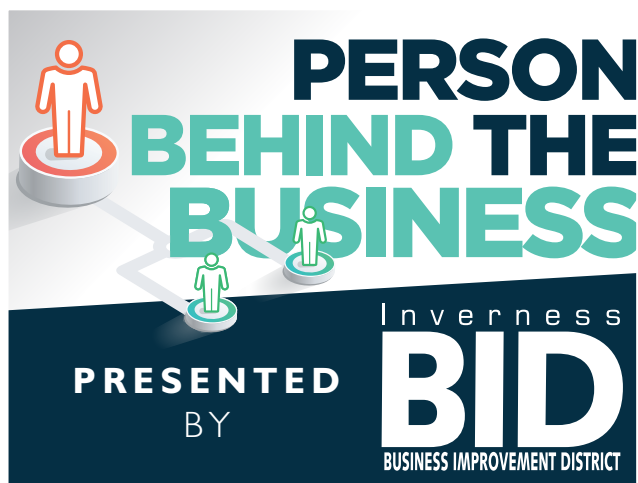


Family-run city salon is a cut above

Good service and hard work are the family traditions **Gilby Crook** says will take Ralph Crook Hair into its next 40 years



Q How would you describe your business?

A It's a family hairdressing business and it's only hair services. We stick to what we know! It was started in 1977 by my father, Ralph Crook, and I've worked with him for about 17 years. He retired and I've taken over from him. I think our business has lasted so long because we're a family-run business and we strive to maintain a good standard for our guests who are incredibly important to



Family business Ralph Crook Hair is in the safe hands of son Gilby.

Picture: Callum Mackay

us. We always try to help in any way we can; without them we're nothing. We get a strong amount of newcomers but we have a very loyal customer base as well which is good.

Q What led you into the business?

A I love the fact it is creative and it's always different every day. I enjoy meeting people and making people feel happy. There are very few jobs now where you're with someone for that amount of time and speaking to people one-to-one.

I started off working in London at Vidal Sassoon and then worked in Glasgow for Alan Edwards, a very well-known hairdresser there. I came back from London and Glasgow and I wanted to work with my father while he was still working. He's a brilliant person to learn from. He's been in the trade a long time! It was good spending that much time with him; it was an honour.

Q What is your greatest achievement?

A Myself and my father walked up to the base camp of Mount Everest in 1998/99. That was a good achievement! We spent a month in Nepal and it was just great spending time with my father. It was the first time I'd spent a whole

month with dad where we weren't at work. I was very lucky to spend that time with him. With walking and climbing you get back to basics and nature. You're not getting annoyed by technology. You go to these countries and they've got nothing but they offer you everything. It makes you feel very humble. It was a great experience - phenomenal. I've also just had a baby boy, Alfie Christopher Crook. I'm blessed to have a beautiful son.

Q Who do you admire in business?

A I admire my father. I'm also very good friends with Norman MacDonald from Cafe One. I admire what he's achieved and how he managed to get through lockdown and he's still going strong. It's a great restaurant. I admire everyone that's in business in Inverness.

They've managed to sustain their businesses though lockdowns and the pandemic, and are still going strong. I've been fortunate because I've grown up with these people, I look up to them. They're the best people to learn from because they've done

it, they've gone through the ups and downs. They can always help you and give you advice.

Q What's your advice to budding entrepreneurs?

A If you have a goal and a passion for what you do, just continue doing it. It's not going to be easy, nothing is easy but just persevere. When it gets hard, keep going and you will get there, you will succeed. If you want it that much you will achieve it. For every hurdle, there's a way over it. If you want to succeed, you have to keep working.

Q Can you tell us something more about yourself?

A I like spending time with my family. I love my job so I'm constantly trying new ways and training. I also love travelling, I've been fortunate enough to travel quite a lot to different countries. It's great to go to new places and inhale a new culture and see how other people live. I've learned throughout my life that, we may all live in different places, but we're all the same people really.

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