Next generation of hospitality professionals challenge an industry in transition at Edge Hotel School's Student Conference



Edge Hotel School hosted its Student Conference this week to tackle and challenge pertinent matters topping the agenda in hospitality.

Current hotel and event management students, alumni and esteemed industry professionals came together at Leonardo Royal Hotel St Paul's for a compact programme of education sessions aimed at kickstarting the careers of the next generation of hospitality professionals.

The school's Principal, Andrew Boer, welcomed students with an opening speech on the importance of experience, reiterating the support network that the hospitality community offers. The event followed the Master Innholders' Hotel Leadership Conference at which

many students were volunteers, managing registration and putting their organisational skills to the test with 500 delegates.

The first session saw Dan Rose-Bristow, Owner of The Torridon Hotel and Chair of the Master Innholders, and Rohaise Rose-Bristow, Owner and Director of The Torridon Hotel speak on their unconventional route into hospitality. Dan, who started out in a career in finance stressed to students that the skill of being hospitable is teachable. Rohaise urged students not to underestimate the value in making connections and reaching out to industry professionals that they aspire to follow or work for.

Next, Stuart Jenkins, former rugby player and current Managing Director of Blue Strawberry, luxury event caterers and planners, advised students to be agile: “those that respond quicker are those that will succeed”. James Clarke, General Manager at Hilton London Bankside followed with practical experience in putting sustainability at the forefront of hotel operations, without compromising the quality of the guest experience.

Two panel discussions sparked some topical debating among the inquisitive audience of young professionals. The first raised questions around the alignment of values with an employer, the perception of body art and piercings on staff, and the concept of tipping.

The final session saw four successful alumni return to share their journeys into fruitful hospitality careers, how to deal with rejection and dealing with imposter syndrome when you succeed.

Students were then given the opportunity to network and explore different avenues for careers in hospitality and events with their industry peers.

On the curation of the conference, Principal Andrew Boer said: “This is one of our educational highlights of the academic year and an invaluable experience for students to broaden their horizons and think bigger for a prosperous career in hospitality.

“The theme, ‘An Industry in Transition’, reflects the continued impact we feel from the Covid pandemic, the ongoing revolution of technology, the importance of sustainability, the social perception of work and the political upheavals that have all meant re-evaluating how we run and deliver hospitality and events.

“There is no greater motivation for the students than hearing the success stories not just of the top event companies and hoteliers, but alumni that were in their very shoes and have gone on to do wonderful things in the industry. We’re grateful to Leonardo Hotels for their generous support and the ongoing support of the Edge Foundation to make events like this possible.”

To find out more about Edge Hotel School, visit: https://www.wivenhoehouse.co.uk/the-edge-hotel-school/.

ENDS

Notes to editor:

The first of its kind in the UK, Edge Hotel School (EHS) has been delivering higher education degrees for 10 years, with students from all over the world who assist in the operation of Wivenhoe House, a fully commercial on-site hotel. The initiative is a joint venture between the University of Essex and the Edge Foundation, collaboratively delivering professional education to hospitality's next generation of leaders. Students can study on either an accelerated two-year or a standard three-year bachelor's degree in Hotel Management or Event Management.

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