

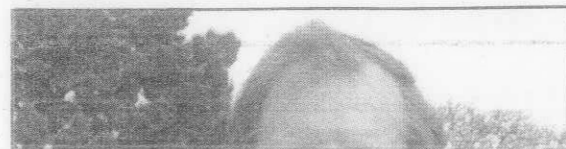
Historic grandeur: the Knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald with his wife Oida, daughter Catherine and first grandchild, Isadora.

• Pictures: Michael Cowhey

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The dining room at Glin Castle, now open for reservations



Castle season, and a Knight's hospitality

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AT HOME . . .

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Desmond proudly holds his grand-daughter, Isadora

THERE are few places on earth as heavenly as Glin Castle on a sunny Spring day.

The magnolias and camellias make a stunning show in the old walled garden and the vast lawns overlooking the sweep of the estuary are carpeted with daffodils. The imposing edifice itself basks in the glow of a rare historic grandeur.

The 29th Knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald is as proud as punch as he holds his first grandchild, Isadora.

Isadora, who is just six months old is daughter of Desmond and Olda's daughter, Catherine, and her partner, the Shakespearean actor, Dominic West. She is now very much the lady of the manor. The whole family, particularly her grandmother, are besotted with her.

"She woke at 5 o'clock this morning," said Olda proudly.

The Knight and his family are now involved in

AT HOME . . .

with the Knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald, his wife Olda, daughter Catherine and first grandchild, Isadora

the tourism business, keeping guests from all over the world in the 15 magnificent double en suite rooms. This season they are opening up the historic dining room to people who are not resident, and here's a rare treat for the Epicureans of the Mid West.

Now you can book dinner in the castle - if there's a table available - and indulge your aristocratic tastes for a mere €53 per person. If you want to stay overnight, it's €310 per room, reservations manager, Breda Brosnahan tells us.

"All the vegetables and the fruit come from our own garden and we have a great manager, Bob Duff and a great chef, Seamus

Hogan," said Olda. Daughter, Catherine does the marketing and promotion, and she is also a qualified botanist and horticulturist who has taken a huge interest in the gardens and everything they produce.

"We had a great tourist season last year," the Knight tells us. "People came from all over the world, a lot of Americans and more British tourists as well. They stopped off here for a night to take in places like the Cliffs of Moher and to visit the pubs in the village."

"We're also getting an increasing number of Italian visitors these days," he added.

He's currently awaiting the publication of his lat-

est book - the story of Irish Furniture, which will be published by Yale, first in America and then in London in a few weeks. The Irish launch will be at the Hunt Museum on May 23.

"I have spent 40 years researching this book and I have written it in collaboration with a colleague of many years standing, James Peill," said the well known antiques expert.

The book isn't all about the elegant furniture of the big house either, he tells us. "It's about furniture used in all kinds of houses in Ireland over the ages."

He has written several other books, one in collaboration with Anne Crookshank and another with Maurice Craig.

He's not the only book writer in the family either. Olda produced a fabulous book on Irish gardens a couple of years ago.

Glin has been the home to the FitzGerald for generations. The original castle was situated at the other side of the village



The hall at Glin Castle

and the present seat of the Knight was built first as a long low house which was transformed into a castle complete with battlements in the mid 18th century.

Despite taking guests now, it is still very much a family home, especially since the arrival of Isadora, and is redolent with history and tradition. Portraits of aristocratic

ancestors hang in every room and hall and Americans in particular love the atmosphere.

But this whole area of the Shannon estuary is

castle and its ancient ruined predecessor in the village could surely echo some amazing events.

"I am very proud," said the 29th Knight of Glin,

'All the vegetables and the fruit come from our own garden . . .'

FitzGerald territory and has been for a very long time. The walls of Glin

"to be the remaining representative of that ancient house."



By the sundial in the garden



Pictures in the hallway

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