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IMAGE



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This serene Connemara stay is the perfect winter retreat



by Megan Burns
07th Feb 2024

We may think of the rugged west coast as a summer destination, but it's the perfect place to go for a restful stay in the quieter months. These self-catering townhouses are the ideal base to explore, or to simply relax and stay cosy.

We all know about the enchanting beauty of Connemara. Its otherworldly landscapes and pristine beaches are a draw for so many of us. But while people flock there in the summer, it's less known as a place to visit during the rest of the year.

Winter is especially quiet – the weather can be wild, many businesses close, and there are few people around. But this makes it an exceptionally relaxing experience, especially when you choose a stay as beautifully luxurious as **Within the Village** in Roundstone.

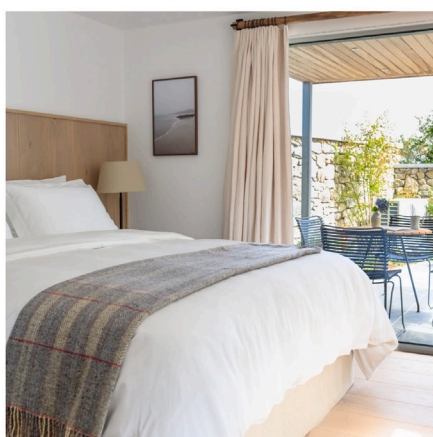


A collection of five townhouses on the main street of the village, hiding behind their subtle exterior are spaces into which care and craft has been poured into in abundance.

The attention to detail is evident everywhere you go, from bespoke oak joinery, to Irish-made pieces at every turn.

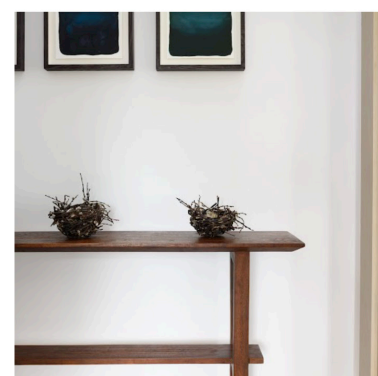
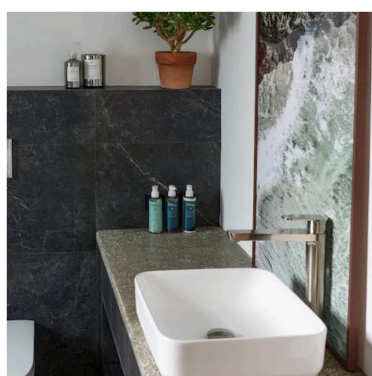
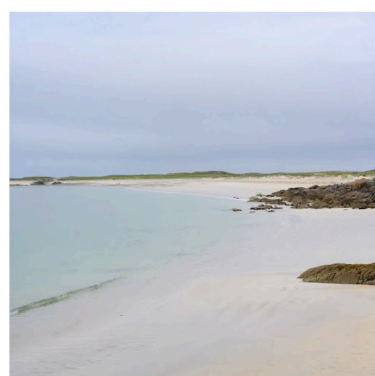
We stayed in the Sea suite, which has throws and cushions from The Tweed Project, nest sculptures by Joe Hogan, crockery by Roundstone Ceramics, prints by Cliodhna Prendergast and Dorothy Cross, concrete surfaces embedded with shells by Paddy O'Malley, Burren Perfumery toiletries, Irish Living sheets and towels, and a King Koil mattress made in Kildare (this I know because it was so comfortable, we had to ask where it was from).

Upon arriving we were given a warm welcome and shown around by Andy, who was full of helpful advice for our stay, and who brought us fresh scones every morning.



Arriving on a wet January evening, we had plans on heading to O'Dowd's, the pub across the road, but once we settled into our beautiful suite, we couldn't drag ourselves away, so relaxing and welcoming is the space. Lighting the stove, pouring a glass of wine and settling on the sofa seemed too good to pass up.

We woke up the next morning to an incredible view of the sea from our kitchen and living space – in the darkness of the evening we hadn't quite realised how close it was. A slow breakfast watching the waves is, I can assure you, nothing short of heavenly.



If you can drag yourself away from this serene space, you're just minutes away from Dog's Bay and Gurteen Beach, which lie back-to-back. It was wonderfully quiet when we visited, it's a real treat to have such a beautiful place almost entirely to yourself.

Clifden is also around 25 minutes away if you're craving civilisation, with shops, restaurants and pubs, but the real beauty of this location is that you really won't want to leave. With a fully equipped kitchen, should you want to cook, or cosy pub food available across the road, there's a real joy in simply settling in with your beautiful surroundings.



Had the weather been too wild, we would have been happy to stay in all day, watching it from our cosy spot. There's none of the pressure we can often feel on a summer break – we have to get out, see everything, do everything – but the winter encourages us to simply slow down and take time to soak in our surroundings. It would also be the perfect place to gather a group, with spaces both to gather and to spend time apart. I'll definitely be back to this magical spot.

Each of the five townhouses are available to rent individually on a two-night minimum stay basis, up to the end of June, with different minimum stay requirements in summer. They are also available on an exclusive hire basis for small groups, with private event indoor and outdoor event space. Opening season prices start at €300 per night. Go to withinthevillage.ie to book, and for more information, or follow them on Instagram @withinthevillageroundstone. Megan Burns was a guest of Within the Village.

Photography: Cliodhna Prendergast

