

“Entrepreneurship can be a lonely journey but hearing people in the group talk about their own personal and business challenges revitalises you.”

## NIALL JOYCE

### Prograss Design



**M**ayo native Niall Joyce ended his five-year spell living in Vancouver at the end of 2023 when he moved home with wife Sienna and set up his landscape design business Prograss Design.

Niall's path into the landscaping industry had somewhat unlikely beginnings: a Food Science undergraduate degree at the University of Limerick, after which he joined Dairygold Co-operative Society as a production manager in 2016.

A desire to see more of the world took him to Vancouver in British Columbia where he was offered the role of Operations Manager with a landscaping firm working across the metro area of the city. Returning to Ireland, he set about applying that experience to his own venture in his hometown of Castlebar.

“When I came home, I found that Ireland had changed dramatically in terms of people's appreciation for well-designed outdoor green spaces. It suddenly seemed as though people were much more conscious of their connection to nature and the impact their surroundings can have on wellbeing,” says Niall, who bolstered his knowledge of the trade with a Diploma in

Landscape Design from Ashworth College in 2022.

“The great thing about returning to Ireland is that there are certain features, like Living Walls, that are only just catching on here but were big across North America some years ago, so I feel like I have the know-how to capitalise on those emerging trends and make them a big part of my offering.”

Niall admits to feeling the challenges of life in the West of Ireland, where progress on outdoor projects is very much weather-dependent and prospective clients are spread across relatively large distances.

“Good weather is essential. For me, it's like what a good internet means to someone in tech. The forecast dictates your week. I have help from two part-time staff who support the landscaping side and if the weather isn't right, difficulties arise, especially when a project is under time constraints. In Canada, there was snow ploughing to keep crews going during winter. In the West of Ireland, we're a little more limited.”

He continues: “Despite those challenges, my first year was a good one. I was encouraged by the success of the design

service, which includes 2D visuals and 3D walkthroughs of gardens and sites. I'm hoping to drive that a bit more this year. In year three, we're hoping that our Living Walls will feature more and drive the development of the business.”

Niall says that the monthly roundtables with his peers on the Back for Business programme and one-to-one sessions with his Lead Entrepreneur were “revitalising”, helping him to focus on the business strategy more than the day-to-day grind.

“The Back for Business programme was a brilliant experience. The best part was being able to pick the brains of my peers and the lead entrepreneur. It can be a lonely journey but hearing people in the group talk about their own personal and business challenges revitalises and offers a mental boost”

He continues: “Right now, most of my clients are owners of residential homes. But I've worked with a few local businesses, community groups and Tidy Towns. Naturally, the pull is towards larger commercial spaces and landscape design on a bigger sites. Most clients have found me naturally through word of mouth.”



#### POSITION

Founder

#### WHAT WE DO

Transform outdoor spaces with landscape design

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