

ECHONEWS

made Café Paradiso a top restaurant

paradise



Dennis Cotter, above, centre, with Ernie Whalley, editor of Food and Wine Magazine, and Kern Kinnear, Evian, after winning the coveted Restaurant of The Year award, and, right, relaxing in Café Paradiso.



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For Denis, it was a revelation. “New Zealanders grow a lot of their own food and have a great love of food. They eat seasonally and it was there that I learned to approach vegetables differently. “Instead of using asparagus sparingly all year round, I would use lots of it for six weeks while it was in season, and then not at all.” Perhaps it was the parallel between the food culture in New Zealand and Cork that pulled the couple back a year or so later. “There is a vibrant food culture in Cork that isn't so much about restaurants, but about small local producers and consumers,” says Denis. “They have a great passion for what they do and they are in a

place where people are passionate about food; fresh food and local food. It's thriving here more than anywhere else in Ireland.” It appears that just as their cuisine has seduced Cork, the city and its hinterland has equally got a hold on this couple. They are firmly rooted. And yet there is some change planned. Bridget and Denis are opening three guest rooms over the restaurant at the end of the month, while the second part of the two-book paperback edition of the original book, *Paradiso Season*, entitled *A Paradiso Year, Autumn and Winter*, has just hit the shop shelves. However, there are no plans to expand.

“We did look at expanding and moving somewhere else, but the balance is so right here,” says Denis. “If we tried to feed any more people something would give and it wouldn't be fun anymore.” And for Bridget, fun is what it's all about. “I just stand here and get all these positive comments,” she says. “It's hard work, but I don't see it as a real job either. It's so much fun.” Denis sees it differently. “I've been doing it for so long now, it is work. But, it's an obsession as well. When I'm not working I'm sitting at home, thinking about food.” ● Café Paradiso on Lancaster Quay is open for lunch and dinner every Tuesday to Saturday inclusive.

O'Shea on Monday



robert.oshea@eecho.ie

A guided tour of my unique digs...

Next Saturday, for Cork Heritage Open Day, 30 buildings in the city — many which have never been seen by the public before — will open their doors to be showcased. — *Evening Echo*, last week.

Robert O'Shea has something to sell — and he's not afraid to use his column to sell it!

AS A respected columnist in a newspaper you sometimes get opportunities to take advantage of your position: Certain sexual favours given here, an envelope off cash hidden there. I refuse to kowtow to outside influence of this sort because of an ethical journalistic code I practice which is based on the principle that I'm afraid of getting fired. When, however, the favours you are doing is solely of benefit to yourself and is also of some import to a good number of readers, where is there anything wrong in that? What is the point in me squeezing the advertisement for the spare room in our house into the Free Ads section of the paper tomorrow, when I could use all 900 words here to give prospective tenants a much better idea of what they can expect? Over the next three weeks, thousands of students will descend on Cork looking for somewhere to stay. It is for these young people that I sacrifice today's column and not for any sudden need to start splitting the gas/electricity/cable bill again. Today's tour may not display the opulence so carefully flaunted on MTV's *Cribs* or the stately grandeur of *Through The Keyhole*, but I hope by the end you'll understand why we like to call this little place of ours home. As you will notice, there is a step up to the door. This can be a awkward to balance your tippy toes on when trying to reach the key in after a night out but after a little practice you'll soon be a veritable Olga Korbut. Now we're inside. Yes, there is a bit of an old man's smell at the entrance but after a few steps into the lobby you'll notice how it disappears. Observe how the large mirror at the end of the passage gives the illusion of a longer hall. We're very proud of that. Stepping into the kitchenette. Notice there is no door. This is a good thing. You may have seen that the smoke alarm is positioned on the hall ceiling. If we have perhaps left the room when something is cooking the alarm acts as a timer so we can tell when whatever was cooking is ready/burnt/on fire. If there was a door into the kitchen we would probably close it and that could lead to a ruined supper or backdraft. The kitchenette is fully equipped: fridge-freezer, oven (set everything 40 degrees below the recommended temperature), kettle, iron, toaster, microwave, washing machine ... about the washing machine: When it's set to tumble-dryer its best to go for a

little walk. It makes an incredibly loud noise and goes for a little walk itself when on fast spin and that can be a little spooky if you're in there with it because, like the Mona Lisa's gaze, it can seem like it's following you around the room. Through to the living area, or the room with the TV. We've gone for an Asian theme, as you can see from the Chinese and Indian takeaway menus spread about. The coffee table is at an ideal height for both eating your dinner off or placing your feet upon. The gas fire is convenient in that we need not worry about fuel such as coal, briquettes or firelighters, or about even turning it on as it doesn't work. On winter nights though, we can't help feeling rather bohemian as we switch off the TV and gather around the radiator to tell stories (mostly stories about when the gas fire used to work.) Up the stairs and onto the landing; we have decorated the banister with a drying-towel motif. Straight ahead is the master bathroom. An interesting story is the bathroom light: Although it is accepted by the scientific community that the speed of light is constant at 299,792,458 metres per second, the tube lighting our bathroom, well ... it needs to warm up. Hit the switch. Wait. Wait. A flicker! No, no ... another flicker and then it sometimes comes on. Sometimes it doesn't but at night-time the fluorescent lighting from the street lamp outside offers enough illumination for a comfortable visit. One of the few contentious issues among us housemates is the hanging of the toilet paper. Mike prefers the toilet paper hanging upside down with a preference for the underarm grip; whereas I'd prefer to kill Mike when he hangs it like this. Luckily, Mike isn't as intransigent as me on this issue. Your bedroom? We have actually misplaced the key. Fortunately, it is exactly the same shape, size, floor plan and condition as mine, give or take a bit of dry rot. This is where all the action happens. No, not my room; this is the door to the Scandinavian girl's room. If you listen real close to the door you can sometimes hear them at it. What do you mean that's sick, it's the most natural thing in the world. Oh, me listening to them is sick. Well who are you to judge? Who are you to tell me what I can and cannot do in my rent-controlled accommodation. Go on, get outta my house.