



# Old reliable

Seán Creedon finds the third-generation Ford Focus is as good as its predecessor's...

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**Drive**

## Bosses admit to poor hiring choices

Three out of every four employers get some of their recruitment decisions wrong, according to the findings of a new survey by HR consultants Rebur.com. A massive 74% of bosses answered 'Yes' when asked if they ever felt regretful about hiring a member of staff. Only 4% answered 'No'. The biggest issue (63%) was that new workers tended to underperform in their role, while one in five of the managers polled felt the staff member had a bad attitude. The advice to companies from Rebur.com's co-managing director, Kirsty Binges, is to ensure recruitment processes are "robust" so that firms get the right people in.



## Greenroots initiative looking for start-ups

The Macroom E Enterprise Centre is once again looking out for start-up businesses that might benefit from taking part in its free Greenshoots programme. The course helps to provide skills, facilities and support that are necessary to ensure new businesses reaches their full potential and continue to expand.

Entrepreneurs that have been in operation for less than five years and who wish to diversify, grow and explore new markets or even look at exporting their goods or services overseas should log on to greenshoots.ie or contact Catherine Costello (ccostello@macroom-e.com) for more details.

Lucy Hyland of Food for Living, Conor O'Donoghue of Newport Geographic and Catherine Costello, Greenshoots Programme Manager at the launch of this year's Greenshoots programme, take advantage of someone else's 'rubbish'. The service is backed by the EPA as well as both of Cork's Councils and Enterprise Boards, and is free of charge.

## Businesses struggling to pay rates

One in every three small and medium-sized businesses in Ireland will not be able to pay their rates this year, according to a new survey by ISME. Just over 40% of companies polled said that rates were posing a threat to their very survival, with retail (at 65%) the sector facing the biggest difficulties. A massive 73% of busi-

**40%** of companies said rates were posing a threat to their survival

nesses agreed that the current rates system is unfair and ISME chief executive Mark Field has called for changes at Local Government level in order to avoid further job losses. He added: "Rates have a disproportionate effect on small and medium enterprises as, unlike other taxes, they must be paid whether the business is profitable or not."



A recent Bord Bia survey showed that only 20% of gluten-free products in Ireland are actually bought by coeliacs, with the vast majority of customers following a gluten-free diet by choice. It's a finding that bodes well for the future of Heron Foods and Elizabeth is also excited by future plans to work with Joan Healy of Ballingearry-based Katie's Cakes.

"Up until now if we've wanted something new, I've been the one to go into the kitchen and make it. Joan, however, is interested in re-

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