

# Brownie Points

Lifelong “cakey” Viv Parry shares her recipe for sweet-toothed success

It's tempting to picture Exquisite Handmade Cakes' factory in Ilkley as a Willy Wonka-style set-up, with rivers of chocolate sauce and sofas in reception made of sponge then stuck together with lemon curd. Unfortunately, at least as far as the company's 30 staff are concerned, the reality is more mundane. Yet there's no doubting this West Yorkshire company is currently trading with a cherry on top.

“I'd say I'm a bit of a cakey,” laughs managing director Viv Parry (right), who was born in Lancashire but “drifted over the Pennines” and settled in Yorkshire. She trained as an accountant in Newcastle but had long harboured a desire to work in manufacturing. And there are few things more satisfying, she says, than manufacturing delicious cakes.

Her head for figures helped when launching her own business, but she admits that she's still on a steep learning curve. “There are new and different demands as you grow,” she says. “Managing finances gets more difficult. You think it should get easier but it doesn't.”

Nevertheless, her company has continued to blossom through the recession and there are plans afoot to increase the size of its premises in the near future. The secret to its success, Parry says, is listening to customers' feedback when coming up with new product lines. And, crucially, always trying to recreate that special home-baked taste.

Rather than being sold at major supermarkets, most of Exquisite's products enter the market through food distribution companies and end up at contract caterers and cafes – as well as right here on [Jet2.com](http://Jet2.com) flights. For a little taste of West Yorkshire wherever you are in the skies, don't miss out on our onboard selection of Exquisite Handmade Cakes (see p130).

