



# Alumni Newsletter

***This month we hear from graduates who are providing five star service outside traditional hospitality businesses and establishing their expertise across a range of professions. [Contact us to share your story.](#)***

## Stephen Pirovic (2016): Creating Unique and Personalised Residential Experiences

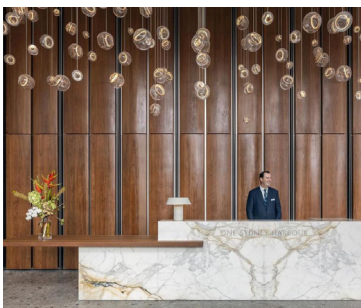
### **What does your current role involve?**

I am the **Operations Manager** for [One Sydney Harbour Luxury Apartments](#). I oversee three towers in Barangaroo, Sydney. My role ensures seamless operations and exceptional service delivery across this prestigious residential complex.

I manage Concierge Services, the Lifestyle department, and the Delivery Concierge, which form the backbone of resident experience and operational efficiency. Reporting directly to the Building Management Committee and Owners Corporation highlights my crucial role in maintaining high standards and fulfilling the vision for these luxury residences.

Daily, I coordinate all aspects of the tower's life cycle, ensuring personalised service for residents and the smooth functioning of building systems. By managing a team that anticipates and addresses a resident's diverse needs, I help create an environment where expectations are consistently exceeded.

The phased opening of the towers adds a dynamic aspect to my role. Tower 1 welcomed residents in February 2024,



Tower 2 followed in August 2024, and Tower 3 is set to open in December 2024. Each phase brings unique challenges and opportunities, requiring meticulous planning, effective communication, and attention to detail to ensure harmonious and high-standard operations. My multi-faceted role demands proactive problem-solving, a commitment to excellence, and a deep understanding of both operational intricacies and resident expectations. By embodying these qualities, I uphold One Sydney Harbour's reputation as a premier residential destination and foster community and satisfaction among residents. Working closely with my team, I strive to ensure every resident feels valued and every operational aspect functions cohesively, contributing to the overall success and reputation of this landmark development.

### **How does your hospitality focus differ in this role?**

Unlike hotels that cater primarily to short-term guests, our luxury apartments are designed for long-term residents seeking a permanent or extended stay in a high-end residential setting. This distinction shapes the nature of our service delivery and operational priorities. Our approach builds continuing relationships with our residents and a personalised service that reflects a deep understanding of each resident's preferences and lifestyle.

Additionally, the reporting structure differs significantly

to that in hotels. My direct reporting line to the Building Management Committee and Owners Corporation of each tower requires a thorough understanding of property management and strata regulations, ensuring compliance and effective communication with stakeholders who have a vested interest in the long-term success and satisfaction of residents.

### **What do you enjoy most about this industry?**

What I find most fulfilling is the inherent diversity and daily opportunities to deliver exceptional service at One Sydney Harbour. Each day presents unique challenges and experiences, ensuring that monotony is never a factor.

Whether it's coordinating routine tasks like ensuring a resident's dry cleaning needs are promptly met or orchestrating grand events such as a memorable Mother's Day luncheon featuring the Sydney Youth Orchestra in our lobby, every moment is a chance to create meaningful experiences for our residents. Being part of this dynamic environment allows me to apply the knowledge and skills gained from my BMIHMS training effectively. It's incredibly rewarding to utilise these tools to consistently elevate our service standards and operational efficiency. More than just managing operations, I take pride in fostering a sense of community where residents feel valued and cared for,



almost like an extension of their own families.

This role offers a perfect blend of creativity and strategic thinking, where I can innovate while upholding the luxury standards expected in a prestigious residential setting like One Sydney Harbour. It's this blend of challenge, creativity, and the opportunity to positively impact residents' lives that makes working in this industry immensely gratifying and motivating every day.

### **What advice do you have for graduates looking for unusual hospitality opportunities?**

My advice is to embrace diversity and think beyond traditional roles. Look for positions that offer unique challenges and allow you to apply hospitality skills in innovative ways, such as residential management or niche luxury services. Networking and staying open to non-traditional paths can lead to rewarding career opportunities that blend creativity, customer service excellence, and operational management, much like my role at [One Sydney Harbour](#).



## Gert Ebner (2015): Creating Unique Travel Experiences with Remote Year

### What does your current role involve?

Since the beginning of 2024, I have been serving as the **Community Experience Manager** at [Remote Year](#). In simple terms, my role is to ensure our community members have the opportunity to explore the world through immersive, off-the-beaten-path adventures, lasting between five to nine days. I work with a small, dynamic team driven by inspiration and the desires of our over 6,000-strong community.

We build connections with providers from some of the most exciting places on earth and develop exclusive itineraries with a unique touch of hospitality. This allows our customers to focus solely on their plane tickets and enjoy a seamless and unique experience.

We collaborate with various departments within the company to capture every vivid detail and ensure our customers leave inspired and with massive smiles.



### How does your hospitality focus differ in this role?

The hospitality focus in this role is distinct from working in hotels, as it depends largely on the hotel's objective. For instance, a relaxation resort aims to provide an environment for guests to disconnect. In contrast, we at Remote Year strive to immerse our community members in the local culture, land, and people of the destinations we visit. Our goal is to facilitate meaningful human connections, such as being welcomed by a local family and learning about their lives. These authentic interactions enable our members to share genuine experiences rather than just impressive photos on social media, although of course you get the [epic pictures too](#)!

### What do you enjoy most about this industry?

The hospitality industry within hotels is akin to playing in the professional leagues, where the entire organisation works meticulously to deliver a flawless experience within a controlled environment.

At Remote Year, while we strive for the same level of professionalism, we also prioritise human connections. The nature of our [Adventures](#) allows us to experience unique moments alongside our community members. We witness their awe and emotional reactions, and we have the chance to

learn about them, guide them and build long lasting relationships. This deeper connection with our community is something we cherish, which differs from the often more formal and rigid interactions in hotels.

### What advice do you have for graduates seeking unique hospitality opportunities?

My advice is to stay curious and open-minded. When I was growing up, there wasn't much information about the diverse career paths available. We often stick to traditional roles because that's what we know.

However, with today's technology, new and exciting business ideas are constantly emerging, creating new job opportunities while old ones fade away. I made a career shift into entrepreneurship, which led me into the world of startups. Many startups begin and thrive in coworking spaces. If you're a creative individual seeking new opportunities and willing to wear many hats, consider working from a diverse workspace that promotes entrepreneurship. Even if your job isn't the most exciting in the room, you'll be surrounded by inspiration and opportunities to join a great idea or start your own.

Throughout the past five years with Remote Year, I've had the privilege of working



in various roles. I started with creating the platform for Remote Year in Santiago, Chile and led multiple programs as the Experience Manager. I've also led two long-term programs through Latin America and Europe and supported both clients and staff with the community side of our operations.

I also had the exciting opportunity to build our platform in Chicago, USA, and Tirana, Albania. Reminiscing on my early days with Remote Year, I realise that what I cherish the most is the flexibility that I was given to be creative. It allowed me to discover my own inner creativity - a trait that I've continued to embrace in my personal life.

When I'm not developing a new project for Remote Year, I'm planning my next [DJ gig](#) in a new city. Allowing yourself to have a creative outlet outside the workplace fosters out-of-the-box thinking within the workplace—it's a full spin! (Get it?!)

**Connect with Gert on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).**



## Shera Pham (2019): From Operational Focus to Strategic Analysis to Unlock Business Potential



### What does your current role involve?

As a **Business Analyst** at **Capitaliz**, (powered by Succession Plus) my role involves a deep dive into the intricacies of business valuation. I am tasked with conducting in-depth financial analyses and market research to determine a company's true market value.

This involves examining financial statements, assessing market conditions, and evaluating operational efficiencies. I compile this information into comprehensive Business Insights Reports, which provide a thorough understanding of a business' current valuation and future growth poten-

tial. By collaborating with a diverse team of advisors, I help ensure our clients receive well-rounded, actionable insights. This work is essential for guiding clients through their succession and exit planning processes, ultimately helping them achieve successful transitions.

### How does your hospitality focus differ in this role?

My career in the hospitality sector provided a strong foundation in various roles, from frontline operations to backend functions like reservations, revenue management, and logistics. In hospitality, the focus was on managing daily operations, optimizing revenue, and delivering exceptional guest experiences. At Capitaliz (and Succession Plus), the emphasis shifts to strategic financial analysis and long-term planning. While my hospitality background taught me operational efficiency and customer service excellence, my current role requires a broader perspective. I analyse over-

all business health, market trends, and strategic positioning to determine a company's value. This transition from operational focus to strategic analysis involves understanding complex financial metrics and market dynamics.

### What do you enjoy most about this industry?

What excites me most about the business succession and exit planning industry is the profound impact we have on business owners' lives. It's like solving an intricate puzzle—each business presents unique challenges and opportunities. I enjoy delving into the analytical and strategic aspects, uncovering insights that can significantly enhance a business's value. I work in a collaborative environment, alongside talented professionals from various disciplines, which enriches my learning experience. It's deeply rewarding to see how our work helps business owners achieve their goals and secure their legacies. The dynamic nature

of this industry keeps me constantly engaged and motivated.

### What advice do you have for graduates interested in a career in this sector?

For graduates considering a career in business succession and exit planning, my advice is to build a strong foundation in financial analysis and business valuation. It's crucial to understand financial statements, market trends, and valuation techniques. Equally important are communication and interpersonal skills, as these are vital for collaborating with business owners and stakeholders. Seek diverse experiences across different business areas to gain a broad perspective. Network actively—connect with professionals, attend industry events, and seek mentorship. Stay updated with the latest trends and best practices in the field. Above all, be prepared and get excited for a dynamic and rewarding career where every day brings new challenges and opportunities to learn and grow.

## Alumni Success at the 2024 NSW Accommodation Awards for Excellence



Congratulations to all of our graduates who were nominated individually, or as part of their property, for the **2024 NSW Accommodation Awards for Excellence**.

**Daniel Siang Lee (2023)** (pictured left) was named the **Industry Rising Star 2024**. Daniel is the **Assistant Banquets Manager, The Langham Sydney**

**Abhi Mallur (2019)** (pictured right) was **Highly Commended** in the **Concierge of the Year** category. Abhi is **Assistant Chief Concierge at Park Hyatt Sydney**.





## Alumni Awards 2024: Nominations are Now Open!

We encourage you to nominate yourself or a fellow graduate in the following categories. The eligibility criteria for each award is provided in each link below, and nominations close on **August 19, 2024**. Watch this space for details on the Alumni Awards event, which will be held in Sydney in late October.

[Rising Star Award](#)

[Career Professional of the Year](#)

[Alumni of the Year 2024](#)

[Making Their Mark Award](#)

[BMIHMS Ambassador Award](#)

Thank you for your support and we look forward to celebrating the achievements of all our Alumni.

[Business Achievement Award](#)

[Hotelier of the Year 2024](#)

### Thoughts from the Alumni Board

*This month, **Chris K. Franzen (1999)** shares his thoughts on **Global Events***

My teams and I have had the privilege of hosting some major global events in the past two years. In 2022, my team hosted the VIP guests for the **FIFA WorldCup 2022** in Qatar at the Waldorf Astoria Lusail Doha; and in June of this year, we hosted the largest ever political event in Switzerland called '**Peace for Ukraine**' at the Bürgenstock Resort Lake Lucerne, with over 100 delegations from over 90 countries and 57 Heads of States in attendance.

Despite being completely different events, what made them successful for both resorts, resulting in massive PR / exposure, prestige and positioning?

**Global Broadcast:** Both events catered to a global audience: one for the football fanatic, the other for politically interested parties – and were broadcast globally for the duration of the event. Your audience is not domestic, regional or countrywide – keep this in mind when you craft Marketing messages!

**Understand Your Customer / Guest:** In both cases, we hosted guests from all four corners of the globe and needed to understand the preferences and needs of VIPs and the political parties visiting the respective resorts. This allowed us to plan ahead when it came to rooms set-up amenities, food offers and even what TV channels we would broadcast in the rooms.

**Understand the Importance of Immediate Feedback – And Record it!** Ask for immediate feedback from celebrities, politicians and other notable VIPs. They will always give it. And be sure to quote it and use it for your marketing! We were able to quote people from showbiz, sports and politics. All of them leaders in their fields with a huge following, resulting in exposure to markets and demographics we could not otherwise afford to reach with the hotel's PR & Marketing budget. Find ways to include quotes and comments from your VIP guests in your marketing strategy moving forward.

**Understand the difference between Sales & Marketing!** Many people, even the most senior leaders in our industry, have challenges explaining and understanding the difference between what Marketing and what Sales has to achieve. If the leadership and teams do not understand the distinction, money is misspent and the return of your marketing dollars will be less. Remember:

#### SALES

Focus – Closing Deals  
Timeline – Short term  
Approach – One on one  
Goal – Generate Revenue  
Measures – Conversion Rate  
Strategy – Product focused

#### MARKETING

Focus – Generating Leads  
Timeline – Long term  
Approach – One to many  
Goal – Create Demand  
Measures – ROI  
Strategy – Customer focused

***If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me. I can be contacted on either [ckf@areus-advisors.com](mailto:ckf@areus-advisors.com) or [chris.franzen@burgenstockresort.com](mailto:chris.franzen@burgenstockresort.com) at your convenience!***



# Alumni Visitors to Leura Campus



We were delighted to welcome back **Raghav Khanna (2001)** to the Leura campus recently. During his visit, Raghav shared many happy BMIHMS memories with his family while touring the School. Raghav is currently the **Director of Exports** for **Carpex Wool Thread LLP**, a star-rated export house based in Amritsar, India with its branch office in Melbourne, Australia. As a second-generation entrepreneur, he is actively involved in the equestrian and textile industries.

*Raghav is pictured left with his wife Prerna, daughter Sairah and son Saihaan.*



It was great to see **Chrestella Nursalim (2009)** and **Adi Saputra Leo (2009)** recently when they brought their children to see the Leura campus. Adi manages the very successful and well-established **HAKA Restaurant** in Jakarta.

*Chrestella and Adi are pictured with their children, visiting Mr Cook's memorial portrait and catching up with Liang Joe Zhou, Duty Manager.*



# WHO—WHAT—WHERE

## 2001-2010

### Irina Berrutti (2002)

Head Lifestyle Concierge, Stedman's Hospitality - One Sydney Harbour

### Karen Niehoff (2002)

General Manager Transformation and People, COSOL Global, Brisbane

## 2011-2020

### Sherie Cooper (2015)

Executive Services - Health Manager, HealthShare NSW, Newcastle

### Rodrigo Avalos Cruz (2015)

Front Desk Manager, Fairfield Inn & Suites Indianapolis Downtown

### Hudson Fox (2017)

Operations Manager & Corporate Events, Two Tribes Events, Cairns

### Jasper Yin Fan Chiu (2020)

Operations Manager, Mantra Chatswood, Sydney

### Neelam Katkar (2020)

Rooms Controller & One Touch Manager, Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

## 2021-2024

### Kingson Joseph (2021)

Venue Manager, Lion - Castlemaine Perkins Brewery, Brisbane

### Darryl Naufal Sini (2022)

Quality Assurance and Control Manager, Daima Hotel, Jakarta

### Manasi Nirbhavane (2022)

Event Services Assistant Floor Manager, The Star Entertainment Group, Gold Coast

### Dong Phat (Peter) Tran (2023)

Assistant Manager, Food and Beverage, Hyatt Centric Melbourne

### Daniel Lee (2023)

Assistant Banquets Manager, The Langham, Sydney

### Christopher Le Minh Dinh (2024)

Front Office Duty Manager, Meriton Suites, Sydney

### Vinayaka Bangalore Vasu (2024)

Hotel Duty Manager, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, Melbourne