

Weekend

Irish Examiner

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Doing it her way

Meet Today FM's new lunchtime host Louise Cantillon

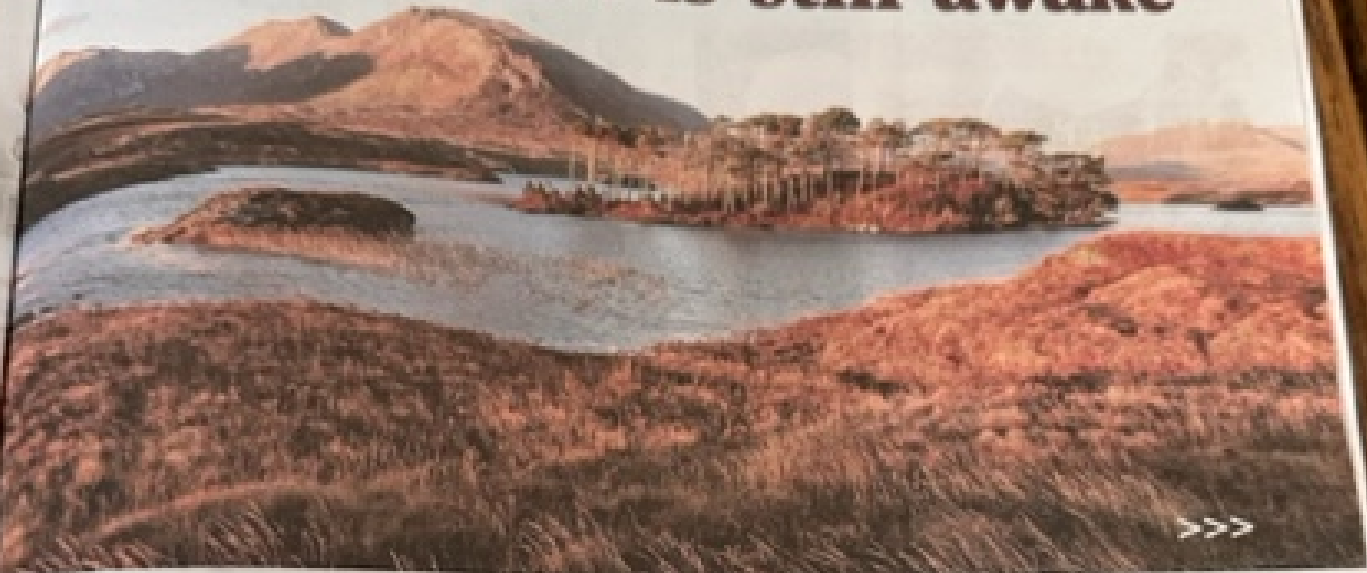
Plus

New Voices

Is Griff about to change the world of pop music?



As the world sleeps through winter, West is still awake



(Above) Pines Island, Berrycare Lough, Connemara. (Below) Kylemore Abbey.

You may have to wrap up warm but visiting majestic Connemara in low season, means you often have the place entirely to yourself, writes Yvonne Gordon

IF YOU stand at the top of Diamond Hill in Connemara National Park, you can see all the way to the sea; the silvery curves of Ballyvaughan Harbour, the poetry peak of Tully Mountain, the long, low shape of Inishbofin Island. To the north are the dark mountain shapes of Clare Island and Achill Island. Far below is Letterfrack, where Kylemore Abbey sits silently overlooking a dark blue lake.

What you can't see, on a clear day in winter, is crowds on the trail below. Or even other people. On the calm, crisp day that we climb the hill, we have the mountain summit and views to ourselves and it's bliss.

Diamond Hill, also known as Finn Ghuaire (blair meaning peak or cliff) or Binngeorta, is one of the Twelve Bens of Connemara. The summit is reached via two walking trails forming a 6.5km loop. Although the hill is only 442m high, the last part is steep so the hike can be strenuous, but most of the trail is paved. This, plus easy access from the visitor centre of Connemara National Park, make it a popular hike.

The reward at the top is views across Connemara, mountains and lakes punctuating swathes of rough brown and orange bog. There are patches of dark forest, scatterings of rock and blue-grey sea inlets. It



(Above) Roundstone, Connemara. (Below) A brass breakfast with superb views at Within the Village in Roundstone.



FROM DOMINATE: Weekend 21-23-2024





The picturesque view from Killary sauna, which can be rented privately for €250.

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can be taken to-
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A bedroom (far left) and chic kitchen (left) at Within the Village, and (above) Lichen sitting room at Within the Village.

(Left) The rugged majesty of Connemara National Park. (Below) Discreet luxury in one of the bedrooms of the boutique self-catering townhouses of Within the Village, in Roundstone village, Connemara.



Dining off-season

In Roundstone The to Within the Village pizza, which can be

After a swim, enjoy sausage rolls at Co Roundstone Pier. (C peak school holiday mid-term. Reopens

O'Dowd's Seafood Roundstone is open their shellfish, including mussels.

In Clifden, Guy menu that's espe

The Signal Bar Hotel, an atmospheric Clifden Railway and has an open

SuperValu supermarket e

Sauna fun

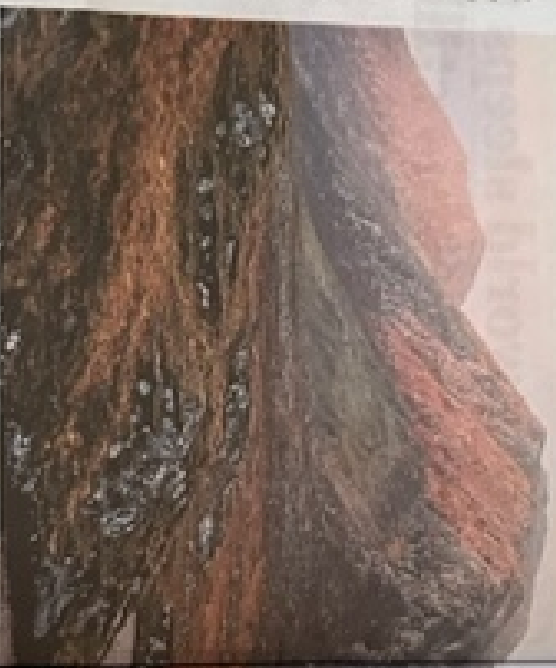
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The pic rented

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Many enjoy the view from the house.

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The view from the bedroom at the house is beautiful.

Bedroom retreat

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Special list

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For photos, see the photo gallery, which can be found on page 10.

escape notes

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