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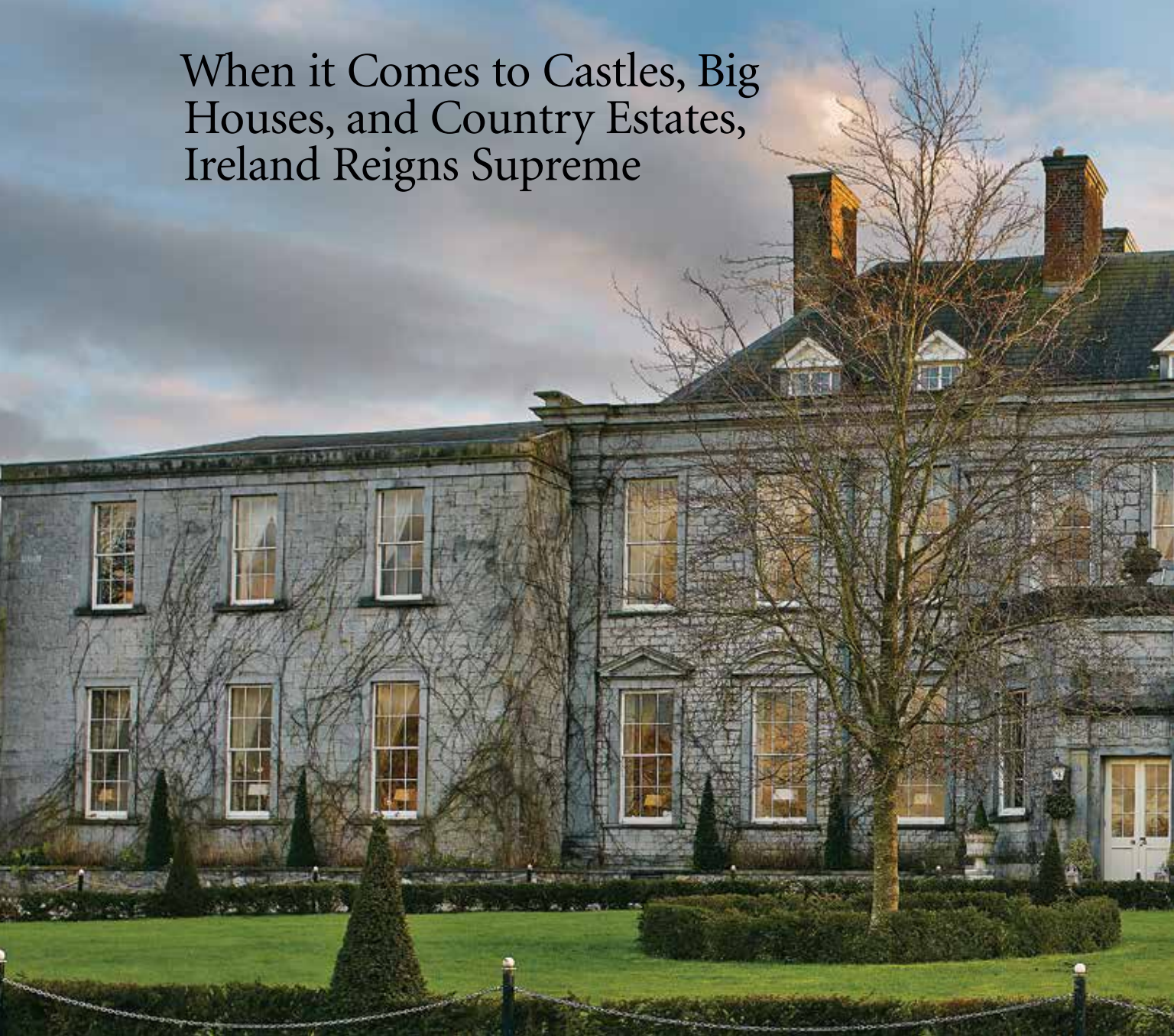
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CASTLES THAT KEEP

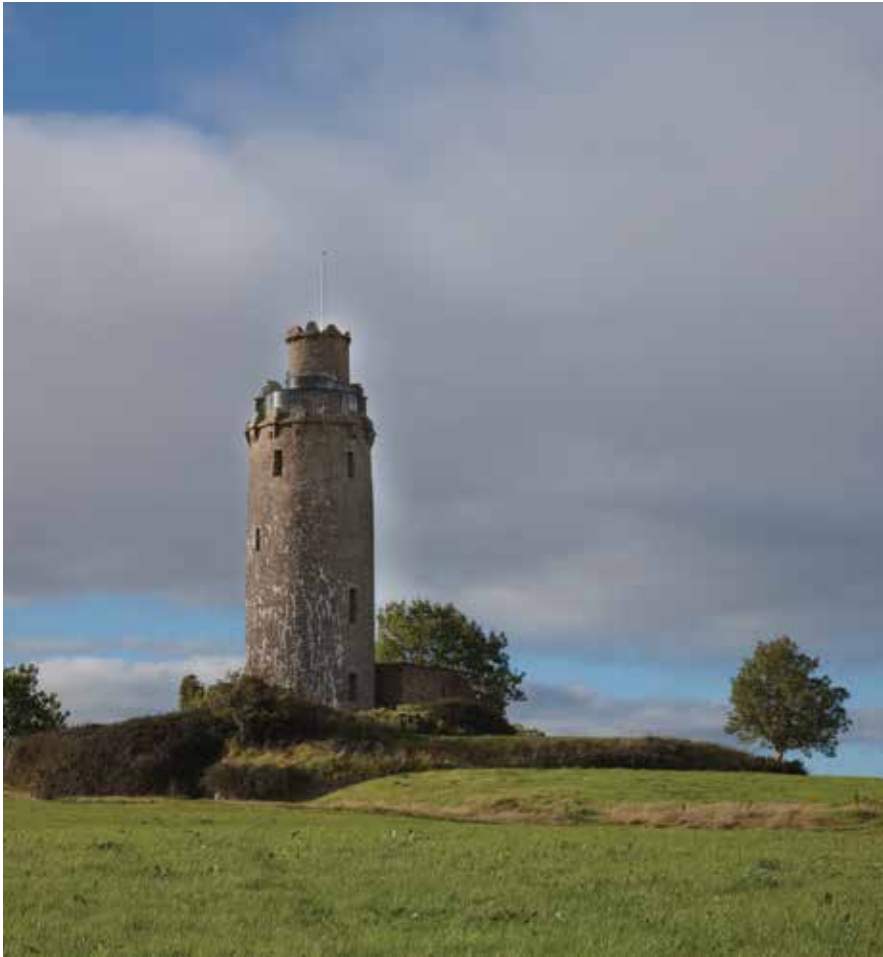
When it Comes to Castles, Big
Houses, and Country Estates,
Ireland Reigns Supreme



Attacked, burned, sacked, sieged, demolished, rebuilt, extended, and redesigned, Irish castles are among the most beautiful in the world. Arriving with the Anglo-Normans in the 1170s, the first were built of earth and wood. Later, they were replaced by stone, a more permanent material that accounts for why there are over 3,000 of these swoon-worthy structures in Ireland today. Some lay in picturesque ruins, others stand as historic museums, and many — and this is the best part — provide luxury, fit-for-royalty accommodations that are unrivaled in Europe.

BY MARGARET M. JOHNSON





BALLYFIN DEMESNE

While there seems to be a castle, crumbling ruin, or tower house around every corner, I discovered on my recent fairytale tour of Ireland that many of its most regal properties are castle-like “big houses” (the name given to large country homes, mansions, and estates of the Anglo-Irish) and country estates. Ballyfin Demense is one of them.

Set in the beautiful surroundings of the Slieve Bloom Mountains in County Laois, the site of Ballyfin has been settled from ancient times, and the house is one of the most lavish Regency mansions in Ireland. It was the Normans who brought the Gothic style to Ireland, but in later centuries, classical Palladian, Georgian, Regency, and Victorian architecture swept through the country, leaving a treasure trove of stately public buildings, pristine big houses and demense (a “home farm” or lands managed by a landlord).

I arrived at Ballyfin, a walled 614-acre demense with mansion,

photo: Ballyfin



PREVIOUS PAGE: Castle Durrrow; TOP: Ballyfin's medieval-style tower was built as a folly in the 1860s. BOTTOM: Dining room at Ballyfin, one of Ireland's most lavish Regency mansions, reflects the exquisite style found throughout the house.



photo: Ballyfin

medieval-style tower, gardens, farmlands, and lake, on a damp, drizzly morning and drove what seemed like an endless roadway through fernery, bluebell glades, and century-old trees. The “wow” moment arrived when the house itself suddenly appeared — and this was even before stepping inside to see why it’s considered to be the most significant early nineteenth century country mansion in Ireland.

Built in the 1820s to designs by the great Irish architects Sir Richard and William Morrison, the house was the family home of Sir Charles and Lady Caroline Coote until 1928 and the much-loved Patrician College Ballyfin from 1928 to 2009. With money in short supply in the school’s later years, the buildings deteriorated dramatically and the school was eventually sold to an American couple, Fred and Kay Kreibel, who had always dreamed of opening a small, luxury country house hotel. When Ballyfin came on

the market, they found it an irresistible challenge and spent eight years restoring it—longer than it took to build it in the first place!

In May 2011, it opened as a five-star, 20-room hotel (five more bedrooms were added in 2015), but it easily doubles as a museum of Irish neo-classical architecture and design. At precisely four o’clock each afternoon, a butler leads a formal tour of the home that explains in great detail the architectural and design features that were original to the home, as well as to the features that figured in the restoration. Coincidentally, many of the Coote family treasures removed from the house when they left in 1928 have been sourced at auctions and galleries and returned there.

When furnishing the home first began, it seems that Lady Caroline had but one thought in mind: to impress. Determined to turn the house that one visitor described as “nothing very

ornamental or magnificent” into the finest in Ireland, she adopted the motto *coûte que coûte* (cost what it may) and embarked on a grand tour of Europe securing everything from Roman mosaics and a mantle clock made for Napoleon I to marble fireplaces and a rare Augsburg table cabinet. Its rather stolid exterior was finally eclipsed by its lavish interior of inlaid wooden floors, ancient Roman pavement, plasterwork in its domed ceilings, and marble and scagliola columns that were unparalleled in any Irish country home of the period. Thanks to the grand taste of Lady Caroline and the unflinching efforts of the Kreibels and Managing Director Jim Reynolds, the house remains a testament to Irish classic style.

But for all of Ballyfin’s classicism, it has embraced contemporary touches that are nearly obligatory in a twenty-first century hotel: a gorgeous indoor swimming pool, sauna, fully equipped

ABOVE: The magnificent grounds of Ballyfin Demense include the Regency mansion itself, medieval-style tower, parts of the original Patrician College, walled gardens, farmlands, and lake.

gym, and treatment rooms are located in the lower level, along with a casual bar and impressive wine cellar focusing on wines from Irish “Wild Geese” families. Executive chef Michael Tweedie also strays from a totally classical cooking style, preferring lighter seasonal foods with big bursts of flavor. Rather like “variations on a theme” on the nights I dined there, he paired citrus-cured salmon with salmon mousse and cubes of salmon jelly; a poached lobster tail with lobster ravioli on a bed of lobster bisque; and lamb chops with mini shepherd’s pie and mini lamb croquettes.

CASTLE DURROW

The next stop on my fairytale tour was Castle Durrow, a pre-Palladian home built between 1712 and 1715, nearly a century earlier than Ballyfin. The rather massive stone structure

was the creation of the Flower family, Anglo-Irish landlords later known as Viscounts Ashbrook, who built and lived in the house during a period of high taste and culture. It’s the first country house of importance that still stands in nearly its original condition, and one of the few eighteenth century houses for which precise building records survive, a bonus for current owners Shelly and Peter Stokes when it came to renovation.

Owners since 1998, the Stokes are completely hands-on proprietors — Shelly greets you and offers tea and Peter chats about things-to-do locally — who have elegantly and individually designed each of the forty bedrooms. Family heirlooms, photographs, and antiques give the hotel the feel of an authentic country house as well as a family home — the Stokes, after all, raised their four children here, so the

intimate homey touches are just that, genuine family treasures.

The public rooms of Castle Durrow can only be described as “classically eclectic,” with the sure hand of Shelly Stokes plainly visible. The original grand staircase, located in the west wing of the mansion, has as its background a magnificent stained glass window whose design was inspired by Shakespeare’s sonnet “The Seven Ages of Man.”

The restaurant is adorned with hand-blocked wallpaper, a direct copy of eighteenth century Chinoiserie paper reminiscent of the Byzantine and Chinese empires, and French chandeliers hang from restored plastered ceilings adorned with baskets of fruit. Recently hand-painted, Mrs. Stokes chose colors for the baskets that mimic those of plants and flowers from around the property.

photo: Castle Durrow



ABOVE: The elegant dining room at Castle Durrow is adorned with hand-blocked wallpaper, a direct copy of eighteenth century Chinoiserie paper reminiscent of the Byzantine and Chinese empires.



Mrs. Stokes joined me in the recently refurbished bar/casual dining restaurant and explained how its interesting, almost unpredictable, design came about.

“We wanted to capture the feeling of what Irish country life was in earlier days,” she told me, “so we hung the walls with exotic wild animal skins. And then we thought the silver deer heads would add a little punch. We think it brings a ‘je ne sais quoi’ feeling to the space.” I think it’s “mission accomplished.”

During our chat, the room quickly filled with locals, patrons who make up a substantial portion of their bar and restaurant business. Because of the hotel’s prominent location in the heart of the village of Durrow, the house and grounds are always open to neighbors.

The bookless library on the ground floor doubles as a resident’s lounge, and like the other public rooms, it’s a treasure trove of interesting styles ranging from ancient Chinese artifacts to

distinctively Anglo-Irish silk panels. And speaking of drapes, Mrs. Stokes personally selected the fabric for all the 108 windows in the castle, much of which came from her native Holland.

As another nod to congeniality, Peter is happy to organize tennis, archery, riding, or clay shooting, and Shelly will personally accompany you on a walk through the many acres of gardens at the rear of the property. A passionate gardener herself, she meticulously coordinates the plantings of vegetables, herbs, flowers, and roses to ensure a continuous display or color. Along with the innate charm of the castle itself, this picturesque setting no doubt accounts for Castle Durrow’s popularity as a wedding venue, with more than 125 scheduled for this year alone.

WATERFORD CASTLE

When it comes to making a grand entrance, nothing beats your arrival at Waterford Castle, an imposing stone structure at the heart of a 310-acre

island on the King’s Channel, an estuary of the River Suir. While not exactly a horse-drawn carriage kind of entrance, there’s certainly an air of charm that comes with the short ferry ride that takes you from the Waterford mainland to The Island, and, on the day I arrived, past the castle’s very own deer herd grazing blissfully on the roadside.

The oldest of the properties I visited, The Island played a major role in the region’s history from the days when it was a monastic settlement, a Viking fortification, and eventually the home of Maurice Fitzgerald, the English Earl of Pembroke who was rewarded with ownership of The Island for his support of the Norman Invasion in 1170. This sealed the fate of the land for eight centuries, with the Earls of Kildare and Ormond and the Knights of Glin and Kerry holding it in one of the longest unbroken stewardships on record in Ireland.

Today’s castle, now a nineteen-room

ABOVE: The welcoming Fitzgerald Lounge at Waterford Castle offers afternoon tea to residents and visitors alike.

hotel owned by the Walsh family, evolved over that long period of ownership. The first part the Fitzgerald's built was a Norman keep, a tower-like stone structure with thick walls, narrow slit windows, and a lead roof. By the fifteenth century, the keep was no longer habitable, so a tower, the center part of the present castle, was built on site of the original. Over the years, subsequent owners enlarged it, adding the east and west wings that have now seamlessly blended into the original center.

The Fitzgerald legacy remains an important part of the castle's history, and for most of its existence, it was a hub of social activities. One Fitzgerald in particular, Mary Frances, dominated the social world of the 1800s. Once engaged to the Duke of Wellington, she later married John Purcell. The last of the family to own the castle was Mary Augusta Fitzgerald, who eventually married an Italian Prince. In 1958, Princess Caracciolo sold the property, ending the remarkable link between the

Fitzgeralds and The Island.

The physical link may have been broken, but throughout the castle the Fitzgerald legacy is everywhere, from the coat of arms above the fireplace in the great hall to the portraits and photographs hanging in the Fitzgerald Room lounge, to the guest rooms individually decorated and named to reflect the long historical links of the family. The castle, though, is neither stuffy nor museum-like; rather, it was totally buzzing with activity on the Sunday afternoon of my stay. Local families with strollers, toddlers, and grandparents in tow arrived for afternoon tea; golfers grabbed a few beers while waiting for their tee times; and a group of twenty-somethings in sun dresses sipped pink Prosecco on the lawn under blue Irish skies — yes, sunny and blue!

I took advantage of the glorious weather as well and walked a good portion of The Island on a (photographic) hunt for the wide variety of wildlife on

the estate — fox, badgers, pheasants, peacocks, and the herd of deer that had managed to elude me since my arrival. Unlike either Ballyfin or Castle Durrrow, Waterford Castle is a full-fledged resort with a Des Smith-designed, 18-hole championship golf course, a lovely clubhouse that doubles as a casual eatery, and 45 contemporary self-catering lodges for golf groups or family get-aways. The castle is also a popular wedding venue available for exclusive hire to the wedding party for a truly fairy tale experience.

IF YOU GO

Ballyfin Demense

Ballyfin, County Laois
www.ballyfin.com

Castle Durrrow

Durrrow, County Laois
www.castledurrow.com

Waterford Castle Hotel & Golf Resort

The Island, Waterford
www.waterfordcastleresort.com

photo: Waterford Castle



ABOVE: Waterford Castle is an imposing 19-room hotel that sits on its own private island on the King's Channel, an estuary of the River Suir.



CASTLE CUISINE

LOBSTER WITH LOBSTER-STUFFED BASIL RAVIOLI

SERVES 2

Like many recipes from chefs working in castle kitchens, this three-part dish, adapted from Ballyfin's Chef Michael Tweedie is elegant, luscious, and a bit involved! For the less intrepid cook, use prepared lobster ravioli.

For the lobster bisque

- 2 1-pound lobsters
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 fennel bulb, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 tablespoon white peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon cardamom seeds
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup chopped plum tomatoes

- 1 cup cognac
- 4 cups fish stock
- 1/4 cup tomato purée
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup heavy cream

For the ravioli filling

- 4 sea scallops
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger, blanched
- Reserved lobster claw meat
- Salt
- Freshly-ground black pepper
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

For the basil ravioli

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 to 6 basil leaves, chopped
- 1 large egg
- 3 large egg yolks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted

Salt

Egg white, for sealing

Caviar, for garnish

Micro shoots and fresh chives, for garnish

1. Make lobster bisque. Bring a large pot of water to boil. Add lobsters, head first, return to boil, and cook for 10 minutes. Using tongs, transfer lobsters to large bowl and let cool; reserve 2 cups cooking liquid.

2. Working over a large bowl to catch juices, cut off lobster tails and claws. Crack tail and claws; keep tails whole, cover and refrigerate. Chop claw meat; reserve for ravioli. Chop shells and bodies; reserve juices in large bowl.

3. In a large saucepan over medium heat, heat olive oil. Add shells and bodies and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, or until shells start to brown. Add carrot, onion, fennel, garlic, peppercorns, coriander, cumin, cardamom, bay leaf, tomatoes, and cognac. Boil for 4 to 5 minutes, or until liquid is nearly evaporated. Add fish stock, reserved cooking liquid, and reserved lobster juices. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 1 hour.

4. Strain soup through a sieve over a large saucepan; press on solids to extract juices. Whisk in tomato purée and return to simmer. Cook for 20 to 25 minutes, or until liquid is reduced to about 3 cups. Stir in cream. Set aside.

5. Make filling. In a food processor, combine scallops, egg yolk, and cream; process for 10 to 15 seconds, or until smooth. Scrape the mixture into a bowl and stir in ginger, lobster, salt, pepper, cayenne, and lemon juice; cover and refrigerate.

6. Make ravioli. In a small food processor, process oil and basil until smooth. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg, yolks, and basil oil mixture.

7. Combine flour and salt in large food processor; pulse until blended. Add basil mixture and pulse 10 to 15 times, or until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Remove pasta mixture and form into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and let rest for 30 minutes.

8. Divide dough into four portions. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a 12-inch round. (If using a pasta machine, pass each portion through



machine according to the manufacturer's directions until dough is 1/16-inch thick.)

9. Lay half of pasta on a clean work surface. Using a 2 1/2-inch biscuit cutter or round ravioli stamp, cut out rounds. Using a pastry brush, brush edges of rounds with egg white, and then place a heaping teaspoon of filling in center. Top each with a plain pasta round and seal with fingertips. Crimp edges of ravioli with a fork.

10. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add ravioli and cook for 10 to 12 minutes, or until tender.

11. To serve, place a few spoonfuls of lobster bisque on plate, top with lobster tail and 2 to 3 ravioli (save extras for another use). Garnish with caviar, micro shoots, and chives. Serve immediately.



CASHEL BLUE SALAD WITH PROSCIUTTO AND PEARS

SERVES 4

Casual dining in the bar at Castle Durrrow is a delightful experience. The menu suits guests and locals who stop in for afternoon tea, a few drinks, or simple but eclectic meals like this salad, featuring Tipperary-made Cashel Blue cheese and Italian ham.

For the dressing

- 4 tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup sherry vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Pinch dried tarragon
- 2/3 cup olive oil
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 to 3 teaspoons water (optional)

For the salad

- 1 (10 ounce) package mixed greens/spring mix
- 2 large Bartlett pears, cored and sliced
- 4 ounces crumbled Cashel Blue cheese
- 8 slices prosciutto, sliced lengthways
- Freshly-ground black pepper



photo: Dromoland Castle

1. Make dressing. In a small bowl or lidded jar, whisk or shake honey, mustard, vinegar, tarragon, oil, salt, and pepper until smooth. Add water to thin, if necessary.
2. Make salad. Arrange greens and pears on four salad plates. Divide cheese and prosciutto over the greens. Drizzle with dressing and a few grinds of pepper.

CASTLE LAMB WITH PARSNIP PUREE AND CHIPS

SERVES 4

Waterford Castle head chef Michael Thomas relies on local ingredients for most of the culinary creations served in the Leinster Room, the hotel's fine dining restaurant. Because some are so local, feel free to substitute; for example, use prosciutto for pig's coil and bacon for pork belly. Fry the parsnip chips as close to serving time as possible to keep them crisp.

For the mousse

- 4 slices bacon
- 1 (4 ounce) boneless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 8 slices prosciutto
- 1 (2 pound) boneless lamb loin

For the parsnips

- 3 large parsnips, peeled

Intermezzo

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup canola oil, for frying

For the jus

- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Sautéed spinach or kale, for serving

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Make mousse stuffing. In a large skillet over medium heat or in a microwave oven, cook bacon until nearly crisp; cool and chop. Combine bacon and chicken in a food processor and process for 20 to 30 seconds, or until smooth.
3. Put a piece of parchment paper or foil on a work surface. Lay out prosciutto slices, overlapping slightly, and place lamb loin on top; spread with mousse. Using paper or foil as an aid, roll up prosciutto around lamb.
4. Transfer to a baking sheet and roast for 1 hour, or until a meat thermometer inserted into the center registers 120 to 130°F. Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing.

5. Make parsnips. Cut two parsnips into slices. Bring cream, parsnips, and butter to boil in a medium saucepan. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, or until tender. Uncover and cook for 5 to 8 minutes longer, or until liquid is reduced by half. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to food processor and purée until smooth. Keep warm.
6. Make jus. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the stock, wine, thyme, rosemary, salt, and pepper. Cook for 10 to 12 minutes, or until reduced to sauce consistency.
7. Make parsnip chips. With a vegetable peeler, peel off wide, long strips from remaining parsnip. In a large skillet over high heat, heat oil. Working in batches, gently drop strips into oil and fry for 1 to 2 minutes, or until browned and crisp. With a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towel-lined plate.
8. To serve, cut lamb into slices, drizzle with jus, and serve with parsnip purée, chips, and spinach or kale.

PUMPKIN AND TREACLE TART

SERVES 6 TO 8

Executive chef David McCann, a fixture in the Dromoland Castle kitchens since 1995, combines his classical training with an elegant, creative style that makes dining there more than a special occasion. In this recipe, he adds fresh pumpkin to a traditional treacle tart for lovely results.

For the pastry

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 8 tablespoons cold butter, cut into pieces
- 2 to 3 tablespoons cold water
- 1 large egg yolk

For the filling

- 2 cups golden syrup, such as Lyle's brand, or light corn syrup
- 12 ounces fresh pumpkin, diced

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

Pinch of ground ginger

1 cup plain breadcrumbs

1/3 cup ground hazelnuts

Whipped cream, for serving

1. Make pastry. In a large bowl (or food processor), combine flour, salt, and butter. Pulse or work in butter until it resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in just enough cold water to bind dough together. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Cut off one third of pastry and reserve for lattice top. On a floured surface, roll out pastry to a 10½-inch round. Press pastry into 9-inch loose-bottom tart pan.
3. Make filling. Preheat oven to 325°F. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, heat syrup. Add pumpkin, lemon zest, juice and ginger. Bring to boil, then remove from heat immediately. Stir in breadcrumbs and hazelnuts; mix well.
4. Spoon filling into prepared pan. Roll out reserved pastry trimmings and cut into ½-inch wide and 10-inch long strips. Arrange strips at intervals across tart and then place a second set across to make a lattice top; trim edges. Whisk egg yolk and

brush across lattice.

5. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until crust is browned and filling is bubbling. Slice and serve with whipped cream.

CRÈME DE CITRON

(Lemon Tart)

SERVES 8

At Ballyfin, chef Michael Tweedie pays homage to French patisserie with this “crème de citron.” For an added nod to the classic dessert, he bakes it in a 13-x 4-inch rectangular tart pan, but you can also use a 12-inch round pan.

For the pastry

1 large egg yolk

2 tablespoons water

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1¼ cups all-purpose flour

1/3 cup sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

8 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes

For the filling

¾ cups fresh lemon juice

6 large egg yolks

3 large eggs

¾ cups sugar

4 ounces butter

Fresh berries for serving

1. Make pastry. In a small bowl, whisk together egg yolk, water, and vanilla. In a large bowl (or food processor), combine flour, sugar, salt and butter. Pulse or work in butter until it resembles coarse crumbs. Add egg mixture; mix until dough comes together. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 375° F. Transfer dough to lightly floured surface and roll out to fit tart pan. Line with parchment paper or aluminum foil, fill with ceramic pie weights or dried beans, and bake for 20 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350° F, remove paper or foil, and bake for 15 to 18 minutes longer, or until crust is golden.
3. Make filling. In a medium saucepan, bring lemon juice to boil. In a medium bowl, beat egg yolks, eggs and sugar with an electric mixer until smooth. Slowly add lemon juice; beat until smooth.
4. Return mixture to saucepan. Return to boil, whisking constantly until mixture begins to thicken. Whisk in butter, a few pieces at a time, until smooth and thick. Pour into the tart shell and let cool; refrigerate until firm. Slice and serve with fresh berries.

RASPBERRY-VANILLA CRÈME BRÛLÉES

MAKES 6

“Simply delicious” is the way guests describe this simple dessert from Castle Durrrow. Substitute blueberries or blackberries if you wish.

7 large egg yolks

1/2 cup sugar, plus more for topping

2 cups heavy cream

1/2 cup milk





- 2 vanilla beans
- 1/2 pint raspberries, plus more for topping

1. Preheat oven to 325° F.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together yolks and sugar. In a medium saucepan, combine cream and milk. With tip of a sharp knife, scrape seeds out of vanilla beans into mixture; bring slowly to boil. Slowly whisk in yolks mixture until smooth.
3. Divide berries into six 6-ounce ramekins; spoon custard over. Place dishes in a baking pan with enough hot water to come halfway up the sides of dishes. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until centers are just set. Remove from oven and let cool in pan; cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.
4. To serve, sprinkle 1 tablespoon sugar evenly over top of each dish and heat with a kitchen blowtorch until sugar caramelizes

(alternately, put dishes under broiler until caramelized). Let sit at room temperature for a few minutes to harden. Garnish with additional raspberries.

WHITE CHOCOLATE-ELDERFLOWER MOUSSE WITH STRAWBERRY PUREE AND BROWN SUGAR CRUMBLE

SERVES 6

This luxurious recipe is inspired by one from Waterford Castle's pastry chef Paula Hannigan. Hers has several components, including mousse, chocolate coating, strawberry glaze, strawberry sorbet, and brown sugar crumble. This simpler version incorporates all the elements of the chef's original recipe and maintains all of its unique flavors and colors.

For the strawberry purée

- 1 pint strawberries, stemmed and halved
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

For the mousse

- 4 large egg yolks
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons elderflower cordial, such as St-Germaine
- 1 cup mascarpone cheese
- 1 cup heavy cream (whipped)
- 4 ounces white chocolate

For the crumble

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (packed) light brown sugar
- 5 tablespoons cold butter, cut into cubes
- Sliced strawberries, for serving (optional)

1. Make purée. Process strawberries in food processor until smooth. Add sugar and lemon juice and process until well blended. Spoon purée into 6 martini glasses.
2. Make mousse. In a microwave-safe bowl, microwave chocolate on high for 30 seconds; stir. Microwave 30 seconds more; stir. Continue heating and stirring in 10-second intervals until completely melted and smooth.
3. In a large bowl set over a bowl of hot water (or in a double boiler) whisk together egg yolks and cordial until light and fluffy. Fold in mascarpone, whipped cream, and chocolate. Spoon into glasses over purée and refrigerate for 4 hours, or until firm.
4. Make crumble. Preheat oven to 325° F. Line a baking pan with foil or parchment paper.
5. In a large bowl, combine flour and brown sugar. With a pastry cutter or your fingers, cut or work in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Spread out on prepared pan and bake for 5 minutes; stir and cook for 5 minutes longer; continue baking and stirring until lightly browned. Let cool. Store in airtight container until serving time.
6. To serve, sprinkle crumble over mousse and garnish with strawberries, if desired.