

JETCETERA

jetcetera@tribune.ie

Tie these prices down, sport

AUSTRALIA: the continent where they don't get snow (alright, they do in some parts but let's not be pedantic), where the sun shines and the beaches beckon. And it's never been more appealing than right now. Abbey Travel has a sale on fares to Australia, as well as New Zealand, running until 2 February. A Qantas flight to Perth is from €725 (€353 plus €373 tax); Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Cairns and Darwin, meanwhile, are from €784 (€399 plus €416 tax). If NZ is your favoured destination, flights to Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington are from €815 (€399 plus €416 tax). The route is Dublin via Frankfurt and Singapore and the travel dates are from 16 April to 20 June. Tel: 01 8047100 or visit www.abbeytravel.ie.

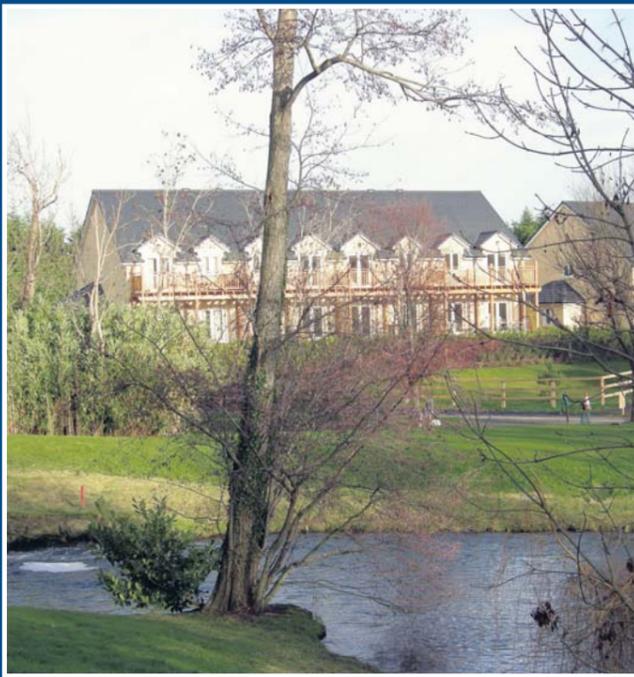
The love moat



IF you want to raise the bar this Valentine's Day, a 13th century castle is certainly one way to go. Ashford Castle in Mayo has the deserved reputation as one of Ireland's most romantic destinations and it's promising a memorable time if you choose to get loved up here. The price for the weekend is €395 per person sharing from Friday 12 February to

Grounds for approval

WHY take your hols in summer when there are so many good winter deals around? We like the offers from Trident Holiday Homes, which provides self-catering houses in the grounds of some of the country's best hotels, with full access to their luxury spas and leisure centres. The company is giving 10% off its rates, with most spas running special offers too. For example, you could stay the weekend in a four-star, three-bed house (sleeping six people) in Woodstock Demesne at Druid's Glen, Co Wicklow (right), for less than €60 per person and get a 30% discount on any treatment in the Elemis spa. Or you could stay at the Heyward Mews at Roganstown Hotel and Country Club near Swords, Co Dublin, for just over €50 per person and get a half-day Yon-Ka spa treatment and lunch package for €99. Tel: 01 201 8400 for more information or visit www.tridentholidayhomes.ie.



Sunday 14 February and included are two nights' stay in a deluxe room, full Irish breakfast on both mornings; a five-course table d'hôte dinner on one evening in the George V dining room; a dozen red roses and a bottle of chilled De Canteneur champagne. If taking him or her here as a grand romantic gesture doesn't work, we think nothing will. Tel: 094 954 6003 or visit www.ashford.ie.

Doon hill

SKIING doesn't have to be prohibitively expensive, particularly if you head to nearby Scotland. Stena Line is offering a special deal to the Cairngorm mountains, where a hotel stay in Aviemore and return ferry travel between Belfast and Stranraer costs from €83 per person,

per night, which is based on two adults travelling, with a minimum stay of two nights. This part of the Highlands has spectacular scenery. Ski packages in the Cairngorms are available from €78 for a three-day pass. The package for travel is available until 28 May. Go to www.stenaline.co.uk/hotelbreaks for more details.

Island getaway

MORE amorous adventures potentially await at the Fota Island resort, where you can escape to your own private island for Valentine's Day. One night's b&b and a gourmet dinner in the Cove restaurant with champagne and truffles on arrival is from €340 per room. You could also make a weekend of it and stay for two nights' b&b, again with dinner in the Cove on the Saturday night, with champagne and truffles on arrival, from €480 per room. Tel: 021 488 3700 or visit www.fotaisland.ie.



Full tankard

One of the best deals around this January, is from gorgeous country hotel Tankardstown. The Winter Warmer offer here costs €149 per person per night and includes overnight accommodation in a courtyard suite, an 'in room' back massage, dinner in the charming Brabazon restaurant (or you can have it in your room) and hot toddies before bed. Tankardstown, which is an hour's drive from Dublin and set on 80 acres of lovely parkland, has everything you need to while away a cold winter's evening, from roaring log fires in the main house, to a DVD library. Tel: 041 982 4621 or visit www.tankardstown.ie for details.

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