

Stay positive and you can do anything

Whether it's bagging Munros or rising to life's challenges, having a positive mindset is the key says **Graham Calley**



PERSON BEHIND THE BUSINESS
PRESENTED BY **Inverness BID**
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Q How would you describe your business?

A Blackfriars Hotel is simply summed up by our signage; Eat, Sleep, Drink. We are a delightful nine-bedroom hotel with a very comfortable and warm atmosphere. Our restaurant and bar serves amazing food which is all freshly prepared by our head chef, Paul Donnelly, and his team. The bedrooms at Blackfriars are luxurious and every room is uniquely



Graham Calley, general manager at Blackfriars bar, restaurant and hotel. Picture: James Mackenzie

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decorated. We have a great team and along with my assistant manager, Alex Thetford.

We offer both visitors and locals a friendly place to dine or simply enjoy a drink.

Q What led you into the business?

A I've been involved in the hospitality industry for many years. I was the sales director of a coffee supply company. Most of my clients were at the higher end of the hospitality industry and I became fascinated by the whole concept of this field. It seemed a natural change of direction from direct sales to running hospitality businesses, especially the front-of-house operations. I have known the owner of the business, chief executive officer Billy McAneney, for around 20 years. Blackfriars is part of the Baby Grand Group of restaurants based in Glasgow and also runs the Winking Owl in Aviemore. Billy asked me earlier this year to take over as general manager and it was a pleasure to get involved.

Q What makes Inverness a great place to run a

business?

A Inverness is a vibrant city in which to run an independent hotel; there is a unique opportunity between the tourists and the local population.

Businesses cannot just rely on tourists and we are trying to ensure that local residents and businesses can get better information about our hotel and restaurant.

Q What is your greatest achievement?

A My greatest achievement is raising an amazing family of four daughters and my son. They have been my rock over some personal challenges.

Q Who do you admire in business?

A I would have to say Billy McAneney is truly someone that I admire. From the early 80s he has grown his business from one modest restaurant, The Baby Grand, Glasgow, into a thriving group of catering establishments covering

Glasgow, Edinburgh and now the Highlands. Billy also does a tremendous amount of work with underprivileged people in Malawi.

Q What's your advice to budding entrepreneurs?

A My advice is always never say no to an idea; a positive mindset can overcome any challenge.

Q Can you tell us more about yourself?

A My greatest passion in life was equestrian based. I used to compete in show jumping and cross country events. At one time, myself and my family ran an equestrian centre in Fife which was also a holiday centre. Now a bit more sedate, myself and my wife, Ole, love hill walking and do try to bag a few Munros each year. Travelling is also very enjoyable and trying different kinds of foods.

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