

## Highlands and Islands Food and Drink Awards 2007 Winner of New Business Award 2007: Bogbain Highland Market (Bogbain of Inshes, Inverness)

Today Bogbain Adventure and Heritage Farm is an interesting and entertaining day out for visitors of all ages, offering activities with appeal across the generations. When Bruce Macgregor started his enterprise in 2004, however, the number of activities was more limited, as was the food and retail service provided alongside. As the business grew, it became clear that expanding the range of activities on offer would also serve to cater for the needs of parents and grandparents accompanying their young charges on a visit to this interactive adventure farm.

And so towards the end of 2006 the Award winning idea of the Highland Market was developed. "Research into the market showed that good quality farm shops with affordable products were few and far between," Bruce explained. "By offering food that was top quality but at the same time affordable for all, we hoped to appeal to our local customer base, while adding to the interest for all ages of visitors to Bogbain Farm."

As it expanded, a separate identity was developed for the food side of the business - the Highland Market. Bruce continued the story: "Bogbain Adventure and Heritage Farm has two main markets. We have the visitors with families who are delighted to sample traditional products and food, and we get local people coming with their kids. Now we also have a lot of new customers whose main reason for visiting is the food and drink products. The result has been that we now cater far better for the whole extended family. This in turn means that we are better able to manage the periods of the year that would have been traditionally quieter for the business.

Researching the marketing involved quite a bit of time and dedication from Bruce and his staff. "We went round a lot of the leading farm shops in the UK, taking note of price, quality and product. This helped shape our ideas on creating a menu which was simple yet appealing to families. And our research didn't end there – we followed that up by offering the menu choices free of charge to guests, providing they contributed feedback and ideas about their experience of the business.

Having established the core product, Bruce looked for other ways to expand the market. "We started a Ladies Lunch Club to attract customers who might not think about Bogbain as a food destination first and foremost. The Club is now a really important part of our marketing as the people that come to it are local, connect with the market and promote Bogbain for us by word of mouth.

At the moment, when he's not pursuing his other business interest – playing fiddle with the band Blazin Fiddles – Bruce is keeping an eye on other potential developments for the food side of the business. "I'd like to extend the products offered at Bogbain and we hope to be releasing more news on this front later in the year. In the meantime we continue to work with a host of local suppliers to source the best ingredients and products for the business."

One thing is sure: Bogbain Adventure and Heritage Farm is serious about its food. Bruce underlines this by adding: "Winning the Highlands and Islands Food and Drink Award showed that Bogbain Farm was a serious contender when it comes to Highland food and drink. As well as the added recognition, the award has been a great help with the promotion of The Highland Market. Since last year we've catered for all kinds of new functions, including tourism seminars, wedding receptions and parties."

Bruce believes that one of the most important benefits of winning the Award has been the boost to staff morale. "We all realise what we are aiming to do is unique and sometimes it can be difficult. Awards are like a little pat on the back and confidence booster for everyone involved in a small company like ours."

Website: [www.bogbainfarm.com](http://www.bogbainfarm.com)