

“Everything is chaotic, which is how I like it”

MY WEEKEND  
Gok Wan

The How To Look Good Naked star is back to host Bling - a show centred on jewellery and why it means so much to us. The 47-year-old lives in London's Covent Garden with his dog Dolly.



On a non-working weekend I usually wake up between six and seven, which is no different to any other day of the week. I have a Teasmade in my room, so I make a cup of tea and have it in bed while cuddling with Dolly. Once I've surfed social media, I'll have a shower with the radio on and head downstairs. Then it's out the house with Dolly and we'll go for breakfast. We go on dog and daddy breakfast



FIRST BRUSH WITH FAME Gok became a household name on how To Look Good Naked

dates where I'll get a full English and she'll have bacon and eggs. She sits up at the table opposite me, like we're on a date.

After Dolly is fed, watered and walked, I'll usually call someone to say, "Where are you? I'm in town, do you fancy a cup of tea or coffee?" Then we go and grab anything but a tea or coffee - it might be a mimosa or a glass of champagne, even though it's never much later than 11am!

Then, because there's always work to do on the weekend, even if it's a non-working one, I'll find my way back home and spend some time replying to emails and sorting bits out. By the time I've ticked that off my list it's time to walk the dog again.

Once Dolly's exercised, I'm on the phone to friends arranging lunch. It's not long before we're in a pub eating. The dog will have a roast dinner and we'll enjoy a few drinks and then head back to my place in Covent Garden to chill, chill, chill.

When the evening rolls round we'll get ourselves out and about, to a pub or restaurant or to play poker. It's normally quite chaotic and quite spur of the moment. I very rarely have cemented plans. We're all quite good at being spontaneous.

We live by schedules all week, so by the time it gets to the weekend it's the best way to be.



KEY ROLE Farming trainee Jet Burden tends to the hens



VITAL RESOURCE Jet collects some of the eggs



LEADERS Manager Sharon Rae and outdoor education officer Sam Gardiner. Right, Sharon

Welcome to the farm that raises funds for Cyrenians charity, gives young people life skills and sends food to the plates of top restaurants

BY HEATHER GREENAWAY

NESTLED in the rolling countryside of West Lothian, Humble Holdings is a farm like no other - one which has been built on love.

The Cyrenians charity, which is committed to combating the causes and effects of homelessness, has created the unique venture which combines the skills of expert horticulturists and the passion of volunteers.

That synergy at Kirknewton has this month seen them pick their 30,000th vegetable from the ground - a remarkable achievement which is keeping a vital supply of food to the places in Scotland where it's needed most.

The fruit and veg is placed in bags and routed into communities via Cyrenians' partner stores in Edinburgh and the Lothians and the farm's 300 resident free range chickens lay 220 eggs which are also put to good use.

All of the money made on the farm, which was set up in 1972, goes back into the charity to fund 41 projects across Scotland which tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness.

Sam Gardiner, 41, is the outside education officer and says the farm is making a world of difference to so many people on so many different levels.

He said: "The farm is an incredible place to be and an awesome place to work. There is a real buzz around the place as people work together to grow the fruit and vegetables and send them out for distribution.

"We grow seasonal produce as well as staples like carrots and potatoes and every single penny made through the sale of the food is pumped back into the charity and their work with the homeless.

"At the minute we've got a lot of winter salads, butternut squash, courgettes, leeks and apples on the go and lots of other herbs and more unusual produce growing in our fancy polytunnels. We also grow cut flowers."

Sam, who has worked at the



HARVEST Volunteer David Wilson picks beans. Pictures: Callum Moffat

“The chickens a great teaching aid as they have proved therapeutic to those who have suffered trauma”



NATURE'S LARDER Humble Farm produces an abundance of organic food, including eggs, onions, potatoes, asparagus, rhubarb and purple beans



# Field good factor

farm for just over a year, added: "Locals and Edinburgh folk cannot get enough of our veggie bags and orders are flying in all the time.

"We've got a gig with the Margiotta stores where people can order and collect our bags from there as well as other collection points throughout the Lothians and we also do deliveries.

"During the pandemic demand for homegrown organic food went through the roof and we were struggling to grow enough.

"We also send what we grow to homeless hostels and many Cyrenian projects who are helping to feed those most in need. Not a scrap of food is wasted.

"As well as making up batches of

food which can be frozen and used in the projects, the fruit and veg is also used by our cook school, which teaches vulnerable and homeless young people."

The farm has also become a favourite with high-end chefs looking for locally sourced, hard to come by ingredients.

Sam said: "We have all these micro businesses that stem out from the farm. "Chefs come to get bizarre things like fig leaves, cut flowers or weird and wonderful herbs that they use in a crazy sauce they are trying to pioneer."

"We grew these moori radishes for a Japanese street food place. Luckily for us Edinburgh is full of foodies wanting different local produce, especially our free range organic eggs.

"We got 300 Pentland Red hens in May. They've been laying 220 eggs a day, which are proving very popular. We even have our own stamp."

The Cyrenians charity was set up in 1968 to help homeless people in

Edinburgh by encouraging them to learn the skills to find employment and live independently.

Sam said: "The land at Kirknewton was bought in 1972. It had a house that needed doing up and there were people needing somewhere to live so they came, did up the house and started growing vegetables and the farm grew from there.

"The farm is eight acres and we have an army of volunteers who help us run it as well as paid staff like Andie Richards, our resident horticulturist, Adam Forrest the farm manager and myself.

"I'm look after the groups of young people from tough backgrounds who come to the farm. It's my job to engage them in learning land-based skills.

"I work with lots of young people from school leavers, school refusers and the travelling community to boys and girls from supported services and those struggling with their mental health."

He added: "I teach them all aspects of

working on the farm from the growing to the business end. The chickens have turned out to be one of the best teaching aids as they have proved to be therapeutic to those who have experienced trauma or have had difficult childhoods.

"Some of our many volunteers have been coming here for many years, supporting the young people and doing whatever needs done round the farm."

Farm community manager Sharon Rae, 46, has been working at the farm for 18 years and looks after eight homeless young people who live on the farm alongside peer residential volunteers.

She said: "These young people are all aged between 16 and 30 and come from various backgrounds. They all help out on the farm."

"It's a great way to gain skills, improve their mental health and socialise with



DEMAND Chefs love the produce from the polytunnel!

others. For various reasons these young people haven't been able to stay in their own homes so they have joined the farm community to work on the barriers in their life that are holding them back from living independently.

"For them to be part of the farm from seed to plate initiative is invaluable. They get to marvel at how the seed they

planted out in the farm has turned into the food they are eating round the table in the farm kitchen.

"It is the farm that love built and hopefully it will continue to make a huge difference to the lives of the homeless and vulnerable for years to come."