

# Celebrating 25 years in business



Michael and Derval Gleeson.

A FAMILY business in the heart of the city, Michael Gleeson Shoes of 26 William Street is celebrating 25 years in operation. The independent retailer may seem to be a dying breed in the fashion business but Michael Gleeson Shoes has seen businesses come and go while it thrives from its William Street base. The strength of the business is in the service that they offer, "we don't really sell shoes", Michael explained

to me, "we help people to buy shoes instead, there is a difference."

The store is known for its personal service. Michael himself – a proud East Limerick man originally from Dromkeen – has been helping people buy shoes for over 40 years. His business now involves his whole family but the most important people in his shop are the customers, he tells me, and the next most important people

are the staff on whose expertise he relies on to look after every customer's individual needs.

"Our strength in the last few years has been the loyalty of our customers, this has pulled us through the recession, and we hope to continue offering that personal service for a lot of years yet."

Michael's daughter Derval is following in the footsteps of her father, and keeping the foot care legacy in the family. As is Michael's other daughter Grainne, who operates 'Grainne Gleeson Chiropodists' from the basement level of the same building with the biggest chiropody clientele in the MidWest. Having a chiropodist's downstairs is unique in the shoe trade, and a great complementary business, and just shows the huge family interest in foot care and proper shoe fitting. Grainne is also a trained shoe fitter, as is Michael's son, John, a pharmacist with a business in the Woodview Shopping Centre, who also pops in and helps out from time to time in what is a bona fide Limerick family business.

A few years ago, Michael and Derval expanded the business by opening a dedicated children's shoe shop next door. Considered somewhat unusual in the shoe trade as many competitors were going in the opposite direction away from this specialisation, 'Young Gleeson Shoes' is now one of the biggest children's shoe businesses in the country. The ethos here again is all about service and fitting. Each member of staff is a trained fitter and they understand how important these moments are in a child's life – everybody remembers getting fitted for their first pair of shoes as child, and this tradition continues at Young Gleeson Shoes. Quality brands like Clarks and Geox ensure your little ones' feet will be looked after, while every little girl's dream can also be catered for in brands like Lelli Kelly for colourful sandals and shoes.

Michael finished by telling me he would like "to take this opportunity to thank our customers, we really appreciate the loyalty and support over the years" and by asking people to continue supporting local business in what I think is a great mantra for the times: "Keep your business in town, to keep your town in business".

Michael Gleeson Shoes is open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5.30pm. They offer a professional and friendly service by experienced and trained staff, and stock a range of affordable fashion, comfort, and physiological footwear from leading brands like Clarks, Ecco, Grenson, Gabor, Rainbow Club, MBTs, Spring Boost, Fit-flop, Van Dal, and Hotter. Call to the store at 26 William Street, or contact 061 417407.

## New free personal styling service launched

HAVE you ever uttered the words "I've nothing to wear" while looking at a wardrobe full of clothes? We've all been there. It's a sure sign that it's time for some serious wardrobe work, and now with the help of Imasa, we can get some expert advice in the area. Imasa want to help us analyse our wardrobes and build a working wardrobe combining our existing wardrobe with new season pieces to grow our look by shopping smarter.

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