

Marketing Lessons From The Hospitality Industry

This is the episode where we identify a massive gap in the Royal Wedding arrangements PLUS we're joined by Laurel from [LaPerouse Bed & Breakfast in Lorne, Australia](#) who shares with us how she runs a successful Bed & Breakfast business whilst also building a string business community in her local township. This is gold for any small business owner looking to inject some love and passion in to their marketing efforts.

Tim: Lukey, Lukey, Lukey.

Luke: How are you Timbo?

Tim: Really good mate. On the eve of the Royal Wedding, going to air, it is exciting stuff.

Luke: Thought you were going to say "on the eve of our 50th show!!

Tim: For some that is more exciting than the wedding, but I think for most, I think the wedding takes the cake. And you look absolutely beautiful sitting there in your tiara.

Luke: Thank you Timbo.

Tim: I didn't know you had one.

Luke: Nice garter belt too.

Tim: Stop it. Hey, welcome back listeners to Small Business, Big Marketing, the show where we do our absolute darndest, Luke I'd say our darndest?

Luke: Yes.

Tim: To make marketing simple, exciting, exhilarating, high impact for the small business owner.

Luke: And affordable.

Tim: Oh yeah, affordable. We never come out with big, expensive ideas do we?

Luke: No.

Tim: You don't have to.

Luke: No, you don't have to in this day and age.



Tim: And welcome aboard to all Flying Soloists, our partners in crime over at flyingsolo.com.au.

Luke: That's right Timbo.

Tim: Who are there to represent those of us who work by ourselves.

Luke: Yeah, it's a place where us lonely small business people can go and commune with others online.

Tim: I don't know, I'm not lonely, I love it.

Luke: Yeah, I love it.

Tim: I spend enough time going back into corporate to see that we have a wonderful life Luke.

Luke: Yeah, I spend enough time in meetings to be happy that -

Tim: Can you just move your head to the left, your tiara is glinting.

Luke: Is it?

Tim: There's a particular diamante in your tiara that's just getting my eye.

Luke: Sorry.

Tim: That's alright. So Lukey, exciting stuff, episode 49. Today we have a fantastic guest – Laurel, Laurel.

Luke: Yes.

Tim: Which we're going to launch into in a short while, but Laurel owns a bed and breakfast in a seaside town. However, before we launch into Laurel -

Luke: Yes, Timbo?

Tim: We have got some things on our mind.

Luke: We sure do, I've got heaps on my mind actually.

Tim: Have you?

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: That's good. Because I've got a little bit on my mind but it's a little bit frivolous.

Luke: A bit frivolous?

Tim: Yes, well, you tell me what's on your mind and then we'll get into some frivolity.

Luke: The first thing is what's on my mind – and if I can announce properly – just how easy it is to get an idea, particularly in the digital age, to have an idea come to fruition. I'm in the process of building a classified system for one of my boating sites, boatsplus.com.au and there is a fantastic plugin for

WordPress that's actually a classified system that sits on top of WordPress. And our listeners, if you've been listening for a while, you probably realise that I'm a fairly big fan of WordPress and WordPress is basically a platform, it's one of the most widely used publishing platforms on the web. And if you think about WordPress I guess like a skeleton that you then hang on top of that themes that make it look nice and make it behave -

Tim: It's actually a way of managing your content on your website isn't it?

Luke: It is.

Tim: It's a content management system.

Luke: It's essentially a content management system, used to be pretty much purely a blogging engine but it's used for a lot more than that now and I was able to buy essentially a classified theme for about \$100 that then goes and sits on top of WordPress. I did need some customisation, so I went off to elance.com, Timbo, and for another couple of hundred bucks got some more customisation done, which should be finished in -

Tim: Do you know, this is really interesting. You raise a very good point. There's two parts to this. Well, there's three: all websites should be built on WordPress. Sweeping claim, I'm sure there's developers out there that are going to ring us and say "You don't know what you're talking about" -

Luke: You want to use Joomla, or you want to use -

Tim: "What are you talking about? I've got my own and it's really good".

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: But okay, I like to be specific for our listeners. So WordPress is good. Secondly, the fact that you can go and get something off the shelf and enhance your existing website without having to pay - I don't even know what the terms are - coders and software developers and hundreds, or if not thousands of dollars later. You've just picked something up off the shelf for \$100 and you've just added so much unbelievable value to your website.

Luke: And that's what I mean, so five years ago when I had a web development business, to spec out and have a developer - i.e. the guys that were working for me - to build that sort of system, it would be tens of thousands of dollars. And these days you can do something - as you say Timbo - buy it off the shelf, install it. Even if you get someone to do that you say "Okay, I want WordPress and I want this plugin installed and here's a little bit of things that need to be done". And look, you can get it done for under a grand these days.

Tim: The stepping stone, the hurdle, for the small business owner in what we're talking about is just actually finding, knowing that they then need to find a developer or a code monkey - or whatever they call them - to make that plugin work in your site.

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: And I don't know how you overcome that but it's about asking questions isn't it?

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: Because my question to you is okay, so there's so many plugins for WordPress it's amazing and what these plugins allow you to do, listeners, is just add so much functionality to your site. What are some other plugins Lukey – putting you on the spot here – that a small business owner who's running a WordPress website could add to their site today to just make all the difference?

Luke: It depends what sort of difference you want to make.

Tim: It does.

Luke: So there's certainly fantastic SEO plugins, there's -

Tim: Talk to me about SEO plugins.

Luke: There's Platinum SEO, there's All In One SEO. If you're using a theme called Thesis it has its own well-structured SEO, and that's on-site SEO so it makes sure that the pages are structured right and that you can put in the right heading titles and all that sort of stuff.

Tim: Just so listeners understand, like those SEO plugins – All In One SEO, that's free isn't it?

Luke: Yes it is.

Tim: Okay, so All In One SEO is a plugin that you can put on your WordPress site – and we've got it on a number of our sites. What it allows you to do is, it basically says "Here are the empty boxes that if you put information in Google will rank you higher". I'm being very simplistic here, but that's what that plugin is all about.

Luke: Yeah. There's a couple of others Timbo. There's Sexy Bookmarks which basically puts social media buttons down the bottom of all the posts and pages on your website, which means people can tweet about it or Facebook about it. One of the ones that we use on Small Business, Big Marketing is Facebook comments and that basically takes over from WordPress' normal comment system and puts in a Facebook comments system which is great, because then comments actually appear on people's profiles on Facebook with a link back to the individual article as well.

Tim: I think that one and the Twitter one, which is the ability for people for people to retweet whatever's on that page – those two are just no brainers and I think every small business, on most pages of their website, it just would be worth having a Facebook and a Twitter button. It just gives a short at viral, kind of, sharing, you know?

Luke: Absolutely. The Google sitemaps – look, there's plenty, I've actually written a blog post on my own personal website Timbo, lukemoulton.com, with all the ones that I use there so go and have a look.

Tim: Nice, well, I just think that's a bloody ripper and you're right, going back to your initial comment that the idea of having an idea these days and bringing it to life – particularly online – it's just not as hard anymore and the costs of entry are low.

Luke: Yeah. Barrier to entry has just come down so much it's amazing.

Tim: Well, I look forward to seeing that, classifieds Lukey, and I've got a boat you can put on it mate, so here we go.

Luke: Awesome, fantastic.

Tim: Alright.

Luke: The other one Timbo, actually this has been on my mind for quite a long time and that's PR agencies and their possible – now this is going to be a sweeping statement so hopefully I will upset a few people.

Tim: Hello to all you publicists.

Luke: And their lack of knowledge around SEO.

Tim: Oh my God.

Luke: So I believe that PR agencies are in a fantastic position to leverage the content that they're putting out for PR reasons better for SEO. And I actually did a workshop during the week with one of the PR agencies that deals with one of my clients, and I think it went down pretty well. So I didn't only talk about SEO.

Tim: Did you stir the hornet's nest Luke?

Luke: The response was reasonably good. I certainly tried not to tell them how to suck eggs.

Tim: They probably walked back to their car going "What was the guy talking about?"

Luke: No, I made it very simple. It was very simple and look, it can be really simple stuff. I did also add some suggestions how they can provide additional services to their clients as well Timbo, to essentially expand on their business.

Tim: Did they listen?

Luke: I don't know. I don't know, but only time will tell.

Tim: Well, that's interesting because I didn't know you were going to raise that. I ran a workshop last week which this company's PR agency came in for the first two hours and they reviewed a PR proposal that they had presented and had approved by the client about getting some exposure over the coming months for a particular part of this brand. And it was a good stock standard PR proposal that had them appearing on all the different shows, in front of all the different newspaper journalists – there was no

mention of online. No authority bloggers, you know “We should get in front of this blogger or that blogger” or “We should try and get some exposure on this website or that website” – none of it. None of it and, mind you, this product that I’m talking about is heavily involved online. So it was pretty extraordinary to ignore what we’d call authority blogs, i.e. a blog that is really representative of what’s going on in a particular industry and a real voice and opinion leader in that industry. You’ve just got to know that blogger. You’ve got to ring them up, you’ve got to email them, you’ve got to comment on their blogs, you’ve got to add value to their, but they’re contributing online. So very interesting Lukey. Now, Royal Wedding, Luke, your tiara has just dipped a bit mate, it’s covering one eye.

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: Now, I was having a think -

Luke: Just before you start Timbo, I’m not a big Royalist fan -

Tim: Oh, I’m not getting all Royal on you, it’s newsworthy.

Luke: I would say I’m a Republican.

Tim: Oh, here we go.

Luke: Go on.

Tim: Well, I’m a Monarchist, alright.

Luke: I can see you with a crown.

Tim: Yes. Sitting on the throne.

Luke: [laughs] Please.

Tim: Now, the Royal Wedding lacks not a lot, correct?

Luke: No, it’s probably one of the most publicised events in history.

Tim: Lots of publicity, probably don’t need a marketing manager or a publicist or anything to increase exposure or awareness.

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: Do you know what it’s missing?

Luke: What Timbo?

Tim: Sponsors.

Luke: [laughs] Sort of like half-time at -

Tim: No, all through. Yeah. I would like to see Kate and William walking down the aisle with branding on the back of the suit, maybe Kate some kind of signage on the tiara, all over the place. I just think there's opportunity lost here Luke, and I've just had a think about some of the potential sponsors that -

Luke: Have you got some suggestions Timbo?

Tim: I have.

Luke: I'm interested to hear.

Tim: Some of them are very lame.

Luke: Yeah [laughs]

Tim: But I just think massive gap in the marketplace here, massive opportunity. It's too late now, it's 12 hours away, so for all those sponsors that I'm going to mention that could have potentially involved themselves in this event can't do it.

Luke: No, it is too late.

Tim: But I think Rip Curl could have been involved Luke.

Luke: How Timbo, how?

Tim: Sponsoring the Royal wave.

Luke: [laughs]

Tim: You like that?

Luke: Yeah, good one. Yeah, nice.

Tim: Okay, so maybe just -

Luke: Back of the hand or the palms or -

Tim: A little tattoo on the back of Kate's hand as she does that, you know that wave?

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: So "Rip Curl" and every now and then – listeners can't see – but you know that kind of cool sign that the kids do these days?

Luke: It's been done for a while, Tim, that's the hang 10 sign, I think it originated in Hawaii, yeah.

Tim: Okay, there you go. Lukey, I just think -

Luke: Royal wave, good one. Next?

Tim: Colgate. Just a smile, I'd just like to see some kind of permanent tattooing on both Kate's molars and also front – what do they call it? I don't know what teeth are called.

Luke: Incisors?

Tim: Incisors? Just a little -

Luke: Maybe there's a big teeth whitening affiliate out there who could do that?

Tim: That's right. And this can be put in post-production too, like maybe for the documentary. So have you got any Lukey, have you got any -

Luke: I'm waiting for the honeymoon to me.

Tim: Honeymoon, okay. Well, honeymoon, I mean there are some massive opportunities here.

Luke: Definitely the honeymoon, and the sponsor for the honeymoon should be Ansell -

Tim: Ansell, that is disgusting.

Luke: Because we don't need any more oil.

Tim: Well, that ain't gonna happen and I reckon those two will be on the nest at the honeymoon, on the honeymoon. Royal child, nine months, guaranteed.

Luke: You reckon?

Tim: It's just what they do.

Luke: And who's going to sponsor the birth? [laughs]

Tim: Correct. I'm not even going there. No, I'm not going there. For our female listeners, you're just out of control Luke.

Luke: Right.

Tim: Captain Snooze.

Luke: For the honeymoon?

Tim: The queen size bed. Oh, we're still on honeymoon.

Luke: Are we?

Tim: Actually, well, I think Captain Snooze could sponsor the queen size bed, although I think they'd have a king. I don't know. But queen's nice. It could be a king size bed. Back to honeymoon, I just think a region should sponsor the whole wedding and say "This is where they're going". I think like Gold Coast – so they could do like Wet 'n' Wild, Dreamworld, SeaWorld, White Water World.

Luke: Nice romantic honeymoon for Kate, yeah.

Tim: Yeah, lots of slippery slides, or just really like turning it up, amping it up, is it Ibiza?

Luke: Ibiza, yeah, in Greece?

Tim: I could see Kate kind of running in – is it Greece or Spain?

Luke: Yeah, I think.

Tim: You know those kind of teenage frat shows they have on late night TV?

Luke: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah, so like “Royal Wedding brought to you by Ibiza” and you see Kate running through the waves kind of Bay Patrol style.

Luke: Nice.

Tim: Now, also the Navy, because I think William is a bit of a naval boy isn't he, or Air Force?

Luke: Air Force.

Tim: Maybe like have their honeymoon in a submarine. So “Royal Wedding brought to you by Royal Navy” and the whole honeymoon takes place under water.

Luke: I'm pretty sure Richard Branson is actually getting up a submarine tourism business Timbo, so there you go. Perfect.

Tim: No doubt. Go down with Richard Branson, Kate and William.

Luke: [laughs] You're terrible.

Tim: Now Lukey, you know what really worries me? The royal carriage. I just think the tyres – well, they're not even tyres, they're wheels, they must be hard and I think Michelin should take a role in -

Luke: Or Bridgestone.

Tim: Or Bridgestone, you know that big, big gold carriage? It must be a rough ride. Maybe it is maybe like a Pedder's air suspension type set up they could get involved with but I think no-one's going to see that. And I think just some nice big Michelin 18” on the side of the carriage.

Luke: Just some phat rims, and by phat I mean P-H-A-T.

Tim: And I've got another one.

Luke: Yes.

Tim: Did you see when they got engaged all the flashes that went off in that room? It was like, there's this particular footage of when they announced their engagement and the flashes that went off were extraordinary. So I just think Ray Ban have a role there, I'd like to see Kate and William wandering down the aisle with a pair of Wayfarers on. Just kind of – what's that Tom Cruise film? Risky Business style.

Luke: Risky Business?

Tim: Yeah.

Luke: Just in their socks?

Tim: Yeah, Kate in her white socks and Will just kind of cruising down with boxers, but it's the Wayfarers.

Luke: [sings]

Tim: Yeah, I don't want to take anything away from just the Wayfarers going down the aisle.

Luke: Okay, good one.

Tim: That's all I've got but I think, clearly, clearly, there is a big gap in the marketplace. It's been missed but maybe if Lizzie or Phil or any of those Royals are listening and there is another – there'll be another wedding.

Luke: There will.

Tim: Seek sponsorship early. That's all I've got to say Lukey.

Luke: Good advice Timbo, for the Royal Family.

Tim: Thank you.

Luke: Maybe they'll pick this up and hire you for the next wedding -

Tim: I won't have the capacity to take that kind of work on Luke. Now, anything else on your mind before we get stuck into our guest?

Luke: No, well, there's always plenty on my mind Timbo, but better leave some time for our guest today.

Tim: Alright, well, this taffeta is getting a little bit hot and steamy underneath, so we must get stuck into our guest so we can reorganise things. Now, here we go Lukey. I went down to Lorne a few weeks ago to run a conference.

Luke: Wonderful, lovely seaside town in Victoria, Australia.

Tim: Probably if not the best seaside town in Victoria, Australia – right up there, one, two or three.

Luke: Playground of the rich and famous.

Tim: Correct. And it's impressive, it's come a long, long way since I was last there.

Luke: It's on a par with Portsea for the west side.

Tim: I think it's probably surpassed it.

Luke: Oooh.

Tim: Hello to all your Portsea-siders but, you know, I do believe it may well have passed it. So I stayed in this fantastic bed and breakfast, right, had a great experience – the whole thing was just lovely. Everything, the bedding, the views, the whole fit out. Went downstairs that morning to have my breakfast, the croissant, the coffee, the fresh juice, was just lovely, met the owner Laurel. Get talking to Laurel and Laurel is an ex-nurse, right? And I think she said she was a Doctor of Philosophy – I might be wrong and she may well correct me on that – but she's all of a sudden – her and her partner – have gone and bought this bed and breakfast. And she's talking to me about it and I'm listening to her and going "Laurel, you are a fantastic marketer – you don't know it. You are just a bloody good marketer" you know, so I said "I've got to go and do my workshop, I'm going to come back and do an interview with you". And I didn't have you, you weren't there, I had to make all these decisions by myself and she agreed to it and hence here is an interview with Laurel who owns and operates La Perouse Bed and Breakfast down in Lorne, Australia. And she gives some insights into firstly running the bed and breakfast Luke, but secondly how she's then gone and worked with the community to build up some love and attention around the Lorne region as well.

So, I started off by asking Laurel how she got involved in the bed and breakfast industry?

Laurel: I guess the reason we moved to Lorne is a couple of years ago – maybe five years ago – my father got sick and died and Sue and I stopped work to look after him and then he died. And it really, really changes your life, like he was a doctor, he retired and died and I just went "You know what? We're not going to do this anymore, we need to do something really cheery". Now, Sue and I have travelled and travelled so we know, kind of, what we expect and I stopped travelling I guess after September 11 because I just didn't want to fly all the time. I used to work for the book trade and I had to go to book fairs, so we came back to Massing, dad got sick. So then we moved here – you don't have to record all this -

Tim: Oh, yes we do!!

Laurel: This is how it happened, you can cut all this but it just makes it. We had a beach house that we bought down here and we couldn't find a cleaner. We couldn't find anyone who would clean it to the standard that we wanted it cleaned so we started cleaning it, coming down, and then the two boys that live next door to us at the beach house they said "Girls, why don't you stay?" and they look at property every week and they found this. And they said "You can make beds and be nice to people" and I said "You know what, I'd love it" and Sue of course is saying "Where is the hospital? Where is the hospital?".

Tim: She's a nurse and she needs work?

Laurel: Yeah, so because there's Lorne hospital. So anyway, when we bought the house it was attached to the house next door, which was called Stanmore, and they always called this part, which was the

accommodation, La Perouse. I didn't know what La Perouse was originally, but in fact La Perouse was a French explorer that came kind of the same time as Cook. So when you go to Sydney you have La Perouse and Botany Bay. Anyway, I kind of thought it was romantic and it sort of went with the whole "I can't really cook" so I did a French breakfast with croissants – I wanted really good quality, and they do good quality. They never scrimp on quality. Everything's beautiful there.

Tim: Who's this?

Laurel: The French.

Tim: The French, yeah, okay.

Laurel: Yeah, they don't worry about productivity, they still pull their shutters down, like, their economy is really struggling but they still pull their shutters down and come and sit down and have lunch. They really live and that kind of was my lesson because dad died, we wanted to stop and just be. So we didn't actually move here for the money, we moved here for the joy and, I don't know.

Tim: And that shows. I stayed here last night, as you know, and as soon as I walked in I thought "You know what? This reeks of love and quality". So you come to work each day with that in mind do you?

Laurel: I do. I do. I get up early, I watch the sunrise, I pick up the newspapers on my way here. Yeah, and I just, I don't know, I just want people to enjoy and feel the love of Lorne because here it is on our own doorstep, this magnificent place with the ocean and the sea. That's the other thing, the water here is very hard so I chose the products really carefully, the French people go, "Oh the water Laurel, it's beautiful" and it's actually terrible. But when they put that in the water it makes it really soft.

Tim: One of the things Laurel I get a sense of is that you spend less time being myopic and looking inside your business and more time looking at the bigger picture, which is the township in which La Perouse is in, which is called Lorne.

Laurel: Yeah.

Tim: We have a lot of overseas listeners so we have to talk globally.

Laurel: Okay.

Tim: But, is that right? You don't spend a lot of time naval gazing?

Laurel: Well, I guess because we came here for the joy, initially I thought we'd be closed all winter, we'd just do weekends. So it wasn't a money-making exercise, it was "We've come for the happiness". But Lorne is, because my background isn't – I used to work in intensive care – I used to work in a collegial environment where you help everybody else. So patients are sick and their family are vulnerable, so your job is to make them happy and make them comfortable. So when I went into small business it was a bit of a shock to me that businesses worked as individual businesses trying to promote their own thing. We've spent a long time trying to encourage other businesses in Lorne to go "You know what, if

we're all successful then everybody's busy", it all flows on. But it takes a long time to actually change that mindset.

Tim: But have you made a concerted effort to take that mindset of intensive care and bring it to La Perouse, or is that just all you know and you've obviously identified a gap in business where people aren't doing that, aren't bringing the joy and the love and the care and just going "You know what, this is how we're going to deliver our product and if it works it works and if it doesn't"?

Laurel: Well, I have to still pay the mortgage, so there's no – yeah, I still worry about that. Initially, I suppose, when we started I thought how will we pay this \$2million? But I guess because our situation was like a crisis, you know, you leave Melbourne because it's a disaster – I didn't care. It wasn't until two years later when we're fantastic, everything is really successful and you just go "You know what? We need insurance for if we burn down because this is fantastic but how will I pay for it?".

Tim: Did you ever put a plan together or did you literally go "You know what, got to get out of Melbourne, Lorne seems like a good option, let's just follow where it takes us"?

Laurel: We had the beach house so we kept coming here on weekends. I've got a really conservative banker and I've got a really way-out-there accountant, so between the two of them I went to them and I said "We've got this idea, we buy this guest house and we make something really luxury because there's nothing like that in Lorne". And the banker said "Oh, I don't think this is very good, I don't know about this, millions of dollars borrowing" -

Tim: Is he Indian?

Laurel: No, he's not.

Tim: You put on an Indian accent then.

Laurel: No, he's not. But our accountant said "You know what, sometimes people have a great idea, but the people don't have the right personality. Sometimes they've got a shit idea but their personality is fabulous." So he says "You two are terrific and it's a great idea" he says "I'll back you". And because we've had the same accountant for 20 years he was able to go into the bank and say "You know what, they'll be able to service \$2million". And when I look back now, what was I thinking? That's why the economy actually probably died because they let people borrow that sort of money.

[phone rings]

Laurel: Excuse me.

Tim: Is that the cuckoo clock? [laughs] All part of the old world charm isn't it?

Laurel: It's good.

Tim: It is good. Okay, so good accountant, good banker. Did you do forecasting or figure out how you were going to market this baby or package it up?

Laurel: No. Well, because I did work in the publishing industry I had a small bit of experience running a small business. But I don't know – we put it on the internet, I can develop websites, I used to do that as a past life as well.

Tim: You've done a few things?

Laurel: Yeah.

Tim: So you brought that skill to the party. So early days – because when we got talking this morning clearly your occupancy is high and it's not as if you have to go out there and actively promote yourself using all the clever channels open to us.

Laurel: It sort of was.

Tim: Yes, it was.

Laurel: It was from day one. It was day one we started -

Tim: Okay, where's the magic, where's the silver bullet?

Laurel: We started 1st of December, so that is the peak season, you're going into summer, so I think that helped. It's good to – not that we thought about that. In fact, we had jobs until Christmas Eve which I kept doing too, so I kept going back to Melbourne even though we'd started because I was committed to finishing what I'd done in Melbourne. I'm an ethical person. But, in retrospect, that was kind of a nightmare, it was very difficult because we were so busy so quickly. I don't know, I guess people in the summer time it's all booked out in advance and here came something new that was available.

Tim: And was the product ready or did you open the doors before you were ready?

Laurel: No, we didn't. We took over on the 1st December and we spent a month really doing new linen, new beds, new everything. We plumbed in coffee because we're from Melbourne, that's the first thing, that was my leading role with that coffee. And my daughter works at MoVida you know the two hat restaurant? So she taught me the 101 coffee and Sasha from Pizza By The Slice gave me 102, and I think it probably took about three months. And I wasn't happy until Italians came and said "You know what, your coffee is fabulous" that I thought okay, I'm onto it. So we have kind of a, I don't know, it's a niche product I suppose.

Tim: So did you ever embark on a marketing campaign of great website, bit of search engine optimisation, social media, ads – none of that?

Laurel: We did ads.

Tim: How'd they go? I bet I could guess.

Laurel: Tell me.

Tim: Flopped?

Laurel: We did ads in strategic spots, so we would do an ad in like the Surf Coast information booklet because people are travelling along the Great Ocean Road and they'll pick that up. I initially thought "You know what, we just need a website and we need a really good website" which I did before we started, because it took about five months to negotiate this property. So I had time to set that all up before we were actually opening the door, but my Sue, my partner in the business, she said "I like to read, do you have anything on paper?" because some people don't go to the website, they actually like to read and carry it with them in the car. So we did things like the RACV magazine, and people used to walk in and they'd say "We got you out of the book". So we were in the bed and breakfast book, so strategic things, so I suppose I did spend a few thousand dollars initially. But I have to say it's more, it's word of mouth, and it's good word as mouth as well as bad, because we've had bad reviews on Trip Advisor which initially I wanted to just close. But we went down the Great Ocean Road for a few days and we came back I asked my guests and I said "You know, how did you find us?" – I always usually ask them how did you find us – "We read that really bad review on you and we thought you must be fabulous, someone's trying to sabotage" and I went "What?". So that kind of gave me renewed enthusiasm, I thought it doesn't matter, you're never going to please all the people all the time. Even though you think you can, you can't because everybody like something different so you just have to accept – mind you, we've probably had three people in our four years.

Tim: Yeah, and you focus all your energies on those three terrible reviews and yet think about all the great stuff that people are saying.

Laurel: Yeah.

Tim: So word of mouth is clearly huge for you?

Laurel: It is.

Tim: Do you do anything beyond just providing an amazingly good product to engender that word of mouth?

Laurel: I use Twitter and Facebook, so I've got a Facebook page for La Perouse. But I only have like 56 people on there. I've got my website I can do a newsletter, so, you know, when there's something to tell people about Lorne, like we've got whales calving. One year we had whales there for five months and there was an albino whale.

Tim: Cool. That's a drawcard.

Laurel: It is, people really love stuff like that. They don't always want to hear you've got a special for two nights, they're really interested in the people. Like for instance, last year there were 22 babies in Lorne, so I used to tell people about that. And my Sue who works at the hospital, she's a midwife, she's making little cardigans for the kids, the new babies.

Tim: You hit it on the head when you talked about, like people don't want to be pushed, we don't want to be sold to. If you can engage them with "Hey, there's an albino whale calving out the front" or "22 babies were born in Lorne" and just get them emotionally engaged in the community then -

Laurel: Well, the community is interesting.

Tim: And every now and then sell.

Laurel: Yeah, but we have a lot of characters, there's a lot of characters in Lorne, really interesting characters. Like the fellow who sells fish at the Co-Op, he's a poet. So you'll go down there and there'll be poetry on the blackboard.

Tim: Beautiful.

Laurel: You know, it's really -

Tim: So this is interesting, so this is where we got talking this morning, this is where I thought "Gosh, got to have a chat to you Laurel and get you on the show", which is you've got a great product here in La Perouse. Great occupancy, everything is going well, you've now got involved in the greater community in which you live, which is called Lorne. What have you done there? You told a great story about sitting in one of the restaurants and how you're starting to use Four Square and Twitter. Tell us that.

Laurel: Well, Sasha and I – Sasha is the restaurant owner of Ba Ba Lu Ba and we do lot of projects together, packages and things. He's been really supportive. I must mention I've made friends with people who were like-minded because that helps with your business as well. And we decided that we should get on Twitter, so we were sitting at the bar and I'm Twittering him saying "I'm at the bar" and he's saying "I'm the barman" and it was just ridiculous.

Tim: Sitting next to each other?

Laurel: Yeah, but it was like when chat first came on and you were chatting and then you'd ring and you'd go "Did you get that chat?" and you'd think, you know what, the telephone is infinitely more superior but we still use chat, we use the telephone, we use Twitter. Anyway, somebody else was following us on Twitter and they said "There's crayfish in the paella" and I said "Sasha, there's someone here at the restaurant who's using Twitter who can see the crayfish". And of course, the restaurant's full, we don't know who it is so we're sitting there thinking we're so excited that we're actually onto something that people are into. Anyway, it happened to be the Herald Sun food writer.

Tim: Herald Sun being Melbourne's largest distributed newspaper.

Laurel: And not only that, she was actually staying in one of my houses -

Tim: Get out of here.

Laurel: I look after 20 beach houses for all my nurse friends that are married to doctors. I look after the doctors' houses basically because they get ripped off usually. And -

Tim: Hello to all you agents out there. [laughs]

Laurel: Yes, it sort of has to remain anonymous. However, she introduced herself to Sasha as she was leaving and he said "Oh, there's Laurel sitting at the bar, that's who you rented the house from" and

anyway, we had this on-going relationship. She said she came to Lorne because she read a bad review saying Lorne was soulless and Lorne was this. Now, she stayed in the beach house and I told her where to have dinner, where she could find koalas, where there were kookaburras and they had just had the most magnificent time with her two kids. She then came back in summer, tweeted all summer about what she was eating and – I don't know, it's a very powerful tool, it really is.

Tim: And that's all off you simply sitting next to Sasha and sending off a couple of tweets and seeing what this thing's about.

Laurel: Yeah.

Tim: We interviewed a guy on a show maybe 18 months ago now who did a similar thing, although it wasn't using social media, but he did a little letterbox drop in his local suburb Yarraville in Melbourne about his new business. And off the back of that he inadvertently dropped one of his pamphlets into the letterbox of the editor of the local newspaper, who then wrote an article on his business which was then picked up by the Herald Sun. Long story short, every Current Affairs show and news show in Australia ended up running a little segment on this guy's business as a result of a little letterbox drop.

Laurel: Fantastic.

Tim: Yeah. Now, that reminds me – we'll get back to how you're embedding yourself into the Lorne community – but tell me about what happened when you got La Perouse on national TV? How'd that come about?

Laurel: I'm not quite sure how it came about. We'd been here four months, I'm driving along the Great Ocean Road and the producer from Channel 9 calls and says that she wants to put us on Postcards, and I have to say I nearly crashed the car, because I'm a nurse and I went "Oh no, oh yes, that's fantastic". And she didn't really give me enough notice because they said they wanted to come, I think it was a week on the Tuesday and I found out later that they were going to do Kudos, which is a gallery here, fantastic little cottages and they decided that was a show in itself and that they just wanted – because they were coming to film Ba Ba Lu making the paella, and we did some stuff together, that we would be perfect. And we were new so it was like this mad frenzy because they said they wanted all the rooms empty and of course we were full. We had French people here and, you know, you don't know who people are. They might be -

Tim: Isn't that great, they're "Yeah, we're going to come down in a week and, by the way, we want all the rooms empty".

Laurel: So they could film it, and Suzy Wilks was doing the show and she needed a room to have her hair done and all that sort of thing. And you know, they wanted to film our café – because we've got a café that we do breakfast – and I thought "Like, people could be having affairs" -

Tim: You mean where we're sitting now?

Laurel: Yes, and you don't know who the people are. They could be anyone, you need their permission and I was stressing going "Oh my God, this is all a nightmare". And then you're on a mad cleaning frenzy to make sure it's all perfect. Anyway, they arrived five o'clock in the morning and we had gay men staying here, we had a French guy and his daughter who'd been travelling the whole coast looking at lighthouses and you know what – they loved it. They curled Sue's hair, did make-up on me, they all got up and made up all the rooms. It was all fantastic and then we were booked out for about five months a year and it was a nightmare, because all our regular guests were ringing me saying "Laurel, my room is booked out for five months" and we have regulars that come every month. And so that was a bit naïve of me that I didn't really understand the power of television.

Tim: So what could you have done, because you either – would you have said no?

Laurel: No, no, no. Because they ran it again – they pick their favourite shows and they did a summer series and they gave me notice, they said "We're going to run it on Valentine's Day" and I said "Thank you for the head's up" so I blocked strategically some weekends for my guests, the rooms that I know they have. So they were ringing up going "Oh, it's booked out?" and I'm like "No, I've got you all set". So yes, that was – because you have to look after people who come to you all the time, which I didn't understand either when we first came because all our guests were French when we first started. Literally.

Tim: Why?

Laurel: I guess they meet down the road and they just get sick of dry toast and they say "You know what, La Perouse, you can have proper croissants", yeah. So we got, I don't know, people chat in B&Bs along the coast so they, it's word of mouth I suppose. But now we have a lot more locals, and after the downturn in the economy really local, like Sorrento and Colac and quite local. Because people still want to go away but they think "Hmmm, we'll just go somewhere closer".

Tim: Now you talked about – let's get back just to the broader community – you talked about how you package things up with other businesses. I like that idea, tell us about that.

Laurel: Yeah. Well, we do lots of different things but we do like dinner. So you stay two nights and you have dinner. There's a lovely woman in the town who does massage, and I've had a few people that have come to La Perouse and most of my guests prefer this woman, so with her we did massages so you can – she also is a very spiritual, creative person and she does tarot readings. So sometimes we have things like that, so you can have girls' packages where they come down and like all the bridesmaids will come before the wedding and they'll send the bride off for a tarot reading. I think people nowadays are kind of lazy and tired and they just want to open it up and go "You know what, that's the perfect weekend – massage, dinner" -

Tim: Good insight there nursery.

Laurel: Yeah.

Tim: You're not a nurse, you're a marketer from way-back.

Laurel: No, I'm not, I'm a nurse.

Tim: Do you call those packages anything, like Romance Pack or Pamper Pack?

Laurel: Yeah, all that sort of thing, yeah. Twin Getaway, and I try and change them regularly just to create interest. We had a helicopter guest recently, that was pretty exciting.

Tim: What's a helicopter guest?

Laurel: Well, he flew down in a helicopter.

Tim: Sweet.

Laurel: Yeah, I loved it. And I thought "Oh my God, he could be a rock star". I didn't know who they were and he wanted to be picked up at St George River, so now I've got that on my website. And he was so wonderful, he goes "You can use the pictures of the helicopter", yeah. But things like that, it's just you can fly down here in 20 minutes for a night. He had five children under seven and he'd organised baby-sitting for his wife.

Tim: I'd get a helicopter too if I had five children.

Laurel: Yeah, he wanted 20 red roses – so men are kind of romantic, they do want a lot of, you know, and they'll call and organise it all but if it's all set out really easy for them and they can go "Yeah" -

Tim: Tick a box.

Laurel: Tick the box, so all my extra services are, you can add them or they are in a package, so my website is very transparent. The whole town can see what I do and it's fine. So we have more than 50% overseas guests and they don't carry a beach towel but this is the beach, so they can go tick, beach towel. So things like that I think – I just know things that were really helpful for me when I was travelling and you get to a place and you go "Great, beach towels", you know.

Tim: Yeah. What have you learnt about people? You've learnt a lot about people as a nurse I imagine, in fact probably more than you would as a business owner, but what have you learnt about people now that you run a B&B?

Laurel: Well, I think it's a little bit of a shock to me that people are nasty to you, because I've always worked in an environment where people are very vulnerable.

Tim: They rely on you.

Laurel: Yeah, so you sort of, when people kind of write nasty things about you – which has only happened once but was one too many as far as I was concerned – I just was sort of shocked that people, you know, the fact that someone would sabotage another business. I just, I don't understand that.

Tim: My advice, for what it's worth, there a) it's the minority of the time – you've talked about one or three times when someone's done something yucky. But the other thing is it's their thing, it's not yours.

Laurel: True.

Tim: It's kind of like they've obviously got something – and you still want to be respectful. I think of the fact that they're abusing you or providing critical feedback that's not constructive but it's like, I take comfort in knowing that they've got something going on and it's not you. Otherwise you could get really upset with yourself.

Laurel: Yeah, well I guess I'm tougher now.

Tim: Yeah.

Laurel: But I don't know, the price is really relevant too. You have to make sure that the price is not too low so people abuse it and if it's too high then their expectations -

Tim: I was going to ask you about price. Because pricing is hard.

Laurel: Very hard.

Tim: How did you go about arriving at those magical numbers?

Laurel: I guess from my experience from when we've travelled, because when I look up things to travel and stay I think "Must be dodgy because it's less than this". If it's too high I think "Oh, it's too pretentious". So yeah, it took a bit of juggling. I suppose it took about three months before I was happy and -

Tim: Experimenting?

Laurel: Yeah, experimenting. And we pretty well don't change our price much. We just have those two weeks peak in summer where we make it a little bit higher, and really a little bit higher. Some of the places in seaside towns quadruple, and it doesn't work for me. I want people who come for one night or two nights in summer to go "You know what, this is great" and come back in winter. So I try and keep the price affordable but a special occasion sort of a thing. Yeah, so the price seems to work, yeah. And sometimes I've had people who have come in and said "What's your best price?" and I say "I can make it higher".

Tim: [laughs] I love that.

Laurel: I love that too.

Tim: What do they say?

Laurel: They run away. Yeah.

Tim: And you had a fellow only this morning was it, or the other night, saying "Can you do it a lot cheaper"? Didn't he want it up for \$140 or something you were saying?

Laurel: Yeah, he went into another B&B and he didn't like that one, but that was their price and I just said "Sorry".

Tim: Good on you, standing strong.

Laurel: Yeah, you can't do that. And I don't want a person sitting next to this person at breakfast sitting next to this person, I want them to know they've paid the same, it's all very transparent. Yeah, that's what we do. You don't go to Mercedes do you and say "Oh, we'll pay actually half that".

Tim: It would be nice but no, you don't.

Laurel: You don't.

Tim: Tell me, so what are you doing now? You and some other business owners have come together and created this concept called Love Lorne.

Laurel: We have.

Tim: So what is it?

Laurel: Love Lorne, well, I thought that if we get an outside person who didn't have any conflict of interest to promote Lorne as a destination as opposed to me. I can do, I can employ someone and they can do La Perouse but we're already successful and fantastic but I want my guests to go down the street and all the shops to be open and all the restaurants to be open. And we basically want the town to be sustainable, so we want people to move to Lorne and stay in Lorne, bring their children up in the school and live here. It has a – I think the whole view of Lorne is that it's sort of wealthy and it's okay. But it's hard when you live in the seaside when people come and go, like 50,000 people come in summer and then 20 come. It's hard to maintain that.

Tim: Seasonality – serious seasonality.

Laurel: Yeah. So Sasha from Ba Ba Lu approached the business traders and myself and a few others with the concept of Love Lorne and we got 100 people out on the darkest, coldest night of winter last year and they were mothers, they were business owners, they were retired people. And everyone went "Hey, this is cool" so -

Tim: And what did you do on that dark night? Did you say we want everyone to come together -

Laurel: We do, we want everyone to come together and we want to promote Lorne as a destination. And we had engaged a woman, a marketing woman, to come and talk about what she could do, and she'd already presented to us as the business traders. And for me, because I'm from Melbourne, she talked about she'd done Yarra Valley. She does marketing -

Tim: Regions.

Laurel: Regions, and all everything she talked about – she talked about Map Coffee, all the things, the places that I used to, the coffee I used to drink, the places I used to go, she had created that. And I thought, you know what, she's perfect, she's the perfect person. Her grandfather had a house in Lorne.

Tim: What do you mean Map Coffee? That's a brand of coffee but what's the -

Laurel: Like, it just came up, it was something she marketed and it's a coffee I used to drink.

Tim: Oh, okay, so she'd been involved in a coffee brand that you really liked and you thought, okay, yeah.

Laurel: Yeah, she'd done -

Tim: So what's Love Lorne gone and done? You got a website, which is lovelorne.com.

Laurel: Lovelorne.com.au, yeah.

Tim: So what is Love Lorne? What happens if I go to the website? Do I just see a whole lot of ads to different businesses?

Laurel: Well, that's a very good question. Initially it was set up just before summer as a way to collect data from people who came to Lorne in the summer and we ran a competition and people had to say why do you love Lorne. And we had boxes, we put boxes in every business that was involved – because people have to pay to be involved in the Love Lorne campaign, because that's how you raise \$100,000 so you can pay people to -

Tim: Is that what you raised?

Laurel: Yeah. You need a lot of money to do a big project like that, so you need a lot of people. So we've got 60 businesses I think that are involved. It took a while to get everyone on-board because people are sceptical and some people own their own land, there's different kind of – you can imagine.

Tim: Yeah

Laurel: And yeah, so you go to that website and you saw five characters from Lorne. So the Mayor, the fisherman – oh, sorry, I should go back a step. We actually got the town together and we put out a survey and it was like who do you think is the most interesting person, and so the whole town gave feedback about who should be on the website. There's quite a bit -

Tim: Those are all bookings coming through I hope?

Laurel: Yeah, they are.

Tim: Is that an app called Boxcar?

Laurel: No, it's just my email. Well, it's a text.

Tim: The fellow who I co-host with who will clearly hear this interview, he sells various things online and when he makes a sale he uses this app and it kind of makes a sound.

Laurel: So you know, which is a ching-ching -

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Laurel: I love it. Well, when people book on my website it gives me an SMS immediately because I need to know, because I could be surfing on the beach, I could be anywhere and I need to know that the room is booked out because we actually over-booked five times I'm embarrassed to say when we first started, because I was completely hopeless. And you make friends really quickly with other accommodation providers, which was good.

Tim: Okay, so back to Love Lorne.

Laurel: Yeah, so Love Lorne -

Tim: Raised lots of money and now you've got 60 businesses involved.

Laurel: So then we engaged someone to do a brand and we've got the Love Lorne brand, and we had stickers made and T-shirts and caps and we set up Facebook and Twitter – We Love Lorne. And we put the characters -

Tim: It is .com by the way, not .au.

Laurel: Okay, very good. Good spotting. Lovelorne.com. And the idea eventually is that the website – because they've just been round and photographed all the businesses that are involved and the new website will come up quite soon and it will show our town from the business perspective.

Tim: How will you know if it's working? It sounds to me like a bit of a directory of Lorne businesses coming together to make sure that the offer – which is Lorne – is a good one, so that when people stay at La Perouse they can go down the street and the restaurant's open and the masseurs are all geared up, and all these different service offerings and product offerings are ready to go. How are you going to know if it works after spending all this money, money, money, money?

Laurel: Yes, that's a good point isn't it? It's a good point. We've also engaged a PR woman as well who writes press releases for us every two weeks and sends an offer with a special about what we're doing in Lorne. So it will be luxury then you'll be hearing dinner -

Tim: Off the website, so again register on the website, you've got a list there and you are emailing?

Laurel: That's all coming. It'll have lovelorne.com underneath our sign to Lorne, so as you drive into Lorne you'll see that website address and it'll also have a calendar of events so you'll know what's happening in Lorne. See, 75% of the homes here are beach houses that people use on weekends and come down in school holidays, and those people are part of our community as well and we love them because they spend money in restaurants and they buy things and they're really art collectors and they like to be involved in what's going on in our community too. So it's a good question. They do reports our marketing people, they do reports.

Tim: Well, it's one of those things, I mean, often we go about our marketing and think "Oh my gosh, I wonder whether it's working or not, how am I going to measure that?" and some things aren't, some of that, like Love Lorne is what I would call an emotional campaigning. And without hard offers – and probably one idea you could do is that the businesses that are involved in Love Lorne make exclusive offers through that Love Lorne channel which aren't available anywhere else. That way you know, or there might be a number, if there's a phone number attached to it then it's an exclusive number that simply – but that would be hard because who would answer the phone, there's 60 businesses?

Laurel: That's true. We've had journalists come down and do visits and stay and eat and experience the things that we love to do in Lorne, like the bush and the surfing lessons and things like that. There's one about to come out in The Age, Sydney Morning Herald. I guess when we first started this project my idea of what would be successful is that I would actually read about Lorne and the people of Lorne in the press. That was what my aim was. Of course, everyone else's aim was to make more money and for it to be busier. Some were to have people come and live here. So we all had different reasons for why we thought we should do it but I guess, I'm paying someone to write about Lorne because we don't have time because we're too busy working and I don't know. I just, it's a very good question.

Tim: Surely the outcome of Love Lorne is that more people visit Lorne, and if some choose to stay a night or others choose to buy a house or others choose to use it as a place to buy art – it doesn't really matter does it? Love Lorne outcome is get them here.

Laurel: Yeah. Instead of just driving past.

Tim: You couldn't drive past Lorne. I drove in yesterday – and I haven't been down here for about five years, because I'm a bit of an East Coast boy -

Laurel: Yeah? We can change that.

Tim: Well, you've started.

Laurel: You can share. My guests, they went off on the ferry today to Sorrento, so.

Tim: Yeah, I could have driven them round, I'm about to do the drive. But it would be very hard not to stop in Lorne these days, just the whole vibe just driving in, as I said to you this morning, it's a really well kept place now, really wide footpaths. I love the fact that there's this semi-permanent furniture out there that makes you want to stay and stop and sit. There's just some really cool cafes and shops, like it's almost like a high street in a sense, a high street by the beach.

Laurel: That's good, we're cool.

Tim: And I'm comparing it with Sorrento which is, for our overseas listeners or people who aren't in Victoria, Sorrento is probably the probably the version on the other side of the bay isn't it?

Laurel: Yes.

Tim: That we compare Lorne to, and Lorne, it just feels like it's racing ahead at the moment which is -

Laurel: That's exciting.

Tim: Yeah, it is. So the Love Lorne thing, we talk about measuring it and maybe it'll be that it's the emotional outcome from people loving Lorne and having special offers, but probably a really good measure is that it's bringing together the businesses within Lorne. That's a good outcome.

Laurel: Well, for me that's been the number one thing. Moving from the city to the country, for me, you know people behave better in a small place.

Tim: Do they?

Laurel: And I love that. Like, all my friends are doctors or nurses because I've grown up in that monoculture, and all of a sudden I have friends who are cleaners and hoteliers and fishermen and it's really interesting. People stop, take the time to say "Hello". I love it, it's wonderful. It's really, really, really wonderful.

Tim: You've really created something that's just, I mean, it's not work is it? It's like -

Laurel: It's life, it's being and it's like what the French say "Be in the day" and that's -

Tim: Oh my God, how beautiful is that?

Laurel: That's good. I know, they're a bit excessive, they shut their shops for three hours and have lunch. We tried to introduce that after our little sojourn to Paris last year, didn't go too well in the hospital.

Tim: No.

Laurel: No but, I don't know.

Tim: That's fantastic. Yeah, it just has – you can feel it coming together basically. You can feel the whole vibe.

Laurel: There's all these things at the Fig Tree, which is the community centre, we go and do French classes on Thursday nights. Sue's pretty good and French but we're trying to – we've met all these locals and it's fantastic, and they go off and they do the Tour de France.

Tim: Would you ever move back to town?

Laurel: Never.

Tim: Never.

Laurel: Never.

Tim: And would it be fair to say – and it's a personal question – but you've followed your heart, you're doing something you love, you didn't put the big financial plan together – you had accountant and bankers come together and tick the right boxes – but you're now making good money and money that

you thought “My God, here I am, I’ve just followed my dream, I’m doing what feels right as a human being and a business owner and the money will come”. We hear that all the time – is it true?

Laurel: Basically, if I can pay that mortgage and eat out and go surfing, life is good and two weeks in Paris once a week.

Tim: Oh and the two weeks in Paris, you tagged that on at the end.

Laurel: Well, for the first three years we didn’t do anything but now we are, and I like to do that because you learn things you see. You go and see other places, we stayed in places similar size, similar owners and you learn things, like beach towels. They had them. Little things, and one place we stayed in in France last year, the guy was really good croissants so I went to classes and now I make them in the winter.

Tim: Do you?

Laurel: Yeah, in the Summer time we get La Madrais to supply them because we’re so flat out and it’s hot making them. But I like to do things like that, and one of the locals the other day gave me a whole thing of quinces, I made quince jam and poached quinces – because we’re about to run out of berries. Because I like to use organic fruit too. Yeah, so that’s -

Tim: I think you’re very clever having that ice cream machine at the front door. I came home last night from my dinner and walked in that front door and there is a little fridge – I might have to take a photo on it and put it on our show notes for the website. Just \$5 for a little tub of the yummiest ice cream in the world –

Laurel: It’s Swiss ice cream.

Tim: Ooh, it’s nice. Are you going to do any other ways – because you’ve got three rooms here so you can only ever -

Laurel: And the cottage.

Tim: Oh, you’ve got the cottage?

Laurel: We have a honeymoon suite. Yeah.

Tim: There you go, the La Perouse Penthouse.

Laurel: That’s right.

Tim: So you’ve got four rooms, that’s the maximum number you can have each night?

Laurel: Well, I had some structural engineers stay with me and they said “Laurel make an attic room” and when we were in Paris I said to Sue “Let’s get a spiral staircase” and we’ll send it back and we could have an emergency room for when you get double booked – which actually we don’t any more. So we possibly could have five.

Tim: Any other additional revenue streams that you think you'd add?

Laurel: We've just added little mini bars and someone made a joke about it, because I put a little picture on Facebook and they said "Where's the alcohol?" because so far it's like San Pellegrinos and different tonic water and things like that. But I'd like to use some local producers for some, maybe beers, different beers because you go to a place sometimes and you shut the door and you went yeah, I always have a beer, and a bottle of Bollinger champagne. People like to celebrate. We've had like 38 engagements.

Tim: Wow.

Laurel: Yeah, that's the ones I know about where they tell me they want me to set up lights, tea lights or whatever.

Tim: You got a funny story you can finish on?

Laurel: Funny story?

Tim: Have I put you on the spot here? Funny, weird, humorous, you're not going to believe this – no names.

Laurel: I suppose one day I went up to the room and there were handcuffs left behind and I didn't -

Tim: I was wondering where they went.

Laurel: I didn't know whether to tell Sue or not, because she wouldn't like that really. Anyway, I packed them up with all the other things that people leave behind. Anyway, they were policeman and they rang and came back for them and I'm like no way.

Tim: So just to be clear there, they were left behind. Were they left behind because he forgot to put them on his belt when he'd taken his belt off or was he actually using them as a prop?

Laurel: I'm not sure. I didn't ask, I just smiled and said "There we are".

Tim: Love it. Are you going to write a book?

Laurel: Well, we thought we might write a book the first year at La Perouse and we did take photos and I took a lot of notes.

Tim: You could call it "Where's my handcuffs?".

Laurel: No. There's lots of things I want to do still. Like we had the restrautner from Boire, which is to drink, Boire French restaurant in Melbourne. She came and stayed here at Christmas time two years ago with her whole family and she had a little 2CV and I said "You know what, I want a little van, like a little Citroen with La Perouse and we can drive along the Great Ocean Road, La Perouse, Lorne" but our banker and our accountant is like "No, when you're empty you can have your little van but so far no".

Tim: Laurel, thank you so much for being on Small Business, Big Marketing and if people want to check out La Perouse, can you spell it for them?

Laurel: It's laperouselawn.com.au. So it's L-A-P-E-R-O-U-S-E-L-O-R-N-E.com.au.

Tim: We'll put it in the show notes too so people -

Laurel: It's a bit cumbersome isn't it?

Tim: It is, it is one to get your mouth around but that's okay, I'm not sure that many people would type in that. Might be interesting to go and register a domain like lorneaccomodation.com.au – I'm guessing it's gone – and redirect it to your site. But your word of mouth is such that less people are going to be typing La Perouse into Google and really are going to be going and finding out about it from other people or doing what I did, which was do a search on Lorne accommodation.

Laurel: Is that how you found me? Just Google?

Tim: Google.

Laurel: I have greenlorne as well, like green the colour and Lorne the place – greenlorne.com.au.

Tim: Love your work Laurel, it's been a pleasure.

There you go Lukey, that was Laurel from La Perouse.

Luke: Beautiful story Timbo, it sounds like she's certainly on top of her marketing.

Tim: Just there's a lot of love.

Luke: Yes, absolutely.

Tim: A lot of love all over the place.

Luke: Good customer service, good product.

Tim: Yeah, so now I'm sure – we'll put a link to Laurel's website in our show notes listeners – laperouselorne.com.au – and I reckon Lukey, if they said, if they roll upright and said "We heard your interview on the Small Business Big Marketing show" Laurel would give them something a little special, maybe an extra croissant.

Luke: I'm sure Laurel will look after them.

Tim: She will look after them. So there you go, now Lukey – next show.

Luke: Number 50, big number 50, Timbo.

Tim: 5-0, absolutely. Listeners – we'd love to hear you on our show, we're getting some good feedback on our Facebook, if you go to facebook.com/smallbusinessbigmarketing. We've got a string happening

there of people leaving comments about what their favourite show has been or favourite episode and why. If you want to record something listeners, tell us what your business does and maybe how, if in any way, you have benefitted from our show, from one of our guests, how you've gone and actioned what you've learnt from the show over the last 50 episodes. We'd love to hear from you, we'll put you on our show -

Luke: Sure would.

Tim: Nice way to get a little bit of free publicity Lucas?

Luke: Indeed, we love that.

Tim: Alright mate, well, that is all for episode 49. Until next time.

Luke: Thanks for listening guys, we'll catch you later.

Tim: Love your work.

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