

Sophie Gilmour

Instagram

Back in 2012, Sophie Gilmour was working all the hours that god gave as a commercial litigator in one of the country's top law firms.

That may have been where she stayed, except one night at the pub with friends, she and three friends decided to buy a fish and chip shop that was listed on TradeMe.

That impulse purchase transformed Sophie's career – and life – permanently; as they developed the humble fish and chip shop into rotisserie chicken eatery Bird on a Wire in on Auckland's Ponsonby Road.

In six short years, the free-range chicken and salad takeaway restaurant became a \$4 million business with 362.7% revenue growth year-on-year; a #19 ranking on the 2016 Deloitte Fast 50 list of fastest growing companies, and 65 staff across three restaurants selling seven tonnes of chicken per month.

Not bad for a group of twenty-somethings who had no business plan and no experience of running hospitality businesses (other than managing front of house wait staff!).

These days Sophie lives and breathes all things hospo. Having sold Bird on a Wire in 2018, she set up her hospitality consultancy business, Delicious Business.

As a consultant, she uses the skills she learned as a young lawyer; the cooking skills she honed at the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Ireland; and the passion she developed for business during her years operating Bird On A Wire, to help others in the industry succeed.

It's perhaps not the biggest surprise that Sophie's career trajectory took this path - she does hail from NZ culinary



outspoken

royalty. Mother Emerald Gilmour is a well-known restaurateur and maitre'd, and sister Mimi Gilmour founded the wildly successful Mexico and Burger Burger restaurant groups.

But Sophie's path has been unique to her, and she has woven her social conscience into everything she does, designing Bird on a Wire to be a zero-waste, environmentally sustainable business – all packaging and food waste was recyclable or compostable.

She is also on the board of two food charities; Everybody Eats - where food otherwise destined for waste is converted into restaurant-quality food and purchased on a "pay-as-you-feel" basis; and Dine Aid - a nation-wide scheme where restaurant diners have the opportunity to add \$2 to their bill at Christmas time, which is then donated to local city missions to fund emergency food parcels.

Sophie is a warm, thoughtful and articulate speaker on the topics of entrepreneurship; business ethics and sustainability, and the hospitality industry in general; and whose heart is as huge as her intellect and ambition. She co-hosts the Spinoff's food podcast 'Dietary Requirements', loves a great debate; adores a solid panel discussion and even conducts live interviews like the boss she (literally) is.

When she isn't consulting, you can find Sophie travelling locally or internationally and either whipping up delicious dinners for her friends and family or going out to her favourite Auckland restaurants!