

The Edinburgh Reporter chats with Edwin Van der Ven



WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE DID YOU COME FROM

My name is Edwin van der Ven, owner of The Reverie restaurant and bar in Newington. I originally come from The Hague, in the Netherlands.

WHAT IS THE BUSINESS BOOK YOU RECOMMEND THAT EVERYONE SHOULD READ

I would recommend 'The Way I See It', by Alan Sugar. Witty Lord Sugar does not hold back on advice for (would be) entrepreneurs

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE YOUR BUSINESS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

My wife and I make a very good team. She has excellent financial skills, while my main strengths lie in operations – this combination works well for the business.

I don't know if it counts as a weakness, but we always like to be working on new projects and achieving new goals, which keeps us very busy.

WHAT WAS THE DEFINING MOMENT ON YOUR CAREER PATH ?

The defining moment on my career path was when I was working as assistant food and beverage manager at a prestigious Edinburgh hotel. I really enjoyed the job, but when my first child was born, I realised I was working such long hours that I was not seeing enough of my family.

We realised the answer was to run our own business and this

has helped us attain the work/life balance we need.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR SPARE TIME

I love spending time with my family and walking our dog, Lola. I've also recently joined the rowing club in Portobello. We are training for the summer regattas organised all over Scotland. It's hard work, but very enjoyable.

DO YOU THINK YOU ACHIEVE A GOOD WORK/LIFE BALANCE

I think we have largely achieved a good work/life balance, although [The Reverie](#) keeps us extremely busy, especially during the Festival, the Six Nations and the Christmas and New Year period.

WHAT MAKES EDINBURGH THE BEST LOCATION FOR YOU TO LIVE AND/OR WORK IN

Where do I start? It is multi-national, beautiful, historical, easy to get around and has easy access to the countryside. It is by far the best city in Britain!

WHAT IS YOUR SPECIAL AREA OF EDINBURGH OR SPECIAL PLACE IN EDINBURGH AND WHY

My favourite place in Edinburgh is Portobello. We live nearby, and like being part of the community – I row there, our daughters go to Brownies, we walk the dog along the Promenade and we also like to shop locally, wherever possible.

WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE PINNACLE OF YOUR CAREER

While I have achieved a number of goals, I don't think I have reached the pinnacle of my career yet!

IF YOU HAVE A MENTOR, TELL US ABOUT THAT

We have in the past made use of the mentoring service offered by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, and found it very useful to bounce ideas off the mentor we worked with. He also provided

us with helpful insights to apply to the business.

WHICH NETWORKING GROUPS IN EDINBURGH HAVE YOU FOUND PARTICULARLY USEFUL

We rarely have time to network, although we have met some useful contacts at Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce meetings. One of the benefits of being a publican, though, is that we have a ready made network in the form of our customers!

WHO ARE YOUR BUSINESS HEROES

I admire everyone who has taken the step to become self employed, from sole traders through to magnates such as Lord Sugar.

WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS GOALS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

We're planning to further enhance the interior of the Reverie, to make it even more comfortable, with new lighting and soft furnishings.

DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY FOR US

The best thing about working in a bar is the variety of the job. While there is of course a daily routine to ensure everything runs smoothly, no two days are every the same. I start the day by walking to the Reverie, via Arthur's Seat, then the day flies by, as I set up the bar, serve customers, discuss menus with our head chef and source more of the interesting local beers that our customers love.

BEST JOB ADVICE YOU EVER RECEIVED

Do what you enjoy the most!

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