

Turnover takes off for city-based travel firm

Edinburgh-based travel firm Lindsay's Highland Tours has doubled its turnover in the wake of transatlantic tourism taking off again following the pandemic – and plans to add to its staff due to demand.

The capital-based business reported sales of £264,811 to the year end 31 January, which compares favourably to the previous 12 months' figure of £132,159.

Profit before tax was down at £13,274 (£35,143), the decrease reflecting a significant investment in staff, vehicles and a website overhaul.

Family-run, the firm specialises in bespoke luxury tours around Scotland and it has been buoyed by the increase in demand from holidaymakers from the USA who enjoy travelling with a local guide with genuine insight into the various different parts of the country.

Visits to the Isle of Skye and Loch Ness have been the most popular, along with the Outlander tours.

Earlier this year, VisitScotland said the country was enjoying a faster recovery in international tourism compared to other areas of the UK and stats from Q3 of 2023 showed Scotland to be the only region to report an increase in visitors from the

USA.

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) recently released its annual members' figures and they showed visits to Scotland's most popular sites increased by 21 per cent last year compared to 2022, with the UK average sitting at 19 per cent.

Steven Lindsay, managing director of Lindsay's Highland Tours, set up the firm five years ago with his father George, and said: "As proud Scots, we found that the true essence of our homeland was lost in oversized tour groups and generic itineraries.

"We know the real magic of Scotland lies in its intimate tales, hidden trails and majestic landscapes that can only be appreciated through a tailor-made journey.

"We set out to offer something different: tours that are not about herding tourists but about understanding individual interests and creating deeply personal Scottish experiences that resonate long after they leave.

"It's clear more people are travelling now post-Covid. People are just keen to get away while others have had holidays postponed due to the pandemic and are now feeling comfortable to rearrange them. Our mission is to showcase Scotland as the ultimate travel destination. 90 per cent of our customers are from the States and there's no doubt they now have their appetite back for travel and are coming back to Scotland in their numbers.

"That is reflected in our latest set of results. We have reinvested heavily to set us up for continued growth and we're very confident for the year ahead given the bookings we already have confirmed.

"There is a lot of organic bookings which is reassuring and a big endorsement of our offering. We focus on quality not

quantity, don't do groups and put our emphasis on the personal touch. Given the upward trend of the bookings, the plan is to add to our staff later in the year."

