

Estate unveils its latest addition



The Picnic House is situated within Ballyfin's grounds, close to the main house

Ballyfin, the 15-bedroom hotel in County Laois, just over an hour from Dublin, has recently re-opened for its third season with a brand new Picnic House on the edge of the 600-acre private estate.

The new Picnic House, a slate roofed cottage, has been specially constructed

for use throughout Ballyfin's open season - from March through to December. Guests can visit the property, which is 10 minutes away from the main house, by golf-buggy, bicycle or even pony-and-trap.

The Picnic House, boasting floor to ceiling windows, features views of Portlaoise (the neighbouring town to Ballyfin Demesne) and the Slieve Bloom mountains,

The room has an open fire and provides shelter and a dining and entertainment area. There is also a table for up to 12 picnickers.

General manager, Ballyfin, Aileesh Carew commented: "The Picnic House promises to be a wonderful added attraction for our new 2013 season, adding as it will to the wide variety of activities for our guests."

Celebrating The Gathering initiative

In celebration of Tourism Ireland's 'The Gathering' initiative', Preferred Hotel Group has recently introduced a plethora of special packages at several of the properties in its Irish portfolio.

To honour the initiative, Dromoland Castle is to provide a complimentary upgrade, full Irish breakfast and wine on arrival, plus a discounted voucher for tourist attractions in the Shannon region.

Meanwhile, Fitzwilliam Belfast and Fitzwilliam Dublin are expected to introduce a series of attractive offers including complimentary breakfast and a guide to Dublin. Furthermore, Dylan hotel is to provide a full Irish breakfast plus two tickets to visit the Guinness Storehouse.

The Europe Hotel & Resort 'The Gathering' package includes a discount on the Ring of Kerry Tour, use of the pools, sauna and steam room facilities, plus complimentary WiFi. The K Club hotel, which is also participating in the promotion, is to offer guests a round of golf on the Smurfit Course; frequent flyers will be able to receive miles with 16 airline partners; and iPrefer guests will be offered extra amenities under a package for 'The Gathering'.

Additionally, Preferred Hotel Group has introduced a Special Summer MICE Promotion offer available at Irish Hotels - The K Club, The Europe Hotel & Resort and 18 participating hotels.

Ireland cruise itinerary introduced

For the first time, luxury specialist, Crystal Cruises is to set sail to and from Dublin Ire for two Northern Europe cruises this summer.

The new seven-day itineraries are to sail between Dublin and London aboard *Crystal Serenity*, exploring the countryside, medieval monuments, castles and the bustling pubs of Ireland, Scotland and England.

The 'Emerald Isle Escape', due to depart on August 26, 2013, is set to travel from Dublin to London with a visit to Belfast, Northern Ireland; Holyhead, Wales; Liverpool, England; Cork, Ireland; Portland, England; as well as Guernsey/St. Peter Port, Channel Islands.

Senior vice president of marketing and sales, Crystal Cruises, Jack Anderson said: "We're excited to offer



Crystal Serenity will for the first time embark on a journey to and from Dublin

fascinating Dublin as a destination for Crystal guests to start or end their journey.

"As a gateway to the Emerald Isles, the city makes pre- and post-cruise travel convenient. It's also a great 'turnaround' port for guests who may want to combine these voyages," he added.

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