

Interview with Edge Hotel School alumnus Tomas Parry

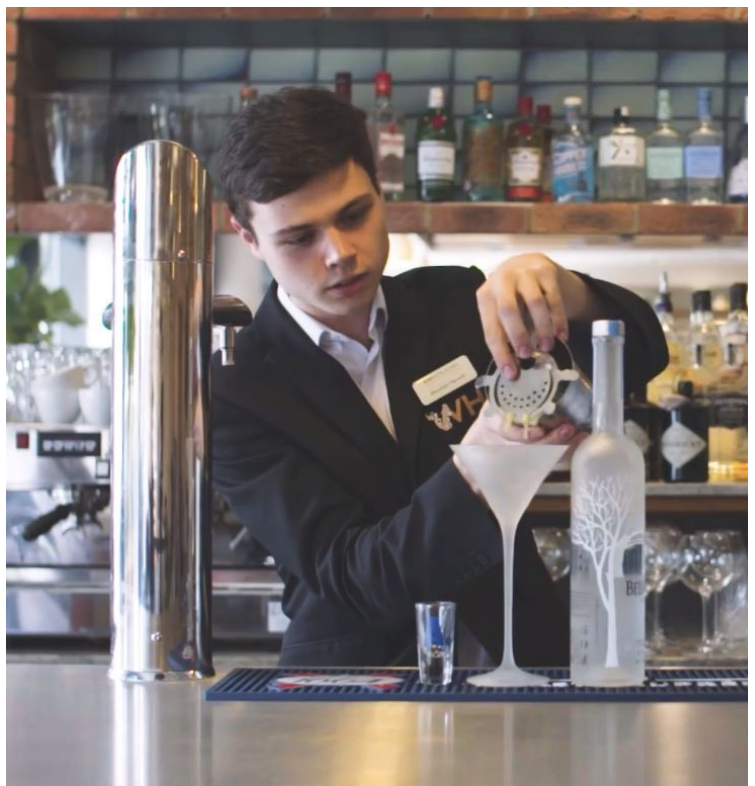


Tomas graduated from the Edge Hotel School last year and is now Restaurant Supervisor at Salcombe Harbour Hotel, part of the Harbour Hotels group.

Looking back, now you're out in the hospitality industry, what would you say were the main benefits of studying at EHS?

"One of the main benefits was being able to learn a number of new skills in a very short space of time. This really helped me since Salcombe Harbour Hotel reopened after the lockdown. I was put into a position with more responsibility and the fast paced learning at EHS really helped me to cope with quickly getting to grips with the recruitment platform and the procurement platform. My experience at EHS helped me understand the knock-on effects that actions and decisions in one department have on others, and on the guest experience as a whole."

"Whilst I was at EHS, I was fortunate enough to have worked at two of the Master Innholders Leadership Conferences where I met many influential people in the industry who gave me great advice about my future career."



What other opportunities did you have during your studies to meet people in the industry? And how did that help you?

"After a conversation with an industry professional at one of the Leadership Conference, I was also able to arrange work experience at Lucknam Park. This experience of working in a 5 red star property with a Michelin star restaurant really "unlocked my understanding of the guest experience and showed me first hand what the 5 red stars stand for."

What do you think are the most important skills you need to succeed in the hospitality industry and how did EHS help you develop them?

"You need to be driven to succeed. The industry is high pressure, all year round and always working to meet and exceed guest expectations. You need to be focussed on where you want to be and be driven to get there. You also need to be adaptable."

The industry uses change in a very positive way whether this is embracing new technology or studying what your guests really want and how your offer can differentiate you from your competitors.

But to me the most important skills is understanding people. No matter where you are in the industry, you are dealing with people – whether guests, suppliers or colleagues. Understanding people and how best to communicate with them is vital. Everyone is different so you need to "drop the script" and be adaptable and empathetic. That way you'll get the best result for everyone."

What's the best piece of advice you've received since starting out in the industry?

"Never ask anyone to do something you haven't done! This advice inspired me to learn about every aspect of the industry so in the future, when I'm delegating tasks, I will always understand what I'm asking people to do. It's also one of the best ways of gaining colleagues' respect and showing we are all one team, working together."

The hospitality industry has been particularly affected by Covid-19. How has it affected you? And what would you say to a young person thinking about a career in hospitality now?

"It has had a huge impact but I have no doubt the industry will bounce back. The pandemic has really shown how important hospitality is to the economy and to people's wellbeing. Personally it has given me the opportunity to experience re-opening a hotel. This was a huge learning curve and has prepared me for a brand new opening I will be part of later this year. My advice to others would be, be resilient. It is a hard time to join the industry but there will be massive opportunities now and in the future. You need to keep the faith!"

Well that's a very positive approach! Thinking about your own career, where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?

"I'll be 26 in 5 years' time so hope to be at Operations Manager level, in a 4 star hotel. Where I am currently, Harbour Hotels, is a very exciting company to be involved in, always moving forwards and supporting staff progression so there's nothing to say that I won't still be with the same organisation!"



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<https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/edge-hotel-school>