



Alumni Newsletter

Alumni of the Month – Chris K. Franzen

Congratulations to our Alumni of the Month for June: **Chris Franzen (1999)** who has been appointed Area Vice President Western India for Hyatt International Hotels & Resorts, in addition to becoming General Manager of the Grand Hyatt Mumbai.

What do you enjoy most about working in hotels? Engaging with guests and colleagues, being a host to guests from almost all walks of life and corners of the world. It is great to interact with someone who just came back from a climbing expedition, a business man or a long-haul traveller all on the same day while also assisting our colleagues whenever they face a challenge. There is not a day where I do not learn something new about something or someone.

Most productive time of your day? There is not a specific time. But in general I prefer to handle meetings and admin work in the morning; meeting clients and guests later in the day.

How do you build your team?

While I believe that leadership means giving vision and direction, I also feel it is equally important to create an environment of harmony and fun. I would never hire anyone reporting directly to me without speaking to them myself. I am interested if we have chemistry and if the person will fit in the team with their character. One wrong hire can result in a lot of disruption.

Favourite saying? "If you're brave enough to say goodbye, life will reward you with a new hello." (Paulo Coelho). I feel it embodies the life of an international hotelier. We have to move sometimes from place to place like a modern gypsy: while leaving may be hard, it opens new doors and opportunities.

An item on your bucket list?

I still want to do my pilot's license; I want to do a trip in Northern India on a Royal Enfield motorbike and would love to take a sabbatical year and travel with the kids and Rachel (also an AIHS graduate!)



Your dream car? According to my 10 year old son, it would be a Tesla. If you ask me, it would be another Harley-Davidson. As a sensitive Dad of Ashley, 13, and Lex, 10, it would probably be a Ford F-150 Raptor. But don't tell Rachel... Because then it would have to be a BMW of sorts. :-)

If I had a dollar for every time I said:

"We are Hoteliers and not Managers! The difference is that Hoteliers sell emotions and experiences. Managers sell steaks and beds! Where would you rather stay?" **I would be a rich man!**

Chris's full interview is on our [Facebook page](#).

Rising Star of the Month – Laura Wiersma

Congratulations to our Rising Star of the Month for June: **Laura Wiersma (2018)** who is Manager in Training at the Four Seasons Sydney and was also nominated for a TAA Rising Star award.

Favourite memory of BMIHMS? The lifelong friendships I have made.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Finding the best travel deals for my next holiday!

Your next holiday destination? Either Greece or Japan.

What do you enjoy most about hospitality? Meeting new people and experiencing different cultures from all over the world. There are so many possibilities and jobs in this industry that the opportunities are endless!

Most challenging aspect of leading a team? Being young, and having people question your knowledge and experience.

Best advice for a new graduate? Don't settle for an unwanted job, keep searching and the right opportunity will present itself.



Laura's full interview is on our [Facebook page](#).

Dear Alumni,

Term 2 has finished and we are halfway through the year already! During the next 6 months we will be holding quite a few Alumni social networking events so please keep an eye on your emails and on the Alumni Facebook and LinkedIn group pages for more details.


"Save the Date" for our major event this year - the Alumni Awards on Tuesday October 8 at the STUDIO Sydney Tower. Nominations for each of the award categories are now open (see the accompanying email for links to the online forms) and we encourage you to nominate yourself or a fellow graduate. Most importantly though we hope to see you on the night as we celebrate the wonderful achievements of all our graduates.

Thank you for your feedback and emails on the May newsletter. I really enjoy hearing from you.

Until next month.

*Petra Braat
Alumni Coordinator*

Connect with us

 petra.braat@laureate.edu.au

 [Alumni Website](#)

 [Linkedin Group](#)

 [Facebook Group](#)



Alumni Achievements

Jack Widagdo (2001) GM of Alila Anji was recently presented with the Conde Nast Traveler – China, **Best Resort of the Year** award. Alila Anji has won this 2 years in a row from a hand-picked Gold List of 16 hotels & resorts in China. The winner is decided by both the media judging panel and guest reviews. The event was located in the prestigious Shangri-La, Yunnan (South Western province of China) 3000m above sea level, where the Lost Horizon novel by James Hilton is set.



Erica Blythe (1999) was recently featured in the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia's video on a career in the Events industry. As the Director of Finance and Administration for the ICC Sydney, Erica is uniquely placed, as she says, to "have the luxury of being able to crunch the numbers in my office. Then walk outside and see the visual and tangible side of the numbers with our amazing events. That's unique to hospitality."

See more exciting event professionals in "[A Career for Life 2019](#)"

Congratulations to **Lauren Puttini (2009)** who has been promoted to Director of Food and Beverage at The Ritz-Carlton Georgetown. Lauren was also recognised as their **Leader of the Quarter (1st Quarter) 2019**.

Lauren was the recipient of the 'Making Their Mark' Award at the Alumni Awards 2018 and it is wonderful to see her continued success and commitment to strong leadership.



Congratulations to **Marcus Yao Dong Chan (2017)** who has been awarded the "Sales Leader of the Year (2019)" for IHG Australasia. Marcus has also been named as a Finalist in the "Sales Talent of the Year" category in the 2019 NSW Tourism Accommodation Awards for Excellence.

Marcus is currently the Business Development Director at InterContinental Hotels Group in Sydney. He has already been recognised by IHG as the **Leader of the Quarter** in 2017 and **Leader of the Year 2017**.

We wish you all the best in the TAA Awards.



WHO—WHAT—WHERE

1993-2000

Lara Connolly (Scartozzi) (1993)

General Manager, Novotel & Ibis Melbourne, Glen Waverley

Rob Everett (1993)

General Manager, RACV Club, Melbourne

Kate Gerits (Hawdon) (1996)

Regional General Manager, Thailand Central & South, InterContinental Hotels, Pattaya

Hardip Marwah (1996)

General Manager, Hyatt Regency Mumbai

Christopher Adams (1998)

Vice President, Food and Beverage, Oracle Hospitality, Baltimore

Frank Gribi (1998)

Director, Frank Consulting Solutions, Melbourne

2001-2010

Francisca Renny (2002)

Claim Liaison Officer, Cover-More Group, Sydney

Damien Riordan (2005)

Operations Manager, AHS Hospitality, Melbourne

Berlyn Shelton (Pereira) (2009)

Network Service Manager Vic/Tas, LJ Hooker, Melbourne

Abhishek Ghai (2010)

Multi Hotel Revenue Manager, Minor Hotels, Brisbane

2011-2019

Daniel Nabil Bassett (2012)

Front Office Manager, Nissi Beach Resort - Ayia Napa, Cyprus

Whitney Back (2014)

Resource Partner, Verity Consulting, Brisbane

Michelle Carlos Hernandez (2014)

Account Executive, SiteMinder, Sydney

Josie Gibson (2014)

Hotel Manager, Minor Hotels, Hunter Valley, Sydney

Sofya Kilikyan (2014)

Assistant Front Office Manager, Corinthia Hotel, St. Petersburg

Oat Sitalasai-Le Berre (2014)

Assistant Human Resources Manager, The Abu Dhabi EDITION (Marriott), Abu Dhabi

Jamie Cumner (2015)

Food and Beverage Supervisor, Mantra Hotels (Sydney Domestic Airport), Sydney

Amrapali Gokani (2016)

Resort Assistant Manager, Four Seasons Resort Vail, Colorado

Rahmi Putri Adningtyas (2017)

Senior Front Desk Agent, Rendezvous Hotels, Sydney

Charlotte Tokmak (Walsh) (2017)

Reservations Coordinator, Next Hotel Brisbane | Sage Hotel James Street, Brisbane

Upcoming Alumni Events

Alumni Drinks
London

Thursday July 11
[RSVP here](#)

Alumni Drinks
Sydney

Wednesday July 24
Details TBA

Alumni Drinks
Dubai

Thursday July 18
Details TBA

Alumni Drinks
Brisbane

Details TBA

Alumni Awards
Sydney

Tuesday October 8
[Details TBA](#)

Quote of the Month

“
I have learned that as long as I hold fast to my beliefs and values - and follow my own moral compass - then the only expectations I need to live up to are my own.

”
Michelle Obama



School News

During June, a group of Leura-based students hosted a dinner on campus to raise funds and awareness for those living with invisible disabilities. The initiative was supported by local Blue Mountains organisation, DARE Disability and their "Are You Inclusive" project. Congratulations to the team, who raised \$378! We are very proud of their initiative and hard work on this event.

For more information on the services provided by DARE Disability Support please [visit their website](#).



Leura Campus Visitors



Max Von Schwerin (2017) visited the campus recently and had a great time catching up with staff including **Donna Faulder** (pictured left) and **Adriana Glackin** who took him on a tour of the campus.

Max is currently the Operations Manager for the Hutchy Group in Flic en Flac, Mauritius.

It was wonderful to catch up with **Pericles Yiannakis (2007)** and his girlfriend last week. They enjoyed lunch in Chambers restaurant during exam week (lots of memories there!) and Perry couldn't resist acting as Concierge at the BMIHMS Front Office!

Perry is the Chief Concierge at the Sofitel Brisbane and member of the Les Clefs' d'Or.



It was exciting to meet **Matthew Hamilton (1996)** and his family (Brooke, Augustus and Riley) when they visited the Leura campus. As well as enjoying their accommodation at the Waldorf Hotel adjacent to the School, Matthew and his family toured the campus, relived a lot of memories and saw all the activity and renovations that occur during the mid-term breaks!

Matthew is the Senior Private Banker for Wells Fargo in Tampa/St Petersburg, Florida.