

An enthralling vista

The Cliff House Hotel Ardmore is the focus for this issues hospitality review

As the name suggests this contemporary boutique hotel is built into the steep cliffs overlooking Ardmore Bay and the Irish Sea. Arriving into Ardmore from Dungarvan I was treated to my first sight of the hotel which gleams from its lofty embedded position in the cliff face. Immediately you realise that this is no ordinary place.

by Tom Keane

On arrival I was greeted by the hotels' general manager Adriaan Barthels. Renowned hotelier, affectionately known by all who cross his path as Mr. B, Adriaan has done a wonderful job in putting the Cliff House on the map, not only here in Ireland but on the international scene. His hallmark of unequalled attention to detail and exemplary service is laid bare for all guests to adsorb and enjoy. A Relais & Chateau venue, the hotel exudes style, comfort and finesse.

The reception area is a feast for the eyes with contemporary styling, a mesmeric spiral staircase leads you down to the bar and restaurant, vivid colours and a homely feel from the open fire is the aperitif to the main - the aqua marine jewelled back drop on a windowed canvass. The layout is open yet mazy all adding to the intrigue and magnetism one suspects was intended by the designers.

As I sauntered down to the suite I was greeted to an architectural masterpiece consistent with front of house. The suite, on two levels, has a living area on one level with all the mod cons you would expect from a five star luxury boutique hotel.

On ascending the winding staircase with two returns I reached the upper level of the suite to be met by the enthralling vista of Ardmore Bay and the expansive Irish sea.

The wet room ensuite was spectacular, with his and hers shower with glass wall overlooking the bay was something to behold and underlines the attention to detail in the layout of each and every square foot of the building.

The freestanding contemporary two person bath further proof of the emphasis put on relaxation and creature comforts. The very spacious balcony



overlooking the bay is the ideal location for summertime al fresco dining.

The facilities beggar belief, the glass walled swimming pool area is a particular delight and it is hard for one to find fault with any aspect of the architecture and interior design, it clearly has been a labour of love for owner Barry O'Callaghan.

One of Irelands great entrepreneurs, Mr. O'Callaghan can truly be proud of his creation and the team he has working there as the Cliff House is a real example of what Ireland can deliver with the right people and vision.

Additional unique features worth a mention include Irelands most unique golf hole, where guests can tee off onto the green floating in the Irish sea below! The outdoor jacuzzi is a must anytime of the year and I must admit I spent much of my time here just cleansing my mind of all the stresses of the Irish economy and talk of bailouts!

But the real magic happens later when the restaurant opens its doors to the wizardry of an ambitious and hugely creative Michelin star chef in Dutch-

born head chef Martijn Kajuter. He is more Merlin than Michelin as he creates a magical culinary experience. And that is the word, experience, every course is a work of art that meagre words can do no justice.

The recently awarded Michelin star is testament to the standards to which

the hotel strives continuously to achieve and the fact that it is the only venue outside of Dublin boasting the accolade and only one of six in the entire country. The Relais & Chateau reputation for good food is in safe hands with Martijn and his team of chefs. 

