



Entrepreneur
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Sweet Dreams

This Cold Stone Creamery franchisee lives the good life, serving up ice cream in paradise.

By Devlin Smith

How's this for a March weather forecast: highs in the mid 80s, lows in the mid 70s? Sounds like perfect weather for lounging by the ocean, or eating ice cream. Brian and Felicity Curin get their fill of both. For nearly two years, the Curins, both 28, have been living in paradise ... operating a Cold Stone Creamery franchise on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Brian worked at Cold Stone's Scottsdale, Arizona, headquarters as head of marketing before deciding to switch from the corporate side to franchising. Opening their franchise and becoming area developers in the Caribbean was an easy decision for the Curins. Why? Simply because "it's the Caribbean," Brian says. "It's this island paradise; warm, beautiful weather all year round, and ice cream just fits."

Brian and Felicity co-own and operate their store as well as oversee six franchisees in their area, but since their twin daughters were born 10 months ago, Felicity has been playing a smaller role in day-to-day operations. The Curins start their day at 6 when their daughters wake up. After the changing and feeding, it's time for Brian to get to work.

Around 6:30 a.m., Brian begins his workday by checking e-mails from Cold Stone's headquarters, keeping up with the latest products and promotions and keeping track of important information to pass on to his franchisees. Then Brian sets up his to-do list, tracking which franchisees he'll visit and determining whether there are any prospective franchisees or sites he needs to check out.

The first stop of the day is the Curins' St. Thomas store, where Brian will make the ice cream for the day and begin baking brownies, waffle cones and waffle bowls, as well as handling administrative duties. "It's really overseeing the day-to-day operations as well as making the ice cream," Brian says. "We go in there and make the ice cream fresh in the morning, so it's ready for that day." The store opens at 10, and Brian stays for about two hours to make sure everything is running smoothly and his employees and customers are happy.

The afternoons are dedicated to Brian's duties as an area developer, keeping all his franchisees up to date on what's going on at Cold Stone and making sure their stores are successful. He'll take a seaplane to Puerto Rico to visit his franchisees there or take a ferry to nearby St. John to scope out locations for newly awarded franchises. "The biggest responsibility I have is to help support my franchisees and try to help them become more successful with the store they own and operate,"

Brian says. "A lot of that really is communication, making sure the lines of communications are open, visiting stores and reviewing how their store is running, helping them with local marketing."

It's back to the St. Thomas store at the end of the day before Brian returns home, a five-minute drive from the franchise, to have dinner with his family and then call it a night. "At that point, I'm pretty much exhausted. I'm thinking about everything we need to do the next day or the next couple of days," Brian says.

While Brian's Caribbean life isn't exactly filled with lazy days in the sun, he says it's hard to classify his work in the islands as actual work for two reasons. "One, because of the place we live in, and two, because of the job we have," he says. "We're selling the world's ultimate ice cream experience. It's a lot of fun, and the people we deal with are so much fun. Taking trips over to Puerto Rico via the seaplane or taking a boat to one of the nearby islands to look for possible store locations--that's a great time. I actually combine what I'm doing for work with pleasure, and I get to enjoy the beauty of the islands all year round." Sounds like the perfect mix.