



Q&A with Natasha Smith

Natasha Smith is a partner at Meridian. A qualified accountant and a chartered tax adviser, she has over 20 years' experience providing tax advice to high-net-worth individuals and businesses.

How did you come to join Meridian?

Having spent several years working in large organisations, I wanted to return to a smaller firm where everyone knows and communicates effectively, and teams blend with each other. I was excited by Meridian's unique proposition of providing legal and tax private client advice.

What are the biggest changes you've seen in the sector in the last two years?

The move to working remotely – originally enforced but now by choice. We have seen the advantages and disadvantages it brings and, as a firm, have opted for both office based and home working with continuation of the flexible working arrangements we had in place pre-pandemic. We find this works well and mirrors the way many of our clients are working.

You're a keen traveller; what's your most memorable trip?

Tokyo for England's Rugby World Cup final in 2020 is my most memorable in recent years. I was fascinated by Japanese culture and behaviours. It's very different to the UK. For a bustling city, it was refreshing to see that no one was in a rush to be anywhere.

I enjoy the challenge and opportunity to use different languages; to make communication more interesting and diverse. And authentic food. In a Seoul food market, I bought the same food that the locals had for lunch; a mung bean pancake served in a paper cup – delicious and memorable.

Have you ever had your resilience tested when travelling?

Travelling can be exciting but daunting. In 2004, after 14 hours on a bus from Yangshuo in China to Macau, I was

beginning to wonder if I was headed in the right direction. The bus stopped - with no obvious sign of a border crossing - so I asked a taxi driver to take me to the border where he duly dropped me off outside a shopping centre. This taught me never to judge a book by its cover, stay strong and go with your instincts. Turns out the top floors of the shopping centre housed the border post!

Where is the one place in the world that you want to visit the most?

Following an exciting seven-day trip on the Trans-Siberian 18 years ago, I'd like to see Uzbekistan by train next. Train travel is a fantastic way to enjoy the heritage and beauty of a country at a slow and steady pace.

What has given you the greatest satisfaction in your career?

I can't pick one thing. My work is incredibly interesting; tax law is always changing, and no two client scenarios are the same. There is always something new to research and learn, which makes for a very satisfying career.

If you could choose anyone, who would be your mentor?

Sir David Attenborough. For his perseverance in bringing so much of the natural world to our screens and his enthusiasm and knowledge for his subject is inspiring. I'd love to join him on one of his travelling adventures!

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