

Dragons and monsters: Highland hotel duo secure deal with Bannatynes

By [Simon Warburton](#) ⌚ March 2, 2023, 11:58 am 0



From left: Richard Drummond and Jon Erasmus. Image: Heartland Media.

A Scottish tech firm with Highland roots has broken into North America and Africa after cementing a deal with the leisure group founded by Dragon's Den star Duncan Bannatyne.

Hop, a hotel property management software company, was the 2017 brainchild of Highlands-based hoteliers, Richard Drummond and Jon Erasmus as well as developer, Ronald Tweedie.





It's been quite the week for Jon Erasmus (L) pictured here with wife Victoria at the new Uile-bheist distillery and brewery in Inverness. Image: Sandy McCook/DCT Media.

Mr Erasmus, who also owns the [Glen Mhor](#) Hotel in Inverness, said: "Securing the Bannatyne contract was really important for us as a business, while the international deals take things to a new level.

"We are in a crowded market but our customers tell us our product represents the type of functionality they want for their money, which is crucial in a time of rising costs across the hospitality sector because people are looking for value.

"Like all businesses, Covid was a challenge for us, but the aim now is to effectively double the size of the business in the next few years."

Uile-bheist distillery and brewery to create around 40 new jobs

It has been a busy week for [Mr Erasmus who has just opened the £8 million Uile-bheist distillery and brewery](#) next door to his Glen Mhor hotel right in the heart of the Highland capital and drawing on water from the adjacent fast-flowing River Ness.

Around 40 jobs will be created by Uile-bheist's – Gaelic for monster – operations in production, tours, administration, marketing and indirectly.

Future phases will see the creation of a distilling “campus” with increased capacity, a bonded warehouse with shopping, plus tap room, tasting and visitor spaces, while [D&E Coaches](#) will also include the site as a point on its hop-on, hop-off city tours.

Hop to it

The trio behind the software firm developed it out of frustration with more expensive systems, creating single-point software which could handle a number of functions including bookings, payments, orders and check-ins.

Mr Drummond, who also runs [McKays Hotel, Restaurant and Bar](#) in Pitlochry added: “We have a good presence and foundation in Scotland, probably because we have more than 40 years of experience running our own hotels here.



Deals now around the world. Image: Heartland Media.

“That gives us a ground-up, daily insight into the Scottish and UK sector and we are keen to continually build on that with the knowledge we have.”

Hop’s Florida tie-up sees the company provide solutions for [Skyborne Aviation](#), which operates a 314-room campus hotel as part of an airline training academy at Vero Beach.

The company is also providing systems for [CheckInn](#), which is a multi-property organisation, in Nigeria.

Another partnership with a holiday complex in Barbados in the Caribbean is due to go live within weeks.

Major Highland presence

As well as securing integration agreements with the major international payments platforms, Hop was voted Property Management System Partner of the Year 2022 by [SiteMinder](#).

Hop’s Scottish clients include the J&R Group, the three-hotel [Isles Hotel Group](#) and four-hotel [Cobbs](#) in the Highlands and Islands.

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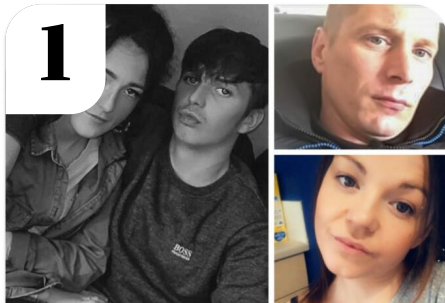
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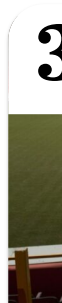


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