



Cork International Airport Hotel an exciting new arrival

BY LEO MCMAHON

WHETHER it's for leisure or business, Cork International Airport Hotel is a truly most exciting new arrival and one that must be seen in order to fully appreciate and admire. Innovative in every aspect, the luxurious new hotel in the heart of the business park is a short walk from the new airport terminal and just a 20 minute drive to Kinsale and West Cork.

Aviation, past, present and future abounds in the stylish 150 bedroom €35 million development which opened for business in July as I saw on a recent tour accompanied by general manager Gabriele Molari who reported "a very positive response from guests and customers for something that's totally different in the hotel sector".

The interior of the avant-garde four star hotel, for which the driving force is leading developer Bernard McNamara, was designed by renowned German architect Henrik Frischgesell, a man with a lifetime interest in aviation who has literally let fly his many ideas but at the same time incorporated all one would expect of a high quality hotel and more.

Unique features include the futuristic ground floor dining area with an actual moon landing craft, dining in the actual fuselage cabin of an airbus, a history of aviation in model aeroplanes and spacecraft, an airship, an Austin car, artwork and travel posters, all of them original and sourced from ten countries. Even the toilets are colourful and exotic!

Cork International Airport Hotel, said Gabriele, caters for every type of client and has already become the favourite meeting place for many of the 4,000 people working in the business park whether it's for coffee and some home baking in the morning, lunch, dinner, an after work drink or function.

Indeed the hotel is already gearing up for a busy festive season with a fine selection of Christmas and New Year

party celebration and accommodation packages, all of which are now available in a free brochure or by contacting banqueting and conference sales co-ordinator Carmel Lonergan at 021-4549800, e mail: clonergan@corkinternationalairporthotel.com.

The hotel boasts a magnificent ballroom which can host any size function – including weddings and exhibitions – for up to 320 people. It will be the venue for an International New Year's Eve Black Tie Gala Dinner and recently hosted a 'People in Need' Telethon Ball.

Being so convenient to both the airport and business park and city, Cork International Airport Hotel is the ideal location for conferences, training seminars, press receptions or business meetings. It has full corporate communication facilities (e.g. digital TV stream, cable and conference calling) and nine adaptable meeting rooms, all air conditioned and wheelchair accessible, that can cater for conferences for up to 400 delegates.

Proving very popular are the restaurants and bars on the ground floor. Whether it's a steak or a sandwich, this hotel has every taste in mind. A new Fresh Express sandwich bar is opening shortly while the hotel's in-

house bakery has a wonderful selection of breads, cakes and biscuits (baked on the hour) to either take-away or enjoy in the O Bar an Irish pub with its art-deco styling where the coffees are simply the best and soup and other snacks are available.

Another hit with customers is the cosy Italian style Cafe Tucano, open all day, with its wonderful display of model aircraft and a fabulous photograph of sea plane, courtesy of Foynes Museum. This will shortly be the venue every Friday night for jazz sessions.

Buzzing with activity every lunch time is the Strata Restaurant. It features a market style buffet kitchen restaurant where you can

pick what you fancy from a huge range of fresh, seasonal, organic and mainly locally sourced cuisine for breakfast or lunch or enjoy a full meal prepared before your very eyes by the hotel's chefs. The dining area of The Strata is truly unique with authentic aircraft cabins and seats and the ambience is lovely and relaxed by evening.

This is a new kind of dining, said Gabriele, which has really taken off among customers from the business park who added that brunch is on offer every Sunday

Private dining for up to 12 people is available in the intimate setting of The Wine Vault with its mouth watering a la carte menu and extensive wine list from destinations world wide which is also available in The Strata.

However, to also stay overnight and experience all that the new hotel has to offer is an experience many a traveller or patron will find very hard to resist.

The spacious individually designed bedrooms in three categories: first class suite, business class or economy, are simply superb with large comfortable beds, beautiful décor, balcony views of the city or airport, multi-channel internet TV, WiFi and ISDN broadband connections, mini bar, 24 room service menu, in fact, every need for a pampered guest to make his or stay special and one to be repeated.

And there's more! Cork International Airport Hotel, which is part of the Mercier Accommodation Group, boasts Europe's first in-hotel Pullman lounge (see separate report) and will shortly be opening a hair salon while a spa and leisure centre will be opening in early 2008.

At your service on the first floor (accessible via lifts or staircase) which also has an outdoor decked terrace facing the airport, are friendly reception staff. The hotel has three sun terraces, attractively landscaped grounds, 166 free parking bays and a courtesy mini bus to the airport terminal which incidentally, is just a three minutes walk away.

Described as being "a new departure in airport hotel", Cork International, said Venice born Gabriele is truly special. And he should know, having previously served in leading quality hotels such

as The Savoy in London, the Royal Berkshire in Ascot and qualified with a degree in hospitality and an executive MBA along the way.

Now living in Kinsale, Gabriele told South County: "I have always loved Ireland and often searched for any new opportunities here. Fortunately, I was offered this exciting challenge. This hotel is good for the Cork area and for its future" and pointed out it already employs 86 people.

A visit to Cork International Airport Hotel is a guaranteed pleasure for people on the move, for business or looking for something different. A warm invitation is extended and excellent service assured from a hotel that's destined to take off and revive the days when going to the airport was a social occasion to savour.



Welcome aboard! The aviation style Strata Restaurant at Cork International Airport Hotel.