



AA HOTEL OF THE YEAR 2017 - 2018

EXPERIENCE UNIQUE HISTORY

“The secret is... there is no secret”

“We believe that hotel success is simple - smile at your customers and greet them even before they see you, take a real interest in them and their journey to The Old Inn, then make sure they are cared for and helped on to their next destination - there’s very little else to focus on.... It’s called hospitality and that’s what has been happening under this thatched roof for over four hundred years” Says Garvan Rice hotel Director.

“The hotel has been in the Rice family now for over thirty years and has grown from strength to strength. In 1982 it was no more than an unlisted and unloved hotel of sixteen bedrooms, of which only three were en-suite. Imagine if we asked anyone now to share a bathroom!”

“We were delighted to gain three star status almost immediately and then progress to four stars from both the AA and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (Now Tourism Ireland) this was immediately followed by a succession of awards such as NITB Hotel of the year 2007 and 2009, Translink Ulster in Bloom Award for six years in a row, Bangor Business Growth Award and Golfers Guide to Ireland Best Ulster Restaurant 2011.

More recent accolades have included gaining AA four silver star status and achieving a top ranking merit score of 83% in the four star sector from Tourism Northern Ireland.

“Imagine if we asked anyone now to share a bathroom”

“The truth is, we don’t go looking for awards, and there is no secret to being successful in the Hotel industry. We have three key strengths and they all lie in our staff;

- Anticipating and exceeding customer needs.
- Genuinely taking an interest in our guests and being personalities rather than robots.
- Having pride in our product and delivering exact standards each and every day, even at the end of a 50 hour week!”



Unique Artefacts

These Querns were the grinding stones used by Monastic scholars who travelled between Bangor Abbey and Holywood Priory to prepare their humble gruel - a rare treat under the rigid regime of St Comgall who believed in fasting, education and penance..



Traditional Craftsmen

The thatcher is commissioned once every ten years to entirely replace the thatch over the oldest part of the hotel. Keeping traditional crafts and local work alive.

Historic Timeline

The Old Inn has records showing building in its current form, back to 1614.

Crawfordsburn Inn was a common stopping point over the next 2 centuries for Monks, traders and scholars travelling from the Parent Abbey in Bangor to Holywood and the Priory.

Sharman Crawford, a member of the Landed Gentry, arrived with the Plantation of Ulster and took control and gave his name to this land formerly known as Ballymullan and the village takes its name from the ulster scots name for river, or 'burn, behind the Inn – hence 'Crawford's Burn'.

Many notable names are associated with this ancient Inn, such as: Peter the Great, William III and the nefarious Dick Turpin is believed to have used hidden tunnels at the back of the Inn for stashing his bounty before moving on.

In more recent times C.S. Lewis, Author of The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe spent what he called 'a perfect fortnight' on belated



honeymoon here in 1958 with his wife Joy Davidman (nee. Gresham).

The Old Inn has been called simply 'The Inn', The Ship, The Old Ship Inn and Crawfordsburn Inn – but it doesn't matter what you call it if you are looking for a unique and indulgent short break in a piece of Northern Irish History it's here to stay.

OLD INN HISTORY

The Old Inn, or Crawfordsburn Inn has been the subject of many paintings, tapestries and often photographs to adorn postcards over the centuries. Confirming its place in hearts and history books alike

FOR MORE
www.theoldinn.com/our_history



Each bedroom in The Old Inn is uniquely designed and furnished. Four poster and half tester beds adorn most of the large rooms, plus family and bijou rooms are available for all types of guest and budget.

Unique Charm and Character

Take your pick from the elegant and extravagant Superior rooms, featuring four poster beds or our perfectly formed Bijou bedrooms – perfect for an overnight getaway and a chance to unwind, relax and enjoy a meal in the 2AA Rosette Lewis restaurant.

This ultimate AA award of Hotel of The Year recognized significant re-investment by the Rice family over its 35 years of ownership. The last inspectors report particularly praised;

- High Quality of furnishings and fixtures
- Superior levels of comfort
- Notable quality and style of bed
- Notable quality of linen
- Rooms are spacious, comfortable and well accessorized
- Room & Bathroom Cleanliness
- Good quality toiletries

The private cottage at the rear of the hotel offers a secluded oasis for your next visit. With its own living room and open fire you can call room service and snuggle down for the night. The high vaulted ceilings and carved four posted bed make this cottage feel like you could be in the middle of Crawfordsburn Country Park with its unspoiled treetop view from the bay window.





AFTERNOON TEA BY THE FIRE



Parlour Bar

The relaxed and casual feeling in the Parlour Bar is somewhere you can enjoy a pint of Guinness, a cocktail or sample our extensive gin menu.



Lewis Restaurant

Taking its name from C.S Lewis who ate and drank in the Hotel many times, the Lewis restaurant is a convivial atmosphere of charm, décor and stunning local produce.

FAST FACT – UK AVERAGE AA MERIT SCORE FOR 4 STAR HOTELS IS 77%

77% UK

IT'S A GOOD YEAR FOR THE ROSETTES

83%



AA Hotel Merit Score and 2 AA Rosettes

AA ROSETTES CRITERIA

Excellent restaurants that aim for and achieve higher standards and better consistency. A greater precision is apparent in the cooking, and there will be obvious attention to the selection of quality ingredients.

TO BOOK THE LEWIS RESTAURANT CALL
02891 853255

Afternoon Tea, Sunday Lunch, Brunch, Snacks, A La Carte and Bistro dining options are available throughout the day at The Old Inn. All prepared fresh each day by our talented team of Chefs.

The open pass into the kitchen allows you full viewing into your dished being prepared and is a focal point of the dining experience.

Or perhaps relax with some casual bar snacks.

All accommodation comes with a full cooked plated breakfast choice of Ulster Fry, omelettes, eggs Benedict and other locally sourced produce. Clondeboyne Estate yoghurts and Young Buck cheeses are local highlights on our continental buffet.

All of the menus in The Old Inn are clearly marked with Gluten free, vegetarian and gluten alternative options.

“
Perfect cookery
here, deliciously
deep flavours,
deeply indulgent”

[AA Inspector Martin Slater]

PERFECT PARTIES START HERE

Whatever your family occasion – a special birthday, a wedding, a golden wedding anniversary, you can be sure The Old Inn charm, warmth and character will give you that special feeling of Irish hospitality.

Our team of service staff are on hand to cater for your every need.

“Anticipation of guests needs is the art of hospitality.” says Paul Rice, Director. “...if a guest has to ask for something, be that a drink or some mustard, whatever – we’ve not done our job. It’s not about selling, it’s about placing the food, drink or service right in front of the guest at exactly the time they want it. Our servers are well trained in all of our products and regularly taste the food, wines and cocktails. It’s their job to help the guest through our thousands of local and imported products from Short Cross Gin to Japanese Yuzu they have to know what they’re talking about. This also goes for the preparation stages of our food due to our focus on flavours and local, seasonal products. Most of our food is naturally gluten free and we use cooking techniques such as sous-vide and curing processes to deliver the best of the best.”

ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET

The Old Inn has a great local reputation for being a bespoke wedding venue. You can even book the whole hotel for your exclusive use and it has had celebrities celebrating under its thatched roof for centuries. The distinguished visitor list includes George Bush Sr, Jamie Dornan (Fifty shades of Grey), Van Morrison, Kit Harington (Jon Snow), Brendan Fraser, David Suchet (Poirot) and local legend Gary Lightbody.



THE CROWN OF NORTH DOWN

It's hard to imagine where we will all be in the year 2417 however when the Old Inn first opened its doors in 1614 I'm sure they weren't even thinking that the building, albeit transformed over centuries, that it would have become 'The Crown of North Down' that it is today.



Significant reinvestment of profits have meant that this icon stays strong. Since it was bought by the Rice family over £9m has been spent on restoring, renovating and improving the hotel both in size and standard.

"There have been a lot of changes in the world that have led to some substantial investment" says Danny Rice, Chairman. "Sometimes we find things like old wooden foundations which lay under the 1614 restaurant which changed our plans significantly for that end of the building and quadrupled the spend re-digging foundations. If you have noticed the angle of the Albert Clock, also built on wooden foundations, you would see why we had to change our plans!"

Danny Rice has a long and distinguished history both as a publican and as a renovations specialist, and there is hardly a corner of The Old Inn where you can't see his incredible eye for detail in furnishings, fabrics and ambiance.



The building is very deceptive and takes up almost one half of the village of Crawfordsburn. It has an important place in the community where locals meet in the pub on the weekends, thousands of couples exchange wedding vows, new-borns are celebrated and every manner of family life ticks on.

The Old Inn 'family' have hospitality running in their veins, known to take in mail parcels for local villagers to collect later, transport elderly or infirm guests back home personally. Offer free hot meals, showers and bedrooms to people stranded by snowfall.

The bedrooms here are names and not numbers, with local places, flora and fauna celebrated on the 33 bedroom doors, such as; Mountstewart, Castleward, Oriental Poppy, Fuchsia and Petunia.

Some of the rooms are named after previous cherished employees such as 'Wee Jimmy's' and 'McGuikians'.

Castleward Bedroom

The delightful four poster bed, with balcony and unhindered views of The Old Inn Gardens and Crawfordsburn Country Park



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Hotel on +44 (0) 891 853255

Visit us www.theoldinn.com

ADDRESS

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