



FOREVER EDINBURGH BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: HOWIES



Edinburgh
4,129 followers



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As Howies marks an incredible 35 years in Edinburgh's thriving food scene, we're shining a light on this much-loved local favourite that has become synonymous with Scottish hospitality.

From its iconic Victoria Street restaurant to the elegant Waterloo Place and the more recent addition of Scotts Kitchen on Victoria Terrace, Howies has grown in step with the city it calls home. And with the launch of Events by Howies – a dedicated arm focused on unforgettable private and corporate experiences – the future is looking bright.

Today, the business is managed by Louis Scott, son of founder David Howie Scott, alongside Suzanne O'Connor. Together with their passionate team, they continue to grow the brand while staying true to its Edinburgh roots.

We caught up with Louis to hear more about what inspires the team, how the city has shaped their journey, and what's next for this enduring Edinburgh institution.



What inspired you to start a business in Edinburgh?

We started Howies in 1990 during a recession, with a simple goal: to offer accessibly priced, excellent food that champions Scottish produce. Scotland has an incredible natural larder, from world-class seafood to outstanding seasonal vegetables and wild game and we wanted to put that centre stage. That ethos still guides us today. From the very beginning, we've offered pre-fix lunch and early dining deals to make good food available to more people, without compromising on quality. My father grew up in Edinburgh so it felt like the natural choice.

What makes Scotland's capital a great place to do business?

There's a real appreciation here for local, independent businesses. Edinburgh has a year-round flow of both loyal locals and visitors and that creates a uniquely supportive and dynamic business environment.

In what ways has the local community supported your business growth? The community has been instrumental, from local producers who supply our kitchens to regular customers who've supported us for years. We couldn't have done it without them. Edinburgh's business scene is collaborative and that shared spirit has helped us survive and thrive.

Have you incorporated Edinburgh into the business in any way whether through products, branding or experiences?

Absolutely. Each of our restaurants is located in a beautiful, historic Edinburgh building and we've kept the charm and character of each space intact. Our menus celebrate the best of Scotland's seasonal produce and we're proud to work with fantastic local suppliers including Gilmours Butchers, Mellis Cheese, Newbarns Brewery and Welch Fishmongers. From the ingredients to the experience, we aim to reflect the flavour and spirit of Edinburgh and Scotland in everything we do and that includes offering a warm welcome and the kind of enthusiastic Scottish hospitality that makes people feel right at home.



What is your favourite part of living and working in Edinburgh?

The walk to work is never boring - cobbled streets, skyline views and green spaces make it a city that constantly inspires. It's big enough to stay exciting, but small enough to feel like home.

What does your ideal 24 hours in Edinburgh look like?

Start with coffee and a stroll through Stockbridge Market, walk up Arthur's Seat, lunch in a local café, explore the hidden closes of the Old Town and finish with dinner and a quiet whisky in a tucked-away bar.

What is one local hidden gem that you swear by and tell all your clients or friends about?

I always recommend Moss in Stockbridge, a small, beautifully run eatery by Henry Dobson. Everything is sourced from within the UK and as much as possible comes directly from Henry's family farm in Angus. It's seasonal, thoughtful and genuinely rooted in sustainable local food. A real gem.

If you could collaborate with any other local business or Edinburgh-based personality, who would it be and what kind of project would you dream up?

I'd love to create a Scottish experience series at the Assembly Rooms, something immersive, memorable and rooted in our culture. Imagine a big ceilidh band, whisky experts guiding guests through tastings, actors weaving in snippets of Scottish history between courses, everyone dressed in tartan and the room glowing with candlelight (though I'm sure health and safety would have something to say about that!).

We'd love to partner with the Scotch Malt Whisky Society to bring real depth to the whisky experience and collaborate with Mothership (from the Bramble Bar team) for beautifully crafted cocktails and service. It would be a true celebration of Scottish food, drink, storytelling and music, all under one beautiful, historic roof.



What's one local event or tradition in Edinburgh that you never miss and why?

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is unmissable. It brings an unmatched buzz to the city and we love being part of that creative, communal energy every August.

Looking ahead, how do you see your business evolving within Edinburgh's dynamic cultural and economic landscape?

We're committed to growing sustainably, continuing to work with Scottish producers and staying connected to the cultural pulse of the city. Our focus will always be local, seasonal and community-minded.

We've also recently launched Events by Howies, a new arm of the business aimed at bringing the best of Scottish hospitality to whatever venue you choose, combining our passion for great food, service and atmosphere with complete flexibility for private and corporate clients.

Which Forever Edinburgh initiatives have you been involved with and how have you found it?

We've taken part in several Forever Edinburgh campaigns and have found them to be great for visibility, collaboration and community connection - especially in the post-COVID recovery phase.

What would you say to other businesses looking to get involved with Forever Edinburgh?

Do it. It's a genuine way to be part of a city-wide conversation and work alongside other businesses who care about Edinburgh's future. There's strength in community.