

The Long Room is in fact three interconnecting spaces that run across the back of the Lodge, the main building at Doonbeg. The bar, lined in stained oak panelling, opens into a formal dining room. American designer Jacquelynne Lanham used colours in keeping with the western location: shades of green and blue are subtly mixed in a custom made carpet. Pictures of old golf clubs are mounted to walls, lest one forgets what Doonbeg is all about.

NINETEENTH HOLE

THE INTERIORS OF DOONBEG GOLF CLUB COMPLEMENT A LOCATION WHERE LAND AND THE SEA MEET SPECTACULARLY ABOVE A CRAGGY STRETCH OF WESTERN COASTLINE.

PHOTOGRAPHY TIM YOUNG WORDS EOIN LYONS



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US architect John Haley as a stone country house in the baronial style – all jutting gables and dormers, with mullioned bay windows and muscular stack chimneys. It contains 15 suites in the main lodge, a combination of one, two, three or four bedroom suites. There are formal dining rooms and, in one wing, a club house with bar, lounge, and billiards room. Locker rooms and a spa occupy the basement. Set around the Lodge are lime-rendered cottages which house yet more suites. Most of the suites and course-side cottages are privately owned but can be rented by guests. All are decorated in a similarly traditional tone, although no two suites are the same.

Classical mouldings and centuries-old fireplaces, shoulder architraves, Georgian-style doors set in panelled recesses and an abundance of antique furniture mark the interiors of the Lodge. Several winding staircases add drama to the general feel of cosy luxury. Diners in the three-section Long Room can enjoy views of the Atlantic amid a colour scheme that takes its cue from the browns, greens, greys and blues of the sea, grasses, birds, wildflowers and stone walls that characterise the area.

The clubhouse is a large, bay-windowed space with stone fireplace, banquettes and dark wood. Impressive marble-clad locker rooms underline Doonbeg's ambitions as a prestige golf destination, as does the feng shui modernity of

Being lashed by horizontal rain and roaring Atlantic winds wouldn't be everyone's idea of inspiration, but when Buddy Darby and Leonard Long first set foot on the rugged dunes at Doonbeg in Co Clare they knew they'd found something special. That was 1999. Since then, the South Carolina duo, known for creating world-class golf settings, have created and defined a new course and hotel at this site on Doughmore Bay, between Ballybunion and Lahinch.

Greg Norman designed the golf course, which is routed along the existing terrain of a crescent beach and dunes. The private club opened in 2002 and the accommodation was completed four years later on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic.

The main building, the Lodge, was conceived by

OPPOSITE PAGE The exterior of the Lodge is designed in an American version of baronial style and sits on the edge of a bluff above the sea. As the building ages it will meld with the landscape. ABOVE Some suites are positioned around a garden courtyard that offers shelter from the wild Atlantic winds. This one is decorated in a polished version of traditional Irish style: note the grooved panelling, ladder-back chairs and flagstone floor. RIGHT A bedroom in the same suite looks towards the sea. The beams were reclaimed from Kentucky log cabins. Not everything is classical Irish style – a Chinese chest at the foot of the bed adds a touch of oriental charm.





snapshot, albeit very polished, idea of a traditional Irish interior.

Food is a big attraction for visitors to Doonbeg. The award-winning chef, Tom Colicchio, the force behind New York City's Gramercy Tavern – and Craft, another popular restaurant – was involved in Doonbeg's dining room. Under his guidance, menu selections feature fresh local vegetables and speciality seafoods. Colicchio, known for his inventive and bold American cuisine, has accolades that include the James Beard Foundation's Best Chef, New York City.

Whether you are a golf fanatic or simply want to unwind in the comfortable surroundings of this polished establishment, Doonbeg is an incredibly relaxing place to spend some time. And if you can drag yourself away from the comfort of the hotel, the nature and landscape of the surrounding area is spectacular. Take a drive to the Burren and the Cliffs of Moher, go for a bracing walk on the fantastic beaches where you will spot rare birds and possibly a dolphin or two, or simply take a leisurely drive around the pretty, quaint villages that dot the surrounding countryside. Heavenly.

Doonbeg Golf Club, Doonbeg, Co Clare, 065 905 5602; www.doonbeggolfclub.com. To contact CLR Design, ciara@bishopsvale.com.

the spa, designed by New York-based, Irish-born Clodagh O'Kennedy. It features warm-toned Venetian plaster walls and kinetic lighting.

Running throughout most of these spaces is plenty of reclaimed timber. Ceiling beams have come from, of all places, Charleston buildings and Kentucky log cabins. Irish linens, wools and plaids have been used throughout, including a bespoke brown and blue tartan, produced by John Hanly & Co, a renowned Tipperary weaver.

Jacquelynne Lanham, an Atlanta-based designer was responsible for the interiors. She was supported locally by Dublin design team Rhona Roe and Ciara Ní Laoi of CLR Design. The result could be described as "designed disorder" – a look that gives the feeling that pieces have been accumulated over many years. The antique furniture was gathered in Ireland, England and Northern Europe and there is mercifully little that is reproduction. There is a meticulous attention to detail (such as custom-designed light switches and door stoppers) and rooms give a

ABOVE Real antique furniture, much of it typically Irish, is what sets the suites apart from regular hotel rooms. Here, bobbin-turned shelves lend some character to the living area of a suite in the Lodge. RIGHT Each suite has a different layout and decorative scheme. Some, such as this one, have upholstered walls. The suites are privately owned but can be rented by guests. They have between one and four bedrooms and a kitchen.

