

IS STORMED



Gin and bear it...Geraldine relaxes in the castle's bar

to suite dreams wedding retreat



Dishy...Choose from extensive menu



Grass act...View to a thrill



Fairytale...Shane and Victoria Mary Clarke

PICTURES: Barbara Lindberg

feeling that someone was watching me. Con had told me the ghost of a monk always turns up at wedding receptions. He is believed to have haunted the place ever since his abbey was razed to the ground and replaced by the castle in 1209.

He said: "He mingles with the crowd at the banquet in the Great Hall. We think he's drawn by the happy atmosphere of the people celebrating."

Wedding co-ordinator Mary Smith - who is getting married in the castle in November - said the monk is not the least bit snobby.

She added: "We don't just do celebrity weddings here - anyone can get married in the castle."

The monk is just as happy among people who paid €65-a-head for the set wedding menu as those who spoil themselves with a feast that can cost anything.

I reckoned the old monk had got a bit curious after all these years of celibacy - and wanted to see what it was like in the bridal suite.

I was sure Shane MacGowan wouldn't mind - he's well-known to be fond of the old spirits.

But my monk fantasy vanished as quickly as the bubbles in the Champagne glass, when I remembered that I was being photographed.

Now at last I knew what it felt like to be a star. Blasted paparazzi!

Naturally, I had to call in the bouncers - but not before I'd had one last bounce on the bed.

Still, there's only so much romping around a girl can do with a bridegroom, so I reluctantly kissed the room goodbye - until I find my Mr Perfect.

The pampering doesn't end there - the castle has a luxury spa which is open to day visitors too.

After all that Champagne-cork popping, what better way to relax than in a hot tub or jacuzzi, sobering up in a civilised way with herbal teas or fresh fruit smoothies while a team of therapists massage and beautify you.

Just in case all that VIP-style pampering is going to your head, the spa also has a life-coach on hand and meditation classes.

But you can really feel like king and queen of the castle by going for a canter round the demesne and taking a lesson in falconry.

I toyed with the idea of hanging around until evening, when the bar is full of locals - including actor Patrik Bergin.

While the memory of him in *Sleeping With the Enemy* was enough to put me off marriage - the bridal suite had given me a real taste for it.

Drunken Bishop is collared

A BISHOP who got drunk at an Irish Embassy Christmas bash faces a formal ticking off.

Bishop of Southwark Rt Rev Tom Butler is under investigation by senior Church of England authorities.

He has said he could not remember what happened between the time he left the reception in Belgravia and arrived home in south London with head injuries.

During the evening he lost his mobile phone, briefcase and sustained a black eye.

Witnesses claimed the Bishop climbed into the back of an unlocked Mercedes that night.

The top cleric was seen throwing toys lying on the back seat out of the car saying: "I'm the Bishop of Southwark. It's what I do."

He was dragged from the vehicle by its owner and fell to the ground.

The Bishop did not turn up to the London embassy's Paddy's Day bash last month.

Book bid to prevent suicides

A DOCTOR has written a book about depression after one of his patients committed suicide.

Dr Harry Barry was haunted by the tragic death of a 19-year-old man called Niall.

The Drogheda GP spent four years researching mental illness for *Flagging the Problem* which will be published this week.

Dr Barry said he hopes his research will "change a lot of thinking".

He added: "It explodes a lot of the myths that surround depression. It is a much misunderstood condition.

"We have got to change our thinking - too many people are dying."

Dr Barry said 50 per cent of depressed people "get no help of any kind because of lack of understanding".

Doubled jail term praised

THE mother of one of two young girls killed in a horror crash has praised a decision to double the jail sentence for the driver.

Geraldine Mahony from Kilkee, Co Clare, was speaking after the driver had his original sentence doubled in the Court of Criminal Appeal from three to six years.

David Naughton was extradited from London last July and sentenced after he pleaded guilty to dangerous driving causing the death of Geraldine's Lorna, 13, and her 16-year-old pal Stacy Haugh.

Geraldine said: "This brings a certain amount of closure but only as far as the criminal case is concerned, we still have to go through the inquest."