



Deirdre McGlone Harvey's Point

GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

NAME:

Deirdre McGlone

BUSINESS

Harvey's Point

POSITION

Owner

WHAT WE DO

Hotel

CONTACT US

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In the summer of 1989, Donegal native Deirdre McGlone began working as a receptionist in Harvey's Point following her honours degree in European Studies at University of Limerick. *"I loved being back home in Donegal. The 'summer' is still going strong – I haven't left! Harvey's Point is currently 28 years in business and I am proud to have been part of the journey from the beginning."*

Harvey's Point was originally owned by Swiss-born Jody Gysling. Romance blossomed between Deirdre and Jody's brother, Marc and they married in 1996. The couple bought the hotel and have managed it together since 1996. Along with Jody, all three share a passion for hospitality, food and the rich heritage of Donegal. As managing director of the hotel, Deirdre found it challenging to adapt at first. *"The business becomes a part of you. The decisions are down to you and that lies on your shoulders. Beforehand, I was able to leave the job behind and not worry about it. Harvey's Point became my life."*

Over the years, the business model for Harvey's Point has changed. Having opened with 20 bedrooms, a restaurant and a small team, the hotel has seen phenomenal growth over the years. *"We got busier and bigger every year. We were consistently reinvesting our profits back into the business. We aimed to be innovative and tried to keep ahead of trends. Throughout the recession, we remained focused on the guest experience and building our team."* Currently, the hotel boasts 64 palatial suites and they have just recently launched an additional new product called 'The Lodge @ Harvey's Point', located on the grounds of the hotel and which is open for special interest groups.

Despite the changes, Deirdre has always strived to portray a culture of welcome and hospitality, with a "family feel." She realized very quickly that she had to learn to delegate efficiently, *"I knew that I couldn't do everything. We now have up to 125 people employed in Harvey's Point during the high season. We are so blessed to have a team who genuinely care about our guests. They go the extra mile with a smile. It comes naturally. It's the Wild Atlantic Donegal Welcome!"*

Having committed staff in Harvey's Point has allowed Deirdre to take a step back from the business to concentrate on sales and planning for the future. A participant on the 5th cycle of Going for Growth and having recently completed the 'Continuing the Momentum' programme, Deirdre found the initiatives provided a *"great opportunity to focus on the business strategically and take time out to meet like-minded people. Although we all have different businesses, we all face similar challenges"*.

Deirdre firmly believes in promoting Donegal as a tourist destination. *"Voted as "the coolest place on the planet" by National Geographic, Donegal has so much to offer - from its landscape to its people. There is a perception that we are isolated in the North West. However, we are only just over three hours drive from Dublin and with the recent launch of the new tourism campaign, the "Wild Atlantic Way", Harvey's Point is greatly positioned to help put Donegal and the North West on the map"*.

In January 2016, Harvey's Point was voted Number 1 Hotel in Ireland in the TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice awards for the fourth successive year. The multi award-winning hotel was also featured in the top twenty best hotels in Europe. *"We are still on a high. To receive the award four years in a row is something we are very proud of at Harvey's Point"*.

Deirdre advises other women in business to *"keep learning; look at the business strategically rather than get bogged down on the day to day. Having a work/life balance is essential for anyone – women with families to bring up need to make enough time for everybody. But most importantly, have fun... If you love what you do, it's never work!"* Even after 27 years, Deirdre has not lost her infectious enthusiasm and love for Harvey's Point and Donegal. With even more aspirations for growth, Deirdre and her team continue to push the boundaries as an industry leader, delivering exceptionally high standards in world-class hotel-keeping blended with authentic Irish hospitality.



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