



BUSINESSWORKS

Issue 2 November 2022 North East

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Alex Erwin set up 'The Treatment Centre' in Chester-le-Street earlier this year

THE MARRIOTT WAY

Award-winning marketer Samuel Marriott-Dowding

GAME CHANGER

Retro arcade bar Four Quarters co-owner Francois Kitching is coming home



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WELCOME

As I write this - in what is only the second ever BW Magazine for the North East - my family and I have just experienced our very first hurricane whilst on a much-needed Trans Atlantic getaway.

Hurricane Ian has just torn its way through South West Florida, the largest in over 100 years I'm told. Yet this eerie calm after the storm has allowed me to take stock and think warmly of the amazing community spirit they have here, and how similar it is to home.

Is it just me or are things starting to feel a little bit more settled - hurricanes aside - as we head into the winter? With so much uncertainty in the world it does feel rather re-assuring that, dare I say it, the comfort of Christmas is now just around the corner. I think we could all use a welcome, non lockdown threatened period of reflection with our friends and families after a heavy year in business.

And, as we head into winter, I've been fortunate enough once more to oversee some amazing tales of inspiration and genuine entrepreneurial spirit right here in our dear region.

Business confidence without a doubt is falling in the North East as those well documented economic challenges finally take their toll.

This is being felt within companies of all shapes and sizes throughout the United Kingdom and our region is by no means any different.

One thing that has struck me rather massively since being proudly appointed as editor, however, is how the region's entrepreneurs refuse to be beaten, even in times of serious pressure from all sides.

What is incredibly encouraging, as you will see and read in this edition, is that many of our entrepreneurs, rather than giving in, continue to remain agile, resolute and continue to push for sustainable growth and find new ways of working.

I hope you all enjoy our second edition and I encourage any entrepreneurs out there who have a story to tell to get in touch. You are after all, the reason why we exist. We're here to champion you and to support you on your journey. Never give up.

Jon Corbett,
BW Editor



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bw CONTENTS ISSUE 2

Embracing entrepreneurship and business success

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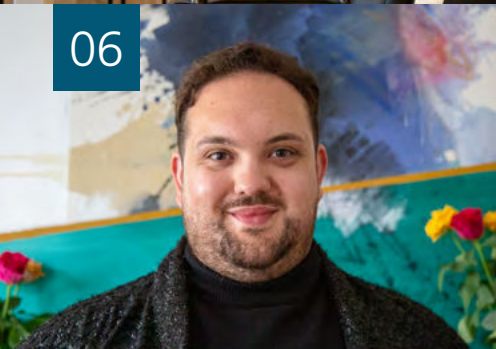
22



14



06



46



30



FEATURES

06

THE MARRIOTT WAY

Award-winning marketer Samuel Marriott-Dowding

14

BEATING THE SCROLL

Teesside's Wander Films is helping brands stand out amidst the noise

22

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Alex Erwin set up 'The Treatment Centre' in Chester-le-Street earlier this year

30

GAME CHANGER

Retro arcade bar Four Quarters co-owner Francois Kitching is coming home

REGULARS

46.

TURKISH PROPERTIES

50.

EVENTS DIARY

39



LS LIFESTYLE



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The Marriott way

The North East's community-focused culture and tenacious spirit attracted award-winning marketer **Samuel Marriott-Dowding** to Sunderland

Originally from London, entrepreneur Samuel Marriott-Dowding is one of a growing number of business owners who are flying their native nests and planting their roots firmly in the North East.

Samuel initially launched his marketing agency - Marriott Communications - on the Scottish borders, but as his company began to grow, he looked elsewhere to take his business to the next stage.

Impressed by the redevelopment efforts taking place across Sunderland and the North East's dynamic and supportive business community, Sam couldn't resist the opportunity of launching his new look business on Wearside.

"Personally, I find that everyone has a nice quality about them in the North East," Sam told BW Magazine. "It's like, they would give the t-shirt off their own back to help you and there's a community spirit about that. You don't find it in many places"

Marriott Communications has grown rapidly since launching in January 2021, acquiring new clients from across the UK and abroad and picking up several prestigious business awards and nominations along the way. Notably, Sam has been nominated for Entrepreneur of the Year in the Sunderland Echo Business Awards and Marketer of The Year in the Prolific North Awards.

For Sam, marketing is all about storytelling. Since launching his company in early 2021, Sam has built a strong reputation for his ability to take the essence of a brand and shape its story into a successful communications campaign. ►





His multifaceted strategies bring together content marketing, public relations, brand development and storytelling to help businesses get their stories heard and, more importantly, make them resonate with their audience.

"My tagline is, every brand has a story, make yours matter," Sam said. "Marketing has shifted recently towards a more conscious consumer. People care about where they're buying from so companies must be aware of their consumers' buying power."

"As businesses become more and more aware of this, they want to make sure that their story aligns with the values of their target customer. That's where I fit in the

middle to provide that conduit between business, sales and the customer."

Sam works with a diverse clientele, but he has a particular passion for non-profits. Even as his business has grown, he continues to offer pro bono charity support, allocating a set number of hours per month to charitable organisations. The third sector is notoriously underfunded and communication budgets are often the first to be cut. However, marketing is also one of the most important things non-profits can do to raise both their profile and funds.

Over the past two years, he has worked with charities supporting a wide range of causes, including organisations working within the Scottish prison system, therapy

groups and addiction recovery. A successful campaign for the baby loss charity Held In Our Hearts saw the Scottish organisation reach 2 million people. But it's not just the large-scale projects that Sam is excited by. Telling the stories of small, local brands is equally as important to him.

"A lot of the smaller brands have incredible stories, but don't necessarily have the leeway to shout about them," he explains. "I really want to work with those businesses and really challenge the conventional way of doing things."

Sam wants to challenge the status quo in marketing, putting empathy, social consciousness, and inclusivity before profit for businesses and their stories to connect and resonate with their audience.

But while the bottom line may take the backseat in the planning room, facilitating growth remains the aim. The company's ability to develop impactful communications strategies have shown to generate awareness and drive engagement again and again.

It is this business model, "blending socially conscious work with a tenacious spirit", that makes the company unique and stand out from the competition.

"I think empathy is really vital when you work in marketing," he added. "I see a lot of marketing companies that I can tell are so focused on the bottom line, but they're not focused on making a difference."

"I really want my business not to just make money, but to also make a difference. I want to leave my little mark on the world and leave it as a better place after I'm gone."

Sam got his first taste for social media and marketing at the age of 17, volunteering for a health watch group. After moving to Holland for university he launched his first business, a club promotion agency that catered specifically to international students and young professionals. Working with six clubs across Holland, he brought in £80,000 collectively over the course of a year.

After graduating from his degree in politics in 2019, he returned to the UK "full of hope and optimism", with aspirations of working for the Foreign Office. Sadly, Sam was among the thousands of graduates who found themselves crippled by the Covid-19 pandemic.

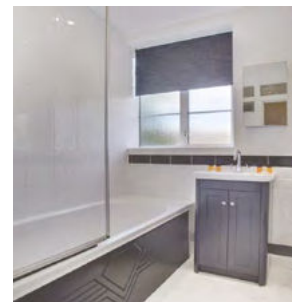
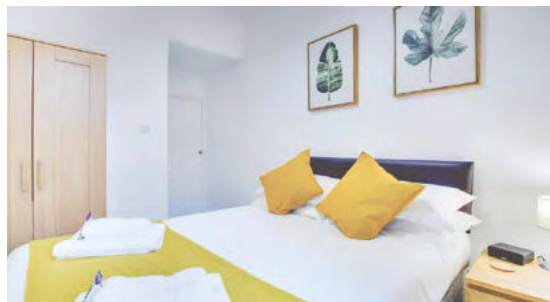
Unemployed for a year, he applied for a staggering 276 jobs, securing four ►





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interviews and receiving no job offers. The worsening state of the job market over the first year of the pandemic had a detrimental impact on his mental health.

"There was me thinking I'm going to get an amazing job in the Foreign Office, but then the pandemic happened and it was horrendous."

"Looking back at 2020, I don't even recognise who I was that year and I think a lot of people feel the same. I was going through so much anxiety and depression. From finishing the year and starting the new year, I was in a completely different place. I look back now, and I can't believe that it was me."

Sam knew he wanted to make a change, so when a volunteering opportunity arose with a charity-focused venture capitalist he took it. After a couple of months working in kind as a social media manager, he

asked himself: "why would I want to work for someone else when I could work for myself?".

"I just woke up one morning and I thought, 'you know what, I'm going to set up my own agency' and I really went for it. The same day, I signed up to Companies House and by January 2021 I was incorporated."

With a limited portfolio, few connections and no financial backing, Sam faced a challenge ahead, but it was this tenacity that shaped his work and success over the following two years.

"I didn't have anyone in the industry to give me a leg up, I didn't have any connections to paying clients, I didn't have a real portfolio and so with everything I've done, I've had to prove myself and work hard to get where I am," he continues.

Having established Marriott

Communications in the North East and nationally, the company is now embarking on expansion plans into Europe in 2023 with two new clients based in France and Italy.

The company also intends to expand its current one-man team over the next year.

"There's a real tenacious business spirit here, where there's enough success for everyone and no one is trying to stab anyone in the back," concludes Sam. "There's a piece of the pie for everyone."

"The North East has an amazing history, and I think it has shamefully been overlooked in terms of funding and investment. Now we have such an incredible, dynamic and innovative business community, and I think we're going to end up showing the rest of England. It's an exciting time to be here."

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BEATING THE SCROLL

In a world where some 720,000 hours of video content is shared daily on social media, Teesside's **Wander Films** is helping brands stand out amidst the noise and create content that demands attention and truly makes a difference

People come to us when they want to beat the scroll," says Chloe Clover, co-founder of Teesside-based video and content production company Wander Films.

The Middlesbrough-based business only opened its doors four years ago but has quickly established itself as a go-to video production and content marketing company for some of the world's most iconic brands.

Putting authenticity, innovation and creativity at the centre of their work, the 18-strong team are known for their attention-grabbing content that gets their clients' stories heard among the endless stream of content.

Formed in 2017, Wander Films was born from its co-founders' travels across Australia and South East Asia. Chloe Clover and her partner - both in life and business - Lou

Tonner met 8 years ago via the North East's bustling music scene. The pair played in a band together with Lou on vocals and Chloe on drums.

At the time, they both found life wasn't what they expected it to be and connected over a shared longing for a new adventure. Feeling "stuck" in their lives at home, they made the bold decision to buy one-way tickets to Australia. Thanks to Lou's degree in Television & Film and Chloe's passion for photography and filmmaking, the couple found work on a TV pilot in Sydney.

This was a lightbulb moment for them both. They had both found their purpose. From then on, the pair used their skills to fund their travels, offering businesses video content in exchange for accommodation, food and experiences. Soon, they were

being paid for their work and Wander Films was born.

For many couples, going into business with their partner would be a recipe for disaster, but for Chloe and Lou, the success of their joint venture is, in part, thanks to the success of their personal relationship.

"Ever since we met, that was it, our gravity shifted to each other," explains Chloe. "It's amazing. It's almost like our superpower; we are the bits that are missing from each other. It would never have worked without the other.

"Lou is sensible and reigns me in sometimes, and she knows when to push me, when to make me go out there and be a bit wild."

They continued to work and travel across Australia and South East Asia, where they ▶



had some amazing experiences, but after several years of travelling, they sat down and decided the time had come to return home.

"We could have travelled forever and that would have been amazing, or we could go home, create something special, put down some roots and try to change the world," Chloe said. "We went wandering to figure out what to do with our lives and we didn't want to come back and put ourselves in a box."

Chloe and Lou returned to their hometown of Middlesbrough in 2018 and brought Wander Films to the North East. Initially dedicated to video production, the company has since diversified to offer brands complete end-to-end content marketing, from content creation to marketing strategy and social media management.

"There's a huge gap in the market, especially at that time, where businesses were creating what they wanted to put out, but they weren't thinking about what people actually wanted to see," Chloe continues.

"We identified quite early on that we would create this really cool content and we'd hand that over to the client, they'd think it was great, they'd share it, but then after that they sometimes were not getting the most out of the content.

"We realised quite quickly that we should pivot our business to include end-to-end content marketing. So, not only do we create really cool content and video animation, we also come up with a strategy and we deliver that."

Chloe and Lou's adventurous streak is alive and kicking in their content and company culture. A restless urge to do

things differently and a refusal to be anything but themselves has attracted some of the world's biggest brands and led to the company's rapid growth over the past four years.

What started as a two-woman business is now a multi-talented, 18-strong team that works nationally and internationally with some of the world's most recognisable brands. With clientele ranging from the BBC and Riot Games to McDonald's and KPMG, it's safe to say that the young company has made its mark.

"Brands come to us when they really want to shake things up, create something that really makes a difference and has impact," says Chloe. "We get fed so much information and content on our phones and social media, and because of that it takes something extra special to break through and make people stop and pay attention." ►





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"Being real, being authentic and just having fun is what we started this business for. It doesn't matter who we're speaking to or working with, we are young, fresh and kind of weird, and we bring that personality to the brands we work with. We dig deep into their culture and personalities. Ultimately, our goal is to make sure our client and our team are happy with the end product."

What is so refreshing about Wander Films is that its international success has not dampened its passion for the North East. Chloe and Lou are still committed to investing locally and working with regional clients.

"We feel really passionate about the North East. There's so much incredible talent here, we're just not very good at shouting about it."

Wander Films is showing no signs of slowing down. The business has recently moved to a new studio in Middlesbrough, boasting an open-plan design, editing suites, training rooms and a state-of-the-art studio.

With this new site comes a new mindset, Chloe said. The move which took place in June has brought their team further together and provided the strong footing they need to embark on the next phase of growth.

In addition to its marketing brand which continues to expand, Wander Films is now branching out into broadcast content. The team is currently producing a documentary with the BBC and aims to develop this arm of the business with further production projects across broadcast, streaming and TV.

"There's a lot happening," Chloe added. "We're developing some really cool broadcast work which is super exciting. This new part of the company is growing really fast as is our marketing brand."

"We're becoming a producer's firm where we develop our own ideas whether that's within factual content, documentary or entertainment."

To meet the increase in demand, Chloe and Lou have put plans in motion to expand their team as they look to hire for several senior roles, including Head of Development (TV production), Head of Marketing and other production talent.

The couple are also highly committed to bringing young people into the media industry through apprenticeship schemes, giving budding creatives the skills they need

to succeed and thrive in what can be a highly competitive sector.

"There are some key positions we want to recruit into," concludes Chloe. "We want to bring in experienced senior team members to help us grow our individual pillars of the business and help lead in those places."

"But then we're also super passionate about apprenticeships and bringing young,

fresh talent in and retaining them in our area. It's really hard to get the skills you need to be a content creator from the education system. There's a disconnect between the two at the moment; education is very traditional, but the world has moved on. So, we're bringing in fresh talent and training them up is important to us."

For more information about Wander Films, head to wander-films.co.uk. ●





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FOUR BUSINESS CENTRES AND COUNTING...

Paul McEldon, Chief Executive of the North East BIC, tells BW why the addition of a fourth property to the BIC's portfolio is good news for the whole region



The arrival of the first tenants into our new £8million innovation centre in Darlington is not just good news for them and for us – it's a confidence boost to the entire region.

The BIC's sole purpose for the past 28 years has been to create the right environment for the region's businesses to thrive. So, to be asked to take over the running of our fourth business centre is an indication of the health of the North East's business community, as well as our own.

It's the appetite and spirit of the start-up community in the Tees Valley that has prompted Darlington Borough Council to invest in Innovation Central. And early indications show the demand for the Grade A office and lab space is as high as was expected.

Our first business centre in the town, Business Central, has already reached capacity – with 200 businesses helped to start up and grow since we launched in 2015. And now this second neighbouring site, just minutes away on Darlington's Central Park development, will continue to build on this momentum – providing choice and wrap-around support to today's entrepreneurs.

It's our closeness to the business community that helps us to understand and respond to what's actually needed rather than what might be incorrectly assumed.

Vanessa Wood, our Centre Manager at Business Central, has been involved in the design of Innovation Central from day one

and has poured her extensive knowledge of running successful business space into creating the new facility and a support system for tenants.

She knows it's about more than simply creating an attractive commercial space. It's about creating the creative, collaborative and supportive environment where ideas people can be inspired.

That's why the centre will provide tenants with access to an events programme,

business support and networking opportunities, as well as comprehensive lifestyle facilities including a gym and micro spa.

Darlington is buzzing with entrepreneurial potential right now so it's incredibly exciting to be able to offer such excellent locations and facilities to bring this to fruition. We've helped to create more than 7,000 regional jobs since 1994 and we've no plans of slowing now. ●



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Workspace at Innovation Central is available to all sectors, with office sizes ranging from 174 - 630 sqft and lab sizes from 410 - 743 sqft.

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The project is jointly funded by Darlington Borough Council, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), £3.55million from the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority, and the Government's Getting Building Fund.

Health is wealth

County Durham has never looked so good, since local entrepreneur and qualified aesthetician **Alex Erwin** set up 'The Treatment Centre' in Chester-le-Street this year

Aesthetics at Erwins plans to bring out the best in everyone, with the company's tailor-made treatment plans and its unique one-stop-shop wellness experience.

Aesthetics at Erwins began as a one-man operation back in 2018, but the business has grown into an impressive collective of like-minded professionals working towards one shared goal: "enhancing natural beauty." Based in the centre of Chester-le-Street, Erwin's new facility – The Treatment Centre – is a one-of-a-kind operation that plans to provide both the county and the surrounding region with a shining example of the North East's collaborative and entrepreneurial spirit.

From working in car sales, to manning the fragrance and beauty counters in Highstreet stores, and now to running his own aesthetics company, Aesthetics at Erwins founder Alex Erwin has a portfolio career that perfectly encapsulates what it means to be an entrepreneur. At thirty-one, this Lanchester native has spent years working hard to build a reputable brand, but he has also spent much of this time identifying his passions and then subsequently finding ways to monetise them.

Growing up, Alex recalls being surrounded by his mother's love for looking good and feeling good, and it was her

relationship with self-care that first attracted him to the beauty/aesthetics industry.

Throughout his professional career, Alex has worked within a variety of industries that all seem to have one common goal: making others feel good. Weaving his way from sales to retail and then finally to healthcare, Alex has "worked from the bottom all the way to the top" to transform lives one client at a time.

While Aesthetics at Erwins may have started as a lucrative 'side-hustle' four years ago, the opening of Erwin's Chester-le-Street location earlier this year has revolutionised the way in which consumers interact with the beauty industry and in turn their own wellbeing. ►





Alex himself describes the business as a “collective”, which is made up of a team of beauty professionals “all of whom are experts in their own right”. More specifically, Alex Erwin is a highly qualified aesthetician, who is renowned for making clients “feel just as good on the outside as they do on the inside.” With a reputation for providing some of the best filler and Botox services in the region, Alex has also expanded his offerings to include laser services (including hair removal) and HIFU (skin tightening) treatments. The focus for Alex is maintaining a client’s natural beauty, and the Aesthetics at Erwins team work together to provide an end-to-end service experience.

The Aesthetics at Erwins collective are more than just a beauty spa, they are a community of like-minded individuals who aim to empower and enhance. Offering a wider range of services than one beauty therapist could ever do alone, the team are able to create bespoke and comprehensive

treatment plans for every client without them ever having to leave the facility.

In addition to Alex’s aesthetician services, clients can make use of the in-house hairdresser, nail technicians, beautician, and massage/holistic therapist. All workers are self-employed (with Alex operating as the company’s owner/director), but he insists that the entire Aesthetics at Erwins team navigate the communal workspace as co-owners; “a community which understands that in order to bring the best out in their clients, they must first bring the best out in themselves.”

The success of Aesthetics at Erwin’s relies heavily on the company’s contemporary approach to an ever-evolving list of services. With an overarching goal to “succeed together,” Alex and the team understand the importance of tending to and nurturing your community.

The North East is renowned for its community-first attitude, where regional pride leads to regional small business success and local support is integral in the pursuit of long-term success. Chester-le-Street is a market town, characterised by its never-ending supply of community spirit.

Whether it be the town’s central location or the huge variety of Highstreet vendors that call this place home, Chester-le-Street may have a small town feel but it’s jam-packed with big city opportunities. As Alex explains himself, “you can easily get lost within city centres, but in Chester-le-street we are all each other’s biggest supporters”.

In fact, one such County Durham non-profit holds a special place in Alex’s heart. The CDC Enterprise Agency has provided invaluable support for both Aesthetics at Erwins as a whole, but also for the self-employed workers within the company. A true example of community spirit, Alex explained how he “couldn’t thank them enough” for their continued mentorship and guidance. ►





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From discounted coffee to exclusive batches of local-sourced essential oils, Alex and the team can reach new heights and move outside of their comfort zones through the dedicated support of their local community. With a social-media heavy strategy combined with word-of-mouth support, he has been able to attract an impressive loyal clientele (of both men and women - all over the age of twenty-five) and convert potential into profit.

Looking towards the future, Alex and The Treatment Centre's team plan to strive for bigger and better things, and not just for their clients but also for themselves.

More explicitly, it is essential to stay up to date with the latest techniques and training when working within such

a fast-paced industry. Alex himself actively re-trains gains a new skill-set within aesthetics every year (via Empire Aesthetics Academy), making sure to set the example for those working alongside him and remind them that "we're here to give good treatments and services, whilst being as professional and well-trained as we can be".

For Aesthetics at Erwins, the team "isn't there to rip people off," they simply want to provide unparalleled services within a region that deserves to house high quality ideas/products.

As Alex Erwin rightly concludes "it's the little things that make a huge difference," and the driving force behind Aesthetics at Erwins is that a little bit

really can go a long way. With a team of experts on hand, and a community that is rallying for their long-term success, it comes as no surprise that this ambitious entrepreneur plans to eventually open another facility next year. Because no matter what you do, where you go or who you are, "health truly is wealth", and the services provided by businesses such as Aesthetics at Erwins can make everyone feel like a million dollars.

Whether you're looking for a confidence boost, or just fancy treating yourself to a well-deserved treatment, head over to the The Treatment Centre in the centre of Chester-le-Street.

For more information head to [Facebook.com/TheTreatmentCentre](https://www.facebook.com/TheTreatmentCentre) ●



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PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR GROWTH

South Tyneside businesses are joining forces to support economic growth in the borough

Businesses across South Tyneside are signing up to a pledge aimed at boosting local economic activity, reducing health inequalities, cutting carbon emissions, and enhancing civic pride for the benefit of the Borough.

Launched in January 2022 the pledge sets out nine commitments around spend, recruitment and support. It encourages organisations to focus on local activities and practical steps such as local procurement and recruitment, which can help South Tyneside to thrive.

The Pledge does not involve targets or difficult reporting, or an obligation to carry out every step. Instead, it is based on the sharing of best practice and working together.

Cllr Tracey Dixon, Leader of South Tyneside Council and Chair of South Tyneside Partnership said: "We have had a fantastic response to the South Tyneside Pledge since we launched with almost 140 organisations signed up now.

"By signing up, organisations, big or small are saying they will do all they can to spend, recruit and support our local area and bring about positive change.

"This isn't a piece of paper we sign and pop in a drawer to make us all feel better, it's about shining a light on our practices and seeing what we can do to support the Borough.

"The Pledge has encouraged organisations to look at their own practices and see what they can do to support the borough. As individual organisations we can only do so much, but collectively, with a common set of objectives, we can make a real difference."

The Pledge builds on the best practice of Pledges in Leeds, London, Greater Manchester, Wigan, Ayrshire, Preston, and North of Tyne. In Preston, over five years, procurement spend retained in the local



economy rose from 5 per cent to nearly 20, a rise of £74m.

South Shields based Metec UK has signed the South Tyneside Pledge and is determined to grow the region's engineering base by sub-contracting locally.

Last year the company secured a major contract from Dogger Bank Wind Farm.

Graeme Crow, Commercial Manager at Metec said: "We've got a philosophy that when we win a big project, we keep as much of that investment as possible local. Our work is largely self-contained but, whenever we can, we subcontract to companies in South Tyneside.

"Despite conducting most work in-house, we do subcontract some. On this occasion, we spent over a quarter of a million pounds with local suppliers to support and assist us to deliver high profile projects of this nature.

"By spending locally – we are keeping engineering companies busy and that filters onto smaller businesses, allowing them to take on more workers. It's in everybody's interests to grow local skills and increase their availability. We must get more people involved in engineering, although it's coming back with green energy – we came very close to losing that forever."

Howell Technology Group signed up to the South Tyneside Pledge to continue to grow, recruit and procure in the borough. Home to the region's first "Microsoft

Centre of Excellence" the firm has worked with global corporates and remains focused on South Tyneside by working with local schools and recruiting locally.

George Galloway, Sales and Marketing Director at Howell Technology Group said: "We are proud of our roots and are committed to remaining in the region long-term. We want to be an active member of the business community and support neighbouring businesses.

"We are providing a pathway for careers that historically may have required a move to a different region to progress. Creating a Microsoft Centre of Excellence is a sure-fire way of keeping talent in the North East and solidifying the region's emergence as a tech hub.

"We have also purchased a premises on Monkton Business Park in Hebburn to house our growing team and have ambitious recruitment plans. ●



Organisations, public and private, big, and small, can sign up at any time and become part of the Pledge South Tyneside network at www.southtyneside.gov.uk/southtynesidepledge

South Shields FC



South Shields Football Club is a business on the up – on and off the pitch. With a fully-professional men's first-team, a rapidly-emerging women's team, talented Academy sides and a charitable Foundation, the club is future-proofed for success on the pitch.

But this is a club about far more than football, and the Mariners are firmly establishing themselves as a key part of the North East community, with modern facilities suitable for any business or social functions.

The HLA Mariners Business Club, meanwhile, is hosted by South Shields FC and provides the business community with a forum from which to network, develop contacts and do business together.

The club's newly-installed executive boxes deliver a matchday experience to rival any others in non-league football, adding to the hospitality offerings already provided, which are popular among club sponsors and other businesses alike.

If you would like to enquire about the club's facilities or hospitality offerings, please send an email to info@southshieldsfc.co.uk or call 0191 454 7800.

South Shields FC is a proud supporter of the South Tyneside Pledge as a key member of the business community in the borough.

The HLA Mariners Business Club encourages inter-trade between the club's partners, and the Mariners have also regularly hosted North East Chamber of Commerce meetings.

An equal opportunities employer, SSFC and its charitable Foundation seek to recruit locally and follow the principles of equal pay for equal value work. The Foundation delivers around £2million of social impact per year and has 90 volunteers.

The club is also committed to climate change action, and recently installed £130,000 of solar panel capability on the roof of its modern new stand at 1st Cloud Arena.

www.southshieldsfc.co.uk

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If your business would like to engage with this forward-thinking football club, the HLA Mariners Business Club may be the perfect avenue.

The business club was launched in the autumn of 2022 and brings together companies from a wide range of industries, leading to collaborative thinking and ways of working.

The HLA Mariners Business Club is scheduled to meet a minimum of six times per year, and any business can attend initially as a guest.

Membership starts at £535, which not only provides the benefits of the business club, but also includes a crowd-facing advertising board at 1st Cloud Arena.

To enquire about this, please send an email to info@southshieldsfc.co.uk.



Photography credit: Four Quarters



GAME CHANGER

After huge success across London and Bristol, retro arcade bar Four Quarters co-owner **Francois Kitching** is heading up North to bring both Geordie natives and toon tourists their new favourite hotspot. He'll also be realising a lifelong dream in coming home



Described as the UK's original and best arcade bar, Four Quarters are continuing their expansion from venues in Peckham, Bristol, Hackney Wick and Elephant Park.

The concept was born from Fran and fellow co-founder Marc Jones' love for both games and a great night out. Originally launched as a side project, the company's first bar in Peckham proved a huge success and soon, they were expanding the concept from its original site in Peckham to Bristol, numerous other boroughs of London and now, the North East.

The hugely popular retro gaming venue has confirmed a new Dean Street location, with plans to move into the basement and lower ground floor of the former restaurant, Gershwin's.

Four Quarters - named after the fact that 1.50 gets you four American quarters to feed into their machines - boasts a varied collection of vintage arcade games from

the 1970s to the mid-2000s. Visitors can enjoy themselves on the lovingly restored machines, from throwback favourites such as Pac-Man to the more modern likes of Time Crisis 2. There are also comfy booths with various old school consoles, from the Megadrive, N64, to the beloved PS2. After working up an appetite, guests can enjoy a range of pizza, classic and themed cocktails, and local craft beer.

While Marc comes from a background in hospitality and entertainment, Fran's career began in construction and project management, giving the founding pair a strong foundation of skills and expertise that has led to the franchise's ongoing success. But where it all starts is a love of classic video games and a great pub.

"Without the love of the games, it would never have existed. But I think also without the love of a good night out, it would never have existed either," Fran said.

It was Fran's fond memories of growing up in Whitley Bay in the early 90s, playing games in the arcades of Spanish City, that inspired the idea of Four Quarters. He rediscovered his love for arcade games after a trip to Japan where old arcade games were back in fashion.

"I loved arcade games but when I got a bit older it all sort of went away for a while," Fran continued. "It just so happened that I was travelling in Japan and I came across video game cafes and arcades and I was just like, 'wow, I really still love this stuff' and maybe there's something that can be done back at home."

"Fast forward a few years from there and I'm living in London, working in project management, sick of what I'm doing and trying to work out how I might make this project a reality."

Meanwhile, similar ideas were brewing in Marc's mind as he drew inspiration from ►

Barcades which were popping up across the United States. The company's five founders eventually met online through social media and forum platforms, coming together to turn the concept into a reality.

Fran has wanted to bring the concept to his hometown since the company's beginnings. After their initial efforts to open a site in Newcastle was quashed by the pandemic, the team said it is excited to finally bring the novel concept to Dean Street, an address that holds a particularly special place in Fran's heart as one of his old stomping grounds in the 1990s.

"I love Newcastle, I miss Newcastle and for me it has always been important to end up back there. I wanted to have a bar at home," Fran said. "It'll make me immensely proud and especially on such a site as Dean Street. I come from a rave background so back in the early 90s we used to go down to generator records which would have been just around the corner. That street has been important to me for as long as I've lived."

Fellow-co founder Marc Jones, added: "The goal was always not to be just a 'London brand'. We want Four Quarters

to be a key part of the nightlife scene that thrives across the country, including cities other than London".

Thanks to the skills and expertise of arcade game expert and founding team member, Tom Humphrey, the company began to expand its collection of machines which are all lovingly repaired and restored by Tom and his team. Four Quarters now owns over one hundred arcade machines from the past four decades which all require ongoing maintenance.

"Some of the old machines are from the early 80s and they break; they break ►





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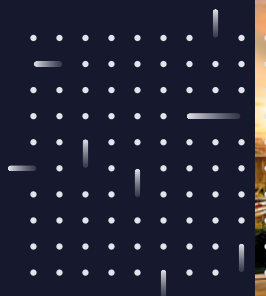
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constantly," said Marc. "It takes a lot of maintenance to make sure that we're fixing them and making them as good an experience as we possibly can and something we really care about."

The bar will be located in a historic site with a well-known backstory. Best remembered as Gershwin's Restaurant, the site was left abandoned for a decade. It comes as no surprise, then, that getting the site whipped back into shape hasn't been easy.

The opening has been a long and involved process, according to Fran. One that required working closely with all the city's stakeholders - including the council, heritage and environment organisations and the police - to ensure the long-vacant building was fit for purpose.

"This particular site has taken a long time from finding it and developing the

concept to actually delivering it. There were many challenges, but it is an amazing historic site with a really interesting backstory.

"It's a slightly notorious ex-den of iniquity, to some extent," Fran explained. "But it's going to be an exciting space to bring back to life after having been empty for ten years. Now we've got the space opened up and we're going to fill it to the brim with arcade machines."

Despite originating in the South, Four Quarters is committed to being more than just a "London brand" and aims to become an integral part of Newcastle's thriving nightlife. The new bar is expected to create upwards of 12 new jobs for the region, with roles including management positions, bar supervisors and kitchen staff soon to be advertised.

"People who come to work for us are

going to be proud of the fact that they work for us," Fran said.

"They're going to see it as a place that is inherently different to everywhere else. As well as the games, there'll be a broad selection of craft beers, there'll be a good cocktail offer, and there'll be a good standard of product coming over the bar, and hopefully a great experience for everyone who comes walks through that door."

"We also want to find employees who want to be part of the journey and we'll be undertaking a recruitment drive in due course."

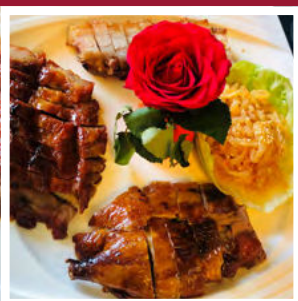
Four Quarters plans to open its doors in late November and visitors will be able to feed their quarters into retro machines 7 days a week. This latest addition to Newcastle's renowned night life has a lot to live up to, but Four Quarters is expected to top the city's leader board in no time. ●





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Sky Chinese Cuisine is a traditional Hong Kong style restaurant situated opposite the casino on the top floor 20-28 Stowell Street, take the lift upstairs to the main entrance. Sky Chinese Cuisine re-opened on 31st October 2021 after the pandemic with a new menu and new food concept. Based on Cantonese food from the famous dishes of 21 cities, counties and regions in Guangdong Province. The food characterises a wide and unique selection of resources and the cooking methods are extensive, including frying, grilling, stewing, baking and boiling. It reflects the dietary differences between the south and north of China, with the green, healthy and pastoral dietary needs and style characteristics, the unique cooking of celebrities has formed a unique flavor. In a sense, it conveys the warmth and pragmatism with "home" as the spiritual core and the grand enthusiasm with "Banquet" as the etiquette form.

Sky Chinese Cuisine brings you dim sum, banquets or parties and a variety of traditional and delicious dishes in a comfortable restaurant environment. Dim sum is Cantonese, referring to a large range of small Chinese dishes that are served in bamboo steamer baskets or on small plates. Dim sum culture started in Hong Kong and Guangdong province, but has since spread throughout the world. The meaning of dim sum in Cantonese is "touching the heart". It is a great way for family or friends gathering, the dishes are

meant to be shared. Dim sum is served all day and made to order by elite team of chefs in Sky Chinese Cuisine, the menu is full of familiar favourites. Besides, Sky Chinese Cuisine can cater for different parties or banquet up to 200 people, whether you are celebrating the birth of a child, a wedding, hosting traditional banquet or party for any special festival like Christmas. Sky offers a variety of high quality set menus designed to optimise the dining experience to match the celebrations.

Chinese New Year is the biggest festival in China. The date for Chinese New Year is different every year as it is set according to the Lunar calendar which goes in a cycle of 12 years. Each year is symbolised by a different animal. In 2023, it's the year of rabbit that represents tremendous luck and good fortune with a long, peaceful life bringing beauty, love and prosperity. Traditionally, the dancing lion performance is arranged in Stowell street on the first Sunday of Chinese New Year which tentatively on 22 January 2023. Why not book a table to celebrate in Sky Chinese Cuisine after watching the dancing lion performance in Stowell Street. ●

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Socials are held regularly, with students enjoying spending time with one another, whether it be a formal black-tie event with all its traditions and etiquette, a paint party or

a cookery competition. We also run rewards weeks to celebrate success and effort and these are always very popular with the students voting to choose the rewards.

The boarding environment is crucial in supporting students' personal development and helping students grow in all aspects of their lives. Whether that is in academic studies, in the clubs that they choose, in the trips they attend or in the friends that they make; their experiences at QE will shape their life.

Jemma Holroyd, Head of Student Wellbeing explains; 'With a large community of boarding students our task is to ensure that we create the same family atmosphere that smaller boarding schools have, whilst also celebrating the diverse community that harmoniously comes together at QE. We feel that we have something special within our school that comes from a combination of innovation, commitment to celebrating childhood and a drive to give the students the best education both pastorally and academically to help them become the best and happiest adults they can be.'

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BEAUTY IS IN THE 'I' OF THE BEHOLDER

David Bootle tests out the all electric BMW iX xDrive from Vertu BMW Durham

The argument seems won about the EV. We need them otherwise we will continue to cause damaging emissions which will destroy our planet. Even the most hardened climate crisis sceptic probably now accepts this.

So the challenge now is roll out, extending the duration of travel and affordability.

The BMW iX xDrive 40 does pretty well in all those departments – though I think as time moves on cost will reduce and journey length will only continue.

This is a race to save the plant as much as a race to build EVs.

So all that said I hopped into the rather robust looking BMW iX xDrive 40 for a few days to give it a spin. The more physical grill at first is a deviation from the trade mark BMW branded front, but its angularity soon grows on you, and a big robust vehicle creating quite a sight. But the angular detail and the ease of drive soon makes you feel comfortable.

For reference this is the 322bhp variant with 257 miles of range. That is a decent

range and the next tier up xDrive 50 can take you considerably further.

I really liked the iX but that could be because it was the drive experience as much as anything else. It combines style and substance, but for me it is the substance which is the overriding winner.

Style wise this new appearance has a distinctive quality. It is a reimagination of the BMW brand and takes a little getting used to, but it carries all the hallmarks of the former iconic front in time. This new approach looks sturdier and more in your

face. My BMW contact though reminded me there thousands of little sensors on the grill so again perhaps this is substance proving as important as style to the iX. Safety is paramount as we will go on to see...

It does look big and solid, but that's part of its persona. It certainly doesn't drive like that though. The iX for me felt very nippy, with some lovely close cornering for its size. It also boasted sharp acceleration from 0-62mph sprint in 6.1 seconds.

It packs a lot of good things into its design repertoire. The frame is actually carbon fibre - No one really expects an EV to be particularly swift, but this felt agile.

Inside there is plenty of room. The dash display is also a wow factor. A wide, long elegant integrated screen with a range of colour and graphical display that possesses intuitive touch functionality greets you. My 15 year old son was impressed. And nothing really impresses him! I could sense he was also proud to be in a leading EV car though. This future generation is far more environmentally conscious.

1 in 3 young people now won't touch a product if the brand cannot demonstrate an eco-friendly approach to business, according to Deloitte.

Well EVs and the technology they are pushing out certainly push those factors. BMW is an early adopter of EV tech and I believe it will continue to push boundaries. Yes, the competition is fierce with the Audi Etron and Mercedes EQC400 which are all there or thereabouts.

RRP is over £80,000 which is similar to other EV's in this class however this can be made much more affordable using BMW PCP or PCH, amounting to £774.10 per month.

Cars of this calibre will obviously dent your pocket, but you must remember the savings not using petrol or diesel. Also the environmental savings as discussed really do weigh into the argument.

The battery can be charged up to 80% in 30 minutes assuming you find a public charge that delivers the power. This tech will only improve too with BMW boffins busy in the background pushing it forward.

A distinguisher here though too (not to be ignored) is safety. The BMW iX gets an industry standard Euro NCAP rating of 5 out of 5 ahead of the eTron and iPace. BMW are keeping the planet safer but focussing continually on the passenger and driver safety too. ●





DESIGN INNOVATION

Andrea Zagato talks Italian design philosophy. By *Josh Sims*

It's funny," says Andrea Zagato, "but Italians have a more horizontal philosophy when it comes to design innovation - we make something remarkable and the next time we completely forget we've done that and try to do something else remarkable but completely different. I think that's why Italy has never had the same success in design as Japan and Germany, because their design philosophy is vertical - everything builds on what has come before. I really should try to be more German. I do at least have a Japanese chief designer [in Norihiko Harada]. He's spent more time with me than my wife."

Zagato's name is something of a legend in petrolhead circles. Yet those schooled in premium European carmakers may know the Zagato name more by default: as a coach-builder that marked its centenary over lockdown, Zagato has lent its styling to the likes of Bugatti, Rolls-Royce, Porsche, Bentley, Jaguar and AC, among just about every top marque you can name. Indeed, Zagato stands alongside the likes of Pininfarina, Karmann and Bertone for its visionary ability to give already incredible sports cars, tourers and saloons just a little extra distinction. Add a Zagato badge - even to a less glamorous Peugeot, Toyota or a

dinky Fiat 500 - and you can triple the price of the vehicle.

"And I hope it does do that," laughs Zagato, who is now finding that he can offer the same cachet boost to other products, from cameras for Leica to watches for Chopard, by adding the family name to those too. "But the point is that we're not competitors. We only apply our brand to the side of the car. The one on the bonnet is still very much theirs. The idea is to have teamwork and come up with something that's a mix of your two approaches and so stronger for having both."

Just consider the likes of the Aston



Martin DB4 GT Zagato, the Alfa Romeo TX3 Stradale or the Giulietta Sprint Zagato. Weep with joy at the Zagato Lamborghini 5-95 or Raptor, the Lancia Hyena or Flaminia Sport Zagato, the Ferrari 575 GTZ, the BMW Zagato Coupe. Get in line for the new open-top Zagato Maserati Mostro Barchetta.

"Of course it sometimes happens that something doesn't have as much 'Zagatoness' as we might want," he adds. "And at other times it's only Zagato from certain angles. Bentley, for example, told me that we should work more freely with the back of their car, because that's typical of Zagato, and go softer on the front, because that should be more Bentley."

"Imagine an Italian sitting with his coffee in the town square and a car is parked there - he wants to see it side-on or three

quarters," Zagato adds. "Germans are different - you're normally full speed on the autobahn and you look in the mirror and it's important you get scared so you move out of the way. But for Zagato to come along and design something different is not difficult. The skill lies in being different but consistent with the original design."

Andrea Zagato has had a lifetime to think about getting this right. He was introduced early to the idea of joining the firm established by his grandfather Ugo - each day he chauffeured him to school in an Alfa Romeo 2.6 presidential limousine. Andrea resisted at first, having every intention to become a vet. "But curiosity more about my father [than cars] took me to the company," says Zagato, "and I actually started really loving it when I realised how unique Zagato is".

Indeed, Ugo Zagato wasn't a car guy either, starting his career in aircraft design, and applying his knowledge of aviation's metal construction to automobiles, bringing extreme lightness and aerodynamics. The company has continued to innovate by bringing tech over from aviation into automotive: its Alfa Romeo SZ of 1989 was the first car completely developed using CAD/CAM systems; the use of glues to affix the subframe to the skin; the first entirely carbon fibre shell - all were Zagato borrowings from aircraft manufacturing. Zagato was experimenting with making all-electric cars, with its Zagato Zele, 50 years ago.

That Zagatoness is so sought after by the world's most luxurious auto manufacturers is a rare quality too. In contrast to rival coach-builders, Zagato has never done ►

series models - it only creates custom-made series in very limited numbers - which has meant it's avoided following the trends of the times as production cars inevitably do. And, despite being an Italian company, its design ethos is more Germanic, a product, Andrea Zagato says, of being based just outside Milan, northern Italy having been more under the influence of Austria, the south under France.

"That French way of design sees the application of decoration to an industrial product. Think about a Parisian bridge and it's all flowers and sculptural elements, added to a functional bridge," explains

Zagato. "In Milan it's all clean, clean, clean: Bauhaus, Ulm School, Rationalism, less is more. You don't add anything that isn't necessary and that's what makes the product beautiful. It's not just style, which ultimately is just marketing. It's sales. It's all about functionality and simplicity. Ferrari, for example, would say that the car that wins the race is the most beautiful. Why? Because it wins the race - it's expressed a purpose, which is to win the race, not just to look beautiful. Style is trying to look beautiful without any other purpose."

A few decades ago and Zagato would

have been manufacturing cars itself too - but Andrea's father, faced with the economies of scale that more global competitors were achieving by massively ramping up production, made the tough decision to drop that side of the business. The other Italian coach-builders soon followed suit. But that has allowed the company, under Andrea, to focus on design in a way, he hopes, that will give the company the longevity to see another hundred years. Engine design is already going through a radical overhaul, with electrification, but people will, he reckons, still want beautiful cars - "you can change



the inside of a phone from an analogue to an electronic system but someone still has to design the exterior, and the exterior can be the same in both devices”.

Zagato concedes that he is torn in his expectations for the future of the car industry at this top level. On the one hand the industry is consolidating into ever bigger - huge, in fact - groups that, he suggests, make dynamic and bold decision-making all the harder. It also means that, for example, the next generation of Alfa Romeo will be built on a platform shared with Peugeot and Citroen, “and the end result of that approach is that cars will look the

same. We won’t be driving cars anymore but washing machines.”

On the other, he says, “with electric cars you reduce the number of components too, and [under the bonnet] they are much the same inverter, motor, battery. So the question arises of how you differentiate cars one from another, and that will be in design, in the ‘skin’ around the cars. So it’s possible that design becomes the main element of differentiation. Of course, that’s my hope for the future of this company.”

Just in case, Zagato isn’t limiting that future to the kind of upscale four-wheeled transport it’s come to be associated with.

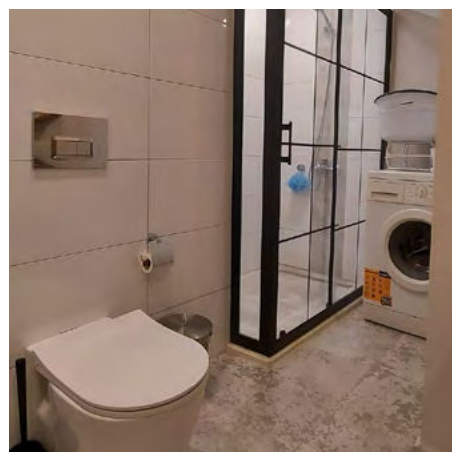
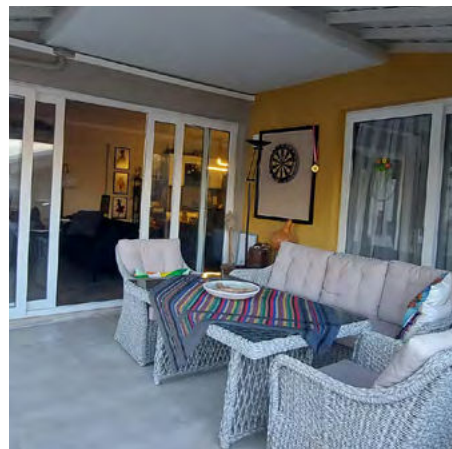
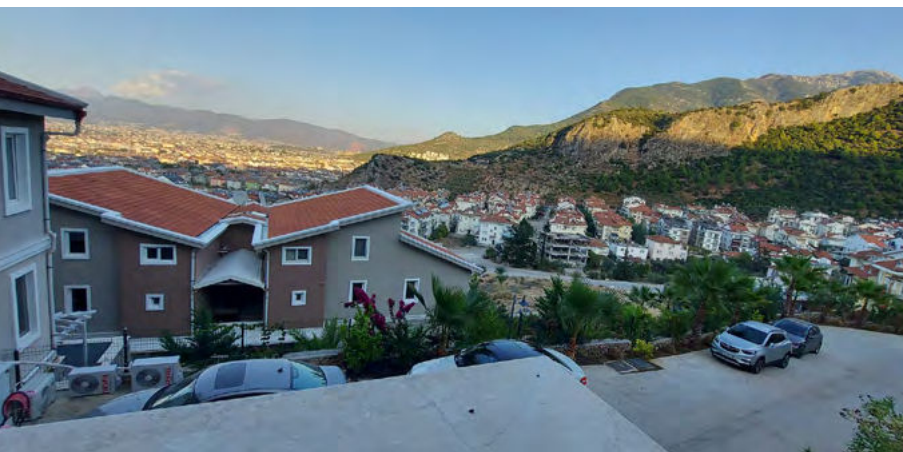
It has even applied its vision to a tractor. Don’t laugh at that prospect, Andrea Zagato suggests. “A top-end tractor is actually a super luxurious vehicle these days, and it has to be, what with the driver in that cab for maybe 10 hours at a time, every day, in the sun,” he explains. “That necessarily makes the design highly ergonomic, and why the cab tends to cost a fortune. Comfort and convenience are stressed much more than they would be in an actual luxury car.”

“But, you know,” he chuckles, probably to the great relief of those petrolheads, “we really see Zagato’s future as still being mostly with cars.” ●



Beautiful Apartment in Deliktas

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3 of the villas each cost £850,000 with the other villa valued at £950,000.

Galaski Villalari

Location: Fethiye Kargi

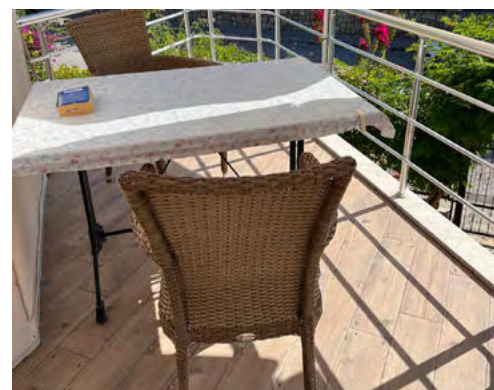
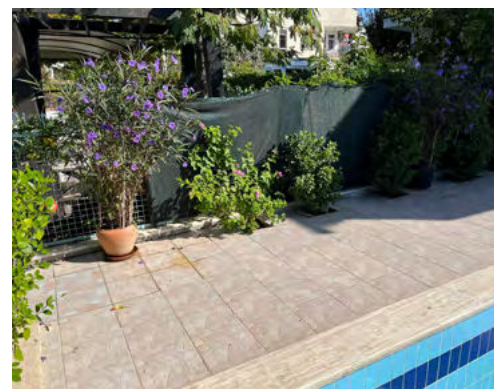
£750,000 depending on the exchange rate



8 villas are available in 2 different styles. Spacious lounge area, heating system running throughout the villa, pool area and sauna. The Galaksi Villalari villas each have a parking space outside as well as an elevator inside to create super easy accessibility. These villas are just a short walk away from the beach.

Villa in Calis

£420,000 for both apartments



The garden floor has 2 bedrooms, 1 living room and 1 bathroom. Partly furnished apartment. These apartments have 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 1 large pool and parking space. The apartment also comes with a separate storage room and a beautiful garden area. These apartments have a great location and are located 5 minutes walk away from the local shopping street and Calis beach.

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EVENTS DIARY



NOVEMBER

- 23** Property Deal Network Newcastle Property Investor Meet up - All Bar One Newcastle, 51 Grey St, Newcastle, NE1 6EE
- 30** North of Tyne Networking - Maldron Hotel Newcastle, 17 Newgate Street, Newcastle, NE1 5RE

DECEMBER

- 1** NE1 LTD Christmas Business Breakfast - The Cathedral Church of St. Nicholas, Saint Nicholas Square, Newcastle, NE1 1PF
- 1** Gateshead Weekly Structured Networking Lunch Events - The Woodmans Arms, Whickham, NE16 5BB
- 1** Make UK Member Connect: ElringKlinger (Great Britain) Ltd - Troisdorf Way, Kirkleatham Business Park, Redcar, TS10 5RX
- 2** North East Networking Christmas event - Lumley Castle, Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, DH3 4NX
- 2** Durham Business Networking Event - Chester Le Street Cricket Club, Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3PF
- 5** Employment Law & Health & Safety Seminar - C11277 - Marriott Durham Royal, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3JN
- 6** Go Green for Business Growth - Byker Community Fire Station, Union Road, Byker, NE6 1EH
- 6** Chamber Local: North, Leila Lily's, 2-12 Grey Street Newcastle, NE1 6AE
- 7** Chamber Christmas Exchange (South) - Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgfield, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 2EH
- 9** Rise and Design - Pecha Kucha 2022 - Northern Design Centre, Abbot's Hill, Baltic Business Quarter, Gateshead, NE8 3DF

- 14** Chamber Christmas Exchange (North) - Grand Hotel Gosforth Park, Newcastle, NE3 5HN
- 14** First for Networking - Blaydon Rugby Club
- 14** Community Event: Pitch Club - 1 Trinity Gardens, Newcastle, NE1 2HF
- 15** Stockton MET - Hampton by Hilton, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TW

JANUARY

- 9** Mums who Make - Meet Up: Romanby WI Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8BQ
- 11** The People and Culture Forum Mental Wellbeing Across a Career: Quorum Park, Newcastle, NE12 8BU
- 12** NECC Exchange (South): Judges Country House Hotel, Kirkclevington, TS15 9LW
- 12** Start Up Smart: Start Your Own Business in Gateshead. Northern Design Centre, NE8 3DF
- 25** ASSIST: Just Networking in Stockton. Daisy Chain Project, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1PF
- 25** NECC Local (South): Health and Wellbeing Event. Pioneering Care Partnership, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF

FEBRUARY

- 16** Middlesbrough Careers Fair: Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough, TS3 6RS
- 22** Newcastle Careers Fair: St. James1 Park, Newcastle, NE1 4ST

To have your event listed here, please email dominic@bw-magazine.co.uk.

Please note, while we make every effort to ensure these listings are correct, we cannot be held responsible for changes or cancellations - always contact the venue beforehand to check.

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