

Dishing up the secrets of his success!

Ambition and a passion for authentic Spanish cuisine was a recipe for success for La Tortilla owner **Duncan Chisholm**

PERSON BEHIND THE BUSINESS

PRESENTED BY **Inverness BID**
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Q How would you describe your business?

A I think my business is an original restaurant, unlike anything else. It has evolved over 21 years into something unique. La Tortilla Asesina is a tapas bar that specialises in paellas.

Q What led you into the business?

A I’ve always had business ambitions and when I discovered that I couldn’t get into the family business I



Owner of La Tortilla Asesina tapas bar, **Duncan Chisholm**.

Picture: James Mackenzie

had to choose another business. A combination of Spanish influences in my life combined with a love of food culture and cooking led me to opening a tapas bar.

Q What makes Inverness a great place to run a business?

A For me, Inverness was the right place to start because it’s a community that I know and when you start a business you need all the support you can get. I moved back to Inverness because I wanted to live here and I think it offers a good lifestyle. Inverness has always been a steadily growing city and it has an unusually large catchment area of customers which is what you want when opening a restaurant. Although we are a small city, we attract a lot of visitors from around the Highlands as well as tourists from the UK and worldwide.

Q What is your greatest achievement?

A Well, the first thing that comes to mind is of course my daughter Mimi. Being a father has always been my main ambition and I was delighted when it happened. As any parent will confirm, it changes your life and brings new challenges. After my

daughter it would have to be my business, I’m very proud of it and the longer I do it the more I see its potential. I think my best days are ahead of me.

Q Who do you admire in business?

A I have a number of people that I admire in business for different reasons. I admire my dad because he has not just been a father to me he has also been my father in business. My original insight and ambition comes from my dad. Another important influence was the owner of a company that I worked for for 11 years. He had an ability to manage me that no-one else has ever had. I think I am a difficult person to manage and he was such a great example of how to manage people. I was also influenced by Tom Hunter, a well-known figure in business in Scotland. I must have been one of his first employees and I used to call his house with my figures at the end of the week and he would always respond positively and take time to have a chat.

Q What’s your advice to budding entrepreneurs?

A Develop an endurance mind-set and find yourself a business mentor. The really hard bit is being able to listen to a mentor, understand their wisdom, and act on it. This could make your learning curve much shorter and save you a fortune. Evolving and developing quickly is important. This could be the difference between surviving or not.

Q Can you tell us more about yourself?

A I have what I call ‘hobby ambitions’. It’s important to not be obsessed with one thing because if that one thing fails you are in a terrible place in life. I have always focused on my health and fitness, even during the most difficult moments in my business I will find time to go for a run. I’m a member of the local triathlon club and I take part in a lot of events and I want to do a full Ironman next year. I play piano and bass guitar, I play in a band and I want to write a solo album.

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