

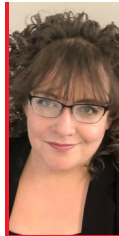


Exciting times for city centre businesses in build-up to Christmas

IT'S an exciting month for the city centre. The NC50 Music Festival went so well we're delighted to hear it'll be back next year.

We hosted our fourth annual Inverness City Centre Business Awards and the recognition was extra special as all our worthy finalists and winners, representing many businesses and charities, were chosen by the people who matter to them the most: their own customers and clients.

We've also just launched the Inverness City Centre Gift Card, now accepted in over 150 fantastic businesses, meaning Christmas shopping this year can be entirely stress-free as it makes the perfect gift for all ages. Plus, by choosing to support local, it brings people together and helps build a stronger, more vibrant and resilient community so it's win-win. To find out more visit: www.invernessgiftcard.com



Business Comment

By Lorraine Bremner McBride
Director of Inverness BID

We'd love to hear your Gift Card stories and see your pictures so join in the conversation and tell us where you'd spend a City Centre Gift Card: [#invernessloveslocal](https://twitter.com/invernessloveslocal) [#invernesscitycentre](https://twitter.com/invernesscitycentre)

Coming soon - we have free events for a bit of festive fun including Elf on the Shelf in the Victorian Market on December 2 and 3 (11am-4pm) and The Hunt for the Lost Toys QR trail from December 1-31.

Santa's Grotto in aid of the Highland Hospice also returns to the Eastgate Shopping Centre from November 27, book in advance at: www.eastgateshopping.co.uk

Larger shop aids drink experts to taste more success

Filling the streets with locals and tourists would be the vision for **Lorna Baird**, branch manager at WoodWinters Wines and Whiskies

Small Business Focus in association with **Inverness BID** BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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Q How would you describe your business to a stranger?

A WoodWinters is a specialist wine and spirits shop in spacious new premises in Church Street. We stock quality wines from all over the world and have close contact with the producers to ensure the highest standards are maintained and that we can offer exceptional wines at prices to suit most pockets.

We want a visit to a wine shop to be fun and exciting. We are trying to dismiss the whole idea that wine should be expensive before it is tasty and to prove that no matter what your budget you can get delicious wine. We don't do one-off deals to drag you into the shop. We offer fair pricing on good quality wines rather than mass production short-term deals. What good is a bargain if the wine isn't great and doesn't fulfil expectations? Life is too short for that.

We are happy to discuss customers' preferences and make recommendations so purchases can be tailored to individual tastes and requirements.

We are importers, wholesalers and retailers and run and support events featuring our wines. We also work with independent bottlers and to offer WoodWinters exclusives on bottles from single malt whisky casks at affordable prices.

People can get an essence of who we are and what we offer when our popular annual ticketed Big Tasting returns on Friday, November 18, in the Ironworks, which boasts over 100 wines.

Q What inspired you to start the business?

A The first WoodWinters opened in Bridge of Allan in 2005 followed by a shop in Edinburgh and



Lorna Baird.

then Inverness in 2016. We had worked with a couple of well-known restaurants in the area and felt that establishing ourselves in Inverness, where there is a fantastic wine scene, was a great opportunity to grow our business in the Highlands.

I joined the company this year, returning to my hometown on the Black Isle after 24 years in Glasgow studying and then working in hospitality and off-licence companies and later managing a wines and spirits business including buying in after sampling vintages at tastings at vineyards. I have gained a great deal of knowledge which I am delighted to share with WoodWinters customers.

Q How has your business developed?

A We have just relocated to a new and bigger shop to help improve the shopping experience and offer a bigger range of wines, whiskies, and artisan spirits as well as craft ales

and there has been a huge walk-in trade uplift. We have also grown rapidly in the on-trade business, working with some fantastic clients from Skye through to Aberdeen.

Q How are you moving forward post the Covid-19 pandemic?

A We have supported our on-trade customers, who have been through an awful time in the last two-and-a-half years, through wine dinners and tastings. We are again now hosting in-person tastings rather than being limited to online.

Opening the larger shop has helped create a more spacious environment for our customers. Our website also allows browsing and ordering.

Q What lessons have you learnt from your time in business?

A That the love of wine is certainly here in the Highlands, and we have so much to offer in our new shop. Each customer is different, and we are here to help them find their own niche.

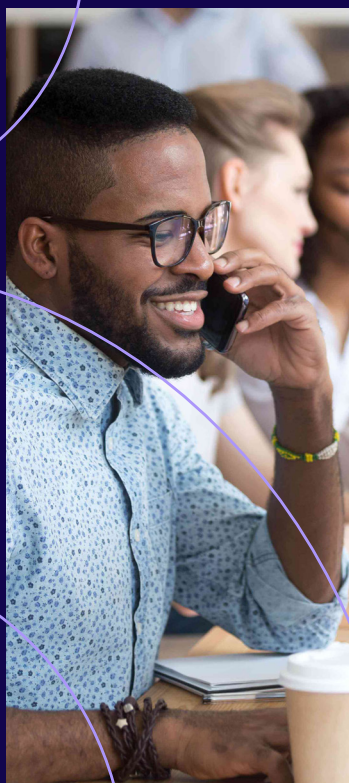
Q What's your vision for Inverness city centre?

A To get the streets filled with locals and tourists supporting local businesses which are key to creating the best possible city centre. Without these fantastic people, we wouldn't have a High Street.

Q Tell us something interesting about yourself?

A I gained a degree in sociology and anthropology at Glasgow University and did fieldwork for my dissertation on 'Voodoo: A Means of Hope and Control' in Livingston, Guatemala working with a shaman and studying his homeopathic healing practices.

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