



Lough Eske Castle named Irish Wedding Venue of the Year after just 20 months in operation

Latest award for Donegal's only five-star hotel crowns meteoric rise to top 21 February 2010:

Irish Brides have declared one of the country's newest hotels, 5-star Lough Eske Castle, Donegal Ireland's top wedding venue for 2009 in an awards scheme to mark the 10th anniversary of Ireland's most popular weddings website, WeddingsOnline.ie.

The award comes just three months after the 17th century castle hotel just outside Donegal town won the coveted international World's Best Luxury Country Hotel at the industry's top international awards ceremony, the World Luxury Hotel Awards in Bangkok.

The hotel, which is managed by Solis Hotels & Resorts, opened just two years ago after being lovingly transformed from a ruin into Donegal's only Five Star Hotel by owner and proud Donegal native Pat Doherty. The hotel, now widely recognised as a fairytale wedding location, hosted 64 weddings last year and has 85 wedding receptions already booked for this year.

Eleven awards were up for grabs at the WeddingsOnline.ie ceremony, with Lough Eske Castle taking two of these, Castle/Country House Venue of the Year and the overall Ireland Venue of the Year. The awards scheme recognises Irish wedding professionals/service providers who have a proven commitment to outstanding customer service and the winners were chosen by brides of 2009 as well as an expert and impartial panel of judges. Lough Eske Castle fought off stiff competition from 25 other venues across the country to win the title of Ireland Venue of the Year.

It has been a meteoric rise for the new Donegal Hotel, in addition to the extremely prestigious World's Best Luxury Country Hotel award and now the Ireland Venue of the Year accolade, it has also topped the "myguideireland Top 10 Hotels in Ireland" list and was named as one of the world's best castle hotels by US based travel expert Stephanie Abrams.

Andrew Turner, General Manager of Lough Eske Castle expressed his delight for the hotel winning the award, adding that it is a further endorsement of the spectacular setting and equally exceptional personal service and attention to detail delivered by Lough Eske Castle's dedicated wedding coordination team. "We set ourselves very high standards from the first day we opened Lough Eske Castle and while it is very rare that you can deliver on those aspirations from day one we have managed to do so, as this award clearly demonstrates. WeddingsOnline.ie is the most popular website for brides in Ireland and the very fact that brides were involved in deciding the winner is the ultimate tribute.

"Weddings are a hugely important part of our overall business. We've invested heavily in creating a special wedding garden as well as installing a collection of 30 specially commissioned bronze sculptures in the castle grounds to ensure that we have the best possible setting, particularly for photographs.

"We're also registered as a Civil Ceremony venue and have a one wedding a day policy. And on the day after a wedding we treat the newly-weds to an Aromatherapy Associates Couples Massage in our award winning spa."

Lough Eske Castle boasts 95 spacious bedrooms and suites, an Aromatherapy Associates Spa, thermal suite, fitness centre and swimming pool, Cedars Restaurant, two bars and 600m2 of banqueting facilities as well as a Presidential Suite with its own private dining room ideally suited to family weddings. Located just outside Donegal Town and nestled within 43-acres of forest woodland along the shore of Lough Eske, the hotel has redefined the meaning of luxury in the North-West.

Ends.

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Photographs supplied by Clive Watson, Tel: 086 2221024

Notes to editors:

The Solís Hotels and Resorts brand was developed by legendary hotelier Horst Schulze and his team of hospitality experts. Solís Hotels and resorts is a collection of resorts, hotels and residences offering a convergence of unparalleled designs, settings and experiences. Luxury "the Solís way" goes way beyond superbly appointed accommodation to reach Schulze's benchmark of elevated guest service.

