

CHECK IN



Advisor to the stars (five-star hotels, that is)

Top hospitality investors rely on Tom Engel's expertise



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CHECK IN

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From the DEAN

Dear Friends,

By now most of you have heard that I will be retiring at the end of this academic year. The decision was not an easy one, and I thank each of you for making my time here at the School of Hospitality

Administration both rewarding and meaningful. I am pleased to have fulfilled three main objectives in my time here at BU: we more than doubled our student population, became an independent school, and opened a new facility. I feel good about where the School is, and I feel good about what we've accomplished.

In this issue we highlight some of our outstanding alumni, along with Advisory Board Vice Chair Tom Engel. Tom's course on asset management is one of the five new courses added last year that have already proved to strengthen the value of a SHA education. We are grateful to the Advisory Board for helping to shape our curriculum, improve career services, and advance SHA's image in the hospitality industry.

We also celebrate the School's 25th anniversary this year with a toast to the members of SHA's first graduating class. Our alumni association has grown exponentially in the past 25 years, and we honor the Class of 1984 for blazing the trail for future young leaders in hospitality.

I am confident a new dean will take the School of Hospitality Administration to the next level, and I urge you to continue to support your alma mater. We welcome your assistance in making vital financial contributions, mentoring our enthusiastic students, and participating in alumni events across the country.

Please contact our development officer, Tracey Sharp, at 617-353-1011 or tsharp@bu.edu to make your gift, tour the building, inquire about alumni events, or join the SHA Alumni Association. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

James T. Stamas



Etiquette consultant Jodi Smith says it's important to make a polite first impression. *Photo courtesy of Jodi Smith*

Looking for a job? Mind your manners!

Good manners make a powerful impression. "When people have good social skills, we presume competence," says etiquette consultant Jodi Smith. That's why job seekers, she says, should focus as much on polishing up their social skills as on shaping up their résumés.

Smith, who's headed Mannersmith Etiquette Consulting since 1996, offered SHA students a crash course in standard American business etiquette before graduation last spring. Here are a few of her tips:

- Dress for success: wear dark colors toward your feet and light colors toward your face.
- Place a nametag on the right-hand side of your chest, where it's easy to read during an introductory handshake.
- Have a self-introduction prepared to help launch the conversation at networking events.
- Turn off your cell phone before entering a meeting.
- Use formal forms of address until invited to use someone's first name.
- Offer a firm, web-to-web handshake.
- Send *handwritten* thank-you notes.

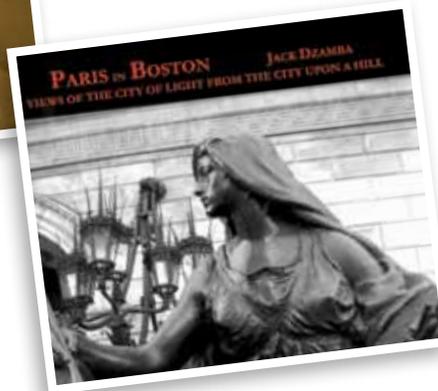
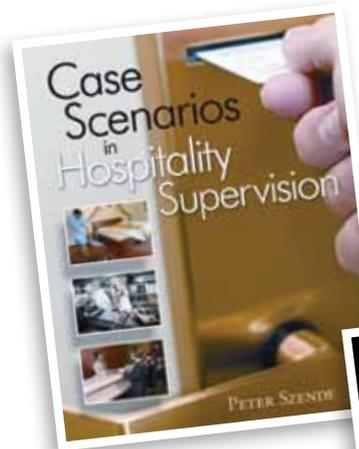


Suggested Reading

Two SHA faculty members have new books on the market.

Assistant Professor Peter Szende, who teaches human resources and management courses, recently published *Case Scenarios in Hospitality Supervision*. The book presents 75 short case studies depicting dilemmas often encountered by new managers and first-level supervisors in hotels and other hospitality settings.

Adjunct faculty member Jack Dzamba, a lawyer by training who teaches hospitality ethics, draws on his other area of expertise—photography—in *Paris in Boston*, which captures the similarities between Bostonian and Parisian architecture in dramatic black-and-white photographs, including several interior shots of elegant Boston hotels.



SHA's New Asian Connection

SHA students will soon be traveling to Hong Kong for classes and internships, and hospitality students of Hong Kong Polytechnic University will come to Boston for similar experiences. The student exchanges form the centerpiece of a strategic alliance recently forged between the two schools.

Dean James Stamas arranged the collaboration earlier this year during a trip to Asia, where he visited with alumni and with leaders of hospitality programs in Dubai, Bangkok, and Hong Kong.

Stamas describes Hong Kong Polytechnic as an excellent school located in a city with world-class hotels that can provide valuable work experiences for SHA students.



Dean James Stamas (center) meets with members of the BU Alumni Association of Thailand during a recent visit to Bangkok. *Photo courtesy of SHA*





SHA: 25 years of MOMENTUM



Twenty-five years later, members of the Class of '84—and the school they graduated from—are hitting their stride. **By CORINNE STEINBRENNER**

Arguing with her classmates is what Laura Edelstein ('84) remembers most fondly about her time in BU's hospitality program. "We did lots of group projects," she recalls, and because group members didn't always agree on how to tackle a given task, "we had some pretty heated exchanges," Edelstein says with a laugh.

Learning to work in a team environment proved to be invaluable for Edelstein, who's owned a catering business in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood for more than two decades and says her greatest point of pride is that she's been able to hold together such a wonderful team. "My employees stay and stay," she says.

Working on group projects—and participating in the lively discussions they generate—is as much a part of today's SHA experience as it was in Edelstein's day; it's one of the many aspects of the hospitality program that has remained the same over the 25 years since she graduated. As the program celebrates the 25th anniversary of its first graduating class, much, however, has changed.

Chief among those changes is the transformation from a small program within the University's Metropolitan College to an independent school. MET—which primarily focuses on part-time, evening programs for nontraditional college students—was a slightly unusual home for a full-time hospitality program. Nick Washienko, who was in charge of developing new programs for MET in the late 1970s, explains how the relationship came about: "At one point, given the size of the hospitality industry in Boston, we thought it would be a good idea to offer some courses in the hospitality area, and at the time we were thinking they would be for the traditional MET audience, which was adult workers who wanted to take some courses. After talking to

people in the industry, we realized that there might be a demand for an undergraduate program for traditional college-age students... It was certainly out of the purview of what MET would normally do. Nevertheless, we got permission to do it."

The full-time Hotel and Food Administration Program began in 1981 and graduated its first 20 students in 1984. The program grew under the MET umbrella, becoming the School of Hospitality Administration in 1992. In 2004, under the direction of Dean James Stamas, SHA became a fully independent, freestanding school within the University.

According to Stamas and Washienko, the School, with its student body of 450, is reaching full maturity. "As you get more students, you get more faculty," says Washienko, who is now a professor at SHA. "You're able to offer a much wider range of subjects, and you therefore have a much fuller and healthier curriculum." In addition, the School has built strong ties with the hospitality industry and—thanks in large part to industry support—now has an elegant building on campus all its own. Stamas says the School now proudly competes with its much older peer schools at such universities as Cornell, Pennsylvania State, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

What those older schools have that SHA still doesn't, he says, is a decades-old alumni association. "The strength of those schools is that they have extremely active alumni networks," he says. "They support their school financially; they help one another get jobs." But with more than 1,500 living alumni and a growing list of regional alumni organizations, SHA is now well on its way to establishing an alumni presence of its own. "Building an alumni network takes time," says Stamas, "but it's incredibly important, so that's our next step." ■■

Right: The first course listing for the Hotel and Food Administration Program at Metropolitan College.

Far right: *The Daily Free Press* announces the first dean of SHA, in 1995.



Class of '84: Where are they now?

SHA's first graduating class—the Class of '84—included just 20 students. Here's an update on what some of these alumni are doing today and how they're using their SHA education.

Debra Dewar

General Manager,
Turner Fisheries at the
Westin Copley Hotel
Boston, Mass.

"I've always felt comfortable asking questions, pushing forward, and believing in myself as a manager. I believe this confidence came from the well-rounded education I received at Boston University."

Laura Edelstein

Owner, Prince Street Caterers
Boston, Mass.

"The accounting, economics, and statistics classes I took at BU have been very useful in running my own business."

Bill Goodwin

Vice President,
Classic Restaurant Concepts
Framingham, Mass.

"To this day, I live by instructor Bill Heck's advice to 'consistently fulfill the expectations you've created.' But I try to take it one step further—to surpass the expectations I've created."

Robert Greenberg

President,
Evergreen Mechanical Corp.
Bronx, N.Y.

"I considered going into the hotel/restaurant field, but I haven't got there yet. However, the education was business related and I feel was invaluable, even though I never entered the industry."

Frederick Houston

Vice President of
Franchise Operations,
Uno Restaurants
Boston, Mass.

"In the hospitality classes we constantly spoke about the importance of meeting or exceeding the guest's expectations. This is even truer today, given the number of choices our guests have. We need to make it a wonderful dining experience each and every time if we want to grow our brand."

Marilyn Kalison Lynch

Library Media Specialist,
West Haven High School
West Haven, Conn.

"I did not stay in the hospitality industry but will always cherish the impact Professor Harold Lane made upon me. He gave me confidence in my ability to succeed in anything I pursued."

Annette Shafer

Author, *The Wine Sense Diet*
Owner, FitSense Solutions
Napa Valley, Calif.

"Marketing skills and attention to detail when it comes to delivering a service—skills I learned at BU—are paramount in my current job."

Seniors in the Hotel and Food Administration Program appeared alongside other MET seniors in the 1984 *Bostonian* yearbook.

Andrew Sundberg

Chief Operations Officer,
Sundberg Household
Glen Allen, Va.

"When my son started elementary school, we decided against after-school daycare, so I became a SAHD (stay-at-home dad). This new job involved taking care of the house, my two children, and a wife who travels some, and BU's hospitality program helped me do it. Cooking, running a business (a home), recordkeeping, you name it—it's all part of the hospitality field."

David Waronker

Owner, CBD Real Estate
Investment, LLC
Scottsdale, Ariz.; Celebration, Fla.;
and Delran, N.J.

"SHA provided me a general yet varied education that gave me an opportunity to start out in my field of education (hotel administration) and parlay that education into my own real estate development business."





Getting Down to Business— the Real Estate Side



It's not all about operations. SHA Advisory Board member Tom Engel approaches—and now teaches—hospitality from the real estate side of the business. **By CORINNE STEINBRENNER**

TOM ENGEL sits at the oval table in the center of his small office suite in Boston's trendy South End, tucked into a building otherwise filled with artists' studios. The informality of the space—employees' desks line the perimeter of the single room, a bicycle leans against a bookcase full of binders—quickly fades to the background as Engel gets down to business.

"I'm going to New York today, and I've got four appointments," he says, as he begins to run down his itinerary for the coming days, which includes a meeting at Barclay's Capital to discuss the bank's sale of distressed debt for a luxury hotel in San Francisco and a quarterly meeting with the president of Vornado Realty Trust, one of the largest owners of commercial real estate in the United States. As his blue highlighter checks the last box on his handwritten agenda, he turns to the young associates sitting across from him: "Okay, so what's hot? What have you got going, Meg?"

Analyst Meg Heim ('08) and Intern Analyst Haley Johnson ('09) tick through their action items for the week: putting the finishing touches on the firm's proposal to reposition six hotels in Geneva, Switzerland; distributing requests for proposals for an upcoming Marriott hotel renovation; scheduling a conference call with the management team

at an Orlando resort; booking Engel's flights for a set of meetings in Munich.

This is a typical staff meeting at T.R. ENGEL Group, a boutique advisory firm Engel established 10 years ago that has since become a training ground for young professionals interested in the real estate, investments, and asset management aspects of the hospitality industry. Engel founded the company after a long career in the hotel business that included launching three lodging brands—Embassy Suites, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, and Hawthorn Suites—and managing a multibillion dollar lodging and leisure portfolio for Equitable Real Estate/AXA Investment Management Inc.

"We're a lodging investment advisory and asset management firm," Engel says of his company, "and we focus on advising investors on existing hotels or resorts as well as on to-be-built hotels and resorts, and everything in between. And typically that advisory work then converts to an ongoing asset management role where we oversee the assets on behalf of our investor clients."

The Investor's Advocate

Those ongoing asset management contracts, Engel says, are a growing part of his business, reflecting a growing trend in the hospitality industry. As Marriott, Hilton, and

other hotel chains have moved away from owning their buildings in favor of managing properties owned by others, he explains, the need has increased for knowledgeable asset managers who stand between property managers and property owners and advocate for the owners' interests. Asset management has become so important within the hotel industry that Engel, a longtime member of the SHA Advisory Board, recommended that the School add a course in asset management to its curriculum. SHA faculty agreed, and the two-credit course—HF415: Hospitality Asset Management—launched this fall, with Engel as the instructor.

Engel says he expects the class to appeal to "serious" students—and serious they'd better be. The course plan is rigorous. In a single semester, the class will cover all the services typically included in an asset management contract—operating and capital investment plan approval, monthly profit and loss reviews, monthly capital reviews, personnel reviews—as well as how to determine the economic feasibility of a prospective acquisition and how to choose the right market positioning and management company to fit a given property. (The size and location of one building might make it ideal for a serious business hotel branded as a full-service Marriott or Hyatt, Engel

explains, while another building's architecture and history would argue for positioning as a "grande dame independent.")

From Mentor to Teacher

Engel hasn't lectured on these concepts in the classroom before, but over the years he's gained plenty of experience teaching them to interns and new employees—many of them SHA students and recent graduates. Heim, whom Engel refers to as one of the firm's rising stars, began working for T.R. ENGEL Group as an intern during her senior year at SHA and has continued there full-time since her 2008 graduation.

"Tom's mantra when it comes to teaching," she says, "is that if you're drowning 100 yards offshore, he'll throw you 60 yards of rope, and then he'll make you work for the rest." This hands-on approach has been effective for her, she says, and she expects it will work with SHA students as well.

Heim earned a minor in business while attending SHA. "After being in the School of Management," she says, "I realized I was

interested beyond just working *inside* of a hotel and wanted more of a macro perspective." Working at T.R. ENGEL Group has given her this broad view of the industry—how new hotels and resorts are financed, what can be done to increase the value of a hotel asset, how ownership and management interact.

"If you're drowning 100 yards offshore, he'll throw you 60 yards of rope, and then he'll make you work for the rest."

—Meg Heim ('08)

Watching Engel and the way he works with clients, she says, has also taught her about the thoroughness, tenacity, and confidence it takes to succeed in this business. "One thing that's a specialty of Tom's," she says, "is having the ability and the confidence to 'stir the pot'—to not just look at a situation and take it as it is, but to ask questions, to really probe, to really get to the bottom of things, even if that means making things a little uncomfortable."

and clubs—they're *businesses* and in order for them to survive and flourish, they must be successfully managed as businesses.

"The School of Hospitality Administration at BU has done a really excellent job in preparing students to work on the operations side of the hotel business," he continues, "whether it's in guest services, or food and beverage, or whatever. Now I want to help them see the big picture and really understand the whole, multi-faceted business of hotels." ■



Tom Engel reviews plans for a hotel restaurant and lobby renovation with Analyst Meg Heim ('08) and Intern Analyst Anthony Tracy.



A Change of Pace

By PATRICK KENNEDY

In Madrid last semester, Cindy Cordova ('10) discovered the joys and spices of Spanish cuisine. "I still try to keep in touch with the culture by cooking some of the recipes I learned when I was there," Cordova says. "Part of me misses Europe."

From January through May, Cordova interned for OM Premium, a marketing and event planning company geared toward upscale athletes and spectators. The 19-year-old outfit promotes polo, golf, and tennis tournaments in Spain, Portugal, and throughout the rest of Europe.

"Since most of their events happen during the summer," says Cordova, "I helped with what's called pre-convention work: getting all the accounts set up, helping organize events, and ensuring attendance."

She also edited and translated articles from Spanish to English for two magazines the company publishes, *Polo Lifestyle* and *Sports Challenge*. As well, Cordova translated the company's new website, which she helped create.

Meanwhile, she took three courses at the *Instituto Internacional de Madrid*—Spanish Film, European History, and Spanish Literature—and still found time to explore the city and travel the Continent.

The experience taught her a great deal about an unfamiliar market, Cordova says. She found that Spanish executives value the personal touch. "Instead of a lot of e-mails, it was mostly face-to-face. We set up a lot of meetings and lunches. And the way they conduct business is not subtle. They tell you right off the bat whether they want to do business with you or not.

"It was also very slow-paced compared to the United States. They really like to take their time and focus on one thing, rather than multitask so much. What I learned most over there was to have a lot more patience." ❧



While completing an internship in Spain, Cindy Cordova ('10) supplemented her work and studies in Madrid with excursions to San Sebastian (top) and Salamanca. Photos courtesy of Cindy Cordova

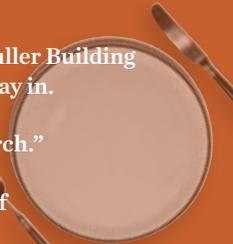


Students Tell Us



You know you're a SHA student when...

- you critique every visit to a restaurant or hotel.
- you fold your napkin into a bird of paradise before eating in the dining hall.
- you can't help but take over the hosting duties at every party you attend.
- even though there are 18,000 undergrads at BU, everyone you meet knows someone you know.
- going to the third floor of SHA is like walking into Cheers—everybody knows your name.
- you're required to imitate inappropriate office behavior in HR class.
- people call you from outside the Fuller Building because they can't figure out the way in.
- you go out to eat often for "research."
- you can take the wine class even if you're underage.
- you find it hard to part with your HF120 cookbook.
- your TiVo is filled with the Food Network and the Travel Channel.
- Anthony Bourdain is your friend on Facebook.
- your school supplies are technically weapons (knife set).
- you're one of the few people smiling while walking down Comm. Ave.





Getting Ahead of Himself

Four years out of SHA and Anthony Valletta has already opened five restaurants.

By ANDREW THURSTON

Anthony Valletta ('05) sends his apologies. He'd love to chat about the new upscale Italian restaurant he's managing, but we'll have to wait. There are less than two months until opening night and he's bumped into some construction issues.

The 150-seat Tavolino (Italian for "table") opened in the annex of a revamped, 19th-century railroad station in Westborough, Massachusetts, in October 2009. When we first caught up with Valletta, Tavolino's general manager, construction was in full swing. Well, sort of. This was, after all, a historical rebuild or, as Valletta put it after resolving what turned out to be a minor blip with a kitchen exhaust system, a project that was "an engineering marvel and a challenge at the same time."

The restaurant is the fifth that Valletta has helped open—a remarkable tally for someone yet to celebrate his 27th birthday. After graduating from SHA, Valletta joined RARE Hospitality (known for its Longhorn Steakhouse franchise and now part of the Darden Restaurants group) and quickly worked his way up.

"I was promoted to general manager when I was 22," he says. "I remember sitting down at my first interview with my boss and he said, 'I want to know what your short- and long-term goals are.' I looked him square in the eyes and said, 'In 15 months, I'm going to be a general manager.' He laughed and told me not to get ahead of myself. Thirteen months later, he promoted me."

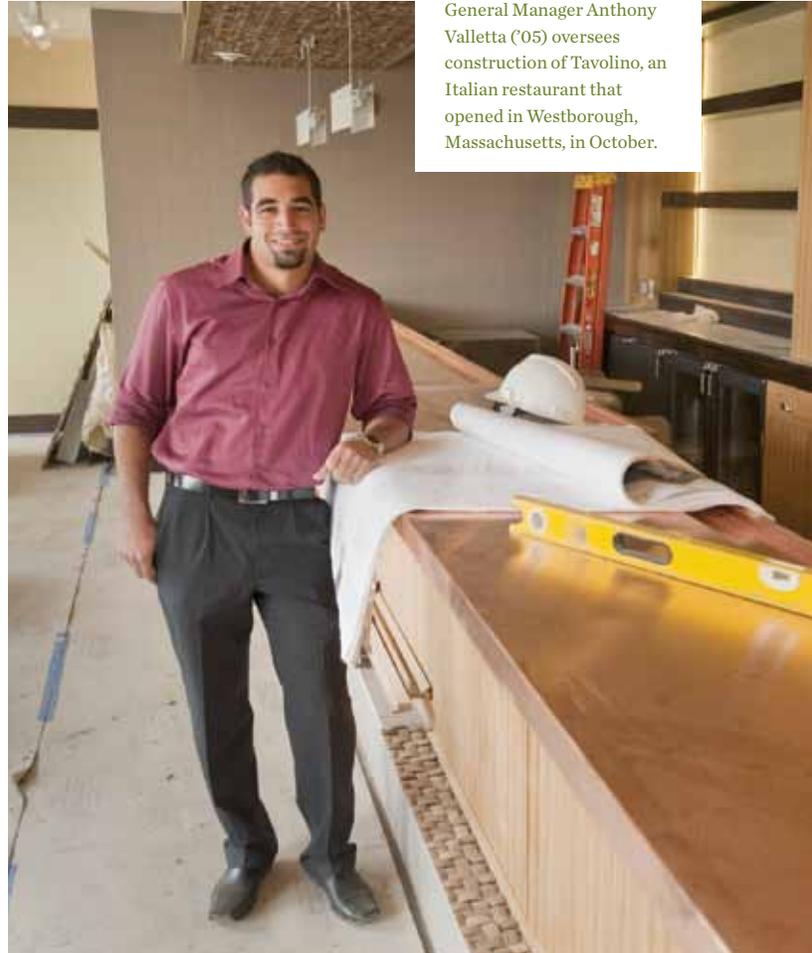
Valletta admits some of it boiled down to luck and timing, but he's just as quick to talk about drive and hard work. Although he doesn't feel pressure "to go above and beyond anybody else" to compensate for his age, he clearly has big goals and a determined work ethic. Both shine through whether he's talking about washing dishes in a sports bar at age 13 or sharing the aspiration that's pushed him to notch up a handful of first nights: "I've always had an ambition to open my own restaurant and that's part of the reason I've been involved in so many openings," says Valletta.

There's no doubt what type of food will be served in his start-up venue: Italian. The restaurant business might not be a family tradition, but Italian hospitality is.

"It goes back to my grandmother," he says. "To this day, she always has food cooking; she's always so hospitable. No matter who comes into her house, there's food on the table.

"I grew up around that and it's the memory that brings me to this business—I wanted to be like that on a bigger scale."

It's one of the reasons he's so excited about Tavolino. The restaurant is only the third in a fast-emerging chain of Italian eateries, and Valletta says that's given him the freedom to "create a personal mark throughout." He hopes to become part of the executive team as the company expands, gaining the experience he needs to bring Ristorante Valletta a little closer. Given his current trajectory, nobody's likely to tell the young restaurateur he's getting ahead of himself. ❏



General Manager Anthony Valletta ('05) oversees construction of Tavolino, an Italian restaurant that opened in Westborough, Massachusetts, in October.



Become a SHA Expert Speaker or Mentor

Anthony Valletta is a regular speaker at SHA, sharing his experience and advice with current students. To find out how your industry know-how can help prepare those following in your footsteps for a career in hospitality administration, contact Tracey Sharp at tsharp@bu.edu or 617-353-1011.



Delivering Luxury in Beverly Hills

By CORINNE STEINBRENNER



Photo courtesy of the SLS Hotel at Beverly Hills

Chairs shaped like teacups. Cocktails flash-frozen with liquid nitrogen. A room service menu for your dog. Quirky design and outlandish amenities make working at the swanky SLS Hotel at Beverly Hills as much fun as staying there. "It's like being Alice in Wonderland," says Leslie Lone ('06). "Every corner you turn, there's something different and exciting."

Just over a year ago, after completing Starwood's management training program and working two years as an assistant outlet manager at the St. Regis in Houston, Lone transferred to the SLS, where she now oversees in-room dining services.

While she saw her share of celebrities at the St. Regis, Lone admits she's still occasionally starstruck by the caliber of famous guests who frequent the SLS: "A couple of weeks ago I said good morning to Morgan Freeman, and just hearing his voice, that really distinct voice—I was speechless."

As in-room dining manager, Lone has a particularly important role at the SLS, where celebrity guests often prefer to dine in the privacy of their rooms—and don't mind paying for the luxury. The SLS is especially popular among Hollywood's trendy young stars who often hold late-night parties in their rooms, says Lone, and she doesn't bat an eye when they ask for elaborate in-room spreads. "Nothing is too big for us," she says. "Anything people ask for, as long as we have the product in-house, we can definitely accommodate." ❖

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NEWS & NOTES

Send us your news at tsharp@bu.edu.

Graham Ruggie, AIA, ('91) founded Janez Design & Development, an architectural design and real estate development firm in Ashland, Mass., that specializes in residential, commercial, and hospitality projects. He just completed his second restaurant design/construction project in Needham, Mass.

James Shepard ('98) is the new assistant general manager for Lucky Strike Lounge, Jillian's, and Tequila Rain on Lansdowne Street in Boston. He has been married for seven years to his wife, Idella, and has two children, Sage, 7, and Wolfgang, 4.

Melanie Downing-Jones ('01) had a baby girl on April 23, 2009. Ellora Melanie Jones was born at Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Mass.

Melissa Filan ('04, COM'04) recently accepted a position with Potomac College in Washington, D.C. Melissa is also working with the local BU Alumni Club to form a SHA Alumni Board in D.C. If you are interested in joining, please e-mail her at mfilan@alum.bu.edu.

Lincoln Fuge ('05) earned a culinary and wine degree from the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in Napa Valley, Calif., and then spent two years as sous chef at Todd English's Olives restaurant at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, Miss. He is now executive sous chef of Beso, a restaurant in Hollywood owned by Eva Longoria of *Desperate Housewives* fame and celebrity chef Todd English.

Jennifer Kramer ('07) is the public relations and events coordinator at Skyy Spirits in New York City. She works with Skyy's imported brands and enjoys meeting BU alumni at industry events in the city.

Patricia Ramsey ('07) recently took an around-the-world trip to Belgium, Germany, Hungary, India, China, Singapore, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. She is now a catering sales manager at the Westin Maui Resort & Spa. She and her fiancé, Matthew Gill (SED'07), will be married in Belgium in July 2010 and plan to move back to the East Coast next year.

Olya Pavlenko ('08) married Andrei Schafranek on October 19, 2008, in Burlingame, Calif., in a traditional Russian Orthodox ceremony performed by Olya's father. Ashley Deplitch (CAS'08), Kim Schumann (SMG'09), and Kate McCormick (CAS'09) were in attendance. Andrei and Olya currently live in northern New Jersey. Olya started a new job this fall as a conference coordinator for Opal Financial Group in New York City.

Randy Forrester ('09) was recently selected to perform in a Chef's Challenge to benefit the United Way of Greater Mercer County in New Jersey. Randy is working under Executive Chef Stanley Novak at the Harvest Moon Inn in Ringoes, N.J.

Boston University School of Hospitality Administration extends a very special thank-you to those alumni, parents, and friends who made gifts from July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009.

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