

Talking about charity work

Virginie Brouard, French born, mother of three and owner of both Le Di-Vin Wine Bar and La P'tite Folie French restaurant situated in the West End area of Edinburgh.

- Virginie, your restaurant and wine bar are both iconic Edinburgh institutions and have fabulous food and wine, how do you maintain your standards of cuisine and service?

Thank you. We always try to listen to our customers and work with them to create a nice place to enjoy your favourite wine, small plates and tapas. We encourage feedback from our customers and receive a lot through our social media channels etc. We also have a very close working team throughout the wine bar and restaurant, some who have been with us for many years. It is so important for me to look after them and work as a team together but also to change with the times and we have a lot of new exciting projects coming up that I am excited to share with you all when we can.



- How did you come to be in the restaurant business?

I arrived in Edinburgh in 1991 aged 19, with £90 in my pocket. I gave up University in France and came to live in Edinburgh. I started working in Pierre Victoire (Famous French Bistrot) as a Waitress and after 5 years there an opportunity came up that I couldn't turn down and I bought Frederick Street, my first ever restaurant in 1996. Milan my first son was just 5

months old at the time. In 2003, I opened the second branch (Randolph Place). Both places were successful. Then, in 2008, I opened the Wine Bar, with my second son, Pierre aged 6 months!

- Your sommelier Luke is quite a character, what does he bring to Le Di-Vin?

He certainly is! Luke brings so much to the wine bar. He has an amazing background as a Sommelier and he has such amazing knowledge and love for wine, it is just incredible. He is very good with people and everyone takes a liking to him that meets him. He always goes out of his way to let customers taste and try the wine to ensure that they find something that they love. He is currently very busy working on our latest wine list which will be out in April so we are very excited about that. Together with Barbara, the restaurant Manageress who works very closely with Luke, both are very motivated to get the business working well and both of them are doing a great job.

- You do some interesting things, oysters and raclette! Any future ideas?

Yes, everyone loves our oyster evenings and our raclette! They always go down so well. We always try to do something a bit different and what the customers want too. We have some very exciting food and drink plans for 2019 but it is top secret just now. We will let you know more when we can!

- And lastly I'd love you to tell me about your charity work and connection with Ethiopia.



Virginie on the bar at Le Di-Vin PHOTO | Derek Anderson Photography

Because the Businesses are successful, I decided to start Humanitarian work which is how I began travelling to Ethiopia to volunteer there.

I started my work in Ethiopia by sponsoring a feeding program for orphans and very poor children. In the last year, I have managed to get renowned Mary's Meals to start feeding school children in Ethiopia.

This new collaboration with Mary's Meals will benefit thousands of children and initially we will be working with 3 or 4 local schools before hopefully helping even more. My main aim this year through the charity work is to raise enough money for a water well for the children.

I now work very closely together with Mary's Meals. We now feed 12 schools, nearly 8000 children per day and more is planned for 2019. Ethiopia will always be very close to my heart.

Thank you again!

