

A touch of Quality at Roxboro

The latest addition to Limerick's ever-expanding hotel market came in the shape of the new Quality hotel in Roxboro when it opened on August 25.

Dublin-born Peter Brennan, speaks to Pamela Duncan about the group's latest venture.

PETER Brennan is the Group Operations Director for both the Quality and Comfort Inn hotel chains with responsibility for 14 hotels in Ireland. But he has travelled a long way to don this mantle.

Mr Brennan started his career here in the region as a wine waiter at Dromoland Castle back in 1979, while on his placement from the Dublin College of Catering.

Now he is back in the area having overseen the opening of the Quality chain's first Limerick-based hotel, their eighth in Ireland. He has noted a big change in both Limerick itself and the hotel industry in the area.

"Overall, yes, there's a huge upsurge in Limerick of commercial business. Obviously the city has become more attractive both to investors coming in, but also to people going away for weekends, which makes up the commercial and leisure business to the area".

an up-and-coming area, close to the industrial parks, but close enough to the city



Peter Brennan

which you can't miss from the new ring road.

"People say it is a difficult area but we've opened hotels in difficult places before. We opened a hotel in Dublin and there was nothing between us and Sheriff Street, and now the whole area's growing around us.

"We opened a hotel in Cardiff Lane, which was a no-go area for

and from knowing that the business we had for a short while in the Limerick Ryan before it became the Clarion Suites. I think we have a great feeling of confidence for the city," Mr Brennan answers.

Because the hotel group are able to provide their customers with three different varieties of hotel with different levels of service and price ranges, Mr Brennan feels the chain has tapped into the market at the right time.

"In bringing the Quality hotel group to this country, I think we have made a very strong presence very quickly because we were able to take larger hotels with a very set room structure in that the rooms are very nice and obviously well fitted out.

"We brought along the structure of a leisure club for each of these hotels; we brought in a branded restaurant called Lannigans to each of these hotels. We then allowed the local man-

they want and they want it quickly, they want it now and they want it with a smile".

Brennan admits that the success of the group also has a lot to do with a the shift towards a more affluent generation.

"I think the general public whether they're Irish, English, American, European, they are certainly looking for a higher standard of product. I think that hotels are probably offering lower prices now than they were five years ago, but there are so many hotels and so much to offer as regards various types of hotels that people can get their hotel for the same price as the B&B, and they can get their pint when they're going upstairs at night-time, if they wanted it.

"A businessman is probably not going to go to a B&B and that rubs off on people coming up the line, the 19 to 29-year-olds have a taste for staying in a hotel for a reasonable price on the weekend, and they're starting to do more and more of it."

The Choice chain of hotels, which include the Quality Hotels as well as the Clarion and Comfort Inn brands, launched in Ireland in 1998, and claim to have overtaken their

rivals as the biggest and fastest-growing hotel group in the country.

The group intends to continue on this upward trend, and have their sights on expanding to another three or four hotels nationwide.

But Peter adds that

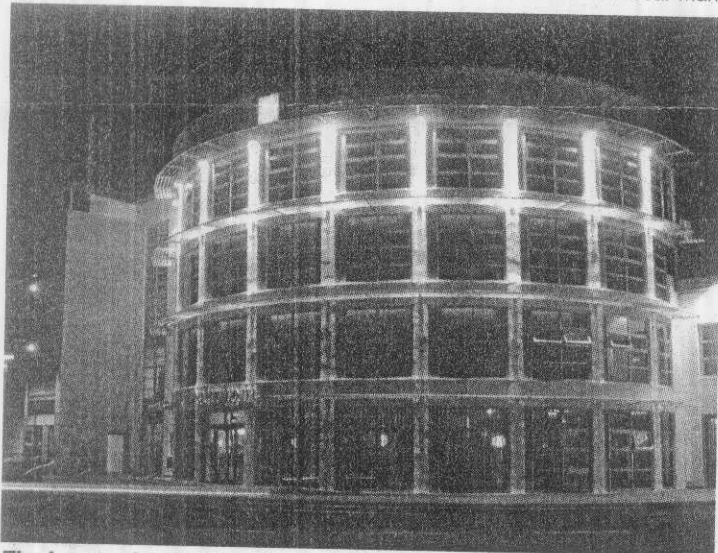
their base here in Ireland is somewhat of a stepping stone; "When we started up in Ireland eight years ago, we had the sense that we wanted to become a strong Irish company, which we have become, and I think that the natural progression from that

is to take on the UK and then try to take on Europe.

"We believe that we have very strong management in Ireland and we believe that those management skills will work in the UK, and that it isn't a great step from there to mainland Europe."



Tesco Dooradoyle customer services manager Marion Halpin, pops into St. Paul's N.S. Dooradoyle to present Tesco vouchers for this years Tesco Sports for Schools and Clubs Initiative to School Principal John Tuomy. Our picture shows: Marion (centre) and pictured around Marion were Megan Hannon, Joanna Falbrowska, Katie Reidy, Lauren Shaw, Ciara Reidy and Lauren Cassidy.



The impressive new Quality Hotel building in Roxboro is one of the groups newest additions to its hotel chain.

Armed with this knowledge and the experience of the two Clarion hotels, which also come under the Choice brand, the group have moved to open the Quality hotel on the border of Roxboro and Southill.

And while some eyebrows have been raised locally as to the hotel's location, Mr Brennan sees the area as the perfect up-and-coming district from which to launch the Limerick.

"We have great confidence and faith in this area that it will grow," Mr Brennan says. "It's

policemen two years ago, but now you wouldn't buy an apartment there for less than a million euro.

"We are delighted to be here and feel that we are going to be part of the community going forward".

But with a huge number of hotels having opened, and due to open in Limerick in months to come, why open up a 200-bed-room venture?

"We have a very strong sense of Limerick and we have a strong sense from our experience in the Clarion in Limerick,

agement to diversify into meeting rooms and into their pubs and bars within it. I believe that that model works very well for the Quality hotel group and obviously from our geographical spread, our customers feel the same.

"We found a niche for the service that you're not going to find in a top-range hotel like Dromoland Castle but what you will find and what people are looking for, is hospitality and friendliness, not necessarily pampering. For the business man who just want what

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Mental Health Week 7th – 14th October 2006

a week of experiential workshops and seminars focusing on
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LAUGHTER YOGA PARTIES

• For everyone age 6 and over in the Hunt Museum – at 2.15pm, 3.15 pm & 4.00pm – facilitated by Mary Mitchell (Free, booking required)

SEMINARS ON MINDFULNESS AND RELATIONSHIPS

• Mindfulness – it's not what you think in the Castletroy Park Hotel for the general public facilitated by Dr. Tony Bates & Dr. Linda Lerhaupt, on Monday 9th October at 8pm (€10, pay on night)

• Relationships – attachment and detachment in the Dunraven Arms Hotel, Adare for the general public facilitated by Dr. Paddy Ryan (€10, pay on night)

WORKSHOPS ON MINDFULNESS AND LAUGHTER

• Heart of Laughter, 10 am – 12pm and 2pm – 4pm in Dromroe Village, UL, for the general public on the 11th October, facilitated by John Cremer (€12, booking required)

• Be Free Wherever You Are – public day on mindfulness in the Castletroy Park Hotel from 9.30am – 4.30pm facilitated by Dr. Tony Bates & Dr. Linda Lerhaupt (€30, booking required)

• From Shambles to Showtime – in Le Chéile from 9.30am to 4.30pm for the general public, facilitated by John Cremer (€24, booking required)

• A Day of Mindfulness for health and education professionals, 9.30am – 4.30pm, facilitated by Dr. Tony Bates & Dr. Linda Lerhaupt (€85, booking required)



Limerick Mental Health Association

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