

## Siobhan Hamilton on how Guinness is Building a Global Brand with a Local Heartbeat.

*An interview with Siobhan Hamilton, Global Commercial Director Guinness, Diageo on the new drinking occasion, shaping a global brand, and the implications of a founder who signed a 9,000 year lease. Melissa Lane Porter reports here.*

According to Siobhan Hamilton, a new drinking occasion is defined in part by where consumers socialise, what they expect, and how they make decisions. We discussed ritual and repertoire, and the clash between a consumers need for personalisation and need for the habitual. “As a consumer, I want something personal to me, but at the same time I like the ritual, and that’s fascinating because these two concepts don’t sit naturally together. So how does this story play out?” asks Hamilton.

Siobhan has an understanding of consumers and a respect for culture that gives her unique insight into the people who make up the current drinking occasion, whether they are in Latin America, Asia, Europe or Africa.

“I love the breadth of it; that it’s global. I love seeing how similar people are across the world and how completely different and rich each culture is. And I’m completely privileged because of this reach” said Hamilton.

According to Siobhan, culture has always been central to how Guinness has built their brand. “For example, Guinness is so integrated into Nigerian culture that it’s not even thought of there as Irish in Nigeria. (Guinness is in fact, the national beer of Nigeria.) “So it’s this whole concept of how do you build a global brand with a local heartbeat- and I find that really exciting. “



### Arthur Guinness: A Forward Thinking Founder

Looking back into the limited records available on Guinness founder Arthur Guinness, no one could say he wasn’t a visionary. In 1759 he signed a 9,000 year lease at an annual rent of £45 for the St. James Gate Brewery in Dublin. “Can you imagine signing a 9,000 year lease in a modern company today, or how many different teams would be involved in even a 9 year lease?” Siobhan asked. He signed 9,000.”

The vision of the brand is embedded in their philosophy and decision making. “When we get a bit flummoxed, we say, what would Arthur do? And Guinness is the type of brand that gives you the privilege to make unique decisions.”

Hamilton has been asked what Guinness will do with the brewery at the end of the lease. “We’re about 260 years into it and there is no project team working on what happens when we finish (which is in 10,759 AD). It always makes me smile.”

Siobhan Hamilton will be giving the opening keynote at the Beer Strategies Roundtable Forum on 30<sup>th</sup> June. It’s an event that brings together world leading brewers to identify key drivers of growth, innovation and customer engagement in the beer industry.

Interested in attending? There are still a few remaining places and you can [register here](#).

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