

TAKING CHANCES

How a local construction firm is giving one lucky student an early career break.

BY: KELLY MERRITT
PHOTOGRAPHY: ERIN NAGLE

Architecture, nature, fashion and the arts have long inspired photography in professionals and students alike. So when Larry Porter of PorterVanArsdale gave college student Erin Nagle a shot at photographing one of PorterVanArsdale's renovated homes, she jumped at the chance.

"Having an opportunity like this is great for any aspiring artist," said Nagle, who traveled to Naples for the photo shoot from Alabama. Porter's daughter is Nagle's roommate. And when

Porter heard she wanted to pursue photography, he invited Nagle to test her photo wings in Naples.

While in Naples, Nagle shot photos of some PorterVanArsdale houses, and was inspired by the Pelican Bay home Porter's firm renovated.

"We went to a few locations and took some photos for the PorterVanArsdale website and office – I was inspired by the Pelican Bay house, by the color of the home and



opportunity Nagle might not have otherwise been given.

"In sponsoring these kids, whether we're helping young upcoming photographers or we're using architecture to inspiring budding careers, it's important to give these students avenues to discover what they want to do with their education," said Porter. "Often times, they go to school and graduate, but often they are still not sure what genre or field of work they want to pursue."

Nagle agrees. She is majoring in photography and graphic design with a focus on photography, however, she's not sure what avenue to pursue.

"I've done everything from fashion to nature to black and white photography, to landscapes and architecture," she said. "I could be happy doing anything, but I hope to decide what I want to do before I graduate."

Getting professional experience before she's out on her own, away from the protective insulation of her college, will go a long way toward Nagle finding her path. Porter hopes her time shooting construction and architecture will help Nagle ascertain what she likes best, but also, will give her the opportunity to see what life is like for a professional photographer.

"It's amazing to me to see the younger generation working so hard in school," he said. "And to be able to help them contribute and succeed is something we should all try to do if our business allows for it."

Porter isn't the only executive with

was thrilled to see how Mr. Porter and his team were able to salvage the tile floors," said Nagle. "I loved the tropical vibe and the feeling and atmosphere of the entire house."

That she might see her photographs in one of PorterVanArsdale's marketing materials someday is exciting to Nagle.

"Publicity for your work is one of the most helpful things that any artist can get," she said. "All of the PorterVanArsdale homes I photographed seemed very authentic and inviting – each had a very unique quality and that's what makes for great photography."

For Larry Porter, getting photos of his work is business as usual. In fact, some of Naples' most successful photographers have seen his homes through their lenses.

But for Porter, who believes in helping students fulfill their education is a passionate endeavor. And having a student photograph his properties was all about sharing an

entrepreneurial spirit for helping the young conjure the next phase of their professional lives. In fact, according to multiple collegiate studies and experts, aside from classroom learning, the next best thing students can do to ensure readiness for employment is to gain real world experience.

CollegeView.com even goes so far as to say that internships and other such on-the-job training like that which Nagle received from PorterVanArsdale, can be essential to landing a student's ideal job at graduation. CollegeView also suggests that the connections a student can make with people like Porter and his colleagues can make the difference between being an employed graduate or a graduate without prospects.

Porter also reached out to Portfolio Magazine and Publisher Bill Hemmer regarding Nagle's photography goals. Hemmer wanted to give the aspiring photographer an opportunity glean information on what it takes to get your work in print.

"Portfolio Magazine is all about showcasing amazing photography, beautiful places and the Naples lifestyle," said

Hemmer. "We feature some of the area's best photographers in our publications."

Hemmer also publishes a sister magazine called "Views" in Western North Carolina, which has a similar

readership to Naples. Views is also known for a focus on beautiful landscapes showcased in breathtaking photographs and stories that celebrate life against the backdrop of amazing locales.



"Our readers appreciate the ability of our photographers to capture these images, images which have become art," said Hemmer. "I'm excited for Ms. Nagle to see her work alongside these other artists who have made a

successful living with photography – for a student, it's a really big deal."

Porter also believes that when it comes to working right out of college, going back to the basics never hurts,

"Even in the time of social networking when a computer is the avenue a student uses most to get a job, nothing beats good old fashioned connections," he says.

And Porter would be right. In fact, according to The Education Portal, face to face networking, such as the kind students can get on the job like Nagle's PorterVanArsdale photo shoot, is one of the best ways to get noticed for a salaried job opportunity at graduation. And even if a job isn't in the cards immediately upon graduating, a recommendation letter for Nagle from Porter will go a long way in Nagle's future interviews elsewhere.

Porter says his firm is committed to helping students prepare to graduate. And Nagle is grateful for the opportunity. In fact, she has a message for Porter and his firm.

"Although I am really just starting out, this will help people see my abilities now as well as my progress as I continue my passion of photography," she

said. "I would like to thank PorterVanArsdale, specifically Mr. Porter for this amazing opportunity to showcase my work and let people know what I can and would like to do with my future career."

