. The plan recognizes that a major transition is taking place as an entire generation of faculty members is retiring.

Knowing that it takes special funding to support an agile recruiting strategy, the university followed up on the strategic plan by creating a 50-million-dollar Faculty Renewal Sesquicentennial Challenge. The challenge offers a one-to-one match for multi-year gift commitments of 500,000 dollars or more. These funds are for current use rather than endowment, so they can be applied immediately to the recruitment of highly promising junior scholars as well as distinguished senior faculty.

Here at SHA, well over one-third of the faculty is new to the school since my arrival in 2006. With a number of retirements on the horizon, we are actively engaged in multiple faculty searches. In support of these efforts, our goal has been to secure five Faculty Renewal Fellowships by 2015. We received the first of these, the Bradley H. Stone '77 and Family Faculty Fellowship, last year. Now I am very pleased to announce the receipt of two more fellowship gifts for the recruitment of SHA faculty members. Charles S. Henry '74 and his wife, Deborah Buell, and Susheel '99 and Sohita, CALS '98 Torgalkar have joined Brad and Susan in supporting this initiative. Chuck and Deborah have honored one of our most inspirational emeritus faculty members by establishing the Prof. Robert M. Chase Faculty Fellowship. All three of these generous gifts will aid our search for the legendary faculty members of the coming generation.

Our school has been focused on attracting, developing, and retaining the best possible faculty since the beginning of my deanship seven years ago. We have attracted a truly superb cohort of junior faculty and brought senior faculty member Crocker Liu to Cornell as the Robert A. Beck Professor of Hospitality Financial Management.

Consistent with a strategy proposed by the university, we have recruited some new faculty members even before their predecessors retired, enabling our new hires to learn from their senior colleagues and helping us to preserve our academic legacy.

We are on track to turn over another third of the faculty by the end of my second term, in 2016, and we continue to search for outstanding candidates to keep our faculty the finest in hospitality leadership education. With a little more than two years remaining before the start of our sesquicentennial year, we still must fund two more faculty fellowships in order to support our hiring needs.

My sincere thanks go to Brad and Susan, Chuck and Deborah, and Sush and Sohita for helping us succeed in this vital initiative. I hope that others will soon join them so that we can ensure our continued preeminence as *the* school for hospitality leadership.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Johnson
Dean and E. M. Statler Professor



Jon Reis

RedATI Over

News-makers

Clinton praises Abouelnaga

Karim Abouelnaga '13 was one of five college students chosen from thousands of applicants to share the stage with former president Bill Clinton at the 2013 Clinton Global Initiative University, held at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri in April. He was invited there to summarize the concept and impact of Practice Makes Perfect, the nonprofit organization that he founded with five other Cornell students in 2011. Abouelnaga, who is profiled on page 44, has also been analyzing the problem of wasted federal spending on education as a presidential fellow through the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress.



Karim Abouelnaga '13 and Bill Clinton



Keith Barr '92

IHG raises Barr

Keith Barr '92 has been appointed chief commercial officer for InterContinental Hotels Group, effective June 1. In this role he will be responsible for IHG's global sales, marketing, and brands. Barr joined IHG as vice president of sales and revenue management in 2000 and has since held positions including vice president of operations for midscale brands in North America, vice president of operations for the Holiday Inn brand in North America, and chief operating officer for Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific region. In his most recent position, chief executive for greater China, he drew praise for driving outstanding operating results and building an industry-leading market position and pipeline for IHG in the region. Barr also oversaw the recent development and launch of IHG's HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts, an upscale brand designed for the Chinese consumer. He has been a member of IHG's executive committee since April 2011.

Michael C. Coolidge '97

Coolidge joins CSM Lodging

Michael C. Coolidge '97 has been hired by CSM Lodging, a division of CSM Corporation, as senior vice president of real estate and lodging development. He was formerly senior vice president of real estate and acquisitions for Watermark Capital Partners and co-advisor of Carey Watermark Investors, a one-billion-dollar, publicly registered real estate investment trust. CSM Lodging acquires, develops, and manages hospitality real estate investments within select markets and currently manages 38 hotels.



Haggerty heads Hyatt global real estate

Hyatt Hotels Corporation promoted **Stephen Haggerty '90** in October to executive vice president and global head of real estate and capital strategy. Haggerty, who had served as Hyatt's global head of real estate and development since August 2007, is now responsible for implementing Hyatt's overall capital strategy, managing the company's asset base, and supporting the company's development professionals around the world. Before joining Hyatt, Haggerty spent thirteen years at Marriott International, nine of them in Asia and ultimately as senior vice president of international project finance and asset management for Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Stephen Haggerty '90



Hersha is NAREIT's Leader in the Light

Hersha Hospitality Trust, a New York Stock Exchange-listed real estate investment trust led by **Jay Shah '90** as chief executive officer, received the 2012 Lodging and Resorts Leader in the Light Award from the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts (NAREIT) last December. Hersha, which owns 66 hotels in major U.S. urban gateway markets, was recognized as the lodging and resort sector's top leader in environmental sustainability. Hersha earned this recognition for the superior and sustained

Jay Shah '90



Newsmakers continued

energy-reduction efforts it has undertaken through EarthView, a triple-bottom-line program dedicated to fully integrated environmental and conservation policies that aim to make sustainable hospitality a genuine reality.

Hersha developed EarthView to address the need for a unified analytical approach to sustainability across its multi-brand portfolio of hotels. EarthView generates significant returns for Hersha while also reducing the company's environmental impact and increasing its global and local community involvement.

Cornell's Statler Hotel launched EarthView this past semester to evaluate and increase the hotel's financial, environmental, and social impact. The Statler's professional staff and the students in the Hotel Leadership Development Program worked with Hersha's EarthView team to catalogue the hotel's existing sustainability efforts, calculate costs and savings, and begin to create initiatives with high positive impact. The hotel has already begun to collect used bar soap and toiletries to donate to Clean the World, a nonprofit organization that recycles these amenities and distributes them to people in need as a means to fight the spread of infection and communicable diseases. The EarthView partnership will be ongoing, with more initiatives to be rolled out in the fall.

Shoemaker tapped for Harrah deanship

Stowe Shoemaker, PhD '95 was named in May to head the Harrah College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. His appointment will take effect July 1.

Shoemaker's background is in pricing, revenue management, and customer loyalty programs. He has consulted for gaming developers, airlines, major hotel companies, and a major medical center and is currently helping to write a strategic plan to bring healthcare tourism to southern Nevada. He has taught marketing strategy, revenue management, and the mathematics behind casino games and has written two marketing textbooks on hospitality and tourism.

Shoemaker began his career at UNLV and moved after nine years to the University of Houston's Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management as associate dean of research, a position he held for eight years. He also served on Cornell's executive education faculty for seventeen years and as a visiting scholar at the École hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland. He returned to UNLV in 2012 as a Lincy Professor.

Shoemaker follows in the footsteps of another Hotelie, Jerome Vallen '50, PhD '78, who founded the hospitality program at UNLV in 1967 and led it for the next 22 years.



Stowe Shoemaker, PhD '95

Stiles honored at ALIS

Robert Stiles '83, a principal and managing director of investment banking firm Robert Douglas, was handed the prestigious Jack A. Shaffer Financial Advisor of the Year Award at January's Americas Lodging Investment Summit (ALIS) in Los Angeles. Earlier that month, he established Robert Douglas with Douglas Hercher, his former partner at Sonnenblick Goldman and former fellow member of the leadership team at Cushman and Wakefield. Currently based in San Francisco, Stiles has been active in the hotel development, finance, and asset sales markets for almost 30 years. As a founding partner of Horwath Asia Pacific, he spent the first half of his career in Asia, opening new markets and building one of the largest advisory firms in the region. He also founded HICAP, Asia's leading lodging industry investment and finance conference.



Robert Stiles '83

Urban joins Destination

Destination Hotels and Resorts in January named **Russell Urban '81** their executive vice president of business development and acquisitions. Urban, who has more than 30 years of institutional, entrepreneurial, and global experience in hospitality real estate acquisition, development, strategy, operations, and financial management, will lead Destination's asset acquisition and business growth efforts, including sourcing and securing new management contracts.

Most recently, Urban served as principal and senior vice president of acquisition and development for HEI Hotels and Resorts. He has also held leadership positions at Marriott International, Hotel Partners, CapStar Hotels, Island Resort Collection, and Urban Hotel Corporation.



Russell Urban '81



Authors

Dev surveys the hospitality “brandscape”

Business strategy in the hospitality industry once began with marketing and incorporated branding as one of its elements. But in recent years, the brand has moved squarely into the spotlight as the key to success.

Hospitality Branding (Cornell University Press), a new book by **Chekitan S. Dev, IMHI '85**, SHA associate professor of strategic marketing and brand management, describes the past and future of this trend by blending recent history and cutting-edge research, offering hospitality organizations advice on how to survive and thrive in today's competitive global business environment. Dev explains how this change in emphasis on the brand puts all the elements of the business model in play, causing hospitality leaders to completely rethink their businesses by defining their primary purpose as creating and building great brands.

The book explores the past and future of hospitality marketing and branding, challenges and opportunities, branding and the Internet, and a case study on Carnival Cruise Lines. A section on global branding covers global brand expansion, branding beyond borders, and brand strategies, concluding with a case study of Ritz-Carlton Bali. The strategic branding section includes material on brand equity, positioning and extensions, and customer loyalty, illustrated by a case study of Taj Hotels, Resorts, and Palaces. Dev concludes the book with insights into branding execution, from managing marketing and branding relationships to brand franchising and brand partnerships, ending with a case study of Groupon.



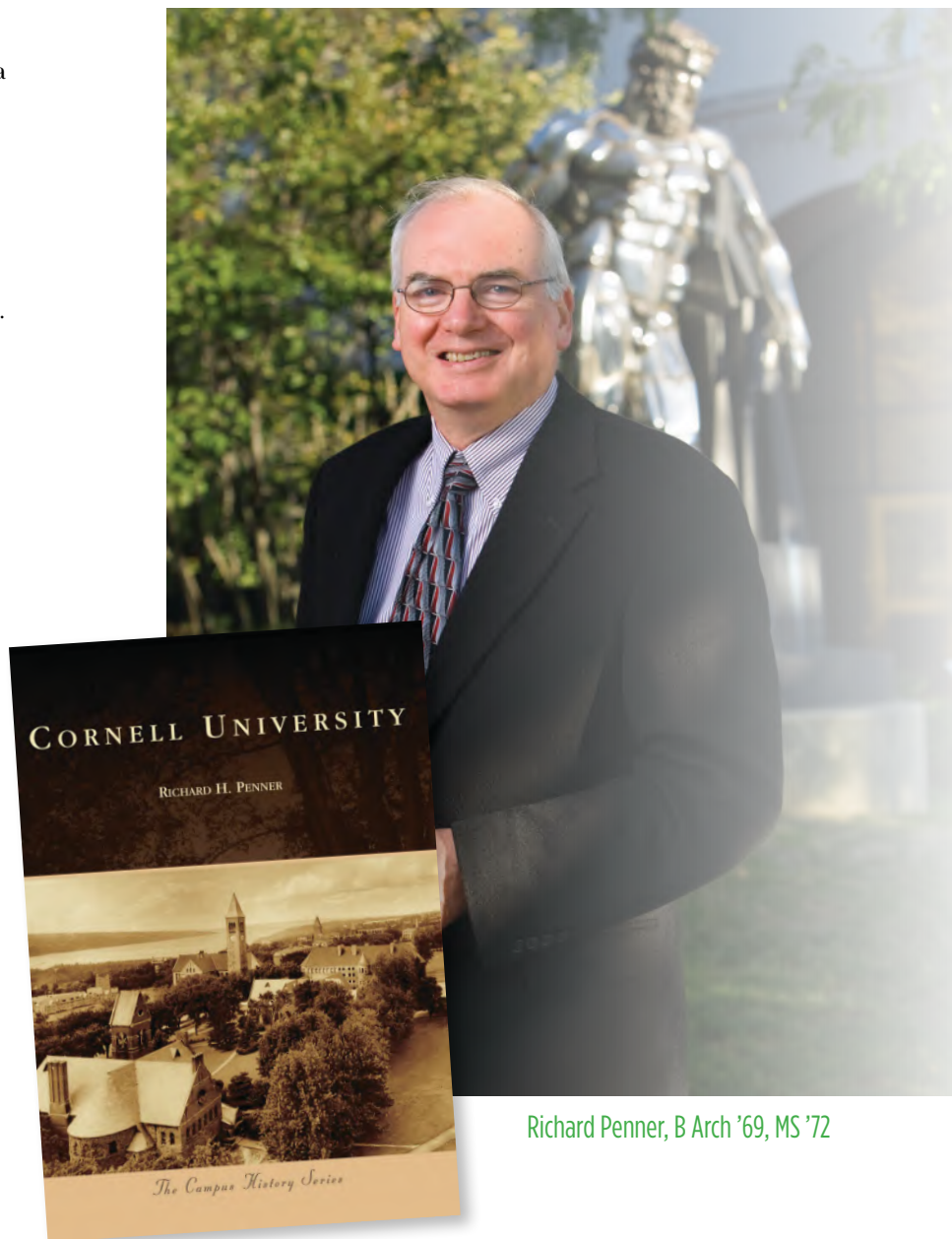
Chekitan S. Dev, IMHI '85

Dev's research has appeared in journals including the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, the *Journal of Marketing*, and the *Harvard Business Review*. He is the recipient of several major hospitality research and teaching awards. A former corporate executive with Oberoi Hotels and Resorts, Dev has served corporate, government, education, advisory, and private equity clients in more than 40 countries as a consultant, seminar leader, keynote speaker, and expert witness.

Penner traces Cornell's history

Professor Emeritus **Richard Penner, B Arch '69, MS '72** (AAP) has added Cornell University to Arcadia Publishing's *Campus History* series. His 128-page chronicle, illustrated with more than 200 archival photographs, features notable students and faculty, athletic history, and highlights of student life and describes the campus as it is today. The book is available at bookstores and through online retailers as well as the publisher, www.arcadiapublishing.com.

Penner joined the SHA faculty in 1970 and retired as a professor of facilities and property management, planning, and design in July 2012. He served as the school's Richard J. and Monene P. Bradley Director of Graduate Studies from 2005 to 2008, leading the MMH program through a successful AACSB review. In 1992, he was honored by *Hospitality Design* magazine with its Platinum Circle Award for his contributions to hospitality design as an author and teacher. He has written four books on hotel architecture and numerous articles and book chapters.



Richard Penner, B Arch '69, MS '72

SOLD-OUT

Cornell awards gala

honors hospitality
luminaries, raises
funds for student
programs

At the sold-out fifth-annual Cornell Hospitality Icon and Innovator Awards, 800 senior leaders from the travel and hospitality industry gathered to celebrate Tom Pritzker, executive chairman of Hyatt Hotels Corporation and chairman of Marmon Group, Inc., and Steve Ells, founder, chairman, and co-CEO of Chipotle Mexican Grill. At the gala—which raised more than 300,000 dollars for SHA programs and scholarships—Pritzker received the Cornell Icon of the Industry Award and Ells received the Cornell Hospitality Innovator Award.



Hyatt Executive Chairman and Cornell Icon of the Industry Award winner Tom Pritzker (left) with his cousin Penny Pritzker and Dean Michael Johnson



Photos by Robert Barker/UPhoto

Cornell Hospitality Innovator Award recipient Steve Eills, founder, chairman, and co-CEO of Chipotle Mexican Grill, is flanked, from left, by Lee Pillsbury '69, founder, co-chairman, and CEO of Thayer Lodging Group; John Peters, president of the travel media group at USA Today, an exclusive media co-host of the event; and Dean Johnson.



"The Cornell Hospitality Icon and Innovator Awards gala has grown to be a tremendous event for our alumni and for the industry at large. It is humbling to be able to honor industry leaders who have not only had a great impact on the business of hospitality but also on the global community through their dedication to the arts, philanthropy, science, and sustainability," said Dean Michael D. Johnson.

The awards ceremony, held June 4 at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City, was emceed by Simon Hobbs, co-anchor of CNBC's *Squawk on the Street*. Special

guests included Pritzker's wife, Margot; his cousin, Penny, civic and business leader and President Obama's nominee for secretary of commerce; Frank Gehry, world-renowned Pritzker Prize-winning architect; Andrew McCarthy, actor, author, and travel writer; and Josh Bernstein, TV host and travel explorer.

Since its inception in 2009, the Cornell Hospitality Icon and Innovator Awards has grown to be the largest event on the SHA calendar, attracting influential leaders and innovators in the hospitality and travel industry from seventeen countries. The event has raised nearly 900,000 dollars for SHA scholarships and programs.

More than 70 corporate sponsors helped make the 2013 awards ceremony possible. Hyatt was the title sponsor. Travel and Leisure and USA Today were exclusive media co-hosts; Baccarat, Delta Airlines,

Flag Luxury, Groupe du Louvre, Inter-Continental Hotels Group, Latham and Watkins, Marriott International, Menin Hotels, Shelborne, and the New York Observer were diamond sponsors; Amazing Taste, LLC was strategic marketing and event consultant; and Do More Good | CSK directed strategic brand marketing and design.

For additional information, please visit www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/industry/events/awardsdinner.html.

- Ashlee McGandy



Over 800 people, many of them senior leaders of the hospitality and travel industry, filled Cipriani 42nd Street in New York for the fifth-annual Cornell Hospitality Icon and Innovator Awards.

A conversation between Cindy Estis Green '79, CEO and co-founder of Kalibri Labs, and Chris Anderson, SHA associate professor of services operations management, October 8, 2012.

The Changing *of online booking*

CHRIS ANDERSON: I'll start you off with Expedia's foray into the retail-versus-merchant model in North America. What are your thoughts on recent evolution in the distribution space?

CINDY ESTIS GREEN: Well, it wasn't a surprise, for one thing, because Booking.com has been very successful in that arena and they are Expedia's top competitor. The hotels prefer a retail model because they can manage their commissions better and they have more of a direct connection to the guests. It's hard to know how it's going to play out, what the deals will be, or how it would affect a hotel or a hotel owner in terms of added cost.

ANDERSON: To me this seems like a real boon to the OTAs. I think this is going to increase cost to the property; I think it's going to increase the OTAs' share of the transactions, but I would sense a lot of hesitation from individual hoteliers to enter the space, especially owners. I can see management companies liking this model, but it's going to really impact costs.



oom key

Search. Book. Relax.

space

ESTIS GREEN: The hotels now have to incur credit card fees, commission processing fees, and higher brand or management fees, since they are based on gross revenue that will be inflated with the commissions included. I would say the jury is still out.

ANDERSON: Do you think that Expedia will negotiate a different sort of commission structure under retail-versus-merchant?

ESTIS GREEN: If they do, it could be a more desirable deal. I think as long as Booking.com is in the market and has a lower commission rate, Expedia will wind up having to follow, and I think it will bring the margins down. But if it's a higher cost for hotels, it's a bad deal. I don't think it's such a bargain if it diverts business from Brand.com.

ANDERSON: If I'm a consumer, there's been this incentive to book with the brand directly so I can avoid paying in advance; there's also this incentive that I'll get my loyalty program if I book with the brand directly. Will suppliers stay under both models?

ESTIS GREEN: I think that more will come through as retail when the commission rates come down to a level that makes it worthwhile to the hoteliers to absorb those other expenses. Expedia has to do it to compete, because they're losing a lot of market share to Booking.com.

ANDERSON: Are you seeing a movement from a transaction model back toward the advertising model, where you pay to participate and traffic's moved back to a supplier directly? Travel Zoo has used the advertising model for hotel reservations for years.

ESTIS GREEN: Yes. I think there will be a substantial move toward media-based distribution—consumers will start their travel shopping process at the new referral sites and then get directed to Brand.com or to an OTA site. I think that all the OTAs will lose some market share to the new players, like the meta-search engines Google Hotel Finder, Kayak and the



hotel-owned meta-search, Room Key. There are also the social referral engines, like TripAdvisor, a new entrant, Hotel Me, and even Facebook, that are part consumer review with travel inspiration, and all have some form of search. I think that these sites are going to give the OTAs a run for their money and start attracting consumer traffic and charging hotels for listings, advertising, and other kinds of media.

ANDERSON: When I talk to revenue-management vendors, I get the sense that there is a disconnect for how firms are revenue-managing inventory—not cognizant of the cost of different channels, or when the channels book; they're really looking at business in a much more aggregated fashion. What do you see happening?

ESTIS GREEN: There is a disconnect. Distribution costs have not been incorporated into most revenue management models; these costs are not often factored into consideration for a hotel in their monthly or annual planning. Some brands have started to drill down into each channel and allocate costs. But that knowledge

is not readily available and has not yet filtered into most hotels and influenced what they do on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis.

ANDERSON: Revenue management systems may be able to move the needle one to three percent when some of these channels have a cost structure ten times another channel's. If I had to focus on channel mix and its costs, that would really be a first-order effect, and maybe tweaks to my revenue-management approach would be second-order effects.

ESTIS GREEN: A lot of what I'm doing at Kalibri Labs is trying to develop models for hotels to target an optimal channel mix. Hotels can't function strictly on a top-line basis—they have to start evaluating contribution to profit from their channel mix. That goes for group and meetings business as well; in the big-box properties, upwards of half the business is coming through third parties, and no one is doing the calculations to be able to say, "What is this piece of business really worth?"

ANDERSON: Right now, roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of OTA transactions are fully or partially nonrefundable. Many more consumers are thinking, "I'll get the deal but I'll sacrifice flexibility to pay for it." Do you see retail evolving to be more flexible, refundable, as if I'd booked directly with the property?



Room key

Search. Book. Relax.

ESTIS GREEN: Yes, which is why I think that the merchant model may evolve toward the advance-purchase, nonrefundable format. When people book retail and pay later, they'll expect to be able to make changes and the rate may be higher. Corporate travelers will move to OTAs knowing that now, if they pay later, they don't have any risk if their trip changes.

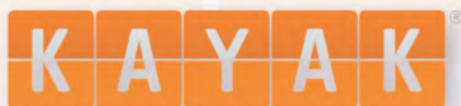
ANDERSON: What is your sense as we go mobile, as we go much more to in-market transactions? Whether that's the old opaque inventory or the semi-opaque, like Hotel Tonight, where it's in-market at a certain qualified stay time or arrival time... are we going to train this consumer to be much more last-minute?

ESTIS GREEN: I think it always depends on the nature of the trip. The use of mobile will become so prevalent that it will cover a wide range of booking types, not just last-minute. We're moving quickly to mobile—smartphones and tablets, for shopping as well as buying, for every kind of business. I think that people will start thinking about their old desktops as quaint and old-fashioned, like a CRT was 20 years ago.

ANDERSON: There's a lot of evolution in the space. As I tell my students, this is a great time to be in this convergence of revenue management and distribution; there's a lot of cool stuff happening.

ESTIS GREEN: Oh, yes, there's definitely convergence, and add marketing to the mix. Those disciplines that were considered siloed before are merging into one. I think that some of the brands have to catch up with that and realize these disciplines are connected. For example, you have to have brand marketing involved in mobile strategy. You can't separate them and just say, "Oh, well, that's e-commerce," because it isn't; it's as much a part of branding as something like a TV ad. And channel mix decisions cross those boundaries as well.

ANDERSON: I think it's a great time for your business. It's a great time for me to be an academic, because there are lots of interesting puzzles. It's a great time for new students getting out in this space. It's a great time for curiosity in the distribution and RM space, and for innovation.



The Art of Teaching

*The**Art**of*

What is it about an SHA education that keeps our school in a class by itself? We often talk about our exceptional experiential learning offerings, our beautiful facilities, the abundant opportunities for students to interact with industry leaders, and the power of the Hotelie network. We also report often on the excellent research output of our faculty.

But we tend to take for granted what happens in the classroom, the setting where students learn to make sense and

Teaching

profitable use of the new world they are encountering. Here they come in personal contact with the most impressive scholars in the field of hospitality business leadership. The SHA faculty is filled with gifted, dedicated teachers who challenge their students to examine every assertion, to think on their feet, to make exciting connections between the material they learn in school and the situations they encounter in the business world, to generate ideas of their own. Under the guidance of our faculty, SHA students work in teams, learning to challenge and inspire each other, learning to collaborate and to lead, learning who they really are and where their capabilities can take them.

In this issue we introduce you to Dave Sherwyn, Kate Walsh, and Bill Carroll, three educators who are revered for their ability to rivet the attention of their students and pull them deep into their subject matter—and loved for the care they show for every one of them. As one measure of their impact, these three have been honored with more than two dozen teaching awards. We are pleased to highlight them in our new series on the art of teaching.



“I love taking students from the first day of class, when they have no idea what I’m talking about, to the first exam, where they write for six hours and they’re still talking about it and fighting about it as they leave the room. It’s the greatest job in the world.”

Dave Sherwyn:

Bringing
the law to life

By
Sherrie
Negrea





As the sun rose on a chilly morning in early April, 22 Cornell students boarded a campus bus bound for Manhattan. Five hours later, they filed into a conference room in the New York Observer Building to watch an arbitration hearing for a hotel kitchen worker who had been fired for allegedly leaving work early without permission and failing to perform her job duties.

For Andrew Newman '14, an aspiring hotel manager, it was an experience he'll never forget. "This wasn't just a contract arbitration," he said after class the following week. "This was somebody's life story. It was amazing that somebody allowed us to see that."

This annual field trip is one of a variety of means by which David Sherwyn, ILR '86, JD'89 engages students in learning about law, business, and labor relations in the hospitality industry. While he often covers complex court cases in class, the students are drawn in by Sherwyn's teaching style, which challenges them to tackle the material by applying it to real-life situations.

"When he teaches, it doesn't sound like it comes from a textbook," said Patrick Choi '14, who chose law as his undergraduate concentration after experiencing Sherwyn's teaching. "It feels like you're getting his analysis on things. It's very captivating."



The only SHA faculty member you're likely to find wearing jeans and sneakers to class, Sherwyn teaches by the Socratic method—although, he insists, in an impure form, since he not only questions his students but also teaches them concepts about court cases, employment law, and labor issues relating to the hospitality industry. The winner of sixteen Cornell teaching awards, Sherwyn does not use PowerPoint or notes; instead he lets his students lead class discussions that often digress to unexpected topics that they want to explore.

"The world doesn't dim the lights and put up on a screen the things you need to recognize," he said. "There are times when you need to take notes and discern what is important and what is not important. I know what I want to cover, and we always get there, but I have no idea how we'll get there, and no class ever gets to the same points in the same way."

Raised in Westfield, New Jersey, Sherwyn says that he grew up in the hospitality industry, since his father was a salesman

and sales manager for the Seagram Company and the former Schenley Industries. The son took his turn in hospitality, too, bussing tables in high school and tending bar at Ruloffs in Collegetown as a student at Cornell.

Though he worked as a practicing attorney, Sherwyn knew that he wanted to teach from the day, in his third year of law school, when he subbed for a professor in teaching the course Liberty and Justice For All. After leading the class in discussion, he remembers thinking, "Wow, this is so much fun! What a great way to spend your life!"

Five years later, while working at Laner Muchin, a Chicago law firm, he got a call from a former classmate, Paul Wagner, A&S '86, JD '90, offering him some space in the waiting room of the Ithaca law firm where he worked. "I had this crazy idea that if I came back to Ithaca I would get the opportunity to teach, and that if I got that opportunity, it would turn into a career," said Sherwyn. "If that didn't work out, I figured I could build a law practice."

Sherwyn's idea turned out not to be so crazy. In the fall of 1994, he was hired as a visiting lecturer to teach a class on discrimination law in the School of Indus-

trial and Labor Relations. A year later, he approached the SHA and proposed creating a new course, Employment Discrimination Law for Managers. He still teaches it today. In 1997 he was appointed to the SHA faculty as an assistant professor of law. Now a full professor who was named last year to the John and Melissa Ceriale Professorship in Hospitality Human Resources, he remains the only permanent faculty member teaching law for the school. (His old classmate Wagner is one of two practicing attorneys who currently supplement the SHA's law curriculum as adjunct faculty members.)

Though his title has changed, Sherwyn still teaches the same subjects that fascinate him. In an Employment Discrimination Law for Managers class in April, he questioned his fourteen students about two court decisions involving employee retaliation, which he said is now the fastest-growing type of case in discrimination law. It is crucial, he said, for future hotel managers to understand this area of the law in order to handle complaints that may one day arise among their employees.



Heather Ainsworth/Jon Reis Photography

"Hospitality is the most labor-intensive industry in the world," he said while relaxing in his Statler Hall office after class. "Managers need to understand how the law works so that they can comply with the law and so that they can deal with an allegation of discrimination, whether it's against themselves or against somebody they supervise."

This July, Sherwyn will become director of the newly created Cornell Institute for Hospitality Labor and Employment Relations. The purpose of the institute—which came about through the vision, personal generosity, and fundraising efforts of John Ceriale, president of Prospect Advisors and exclusive hotel advisor to Blackstone Real Estate Advisors—will be to foster innovative research and to serve as a clearinghouse for information on labor relations in the industry.

"It's our goal—and it's a lofty goal—to improve traditional union-management relations in the hotel industry and to be a source of information, innovation, and cutting-edge knowledge concerning any employer-employee issue in the industry," said Sherwyn, who publishes in law reviews across the country as well as in the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*.

Eventually, Sherwyn hopes that faculty from ILR and the Law School will collaborate in the work of the institute, which will host conferences and roundtable discussions to help bridge the gap between the academic and professional sides of the industry.

While the institute will occupy much of his time, Sherwyn will remain foremost a teacher and mentor to students. "I love to teach and I love to watch the energy of the students," he said. "I love taking them from the first day of class, when they have no idea what I'm talking about, to the first exam, where they write about it for six hours and where they're still talking about it and fighting about it as they leave the room. It's the greatest job in the world."



Kate Walsh:

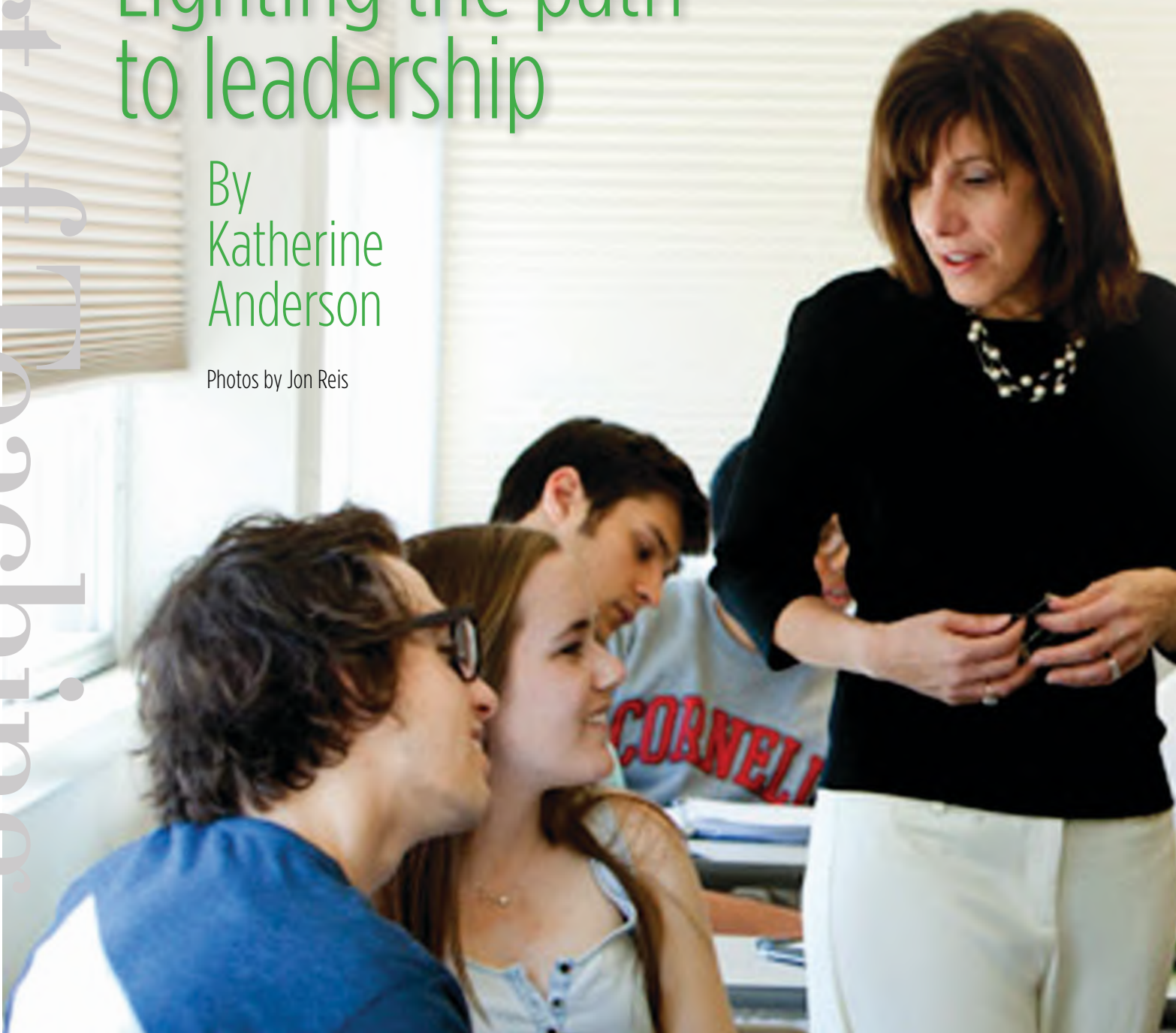
Lighting the path
to leadership

By
Katherine
Anderson

Photos by Jon Reis

“I honestly don’t have an ego about teaching. The minute you think you’ve got it down, you’re done. Each new class offers me a new chance to make this material meaningful, and I take advantage of that.”

The Art of Teaching



Watching Kate Walsh, MPS '90 keep a classroom of 45 freshmen fully engaged for an hour at lunchtime, it quickly becomes clear why this associate professor of management and organizational behavior has won so many teaching excellence awards at Cornell.

One moment she is sharing key facts about the day's topic, "Giving Performance Feedback (and firing, too)"; the next, her Organizational Behavior class is role-playing. "I point out major questions and issues for students to think about, but every class has some form of doing," she explained. "I want them not just to know the material but also to understand how to apply it. I never lecture for long—if I only talk, my students will retain 80 percent of what I say in the first ten minutes, and it'll be downhill from there."

Midway through this particular class session, the students broke up into small groups and practiced giving and receiving meaningful feedback using different performance review scenarios involving "challenging" employees. Afterwards, Walsh shared other evaluation challenges with the class, including the "paradox of





excellence” seen when high achievers don’t ask for help and “continue to do the wrong thing well.”

“My teaching philosophy is based on my background in experiential learning,” she said. “Adults learn best kinesthetically. Anytime you increase the amount of sensory input, the students’ retention levels rise.”

Walsh makes a point of learning every student’s name early on. “My role is not just to provide theoretical content; I work really, really hard at building rapport so that we can talk comfortably about how these students can become strong managers of themselves and good colleagues with their peers, and one day lead others and perhaps their organizations.”

Walsh, who earned her BS in accounting from Fairfield University’s School of Business and is a CPA, has plenty of real-world experience to share with her class. As an internal auditor for a mining company

early in her career, she traveled around North America visiting gold, tungsten, and other mines. She also put her accounting skills to use at the London Metal Exchange before working as a senior auditor for Loews Corporation.

“I was constantly traveling. I stayed in hotels so much that it actually piqued my interest in the hospitality industry,” she said. As a result, Walsh decided to earn an MPS from the SHA in 1990. She was then quickly hired as the corporate training manager at the Harvey Hotel Company in Dallas, which was then run by three SHA alumni.

A three-year stint as corporate director of training and development at Nikko Hotels International followed. “At the time, Nikko had seven high-end hotels in North America, including the Essex House in New York City,” she noted. “They were all beautiful, service-oriented properties.”

Before long, Walsh was considering a different kind of career, in academia. “I’d kept in touch with my professors here at the school and had thought about coming back for my PhD, but Tim Hinkin, one of our management professors, took me aside and said that, if I ever hoped to teach here, I should look elsewhere to round out my doctoral education. It was great advice.”

That elsewhere turned out to be the Carroll School of Management at Boston College. While there, Walsh gave birth to the first of her three sons. “Having a baby and pursuing a doctorate was a challenge, but we made it work. It helped enormously to have a supportive husband; among other things, he’s the chef in our family.” After graduating, Walsh had several good job offers, but ended up taking advantage of an unexpected opening at Cornell. “I had always dreamed of returning and was thrilled when it happened. Coming back here felt like coming home.”



Walsh's research interests include examining leadership career paths. With a long list of scholarly and industry publications to her credit, she is clearly as passionate about research as she is about teaching. "Creating new knowledge makes me a better teacher, and vice versa," she said.



In April, Walsh co-moderated a panel on "Women and Leadership" as part of Hotel Ezra Cornell, the school's biggest annual student-run event. "Women make up more than half of SHA graduates and the industry's future leadership, but they occupy a much smaller percentage of hospitality's C-level [i.e. CEO, COO, CFO, etc.] positions. Many are opting out of the industry," she observed. One of Walsh's research interests is exploring what companies can do to support professionals, and women in particular, in developing their career paths and keeping their talents in the hospitality industry.

It's no surprise then that, given the opportunity to create an elective, Walsh developed the course Career Planning for the Hospitality Industry. As part of the class, SHA seniors map out the next ten

years of their professional lives as well as the different paths they might take on the way to making their industry imprint. Students are also asked to create personal "brand pitches" for use in interviews and, more importantly, networking. "These pitches are their two-minute stories of themselves, complete with an account of how their unique skill sets, values, and passions will add value to a company," explained Walsh. She also has them reach out to industry leaders for interviews, an interaction that often leads to a real-life job offer. The highlight of the course, she said, comes when Dean Michael Johnson visits the class to share some words of wisdom as a guest lecturer.

Career Planning for the Hospitality Industry is obviously a hit with students. Walsh scored a perfect five points on the course evaluations done by her students last fall.

In spite of such success, however, she keeps looking for ways to make the class better. "I honestly don't have an ego about teaching. The minute you think you've got it down, you're done. I use my course evals to improve my teaching all the time. Each new class offers me a new chance to make this material meaningful, and I take advantage of that."

Walsh is, first and last, vested in maximizing her students' potential. "My freshmen are even more impressive by the time they are seniors; they're more professional and thoughtful in what they contribute. Their time here is transformational—it's all about growing and learning. It's a privilege to be a part of that."



The Art of Teaching

“The development of search algorithms with Google, or the nature of the way that Facebook is being used, or even the way that mobile applications are being developed is happening in weeks and months. In order to stay up with what’s going on, we really have to bring in practitioners who are out there today grappling with those issues on a regular basis.”



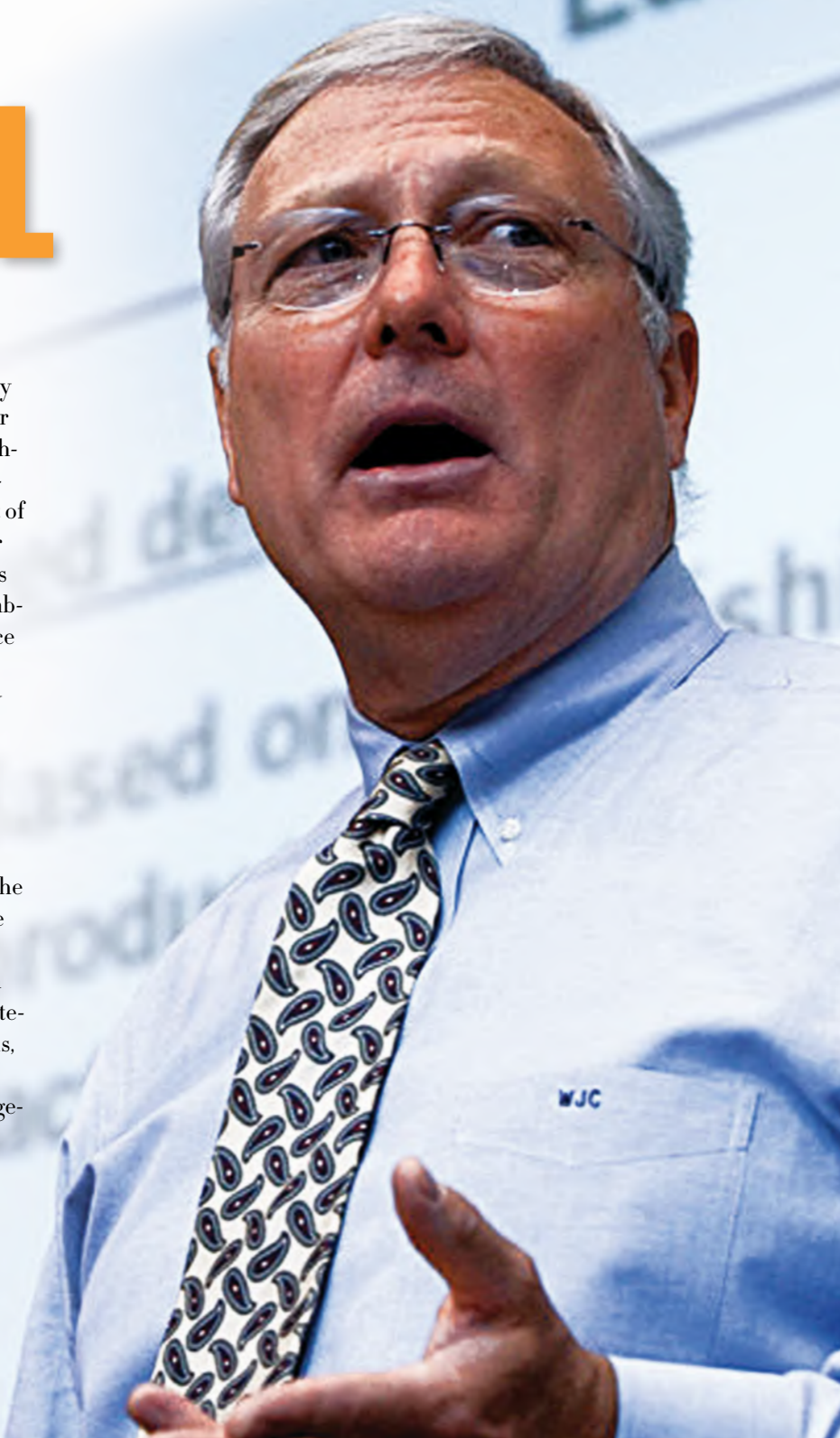
The ever-evolving **BILL CARROLL**

By
Jeannie Griffith

Bill Carroll whispered “Ooh!” and quietly pumped his fist. “It doesn’t get any better than this,” he confided with glee as another of his students put a really good question to Paolo Torchio, the vice president of e-marketing and revenue consulting for Sabre Hospitality Solutions. Torchio was in the midst of surveying the mind-numbing complexities of channel convergence and attribution in online booking as the week’s scheduled lecturer in Hospitality Marketing with Evolving Media: Social, Mobile, and Search.

Carroll can normally be found standing (or, more likely, bounding, lunging, and pivoting) at the front of the room when he teaches Microeconomics for the Service Industry, a core course for freshmen, or engaged in probing give-and-take when he teaches Hospitality Distribution Strategies and Hospitality Pricing and Analysis, two courses for seniors and graduate students in the school’s master of management in hospitality (MMH) program.

Photos by Robert Barker/UPhoto



But on this day the veteran senior lecturer was sitting, bright-eyed, among his students as Torchio led them on an intensive tour of the hospitality digital distribution landscape.

An active consultant and researcher, Carroll contributes frequently to the literature on the evolution of hotel distribution and its impact on the industry. But he recognizes that he cannot use a traditional academic approach, no matter how lively, to present rapidly evolving subject matter like this. “The development of search algorithms with Google, or the nature of the way that Facebook is being used, or even the way that mobile applications are being developed and put out by the major hotel chains is happening in weeks and months,” he said. “It’s hard for me to stay on top of developments like these, because I don’t do this work every day. In order to stay up with what’s going on, we really have to bring in practitioners who are out there today grappling with those issues on a regular basis.”

Torchio was one of six Sabre executives who came to Carroll’s classroom this spring to share their in-depth, real-time knowledge of digital distribution, mobile innovation, website marketing, search-engine optimization, and more with the students in Hospitality Marketing with Evolving Media. Carroll determined the lineup with Felix Laboy ’86, president of Sabre Hospitality Solutions, who co-designed and co-taught the eight-week course for seniors and MMH students. “Felix has put his executives at our disposal, and they’ve done a terrific job,” Carroll said. “He brings in the best of the best. It’s really very valuable to the students.”

Laboy is equally enthusiastic about his experience collaborating with Carroll. “Bill’s done a fabulous job of encouraging the right students to take the class. They’re all

so engaged that we can’t even get through our presentations!” he said. “The students are really excited about the class, and that’s good for us.” Not only has he had fun teaching them, but Sabre, a company of 650 employees, hired two students who took the class last year.

Hospitality Marketing with Evolving Media—and its online counterpart for industry practitioners, Marketing the Hospitality Brand Through New Media: Social, Mobile, and Search—came about after Laboy took his idea for the courses to Michael Johnson, dean of the School of Hotel Administration. “I felt that the students who were graduating, whether from Cornell or from other schools, just didn’t have a good handle on e-marketing,” Laboy said. “Many, many jobs are being offered up in that area, and I think that it’s important for the students to be armed with this kind of knowledge when they enter the workforce.”

Felix Laboy ’86 co-designed and co-taught the course Hospitality Marketing with Evolving Media: Social, Mobile, and Search.



Johnson listened and gave Carroll and Rob Kwortnik, associate professor of services marketing, the green light to develop the two courses with Laboy. The two-credit course for full-time students debuted in spring semester 2012 with the participation of the three co-creators and continued this year largely without Kwortnik, who has taken on a new role as academic director of the Center for Hospitality Research. Laboy, Carroll, and Kwortnik are all involved in the online course, which is being offered as part of the SHA Office of Executive Education's certificate series and in a simpler version as one of Cornell's first MOOCs, or massive open online courses. An article about the online courses appears on page 57.

Laboy's commitment to the courses is substantial, as is his company's. Each scheduled lecturer in Hospitality Marketing with Evolving Media traveled from Washington, D.C. to teach two classes, one in the evening and a second the next morning, and to hold office hours in between. Laboy, in addition to working with each of them to plan their lectures, commuted to Ithaca to lead several of the discussions with the visitors, the students, and, in one instance, a Sabre client who joined the class via remote feed. The result was as real, and as current, as it gets. "The material changes very fast, on a very regular basis," Laboy noted. "A lot of the information that we presented to last year's class has already changed—we're already teaching new material."

Carroll seems to thrive on the constant turnover of the material he teaches in this and his other two advanced courses.



"I tear up the syllabus every summer for both of those courses, because too many things have changed," he said. "I'm writing Powerpoint lectures two days before I'm supposed to deliver them. Things are happening so quickly that they have to be rewritten even up to the last minute."

He stays current, in part, through an active consulting practice as CEO of Marketing Economics, a firm he founded in 1999. Carroll advises a number of major clients in the travel, hospitality, and investment industries on strategic planning, marketing, pricing, mergers and acquisitions, and technological and organizational change.

"We're co-joined, the industry and I," said Carroll, who had long, overlapping careers in the travel industry and the military before coming to Cornell. He retired from the U.S. Army Reserve in 1995 as a lieutenant colonel, having served the previous four years as a brigade-level operations officer for the Army Logistics Tactical Operations Center during the Gulf War. At the time, he was also division vice president for global marketing planning at Hertz Corporation.

Carroll entered the Army in 1969 after earning a bachelor of arts in economics from Rutgers University and a master of science in labor studies from the University of Massachusetts. He served one year

of active duty as a lieutenant in Vietnam, where he managed vehicles and weapons inventory, and was awarded the Bronze Star.

Following his return to the States, Carroll studied for a doctorate in economics at Penn State and entered academia as an assistant professor of economics at Drew University. Five years later, he stepped onto the corporate track to manage the economic analysis staff at AT&T. After four years there and thirteen years with Hertz, he took the position of vice president for global marketing at Reed Travel Group, a publisher of travel information, and then moved up to vice president of operations and development for Reed Elsevier's Travel Group. He left that company to form Marketing Economics. He joined the SHA faculty three years later, in 2002.

In the classroom, Carroll is a natural. He has been honored three times in eleven years as Teacher of the Year for the Freshman Core for his teaching of microeconomics. He was chosen to receive a Ted Teng '79 Dean's Teaching Excellence Award in the first year they were given, 2008, and again in 2011. Not one to indulge in self-analysis, he said simply of his teaching, "For me it's like drinking water—I just do it." Brim-full of effervescent good humor and restless intelligence, he commands respect with his excitement for his subject, a cheerfully gruff demeanor that he no doubt perfected in the military, and a tendency to focus laserlike on a student when he wants to know more.

That's one sure thing about Bill Carroll: he always wants to know more. Teaming up with Felix Laboy and Sabre Hospitality Solutions has been at least as rewarding for him as it has been for his students, and he's happy to take a seat in the classroom sometimes to learn along with them.



Hotelies Afield



Taj + Cornell = a degree of distinction

By
Sherrie
Negrea

Sibi Mathew had been working for two years as a front office manager at a hotel in the Himalayan nation of Bhutan when a notice in his company newsletter caught his eye. His employer—Mumbai-based Taj Hotels, Resorts, and Palaces—was offering qualified employees a full-ride scholarship for graduate study in the master of management in hospitality, or MMH, program at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. With hotels and resorts beginning to proliferate beyond the big cities in his native India, Mathew realized immediately what such an education could mean to his future. “I knew that the opportunities would be vast and that I could grow quickly in my career,” he said.

Mathew won his bid to come to Cornell and earned his MMH in 2010. He then returned to Taj—a commitment he made in accepting their academic sponsorship—and was promoted to general manager of the Vivanta by Taj, a small luxury resort situated along a lagoon near Kerala. Not only was he given increased responsibility, but he was also entrusted with a position that allowed him to use the new tools, such as social media strategies,

that he had acquired at Cornell. “The degree gave me a leap that would have otherwise taken me at least five to ten years,” he said.

Since Taj launched its scholarship program in 2008, Mathew and eight other Taj managers have graduated from the MMH program at Cornell, including two this year. All were rising executives at Taj, India’s leading hospitality chain with 125 hotels worldwide, and all received promotions at the company after completing their degrees.

“The collaboration with Cornell has been one of the best ways that Taj has to develop the talent of our associates,” said Raymond N. Bickson, the company’s managing director and chief operating officer. “With our appetite for expansion and growth and our quest to internationalize Taj, the program gives our associates a



Photos provided by Taj
Hotels, Resorts, and Palaces



competitive edge and the opportunity to leverage these skills within the company.”

Each year, Taj provides a 75,000-dollar scholarship to two managers, covering nearly all their expenses in the twelve-month MMH program. In return, the “Taj babies,” as they are called at Cornell, are expected to remain with the company for at least three years after earning their degrees.

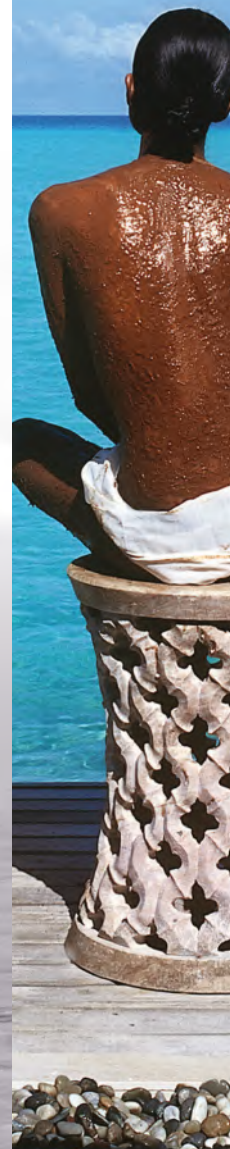
“A 75,000-dollar scholarship is a significant investment,” noted K. S. Srinivasan, who at the time this article was written was Taj’s vice president for human resources and for learning and development in the Americas and Europe. (He now heads human resources for Tata Global Beverage, another company owned by Taj’s parent corporation, the Tata Group.) “But we feel it is worth it, because we’re creating a talent bank for the future in association with the preeminent hotel school in the world.”

Like many hotel companies around the globe, Taj provides extensive training to the people working in its hotels and resorts. Yet while the training helps the employees learn new skills, it does

not offer the deeper understanding of the industry that comes with earning a master’s degree, noted Timothy R. Hinkin, the SHA’s St. Laurent Professor in Applied Business Management and the Bradley Director of Graduate Studies.

“Taj has an extensive array of training programs, but their leadership understands the difference between training and education,” he said. “We’re providing a graduate-level education, and we’re also teaching a greater depth in the subject matter for which you cannot substitute training.”

In the MMH program, students choose one of four concentrations: marketing management, operations and revenue management, real estate finance and investments, or self-directed study. The students, who work closely with a faculty advisor specializing in their area of the industry, also take a series of fundamental core courses in the hospitality field and choose from among the 40 graduate electives offered each year.





After completing the 48-credit degree, the Taj graduates return to the company and participate in an orientation that grooms them for a promotion at one of the company's hotels and resorts. "What this program does for them is change the trajectory of their careers," said Hinkin.

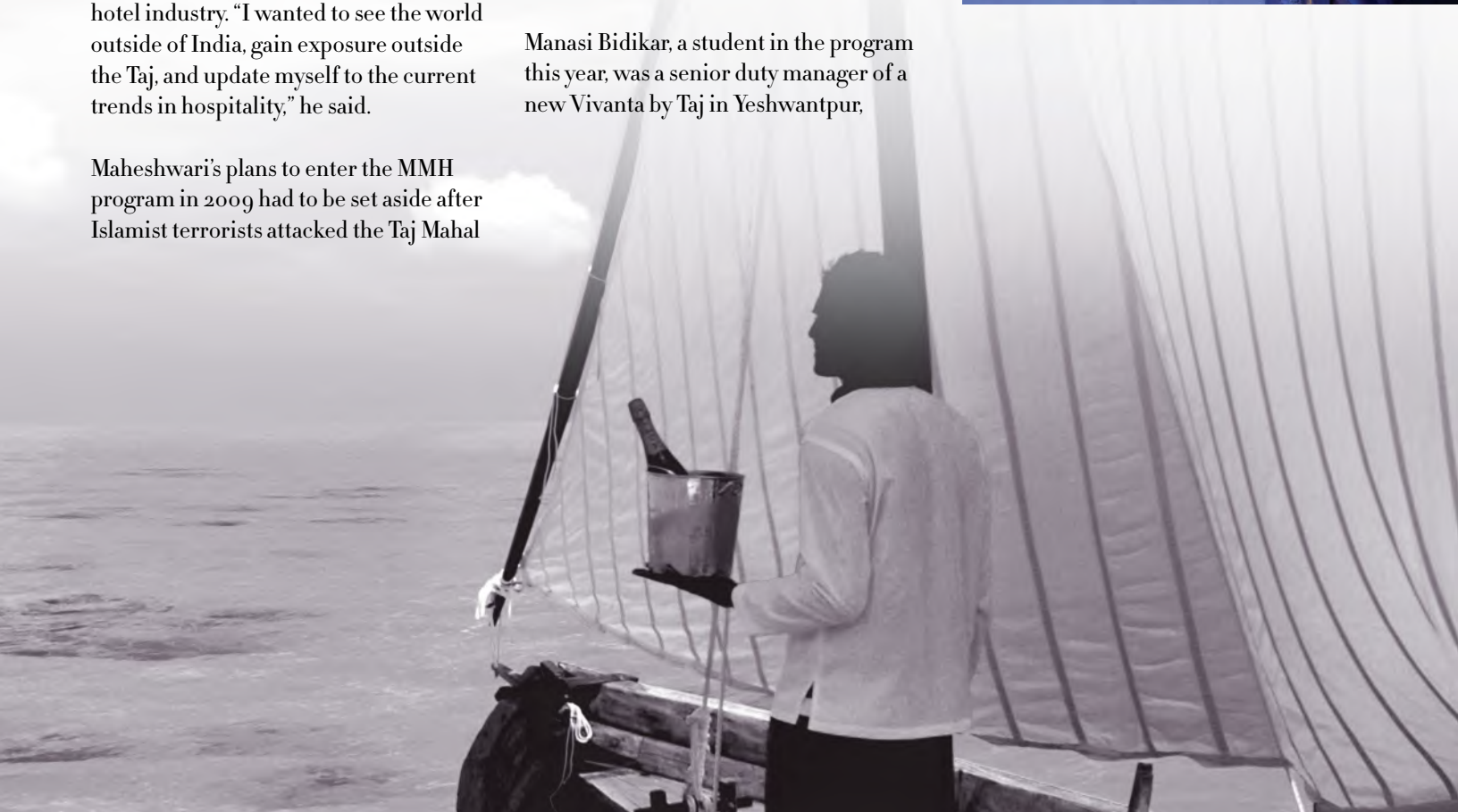
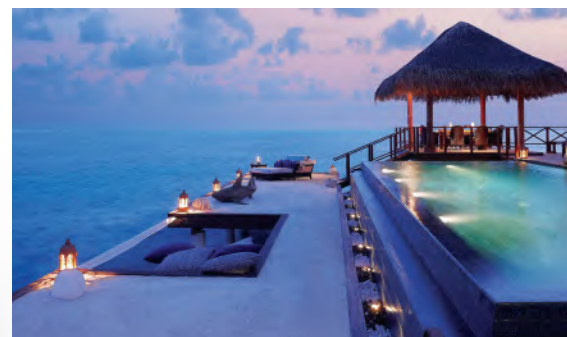
Sachin Maheshwari, MMH '11 had worked for the company for five years when he decided to apply for the MMH program. Though his career was on an upward track, progressing from restaurant manager to banquet manager at Taj's flagship hotel in Mumbai, Maheshwari wanted a broader understanding of the hotel industry. "I wanted to see the world outside of India, gain exposure outside the Taj, and update myself to the current trends in hospitality," he said.

Maheshwari's plans to enter the MMH program in 2009 had to be set aside after Islamist terrorists attacked the Taj Mahal

Palace and Tower on November 26, 2008. He was supervising a sit-down dinner when the militants attacked; over the next three days, eleven coordinated attacks across the city killed 164 people. One image more than any other telegraphed the shock of the onslaught to every part of the world: the wounded Taj Mahal Palace, its imperial splendor affronted by vivid orange flames and a thick column of smoke that gushed from its side and spiraled around its main dome.

Maheshwari committed himself, as did many other loyal Taj employees, to the rebuilding of the 1903 landmark hotel, and afterwards entered the MMH program in 2010. At Cornell, he learned how to market products online, analyze data, and achieve effective results. "I think it's important to drop everything and do this, because while you're at work, you keep doing the same things," said Maheshwari, who was named the Fairmont Student of the Year at Cornell. "You do pick up these things, but it's going to take you a while." He is now director of food and beverage at the Taj Lands End, near Mumbai's airport.

Manasi Bidikar, a student in the program this year, was a senior duty manager of a new Vivanta by Taj in Yeshwantpur,



Bangalore. Her courses this year ranged from organizational behavior to hospitality pricing and analysis. While she has studied the finances, management, and operation of hotels in her classes, she finds learning from her classmates just as valuable.

“Coming here and experiencing the diversity of the students—it’s really an

amazing opportunity,” she said of her highly global cohort. “You learn so much from your classmates. So many of them have a brilliant background. You not only learn from your professors but from the people around you.”

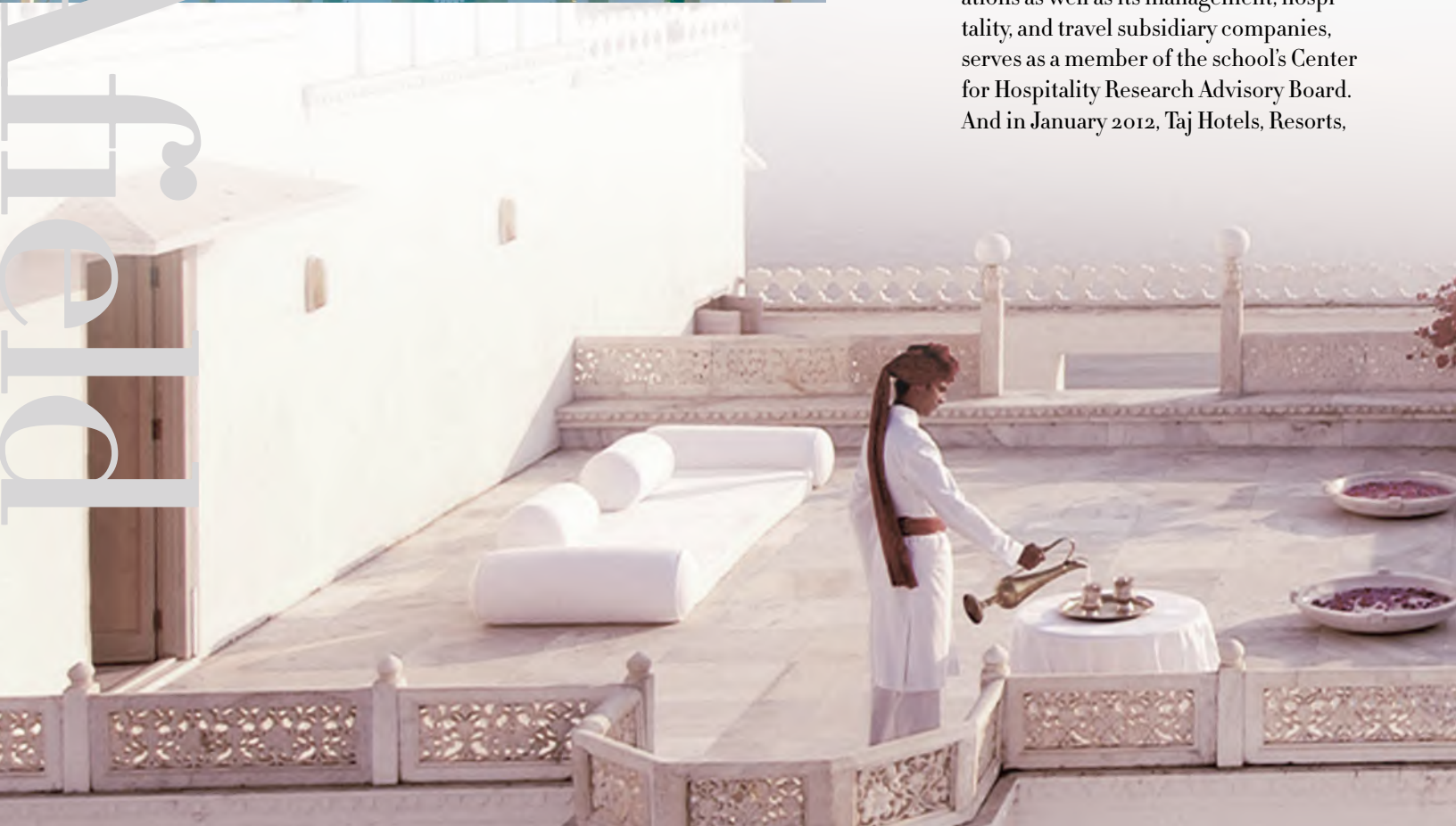
For Arnab Gupta, this year’s other “Taj baby,” gaining an understanding of the international hospitality industry has also been a top priority. As the restaurant

manager at the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower in Mumbai, Gupta realized that he must learn how to interact with customers from all over the world.

“Once I go up the ladder and take other positions, there are far more situations that I will need to handle and far more people I will need to work with,” he said. “The hospitality industry changes on a daily basis, and you need to be very adaptable to changing situations.”

The scholarship program is just one of many connections linking Taj, the largest hospitality company in India, to Cornell. The company’s chairman, Ratan Tata ’59, B Arch ’62, is a Cornell trustee who leads the Tata Group, a conglomerate that owns Taj, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, and Tata Global Beverages. Tata was honored last October as the 2013 Cornell Entrepreneur of the Year at the first Cornell Entrepreneurship Summit in New York City.

Bickson, who oversees all Taj Hotels operations as well as its management, hospitality, and travel subsidiary companies, serves as a member of the school’s Center for Hospitality Research Advisory Board. And in January 2012, Taj Hotels, Resorts,



and Palaces hosted the first Cornell International Hospitality Summit at its flagship hotel in Mumbai.

Taj also offers employees other educational and training opportunities. Some can earn an MBA at the S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research in Mumbai or take online hospitality courses at the Glion Institute of Higher Education in Switzerland. “Both of those programs have their own advantages, but they are more to enhance your skills and are not as intensive as the full-time master’s program at Cornell,” explained Srinivasan.

One of the benefits of the Cornell MMH program for Taj is that graduates can immediately put their education to work once they return to the company. Mathew, for example, was able to apply his knowledge of social media to promoting his hotel, the Vivanta by Taj in Kerala, on travel sites such as TripAdvisor. Similarly, Maheshwari began offering customized products, including specially priced meals, on online websites after he returned to India and became food and beverage manager of the Taj Lands End in Mumbai. “It helped me put new things in place, like putting my product on online channels,” he said. “We had never done that before.”

Most of the Taj managers who have earned an MMH degree at Cornell choose to stay with the company after working the three years required post-graduation.

Anahat Arora, MMH ’09 returned to become the sales manager of the Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi; three years later, he was promoted to director of sales and marketing for two marquee resort properties in the Maldives.

“I have decided to continue my career with Taj,” Arora said after accepting his new position in October. “I see a great future for the brand as it continues its global expansion.” Besides the two resorts in the Maldives, Taj owns fourteen other international hotels in countries from North America to Africa, along with more than 90 properties in India.

Taj officials say the scholarship program offers graduates the motivation to stay with the company because of the bonding experience that occurs between employees and employer. “We have not experienced many of these managers leaving us,” Srinivasan said, “because the

experience has created a trust and loyalty with us. When they come back, they’re motivated to be part of the company.”

Hinkin would like to replicate the success of the Taj program with other hotel companies. The graduate education offered here could complement the training typically offered at many hotel chains. “Here’s a company that’s taken advantage of this opportunity and created a program that’s a win-win,” he said. “The students are getting an education that they cannot get anywhere else in the world. Taj recognizes it as a program to get their managers in a fast-track management career. And we get to have really good students who become loyal alumni who hopefully hire more graduates in the future—and so the cycle continues.”



The Business

*Meet eight Hotelies
who make humanity
their business*

Hotelies Afield

of changing the world

By Sandi
Mulconry

When you think of entrepreneurs, who comes to mind? Do you think of Ray Kroc, Conrad Hilton, Steve Jobs, or any of the other larger-than-life personalities who have built iconic brands and created whole industries?

If you do, you're not wrong, of course, but entrepreneurialism does not have to lead to empire-building, large or small. "Another aspect, which people almost never think about, is social entrepreneurship—ventures that serve a greater good in addition to making money," said SHA senior lecturer Neil Tarallo, who is academic director of the school's Leland C. and Mary M. Pillsbury Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship.

"Our students are very focused on social entrepreneurship," Tarallo said. "Even if their interest is in new venture creation or corporate entrepreneurship, they think about the role that community will play in their organizations."

Entrepreneurialism is not about starting companies, Tarallo points out. "It's about

understanding the opportunity and how to monetize that opportunity. I tell my students to think about their social entrepreneurship ventures not just in terms of cash but in terms of how many lives they touch along the way, how many people they help. That's the true measure of a social entrepreneurship venture. Entrepreneurship is the most powerful force on this planet today. It can change countries. It can change people's lives."

In the following pages, we profile six SHA alumni and one student, just graduated, who count among the many, many Hoteliers who have taken that message to heart.

What do these seven have in common?

They're unwilling to accept the status quo.

Several adopted sustainability early, before it became a buzzword.

Two were inspired by their grandfathers. Others were inspired by their mothers or fathers. Family is important.

So, too, is vacation (haven't we always known that?). One found inspiration on a trip to Cambodia, another on a beach on St. Martin.

They're not afraid to be somewhat audacious in service to their mission. They have pasted pink mustaches on cars, filled a hotel lobby with shredded newspapers, run triathlons to raise funds, and talked trash to hotel managers.

Bill Clinton congratulates Karim Abouelnaga '13 for his efforts to reform education



They have lofty dreams, many of which are quickly becoming reality. One set out to create a new mode of transportation. One is working to transform both the waste industry and the organics industry. One wants to craft legislation that will help disadvantaged children succeed in the classroom. One wants to create economic opportunity in Cambodia.

And, not surprisingly, nearly every venture was shaped by an entrepreneur's Cornell experience. If we had the room, we could probably tell you a hundred more stories like these.

Ben

Justus



"We want to grow this idea of using hospitality to help people in developing countries."



EGBOK students

For Ben Justus '08, the road to social entrepreneurship began on a family vacation to Cambodia in 2006.

"Although tourism and economic growth were booming, I could see that, deep down, Cambodia was a country rebuilding from genocide," Justus said. "I was struck by the teenage population's desire to shape their own lives."

After returning to Cornell his senior year from a semester at sea and reaffirming his desire to "use my background in hospitality to do something meaningful," Justus developed a mission statement and started raising funds for what would become EGBOK Mission. The international nonprofit organization provides education, training, and employment opportunities in the hospitality industry to underprivileged young adults in Cambodia.

"We help them become self-supporting, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty that exists throughout the country," Justus said. "The name is taken from a saying of my grandpa's: he used to sign his letters 'EGBOK,'" meaning "Everything's gonna be okay."

The organization, which has its U.S. headquarters in Chicago, got its official start in 2009, when Justus moved to Cambodia and started offering a hospitality class at an orphanage in Phnom Penh. Today, EGBOK offers training in three phases—all at no cost to participants.

A foundation course—taught at orphanages, community centers, and public schools—builds students' confidence and familiarizes them with the industry.

Through the yearlong Hospitality Education, Training, and Social Support program, students choose an area of focus and gain theoretical and practical training. While enrolled in the program, they reside at an EGBOK Living Center and are provided with school supplies, transportation, and supplemental language and computer courses, along with an array of social services. A new partnership with Park Hyatt Siem Reap will allow all students to complete one of two required internships at the hotel, which is scheduled to open this spring.

In the project's final phase, EGBOK helps students secure their first jobs.

About 300 students have completed the foundation course, while 94 have completed or are currently studying in the yearlong training program. Within three months of completing the program, 96 percent of alumni find full-time employment—many with Cambodia's top hotels and restaurants. First-year annual base salaries for graduates average 1,092 dollars, compared to the national household average of 615 dollars.

"Every student has a fascinating story to tell about the hardships they've overcome," Justus said. "Now many are starting their own families, and they're able to support not just themselves, but their children and their loved ones. That's really amazing to see."

EGBOK Mission maintains strong ties to the School of Hotel Administration. "Cornell has been very supportive in allowing us the platform to engage students, engage the community, and share the work we're doing," Justus said.

Alumni affiliated with the project include Liza Steinfeld '06, a member of the social work team; Barbara Lang '78, MPS '04, a volunteer in student development; Charis Chambers '14, a volunteer in hospitality training and alumni outreach; Osman Khawaja '01, MMH '07, a volunteer in hospitality curriculum and training, who will become director of the project in June; Ruth Youn '07, a volunteer in hospitality training; and Mitzi Fritz '76, who assists with efforts in the United States. Two other alumni—Robert Fritz '08 and Lindsey Brous '12—serve on the board of directors.

"We want to grow this idea of using hospitality to help people in developing countries," Justus said. "Ultimately, it's about a lot more than hospitality. Students come out of our program with confidence in their leadership ability."



Walker

Lunn



"Our vision is to use organics recovery, organic farming, and what we call 'real food' to feed the world."

As CEO of EnviRelation LLC, the largest food waste hauler on the East Coast, Walker Lunn '03 hopes to transform not only the waste industry but also the organics industry. "Our vision is to use organics recovery, organic farming, and what we call 'real food' to feed the world," he said.

EnviRelation—its name is a fusion of the words "environment" and "relationship"—started out servicing hotels but has since expanded to include restaurants, grocery stores, educational institutions, and healthcare organizations. In its seven years of operation, the company has diverted some 20,000 tons of food waste from landfills.

For many EnviRelation clients, zero waste is now an achievable goal.

"The Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, in Virginia, has completely redesigned its waste management program, making organic separation and composting, and then recovery, the central focus," Lunn said. "Similarly, we have restaurants that have been able to cancel their trash service entirely. They are literally zero-waste restaurants. That's pretty ahead of the curve."

Lunn said that when clients manage their programs well, they save money. But that's not the prime motivator. "The people driving these organizations believe in environmental stewardship," he said. "Creative chefs are committed to local

food and farm-to-table, and this is the flip side of that. Engineers who take pride in how they manage their buildings see this as a way not just to manage costs but to increase their recycling rate."

Composting has a variety of environmental benefits, some of which are complex and not well understood, he said.

"It doesn't just keep trash out of landfills. When compost is put into the soil, it helps the soil retain natural or chemical fertilizers that are applied to it. So, for example, compost will reduce nitrogen runoff. In our area, nitrogen runoff into the Chesapeake Bay is a big deal. Algae feed on nitrogen. In so doing, they absorb oxygen and cull it out of the water, creating dead zones and suffocating the surrounding aquatic and marine life.

"When you draw this to its natural conclusion," he said, "the widespread adoption and application of composts will help restore the Chesapeake Bay. This is something we try to get our clients to understand. Some are in office buildings and have customers who interact with the program; it's not just staff who are responsible for separating trash. One way to connect with both staff and customers is to let them know that the choices they make during their lunch break can have an impact on the Chesapeake Bay."

Currently, EnviRelation services Washington, D.C. and the Maryland cities of Baltimore, Annapolis, and Germantown. Within the next six to twelve months, it plans to expand to New Jersey, Delaware, and Philadelphia.

"Our company is built on the promise of timely, affordable, trustworthy service," Lunn said. "We collect only food—we



Robert Barker/Photo

don't also collect recycling or trash. Not being in those businesses helps us maintain a high degree of trust and stewardship with our customers."

Since large-scale composting is so new, EnviRelation has been at the forefront of helping develop the industry's infrastructure and regulatory framework. "Watching an entire industry spring up from your work, and then leading that industry, is incredibly satisfying," he said.

Lunn was drawn to the School of Hotel Administration because of his passion for scuba diving and his one-time desire to run a dive boat operation in the Caribbean. He returns to the school each year for the Center for Hospitality Research's Sustainability Roundtable, which he co-founded with a former colleague.

"Thinking about tourism provided me with the exposure to ecotourism, which ultimately was the gateway to viewing sustainability in a broader context," he said.

Dan

Rosenthal

"Our mission is to raise awareness at both the restaurant operation level and the consumer level about the importance of buying truly sustainable food product"

On a beach in St. Martin, Dan Rosenthal '71 saw a dead loggerhead turtle wash up on shore. He later learned it had died from swallowing a plastic carryout bag.

"At that moment, I realized I was helping to kill the very turtles that my mother was saving," said Rosenthal, president of the Rosenthal Group, a restaurant development and management company in Chicago. "My mother was involved with the loggerhead turtle watch program at Longboat Key for many years, and was one of the first people authorized by the state of Florida to handle endangered species of loggerhead turtles. By using 400,000 plastic carryout bags a year, my fast-casual restaurant operations were indirectly killing my mother's turtles.

"I decided right then and there to do my part to try to clean up the massive mess that we're making of our planet," he said.

But as Rosenthal worked to make his operations more sustainable, he found it difficult to source and authenticate products. He also found prices for small quantities to be prohibitively high. So, in 2007, he founded the Green Chicago Restaurant Co-op to enable like-minded restaurateurs to buy paper goods, bags, and other sustainable products and services in volume.

The co-op grew and shifted focus, eventually becoming the Green Chicago Restaurant Coalition. Today, its efforts are focused on advocacy and education, and Rosenthal has stepped back from its day-to-day operations.

"Our mission is to raise awareness at both the restaurant operation level and the consumer level about the importance of buying truly sustainable food products and supporting the restaurants that do so," he said.

In 2010, the coalition sponsored a State of the Plate conference to educate chefs, restaurateurs, and distributors on issues relating to meat production "and how horribly detrimental the industrial agricultural system in the United States is to the environment and to humans," Rosenthal said. The second State of the Plate conference, organized by the Animal Welfare Association, was held in 2011; a third is in the planning stages.

The coalition also established the Guaranteed Green program, which recognizes area restaurants and foodservice establishments that have received national certification from the Green Restaurant Association and the Green Seal Association.

Currently, the group is working to bring large-scale commercial composting to Chicago.

To achieve its many goals, the coalition partners with such organizations and programs as the Chefs Collaborative, Animal Welfare Approved, the American Grassfed Association, and the Pew Charitable Trusts and its Supermoms Against Superbugs program.

Rosenthal's efforts have been recognized by Chicago Magazine, which named him a recipient of its Green Award; by the Chicago Tribune, which presented him with a Good Eating Award; and by the Illinois Environmental Council, which honored him with an Environmental Leadership Award.

For Rosenthal, success comes one convert at a time. "After I give a speech," he said, "people often come up to me and say, 'I had no idea how these animals are raised. I need to vote with my dollars.' We're starting to get to the tipping point."

Rosenthal's social entrepreneurship doesn't stop with sustainability; he also is a champion of immigration reform. "I've spent a lot of time advocating for undocumented workers in this country, so that they can come out from behind the shadows," he said. "They're the most loyal, most hard-working, most deserving people you'd ever want to meet."

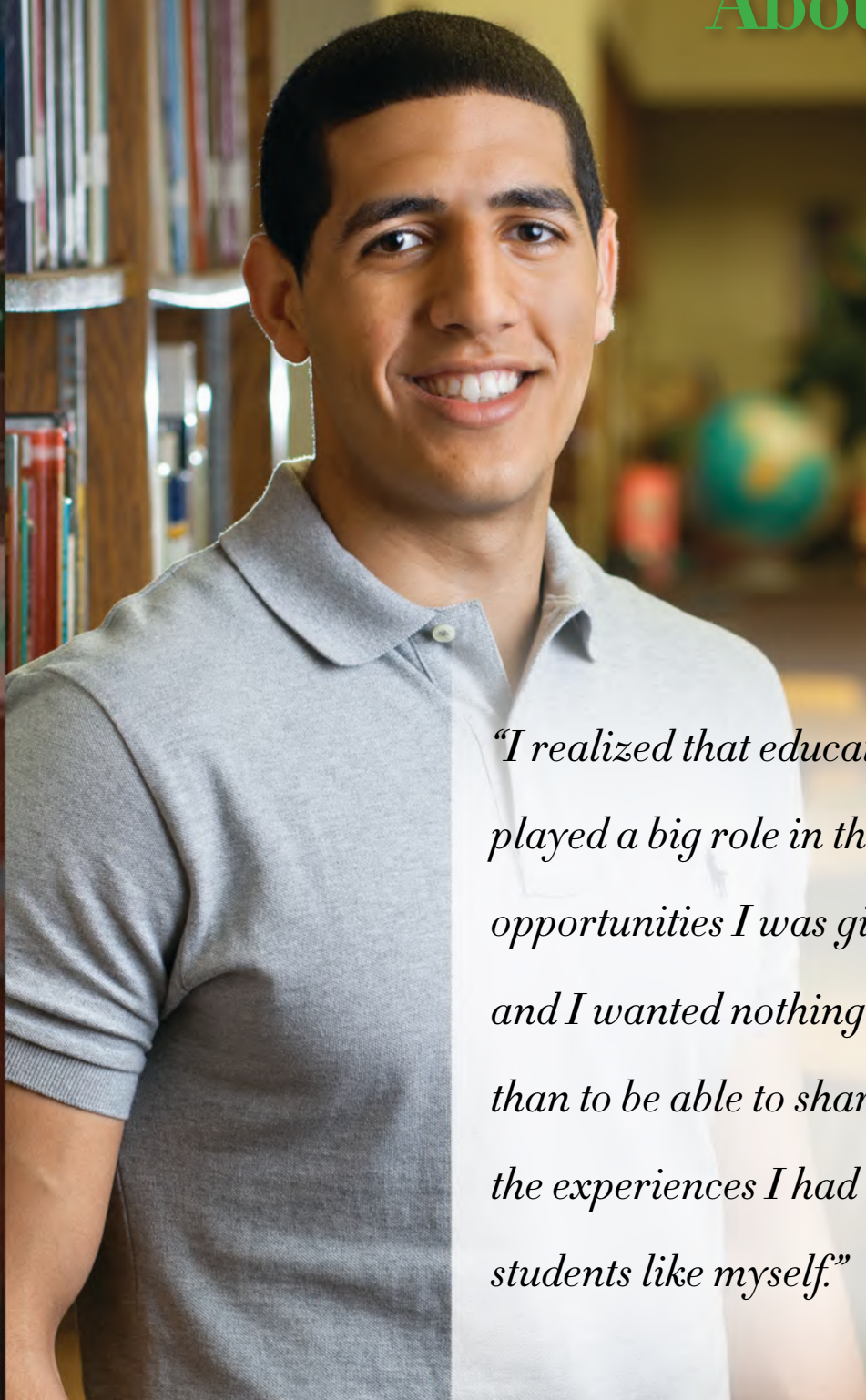
The School of Hotel Administration is a family affair for Rosenthal, his wife, Lin '70, who is the Rosenthal Group's vice



president of development, and their children, Travis '97, owner of Rumba and the Tango Restaurant in Seattle, and Taryn '00, Rosenthal's vice president of marketing. "Cornell creates an environment where independent thinking and the questioning of long-held beliefs are encouraged," he said. "Without that basic confidence that a Cornell education provides, I don't think I would have been able to pursue the things I have with the same vigor. And I mean that sincerely."

Karim

Abouelnaga



"I realized that education played a big role in the opportunities I was given, and I wanted nothing more than to be able to share the experiences I had with students like myself."

At the age of five, Karim Abouelnaga '13 was helping his father sell Egyptian arts and crafts at street festivals in New York City. The business thrived and expanded, eventually growing into its own storefront location. When the boy was fifteen, his father succumbed to lymphoma, and the family's middle-class aspirations all but died with him.

Forced to sell everything, his mother moved her young family into a two-bedroom apartment. "My four brothers and I got jobs as candy salesmen," Abouelnaga said. "If we didn't, I remember our mom telling us, we'd be living in the streets. As one of the oldest, I thought I owed my family a lot more than that."

Abouelnaga started dreaming big as an adolescent. "I played a lot of sports, so I always wanted to own my own recreation center. I always wanted to own a restaurant, because my father would say that people are always going to be hungry. I always wanted an airplane, because I thought it was cool. I remember the time that me and my father saw this Trump logo in the city. I had seen it before on airplanes and on clothes, and that's when I realized that I had no interest in actually managing any of these ventures, that I just wanted to own them, so that I could take part in them. That's something I'm going to do with my brothers as they grow up."

While in high school, Abouelnaga earned money as a lifeguard at an area aquatics center. He was co-managing the learn-to-swim program by the summer of his senior year, earning eighteen dollars an hour.

In his junior year, Abouelnaga became eligible for the REACH program, which paid students for passing AP exams. He overcame lackluster grades and passed five AP exams before graduating. "I began to see education in a new light—as a way

to provide for my family and create opportunities beyond school."

He entered Baruch College as a freshman to study business. He found his way to Cornell through his boss at the aquatics center, and to the School of Hotel Administration after realizing, "What better place to learn how to build a brand—because brands truly do transcend industries—than the number-one hotel school in the world?"

In the months leading up to his arrival on campus, he secured an internship at an accounting firm, worked on a political campaign, was accepted by Harvard University's Public Policy Leadership Conference, and received a Life Lessons Scholarship. He also attended an undergraduate camp at Goldman Sachs and won the firm's Scholarship for Excellence.

"I realized that education played a big role in the opportunities I was given, and I wanted nothing more than to be able to share the experiences I had at Goldman Sachs and the following summer at Black Rock with students like myself, from similar backgrounds."

In 2011, Abouelnaga and five other Cornell students, including Brennan Spreitzer '13, founded Practice Makes Perfect (PMP). The social venture and Cornell student organization aims to narrow the achievement gap by pairing underachieving middle school students with high-achieving high school students from the same inner-city neighborhoods under the supervision of undergraduate interns.

Last summer, PMP was offered at three New York City schools to more than 100 low-income students. Entry and exit exams showed average gains of fifteen percent in math and four percent in reading. "This summer, we expect to operate in ten schools, serve 500 low-in-

come students across the city, and have 50 interns—all with the support of 29 volunteers," he said.

PMP is already winning national acclaim. The pilot program was one of sixteen concepts chosen to compete in the 2012 Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitments Challenge, and this year Abouelnaga and his team have been invited to attend the CGI University meeting. PMP also advanced to the finals of the Dell Social Innovation Competition and the semifinals of Penn's Graduate School of Education business plan competition.

Last spring, Abouelnaga received Cornell's Robinson-Appel Humanitarian Award, and in 2011 he was named a Pearson Prize National Fellow.

Now, as a presidential fellow through the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, Abouelnaga is carrying out research addressing the billions of dollars of waste in federal spending on K-12 education. In particular, he is focusing on the one-sided market in supplemental education services.

"First, the government sets a price per student, and then companies market themselves to win the contracts, but there is no competition on price," he explained. "The government sets the price as a regional allocation. We were running Practice Makes Perfect at 180 dollars per student, and the government had set a regional allocation of 1,300 dollars for comparable summer enrichment programs. As an operator you have no incentive to charge anything less, and price is not even a factor in awarding bids. These companies have been spending 30 to 50 percent of their allocations on advertising and marketing to students' parents, who have no idea what these services should cost. The for-profit education market is at almost a trillion dollars now. It's crazy."

John Zimmer



"Knowing that 80 percent of passenger seats on our highways are empty and that owning a vehicle is the second-highest household expense, I wanted to make carpooling a convenient and easy option."

Seen any pink mustaches lately?

You more than likely have if you live in San Francisco or Los Angeles—the cities in which Lyft, a short-distance ride service, now operates. Lyft and Zimride, which serves people traveling longer distances, were both co-founded by John Zimmer '08.

Zimride came into existence first, in 2007. The service, which maintains that “life is better when you share the ride,” uses social media to match drivers and passengers, who create social profiles and list their destinations and dates of departure. “Before you agree to share a ride with someone, you can see if you have friends or interests in common and check out reviews,” said Zimmer.

Zimride is the largest service of its kind in the country, with more than 400,000 users in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Lake Tahoe, New York City, and Washington, D.C. It also has 130 university and corporate networks (including one for Cornell, at <http://zimride.com/cornell>).

“The Zimride community has traveled more than 200 million miles with the platform—the equivalent of driving around the world 8,000 times,” Zimmer said. “Users have saved over 100 million dollars in car expenses.”

The need for the service occurred to Zimmer while he was taking a Green Cities class in the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning. “One lesson was on transportation, and the professor talked about the evolution in the Northeast from canals to railroads to highways,” he said. “I started thinking: What will be next? Will it be physical infrastructure? I didn’t think so—I thought it would be information infrastructure. Knowing that 80 percent of passenger seats on our highways are empty and that owning a vehicle is the second-highest household expense, I wanted to make carpooling a convenient and easy option.”

Zimmer took a job at Lehman Brothers after graduation, but soon grew restless. “I was on Facebook one night, and my soon-to-be co-founder, Logan Green, posted on his wall that he was starting a service called Zimride,” Zimmer said. “Logan named the company Zimride because he was in Zimbabwe when he was inspired to create it. That’s where the ‘Zim’ comes from. It has nothing to do with me—that’s just a crazy, fateful coincidence.”

In June 2012, the partners introduced Lyft, an app that provides on-demand short rides within a city. In its first six months, the service—and the big pink mustaches sported by members’ cars—scored coverage on the Today show, ABC News, CNN Money, and the BBC and in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune*, and *Business Insider*.

Why a pink mustache? “We wanted to do something a bit fun and audacious to get people talking about the product, but also to break the ice for people meeting for the first time,” Zimmer said. “The pink mustache brings a smile to people’s faces when they get in a Lyft. It sets the tone for the experience to be a fun one.”

Sometimes, users get far more than just fun and a cheap ride.

“People have started dating, and one Zimride couple got married after meeting through the service,” he said. “People have found jobs, changed careers, moved, all because of experiences they had meeting people through Lyft and Zimride.

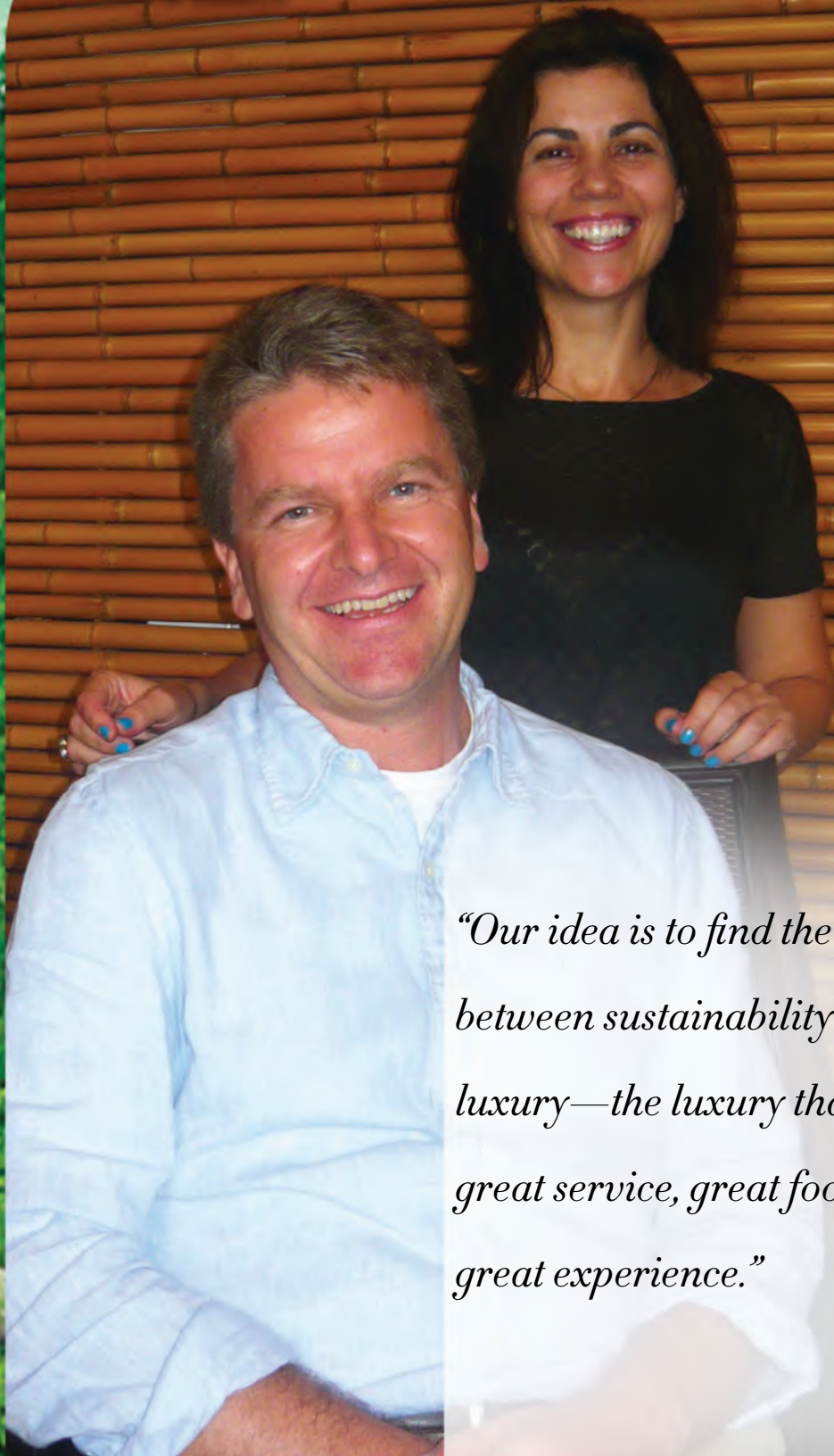


Lindsay France/UPhoto

“Looking ahead,” Zimmer said, “we want to continue to push the idea of connecting people and places through these products. Ultimately, we hope that everyone in the country, and then globally, will be able to connect in this new way, get around for less money, reduce their impact on the environment, and have more fun with transportation.”

Hans Andrea

Pfister Bonilla



"Our idea is to find the symbiosis between sustainability and luxury—the luxury that comes with great service, great food, and a great experience."



While vacationing at one of the nine properties managed by Cayuga Sustainable Hospitality in Costa Rica or Nicaragua, guests may find themselves visiting a local school, planting a tree, or taking part in a wildlife conservation project.

It's all part of what co-owners Hans Pfister '95 and Andrea Bonilla '97 call "sustainability 2.0"—offering their guests authentic, unique experiences while conserving resources and benefiting local communities.

"People long for these kinds of experiences, which make the lodging experience and the vacation experience so much more meaningful," said Pfister, president of the hotel management company. "Community is an important part of our concept. It spreads the wealth."

"Costa Rica is seen as a world leader in sustainability," said Bonilla, vice president of operations and a native Costa Rican. "That's a big responsibility. We need to do things right and keep up with the trends and new technologies, which isn't always easy in such a small country."

In addition to community involvement, many of Cayuga's sustainability efforts target food sourcing. "We've always believed in buying local, but we're taking it to the next level," Pfister said. "We now grow vegetables and lettuce hydroponically, on site. It has a great impact on people when they see the food growing and then see the chef walk by, cut it down, and take it to the table."

Cooking gas and organic meat are also produced on-site. "At our lodge at Lapa Rios, Costa Rica, pigs eat the leftover food," Pfister said. "Their excrement creates biogas, which we then cook with. And, of course, we eat the pigs. It's a closed circle. Since the pigs only eat leftovers from gourmet restaurants, it's the best pork you'll ever taste."

Properties managed by Cayuga have stopped selling beverages in plastic bottles, replaced plastic straws with biodegradable bamboo straws, and dropped tuna and shrimp, neither of which is sustainable, from their menus.

Education is a key component of the experience. Employees must often be taught basic skills such as reading, writing, and English, along with hospitality and sustainability skills. They also learn an appreciation for the biodiversity that surrounds them.

"It's hard for our employees, who grew up in the rainforest, to realize that these animals are something special, since that's all they've ever known," Pfister said. "We have to teach them that they're worth saving and worth protecting."

Other educational programs—ranging from dancing and surfing lessons to sustainability training to programs on rainforest and wildcat conservation—are offered for guests and for the local community. Guests are also invited to take what Pfister calls a back-of-the-house sustainability tour. "We open our hotels up completely—we take them to the laundry, the area where we treat the pools, the kitchen, employee housing, the employee dining area," he said. "That turns satisfied guests into raving fans, because now they feel they're part of something bigger. They really appreciate our efforts."

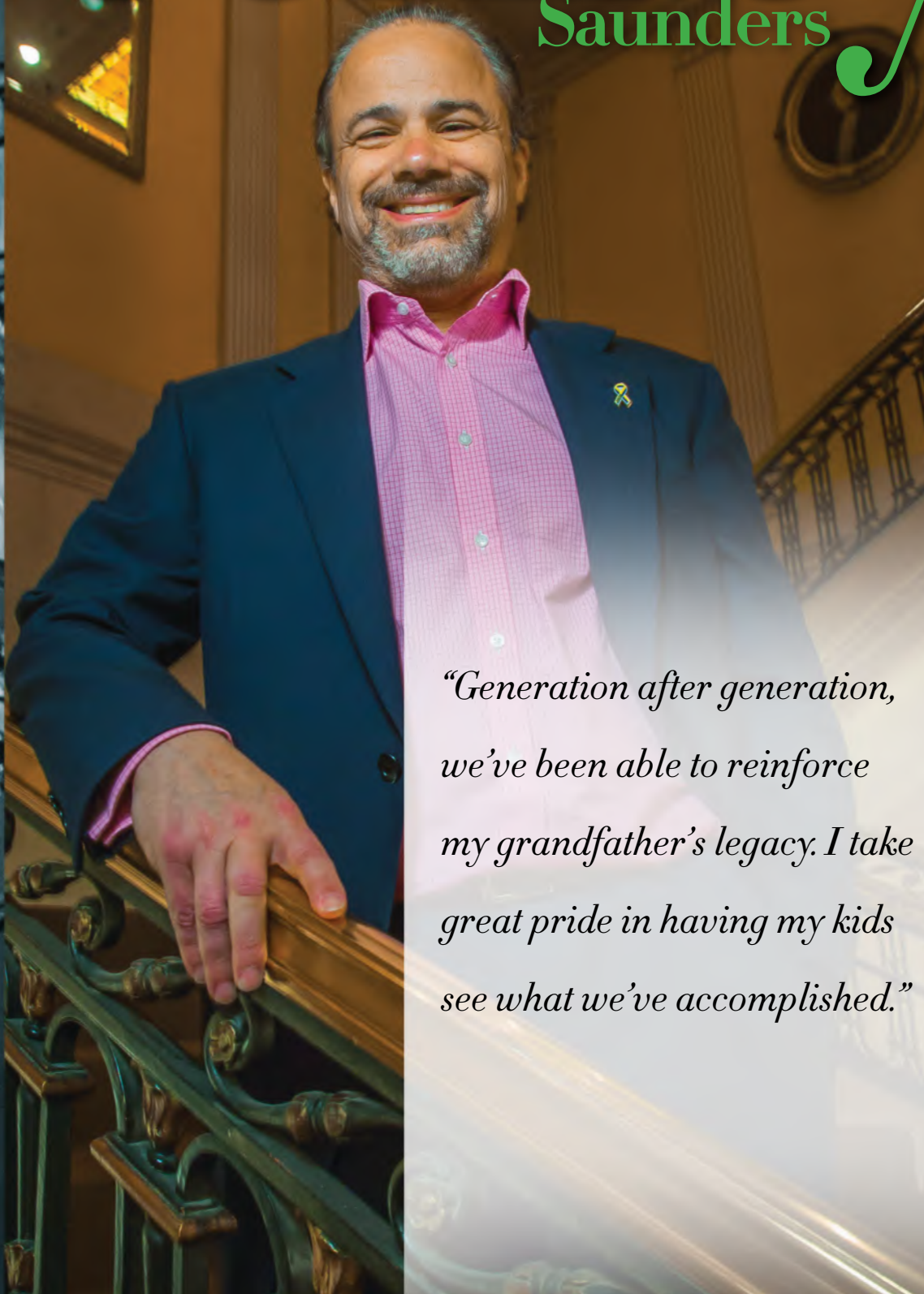
Those efforts have been recognized by Condé Nast Traveler, which presented Cayuga with a World Savers Award in 2010, and again in 2012, for support of the local economy and culture at each of its properties, and by Travel and Leisure, which presented the company with an Environmental Leadership Global Vision Award in 2010.

Last spring, Pfister and Bonilla came to campus as speakers in the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series—the first speakers featured for their work in sustainability.



"Although sustainability is of increasing importance, it's not the only thing we're focused on," Bonilla said. "Our idea is to find the symbiosis between sustainability and luxury—the luxury that comes with great service, great food, and a great experience."

Jeffrey Saunders



"Generation after generation, we've been able to reinforce my grandfather's legacy. I take great pride in having my kids see what we've accomplished."

Irving Saunders was so committed to philanthropy and community service that he named one of his racehorses Pine Street Inn, after a Boston homeless shelter, and donated all of the horse's winnings to the shelter.

Jeffrey Saunders '79, president and CEO of the Boston-based Saunders Hotel Group (SHG), the successor to the company that his grandfather Irving founded in 1939, is now following in that tradition.

"When my grandfather would talk about the horse and what he had decided to do with it, I was young, but I was old enough to understand philanthropy," Saunders said. "I heard all the stories and even went to some of the races in the early Seventies. I'm glad I was just the right age to be able to do that—to see history in the making, to see the creation of a philanthropic legacy within our family."

SHG continues to support the Pine Street Inn, along with dozens of other community nonprofits, and is a sponsor of the organization that provides funding for Boston's mounted police unit. The family is also a strong supporter of education—Jeffrey's father provided the naming gift for the Roger Saunders School of Hospitality at Newberry College.

In addition to its commitment to philanthropy, SHG has been a leader in sustainable tourism practices since the early Eighties. At a time when recycling was

still considered cutting-edge, Saunders recalled, "we filled part of the lobby at the Boston Park Plaza with shredded newspapers piled 20 feet high, to show the volume of paper needlessly going into landfills."

Other sustainability initiatives have included the adoption of hybrid cars, waterless urinals, state-of-the-art windows, ozone laundry systems, pump dispensers in showers, and the nation's first towel and sheet reuse programs. "Sustainability has long been a part of our business strategy," Saunders said.

In recognition of these and other efforts—most notably the conversion of a former police headquarters into the Back Bay Hotel and SHG's multi-million-dollar contribution to, and employee involvement in, the development of affordable housing in Boston's designated urban renewal areas—Saunders Hotel Group received the 2012 World Travel and Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Community Benefit Award. The award was presented in Tokyo, with the prime minister and hospitality executives from across the globe in attendance.

SHG also received the hotel industry's number-one ranking in the 2012-13 Climate Counts Company Scorecard, and this spring, the Lenox Hotel was named Best Place to Work in the City of Boston by the Boston Business Journal.

Along with the Lenox Hotel, SHG currently owns and manages five other properties—the Boston Common Hotel and Conference Center; the Comfort Inn and Suites Boston/Logan Airport; the Hampton Inn in Norwood, Massachusetts; the Hawthorn Suites in Alexandria, Virginia; and the Premiere Hotel and Suites in New Haven, Connecticut.

The Boston Common Hotel and Conference Center, the group's most recent acquisition, is managed by Saunders's son, Alex. "Later this year, we hope to redevelop the site into a special multi-use facility that will open in 2016," Saunders said. "The four- to five-diamond independent property will have 227 hotel rooms, along with a world-class ground-floor restaurant, a sky lobby and restaurant facilities on the seventeenth floor, a conference center on the eighteenth floor, and condominiums on the top fifteen

Jesse Winter



floors. It's a hugely ambitious project and the first time my family is building something from scratch in Boston.

"Being involved in the community doesn't just make you feel good, it's also smart business," he said. "Generation after generation, we've been able to reinforce my grandfather's legacy. I take great pride in having my kids see what we've accomplished."

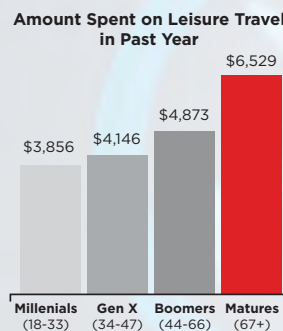
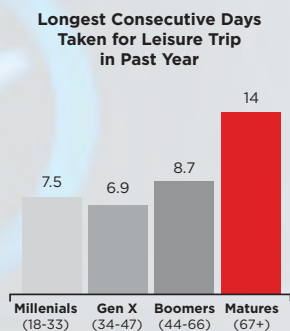


By Peter C.
Yesawich '72,
MS '74,
PhD '76

My company, MMGY Global (formerly Ypartnership) has been tracking the travel habits, preferences, and intentions of American travelers for over 20 years through an annual survey, the MMGY Global Portrait of American Travelers™ (formerly the National Travel Monitor). Each year we poll a nationally representative sample of 2,500 active travelers (adults who took at least one overnight trip more than 75 miles from home during the previous twelve months) and measure changes in their perceptions and behaviors on over 100 different variables associated with demand for both business and leisure travel. We interpret the results with reference to the prevailing economic, social, and political climate to make predictions about emerging market trends, most of which, I'm pleased to say, have proven to be quite prescient! Below are some contemporary insights into the behavior of American leisure travelers, who now represent the largest segment of the travel market.

The age(s) of travel

As Americans get older, they tend to spend more on leisure travel and take longer trips. This is not surprising given that they tend to have a higher percentage of discretionary income and more leisure time. This critical observation is lost, however, on many travel service marketers who mistakenly believe that the “real action” is among Millennials and GenXers.



ME

Of course, much more goes into the successful marketing of travel services than knowing the age of the travelers. Each stage of every trip—whether planning, booking, or traveling—is influenced by a multitude of factors that weigh on the minds of consumers as they evaluate options and make decisions. The complexity of these decisions is palpable in an increasingly time-impoorished world. Navigating the nuances successfully requires a deep understanding of travelers' lifestyles, social values, aspirations, media habits, and previous travel behavior.

The next generation of travelers

The motivations that drive demand for leisure travel services differ widely across the major age cohorts. For example, let's consider Millennials, the group born between 1979 and 1993.

Millennials have an unmatched appetite for travel, though only 33 percent describe themselves as “actual travelers.” Millennials see travel as an escape from their daily routine and a gateway to a multitude of experiences they cannot find at home. They are destination dilettantes: 89 percent prefer travel to destinations they have never visited before. They are also keenly interested in sampling different experiences while on vacation. Hence, they represent a whimsical market for most travel service providers, and their “loyalty” is by no means assured.

ET the new. American traveler



Agree	Total	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers	Matures
I am more likely to try new things while on vacation	89	93	90	87	75
I prefer to go to new destinations for my vacations	85	89	86	82	83
Taking vacation is the event I most look forward to each year	80	83	82	78	67
I believe that the destinations I visit say a lot about who I am	60	69	62	53	48

The ability to mass-publish photos has created a new “look at me” culture among younger travelers. Millennials are not satisfied simply to experience new

Agree	Total	Millennials	GenX	Boomers	Matures
I show my vacation photos on social media sites like Facebook to make my friends/family jealous	35	45	38	23	17

things—they want everyone else to know what they are doing...as it happens.

It's (still) the economy

The economy continues to bridle demand for travel services, despite the encouraging growth we have observed in recent months. For the third consecutive year, the top five reasons for taking fewer trips in the year ahead are all related to the economy. Interestingly, as America has moved on from the Great Recession, we have seen a significant increase in the percentage of travelers who cite “no time” or “can’t get time off from work” as reasons for not traveling more. This is presumably a direct reflection of the importance of work in an otherwise high-unemployment economy.

The economy also ranks as the number-one global “concern” among American travelers, topping healthcare, unemployment, the national debt, and the quality of public schools. Even with the recent improvement in financial markets, Americans have come out of the Great Recession chastened and much more conscious of what the future holds. Despite these anxieties, purchasing behavior gives us some indication that the mood is shifting. Specifically, since 2010, we have seen a decline in the percentage of consumers who are tightening their household budgets, but the percentage

who continue to select generic over branded products and wait for items to go on sale remains quite high nonetheless. In addition to a modest reduction in budget tightening, we have also observed some loosening of budget strictures, with 67 percent of travelers now saying that they try to adhere to a monthly budget, down from 71 percent in 2010.

Resourcefulness reigns

Despite any improvements in economic well-being, Americans continue to cite the pursuit of “good value” as an important part of the travel planning process. Eighty-seven percent of American travelers consistently “try to get the best prices” on the items they purchase. Among affluent Americans—those with annual household incomes greater than 250,000 dollars, the top two percent of U.S. households as defined by current income—this sentiment is nearly as strong: fully 77 percent “shop aggressively for the best deals.” In fact, it’s fair to say that shopping for great travel deals has become a new American sport.

Yet this is not to say that consumers have abandoned the idea of paying full price. On the contrary, 70 percent of consumers acknowledge their willingness to pay full price if they are guaranteed the “quality and service they deserve,” up from 64 percent in 2011. Not surprisingly, this desire is most evident among affluent travelers (81 percent), but the greatest shift in this sentiment—from 61 percent to 68 percent in the last year—has occurred among travelers with an annual household income of less than 125,000 dollars. The desire for improved quality appears to be driving American travelers to an increased preference for full-service hotels/resorts, now preferred by 80 percent of travelers,

and luxury hotels/resorts, now preferred by 26 percent of travelers versus nineteen percent in 2010.

The importance of value is most evident when examining the relative importance of over 20 factors in the selection of lodging accommodations. "Value for the price" is cited by 90 percent of respondents when choosing a hotel, motel, or resort—more than "location," a factor cited by 87 percent, "the nightly room rate," cited by 86 percent, or "previous experience with the hotel," cited by 84 percent. Even 81 percent of affluent Americans mention "value for the price" in the lodging selection equation.

The age of connectivity

The steep rise in the use of smart phones and tablets has done much to accelerate the popularity of travel websites. Ownership of these devices has more than doubled since 2010, and the percentage of American travelers who now own both smart phone and tablet (we call them the "Digital Elite") has climbed to 21 percent. Consumers have embraced mobile technology, and 24-hour connectivity has become an expected way of life.

The smart phone, in particular, is gaining popularity in the mobile access race. Fully 37 percent of active travelers have downloaded a travel app on a smart phone (up from nineteen percent in 2010). In turn, many travel-related activities performed on smart phones have increased significantly during the past year. Conversely, the

incidence of travel-related activities on tablets has actually declined since 2011. We believe this shift is occurring because the smart phone is a more tote-worthy mobile companion than a tablet. And with 90 percent of all tablets being sold as Wi-Fi enabled only (not carrier-based), the tablet is still primarily a living-room entertainment technology for Americans, making the smart phone the preferred choice when on the go. This is clearly evident when we examine selected travel-related behaviors on both devices. For example, 25 percent of smart phone users "comparison shop airfares and hotel rates" versus 37 percent of tablet users. Only sixteen percent of active travelers report "making reservations" on a smart phone, versus 28 percent on tablets. The digital marketing strategies that are most effective on each device differ accordingly.

The growth of tablets and smart phones also helps explain the rising appeal of Internet access while on vacation. The traditional idea that a vacation is a "getaway" from our everyday lives is dissolving rapidly as more travelers seek free Wi-Fi and Internet access at their destinations. We call the phenomenon being "wired for relaxation." American travelers are shifting from "I'll tell you all about it when I get back" to more of a play-by-play commentary on vacation experiences as they happen. It will be interesting to watch the evolution of this mentality over the next few years, as constant connectivity could reach a tipping point and the lure of "disconnecting" may soon return.

These are just a few of the provocative insights that may be found in *Portrait of American Travelers™*, and I invite you to contact me at pyesawich@mmgyglobal.com if you would like to learn more.



Peter Yesawich leads all of MMGY's efforts in consumer insights. He is regarded as one of the most respected and insightful sources on the habits and preferences of American travelers. He is a frequent commentator on travel trends in publications such as The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Time, Newsweek, and Business Week, and has been featured on CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, BBC World, and National Public Radio. His honors include the World Travel Award from the American Association of Travel Editors, the Albert E. Koehl Award from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI), and a Silver Medal from the American Advertising Federation



Entrepreneurship boot camp empowers disabled vets

Alex van Breukelen knows firsthand the challenges of launching and running a successful business. He opened The Americana bar and restaurant in Baltimore in the spring of 2011 while in the U.S. Marine Corps. He has been managing marketing plans, budgets, human resources, and more ever since.

But there was still a lot he didn't know, from pricing and costing to financial analysis and marketing concepts, he said. "There were so many different aspects of restaurant management and entrepreneurship that I just didn't know I was missing," said the thirteen-year military veteran.

By
Ashlee
McGandy

Thanks to a new entrepreneurship training program offered through the Pillsbury Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship (PIHE), van Breukelen gained the skills he needs to build a successful business. Van Breukelen was one of eleven veterans who participated in the weeklong Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) held at the school last fall.

"If I had known two years ago what I have learned [at EBV], I would be leaps and bounds ahead of where I am right now," said van Breukelen, who went on to win 5,000 dollars and an award for the best venture impacting veterans at the EBV National Business Plan and Pitch Competition two weeks later in Denver.

The annual EBV program begins with an online curriculum that participants complete before they arrive on campus for a weeklong residency program. After they leave campus, they have access to ongoing technical assistance from faculty experts and EBV partners.

"We know that we are not able to teach the students everything they need to know to start their hospitality or real estate businesses in one week," said Neil Tarallo, SHA senior lecturer and PIHE academic director.

"However, we can provide a strong foundation from which they can build. Perhaps most importantly, we can give them hope by working with them to create a path to success."

The EBV program began in 2007 at Syracuse University. Since then, seven other universities have joined the EBV consortium, offering experiential training to veterans who were disabled as a result of their service. Cornell's EBV was the first to offer a program on hospitality and real estate entrepreneurship. It covered business plan development, accounting, marketing strategies, Excel and other software programs, and financing opportunities for veterans. Sessions were led by more than a dozen SHA faculty members; speakers from the Culinary Institute of America, Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and the U.S. Small Business Administration; and finance, real estate, and community banking professionals.

"I know from experience that entrepreneurship can empower people to change their lives in a way that few initiatives can, and it is especially exciting to open the world of hospitality entrepreneurship to our disabled veterans," said Tarallo.

Some participants, like van Breukelen, had previous experience as entrepreneurs. For others, entrepreneurship was a new career path—one explored only after physical impairments closed other doors. "Before my injury, I had a one-track mind—I wanted to be a police officer," explained Rick Yarosh, who suffered second- and third-degree burns over 60 percent of his body and lost his ears, nose, and part of his right leg when a roadside bomb in Iraq set fire to his tank. "Since then, my mind has really opened up. I recognize opportunities, but I don't follow through on them. I think the reason is that I don't know how."

EBV is designed to build veterans' skills and confidence but also to teach them to take a critical look at every aspect of their business concept. It is hard work, but it is worth it. "During EBV, I rethought my idea a million times. Sometimes my confidence had gone lower, but I think I need that. The next day I came in and my confidence was through the roof," said Yarosh. "It's like the Army—we have to break it down before we build it back up. That's what we did in basic training. EBV really is a boot camp."



Illustration: Marc Rubin

Digital marketing course now a virtual reality

By
Leslie
Morris

Hospitality professionals in need of digital and social media marketing skills, take heart. A version of the popular new-media marketing course that SHA faculty members Bill Carroll and Rob Kwortnik developed with Sabre Hospitality Solutions is also being offered through eCornell as one of the University's first MOOCs (massive open online courses). In addition, a more comprehensive version of the course is now being offered through the SHA's online certificate series.

"The SHA and eCornell have offered opportunities for virtual engagement that is not typical of MOOCs but which supports Cornell's brand position of teaching excellence," said Kwortnik. The online course combines traditional faculty-authored instruction with advice from leading industry experts and applied simulations of typical industry activities.

"Innovation in digital media, especially in the social and mobile media domains, is constant and rapid," said Kwortnik. "Technology has opened up innumerable new ways to communicate with customers, to build brands, and to enhance the service experience. Keeping up with this revolution and figuring out how to adapt marketing programs efficiently to new-media opportunities—and threats—is a challenge for managers. This new course will help managers make sense of new media by framing the field with solid marketing theory, concepts, and frameworks."

Kwortnik and Carroll spent six months transitioning their classroom course to a virtual reality. "It was very challenging and time-consuming. It's similar to making a movie," said Carroll. "When you are teaching in a classroom, the delivery of the content is very sequential. As you're developing an online course together, you may shoot video one day, develop exercises another day, and work on the website another day. Everything is in snippet form instead of a 75-minute lecture."

The course, *Marketing the Hospitality Brand Through New Media: Social, Mobile, and Search*, is unique due to the high degree of interaction between the participants and the instruction team. "We've developed exercises where participants are asked to analyze a hotel company's brand promise as presented on a

website and then join a discussion forum with other course participants to debate the brand strategy," said Carroll.

Given the dynamism in the new-media landscape, Kwortnik and Carroll wanted to be able to update the course annually to keep it fresh. "We wanted to incorporate new media into the course, so we used more video than text, with the ability to link out to websites, YouTube, and other social media platforms," said Carroll. "This course is unlike anything eCornell has done in the past."

Industry experts agree. "We're not talking about simply teaching SEO, social media, or customer analytics here," said Anil Aggarwal, CEO of Milestone Internet Marketing. "What's really needed in hospitality is something that makes the connection between marketing theory and the practical reality of managing social media."

"We are already receiving really good feedback," said Carroll. "Students can't wait to go on to the next module and really think about the strategies and tactics that go into making the connection between marketing theory, branding, and reputation management. It's a challenging course."



UPhoto

IT'S OUR TURN TO

Thank you

FOR LEADING OUR
INDUSTRY FORWARD

On behalf of the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, our alumni, our corporate partners, students, faculty, and staff, thank you for your amazing vision and generous support of the school at this premier event. Your sponsorship has helped our students to shine at their *brightest!*

The Cornell University School of Hotel Administration congratulates **Tom Pritzker** and **Steve Ells**, recipients of this year's Cornell Icon of the Industry and Cornell Hospitality Innovator Awards. We thank you for your extraordinary vision, innovation, and heart of purpose.



5TH ANNUAL CORNELL HOSPITALITY
ICON & INNOVATOR AWARDS



TITLE SPONSOR:

HYATT®



DIAMOND SPONSORS:

Baccarat
FLAG LUXURY

DELTA



LATHAM & WATKINS



Marrriott

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

MENIN | HOTELS



PLATINUM SPONSORS:

Access Point Financial
BDT & Company
Boutique Design
Cafe Spice
Cipriani 42nd Street
Cleverdis
Cornell Hotel Society
Deloitte
Four Seasons
Hotels & Resorts
Hilton Worldwide
Hospitality Design
Hotel Business
Hsyndicate
Interstate Hotels
& Resorts
JHM Hotels
The Lodging Conference
Nobu New York
PwC
Pyramid Hotel Group
Questex Hospitality
Group
Runtriz
SchellingPoint
Sweet Street Desserts
Thayer Lodging Group
Veolia Transportation

EXCLUSIVE MEDIA CO-HOSTS:

TRAVEL+
LEISURE



STRATEGIC MARKETING & EVENT CONSULTANT:

AMAZINGTASTE

STRATEGIC BRAND MARKETING & DESIGN:

DOMOREGOOD | csk
Building brands that truly matter.



GOLD SPONSORS:

American Hotel Register
Banfi Vintners
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group
Denihan Hospitality Group
Fairmont/Raffles/Swissôtel
FRANCE 24
Grand Hyatt New York
Harney & Sons
Hersha Hospitality Trust
Hospitality Real Estate Counselors (HREC)
Hotel Capital Advisers, Inc.
HotelPlanner.com

Jones Lang LaSalle
J.P. Morgan
La Quinta Inns & Suites
The Leading Hotels of the World
PhoCusWright, Inc.
RLJ Lodging Trust
Scotiabank
Stonebridge Companies
Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces
Wells Fargo
Wyndham Hotel Group



SILVER SPONSORS:

American Hotel & Lodging Association
Cornell Center for Hospitality Research
Cornell Center for Real Estate & Finance
Cornell Hotel Society – New York City Chapter
Cornell Pillsbury Institute
for Hospitality Entrepreneurship
HotelNewsNow
HSMIA
PAR Springer-Miller Systems
PepsiCo
Sack Family Foundation

Southworth Development LLC
Spencer Stuart
The Bernstein Companies
The Wall Street Journal

The 2013 Cornell Icon & Innovator Awards event SOLD OUT, bringing together the most distinguished leaders in the hospitality and travel industry. Reserve your sponsorship and guarantee your spot for the 6th Annual Cornell Icon & Innovator Awards on **June 3, 2014**, by contacting Joe Strodel, Jr., Executive Director of Corporate Affairs, at **607-255-4646**.



Cornell University
School of Hotel Administration

Thank you to our sponsors!

Cornell International Summit: Hospitality, Real Estate, and the Built Environment

April 20, 2013 • Shanghai, China



In April, over 275 industry leaders and academic experts in hospitality, real estate, architecture, and urban planning gathered in Shanghai to discuss innovation and growth in China's hospitality and commercial real estate markets. The **Cornell International Summit: Hospitality, Real Estate, and the Built Environment** was the second Cornell International Hospitality Summit in Asia and assembled a diverse array of nearly 40 speakers, including Shanghai Vice Mayor Zhao Wen, several Cornell faculty, and prominent Cornell alumni and industry speakers.

Thank you to our sponsors, whose generous support made this event possible.



Cornell University

Co-presented by:

College of Architecture, Art, and Planning
Center for Real Estate and Finance
School of Hotel Administration

In coordination with:

Cornell Asia Pacific Leadership Conference
Cornell Hotel Society Asia Pacific Regional Meeting

Title sponsors:



Diamond sponsor:



Sponsors:

Cornell Baker Program in Real Estate
Cornell Center for Hospitality Research
Duetto Research
eCornell
FRANCE 24
Galaxy Entertainment Group
Hilton Worldwide
Hsyndicate
Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
IDEaS: A SAS Company
International Tourism Partnership

KPF
Marriott International
Cornell School of Hotel Administration
Office of Executive Education
PhoCusWright
Thayer Lodging Group
TravelDaily
TTG Asia Media Group
USA TODAY
Xn Hotel Systems

CHS president's message

Dear Friends,

I am delighted and honored to serve the Cornell Hotel Society this year as president and to be working with first vice president **Raj Chandnani '95**, second vice president **Deniz Omurgonulsen '00**, treasurer **Steve Lipinski '72**, and program assistant Nickie Fredenburg. We are proud to carry on the traditions of the Society, which has accomplished so much over the years.

Our aim is to continue to strengthen this remarkable network of alumni, which is now served by 60 chapters worldwide. At its core, the Society upholds the interests of the alumni, students, faculty, school, and university to further camaraderie, education, and professional endeavors.

Our connections lie in the powerful experiences that we had as SHA students. Those experiences shaped us, taught us so much, and resulted in such strong friendships. Wherever we are in life at this time, or whatever we are doing, so much is tied back to the school. E. M. Statler's quote, "Life is service; the one who progresses is the one who gives his fellow man a little more, a little better service," is perhaps even more significant today.



CHS officers Regan Taikitsadaporn '93, past president; Deniz Omurgonulsen '00, treasurer; Raj Chandnani '95, first vice president; and Liv Gussing Burgess '91, president in Ithaca for the CHS spring meeting



Robert Barker/Photo

Liv Gussing Burgess '91

So what does it mean to be a Hotelie for life? How do we put into words the little flutter that lights our spirit when we think of our university experiences? And how do we keep that spark alive and engaged as we each take different journeys through life? How do we enable and encourage others to have that opportunity?

We wish to offer answers to these questions in order to ensure that CHS becomes even more relevant and important to our alumni, students, and the school. Thus, our focus this year will lie with the following three initiatives:



Defining what it means to be a Hotelie for life:

We started this journey in 2011 when we decided that we had to further redefine the CHS value proposition. We sent out a survey in March 2012, followed by in-depth individual interviews and focus groups. Cheryl Farr, MMH '04 conducted a survey last fall of ten alumni organizations in an effort to discover best practices. Cheryl is now helping us to answer some of the fundamental questions, and we look forward to sharing these findings with you as we shape the path that will lead CHS forward for many years to come.

Ongoing learning: We plan to expand the faculty road show program in order to bring more faculty members to you and your chapters. This is a vital opportunity for us to share the SHA's remarkable and evolving resources while providing our members with valuable lifelong learning and a lasting connection.

Promoting the strength of the school's alumni:

The school's sustained success lies in each and every one of YOU. We want to celebrate our alumni and the diverse journey that each one of you has taken. Your accomplishments reinforce the school's global preeminence as a unique applied business program. Help us to make it even better by participating and staying involved, whether by mentoring an alum or student, attending one of our 150 global functions, or providing job opportunities.

Before closing, I want to acknowledge our sadness over the loss of **Christine Natsios '85**, who passed away in February as a result of cancer. Her life was taken away too quickly at too young an age. Since her appointment as director of alumni affairs in June 2005, Christine had worked endlessly and devotedly to strengthen our connections to each other and our alma mater. She attended events around the world, sharing her joy with fellow Hotelies. Although we have lost a great friend and support, let us celebrate her life and continue in her steps of embracing our connections as humans.

We thank you for your amazing commitment and enthusiasm thus far. I am looking forward to the next year in our journey together.

Warmest wishes,

Liv Gussing Burgess '91
President, Cornell Hotel Society
livgussing@gmail.com

Chapter *events*

Arizona



The Arizona chapter held its annual summer dinner at the Phoenician resort in Scottsdale on July 14. The resort's manager, **Todd Raessler '87**, hosted the event.



Nancy Barger Seadler '79 hosted the Arizona chapter's annual holiday brunch in her Paradise Valley home on December 2.

Asia-Pacific

The 18th Annual CHS Asia-Pacific Regional Conference took place in Siem Reap, Cambodia November 1-3, with **Ben Justus '08** as host. Approximately 60 attendees from South Korea, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the Philippines as well as from Europe and the USA enjoyed a full itinerary including visits to Wat Damnak, a beautiful active pagoda, where the monks gave a welcome blessing; Ta Prohm Temple in Angkor Wat, famous for the massive tree roots there that have been entwined for centuries in battle with ancient stones; and the mystical Bayon Temple in the ancient city of Angkor Thom.

Thursday night cocktails and canapés were served at McDermott's Gallery—the Passage near Wat Damnak. From there the group traveled by tuk tuk to dinner at Cuisine Wat Damnak, one of Siem Reap's finest restaurants.



Participants in the CHS Asia-Pacific Regional Conference visit Angkor Wat

Friday lunch was held at Khmer Kitchen, and the group reassembled after an afternoon of leisure for a relaxed seafood barbecue in a traditional Cambodian home set in the rice fields.

Saturday morning's seminar, which covered Cambodia's tourism, education, and nonprofit sectors, took place at the Paul Dubrule School of Hotel and Tourism. CHS Past President **Regan Taikitsadaporn '93** updated the group on Society activities, and Meg Keilbach, SHA assistant dean of alumni affairs and development, reported on events at the school. Afterwards, the Paul Dubrule School hosted a delicious lunch.

After lunch, the group headed to an open house at EGBOK Mission's Learning Center, which opened in July 2011. The open house featured representatives of three nongovernmental organizations, including the Monks of Wat Damnak, who represented the Life and Hope Association; a local sugarcane vendor; demonstrations of lotus flower folding and the Aspara hand gestures used in traditional Cambodian dances; a Cambodian herb and food tasting; a tour of the facility; and a tour of the garden where food is grown for EGBOK. Twenty EGBOK students were on hand to meet the visitors. The organization has 50 students aged 18 to 22 in its third intake class for 2012-13.

Saturday evening's Gala Dinner and Auction was held at the Athakon House, a stunning Khmer-inspired home. The auction, organized by **Rebecca Inhee Lee '02** and others, was lively and fun, and the bidding there was supplemented by other contributions to yield 60,290 dollars for the CHS Asia-Pacific Regional Scholarship fund.



Asia-Pacific region alumni and friends arrive at EGBOK Mission's Learning Center on November 3.

Northern California

CHS Northern California held its second-annual—and second sold-out—Northern California Hospitality Investment Forum in early November. **Mark Woodworth '77, MPS '78** started off the program with an economic and hotel market overview. Greg Wolkom, EVP of Wells Fargo's Hospitality Finance Group, led an investment panel discussion featuring **Joe Long '83**, CIO and EVP for development of Kimpton Hotel and Restaurant Group; Tom Callahan, co-president and CEO—West of PKF Consulting; **Rob Stiles '83**, managing director and founding principal of Robert Douglas and former executive managing director and principal of Cushman Wakefield; and Brian Heafy of Pacific Capital Partners. **Jon Kimball '84**, general manager of the Westin St. Francis, donated the meeting space for the second year in a row, and Wells Fargo, Kimpton Hotels, and Chartres Lodging all helped sponsor the event. Michael Brown '02, VP, Wells Fargo, helped organize this very successful event.



NorCal investment panel participants, from left: **Joe Long '83** of Kimpton Hotels, **Rob Stiles '83** of Robert Douglas, **Mike Brown '02** of Wells Fargo, **Katherine Chan '06** of Kimpton Hotels, **Mark Woodworth '77, MPS '78** of PKF Consulting, Greg Wolkom of Wells Fargo, Brian Heafey of PCCP, and Tom Callahan of PKF Consulting

Chapter events continued

The NorCal chapter celebrated the holidays on December 5 with a party at E&O Asian Kitchen in San Francisco. Owner **Chris Hemmeter '86** (founder, CEO, and chairman of the E&O Trading Company Restaurant Organization) served as host.

Europe, Middle East, and Africa

Following a motion by CHS president **Liv Gussing Burgess '91**, the EMEA region has decided to have two regional vice presidents in order to improve communication between the membership and CHS chapter and global leadership. **Alison Hargreaves '00**, who previously presided over the London chapter, has been appointed regional vice president for Western Europe, with responsibility for the Finland/Russia/the Baltics, France, London, Norway, and Sweden chapters. **Christian Walter, PDP '08**, the outgoing president of the AlpAdria/Eastern Europe chapter, has been appointed regional vice president for Central Europe, the Arabian Gulf, and Africa. He now serves as liaison with the Arabian Gulf, BeNeLux, Germany, Kenya/East Africa, Pan-Hellenic, and AlpAdria/Eastern Europe chapters.

The EMEA region has been hit hard by the passing in February of **Christine Natsios '85**, who served with such devotion as the secretary of the Cornell Hotel Society and the SHA's director of alumni affairs. The group dedicated their annual scholarship auction, held during late April's 2013 EMEA Regional Meeting in Helsinki and Tallinn, to Christine's memory. Their hope was to make this auction the most successful to date.

The 2014 EMEA Regional Meeting will take place in Verona, Italy and will be hosted by **Michael Cortelletti, MMH '99**, the incoming president of the AlpAdria/Eastern Europe chapter.



From left: Mark Depew, SHA associate director of alumni affairs and development, attended the event with NorCal chapter leaders **Katherine Chan '06** (secretary), **Ray Manning '07** (ambassador); **Scott Slocum, MMH '03** (regional VP); **Miranti Ojong '02** (president and social chair), **Jadey Chow '08** (social media), **Lindsay Broad '05** (design chair), and **Addy Williams '98** (VP and programs chair).

Central Florida

The Central Florida chapter hosted an Evening with Dean Michael D. Johnson on March 18 at The Peabody Orlando. The Mariani family and Banfi Vintners provided Italian wines for the event, and Alan Villaverde, managing director of The Peabody, provided an exquisite menu of hors d'oeuvres and exceptional hospitality.



From left, **Larry Stuart '76** (president), **Donal Dermody '53, MS '68**, Dean Michael Johnson, Catherine Dermody, **Andrew Johnson '16**, **Steve Weisz '72**, and **Steve Weisz, Jr. '01** attended Central Florida's Evening with Michael Johnson.

Georgia

Happy hour at Whiskey Blue: Close to 50 Hotelies and industry guests enjoyed a variety of specialty drinks, passed appetizers, and hors d'oeuvres when the Georgia chapter gathered at Whiskey Blue on October 17. Located on top of the W Hotel in Buckhead, Whiskey Blue offers spectacular views of the city of Atlanta.

The event was hosted by **Steven Nicholas '92**, principal and EVP of Noble Investment, owner of the hotel. **Rodolfo Carlos '05**, manager of investment analysis with InterContinental Hotels Group, organized the event.

Entrepreneurship panel: On November 7 the Georgia chapter hosted a gathering organized by the Cornell Entrepreneur Network (CEN) in partnership with the School of Hotel Administration and its Pillsbury Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship. The event, a seminar entitled "A New Breed of Entrepreneur in the Business of Hospitality, Food, and Drink," was held at White Oak Kitchen and Cocktails, **Alan LeBlanc '84**'s new restaurant in downtown Atlanta.

Following a welcome reception, a young alumni panel discussed the challenges of developing and maintaining their hospitality businesses. The discussion, which Alan moderated, covered social media, branding, balancing work life and home life, real estate, and finances. Panelists were **Fred Castellucci '07**, **Chad Crete '07**, **Garnie Nygren '05**, **Ryan Pernice '07**, and **Patrick Service, MMH '09**. Cornell staffers Amanda Christofferson of CEN and Megan Kaminska from the SHA's Office of External Affairs organized the event.

Annual holiday party: **Savannah Woodworth '16** and her parents, **Mark '77** and Mary Kay, were the gracious hosts for the Georgia chapter's annual holiday party on December 2. Chapter president **Meri Keller '04** and vice president **Adam MacLennan '06** organized the event.



From left: **Adam MacLennan '06**, Ryan Lindgren, **Meri Keller '04**, **Sophia Lin '05**, **Garnie Nygren '05**, and **Angela Tomlinson-Tassie '96** enjoy CHS Georgia's happy hour in October



From left: **Patrick Service, MMH '09**, **Ryan Pernice '07**, **Garnie Nygren '05**, **Fred Castellucci '07**, and **Chad Crete '07** discussed their business challenges as panelists at an Atlanta event organized by the SHA and the Cornell Entrepreneur Network.

From left: **May Ray '96**, **Bumjoo MacLennan '05**, and Professor Jack Corgel celebrate the holidays at the Woodworth home in Atlanta.



Chapter events continued

Over 40 Atlanta Hotelies (classes 1955 to 2012) and guests enjoyed a dinner and dessert buffet catered by Fred and Stephanie Castellucci and Chad Crete of the Castellucci Hospitality Group. Beer was donated by Alan LeBlanc, while Garnie Nygren contributed the wine.

Joining the group from Ithaca was Professor Jack Corgel. After Jack's update on happenings in Ithaca, Meri and Adam presented him with a \$10,000 check from the Georgia chapter for its scholarship fund. Following the presentation, **Mark Newton '74** repeated his role as Santa Claus during the annual gift exchange.

Pizza party: The chapter gathered at Fred and Stephanie Castellucci's contemporary southern Italian restaurant, Double Zero Napoletana, on February 25 to make authentic Neapolitan pizzas. Chad Crete is the restaurant's culinary director. **Leah Corgel '09** and **Harryette Kim '12** organized this extremely fun and yummy event.

Fred opened the evening by providing some background on Neapolitan pizzas, which the group learned can only be certified as authentic if they are made with the proper tomatoes, cheese, and double-zero flour. The pizzas are cooked in extremely hot, custom-built ovens for just 90 seconds. After Fred's presentation, the group got hands-on experience stretching dough and topping their own personal pizzas.

Germany

The Germany chapter celebrated the December holiday season with a charming evening at the Fleming Deluxe Hotel, in the heart of Frankfurt's financial district. Flip Blodinger (EHL), whose family owns the Fleming Hotels, hosted the event, which was organized by **Mario Kiefer, PDP '74**.

Cornell/EHL Reception: A sell-out crowd of 300 attended the fifth annual Cornell/EHL Reception, which was held on March 5 in conjunction with the International Hotel Investment Forum (IHIF) in Berlin. Steve Carvell, SHA associate dean for academic affairs, gave an entertaining update on activities back in Ithaca. This event has evolved from a series of gatherings that began more than 30 years ago in the home of **Rudy Muenster '62**.

During the week at IHIF, **Bryan Dunn '14** and **Matt Glodz '14** bested two teams of graduate students from EHL to win the Student Strategy Challenge: Developing the Deal competition. Bryan and Matt presented an analysis of the strategic and financial ramifications of a proposed mixed-use development in Paris.



From left: **Mario Kiefer, PDP '74**, **Christoph Satter, PDP '99**, Martina Fidelschuster, Peter Häfner, Jochen Bausback, and **Sascha Meusel, PDP '99** enjoy a convivial December evening at the Fleming Deluxe Hotel in Frankfurt.

India

CHS Delhi held an alumni get-together with Professor **Chekitan Dev, IMHI '85** on January 4. **Ravish Khanna '91** hosted the event at his fine-dining establishment, Auma, located at the super-luxury DLF Emporio Mall. Cheki updated the gathering on the SHAs latest initiatives.

Japan



CHS Delhi at Auma:

From left, front row: **Liang Shi'ai, MMH '09**, **Nirupa Shanka, MMH '09**, **Nipun Nath '05**, **Chek Dev, IMHI '85**, **Vivek Bhalia, MMH '00**, **Samir Kuckreja '90**, **Aveek Sengupta, MMH '09**, **Beni Agarwal, IMHI**, **Pawan Marwaha, MMH '06**, **Gaurav Chopra, MMH '10**, and **Ravish Khanna '91**

A November 9 event in Tokyo brought together members of CHS Japan and alumni of the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. Sixty alumni and friends from the two schools enjoyed a delicious dinner, engaging conversation, and a beautiful night scene of Tokyo at the Roppongi Hills Club.

New York City

Defining the New Luxury was the topic of a panel discussion held at the Westin Times Square on November 12, during the International Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Show. Professor **Chekitan Dev, IMHI '85**, moderated the panel, composed of **Ellen Brown '88, EVP**, development/hotels, Denihan Hospitality Group; **Richard Cotter '77**, managing director and EVP, Brilla Group; **Christopher Hunsberger '81, EVP**, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, and **Joy Kull '09**, head of merchandising and wine, Gilt Groupe. This event was conceived by CHS board members **Regan Taikitsadaporn '93**, then president; **Liv Gussing-Burgess '91**, then first vice president; and **Raj Chandnani '95**, then second vice president.

Hotel Asset Management and Investment

Symposium: On March 19, CHS New York City held their inaugural Hotel Asset Management and Investment Symposium in partnership with the Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance and the Harvard Business School Real Estate Alumni Association (HBSREAA). CHS NYC's '80s Committee—**Cherie Bagwill MPS '80**, VP of Schrier Wirth Executive Search; **Nina Kleiman '86**, SVP of hotelAVE; and **Liz Schafer '84**, VP of corporate sales at Oberoi Hotels and Resorts—joined with the founder of HBSREAA, **Dionis Rodriguez '98**, HBS '06, EVP of acquisitions and development at GB Lodging, to organize this event at the Harvard Club of NYC, attracting over 150 attendees.

Chapter events continued

Brad Wilson '84, president of the Ace Hotel Group, provided the keynote address. Professor **Jan deRoos '78, MS '80, PhD '94** moderated a panel on hotel asset management featuring Eric Habermann, SVP of asset management of Host Hotels and Resorts; Naveen Kakarla, JD '93, president and CEO of Hersha Hospitality Management; William Kidd, VP of asset management at Hilton Worldwide; and Michael Straube, corporate director of finance for the Trump Hotel Collection. **Art Adler '78**, managing director and CEO for the Americas at Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels, moderated the second panel discussion, on hotel investment, which featured David Gutstadt, head of hotels at Lubert-Adler Real Estate Funds; Antonio Larino, managing director at Rockwood Capital; Tyler Morse, HBS '02, CEO and managing partner of MCR Development; and Dionis Rodriguez. The symposium was generously sponsored by Schrier Wirth Executive Search and the Chartres Lodging Group.

Pan-Hellenic

On February 22, members of the CHS Pan-Hellenic chapter gathered for an informal dinner at the Premier Restaurant of the Athenaeum InterContinental Hotel in Athens. The host of the event was chapter president **Panos Panayotopoulos '91**, general manager of the hotel.

Clockwise from left:

Host **Panos Panayotopoulos '91**, president of the Pan-Hellenic chapter, his wife Lily, **Yiannis Retzos, MPS '95**, his wife Emmanuela, **Angelos Seferiadis '93**, his wife Ariadne, **Evan Pezas '72**, and **Themis Trakas '95** at the Athenaeum InterContinental Hotel in Athens

Seattle-Northwest

"Alleviating Poverty through Hospitality" was the theme of the second-annual dinner organized by EGBOK Mission and the Seattle-Northwest chapter. The July 22 event drew 60 attendees and raised nearly 10,000 dollars for the Cambodian hospitality students at EGBOK's new training facility, the Learning Center. The dinner and auction were held at FareStart, a culinary job training program for homeless and disadvantaged individuals in Seattle.



Attendees of Seattle's EGBOK dinner included, from left, **Jackie Murphy '09**, **Mitzi Fritz '76**, **Robbie Fritz '08**, **Ting Phonsanam '95**, **Samantha Noonan '03**, and **Philip Kim '14**.





The Seattle chapter's EGBOK dinner raised almost 10,000 dollars for students of the mission in Cambodia.

Hotelies at the Four Seasons Vancouver: From left, front: **Vito Romeo '11**, **Robert Pratt '82**, **Linda Chen-Point '93**, **Amy Chrisman Cima '88**, **Sophia Van Norden '81**, and **Louis Vincent Ng Cheong Tin '03**; and back: **Michael Lau '03**, **Franck Point '93**, **Stephen Darling '79**, **Elizabeth MacDonald '78**, and **Robert Cima '83**. **David Philp '84** also attended the event.

Vancouver

West Coast alumni gathered on February 19 for a post-New Year celebration and luncheon at the Four Seasons Vancouver. Hosts were **Robert Cima '83**, Four Seasons regional VP and general manager of the hotel, and **Amy Chrisman Cima '88**. Chef Ned Bell and his colleagues served a delicious menu in the Prime Minister Suite, where sunlight poured through the windows and warmed the two-story-high room, which features a 27-foot-high vaulted ceiling.

Washington, D.C./Baltimore

The value of intellectual property was the topic of discussion when the Washington, D.C./Baltimore chapter continued its tradition of scholarship fundraising and hospitality industry programming on October 25. Seventy-four people attended the third annual panel discussion at the Fairfax at Embassy Row.

Mark Woodworth '77, **MPS '78**, president of PKF Hospitality Research, served as the evening's moderator. Panelists included Minaz Abji, EVP of asset management, Host Hotels and Resorts; **Jim Cone '88**, VP of global promotions customer marketing for Hilton Worldwide; Ken Rehmann, EVP of brand marketing and e-commerce at Marriott International;



The 2012 Real Estate Panel drew 74 people to the Fairfax at Embassy Row on October 25.

Chapter events continued

and Jim Biggar, EVP of full-service hotel operations, Interstate Hotels and Resorts.

A networking reception followed the program. With the help of sponsors including Pyramid Hotel Group, Thayer Lodging Group, Swank Audio Visuals, and Hilton Worldwide, the chapter raised a record 8,095 dollars for their scholarship, which grew to 10,793 dollars when matched.

Seventeen alumni and friends of the Washington, D.C./Baltimore chapter turned out on February 21 for a very nice winetasting at Vino Volo, Bethesda Row. From left, top: **Martha Glose '08**, Raj Contractor, **Nancy Desai, MMH '07**, **Ian Banger '08**, **Anna Chung '03**, and **Youn Cho '07**; bottom: Erik Przygocki, **Brenna Halliday '03**, and **Eva Robertson '03**



Other events

Hotel Ezra Cornell



HEC happened too close to press time to include full coverage, but here is one moment of fun from the weekend. From left, Kyu Whang, Eileen Whang, Ezra Cornell, Tetlow Park, Joanne DeStefano, Pete DeStefano, Jill Kobus Johnson, Roy Park, Daphne Cornell, and Dean Michael Johnson gather in the Park Atrium before dinner on Friday night. The atrium was made possible by a gift from Roy Park's mother, Dottie.



International Hotel Investment Forum

Majid Mangalji, president of Westmont Hospitality Group and father of **Alyshia Mangalji '09**, was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 16th annual International Hotel Investment Forum (IHIF) in March. Celebrating at a dinner following the presentation at the InterContinental Hotel Berlin were, from left, Steven Carvell, SHA associate dean for academic affairs; **Grace Leo '77**, president and CEO of A Touch of Grace; Majid, Omar, and Alyshia Mangalji; and Meg Keilbach, SHA assistant dean of alumni affairs and development.

Remembrance

Henry L. Hood '43	February 18, 2012
Myron "Mike" Linz '43	October 14, 2012
Paul R. Handlery '43	January 26, 2013
Harold Callis '49	March 24, 2012
John J. Bilon '49, MS '57	February 9, 2013
Richard G. Mino '50	September 13, 2012
Watson Parker '51	January 9, 2013
William B. Matthews '52	October 26, 2012
Willy J. Bergmann '54	December 15, 2012
John C. Perry '54	July 9, 2012
Edwin A. Martin '56	October 25, 2012
John A. Meyer, Jr. '57	December 4, 2012
Robert H. Hurlbut '57	March 4, 2013
W. Donald Tipton '58	January 18, 2013
Edward H. Carrette, Jr. '61	March 27, 2013
Alexander M. Brooks III '67	January 15, 2013
Bill Stebbins '74	January 6, 2013
Lynn Witte '78	April 26, 2012
Christine D. Natsios '85	February 16, 2013
Susan L. Peterson '85	March 16, 2013
Paul L. Schimoler '89	February 15, 2013
Fred Tschanz '95 (Euro Aff.)	December 20, 2012
Andrew J. Quinn '12	March 9, 2013
Gerald W. Lattin, MS '48, PhD '49 CALS	April 16, 2013



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/publications/hotelie.html



Rising

above my comfort zone:

Atacama and the Chilean Andes

By Bryan Dunn '14

"I have to do this," I thought as I opened the email while struggling up Libe Slope on a frigid January morning in 2012. I had cold-emailed a passionate note to Henry Purcell '55 just days before, expressing my desire to complete an internship at Ski Portillo, his resort in the Chilean Andes. I couldn't believe the response I received.

I was to work a regular shift at the hotel's reception desk; I would live and eat on-premise at no cost; skiing was free and encouraged; I would be paid. I recognized this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but I also knew that I would be venturing far out of my comfort zone. While I considered the inherent value of a rotational internship with a major brand, I wanted a somehow deeper experience. This would be my first formal exposure to the hotel industry, and I wanted to be inspired.

Portillo is an all-inclusive mountain resort nestled deep in the Andes Mountains near the Argentine border. The oldest

ski area in South America, Portillo offers arguably the best skiing out there when it's summer in the Northern Hemisphere; just ask the U.S. Olympic Ski Team or the other international contenders who train as guests there each season. Ever since I saw the little yellow hotel featured in the film *Warren Miller's Journey* as a kid, I had dreamed of one day being fortunate enough to visit. Now I found myself standing in my 8:30 a.m. culinary lab, dicing vegetables in sheer disbelief that I had just been invited to spend my sophomore summer as an intern at the resort.

Five years of high school Spanish would not be enough for this adventure. I immediately purchased Rosetta Stone, changed my phone and laptop settings to Spanish, and met with professors to make a game plan. Before I knew it, I was clicking "Me gusta" on Facebook and yelling poorly accented Spanish into my laptop's headset.

Detour to San Pedro de Atacama

As my plane pulled up to the gate in Santiago on June 14, I checked my phone and found a message from Henry asking me to call him. When I did, he explained to me that a lack of snow had forced back the opening of the resort at Portillo for at least two weeks. In the meantime, I was to fly to San Pedro to intern at one of the Purcell family's recently opened properties, Tierra Atacama.

Tierra Atacama is a 32-room boutique spa hotel located in northern Chile's



Ski Portillo, Henry Purcell '55's famed resort hotel high in the Chilean Andes

The view of the desert from Tierra Atacama, 8,000 feet above sea level

Atacama Desert. The Atacama is the driest desert in the world—50 times drier, if that seems possible, than Death Valley. Although snow persists on a few peaks, some weather stations there have never recorded rain. The soil in those areas is as devoid of life as that found on Mars, making it a suitable place for NASA to test instruments for future missions. My internship was taking me to one of the most alien outposts on Earth.

On a high, narrow plateau overlooking Chile's Pacific coastline, this desolate land can be even colder at night than the neighboring Andean peaks. I was greeted in nearby San Pedro (elevation 2,440 meters, or just over 8,000 feet) by a hotel shuttle

and spent the next hour and a half with my eyes glued to the sky, mesmerized by stars unlike anything I had ever seen. This was just a taste of the beauty that I would discover while in the desert.

Tierra Atacama's "Adventure Spa" concept pairs a typical all-inclusive food and beverage package with a unique array of local excursions capable of satisfying even the most adventurous traveler. During my downtime at Tierra Atacama, I was given the chance to join guests on excursions and experience the wonders of the local area. I visited the Atacama Salt Flats, hiked through a cactus valley, explored the historic town of San Pedro, and observed the southern night sky.

I had the opportunity to rotate through full shifts as both a receptionist and barman while assisting with administrative and F&B support tasks in my free

time. As a member of the reception team, I naturally became the point man for all English-speaking guests, and in this respect, at least, I was able to contribute from the start.

While my Spanish had come a long way since February, Chilean Spanish was an entirely different beast than I had prepared for. Among the fastest talkers in the Hispanic world, Chileans swallow parts of words crucial to comprehending their distinctive idiom and nearly impenetrable slang. I was also confronted regularly with Argentinean Spanish, not to mention Portuguese.

Determined to become a more versatile member of the operation, I jotted down words, terms, and phrases in my BlackBerry all day, then transcribed them into an Excel document to study at night. I spoke with everybody around me, in English or Spanish, and sometimes in a combination of the two. I wanted to learn more about the hotel, the language, the culture, and the guests. Not only did this allow me to quickly build relationships with coworkers and guests alike, but I



The entrance to Hotel Portillo

Laguna del Inca, with Las Tres Hermanas (the Three Sisters) beyond



began to gain a crucial understanding of the type of people I was working alongside, and the type of people I was serving. I knew that I needed a better grasp of South American culture to be successful there.

I suddenly realized the full depth of my immersion on one of my last nights at Tierra Atacama, when I was invited to a goodbye party for one of the hotel's beloved chefs. This traditional Chilean barbecue included local music, endless meats, hot wine, and of course, Pisco, a brandy distilled from grapes. There I stood, the only American hanging out among a staff comprised of Chileans, Peruvians, and Bolivians, sharing laughs around a fire after a long day of work. I could not believe that I was part of such an authentic experience. I will never forget that night.

Portillo

A company truck took me to Portillo the next afternoon, traveling through the town of Los Andes and into the mountains, passing numerous active mines and far

too many roadside memorials. The nearly three-hour drive culminated in a stretch of 37 numbered switchbacks, negotiated with ease by the seasoned driver while I clutched the handles in front of me for dear life. I finally arrived at Hotel Portillo, situated 9,450 feet, or 2,880 meters, above sea level.

I was greeted by a reception staff of about a dozen young, bilingual or trilingual South Americans. As the resort is isolated deep in the mountains, all employees live on-premise for the winter season. I was assigned a triple room in Siberia C, the third of seven employee living quarters, sharing a connecting bathroom with three Chilean receptionists: Cristobal, 19, from Santiago; Francisco, 26, from Chillan; and Guillermo, 28, from Los Angeles. I realized early on that these guys wanted to practice their English on me as much as I needed to practice my Spanish on them.

BINEROS DE CHILE
"GUARDIA VIEJA"
OBLIGADO TODO TIPO DE VEHICULOS
INVISITABLE HASTA:
NAS DESDE:



Outposts

It was a mutually beneficial struggle to communicate that eased as we spent time together on and off the slopes, sharing our cultural perspectives on everything from family to religion, from girls to drugs. Along with my other coworkers, they were there for me whenever I needed anything at all, allowing me to reach a refreshing degree of comfort in unfamiliar circumstances.

The first two days at Portillo were the most challenging of my life. Nearly all of the guests were from Chile or Argentina, and every communication was difficult. Feeling unable to deliver the expected level of service, I asked my American manager for a transfer to another department after my third shift. He urged me to stick with reception, assuring me that, in the coming weeks, more guests would speak English, and I would become more of an asset to the team in that respect. He also noted that verbal communication should only be one aspect of my efforts with guests and that my language obstacles would force me to improve my general communication skills from the most basic level. Speaking from experience, he assured me that the coming days would be very difficult, but not impossible. Most importantly, he made the point that nobody would fault me for putting forth my best effort.

I trusted his advice and saw everything fall into place in due time. I had failed to realize that many of my coworkers had once struggled with a second language just as I was doing now, and that they were eager to help me out as a result. I gradually picked up on the ins and outs of the operation and developed relationships with the staff in different areas of the hotel, with the goal of becoming a bilingual expert on Hotel Portillo. In less than three weeks, I was fully checking in Spanish-speaking guests, holding cordial conversations and successfully hiding the fact that I was the one gringo living among 500 South American employees.

Once I became comfortable with my reception post, Henry asked if I wanted to experience any other aspects of Portillo's operation. I voiced my interest in contributing to the resort's international marketing and social media initiatives. It turned out that the employee managing their social media would be on leave for the final two weeks of my internship. While still working my daily shift at Reception, I started waking up at 7:00 each morning to update the website and mobile app with weather and snow data. I also began to manage the resort's social media outlets, sharing new photos each day to highlight trademark aspects of the Portillo experience. Media traffic doubled within two weeks, and I saw reservation references sourced from social media increase. As a diehard snowboarder, being

\$390

Choshuenco

CHI

\$390

huenco



San Pedro, the town nearest to Tierra Atacama

the man behind the numbers and photos of my favorite mountain was the coolest thing, and it felt great to see my efforts benefit the operation.

I can confidently say that Portillo is unlike any other mountain resort in the world. There is no town, and there are no other mountains nearby, so guests are on-premise at all times. The rooms do not have televisions, and guests overwhelmingly support this decision year after year. In other resorts, guests simply disappear to their rooms after a long day on the slopes, but not at Portillo. Following a day lapping the slopes (with a capacity of 450 guests, there is no such thing as a lift line), skiers warm up with *Once* (Eleven), a Chilean tradition of tea time, in the hotel's cavernous living room. A three-course meal in the formal dining room is followed by a drink or a few at the bar, where a different live band performs every two nights. For those who are still up for it, the disco starts up once the bar

closes down, and partying continues through the night. It's amazing to see relationships gradually built throughout each week, between guests and staff alike. I quickly became accustomed to seeing guests embrace their favorite instructors/waiters/doormen upon their return to Portillo. And return they do—about 60 percent of guests come back to the resort following their initial visit. To stay for a week is an undoubtedly special experience, but to help facilitate that experience for others was the greatest honor of my life.

The day before I departed for Santiago, I was invited to sit down with Henry and his wife Ellen to reflect on my summer. We spoke for a while about my experience at Portillo, my future interests, and the current state of the hospitality industry. We shared a really nice conversation, allowing my exhilarating experience in Chile to finally come full circle. With Henry's permission, I ended up leaving Portillo a couple of days ahead of schedule to join my friend Cristobal at his mother's home in Santiago and then his father's in Vina del Mar. I loved the authentic Chilean hospitality that I received from his entire family; I will always remember the home-

made ceviche his uncle made specially for my visit. For me, this trip was the perfect way to end my time abroad.

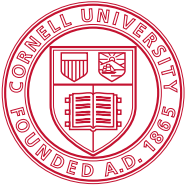
When I received Henry's invitation to intern with his company on that January day in Ithaca, I never could have imagined the growth that I would experience six months later. As clichéd as it sounds, while I learned a good amount about resort operations at Tierra Atacama and Portillo, I think I learned even more about myself. Spending seven weeks isolated from everything I knew forced me to face personal difficulties that might otherwise have been masked by the routine of daily life. By throwing myself into a situation where I was absolutely uncomfortable for the first time in my life, I was forced to dig deep down and realize where my strengths lie, and where I must seek to make improvements in my life.

My time in Chile has made me embrace the notion of "daring to be different" and shown me the value of leaving my comfort zone. To look back and realize everything that I overcame in seven short weeks is immensely fulfilling, and it has changed my approach toward challenging situations in all facets of my life. I know now that I desire to have as deep an impact on other people's lives as Henry has had through Portillo. My next challenge is to discover how.



From his room at Tierra Atacama, Bryan Dunn '14 had this view of 19,423-foot-high Licancabur Volcano.





Cornell University

School of Hotel Administration
189 Statler Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853-6902

www.hotelschool.cornell.edu

Hotelie

The magazine from the school for hospitality leadership