

Gráinne Mullins

Grá Chocolates

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When Gráinne Mullins won The Euro-Toques Young Chef of the Year in 2019, it opened up a host of new opportunities that involved a job in a high-end restaurant in Indonesia and plans to travel around the world.

But when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, like many others, Gráinne's plans were cancelled and she found herself back at home in Kilchreest, Co Galway. But the pastry chef embraced the turn of events and seized the opportunity to create an exciting new business venture, Grá Chocolates.

To keep busy in the pandemic, Gráinne designed and created individual Easter eggs for her family and friends. The hand-painted, abstract designs were a hit on Instagram and it wasn't long before people started enquiring where they could buy them. Having worked as head pastry chef around several high-end restaurants across Ireland, Gráinne's expert pastry knowledge allowed her to experiment and create luxurious, quality chocolates in five different flavours.

While working on the chocolates, she enrolled in two online courses: one with the Digital School of Food and a local start-your-own business programme with classes on Zoom. Operating from her certified kitchen in the family home, Grá Chocolates officially launched in July 2020.

Before joining ACORNS, Gráinne was running everything herself. She credits ACORNS with helping her define her business plans and enabling her to take on employees. While she enjoyed crafting new recipes in different restaurants, Gráinne loves being able to express herself and her creativity through her own venture.

Gráinne now plans to move her chocolate factory into a larger production unit and continue to build Grá Chocolates' brand. She now has a team of 14 and has recently launched 2 concessions in Brown Thomas Grafton Street and the new Brown Thomas Dundrum. Grá Chocolates still has a focus of selling directly to its consumer through its website, www.grachocolates.com, but the opportunity to meet with their consumer in person is very important to build brand relationships.

Gráinne was listed on the Forbes 30 Under 30 2023 and she is constantly working on new avenues and sees endless possibilities within the world of chocolate.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



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