

# Travel

Bringing you all the latest deals and offers



By Catherine Murphy

**W**HILE we've been in lockdown, the hotel business has been busy with refurbishments, relaunches, and even some new openings. Here's three of the freshest new stays across the island that have great offers for November and December.

## 1 Wren Urban Nest, Andrew's Lane, Dublin 1

Tucked into the old Andrew's Lane Theatre site in the heart of Dublin city centre, Wren is aptly named, with 137 compact bedrooms (aka 'snug' and 'cosy' nests) over nine floors, and the capital's attractions right on its doorstep.

This capsule hotel is also tagged as Ireland's most sustainable place to stay; it produces net zero carbon and complies with World Green Building Council standards. "Think of it as no-guilt luxury."

Wren opens smack in the middle of the debate about Dublin's arts venues being replaced by hotels — but, in fairness, it does pay homage to Andrew's Lane Theatre, with



## 2 The Rabbit Hotel & Retreat, Co Antrim

its ALT space and it plans to be a space for the arts. "We want the hotel to have a cultural heartbeat," says general manager Phoebe Fairbairn. "Our bedrooms are small — we don't hide away from that — but they've got lots of smart features, fridges stocked with Irish treats, and really

comfy beds, perfect for a city visit."

■ Run by Moran Hospitality. Introductory rates, from €99 per room; wrenhotel.ie

## 2 The Dean, Galway city

You might be thinking "oh no, not another branded hotel", but The Dean Galway general manager Cian Ó Broin would convince you otherwise.

Set on the site of the old Connaught laundry, less than 100m from Eyre Square, the newest Dean arrival is full of stories and character. As well as featuring a two-storey building dating

back to the 1830s, the hotel incorporates a railway tunnel from the old Galway to Clifden line, which operated from the 1890s up until 1935.

Fasi-forward to December 2021 and guests staying in this 101-bedroom hotel can take part in power-gym classes in a section of the preserved tunnel, then they can peruse 300 works of art by local artists, admire views of Galway city from Sophie's Rooftop Restaurant or relax in Peg's Bar — formerly Hogan's pub, a favourite hang-out of former Galway GAA player and manager Bosco McDermott, and a stop-off for every musician passing through Galway.

# After lockdown, we all need a little pampering

Three unique hotels to escape rat race

The Dean will bring the first Elephant & Castle Restaurant to Galway and is home to a penthouse, rates for which will be "reassuringly expensive", says Cian.

■ Opens on a phased basis from December 9, with lead-in rates from €150 per room; thedean.ie

## 3 The Rabbit Hotel & Retreat, Co Antrim

Set in Templepatrick, The Rabbit Hotel & Retreat may be named after local wildlife, but it aims to bring a touch of boho glamour to rural Antrim, especially in its 'relaxation burrow'.

While the hotel — part of the Galgorm Collection — opened a few months ago, its spa is brand new and promises a laidback Balearic vibe with a playlist to match. Conceptually, it has its eye firmly on a younger market, with a halotherapy salt chamber, a Swedish sauna, Roman bath, and relaxation cabanas. It also offers private pool parties for up to 50 people, with dinner, champagne bubbles and DJ sets.

Just a 20-minute drive from Belfast city centre, it has a lakeside setting with 33 Seandi-inspired bedrooms in four styles — luxe, snug, cosy and attic — equipped with Dyson hairdryers, Nespresso machines and in some cases, outdoor bathtubs.

■ The Rabbit Hotel & Retreat rates from £180 B&B per room midweek (approximately €213); rabbithotel.com