

House of Hound – one stop shop for all your dog's needs

Darren Donaldson is the sole proprietor of House of Hound on Roseburn Terrace which as you may suspect is all about dogs. While we visited one black lab dragged its owner off the street and into the shop, clearly knowing what it was after, so this is obviously a favourite stop for many.

Clearly a dog lover, Darren has just adopted another wee dog after its owner died. He said: "Very recently we lost a member of our community, Bett, and she left behind her little dog a Schnauzer. I have known him since he was eight weeks old and since there was no family to take him he is coming to live with me. I have adopted him. The dog is now eight. She was a lovely woman.

Darren explained that he has nearly 25 years retail experience with most of his experience in the luxury world.

He said: "I had worked for Cruise, Harvey Nichols and wanted to translate that into having my own shop. For my 30th birthday I went to New York. At that time I had three dogs depicted on the sign on the door, but Eddie is the only one left now. There were amazing dog boutiques – mostly super modern, very New York and stylish, and I wondered how to

translate that into something for Edinburgh.

“I opened my shop in 2014. It was probably unique at that point, although other new businesses have started up over the years. We work closely with our fantastic competitors so that we don't cross over, or step on each other's toes. There is a wider range of shops than there has ever been, but we all do our own little thing.

Darren shows off the wonderful comfortable beds for dogs in his window but he also has bandanas, collars and harness, dishes to eat out of and treats.

He explained that while owners want the best for their dog it is not about humanising them. He said: “It is about ensuring they give them the best. It is about a full care package and so we recommend good vets, groomers, and our biggest focus is about ensuring that we sell the best food.

“Our shop is for personal shoppers only, although we invite email inquiries. I feel strongly about bricks and mortar as it is the only place you will get the best advice about your pets. The team are all trained in giving the best advice possible. I would honestly rather somebody left empty handed than left with the wrong advice.”

There are four part time members of staff at House of Hound – even Darren is part-time as he is studying an ethics degree at the moment through Open University.

He explained it had not always been plain sailing to start. He said: “I started prepping the business in mid 2013. I had a massive setback when one of the major brands which I was going to have as our anchor brand signed a deal with a major supermarket unbeknown to me. So I had six weeks to start from scratch. But it turned out to be one of the best things that happened as we then entered into deals with about sixteen smaller suppliers and work in a much more fine tuned way. I now buy little and often from them.”

The House of Hound bestseller is dog food by Canagan which is a British brand of dry and wet food, all responsibly sourced and ethically produced.

<https://www.thehouseofhound.co.uk>

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This article is part of a paid for advertorial feature which appeared first in our April newspaper.



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