

The Liberal

TRAVEL

Ballymalloe House oozes Irish gentility

By JOHN KERNAGHAN

CORK — One might say it was an accident of Ireland's liquor licencing laws that turned Myrtle Allen into a hotelier.

And if that's the case, thank God for bureaucracy.

Mrs. Allen, you see, ran a rather simple country restaurant until 1967 when she applied for a liquor licence. She was given the option of converting to a pub or a hotel, which in her estimation was really no choice at all.

"I didn't like the thought of becoming known as the proprietor of a roadhouse so I opened up rooms for guests."

Since that time, hundreds of diners and overnight guests have savored the wisdom of that decision. For Mrs. Allen's Ballymalloe House, 25 miles southeast of Cork, near the village of Shanagarry, is probably the state of the art in Irish gentility.

From the time one rolls up a long meandering drive, stopping for an errand sheep or two, until one has been effortlessly checked into the White Room (no numbers at Ballymalloe House) the expectation is set: this will be a sojourn with a difference.

You notice there's no lock on your door and your mild protest is shushed with an assurance that no one, at anytime, has had that trouble at Ballymalloe.

So you're not that surprised at the informality then, when enquiring about the bar, you're directed to a converted closet in a turn-of-the-century room and invited to pour your own and mark it up on a tally sheet.

A shot of dark, earthy Bushmills whiskey in hand, you settle in front of a fresh peat fire contemplating the soft Irish rain and let the knotted nerves of the 200 miles of untoward road from Dublin unravel.



Ballymalloe House, near the village of Shanagarry, offers a sojourn with a difference for tourists in Ireland. It represents the state of

the art in Irish gentility, says travel writer John Kernaghan.



Nassau: the temperatures and hospitality are tropical. Tourists get acquainted by dressing up in their bed sheets.

Nassau holiday's a non-stop party

By AILEEN ADAMS

Vacationers can be divided right down the middle — those who go away for a quiet holiday so that they can come back to face the working year rested and relaxed, and those who look forward to a holiday that is in sharp contrast to a hum-drum life, so that they can come back stimulated and happily exhausted.

During the worst of the winter I made my first visit to Nassau and my first contact with one of the non-stop party holidays.

But before I tell you about Zemi's, I must discuss my first discovery. Nassau isn't an island at all — it's a town. A port on the island of New Providence. It's first tourist must have been Christopher Columbus, who visited the Bahamas 481 years ago — and its most prestigious, the late Duke of Windsor, who was the island's first Governor after his abdication.

It isn't until you see this warm and blossoming island that you realize what an appalling step down it must have been for His Royal Highness to relinquish being the titular head of an empire to occupy the chair of governor of a chain of tiny islands.

Although Nassau was thoroughly British until its independence in 1973, it seems American in many ways.

One of these ways is the package holiday where you can be happily and exhaustively entertained, dined and wined at an all-inclusive price.

Zemi's, which says it is the non-stop party in the Bahamas, claims to offer visitors an uninhibited alternative to the ordinary vacation.

The hotel, formerly the Blue Vista Hotel, has been completely refurbished and is spanking clean. The property is small and there is no beach. Two pools — one fresh water, the other salt — substitute for this lack and there are periodic boat trips to an uninhabited island just offshore.

The food — and there are four meals a day — is much above the standard of resort hotel fare. In fact, the meals are superb, and served with wine.

When you arrive, you purchase a string of apples with which you buy such extras as cigarettes, drinks at the bar (non-alcoholic drinks are expensive) and incidental shopping. There is no need to reserve

funds for tipping unless you choose to, as it is included in the rate.

Your days can be so crammed there is no need to leave the resort. There is tennis, volleyball, a games room, beautiful island girls to play backgammon or chess with you.

Each morning you can exercise to Caribbean rhythms. And there's a party where you are expected (almost commanded) to strip your bed to its sheets and dress up in them. The idea's to get

you acquainted with other guests.

All rooms are twin-bedded and air-conditioned. Rooms are booked on a shared basis and single arrivals are requested to share accommodation.

Weekly rates at this time of year are \$400 to \$450 per person, or a little under \$60 a day all inclusive.

Unitours package includes ocean-view rooms, return Air Canada flight (for one week) at \$599 per person.

The peace is jarred slightly, later you agree welcomingly, when a cherubic form of leprechaun named John True enters the room.

"It's magic, isn't it?" the Belfast newspaperman declares. "The rain is so soft you can't even feel it," he judges, of his stroll outdoors enjoining you to feel his shirtsleeve.

True is unbridled in his praise of the Allen establishment, lauding the grace of the home, part of which dates back to the 15th century. But he saves his superlatives for Myrtle Allen's cooking.

"Ah, it's too good for me," he sighs, messaging an ample midriff.

True lived up to his name. The next two days offered up hot buttered lobster, dressed crab, all supported by a host of fresh vegetables supplied by the fields of the 400-acre Allen farm.

Mrs. Allen also won over a pair of weight-conscious travellers with her Irish Coffee meringue

and gooseberry sorbet. It's not too surprising that Mrs. Allen, former cooking correspondent for the Irish Farm Journal, recently has published the Ballymalloe Cookbook.

While the Allen establishment is probably one of the most expensive examples of Irish farm holidays, the same brand of hospitality, though in more humble surroundings, can be had for as

little as \$5 per night. Ballymalloe rates vary from \$17 single per night for bed and breakfast (and that's a full meal, with eggs, bacon, sausage and bread) to \$45 per day for full board.

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29 June	20 July	3 wks.	\$485	\$359	
27 July	10 Aug.	2 wks.	\$485	\$359	
27 July	17 Aug.	3 wks.	\$485	\$359	
27 July	24 Aug.	4 wks.	\$485	\$359	
27 July	24 Aug.	4 wks.	\$485	\$359	

TO SHANNON/DUBLIN*

DEPART	FLIGHT	RETURN	PRICE	RETURN	PRICE	LAST
	No.	14 DAYS		21 DAYS	28 DAYS	BOOKING
June 8	TSO 1	June 22	FULL	June 29	FULL	July 6
June 15	TSO 2	June 29	FULL	July 6	FULL	July 13
June 22	TSO 3	July 6	\$379	July 13	\$359	July 20
June 29	TSO 4	July 13	\$369	July 20	\$359	July 27
July 6	TSO 5	July 20	\$409	July 27	\$409	Aug. 3
July 13	TSO 6	July 27	\$409	Aug. 3	\$389	Aug. 10
July 20	TSO 7	Aug. 3	\$409	Aug. 10	\$389	Aug. 17
July 27	TSO 8	Aug. 10	\$409	Aug. 17	\$409	Aug. 24
Aug. 3	TSO 9	Aug. 17	\$379	Aug. 24	FULL	Aug. 31
Aug. 10	TSO 10	Aug. 24	\$379	Aug. 31	\$379	Sept. 7
Aug. 17	TSO 11	Aug. 31	\$359	Sept. 7	\$359	Sept. 14
Aug. 24	TSO 12	Sept. 7	\$359	Sept. 14	\$339	Sept. 21
Aug. 31	TSO 13	Sept. 14	\$349	Sept. 21	\$339	Sept. 28
Sept. 7	TSO 14	Sept. 21	\$349	Sept. 28	\$349	Oct. 5
Sept. 14	TSO 15	Sept. 28	\$349	Oct. 5	\$349	Oct. 12
Sept. 21	TSO 16	Oct. 5	\$349	Oct. 12	\$319	Oct. 19
Sept. 28	TSO 17	Oct. 12	\$299	Oct. 19	\$299	N/A
Oct. 5	TSO 18	Oct. 19	\$299	N/A	N/A	N/A

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