UNLV Alumnus George Maloof takes success in stride
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This past July I had the opportunity to be a guest of Banfi Vintners and accompany two of our students, Jolie Duhon and Zach Substanley, on a week-long food and wine tour of Tuscany, Italy. While I had been hearing about this annual tour for at least 15 years from colleagues who had attended, I had not made the time to take advantage of Banfi’s many invitations and generosity. It’s a shame that I didn’t take them up on their offer sooner. This was truly one of the best travel experiences of my life.

I anticipated a lot of great food and a lot of great wine, with a lot of consumption of both. What I didn’t anticipate was the educational opportunities that were provided by our Banfi hosts: Bill Whiting, director of wine education; Neill Trimble, vice president of advertising and marketing; Elizabeth Koenig, estate hospitality project director; and Michela Dominici, hospitality manager. From our first meal together upon my arrival in Milan to our last in Rome, food preparation and ingredients were continually discussed and explained along with the Banfi Vintner’s wines that were served.

While one could have expected that food and wine pairings would be highlighted on such a trip, I didn’t expect the wonderful excursions to see the commercial production of food products, starting with Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese at the dairy in Reggio Emilia. We saw the fresh milk turned into the wheels of cheese before our eyes. Do you know which one of the five senses are used to tell the quality of the wheel? (See answer at the end.)

The enlightenment continued with a visit to the Balsameria and the production of balsamic vinegar. This production facility had been in the same family for three generations and the current proprietor, a woman who was a former Italian Olympic swimming champion. She exuded such pride explaining the process of making balsamic vinegar as she showed us around her plant.

How many of us have tasted the difference in balsamic vinegar made from pears, cherries or with the more traditional grapes? For the first time I had vanilla ice cream with balsamic vinegar as the topping instead of hot fudge! Try it, you’ll like it.

Next, we were taken to a small production plant for olive oil – again an operation that had been in the same family for generations. After learning about the production process and inspecting the stainless steel machinery, we proceeded to a tasting room, where we sampled four different oils and quickly became olive oil connoisseurs. I learned that the price of olive oil in the U.S. should not be the sole determinant of the quality and that oil is best purchased in a metal container to retain maximum shelf life. The best determinant of quality is by tasting the oil itself.

Our students participated in a cooking class by preparing a lunch for all of us that started with a bread salad. Yes, a bread salad. Now, I know that you foodie types who understand Italian food know all about bread salad, but this was a new one for me. Italian bread is baked without any salt content so that it doesn’t absorb moisture from the air and can be easily maintained and consumed for two weeks, after which it becomes stale and is used to make the bread salad. It is a simple process. The bread is soaked in salt water until mushy. Then all the water is squeezed out and the bread is crumbled into a bowl. Add tomatoes, onions, spices and olive oil and you have a salad that tastes fabulous. The rest of the lunch was equally as good as we dined on Tuscan Beef. The students had a ball preparing this for everyone.

We also visited a small local bakery in Montalcino, again a third generation operation where the proprietor, a woman of 74 years, still arises at 3 a.m. to begin the daily preparation. The smells and samples were delicious.

Before I go get something to eat because I have made myself hungry, I would be remiss without saying how proud I was of our two UNLV student representatives, Jolie and Zach. They were two of 16 students from eight different universities invited by Banfi. The entire student group was a pleasure to be around for the entire trip, but it was clear to me that both Jolie and Zach were there to learn as well as to have a good time. And they did both in spades...as did their Dean! ※

Answer: Sound: a small metal hammer is used to tap the wheel of cheese in a number of places. The pitch is distinctly lower in a less quality wheel.
“...Is it too much to ask of people who go out to eat at a nice restaurant to dress properly? If people wish to look scruffy when they’re at a fast food place, fine—that’s not dining, that’s chewing...”

I collect things: mostly emails or clippings from magazines and newspapers that intrigue me and have, either peripherally or directly, something to do with this wacky, yet wonderful, world of hospitality—and, anyone who thinks it isn’t wacky is not of this planet. Anyway, just the other day, in preparation for this column, I leafed through my collection and uncovered some juicy tidbits that gave rise to the following that I’ve decided to call “Ruminations.”

Here’s an email from, shall we say, a frightened customer (and I quote): “Restaurant owners and their chefs who still permit foods and drinks to be flamed tableside ought to be burned at the stake.” Apparently, this customer (an acquaintance) was scared to death by the sudden whoosh of a fancy drink going up in flames. And wants me to do something about it?

Deep in the recesses of this file of collected clippings is an ad from an in-flight magazine; unfortunately, there’s no dateline on the page but I believe it’s from the late 1980s early 1990s. I kept it because the ad makes a point about service, style, and substance—all of which go hand in hand if an operation is to succeed. The ad is for a Sheraton Hotel in Minneapolis: it’s all copy, no photo or illustration to dilute the effectiveness of the message. Headline: “What if, God forbid, you had to run a hotel.” Copy: “We wouldn’t wish such a gruesome task on such a nice person. But if you absolutely had to do it, wouldn’t you want to do it right? All right, the trick is to remember all the things you’ve hated about all the hotels you’ve ever visited. The indifference; the arrogance; the carelessness. The...well...you get the picture. Then you simply decide you’re not going to stand for it, and you become a holy terror until things get running right. You also watch everyone like a hawk ever after to make sure there’s no backsliding.” Please note there is no mention of what a neat-looking place the hotel is or how large its pool is or how fluffy its towels are or how yummy its food is. The thing to remember about yummy food and fluffy towels is that—in most places—they are givens: guests expect them and they expect them to be decent. Note also that the emphasis in the ad is not on the flash of the hotel’s filigree or the panache of its pedigree. But—by inference—on employee attitudes and responsibilities. Couple those elements and you have—as I mentioned earlier—the essence of a hotel’s style.

From the food section of a suburban newspaper: “Fake flowers on the table and plastic plants hanging from the ceiling are dead giveaways of what to expect from the kitchen.” Allow me to chime in: You could say the same thing about a lousy house wine.

A letter to the editor from a disgruntled diner about dress codes in tableservice restaurants got me to thinking. I’d quote the letter, but it was objectionably (almost repulsively) angry. But, as I said, it got me to thinking. Is it too much to ask of people who go out to eat at a nice restaurant to dress properly? If people wish to look scruffy when they’re at a fast food place, fine—that’s not dining, that’s chewing. I remember years ago a picture in a newsweekly of a gentleman (I use the word advisedly) dressed in a t-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops shaking hands with his minister following a Sunday morning service. The magazine titled the story, ‘Are we a nation of slobs?’

What in the name of everything that’s sane is molecular gastronomy? An article in Saveur magazine by Bill Rice (former food writer for the Chicago Tribune) tries to explain what it’s all about and, although his prose is direct and informative, he loses (and I might add, baffles) me when he writes about a chef who locks himself (and his recipes) in some sort of culinary laboratory in the basement of his restaurant while he fiddles with inventions that, apparently, to those who practice this sad form of cuisine-art make a lot of sense. I think Nations Restaurant News got it right when they titled an article about this process: “Frankenfood?”

“Industry Insights” is a featured column in Premier. A member of the college’s International Advisory Board, Michaelides is a freelance writer, speaker, and food service consultant.
As a frequent visitor to Las Vegas as a child, Andrew Kao got to know the city pretty well—even mapping out the entire Fashion Show Mall floor plan in his head. Now, at 20-years-old, Kao is mapping out his future.

A triple major in hospitality, meeting and events, and lodging management, plus focusing on a Japanese minor, Kao relies on his iPhone and Google calendar to coordinate the days and nights that he seemingly eats, breaths and sleeps the hotel college. No stranger to the hospitality profession (his father runs a hotel in California), the Burbank, Calif. native’s ambitious career path is already taking shape. He attends class and works full-time, assists with special events in town, attends professional luncheons, conventions and meetings—locally, around the nation and overseas—and chairs the UNLV International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) student chapter.

The allure of working in hospitality brings in a mix of all his interests—from working behind the scenes in an office setting and managing finances to interacting with people and creating innovative ways to enhance a customer’s experience. He’s energetic about what he does and will sign up for any project that comes to him.

“I want to learn what every industry does and every segment of how a hotel runs. There are so many parts of a hotel that have to come together for the guest’s experience,” Kao says. “Everything is done very glamorously here. It’s a very good concentration of everything that is good about the hospitality industry, which is packed in this tiny strip. You can’t find this anywhere else in the world.”

Kao began working at Tahiti Vacation Club, a time-share company, as a front-desk agent two years ago and is now a shift manager. He plans to graduate in 2010, and he’s aiming for general manager before graduation. He’s aware graduates traditionally do not reach that level of management before they move their tassels to the left, but that doesn’t stop Kao from looking ahead. An MBA and owning his own hotel are also on his list of things to do.

“My main goal is to end up in the lodging industry. A large property does have several departments under it,” Kao says. “A good general manager or above should worry about and understand all these departments.”

Being in IAEE and attending networking and educational events helps hotel college students like Kao gain practical experience needed before entering the workforce, says Curtis Love, associate professor in the tourism and convention management department and advisor for IAEE.

“He’s already creating a professional network as a student. He’s building a nice resume to make him more marketable in this economy,” says Love. Kao encourages fellow students to be involved, actively recruits new members and keeps the group up to date on the latest events and IAEE news. “He’s a very motivated, driven and hard worker.”

Attending seminars and conventions can become costly, especially on a student’s budget. However, the hotel college uses private donations to pay for all or portions of student trips. Kao received a $500 scholarship from GES Exhibition Services and the $2,500 Helen Brett scholarship.

Thanks to a $7,500 scholarship, Kao was part of a four-student group that traveled with a UNLV professor to Austria for the International Tourism Students Conference held in April. There they presented research on the history and future of meeting and event management in the U.S. Exchanging ideas and meeting students from abroad gave the group global perspectives on how hospitality works around the world, Kao says. Through the Internet, Kao has been able to stay connected with the students he met.

Kao and other students just like him have attended meetings and conferences in San Diego, Las Vegas, Seattle and, in the next few months, will be heading to Miami for the IAEE national convention and to New Orleans to attend the Professional Convention Management Association.

“Scholarship money makes this possible,” Kao says. “Our goal is to get every student who’s actively involved in our organization a job before they graduate.”

Every chance Kao gets is an opportunity to talk about UNLV and the hotel college. He says he’s going to be an alumnus one day and wants to raise awareness about the quality and capabilities of students at the hotel college.

At a recent luncheon with the Las Vegas Hotel Association, Kao marveled at how many UNLV graduates represented several companies.

“It’s exciting to see that this is what I’m going to be doing a couple of years from now.”
It makes sense that when you enjoy what you do for a living, you work harder and feel better about your work. Employees who are truly engaged in their work can help companies to be more productive and improve their operations.

Cheri Young, an associate professor in the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, is conducting research to find out what factors help employees feel engaged in their jobs. Her research, funded by part of the $30 million gift from the Harrah’s Foundation, will study companies where employees are engaged in their work and are really passionate about their jobs.

Young teaches an organizational behavior course that focuses on the positive psychology perspective and helps students understand how to create an environment where employees will thrive. Several students from this course will be involved in various stages of this research project.

Young notes that there is a correlation between being engaged in work and personal growth in the employee. She and her students will try to find out how these two factors are related and will also look at what other elements contribute to employee engagement.

“We will look at how work helps people grow not only professionally, but personally,” says Young.

This fall, data will be collected through focus groups and surveys of Harrah’s employees in the U.S. Then, employees who are identified as engaged employees will be compared with a control group to help the researchers determine what factors contribute to employee engagement.

The partnership between Harrah’s and UNLV for this research is a unique one. “It’s difficult to find a company that is willing to provide the money, but especially to provide access to employees,” says Young.

The results will be beneficial for many companies. Employees who are truly engaged in their work can increase productivity, improve both employee and customer retention, and have other positive impacts on the organization.

Eileen McGarry, executive director of career services at UNLV, notes that this research is in line with what she observes from students and employers. She says that national surveys of graduating college students show that they are interested in job security, advancement, and often a location close to their families.

“We see many of these same attributes in the students we work with here,” says McGarry. “They want to stay with their employers, so students are looking for jobs that are more fulfilling. They want places where they can grow and thrive.”

UNLV Associate Professor Cheri Young  Photo by Marsh Starks

Researcher Connects Job Satisfaction and Productivity

Michelle Mouton
The World in His

UNLV alumnus George Maloof takes success in stride

Robyn Campbell-Ouchida ‘00 MA

Photo by Geri Kodey ‘85
Once you’ve been called “the nicest and sweetest person” by Steve Wynn, what comes next? Well, for George Maloof ’88, owner of the Palms, staying true to his beliefs while providing the best possible service to his guests are his goal. “I don’t know if I’m really the nicest and sweetest person,” says Maloof. “But I have so much respect for Steve that any comment he makes about me is special.”

Growing up in Albuquerque, Maloof discovered his love of hospitality while working in his late father’s Classic Hotel and for the family’s New Mexico beer distributorship. Although he started college in San Antonio, he transferred to UNLV during his sophomore year in 1985. “We always used to visit Las Vegas and, because I was interested in hospitality, I thought I would give UNLV a shot,”
says Maloof. “I had taken a liking to the hotel business, and I thought, where better to go than Vegas?”

“I really liked living in Las Vegas. I knew every buffet in town, I liked spending time in the casinos, and I learned firsthand what a great community this is,” says Maloof. “One of the first people I met when I came to town was Dean [Jerry] Vallen, and he was very accommodating. And, of course, I loved playing football for UNLV.”

Maloof recalls that his first year in the Harrah Hotel College was his most memorable. “I was focused, and I really fell in love with my classes. Hospitality was a great major in a great city.”

In 1994, the Maloof family bought the Fiesta Casino for $8 million, selling it in 2000 for more than $185 million. The money was reinvested into the development of the Palms hotel and casino. Maloof, one of the youngest and hippest hoteliers around, has become quite recognizable as the owner of the Palms. Did he set out to become the “face” of his popular property? “I probably knew that I would be,” he says. “It’s not my favorite thing to be so out there, but I want people to understand that I care about my guests and am available.”

The Palms has become the hangout of choice for many celebrities, and although Maloof has developed friendships with some of today’s hottest stars, he has a decidedly down-to-earth perspective about it all. “It’s fun, but I don’t take it too seriously. They’re friends and it’s great to meet a lot of people that I wouldn’t have otherwise.”

When asked who is the most interesting of the celebrities he’s met, he ponders the question a moment before answering, “Paris Hilton. People are absolutely fascinated by her, and she’s really quite a respectable young lady.” He also enjoys his friendships with Mario Lopez (“he’s continually reinventing himself and has worked hard during his career”), George Clooney (“I have lots of respect for him”), and of course, Hugh Hefner (not a coincidence since Maloof helped open the world’s only Playboy Club inside the Palms in October 2006).

He also mentioned a good buddy, chef Kerry Simon. “I’ve known Kerry for about ten years, since he was at Prime [steakhouse]. We’ve always wanted to do something together. We had a lot of fun figuring out his restaurant Simon at Palms Place, and the fact that it overlooks the pool is great.”

But when it comes to finding new industry talent to bring into his Palms empire, Maloof doesn’t just draw on star power. He knows that providing a supportive workplace environment that encourages employee growth is the key to building a devoted workforce. “We search for the right people, and we’ve actually had very little turnover from the start,” he says. “We offer a thorough benefits package, and we track our employees very strongly.”

What’s his advice for future hoteliers and hospitality experts? “Stay focused and work hard. Have a feel for your guests and how to best accommodate people and service. If you don’t focus on service, you’re wasting your time,” says Maloof. “The most important part of hospitality is being hospitable—if you’re not, then you better move along to something else fast.” He adds, “You also need to have a little humbleness. You’re there to serve.”

In addition to being a great advocate for hospitable service, Maloof is deeply committed to giving back to the community. Through his organization, the Maloof Family Foundation, he has supported a wide range of causes, including education, healthcare, and community development.”

The Maloof Brothers: Phil, George, Gavin and Joe
Photo courtesy of the Maloof family

George Maloof has established himself as one of the hippest and most recognizable hoteliers in the industry. Photo by Geri Kodey ‘85
Many achievements. Education was the foundation for his help others. It's terrific that his UNLV gives of his time and resources to Wherever and whenever possible he as a citizen of the Las Vegas community. Entrepreneur he is even more successful "As successful as George is as an Stuart Mann, dean of the Hotel College. George Maloof as our graduate," says outstanding job, and he recognizes the globality of the hospitality industry today, with the Singapore campus and soon-to-be campus in the United Arab Emirates. I'm proud to be associated with the college." And, obviously, the admiration is mutual.

"We are so proud to showcase George Maloof as our graduate," says Stuart Mann, dean of the Hotel College. "As successful as George is as an entrepreneur he is even more successful as a citizen of the Las Vegas community. Wherever and whenever possible he gives of his time and resources to help others. It's terrific that his UNLV education was the foundation for his many achievements." 

Matching Gift Boosts Hotel College Phonathon Support

Michelle Mouton

It's not every day that donors have an opportunity to double the money being contributed to the university. But for alumni and friends of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, that opportunity came last spring when alumnus George Maloof '88, CEO and president of the Palms Casino Resort, offered to match every gift given to the hotel college through the Rebel Ring Phonathon.

The Rebel Ring Phonathon program provides opportunities for alumni and friends to make unrestricted donations to the university or to specify a college or program to receive the funds. UNLV student callers reach out to alumni and friends of the university, share stories, and gather support for the university. Last spring, these callers were especially excited to share that Maloof would be matching gifts made to the college during that semester.

"I feel strongly about supporting the College of Hotel Administration, and I was honored to match every gift given to the college through the Phonathon," says Maloof. "I received an excellent education at UNLV through its outstanding hospitality program and am fortunate to now be able to give back to this program to help provide an exceptional educational experience for the next generation of hotel college students."

Maloof's matching gift enabled Phonathon donors to the hotel college to double the impact of their gifts and provide exceptional opportunities for students. Funds from these gifts are part of the Dean's Associates fund, which allows Dean Stuart Mann discretionary money to provide opportunities for students to travel to conferences and trade shows to enhance their educational experiences and provide opportunities for the students to see the industry firsthand. When the callers notified alumni that Maloof would match their gifts, many were excited about his generosity and the opportunity for their gift to make an extra impact.

"He's been an incredible supporter of UNLV," says Chuck Lehman, a 1971 graduate of the hotel college, of Maloof. "It was a good opportunity to double my contribution."

Giving during this period increased an average of 10 percent per gift. Christina Loffredo, director of annual giving, says that funds raised through the Phonathon are an important part of UNLV's efforts.

"Unrestricted gifts are some of the most important we receive because they allow the university to help in the areas of greatest need. It's wonderful that George Maloof offered this matching gift because it has encouraged others to give to the university," says Loffredo.

Lehman agrees that alumni support of the university is important for these funds because they have the opportunity to give back to the program.

"I had a great college experience. I was finally studying something that meant something to me and that I enjoyed," says Lehman. He believes that the graduates coming out of the campus now can be proud that it's one of the best schools in the country for hotel administration.

"Annual alumni support goes a long way toward providing the first-rate education and unique opportunities that separate UNLV's hospitality programs from all others," says Maloof. "I am proud to hold a UNLV degree and believe it is important to give back to the college that has given me so much."
Epicurean Charitable Foundation Sets Standard For Giving Back

Robyn Campbell-Ouchida '00 MA

Photos by Geri Kodey '85
Since its inception in 2001, the Epicurean Charitable Foundation has become a valued player in the world of hospitality. Established by Las Vegas businessman Rino Armeni, the foundation is comprised of more than 40 top food and beverage executives who are dedicated to making a difference in the hospitality industry and the community through support of the local education system and hospitality- and culinary-related organizations, charities and associations. Many of the organization’s members are graduates of UNLV’s Harrah Hotel College.

“The organization was originally called the Epicurean Club,” explains Epicurean Charitable Foundation President Shawn Ritchie ’90. “It started as a group of senior-level leaders in the industry, and it turned out that more of them were on the food and beverage side of operations.”

The foundation’s primary charitable endeavor is educational support for students seeking a career in the hospitality and culinary industries. This support comes in two forms — scholarships and professional mentorship and guidance. Working with the Clark County Public Education Foundation, exceptional students are sought who can someday serve as the next generation of hospitality executives in Las Vegas.

Through the annual scholarship program, the foundation gives financially underprivileged students the opportunity to attend a four-year college with premier hospitality and culinary programs anywhere in the United States.

“The organization’s original sole purpose was to provide funding for worthy students looking to go into the hospitality field,” says Ritchie. “It turns out that about 90 percent of the students we honor with scholarships choose to attend the Harrah Hotel College. As a graduate myself, I think it’s great that we are able to educate them in their hometown.”

Currently, the Epicurean Charitable Foundation provides scholarships to eight students a year but has a goal of reaching 12 students each year. “We have about 20 students total in the program right now,” says Ritchie. “Each recipient is assigned a mentor within the foundation. How many students have the chance to affiliate themselves with someone who holds a degree, is in senior management, and mentors them on a monthly basis throughout their college career?”

One of those recipients is Gina Galvan, who is currently a junior majoring in meetings and events management.

“The Epicurean Charitable Foundation Scholarship provides more than the financial means for college,” says Galvan. “The group also provides a mentor who is part of the hospitality industry and, most importantly, provides constant guidance. It is challenging at times but also rewarding, which is why I have learned and grown more than the average college student.”

The foundation also sponsors Clark County high school and college students for internships in hotels and restaurants throughout the city. Galvan is currently working at the Stirling Club through an internship program with the foundation. “I began looking for a summer job or internship to increase my work experience hours and unfortunately had difficulty finding an opportunity, since I am not yet 21 years old,” explains Galvan. “I then spoke with both my mentor and the foundation’s director of development. They called and emailed their contacts, and I received several employment opportunities. I took great interest in the one with the Stirling Club and am gaining exposure in my field.”

Galvan goes on to say, “The foundation has monthly meetings and constant communication to make sure that I am keeping up. My mentor, Christoph Jorcin, who is the vice president of food and beverage at the Flamingo, has been a terrific resource. He has helped members of my team and me with class projects, papers, and comprehension of material covered in my food and beverage classes.

“There are also several events that are great for networking, including back-of-the-house tours, luncheons with industry members, anniversary dinners, community outreach programs, and the annual scholarship fundraiser. I enjoy the fundraisers because, as a meeting and events management major, I have the opportunity to learn about the process and planning and also get to volunteer time to help with the function’s coordination.”

In addition to its educational support, the foundation plays an active role in building a stronger local community. It has made financial contributions to numerous local charities such as the Nevada Cancer Institute, Keep Memory Alive, Opportunity Village, UNLV Foundation, the Governor’s Black-Tie Invitational at Southern Highlands, and Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow.

As Ritchie says, “It’s enlightening to see the people running these major food and beverage departments are getting more involved in the community. I feel honored to be the president of this organization and am proud to represent the people in my field while helping prepare those to work in this field in the future.”

For more information about the Epicurean Charitable Foundation, visit www.ecflv.org.
Although optimism is often the first casualty of tough times, UNLV Professor Cynny Carruthers says that building on our individual strengths and capabilities will not only prepare us to thrive and experience happiness during good times but can also steel us against life’s occasional setbacks as well.

Carruthers, a professor of recreation and sport management at UNLV, is a disciple of the “positive psychology” movement—a relatively new academic discipline that seeks to understand individuals who are resilient and experience high levels of happiness. One of its main tenets—that living mindfully and fully in the present will result in positive well-being—is particularly salient during times like these.

“There is a distinct value in bringing pleasurable, meaningful things into your life” she says. “Having activities that give you a sense of self, a sense of forward movement, a sense of using the best of yourself, and that connect you to something greater than yourself can make you more resilient.”

Many leisure service providers are becoming more aware of the research supporting leisure’s benefits and are designing programs that intentionally use these services to promote positive physical, emotional and social health. It’s not uncommon to find community resources like park and recreation departments offering classes, workshops, and outings for the “whole being.”

“One of the things that we know clearly about depression is that when it occurs, people often stop doing things that
bring them pleasure and satisfaction,” Carruthers explains. “The literature suggests that just the opposite needs to happen—that there needs to be an intentional cultivation of things that elevate positive emotion at a time when it’s very difficult to do so. You may have heard it said that it’s sometimes helpful to volunteer when you’re feeling down because you’ll see that someone else may be in a worse situation than you and that you have something to offer.”

It’s a point not lost on employers, who increasingly recognize the benefits that employees receive—leading to better productivity—by simply providing them with volunteer opportunities. MGM MIRAGE and Station Casinos have been leaders in the hospitality arena in this regard.

According to MGM MIRAGE Director of Community Affairs Jocelyn Bluitt-Fisher, “Employees want to feel part of something bigger than themselves. We try to help them
build a culture and relationships with their co-workers outside of the ‘9 to 5.’ We implemented our Voice volunteer program for that very reason. In this day and age, the majority of people spend most of their waking hours at work and need social interaction.”

Employees within the company are offered a multitude of organized volunteer activities through Voice, which includes working with Clark County School District “empowerment schools” and other local non-profit organizations. “There are company-wide initiatives, and we try to find opportunities to meet these goals,” she says. “We publicize the opportunities through email campaigns, posters, newsletters, and most importantly, word of mouth.”

The employee volunteer program primarily serves as a tool for employees to link with community organizations and to identify volunteer opportunities available within the community. Through the program, employees find a place in the community where their talents, enthusiasm, and passion for causes are best suited. This helps create ongoing relationships between employees and non-profit organizations.

Many employees want to volunteer for their organization of choice, and MGM MIRAGE offers incentives to help. “Our Dollars for Doers program tracks the time employees spend volunteering with various organizations, and we honor those organizations with monetary grants,” says Bluitt-Fisher. “For example, if an employee volunteers 25 hours with an organization, we will give that organization a $250 grant. It’s a win-win situation for everyone involved.”

Likewise, through the Voice program, annual events highlight the company’s most active volunteers. “We have an Employee Volunteer of the Year program where we recognize two recipients for their contributions to the community as well as two finalists,” says Bluitt-Fisher. “Honorees are able to make grants in their non-profit’s name. We also recognize a Voice Volunteer Shining Star, who is honored by having a star named for that individual with the International Star Registry.”

Station Casinos also believes that commitment to the communities where it operates is vitally important. According to Vice President of Human Resources for Station Casinos Valerie Murzl, “Giving back to the community has been engrained in our company culture for more than 30 years. It started with our founder Frank Fertitta Jr., who believed it was essential to be an active part of our community and ensure that the future of Southern Nevada was well taken care of. Today the legacy continues through his sons Frank and Lorenzo Fertitta.”

UNLV Professor Cynny Carruthers studies the positive aspects of leisure activities, such as volunteering. Seen above at the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Nevada. Photo by Marsh Starks
“Employees want to feel part of something bigger than themselves. We try to help them build a culture and relationships with their co-workers outside of the ‘9 to 5.’

Murzl says, “We primarily focus on our team members’ volunteer opportunities around our signature community outreach program, Smart Start, a partnership with the Clark County School District. Each of our properties and our corporate office has adopted a high-need elementary school, and we work with the principal and staff to identify year-round needs, from back-to-school supply drives to volunteering in the classroom to very special events like hosting etiquette luncheons for the children.” She mentions that in addition, the school gets a $10,000 annual donation from Station Casinos to use toward its school improvement plan.

“This special partnership has been extremely rewarding for our team members, and each property has truly created special relationships with the teachers and students at its school,” Murzl says.

Another volunteer project for Station Casinos is the annual Magical Forest at Opportunity Village. “As part of our involvement, we work with Opportunity Village each year to volunteer for one night of the Magical Forest, and each year our team members enthusiastically want to get involved,” says Murzl. “Additionally, we host an annual event at the Magical Forest for our team members and their children. We buy out the Magical Forest for three evenings, and last year alone, more than 8,000 team members and their children attended the Magical Forest as our guest. It’s so rewarding to know that our donation for hosting these nights goes to such a worthwhile cause.”

Station Casinos chooses its key community initiatives based on employee feedback as well as looking at the needs of the neighborhoods surrounding its properties. “For example, we have been involved annually with a project called Rebuilding in April, where we assist with refurbishing rundown homes owned by seniors,” explains Murzl. “We also take our guests’ feedback into consideration as well. We primarily cater to the locals, so our guests live here as do our more than 14,000 team members. It’s our responsibility to take an active role in ensuring that our community is well cared for.” She also mentions the key role that Station Casinos played after the Hurricane Katrina tragedy. “Seeing everyone rally together to help, we created a couple initiatives from a donation drive where the Fertittas challenged our team members and guests to donate by offering to personally match their gifts. We were able to raise $500,000 in just a few days as a result of that effort.”

Thinking back to the concept of positive psychology, Murzl says, “It’s absolutely a ‘feel good’ outcome. We are all busy in our jobs, but when you take an hour or two out of your day to make a difference, it really puts priorities in perspective.”

So how can people at this time of challenge bring these positive feelings and better living practices into their lives? And secondly, how can they keep themselves out of thought processes that undermine their ability to take action to build a good and meaningful life? According to Carruthers, the intentional cultivation of positive experiences and feelings provides a reservoir of strength from which to draw in times of adversity. The development of optimism is also associated with the resilience needed to overcome the obstacles of life. Leisure provides a wonderful opportunity to experience positive emotion, develop one’s personal strengths, and connect to something greater than oneself.
Legalizing and regulating online gambling in the United States and Canada could help reduce some of its most negative effects on consumers, says a new study by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and the University of Western Ontario. The study, “Blackjack in the Kitchen: Understanding Online Versus Casino Gambling,” will be published in the February 2009 issue of the Journal of Consumer Research.

Advances in internet technology, gambling software, and secure online payment systems have transformed the gambling experience from social trips to the casino and late night card games in the basement into more commonplace occurrences—arranged in as much time as it takes to turn on your personal computer. But easy accessibility to online gambling poses numerous problems, particularly for individuals prone to addictive behaviors.

“The integration of online gambling in the home can more easily turn gambling behavior into a component of a consumer’s everyday life, like watching television,” says Kathryn LaTour, associate professor at UNLV’s William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. “When online gambling becomes a routine daily behavior, it is easier for consumers to engage in mindless consumption of that activity, ultimately resulting in addiction and resultant financial losses.”

For the study, LaTour and colleague June Cotte, marketing professor at University of Western Ontario, interviewed 20 regular casino gamblers and 10 regular online gamblers using pictures as stimuli to learn what gambling feels like and how it is perceived. Results show online gamblers gamble more frequently and aggressively.

That’s true, LaTour and Cotte explain, because casino gambling, which requires travel to an outside location, is more difficult to hide. In contrast, access to online gambling is as easy as the click of a computer mouse and is easily integrated into daily home routines, meaning more time can be spent gambling. In addition, online gambling lacks social interaction so participants are involved for the game, rather than other aspects, which may appeal to their competitive streak and increase the risk of addiction.

Some researchers argue that the addiction risk is higher, too, for underage populations – many of which, by and large, have almost unrestricted access to computers. Among study participants there was a widespread belief that underage players were gambling online, evidenced by the number of gamblers who were soliciting help for their homework via online gambling chat boxes. LaTour suggests that such abuses are rampant because of the problematic issue of regulation, once the activity moves from the casino to the home.

“There is little or no ability to police these illegal sites, and no strict, enforceable regulations,” LaTour says. “Regardless of whether one believes in intervention to protect consumers from themselves, or whether one takes a more libertarian view, there is no escaping the conclusion that with online gambling there are little or no protections for children.”

One potential solution for many of these problems, the study asserts, is to allow legitimate corporate sponsors of gambling, like the corporations who run major casinos in the U.S. and the government sponsors in Canada, to enter a newly regulated market for online gambling.

“Just as legalized commercial gambling in casinos allowed governments to regulate it, so too could the legalization of online gambling allow for better regulation, including efforts designed to reduce the number of problem gamblers,” says LaTour.

Cotte and LaTour suggest that the following strategies could also be tied into online regulations, thereby helping reduce the incidences of problem gambling:

- Better use of age checks when signing up for an online account
- Cross-checking new users with lists of pathological gamblers
- Setting financial limits on gambling and having the site communicate to gamblers that they are spending long hours and a lot of money
- Making information available about problem gambling treatments via pop-ups on instant messages
- Having an online gambling counselor available online
- Establishing mandatory “cooling-off periods,” which force online gamblers to stop gambling for a pre-set amount of time before they are allowed to wager money from their accounts
- Making tabulations of wins and losses more central and larger on the screen

LaTour and Cotte also recommend online gambling casinos minimize use of flashing bold graphics to signal wins to lessen the emotional experience for gamblers.

Online gambling is currently illegal in the United States and is only allowed in Canada when initiated by its provincial lottery corporations. However, North American consumers can easily engage in online gambling via internet companies located offshore. As a result, recent estimates of online gambling revenues range between ten and twelve billion dollars annually.

The study was funded by a grant from the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration at UNLV.
Of all the adjectives used to describe celebrity chef and UNLV alumnus Guy Fieri, “modest” is usually not one of them. That’s not to say that he’s arrogant (quite the contrary, actually), but he does have a certain élan that comes across both on his Food Network television shows and in his eclectic cooking style.

In reality, he’s a humble, self-effacing guy, someone who is more apt to attribute his success to good luck than to great skill—though he seems to possess both in abundance.

“It’s funny to think that my career has experienced this meteoric rise in the past couple years,” Fieri told a group of hotel college students. “I was just this guy who liked to cook. I worked in the kitchen seven days a week. It’s who I am. Now people are paying me to talk to high school kids. It’s weird.”

Fieri was on campus this past October to headline UNLV’s Chef Artist Dinner Series, a fundraising event that benefits the food and beverage department, and to talk with UNLV students about what it takes to run a successful restaurant business.

“You’ve got to really want it,” he told the class. “But the really exciting thing is that it’s yours to lose. It may sound cliché, but whatever you want to be today, you can be.”

Let’s face it, Guy’s personality may have helped him open a few doors, but it certainly can’t account for all his success. After all, you can’t be the star of three separate shows on the Food Network, the co-owner of five popular restaurants, a soon-to-be author and the father of two young boys without putting in the requisite hard work and dedication. And if that lineup’s not daunting enough, he’s also recently established his own foundation: The Guy Fieri Foundation for Mentoring and Imagination.

“I really don’t believe that we have enough imagination in this world,” Fieri says. “It seems like we don’t even have to think at all anymore because we can just do it on a computer or a video game.”

The concept is patently Guy Fieri: bold, ambitious, a little quirky, and right on the money. It’s a combination that seems to work for him, both in the kitchen and out. Fieri’s first restaurant, Johnny Garlic’s, isn’t your typical Italian restaurant (unless you consider jalapenos in your pasta, typical) and his second restaurant concept, Tex Wasabi’s, is a blend of barbeque and sushi (enough said).
Brick in the Wall Hens with Salsa Verde

3 Cornish game hens, washed and dried
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon dried sweet basil
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Salsa Verde:
1/2 cup basil, fresh
1/2 cup parsley
1/2 teaspoon red chili flake
1 tablespoon garlic, chopped
3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon capers
1 teaspoon anchovy paste
2 tablespoons roasted red bell pepper, chopped
1 tablespoon onion, chopped
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Salt to taste

In a food processor, add all ingredients, and slowly add olive oil. Puree until smooth.

Special equipment: 4 bricks covered in aluminum foil, large cast iron skillet

Remove the backbone of the hens. Split the breast plate and press down on the chicken in all joints to flatten it.

In a small bowl, mix together the rosemary, white pepper, paprika, salt, garlic, oregano, and basil. Rub the mixture all over the hens—under the skin, on top of the skin, and inside cavity.

Heat a large sauté pan over medium high heat with oil, and place hens cavity side down. Place another large sauté pan on top of the hens, and place 4 bricks inside of the top pan.

Cook on medium high heat, for 7 to 10 minutes on both sides, or until the internal temperature of the meat reaches 165 degrees F.

Yield: 4 servings
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
 Ease of preparation: Easy

I’ve got a lot of crazy concepts up my sleeve,” he says. Fieri’s flair for fusing seemingly disparate flavors may be part personality, part good business sense. He believes limiting yourself to one specific component of the culinary profession is an outdated approach.

“It’s not enough anymore to be a great Italian chef, or sushi chef, or to make the greatest biscuits in the world, or whatever,” Fieri said. “If you want to be in this business—if you want to be great in this business—you have to fortify yourself in all aspects of the industry.”

Underneath it all, though, Fieri is still just a chef at heart. Pleasing others through his art is the thing that has always inspired him, from his earliest days selling pretzels from a three-wheeled bicycle (at the age of ten) to his growing restaurant empire today.

“All the TV stuff is great and the money certainly isn’t bad, but my truest love is food and making people happy,” Fieri said. “It’s what I enjoy most.”

And he has certainly succeeded. Just ask any of the people who attended the sold out dinner at the Stan Fulton Building, which included a number of his signature dishes. He worked with UNLV executive chef John Gremo and a group of UNLV student chefs to help prepare for the dinner.

“The experience our students get from this event is invaluable,” says Pat Moreo, chair of UNLV’s food and beverage department. “It’s a way for them to work with successful restaurateurs and for the public to have a dining experience they typically would not get in a restaurant.”

The money raised from the event benefits the students and faculty in UNLV’s food and beverage department through scholarships, professional development opportunities, and new equipment for the kitchens.

“I’m proud to be a graduate of this school,” Fieri said. “I think it is now my responsibility to give back.”

You can catch Guy Fieri several times a week on the Food Network on Guy’s Big Bite; Guy Off the Hook; or Diners, Drive-ins and Dives.

Wolfgang Puck and Eric Klein (Spago Las Vegas) will headline the next Chef Artist Dinner in March. Details to be posted soon at hotel.unlv.edu.
Planning for a Crisis

What happens to a hotel’s employees when disaster strikes?

The field of human resources has gained more importance over the past decade as more companies have realized its true importance—placing the right people in the right jobs, based on their education, experience, and values. The HR department’s role is not simply filling jobs but is the organizational function that deals with the people and issues related to personnel, such as compensation, hiring, performance management, and training. While it’s ideal to have the right people in the right positions, what happens when a natural disaster or crisis strikes? It’s not something most people stop and ponder, but after the effects of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans in August 2005, it’s an ever-growing area of concern, especially in the hotel industry.

After Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, businesses were at a loss as to where their employees were or if they were even still alive. Nobody really knew where to begin the search. Hotels, with their large numbers of personnel, rushed to set up toll-free hotlines where employees could “check in” and let their employers know they were all right.

Mehmet Erdem, an assistant professor in the Harrah Hotel College who used to live in New Orleans, spent this past summer trying to learn more. “While crisis management research is fairly prominent for the tourism industry in general, it is not so prominent when relating crisis management to hotels specifically,” says Erdem. “Two of the more recent studies focused on hotel reaction and recovery to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. after 9/11.”

Erdem’s overall research focus is on human performance technology, including human resources and operations management issues such as crisis management. “Moreover, I decided to pursue this study because I used to live in New Orleans and personally endured Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath.”

To learn more, he set out to study the effects Hurricane Katrina had specifically on hotels in New Orleans. “I worked for the hotel program at the University of New Orleans and have several friends in the industry who were impacted by the hurricane’s effects. I myself was ‘homeless’ for about four months—I stayed with friends in other states while teaching all my courses for Fall 2005 online,” he explains. “Many of my friends, colleagues and students suffered a great deal. I witnessed the struggle my friends in the local hotel industry went through (and in some cases, are still going through)... I know several people who had to end their careers in the hospitality industry due to the immense impact of the hurricane.”

With help from a personal contact in the New Orleans Hotel Human Resource Directors Association, Erdem...
Gaming business volume on the Las Vegas Strip recovered significantly quicker following the attacks of Sept. 11 than most industry management and analysts had predicted, according to a UNLV study published recently in the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly.

Using monthly reports released by the Nevada Gaming Control Board between January 1990 and November 2004, researchers analyzed slot machine coin-in—or the total dollar amount wagered in slot machine during play—as an indicator of gaming volume recovery. Slot coin-in is considered a strong indicator of gaming volume because it does not factor in luck or short-term volatility and is increasingly important in the overall gaming mix.

The analysis indicated that the most adverse effects on gaming after Sept. 11 lasted only five months, from September 2001 through January 2002. That rapid market recovery was at odds with dire predictions made by industry analysts and executives, the latter of which contributed to subsequent layoffs and capital project delays. Researchers say those management decisions damaged employee morale and significantly hindered property operators’ abilities to meet demand following recovery of the tourism market.

“Our study points to the need for managers to set aside the understandable fears that inform decision making during difficult times,” says Bo Bernhard, director of gaming research at UNLV’s William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. “Our results also support previous terrorism-related tourism research that shows business levels tend to return to normal much more quickly than the masses and managers fear.”

Researchers also argue that although the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 caused an abrupt and severe decline in travel and tourism, the Nevada gaming industry was already ensnared in a slowdown prior to that day. Researchers say that gaming revenue in Las Vegas was negatively affected by a lack of new properties in 2000 and 2001, the number of commercial casinos operating in other states, and competition from nearby Native American casinos in California, Las Vegas’ major feeder market. The latter slowed the recovery after Sept. 11 because Indian gaming allowed would-be gamblers to avoid air travel to Las Vegas, which was also cited at the time as a high profile terrorist target.

Although slot coin-in is the purest indicator of gaming volume, researchers acknowledge that future research on gaming volume should take into account the recovery of table games, such as blackjack, craps, and baccarat, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of recovery. Also, because the study focused strictly on Las Vegas Strip properties, the study does not provide significant insight to the recovery of various locals’ markets.

In addition to Bernhard, researchers included David Eisendrath, an executive at Harrah’s Entertainment; Anthony Lucas, associate professor of hotel management at UNLV, and Dennis Murphy, professor of statistics at UNLV. The study, “Fear and Managing in Las Vegas: An Analysis of the effects of September 11, 2001, on Las Vegas Strip Gaming Volume,” appears in volume 49, Issue 2, of the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly.
Incoming Chair has Outgoing Perspective

Put...down...that...travel...guide...and go. Anywhere. Take a glance at the guide a few times, step out of the all-inclusive resort you signed up for, rely on your instinct when you’re traveling either locally or abroad and don’t be afraid to talk to the locals, says Tony Henthorne, a professor and new chair of the Tourism and Convention Administration Department at the hotel college.

“Experiences will find you. Americans are the most timid travelers in the world. We view ourselves as being individualists. We go out and want to do great new things but in the small confines with what we’re familiar with,” says Henthorne. “It’s not a bad thing. But it’s important for the traveler to be open to the experiences.”

Having a global perspective is Henthorne’s advice for not just the traveler, but for hotel college students, particularly in the tourism and convention fields. It’s one of the top three tools Henthorne cites students must have before they transition into the workforce. It is also a “lifetime project” and a goal for Henthorne to accomplish as new chair.

“Students need to know life exists outside of Las Vegas, and they have to know life exists outside of the United States,” Henthorne says. “We’re doing so much business outside in a global environment that you can’t survive without that. It would be nice to see globalization incorporated throughout the fabric of every class.”

Effective written and oral communication skills and the basics of financial analysis are also important tools for students, Henthorne emphasizes.

Thanks to the traveler’s digital companion—the World Wide Web—myriad Internet sites are devoted to airfare prices, and hotel, spa, and restaurant reviews, which have helped today’s tourists become more knowledgeable and demanding. They know exactly what they want or where they can go to get it, Henthorne says.

The fluidity of the tourism industry revolves around people changing their habits and desires in both good and bad economic cycles. It’s a challenge for service providers to keep up with, but Henthorne says the excitement of this field “keeps you on your toes and makes you more innovative.” He believes that students who have these top three tools will be able to adapt to changes and promote their product successfully.

To encourage a global outlook education, Henthorne wants to expand the hotel college’s study abroad program to include more countries, and he wants to hold more seminars with business professionals who work in the tourism industry nationally and abroad. The hotel college’s expansion into the United Arab Emirates and Singapore and the growth of international hotel college student enrollment validate the need for a multicultural curriculum, Henthorne says.

Reaching out to Community

While he calls himself the “new kid on the block,” Henthorne isn’t new to the study of tourism. He has researched tourism the last 15 years and previously taught marketing at the University of Southern Mississippi, where he was also the chair of the department of tourism management for the last two years. He also directed the Center for Tourism and Economic Development Research for two years prior to becoming chair.

Living in a metropolitan city wasn’t the hook that reeled in Henthorne; it was the hotel college’s national reputation and growing international reputation that prompted the Southern native to head West for the first time. He is excited to see UNLV committed to a path of becoming a full-fledged research institution, and says his role is to not only work with faculty and the college, but to also become an “outside chairman” for the program.

“I’m knocking on everybody’s door,” Henthorne says with a friendly southern drawl. “I want them to know who I am and who we are. I want them to know what we have to offer—why it is important for each of us to partner with one another.

“I think it’s vitally important so you can build rapport with the community because you need its support and it needs our support. We give them the life blood of employment that keeps people going.”

His goals? To increase the number of academic articles written by hotel college faculty, raise awareness about the faculty’s expertise, fundraise for the college to boost its visibility, work with local hotel and convention properties, and, most importantly, focus on placing students in the best jobs locally, nationally, and abroad.

“Our job here is to give a much greater perspective on everything. You may see things from a different standpoint than before,” Henthorne says. “If we provide them with a solid foundation of the industry, our students will be head and shoulders above the vast majority of new hires going into these businesses. They will have the fundamentals of it down.”

Henthorne is familiar with how Nevada works, especially since tough economic times have impacted Las Vegas. He’s lived through this before in Mississippi, which has a growing gaming industry that has become an integral part of maintaining the state’s economy.
Henthorne calls it a “microcosm of Las Vegas” in that the state has had its share of economic cycles, especially since Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast’s casino industry. Without the help of the casinos rebuilding as quickly as they did, Henthorne says Mississippi could have been worse.

And he thinks Las Vegas will bounce back because it knows how to reinvent itself and how to adapt to what people want—whether it’s a high-end experience during peak economic times or pocket-book friendly fun during the low periods. In fact, Las Vegas is still the number one domestic destination according to a survey conducted by Travel Leaders, which polled 415 agents, managers, and owners within its organization.

The spas, nightlife, Broadway plays, shows, and top-notch restaurants are all working for Las Vegas. If the city were to change its marketing strategy and go back to a “family-friendly” atmosphere, Henthorne isn’t so sure it would work. Staying along its “anything goes” mantra is a right course for the city, but there is a line of going too far off the edge, Henthorne says. Diversifying its economy is also a positive step for Las Vegas, he says.

A Drive to Succeed

Henthorne also does consulting work for hotels in the Caribbean and often travels to Europe or Asia for work. One of his favorite places to visit and to research is Cuba. For many Americans, it’s a destination unknown and unexplored, Henthorne says. However, there is a lot to learn from Cuba including “perseverance and the drive to succeed, not maintain.”

Although Cuba has been cut off from American ties and funding, the country has marketed itself to become one of the top destinations in the Caribbean.

“It’s fun to watch how the tourism industry has truly been the salvation of that country, and how the tourism industry has pushed it on the road to capitalism,” Henthorne says. “It’s like the Caribbean on steroids.”

Cuban architecture and automobiles may be reminiscent of the 1950s, but the country, rich with everything nature has to offer—from rainforests, beaches and deserts to activities like scuba diving and white water rafting and an upbeat nightlife—is moving from a socialist to a capitalist society.

Henthorne has been to traveling to Cuba since 1993, and the last time he was there was five years ago. He recalls the country with great fondness—a place of adventure but also a place of camaraderie. It’s where he was giving a speech to 150 Cuban hotel managers when he learned of the events of Sept. 11 and when politics were put aside for a greater purpose. The group took a break from the seminar and showed sympathy for Henthorne. The day after, all 150 managers signed and presented a written proclamation of support for Henthorne and the United States.

“It was interesting because it drove home the point to me that people really are the same. There’s a definite level of humanity that is everywhere. In a situation that is so catastrophic, people come together in support,” Henthorne says.

This experience is another reason Henthorne still hits home the importance of giving students international viewpoints.

“It helps you understand how other people are. But it helps you understand who you are. It helps you grow as an individual,” Henthorne says. “You don’t have to travel out of the country to do that. Not everyone can do that. But, if you ever stop learning or trying to learn—you quit growing.”

Tony Henthorne, new chair of the tourism and convention management department, believes having a global perspective is critical for students entering the industry. Photo by Marsh Starks
Inaugural Wine Affair Attracts Discriminating Palates

High-end wines, scrumptious food and an elegant atmosphere proved to be an enticing combination for the inaugural UNLV Wine Affair at Green Valley Ranch Resort and Spa. The event, created expressly for wine aficionados and food lovers, offered guests the opportunity to sample vintages from some of the world’s most famous wineries perfectly paired with cuisine from Green Valley Ranch restaurants including Hanks, Terra Verde and Sushi + Sake. With a smooth jazz trio providing the soundtrack, hand rolled cigars, cognac, port, desserts and coffee rounded out a relaxed evening poolside and under the stars.

Aside from the fine cuisine and superior wines rarely offered together at a single event, the Wine Affair provided another delight: food for thought. Esteemed chefs discussed food preparation and seasonings. Winery representatives narrated tastings with nuggets on winemaking techniques and vintages, and wine experts highlighted the advantages of breathable stemware and explained the art of wine decanting. For the true connoisseur, Green Valley Ranch even offered guided tours of its own vineyards.

The Wine Affair is the brainchild of UNLVino director and hotel college instructor Mohsen Azizsoltani, who envisioned a high-end event for the public to learn about fine wine, while students simultaneously practice event management and guest-relations skills. Proceeds from the Wine Affair will benefit the DeLuca Academic Excellence fund for students in the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. Event sponsors included DeLuca Liquor and Wine Ltd., Green Valley Ranch and UNLV.


Photo by Aaron Mayes ’06
Jerry Vallen Professorship Attracts the Best in the Industry

Born 18 months ago from a simple idea to expose students to the wisdom and knowledge of the best minds in the hospitality industry, the Vallen Professorship has already attracted nationally recognized leaders and strategists.

The professorship began with its namesake, Jerry Vallen, founding dean of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. Vallen offered students a first-person view of the college’s rich history and early days. The series then turned to its focus: practicing industry leaders. Jim Moore, president of Moore Ideas and recognized hospitality management guru, brought his insight on state-of-the-art leadership and strategic planning practices. Similarly, Peter Yesawich, chairman and chief executive officer of YPartnerships, a leading hospitality marketing and public relations firm, shared his expertise. Yesawich detailed the latest trends in hospitality marketing, including the increasing influence of millennials and the latest Internet marketing strategies.

Hotel college administrators hope to expand the Vallen Professorship through the continued generosity of donors. A goal of $250,000 has been set for the endowment. When fully funded, the professorship will offer increased opportunities for brief lectures and mini-courses lasting from a week to a month—all in an effort to create direct interaction between the biggest names in the hospitality industry and the UNLV students who may eventually take their place.

To support the Vallen Professorship Fund, call (702) 895-2934.

Founding hotel college dean Jerry Vallen (left) is greeted by current Dean Stuart Mann. Vallen gave the inaugural lecture in February for the professorship that bears his name.

Beth Barrie (center), associate professor of recreation and sport management, speaks to students in her outdoor recreation and education class. This semester, the class is introducing at-risk youth to outdoor recreation activities, such as rock climbing. Photo by Aaron Mayes ’06

Bridging the Gap
Hotel College and Public Lands Institute combine resources for common goal

The National Park Service relies on 70,000 interpreters to explain the parks’ features, geography, and history to visitors. About 4,000 are paid employees; the rest are volunteers in need of training. New UNLV professor Beth Barrie brought that training into the 21st century by designing an interactive, online suite of courses while at her previous position at Indiana University.

Now, her UNLV students will study those course materials to develop their own interpretive programs for the public lands surrounding Las Vegas. That’s what she calls the “terrific synergy” of her joint appointment to the Department of Recreation and Sport Management and the Public Lands Institute (PLI). Created in 2005, PLI works in collaboration with federal, state, and non-profit partners to create new knowledge, advance technology, improve education, and engage the
amazing to do here, including building

In this new role, Barrie is tasked with bridging the gap between the academic, theory-based approach of the recreation and sport management department with the more hands-on and practical mission of the PLI.

“Both units are interested in how to best work with and engage volunteers,” Barrie explains. “One of my goals is to help determine how we can build transformative experiences that make volunteers feel like they’ve not just completed some task, but rather contributed in a more meaningful way.”

It’s a natural extension of her work as an interpreter, Barrie believes, because instead of trying to get people to understand and appreciate a natural area or resource—which is what interpretation is all about—she gets to actually work with the volunteers and further develop their sense of stewardship.

“Through interpretation we help people to care about our public places so they will, ultimately, end up caring for them,” Barrie says. “Working with volunteers is really the ultimate job for an interpreter.”

But the choice to make the leap from interpretation to volunteer management—and from Indiana to UNLV—did not come easy for Barrie. After all, she was already employed at one of the best institutes of its kind in the country, where she was working a “dream job” that placed her at the top of her field.

But then Dan McLean, chair of UNLV’s recreation and sport management department, called and asked her to apply for the position. After their conversation, her sense of adventure and love of a challenge got the best of her.

“When I heard about all of the exciting things the department of recreation and sport management is aiming to do here, including building a curriculum based on transformative experiences, I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to help accomplish that.”

Among other things, she was drawn to the idea of combining her academic research with the more applied component that her role with PLI provides.

Take, for example, the outdoor recreation class that Barrie is leading this fall. Instead of using PowerPoint presentations to teach her students about the subject, Barrie has incorporated a service learning component into the curriculum that gives her students real-life experience in delivering recreational services. She accomplishes this through the PLI’s Discover Mojave Outdoor World—an innovative education program designed to introduce at-risk urban youth to outdoor and environmental education.

Over the semester, Barrie and her students are introducing fifth graders from Paradise Elementary School to a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities, such as canoeing, rock climbing, kayaking and fishing. The program was built on a growing body of research that indicates children are more likely to develop a positive environmental ethic the more they engage in outdoor activities in the natural world.

“Many of these kids probably wouldn’t have the opportunities to do these activities otherwise,” explains Barrie. “At the same time, it’s an opportunity to teach our students how to help others have transformative experiences through recreation. It’s a win-win situation.”

The PLI and hotel college feel the same way.

“Beth is a great addition to our faculty and to the PLI,” says McLean. “One of our long-term objectives is to become a leading center on volunteerism in America, and Beth will undoubtedly help us accomplish that goal.

To learn about volunteering in Southern Nevada, visit http://publiclands.unlv.edu/

Welcome

The Department of Recreation and Sport Management is also pleased to welcome Chrysostomos Giannoulakis to the faculty.

Giannoulakis comes to UNLV from the University of Northern Colorado, where he recently completed his Ph.D. in sport administration. His doctoral dissertation focused on the marketing strategies employed by surf, skateboard, and snowboard companies to expand their brands to mainstream audiences.

His research interests focus on sport volunteer management and the marketing aspect of the action sports industry. In 2004, he worked as a supervisor of the public information offices of the Athens Olympic Games, during which he became interested in the evolution of the Olympic sponsorship program and the different ways that corporate partners incorporate the Olympic values into their marketing strategies.

“I strongly believe that Las Vegas provides a plethora of opportunities for recreation and sport management students to acquire hands-on practical experience and establish a professional network,” Giannoulakis says. “My intention is to enhance cross-collaborative efforts of the recreation and sport management department and cultivate on professional relationships that would ultimately support research projects and students.”

In addition to his Ph.D., Giannoulakis earned an M.Ed. degree in sport management from Springfield College and a B.S. degree in physical education and sport science from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.
Career Calling

How to make your UNLV alumni membership work for you

If you keep up with the news at all, or have seen your latest 401K statement, you know that the economy is in a recession. The depressing stories keep on coming—high gas and grocery prices, rising unemployment rates, and the failure of some of the country’s biggest financial institutions. The sad truth is that with today’s economy, you’re either facing a job loss or know a friend who is. What comes next?

If you’re an alumnus of the Harrah Hotel College, you have some advantages over the many others who are also searching for jobs. In just its first year of existence, the Bob Boughner Career Services Center has helped hundreds of students and alumni forge new career paths or refine old ones.

The Center provides opportunities for hotel college students and alumni to gain access to a broad range of employers and job opportunities. Bobbie Barnes ’93, ’05 M.Ed., the center’s director, has a wealth of experience from her years working at The Mirage.

“I’m really passionate about my job,” says Barnes. “I’ve been out there and I know how hard it can be to find a position that is just the right fit. I hope I can help others through the work the career center is doing.”

While some similar centers might take a while to get “up and running,” that’s not the case with this career center. With a go-getter like Barnes at the helm, the center had a busy first year: there were 185 classroom visits by industry professionals as well as 54 classroom presentations on a variety of topics related to job searching. Over 500 students were assisted with resume reviews, scheduling of interviews, and career counseling sessions. Additionally, 262 students participated in three mock interview days with the Harrah’s Entertainment Employment Center.

“We really looked for opportunities that could best assist our students and alumni,” says Barnes. “It’s been a busy year but a great one!”

In addition, the center hosted five Signature Program weeks, which provides selected hospitality companies an arena to showcase its part- and full-time jobs, internships and management program opportunities. This year’s participating companies included MGM MIRAGE, Venetian, Marriott, Harrah’s, and Station Casinos.

In addition to the efforts coordinated by the center, Barnes also notes the extensive software and search engines that are available to students and alumni association members.

“CareerShift is an easy-to-use search engine that helps you manage your job hunt in one place,” says Barnes. “You can search for jobs or search for specific contacts within companies you’re interested in and create e-mail and postal mail campaigns with your saved contacts and documents. It’s very interactive—you can customize it with your zip code, and it will show information about your community and the job market. It’s really user friendly, and we’ve had rave reviews about it from our clients so far.”

Another option offered by the center is UNLV CareerLink. As a dues paying member of the UNLV Alumni Association, alums are able to obtain registration codes and access assistance to this search engine. The center also offers personalized career counseling, (including resume review and the scheduling of mock interviews) access to Discover computerized assessments (which profile candidates’ interests, abilities and values), and Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (which analyze how people are energized, how they take in information, how decisions are made, and how people approach life).

Non dues-paying members can utilize the university’s career services counseling but cannot use as many services as those that are members of the alumni association. “It’s a great benefit to join because of all the resources we can make available to you,” says Barnes. “It’s really worth the small financial commitment to become a member.”

Barnes also mentions that, “When you’re looking for a job, sometimes you just have to cast a wide net and look outside your city and what you have done in the past. It might be as simple as really taking a hard look at yourself to make sure you’re matching up to the jobs you’re applying for.”

If you are looking for a new job, you may want to possibly relocate or perhaps become an entrepreneur. When Christine Newcombe ’04, wanted a different challenge, she used her years of experience working in hospitality to
form a new company, Studio Ennovate. “It has always been an ambition of mine to start a company that merged the needs of the hospitality organization with the experiential branding that entertainment offers,” says Newcombe, a former performer. “Bobbie and the center are more like partners in my company. I’m utilizing the CareerShift software program and consulting with Bobbie on my employment needs so that I can offer opportunities to transitioning professional performers.”

Along that same line is the choice people have when they are laid off—it can be thought of as a downer or as a new opportunity to step back and look inward.

“Getting laid off can be the best thing,” says Barnes. “Sometimes you get so ensconced in one culture that it’s hard to learn another.” For example, Barnes made the change from the gaming industry to the university. “It is certainly different than working in a Strip hotel, but I’m so glad I made the move,” says Barnes.

Another good example of someone “taking a look outside the box” is Keri (Danielson) King ’96. King lost her position with MGM MIRAGE this past spring after working for the company for 15 years. “The company laid off more than 400 middle managers. It was shocking to lose my job after so many years,” says King. “I started there as a project staff member while I was still a college student and was hired permanently after graduation. Although I didn’t work in a department that was directly related to hospitality, it was a hospitality company, and the things I learned at the Harrah Hotel College were integral to my job.”

She continues, “Getting laid off did come as a surprise but it also gave me an opportunity to do something I’ve always wanted to—stay home with my girls. It gave me the push I needed to try something new, and I am now helping my husband (Ken King ’93) expand his business. We’ve relocated and are finding new opportunities.”

Barnes mentions that many people consider earning a second bachelor’s degree in another subject. “In hospitality, a bachelor’s degree is the going degree. Rather than going for a second bachelor’s, you might want to think about getting a master’s degree. It will take you further than a second bachelor’s.”

The Harrah Hotel College offers a number of advanced degrees, including master’s, a dual M.S./MBA, and Ph.D. programs. These programs allow students to develop an understanding essential to the resolution of complex issues facing the hospitality industry. Further, graduate students can pursue areas of concentration in food service administration, hotel administration, hospitality education, casino operations, conventions and meetings administration, club management, entertainment, or sport and leisure studies.
On these pages we recognize the loyal donors to the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration for the fiscal year 2007-2008. The Honor Roll recognizes alumni, friends, and companies who make it possible for students to receive a premier hospitality education at UNLV.

During the past fiscal year, the college received 636 cash and in-kind gifts from 430 donors totaling $8,036,225.49. With this outstanding support, the college can continue to provide much needed scholarships, funding for student professional development and faculty enrichment programs, to name just a few.

Gifts from alumni and friends play an integral role in helping the college maintain the highest standards of excellence so that we can respond to shifting academic priorities. Annual donors are the foundation of the college’s development program. It is with heartfelt thanks that we recognize all the donors whose names are listed throughout this issue of Premier.

Please know how much your contributions are valued. On behalf of the entire college, we recognize and are grateful for your past, current, and future generosity. It is with gratitude and pleasure that we acknowledge the following benefactors to the Harrah Hotel College.

THE DEAN’S ASSOCIATES DONOR RECOGNITION PROGRAM
JULY 1, 2007 – JUNE 30, 2008

The Dean’s Associates annual donor recognition program begins at the $1,000 level and its purpose is to provide unrestricted donations to fund important projects and activities within the college. This includes supporting student professional development, which allows students to represent UNLV at national and international academic meetings, conferences, and industry events.

Our students are the future of the industry, and they are truly a worthwhile investment. We wish to thank our Dean’s Associate members for their annual support through gifts of unrestricted support, which is vital to continue setting the bar as a premier international hospitality education program.

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Invent the Future is UNLV’s first comprehensive effort to secure the promises of tomorrow through a $500 million fundraising initiative.

Alumni and friends have already committed more than $41 million to the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration for student and faculty learning, program excellence, and the future endeavors at Innovation UNLV.

Thank you for being part of the successes that will reach our students, community, and industry for generations to come.

To view our entire progress, visit campaign.unlv.edu
*These individuals helped make the Rebel Ring Phonathon the most successful to date.

Bold—National Advisory Board, College Alumni Association Board of Directors or their related company.

A Final Note
We strive to ensure accuracy in this listing of benefactors who supported the Harrah Hotel College from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. If there is an error in the way we listed your gift or if you wish to make a change to your name as shown, please accept our apology & bring it to our attention by calling 702-895-2934 or e-mail Judy.Nagali@UNLV.edu.

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HONOR ROLL LIST

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Congratulations

Doctoral student Amy McManus won the Best Student Paper Award at the annual conference for the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning (ABSEL) for her examination of how organizations and educational institutions can maximize the positive outcomes of internships and the future careers of their participants.


Jean Hertzmann received numerous accolades during the past year, including a Best Paper Award at the I-CHRIE conference, a President’s Award for Outstanding Commitment to the ACF (American Culinary Federation) Chefs Las Vegas, an Opportunity Village Young Heroes Award, a CSUN (UNLV Student Government) Faculty Excellence Award, and a Best Poster Award for Foodservice Educators Network International (FENI) Inaugural Poster Session.

Bo Bernhard was named to a task force of representatives from U.S. colleges and universities to craft model guidelines for developing best policies focusing on student gambling and related health issues. The task force is being coordinated by the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders, Division on Addictions, which is part of the Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School.

Mehmet Erdem was invited to serve as the guest editor of two special issues of prominent journals: The Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management: Special issue on “The Impact of Consumer Generated Media and Social Networking in Hospitality—The Implications for Consumers and Hospitality Managers”; and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management: Special issue on – “Emerging Issues and Trends in Hospitality & Tourism: An Overview of Ongoing Advances and Expected Challenges in the 21st Century.”

Vince Eade was selected to serve as associate dean, a new position to the administrative structure of the college. In this role, Eade is tasked with providing leadership with regard to curriculum planning, development and implementation, and strategic planning.

Kia Frericks, assistant director of advising, received a fully funded trip to the National Academic Advising Association conference in Chicago in October. She was selected by the Office of the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs for her commitment and efforts to improve academic advising in the college.

The Department of Hotel Management welcomes Jeff Voyles to the faculty.

Voyles brings more than 15 years of industry experience to his position. He has served as executive vice president of Beluga Entertainment, Ltd. in China, and as a partner in Globalysis, Ltd., a boutique research and consulting firm that provides strategic counsel, industry analysis, and strategic planning for the hospitality, travel, and lodging industries. Voyles began his career in 1993 at MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, where he worked his way up from a table games dealer to pit manager to training manager for casino operations. He was also a member of the property’s Card Count Team, which was charged with ensuring the security of the casino and integrity of the games.

“I have always had a passion for bringing together academics and the gaming industry,” says Voyles, who has taught as a visiting professor since 2003. “I have watched over the previous 15 years as universities and gaming companies have turned to each other for support as we educate students to enter the industry at levels unheard of a decade ago. I have dedicated myself to helping students enter the industry before graduation in order for them to establish themselves for the next level of promotion after graduation.”

Voyles is teaching a class in Hospitality Security this fall. He holds a B.S. degree in Hotel Administration with an emphasis in Casino Operations from UNLV and an M.A. from the University of Phoenix, where he is currently a doctoral candidate. He has taught previously at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; New Jersey City University, and for the University of Phoenix.

Tom Jones co-authored a new textbook Managing the Built Environment in Hospitality with UNLV alumna and Cornell professor Dina Zemke. The book will be published later this year by Prentice Hall. He was also elected to the International Executive Housekeepers Association board of directors.

As the manager of operations for the Harrah’s Research Center, Mikael Ahlgren oversees all day-to-day activities at the center. Responsibilities include financial reporting and budgeting, marketing, promotion, grant program execution and coordination. Ahlgren serves as the liaison between the Center’s industry committee members and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas faculty members.

Prior to joining the center in January of 2008, Ahlgren spent a year working at the American Gaming Association in Washington, D.C. after completing his masters coursework at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Mike is currently a Ph.D. student at the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration.

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Congratulations

The Department of Hotel Management welcomes Sara Tanford to the faculty. Tanford joins the faculty of the Hotel Management Department after serving more than 20 years in the private sector—the last seven of which were with Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc. During her tenure there, Tanford managed the strategic analysis and application of hotel pricing, marketing and special events designed to drive revenue and occupancy for Harrah’s eight Las Vegas hotels.

“I am delighted to return to the academic community after working for many years in the travel and hospitality industry,” says Tanford. “Drawing upon management experience at Harrah’s Entertainment in hotel strategy and market planning, I hope to enrich the classroom and help students prepare for the challenges they will face in hotel management careers.”

Tanford will teach courses on Lodging Operations and Strategic Management this fall and conduct research on pricing, marketing and consumer behavior. Tanford taught psychology for five years at Purdue University.

She earned a B.A. in psychology from Northwestern University, and a M.S. and Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Anthony Lucas completed a new textbook, Principles of Casino Marketing, published this year by Kappa Press. The book was co-authored by former UNLV professor Jim Kilby and is the only casino marketing text on the market.

1980s

John Maksimik ’80, joined Denny’s in Las Vegas, then Summa for years (Howard Hughes’ old company) as Food and Beverage Director for the McCarran Flite Deck Restaurant services. Later, he worked at the Nevada Test Site in food and beverage at a secret site. John had a career switch to Commercial Insurance for the last 23 years. He is a member of the Nevada Restaurant Association, CCIM, and Nevada Subcontractors Association. John holds the Certified Insurance Counselor and Certified Risk Management Professional Designations. He writes insurance articles for Reno and Las Vegas publications in his spare time. Orgill-Singer & Associates Insurance is where he licensed in 38 states to serve his clients. jmaksimik@orgillsinger.com

David Porter ’93, joined Pollin Hotels LLC as the general manager for the new, hip Starwood aloft Portland Airport at Cascade Station, the 9th aloft to open worldwide. He recently spent the past three years as the director of sales for the Mark Spencer Hotel in downtown Portland, Oregon. David is getting married to his fiancée, Mary Pat, in December at the Maui Sheraton.

Hilary McClain ’94, began working for MGM Grand upon graduation in the Human Resources department. She has also worked for Station Casinos and Harrah’s, and returned to MGM MIRAGE in 2002 as the vice president of HR for Primm Valley Casino Resorts. Her most recent position is vice president of internal talent for MGM MIRAGE. Hilary enjoys living in Las Vegas with her husband and four children.

1990s

Michael Dube ’96, was recently promoted to General Manager at the Sheraton Denver Tech Center after serving as Director of Sales and Marketing at the hotel for three years. He enjoys his new role and enjoys living in Denver with his wife, Natalie, and their two kids Ryan (3) and Keira (2). To reach Mike, feel free to email him at mdube@thehotelgroup.com.

JungHoon Lee ’97, has just started his first semester at Kansas State University to pursue his doctoral degree in Hospitality Management. Since 1997, when he received his MS degree from the Harrah Hotel College, he has worked in the hospitality industry as a front office manager for a Hilton hotel in New Jersey, a GM of Tony Roma’s in Korea, Director of HR and Director of International Development for SUN@FOOD Co., a food service company that owns and operates 60 restaurants with 5 brands including Tony Roma’s.

Atsushi Nozao ’98, is a Market Manager for Travelocity in Tokyo, Japan after serving in JTB Business Travel Solution as a Group Supervisor for Byears. He is now living in suburb of Tokyo with his wife and little boy, Taiga. To reach Atsushi, feel free to email him at atsushi.nozao@sabre.com

Amy (Canepa) Donahue ’00, is a Portfolio Manager for United Liquors Ltd. in Boston, Mass. She married Mark Donahue in September of 2008. After 10 years in the restaurant business, Amy now works for a liquor distributor representing the Diageo and Moet-Hennessy High End Spirit Portfolios.

2000s

Christian Gonzalez ’00, joined Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts in 2001 and spent five years at Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita, Mexico as a sales manager. He moved to California in 2006 to do pre-opening sales for the company’s hotel in Westlake Village. Recently, he was transferred to Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills. If you haven’t kept in touch, send him a note: christian.gonzalez@fourseasons.com

Christopher ‘02, ’06 M.Ed. in Workforce Education and Development, is the director of training at MGM Grand Detroit.

Debbie Howarth ’03 MHA, was just promoted to associate professor in The International Hotel School at Johnson & Wales University, Providence Campus. She has also just completed her first year as a doctoral student in the School of Education at Boston University.

Special Offer for UNLV Alumni
The Platinum Hotel and Spa in Las Vegas is offering UNLV alumni, staff and students the following discounted rates:
- Rooms – 20 percent discount (based upon availability)
- WellSpa – 25 percent discount on treatments
- STIR Café and Lounge – 50 percent discount on drinks
- Food (Hotel Wide) – 20 percent discount (based upon availability)
- Rooms – 20 percent discount (based upon availability)

For more information about the Platinum Hotel and Spa, visit www.lvplatinum.com

Brett Hughett ’03, has been promoted to property manager of Oakwood Worldwide’s flagship property in Marina del Rey, CA. Oakwood Marina del Rey is a 597-unit, multi-family property that offers corporate housing and conventional apartments. He has been with Oakwood for four years, and most recently managed Oakwood’s premiere northern California property in San Jose. Brett invites friends to contact him at bhughett@oakwood.com.

Lindsay Stein ’03, is an event planner for Great Events in Northbrook, Ill. She has been with Great Events for almost 5 years now. She is getting married in November and will reside in Chicago, Ill. Feel free to email her at Lindsay@greatevent.com.

Megan Rice ’05, moved to Boston after graduation and worked at Four Seasons Boston as a management trainee. From there, Megan was promoted to Four Seasons Miami as assistant manager. After a year, she was asked to move back to join the team of Wynn Las Vegas and is working now as the housekeeping training manager. She invites friends to reach her at Megra158@hotmail.com.

Thomas (Tony) Trousdale ’07, started his career at The Bellagio, two years later opened the Wynn Resort, one year later joined the front office team at Mandalay Bay. In May 2003 Tony joined the Starwood team in San Francisco as a front desk manager at the Westin SFO and has been there since. Feel free to email him at thomas.trousdale@westin.com.
UNLV Alumni Clubs

GET INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED. Alumni Volunteers Wanted!

If you are interested in joining an existing alumni club or if you would like to start one in your area, please contact your fellow alumni:

**Austin Area**
John Friday, ’01  
bonitavista92@yahoo.com

**Chicago Area**
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**China (Hong Kong/Macau/Shenzhen)**
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Yuichi Tanaka, ’94

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**Willamette Valley, OR Area**
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UNLV Singapore has been selected to host the 7th annual Asia Pacific Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (APacCHRIE) conference May 28 – 31, 2009.

“This is an exceptional opportunity for UNLV Singapore to showcase itself as a leader in hospitality education in Asia,” says UNLV Singapore Dean Andy Nazarechuk. He believes the theme of this year’s conference—Creativity, Hospitality, Research, & Innovative Education—is a perfect fit for the campus’ mission. “We want every hospitality educator who attends the conference to understand the impact that Singapore will have as a top tourism destination and to demonstrate that Singapore offers some of the best hospitality education opportunities in the region.”

“Hospitality educators and students from at least 15 countries will attend the conference. UNLV Singapore has also recruited valuable sponsors for the event, including the Singapore Tourism Board. UNLV Singapore undergraduates Chestine Lan, Rebecca Khoo, Caryn Teh, Chin Ya Pang, Deborah Sim, Jacques Chua, and Adam Hudzaifah, are responsible for the overall planning and execution of the conference. Earlier this year, they attended the APacCHRIE conference in Perth, Australia to gain experience and learn how to prepare for an event of this size and scope. The experience has been critical to their educational and professional ambitions.

“The trip to Perth was both enriching and fulfilling,” says Khoo. “Nothing beats the opportunity to see first hand how professionals run a conference. Organizing the APacCHRIE conference allows me to apply what I’ve learned and hone my skills before I embark on my career in the industry.”

Youth Conference

For the first time in Asia, an APacCHRIE Youth Conference will be held at the same time as the 7th Annual APacCHRIE Conference—also to be hosted by UNLV Singapore. The conference aims to attract student participants from the various hospitality institutions in the Asia Pacific region to come together to discuss and learn about hospitality related issues in a practical and academically enriching session. It will also be used as a platform to nurture the future leaders of the hospitality industry.

Objectives of the APac CHRIE Youth Conference 2009:

- To prepare and equip the student participants with the necessary practical skills and knowledge for their future career in the hospitality industry
- To serve as a dynamic platform for student participants to interact, discuss and exchange ideas with current industrial professional leaders and educators
- To provide student participants with an insight into the hospitality industry through site visits

Billy Bai, professor of hotel administration at UNLV main campus in Las Vegas, has been appointed as head reviewer for the conference.

For detailed conference information, including registration and paper submission guidelines, please visit www.apacchrie09.org or www.unlv.edu.sg.
Hold a cocktail party on campus? How about a wedding reception or a sports bash? It can be done, as can a number of different types of events, thanks to the banquet and meeting room space available at the Stan Fulton Building. With more than 6,000 square feet of space as well as a professional catering staff, the Stan Fulton Building can accommodate small meetings and conferences as well as receptions for up to 300 people and full-service dinners for 200 people. The Stan Fulton Building is also home to a hip yet comfortable lounge-style bar.

Conveniently located at the edge of campus on the corner of Flamingo Road and Swenson, the Stan Fulton Building is an ideal setting for special events and meetings. Executive Chef John Gremo and his talented culinary team will deliver an unforgettable dining experience, whether your group is in need of a continental breakfast, a working lunch, or an upscale, seated dinner. A variety of menu options are available and Chef Gremo can also personalize a custom menu to enhance the overall goal of your event.

The next time you’re looking for the perfect space in which to host your special event, look no farther than the experts at the Harrah Hotel College. With the range of services and room styles available, there is certain to be one that fits your needs perfectly!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT FRANK VITUCCI AT (702) 895-3903 OR SFBEVENTS@UNLV.EDU.**
Cheri Young’s students are getting an up-close view of the hospitality industry. The hotel management professor is leading them on a quest to discover what inspires employees. Their research — funded by a gift from the Harrah’s Foundation — is helping local businesses improve their operations. It’s also providing students with hands-on experience and expanding UNLV’s role as a business partner. In short, it’s a win-win.