

Business profile – Robi Lambie of Cairngorm Coffee Co

✘ Robi Lambie is the owner of Cairngorm Coffee Co in Frederick Street where they serve the most divine coffee and 'world famous' cheese sandwiches....

Who are you, and where did you come from?

I'm Robi, and I have laid my hat in a fairly scattered variety of places over the past few years, but come from the Highlands.

What is the business book you recommend that everyone should read?

Several of the books I've read are fairly specific to the area of business that Cairngorm Coffee Co. is related to. One in particular 'Wake Up & Smell The Profits' was an interesting read, however there are so many aspects of it that are painstakingly obvious and I was always advised when starting this project just to get stuck in and start learning. I feel that to a certain extent there is a lot of benefit of doing this and certain things can't be taught with words.

I did enjoy the ruthless, natural entrepreneurship in Duncan Bannatyne's 'Anyone Can Do It', and I'm currently reading 'The Virgin Way: How to Listen, Learn, Laugh and Lead' by Richard Branson which I'm hoping will give me some balance on having fun at work.

How do you spend your spare time?

I'm a big fan of going to the cinema, and enjoy attending concerts. Whenever I get time to take a break and go away I find myself led towards coffee shops to pick up ideas and try other great coffees.

What is your special area of Edinburgh, or special place in Edinburgh and why?

I love Stockbridge having lived in and around there a couple of times in the past. It's just a brilliant small community, and in some aspects probably reminds me of some of the High Streets of several small Highland towns I've grown up in. I love the self sufficiency of it also; that is has a great butcher, fishmonger, post office, greengrocer, etc.

There's something quite romantic about the fact that you could live there and almost avoid any chains if you really wanted to. In addition our coffee is roasted on Dean Park St by the tremendous Mr Eion, so that's more reason why it's a special place for me.

What would you consider the pinnacle of your career?

Having only been doing this for a very short time, I like to think that the pinnacle of my career is yet to come. However, actually getting the place open after months of renovation, and finally serving that first coffee was a fairly monumental milestone!

If you have a mentor then could you tell us who that is and about your relationship.

My mentor really is my Dad. He owns a Cafe on the A9 by Newtonmore and so growing up I did shifts there, which clearly had a big effect on me.

What benefits does that relationship bring to you and your business?

The biggest benefit is that he has done the exact journey that I'm on now, and so I know that any advice he lends has a track record in the exact industry that I've found myself in and isn't just an opinion. It's invaluable really to have that on the end of the phone daily so I count myself incredibly lucky!

What are your business goals for the next year?

I really want to just continue with a focus on trying to make the best coffee we can and claim a stake in the fantastic existing and developing coffee scene in Edinburgh among so many great shops. I think that any development may come from the success of our Grilled Cheese sandwich, and I think there could be scope for us to experiment with this.

Best job advice you ever received?

Again, advice I received from my Dad which is always weighing on my mind is 'Keep It Simple', and since opening in March last year it's been a bit of a motto I've tried to live by.

Your plan of attack for the next 12 months?

My plan of attack is to continue with a focus on trying to make the best coffee we can and claim a stake in the fantastic existing and developing coffee scene in Edinburgh among so many great shops.

