



BACK FOR BUSINESS



Irish Abroad Unit

An Roinn Gnóthai Eacnama

Department of Foreign Affairs

“The Back for Business programme was so helpful, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who can participate.”

ALAN COAKLEY Republic of Oud



Alan Coakley first found oud-infused perfume while shopping in a duty-free in Bahrain airport, an experience that quickly made him “fall in love” with the fragrant oil harvested from agarwood.

The scent of oud would be ever-present throughout his two decades on the Arabian Peninsula where he worked in as an engineer for the oil and gas industry, a career which took him to places as far flung as Qatar, Azerbaijan, Oman, Muscat, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kazakhstan. Indeed, such was his passion for oud, Alan would regularly bring perfume and agarwood chippings to Ireland to gift to friends and family.

“When people started requesting it, I knew there was a business in it, so I had it in the back of my mind that I would set something up in Ireland. Then the last three years I was on a job in Iraq, and the site was being attacked by militant groups with drones. My wife and two children were back in Cork, and I thought then that it might be a

good time to try something else,” says the father-of-two.

The result is Republic of Oud, Alan’s niche perfume house and distributor based in Cork City. Operating from a store in the city’s historic Winthrop Arcade, the company employs three full-time staff and stocks perfume brands from the Middle East, France, Greece and the UK. It is also a key distributor for Ajmal, a historic perfume house in the UAE.

“None of what we stock is mass marketed, nor is it made in huge volumes. The palette is much richer than designer brands so it’s more for connoisseurs,” says Alan, who plans to open a second store in Dublin and expand the distribution side of the business in the short to medium term.

“We want to build relationships with businesses that are already up and running, like pharmacies or a duty free, to help us grow. We also want to grow our physical footprint with another store in Dublin. Obviously being based in Cork that would

be a massive challenge, but it’s the natural next step,” he says.

Recently named in Gloss Magazine as one of Ireland’s top 100 stores, Republic of Oud is also a member of the UK Fragrance Foundation, a prestigious organisation featuring a range of major market players, including Harrods, Selfridges, and Harvey Nichols.

Alan hails the Back for Business programme’s influence on the development of his business. “My Lead Entrepreneur was a retailer. He helped me set goals and targets and kept me accountable to them. That was very, very beneficial. The roundtables were great for getting things off your chest. We were all from different industries, but there were plenty of shared challenges,” he says.

“My peers had great solutions, whether it was accounting options or payment options with the lowest fees. It was so helpful and I would highly recommend the Back for Business programme to anyone who can participate.”

POSITION

Founder

WHAT WE DO

A niche perfume house and distributor based in Cork City, stocking brands from the Middle East, France, Greece, and the UK.

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Republic of Oud