

When anyone tells me that they are planning on going it on their own and starting their own business I immediately get a sense of trepidation for them. It is difficult to prepare for all the unexpected challenges that are faced and the entire change of lifestyle that comes with it.

Brian and I graduated from Catering Colleges in Galway and Dublin and met while we were working in Ashford Castle in the early 90's. We decided to open a bed and breakfast and had very definite ideas of how the house should look and knew the "feel" we wanted. I consider us fortunate to have shared a singular vision as this really helped to keep us focused.

One thing that consumed much of our time was the planning of room layouts. While this was important from a commercial aspect, we wanted to provide our guests with spacious rooms as part of that "feel" I mentioned. Small rooms were never part of the shared vision and it was admittedly quite enjoyable to plan out the most central part of our guesthouse.

Shopping for furniture and accessories to fill our new accommodation was even more enjoyable! We wanted a mix of new and older pieces. Needless to say my Mum and I were in shopping heaven going to auctions all over the country seeking antiques and collectables! Week by week we watched our hoard of furniture and "stuff" grow until finally the house was finished. It was time the builders moved out and we could move in. The time had come to put it all together, just like one huge doll house!

We literally had one week before our first guests were due to arrive so it was an exhilarating and exhausting time. I do recall washing our new delph at 4 am one morning because I couldn't sleep. As opening day grew closer we were really nervous that we had done the right thing but then the great day came and we haven't looked back. So I suppose my advice to anyone thinking of opening their own business is go for it and take that leap of faith. In our own case we had a dream and were lucky enough to be able to make it a reality.