

upstairs

DOWNSTAIRS

**INTERIORS &
FASHION AT...**

**ABHAIN NA
MBRADÁN**

**MIRROR
BASICS**

**WALLPAPER
BASICS**

**PINK
NOT JUST
FOR GIRLS**

**SLEEK
& COOL**

**SUBTLE
GRAYS**

**BACK
TO BLACK**

**WIN
DUBARRY
PRODUCTS**

A CASTLE...
FIT FOR A KING OR QUEEN

ISSN 1393-8002



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A CASTLE FIT FOR A
KING OR
QUEEN

BRENDAN AND MARNIE FARRELL CONTACTED UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND WEBSITE DETAILS OF TURIN CASTLE KILMAINE CO. MAYO TO ENQUIRE IF WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN FEATURING THE CASTLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE. I WAS IMMEDIATELY INTRIGUED AND DECIDED TO HEAD DOWN TO MAYO THE FOLLOWING SATURDAY. AS IT WAS THE WEEKEND I DECIDED TO BRING THE CHILDREN ALONG AS I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE I COULD SPARK SOME OF THEIR CURIOSITY ABOUT THEIR HERITAGE. PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTINA REGAN. WORDS BY JULIE KEARY



As we drove through Shrule and onto Kilmaine I was hounded by the inevitable question – “are we there yet?”. I was beginning to think that dragging my children up to Mayo on a weekend was a very bad idea until I saw their reaction on their first glimpse from the road of Turin Castle. I had told them very little only that we were going to see a castle. As we approached the long driveway up to the castle we could see Brendan and Marnie sitting on the large patio at the back of the castle enjoying the long overdue sunshine. When they opened the large native Irish oak door to the castle the children were enthralled. The questions started to fly. “Why is this door so low? Who lived here? Was it just like this in olden days and when can we come to stay”? I was thrilled to see the delight on their faces when they realised they were in a medieval castle and they could go where they wanted and explore.

As they explored all the nooks and crannies I got a chance to chat to Marnie and Brendan and find out why would a couple from Dublin and Meath respectively want to renovate a medieval castle in the West of Ireland. It was no surprise to hear that they live in a castle in Wicklow, so their love of castles and history was evident. Brendan has a great interest in history and has long been a collector of antiques and militaria from all over the world. Marnie has a keen interest in interior design and enjoys decorating. Having refurbished their home, Glanmore Castle in Co. Wicklow they set out to find another property to renovate with a view to renting it out. With the help of Helen Cassidy an auctioneer in Clonbur they found the ideal property.



MARNIE LIT THE WOOD BURNING STOVE WHICH WAS SUPPLIED BY MURPHY HEATING IN KINVARA AND INSTALLED BY TOM FAHY FROM BALLINROBE. I WAS AMAZED AT HOW QUICKLY THE ROOM WAS HEATING UP,



12 UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

Brendan and Marnie purchased the castle in 2007 from a local man from Headford, Turin Castle was a ruin when the previous owner started this project. Having cleared and sandblasted the ivy-covered stone, he pointed it with lime mortar. Douglas fir was used in rebuilding the medieval style roof including all the floorboards and trusses. With the groundwork complete Brendan and Marnie commenced the refurbishment employing the services of local tradesmen. Sean O'Neill completed the intricate carpentry work and extend the minstrels gallery which spans one end of the main hall. All the plumbing works were supplied and fitted by Michael Walsh and the electrical work was carried out by Malachy Gallagher.

WHILE ALL MODERN APPLIANCES HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED TO MAKE THE CASTLE COMFORTABLE, IT HAS BEEN REFURBISHED WITHOUT DETRACTING FROM THE GRANDEUR AND CHARM OF THIS MAGNIFICANT BUILDING.

While all modern appliances have been incorporated to make the castle comfortable, it has been refurbished without detracting from the grandeur and charm of this magnificent building. On the ground floor there is a large stone flagged beamed room with deep wall recesses. There is a large ornately carved antique French bed which can be converted into two singles. On the second floor there are two ensuite rooms, one principal vaulted double with a delightfully romantic king size rococo bed and a small double/twin room with a double gothic iron bed.

We were led up a winding stone staircase to the main hall and seated at the large oak table. Marnie lit the wood burning stove which was supplied by Murphy Heating in Kinvara and installed by Tom Fahy from Ballinrobe. I was amazed at how quickly the room was heating up, the whole place was warm and cosy by the time we had explored the rest of the castle and returned to the large hall. Fiachra my son was attracted to a suit of armour in the corner of the Great Hall. "a real live sword" as Fiachra put it, lay alongside the suit of armour. Fiachra picked it up and he was surprised at the sheer weight of it. A soldier fighting in battle wearing the heavy suit of armour and carrying this extremely heavy sword is beyond

comprehension. Two large fortress guns which came from the armoury of the Maharajah of Jaipur in India adorned one of the walls and various armour breast plates decorated the adjoining walls. A wonderful blue and gold tapestry hung majestically on the wall facing the window which caught the afternoon sun. Many of the artefacts have been collected and bought from various parts of the world. Although not all the artefacts were of the same era they all seemed to blend in and certainly did not look out of place.



We followed the stairs to the top of the castle and were shown into a large sitting room with wonderful views of the countryside. The room is gracefully furnished with antiques and tapestries. The trussed roof was modelled on Dunsoghly Castle and traditionally designed. Hidden behind a bookcase is a ladder which leads to a secret chamber where valuables or prisoners would have been held. This was of particular interest to the children. Adjacent to the sitting room is a beamed double room with a large four poster bed with lavishly hung silk embroidered

drapes. Set in the window is a free standing bath which offers spectacular views of the stone wall fields and the mountains. The ensuite room has a double handed crafted sink unit. Marnie found the fabric for the curtains and cushions at markets in Morocco and the Far East, she thought the mixture of green and gold had an Irishness about it and would blend in with the gold coloured furniture in the main sitting room. Aoibheann my daughter was amazed at the grandeur of the place and I could tell she was imagining herself as the Queen of the castle.





About Turin Castle...

There are five bedrooms at Turin Castle and all of the bedrooms are heated by electric storage heaters, while both the Great Hall and top sitting rooms have wood burning stoves. Earlier this year Brendan and Marnie had a trial run and invited twelve of their friends for a mini banquet. The weekend went very well and all twelve people were accommodated in the ensuite bedrooms very comfortably. The castle is ideal for small weddings, special parties and corporate events or groups that need an unusual setting for weekends and get togethers. Turin Castle is

also an ideal conference setting providing luxury accommodation tranquillity and privacy with every modern convenience.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Turin Castle and I was equally delighted with the children's chat and discussion about their experience as we drove away from the castle. It was a truly memorable day for them. For further information on the history of the castle including the rental details check out the website www.turincastle.com