



‘I wanted to work out of my comfort zone’

Passionate distiller **Graeme Bowie** began his innings in the whisky industry by luck rather than through whisky knowledge. He was lucky enough to grow up in north Scotland, which was dotted with many distilleries in the vicinity around him. He has been a passionate sportsman since childhood and it was football which brought him in contact with distilleries and finally got a job there. So, it was his love for football that shaped his future.



After working 37 years in Scotland he came to India for a new adventure.

The happy Scott has too much on his plate and he is determined to make Piccadilly plant a shining example for all to see how a fine malt spirit is produced in India.

Born in Glasgow to a quantity surveyor father and nursery teacher mother, Graeme got the opportunity to play football for a semi-professional team called Keith FC, in the Scottish Highland League in 1984. Keith FC was the top club at the time and they were sponsored by Chivas Regal. “The Office Manager at Strathisla Distillery for Chivas Brothers at the time was Sandy Stables. He was also the Chairman of Keith FC, so as an incentive to get him to play for them he said that he could get me a job at Glen Grant Distillery, where I would be working in the warehouse,” Graeme disclosed.

“As it has turned out, my distilling career has lasted a lot longer than my football career,” he said, with a glint in his eyes.

Work Ethics

Some of his work ethics include listening to the workers. They know the distillery and how it works. “You are always learning,” he offered modestly.

One of his proudest moments was when Adrenarche Distillery began to produce their first spirit and according to him, “I played a major role in the creation of their whisky under some very challenging circumstances.” As for reaching Piccadilly in India, he said he was bored of the same old routine.

“As much as I enjoyed my time at Tomintoul Distillery, I would like to thank Robert Fleming for getting me back into the production side of the industry. The staff was great and the Hillman family was terrific owners but I needed something different in my working life,” he elaborated.

He wanted to do something out of his comfort zone. He saw an advertisement online, asking for CVs of people interested in working in the whisky industry in India. His wife knew he wanted to do something else so she asked him to follow it up. On Monday he sent off

his CV and by Friday morning at 6.00 am, he was being interviewed by Siddhartha Sharma.

“We discussed my work, my experiences, we talked about the role; what he was looking for and his dreams and vision of where he wanted Piccadilly Distillery in the future,” disclosed the distiller.

“I was so intrigued by his knowledge and passion for single malt whisky that when Mr. Sharma asked would I like to come and work for him in India, my answer was short and simple ‘Yes’, without even discussing it with wife, Astrid, or negotiating salary and such things.”

A New Adventure

“There was just something that excited me. This was not a normal move. I cannot think that too many people move from Scotland to India to work in the whisky industry. I went up to the bedroom and Astrid was awake. I said, ‘You had better start packing, we have to move.’ After about six weeks, I received my working visa and handed in my notice period of a month to Angus Dundee Distillers,” he conveyed.

On Saturday 5th June, he said goodbye to his extended family and friends and jetted off to their new adventure in India with Piccadilly.

He feels he has many people to thank for his 37-year-long and rich journey through whisky that has now taken him to India. “Astrid has taken a great interest in the

distilleries where I have taken her too. She always liked to get to know my colleagues; she would bake cakes for them and once cooked 30 bacon rolls for the guys constructing the distillery as the Chef at the hotel slept in for breakfast. She has sacrificed many things for me, her career, not seeing friends and most of all, missing spending priceless time with our daughter Katie and our two gorgeous grand daughters, Kara-Grace and Georgia,” expressed Graeme with genuine gratitude.

His next step in his new role is making improvements in production, cost savings, and efficiency. “I am here to ensure internationally proven best practices of whisky making and things are already looking good,” he asserted. 

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