

PRESS CUTTING

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Weekend getaway: A castle in Clare with a €20 million refurbishment



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Dromoland Castle in Co Clare is a special place. Sat beside an ancient lake, with history that sees Brian Boru, High Kings and chiefs of Ireland mixed with Viscounts, Presidents and royalty. From the moment I arrived, as the castle emerged from the forest and manicured lawns, I knew that I had underestimated the place.

Dromoland sits smack bang between two of Ireland's most well-known luxury hotels. But what becomes clear during my stay is that this destination rivals any in Ireland for luxury, service and class.

The mark of a hotel that stands above the rest is the people. In Dromoland I feel welcome no ask is too big. Everybody from the bar staff to the stable hands are incredibly welcoming and kind.

Dromoland has just seen a €20 million refurbishment which preserved and updated the 16th century hotel. The spa, dining and lounge areas have all been transformed with the most up to date fixtures and fittings.

On my visit I experience afternoon tea, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Each meal takes place in the formal dining room and the variety of Irish produce on offer is exceptional. What stands out however, is the cosy bar area we visit after dinner. With the feel of a private members club you won't want to leave this special hidey-hole with its fabulous cocktails and charming bar staff.

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Over the two days I try only a few of the vast quantity of activities that Dromoland has on offer. I spend a leisurely hour in the spa having a full body massage; where the warm, cocoon-like atmosphere sends me into a sleepy, happy haze. Later in the afternoon I get up close and personal with Dromoland's falcons and meet a very friendly owl called Mr.Pickles.

The following morning I experience a magical horse ride through the 450-acre grounds. We traverse through an ancient forest where the temperature drops among the moss covered trees. Back at the stables we meet the other horses, the stable hands and the friendly castle dogs.

With 97 rooms the accommodation on offer at Dromoland ranges from majestic to modest, but each will leave you feeling rested and refreshed.

Dromoland Castle is located at Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare, Ireland. The hotel can be contacted on 061 368 144 or online at www.dromoland.ie. Reservations can be made through the hotel or online.

Dominique was a guest of Dromoland Castle