



PHOTOS COURTESY OF YOGA~NU~U

Retreats to advance your personal life

TODAY, COSTCO MEMBER Lindsey Porter, a yoga teacher who has studied in India and South America, offers yoga sessions with a focus on wellness in Falkirk through her business, Yoga~Nu~U (yoganuu.com), but a decade ago she was working as a project manager for some of the world's biggest banks.

She started practising yoga to improve her work-life balance, but it soon became much more. Later, with children on the way, a husband who worked full-time as a scientist and a job that was taking more and more time, she knew something had to give.

In 2014, she took a neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) course to inform her yoga practice. It was there that she first met her current business partner and fellow Costco member, Cat Trebilco. Like Porter, Trebilco had a banking background but wanted out because she felt her values didn't match those of her employer.

The pair decided to offer wellbeing retreats with a difference, including a self-reflective combination of yoga, hiking and NLP, and have since run two sold-out events in the Highlands of Scotland through their new venture, Reach the Peak (reachthepeak.co.uk). "I asked myself 'What am I waiting for?'" says Porter on why she started her business. "It was now or never, so I went with now!" The duo have already set quarterly dates for

Above: Lindsey Porter (back left) and her business partner, Cat Trebilco (back right), practise yoga and enjoy Loch Rannoch in the Scottish Highlands with clients. Below: Porter demonstrates a yogic headstand in front of The Kelpies in Falkirk, Scotland.

retreats through 2017.

Does Porter's corporate experience complement her new career direction? It certainly sounds like it: she's already partnered with Alzheimer's Research UK (alzheimersresearchuk.org) and Yoga Scotland (yogascotland.org.uk), and was analysing the effectiveness of advertising on Google, Facebook, Twitter and bookyogaretreats.com at the time of publication.—*Art Anthony*



RICHARD HOSLINS



Let them eat vegan cake

COSTCO MEMBER LOUISE Vargas of Bristol has always loved baking. As a child she baked cakes with her grandmother, and she hasn't stopped since. In December, she decided to turn her house into a pop-up bakery one Sunday a month, with a selection of vegan cakes. The business quickly grew, and after she lost her job at a recycling company in March, she turned her hobby into a career.

Vargas opened 280 Bakes (280bakes.weebly.com), which incorporates her address number, in June. Her daily specials have created a buzz with customers. Every morning between 7 and 8, she announces the special on Facebook and Twitter by posting #cakeOD (cake on demand). She takes orders until noon, then delivers the cakes around the Bristol area by tea time.

"Vegan cooking is growing in popularity," says Vargas. "Around half of my customers are vegan. Finding substitutes for butter and eggs has meant that I need to have a solid understanding of the chemistry of cake, how ingredients interact and flavour combinations. My skills as a baker have definitely improved as a result, and it's upped my passion for baking."

In addition to her daily specials, Vargas makes bespoke cakes for birthdays, weddings and other celebrations, and caters for a variety of special diets, including gluten-free and low sugar. She also volunteers for Free Cakes for Kids (freecakesforkids.org.uk), an organisation that helps families who cannot provide one for their child's birthday.—*Rachel Stafler*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LOUISE VARGAS

Louise Vargas

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