

DINING AT THE CASTLE

No matter how you dine, when you dine, or where you dine, creative Irish cuisine – underpinned by impeccable service – is at the heart of everything we do at Dromoland Castle. This is Irish country living at its very best.



Earl of Thomond Restaurant

Dromoland Castle's flagship restaurant, the Earl of Thomond, is celebrated in culinary circles for its panache, its elegance, its innovation. Delightfully relaxed, a meal here will be a highlight of your stay with us. Executive Head Chef David McCann marries classical techniques with the most outstanding Irish produce from sea and land with heavenly results. Prepare to be dazzled by exquisite local flavours, imaginative wine pairings, impeccable service and a dash of Dromoland magic. Offering an authentic taste of Ireland surrounded by Venetian silk, sparkling chandeliers and sweeping views of the estate, there are many restaurants in Ireland, but nowhere quite like The Earl of Thomond.



The Figtree Restaurant

Bright and sunny in summer, comfy and cosy in winter, The Fig Tree Restaurant in the Golf & Country Club is always buzzing. Lively and welcoming, you'll find golfers, locals and hotel guests relaxing, chatting and analysing their games over delicious food and drinks. From sandwiches to steaks and salads, fish and chips to chowder, our delicious menu offers big-flavoured crowd-pleasers using outstanding Irish ingredients. Relaxed and buzzy, The Fig Tree is the ideal spot for a light lunch, post-golf snack or casual dinner. No matter what the weather, expect a warm welcome.



Mrs White's Afternoon Tea

A long-standing tradition at Dromoland Castle, we aim to impress with this fun and indulgent ritual. Named for a long-standing member of our staff, Mrs White's Afternoon Tea, is a feast fit for royalty. You'll enjoy the prettiest selection of treats: scrumptious finger sandwiches, warm scones with clotted cream and homemade jams, delicate pastries, our signature tea brack and the sweetest confections. Of course, our specially selected loose-leaf teas from around the world are served in sparkling silver teapots, alongside the prettiest china. An unmissable five-star indulgence we know you'll love!



The Gallery

One of the most beloved spots in the Castle, the impressive Gallery captures the essence of Dromoland's magic. Sink into a deep fire-side sofa or cosy armchair and settle in for a morning's reading, replenished by coffee and scones or a light lunch. Relax here after a day's activities with a casual evening meal, afternoon tea or cocktail and a snack. Surrounded by beautiful antiques, hunting mounts, ancestral portraits and the comfiest of furnishings, don't be surprised if you linger longer than you intended!

THE SPA AT DROMOLAND



A visit to The Spa at Dromoland Castle is like stopping time. The ultimate indulgence for the weary traveller, our tranquil sanctuary offers intimate and serene escapism within 16th century castle walls. Away from the stresses of modern life, our team of skilled therapists invite you to surrender to the pleasures of our soothing and luxurious treatments.

Offering pampering and relaxation, you'll find hands-on treatments delivered with expertise and care. Each of our carefully selected offerings uses Elemis products designed to relax, revitalise and restore your body and spirit. With six treatment rooms, two dedicated manicure and pedicure rooms and an Outdoor Jacuzzi, we invite you to recharge, recover and rest in pure tranquillity.

Spend time with us in our subterranean sanctuary and you'll drift away afterwards, renewed, relaxed and ready for anything.

HISTORY



DROMOLAND
CASTLE

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DROMOLAND CASTLE & COUNTRY ESTATE

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LEGEND™

Preferred
HOTELS & RESORTS



1002-1014 Brian Boru ruled Ireland as High King from his throne in Killaloe.



1014 Donough O'Brien, a son of Brian Boru, controlled Dromoland when it was a defensive stronghold. It was similar in structure to Bunratty Castle, which was also an O'Brien stronghold at that time. For the next 900 years a branch of the O'Brien's lived and ruled from Dromoland Castle.



1543 The chief of the Clan O'Brien, Murrough, 57th King of Thomond was forced to surrender his royalty to King Henry VII, thus becoming the Baron of Inchiquin and First Earl of Thomond. Records show that the Castle was rebuilt during this period.



1650 Sir Donough O'Brien moved the most powerful branch of the O'Briens to Dromoland in the late 17th Century. He was an astute man and managed to avoid declaring for either King James II or King William. He was at that time reputed to be the richest man in Ireland.

1651 Conor O'Brien of Lemanagh Castle was killed in battle by the Cromwellian army. His widow Marie Rua or Red Mary O'Brien agreed with General Ireton as a mark of good faith to marry an officer in the Cromwellian army in order to save the family estate. She married Cornet John Cooper thus preserving the Estates for her eldest son Sir Donough O'Brien.



1700-1730 The second castle/house at Dromoland was built; it was more residential in appearance with a design of the Queen Anne period. The Queen Anne Court, the charming quadrangle of 29 guestrooms, is a century older than the rest of today's Castle. It was rebuilt inside and redecorated in 1963 when the castle was redesigned as a hotel.



1730 Sir Edward O'Brien, the 2nd Baronet, was revered as a famous racehorse owner and trainer. He built the Turret on the hill opposite the entrance to Dromoland Estate, from where he would observe his horses' race. He once gambled the estate on a horse race; mercifully, Sean Buis won the race and saved the estate. Sean Buis is buried under the Temple, 100 yards from the old entrance to the Castle.



1800-1836 The present main building of Dromoland Castle, with its high Gothic-styled grey stone walls, was rebuilt and redesigned by the Pain brothers, famous architects of that period. The Castle was built by the then Lord of Dromoland, Sir Edward O'Brien, 4th Baronet, at great expense. The cost of cutting and hauling its stone from a nearby quarry on the Dromoland Estate alone was more than 80,000, a huge amount in Georgian times.



1803-1864 Dromoland Castle was the birthplace and boyhood home of William Smith O'Brien, M.P. Despite his aristocratic background, Smith O'Brien fought militantly for the rights of oppressed Irish Catholic peasant farmers and led the Young Irelanders rebellion against the British authorities in 1848. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, later exiled instead to Tasmania for his role in the revolt. He returned to Ireland in 1856; there is a statue of him in O'Connell Street, Dublin. He died in 1864.



1880-1921 The wealth of the Barons of Inchiquin dwindled after a series of Land Acts started in the 1880's. During this time, landlords were compelled to sell their tenanted farmlands, thus the Inchiquins lost their main source of income. They still considered themselves fortunate as their castle had survived the troubled times of Ireland's revolutionary war against Britain. The homes of many landlords in Ireland were left in ruins during the Irish Republican Army's war against the British forces in 1920 and 1922.



1921 The IRA leaders in Dublin marked Dromoland Castle for destruction. However, the sabotage orders were reversed at the last minute at the urgent request of local IRA leaders in County Clare, who argued that the Inchiquin Lords had been fair and benevolent in dealing with their tenant farmers. Sir Lucius O'Brien, the 13th Baron of Inchiquin (brother of Sir William Smith O'Brien), was remembered respectfully by the people of County Clare for his relief work in the famine years of 1840's.



1922-1940 Although the family's good reputation saved the castle during the revolution, the later loss of income after the forced sale of the tenant farms made the castle and the 2,000+ acre estate increasingly difficult for the Inchiquins to keep. After the death of the 15th Baron of Inchiquin in 1929, Dromoland was supported mainly by the personal wealth of his widow, Lady Ethel Inchiquin, an heiress, whose portrait, painted by Herbert Draper, hangs near the staircase in the Castle's hall.



1927 Dromoland Castle, Lord Inchiquin's historic seat in Newmarket-on-Fergus, County Clare, was one of the few big houses to escape destruction during what they call 'The Troubles' in Ireland. This was lucky, because it is one of the show places in the South. Lord Inchiquin is a Senator of the Irish Free State and was elected in 1921. The Hon. Donough O'Brien is his son and heir, and Mrs Donough O'Brien was the Hon. Anne Thesiger, and is a daughter to Lord Chelmsford, a former Viceroy of India. The Hon. Griselda O'Brien is a daughter of Lord and Lady Lord Inchiquin and is with her cousin, Lady Katherine Phipps, Lord and Lady Normanby's elder daughter.



1940-1962 After Lady Ethel's death, her eldest son, Sir Donough O'Brien, the 16th Baron of Inchiquin and his wife, Lady Anne, daughter of Viscount Chelmsford, a Viceroy of India, managed to maintain Dromoland Castle as a traditional ancestral home for more than twenty years. Lord Inchiquin tried to make the estate self-supporting as a dairy farm, but by 1948 was so financially hard pressed that he began to take in tourists as paying guests.



1962 Lord Inchiquin sold the Castle, along with some 330 acres of surrounding land, and the hunting and fishing rights to Mr. Bernard McDonough, an American industrialist, whose grandparents were born in Ireland. Conor O'Brien, the 18th Baron, and his family live in Thomond House and continue to farm and run part of the estate as a sporting and leisure estate. The pedigree of the Dromoland O'Briens is kept in a vault at Lloyds in London and is 36 feet in length.



1962 The Castle underwent major renovations to transform the ancestral home into a luxury hotel. When the castle was officially reopened as a Resort Hotel, visitors who remembered it from the days of the Inchiquins marvelled at the preservation of its stately, warm and cheerful baronial country house atmosphere. The public rooms on the main floor of the castle look very much the same now as when Lord Inchiquin's family lived there, although the Lord's octagonal shaped study, under the round tower, is now a pleasant cocktail bar, and his library is now part of the dining room.



1987 A consortium of mainly Irish American investors purchased the castle and estate. Through their continued investment and management, the castle has enjoyed a worldwide reputation for excellence and is regarded as one of the great resorts in Europe.