



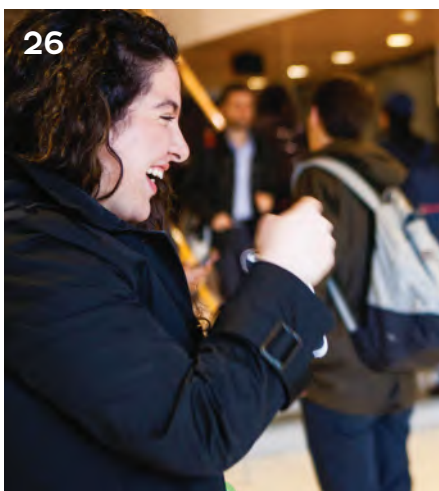
Hotelie

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Hotelie

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On the cover: The Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards, flanked by the office towers 30 Hudson Yards (left) and 10 Hudson Yards. Image courtesy of the Related Companies.

Image credits, counterclockwise from top: Jenny Linquist, Jon Reis, Elkus Manfredi Architects, and Dana Beninati, MMH '15



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The Way Ahead

On Saturday, January 30, the Cornell Board of Trustees formally voted to create the Cornell College of Business, to include the School of Hotel Administration, the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, and the Johnson Graduate School of Management. Planning committees have been formed, and discussions are under way to decide how best to structure academics and design administrative functions and services while assuring the preservation of each school's special character and academic mission. Only the broad outlines are known so far. The work of filling in the details concerns all of us and requires all of us to move ahead in the most productive and constructive ways possible. As I expressed recently to our faculty and students, the shape that SHA will take in the future depends on the involvement we give to the process now. We—SHA's faculty, staff, students, and alumni—are world-renowned for our unmatched commitment to leading through hospitality. This is the time to set the standard for collegiality going forward. I encourage all of us to come together as a community to find creative ways to meet the many challenges ahead. Let's do this by drawing on what makes our school so special.

The time is now for us to show the world what it means to be a Hotelier.

At this time of transition in our school's history, it is also important to recognize and celebrate how much we have accomplished, not only since our founding in 1922 but in the past decade. Our accreditation eighteen months ago by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business was the first ever awarded individually to a hospitality-focused academic program. The AACSB's praise of our academic excellence was unequivocal—SHA offers an outstanding business program that derives strength not only from the high quality of its faculty and students, but from its unique grounding in hospitality and the exceptional involvement of its alumni and other industry leaders.

Both our academic stature and our level of industry connectivity have increased significantly in the past decade. During a period of historic generational turnover in university faculty nationwide, we have hired

an excellent young faculty with great teaching and research potential and a strong interest in creating new knowledge for the hospitality industry. Through a series of initiatives ranging from the establishment of four new centers and institutes to the creation of high-profile events and student competitions, we have greatly increased our visibility and extended our engagement with executives and innovators at the highest levels of hospitality and related industries.

THE SHAPE THAT SHA WILL TAKE IN THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON THE INVOLVEMENT WE GIVE TO THE PROCESS NOW.

Our industry reach and faculty quality have contributed a great deal in turn to the quality of the student experience in SHA, which our students consistently rate the best at Cornell. On campus, our students enjoy outstanding classroom instruction, operations-based leadership training, and access to distinguished industry speakers, guest lecturers, and mentors. In major cities here

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Dean Michael Johnson
with student assistants
Remi Zimmerman '16
and Patrick Tan '16. Photo
by Jason Koski/UPhoto

and abroad, they enjoy exceptional industry site visits, networking, and internship opportunities. When they graduate, they are employed and prepared to lead.

Our global reach has grown dramatically in the past decade. Already the acknowledged campus leader in online learning, SHA enrolled 20,000 people in 187 countries in free and for-fee online courses last year. We recently established a dual MMH-MBA degree program with the China Europe International Business School, and we have two more such programs in development with other top global business schools. We have also been laying the groundwork to develop a new generation of SHA-educated hospitality faculty in China who will have the knowledge and credentials to help us extend new study opportunities to our faculty and students. Those opportunities will be facilitated in wonderful ways by the SHA Center Shanghai, which is being built within the new Aman Resort near Shanghai.

We have provided our students and faculty with outstanding facilities within

Statler Hall and the Statler Hotel, investing 50 million dollars in our physical spaces in recent years. We have ensured that our academic programs will continue to thrive by raising record funds for both current use and endowments, and we have stewarded those funds with disciplined fiscal restraint. This past year we retired the last of our construction debt, and the school is now debt-free for the first time in several decades.

The importance of the generosity of our alumni and industry champions cannot be overstated—it has made every one of our initiatives and advances possible. The gratitude I have always felt on behalf of our school has recently been made even more personal by the success of an effort, spearheaded by Bob Alter '73, to inspire others to help endow the Michael D. Johnson Family Professorship in Services Marketing at the school. This is a gesture that Jill and I will cherish always, and I give my heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this very special gift possible.

Last fall, we proudly launched our new website and announced our new branding, which recognizes that Hospitality is Everywhere and identifies us as the World's Most

Adventurous Business School. As hospitality has become a priority in industries from senior living and healthcare to sports, it has opened up more and more opportunities for our students. Over our history we have created a truly unique position in the educational marketplace by offering a first-class business education firmly grounded in the hospitality industry. Combined with the tremendous efforts of our admissions staff, our new branding has categorically increased the size and quality of our applicant pool.

Most of all, Jill and I want to thank all of you for your support and friendship over the past decade. Everything we have accomplished has been done with our students in mind, as they are the best in the world.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Johnson
The Bradley H. Stone Dean and
E. M. Statler Professor

RED ALL OVER



PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS



NOAH BRODSKY '02 was promoted last July to senior vice president of worldwide loyalty and engagement at Wyndham Hotel Group. In this role, he is responsible for leading all facets of customer loyalty and engagement across the company and its 7,600 hotels and for aligning the loyalty and engagement strategy throughout Wyndham Worldwide. Key areas of oversight are loyalty and multi-brand marketing efforts, customer service operations, and the company's newly formed global social media marketing group. Brodsky previously served as the company's vice president of worldwide loyalty and led the relaunch of the Wyndham Rewards program. As part of the program's global rollout, he managed the development and execution of a 100-million-dollar global marketing campaign. He joined Wyndham in 2014 as vice president of sales innovation.



StepStone Hospitality announced in September the appointment of **JEFFREY DALLAS '83, MBA '91** to the newly created position of chief development officer, with responsibility for expanding the company's portfolio through acquisitions and third-party management contracts. Dallas has more than 30 years of experience in real estate and hospitality. After earning his MBA, he served as director of hotel investments for Prudential Realty Group. He then became a partner and leader of the real estate and hospitality advisory services practice at Ernst and Young. From there he was recruited as senior vice president of development for Remington Hotel Corporation and then joined Wyndham Hotel Group as senior vice president of business development.



MITCHELL DAVIS '91, executive vice president of the James Beard Foundation, was tapped to oversee all programming, content, and design for the USA Pavilion at Expo Milan as chief creative officer on behalf of Friends of the USA Pavilion Milan 2015, a nonprofit organization formed by the James Beard Foundation and the International Culinary Center. Davis is a cookbook author, restaurant critic, food journalist, and scholar. Another Cornellian, James Biber, AAP '76, designed the pavilion.

GREG DENTON '87, MS '99 has been recruited by the Dow Hotel Company to lead the growth of its acquisition program as senior vice president of hotel investments. Denton, an industry veteran who has held senior positions at the Related Group of Florida, Gencom Group, CNL Hospitality, and White Lodging Services, is responsible for acquisition sourcing, finance structuring, investor relations, and asset management.



ANDREA FOSTER '96 has been named senior vice president of development at Marcus Hotels and Resorts and MCS Capital. Foster, a 20-year hospitality veteran and lodging industry expert, is responsible for marketing the company's hotel management capabilities and identifying and securing potential acquisition, joint venture, and third-party management opportunities for the company. Foster served most recently as a managing director for PKF Consulting | CBRE Hotels, leading their Boston office and overseeing their national spa advisory practice. Until 2011 she served as vice president of marketing and business development for Miraval Holdings. Earlier in her career she worked for PKF in hospitality real estate and feasibility analysis and held positions in operations management with boutique hotel properties.



MARK OWENS '00 became executive vice president at CBRE Capital Markets in September, with responsibility for leading debt and structured finance for it hotels sector. He joined CBRE from Ackman-Ziff, where he led the hospitality practice and was responsible for the origination and placement of hospitality-related transactions including debt, equity, joint-venture equity, and transaction sales. During his tenure at Ackman-Ziff, he annually arranged more than one billion dollars in debt and equity transactions. He had previously served as vice president at Sonnenblick Goldman, where he closed three billion dollars in transactions, and had consulted on hospitality real estate transactions for HVS International. Owens was a founding board member of the American Hotel and Lodging Association's Under 30 Council and was voted one of *Real Estate Weekly's* Rising Stars.

JONATHAN GANTT '04 joined Condor Hospitality Trust as senior vice president and chief financial officer in October. His responsibilities include leading the company's capital-raising requirements and shareholder and analyst relations. Gantt most recently served as the director of treasury, capital markets, and mergers and acquisitions at Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, before which he was an associate and analyst with Summer Street Capital Partners and a member of the asset team of HEI Hotels.



NICK QUINN '04 has also joined CBRE, as first vice president on their retail brokerage team. Quinn has more than twelve years of experience working with restaurants in operational, consultative, and brokerage roles. For six years prior, he was a restaurant-focused commercial real estate agent with InnSite Hospitality Properties.



BRIAN WALDMAN '99 has joined Peachtree Hotel Group as senior vice president of investments, with responsibility for leading the company's hotel real estate investment and asset management programs. In his former position as managing director and head of capital markets for Beacon Hospitality Partners, Waldman oversaw hospitality transactions with an aggregate asset value of over eight billion dollars. His fifteen-year career has also included executive positions with DTZ Hospitality Group, the Mumford Company, InterContinental Hotels Group, and Arthur Andersen Hospitality Group.

RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS



MAX ARONSON '19 won 10,000 dollars in a redemption round of the Food Network show *Chopped Teen Tournament* in September. He first appeared on the program in July 2014 but was eliminated, or chopped, in the dessert round after his grape pop-rock ice cream was judged a fizzle. He was called back a year later to try again and acquitted himself successfully with daikon radish and crabmeat in the appetizer round, Korean short ribs and wax candy bottles in the second round, and peanut butter ice cream with berry coulis, toasted-cookie-and-nut granola, and a foam of cold-brew coffee in the dessert round.



CHUCK FEENEY '56, founding chairman of the Atlantic Philanthropies, was one of eight recipients to be honored with a 2015 Andrew Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy. The award is given to families and individuals worldwide who dedicate their private wealth to the public good. Via his foundation, Feeney has given or committed nearly one billion dollars to Cornell since 1982, helping to launch programs, support scholarships, and enable expansions and campus transformations. By the time Atlantic concludes its grantmaking this year, it will have given away nearly eight billion dollars to promote education, human rights, science, and healthcare around the world.



Hotel Management in 2015 named **HERB GLOSE '08** and **NALA HOLMES '12** to their 30 Under 30 list of Top Rising Stars in the hotel industry.

Glose is the assistant vice president for hotel performance support at B. F. Saul Company Hospitality Group, where he handles a wide variety of operational, development, and capital projects and serves as the regional manager for one of the portfolio's hotels. Before joining B. F. Saul in 2012, Glose worked for Southworth Development Company. While with Southworth he led food and beverage operations at Machrihanish Dunes Golf Resort in Scotland and opened the clubhouse at Creighton Farms, a luxury club and community in northern Virginia.



Holmes, the senior analyst for Pyramid Hotel Group's Boston-based business development and acquisitions team, works on all aspects of underwriting, identifying capital groups, conducting due diligence, and providing support on financing, closing, and operational transitioning. She began her career as an analyst on the investments origination team at the private equity firm Rockbridge. While at Cornell, she served as student general manager of the Statler Hotel and interned in the hospitality division of Goldman Sachs.



GARY MENDELL '79, chairman and chief executive officer of HEI Hospitality, was honored by the Lodging Conference as the 2015 recipient of their Above and Beyond Award. Mendell was recognized for his activities as founder and chief executive officer of Shatterproof, a national organization committed to protecting children from addiction to alcohol or other drugs and to ending the stigma and suffering of those affected by addiction. Shatterproof was founded to spare other families the tragedy that Mendell experienced with the loss of his son, Brian, in 2011.



LELAND PILLSBURY '69 will be honored on April 14 and 15 as Cornell University's 2016 Entrepreneur of the Year. Pillsbury is the founder, co-chairman, and chief executive officer of Thayer Lodging Group, which ranks among the top five percent of privately held real estate investment firms in terms of performance. He is also the co-founder and chairman of TIG Global, an internet marketing company serving over 1,500 hotels worldwide; co-founder and chairman of EMC Venues, the largest resort and conference-center marketing representation firm in the United States; co-founder and chairman of Thayer Insurance Group, providing specialized insurance coverages to hotel and

hospitality firms; co-founder of HUBSI, providing the only global distribution system and central reservations system to the domestic Chinese hotel and airline industries; and co-founder of HQuant Lodging Real Estate Index. Pillsbury is a member of Cornell's Board of Trustees and a former Frank H. T. Rhodes Class of '56 Professor. He and his wife, Mary, endowed SHA's Leland C. and Mary M. Pillsbury Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship in 2006 and are Foremost Benefactors of Cornell.

UPSTARTS



ZACHARY CONINE '03 and four teammates were awarded 500,000 dollars as the winners of the Las Vegas component of the Strong Cities Strong Communities Visioning Challenge, a competition funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration that drew interest from 49 states and 48 countries. Their winning proposal was to redevelop the Cashman Center in Las Vegas as the Unmanned Aerial and Robotics Resource Center (UARRC), an incubator space for the commercial robotics/unmanned aircraft system industry. At the time of the award announcement in June, UARRC had already engaged Arcata Associates and Praxis Aerospace Concepts International as operating partners and was ready to begin developing the facility, with the goal of having a group of startup companies operating within the facility by the end of 2016.



Bâtard, a Tribeca restaurant from Myriad Restaurant Group owner **DREW NIEPORENT '77**, chef Markus Glocker, and managing partner John Winterman (shown left to right in the photo above), was voted Best New Restaurant last May by the members of the

James Beard Foundation. The restaurant has been a remarkable success since opening in May of 2014, winning celebrity buzz, a repeat Michelin star, and enthusiastic praise from some very prominent critics. For example, it topped the 2014 year-end lists of the *New York Times*'s ten best new restaurants, *New York Magazine*'s twelve best, and the *New Yorker*'s "Five of the Finest."



MICHELLE RUSSO '87 and the company she founded, Hotel Asset Value Enhancement (hotelAVE) in Providence, Rhode Island, were the subjects of *Lodging Weekly*'s September 17, 2015 cover story. According to the article, Russo started the company out of her home in 2003 after Lee Pillsbury '69 sought her help in figuring out what to do about a problem asset. From there, her client base grew by word of mouth. These days, hotelAVE has over 25 employees, satellite offices in New York and Los Angeles, over four billion dollars in assets under management, and advising on another four billion-plus in hotel real estate annually. With the exception of 2009, a flat year for hotelAVE, Russo told *Lodging Weekly* that her company has averaged 15-to-20 percent growth annually. She has hired a president and a chief financial officer and plans to add an office in Europe this year.



ERIC SINOWAY '96 and his partners have formed the Worth Group, with Sinoway as chief executive officer, assuming control of *Worth* magazine business and the intellectual property of the Worth brand. The Worth Group provides sales and marketing services to brands and organizations that target an affluent audience; creates content for that audience and publishes it via print, digital, and other channels; and builds, curates, and sells products and platforms to consumers and organizations. *Worth*, a magazine begun by Fidelity 23 years ago, is distributed to a controlled audience of very high-net-worth consumers and top wealth advisors.



General Motors announced in early January that it would invest half a billion dollars in Lyft, the rideshare company founded by **JOHN ZIMMER '06** and Logan Green. GM will get a seat on the board as the two companies start working to develop a fleet of on-demand autonomous vehicles that users can bring round using Lyft's mobile app. In the near term, GM and Lyft will also build a network of rental centers where Lyft drivers can pick up cars at a discounted rate. Lyft's valuation has increased from 2.5 billion dollars to 5.5 billion dollars since May 2015, thanks to a series of buy-ins from investors including Carl Icahn, Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, several other investment firms in the United States

and China, and Chinese ride-sharing company Didi Kuaidi Joint Company. A global alliance that Lyft formed last year with that company and two others will facilitate international travel by networking the four companies' ride-hailing apps.

Lyft co-founders Logan Green, CEO (left), and John Zimmer '06, president (right), hang with General Motors president Daniel Ammann.



Masters OF THE **WINE WORLD**

BY SHERRIE NEGREA



Sabato Sagaria '97 stood nervously in a conference room at a hotel in Aspen with six glasses of wine—three whites and three reds—placed on a table in front of three judges. His task, over the next 25 minutes, was to identify not only the grape variety, but also the vintage, country of origin, and quality of each wine. If he failed this test, Sagaria would have to start from scratch in his decade-long quest to pass the three-part master sommelier exam.

But that spring day in 2012, Sagaria was “hoping that the wines were speaking to me and I had a clear head and could be very deductive in my thinking and not be intimidated by the other folks sitting there.” The years of studying wines—from the day he entered SHA’s Introduction to Wines course and became fascinated by enology to the day he became food and beverage director at the Little Nell, the hotel where he was now taking the test—paid off, and Sagaria was able to name the six wines: an Alsatian Riesling, a Spanish Albariño, an Austrian Grüner Veltliner, an Australian Grenache, an Italian Amarone, and a Bordeaux blend.

Having conquered the blind tasting, Sagaria became one of 146 people in the United States and just 230 in the world to earn membership in the Court of Master Sommeliers, the certifying body. “I was on cloud nine,” he said. “I was in a whole other world—to be able to achieve something that I had been working towards for the past ten years.”

STUDY AND SACRIFICE

Four SHA alumni have achieved the esteemed title of master sommelier, and all say that passing the master’s-level exam was one of the most grueling challenges they have ever faced. They also agree that the personal satisfaction of reaching that milestone was worth the years of sacrifice.

Before being invited to take the master’s exam, candidates must pass three levels of qualifying exams: introductory, certified, and advanced. The master sommelier exam itself consists of three exams: theory, an oral test of a candidate’s knowledge about the world’s wine-growing regions and styles of wine; service, which requires a demonstration of wine service knowledge, technique, and etiquette; and blind tasting, in which a candidate is asked to accurately describe and identify six wines.

The rules were modified in 2013 to require candidates to pass the theory exam before taking the practical

Christopher Bates '02
at his winery in Arkport,
New York. Photo by
Jon Reis





Greg Harrington '92 shares the fruits of his winery, Gramercy Cellars, with friends in Walla Walla, Washington. Photo by Jenny Linquist

exams in service and tasting, which they then have three chances to pass within three years. Prior to 2013, first-time candidates took all three parts at once and had three years to get through all of them before being required to reset, or start over.

"It's a pretty stressful environment," said Christopher Bates '02, who had to reset after failing the blind tasting three times. "You've not only spent a lot of time on it but have also invested a lot of money and emotion into it. You have a lot riding on the exam."

DRIVING ALL NIGHT

In Arkport, New York—a village of 832 people due west of the Finger Lakes towns of Watkins Glen and Hammondsport—Bates grew up cooking in his mother's kitchen and washing dishes at a restaurant called Rupert's at the Lodge. After graduating from SHA, he worked for a while in restaurants in the Midwest. Deciding that he wanted to learn more about winemaking, he moved to Europe to harvest grapes in Italy and Germany. He then spent a decade running luxury properties in Texas and Pennsylvania.

Bates took the introductory sommelier exam while still a student, in 2001, but then set the books aside until 2007, when he began working on establishing Element Winery in Arkport with the help of his father. In September 2012, on his way to conquering the master's exam in May 2013, he won the gold medal at the Concours des Jeunes Sommeliers in Capetown, South Africa, an extremely select competition sponsored by the International Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs. During those very busy years he was still working more than 200 miles away, as general manager and executive chef at the Hotel Fauchère in Milford, Pennsylvania. He moved back to New York only in 2013. "It was a personal challenge," said Bates, who now teaches wine courses around the country. "I enjoyed the drive of it."

Bates is still driving. In addition to making wine, he can be found many nights manning the grill at F.L.X. Winery, the restaurant he opened in 2014 with his wife, Isabel. The very informal eatery, up a country road west of Seneca Lake and a favorite with the area's residents and winery personnel, serves artisanal hot dogs, housemade sausages, and hamburgers and offers an apparently random (but don't bet on

it) assortment of wines from around the world. Bates has also been busy launching an entirely different restaurant concept, F.L.X. Table, which opened in February at the north end of the lake in Geneva. F.L.X. Table has only one table, for twelve, where friends and strangers can enjoy a sophisticated fixed-course meal together like guests at a dinner party, choosing their wines from the bottles arrayed on a sideboard. The restaurant is connected to F.L.X. Culture House, where Bates will focus on producing very small quantities of barrel-aged sour beers.



Photo by
Jenny Linquist



Bates is the only master sommelier in the world who works professionally as an executive chef running a kitchen. Involved in managing all aspects of his restaurants, he noted that what he learned about hospitality while preparing for the master sommelier exam is part of everything he does. “A sommelier—a lot of that is based around service, and service is at the core of every level of hospitality,” he said. “That’s something we work very heavily on.”

DRINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Greg Harrington '92 grew up on Long Island in a family that sometimes drank “wine from a box.” He didn’t learn to appreciate wines until he took the Introduction to Wines course taught by Stephen Mutkoski '67, PhD '76, the Banfi Vintners Professor of Wine Education and Management, in his senior year. “I just had no idea what wine could taste like,” said Harrington, who now owns Gramercy Cellars, in Walla Walla, Washington, with his wife, Pam. “I didn’t really have any intention of doing anything with wine.”

A year after Harrington graduated, his father asked him to set up the wine department in a restaurant he was opening in Las Vegas. While there, Harrington met a wine salesman and a wine director who asked him to study with them for the master sommelier exam. “I thought, ‘Wow, this is one of the hardest exams in the world, and I love wine,’” Harrington recalled. “Why don’t I try and take it and see if I could pass?”

Just three years later, Harrington had qualified to take the master’s exam. He nailed the blind tasting—for many people, the most intimidating part of the test—but he failed the theory and service tests.

He flew to London later that year to retake them at the Dorchester. As he poured a red wine for the judges there, he spilled some of it on the table. As his faux pas spread into the tablecloth, he summoned his composure and called upon his three years of experience as a sommelier to help him salvage the situation.

“I just apologized,” said Harrington, who was then only 26. “There’s a formal way to cover up a stain on a table”—with clean table napkins—“and I also offered to bring the gentleman another glass of wine.” The judges were mollified and he passed, becoming the youngest master sommelier ever in the United States.

Looking back, he said, “It’s one of the greatest days of your life—getting married, having kids, and passing the master sommelier exam.”

NOW TRY DOING IT ON CAMERA

Some years after his triumph in London, Harrington visited Steve Mutkoski's class as a guest lecturer. There he met Jack Mason, CIA '08, SHA '11, Mutkoski's head teaching assistant for Introduction to Wines.

Mason had begun his wine education at the Culinary Institute of America and was already focused on a career in wines when he met Harrington. While at SHA, he won a Banfi scholarship and spent the summer of his senior year immersed in wine and food culture and production in Tuscany, Piedmont, and Rome.

After graduation, Mason joined the team of sommeliers at Pappas Bros. Steakhouse in Houston, Texas, not far from his hometown of College Station. Harrington recommended that he pursue certification by the Court of Master Sommeliers. Six years later, Mason became one of the youngest master sommeliers in the guild's history.

After passing the introductory and certified exams in one year, and the advanced level the next, he picked off the parts of the master's exam one year at a time. The last to fall was the blind tasting, as Mason twice fell prey to an acute case of nerves. "It's a huge ball of anxiety, because people are going into the exam room and you have hopes for them," he said. "But almost everyone comes back with some amount of disappointment, and you're about to walk into that."

Mason's final attempt at the blind tasting was even more intense. As a subject of the Esquire Network's six-episode reality TV series, *Uncorked*, he had a camera crew documenting his preparation for the exam (though not, mercifully, the exam itself). The show chronicled six New York City sommeliers and the mentors, including Sagaria, who helped them as they prepared for the exam.

"I'm the only one to pass of the six people" on the show, Mason said proudly. Recalling the moment last May at the Little Nell when one of the examiners took him aside to tell him the results, he said, "It's real raw emotion. It's just one of those kind of black-out moments of existence."

Ten months before becoming a master sommelier, Mason joined Marta, Danny Meyer's upscale Manhattan pizzeria, as its first wine director and created the restaurant's wine program. And what does he recommend to drink with pizza? Champagne.

"Categorically, there is no other wine that pairs as well with so many different foods, especially pizza," he said. "A bottle of Champagne can carry you through most styles of pizza, and do so on a very high level, because of the refreshing acidity, cleansing bubbles, and moderate alcohol. Champagne also happens to be very delicious on its own."

And it's wonderful for celebrating life as a master sommelier.

Sabato Sagaria '97
at the Modern in New
York City. Photo by
Jesse Winter





Jack Mason '11 at Marta.
Photo by Alice Gao

THE BENEFITS OF MASTERY

"I wanted to become a master sommelier because every one of them I have met represents a kind of ideal of mastering something and being at the top of their game," Mason said. "Being a young person, people don't always take you super seriously. So one of the reasons I wanted to pursue this was to add that instant level of respect and recognition that I have achieved this level of knowledge." Mason hopes that the recognition and stature he has achieved will help him attract investors interested in supporting his goal of establishing his own restaurant back home in Texas.

For Sagaria, earning the master sommelier title helped him catapult into an executive position at Danny

Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group, which has created some of New York City's most famous restaurants, notably Union Square Café and Gramercy Tavern. The move came about after he ran into Meyer at the Pebble Beach Food and Wine Festival in 2013 and learned that he was creating a position at the company for a chief restaurant officer.

Six months later, Sagaria was offered the job. He now oversees Union Square's thirteen restaurants as well as the company's marketing, operations, and facilities. Although he isn't on the floor helping customers choose wines, he said he uses the skills he gained preparing for the master sommelier exam to improve the quality of the restaurants.

"I'm probably unique in the sense that I don't necessarily use it on a day-to-day basis," he said. "It's more working with our teams to shape our beverage programs and offer a different perspective. I look at it from the eyes of a guest and from the eyes of a business leader and from the eyes of a wine director and sommelier and how we can shape the vision for each wine program. We look at wine as a business within a business, and I'm helping them to start growing as business leaders and as sommeliers."

No matter where their careers take them, the four SHA alumni who earned the title will always be master sommeliers, proudly displaying the initials "MS" after their names and wearing the coveted red oval lapel pin that depicts the god of wine. Since they are all teaching courses in the program, they are also helping to nurture the next generation of leaders in the wine world. "One of the big benefits to me from having achieved this accreditation," Sagaria said, "is to be able to pass that knowledge on to others and connect to them. That is really exciting." ■



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COMMUNICATING LEADERSHIP

C

Change has a way of upsetting people, even when it's a good idea. Especially in cases of major corporate change, effective communication planning is essential to gaining buy-in from employees, customers, and other stakeholders. When an important announcement is not well planned and delivered, the fallout can be serious and long-lasting.

"Communication is essential to leadership," said SHA senior lecturer Amy Newman, who teaches the principles and practices of effective communication in the required courses Management Communication I and II, for undergraduates, and Management Communication, for graduate students, as well as in the elective Corporate Communication. "How you communicate will determine your ability to build and manage teams and win support for your vision."

Amy Newman.
Photo by
Jason Koski/
UPhoto

COMMUNICATION PLANNING:

A STAR EXAMPLE

Newman, who spent her early career teaching management development courses at Reuters, Canon, and Scholastic as a corporate learning specialist, regularly scans news media, Twitter, and business journals for teachable examples of corporate communication done right—and not so much—to use and to share with her faculty colleagues. She also keeps up with corporate happenings by talking to former students now out in the workforce.

She followed with particular interest the announcement last fall of Marriott's acquisition of Starwood, the biggest merger in the history of the hotel industry. She gives the two companies high marks for the way they presented this momentous development to their employees, brand loyalists, and other stakeholders, so much so that she made it the central example in a communication tool

she wrote for the Center for Hospitality Research, "Communication Planning: A Template for Organizational Change."

"It's a great example of thoughtful, planned communication," she said. "Employees were notified before the announcement was made publicly; similar messages appeared on both companies' websites; employees received additional, direct communication from the new leadership; the management team used multiple communication channels—for

example, email, video, and in-person employee forums; and specific audiences, such as Starwood Preferred Guest and Marriott Rewards members, received tailored communications. You could tell that communication was part of the planning, as it should be in any organizational change."

PRACTICE FOR THE REAL WORLD

Newman's students will not be grappling with multi-billion-dollar mergers anytime soon but, through classroom activities that focus on real issues, they learn by practicing the communication skills they will need to succeed in the business world. In Corporate Communication, for example, Newman

*HOW YOU COMMUNICATE WILL
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WIN SUPPORT FOR YOUR VISION.*

uses current events as a basis for written assignments and highly interactive presentations that analyze how companies handle crisis communication, work with the media, manage change, and inspire employees.

In Management Communication I, Newman emphasizes active learning in teaching the freshmen such skills as how to modify their academic writing for a business audience; how to write in different genres, such as emails, blogs, and reports; and how

to give effective oral presentations. Management Communication II covers more matters of persuasion. “Persuasion involves addressing potentially hostile audiences, addressing resistance to your idea,” she explained. “So it’s about how you formulate an argument—how you gather evidence and support for your claims and deliver a logical presentation.”

In a class session last September, the first-year students split up into five groups and imagined they were recruiters for a financial services company who were recommending a job candidate for a training program. Each group then stood at the front of the room and argued why a particular job candidate should be hired based on the strengths of his or her résumé, cover letter, and voicemail message.

“This is about the hiring manager’s perspective of employment communication,” Newman said. “After analyzing materials from the employer’s point of view, students can look at their own résumés and cover letters more objectively. They are evaluating how well candidates present themselves.”

Megan Guefen ’19 has enjoyed Newman’s engaging way of presenting material that every student needs to know. “It’s really discussion-based, and you get to talk about and hear everyone’s opinions,” she said. “For me, it’s a better way to understand the concepts and apply them.”

What has also helped Guefen learn to think like an employer is hearing Newman offer insights that she gained from working in corporate human resources. “It gives her credibility, and it helps us understand more when she brings in her experience,” Guefen said.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

Newman, who has a bachelor’s degree in human development from Cornell’s College of Human Ecology and a master’s degree in human resource management from the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy, began her career in banking and became the lead trainer in human resources for Canon USA and the director of employee development for Reuters America, where she oversaw management development, succession planning, recruiting strategy, and career development. After twelve years in human resources positions, she started her own consulting business in 1998. The company offered training in corporate communication, management development, and human resources to companies in the New York area.

She has won numerous teaching awards since joining SHA’s faculty in 2004, including the Ted Teng ’79 Dean’s Teaching Excellence Award, the Teacher of the Year award for the freshman core, and four faculty teaching awards for the junior/senior core. This fall,

she received the Meada Gibbs Teacher-Scholar Award from the Association for Business Communication, an international organization committed to advancing business communication research, education, and practice. “One of my favorite parts of teaching is seeing students learn,” Newman said. “Because I teach observable skills, it’s easy to see improvement in writing and speaking during the semester.”

Newman’s teaching strategy predates the increasingly popular “flipped classroom” model, in which students learn new concepts outside of class—from textbooks or videos—and then spend their course time applying this information in group projects. “People talk about the flipped classroom now,” she said. “Those of us in business communication have been using active learning for years. Learning new concepts comes from applying them.”

Opportunities to practice communication skills in class not only make learning more engaging, but also help her students gain confidence as speakers. “Getting everyone out in front of the class has made it a more comfortable process,” said Sammakai Richards, Jr., MMH ’16. “Now it’s like talking to your family. I’m way more comfortable than I was.”

Sam Vempati, MMH ’16, who worked as a chef for three years in India before enrolling at Cornell, said that Newman has helped her adapt her communication style to an American approach. “Asian communication is very different from an American standard,” she said. “She helps me understand how I have to change my approach. If you’re going to be in the industry in this country, you’ve got to talk the language.”

“Communication is a differentiator,” said Newman. “Good communication will often distinguish you from your colleagues who are also doing good technical work in a given job function. What’s going to make one of you promotable into a leadership position is how you communicate with people and build relationships, especially across differences. It starts at the time of the job interview, in an entry-level job, all the way up to the most senior-level position in an organization.”

Photo by Heather
Ainsworth/Jon Reis
Photography





QUIET LEADERSHIP

In 2010, Newman was asked to revise the eighth edition of *Business Communication: In Person, In Print, Online*, a textbook published by Cengage Learning. Updating the book, which she has done twice more since then, has allowed her to incorporate current communication strategies that she is already teaching in her courses. Parts of the book are used in the management communication curriculum, while other parts, particularly relating to listening, are used in organizational behavior classes.

Newman also writes a blog for the benefit of her students and colleagues; in it she shares industry communication examples. “It’s important to me to provide other business

communication faculty with resources for their students,” she said. “We are always looking for good examples of communication in the workplace, so I spend quite a bit of time curating those examples to show students how what we’re teaching is used in different contexts.”

Leadership through communication is not only an academic subject for Newman, but an art that she practices, according to Dean Michael Johnson. “Behind the scenes, she is truly the leader of the communication group,” he said. “She is humble to the task—it’s not about her, it’s about the students, and it’s about the art of communicating. She’s a great example of a quiet leader.” ▀

Photo by Heather
Ainsworth/Jon Reis
Photography

FINDING THE “HUMAN” IN HUMAN RESOURCES



W

Whether in class or on stage, Professor J. Bruce Tracey rocks it. Drawing on his two main passions, Tracey, a professor of management who sometimes moonlights as a vocalist and bass guitarist in a rock-and-roll cover band, infuses music into his teaching of human resources. “I enjoy connecting with students through music,” he said. “Since most everyone relates to music, it makes the material more memorable.” He finds parallels between his vocation and his avocation: “Just as good musicians aren’t afraid to go off-script and do a little improvising, we sometimes digress into an impromptu discussion or debate in class.”

This fall, in the class Human Resources Management, Tracey introduced the concept of “musical preference” as an employment discrimination issue. He told the class that students working for him as teaching assistants must love rock-and-roll music as a condition of employment. He then asked:

“Is it okay if I decide not to hire someone because they love country-western music? What are the implications of using musical preference as a basis for making employment decisions?”

Later in the semester, in a discussion on employee training and development, he facilitated a short training program that used two rhythm concepts, the back beat and syncopation, to introduce key concepts associated with training design. The program had students clapping their hands and beating on tables while Tracey played songs from artists on his current playlist. “We saw how to make the training process effective, memorable, and fun,” said Victoria Mutai ’18, who took part.

Both education and the arts run in Tracey’s family. His mother, Nancy, owned and taught dance at the Ballet Barre in Pueblo, Colorado, when he was growing up; although she has since sold the studio, she continues to teach, despite being close to 80. His sister Meg is director of the Boston

Ballet School; sister Katey is a ballet master with the New York City Ballet; and brother Ed is an instructor in the Culinary Arts Program at Pueblo Community College. “Teaching and the arts are in my DNA,” he said.

His love for music? That likely comes from his father, John, a retired attorney and judge—and a singer and musician—who performs with the Pueblo Choral Society. His wife, Jess ’05, son, Peyton, and daughter, Adelaide, are also musically inclined. “It keeps the family strong,” he said.

*SHA STUDENTS ARE JUST AWESOME.
THEY COME HIGHLY MOTIVATED AND
HAVE AMAZING ABILITIES.*

AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT

After earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Colorado College, a master’s degree in industrial and organizational psychology from St. Mary’s University, and a PhD in organizational studies from the State University of New York at Albany, Tracey joined SHA in 1992 as a visiting assistant professor. The following year, he received a full-time appointment as assistant professor. “In the tradition of the hotel school, I’m here



Bruce Tracey, Photo by
Jason Koski/UPhoto

because of the generosity and hospitality of others, particularly Professor Emerita Florence Berger, who took me under her wing,” he said.

Tracey landed at SHA largely by happenstance, having previously worked with a non-profit organization, the military, a testing company, and a grocery store company—but never in hospitality.

Now, more than 20 years later, he has taught courses on human resources management to undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia and has consulted with hospitality companies around the world. He has been named SHA Teacher of the Year eleven times, has twice received both the Ted Teng

Photo by
Patrick Shanahan

’79 Teaching Excellence
Award and the Andrew

Dickson White Teacher of the Year award, and has several times been named Outstanding Professor by the Interfraternity and Panhellenic councils and Outstanding Educator for having most influenced SHA Merrill Scholars.

“I love what I do,” he said, attributing both his professional and personal contentment to his students and colleagues.

“SHA students are just awesome. They come highly motivated and have amazing abilities—they keep me on my toes. After they graduate, they go out and take the industry by storm—it’s incredibly fun to watch,” he said. “And my colleagues, both in the industry and at Cornell, are some of the best people I know—not only as practitioners and scholars, but as human beings.

“Lou Gehrig made a famous speech about being the luckiest guy who’d ever played

baseball. That’s how I feel with regard to my SHA experience.”

A HOTELIE’S TOUCH

Ask current and former students, and they’ll tell you that Tracey is passionate about what he teaches, inspiring, and, as one of them said it, “one of the most caring, engaging, genuine teachers I have had.”

“Bruce is part of the fabric of the hotel school,” said Eric Sinoway ’96, chief executive officer of the Worth Group. “From involvement in student clubs to supervising independent studies to representing the school to external audiences, he very much lives the ‘magical Hotelie spirit.’”

Tracey describes his approach to teaching as “mass customization,” a means by which he tries to account for students’ individual learning styles. He often mimics a



talk-show host, “walking around and engaging with students, then broadening the conversation as best I can to keep them interested in what we’re talking about.

“Many of my students will go into investment banking or real estate or become entrepreneurs; only a few will go into HR. I know that, so I try to frame the class in a way that they can see its utility,” he said.

MY COLLEAGUES ARE SOME OF THE BEST PEOPLE I KNOW—NOT ONLY AS PRACTITIONERS AND SCHOLARS, BUT AS HUMAN BEINGS.

“Everybody hires, everybody trains, everybody evaluates. It’s a hat they wear. That’s the little sales pitch I give them.”

As an undergraduate, Cary Friedman ’97, managing director and senior talent development officer for Credit Suisse, was struck by Tracey’s “uncanny ability” to connect with students. He now returns to SHA regularly as a guest lecturer.

“Professor Tracey built up my self-confidence and made learning and going to class something I looked forward to,” said Friedman, who recalled occasions when Tracey attended student-run events to demonstrate his support. “During my senior year, I lived with seven other Hotelies, and Professor Tracey surprised us by showing up at the ‘Christhanukkah’ party we hosted at our off-campus house. He showed me how important the human touch is to achieving success in business and in my social and family life.”

Orion Corcillus ’97, a partner in Orion Hospitality, was impressed by that same ability. “I don’t think I’ve ever had a professor who had such an innate manner of connecting with his students,” said Corcillus, remembering that Tracey occasionally joined students for late-night study sessions at Ruloff’s “to demonstrate the practical application of class material in a setting we could relate to.”

Tracey’s connections, forged over decades, benefit students before and after they graduate. When they need career advice or are seeking an internship, he connects them with industry professionals, many of them his former students. For Lexi Mohr ’17, one of his teaching assistants, that translated into a summer internship with the SBE Entertainment Group, in Los Angeles, where she had wanted to work for years. For teaching assistant Wendy Guo ’16, it meant an internship with the Leading Hotels of the World, in New York City.

“Bruce’s relationships with his students extend well beyond the classroom,” noted Sinoway. “He was much more than a professor to many, including me. He became a mentor and a friend. Our relationship of over 20 years has resulted in too many lessons to count, meaningful conversations to recall, or laughs to recite. When the history of the school is written, Bruce Tracey will go down as having had a meaningful role in its continued excellence.”

HUMAN CONTEXTS

When not teaching or consulting, Tracey conducts research on a wide range of strategic and operational-level topics, including human resources flexibility, staffing, employment law, leadership, employee turnover, and issues relating to training, evaluation, and effectiveness. “I dance in a variety of segments, working with the hotel, restaurant, and food and beverage industries, among others,” he said.

Specifically, he looks at contextual factors that can hamper effectiveness or, conversely, propel an organization and its people forward. Befitting a psychology major, he is most intrigued by the “human” part of human resources, which dictates that no one formula works the same way every time. Context comes into play—and Tracey’s work highlights the need to

pay attention to context when making decisions.

His work in human resources flexibility has shown that adaptive companies tend to have HR systems aligned with their business strategy, which results in high employee retention, consistent service quality, and—ultimately—greater revenue growth.

In the area of training, Tracey has examined individual, workplace, and organizational factors that affect performance and the transfer of new knowledge and skills back to the job.

He has done extensive work on leadership, identifying constructs relevant to different leadership practices across the globe. “I’ve looked at whether conceptualizations and measures that have been developed to promote the notion of transformational and charismatic leadership are really what they say they are, and not just effective managerial practice,” he said. “I’m a bit of a skeptic.”

Tracey’s research has been published in such diverse outlets as the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (CQ)*, and the *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Labor and Employment Law*. From 2010 to 2013, he was editor of the *CQ*; since then, he has served as associate editor.

Reflecting on his 23 years at SHA, Tracey said, “I know how lucky I am to be doing what I do, where I am doing it. It’s a gift I try not to take for granted.” ■



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The “Perfect Intersection” Between East and West

The first time Loyal Taher '16 saw an Ivy League campus, she fell in love with it. She was eleven at the time and was watching *Legally Blonde* on TV while her parents entertained guests downstairs.

This wouldn't be so unusual except that Taher grew up half a world away from any Ivy League campus, in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The oldest of five siblings in a caring, close-knit family, she said that the movie inspired her to seek an Ivy League degree—and to get going on that goal right away.

After the movie ended, “I ran downstairs to ask my parents: ‘Can I study abroad?’” she related. “They each took a breath, looked at one another, then smiled calmly at me and said yes.”

“I was surrounded by an amazing family,” said Taher. “They have been a continuous source of inspiration, because they’ve made it seem like it’s normal to do the impossible, dream big, and follow your heart.”

For the next six years she dedicated herself to getting ready for college. “I did everything you could think of in terms of experiences,” she said.

In the first graduating class at Jeddah Knowledge International School, she excelled academically, held such leadership positions as president of the student council, and earned both an international baccalaureate and an American high-school diploma.

She also co-founded and was deputy secretary general of her school's model United Nations—which, at the time, was only the second one in Saudi Arabia.

Nominated to take part in the National Student Leadership Conference in New York City in 2011, she leaped at the opportunity. “I wanted to expand my experiences globally and take on more adventures,” she said.

None of that seemed unusual to her. “The community I grew up in was one where everyone was free to color with whatever tools they wanted,” said Taher. “At school we were encouraged to aspire to achieving our own personal goals. There was a lot of dreaming going on.” One classmate hoped to work in a lab and cure cancer; another sought to work on human rights issues at the United Nations, she recalled.

“I'd always loved literature and wanted to be a writer,” said Taher, who had been founding editor of her school magazine and went on to edit a children's book that's still available on Amazon.

She grew up speaking English as well as Arabic, and she sounds thoroughly American when she speaks. Her English writing skills got her admitted to a Harvard pre-college summer program in 2010, where she took two psychology courses in preparation for a double college major in literature and psychology.

But she had some concerns.

“I didn't love the way psychology was taught from a research perspective academically,” she said. “I'm a very outgoing, active person. I worried that reading studies all day every day would drain me.” Studying literature in college appealed to her writerly side,

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Loyal Taher '16.
Photo by Jon Reis



but similarly, she wasn't sure it would be the best choice for an extrovert like her.

Two weeks before U.S. college applications were due, Taher was talking about her plans with her father at the end of the day—a family tradition—when he interrupted her. “He said to me, ‘Layal, singing makes you happy, doesn’t it?’” she related. It did, she agreed, but why was he asking her that now? “He said to me, ‘Why don’t you do something for the next four years that’s going to make you as happy as you are when you sing?’ It was like a light bulb went off in my head,” she said.

Taher works the dinner service at Establishment as a course requirement for Restaurant Management.
Photo by Jon Reis

Unable to sleep, she

stayed up all night searching for the right direction to take, the one that would make her as happy as singing did. At some point, exploring the programs offered at the Ivy League colleges on her list, she stumbled upon Cornell’s School of Hotel Administration. “That’s when I found out there’s a subject called hospitality that’s taught at an Ivy League level,” she said.

It was a revelation. “I had been an event planner ever since I could remember, and loved it,” Taher said. “But until that moment I’d never thought of it as a professional path.”

Indeed, at age ten she planned a concert attended by 250 people, overseeing everything from staging and lighting to marketing. She threw weekly parties for her high-school

classmates, with themes ranging from murder mysteries to karaoke, and did the cooking herself. At fifteen she organized, down to the last detail, a 600-person wedding. She ran events at her school that catered to more than a thousand guests. Add to that assorted bridal and baby showers for family and friends. “You name it, I had done it,” she said.

From late that night to early the next morning, “I spent hours reading up on hospitality and going through the SHA curriculum,” she recalled. “I thought: This could be amazing! Middle Eastern communities appreciate good customer service and the luxury experience, if they can get it. The market is asking for it here at home, where



every wedding is treated like a royal wedding—but there really isn't any supply" of skilled hospitality professionals.

"By five a.m., Harvard was off the table, and Cornell's School of Hotel Administration became my aspiration," she said.

Later that morning, she told family, friends, and teachers that she had decided to study hospitality at Cornell and become an event planner. "Everybody responded the same way: 'That's so you,' or words to that effect. So that became my direction." She applied, was interviewed in Dubai by Paul Arnold '99, and got her acceptance early in March 2012.

"Layal doesn't just study hospitality, she practices it," said Zoe LaClair '16, who met

Taher when both were freshmen living in Balch Hall. "She always has friends over and cooks these giant meals for them."

"She also is one of the most caring people I know," LaClair added, "and it's not just caring about others. It's also caring about everything she does. If she's going to do something, she will literally give 110 percent."

But that doesn't mean she's super serious. On the contrary: "Layal is up for adventure all the time. When you're with her you can expect anything, and you know you're going to end up enjoying it." As another friend expressed it, in a sign that hangs on a wall in Taher's Ithaca apartment, she is "a party waiting to happen."

"Layal is really a vibrant person," confirmed Pamela Davis-Acey, her advisor in SHA's Office of Student Services. "Anybody meeting her would realize within the first five minutes that hospitality is at her core. She has that kind of spirit about her, and she always has a smile. Even in the most stressful moments, she is able to see a silver lining or a positive element to hold onto."

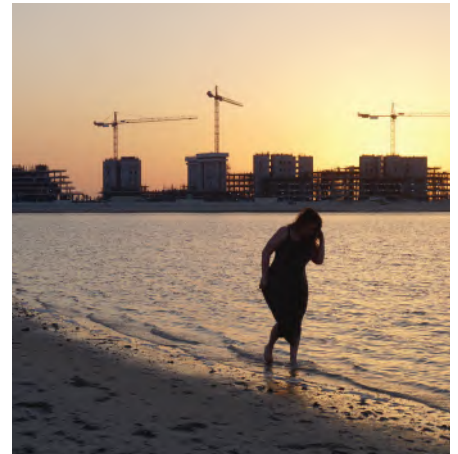
Taher called her first year at SHA "wonderful," adding, "I made some amazing friends. I learned a lot. I loved the school."

But it was also an adjustment period. Among other things, Ithaca winters were a shock. "I would call my parents and tell them my face was stretching with the wind, like in a Tom and Jerry cartoon," she said. It didn't help matters when she sprained her ankle around the time the temperatures started to dip, which put her on crutches for two months. Nevertheless, she persevered. "I decided I would find a way to do some things I was familiar with and loved."

One was singing. When she auditioned for two *a cappella* groups but didn't make the cut, she formed her own singing group with friends. "We sang and wrote music for fun," she said. "We called ourselves the Aca-Pitches," a riff on the movie *Pitch Perfect*.

Another was getting involved with the Model U.N. group on campus. "I became a member of the Cornell Model U.N. Conference's executive board and ran one of the committees."

Networking got Taher an internship with



a wedding banquet center in California for the summer following her freshman

Taher on the beach at home in Dubai

year. "We were doing as many as seven to eight weddings in three days, so the level of personal coordination and design that I love wasn't there," she said. "But it taught me so much about logistics and planning and allocating labor and resources and how to work your schedule efficiently. I now have those skills to refer to and can apply them in a creative way."

Contemplating her return to school after the internship, Taher realized she needed a break. "I felt overwhelmed," she said. "I'd been going, going, going since age eleven. I hadn't taken a moment to really find out who I was."

She calls what happened next her "Eat, Pray, Love" journey. "I wanted to dedicate time to health, fitness, and personally discovering myself," she said. Spontaneity was her watchword as she traveled through Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, staying at hostels and cabins in the woods, working out at gyms, and making friends wherever she went. The experience changed her.

"I came out of that time an entirely different person—not in terms of personality and values, but in terms of mentality and approach. I learned that if you feel like doing something, go for it—you can always sleep later." She returned to campus in January 2014 "fully charged and ready to go."

"Layal has this maturity about really being true to herself," said Davis-Acey. "I

appreciate that about her. Not everybody at 21 would be able to even articulate what that looks like for them or understand its significance.”

During her travels, Taher discovered that she had a passion for Zumba, a dance and fitness regimen, and got certified to teach it. Back on campus, she led a weekly Zumba class, with a hip hop-Latino beat, in the gym at Helen Newman Hall.

That semester, she also decided to up her game by getting involved with the biggest event she possibly could: Slope Day, Cornell’s end-of-classes rite of spring, which can attract as many as 24,000 people. She applied for and got a slot on the event’s board as director of Slope Fest, the carnival held that day on Ho Plaza. “I aspired to make every element exciting enough so that everyone, including people like me who don’t drink alcohol, was able to enjoy the festival aspect of Slope Fest,” she said.

She also applied for and was selected to be director of events on the Cornell Hotel Society collegiate chapter’s executive board and got involved in planning the school’s

presence at the big hotel show in New York City in fall 2014. “I just applied for all the things that I wanted to try,” she said. She was also chosen to TA for Peggy Odom-Reed’s class in management communication.

“My impressions of Layal as a first-year student in my course are what ultimately led me to invite her to be my teaching assistant in her third year,” said Odom-Reed. “One of the assignments in that course is a career development plan. I recall Layal’s plan vividly. Her self-analysis chart—an organizational plan that highlights jobs, leadership positions, any types of career experience you’ve had—was close to ten pages, whereas most students had done a page or two. Even after leaving my course, I would see her at the school and she would tell me that she was still updating and using her self-analysis chart.”

In addition to TAing and her executive board work, Taher was taking a full class load that fall. Her tightly packed schedule was more than many people can manage, but to her, “It was fantastic—that is, until I had a car accident and broke two ribs. I

was on bed rest for about eight weeks. I needed assistance with everything, so a friend flew in to help me out.”

In hindsight, she said, “The realistic thing would have been to drop the semester, but I wasn’t going to do that. Everybody at the school was on board and willing to help. I was being Skyped into classes. Professors would call me and explain things that I didn’t understand. I’d make a list of questions. They knew the type of person I am and appreciated my level of commitment. And I appreciated their willingness to do things to help me.”

Shortly before winter break, she learned that her family needed her to return to Jeddah for a few months. “I asked if there was a way for me to take my spring 2015 semester in the Middle East and still get all the course credits I would need to graduate early, by the end of the next fall semester. I didn’t want to choose between a semester abroad and graduating early. I wanted to do both.”

She was told it would be close to impossible to do so, because she would have to take

Taher
in Dubai





Taher makes a new friend at Atlantis the Palm in Dubai.

two core courses while she was abroad. Demonstrating that

they would be as rigorous as the core courses at Cornell would be a challenge—but never tell Taher that something is impossible. She found a school in Dubai, the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, which had partnered with SHA to create its curriculum, and petitioned for authorization to do a semester abroad there.

Instead of filling out SHA's one-page petition form, however, she created her own—a folder with an impressive, color-coded graduation plan. "I included all the classes I wanted to take, everything I wanted to do, what I hoped to get out of it, all my past experiences at Cornell, my future aspirations, everything," she said.

As luck would have it, the SHA professor who taught one of the core courses she needed had actually helped an Emirates professor create the syllabus for the equivalent course—and to Taher's great surprise, she was granted permission. She returned

to Cornell's campus in fall 2015 to complete her coursework and just graduated this past December, in three years.

"My college experience at Cornell has been fantastic," said Taher, "but it also made me realize that, long-term, I need to live in a place where I hear Arabic spoken and the call to prayer five times a day. I love Saudi Arabia. It's home for me, it's where my loved ones are. And I love the United States. But in terms of a place to settle down long-term, Saudi can sometimes be too east for me, and the U.S. can be too west."

Nearby Dubai, a travel hub where her family also has a home, is "that perfect intersection," she said. In fact, she interned last spring and summer at Design Lab Experience, a luxury event planning company there, and the owner has since offered her a permanent position.

"They design and execute transformational displays, almost like temporary art installations, at special events like weddings," said Taher. "They're interested in my hospitality-oriented business degree and organizational skill set. And I'm excited about

their design expertise and how it offers me the ability to be creative and grow in areas like design and safety. So the two of us are just what we're looking for."

"I expect to see amazing things from Layal, and I know that she'll be very successful," said Davis-Acey. "But what I love about her too is that she does all these great things but she's still so humble and down-to-earth."

When Davis-Acey was sick recently, she said Taher brought her a get-well balloon. "That's the epitome of Layal—she cares. And what better way is there to espouse what we stand for in hospitality than to have that kind of approach to life?"



LINDA BRANDT MYERS has been a writer and editor at Cornell for 34 years. She covered SHA and Cornell's other professional schools from 1997 to 2006 for the *Cornell Chronicle* and Cornell News Service and won an award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education for her writing.





THE

PLACE

MAKER

BY JEANNIE GRIFFITH

The Great Room of the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards, with Neiman Marcus in its New York debut. Rendering by Elkus Manfredi Architects

Kenneth A. Himmel '70 stood in the July sun, in shirtsleeves and a hardhat, gesturing eastward toward Tenth Avenue and the skeletal beginnings of a building. Rising directly next to a nearly completed 52-story office tower, the assemblage of steel uprights and floorplates was on its way to becoming Manhattan's largest and most alluring shopping destination. With Neiman Marcus making its New York debut as an anchor tenant, and with a spectacular restaurant collection co-curated by Himmel and Thomas Keller, of French Laundry fame, the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards is expected to draw more than 20 million visitors into its orbit when it opens in the fall of 2018.

"This is the fastest-growing part of New York today," said Himmel, who is the president and chief executive officer of the mixed-use development firm Related Urban. Pointing out the adjacent High Line and all the apartment construction going on to the north and all the way south on Manhattan's west side, he said, "It's really the new heart of New York."

After explaining that this seven-story, million-square-foot retail showpiece will connect to two office towers—there is another, 90-story building starting up on the other side of it—Himmel noted that we were standing in an area to be landscaped with a public plaza, seasonal plantings, and water features.

It took some effort to visualize this, because the ground underfoot wasn't ground at all—it was a partially completed platform made of six-foot-thick steel-and-concrete slabs. The slabs are being set on steel trusses, which are supported by steel columns. The columns rise from reinforced concrete caissons, up to six feet in diameter, that are being drilled and poured 80 to 100 feet down through the bedrock. There will be 300 of them under the thirteen-acre platform for this eastern half of the enormous development known as Hudson Yards.

Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle in New York, one of the top-performing retail properties in the world. Image courtesy of the Related Companies.

Visible past the unfinished edge of the platform and more than two stories down, the trains of the Long Island Rail Road stood packed together, waiting to move into Penn Station to collect the evening's commuters. There are 30 active tracks running under Hudson Yards, and many of the supports for the platform have to be driven between them—without closing the tracks.

In a few years the entire 26-acre rail yard will be covered over, but the trains will still idle below, their tops about sixteen feet from the bottom of the platform.

This platform has been engineered to carry an incredibly massive load. The half that makes up the Eastern Yard will support the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards; the two flanking office towers—the first



almost 900 feet high and the second one, at 1,296 feet, with an outdoor observation deck that rivals the Empire State Building's in height; a residential tower of 910 feet; and a 1,000-foot tower to house offices, residences, retail, and an Equinox-branded luxury hotel. The platform will also hold a smaller retail pavilion, acres of public open space, and the Culture Shed, a major facility for art and music.

Across West Thirty-third Street from the rail yard, and off the platform, two more office towers will rise, one 780 feet high and the other 1,068 feet high.

A CITY WITHIN THE CITY

By any measure—size, cost, or complexity—Hudson Yards is the biggest private real estate development project in the history of the United States. Seven years after it began, it will take another eight years, and a total of 20 billion dollars, to complete.

“Take every experience that I have had in the last 40 years, then combine it all in one project in the only place in this country where you would really have an opportunity to platform that kind of experience, and translate it into the most extraordinary mixed-use project ever in the United States. That is Hudson Yards,” said Himmel, who described himself as “one of three or four of us who are at the top of this project, making all the decisions and creating the vision.”

The man at the very top of the project is Stephen Ross, founder and chairman of the Related Companies. He is also Himmel's partner in Related Urban, a Related subsidiary.

“Ken is truly a visionary,” said Ross. “He understands all of the pieces—retail, restaurants, hotels, residential, and the public realm—and he knows how to put them all

together. His attention to detail is extraordinary, and he knows how to create an experience that draws people in. He was always ahead of his time and mastered mixed-use development back when naysayers still believed that no one would come to shop or eat in a vertical retail development.”

Hudson Yards seems destined to stand as the paragon of mixed-use development. As many as ten leading architects are respon-

sible for designing different parts of it, beginning with the platform and continuing with the buildings and landscaping. (Howard Elkus, the founding partner of Elkus Manfredi Architects and Himmel's very close friend of



Himmel stands on the platform being constructed at Hudson Yards in July 2015, with the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards beginning to rise behind him. The building behind the steel framework is across Tenth Avenue and is not part of the project. Photo by Jesse Winter

nearly 40 years, is designing the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards.) “We’re working with absolutely the finest architects in the world,” said Himmel.

“The people working on Hudson Yards are top-of-class in every single category,” he added. “Whether it is hospitality, retail, office development, residential development, infrastructure development, or technical engineering development, there is no better team of people ever assembled on any project anywhere in the world.”

Over eleven million square feet of development is planned for the Eastern Yard, the section currently being built from Thirtieth to Thirty-fourth streets between Tenth and Eleventh avenues. The Western Yard, which is expected to be completed five years after the Eastern Yard, will comprise more than six million square feet of primarily residential development and will include a school for 750 students. It will extend from Thirtieth to Thirty-third streets between Eleventh and Twelfth avenues, reaching nearly to the Hudson River.

“Hudson Yards really and truly is city-building within the city,” Himmel said. “This is a nearly 30-acre site in total; I mean, where in New York do you get to work on 30 acres? It is the birth of a part of the city that just did not have its sense of place yet, because it was completely undeveloped. This is how you create it.”

BUILDING ON HOSPITALITY

Ken Himmel left Cornell in 1970 knowing what he wanted to do. “I went right for the development side of the hospitality business, because I had gotten enough out of the school to realize the process of creating these assets really interested me,” he said.

It was his love of the restaurant business, however, that had led him to enroll in SHA two years earlier, after completing a bachelor’s degree in psychology at the College of William and Mary. While there, Himmel had worked at restaurants in Colonial Williamsburg, “so I already had this in my blood,” he explained.

“I knew that I wanted to end up somehow

in the hospitality business, and there was only one place to go if you were going to go into that business; you needed to go to the number-one school, and that was at Cornell,” Himmel said, adding, “I couldn’t get enough of Cornell when I was there.” He pursued a comprehensive business education, including courses from ILR and Johnson, but left room for as many courses in hospitality marketing and operations as he could. He also worked in food and beverage at the Statler Inn.

“I knew I wasn’t going into day-to-day operations, but I was also smart enough to know that was probably going to be the one window

where I wanted to get as much exposure as possible,” he said.

Himmel got his start in hospitality at age thirteen, at the Salem Country Club in Peabody, Massachusetts. He continued to work there whenever he was home from college.

“He likes to remind me that he had to scrub the floors and work his way up to being a server and eventually being one of the head servers at the club,” said his son, Chris ’01, who is managing partner in three

Himmel with restaurant entrepreneur and master chef Thomas Keller and Related founder and chairman Stephen Ross at Per Se in the Time Warner Center



restaurants—Grill 23 and Bar, Harvest, and Post 390—belonging to Himmel Hospitality Group in Boston. “Really, for him, it led to him becoming who he is.”

“I was a jack of all trades in that club,” the father reminisced.

WATER TOWER PLACE

Himmel was just 26 years old when he landed the opportunity to develop the second Ritz-Carlton in the United States, at Water Tower Place in Chicago. After working for three years as the assistant to George Page, the first Hilton franchisee and owner of the Hilton franchises for all of New England, Himmel had recently moved to the real estate group at Cabot, Cabot, and Forbes Land Trust, a highly pedigreed firm whose principals owned the Ritz-Carlton in Boston.

“I really couldn’t wait to get my arms around the new Ritz in Chicago at Water Tower Place, and I found a way to get in the door,” said Himmel, who has a genius for finding a way through most of them. On this particular occasion, he found his way into the seat next to the company chairman, Gerald Blakeley, on a long flight. “When I got off the airplane, I was invited to a meeting at 8:30 the next morning, and by 4:00 that afternoon I was on my way to Chicago.”

Himmel had talked his way into the opportunity to develop a 450-key, fifteen-story luxury hotel and be “thrown into the

middle” of the 90-story, mixed-use development project that encompassed it. Overseen by Philip Klutznick, the principal of Urban Development and Investment Company and the future secretary of commerce under President Carter, and developed by his 36-year-old son, Thomas, Water Tower Place pioneered the concept of “vertical retail” in this country.

“Tom Klutznick was nothing short of brilliant,” said Himmel. “He really understood politics, demographics, the technical side of the business, the creative side of the business. He was one of those rare people who could both teach and press you to perform to levels that you would never think possible.”

Under Tom Klutznick’s mentorship, Himmel saw his world open up dramatically. “That project took me to the top of a mountain, and in some ways I feel like I never came down,” he said.

COPLEY PLACE

After Water Tower Place opened in 1975, Himmel went looking for a development project closer to home on which to partner with Klutznick. He found a “very interesting” project in Boston’s Back Bay neighborhood.

The decision to run the Massachusetts Turnpike through the heart of Boston in the early 1960s had cut off parts of the Back Bay, and south Boston, from the downtown area.

“That scar remained there for years, and nobody was able to figure out how to mend it, how to stitch the city back together, until Ken came along,” said Elkus. “He was a very young guy at the time; I think he was 28, which is a testament to Ken’s genius. You knew he just had it.”

The Copley Place project involved building over a highway interchange and a commuter rail line, property owned by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. Another architect had been selected to design the project but was not up to the task. At the eleventh hour, Himmel, on his own and Klutznick’s behalf, asked Elkus to take over the design of the whole project.

Himmel called Elkus, who had just landed in California after a 20-hour flight from Manila, and told him to get on the next plane home. (Elkus declined, but flew back the next day.) “We had 45 days to re-invent Copley Place, and we pulled it off,” said Elkus, who holds a Stanford engineering degree as well as his architecture degree from Harvard.

While Himmel and Elkus were figuring out the how and what of building a mixed-use retail development in the air over a turnpike and rail lines, Himmel was also working the political channels. “I was so young and unknown at the time that, under the radar, I worked directly with Kevin White, the mayor, and Michael Dukakis, the governor, and went through a whole community process and got the project approved before anyone knew what was going on.”

“Ken has unbelievable energy and vision and perseverance,” said Elkus. “He went through many blows. We had over 500 meetings with various neighborhood constituencies. He dealt with every unexpected issue, constraint, interference, political

ambition—all kinds of factors that had to be managed. He was a genius not only in the creative side of development, which meant that you had to create

Boston architect Howard Elkus, who has led the design of almost every Himmel project since Copley Place. Photo by Jesse Winter





Hudson Yards as it
will look from the
Hudson River. This
city within a city will
completely transform
the skyline of midtown
Manhattan. Image
courtesy of the
Related Companies.





Al Maryah Central in Abu Dhabi. Image by Elkus Manfredi Architects

and recreate, but also in putting people together, and cities and neighborhoods.

“In the long run,” he added, “Copley Place strengthened the whole area.”

With Copley Place Himmel also scored a major retail coup, bringing Neiman Marcus to New England for the first time. “Our project would never have worked without their department store,” he said. “Now you fast-forward from 1984 to 2014, and Neiman’s commits to come to our project for the west side of New York—a very similar dynamic, as fate would have it.”

Copley Place, at 3.5 million square feet, was in its time the largest mixed-use development in the United States, and the most complex. According to Elkus, it attracted quite a bit of interest from the Japanese. “Copley Place was a real prototype for a country like Japan, so densely populated that they have to take advantage of air rights and lacing development with infrastructure.”

It was also good practice for Hudson Yards.

RELATED PROJECTS

Himmel and Ross have known each other since the 1980s, when they met through the Real Estate Round Table, an informal network of high-powered developers and investors that Himmel helped found. Of all the “top guys” who got together twice a year, Himmel found himself spending the most time with Ross, “because I really enjoyed him the most and was most stimulated by the work he was doing. His interests and my interests were in line.”

About ten years into this relationship, Ross, whose Related Companies by then owned, managed, and/or had developed more than seven billion dollars’ worth of residential and commercial property, offered Himmel opportunities to collaborate on two transformative projects. Back then, in the mid-1990s, Himmel was president of Himmel and Company in Boston. He had developed, in partnership with Tom Klutznick, Reston Town

Chris Himmel ‘01 at Grill 23 and Bar. Photo by Jesse Winter



Center in Reston, Virginia; 730 North Michigan Avenue, which included a Peninsula Hotel, in Chicago; and Pacific Place in Seattle, with Nordstrom's corporate offices and a flagship downtown store.

The first of the Related opportunities to come to fruition was CityPlace, a 72-acre city center in West Palm Beach, Florida with destination shopping and dining, entertainment venues, a public plaza, and residential and office buildings.

Related's bid to develop CityPlace was a particularly high-stakes gamble. The area to be developed had been gutted of buildings by a previous, failed developer, and the city's mayor was looking for a bold vision to resurrect this barren tract in a blighted and dangerous area of town. Before the city would allow construction to begin, Himmel had to convince retailers and restaurant companies to open shop in such a place. He had half of them lined up in a little over a year, and CityPlace was 90 percent occupied when it opened in October of 2000.

The effect of CityPlace on West Palm Beach was transcendent. With its attractive architecture and lifestyle appeal, CityPlace became a model for urban mixed-use development and a major regional draw, not just for tenants and consumers but for other developers. It is credited with sparking the economic revival of West Palm Beach. Today, under Himmel's leadership, CityPlace is opening a new 400-room Hilton hotel next to the County Convention Center after eight years of negotiations.

Related also recently announced plans to extend CityPlace northward by building another 450,000 square feet of retail and residential space. In addition, Related will add more apartments, parking, and retail space to the existing site. As managing partner of CityPlace, Himmel continues to refine the mix of offerings that underlie its ongoing success.

Although it was the first project that they completed, CityPlace was the second collaboration that Ross and Himmel

initiated. Ross first called Himmel about an eyesore that had been staring back at him through his office windows for years.

A short distance down the street, on Columbus Circle, stood the New York Coliseum. Never attractive to begin with, the convention center had long been empty and awaited demolition.

"There's a competition going on at Columbus Circle," Himmel recalled Ross telling him one day in 1996. "It's been in the works for fifteen years. No one has ever unlocked it, but its time has come." Eight other developers (including Donald Trump) were submitting proposals for the site.

Early in 1997, Ross and Himmel formed a business partnership as the Palladium Company, the precursor to Related Urban.

Less than a year later, they and their financial partner beat out the other developers and embarked on another paradigm-shifting project, the 2.8 million-square-foot Time Warner Center.

"Ken and I developed a plan for a complex that has now become the benchmark of mixed-use development globally," Ross said of Time Warner Center. "It was all about the fine points—the right tenant, the placement of Jazz at Lincoln Center, the design details, the way the public interacted with the place. Those fine points are what won the bid and why the project has been an overwhelming success, anchoring a whole new gateway to the upper west side."

With Elkus as his architect, as he has been on every project but one (Reston) since

CityPlace transformed a derelict sector of West Palm Beach into a thriving commercial and tourism magnet.



Copley Place, Himmel oversaw the development of the Shops at Columbus Circle, the complex's four-story, vertical-retail center. With Thomas Keller, he assembled a renowned set of restaurants, including Masa and Per Se—each with three Michelin stars—and A Voce, Landmarc, and Michael Lomonaco's Porter House New York. (Himmel and Keller are partners in Per Se.)

Time Warner Center quickly became one of the top-performing retail properties in the world; it attracts eighteen million visitors every year. In addition to the Shops at Columbus Circle and Jazz at Lincoln Center, it is also home to a Mandarin Oriental hotel and some of the most valuable office and residential space in New York. The development increased the value of real estate not just at Columbus Circle but throughout the surrounding neighborhood, which had been in decline. It won numerous awards, including the Urban Land Institute's Award for Excellence, the Building Owners and Managers Association's Pinnacle Award and Office Building of the Year award, and the Visual Merchandising and Store Design Award.

DREAMS IN THE MAKING

Related has two more large-scale projects in the pipeline, the Frank Gehry-designed, mixed-use Grand Avenue development in Los Angeles and another, 40 miles south of San Francisco, that is currently referred to as Related Santa Clara. The plans for Santa Clara call for 9.2 million square feet of development including hotels, retail, restaurants, entertainment, and residential and office space. Both projects have been envisioned to create city centers where none has existed, and the Santa Clara project, like Hudson Yards, is proposed to be built on a huge platform—but this time over a landfill. Himmel is leading the development at both locations.

“My dad can take a look at a pile of rubble and figure out how to build a world-class project with places where everyone wants to be,” his son remarked.)

As co-managing partner of Gulf Related, a joint venture of Gulf Capital and the Related Companies, Himmel has also been collaborating with Elkus on two dazzling waterfront developments in Abu Dhabi. The

first, the luxury mall the Galleria, opened in 2013, and the second, the contiguous, 3.1 million-square-foot Al Maryah Central, is due to open in 2018. Together, they will offer nearly three million square feet of retail, leisure, dining, and entertainment venues, including Al Maryah's open-air, rooftop food hall, with 145 dining options, and rooftop parks with an outdoor amphitheater. Al Maryah Central will also incorporate a luxury residential tower and a life-style hotel/residential tower. Al Maryah Central will bring the first international Macy's store to the United Arab Emirates and the second Bloomingdale's store to the region.

“He is really involved in the whole stratosphere of mixed-use development,” Chris Himmel said of his father. “Usually, developers have some sort of specific specialty. Some focus on the hotel side of it, some on the retail side, and others on the restaurant side. Then there is the office component and the residential. For somebody to encompass all of them is really a rarity. I think that is where he excels, and it separates him from other people.”



Himmel meets with members of the Cornell Real Estate Club during a visit to the school in late January. Photo by Jon Reis



Peter Peterson '93
hosts the members
of the Cornell
Real Estate Club
at Related Urban.
Photo by
Jesse Winter

HOSPITALITY IS IN THE DETAILS

Certainly, great design and a focus on place-making are at the heart of all of these projects, along with a commitment to excellence that is unmatched in the industry. But the overall impact of a large development depends not just on a grand vision, but on the attention given to a swarm of details, large and small. Himmel cares greatly about the details, and his education and experience in hospitality operations have contributed to his uncommon ability to put himself in the place of leaseholders, customers, and communities and envision how they will experience the properties he develops.

"Because of the complicated nature of putting different uses into one building, you have all kinds of different stakeholders and different priorities in terms of how the building should function," said Peter Peterson '93, who first worked for Himmel at Grill 23 and Bar and now focuses on restaurant development as a vice president at Related Urban. "Trying to weave all of those things together in a way that everyone gets a better experience is very complicated. Ken has the drive, the patience, and the diligence to go through that process, and not many people do.

"He's also very passionate about it," Peterson continued. "This is something that he really loves to do, and it's evident in every interaction that he has with the entire team that he's built here. When he's talking about

projects, that passion is very infectious, and that's what leads you to seek to focus in on all those details."

"Ken is as concerned about the handrail and the pattern of graining in the marble on the floor as he is about the impact of an entire project in a city," said Elkus. "You have to place yourself wherever a human being can be. You can't let your game down anywhere.

"He is thinking about all the program ingredients that are going to make a place happen, all the merchants that would fit together," he continued. "He's got his inventory very early in the game, and he's thinking all the way through. How do you create the ambiance, the DNA of a place, and make it fit its context, the history of the place, the culture of the people? Abu Dhabi isn't New York or West Palm Beach; they have very different cultures."

There is a word for this kind of care and attention, of course. It is hospitality.

"It is popular for developers to work with notable architects and designers to create something special for notoriety; the distinguishing factor for our projects is that we work with the same world-class teams to create something special for people," said Anthony Fioravanti, CHE '95, Related Urban's director of design, who helped lead the design of the Abu Dhabi projects and Hudson Yards and is now working on the

design of the Grand and Related Santa Clara. "Placemaking is a widely used term today, but we champion it empirically and experientially to make projects about the guest, customer, shopper, resident, user. We drive it through the entire process, from when you first enter the parking garage to when you take your seat at the perfect table on the window."

As practiced by Ken Himmel and his colleagues, mixed-use development is the differentiator that wins multi-billion-dollar bidding competitions, enhances the enjoyment of countless diners, shoppers, sightseers, entertainment seekers, and residents, earns record sales revenues, increases property values, and revives whole neighborhoods.

"Civilizations are represented by the castles they build, so to speak," said Elkus. "What I think drives Ken is the end game, the promise of what these projects will mean to their communities. He leaves everywhere he goes better off.

"That is a tremendous legacy." ♥



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A DESIGN FOR BETTER, MORE HOSPITABLE CARE

Imagine a facility with a multipurpose atrium—occasionally used for weddings—that houses a meditation garden and an organic food and tea kiosk. Among its other functions are cooking classes, yoga, and free concerts. What comes to mind: A hotel? A community center? Probably not a hospital. But Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital, in Michigan, is one of a growing number of facilities and services blurring the lines between hospitality and healthcare. Nurse Next Door, a senior homecare services company co-founded by John DeHart '96, seeks to deliver “happiness” to its clients. The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center brings the hotel’s legendary service principles to healthcare organizations, transforming their cultures and dramatically improving patient satisfaction.

Founders of the newly established Cornell Institute for Healthy Futures (CIHF) hope to make such occurrences the norm rather than the exception.

CIHF, a joint initiative of the School of Hotel Administration and the College of Human Ecology (CHE), is believed to be the world’s first academic center to combine hospitality, health policy/management, and design—areas in which Cornell has unique strengths. The institute was officially launched November 2 with panel discussions featuring industry leaders and a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the CIHF suite in Martha Van Rensselaer Hall.

Although the words “hospital” and “hospitality” evoke very different emotions, they stem from the same Latin word, *hospes*, meaning “guest” or “host.” DeHart, the institute’s first industry fellow, sees a natural confluence



between the two. “People who work in hospitality and people who work in healthcare share a passion for taking care of others—at their core, that’s who they are.

“But healthcare,” he said, “has a lot to learn from the hospitality industry. The culture of healthcare is attuned to what’s wrong, not to what’s working—it doesn’t embrace wellness or happiness, as the hotel industry does. The best hospitality companies understand how to deliver guests’ unexpected needs. More importantly, they know how to scale the guest experience so that, when you go to any Ritz-Carlton or Four Seasons around the world, you get the same kind of experience.”

DeHart expects to see “a massive cross-over” between hospitality and healthcare in a decade, as baby boomers start to turn 80 and require greater care. “Boomers won’t stand for today’s healthcare system—this will give the hotel industry an unprecedented opportunity to cater to them,” he

said. “CIHF is coming to the fore at just the right time to have a big impact on both industries. This is where the thought leadership will take place.”

Deans Michael Johnson and Alan Mathios at the CIHF inauguration ceremony. Photo by Lindsay France/UPhoto

CREATING A NEW DISCIPLINE

CIHF, which aims to enhance service excellence in healthcare, wellness, senior living, and related industries, is led by executive director Rohit Verma, a professor of services operations management and Singapore Tourism Board Distinguished Professor in Asian Hospitality Management at SHA. Mardelle McCuskey Shepley, CHE professor of design and environmental analysis, and Brooke Hollis, MBA '78, associate director of CHE’s Sloan Program in Health Administration, are associate directors. Under-scoring the schools’ joint leadership, Michael Johnson, the Bradley H. Stone Dean of the

The CIHF leadership team, from left: executive director Rohit Verma and associate directors Brooke Hollis and Mardelle Shepley. Photo by Jason Koski/UPhoto



An inauguration-day panel discussion on November 2. Photo by Lindsay France/UPhoto

graduate-level concentration or minor; dual-degree master's programs; and an online certificate program.

"We hope this leads people to start choosing career paths they otherwise would not have thought of," said Hollis.

More than 30 faculty members—from SHA, CHE, ILR, and the Johnson Graduate School of Management—have joined the institute as faculty fellows. "The fellows will become our intellectual base for conducting research," said Verma. "Each has committed to at least one project that overlaps with the institute's mission." CIHF will support those projects with small grants and other resources. "Since we're an institute of healthcare design, hospitality, and health administration, we'll be looking at a research agenda that supports those three concepts rather than one individually, because there are other funding sources that support those things independently, but there's very little—or anything at all—that supports all three simultaneously," said Shepley. In addition to publishing scholarly articles in journals and other academic publications, the institute will disseminate results of its research and share best practices through managerial reports, case studies, blogs, videos, podcasts, and other information posted on its website (ihf.cornell.edu) and through periodic newsletters.

Industry engagement takes several forms. The institute's corporate members—currently the American Seniors Housing Association, Delos, Mercy Medical Center, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, Cancer Treatment Centers of America, PwC, MindFolio, and the Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center—provide resources and are represented on the advisory board. The new one-credit course, modeled after SHA's Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series, features executives from the health, hospitality, and design industries. An industry roundtable will take place in April, and the institute has its first conference or a second roundtable tentatively scheduled

School of Hotel Administration and E. M. Statler Professor, and Alan Mathios, the Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean of the College of Human Ecology, are co-chairs of the governing board.

Although the institute is new, the close working relationship between the two schools is not. Over the last eight years, SHA and CHE have collaborated on roundtables and courses (Quality Systems and Processes, taught by Verma, and Planning and Operations of Senior Living and Related Facilities, taught by Hollis) and cosponsored panel discussions, both on and off campus, to address the growing overlap between hospitality and healthcare. "Executives in each industry have been looking to the other to gain a competitive edge," explained Verma. "Hospital administrators are incorporating

hospitality principles to enhance their level of service, while hospitality leaders are adding health to their offerings. That's a new way of thinking for both industries, and both have sought our assistance in making the transition."

To deliver on its mission, CIHF will support educational programs, conduct and disseminate research, and host roundtables and conferences for industry executives.

This spring Verma, Hollis, and Shepley are co-teaching a new one-credit course, Hospitality, Health, and Design Industry Immersion Seminar. Within the next few years, they plan to introduce a health and design concentration for SHA students and a hospitality concentration for CHE students; a university-wide minor linking health, hospitality, and design; the equivalent of a

for October. CIHF also plans to host visiting researchers and industry fellows, who will give presentations and meet one-on-one with students. Along with healthcare entrepreneur John DeHart, industry fellows joining the institute are John Rijos '75, founding operating partner of Chicago Pacific Founders; Meredith Oppenheim, A&S '95, business advisor for Oppenheim Architecture; and Satish Devapatla, medical director of the neonatal intensive care unit and past president of the medical staff at Cayuga Medical Center. "All these activities will bring us closer to industry," said Verma. "We'll get to see what they are doing, and they'll benefit from our research and from interactions with faculty and students."

Shepley describes CIHF as "more than interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. We're not just collaborating among disciplines or operating in parallel," she said. "The work we're doing is 'transdisciplinary'—we're creating a new discipline out of three specialties."

AHEAD OF THE TRENDS

The convergence of hospitality and healthcare will result in new career options—particularly for those trained in this new discipline. "We envision a variety of alternative career paths for Hotelies in the healthcare world," said Hollis. "Whether running the

'hotel' functions (dining, housekeeping, maintenance) or coordinating hospitality/customer experience in hospitals, senior living communities, or outpatient clinics, Hotelies should have many opportunities to help improve quality and customer service. Other opportunities will exist with health plans, wellness organizations, medical travel/tourism, and outsourced service firms that work with healthcare organizations. Similarly, design and health management students will have new opportunities to apply what they learn from hospitality to their work as consultants, managers, and designers."

Given the tectonic shifts coming in healthcare and senior living, CIHF is poised to have maximum impact.

Healthcare organizations are taking a new look at design, in accordance with research showing that design innovations can foster healing and drive perceptions of service quality. "We know that certain aspects of the physical environment can reduce stress," said Shepley, a national leader in evidence-based design. "Features that allow you to manipulate your immediate environment, for example, give you a greater sense of control, while views of nature or access to social interaction promote positive distraction."

John DeHart '96.
Photo by Lindsay
France/UPhoto

At the same time, Hollis said, "massive increases in the older population will require innovative approaches and new models for how we care for the elderly." According to projections by the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care, the 82-plus population will increase from 9.6 million today to 15.1 million in 2030—a growth rate of almost 60 percent. "In the senior living world alone, there's a huge amount of work to be done," said Hollis, noting that, unlike the hotel industry, the senior living sector is recession-resistant and can provide an alternative career track for Hotelies. "In many ways, senior living communities are like hotels or resorts for older Americans—it's only when you get to the end of life that it becomes a more medical model."

Also expected to see rapid growth are outpatient care, including home-based care and services like those provided by DeHart's company, Nurse Next Door; medical travel/tourism and the concierge-level services it has fostered; and a variety of related industries.

"CIHF is at the forefront of these changes—bringing together thought leaders from healthcare and outside the industry to provide fantastic learning opportunities for both students and practitioners," said DeHart. When he lectured in Hollis's Senior Living course last semester, he was impressed by the students' knowledge of healthcare and entrepreneurship. "The questions they asked were ones I would expect from my leadership team," he said.

Jill Guindon-Nasir, senior corporate director of global learning solutions and organizational development for the Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center, a CIHF corporate member, believes, "In addition to its influence on today's healthcare system, CIHF's greatest impact may come from educating tomorrow's healthcare leaders, who will understand that clinical excellence and service excellence can—and should—coexist. They are the ones who will truly transform the industry." ■



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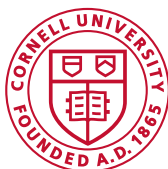
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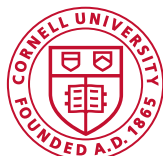
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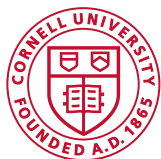
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CHS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we arrive on the Cornell campus we are instantly tagged with a stereotype. We are labeled as “Hotelies.”

For most Cornellians, Hotelies are the fun people on campus who throw the best parties, drink wine and cook food for Ivy League college credit, and ultimately get multiple job offers. I am happy to wear this stereotype as a badge of honor. However, I also know there is more to being a Hotelie than just these superficial traits.

Being a Hotelie means believing that *life is service*. No matter what professional or personal path we take, we passionately believe that providing joy and/or benefit to our guests, clients, constituents, and family members is noble, enjoyable, and satisfying. Hotelies are doers, leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, mentors, teachers, and among the most loyal Cornellians. We are successful in professional, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations. And yes, all along the way we take time to drink our fine wine and enjoy life!

For the past few years, my predecessors have led the Cornell Hotel Society (CHS) through a rebranding effort that has resulted in a new look and image for the Society that encapsulates these virtues. I thank them for all their hard work and for the beautiful new

CHS logo and motto—*Hotelie for Life*—that they have left us.

CHS believes that all SHA alumni, students, faculty, and administrators are Hotelies for Life. However, those people who pay their CHS membership dues are **extra special Hotelies**. By paying their dues, CHS members are providing the funds needed to support the primary goals of the Society:

- **Alumni:** In 2015, our 53 chapters worldwide held 150 events attended by 4,000 Hotelies—approximately one-third of our reachable alumni. Look for even more professional and social networking events in 2016, as well as the revival of chapters that have been dormant the past few years.
- **Students:** In 2015, CHS provided \$50,000 in scholarship funds, supplemented by another \$50,000 raised by our local chapters. In addition, CHS supports on-campus activities such as the CHS Collegiate Chapter and student trips to industry and alumni events.
- **The school:** CHS promotes the SHA brand through local educational events and faculty road trips. In 2015, CHS helped fund visits from a dozen faculty members to numerous CHS events around the world.

The implementation of these goals is achieved by the volunteers who lead our twelve regions and 53 chapters. They are the alumni who provide Hotelies with opportunities to gather, both professionally and personally, all around the world 150 times a year. I thank them for their efforts as they struggle to achieve that fine balance of professional, personal, and volunteer time.

I also have the pleasure to work with some great Hotelies to oversee the global efforts of CHS. Joining me on the CHS executive board in 2016 are first vice president **Cheryl Boyer '87**, second vice president **Bill**

Minnock '79, co-treasurers **Dexter '87** and **Susan '87 Wood**, secretary **Carmel D'Arienzo '88**, and immediate past president **Deniz Omurgonulsen '00**. All of them have accomplished credentials as CHS leaders and will assist me in the implementation of my personal goal to invigorate and grow our local chapters. Our efforts are supported by SHA staff members Meg Hardie Keilbach, CALS '88, Julie Pizzuti, MPS '06, Nickie Fredenburg, and Agata Okulicz-Kozaryn.

Several milestone events are taking place early this year. The annual meeting of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa chapters is scheduled for February 25–28 in Reykjavik, Iceland. HEC 91 is scheduled for March 17–20 in Ithaca. Also be on the lookout for Cornell receptions at the following major hospitality industry conferences: ALIS, IHIF, ITB, and Hunter. Please visit the CHS calendar of events to learn more: <https://sha.cornell.edu/alumni/connect/events>.

As part of his “Around the World with SHA” tour, Michael Johnson will be attending several alumni and industry events during the remaining months of his deanship. On behalf of CHS, we thank Dean Johnson for his service to SHA and his support of the Society. Dean Johnson and his wife, Jill Kobus Johnson, have embraced the Hotelie persona during their time at Cornell, enabling us to get to know them both professionally and personally.

I encourage you to attend as many CHS events as you can during 2016 and, if possible, volunteer your time to become a leader.

We are all Hotelies for Life. Let's have some fun!

Robert Mandelbaum '81

CHAPTER EVENTS



1

1 Arizona: Arizona chapter members enjoyed meeting the Phoenixian Resort's falcon and his handler, Chris, during their December holiday party.

2 Arizona: The Arizona chapter's annual summer dinner at the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North. Back row: **Donnelly Nariss Maysey '97**, **Connie White, MMH '96**, honorary Hotelier Rodo Sofranac, **Nancy Seadler, MPS '00**, **Mary Brierley-Peterman '78**, **Julie Zagars '94**, **Julie Phillips '93**, and **Steve Eberhart '82**. Seated: **Mark Koehler, MPS '01**, **Bruce Sandground '84**, and **Marcella McCormack, MPS '87**.

3 Europe, Middle East, and Africa: Another photo from the EMEA Regional Meeting, held June 11-14 in Istanbul



2

ARIZONA

Arizona chapter members held summer and winter get-togethers in 2015. Their annual summer dinner took place July 18 at the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North. They enjoyed their annual holiday brunch at the Phoenixian Resort on December 13. On that occasion, Julie Pizzuti, MPS '06, SHA's director of alumni engagement and outreach, gave an update on happenings in Ithaca and joined them for lemon-ricotta crepes and mimosas. The members wish a "happy 2016!" to all the other chapters.



3

FINLAND, RUSSIA, AND THE BALTICS

Chapter members spent an enjoyable afternoon in May at Linnanmaki amusement park in Helsinki, where they were hosted by the park's managing director, **Pia Adlivankin '94**. Pia made a presentation to the group and treated them to rides and some of the park's fine food concepts. Linnanmaki is owned by the Children's Day Foundation, which donates the park's profits to organizations helping children. Last year, almost four million euros were given to children's causes.

The group met at Hotelli Helka in June to hear another presentation by popular Johnson School alumnus Jukka Laitamäki, MS '89, PhD '90, who spoke about the development of tourism in Cuba. The gathering was hosted by Jukka Räisänen, the hotel's general manager.



4 Fun at Linnanmaki: From left are host Pia Adlivankin '94, Merit Whirty Tukiainen, MPS '91, Satu Oksanen, IMHI '94, Veikko Vuoristo '76, Martti Palonperä '77, MPS '94, Juha Mähönen, GMP '05, Karl von Ramm, MMH '10, and Deiv Saluts kij '71.

GEORGIA

The 17th annual **Atlanta Lodging Outlook** breakfast seminar, held on September 9, drew 325 area hotel professionals to the InterContinental Hotel in Buckhead. The group was hosted by **Brian Ettelman '87**, the hotel's director of catering. Chapter president **Sophia Lin-Kanno '05** and Jim Sprouse, president of the Georgia Hotel and Lodging Association, made introductory remarks. Jack Corgel, SHA's Robert C. Baker Professor of Real Estate, moderated this year's forum, which included a panel discussion on real estate development activity in Atlanta. A second panel of experts, including **Mark Woodworth '77**, **MPS '78** of PKF Hospitality Research/CBRE, presented their economic outlook for 2016. The event benefits the chapter's scholarship fund.

In May, Georgia chapter members learned how coffee beans are grown, harvested, and roasted during a private tour of the Batdorf and Bronson Coffee Roasters production facility. **Leah Corgel '09** organized the event.

SHA senior lecturer **Stephani Robson '88**, **MS '99**, **PhD '10** visited the Georgia chapter in June at **Ryan Pernice '07**'s acclaimed restaurant Osteria Mattone in Roswell. Stephani gave a talk, "We See What You Think: How People Really Choose Hotels Online," that explored the results of her research on online booking behavior.

Atlanta-area alumni gathered in August for their annual pizza social with area students. This year's guests of honor were **David Kiger '18**, **Savannah Woodworth '16**, and **Sam Woodworth**, **MMH '16**.

Fifty Hotelies and friends gathered for the chapter's annual December holiday party at the home of **Mark '77**,

Mary Kay, **Sam '16**, and **Savannah '16** Woodworth. Event organizer **Sophia Lin Kanno '05**'s company, A Legendary Event, catered the dinner. **Alan LeBlanc '84** donated the beer, and **Ryan Pernice '07** and **Virginia Mariani-Kitt '82** provided the wine. The group was also joined by Dean Michael Johnson and his wife, Jill Kobus Johnson; Meg Keilbach, **CALS '88**, associate dean for alumni affairs and development; and **Bob Alter '73**, chairman of the Dean's Advisory Board. Michael, Meg, and Bob shared a video introducing the school's new branding as the World's Most Adventurous Business School and brought the group up to date on activities and opportunities to support the school.





KANSAI

Of the places where Cornellians gather to celebrate, Zinck's Night arrives first in Japan. Alumni in Osaka got together on October 15 at Bistro Barvida, an establishment operated by **Masayuki Tanigaki, MPS '89**, to enjoy good food and wine and one another's company.

LONDON

Lecturer **Cheryl Stanley '00**, who teaches the courses Beverage Management and Introduction to Wines, traveled to London in October with a suitcase full of Finger Lakes wines to share with SHA alumni, other Cornellians, and friends at the Hotel Russell. With her expert guidance, the 25 attendees experienced six delicious wines that are not available in the U.K. Much merriment ensued, and the event was a great success. **Cody Bradshaw '01**, senior vice president of acquisitions and asset management at Starwood Capital Group, and his team at the Hotel Russell hosted the group, making sure there was plenty of good food for all. **Bumjoo MacLennan, MMH '05** and regional vice president **Alison Hargreaves '00** organized the gathering.

NEVADA

CHS Nevada hosted 36 alumni for a happy hour on September 30 during the Global Gaming Expo. The very successful event was held at Society Cafe Encore inside the Wynn Las Vegas. **Julia Greenman Angibeau '03** and **Alexander Koch '04** organized the get-together, and everyone had a wonderful time. Special thanks also go to **Marjorie Rugg, MMH '07** for all of her work as the chapter's social chair.



1 Georgia: Darr Jacob, **Bob Alter '73**, Dean Michael Johnson, and **Liz Longstreet '08** enjoy the holidays at the home of **Mark '77** and Mary Kay Woodworth.

2 Georgia: **Stephani Robson '88, MS '99, PhD '10**, at back right, with members of the Georgia chapter at Osteria Mattone. Host **Ryan Pernice '07** is in the foreground at right.

3 Kansai: Zinck's Night in Osaka: From left are Megumi Horio, Izumi

Kuroki, Masanori Asada, Emiko Nakano, **Ann Isaka, MPS '93**, host **Masayuki Tanigaki, MPS '89**, Masato Mochinaga, Tony Andoriotis, Hiroaki Gomi, **Keizo Natsuyama, MPS '94**, Atsushi Okada, **Masayuki Nakamura, MPS '92**, Yoshitaka Murakami, Yasuhiro Nakano, Mika Kiriya, **Kenichi Kiriya, MMH '00**, **Seiji Tanaka '81**, and Sachi Tanaka.

4 London: **Cheryl Stanley '00** brought the fruits of the Finger Lakes to London on October 10.

NEW YORK CITY

The program “Creating and Delivering the Cool Factor” delivered a great turnout of alumni and friends to No. 8 on West 16th Street on August 27. Speakers Bill Bonbrest of TAO Group, Scott Gerber of the Gerber Group, Amy Sacco of No. 8, and Jay Stein of Hampshire Hotels shared their unique perspectives on the success and pitfalls in the popular reinvention of nightlife entertainment. The discussion was followed by drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and networking. LDV Hospitality and Heyer Performance sponsored the event, with proceeds benefitting the New York City chapter's scholarship fund.

Dean Michael Johnson and his wife, Jill, joined over 400 alumni, industry friends, and SHA students for the New York City chapter's 93rd annual reception on November 9 at the InterContinental Times Square. His visit was a stop on his “Around the World with SHA” tour, which will continue all year with periodic visits to alumni in Asia, Europe, and the United States. Chapter president **Nikita Sarkar, MMH '06** organized the event with help from **Daphne Rayappu '12**, **Tess Rex '12**, and **Morgan Fleischman '11**. Title sponsor was Sixty Hotels.



1 New York City: Michael and Jill Kobus Johnson speak with New York City chapter president **Nikita Sarkar, MMH '06** at the group's 93rd annual reception in November.

2 North Texas: Spring happy hour at Knife in the Highland Dallas.

3 North Texas: Dallas Hotel Conference reception organizers **Peter Brogan '13**, **EJ Velerian '15**, and **Arzu Molubhoy '12** with speaker **Monty Bennett '88, MBA '89** at the Omni Dallas Hotel.

4 Philadelphia/South Jersey: The Philadelphia/South Jersey chapter enjoys an evening at the ballpark with **Giuseppe Pezzotti '84, MMH '96**.



NORTH TEXAS

The North Texas chapter hosted its first annual Cornell Hotel Society reception following the Dallas Hotel Conference in October. More than 100 attendees, including at least 25 alumni, enjoyed a warm fall evening under the stars on the Owners' Box patio at the Omni Dallas Hotel. **Monty Bennett '88, MBA '89**, president and CEO of the Ashford Hospitality Trust and a sponsor of the event, delivered a wonderful speech to the crowd retelling some of his favorite Cornell memories and how he has continuously crossed paths with the Hotelie network throughout his career. Other sponsors were Ernst and Young and Civitas Capital Group. **Arzu Molubhoy '12**, the chapter's vice president and treasurer, coordinated the reception with assistance from chapter president **Peter Brogan '13** and **Emily Jo (EJ) Veteran '15**.

The North Texas chapter enjoyed a great turnout for their spring happy hour at Knife in the Highland Dallas, the first hotel in Hilton's Curio Collection. Chapter president **Peter Brogan '13** co-organized the event with **Maxi Hepfer '13**.

PHILADELPHIA / SOUTH JERSEY

The Philadelphia/South Jersey chapter hosted a wine-tasting dinner with featured guest **Giuseppe Pezzotti '84, MMH '96** at Citizens Bank Park last June. During dinner, Giuseppe discussed the flavor profile of each wine and how it complemented the food. After dinner, the guests were given a tour of the ballpark, hearing about Phillies history and seeing the locker room, batting cages, press box, and dugout. The event was organized by **Jessica Diamond '04** and overseen by chapter president **Lynn Zwibak '02**. Many thanks go to **Joe Giles '84**, director of ballpark enterprises and business development for the Philadelphia Phillies, and to **Marc Bruno '93**, chief operating officer in Aramark's sports, leisure, corrections, and business dining division, for their support and generosity, which enabled the chapter to donate the proceeds from this event to SHA's Giuseppe Pezzotti Scholarship in Food and Beverage Management.





////////////////////////////////////

1 Singapore: CHS Singapore's annual barbecue.

2 South Carolina: South Carolina chapter members and friends display the CHS banner at the Charleston Marriott.

3 Tokyo: Chef Hiroyuki Sakai addresses members and friends of the Tokyo chapter at his restaurant, La Rochelle.

4 Washington, D.C./Baltimore: Class of 2014 alumnae Kelsie Taylor, Nichole Wiggins, Rachel Towne, Jessica Thompson, and Talia Bronfin enjoy the party at the home of Kevin '94 and Amanda '94 Jacobs.



SINGAPORE

About 50 members and their family members got together in May for CHS Singapore's annual barbecue picnic at Labrador Nature Reserve. Prof. Sherri Kimes was there, as were some newly admitted SHA students.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Nine alumni and family members from the South Carolina chapter gathered for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at the Charleston Marriott on October 29. The reception was hosted by chapter president **DJ Rama, MMH '96**. Other alumni in attendance were **Bob Arnold '68**, **Jay Burnett, MMH '98**, **Robert Mandelbaum '81**, **Ed Marinaro '72**, and **Bill Moeckel '72**.

TOKYO

CHS Tokyo had a fun event with celebrity chef Hiroyuki Sakai on June 17. About 70 participants gathered at his restaurant, La Rochelle, to hear him answer interview questions from his son, **Shingo Sakai, MMH '08**, about his business and his business philosophy. Chef Sakai also fielded questions from some audience members. The sit-down dinner that followed featured a succession of tasty and beautiful dishes.

WASHINGTON, D.C. / BALTIMORE

Kevin '94 and Amanda '94 Jacobs once again served as the generous hosts of the D.C./Baltimore chapter's annual holiday party on December 12. Kevin and Amanda welcomed more than 100 guests to their home in Bethesda, Maryland—the largest turnout in years. Special guests Michael and Jill Johnson helped make the party even more special.





Remembrance

James T. Schmuck '41
JANUARY 23, 2015

Reed Andrae '42
OCTOBER 13, 2015

Walter H. Smith '44
APRIL 9, 2015

Helen F. Stocking '44
DECEMBER 6, 2014

Glenn A. Wood, Jr. '44
JANUARY 17, 2015

William H. Hofmann '46
AUGUST 18, 2015

Franklin W. Carney '47
NOVEMBER 16, 2015

William W. Myers '48
FEBRUARY 4, 2015

Robert Welsh '48
FEBRUARY 6, 2015

Benjamin C. Amsden '49
DECEMBER 10, 2014

Donald A. Kincade '49
APRIL 23, 2014

Gerald D. Mannis '49
AUGUST 12, 2015

John Penn '49
MAY 31, 2015

John F. Burger '50
MAY 10, 2015

Michael C. Aiduk '52
JUNE 7, 2015

Thomas C. Marshall '52
AUGUST 31, 2015

William B. Pattison '54
SEPTEMBER 4, 2015

Albert J. Haleblian '55
MARCH 24, 2015

Henry Hirschy '55
APRIL 17, 2015

Earle Milner '55
DECEMBER 17, 2014

Alonzo "Skip" Ward, III '55
JUNE 12, 2015

Stephen S.J. Hall '56
JULY 30, 2015

Johan H. Krohn, Sr. '56
MAY 22, 2014

Robert A. Minium '56
FEBRUARY 25, 2015

Jamie Poteet '56
JUNE 4, 2015

Thomas C. Chevoor '58
MARCH 12, 2014

Samuel A. Cooke '59
DECEMBER 2, 2015

Risa K. Kassoff '59
MAY 2, 2015

Allen R. Graessle '60
APRIL 15, 2015

Jean-Claude Hollant '60
OCTOBER 1, 2015

Alan D. Fleischman '65
SEPTEMBER 14, 2014

David T. Girves '65
JANUARY 16, 2015

Mary B. Binder '66
JULY 24, 2015

L.K. "Len" Wales '66
FEBRUARY 23, 2015

Anthony J. Forlano, Sr. '68
DECEMBER 13, 2014

James J. Eyster '69,
PhD '77
APRIL 7, 2015

Arthur Nilsen '69
MARCH 7, 2015

Julianne H. Vilardo '70
MAY 10, 2015

Joseph James P. Ecker '72
OCTOBER 19, 2015

William E. Cresswell, Jr. '75
APRIL 17, 2015

David H. Callen '76
JULY 14, 2015

Michael E. Fishman '76
DECEMBER 17, 2014

Thomas A. Rabbia '76
FEBRUARY 14, 2015

Richard F. Jernigan '77
SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

Martin J. Lawrence '79
JULY 11, 2015

Charles Luthi, IMHI '83
JUNE 8, 2015

Lissa W. Kowalski '87
NOVEMBER 5, 2014

Michel Y. Mahe '87
JULY 21, 2015

Kevin C. Nicholson '87
JULY 27, 2015

Mark P. Talbert '89, MPS '92
OCTOBER 19, 2015

Jason L. Davis '97
APRIL 30, 2015

Michelle E. LeBeau '02
JUNE 8, 2015

Caitlin B. Mullinix, MMH '06
JUNE 23, 2015

Where are the class notes?

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

<https://sha.cornell.edu/about/news-and-publications/publications/hotellie-magazine.html>



SPAIN: A FEAST OF TRADITIONS



Spain's ties to the past are so enduring that many traditions are passed down from generation to generation essentially unchanged. In some arenas, this adherence to the ways of the past creates impediments to innovation. In matters of gastronomy, however, it has assured the continuation of a fascinating and rich heritage in food and wine production that has helped define Spain as the worldwide leader in modern cuisine.

I won a remarkable chance to experience the best of this heritage last summer and fall. I was one of twelve young chefs chosen internationally to take part in ICEX Spain Trade and Investment's Award Program in Spanish Gastronomy, a six-month-long deep

LEFT Mezquita, the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba

RIGHT Dana Beninati, MMH '15 with Joan Roca, head proprietor and executive chef of El Celler de Can Roca

dive into the art of eating and drinking in Spain. Following a one-month intensive on Spanish ingredients, techniques, culture, and language in

Valladolid, an ancient city nestled amid five wine regions in Castile and Leon, I was granted the extraordinary opportunity to work at El Celler de Can Roca, 2015's "World's Best Restaurant" on San Pellegrino's influential list of the World's 50 Best Restaurants.

TRIAL BY FIRE

El Celler de Can Roca is located in Girona, a quaint Catalan village north of Barcelona. Girona holds the record for the most Michelin stars worldwide, so it should come as no surprise that it is also home to the best restaurant in the world.

With its many ancient bridges arched over narrow canals running between long cobblestone streets, Girona reminds me of Venice. But Catalonia's proximity to the Pyrenees Mountains has imbued the region with French as well as Spanish influences that are evident in its culture and cuisine as well as in its distinctive language, Catalan.

Three brothers own and operate El Celler de Can Roca. Joan, Josep (better known as Pitu), and Jordi Roca grew up in the hospitality industry with their parents running Can Roca, a petite bar that offers traditional Catalan cuisine in the approachable form of a three-course daily menu priced at fifteen euros. Not only is Can Roca still open to the public, but Mama Roca (as everyone lovingly calls Montserrat) still helms the stove for every service. In fact, Montserrat and her husband, Josep, provide a home-cooked meal at breakfast, lunch, and dinner for all employees of El Celler, bringing new meaning to the concept of a family meal.

El Celler de Can Roca represents the cellar of the original family restaurant. With Joan, Pitu, and Jordi forming a restaurateur's dream trifecta as executive chef, sommelier, and pastry chef, respectively, it has been operating as a fine-dining establishment for over 28 years. It earned its third Michelin star after fourteen years of service. The brothers describe the restaurant's 23-course Feast Menu as "techno-emotional food that's nostalgic and cerebral all at once."

My experience at El Celler de Can Roca was nothing short of a dream come true. Like any Hotelier, I am always eager to learn, especially when presented with the opportunity to learn from the best. The Roca brothers view their restaurant as an extension of their home, and all who enter are treated as family, including employees. Their style of service is strikingly casual, and the food is interactive, playful, and tells a complete story. Each course is paired with its own wine, which ranges from classic to daring. During my days spent working the floor as a sommelier, Pitu encouraged

me to truly push the envelope and test new pairings from the 60,000-bottle wine cellar.

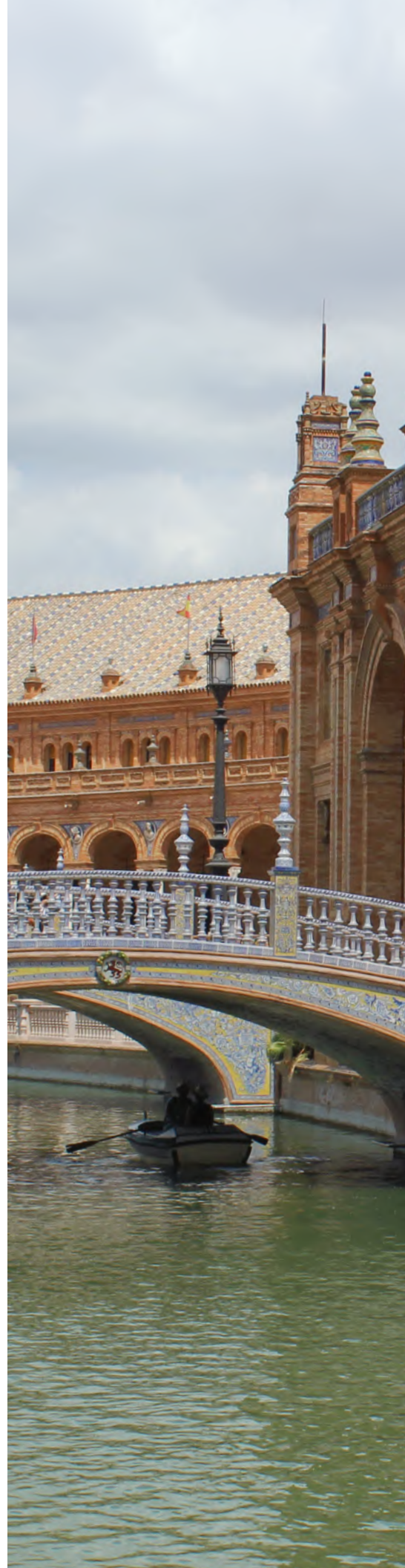
In comparison to the dining room, the back of house has a very different culture and feel. The kitchen operates under a respectful cloak of silence. Sense of urgency is incredibly high, technique is executed to a newfound level of precision, and every step is double- or perhaps triple-checked. The intensity of this environment truly tests the mental strength and discipline of every cook. There were eight stations, predominantly run by male cooks. All newcomers were urged to work faster, cleaner, and harder in an effort to evaluate who could handle the pressure of such silent, sterile conditions. It was the most challenging back-of-house environment I have ever experienced. But after the initial shock, it was clear that it would make me a stronger chef and leader.

Just beyond the kitchen walls, this stifling discipline is quickly forgotten, as innovation becomes priority in the Roca-Lab, a space dedicated entirely to menu ideation and scientific experimentation. Hidden just behind the restaurant's parking lot is *la Masía* (Catalan for farmhouse), a library for research surrounded by a sprawling edible garden. Working alongside these talented chefs, I was taught a new degree of perfection and the infinite value of innovative disruption. I could not be more grateful for these lessons, as I believe they carry weight far beyond the realm of restaurant service.

REGIONAL RICHES

Spain is divided into seventeen regions, and each possesses a defined sense of place. For example, Galicia, located on the northwest coast of the country, is the world's largest producer of mussels and

Córdoba





home to the most incredible of fresh fish. A must-try from this seafood haven: steamed barnacles. Moving south, we find two different regions that produce paprika, Extremadura and Murcia. Spanish paprika is vastly different than its sweet Hungarian counterpart. The flavor is deep, earthy, and laced with a subtle smokiness that is only achieved through a fifteen-day pepper-smoking process, designed by monks centuries ago.

Over one-quarter of the country is also covered in *dehesa*, dedicated grassy areas forested in cork and acorn trees that are used exclusively to raise the esteemed Iberian pigs, a black-skinned breed descended from the Mediterranean wild boar. Only pork raised in this liberal environment (entirely free-range and antibiotic free) can be deemed *jamón ibérico puro de bellota*, meaning ham made from acorn-fed, purebred Iberian pigs.

Beyond the *dehesas*, Spain offers a stunning combination of mountains and sea, which results in the perfect growing environment for a variety of products. Worldwide, Spain is first in production of table olives and olive oil, second in production of almonds, third in production of artichokes, fourth in production of pork, and fifth in production of grapes. This leads to what I believe is the essence of Spanish cuisine: the use of the highest-quality ingredients in the humblest and simplest of preparations.

Of the products I sampled, these are my essentials: Arbiquina olive oil, the most pungent of the four Spanish varieties; *jamón ibérico puro de bellota*; La Legua Garnacha 2013, a delicate, floral, food-friendly leap above a standard Grenache; paprika in all three varieties, *picante*, *agridulce*, and *dulce*; *morcilla con arroz*, a fantastic pork blood sausage studded with rice; saffron, the crimson stigma of the crocus, which is hand-picked for the fifteen weeks of its harvest season; and *ventresca*, a special portion of tuna cut from the belly of the fish and preserved in olive oil.

Plaza España in Sevilla



SAVORED MEMORIES

As part of our ICEX experience, my eleven counterparts and I spent two weeks visiting the regions where these amazing foods are produced. I have been left with so many wonderful memories. Here are a few of my favorites:

- Sailing out to a wooden raft in the Atlantic Ocean to watch farmers pull long lines covered in mussels up between the slats of the raft and toss the creatures into the boat. We ate dozens of them, cracking open their shells and covering them in *escabeche*, an acidic sauce similar to the base used in ceviche.
- Inhaling the golden-brown aroma of fresh smelt, fried and eaten whole from head to tail, while enjoying stunning views of the cliffs of Cadaqués, the seaside city that Salvador Dalí called home for the better part of his life.

TOP LEFT Montaña Roja in Playa Blanca **TOP MIDDLE** Oxen along the Burma River **MIDDLE** The Mercado de la Boqueria in Barcelona **TOP RIGHT** The stigmas are plucked from saffron crocuses in Ciudad Real in La Mancha **BOTTOM** Cadaqués, the home of Salvador Dalí, on the Costa Brava in the province of Girona





- Listening to flamenco in Jerez while tasting bottle after bottle of sherry served with warm egg tortillas and mounds of preserved fish.
- Eating inside-out ravioli and other delights at Disfrutar (translation: Enjoy) in Barcelona. The restaurant is led by Oriol Castro, the former head chef of El Bulli, which was widely regarded as the best restaurant in the world.
- Seeing Morocco across the Strait of Gibraltar, my toes buried in the sand of Cádiz, the water studded with hundreds of kite surfers.
- Walking under thousands of salt-cured pig legs as they dry-aged in a 130-year-old cellar in Jabugo to become Cinco Jotas premium *jamón ibérico*.
- Tasting unfiltered olive oil for the first time at La Boella in Tarragona.

I also remember meeting 78-year-old Jorge, who began taking part in the saffron harvest with his grandfather when he was a child. Jorge is still harvesting saffron, but now he is accompanied by his grandchildren. In time, they will probably return to the fields with their own grandchildren.

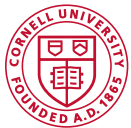
Traditions are strong in Spain; for worse or for better, the old ways endure. What an extraordinary privilege it was for me to experience them. ♥



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