



OUT WITH THE OLD: Gerald's is the new name for Sugar & Spice

There is no confusion over Gerald's qualities

AFTER 16 years in business, Sugar & Spice is now Gerald's. Over the years customers have been confused with another shop by the same name in Troon, so owner Toni Dawson decided in January of this year to completely rebrand the business.

Toni said: "I started exhibiting at food and drink festivals last year and was amazed after all these years how many people were still confused between the two shops. There is no connection between us yet customers regularly turn up at my shop looking for a wedding cake." She continued: "It became even more apparent as the year went on and I exhibited further afield that it had to change. Largs BID (Business Improvement District) gave me access to a fantastic retail consultant, John Cowan, who had previously carried out a mystery shopping exercise here in Largs

and he put me in touch with a number of industry experts. I couldn't have done it without the support of North Ayrshire Council who assisted with consultancy support for everything including strategy, branding, retail and marketing."

Toni started the business when her parents lost their family business in the last recession after 30 years' trading. Seeing Largs as a place with so many opportunities, she initially rented the shop and started out as a cheap and cheerful sweet shop. She said: "I never expected to be here this long but I love Largs and the business has grown and developed considerably over the years. Our family has always been in the ice cream business and just before my Dad died of cancer 11 years ago I re-mortgaged my home, set up my own ice cream production on-site and, in memory of my Dad, branded

my ice cream as Gerald's."

She continued: "Every consultant I worked with said it was the obvious name for the shop rebrand and we're now looking at development plans for our artisan ice cream and providing a more focussed offering of handmade chocolates and premium spirits. We're continuing to work more closely with independent distilleries for our growing range of Scotch whiskies and craft spirits and the craft gin market in particular is huge."

The business was recently recognised by Visit Scotland as a 4-star Tourist Shop and with the 2nd phase of development due to start early next year it's an exciting time for Gerald's. Toni is planning a

Gin Festival & Brand Launch Event in the Brisbane House Hotel on Sat, 19th Nov from 12-6pm. This is a ticket only event where you can sample and meet the producers from more than 15 gin distilleries, enjoy hourly masterclasses, live music and a gin cocktail on arrival. There will also be chocolate tasting and some free prize giveaways on the day.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.geraldosginfest.eventbrite.co.uk



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19TH NOVEMBER 2016 12-6^{PM}
BRISBANE HOUSE HOTEL, LARGS

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