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KITCHENS & INTERIORS

LIVING | HOTEL REVIEW

24 hours in... DUNBOYNE CASTLE

Our leisurely weekend road trip took us east to County Meath, where we spent a luxurious overnight in fabulous 4-star, Dunboyne Castle Hotel & Spa



Whether you prefer cool and contemporary or traditional and charming, there are some hotels that simply have it – Dunboyne Castle Hotel & Spa is one of them. A beautiful mix of old meets new, this sophisticated rural retreat allows you to experience the best of both worlds, showing a striking juxtaposition of the old Georgian house with links to a newer modern structure, finished in a contemporary aesthetic with large-scale artwork adding to its impact.

Set in 21 acres of woodland walks and manicured lawns, the surroundings set the tone for the hotel experience inside. We were treated to a spacious junior suite with its own living and dining areas with floor-to-ceiling glass walls – absolute luxury and just wonderful to relax in the comfort of your own personal space before checking out all the hotel has to offer. The tranquil setting of the hotel allows you to take things at your own pace. For us, it was just bliss to have no must-do's so we spent these precious 24 hours purely relaxing, dining and taking in the wonderfully laid back feel of our gracious surroundings.

The hotel, although busy and obviously a popular spot with spa lovers (a group of ladies were enjoying the spa followed by a meal in the restaurant while we were there) has a very calm ambience, so you feel right at home from the moment you enter the foyer. The open plan reception to the Terrace lounge enhances this laid-back feel and is the perfect spot for enjoying a light bite for lunch. One piece of advice, keep lunch light, as the pièce de résistance (along with the spa, of course!) is the award-winning Ivy

restaurant, where we dined that evening.

The staff knowledge of the menu and level of service was first class and the same has to be said for the food. All three courses were perfection. Starters of quail and goats' cheese were followed by mains of brill and venison, rounded off with mint chocolate fondant and the most amazing carrot cake with gingerbread ice-cream that tasted of Christmas! An extensive wine list completed our flawless dining experience – a full-bodied red was thoroughly enjoyed as a perfect accompaniment to our meal. And a nightcap, of course, in the Terrace lounge was the perfect end to a perfect day.

A visit to the **Scoid** Spa also comes highly recommended. The Thermal Suite is a great place to start or round off your spa experience: spend time in the aroma steam room, on the heated loungers or in the hydrotherapy pool before or after your specialized spa treatments. The Rasul Mud Chamber is probably the most fun treatment to share with a friend or partner. Using mud infused with essential oils and minerals, aromatic steam will fill the chamber to soften your skin and relax your muscles. Dry heat intensifies the muds before a tropical rain shower washes them away, leaving you feeling totally revitalised!

From check-in around 3pm until check-out the following morning, we had a most enjoyable stay at Dunboyne Castle Hotel. So much so that we didn't even venture out to the nearby village of Dunboyne, which is just a short stroll away. Oh well, that gives us a great excuse to return, sooner rather than later!

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