

ISSUE 23 | 2023

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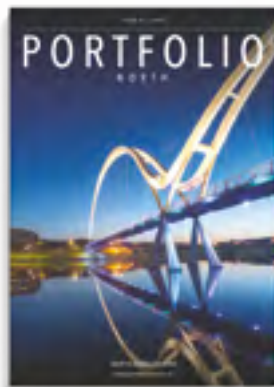
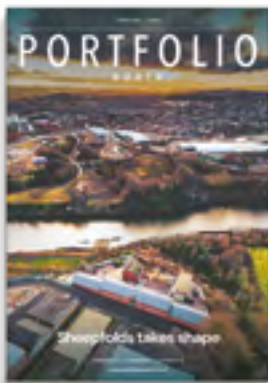
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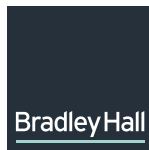
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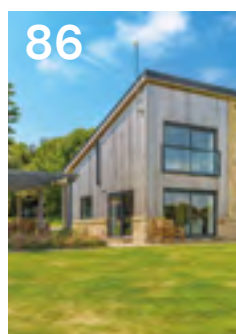
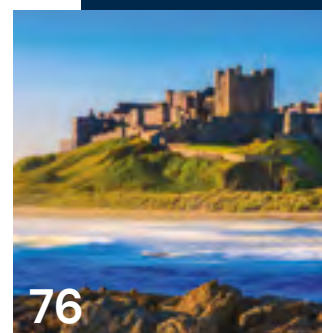
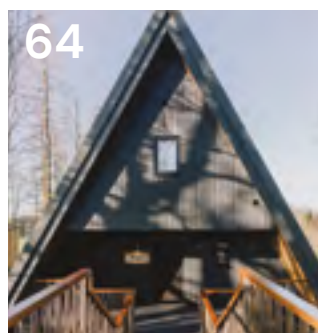
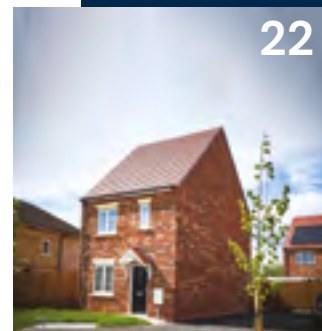
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Contributors Round up



Recipes Terry Laybourne

As the owner of 21 Hospitality Group (21HG), Terry has his roots in the North East and has worked here for more than 35 years. His Newcastle-based restaurant group includes 21, The Broad Chare and St Vincent on Newcastle's Quayside; also Café 21, Saltwater Fish Co, and Porterhouse within the Fenwick department store. He also operates a Café 21 from Fenwick in York and has a bistro at The Lakes Distillery, in Cumbria.

He was the first chef in the region to bring a much-coveted Michelin Star to Newcastle shortly after he opened 21 Queen Street on Newcastle's Quayside.

In 1998, Terry was awarded a 'Catey' (celebrating the best in the UK hospitality sector) for Independent Restaurateur of the Year. Awarded an MBE in 1998 for services to the restaurant and tourism industries, Terry began his training in some of Europe's finest hotels, returning to the region to spend eight years as lead chef, building a formidable reputation for the Fishermans Lodge restaurant in Jesmond Dene, Newcastle.

It was in 1988 that he and a his small team went solo to establish 21 Queen Street which has evolved into the much larger 21HG. In 2006 Terry was awarded a life time achievement award at the Northern Hospitality Awards.

Terry has been a member of the Academy of Culinary Arts since 1998.



Travel Geoff Moore

After joining the Merchant Navy at 18 then entering the superyacht industry in 2007, Geoff has had the privilege of travelling to all four corners of the globe as a crew member on board some of the yachting industry's most prestigious vessels. Fast forward 20 years, whilst the days of transporting and looking after celebrity guests are behind him, he now runs West Nautical from its global headquarters in Newcastle upon Tyne.

They offer a range of nautical services, with a special focus on curating and organising unforgettable luxury superyacht holidays to the world's finest destinations.



Business Wayne Halton

Wayne has worked in the North East for more than 35 years both as a newspaper journalist and a senior PR practitioner. Before moving into PR and launching his own successful consultancy, he worked in the news room at The Journal and was Business Editor at The Northern Echo.

His experience stands him in good stead to provide insightful and honest articles about issues affecting the regional economy and business environment. He will chew the fat and sit toe-to-toe with some of the biggest names and rising stars in the North East business world.

As a specialist in B2B communications, he will conduct a new series titled Big Business Interviews, highlighting and humanising successful business owners in the region. This long-form interview will be published in every forthcoming issue of Portfolio.

Wayne will also be responsible for managing a range of new editorial columns where business people candidly share insights and observations that have helped shape them and their business journeys.



Wine David Harker

David's interest in wine began in the early 1980s in Denhofer's restaurant in Durham, after learning that there was more than two types of grape. David was curious about the different wine grapes in use and that he could make informed choices about which wines to try if he knew more about the varieties.

Following several wine qualifications, David's hobby became his profession when he took on the ownership of Newcastle Wine School. The Wine School runs wine tastings, wine courses, private events and wine tours for customers in Newcastle and across the North East.

Since leaving school at sixteen, David's life has followed many paths including a spell in local government, three years at Newcastle University, accountancy training and Chief Executive of Durham County Cricket Club.

A team effort

Editors notes from Cassie Moyse

It's important to understand your own strengths and weaknesses to continue improving and moving forward. Although I thoroughly enjoy wine, dining and travel, I'm sadly not an expert sommelier, my culinary expertise isn't anywhere near that of a Michelin starred chef and I currently haven't visited as much of the world as I would like. Because of this, it was very important for Portfolio North to team up with the best possible specialists in each field to ensure that we bring our readers engaging and expertly written features to enjoy.



Cassie Moyse
Director, Portfolio North

We are delighted to have welcomed renowned restaurateur Terry Laybourne to share the best recipes from across the 21 Hospitality Group venues for our readers to try at home. Terry is a much-loved and celebrated figure in the North East and I look forward to featuring his delicious recipes in each of our upcoming editions.

Our second appointment is Geoff Moore, managing director of North East based luxury yacht charter specialists West Nautical, as our contributing travel editor. I don't know anyone who travels as much as Geoff, who visits various fabulous locations all in the name of best practice on almost a weekly basis. West Nautical also arrange some of the best holiday and travel experiences in the world, so I know that his advice on where to visit will be second-to-none. We've worked alongside West Nautical for many years, so it's great to officially welcome Geoff to our contributors' team.

Wine expert David Harker joins us as contributing wine editor. David's knowledge on wine is outstanding thanks to his passion and education. He runs Newcastle Wine School, and travels to sample the best wines in the world. David also has a passion for journalism and writing - a combination of talents which meant he was the perfect guy for the job.

Experienced journalist and PR-guru Wayne Halton joins us as contributing business editor. His appointment now allows us to run a range of regular business interview columns and features including The Big Interview in each print edition, What Makes Me Tick which is shared online every Wednesday and our monthly Ask The Entrepreneur quick Q and A round. Wayne and I worked together for many years when I was straight out of University, he was my first mentor, so it's great to be working together again.

We've appointed a lead photographer, Sean Evans, who will be supporting us in creating our own photography style for our business interviews, covering events and other projects which crop up along the way. He's a very talented young photographer whose enthusiasm and passion really impressed us and I am looking forward to supporting him in his new career journey.

Jason Taylor joins us as Head of Client Relationships in Yorkshire, as we announce plans to run six magazines a year in the area, as well as our established North East presence. We've hit the ground

running securing launch partners for our first edition which is very exciting. There's a fantastic buzz in Yorkshire and plenty going on to report on. One partnership is with the stunning Grantley Hall, and we've teamed up to offer an amazing hotel stay and dining experience to one lucky subscriber to our new Yorkshire edition.

Our growth hasn't stopped there. We've got more clients and opportunities than ever so we're looking to grow our team and welcome various new team members very soon. For me, one of the most important aspects of creating Portfolio North was to make sure that it's a great place to work. Somewhere that the team can grow, learn and thrive. I was bowled over by the response and applications - and I'm really looking forward to the interviews next week.

Our digital evolution continues as we make changes to our website, incorporating some more of our brighter brand colours and creating separate pages for our North East and Yorkshire news. We're about to launch our Yorkshire and Wine Club e-newsletters too, following in the footsteps of our successful North East email newsletter which now has thousands of subscribers. Our website traffic doubled last month, as it continues to grow steadily. We've also made some changes to our website, incorporating some more of our brand colours and creating separate pages for our North East and Yorkshire news.

I was lucky enough to take some time out in the last couple of months, and I couldn't resist picking up a pile of magazines in the airport to study while I had some headspace. Our style is complimented regularly, but with the launch of our new Yorkshire edition comes the perfect excuse to create some more regular features and make some layout changes to keep Portfolio North looking fresh and contemporary.

We've also set up a LinkedIn community for marketers in the North called The Marketing Memo. The plan is to create a community style hub for marketing folk in the North to share inspiration and ideas. I find that no one understands marketing challenges like marketers so it's great to have somewhere we can turn for support and guidance- more to follow on this. I think that's most of the exciting stuff!

Hope you all enjoy reading and as always, thank you for your support.

News from across the North East



Dawson & Sanderson and Plan Our Wedding Tie the knot

Leading North-East Travel Agent Dawson & Sanderson has partnered with fellow North-East-based business and digital wedding directory, Plan Our Wedding.

Launched in 2022, and founded by Sarah Lydon and Leanne Manson, Plan Our Wedding is an online platform showcasing the best wedding suppliers the region offers, bringing everything into one place for couples looking to plan their dream

wedding. The wedding directory lists everything couples planning their perfect day need, including florists, makeup artists, and venues, and now in partnership with Dawson & Sanderson, honeymoons.

David Chambers, Business Development Director at Dawson & Sanderson "We are delighted to be able to offer our extensive travel knowledge to couples planning their honeymoon

via the Plan Our Wedding directory. Whether couples are looking for short cultural city breaks, two-week stays in some of the world's most luxurious resorts, or something more adventurous and adrenalin-fuelled, our team of holiday experts are on hand with ideas to bring the dream to life".

£10m industrial scheme planned for Sunderland

Plans to transform an area of disused land in Sunderland into a vibrant new industrial park have now been released.

Proposals for an attractive new development at Commercial Road in Hendon have been submitted to Sunderland City Council's planning authority. Visuals depict a cluster of 19 industrial units of varying sizes, along with a drive-through coffee shop and major improvements to the streetscape surrounding the site.

The £10m development - led by Promenade Park Properties and designed by Sunderland architect and engineering practice BDN - could create up to 150 jobs if it is given the green light by the planning committee. Units will range from 3,500 to 20,000 sq ft. and will deliver much-needed shed space in an area that is well-established as an industrial hub.

The units are designed to be as energy efficient as possible, ensuring businesses that locate to the site benefit from reduced



energy consumption and lower running costs. If proposals are approved, it is expected work could start on site in spring

2024, with the first phase of units ready by the end of the year. They will be offered for sale or rent.

One year ahead of strategy, Swinburne Maddison announces two new partners plus major increases in revenue and headcount.

Swinburne Maddison LLP have ended the 2022/23 financial year on a major high after posting a superb increase in revenues of 19%.

The firm’s three-year plan has been delivered a year ahead of schedule and they are gearing up for further success in the current year and beyond. During this period 23 new appointments were made across the firm including two new partners’ promotions, taking the total number of partners at Swinburne Maddison to 12.

Commenting on these recent highlights, managing partner Jonathan Moreland, said: “We reorganised our Senior Management Team two years ago with a view to accelerating our growth plans to take advantage of opportunities arising following the pandemic.

“I think it’s fair to say the high-profile nature of much of our work and our strong performance has been turning heads for



some time now and the firm continues on an upward trajectory. Indeed, we are

about to commence the rollout of a new three-year strategic plan.”



Tech start-up secures six-figure investment to fuel expansion

A marketing ed-tech company has secured a six-figure investment from six prominent North East entrepreneurs to accelerate the growth plans of its marketing education SaaS platform, both nationally and internationally.

Fabric Academy is poised to expand further with the support of a high-profile investment panel that includes Mike O’Brien, Founder and Co-chair of

Opencast Software; Richard Lane, Co-Founder and CCO of durhamlane; Helen Whitfield, Board Level Executive; Raman Sehgal, Founder & Global President of ramarketing; Paul Dyson, CTO and Co-Founder at Singletrack and Michael Lavery, CEO of Brand and Reputation.

The company has secured the funds following some key client wins across multiple sectors that includes renowned

brands such as Indeed, Boots, Revolution Beauty, 118118Money, Savills, itsu, and The Body Shop.

Launched by Lisa Eaton in 2021, Fabric Academy offers a CPD-accredited online programme for established and aspiring business professionals to level up their strategic knowledge and enhance their marketing skills in line with the latest industry standards.

Esh Group Receives Armed Forces Gold Covenant Award for Outstanding Support

Esh Group is delighted to announce it has been awarded the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Covenant in recognition of its commitment to support the defence and the armed forces community.

The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Esh will join a prestigious list of just 46 businesses across the North East to have been awarded the ERS gold covenant, with a further seven organisations receiving the status this year.

Since 2021, Esh Group has held the ERS silver award and recently launched the 'Soldiers to Sites - Careers in Construction' initiative with Career Transition Partnership (CTP), where work experience and employment is offered to Armed Forces Employment



Pathway Candidates.

The North of England construction company is also a member of Forces Family Jobs, who offer training,

employment, and volunteer roles for family members of currently serving UK military personnel.

Ford Engineering Group donates award winnings to local school to boost future talent pipeline

Harton Academy, based in South Shields, has been awarded £2,000 to support its Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) club activities, thanks to the North East Automotive Alliance's (NEAA) annual awards and one of its winning companies, Ford Engineering Group.

The NEAA Awards evening honoured the brightest talent and outstanding achievements of companies and future leaders shaping the North East automotive

industry. Initiated in 2018 to support future generations within the sector, build sector attractiveness and to recognise talent, the awards have donated over £60,000 to date towards future talent within the industry.

Company winners received a cheque to donate to a STEM engagement programme or local school in support of an automotive or STEM related project, which helps to promote and drive forward careers within the automotive sector.

Ford Engineering Group, a global,

high precision machining and precision component manufacturer for high-tech industries including aerospace, automotive, defence, off-road and rail, was awarded the SME Company of the Year title at the NEAA Awards 2023, which took place in March.

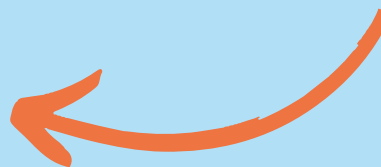


The Marketing Memo.

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An online community for marketers
in the North.

SDDE Summer Soiree

The SDDE Smith Group's 2023 Summer Soirée was a huge hit! It brought together colleagues and stakeholders across the Group's 14 brands for an evening of celebration and fun.

The Soirée kicked off with live music from a talented local band, setting the tone for the evening. Fat Hippo catered the event, and the star of the show was the "It's Dale Clucking Smith" chicken burger, a crowd favourite that had everyone's taste buds dancing.

But the real dance floor action was at the silent disco, where the beats kept everyone going until the end of the night! The evening was a massive success; it was great to see colleagues and stakeholders from across the brands come together and bond (we're sure lifelong friendships were formed on that dancefloor!).

Roll on next year!



Nichola Theaker



Shannon Christie, Osagie Abel-Ebhodaghe



Gareth Walsh, Joanne Knight, Trudy Ellison, Tom Pitt, Laura Bragg, Helen Brady



Ella Stephenson



Reece Ingham



NE Screen Summer Social

The North East Screen Summer Social was held at the newly opened Northern Studios in Hartlepool on the 29th of June. The social was an amazing opportunity for North East-based crew and those involved in the region's screen industry to come together, make new connections, and learn about what's happening in the industry.

North East Screen partnered with Focus Canning to host the event, a North East based production facilities provider, who brought along various pieces of camera equipment for people to try out. Guests were also able to tour the studio complex and speak to some of the production companies that are based in the North East.



Pat Chapman, Dr Martin Raby, Angela Childs



Alison Gwynn



Adam Bouabda



James Craggs



Jamie Bulman



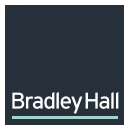
Victoria Glass, Claire Wilson, Karen Martin

Portfolio North Secret Garden Social

Portfolio North recently hosted their Secret Garden Social in the gardens of the stunning Jesmond Dene House hotel in Newcastle.

The event was sponsored by full-service property firm Bradley Hall, AM Recruitment and The SDDE Smith Group. The event included food, summer drinks and the opportunity to network with attendees from

companies including Swinburne Maddison, Lowes Financial Management, Brewin Dolphin and Kirtley Co. With over 50 guests in attendance, the event proved popular and was a great way to enjoy the lovely June weather. To be the first to hear about upcoming events, sign up to our mailing list.



Jamie Pell, AM Recruitment and Training



Manny Thandi, Swinburne Maddison



Charlie McCullagh



Matt Hoy, Bradley Hall



Alistair McDonald, Ward Hadaway



Portfolio North launches marketing event

Portfolio North recently hosted a North East Marketing Summer Social at Chaophraya in Newcastle. Sponsored by The Social Co and Bradley Hall, the event included a DJ, Thai inspired canapes and cocktails, a masterclass from The Social Co and the opportunity to network.

With Mai Thai cocktails, spring rolls, sweetcorn fritters and pork skewers available, the Thai food and drink options complimented the setting, with large Buddha statues and incense adding to the Thai inspired experience.

Guests included marketing managers, social media managers, paid social executives and those interested in developing their marketing and TikTok strategy.

Over 60 people were in attendance and enjoyed the food and drinks provided by Chaophraya, as well as a gift bag at the end of the event.

Making use of Chaophraya's rooftop, which overlooks Grey's Monument, the outdoor event allowed guests to mingle and network whilst enjoying the good weather.

The Social Co Academy director, Zoe Pouton, hosted a very informative masterclass on TikTok and the best way to utilise the incredibly popular social media platform. Businesses are seeing positive return from using TikTok to engage with

consumers in a more natural and informal way and allows viewers an insight into businesses. With over one billion users, there is a significant pool of potential consumers to target content towards, and Zoe talked attendees through insights and analytics of the app, and how to incorporate it into a social media strategy. The Social Co Academy is the educational arm of social media agency, The Social Co, who work with international brands to further develop their social media strategy. With a team of experts including paid social executives, social media managers and videographers, the team at The Social Co have a wealth of knowledge to provide to clients, and are a key player in the North East media industry.

Utilising Chaophraya's variety of spaces available, the masterclass was able to be held outdoors, with the large bifolding doors opening out onto the rooftop terrace. A large projector and PA system allowed all guests to hear the presentation. Feedback from guests was positive, with many finding new avenues

to explore through their company's use of TikTok.

Cassie Moyse, editor of Portfolio North, commented on the success of the event: "Our first event aimed specifically at those in the marketing industry was a great success, and was a great start to a summer of networking events.

"Marketing can be quite a lonely role at times, with many people working solo or in small teams, and so we felt it was important to have an event solely dedicated to those in marketing where they could interact with people they might only know by email address.

"We had a fantastic turn-out at the event and this has highlighted to us that there is a real need for industry-specific networking events. Over the coming months, we will be hosting more events for those in different industries and roles at venues across the North East."

To be the first to hear about our next events, sign up to our newsletter at www.portfolionorth.co.uk/sign-up



Pizza restaurant joins tasty Sheepfolds line-up

Independent North East eatery | Scream for Pizza is set to bring its award-winning slices to Sunderland, after confirming it will open its second venue next year.

The popular restaurant, which opened its first site on Newcastle Quayside two years ago, is the latest business to announce it will be moving into Sheepfolds Stables, a hotly anticipated destination leisure venue at Riverside Sunderland.

The Grade II listed former stables, which is due to complete next year, will provide 11 distinct spaces, with other businesses moving in including a new street food concept from Hairy Biker, Si King and a taproom serving a range of ales.

I Scream for Pizza - part of the Scream for Pizza Group - was founded by Victoria Featherby in 2021 following the success of its street food and events business, which launched in 2014, and its original Scream for Pizza restaurant in Newcastle that has been trading for the last four years. I Scream for Pizza focuses on New York-style slices and homemade soft serve ice creams, with as much produce sourced from local providers as possible.

Working with operations manager, Sarah Kilby, the new venue in the stables will be the Group's largest restaurant, providing 80 covers and serving food day and night. It has established and grown a strong following, something the owners hope to replicate at Sheepfolds Stables.

The stunning building - on the cliff's edge at Sheepfolds - is currently being transformed by Sunderland headquartered architecture and engineering practice Building Design Northern (BDN). Planning permission was granted for the stables' transformation in May 2022, paving the way for the existing listed buildings to be transformed into a new, creative destination,

for food, drinks, events and entertainment. Owner Victoria Featherby said: "It's an incredibly exciting time for the city, as it undergoes significant regeneration and investment, so we're looking forward to being part of that transformation.

"We're very proud of the loyal following we have built at our Newcastle sites, and through our events and pop ups, and we hope that this extends to our new home in Sunderland. The calibre of venues opening within Sheepfolds is an honour to be a part of, and it'll be a privilege to work alongside some of the region's most influential and growing brands."

ISFP will create 25 new full-time and part-time job opportunities when it opens, and will join a stellar line up of venues:

Yem - a cocktail bar, serving a stunning range of classic and modern drinks

Propa - a street food offer from Hairy Bikers star Si King, serving hearty dishes with a twist

Spey Snug - a whisky and cigar lounge from Speyside Distillers

The Calabash Tree - Caribbean food, inspired by the traditional tastes of Trinidad and Tobago

Ember - an Asian-inspired restaurant from a skilled chef Tamar Hassan, who has worked in some of the world's best restaurants

Southpaw Dance Company - the award-winning contemporary dance company is opening a new studio space in a large part of the old stables and will provide entertainment to the thousands of people who visit Sheepfolds Stables each year.

Richard Marsden, managing director of BDN, said: "We're so pleased to have Victoria and Sarah join us at Sheepfolds Stables, bringing their fantastic offer to the city. We've aimed to attract a variety of food and drink operators, all independents and all delivering something different but equally special.

"It's brilliant to be able to bring this to my home city of Sunderland, and in such a stunning venue in a transforming part of the riverside."

BDN has been supported with its plans for the building by Sunderland City Council. Councillor Graeme Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, said: "The range of businesses that are opening at Sheepfolds Stables means this is a venue that will deliver something for everyone. There's a real buzz about this development because of the quality of the offer - I am sure it will be a hugely popular addition to the city when it opens next year."

The Sheepfolds area will be connected to the city centre by a new footbridge, providing a pedestrian and cyclist crossing, with the wider area being transformed as part of Sunderland City Council's Riverside Sunderland plan. The masterplan includes number of large-scale developments in the city centre, with the ambition of doubling the area's residential population and increasing employment by 50 per cent.

To find out more about the Sheepfolds Stables development, follow @thesheepfolds on Instagram and Sheepfolds Stables on LinkedIn.

Vaux housing scheme tops out

The first of four new residential developments – part of a plan to build 1,000 new homes on Riverside Sunderland – has topped out today.

Considered one of the UK's most ambitious residential developments, Vaux's new neighbourhood, which will comprise 135 new super-sustainable properties built using modern methods of construction, has reached its peak, with the tallest of the buildings – a seven-storey apartment building – now built to full height.

The structural frames, floor slabs, and external walls have been assembled by UK leader in light gauge steel framing, Remagin, who are due to complete this element of the works, which is helping to define the new city skyline, in September 2023.

The scheme represents the latest development on a fast-changing brownfield development site on the edge of the city centre. Vaux Housing is being delivered by Sunderland City Council and development-managed by igloo Regeneration, with the ambition that Riverside Sunderland will eventually provide city centre housing for up to 2,500 residents.

The development will comprise apartments, townhouses, and maisonettes, using modern methods of construction, renewable energy systems and smart technology to reduce the carbon footprint of the development, while producing high quality, energy efficient properties in the beating heart of the city.

Patrick Melia, chief executive of Sunderland City Council, said: "Topping out on any scheme is significant, but it really is brilliant to see our first housing scheme on Riverside Sunderland progress. This – and the other new homes that we build in this part of the city – will bring more people into the heart of the city, spending money to support our retailers in the process, and of course, many of them will work in the offices that are currently under construction and those that already play host to a vibrant business community."

Peter Connolly, chief executive of igloo

Regeneration, said: "This is a fantastic milestone for Riverside Sunderland – a project which is a best practice example of how new homes across the country should be constructed and delivered in the future. "Working closely with all of the partners involved to create these high-quality homes, I'm proud of our collective unwavering commitment to delivering a people and planet positive scheme that will transform this part of the city."

The majority of the homes will be built to 2025 Future Homes Standard with 21 built to PASSIVHAUS standard, delivering high levels of energy efficiency. Included in the scheme will be a cluster of award-winning homes, that were selected as the best in the national Homes of 2030 Design Competition – which explored how homes will look and function in the future. The competition, managed by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities, encouraged the design of environmentally friendly homes that support people in leading independent, fulfilling lives as society ages. +Home, designed by igloo Regeneration with Useful Projects, Expedition Engineers and Mawson Kerr and Connector Housing designed by Openstudio with Hoare Lea, LDA Design and Gardiner & Theobald were the joint winners of the competition, and it is their designs that will stand proudly on the site, shining a spotlight on future living and showcasing the ambitious plans the council has to make Sunderland a world-class place to live, work and play.

All homes at Riverside Sunderland will provide a future living offer that will attract new and existing Sunderland residents to live in the vibrant city centre, with the properties sitting alongside the orchards and allotments of Kingsley Gardens and nearby Riverside Park, which is continuing its journey towards becoming an accessible,

attractive, and ecologically diverse parkland. The Vaux neighbourhood will be the site of the Expo Sunderland in 2025, an event that will showcase homes of the future and the vibrant, aspirational lifestyle that Sunderland provides. The first tranche of homes will be completed in early 2025.

"As a local business with manufacturing operations in Newton Aycliffe, the Vaux development, and Riverside Sunderland, is something which is obviously very close to our hearts at Remagin," said Scott Bibby, Country Manager for Remagin in the UK and Ireland.

"We believe it provides an excellent showcase for what future living could offer, and the role modern methods of construction have to play in that – providing high quality, comfortable accommodation at an affordable cost in a way which can address both the chronic housing shortage in the country, and wider environmental challenges."

Vaux housing is part of an ambitious and exciting new community at Riverside Sunderland that will include residential, commercial and leisure developments. It is part of a programme of development projects in the Riverside Sunderland area that, taken together, aim to double the residential population in the city centre and increase employment by 50 per cent and fits with the city's housing strategy, which will see 7,000 new homes built by 2030.

Vaux housing is being delivered with £6.1m of grant support from the Government's Levelling Up Fund, and £2.1m from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities to support the delivery of the Homes of 2030.

To stay up to date with Riverside Sunderland developments, visit www.riversidesunderland.com or follow @RiversideSund on social media.



Deals that make the Headlines

A 900 unit deal between resicentral®, headline sponsors of Urban Living Festival 2023, and Charles Hope Apartments raises the industry standard for energy management, building monitoring, and apartment automation.



resicentral®, a leading property technology company, made an impressive impact at this year's Urban Living Festival in Canary Wharf. As the headline sponsor of the event, resicentral® showcased their innovative energy management solution, resiEM™, and resiAIR™, a Wi-Fi based intelligent monitoring, control, and sensing unit. Both are designed to reduce energy consumption, save clients money, improve sustainability, and provide valuable data insights.

MD, James Baird, and Dale Smith, CEO of The SDDE Smith Group, the parent company of resicentral®, gave speeches, workshops, and live demonstrations, leaving a lasting impression on attendees. Reaffirmed by securing deals in excess of 1000 units whilst at the event. More on that later.

James and Dale kicked off the second day of the Urban Living Festival with a joint introduction. Dale spoke of the acquisition of resicentral® and his pride in The SDDE Smith Group's participation as the headline sponsor of the Urban Living Festival for three consecutive years, underscoring the company's dedication to driving innovation and industry collaboration. James followed to speak on the company's rapid growth, highlighting the company's ambitious plans, including the installation of resicentral®'s resiEM™ technology within 520 units in Leeds.

The resicentral® cloud platform and resiAIR™ technology work together to give clients control over their buildings by monitoring and controlling individual apartments and spaces. This helps

to improve energy efficiency and the resident experience. resiAIR™ uses state-of-the-art processing and sensing technology in a compact device that is about the size of a smoke detector. The system includes features such as temperature setting limits and the automatic shut-off of lighting, heating, and other circuits when sensors detect no occupancy in a given location. The technology uses customizable rules within the platform's rule engine, making them adaptable to various actions with custom configurations.

The accompanying technology, resiEM™, is an energy management platform that compiles granular data across an entire property, breaking it down to each individual unit; benchmarking energy consumption and the estimated costs for power usage. The platform provides real-time and historical reports on energy usage, which property owners can use to effectively monitor and optimise their consumption patterns.

Stemming from discussions and live demonstrations at the Urban Living Festival, resicentral® secured a deal with Charles Hope Apartments to implement resiAIR™ and resiEM™ in over 900 units across 17 locations. By leveraging resiAIR™ and resiEM™ Charles Hope Apartments property managers and residents will experience an evolutionary approach to energy usage and optimisation, raising their efficiency and sustainability standards.

Richard Maurin, CEO of Charles Hope Apartments, shares his thoughts: "Charles

Hope Apartments has chosen resicentral® as a technology partner across our UK portfolio due to the product's superior features offering our business a range of energy-saving and operational management benefits. Charles Hope's ethos is to provide unparalleled customer service; our commitment to lowering energy usage without impacting the customer sits alongside that.

resicentral® offers a data-driven solution that allows us to do this, unlike any other product on the market." resicentral® is committed to sustainability and ESG principles. Through its innovative resiEM™ platform and resiAIR™ technology, the company compiles real-time data on sustainability practises, including Kwh of energy, resident engagement, and carbon offsetting.

At the close of this year's Urban Living Festival, it is clear that resicentral®'s contributions will have a lasting impact on the property industry as a whole. Their dedication to innovation, sustainability, and collaboration sets a high standard for others to follow. It is an exciting time for urban living, and resicentral® is at the forefront, shaping a future where technology and sustainability converge for the betterment of residents and communities.

Want to know more about resicentral®'s energy management and smart automation solutions? Visit www.resicentral.co.uk or contact hello@resicentral.co.uk today.

HOST SO SIMPLE

PARTNER CONTENT

A Simple Decision

Host & Stay acquires North West short-term let company Host So Simple

Host & Stay, the UK's fastest-growing family-owned holiday let management company, acquires Host So Simple, a Liverpool-based short-term let property management company.

The merger is a natural progression for these two award-winning companies, bringing together their shared values and commitment to quality. The Host & Stay portfolio will now exceed 900 properties, providing guests with an even wider range of exceptional accommodation.

Host So Simple, started by Katy and Joe Davies in 2016, has experienced remarkable growth and success in Liverpool through its end-to-end short-term let management service, and this level of service is exactly what resonated with the Host & Stay team. As part of the wider SDDE Smith Group, Host So Simple will further enhance its ability to expand across the North West, scaling all aspects of their end-to-end service that has already driven so much success.

Joe Davies, founder of Host So Simple, expressed his excitement about the merger: "We are genuinely excited about the possibilities that merging with a brand like Host & Stay brings, and we look forward to continuing their ambitions of creating better places to live, work, and stay in the wider North West region. We are a company with a strong focus on our team, and it was clear from the initial conversations with Dale that he shared

this vision with us. We feel that our ability to grow will be significantly enhanced by being part of the wider group, and we cannot wait to see what the future holds as we expand our services further afield."

Dale Smith, CEO of Host & Stay, shared his enthusiasm, stating: "We are extremely proud to welcome the Host So Simple brand into the Host & Stay portfolio. From our initial discussions, it was quickly evident that we held the same passion for property, the same core, family-backed values, and that we were operating very, very similar businesses in terms of process, systems, and attitude towards offering an 'in-house' full management service. The merger represents a significant step forward, and we are committed to delivering a best-in-class property management service for our clients."

Since its founding in December 2018, Host & Stay has experienced impressive organic growth, with their property portfolio doubling year on year. Their success lies in their hands-free, end-to-end service, from cleaning and maintenance to marketing and guest relations.

Host & Stay offers holiday home

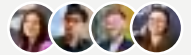
owners a hands-free, hassle-free management solution, with an industry leading 10% + VAT management fee and no restrictions on owner bookings.

Their mission is to make the UK one of the most popular, guest centric holiday destinations in the world, and this initial acquisition is only the start for Host & Stay.

Over the next three years, the company's plans include the acquisition of multiple holiday home and short-term rental management businesses across the UK. Through reinvestment of profits, Host & Stay is poised to scale their operations, enabling them to optimise their capabilities, enhance service offerings, and extend their reach to customers throughout the UK. With a firm commitment to delivering best-in-class services, Host & Stay is positioned to establish a strong foothold in the market and drive sustained growth in the years ahead.

Want to start earning more from your holiday home, or book your next unforgettable UK getaway?

Visit hostandstay.co.uk



TO DO

✓ Write down new business idea
High 2

✓ Pick a name
High 2

☑ Register website and email addresses
High 10

☑ Decide my target audience
High 2

☑ Research competitors
High 2

☑ Build a website to sell my products
High 3

☑ Create a marketing plan
✓ Download social media
☑ TikTok?
High 3

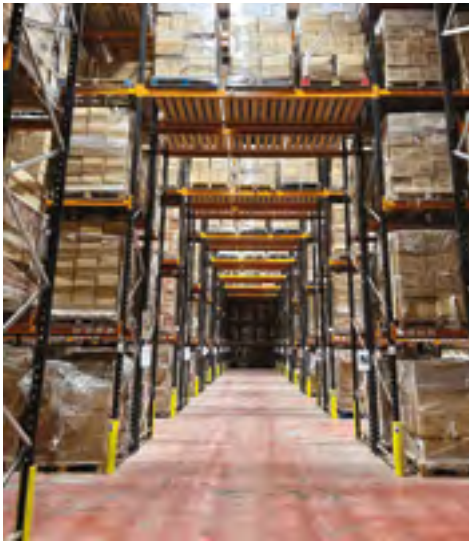
✓ To Google
☑ What is SEO
☑ What is PPC
High 0

IN PROGRESS



☑ Speak to Land Digital
High 0

☑ Buy teabags
Critical



Kirtley Co. announces new commercial premises in Peterlee

A County Durham warehouse operator, The Storage Place, has announced it has received a six-figure investment, which will help to create 40 new jobs.

The e-commerce order fulfilment company has secured £400,000 in a funding round which saw the North East Development Capital Fund, Business Durham and the European Regional Development Fund work to provide financial backing to the company.

The funding will allow for expansion of the business in County Durham, opening a new facility which will enable the company to double its capacity and create new jobs, whilst also supporting the local County Durham business economy.

The Storage Place was founded as a warehousing and distribution firm for heavy industry and automotives in 2002 in the North East. The rise of e-commerce has seen the company shift its focus to e-retail order fulfilment.

The company specialises in the management of stock from suppliers, order delivery and software integration-providing an end-to-end service for e-commerce companies looking to outsource and streamline their distribution system.

Working with an extensive range of carriers including Royal Mail, DPD and Evri, The Storage Place's warehouses are strategically located to provide easy

access to major transport routes and hubs.

Located near to the A19 in Peterlee, their County Durham warehouse is just a short drive from Teesport and the Port of Tyne and is situated next to one of the North East's key routes to the south.

As internet sales now represent over a quarter of all retail sales in the UK, there is an evident demand for e-commerce fulfilment services that provide modern, advanced solutions for clients. Landlord of their Peterlee site, Kirtley Co., has welcomed the investment for their tenant, which will allow the business to grow even further, targeting a global market.

As The Storage Place looks to support the economic development of County Durham and the North East, they also look to develop relationships closer to home. With neighbours at their Peterlee site including Castle Eden Lift Trucks Ltd and GC Grill & catering, the Kirtley Co. owned warehouses are creating a hub of industry and development.

Having owned the site for over 20 years, family business Kirtley Co. has ensured the premises remain modern, accessible and a large car park to allow for the upcoming increased capacity. Kirtley Co. has a long history with

commercial property, the business beginning over 40 years ago by Henry Kirtley. The company remains in the family, with Henry's daughters Alex and Toni managing the successful firm.

With properties across the North East, Kirtley Co. are well-known in the region and along with restoring historic properties, are landlords for properties from Middlesbrough to Sunderland. Managing Director, Alex Kirtley, commented on their tenants' success:

"We are thrilled that The Storage Place has received such significant funding, which will allow them to expand and hire more staff as their fulfilment business continues to grow rapidly.

"We have owned the sites at Peterlee for some time, and it is great to see modern, hard-working businesses thrive in our spaces.

"The spaces at Peterlee are in a prime location for distribution and delivery, and this has proved an important factor for our tenants, reducing travel time and thus increasing the amount of fulfilments that can be made."

Warehousing and Office space are available to rent through Kirtley Co. For more information, visit kirtleyco.uk

A fresh outlook on housing: a review of Michael Gove's plans

In a bid to address the pressing issue of residential property shortages, Housing Secretary Michael Gove has revealed a comprehensive set of proposals aimed at improving the planning process and bolstering the supply of new homes, particularly in urban areas.



These measures encompass innovative investment zones, a "super-squad" of planning experts, and a renewed focus on brownfield land. However, is there much new in Gove's recent speech?

Many across the industry are saying it is political posturing before elections in 2024 and that much of it has been heard before. On the one hand, it appears a multifaceted plan with many potential benefits while, at the same time, it raises some concerns about its efficacy and impact on the housing crisis.

Among the standout elements of Gove's presentation is the proposal to establish investment zones targeting key urban centres. The crown jewel of this initiative is the expansion of Cambridge, which is envisioned to evolve into Europe's new scientific hub.

Equally striking are plans for the regeneration of central Leeds and the ambitious Docklands 2.0 project in east London, promising to add a whopping 65,000 new homes to the capital's skyline. These projects not only hold the potential to invigorate the economy of these regions but also underline the government's commitment to urban growth. There was much focus on London and the south-east, which sadly doesn't really speak to the North East.

Central to Gove's vision is the emphasis on "quality planning". A substantial investment of over £24 million is earmarked for this purpose, with a particular focus on fostering expertise in planning. Frustrated housebuilders and developers will welcome this everywhere.

The introduction of a "planning super-squad," backed by £13.5 million funding, underscores the government's resolve to overcome bureaucratic obstacles to large-scale housing and infrastructure ventures. This approach, once implemented, is anticipated to transform the way housing and industry projects are executed and, in the long term, generate positive economic outcomes.

However, the plan's implications are not all rosy. One of the cornerstones of the proposal, a "more permissive approach" to small brownfield sites, raises eyebrows due to its vague nature. While intended to benefit small and medium-sized builders, the absence of concrete strategies to implement this approach leaves room for scepticism.

We, along with many of our colleagues in the industry, welcome and support greater use of brownfield land. But it is highly debateable whether housing needs can be met by using brownfield sites alone and increasing density within urban areas. Greenfield and green belt land needs to be considered.

Making it easier for developers to convert empty retail premises and betting shops into housing is also a welcome development. Our high streets are changing forever. But there is a slight problem with this approach. When it comes to getting mortgages many lenders don't like to lend on properties that are above or close to business premises. Lenders consider borrowers on this type of property higher risk, resulting in fewer options when it comes to deals

and products available.

Elsewhere, something omitted within the speech by Gove was housing targets. Sadly, any national housing target looks to have been abandoned. You may recall it used to be 300,000 new homes a year, a target never achieved in recent decades.

An innovative initiative unveiled within the framework of Gove's announcement is the Capacity and Capability Programme. Designed to address skill shortages and enhance planning capacities, this programme aims to train and upskill planners at various levels, including graduates.

The intention is to refine the expertise of existing planners and bring fresh talent into the profession. Although the programme's scope is laudable, its ultimate success hinges on efficient implementation, particularly in a context where planning departments have faced resource constraints. How long before it delivers and can make an impact?

By allocating funding to clear the application backlog and address skill gaps, the government acknowledges that monetary allocation alone is insufficient to streamline the planning process. However, critics argue that this amount might fall short in addressing the systemic issues that have plagued planning departments for years.

The underlying political motives and timing of Gove's plan are palpable. With local elections in May 2024, the Conservative government's focus on long-term vision aligns with a strategy that aims to differentiate itself from the opposition. By prioritising density and urban growth, the Conservatives seek to position themselves as champions of pragmatic housing solutions while casting a spotlight on Labour's perceived weaknesses in planning reform.

Critics point to the potential gaps in the Conservative plan. While the emphasis on urban development and brownfield sites is laudable, the pressing need for greenfield land to accommodate housing demands cannot be ignored. Labour's evolving stance on planning reform and housebuilding is indicative of the shifting dynamics within this political arena, with both parties seeking to present themselves as the ones to tackle the housing crisis head-on.

In conclusion, Michael Gove's ambitious plan for housing holds promise for rejuvenating urban centres and unblocking housing development. The emphasis on quality planning, investment zones, and skills enhancement reflects the government's intention to address housing challenges from multiple angles.

Yet, the plan's vague aspects and potential political motivations raise questions about its feasibility and long-term impact. As the nation grapples with a chronic housing shortage, it is incumbent on policymakers to implement strategies that combine pragmatism with comprehensive solutions, ensuring that all segments of society benefit from an effective housing policy.

For more views from property experts visit www.bradleyhall.co.uk



Funding helps South Tyneside firms accelerate growth

Two related South Tyneside companies are moving into a large shared premises, allowing them to grow far quicker than would have been possible at separate sites.

Zenith People and Zenith Training have come together under one roof at Monkton Business Park in Hebburn after receiving support from The Growth Fund - which was set up to help companies looking to expand in Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and the wider North East.

Zenith People is a Recruitment Business covering Engineering and Manufacturing; Technical and IT; Commercial, such as Marketing, Sales, Finance and Customer Service; and Construction.

Zenith Training supports companies with recruitment and training of apprentices, upskilling existing staff and accessing other funding sources.

The companies took over two floors of a building in Merchant Court in June, allowing both businesses to align their work much more effectively and collaborate on opportunities.

Managing Director Angela Anderson believes that the positive impact of the move is already being felt.

She said: "Culturally it brings the two companies closer together and allows for a much more integrated workforce.

"From a commercial perspective it allows us to have much more effective conversations and look at new business

more easily and service our clients better.

"So there's the positive impact on the staff - bringing us all together and aligning the skills - and the commercial impact of allowing us to grow the business far quicker through more direct communication."

The move has come at an important time for the businesses which operate in a market that is candidate scarce.

Alan Metcalfe, Commercial Director, who is also vice-chair of the Advanced Manufacturing Forum and Chair of South Tyneside Chamber of Commerce said: "There aren't enough individuals available to fill all of the vacancies, whether that be for apprenticeships or skilled roles, there just aren't enough, at the same time, overheads are increasing and businesses are struggling.

"What we're trying to do is integrate the funding that we have, developing more effective methods of recruiting and looking where we can add value to new and existing clients, without incurring costs where we can.

"For us it's all about producing a new business model to allow other companies to grow more effectively using our services."

The companies, which currently employ 45 people, have plans to grow and increase the number of staff at its new South Tyneside base.

Angela added: "We have a number of national clients, but around 90% are North East based. We find that South Tyneside is a good central location, it's easy access to Teesside but equally as easy to travel along the coast to Northumberland.

"We've always been based in South Tyneside, we like the community, we work well with the businesses in the borough, we work well with the council and we find it's a good place to be. The business community in South Tyneside is excellent."

Cllr Margaret Meling, Lead Member for Economic Growth and Transport at South Tyneside Council, said: "This initiative will not only benefit the companies involved, helping them become more streamlined and efficient, but will also allow our workforce to take up more skilled work when it becomes available, in turn attracting other employers to the Borough.

"South Tyneside is a great place to do business, and we're always delighted to watch our local firms grow and flourish, taking advantage of our fantastic location, facilities and business community."



Swapping classroom for comms – Creo welcomes new recruit

North East creative marketing agency, Creo Comms has welcomed a new team member to support its expanding client roster.

Hollie Hylton, 23, joins the growing Creo ranks as Junior Client Partner, bolstering the agency's PR team.

Founded in Sunderland in 2014, Creo brings creativity to communications delivering comms campaigns to a wide range of clients across the UK.

Hollie graduated from Northumbria University this year with a BA Hons degree in English Language Studies. After completing her studies in May, she signed up for a spell of work experience at Creo, before securing a full-time position.

With four years' experience in linguistics, Hollie is a talented and articulate communicator. These skills were put to great use working in primary schools as a teaching assistant for the past year, before deciding to shift her expertise to comms.

Speaking about the new role, she said: "I'm so excited to be part of the team and grateful for the support of everyone at Creo. It was daunting to leave the security of university, but since joining, I've already gained additional skills and learnt so much.

"I've jumped in with both feet and love working across a host of projects. I can't wait to see what I can achieve at Creo and grow my skills and experience with help from the team.

"Working at Creo is exceeding all of my expectations. I look forward to something new each day and feel lucky to have the chance to kickstart my career in a truly amazing environment."

Hollie is Creo's third new hire this year, as the agency client portfolio grows. Her immediate focus is on the manufacturing sector, but she is already an integral part of teams working with local authorities, finance providers and tech businesses.

"There's so much variety in the work I've done so far," she added. "It's what I find so exciting about the job - no two days are the same. I'm looking forward to my future at Creo."

Louise Bradford, Managing Director of Creo Comms, said: "Hollie fit in immediately and we're delighted to welcome her on board and help her fulfil her professional goals.

"Her enthusiasm and commitment shine through and she's quickly become a trusted member of our fantastic Creo team. We share Hollie's excitement about her appointment and can't wait to see her develop."

To find out more about Creo Comms and the services it offers, visit creocomms.co.uk



Ongoing success opens up opportunities for promotion at UNW

In the wake of sustained success across all areas of its business, North East independent chartered accountancy and business advisory firm UNW has revealed a number of internal promotions, including one to partner.



The Newcastle-based firm, which currently employs more than 170 people at its city centre offices, has a strong track record of people development.



This year has seen 15 promotions across every one of UNW's service lines - Audit & Assurance, Tax, Accounting Services, Corporate Finance and Payroll.

Many of the recent promotions are of team members who began their careers at the firm, including Brittney Marshall, a previous UNW graduate trainee and ICAEW award-winning student who has been promoted to Senior Audit Manager. Charlotte Kirton and James McGill have both been promoted to Audit Manager, having also originally joined UNW's Audit & Assurance team as graduate trainees.

Dominic Oliver and Ben Robison, who both joined UNW's award-winning apprenticeship programme after completing their A Levels, have been promoted to Tax Manager and Tax Assistant Manager respectively. Other successes include Mike Blenkharn who has been promoted to partner after leading the firm's specialist dental sector team for the last 12 months. Mike's promotion brings the total number of partners at the firm to 16.

Elsewhere, Stacey Adams and Louise Kay become Assistant Managers in UNW's payroll team, Joe Walsh and Katie Constable have been promoted to Senior Audit Manager and Audit Manager respectively, Claire Francis and Daniel McWilliams become Assistant Accounting Services Managers, and Kasia Durma has been promoted to HR Manager.

Andrew Wilson, Managing Partner at UNW, said: "When it comes to our team, UNW is all about creating development opportunities for those with ambition, ability, and an appetite

for progression. We have a genuine strength of talent across our teams, which is very much highlighted by the number of high-quality promotions this year.

"We're delighted to see our 'home grown' talent making waves in the firm. Many of this year's promotions are of team members who started their careers at UNW, showcasing the culture of a business that gives talent the space to grow and thrive.

"Our commitment to continuing to hire, develop, and retain the best people enables us to go above and beyond in the provision of the best advice and service to our clients."

Mike Blenkharn, Head of UNW Dental, said: "I'm extremely proud to have been promoted to partner at UNW. Demand for our all our services remains high and I am excited to continue to lead the Dental sector team, expanding our already impressive national reach whilst maintaining excellent levels of client service.

"From the moment I arrived, the backing I've received from the firm and my colleagues has been tremendous and I think it's that genuinely supportive culture that really sets UNW apart from others. There's also a perfect balance here between a real and sustained focus on developing 'home grown' talent as well as creating opportunities for people joining us from elsewhere.

The Social Co celebrates a record Q2

By Anna Robinson



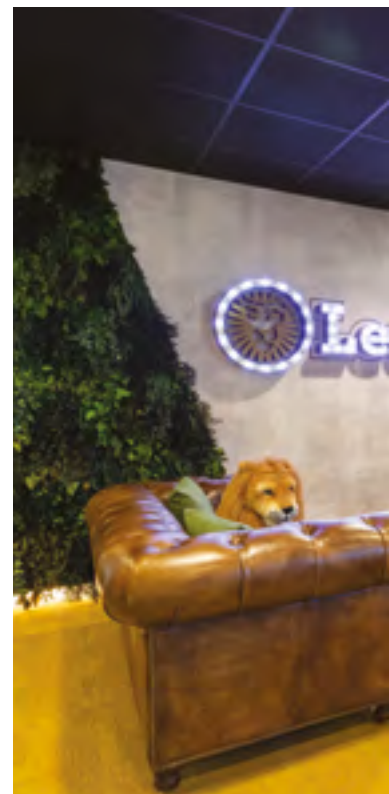
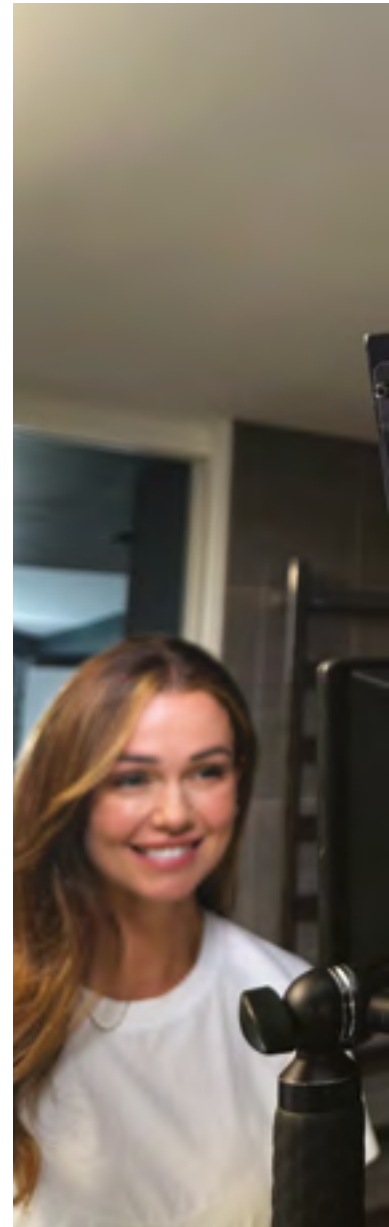
Leading North East based social media agency, The Social Co. has reported impressive turnover growth of 40% during Q2 following its appointment to larger campaigns and their partnerships.

The Social Co. supports clients nationally and internationally through its 30 plus Durham based social experts who support clients in all areas of social media marketing including paid and organic social media strategies, video content and brand development, to create maximum exposure and targeted digital marketing which drives sales.

Reflecting on The Social Co.'s 2023 to date, James said: "We have had a really successful year to date, with a 40% increase in revenue and a host of new clients, who have been fantastic to work with.

"Q2 was particularly successful for us, as we expanded our team and welcomed new talent into our company, as well as hosting some great events with our Academy and achieved impressive results for our clients.

"With our upcoming brand refresh and some exciting announcements to be revealed, the rest of 2023 is looking positive for The Social Co."





Smart Media sees increase in demand for radio and television adverts following appointment of radio advertising expert.

By Anna Robinson



Smart Media Buying, part of the North East based Smart Media Group, is reflecting on a year of success, following the appointment of Rosie Adams.



Rosie has worked in media for over 10 years, initially holding an internship at local radio station Metro Radio during university. She later moved to London to work in national advertising for radio and print. Working across well-known brands such as Grazia and Heat magazines, Rosie's career progressed rapidly as she went on to work across some of the biggest national radio stations such as Absolute Radio, Magic and KISS.

Rosie worked her way up to Group Head of Audio in a variety of roles, ending up working on a variety of accounts such as Wickes, Tesco Mobile, Mondelez and Shell. After nine years in London, Covid hit and Rosie moved back to the North East to be around family.

Rosie had previously worked with Mark Clancey, Managing Director of Smart Media, whilst at Metro Radio and reconnected just over a year ago.

She then began a new role at Smart Media in a team of five and is an Account Director for some of the biggest companies in the UK, such as JD Sports, Castore, Go Outdoors, Metrocentre and Hays Travel.

Last year, television advertising in the

UK formed a revenue of over £3.8billion, highlighting just how important the right media strategy can be to a business.

Smart Media Buying provide advertising strategies across radio, television, podcasts, digital and out of home to provide a full-service campaign to clients.

With over 67% of UK adults listening to digital radio weekly, there is a real demand from Smart Media's clients to advertise on radio advertisements across local and national stations. Additionally, there are over 27.2million televisions in households across the UK, highlighting a significant number of potential customers across radio and television at any given time.

Rosie Adams, Account Director at Smart Media, explained more about her role: "Since I started at Smart just over a year ago, I have had the opportunity to work with local, national, and international clients, in an industry that is rapidly expanding.

"Our growth throughout the last year has been phenomenal and we are working on some exciting projects with our clients. "In Q4 last year we saw JD push the boundaries and enter the world of





cinema. We booked and planned a multi touchpoint cinema campaign that involved sponsorship idents of Black Panther, running a mixture of 120' and 130' commercials. We used geo planning tools to upweight around key performing stores and arranged private viewing of the film for prize winners, influencers, staff and key stakeholders. We also added an experiential area in Westfield shopping centre to bring the campaign to life.

"This is a really exciting time for us and our clients as we have seen a real increase in engagement with our television and radio ads".

Locally, Smart Media work with the likes of the Metrocentre on their media campaigns and utilise a mixture of media platforms such as Digital Out of Home, Radio, Digital, Social and TV advertising to drive audiences to the centre during peak times throughout the year.

With more drivers than ever on Britain's roads, the opportunity to advertise to listeners through radio advertisements has increased, with the RAC noting that motorway traffic had increased by 14.4% in 2021, compared to pre-pandemic levels. With so many potential customers listening

or watching advertisements, it is no surprise that Smart Media has seen an increased demand for their services.

Rosie commented on this growth: "Lockdown really changed a lot of people's perspectives about living and working in London. It is no longer necessary to run a company from a large office in the heart of London and the North East is really proving itself as a hub for media companies to set up a base, and we are benefitting from that demand."

The team at Smart Media pride themselves on super serving clients and offer a full 360 approach to media. Through the Smart Media Group, the team have access to out of home screens, international partnerships, and specialist knowledge. Rosie said: "We see ourselves as an extension to a company's marketing team, and work closely with a businesses' team to ensure we are all on the same page and working towards the same goal.

"Trust is important, and we have developed solid relationships with our clients. Each member of my team is a specialist in a different form of media, such as television or radio, so we are fully

equipped to market our clients to a variety of media platforms."

Through her extensive experience working in radio and print, Rosie has found success for her clients through meaningful media strategies that ensure the right audience are targeted.

Despite newspaper articles suggesting radio listener numbers are declining, this is not the case. The advent of smart speakers has allowed radio users who may previously have only listened in their car, to now also listen at home or work, increasing listener hours.

Rosie noted: "Radio, Digital Out of Home and Television adverts have proved incredibly successful for our clients, and through regional and national campaigns, we have seen a real drive towards listeners and viewers interacting with our clients through their website or social media channels.

"This is definitely a prime time for businesses to expand their media packages into radio and television adverts."

To find out more about Smart Media Buying, visit [smartmediabuying.co.uk](https://www.smartmediabuying.co.uk)

North East tech firm drives change at Knowsley Safari Park



Popular, nationally recognised visitor attractions like Knowsley Safari are turning to mobile app technology to transform their visitor experience.

The Merseyside-based attraction, set in over 500 acres and welcoming more than 600,000 visitors per year, was keen to enhance visitor engagement while updating their digital Safari Drive experience.

Following a short initial consultation, n-gage.io, based in the North East, was engaged to develop, and implement a digital strategy that would see their attraction management software and mobile app technology enhance the Knowsley Safari Drive experience while also helping the safari park gain valuable insights into audience behaviour.

County Durham-based n-gage.io has been working alongside Rachel Scott, head of marketing at Knowsley Estate and Ian Duke, Knowsley Safari marketing manager, along with their team, to develop and deploy the attraction management software and visitor mobile app across the site.

Led by entrepreneur Bryan Hoare and incubated by GCV Labs (part of Growth Capital Ventures) - n-gage.io aims to transform attraction experiences through its powerful, data insight-driven SaaS platform and visitor app.

Within a couple of months, n-gage.io helped launch the highly customisable visitor mobile app to help enhance the safari park's approach to digital visitor engagement.

With 1500 app downloads during the

first week of launch, the attraction is now benefitting from new ways to engage its audience both on and off site, while better understanding how people spend their time during a visit.

Ian Duke explains: "We'd been looking for a solution to update our existing Safari Drive mobile app technology for our visitors but found it increasingly difficult to identify software in the industry that gave us the customisation and control that we wanted. While we've had great success with our previous app, like many other attractions, we found that with more recent technology advancements, and the changing expectations of our visitors, our existing app was rapidly becoming outdated.

"What attracted us to the n-gage.io solution was the highly customisable nature of the base app which could reflect our website brand, and the feature-rich operator platform behind the scenes that powers it and gives us so much more intelligence about audience activity on-site. While the app itself has so many engaging features, it's also what we can do with the platform to deliver an even more interactive and educational experience that really attracted us to the software."

Using the new software, the attraction is now able to not only enhance the previous safari drive experience, but

create other engaging and immersive trail experiences, with triggered in-app content and notifications across the park.

Ian added: "The fact that we can now manage our visitor's interactive digital experience day to day, means we're able to be far more innovative in our approach to on-site audience engagement.

"And from an operational perspective, we're able to help our visitors plan and manage their day more effectively, from integrating with digital ticketing through to interactive mapping and wayfinding." Bryan Hoare, founder and CEO of n-gage.io added: "We've been delighted to work with the team at Knowsley Safari and see how our technology can make a difference, not just operationally, but the positive impact it can make across their whole safari experience."

Software and mobile apps developed by n-gage.io are already in use at Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park, Alameda Wildlife Conservation Park (AWCP), in Gibraltar, and Northumberland Zoo, in North East England with other zoos and wildlife parks launching soon.

For more information about the technology www.n-gage.io

By Wayne Halton



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New city contact centre proves a real curtain-raiser



An international theatre operator has expanded its presence in the North East after relocating its contact centre to one of the region's newest office developments.

Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) has moved into a new 2,400sq ft office at The Yard in the heart of Riverside Sunderland, which is being marketed by Bradley Hall.

Previously operating within the Sunderland Empire Theatre, the 57-strong team is one of the group's three national offices in the UK.

The move, which will bring together its contact centre and group bookings teams under one roof, has already created three full-time jobs and marks the company's continued investment into the city.

Cate Gordon, Business Manager for ATG Tickets, said: "We had been searching for a new space for quite some time however we knew we'd found the perfect place as soon as we were shown around The Yard.

"We had outgrown our space within the theatre, and we wanted to remain within close proximity to it so that our staff didn't feel separated from the rest of the company, and you can't get much closer than the street almost immediately behind it. Another key motivator was being able to improve the wellbeing of our team, which is something we are really focusing on as a business and it ticked all the boxes on that front, too.

"It has a gym, cycle storage, dedicated break-out and wellbeing spaces and is right in the centre of the city. It's just what we were looking for."

The Yard opened its doors earlier this

year following Hanro Group's £3.5million redevelopment of the former Gilbridge Police Station.

The development is a key part of Riverside Sunderland, one of the UK's largest city centre regeneration projects which is expected to create some 10,000 jobs and has already secured relocations from Ocado, Asnet 55 and North East Screen, with RSA to follow in 2024.

And with a new multi-storey car park having opened its doors this month - just a stone's throw away from The Yard - and its superfast 5G internet connectivity soon to be rolled out, ATG is excited about what the future holds for the business.

Cate added: "It's a really exciting time to be moving to Riverside Sunderland with all of the developments that are underway or in the pipeline.

"ATG is a business built on attracting people to visit city centres so we're naturally passionate about placemaking and preserving our high streets and this move really embodies that.

"Not only are we helping to attract more people to come and work in the city centre, but we are ensuring more money is spent on the high street with local bars, restaurants and cafes.

"We've even worked with local contractors throughout the fitting out of the offices, so it's been a real investment from ATG not just into the business, but into the city as a whole."

Helen Wall, Director - Sunderland at Bradley Hall, said: "We are delighted to welcome ATG to The Yard and to hear that the team have settled in so well.

"The Yard is perfectly placed at the heart of Riverside Sunderland, providing incredibly high spec offices in a bustling city centre location with unrivalled transport links.

"It has already proven a real hit among the region's business community since opening in the Spring, with three companies now calling the hub home, and with demand for high-spec office space continuing to grow, we're confident there'll be plenty more activity to follow over the coming months."

The team at ATG were also supported in their move to The Yard by the Business Investment Team at Sunderland City Council.

Cllr Kevin Johnston, portfolio holder for dynamic city at Sunderland City Council, said: "The decision by ATG to continue investing in Sunderland city centre with the opening of a new, dedicated contact centre is fantastic news for the city.

"As a business which operates 38 venues across the UK, it could have chosen absolutely anywhere to open its contact centre, so the fact that it has chosen to continue investing in Sunderland is testament to the city's unrivalled offering and we are delighted that they are continuing to invest here."



Future Walls is bringing art to the streets of Sunderland

You could arguably call it the Banksy effect. Pieces of art mysteriously popping up in public places, creating a talking point and being accessible to everyone.

Such was the case in Sunderland recently when overnight the Sunnyside area saw the arrival of an eye-catching mural, inspired by the characters from Alice In Wonderland.

It was an exciting and engaging way to raise awareness of Future Walls – a trailblazing collaboration between Sunderland Business Improvement District, Sunderland City Council and arts organisation, The Art of Protest.

This scheme will see local creators working side by side with established artists to create art installations in both Sunnyside and the wider area. It's something that The Art of Protest has years of experience in doing, using art not only to be thought provoking and engaging but to also help boost the local economy.

Jeff Clark, who created The Art of Protest having worked as an internationally renowned photographer for National Geographic as well as working as an art curator for everyone from Rolling Stone Ronnie Woods to the Guggenheim in New York, is extremely excited about the Sunderland project.

Jeff was driven to set up The Art of Protest because he had seen the elitist side of the art world and now wanted to create something that everyone can have access to. His roster of street artists have worked on projects across the UK, with the man known as The Postman – who have also happened to work for Madonna and on legacy pieces for Bob Marley – behind the Alice in Wonderland work.

"Sunderland is our first project in the North East," said Jeff.

"And we're incredibly excited to be working on something which will pull people back to Sunnyside and then bring them back time and time again.

"We have seen in other areas what a scheme like this can do in terms of making somewhere engaging and change the culture and the mindset of people." He takes great pains to add that Future Walls – and other projects like it around the country – are about far more than just creating art.

Jeff highlights Brighton's rundown North Street, which had a reputation for crime and where many of the shops had simply closed down or were covered in shutters. Initially, artwork was painted on the shutters, which was so successful "that people came to see it, meaning the shop owners decided to open up later and started to paint the walls near by."

The result was not only the creation of Europe's biggest Street Art Festival but visitor numbers of around 300,000 every year – creating a vibrant and bustling local economy. Jeff sees no reason why the Sunderland scheme should not follow a similar path and drive visitors into the city. For Sharon Appleby, Chief Executive of Sunderland BID, this is exactly what Future Walls is trying to achieve.

"Sunnyside is starting to undergo a transformation and Future Walls is an important part of that," she said. "It's also very much about the local community and the local creatives working with the artists to create some memorable pieces which will be a real legacy for the area."

Lydia McCaslin,
partner and head
of wills, probate and
trusts at Mincoffs
Solicitors, advises
that it's never too
soon to start thinking
about a will.



What's the right age to make a will?

A will is one of the most important documents you will ever sign, however many young people put it off as something to worry about in the future. If you fall in this category then you're not alone, with an estimated 84% of people under 35 currently without a will in the UK.

While it's true that you may not need it for many years to come, having one in place sooner rather than later means your wishes are legally documented should the worst happen. After all, many young people will have assets and dependents that they would want looked after in the case of their death and the minimum age to make a legally valid will is 18 years old.

Recent studies found that the average age to buy a house is 32, the average age to start a family is in your early 30s and 59% of new pet owners over the pandemic were aged 16 to 34. However, it isn't just property and dependents to consider - perhaps you have a sentimental collection you would like to pass to someone who will take care of it or have a family heirloom already promised to a particular person.

Not only does a will provide peace of mind, but it also means nothing is left to chance when it comes to dividing up your assets and making arrangements for dependents. It might even reduce the chance of dispute among loved ones, who may otherwise not be able to decide on who had claim to something with sentimental value.

It is also worth remembering that a will deals with the assets you own at the time of your death.

This means that the sooner you put a will in place, the earlier you have protections in place for the future, when your finances and assets may look very different.

Without a will, it is important to understand that your estate would be distributed according to Intestacy Rules on your death. Not only could this leave a surviving partner or spouse in a significantly different financial situation than you had planned, but it also means that distant or estranged relatives could stake a claim to inheritance.

Drafting a will can be complicated, especially if there are complex finances or family structures involved - for example, if you have children from multiple marriages and want to make sure step children are accounted for. Because of this, many people choose to instruct a solicitor, who can make sure all the right questions are asked, that nothing is left open to interpretation and offer advice on your specific circumstances.

This means that you can rest assured that your will accurately reflects your wishes and looks after those near and dear to you. With this in mind, it would seem that the right age to make a will is sooner rather than later - giving you and your loved ones peace of mind for the future.

For friendly, sensitive advice about writing or updating a will, contact Lydia McCaslin, Head of Wills, Probate and Trusts on lmccaslin@mincoffs.co.uk or visit www.mincoffs.co.uk/services/wills-probate-trusts/

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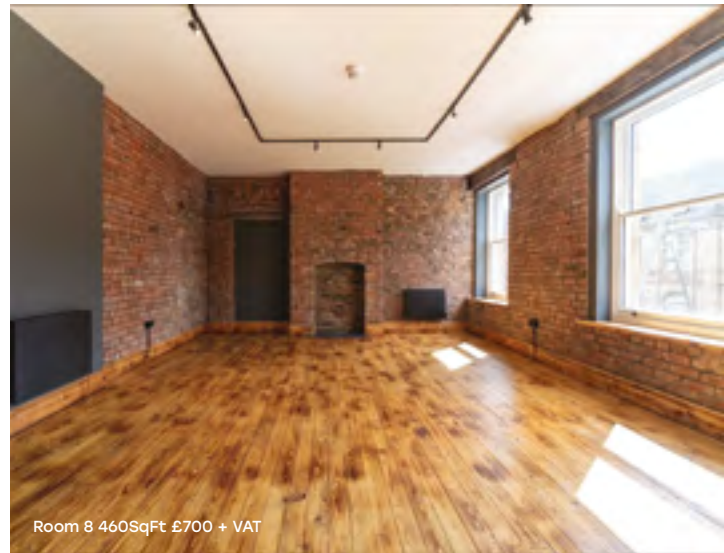
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Office premises to let

Unit 2 Britannia House, Hadrian Road, Wallsend

£10,500 per annum

Located within Britannia Business Park in Point Pleasant Industrial Estate, Wallsend, this purpose built office block of brick construction forms part of a terrace. The property is arranged over ground and first floors with glass frontage, gas central heating, dedicated kitchen area and male and female WC facilities. The subject property benefits from having an intercom and security alarm.

The property also benefits from private car parking to the front.

The estate is accessed by Hadrian Road, the main road that links the A19 with Wallsend. Britannia Business Park is situated within a predominantly industrial location close to the River Tyne.

The property is 4.4 miles from the A19 and Tyne Tunnel, 0.4 miles from Hadrian Road Metro Station, 1.1 miles east of Wallsend and approximately 4.8 miles east of Newcastle upon Tyne city centre. The internal floor areas are calculated at 1,138 square feet.



For more information, contact Bradley Hall's Newcastle office on newcastle@bradleyhall.co.uk or 0191 232 8080.

Residential Development Opportunity

Land to the west of 1 North Side, Shilbottle, Alnwick

Guide price of £300,000.

Bradley Hall is delighted to be appointed to market this residential development opportunity in Shilbottle, Northumberland.

The site is located on North Side in Shilbottle, a village in Northumberland. Shilbottle is located 3.5 miles south of Alnwick, 3.6 miles south west of Alnmouth and 5 miles north west of Warkworth. Shilbottle is situated between Northumberland National Park which is 18 miles to the west and the Northumberland Coastline to the east which can be accessed in less than 10 minutes.

The site comprises 0.47 acres (0.19 hectares) and planning permission has been granted for the development of 2no. residential dwellings including associated access, car parking, landscaping and ancillary works.



For general enquiries and viewing arrangements, contact Callum Armstrong on 0191 232 8080.

Image is an approximate boundary.



Business Opportunity

Jobsons of Alnwick, Tower Showrooms, 1 Bondgate Within, Alnwick

Business premium of £100,000, rent of £20,000 per annum

This popular, established family run business sits in a well positioned, prominent retail unit. The subject property is located directly opposite Hotspur Tower, on the corner of Bondgate Within and Hotspur Street in Alnwick town centre. Bondgate Within forms part of the B6346 and is the main road through Alnwick town centre, linking with Narrowgate, Fenkle Street and Market Street. Bondgate Within benefits from a host of local and national occupiers including EB Bridal, Alnwick Arts and Crafts, Hardy's Bistro, Fat Face, Bells & Sons, Caffe Tirreno, and Alnwick Playhouse. Alnwick is a popular tourist destination and the property is just a short distance from Alnwick Castle and Gardens, Alnwick Golf Club and local car parking facilities.

The property comprises an end terrace building, which occupies a prominent corner plot. The property is well presented with return frontage on Hotspur Street and Bondgate Within. The property is arranged over ground, first and second floors and provides ground floor retail space with an office, workshop, showroom and storage facilities to the first floor and further storage facilities to the second floor.

Jobsons of Alnwick is a unique and family run business which was established over 100 years ago. Jobsons of Alnwick is a retailer of some of the finest brands of Country Clothing, Footwear and Leather Goods. The business, which has an established reputation, is for sale due to retirement.

For more information, contact Bradley Hall's Newcastle office on newcastle@bradleyhall.co.uk or 0191 232 8080.

Residential Development Opportunity

Land on the south west side of Chollerton First School, Station Road, Barrasford, Northumberland

The guide price for the land is £1,000,000.

Bradley Hall is delighted to be appointed to market this residential development opportunity in Barrasford, Northumberland. The subject site is located on Station Road in Barrasford. Barrasford is a small village in the west of Northumberland which has local amenities including a village store, Barrasford Arms, Chollerton First School and various holiday lets. The village benefits from being located less than 15 minutes from Hadrian's Wall and less than 30 minutes from Kielder Forest Park which are popular tourist locations.

Barrasford is located 7 miles north of Hexham, 10 miles north east of Haydon Bridge, 9.5 miles south of Bellingham and

8.8 miles west of Matfen. Nearby towns and villages including Humshaugh, Wark, Gunnerton and Nunwick. Barrasford is accessed by Dalla Bank which links with the A6079 and in turn the A68 to the east and A69 to the south. The nearest train station is Hexham which is 7 miles away and is on the mainline route between Newcastle upon Tyne city centre and Carlisle. The site comprises 2.61 acres (1.05 hectares) of land with a boundary fence. The land is available for the development of residential properties, with space for 14 dwellings with garages, associated access and infrastructure, including pumping station and underground gas tanks.



For more information or to arrange a viewing, contact Callum Armstrong on 0191 232 8080

What makes me tick?

Sean Donkin, Group CEO, The Inn Collection Group

By Wayne Halton



My morning routine is...

With a large operation of 33 sites and counting, my day starts by going through the numbers from the sites from the night before. This lets me head into the office prepared for the day ahead.

What puts me in a good mood...

Getting things done and the sense of achievement from that, be it something small like a good shooting round or something big like getting a pub back open from refurbishment.

What makes me angry...

Not getting things done! I'm a straight forward person so I don't like letting people down and failing to deliver on what you say you are going to do.

Values I try to live and work by...

Delivering on promises and just doing what needs to be done to get things completed.

Bad habits I try to break...

I don't really have any bad habits to break, so I just try to improve on my good habits and doing them better.

My sources of joy are...

People doing well, whether that's my family as above, my colleagues hitting their KPIs or seeing my supported sports teams taking a win.

What motivates me most...

My family, I'm incredibly proud of them and sharing their accomplishments and seeing them strive and succeed in what they do drives me on so I can offer all the support that they need.

I relax and destress by...

Beer, shooting and sleeping! Running a pub company, I enjoy a well-served pint as much as anyone, but my main pursuit away from work is shooting. I enjoy maintaining a skill and getting out into the country.

What most people don't know about me?

I'm actually really shy. I don't like the limelight at all. When I need to, I'll step forward and front up but I'm more comfortable letting others do the talking.

If I didn't do my current job, I'd like to be ...

I'd like to be a sports coach working with young talents to nurture and develop them both as competitors and as people to be the best that they can be.

The Inn Collection Group is a growing pub and inn operator across the North of England and Wales.



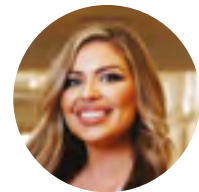
Key traits that make a *successful entrepreneur*

“ *Who’s an entrepreneur? It’s usually just someone that’s prepared to work hard and not accept the status quo or mediocrity. They took a few risks. Grafters might be a better term.* ”



Neil Hart
Bradley Hall

“ *Sheer obsession. Every owner of a highly successful business that I’ve met has been, at some point, completely and utterly obsessed with their company and product.* ”



Alice Rowen Hall
Rowen and Pink Boutique

“ *Continuous Learning: Successful entrepreneurs have a thirst for knowledge and a commitment to lifelong learning. Staying updated with industry trends, seeking feedback, learning new skills and being open to new ideas ensures you don’t get lazy and helps you stay at the top of your game.* ”

Sophie Milliken, MBE
MOJA



“ *You need patience, as it takes time to grow a business. Your relentless effort to drive your business forward will eventually reap rewards. You must be tenacious, this is not for those who give up easily. Learn from both your wins and losses.* ”

Jacqueline Emmerson
Emmersons Solicitors



“ *The ability to accept failure or success in equal measure and think neither defines you.* ”



Ollie Vaulkhard
Vaulkhard Leisure

“ *A successful entrepreneur is someone who has an unwavering determination to succeed but with a willingness to fail.* ”

Bryan Hoare
n-gage.io





Getting out the vote in NE1

A campaign is underway to ballot Newcastle's businesses to have a say on the city's future. Our Business Editor reviews the landscape and issues at play.

There's a big election coming. Admittedly, it's one that doesn't involve the public. But it's important and the outcome will impact on city businesses as well as most visitors to Newcastle.

It's an election that involves none of the usual political suspects. It doesn't matter if your politics are red, blue, yellow, or green. Appropriately, this is a very black and white affair.

It's more of a referendum. A simple yes or no will suffice. Does the business community within the NE1 catchment area of Newcastle want five more years?

It's a ballot on whether the city's business community wants to reinstate the NE1 Business Improvement District Company for a fourth term and ring-fence more than £10m investment over the next five years. Alternatively, it's a chance to say 'no' and perhaps make a protest vote.

Banging the drum for both reinstatement and a high voter turnout is the organisation at the centre of things - NE1 Ltd and its team. Leader of the band is Stephen Patterson, CEO of the organisation. He's inevitably keen to ensure a strong mandate for NE1 for the next five years.

He bangs his drum loud and clear; his message can be heard for all to hear. NE1 exists to serve the city's diverse businesses - to support, empower and enable them to

do better. To help create the best possible commercial environment for members to prosper.

NE1 has spent the last six months or more undertaking an extensive consultation exercise with many of its 1,400 members, as well as conducting consumer and business research. The aim has been to identify the priorities that business members say they have for Newcastle.

Creating a strong, effective voice for the local business community has been one of the key themes since NE1 was founded in 2009. The organisation is proud of its lobbying efforts and claims many successes, particularly in helping secure fundings and grants to support retail and hospitality. The team at NE1 have always played a key role in promoting what is unique about the city, developing and supporting events that attract a wider audience to Newcastle. NE1's annual calendar of events includes Newcastle Restaurant Week, Screen on the Green, Summer in the City, and activities around Christmas and New Year. These are events aimed at driving increased footfall and making the visitor experience more enjoyable.

Stephen Patterson makes a compelling case. He's not just invested because of the job but seems genuine in his passion

and love for the city. As a former PR practitioner, Stephen has the skills, smile and charm to win over most people. His persuasive manner, supported by hard evidence, should secure the support of most around the city.

And in truth, there are few vocal critics to be found. NE1 has successfully entrenched itself in the city's community. The few grumbles you hear are from business people who begrudge having to pay an annual set levy, sometimes seen as another indirect tax on business. On average around £1.8m is raised each year and this money goes towards physical projects such as better lighting and street cleaning as well as the creation of green spaces, crime reduction programmes, events, transport and accessibility improvements.

With a powerful and broad board of directors, NE1 has carefully amassed a group of key stakeholders and supporters who represent most sectors across the city. NE1 looks here to stay. To ensure you have your say in the ballot the key dates are:

- Ballot papers issued September 18
- Ballot closes October 19

Businesses wanting to learn more should visit www.newcastlene1ltd.com



Big Business Interview

Making the most of the breaks in life



Entrepreneur Dale Smith spoke to our Business Editor about how an unlucky break turned him away from a life of football to a career in business.

By Wayne Halton



It's the breaks in life that can set a person off on a journey and determine a course they might never have otherwise taken.

For Dale Smith, 35, it was probably the time he broke his leg as a teenager. He was forced to recognise that his hopes of playing professional football were going to be forever side-lined.

Until then he'd shown promise playing for the youth team at Middlesbrough FC and was looking forward to one day playing for his local club. Today, he can only watch and dream from his corporate box at the Riverside Stadium.

Such a devastating event and realisation might have depressed many a youngster. "Around the same time that I was playing football, I was getting into golf and starting to enjoy it. I was lucky to have another sport I really loved that I could fall back on to keep me occupied," says Dale.

He believes his bad break in football helped shape some of his attitudes and drive. "It certainly taught me resilience and the importance of having it, which is key to building a business. There are going to be setbacks and you have to cope with that and be able to move on," he says.

Whatever setbacks that may have occurred, they don't appear to have slowed Dale's business or his ambitions for future growth.

He and his family run The SDDE Group, based in Skelton in the borough of Redcar and Cleveland, around 10 miles east of Middlesbrough. While most of his businesses are based in the surrounding area, the business operates across the North East and North of England.

The Group - established in Saltburn in 2017 - is on target to reach a turnover of £30m by the end of the year. As CEO he has successfully steered the family business to year-on-year growth, doubling revenue in the last 12 months and now employing more than 350 people.

As if that isn't enough, he is currently launching two new businesses as part of a growth strategy that is looking to break through a turnover target of £150m by 2025. An IPO and or some private equity deal are also on the cards at some point in the future.

'Stay Local' is a new app-based business that invites holiday let guests to tap into exclusive discounts offered by local retailers, service operators and attractions. The other business is a proptech product, Resicentral, that will sit within buildings and monitor a range of assets to ensure safety, quality and security. Resicentral can be configured to work with existing building infrastructures and hardware or integrated into a new building at the design stage, fit for commercial and residential use.

Up until this year, growth had been achieved organically but more recently and going forward the strategy is to accelerate continued expansion through further acquisitions.

The core business - Host & Stay - a holiday let management company, recently announced the acquisition of Host So Simple, a Liverpool-based short-term let property management company. As a result, the Host & Stay portfolio now exceeds 900 properties across the North of England.

Much of this business's success comes down to the hands-free, end-to-end service, from cleaning and maintenance to marketing and guest relations. Property owners can enjoy a hassle-free management service with no restrictions on owner bookings.

Over the next three years, the company's plans include the acquisition of multiple holiday home and short-term rental management businesses across the UK. Through reinvestment of profits, Host & Stay is poised to scale its operations, reaching 5,000 units by 2025 to become the fourth largest operator in the UK sector.

Dale's ambitions don't end there. He believes there is potential to not only take Host & Stay nationwide but also overseas. Dubai and southern Spain, home to many ex-pats but also a key holiday destination for many Brits, are seen as target areas for the future.

This is all a far cry from when Dale and his father bought Burnside Beach House in Saltburn, late in 2016. They already had a small portfolio of properties, but this was the first they felt could be let as a holiday home. And so, the story began.

In the spring of 2017, they launched the Saltburn property via Airbnb and Booking.com. The original plan was to hand Burnside Beach House to a local holiday management company. "We looked at a lot of holiday lettings companies in the area at the time and were underwhelmed. Nobody offered the full service, which included cleaning and maintenance. They only took a booking and their fee. We decided there was an opportunity to fill," says Dale.

At this time Dale was still working for Vertu Motors, in Glasgow. The motor trade was in the family blood. His father had worked with Peter Vardy (snr) at Reg Vardy plc for much of his working life. When Dale returned from

“We have big ambitions. In order to drive that year-on-year growth in revenues, it's essential that we continue to develop our leadership structure and bring knowledge and experience into the group. I'm truly excited about the journey we're on, and it's a great time to be a North East business.”

completing a four-year gold scholarship in the US, he joined Peter Vardy (jnr) who had established Vertu Motors in Scotland. Within two years after starting in a marketing executive role he had become a company director. Dale finally left the business as commercial director in 2017 to develop the family business with his wife Rachel, parents, and sister.

He looks back fondly at those years with Peter Vardy: "It was an important time where I learnt the sales and marketing side of business. Peter was my mentor and taught me a lot," says Dale.

It was there that he also got exposure to the full-service model, a concept he would take to holiday lettings. A model where sales, marketing, customer service and after care are all offered to the owner.

"I am determined to build something unique and different. I'm also keen to keep things local where possible. I'm really proud and passionate about the area and want to keep as much employment here as possible. Around 55 per cent or more of the team are based within Redcar and Cleveland," says Dale.

"I could not do what I do without our unbelievable teams and leaders across the business. We're dedicated to making an impact, delivering our purpose of pushing boundaries to create better places to live, work and stay."

All the businesses within The SDDE Smith Group have a link to the core Host & Stay business. For instance, Grey-Smith Legal handles contracts and compliance issues; Styled Interior Design has an input when property owners want to refurb or improve their homes; and WOODSmith Construction Group helps when owners want to extend or refurbish properties.

While they all service Host & Stay they are all profit and loss centres. Each business is responsible for chasing down and securing new business. The Styled Interior Design team have established strong credentials in the hospitality and office space sectors. WOODSmith Construction, only established in 2021, is rapidly expanding its pipeline of work in both the commercial and residential sectors and has secured contract wins with Anglo American, British Steel, and Story Contracting Ltd at Middlesbrough Train Station. Revenues rose from £1.2m in 2021 to £6m in 2022 and are set to rise further by the end of this year.

Dale says: "We have big ambitions. In order to drive that year-on-year growth in revenues, it's essential that we continue to develop our leadership structure and bring knowledge and experience into the group. I'm truly excited about the journey we're on, and it's a great time to be a North East business."



Evidence-based decision making for Sunderland BID

By Anna Robinson



Sunderland based market research company, MMC, is reflecting on its long-standing relationship with Sunderland BID, as the BID looks to renew its contract for another term.

The BID teamed up with MMC in 2018 to gain important insight from businesses and residents across the city.

Portfolio North spoke to Natasha McDonough of MMC and Sharon Appleby from Sunderland BID to reflect on the success of the partnership to date, to understand how Sunderland BID uses the market research conducted by MMC and how Sunderland is changing.

How do your two companies work together?

Sharon: "Sunderland Business Improvement District works to develop the city into a place that is vibrant, welcoming and accessible for businesses

of all sizes; and one of the ways we do that is through consistent market research such as surveys and in depth conversations. MMC conduct this research on our behalf.

"Our working relationship began when I joined Sunderland BID six and half years ago. We wanted a local company to provide market research that we could then act on and MMC's pitch and quality of service was fantastic."

Natasha: "We have our base in Sunderland and as a team, we are passionate about the city and its development and so we were really keen to work with Sharon and the BID to help develop the city's offer.



"We get feedback from residents and businesses across the city. For example, after events like the Sunderland Food & Drink Festival, we ask visitors to complete a survey about what they enjoyed or want to see more of, and then share this feedback with Sharon's team.

"We regularly provide research reports to the BID so that they can see what is working and what is not, and can then act on any trends or advice we provide."

Sharon: "Our regular feedback meetings are so important and means we can really track the changes we are making to the city."

How did Covid shape your work in the city?

Sharon: "When Covid hit, we created a recovery taskforce made up of 20-30 businesses who would meet weekly to see how we could help companies across the city. We worked hard every day to support businesses in Sunderland.

"I asked Natasha to join the group and she was fantastic and helped us find out what businesses really needed from us.

"We were also able to see how consumers were feeling and how they were interacting with local businesses at a time when we all had to stay at home. Whilst Covid disrupted our plans for our second BID term, we were able to survive and really help where needed. I was really proud of the team, as we were one of the first BIDs in the country to set up a Covid recovery taskforce."

Natasha: "I'll always be glad that we were able to play our part as a business by providing meaningful data that the BID and other key partners in the city could act on."

What additional advice does MMC provide to the BID?

Natasha: "As well as providing the research reports, we also make recommendations on how to act on the research - whether it's around marketing messages, or introducing events or activities aimed at particular age groups. One of my most enjoyable projects in 2021 was conducting a focus group of 16-18 year olds on behalf of the BID and

understanding what they loved, and what frustrated them about the city they lived in. I literally came out of the session, full of ideas and remember calling Sharon before I had even pulled out of the college campus!"

Sharon: "We really value consistency and we have got so much more out of the contract with MMC than just reports- we have a strong working relationship as well as added value and good will and I really enjoy how much we can get out of the presentations."

How do you connect with Sunderland as a city?

Sharon: "Some of the team at MMC live in Sunderland as well as work here, so we are able to receive a consumer point of view from them as well as a professional one.

"We really have a vested interest in the city. Lisa, who works for MMC, initially applied for a role on my team, which I wasn't able to offer her. But, she was so passionate and a brilliant person and so I recommend her to Natasha and she now works with MMC in the city where she lives and is from. People love her and are so receptive to her when she calls to ask them questions because she is so passionate about the city. People really respond to her local accent too!"

"However, we also benefit from the experience the team has outside of the city. For example, MMC's director, Vicki, who lives in Newcastle, has previously supported other cities, including research for Leeds BID and has experience of tracking other tourism campaigns. Natasha has previously lived and worked in places like London, Sydney and Los Angeles - so whilst I love that they're local, we know we get a wider perspective!"

Natasha: "As corny as it may sound, the BID and MMC really are one big team with one big goal. We're all passionate about Sunderland and want to see the city and its people succeed.

"We speak to thousands of people from all walks of life across the city and help the BID to keep their finger on the pulse in terms of what's going on in different communities."

How has working with Sunderland BID helped to expand people's awareness of MMC?

Natasha: "Sharon has been a huge advocate of the work we do, and as a small business owner, I'll never forget that our initial work with Sunderland BID led to us pivoting our business offer to that of market research.

Sharon: "Natasha has also helped us to be prepared for National BID Conferences. I can feed back advice and action we have taken based on MMC's recommendations, and this can then be implemented by other BIDs across the UK. MMC have really helped to make the UK better with their research and advice- and there is a clear trail that this help originated with MMC."

Natasha: "It is great to be able to play a small but meaningful role in the development of Sunderland- and other cities- through our work."

How is Sunderland changing, and what plans do you have for your third term at the BID?

Sharon: "The landscape of Sunderland has changed massively over the past few years and it has been great to be part of that momentum. With developments such as the Riverside, Crown Works Studios and the redevelopment of Mackie's Corner, it has been fantastic to see Sunderland come back to life.

"Our recent Food & Drink Festival in Sunnyside had a massive impact on the city. We had been running similar festivals in the past and the research conducted reinforced how popular an event it was. We are building on this research and making the events bigger and better."

Natasha: "Our next steps are to pull all the data from the past five years and help the BID highlight what people said and how they actioned that.

Sharon: "Once we have decided on which key metrics we'd like to track, we will set the agenda for the next term and make strategic, long-term plans. We have to be confident in our place in the city and act as if we will be here for years, which hopefully, we will."



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Lifestyle

The latest luxury lifestyle news
including travel, fine dining,
interiors and automotive

Creating Spaces

Creating curated spaces for group getaways.



Group travel has long been a source of joy, but it has its own set of challenges, particularly when it comes to accommodation. Balancing the desire for togetherness with the need for personal space is a delicate dance, but it's a dance Styled Interior Design have managed to choreograph.

Take Parkside Villa as an example. For this Harrogate based project, the design team opted for a bold and colourful approach, incorporating shades of blue, pink, and vibrant textures throughout the holiday home. The kitchen was specifically designed to encourage gatherings with guests; such as photo-op moments in front of the neon sign.

Each of the six bedrooms received the 5-star treatment, and a standout feature was the creation of a six person dressing room - as we all know, the best part of going out is getting ready.

Now, let's explore Queenscliffe in Scarborough - a charming six-bedroom residence tailored for larger families and groups yearning for a coastal getaway. In a departure from the typical

beachside look, Styled Interior Design took a fresh approach, infusing modern elements with a touch of Scandinavian influence to cultivate a peaceful ambiance.

With bespoke en-suite bathrooms for each room, guests can relax with their own space, returning to group activities refreshed.

These carefully planned spaces become the backdrop for laughter-filled game nights - just as long as it's not Monopoly- heartfelt conversations, and new memories.

Every piece of furniture, every light fixture, and every little detail is carefully chosen. Styled's thoughtful approach is evident in every corner of their designs. With a focus on creating personal retreats, their interiors provide cosy spots where you can relax, recharge, and take

a breather from the group's hustle and bustle. The clever design balance caters to each group member's unique needs, ensuring a comfortable stay for all.

In a competitive market, Styled stands out by creating spaces that celebrate the beauty of togetherness while respecting individual needs. Their designs are more than just interiors; they are carefully curated spaces for shared experiences, and make Styled Interior Design the first choice for serviced accommodation interior design.

To maximise the potential of your property or to learn more about Styled Interior Design's services, visit www.styledinteriors.co.uk or contact info@styledinteriors.co.uk





Oltco reaches recycling milestone through its 50 franchise regions

Oltco the sustainable resin bound driveway and flooring company, has announced a milestone of recycling the equivalent of 500 million plastic straws from Recycle Bound, which utilises waste plastic that is already in circulation.

Tom Stringer and Johnny Pearce, launched the Recycle Bound product for homeowners and businesses in 2019, and four years later has achieved this milestone through its 50 franchise areas in the UK and Channel Islands.

The company explains that its system uses waste plastic from straws, drink bottles and food packaging and each square metre of Recycle Bound consists of the equivalent of 3,000 plastic straws. That means when Recycle Bound is laid on a standard 70 square metre square drive, the equivalent of 210,000 plastic straws is recycled in the process.

Growing up in Cornwall, the co-directors of Oltco, Stringer and Pearce, said they know first-hand, as we do here on the North East coast, the devastating effect plastic waste has on the coastline and they grew increasingly concerned

about the effect it was having on the environment.

Recycle Bound has been installed at leading visitor attractions across the UK, such as the Eden Project, National Trust Sheffield Park & Garden, Bodmin Jail Hotel, Blackpool Sea Life Centre and RHS gardens Harlow Carr, Harrogate. Oltco highlights that its system recycled the equivalent of 1.7 million plastic straws in the resin bound pathways of the Eden Project alone.

Recycle Bound has received multiple awards in recognition including Product of the Year' at the Cornwall Business Awards, runner-up in 'Recycled Product of the Year' at the National Recycling Awards and Sustainability Warrior' award from the British Franchise Association.

Garath, director of Oltco Durham & Sunderland operation, comments: "We

have recycled the equivalent of 500 million plastic straws which is incredible. It is so exciting and rewarding to see so many Recycle Bound installations taking place up and down the country, it's thanks to our customers for opting for Recycle Bound."

Pearce added: "We are incredibly proud and won't be stopping here as the number of plastic straws that are recycled in our Recycle Bound installations increases every day. Here's to the next 500 million!"

Oltco's resin bound system is suitable for a variety of installations from driveways to footpaths, playgrounds patios and balconies.

To learn more, visit www.oltco.co.uk

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For your FREE sample or instant quote:

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leading sustainable resin driveways

#JoinTheRevolution

* Innovated by, and exclusive to Oltco, Recycle Bound is a resin bound solution that is made using a mix of stone and recycled waste plastic





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A new era for Newcastle Falcons

Following a significant number of positive changes both on and off the field, Newcastle Falcons kick-start their 2023-24 campaign at home the Championship side Bedford Blues on Friday, September 15.

The rugby calendar for the 2023-24 season has seen a structural change due to the Rugby World Cup in France this September. For the opening five weeks of the season, teams from the Championship and the Gallagher Premiership will compete in the Premiership Rugby Cup.

Newcastle Falcons get their Premiership Rugby Cup campaign underway against Championship side Bedford Blues on Friday, September 15 in a 7:45pm kick-off.

Tickets for the fixture go on general sale on Tuesday, August 1 and supporters can enquire about hospitality by contacting corporatesales@newcastlefalcons.co.uk. This also includes the recently launched 'Street Eats' experience - a new, relaxed, family-friendly and affordable package for Falcons match days.

The tie against Bedford will be the first opportunity to see the class of 2023-24 in action at Kingston Park and with an influx of positive changes to both the coaching and playing squad, there's an optimistic outlook from the Falcons camp.

Players from the first team and senior academy have certainly been put through their paces for their first pre-season training block, where their fitness and rugby capabilities have been pushed to their limits.

The four-week training stint finished with a gruelling fitness session on the beach at Druridge Bay, which wasn't for the faint-hearted.

New head coach Alex Codling has got his squad firing and the mood within the team has certainly lifted due to the positive influence he brings from his Pro D2 title winning campaign with Oyannax Rugby in France.

Falcons have also seen some great representation on the international scene, only adding to the good feeling surrounding the club.

Five first team players in Eduardo Bello, Mateo Carreras, Matias Moroni, Matias Orlando and Pedro Rubiolo have featured for Argentina in the Rugby Championship. Carreras most notably scoring a fantastic try against Australia in their 34-31 victory over the Wallabies.

Hooker Jamie Blamire has been away with England for their Rugby World Cup preparations and Falcons' youngster Louie Johnson was also a key feature in the England U20s world cup campaign, which saw them finish fourth.

Speaking on the feeling at Newcastle Falcons going into the new 2023-24 campaign, head coach Alex Codling said: "I have been delighted with the effort and application of the whole squad during the first block of pre-season. The new players have settled in well and we are ready to attack the start of block 2.

"We're also excited for our 'True North Origin' fixture taking place on Saturday, August 12. It's an internal training game between the squad and it'd be great to see as many supporters down as possible as we build towards our 2023-24 campaign opener on Friday, September 15 against Bedford Blues.

"Everyone at the club was incredibly proud to watch our Argentinian players help their national team overcome Australia in a tremendous performance. We are all behind them as they approach the World Cup.

"Also, a special mention to Jamie Blamire who has been training incredibly hard with the England squad as final selection for the World Cup approaches. Everyone at the Falcons is rooting for him."

Newcastle Falcons season tickets are on sale at the most affordable price in the Gallagher Premiership. From just £120 for adults and £60 for under-18s*, you can secure your place at Kingston Park and be part of it by visiting the club's website.

**Making top-flight rugby more accessible than ever before, under-11s can also claim a free season ticket (alongside a full paying adult) which is extended to under-15s if they are registered with an RFU club.*

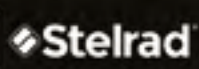


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Regenerative skin repair at Skin & Soul Medical

By Anna Robinson



The skin is the body's largest organ and goes through many changes within different environments, such as sun damage, air conditioning and sugary foods. Internal factors such as genetics, ageing, diabetes and hormones can also affect your skin.

The skin is a protective barrier and faces outward and inward challenges in its fight to protect organs and bones from damage. When the skin is healthy, its layers work to protect itself, but external factors such as sun damage and high air conditioning can compromise the skin and impair its ability to rejuvenate.

One new solution is pHformula, a treatment system based on the technology of regenerative medicine and combined with the concept of creating controlled chemical skin resurfacing.

Controlled chemical skin resurfacing differs from a traditional facial peel which cause skin exfoliation. pHformula's treatment actively provokes an accelerated form of cell regeneration in the skin, whilst also reducing trauma and irritation.

The process of skin resurfacing has been in skin clinic since the 1980s, and pHformula's latest treatment represents a new level of skin care and anti-ageing techniques. Science has greatly advanced since the dawn of skin clinics, from carbon dioxide laser to non-ablative laser systems in use today. Safety and limited invasiveness has improved the experience of treating the skin.

Skin resurfacing is a non-invasive process that rejuvenates your skin layer by layer. Controlled skin resurfacing works beyond just the external layer of the skin and actively provokes an accelerated form of cell regeneration in all layers, forming new skin cells from the inside out.

With more than 30 years' combined experience in the medical and pharmaceutical markets, the team at pHformula have perfected their product and have set a precedent for scientific backed skin resurfacing technology.

Their skin resurfacing system is targeted to the needs of different skin types, from anti-ageing, hyperpigmentation, chronic redness, acne, wrinkles or just for an instant boost. Different treatments in the range can be collated

in a specific treatment programme to treat the skin with different strength and depth levels for different skin sensitivities.

The treatments are self-neutralising and can be left on the skin. Take-home products can be used to continue skin maintenance and achieve the best results post-appointment.

pHformula has taken the process of skin resurfacing to a new level, with dermatological, non-invasive and tailored skin resurfacing treatments based on three decades of combined scientific, medical and skin health knowledge and experience.

Skin & Soul Medical, a holistic, private clinic based in Sunderland and Newcastle has recently added pHformula to their extensive list of treatments in order to resurface and repair the upper layers of the skin.

The advanced skin resurfacing programme of treatments is proving popular with clients looking to improve the quality of their skin. The team at Skin & Soul Medical guarantee this product will be popular with their clients and for those looking to improve the look and feel of the skin without the need for harsh chemical peels.

Lucie Royer, of Skin & Soul Medical commented: "We are excited to be able to offer our customers the latest product to aid with skin resurfacing and improving the look and feel of the skin.

"pHformula is a fantastic product and one that we can't wait to share with our clients to aid in their skincare regime."

Whether you are looking to improve redness and ageing or simply to reduce pores and acne, pHformula is the perfect solution.

With pHformula now available at Skin & Soul Medical, contact the team to book your appointment via skinandsoulmedical.com





Top 5 staycations **in the North East and Yorkshire**

By Anna Robinson



With the rise of staycations, and the thought of an easier and quicker journey time, UK breaks have become popular with many holiday makers during the warmer months.

Northumberland, County Durham and North Yorkshire are home to stunning beaches, wild countryside and ancient market towns.

With so much on offer for families or couples, we have rounded up some of the best staycation options to enjoy, without having to travel too far.





The Kingslodge Inn, Durham

North East based pubs with rooms company, The Inn Collection Group, has 34 venues across the UK, with many of those in Northumberland and County Durham. The Kingslodge Inn in Durham offer a fantastic base from which to explore the scenery and sights of Durham and the wider North East. Just a 10 minute walk from the heart of Durham City, The Kingslodge Inn is ideal for a city break. With dog-friendly cosy bedrooms and delicious menus at the on-site pubs, Kingslodge was voted best venue in County Durham at the national Pub & Bar Awards in 2019. The Inn Collection Group has pubs to suit every type of staycation, from walking holidays to surfing and boating. Comfortable rooms and friendly staff add to the experience at their high-quality, welcoming venues.

Country Glamping Co.

In County Durham, close to the town of Barnard Castle, lies three unique glamping pods, run by Country Glamping Co. The fully-serviced glamping pods feature a living room, full kitchen and comfortable bed and are well suited to couples or small families. The pods offer a different kind of staycation and are the perfect base to enjoy walks at High Force waterfall or take in some history at Bowes Museum. On site, there is a décor for breakfasts or to book a picnic to take on a day of adventures. An advancement on the traditional camping holiday, the pods at Country Glamping Co. are an ideal home away from home and are equipped with everything you might need for a holiday.

The Tempus Hotel

The Tempus Hotel is the latest addition to the Doxford Group and is a luxury, boutique hotel near Alnwick. With 15 boutique bedrooms and a décor inspired by Alice in Wonderland, this unique hotel has views across the 150 acre Charlton Estate. The bar, restaurant and orangery provides fine dining throughout the day, and uses locally sourced ingredients to showcase the best of Northumberland's country and coast. The hotel is well suited for those wishing to enjoy a hotel stay in a vibrant, modern hotel with high quality furnishings and amenities, and is in the perfect location to explore the castles of Northumberland's coast and the rolling hills of the Cheviots.

Ramside Hall Hotel

Ramside Hall's Treehouses provides customers with a staycation among the trees on the large Ramside estate in County Durham. The A-frame treehouses include a hot tub, full kitchen, floor to ceiling windows, and a wraparound balcony to enjoy the views across the golf course below. Treehouse studios, lofts or whole house ensure there is enough space for your entire group to enjoy the luxury venue together. On site, there is an award-winning spa, restaurant and golf course, providing luxury at every turn.

Grounds Keeper's Cottage, North Shire Farm

For fans of Harry Potter, this unique opportunity to stay in a cottage inspired by Hagrid's home is available for short breaks on a stunning farm close to the coastal town of Saltburn-by-the-Sea. The cottage is formed of three interlocking circular rooms, with mismatched stained-glass windows, lantern lighting and luxurious copper bath. With two double beds and a bunk bed, this cottage is ideal for a family break. Despite the old, quirky décor, the property is fully modernised with television, shower and modern, high-quality bedding. Outside, the views stretch across fields to the Yorkshire coast. Saltburn's famous pier and funicular lift are only a short drive away, with pretty villages and long beaches never far away.






Newcastle Milk Market

£175,000

This penthouse apartment at Milk Market offers not only a desirable location amidst Newcastle's vibrant Quayside but also a comfortable and stylish living space, perfect for those seeking a contemporary urban lifestyle with all amenities at their doorstep. Milk Market boasts a prime location on Newcastle's iconic and dynamic Quayside, offering easy access to a diverse range of popular restaurants, bars, and charming cafes. Situated just a short and pleasant ~15-minute walk from the heart of Newcastle City Centre, the apartment ensures convenience and connectivity to the city's vibrant atmosphere. Nestled along the scenic River Tyne, the Quayside itself is a bustling hub of activity. On Sundays, the area comes alive with the renowned Quayside Market, showcasing an array of local delights, artisan crafts, and delectable street food. Across the riverbank, you can admire the striking BALTIC art gallery and the distinctive architecture of Sage Gateshead, an esteemed concert venue. Perched on the top floor, this penthouse apartment enjoys unparalleled views of the illuminated millennium bridge at twilight, providing a captivating backdrop to the urban lifestyle. The apartment boasts plentiful potential. A well-designed layout encompasses a secure communal entrance hallway, equipped with both stairs and elevator access, ensuring convenience and safety. Upon entering, a private hallway welcomes you with a telephone entry system, emphasizing security and privacy. The spacious lounge through diner offers a comfortable and inviting space for relaxation and entertainment, flowing into the well-appointed kitchen, complete with fitted wall and base units. The apartment features two bright bedrooms, ensuring ample accommodation space, and is complemented by a main bathroom. **Resident parking is available under separate negotiation.*



 x 2

 x 1

 x 1



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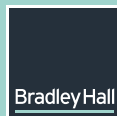


Gateshead Love Lane

£325,000

Love Lane is a little-known block of just 33 apartments, set directly opposite the Sage Gateshead on the iconic and highly sought after Newcastle Quayside. This marvellous apartment enjoys a southerly aspect, with a balcony offering fabulous panoramic views across the water and the many bridges linking the two cities. The incredible attention to detail and significant improvement that has been put into this apartment over the last 5 years certainly does not go unnoticed. The stylish design features include; Porcelanosa tiling to the hallway, living areas and bathrooms, high quality Roca suites and under floor heating to all tiled areas apart from bedrooms, contemporary feature radiators, extraordinary hand built contemporary kitchen with beautiful Silestone worktops and integrated Smeg appliances, and fitted wardrobes to both double bedrooms. There is a floor mounted system gas boiler linked to a 210L pressurised tank with Immersion override. Upon entering the property, you are welcomed into the entrance hallway, shower room/wc, master bedroom with fitted wardrobes and luxurious ensuite; inclusive of an oversized bath, separate walk-in shower, and integrated waterproof TV, remarkable open plan kitchen, dining, and living space with doors leading to the private balcony.

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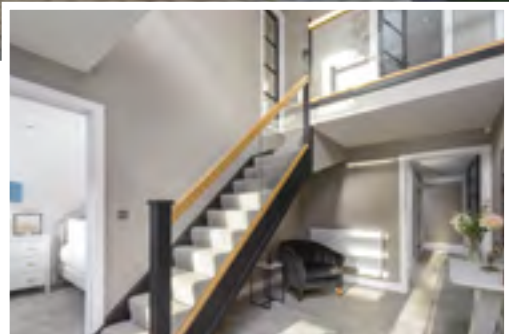
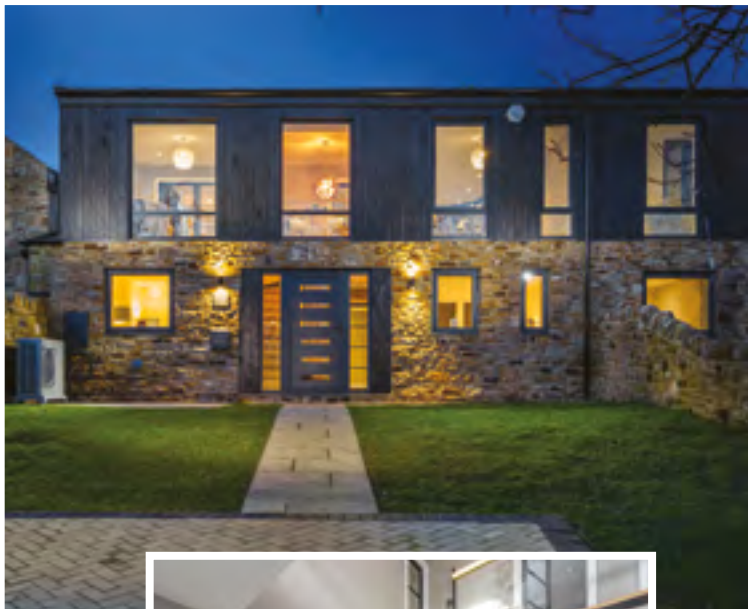


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Durham

Brancepeth Manor Farm

£575,000

Brancepeth Manor Farm Estate boasts multiple high-quality, exceptional homes, close to the established village of Brancepeth. Brancepeth Manor Farm was the once famous racing stables of the former Grand national winner Red Marauder and is now home to an estate of barn conversions, quickly becoming one of the most sought-after residential locations in County Durham.

Haydock Lodge is a unique, three-bedroom, stone-built barn conversion. This property is truly a one-of-a-kind home with captivating views over the lake and countryside from all levels. Extending to over 2000sq.ft, this home boasts high quality finishes throughout and is approached via automatic wrought iron gates hung on stone pillars and leading to the sweeping driveway that dissects the farmland and provides access to the hamlet of barns. As you enter the property you are welcomed into a spacious open plan living space with a double height ceiling. The open plan space comprising of a contemporary kitchen with a range of wall and base units finished with quartz worktops, matching upstands, and a feature oak breakfast bar. The open plan dining room/ lounge benefits from large, glazed picture windows overlooking the open countryside as does the separate snug/bedroom 4. A stunning glazed staircase leads to three generous sized bedrooms, two of which have en-suites and dressing rooms. There is a free-standing bath, walk in shower, basin, and w/c in the main bathroom. There is underfloor heating throughout the ground floor. The property is heated via an air source heat pump which makes this home a very energy efficient home.

Aintree Lodge, also on the estate, boasts captivating views over the lake and countryside from all levels. As you enter the property you are welcomed into a spacious hallway with a double height ceiling and to four generous sized bedrooms, three of which have en-suites. All the ensuites boast black accents, fully tiles walk in shower, basin, and w/c. The master bedroom has the added benefit of a walk-in wardrobe/dressing room. The living area is situated on the first floor in order to enjoy the stunning lake and countryside views as well as the resident geese that greet you on arrival. The kitchen benefits from high quality integrated appliances inclusive of; double fan assisted ovens, dishwasher, microwave, coffee machine, two wine fridges and a floor level fridge. Located off the snug is a reading gallery which takes advantage of the phenomenal views. There is a further, utility room, office/playroom and w/c. There is underfloor heating throughout the first floor. Externally there is a large drive with ample parking for multiple cars and lawned area which is a perfect place to sit and relax to take in the beauty of the countryside. To the rear there is a back garden with rear access.



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x 3

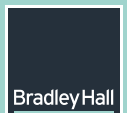


x 1

Durham

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Lambton Park opens the doors to a new showhome

It's one of the most prestigious housing developments in the North East which offers the best in luxury living...

Mention the name Lambton Park and it means different things to so many different people across the North East.

For anyone with a knowledge of local history, they'll know it's the ancestral seat of the Earls of Durham and is where the legendary tale of the Lambton Worm first reared its head - the inspiration for everything from songs to Hollywood movies.

In the 70s Lambton Park became Lambton Lion Park, where visitors flocked in their thousands to drive their cars through the estate and have an almost face to face encounter with big cats and a whole host of other animals.

Fans of television costume drama may also remember Lambton Castle as the backdrop for the BBC series, *The Paradise*, where it was transformed into one of England's very first department stores.

Whatever part of the Lambton story strikes a chord, it's a tale that continues to grow and one which more and more people now have the opportunity to be part of.

In recent years Lambton Park has become equally well known as one of the North East's most prestigious housing developments, thanks to the work of Miller Homes.

The company has created a whole host of desirable forever homes, while also being mindful of their surroundings. The result is three, four and five bedroom

properties, built to the highest specifications and with impeccable design credentials.

Most recently it unveiled a new showhome - the Pine - a four bedroom residence which helps to create a real feeling of what it would be like to live there.

The earliest stages of the development were created by the architect behind HM The King's Pounbury estate at Dorset, which aimed to create an integrated community.

Lambton is also being driven by the same principles. As with Pounbury, the intention is that Lambton Park - which has excellent regional and national transport links - will become a self-sufficient community.

With that in mind the next stage will see the creation of Bowes Gate, a community hub which will consist of a Pavilion café bistro and a range of independent stores such as a delicatessen, butcher, florist and baker.

It means that residents of Lambton Park will have many of their everyday needs met right on their doorstep, as well as being in the enviable position of having Durham, Newcastle and Sunderland close by.

A sense of history is never far away and this is particularly evident in the second phase, where design inspiration has been drawn from the Victorian Arts and Crafts Movement.





At that time artists and creators started to incorporate nature and rural life into their work – a sentiment which is now being echoed at Lambton.

For Aisling Ramshaw, sales director at Miller Homes North East, there’s a magical quality about Lambton Park which everyone who has already bought a property there seems to have discovered for themselves.

“These are really special homes which represent the very best in modern design and architecture but at the same time have taken into account the history of the area they are in,” she said.

“They are attracting a wide range of buyers, from people who are returning home to live in the North East to others who simply recognise the benefits of living in the region and with everything that Lambton has to offer right on the doorstep.

“Phase one has been incredibly successful and we are delighted that phase two is now also starting to sell really quickly.”

There’s no doubt that part of the many attractions of buying at Lambton is the added value that simply isn’t available anywhere else. Because of its incredible surroundings – the 1000 acres of woodland plus the little matter of

the historic castle which is part of its estate – home owners get special all year round access to more than 11 kilometres of woodland walks and get invitations to special events on the estate.

Phase one homeowners concur with the magic that Lambton Park seems to conjure up.

Within just one week of first viewing a five bedroom Aspen house Anne Parrott and husband Ed decided to buy and Anne, from County Durham, said: “It was love at first sight.

“There is just so much light in these houses – the windows are huge and the whole development is so light and airy. Everything about the house is fantastic and there is absolutely nothing that we would change.”

It’s a familiar response from those lucky enough to live there, who appreciate the period design but with all of the benefits that living in a new build can bring.

Lambton Park has a history that can be traced back thousands of years and the good news is that there is still time to be part of that legacy – and it’s very exciting future. For further information visit www.millerhomes.co.uk/new-homes/north-east/lambton-park-lambton-park.aspx



Poppyfield Court Seaton, County Durham

**Bradley Hall are
delighted to
welcome this
exquisite executive
detached home
located in the ever
popular village of
Seaton, County
Durham.**

Poppyfield Court is a unique and luxurious development of 26 bespoke self-build homes the subject being constructed in 2021 by the current owners. The property provides exceptional executive accommodation, set out over three storeys and providing 4500 sq.ft of spacious family living space.

Located on the western outskirts of the village it is well placed for access to village life, walks, cycle-way, bridle way and the beauty of the nearby countryside and coast. The A19 interchange is within 300m, the A690 within 2 miles - a perfect commuter base.

On entering the property, one will appreciate the design and range of

impressive features that greet you in the central reception area, which include tiled flooring with underfloor heating and a range of gallery lighting that creates a striking first impression. From the reception area one can access a front living room, a cloak room and a spacious utility room. Located at the rear of the property is a stunning bespoke living kitchen which is ideal for entertaining friends and family with its extensive open plan feel and lounging area with media wall feature. The kitchen is complimented with a range of eye-catching features including quartz worktops, tiled flooring, aluminium sliding doors and houses a range of integrated appliances including



two wine coolers, a coffee machine, a double oven, two plate warming drawers, a microwave, dishwasher and induction hob with downdraft extractor. Leading off the kitchen is a unique six-seat home cinema with high end equipment including projector, screen and speaker system.

On the first floor there is a master boasting a range of features including his and hers dressing rooms, en-suite bathroom with walk in shower and free-standing bath and a balcony which takes advantage of the spectacular views of the countryside. The first floor also includes a further three bedrooms all generously sized and complimented with en-suite

facilities. Of the three bedrooms one is currently used a gym workout suite and contains rubber flooring, wall to ceiling mirrors and houses a range of specialist fitness equipment.

The second floor has a further two identical bedrooms both with attached living areas, en-suite facilities and boasting excellent views over the surrounding countryside views. It is worth noting that both living areas could be converted to create a further two bedrooms creating an eight-bedroom dwelling.

Externally, there is an open garden to the front with ample drive space and integral garage. The rear garden is

accessed via aluminium sliding doors from the kitchen which lead you out onto a secluded tiled patio area with a garden laid mostly to lawn and benefitting from south-westerly facing sunny aspect garden. This is a great opportunity to acquire a breath-taking executive detached home in this outstanding development, so early inspection is recommended - considerable interest is anticipated.

To arrange a viewing, contact the Sunderland office on 0191 563 4343 or email sunderland@bradleyhall.co.uk



Watermelon Gazpacho

By Chris Dobson, Head Chef, 21 restaurant, Newcastle

By Terry Laybourne



A little sunshine food that's quick, easy and a perfect start to an alfresco supper or a light lunch. Perfect for the summer – whatever the weather.

Serves 4

- 150g Watermelon
- 350g Cucumber
- 350g Ripe plum tomatoes
- 1tbls + 2tsp Sherry vinegar
- 3tbls Extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt

- Peel and deseed the watermelon
- Cut around 2tbls of 1cms dice and set aside for garnish - cut the remainder into chunks
- Peel the cucumber and take the same approach as to the watermelon. Cut a couple of tablespoons of 1cms ish dice and cut the remainder into chunks.
- Remove the core from the tomatoes with the point of a small, sharp knife then immerse into boiling water for 6-7 seconds. Remove, then plunge immediately into cold water. The tomato skins should then slide off easily.
- Cut the skinned tomatoes into chunks, leaving a few aside for garnish
- Liquidise the watermelon, cucumber and tomato chunks at high speed until nice and smooth
- Add the sherry vinegar, olive oil and a good pinch of salt with the motor still running
- Pass through a fine sieve into a chilled bowl and adjust the seasoning with more salt and sherry vinegar if necessary
- Chill for a good 4 hours or so before dividing between 4 x chilled bowls
- Divide the reserved watermelon, cucumber and tomato dice between them along with an ice cube in each

If you wish you can add a bit of luxury by seasoning a handful (8 - 12) of peeled and deveined king prawns with chilli flakes, shredded mint and a squeeze of lime juice before searing in a hot grill pan. Slip 2 or 3 prawns onto each of four bamboo skewers and serve whilst still piping hot alongside the chilled soup.

Chris Dobson, head chef at 21, works alongside Portfolio North's Contributing Recipe Editor, Terry Laybourne, creating delicious meals for patrons and readers.



Chaophraya Bottomless Brunch

By Anna Robinson 

Newcastle city centre is home to a unique restaurant with an incredible view. Chaophraya, a Thai restaurant on the third floor of Grey's Quarter, Eldon Square, is home to a large roof terrace with views of Greys Monument and beyond.

Their Royal Bottomless Brunch is available on Saturday and Sunday and is a fantastic mix of summer cocktails and delicious Thai sharing platters. Portfolio North was invited to try their latest brunch menu.

We arrived to a warm welcome and were taken to a table on the roof terrace. The terrace has views overlooking Newcastle city centre and has a mix of booths and tables for a variety of group sizes. As we were quite a large group, we were seated on a long table, close to the DJ, who soundtracks the Saturday bottomless brunches.

The roof terrace is a perfect sun trap, but if the weather does turn, there are heaters, a retractable roof and complimentary blankets. As it was such a warm day when we visited, these were not needed but we did notice the thoughtfulness that went into making an outdoor dining space.

The bottomless brunch lasts 90 minutes and includes either prosecco, beer or cocktails alongside the dishes. Non-alcoholic options, such as mocktails, are also available, ensuring everyone is included in the fun. We opted for cocktails and could choose from a variety available on the brunch menu. Our group went for a mixture of Raspberry Crush, Lychee and Raspberry Spritz and Mai Thai.

The lychee and raspberry spritz included oriental pink gin shaken with fresh raspberries, lychee juice, lemon juice and lychee syrup and was a fresh and

delicious summer drink with a unique twist.

The raspberry crush was a real favourite amongst the group and included raspberry vodka, raspberry liqueur, sala flavoured syrup and lemonade. This sweet and refreshing drink was an ideal portion size and was a really enjoyable cocktail, ideal for warmer days.

The Mai Thai is Chaophraya's speciality and is a Thai twist on a tiki classic. Featuring two rums, lemongrass liqueur, pineapple and orange syrup, this tropical beverage had surprising flavours and was a great accompaniment for the main courses.

We then opted for one of the two sharing platters available. The Chaophraya platter comes with Thai chicken tacos, chicken satay, chicken spring rolls, tempura prawns and a spicy duck salad. There is also a vegetarian platter available.

The variety of dishes on the platter was impressive and was ideal for sharing between two or three people. There was something to suit everyone's tastes and every item was fresh, good quality and presented on long boards, perfect for picking and sharing.

The main course options include Pad Thai, green curry and lamb massaman amongst others. We opted for the Pad Thai and added prawns for an additional flavour. The portions are the perfect size for brunch and the dish was delicious, with lime, chillies and crushed peanuts adding additional flavours. We also ordered some Thai prawn crackers, a spicier version of

the traditional prawn cracker, which came with a sweet chilli dip and was a great accompaniment to the main meal.

The DJ on the roof terrace added to the ambience as we enjoyed our 90 minutes of cocktails and food in the summer sun. The songs were upbeat and lively but wasn't so loud that we couldn't speak to each other, which is so often the case with a live DJ.

The service was fantastic and our waitress was very kind and attentive and the restaurant indoors was clean and bright, with more views of Newcastle. 90 minutes felt like the perfect amount of time as the service is quick and we did not have to wait for long periods for drink refills or for our food, which really made the experience a lot slicker than other bottomless brunches.

The Royal Bottomless Brunch experience at Chaophraya is £40 per head, and we felt this was very reasonable, as the main courses and sharing platters were of a good portion size and we were able to have multiple cocktails within the hour and a half window.

The atmosphere on the roof terrace was lively and felt like a great place to enjoy a summer afternoon in Newcastle, with couples and groups enjoying the sun.

To book Chaophraya's Bottomless Brunch, visit chaophraya.co.uk/thai-restaurant/newcastle/royal-bottomless-brunch



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Annual Clay Pigeon Shoot fundraiser is bang on target

NE Youth are celebrating after raising over £73,000 through their annual corporate shoots.

NE Youth's Corporate Clay Pigeon Shoot took place on Friday 16th June and the John Shallcross Memorial Shoot took place on Sunday 18th June 2023.

Both events were set in the stunning Hulne Priory in Alnwick with the aim to raise money to support services for disadvantaged young people in the North East of England.

Over 360 individuals were in attendance over the weekend, with a record-breaking 63 teams entering for the chance to prove their shot and win top prizes.

The winners of Friday's shoot were Widdrington Game and on Sunday, Silvermoor Equestrian Haylage retained the trophy from last year.

Story Homes and Queensberry Design were the main sponsors whilst The Inn Collection Group, Bradley Hall and Northumberland Estates were supporting partners for both events. The incredible amount of money raised can fund 2 full time Youth Workers for a year, providing support to over 600 young people across the North East through information, advice and guidance and a fun and rewarding programme of activities.

NE Youth support young people across the region through residentials, youth groups, sports clubs and fun days. Providing safe and accessible spaces for young people to meet friends, learn and play is vital to NE Youth's mission.

Working across diverse communities in the North East, the team of Youth Workers at NE Youth ensure children and young people can thrive.

Jon Niblo, CEO of NE Youth commented: "We are blown away by the shoot this year. With the cost of living crisis affecting everyone we didn't expect to reach last year's target, never mind surpass it. The money raised will mean 100's more young people will be supported across the region. I thank everyone involved from the bottom of my heart".





A spotlight on Bamburgh

Nestled on the stunning Northumberland coast, the picturesque village of Bamburgh stands as a beacon of charm and tranquillity.

Known for its rich history, breath-taking landscapes, and welcoming community, Bamburgh has garnered a reputation as an idyllic destination for families seeking a harmonious blend of traditional and modern living.

Living in Bamburgh

The village was recently named the UK's 'best seaside town' by The Telegraph and it's not hard to see why.

With its stunning coastal views and proximity to the Northumberland countryside, Bamburgh has consistently earned recognition as one of the best places in the UK to live and visit.

In a fast-paced world, the village offers families the chance to embrace a simpler, more fulfilling way of life, exuding a warm and inviting atmosphere, making it an excellent place to raise a family. The community is also tight knit and friendly, fostering a sense of belonging for both newcomers and long-time residents.

Despite its small size, Bamburgh boasts a range of amenities to meet residents' everyday needs. From family-owned butchers selling local produce to charming cafes where families can enjoy quality time together, the village provides convenience without sacrificing its quaint appeal.

Residents enjoy local restaurants such as The Potted Lobster, a popular restaurant focusing on providing the

freshest local seafood caught in the surrounding waters of Bamburgh. The Castle Inn, often referred to as 'The Middle', is a welcoming, traditional pub with warming-home cooked food and a relaxing, cosy atmosphere. Pilgrims Gelato, founded by local women on Holy Island, has a branch in the walled garden in Bamburgh, offering a unique vegan alternative to traditional gelato.

Finding your home

The housing market in Bamburgh offers a diverse range of properties. Whether you are a family looking to settle down or someone seeking to relocate somewhere away from the hustle and bustle of the city, Bamburgh is for you.

From cosy cottages that exude rustic charm to more contemporary homes with modern amenities, there is a property to suit every taste and budget, including some fantastic properties on the market with Bradley Hall.

The firm has some incredible homes on offer located in the stunning village of Bamburgh and its surrounding areas.

Things to do

Bamburgh's history is woven into every corner of the village, providing a rich tapestry of stories to explore. Dominated by the incredible Bamburgh Castle, which dates back to the Anglo-Saxon period, the village offers a unique

opportunity for families to delve into the past, through tours of the Castle and visits to The RNLi Grace Darling Museum and Anglo-Saxon St Aidan's Church.

Bamburgh Castle beach is a fantastic walk for those who love the outdoors, with fantastic views of the North Sea, Holy Island, and the Farne Islands, perfect for a day out with the family. And for fans of the popular Netflix show 'The Last Kingdom', you may spot some familiar scenes which were filmed on Bamburgh's beach.

For golfers, Bamburgh Castle Golf Club is often listed as one of the most scenic golf courses in Britain with fantastic views of Lindisfarne, the Farne Islands, the Cheviots and Bamburgh Castle.

Transport Links

Despite its remote location, Bamburgh has great transport links. The village is well served by local buses, residents can hop on a train and reach cities like Newcastle in just 30 minutes, while York is a mere 90-minute journey away. Direct trains to London also ensure that Bamburgh remains well-connected to urban hubs.

To see properties in Bamburgh available with Bradley Hall, visit the firm's website: www.bradleyhall.co.uk

By Anna Robinson





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Calling all Muscle Car enthusiasts

Dodge 'Last Call' range available for final time

Dodge Ram North East, part of the Performance 28 group, has announced that the final opportunity for muscle car enthusiasts to purchase brand-new Dodge Charger and Challenger vehicles is now, with limited edition vehicles exclusively available at their North East showroom.

By Anna Robinson



The history of the Dodge brand is long-standing. The Dodge Brothers, Horace and John, began building bicycles and honing their engineering skills in the 1800s. As their skills developed, and a need for motor vehicles increased, they formed the Dodge brand in 1900 and launched their first car on November 14, 1914.

Dodge vehicles have become synonymous with Hollywood, and feature frequently in some of the most loved films and shows of the past 50 years. The first Fast and Furious film focused on a driver, played by Vin Diesel, who drove a 1970 Dodge Charger. Popular television show The Dukes of Hazzard featured almost 300 Dodge cars that were used to perform different stunts in the comedy series.



The Last Call range is the final opportunity to own a limited-edition Dodge vehicle. There are nine cars in the range, and once they are sold, will not be available again.

The Last Call vehicles offer the ultimate modern muscle car experience and due to tighter emissions regulations, December 2023 will mark the last Hellcat 6.2 litre V8 supercharged engine production, effectively ending the Challenger and Charger muscle cars in their current iconic iterations.

The final factory order has already been submitted meaning the cars currently locked into production will be the last to roll out of the plant in Ontario, Canada. North East specialist car retailer Performance28 has become an officially licensed Dodge Dealer, with the ability to retail, warranty and service Dodge muscle cars, meaning enthusiasts can confidently enjoy the sheer thrill of muscle car ownership without the fear factor of "grey importing" a vehicle.

All vehicles produced in the final few months of 2023 will carry a "final call" plaque in the engine bay to denote it was produced during the iconic final production period.

King Daytona

The King Daytona Special Edition pays homage to the 1969 Charger King Daytona, which was popular with motorists and drag racers across America. The rare Redeye Widebody features an 807 horsepower engine, mango exterior paint and a unique interior and graphics package.

Super Bee

The Super Bee Special Edition is also available from Performance 28. Resurfacing a few times over the years Dodge has been active, the Super Bee has returned for 2023. Bigger than ever before, the high-performance Charger Super Bee is available in both standard and widebody version, with performance upgrades including drag radials and drag mode.

Swinger

Dodge paved the way for American muscle vehicles in the 70s with its high performance Swinger models. As an ode to the popular cars, the Swinger Special Editions have a retro themed appearance.

Blacktop

The Blacktop vehicles come with blacked-out exterior badges and carbon fiber interior accents as standard. The RWD

models have performance upgrades including a high performance suspension and the Performance Handling Group package, which adds precision to cornering.

Demon 170

The Demon 170 is the fastest accelerating car on the market and features the first 1,025 horsepower production HEMI engine. The interior design is focused on performance with cloth interior, carbon fiber accents and Alcantara steering wheel.

Black Ghost

The Black Ghost is modeled after the original from the 1970s. An 'untouchable' Detroit street racer, the Black Ghost has retained its image as powerful and popular car.

Shakedown

As an original Dodge Product Design Office Concept, the Shakedown is being recreated for the 2023 model year. The Shakedown Special Edition features matching interior and exterior designs, finished with red and black detailing.

To find out more about the Last Call range, visit dodgeramnortheast.co.uk



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Navigating the mortgage market: How to secure the best deal

Much has been made of the UK's 'mortgage timebomb' in recent days and weeks. Over 1.4 million UK homeowners will see their fixed-rate mortgages expire this year, with rates now more than double what they received two years ago. Presently, the average rate for a two-year fixed mortgage sits at 6.19%, more than double the 2021 rate of 2.56%.

For those seeking a new deal, whether they're a first-time buyer or an existing homeowner, there's no glossing over it, it's a bit of a daunting prospect.

However, there are steps you can take to ensure you secure the best deal and make the process as seamless and less stressful as possible, as Chris McVay, Senior Mortgage & Protection Manager at Bradley Hall explains...

Act swiftly

If you're in the market for a new deal, it's best to act swiftly as rates are expected to continue rising over the coming months. Lenders are also continually pulling back their most favourable offers, repricing them every few days, so it's best to lock in the best deal while you can.

This is especially true for those whose deals are set to end within the next six months. You can sign up for a new mortgage deal six months before it is due to start, so with rates expected to rise, thinking quick could save you a significant amount of money.

And in the very unlikely event that rates improve before your new deal kicks in, you can always pull out it and enter into a different, cheaper deal, so stand still at your peril.

Explore your options

To ensure you get the best deal for you, it is essential to explore your options. Don't merely settle for your current lender. Enlisting the services of a reputable mortgage broker could help you save tens of thousands of pounds.

Interestingly, at a rate of 5.82%, five-year fixed deals are currently more affordable than their two-year counterparts too. Another reason why you should explore all of your options.

However, you must also air on the side of caution before committing to a lengthier mortgage agreement. Consider the possibility that interest rates may start to decline within the next year, as predicted by most financial experts. Locking yourself into a longer deal could mean you remain on higher rates for an unnecessarily extended period.

Seek help if you're struggling

Worried that you may not be able to afford your new bill? Don't worry, you're not alone. According to the Resolution Foundation, a total of five million households are set for average mortgage bill increases of £5,100 by the end of 2024, but support is on hand for

those struggling. By having a chat with your lender - or seeking the support of an adviser - you can seek support in lightening the financial burden. For example, they might present you with some viable options, like extending your mortgage term, which can be quite beneficial.

Consider this: by spreading your repayment period from 25 to 30 years, you can experience a reduction in your monthly payments. Let's say you have a £200,000 mortgage at a rate of 6.19%. Extending it from 20 to 30 years could lead to a monthly decrease of £231, from £1,454 to £1,223.

Of course, it's worth noting that extending the mortgage term does mean you'll pay more interest over the entire loan duration. In fact, the total interest you'll end up paying could increase by £91,342 (assuming rates remain the same). However, don't fret; many lenders are flexible and open to extending mortgage terms, especially for older borrowers, often extending them up to the 70th birthday of the eldest borrower.

Another option worth considering is switching to an interest-only mortgage for a temporary period. This approach can reduce your payments since you'd only be paying the interest on the loan, not the capital. For instance, if you switch from a repayment mortgage to an interest-only mortgage with a balance of £200,000 and a rate of 6.19%, you could potentially lower your payments by £280 per month, from £1,312 to £1,032. However, keep in mind that your lender will likely require you to have a well-thought-out plan for repaying

the capital in the long run.

If you're in need of a short-term financial breather, a temporary payment holiday could be an option to explore. Depending on your circumstances and payment history, you might be able to take a break from making mortgage payments for up to six months. Be cautious, though, as not all mortgages offer this feature, and it's crucial to carefully weigh the potential impact on your credit score and future loan prospects. Additionally, keep in mind that interest will still accrue during the payment holiday period.

If you've been diligently making overpayments in the past 12 months, another alternative to consider is underpaying instead of taking a payment holiday. However, it's essential to consult your mortgage provider before proceeding with this option.

It's worth noting that if you've been struggling to meet your mortgage payments and have missed some, it's unlikely that you'll be eligible for a payment holiday. In such cases, it's advisable to discuss your situation with your lender to explore alternative solutions.

The overall picture may be bleak, and there will undoubtedly be more bumps in the road, but it's worth remembering that support is on offer to help those seeking a new deal or looking to get on the ladder.

After all, finding ways to financially support the UK's consumers is crucial if we are to keep the economic wheels of the nation in motion, so seek expert support from an advisor, be savvy and make sure you get the best deal for you.

How much more you will pay						
Size of Loan	Latest Rise to 5%		Latest Rise to 5.5%		Latest Rise to 6%	
	Monthly	Annually	Monthly	Annually	Monthly	Annually
£150,000	£50	£600	£101	£1,212	£153	£1,836
£200,000	£67	£804	£135	£1,620	£204	£2,448
£300,000	£100	£1,200	£202	£2,424	£306	£3,672
£450,000	£150	£1,800	£303	£3,636	£458	£5,496



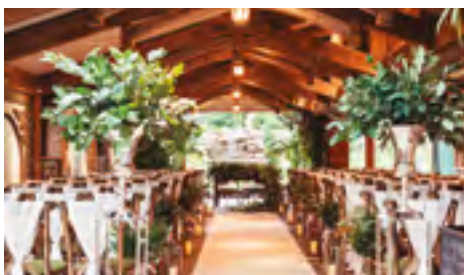
All figures correct at time of publishing

Top 8 North East wedding venues

The North East is home to a remarkable assortment of stunning wedding venues that can transform your dream wedding into a reality. Nestled within picturesque landscapes, these venues offer a perfect blend of elegance, charm, and natural beauty.

Whether you envision exchanging vows in a historic castle, amidst a lush garden, or along the breathtaking coastline, the North East boasts a wide range of options to suit every couple's taste. From grand manor houses to rustic barns and sandy beaches, each venue offers a unique

ambiance that sets the stage for an unforgettable celebration of love. North East company The Apartment Group has stunning and unique venues across Northumberland and Durham to suit any kind of wedding style.





Runa Farm

Runa Farm is the newest addition to The Apartment Group's collection of venues and is a boho, rustic farm estate. With meadows of wildflowers, courtyards and gardens decorated with fountains, the Ibiza style venue is a carefree country retreat. Accommodation includes rooms with hot tubs and balconies overlooking the County Durham countryside, and glamping pods for those wanting to sleep under the stars. The estate provides the perfect foundation for a festival or Mediterranean style wedding and is decorated in an earthy, chic style.

Whitworth

Whitworth Estate is The Apartment Group's intimate Grade II listed manor located just outside of Spennymoor. With 29 bedrooms, guests can stay and enjoy the deer park which surrounds the house, getting up close to the deer that live on the land. With stunning glasshouses, a private wedding chapel and silver lake, this venue is suited for those with age-old style.

Le Petit Chateau

In Northumberland, Le Petit Chateau is a venue with a real difference. A 30 bed boutique hotel, Le Petit Chateau is an historic French, country manor and is an elegant, vibrant wedding venue. It is also dog friendly, ensuring pets don't miss out on the special day.

Newton Hall

The Apartment Group's final Northumberland wedding venue is their original site at Newton Hall. Located close to the North Sea at Newton, near Alnwick, Newton Hall can offer indoor and outdoor weddings, either in their Great Hall, Garden Suite or Enchanted Garden or at the beach nearby for a unique and scenic wedding.

Bamburgh Castle

Further up the coast is the historic fortress of Bamburgh Castle. With indoor and outdoor spaces available- including the King's Hall- there are spaces to suit every size of wedding party. With views of Holy Island and the Farnes, this scenic and beautiful castle is a perfect backdrop for your special day.

Matfen Hall

Matfen Hall Hotel in the heart of Northumberland offers a variety of spaces to tie the knot. From the Great Hall to the Jardin Hollandaise, their unique oak-panelled rooms and manicured gardens offer luxurious and memorable spaces for wedding parties of all sizes.

The Doxford Group

The Doxford Group offer two unique venues in Northumberland, Charlton Hall and Doxford Barns. Both are set within their own private estates, with 18th century Charlton Hall holding 140 in a room decorated with hydrangeas and lilacs and lit by hundreds of fairy lights. Doxford Barns is a rural converted barn that has won 'Wedding Venue of the Year'. Set in 550 acres of rolling countryside, they offer packages of one, two and three night weddings with accommodation available for all guests.

By Anna Robinson 



Enjoy a colourful autumn garden, with Dobbies

Garden centre highlights how people can enjoy their outdoor space for longer this autumn. As the days cool down and summer draws to a close, it can be easy to think that we've got little time left to enjoy our gardens this year.

However, Dobbies, the UK's leading garden centre, says just the opposite is true. Dobbies' Horticultural Director, Marcus Eyles, believes that autumn is the perfect time to make the most of your garden and enjoy the striking colours the season brings, plus prepare it for a blooming beautiful spring.

Here are Marcus' top tips on how to extend the life of your garden this autumn, and the jobs you should be doing to ensure your outdoor space is in good shape.

Early autumn vs late autumn

When it comes to autumn gardening, Marcus notes that it's worth remembering there's a distinction between your garden in the different months of autumn and in fact, early autumn can be thought of as a time to revitalise your garden. Marcus says: "Contrary to popular belief, autumn is not a season of shut down and is a wonderful time to refresh your garden and appreciate all the wonderful colours the season brings. Late summer flowering shrubs will still produce a beautiful display during early autumn, with deep purple, yellow, orange, and white flowers to be enjoyed for weeks in October.

"The later autumn months of October and November are typically when frost sets in so this is time when gardeners should start to think about preparing for winter and protecting their plants. This is also when typical autumn gardening jobs like clearing leaves off your lawn and cutting back shrubs should be done. However, there's plenty of colour to be enjoyed in autumn before you need to start thinking about winter prep."

Instant autumn colour

Marcus says that early October is the perfect time to get planting and inject your garden with autumn colour. Marcus comments: "Gardeners should think of autumn as the perfect time to welcome vibrancy into the garden. Autumn bedding plants such as Pansies and Violas will brighten up your garden and last throughout the winter months.

Herbaceous perennials such as Crocosmia and Echinacea can also be planted in September and will give beds and borders an instant burst of colour. These plants will also flower again each year if cared for properly, making them a great value choice."

For those working with compact gardens or balconies, or who want to add a pop of colour to a patio, Marcus notes you can still enjoy the beauty of autumn in containers. Marcus says: "The vibrant Cyclamen is great for planting in pots, containers, and hanging baskets and will add a splash of pink to your garden in winter. Winter flowering Heathers are another fantastic choice for planting in containers and will help create a welcoming doorway. Pair with ruby red Skimmia and trailing Ivy for a seasonal look come the winter months."

Seasonal planting

Autumn is the time to plant spring bulbs for a blooming display next year, and Marcus notes that there are some great value options at Dobbies to help you save on your spring colour. Marcus says: "The second week of October is the ideal time to plant spring flowering bulbs for your display next year. Varieties such as Snowdrops, Crocus, Daffodils and Tulips are currently on offer at Dobbies and will help you achieve a stunning spring display for less. Planting bulbs in the autumn is a great way to get ahead for your stunning spring display and with our great value offers, you'll save money too."

To get more out of your autumn planting, Marcus recommends giving your plants a boost with Dobbies' new Liquid Seaweed organic plant feed. Marcus says: "Our Essentials Liquid Seaweed organic plant feed is a must-have in gardeners' toolkits for autumn and will encourage strong growth in flowers, fruit and vegetables. Naturally rich in essential nutrients to nourish plants from the inside out, this innovative product is made from Scottish seaweed and will enhance root growth of plants to get them looking visibly better in days. Simply add as instructed to your watering can and apply to the soil around your plants for best results."

Grow your own

Marcus says that early autumn is a fantastic time to grow delicious fresh produce, and vegetables can even be harvested in time for your Christmas dinner. Marcus comments: "If you're looking to enjoy homegrown produce over the festive period, potatoes planted in August or early September will be ready to harvest in December. Sow them in large containers and place in a sunny spot, ensuring you water regularly, and for the best results, plant using Dobbies' award-winning peat-free multipurpose compost.

"Carrots can also be sown in early September and work well grown in containers, so they're perfect if you don't have a lot of garden space or a dedicated vegetable patch. Carrots do well when well-watered but make sure you're planting them in well-drained soil so they don't become waterlogged. Carrots typically only take 12-16 weeks to grow so you can harvest them in winter and enjoy them with your Christmas dinner.

"When it comes to herbs, there are plenty varieties that can be planted in autumn like Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme. Herbs can be grown indoors on a windowsill, however, if you're looking to grow these outside, a greenhouse, cold frame or other covered protection is recommended in the winter months to protect your crop from frost damage. Certain herbs like Basil, Coriander, Chives and Tarragon also need supplementary lighting and heat indoors to grow when the days get colder and shorter."

Lawn care

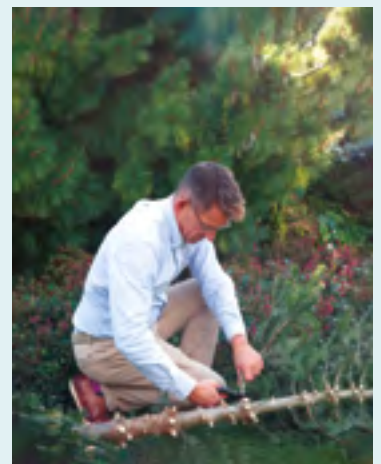
Marcus notes that autumn is a great time to invest time in lawn recovery and advises how gardeners can bring their lawns back to life after a hot summer. Marcus says: "As temperatures begin to cool down in September, this is when you should be thinking about lawn health. Hot, dry summers can leave our lawns weak, however, a few steps can get your lawn in good shape again. Start by removing moss and dead grass with a wire rake or electric scarifier, then use an aerator to take out old soil as this will allow better movement of air and water. Once you've done this, use a peat-free lawn dressing to refresh the soil, and finally sow some fresh grass seed.

"In late autumn, when leaves begin to fall, make sure you remove them from your lawn as soon as possible as they block air and sunlight. However, you shouldn't bin leaves, instead, make sure you compost them to minimise garden waste and save money.

Welcome wildlife

Marcus says we should welcome wildlife into our gardens year-round, but it's particularly important to be mindful of this ahead of the colder months. "To make sure insects and small animals have a safe space to shelter during late autumn and winter, now is the time to think about creating a wildlife habitat", comments Marcus. "You can create a safe space by stacking branches or old logs in a covered spot to help protect small animals from the elements. In late autumn when tidying up your garden for winter, don't prune too much as this will give wildlife another place to take shelter."

To make your autumn garden even more wildlife-friendly, Marcus recommends sowing wildflower seeds, which will bloom quickly in early autumn. Marcus says: "If you're looking for quick results and want to encourage wildlife into your garden, the low-maintenance Meadowmat range from Harrowden Turf is a wonderful choice. You can simply unroll the Meadowmat in exactly the same way you would regular lawn turf and enjoy watching your outdoor space buzz to life with your very own piece of wildflower meadow.



Just make sure you keep the turf has plenty of water for the first season and it will provide a biodiverse environment for local wildlife to thrive."

If you're looking for a low-effort way to embrace wildlife this autumn, Marcus notes that Dobbies' new easy-to-grow seed bombs and seed shakers are ideal for gardeners of all levels and they're a great way to enjoy the garden with children, with results in as little as a few weeks.

With regards to treating pests in autumn, Marcus says: "You should avoid using harsh chemicals and weed or pest killers in your garden as these can be harmful to both wildlife and the environment. Instead, mulch well with peat-free compost to keep weeds at bay and ensure good soil health. If you have a pest problem, consider using an organic pest control like nematodes - Dobbies has a great range from Nemasys that's now available to pick up at your local store and online."

Luxury Northumberland holiday home



By Anna Robinson



With long beaches, historic castles and quaint villages to explore, a luxury staycation in the heart of Northumberland provides the perfect base from which to explore one of England's most loved counties.



Bellshill Bothy is an eye-catching cottage within an expanse of fields and woodland just six miles from the historic Bamburgh Castle.

In complete seclusion, this remote and peaceful cottage has been renovated from its original role as a bothy- a shelter for walkers- into a luxury, high-quality home away from home.

Designed by architects Sullivan Associates, the home has been finished to a high specification. Built from bleached timber, honey stone and with solar panels and a log burner, the home is sustainable and cosy. With three bedrooms sleeping six people, the holiday home is ideal for a family staycation.

The home sits on a slight incline and offers views as far as the Northumberland coast. With an absence of main roads or other buildings, stargazing on clear nights is a popular activity with guests.

The snug and open-plan living area are both cosy and inviting spaces for reading, watching television or enjoying the wildlife that frequently visits the area.

The wood burner in the living room ensures it is cosy and warm all year round, ideal for a rainy day. Amaze Me Interiors recently completed a full refurbishment of the property, ensuring it delivers luxury for guests at every turn.

The wrap-around patio and dining table are ideal for dining outdoors in good weather. Six acres of land includes a large enclosed lawned garden, firepit within the woods and seating to enjoy the deer and birds that visit.

Located close to the coast, the property is in an ideal location to visit the highlights of Northumberland. Bamburgh village, plus the adjoining castle and vast beach is just a few minutes drive away.

With multiple pubs and restaurants, a butchers and deli and ice cream shop, Bamburgh has plenty of dining options whilst visiting the castle, Grace Darling museum or historic church.

One of the most popular dining spots in Bamburgh is The Potted Lobster, favoured by Hairy Bikers Si King and Dave Myers for its fresh seafood, caught locally each day and prepared on site. For watersports

fans, surfing, windsurfing and paddleboarding are all available along the Northumberland coast, with companies in Bamburgh and nearby Beadnell providing lessons, equipment hire and tours of the coves along the coast.

Further up the coast is the historic Holy Island, accessible via a causeway twice a day. Ideal for a family day out, there are ancient ruins to explore, as well as secluded, picturesque beaches and locals selling fruits and vegetables outside their houses.

The closest village to the property is Belford, home to a small supermarket and farm shop selling local produce including Craster Kippers and Doddington Dairy ice cream. From Belford, villages such as Wooler are only a short drive away, through rolling countryside.

In Wooler, the newest attraction is Ad Gefrin, a museum, distillery and restaurant dedicated to the history of nearby summer palace Ad Gefrin, which dates from the Anglo-Saxon times. Enjoy family activities in the museum, or take a guided tour around the distillery and learn about the process of creating the famous Ad Gefrin whiskey.

Northumberland is home to over 70 castles, from ruins to current residences. Alnwick, Dunstanburgh, Warkworth and Ford are all a short drive away and hold events and tours throughout the year. Additionally, Alnwick Castle sits next to the famous Alnwick Gardens, a world-famous garden with cherry blossom trees, interactive water features, mini golf, a treehouse restaurant and the newly opened Lilidorei, the world's largest play structure.

At the end of an exciting day in Northumberland, you can return to Bellshill Bothy and relax in the snug or living room or enjoy marshmallows around the fire pit.

The remote location of Bellshill ensures peace and relaxation are at the heart of a stay in the luxurious property. With so many villages and sights just a short drive away, Bellshill Bothy is the ideal base from which to explore the many highlights of Northumberland.

For more information or to book your stay, email hello@bellshillbothy.co.uk

Book your stay here.





New venues Inn-coming with North Yorkshire expansion by The Inn Collection Group

North Yorkshire is the focus of attention for The Inn Collection Group this summer, as three of the Newcastle-based pub with rooms operator's prime sites emerge from refurbishment.

Starting with reopening of The Harrogate Inn reopening at the beginning of July, the upcoming returns of The Knaresborough Inn and The Ripon Inn will see ICG's footprint in the county expand to eight sites.

It now means that the White Rose county is second only to the Lake District in terms of the number of properties within, with the flagship renovation of the famous spa town's former St George Hotel launching that new status.

Taking place over the last five months, the programme of works has been extensive, creating a brand-new place for eating and drinking on the town's famous Parliament Hill, as well as six new, ground floor guest rooms.

With a new feature entrance looking out on Crescent Gardens and enticing people to step inside, Barking George is a stylish venue with a commanding position that will be open all day, every day offering delicious food and delectable drinks.



Named in recognition of both the site's former moniker and the links between Harrogate and King George III, Barking George has been designed by Newcastle-based BXB Interiors, with the new look giving the feel of a grand established pub befitting its location in the town.

With opulent furnishings and decoration throughout, the inn creates the look and feel of a traditional pub with its own unique character and features.

This includes the commanding stained-glass dome that has been restored and bathes the main bar area of Barking George with a mellow natural light further enhancing the atmosphere of the site.

The refurbishment also incorporates two new outdoor patio features, boosting the number of covers and providing a relaxing place to look out over the scene towards The Royal Baths and enjoy the hustle and bustle of this part of town.

Whilst creating stunning surroundings for visitors to enjoy, the project has also seen the premises' kitchens completely revamped to ensure the highest quality of dishes is served to diners.

A point of focus on the new main menus which are available from 11am to 9pm are steaks and grills cooked in state-of-the-art broiler.

Utilising temperatures of 1600 - 1800 degrees Fahrenheit to create the perfect sear, a resting chamber completes the cook to ensure a juicy succulence to the chosen cuts.

A brand new pasta-making machine also allows The Harrogate Inn to make all of its own products on-site and offer exceptional freshness on dishes including Venison Pappardelle, baked Rigatoni Al Forno and Spaghetti Crudaiaola.

For guests planning a stay at the venue, the existing 90 bedrooms have been supplemented by the creation of six new suites on the ground floor.

Running along the Ripon Road side of the property, these luxurious rooms provide sumptuous spaces in which to relax and unwind in privacy.

Completed in just 152 days, the project has been managed by Silverstone Building Consultancy and delivered in partnership with 7Formation.

Hailing the completed renovation, The Inn Collection Group's property director Louise Stewart said: "We're delighted to have The Harrogate Inn back and welcoming guests after what has been a rapid refurbishment that has delivered a superb quality venue.

"The works have been extensive with a total refurbishment of the old function rooms and reception area of the old St George Hotel, the creation of the new grand entrance and remedial works to the building's roof.

"It has delivered a venue which has been warmly received by those we have shown around prior to reopening, and I hope that the inn is going to delight guests going forward."



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Wine

The latest views from our wine expert and updates from the international wine industry



Educating David

By David Harker



Ever wondered where wine educators go to get educated? Portfolio Wine Editor, David Harker, spends three days in Bordeaux learning about the region and sitting an exam.





"Quiet please." The class falls silent. Twitchy students hunch forward, pens poised over papers. I am squeezed into a too small chair, in a children's classroom, scratching my head. Desperate to recall my limited knowledge of Bordeaux root stocks.

"Any questions? No. Then you may begin..." And with a nod from Sabine we start writing.

The examination marks the end of a three day programme of lectures and vineyard visits accredited by L'École du Vin de Bordeaux. A school that supports a network of 250 wine educators across 21 countries promoting Bordeaux wines.

My class of 11 includes; Wei Xu, who modestly acknowledges that his wine business in Shanghai turns over £3 million. Cheryl, who teaches a class of 700 students at Cornell University. And Belgian geologist turned sommelier, Catherine - AKA "La Fée Pompette" or "The Tippy Fairy". All back to wine school in Bordeaux.

The L'École du Vin resides in the upper floors of La Maison du Vin. An elegant 18th century town house shaped like a ship's prow. The ground floor is home to Le Bar à Vin, decorated with bottles, stained glass and wine themed tapestries. The bar offers Bordeaux wines by the glass at a fair price. A destination for thirsty wine scholars, curious tourists and office workers. The pavement terrace is popular, there's no advance booking but there is a protocol;

wait to be seated, do not share a table uninvited and never rearrange the chairs. I speak from experience.

Ten minutes stroll along Quai des Chartrons is my new favourite wine bar, Le Sobre Chartrons. The vibe here is relaxed and engaging. Owner Pierre busily pours wine, takes orders, and offers advice with a smile.

I'm tempted to stay but tomorrow is an early start. Ahead are three days of vineyard visits to meet the winemakers and discover the challenges that they face.

How best to respond to global warming and build a sustainable future is the pressing issue for Guilain Latournerie. One of a new generation of environmentally conscious winemakers. He brings sheep down from the Pyrenees to roam between his Château Caillivet vines and is contemplating a return to horse drawn ploughing.

The brave new owners of Château La Peyruche turned their backs on Paris in search of the good life. For them biodiversity means building bat boxes and hives amongst the vines. An opportunity, "Air Bat and Bee"?

If you fancy an Air B&B in a vineyard, Bruno de la Rivière will let you a room in his 16th century Château du Petit-Puch.

Rising costs are another cause for concern. Aymar du Vivier, the aristocratic owner of Château de Malleret, likes to reminisce about the good old days selling

wine in New York. Forty years later he finds the market much more difficult. Even though his wines carry the endorsement of Air France. With a Gallic shrug, he exclaims, "the cost!" From €900 oak barrels to losing 20 hectares of crops to marauding wild boar.

I suspect that cost is less of an issue at ultra-smart Château Pédesclaux. Here the search for perfection is such that the winemaking team devote an entire Sunday to a blind tasting of grapes. Why? To determine which vineyard plots make the Grand Vin and which will be relegated to the second label.

The vineyards and their stories surround Bordeaux. Graves, is just a couple of tram stops from the chic city centre. The pretty hilltop village of Saint-Émilion a thirty minute train ride away. A favourite trip of mine was to once take the early morning train and have breakfast on the terrace of Hôtel de Pavie, where James Martin once worked.

If you ever do the same then, over your cannelé and coffee, look out at the vineyards and reflect that for every Château Pédesclaux there are twenty Châteaux Caillivets striving to sustain a living.

Oh, and if you to fall into conversation with a wine maker ask him what root stock he prefers and let me know would you?

By Cassie Moyse



A Taste of Heaven: Discovering the Enchanting Damaso Vineyard in Lake Como



Lake Como, known for its breathtaking beauty and luxurious allure, has long been a haven for travellers seeking tranquility and elegance. Nestled amidst the majestic Italian Alps, the region boasts pristine waters, historic villas, and picturesque landscapes.



However, hidden away in this idyllic setting lies a gem that will appeal to wine lovers- the Damaso Vineyard. This family-owned estate, with its rich history and exceptional wines, sits in stunning acreage looking across the renowned Lake Como. Portfolio North Editor Cassie Moyses recently visited the Damaso Vineyard.

Steeped in heritage and nurtured through generations, the Damaso Vineyard is the epitome of the Italian winemaking tradition. The vineyard was established over a century ago by visionary winemaker Antonio Damaso.

Inspired by the region's fertile soil and favourable climate, he planted the first vines in the late 1800s. The vineyard has since remained under the tender care of the Damaso family, preserving their dedication to winemaking craftsmanship and sustainability.

The Damaso Vineyard is perched on the hills overlooking Lake Como. This strategic location blesses the vineyard with a unique microclimate—a harmonious blend of warm days and cool nights, ideal for cultivating premium grapes. The areas volcanic soils, rich in minerals, impart distinctive characteristics to the wines, contributing to their unique flavours.

During our visit, we were able to enjoy a tour of the vineyard and enjoy a wine tasting and delicious dinner overlooking one of Italy's largest lakes below. While we

ate, we enjoyed the peace and quiet of the surroundings while enjoying authentic Italian dishes including risotto, prosciutto and bruschetta.

Sylvia was incredibly knowledgeable and explained their entire wine producing process to us before beginning the wine tasting. The family believes in quality over quantity, and as such, they focus on a select few grape varieties that flourish in the region's terroir. The indigenous Nebbiolo grape, known for its noble character, is the crown jewel of the vineyard. They use these grapes for their famous red wine, which we tried and was delicious. Pairing the wine with a beautiful lunch made for a perfect combination.

Additionally, the vineyard also cultivates other classic Italian varieties such as Barbera and Barolo. Their white wines are predominantly crafted from Pinot Bianco and Chardonnay grapes, which are known for their elegance and finesse.

During the tour, we visited the cellars on the property. The winemaking process at Damaso Vineyard is a fusion of traditional techniques and modern innovation. Walking into their ancient cellars is like stepping back in time. Oak barrels, some dating back decades, line the walls and are an integral part of the ageing process, allowing the wines to mature gracefully and develop complex flavours.

Deeper in the cellars are the family's most treasured possessions—the riserva wines. These special bottles are reserved for exceptional vintages, representing the essence of each remarkable year. Each riserva is a testament to the Damaso family's unwavering commitment to their craft, carrying within them the stories of the region's changing seasons and the hands that tended to the vines.

Everyone we met during our visit was friendly and inviting, and keen to share their knowledge and history with us. The sommeliers guided us through a tailored tasting, educating us on the unique characteristics of each wine and the intricate art of food pairing.

Our guide also explained the Damaso's dedication to sustainable practices, ensuring that the vineyard remains a harmonious part of the region's ecosystem for generations to come. From organic farming methods to water conservation efforts, their dedication to the environment is a testament to their role as caretakers of this breathtaking landscape.

Set on stunning acres with a beautiful view of Lake Como, the Damaso vineyard is a must-visit if you are staying in the local area. The staff are friendly and welcoming and the vineyards, set against a stunning backdrop, were fascinating and produced delicious wine.

Top 5 places to visit by luxury yacht



Introducing Portfolio North's new Travel Editor, Geoff Moore, Managing Director of luxury superyacht company West Nautical.

By Geoff Moore



Read Geoff's top 5 destinations to visit by luxury yacht below:

1. The French Riviera

Perhaps the destination most synonymous with the world of luxury yachting, the French Riviera never fails to deliver for a memorable break.

Think sun-kissed beaches, crystal-clear waters perfect for swimming and bays begging to be explored. From the glitz of Saint-Tropez to the timeless charm of Cannes, the French Riviera boasts an abundance of chic ports. And let's not forget the mouth-watering experience of indulging in Provençal cuisine and sipping fine wines whilst taking in the awe-inspiring coastline from the sundeck of your luxury vessel.

Beyond the glam and glitz, dive into the region's fascinating history and culture. You can visit historic landmarks like the Palais des Festivals and the ancient port town of Antibes, and of course Monaco, with its unrelenting charm, casinos and boutiques.

Don't miss: Nikki Beach St Tropez for its vibrant atmosphere and live DJs.

2. The Amalfi Coast

Another classic and unbeatable destination - envisage sailing along the iconic Italian coastline, with its dramatic cliffs, vibrant villages and azure waters. A yacht allows you to embrace the coast's natural beauty from a unique perspective, offering panoramic views that are simply unmatched.

Discover hidden caves like the magical 'Blue Grotto' and private beaches that are inaccessible by land, granting you the ultimate privacy and tranquillity. Anchor at charming coastal towns like Positano and Amalfi, and visit the iconic islands of Capri and Ischia, where you can savour local delicacies and immerse yourself in the rich local culture.

Those passionate about history can hike 'The Path of the Gods', or explore the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum, both destroyed and preserved by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Whether it's sunbathing on deck, snorkelling in crystal-clear waters, or exploring ancient ruins, a yacht gives you the freedom to craft your dream vacation.

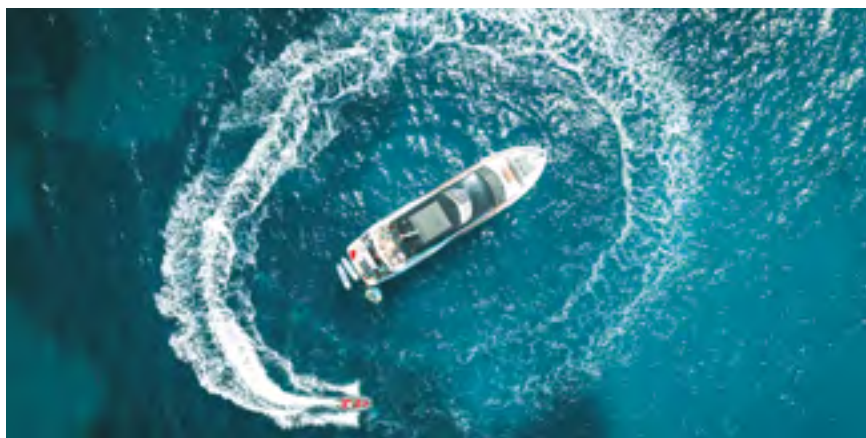
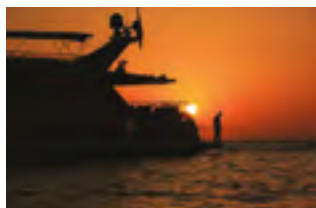
Don't miss: Franco's Bar in Positano for amazing sunset views.



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3. The Balearics

While you may have already visited the Balearic Islands for a land-based holiday, a yacht can unlock a whole new way to experience the Ibizan 'White Isle' and its companions.

Each island in the archipelago offers its own unique charm and appeal, from the vibrant nightlife and cosmopolitan vibe of Ibiza to the serene beauty of Formentera's unspoiled beaches, the Balearics really do have it all. Sailing by luxury yacht allows you to access secret coves and peaceful bays, where you can indulge in private moments surrounded by breath-taking scenery.

Whether you're seeking pure relaxation, an active break, or a balance of the two, the compact nature of the Balearics makes anything possible. Dock at glamorous marinas and chic harbours like Puerto Portals or Marina Ibiza, where you can experience world-class dining, high-end shopping, and vibrant entertainment, or head to one of many fantastic golf courses, cycle routes or hiking trails.

Don't miss: *Alcanada Golf Club in Alcudia for a beautiful but challenging course with spectacular ocean views.*

4. British Virgin Islands (BVIS)

When the sun begins to fade in the Mediterranean it's time to escape to the Caribbean. The British Virgin Islands boast a treasure trove of delights, not least of which are the wonderfully warm temperatures and glittering turquoise ocean. Cruise through tranquil waters, hop between the 60 pristine islands and discover the unspoiled beaches with pillow soft sand.

Discover the vibrant marine life snorkelling or diving in the famous Baths of Virgin Gorda or the RMS Rhone shipwreck. Drop anchor at exclusive anchorages like Jost Van Dyke and enjoy the vibrant island culture, savouring local cuisine and tropical cocktails.

With a luxury yacht, you can craft your dream itinerary, from idyllic sunsets at Anegada to partying at Foxy's on Great Harbour. The British Virgin Islands offer the perfect blend of relaxation, adventure and opulence. This yachting paradise promises an extraordinary holiday filled with sun-soaked days, starry nights and the sheer bliss of the Caribbean.

Don't miss: *Soggy Dollar Bar, located on Jost Van Dyke's White Bay, known for its beach parties, live music and delicious drinks.*

5. The Maldives

Another idyllic winter escape, paradise awaits at every turn in the Maldives. With its unrivalled natural beauty, the Maldives archipelago offers a dreamlike setting for a yachting holiday. Cruise through the crystal-clear waters and discover secluded atolls with white sand beaches.

Dive into a vibrant underwater world filled with colourful coral reefs and mesmerising marine life, with the resident whale sharks often swimming close to yachts at night, allowing up-close encounters. For fishing enthusiasts, the big game available in the Maldives is second to none.

Indulge in exquisite onboard dining, expertly prepared by your personal chef, or enjoy magical beach barbecues by starlight. Each day brings new opportunities for snorkelling, water sports, or simply lounging on the deck, soaking in the sun.

The Maldives' allure lies in its seclusion and tranquillity, making a luxury yacht charter the ultimate way to experience the serenity and beauty of this tropical paradise.

Don't miss: *Ithaa Undersea Restaurant, Rangali Island, for an out of this world dining experience.*

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