

Premium

Revealed: Ireland’s 100 best hotels for 2022, from budget gems to five-star luxury

The Hot 100: Pól Ó Conghaile picks the 100 best hotels in Ireland for 2022



Hot 100 Hotels: Adare Manor



Pól Ó Conghaile

September 10 2022 02:45 AM



What are Ireland’s best hotels?

Compiling the *Irish Independent's* inaugural Hot 100, I knew I couldn't please everyone. There's no certain, scientific way of ranking one hotel against another — no more than there is the best movies, songs or hurlers.

For me, the best hotels in Ireland are those that exceed your expectations and stay in your heart. That's it. So there was only one way to go with this list — to make it personal.

industry has to offer.

10 best hotels in Ireland for 2022 - budget gems to five-star luxury



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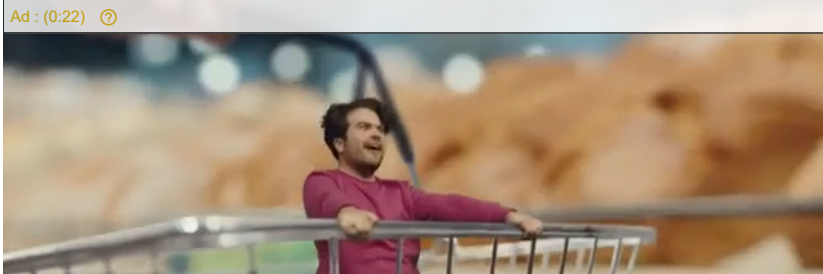
So I chose hotels I see as best in their class, a mix of iconic stays and warm, honest businesses that make me feel at home. I've ranked the Top 25 in order, and listed the rest in groups of four (26-50; 51-75; 76-100), in no particular order within those groupings.

My criteria? As a hotel guest, I love creativity, innovation (from small cinemas to 100ml wine pourings) and thoughtful design. I value hotels that value sustainability, engage with their communities and amplify their locations through menus, activities, art and retail. Be it a budget bolthole or world-famous resort, I think these hotels equal their peers anywhere I've travelled, but remain distinctly Irish.

It's also important for me to feel like staff enjoy their work, are proud to share local tips and are respected by management — nothing tells you as much about how a hotel is run as the happiness of its staff.

I worried about finding 100 worthy inclusions. In the end, the really painstaking calls were which to leave out; this list could easily have been twice the length. It's also worth pointing out that this is a list of hotels, rather than broader places to stay, so I've omitted smaller country houses, campsites and B&Bs. There are also Irish hotels I haven't been to (yet!) — so I plan to update this list annually, as my travels continue.

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Right now, hotels are having to defend rising room rates. And so they should. But my picks are places where I feel you get decent value for your night away — whether you spend €99 or €999.

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Price Guide:

- €: Budget bolthole
- €€: Affordable for most
- €€€: Mid-range magic
- €€€€: Luxury at a fair price
- €€€€€: Eye-watering, but worth the splurge

Top 25

WATCH: Inside Adare Manor's multi-million euro reboot



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1. Adare Manor

Adare, Co Limerick

Before JP McManus and family acquired Adare Manor, it felt like a fabulous but fusty hotel, languishing in Limerick's countryside. Today, it's a world-class resort that sits on best-of lists in the glossiest publications on the planet. Money appears to have been little object in its transformation, with quality

starred Oak Room or cocktails in the Tack Room.

But the casual experiences are just as good, and arguably better — the perfectly judged Carriage House for dining or the welcome you get floating past those living moss wall pieces in the cedar-clad Padel Club and pool. Expensive? Eye-wateringly so. But it can hold its own with any property charging these prices. [Read our *Adare Manor* review here.](#)

Details: €€€€€; [adaremanor.com](#)



Kelly's Resort Hotel & Spa

2. Kelly's Resort Hotel & Spa

Rosslare, Co Wexford

Kelly's is a feeling. It is as confident as it is relaxed, as personable as it is polished; a family-run affair that could stand next to any four-star resort I've seen (though it couldn't exist anywhere but Ireland, of course). Generations of guests continue to flock back to Rosslare, often booking next year's stay as they check out, and Bill Kelly and daughter Laura will have spoken to almost all by the time they leave.

The wine and art collections (look out for a Warhol silkscreen of Debbie Harry) punch far above their weight for a four-star. Younger guests may give the most enthusiastic reviews, thanks to its tradition of taking families seriously — and that's not even starting on the spa, pools and smashing beach outside the back door. It's an innovator, full of familiar faces, and always on hand with thoughtful touches — a camera to take photos of special occasions, for example.

Details: €€€€€; [kellys.ie](#)



One of the refurbished rooms at Dunbrody

3. Dunbrody House

Arthurstown, Co Wexford

Has it really been 25 years? How time has flown for Catherine and Kevin Dundon and their guests. A quarter-of-a-century since the couple first opened this Blue Book bolthole to visitors, it just keeps getting better. Today, you'll find a refurbished main house full of snappy Liberty fabrics, Sanderson wallpapers and Carrera marble bathrooms, alongside the spa, cookery school, 'The Local' (now restyled as a seafood joint) and [a Cosy Cabin to sleep in the woods](#). Creative, confident and fairly priced, it has indisputably become a modern Irish classic. Light-touch luxury at its best.

Details: €€€€; dunbrodyhouse.com



The Armada Hotel, Co Clare

4. Armada Hotel

Spanish Point, Co Clare

Every time I visit — actually, every time I get an email with updates from this hotel — I am blown away by its energy and enthusiasm. In a torturous time for hospitality, it has been relentlessly creative, a thoughtful employer, and continued to put sustainability at the heart of its planning.

Owner [John Burke has climbed Everest](#), so he doesn't shirk from a challenge — and he has steered everything from room refurbishments to the new Aileen's Restaurant, food truck Catch, its own farm, gin and even the *West Clare Explorer* — an off-grid camper van bookable all year-round. Its latest move? Taking over the nearby Spanish Point House. Oh, and the beach next door isn't bad, either.

Details: €€€; armadahotel.com





The bar at Harvey's Point

5. Harvey's Point

Tawnyvorgal, Co Donegal

Other hotels have its elements — a stunning lakeside setting, huge rooms, cabaret and family-run heritage. But none tie them together with quite the aplomb and polish of Harvey's Point. Like Kelly's, it's a distinctly Irish institution, wooing guests with manager Noel Cunningham's greetings, and guided walks to events like midweek wine tastings, or touches like fruit and water offered as you check out.

When [Deirdre McGlone and Marc Gysling sold up in 2019](#), I wondered if standards would slip. A recent visit reassured me, and there are brand new balcony rooms and a resident's bar too. The four-star regularly tops TripAdvisor's polls of the best hotels in Ireland, despite having no pool or spa (yet). Rooms without a lake view overlook the Bluestack mountains. [Read our Harvey's Point hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€€€; [harveyspoint.com](#)



The Shelbourne Hotel on St Stephen's Green in Dublin

6. The Shelbourne

Dublin

In 2024, The Shelbourne will celebrate its 200th birthday. How many present hotels could hope to be around in two centuries time? Dublin's grand dame has heritage (the Constitution was drafted here 100 years ago) and class (a pre-pandemic, multi-million euro refurb is the latest facelift). But it still feels accessible to ordinary folk, and I love the modern sensibility underpinning it all, the slick deck of bars like The Horseshoe and 1824, and... well, location, location, location. It's a thrill just to *be* in the Shelbourne, knowing celebs may be sleeping, trysts fizzing, or deals being brokered over drinks in No.27, or beef Chateaubriand in The Saddle Room. A legendary hotel it's lovely to see busy again. [Read our Shelbourne hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€€€€; [theshelbourne.com](#)



Parknasilla, Co Kerry

7. Parknasilla Resort & Spa

Sneem, Co Kerry

Some people won't consider holidaying anywhere else, and would you blame them? Parknasilla may just be the perfect resort, in the perfect county. There's a tradition of hospitality here stretching back over 125 years, and its take on "laid-back luxury" ranges across not just rooms and suites, but lodges and woodland villas that book out ages in advance for school holidays. Boredom isn't an option on the 500-acre estate, with activities like fishing, walking trails, a spa, al fresco hot tub, sea swimming and kayaking. On my last visit, we joined a birds of prey talk in the foyer, and a brilliant shoreline exploration with wildlife guide and coastal ecologist, Vincent Hyland.

Details: €€€€; parknasillaresort.com



The Long Room, One Pery Square

8. One Pery Square

Limerick

Since Patricia Roberts flipped this former hostel in 2006, it has set the tone for what luxury townhouse hotels can be, having upgraded and evolved even through a recession and a pandemic. It reminds me of the proverbial swan — elegantly moving along, with feet paddling furiously below the surface. A small spa, mix of period and modern club rooms, creative package deals and layers of love for its neighbourhood all tie into a uniquely Irish take on a Georgian boutique hotel.

from chicken and Ballyhoura mushroom gnocchi to a simple Pigtown sausage roll named after Limerick's former market. Pair with wine servings starting from 100ml "small pours", another genius idea, for the perfect combination. It radiates class, without being stuffy.

Details: €€€; oneperysquare.com



Francis and John Brennan at the Park Hotel Kenmare

9. Park Hotel Kenmare

Kenmare, Co Kerry

I'm not sure who else could have gone through a pandemic and come out the other end with *more* hotels, and snazzily upgraded ones at that. As well as buying The Lansdowne and continuing to develop the lovely Dromquinna Manor, John and Francis Brennan splashed on a revamp of their beloved five-star. At their service was designer Bryan O'Sullivan, and the reboots of reception, cocktail bar and outdoor dining terrace are particularly arresting. I'm sure they've had some niggly feedback about the bold new colours from guests who enjoyed the former atmosphere, but a good hotel never stands still, and these hoteliers certainly don't.

The secret weapon, by the way, is chef James Coffey, who brings just the right measures of sophistication, tradition and modern lightness of touch to his menus (Michelin inspectors recently tweeted a photo). Throw in a classy spa, great activities programme and a 25m lap pool, and you have a complete premium package.

Details: €€€€€; parkkenmare.com



10. Hotel Doolin

Doolin, Co Clare

I've been writing about [this little hotel's big ideas](#) for almost a decade, and they just keep coming. By my calculations, the 17-bed was Ireland's first certified carbon-neutral hotel. To its mash-up-style street front, it has added an eco-friendly wedding barn and party space. Menus source 90pc of food from a 100km radius (washed down with its own Dooliner beer), and sustainability seems genuinely to be at the heart of everything it does. "I can't believe bigger hotel chains aren't making these changes," Donal Minihane, its general manager, once told me. Throw in live music at Fitz's, wood-fired pizza at Stonewall, party packages and deep Doolin roots, and you have a tiny trailblazer.

Details: €€; [hoteldoolin.ie](#)

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The lobby and fireplace at Ballynahinch Castle

11. Ballynahinch Castle

Connemara, Co Galway

One of the best hotel bars in Ireland, its deep refurb has brought its heritage in line with contemporary, Connemara chic. Add a shiny new Relais & Châteaux membership card, great Irish artworks (including by Jack B Yeats and Mary Swanzy) and a peachy position on a river and 700-acre estate, and I'm sold! I've been returning to Ballynahinch for years, and am delighted to note a step forward each time. Owned by Denis O'Brien, the hotel has refurbished rooms, added new self-catering offerings, and the Owenmore Restaurant has become a dining room to die for. All of this, and you can go fishing and shooting on the estate... if you can tear yourself away from those open fires, that is. [Read our Ballynahinch Castle review here.](#)

Details: €€€€; [ballynahinch-castle.com](#)





The spa pool at Ashford Castle

12. Ashford Castle

Cong, Co Mayo

The setting! The grandeur! The price... (eek!) It's tough to fault this fabulous five-star resort, recently revamped with lashings of cash and TLC by owners, the Tollman family. Ashford is one of the world's great castle stays, as a steady stream of international guests attests, and many feel it's the best hotel in Ireland. I find the maximalism a teensy bit full-on and, as a fussy swimmer, the pool a little small. But experiences like dining in the George V restaurant ("gentlemen require a jacket; a tie is optional"), walking its wolfhounds, or doing your best *Quiet Man* impressions are bucket-list stuff. Staff are brilliant, and were well looked after in lockdown, too. An iconic Irish stay. [Read our list of the best Irish castles to stay in here.](#)

Details: €€€€€; ashfordcastle.com



Marfield House Pond Suite

13. Marfield House

Gorey, Co Wexford

Laura and Margaret Bowe's Blue Book bolthole was already a classic country house stay. Now, it's a template for how country houses can evolve through the 21st century. The Regency-style manor is its heart, with superb period features, a lovely library bar and quaint conservatory dining room. Add to that the classy Duck restaurant, which helped provide a roadmap for serious casual dining and the repurposing of older buildings when it opened in 2015, and lately, the super-luxe Pond Suites. They bring pops of style and self-contained accommodation to the gardens. I can't wait to see what they come up with next. [Read our *Marfield House* review here.](#)



Ballyfin, Co. Laois

14. Ballyfin

Ballyfin, Co Laois

Fred and Kay Krehbiel's flip of [Ballyfin](#) from decaying Regency-era mansion and boarding school into an exquisite country estate stay deserves a full chapter in any future Book of Irish Hospitality. Those bathtubs... that Gold Room... the library. The detail and craftsmanship is delicious, and triggered a golden age for Irish flagship refurbis, including Ashford Castle, Adare Manor and Carton House. Always a contender for Ireland's most expensive stay, celeb guests have ranged from Kanye West and Kim Kardashian to Amal and George Clooney. Oh, and you can even ask to borrow from its collection of period costumes from the Lyric Opera Company in Chicago.

Details: €€€€€; [ballyfin.com](#)



Montenotte

15. The Montenotte

Cork

When I think of the Montenotte, I think of cocktails on the terrace overlooking Cork City. I think of pops of cleverly curated art, a feel for colour, a cosy cinema and Victorian gardens that take you back in time. But most of all, I think of its can-do spirit. This dynamic hotel is on a development journey that has seen a huge leap forward, and will soon add treehouse-style nests as part of a new 'Woodland Experience'. It has recruited well, staff feel like they enjoy working

as the destination, and are having fun along the way. One day it will be a five-star; I hope it will always have this attitude. [Read our Montenotte hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€€€; [themontenottehotel.com](#)



The Treehouse at Fitzgeralds Woodlands House Hotel & Spa, Co Limerick

16. Fitzgeralds Woodlands House

Adare, Co Limerick

Where do the Fitzgeralds get their energy? Every time I visit, something new is underway... as has been the case since Mary and husband Dick first developed their B&B in the 1980s. Today, that same plot of land hosts one of Ireland's most dynamic four-stars, the Revas Spa, new walking trails, an organic garden and The Treehouse, which won '[Ireland's best Outdoor Dining](#)' in our [Reader Travel Awards 2022](#). Elaina Fitzgerald Kane also played a blinder as Irish Hotels Federation President through the pandemic, advocating for her industry and keeping spirits up with her energy, empathy and smart calls for support.

Details: €€€; [woodlands-hotel.ie](#)



Hayfield Manor

17. Hayfield Manor

Cork

effortlessly opulent (an atmosphere created with great effort, of course). It feels like a period stay, but is underpinned by a contemporary sense of style, service and nicely integrated tech. There's a walled garden and top-hatted doorman, but I also love the tranquil, moody lit pool — which is neither gaudily bright nor blackly underlit. Orchids is the fine-dining option; Perrotts a casual bistro with two AA Rosettes in the conservatory. Little surprise to learn it's family-owned — the Scallys also run the Killarney Royal and Great Southern in Co Kerry.

Details: €€€€€; [hayfieldmanor.ie](#)



Amber Springs

18. Amber Springs Hotel

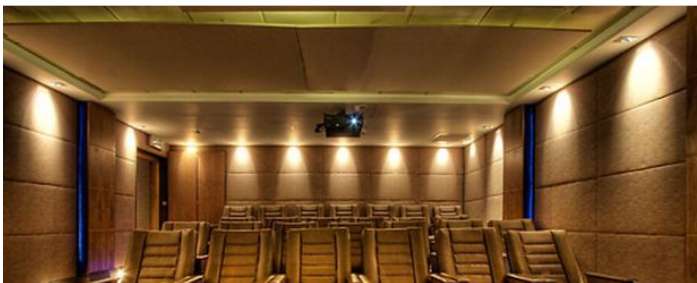
Gorey, Co Wexford

Here's a hotel that's gone all-in on families. "We know they are only young once," it says, with spacious rooms (and dens) sleeping bigger broods, and activities including a kids club, go-karting, mini-golf, express train, indoor playzone, cinema, pool and a gaming and chill-out space for teens. Don't worry, adults aren't neglected — there's a spa and adult-only tapas bar and coffee dock along with the new FHB Farmhouse Burger serving beef from its own farm, and wood-fired pizza at Farina. It can get pricey when demand rises at peak times, but it's a property that hasn't really had to discount. Shout-out too, to [its forward-thinking sister hotel, the Ashdown Park](#), nearby.

Details: €€€€€; [ambersprings.ie](#)

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The cinema at Brooks Hotel, Dublin

19. Brooks Hotel

Dublin

The Drury Street location is plum — an easy stagger with your shopping bags from Grafton Street. The rooms are small but well-designed, the vibe quiet and very comfortable. There's a plush, private cinema in the basement. Special offers are consistently smart, including moreish extras like meals, a bottle of wine, late checkout, movies, or discounts at local shops. GM Anne McKiernan is a sure hand with a lovely manner, and deeply invested in Dublin. Brooks doesn't have the splashy swagger of newer generation four-stars like The Dean, Grafton or Mayson, but it's an understated, assured, tasteful stay.

Details: €€€; brookshotel.ie



Glasson Lakehouse

20. Glasson Lakehouse

Glasson, Co Westmeath

The best hotel evolutions make you wonder 'why didn't I think of that?' That's the case with this revamp of a lakeside golf resort — a hotel project with the potential to be the Press-Up Group's best. It's not the finished article (more cabins would be great, as will a forthcoming Stella Cinema), but the hot tubs, food trailers, playground, new Brooks & Co spa, eclectic interiors and outdoor pool shook things up, showing many established resorts what a post-Center Parc's four-star could be. Its wood-clad lobby mashes up country manor and Alpine lodge, chef Dee Adamson (formerly of The Fatted Calf) is at the kitchen controls, and it has pet-friendly chops, too. Rooms are cut from the same Press Up template, but if it ain't broke... [Read our *Glasson Lakehouse* review here.](#)

Details: €€€; glassonlakehouse.ie





The Merrion Hotel

21. The Merrion

Dublin

Many hotel aficionados would make the Merrion their No.1, and there's certainly lots to love and lust after here. The location opposite Leinster House, the art (if the paintings look good enough to eat, try the afternoon 'art tea' — creations are inspired by the collection), the excellent service, and of course the Georgian detail. There's a notable difference between garden and Georgian rooms, which are worth a splurge — and speaking of splurges, don't forget the two-Michelin star Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud. Summer dining is sweet in the garden, too.

Details: €€€€€; merrionhotel.com



The breathtaking views of Lough Ree from the hot tub in Hodson Bay Hotel, Co Westmeath

22. Hodson Bay Hotel

Athlone, Co Westmeath

Old-school resorts like Hodson Bay faced something of an existential crisis when Center Parcs landed in Co Longford. Rather than stagnate, this one has kept doing what it does best — serving with a smile and evolving while staying true to its audience.

WATCH: [The world's tallest floating water slide... and it's in Ireland](#)



The lakeside location on Lough Ree is breathtaking (as is the inflatable summer fun at Baysports water park, above), there's a decent pool, spa and adult-only Retreat Wing, and a tantalising new addition is Yew Point, a 145-acre oasis of woodlands and nature recently acquired by the hotel. "The land has been untouched for centuries," I'm told, and threaded with trails and other activities. Watch this space for more unique and exciting additions.

Details: €€€; hodsonbayhotel.com



Cashel Palace

23. Cashel Palace

Cashel, Co Tipperary

Here's a hotel I'm sure will climb the Hot 100 next year. Re-opened this March after a deep reboot by owners, the Magnier family of Coolmore Stud, the Cashel Palace brings a head-turning new pool, bedroom wing and lovely investment in local (right down to the Ponaire coffee and local products in a complimentary, in-room pantry drawer). It appears to have overcome that early '[Sconegate](#)' controversy and, under the guiding hand of GM Adriaan Bartels, will surely start to grow an international reputation. In it for the long-haul, it has all the ingredients to be a classic and perhaps even win a Michelin star... and don't forget the zingy Mikey Ryan's gastro pub right outside. [Read our Cashel Palace hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€€€; cashelpalacehotel.ie



24. Ballygarry Hotel & Spa

Tralee, Co Kerry

I felt at home when I walked in the door. Some hotels just have that — a sense of calm, warmly invested staff, a feel of a good stay ahead. Pdraig McGillicuddy is the third generation to run Ballygarry (older guests may remember it as The Manhattan), and he continues to innovate and evolve. The Nádúr Spa, cosy Owen Mac's bar, pops of fresh flowers and long-serving staff are all highlights, and he is developing the hotel's gardens, stretching its estate and adding a new Lodge, a New England style barn for weddings and events, too. But it's the glowing feeling it evoked that still gets me.

Details: €€€; ballygarry.ie



Cliff House Hotel

25. The Cliff House

Ardmore, Co Waterford

This design-led five-star burst onto Ireland's hotel scene in 2008, and in some ways is an example of how tough it is to keep a stylised hotel front-of-mind over time. Not everyone loves the decor, but I always feel a firm hand on the tiller, room upgrades have been underway, features like the infinity edge pool have held up, sea views and terrace are dreamy, and it also has a Michelin star. Oh, and the CLIFF brand also has an extremely slick self-catering (or catered) beach house and cottage nearby. *Read our [Cliff House hotel review](#) here.*

Details: €€€€€; cliffhousehotel.ie

The best of the rest... in no particular order

 Castle Leslie Lodge

Castle Leslie Lodge

Castle Leslie

Glaslough, Co Monaghan

Set on a 1,000-acre estate, with a similar number of stories to tell, this piece of Monaghan magic has gone from strength to strength under Sammy Leslie's direction. The Lodge is its country-luxe social hub, you can self-cater in the Old Stable Mews, and the estate setting and professional staff encourage activities you might never normally think of – like archery, fishing or horse riding. You'll come away with a stack of interiors ideas, too.

Details: €€€€; castleleslie.com

Merchant Hotel

Belfast

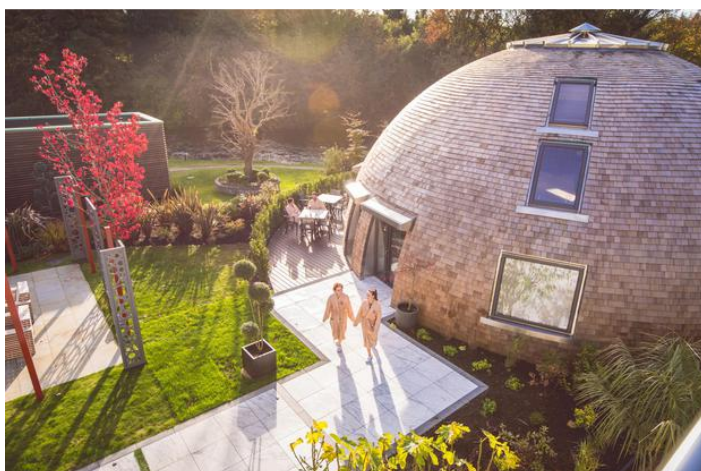
There was always a touch of bling about this Belfast five-star (not least when it served the island's most expensive cocktail), but time has shown it to be an urban classic. Set in the former headquarters of the Ulster Bank, its A-listed section and 'Great Room' are gorgeous, and a newer extension adds a spa, new rooms and Bert's Jazz Bar. Rooms are Victorian style up front, Art Deco in the extension, and the Cathedral Quarter location seals the deal. [Read our Merchant Hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€€€; themerchanthotel.com

River Lee Hotel

Cork

The Doyle Collection isn't the biggest hotel group in the land, but boy, does it know what it's doing. From Dublin's Westbury to the Dupont Circle in Washington DC, its handful of hotels are impeccably designed and fit their markets to a tee. The River Lee is no exception. It's a big, functional four-star, but one with a personal feel to service, a yummy breakfast spread, and I love touches like the curving banquettes of the Grill Room, or the terrace bringing Med magic Leaside. A sure bet, whatever the season.

Details: €€€€; doylecollection.com

Galgorm Resort

Ballymena, Co Antrim

The best spa resort in Northern Ireland? Galgorm has honed its offering to perfection at this point, with a thermal spa village that blows most similarly sized resorts out of the water. It's like a wonderland for spa lovers, from aroma grottos and snow cabins to woodfired hot tubs and forest bathing experiences. It's got several restaurants, a new 'Shepherd's Hut meadow' with one or two-bed small lodge stays, and don't get me started on the gin library...

Details: €€€€; [galgorm.com](#)

Gregans Castle

Ballyvaughan, Co Clare

Guests from JRR Tolkien to Sean Scully have been inspired by the Burren landscape Gregans was embracing long before sustainability was a hospitality buzzword. Simon and Freddie Haden's peaceful and accomplished country house hotel is the kind of escape you'd wish for every county, and chef Robbie McCauley's seven-course tasting menu is the latest evolution of its fine-dining tradition.

Details: €€€€; [gregans.ie](#)

The Twelve

Barna, Co Galway

Energy. Creativity. And the bow-wow factor. Manager (and sommelier) Fergus O'Halloran runs a brilliant operation in Barna village, rolling with the times to consistently innovate and improve. I'm a fan of the spread of foodie options, from pizzas to Pins gastro bar or fine dining at West (a hymn to the hotel's hinterland), and pet owners rave about it, right down to the pet menus and personalised notes.

Details: €€€€; [thetwelvehotel.ie](#)



Inchydoney Lodge and Spa, Co Cork

Inchydoney Lodge & Spa

Clonakilty, Co Cork

tradition of holidaymaking in a bolthole loved by generations of families, couples, friends (and even the odd Fianna Fáil think-in). It keeps buckets and spades at reception, has Netflix in rooms, and a couple's suite in the spa. A class act.

Details: €€€€; inchydoneyisland.com

The Station House

Kilmessan, Co Meath

Small but perfectly formed, the Station House also tells a story. Once a station on the Dublin and Meath railway line, the Slattery family has refurbished it as a slick escape and wedding venue that feels like a cute little campus. Nineteen rooms keep it intimate, lights twinkle on woodland pathways, heritage touches include old photos and a Milner safe in one restaurant wall. The Signal Suite is an Insta-friendly standalone two-level stay (perfect for couples) with a freestanding bath. Think understated luxury. [Read our *Station House hotel review* here.](#)

Details: €€€; stationhousehotel.ie

Bushmills Inn

Bushmills, Co Antrim

It had me at inglenook. This Blue Book stay cries out cosiness, originating as it does from a 17th-century coaching inn. The inglenook is a little snug by the turf fire (bags the rocking chair), the bar still has its original gas lamps, there's a small cinema, "secret" library and 41 rooms spread throughout the labyrinthine little building in which to bed down for the night as a traveller on the Causeway Coast.

Details: €€€; bushmillsinn.com



Sidecar at The Westbury, Dublin

The Westbury

Dublin

If you can bag a Gallery window seat for afternoon tea at this storied city hotel, you are absolutely made. But that's just the beginning. Balfé's has become a consistently good brasserie, design is Art Deco meets grand city glam, there's

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the Dublin jewel in the Doyle Collection's crown. [Read our Westbury Hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€€€€; [doylecollection.com](#)


Mount Juliet

Thomastown, Co Kilkenny

One of Ireland's flagship resorts, if you haven't been to Mount Juliet recently, you may want to plan a return. As well as the Michelin-starred Lady Helen restaurant and characterful period rooms in the Georgian manor house, you can stay in Hunter's Yard hotel with 93 rooms, and have your pick of golf, horse riding and other estate activities. Christmas packages are legendary.

Details: €€€€€; [mountjuliet.ie](#)

WATCH: Pampering time? This is Ireland's No.1 spa, as chosen by you!



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Monart

Enniscorthy, Co Wexford

Technically, I guess it's a hotel — but in branding and spirit this is of course a destination spa, and an absolute trailblazer in that regard. Fans go all wobbly when you mention Monart, and the adult-only escape is careful to stay at the technological forefront whilst retaining the human touch — a critical mix. The food is a surprising bonus.

Details: €€€€€; [monart.ie](#)

Fernhill House

Clonakilty, Co Cork

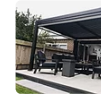
I love Ireland's tradition of family-run hotels, and the O'Neills' Fernhill House is one to savour. From gardens designed by Mary Reynolds to fresh flowers, local art, its own gin, menus peppered with local food and a focus on sustainability that could teach bigger hotels a thing or two, they pour passion into the place. It's popular for weddings, so leisure guests often stay midweek. [Read our Fernhill House Hotel review here.](#)

Details: €€; [fernhillhousehotel.com](#)

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Garth Brooks pops into Dingle, Kerry to lead locals in a singalong



'Every stinking time!' - King Charles III loses patience in another pen-related incident



On This Day In History - September 14th



Privacy

'Jurassic Newpark', an interactive experience featuring life-sized robotic dinosaurs, is the latest addition to this dynamic, friendly four-star just outside Kilkenny City. They join a small farm, adventure playground, go-kart track, swimming pool, games room and much, much more. It's another hotel that amazes me with how it marries non-stop local business with deep residential guest facilities. For a treat, try the deluxe family or executive rooms.

Details: €€€; [newparkhotelkilkenny.com](#)

Take a look inside Glenlo Abbey, named 'Ireland's best hotel' for 2022



00:00 01:51 720p

Glenlo Abbey

Bushypark, Co Galway

It was your hotel of the year in our Reader Travel Awards 2022, and this Blue Book bolthole is another standout property on a big development journey. The Pullman Restaurant, set on carriages from the Orient Express, is an Insta-(and foodie)-friendly highlight, but new bedrooms, interiors upgrades, a boutique spa and the addition of Palmers Bar & Kitchen all beg for a revisit. If you can book midweek, it's one of our more affordable five-stars.

Details: €€€€; [glenloabbeyhotel.ie](#)

Carton House

Maynooth, Co Kildare

Another flagship hotel benefitting from a change of ownership and [multi-million euro upgrade](#) (courtesy of the IrishAmerican Mullen family), Carton House has leaped from four to five stars and, like Cashel Palace, has the potential to rank alongside the very best hotels in Ireland. Now a Fairmont Managed resort, I love the 'hotel-within-a-hotel' concept they've applied to the old Palladian mansion, and the 1,100-acre demesne manages to fit not one, but two golf courses, with oodles of room to spare for trails, nature and outdoor activities like falconry and boat trips. It's the Irish rugby team's regular training base, too. [Read our Carton House review here.](#)

Details: €€€€; [cartonhouse.com](#)

The Ice House

Ballina, Co Mayo



after
heckling
Prince
Andrew in
Edinburg!

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Chill spa and adding a waterside terrace. I like the river-hugging location, which reminds me of the Cliff House in Ardmore, the floor-to-ceiling view from bedrooms, and the way the old house has been seamlessly integrated into newer, angular wings. The art collection is a surprise, and menus feature best-of-the-west ingredients. [Read our *Ice House hotel review* here.](#)

Details: €€€€; [icehousehotel.ie](#)

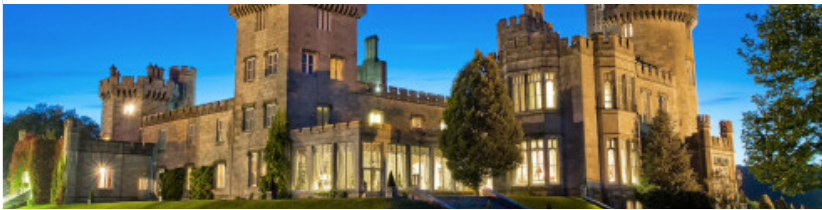
Garryvoe Hotel

Ballylongane, Co Cork

Overlooking a 5km beach on Ballycotton Bay, there's been a hotel on this spot since the early 1900s, and the Garryvoe has gone up yet another gear in its latest guise. People who haven't visited in years may be floored by the library, bar and Samphire restaurant, whose look and feel would fit many city sophisticates, and there's a pool with a 25m lane. Book an ocean view room for excellent East Cork views.

Details: €€€; [garryvoehotel.com](#)

VIDEO: Inside Dromoland Castle's €20 million makeover!



00:00 00:58 720p

Dromoland Castle

Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co Clare

Another iconic Irish stay, Dromoland got a much-needed, multi-million euro revamp in recent years, and its consistently great service, set-piece rooms and grand golf course add up to a fab five-star deck — but importantly, one with feeling and judgement. It leans into the castle-ness of it all, with suits of armour, stained glass and its cheapest rates (in November) are just over half that of Adare Manor's. [Read our *Dromoland Castle review* here.](#)

Details: €€€€€; [dromoland.ie](#)

The Devlin

Dublin

The Dean (with editions now in Dublin, Cork and Galway) is the Press Up Group's flagship hotel franchise, but I like how this suburban sanctuary slips under the radar. A hotel in the middle of Ranelagh village? It didn't sound possible, but they've pulled it off, adding a signature rooftop bar (Layla's, rather than Sophie's, but you know what to expect), a basement Stella Cinema and the

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1 hour ago

Petrol thief was in 'fear of his life'
Balbriggan District Court hears

€50 voucher, too.

Details: €€€; [thedevlin.ie](#)

Bishop's Gate Hotel

Derry

A cosy, classy, boutique base in Derry, the Bishop's Gate is a relatively new arrival to Ireland's Blue Book — whose exacting standards always merit a look. Set within the city walls, it blends Edwardian detail with modern creature comforts, and tasteful design with well-drilled, invested staff. In a former life, it was a gentleman's club.

Details: €€€; [bishopsgatehotelderry.com](#)



Four stars for the Celtic Ross. Gerry Wycherley's grandchildren on Warren Beach Rosscarbery. Photo: Dermot O'Sullivan

Celtic Ross Hotel

Rosscarbery, Co Cork

It could so easily be a generic coach tourism staging point, but the Wycherly family owners and tireless, inspired leadership of General Manager Neil Grant have made this hotel a legend in its locality. Good, thoughtfully sourced West Cork food, friendly staff, some surprising art and the wonders on its doorstep continue to see solid family bookings and repeat business. Twenty-five years since it opened, this year brought the team a new reward — [a fourth star](#).

Details: €€€; [celticrosshotel.com](#)

Cabra Castle

Kingscourt, Co Cavan

The family-run Romantic Castles of Ireland collection has breathed new life into the tier of castle hotels just below Ashford, Dromoland and the like. Affordable luxury brings Ballyseede Castle, Castlebellingham and Markree Castle to whole new levels. Cabra has the old-school, suits-of-armor atmospherics, but also a polished renovation to show off, as well as 100 acres of grounds, courtyard and cottage room options... and a ghost (ask for Sarah's room).

Great Southern Hotel

Killarney, Co Kerry

Can you imagine Killarney without it? I can't. Built in 1854 with a remit to "take the guest's breath away", the Great Southern has had its ebbs and flows over almost 170 years, but is back charting a classy course under the ownership of the Scally family (who also own Hayfield Manor and the Killarney Royal). Historic suites honoured guests like Grace Kelly and Jackie Kennedy, and I've always liked how it mixes a sense of grandeur and railway heritage with personal memorabilia and the human touch.

Details: €€€€; greatsouthernkillarney.com



The exterior of Gougane Barra Hotel in Co Cork

Gougane Barra Hotel

Gougane Barra, Co Cork

If God could choose a location for a small hotel, I'd be shocked if Gougane Barra wasn't on the shortlist. The small, warmly welcoming stay by the lake here is a fifth-generation affair run by Neil and Katy Lucey, and beloved of locals and return visitors for its unpretentious hospitality and decent food. By now, it's hard to imagine this stunning valley without it. The hotel opens seasonally from April to October, and a long-running "overnighter with dinner" offer is hard to resist from €105pp.

Details: €€; gouganebarrahotel.com

Brook Lodge & Macreddin Village

Aughrim, Co Wicklow

Running a certified organic restaurant years before local and seasonal fare became menu staples, this Wicklow wonder continues to bring back the regulars (and weddings). Evan Doyle has been a trailblazer on slow, local and wild food in Ireland, the Wells Spa is a bonus, rooms and facilities feel quality country luxe despite the slightly twee village layout, and many consider it an old favourite.

Details: €€€€; brooklodge.com

Killarney Park Hotel

Kerry has no shortage of five-stars, but the Killarney Park stands out as a surprisingly intimate stay that seems to closet you away and keep you looked after, despite being in the thick of the town's action. It's a real driver on sustainability, a regular on TripAdvisor's 'Best Hotels' lists, and staff have that congenial Kerry kindness too — nobody will forget your name, but they won't over-use it, either.

Details: €€€€€; [killarneyparkhotel.ie](#)



Wren Urban Nest in Dublin. Photo: BDP/Nick Caville

Wren Urban Nest

Dublin

During Covid, most city hotel rooms lay empty, and public sentiment — spurred by the housing crisis and a wave of developments replacing older cultural hubs — was increasingly anti-hotel. An inauspicious time for Wren Urban Nest, which replaces the former Andrew's Lane theatre, to open. But I found a small hotel making a big play on sustainability, already carbon neutral and using lots of Irish suppliers like the Handmade Soap Co. Rooms are tiny but the location is great... and it's just opposite Picket. Read our [Wren Urban Nest review](#) here.

Details: €€€; [wrenhotel.ie](#)

Kilkea Castle

Castledermot, Co Kildare

It doesn't have the profile of other historic Irish hotels with deep-pocketed owners... yet. But Boston-based Jay and Christy Cashman have steered a dramatic overhaul of this four-star stay, polishing the castle element beautifully while adding a small but opulent spa. There's a championship golf course and carriage and lodge rooms along with the 11, more expensive, stays in the castle itself.

Details: €€€€€; [kilkeacastle.ie](#)

Conrad Dublin

Dublin

radar and exceed expectations. It certainly did mine. Polished rooms, a classy lounge bar and the Coburg brasserie could easily pull it off in London, and I was blown away by the breakfast – with local details including bread from the Bretzel bakery.

Details: €€€€€; [hilton.com](#)



Falls Hotel and Spa, Co Clare

Falls Hotel & Spa

Ennistymon, Co Clare

Sustainability doesn't have to be a hassle. It can be fun, help your community, and make business sense. That was a message I took away from this family-run four-star, which is now carbon-neutral. The headline effort is a €1.3m hydroelectric turbine generating its own electricity, but the philosophy trickles down to chemical-free cleaning products, compostable cups... and lots more. The views from the spa are pure forest bathing, too.

Details: €€€; [fallshotel.ie](#)

Renvyle House

Connemara, Co Galway

Renvyle is another hotel that feels like part of the furniture, straddling several generations of holidaymakers. To some, the Coyle family's hotel, which first opened in 1883 and was a former home of Oliver St John Gogarty, may feel dated, but its heritage, friendliness, lake, fishing, beach, nine-hole golf course, lodges and chef Tim O'Sullivan's ease with seafood, in particular, have won generations of fans. People will be returning for many years to come.

Details: €€€€€; [renvyle.com](#)

Mulranny Park Hotel

Murrevagh, Co Mayo

With a dreamy location overlooking Clew Bay on the Great Western Greenway, here's another old railway hotel that has forged a new identity. You can stay in rooms or self-catering apartments, families love the pool and activities, and the menus have always put a little extra effort into sourcing locally. Fun fact: John Lennon and Yoko Ono stayed in 1968, when he is said to have treated guests to a preview of Revolution (there's a room named after John Lennon).

Farnham Estate

Coras Point, Co Cavan

Years of consistency, good PR and happy customers sharing word with their friends has given this resort a national profile, and it's well-deserved. The inside/outside pool, natural tones and well-designed links between new and old (for a splurge, book a suite in the 18th-century house) are all strong points. As is, of course, that spa. It feels wonderfully remote, but is just 3km from Cavan town.

Details: €€€€; farnhamestate.ie



Sheen Falls

Sheen Falls Lodge

Killarney, Co Kerry

The last time I stayed at Sheen Falls, I sat watching salmon leap from flat summer water. Kenmare is close, but this woodland escape, with the waterfall gargling nearby, felt a world apart. I've not always loved stays here, as I felt Sheen Falls struggled for a time to redefine itself and accommodation varied across the campus, but it's on a roll lately, combining the best of lodge and luxury resorts, and a new brasserie and bar, The Stables. For me, dinner at The Falls restaurant, with Christine Bowen's art on the walls and the waterfall flowing outside, is the selling point.

Details: €€€€€; sheenfallsloodge.ie

Lakeside Hotel

Killaloe, Co Clare

A new suite of waterfront rooms took this much-loved hotel to another level just before the pandemic, adding a block of hideaways facing directly onto Lough Derg. The leisure centre has long hosted one of the best hotel pools in the area, complete with a surprisingly speedy, 40m slide. Friendly staff and ongoing refurbishments are good signs, too.

Details: €€€; lakesidehotel.ie

The Old Ground Hotel

Not long ago, Ireland's townhouse hotels felt like a dying breed. Today, creative stewardships of stays like The Lansdowne in Kenmare, Lawlor's of Naas and the Headford Arms in Kells makes it feel like anything is possible. The Old Ground is another stalwart with a central location and warmth and a drive to survive in its DNA. The old manor house heritage combines with local and visiting business, good food and refurbished rooms to make for a buzzy, brilliant stay. The Poet's Corner bar is a bonus.

Details: €€€; [oldgroundhoteleennis.com](#)

The Dylan

Dublin

Here's a savvy layover that could slot into any swish European capital; a *Mr & Mrs Smith*-style bolthole just off Baggot Street where drink clinks on a pewter bar, bold art stops you in your tracks (check out that Ana Fuentes triptych), and classy terraces speak to our al fresco era. A new all-day dining menu is available from 12pm to 9.30pm, promising to take guests "on a culinary journey" from Cassolnovo, Italy to Castletownbere, Co Cork. 'Experience' suites are pick of the rooms, and it's dog-friendly too.

Details: €€€€; [dylan.ie](#)

Killeavy Castle Estate

Slieve Gullion, Co Armagh

It's an hour from Dublin Airport, but I'll bet many readers have never heard of it. South Armagh is full of secrets, however, and this is one. The 45-bed hotel and spa makes a huge effort with local food (an on-site farm provides lamb and longhorn beef for chef Darragh Dooley's menus), rooms have Juliet balconies and baths, there are picture windows at every opportunity, and the cherry on the cake is a restored, souvenir-sized "castle" with four bedrooms.

Details: €€€€; [killeavycastle.com](#)

No.31

Dublin

I don't know how it still feels secret, but it does. No.31 pairs a modernist mews designed by architect Sam Stephenson (the sunken lounge is a magnetic, decadent space) with a Georgian townhouse across the garden. Expect slightly squished, communal breakfasts, a sense of fun (room names include 'Sam's Room', and 'All that Jazz'), and lots of wonderings about what went on here back in the day. Nearby Staunton's on the Green is a sister property.

Details: €€€; [number31.ie](#)

Fota Resort

Fota Island, Co Cork

There's a huge amount going on at this luxury campus, and the location near Fota Wildlife Park is perfect. Self-catering lodges are popular with families, the spa and pool are top drawer, there's a championship golf course, and an adventure centre offers everything from obstacle courses to combat archery

up for dinner at the Cove, or eat casually at the Clubhouse.

Details: €€€€; fotaisland.ie

The Blue Haven

Kinsale, Co Cork

If you want to see how hard the best hoteliers work, how integrated they are with their localities, how creative in the face of challenges they can be, check into Ciarán Fitzgerald's Kinsale hub. With just 16 bedrooms, it's super-central, with the blue-and-white entrance glass leading to a tight series of public areas. The big surprise is its spread of foodie options crammed with West Cork goodies, including Rare 1784 — a cocktail and fine dining concept created with Head Chef Meeran Manzoor during Covid. Sister property, the Old Bank House, is just a few doors down.

Details: €€€; bluehavenkinsale.com

Limerick Strand Hotel

Limerick

Big urban four-stars like this are the workhorses of *booking.com*, and often feel fairly generic. That's one reason I have time for this Limerick layover. As well as great city views, a 20m pool and consistently good family packages, it puts way more energy than you'd expect into local food and drink — continuing the legacy of chef Tom Flavin (a Limerick Afternoon Tea, for example, includes details like brews from Cahill's Tea, the city's oldest shop). When it gets the mix of local and cosmopolitan right, it reminds me of Cork's River Lee Hotel. Little surprise, perhaps, that it's part of the MHL Collection, which also includes The Westin, InterContinental and Galway's Glenlo Abbey.

Details: €€€; strandhotellimerick.ie



One of the stunning bedrooms in Cliff at Lyons, Co Kildare

Cliff at Lyons

Sallins, Co Kildare

I've had mixed experiences at this Kildare campus over the years, but it continues to improve. One obvious reason is, of course, Majken Bech Christensen and Jordan Bailey's two Michelin star Aimsir restaurant — guests

there's a new restaurant in The Mill and outdoor space in the spa. One day, the village feel and canal-side location could offer a world-class escape.

Details: €€€€; [cliffatlyons.ie](#)

The Imperial

Cork

There's a lot happening in Cork's hotel scene, but it says something that some of the most exciting developments are in one of its oldest stays. Dating from 1813, the Imperial has emerged from the pandemic with a new cocktail bar, Sketch, revamped the room in which Michael Collins slept before his assassination, and continues to blend its heritage with a 21st century, cosmopolitan sensibility under the energetic eye of GM Bastien Peyraud. He grew up in Lyon, and sees many similarities with his adopted home. "Cork City has blossomed," he told me. So has the hotel.

Details: €€€; [imperialhotelcork.com](#)

The Europe

Killarney, Co Kerry

Its award-winning ESPA spa is enough to merit a spot on any "best of" hotels list. Carved out of the hill, with cantilevered grass roofs, infinity pools, dark stone slabs and pamper-tastic treatments in its 50,000sqm space, it's a destination in itself. The five-star hotel adds stunning views of Lough Lein, generously sized rooms, and menus including beef and lamb from its own farm. A class act.

Details: €€€€€; [theeurope.com](#)

The K Club

Straffan, Co Kildare

Stuffy old golf resort? Think again. The K Club retains its ravishing Ryder Cup facilities, but it's been on a vigorous journey of change under new owner, Michael Fetherston, and GM Paul Heery (formerly of Adare Manor). Refurbished bedrooms, a glitzy Palmer clubhouse and activities that make the best of the estate (SUP, Segways and K Trails, to name a few) all bring a new sense of style and inclusivity to the Straffan five-star — as does the South Bar & Restaurant replacing K Thai. Healthy competition with a rejuvenated Carton House can only benefit Co Kildare... and us.

Details: €€€€; [kclub.ie](#)





Manor house signature room at Cahernane House Hotel in Killarney, Co Kerry

Cahernane House

Killarney, Co Kerry

I think of this as one of Killarney's best-kept secrets. A new member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World collection, the PREM Group has spent over €7.8m bringing this 19th century pile up to speed, with a mix of modern and original rooms, gorgeous coachhouse conversions, and colours and wallpapers inspired by the Kingdom. Antique details like the banker's desk used at reception catch the eye, even the youngest staff have good judgement and humour, and a fire welcomes you in an original Queen Anne fireplace.

Details: €€€€; cahernane.com

Lough Erne Resort

Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh

Pound for pound, this resort offers some of the best five-star value on the island (especially when the exchange rate is in your favour). The golf, spa, and sprawling outdoors resort feel are highlights, but for me the thing to look forward to is chef Noel McMeel's magic with Northern Irish ingredients at the 3AA Rosette Catalina Restaurant. A five-course dinner at £60pp sounds like a steal these days.

Details: €€€€; loughernereresort.com

Casey's of Baltimore

Baltimore, Co Cork

It has 14 rooms, and calls itself a hotel, but in reality most people know Casey's as an experience. You might tuck into the locally caught seafood and kitchen garden goodies in its restaurant. Or sup a pint in its pub, which dates from the 1800s – the West Cork Brewing Co is on the premises, with treats like Sherkin Lass and Stout x Southwest awaiting your approval. Throw in the Roaringwater Bay views, and you couldn't ask for a better staging post in West Cork.

Details: €€€; caseysofbaltimore.com



Clayton Burlington Road

Dublin

[The Burlo celebrates its 50th anniversary](#) in 2022, and though I'd hesitate to recommend it as anything other than a big, generic, reasonably central four-star in which to sleep, its staff and heritage make it a no-brainer for this list. At this stage, surely every adult in Ireland has been through its ballroom, but staff still care, whether you're Pele, Audrey Hepburn or... well, just you.

Details: €€€€; claytonhotelburlingtonroad.com

Arnold's Hotel

Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal

This Dunfanaghy delight celebrates 100 years in 2022, [now run by the fourth generation of the same family](#). Aisling Arnold has steered the three-star out of recession and through Covid, adding a cafe and burger bar, cocktail bar, and refurbishing rooms with a firm feel for its place within the community. I love the sense of locals who know it inside out, and guests who come back over and over again.

Details: €€; arnoldshotel.com

The Lansdowne

Kenmare, Co Kerry

Not content with the Park Hotel Kenmare and Dromquinna Manor, John and Francis Brennan are now custodians of The Lansdowne, a historic townhouse restored to slick, four-star status in Kenmare. Kasia Michalak is a superb general manager, and Brennan-esque touches range from the continental-style LK Cafe to a chaise longue in the lobby and 3fe coffee. It's a fab reboot, and I like that staff can wear jeans and trainers, but still feel like pros.

Details: €€€; lansdownekenmare.com



The stunning Clonakilty Park Hotel in Clonakilty, Co Cork

Clonakilty Park Hotel

Clonakilty, Co Cork

of a hotel playing to its base, evolving continuously, and having great craic while it does. Pool, play zones, an adventure centre with zip lines and aerial trekking, kids' menus and school-holiday packages with kids' clubs are all on offer, and it has also created a sensory map for visitors with autism.

Details: €€€; [clonakiltyparkhotel.ie](#)

Harrison Chambers

Belfast

Taking inspiration from her travels, Melanie Harrison transformed a 19th century merchant's home in Belfast's Queen's Quarter into a chic homage to local authors, lavish antiques and frisky design. Think free-standing baths on reclaimed floorboards, rooms named after local heroes like CS Lewis and singer Ruby Murray, and *Bridgerton*-style sleigh beds. Personal, and playful.

Details: €€€; [chambersofdistinction.com](#)

The Connacht

Galway

The A, B, C and D wings in this big, modernist-style building sound impersonal, and the place can get mad busy at peak times, but the humans behind the 358-room operation retain the personal touch. Recently refurbished, highlights include family bunk rooms, a living wall near the restaurant, a large pool and leisure centre, and the 'Connacht Cruiser' – an American-style motorhome stay. It's hard to believe this hotel is a three-star.

Details: €€€; [theconnacht.ie](#)



Hot tub with a view at Dingle Skellig Hotel, Co Kerry

Dingle Skellig Hotel

Dingle, Co Kerry

Hugely popular with families, and boasting a mind-blowing location on the bay, the Dingle Skellig has been here since 1968 but has, of course, gone through many evolutions since. It now has executive suites for the fanciest stays (at the very least, try to get a sea view), along with an upgraded bar and

Details: €€€; [dingleskellig.com](#)

The g hotel

Galway

This hotel has been around for some 20 years. Surprised? I am, because Philip Treacy's design still feels fresh. Some will debate that, feeling the Celtic Tiger-era decadence, but I've always been a fan of its boldness — from the space-age concierge desk and aquarium to the light-filled Grand Salon with its 300 floating globe lights. The spa is sultry, the cocktails good, the location a little out-of-town — it offers one of Ireland's most affordable five-star stays, too.

Details: €€€€; [theghotel.ie](#)

Sligo Park Hotel

Cornageeha, Co Sligo

Friendly staff, hard work and a commitment to keep chipping away are key ingredients in any hotel, and this fab four-star is no exception. It's on the go since the 1970s, but a €3m, pre-pandemic investment rebooted the lobby, bar and restaurant, with tweeds, velvets and limestone reflecting the surroundings, as well as refurbishing a chunk of rooms. Guest feedback is encouraging, the Hazelwood Restaurant has an AA Rosette, and there's a 16m pool. Book a room with a view of Ben Bulbin, if you can.

Details: €€€; [sligoparkhotel.com](#)



Waterford Castle

Waterford Castle

Ballinakill, Co Waterford

If this was a list of best hotel arrivals in Ireland, Waterford Castle would be at the top. The two-minute ferry crossing of the River Suir to a private island is modern-day fairytale stuff, and the castle itself is full of standout spaces like the Great Hall and Munster Room. Tom Spruce's cooking won it a spot on our Fab 50 in recent years, and there are dozens of lodges and a golf course, too.

Details: €€€€; [waterfordcastleresort.com](#)

Killarney, Co Kerry

The window seats and terrace here offer some of the best views of any Irish hotel — and pandemic enhancements led to it winning Ireland's Best Outdoor Dining Space at the recent Yes Chef awards. On arrival, the generic wings don't spark any great interest, but inside you'll find a warm hive of activity and generations of hospitality. Spend time browsing the Huggard family memorabilia on the walls, spot photos of previous guests like Charlie Chaplin, and soak up the views of Killarney National Park.

Details: €€€; lakehotelkillarney.ie

Avalon House Hotel

Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny

You couldn't ask for a better base for a trip to the brilliant Castlecomer Discovery Park. Avalon House opened just before the pandemic, combining the polished atmospherics of a 19th century manor house with a tastefully realised contemporary town centre hotel. Interiors are lovely, blending homely comforts and heritage touches like old miners' helmets, and Cathal O'Dowd's food at Lark's Bar or Lil's restaurant typifies a four-star with surprising style.

Details: €€€; avalonhousehotel.ie



Sumptuous food at Ferrycarrig Hotel, Co Wexford

Ferrycarrig Hotel

Ferrycarrig, Co Wexford

Owned by Ireland's Griffin Group, which also runs Monart, this is a thoughtful, invested four-star with great views, a commitment to families and local ingredients (think of seafood fresh from Kilmore Quay, or Wexford cheeses and lamb) on the menus at the Dry Dock bar. The kids' club is a holiday fave, and it partners creatively with local businesses — bundling free passes to the Irish National Heritage Park with some family packages, for example.

Details: €€€; ferrycarrighotel.ie

Delphi Resort

Leenane, Co Galway

stone lodge with earthy tones inside click nicely with the landscape, views from the 814 restaurant and bar are superb (the local lamb and seafood aren't bad, either), and the Delphi Spa is an underrated, immersive gem using organic products... perfect after a go of that bog obstacle course.

Details: €€€; [delphiadventureresort.com](#)



Vienna Woods Hotel, Cork

Vienna Woods Hotel

Cork

Original Irish Hotels is a collection of unique, owner-run properties, and one of the best is Michael Magner's Vienna Woods. Overlooking the Glashaboy River in Glanmire, the popular four-star sprawls around an 18th-century country house, with recent refreshes of tiring rooms just a prelude to a bigger expansion — including a spa, cinema and new rooms. Holiday homes are available too, and Mabel's bistro always gives local produce a good show.

Details: €€€; [viennawoodshotel.com](#)



Lough Eske Hotel

Lough Eske Castle

Lough Eske, Co Donegal

County Donegal's only five-star sits among 40+ acres of woodland at the base of the Bluestacks. The castle (or castle-styled?) element offers sumptuous suites,

reality these are very different properties (not least due to Lough Eske's pool and spa). There's a lovely little Lake Lodge you can rent, too.

Details: €€€€; lougheskecastlehotel.com

Sandhouse Hotel & Spa

Rosstown, Co Donegal

Rosstown is one of the best all-rounder beaches in the west, and here's a hotel to match. Ten years ago, then-manager Paul Driver bought the Sandhouse in a recession. A decade (and a pandemic) later, it's still going strong, with Marine Spa, seaweed baths, a funky nod to local waveriders in the Surfers Bar, and Atlantic views — not least from its Glasshouse restaurant. The feel is a mix of stately, seaside and country house hotels, with a clear love for locality.

Details: €€€; sandhouse.ie

Mount Falcon

Ballina, Co Mayo

This beautiful estate got creative during Covid, setting up a heated bamboo tent on the lawn and letting chef Tom Doyle loose on revamped menus with his Assador grill. The manor house is full of period detail (as well as a 17m pool and small spa), the self-catering set-up is one of the best around, country pursuits like hawk walks and archery add fun to family breaks, and the Maloney family always feel invested in guest experiences and all things Mayo.

Details: €€€€; mountfalcon.com



The exterior of Knockranny House Hotel in Westport, Co Mayo

Knockranny House Hotel

Westport, Co Mayo

It's hard to choose from Westport's wonderful collection of hotels, which work so well together in promoting the area. This sprawling four-star mixes character and contemporary flair, with some big rooms (go higher up for best views of Croagh Patrick), the Salveo Spa and Seamus Commons' La Fougère — a restaurant that wouldn't feel out of place in some five-star hotels — among

Details: €€€€; knockrannyhousehotel.ie



Kilronan Castle in Ballyfarnon, CO Roscommon

Kilronan Castle

Ballyfarnon, Co Roscommon

Its sister hotel, Lough Rynn, may be better-known, but this restored castle in Roscommon has a huge amount to recommend it, and was a pretty breathtaking boom-era project by the Hanly Group. A decadent spa, chef Daniel Willimont's food, opulent lounging areas and that vast country estate (and walled gardens) all amount to a salubrious and evocative escape, at roughly a quarter of the price of top-tier peers like Ashford Castle.

Details: €€€€; kilronancastle.ie

The Marker

Dublin

I feel Dubliners have been slow to bring this landmark five-star into the family, perhaps due to its slightly off-centre location. But its bold design, setting a chalky white chequerboard of rooms over a cave-like entrance, has stood the test of time — and its rooftop terrace is one of the city's best for summer soirees. The spa and infinity pool are sleek, chef Gareth Mullins has been deeply invested in Irish ingredients (breakfast in the large, sun-splashed lobby is lovely). It's now run by luxury hotel group, Anantara; waterfront rooms are worth a splurge.

Details: €€€€€; anantara.com/the-marker-dublin



1783 Whiskey & Cocktail Bar, Faithlegg House Hotel, Waterford

Faithlegg House Hotel

Faithlegg, Co Waterford

Grown up around an 18th century manor house, this four-star is another hugely popular escape. The old mansion is full of period features; chef Jenny Flynn's menus range from the two AA Rosette Roseville Rooms to the more casual Red Cedar Lounge, refurbished last year; and there's an all-important pool. Hotel rooms are in a more modern wing, and self-catering is always in demand during school holidays, including apartments and two and three-bed homes. And that's without detailing the golf course...

Details: €€€€; faithlegg.com

The Bridge House

Tullamore, Co Offaly

Here's one of the beating hearts of Tullamore and a workhorse that knows its audience inside-out. "Think of this place as a cruise liner," as Louise Leneghan, marketing manager and one of the family who runs it, said when I last visited. "There's lots going on." Now 50 years old, the four-star is undergoing room refurb, offers lovely, personable service and the carvery is legendary.

Details: €€€; bridgehousehoteltullamore.ie

Sheedy's Hotel

Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare

John and Martina Sheedy are the fourth generation to care for this 18th century treasure — but of course, they do much more than that. John's cooking is a highlight, using local ingredients like Burren lamb for his French-influenced dishes, as well as his own jams, scones and breads for breakfast. Expect intuitive hospitality, local tips aplenty and 'gracious country living', as they call it. A gem.

Details: €€€; sheedys.com



The grounds of Hunter's Hotel in Wicklow

Hunter's Hotel

Prepare to step back in time at this former coach inn. Thick walls, dark interiors and beautiful gardens date from the 1600s (I spotted inscriptions in windows scratched by travellers generations ago). The 16 rooms could be seen as quaint, the website is dating, but Sunday lunch (€39.50) is a Wicklow institution, and the elements seem to click. Afternoon tea at €25pp is a bargain. It's in the Blue Book, too.

Details: €€€; hunters.ie

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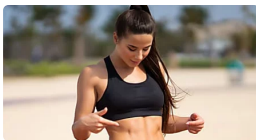
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