

Maire Murphy, BILLINGTON WINE STUDIO



Working with wine would be many people's idea of a dream job, and Maire Murphy is certainly happy with her role as Vice-President of Billington Wine Studio.

Growing up in Belfast, she worked with her mother in her family's wholesale wine and spirits merchants, before moving to Boston, where she worked for the Martignetti company, the biggest distributor of fine wines and spirits in New England, becoming the first woman to sell wine for the company.

Moving on, she launched the Sin É Wine Company with her husband Walt, which they launched in August 2001. Following 9/11, most companies were feeling the pinch, but Maire's brand managed to break that mould.

Five years later, Billington Wines approached the Sin É Wine Company with a merger proposal, which Maire described as "a win for everyone."

"It allowed us to go on to purchase

Havens Wine Cellars in Napa Valley, California, and as Vice-President I get to manage the daily operations of the domestic production division of the company, called Billington Wine Studio.

"Our department is responsible for all California production, which works out as eight brands and 40,000-plus cases of wine."

She says her best advice for those starting out is to stick with their chosen business.

"Everyone should know going into it that the first two years are the toughest, but it is the most rewarding thing in the world to come out the other side with your head above the water.

"But do make sure you have a cash flow so you can anticipate financial issues ahead of time."

www.billingtonwines.com /
www.havenswine.com

Charlie Lord, CELTIC CLOTHING COMPANY

If you Google the phrase 'Celtic Clothing', the first link to pop up belongs to Charlie Lord from Belfast.

Charlie now lives 30 miles south-west of Philadelphia where he set up the Celtic Clothing

Company back in 1995.

Charlie was part of a large influx of young Irish who arrived in the U.S. back in the 1980s. He first landed in Boston in May 1987, but soon found himself at the Jersey shore and from there he

moved on to Philadelphia.

Prior to setting up the Celtic Clothing Company, Charlie had completed a Business degree and had also written a dissertation on entrepreneurship, specifically as it relates to the Irish-American market.

As a result, he decided to set up his own company in the U.S. based on this research.

Despite many challenges, CelticClothing.com now has a major presence on the web and they retail at all the major Irish festivals in the U.S.

"It's been great fun setting up the business," says Charlie. "It has taken me all over the North American continent. I think the formal business training gave me the confidence to give it a try.

"Now we get orders from every state in the Union and dozens of countries around the world."

Eager to continue his learning, Charlie has gone on to complete a Masters Degree at Temple University and is a qualified business education teacher.

Speaking of the future growth of his company, Charlie said: "At first we carried primarily clothing, but we engaged in a successful product development strategy, which has seen us add Irish-made gold and silver jewellery, Irish rugby jerseys and well-known brands such as Celtic FC, Guinness and Jameson.

"We are constantly sourcing and developing new products for the Irish-American market," he added.

www.CelticClothing.com

