

Pacific Horticulture & The Gardens of Ireland *Spring 2024*

22 May – Guests arriving by **1PM** at Dublin Airport will be met by a driver/ guide in the arrivals area to transfer to the **Westmoreland Hotel**. The Westin, a famous five-star hotel straddling three buildings on Westmoreland St in Dublin, has been rebranded as The Westmoreland since Tuesday, June 13, 2023. Westmoreland has undergone a €10.5m investment, including a remodeling of its lobby, an expansion of its Atrium Lounge and the creation of a new Library space, along with 19 new ‘heritage’ bedrooms overlooking Trinity College and Westmoreland Street. Here we will have our first night stay, our Welcome Reception dinner with our travel companions and meet our guide. ***Westmoreland x 1 night with breakfast and one dinner.***



23 May – This morning we will be collected by our guide for a walking tour of **Trinity College and the Book of Kells**. Whilst the Long Library undergoes refurbishment until September 2024, the Book of Kells will be in the Printing House at Trinity for guests to enjoy. Trinity College is a prestigious educational institution located in Dublin, Ireland. It was founded in 1592 and is known for its rich history, academic excellence, and beautiful campus. It has a vibrant academic community and has produced numerous distinguished alumni, including renowned writers, scientists, politicians, and scholars. The Book of Kells is an illuminated manuscript Gospel book that is considered one of Ireland's greatest cultural treasures. It is believed to have been created around the 9th century by Celtic monks, on the island of Iona.



After our morning tour, we will depart Dublin at **11.30PM** and head to Wicklow. En route will stop for an included lunch and visit to **The National Botanic Gardens at Kilmacurragh**. Following our lunch reservation for **1PM** at the Acton Café, we will have a guided tour at **2.30PM**, taking in the history of the estate and its lovely gardens. Learning about the garden's conservation of all the native species and various selected plants.



Our last stop before reaching Powerscourt Hotel will be to tour **Powerscourt Waterfall**. The waterfall is set within a beautiful, forested area of the Powerscourt Estate. The estate covers over 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) of parkland, with numerous walking trails and picnic areas. The surrounding woodlands are home to a variety of plant and animal species, making it a popular spot for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts.

Our day ends with a check-in at Powerscourt Hotel. ***Powerscourt Hotel x 3 nights with breakfast. Lunch included in our touring today.***

24 May Another full day of sightseeing today as we depart the hotel in the morning and travel directly to ***Jimi Blakes Hunting Brook Gardens***. Our visit here today will also include Jimi teaching us a course. Jimi Blake's Hunting Brook Garden has gained international recognition and has been featured in numerous gardening publications and television programs. Its unique and dynamic approach to gardening continues to captivate and inspire visitors from around the world. Lunch will be prepared from Jimi's nephew's local Pub and provided for us today on our visit.



After our lunch stop, we will head to ***June Blakes House and Garden*** which spreads over three rural acres, wrapping itself around June's home, a handsome Victorian farm steward's cottage surrounded by a huddle of austere beautiful, granite-stone farm buildings.

Our third visit today will be ***Powerscourt House and Gardens***. The Powerscourt Estate has a rich history that dates to the 13th century. The original house on the site was a medieval castle, which was transformed into a grand mansion in the 18th century by the Wingfield family. The house was later destroyed by fire in 1974 but was subsequently restored. The gardens at Powerscourt are among the most stunning in Ireland. They are meticulously designed and boast a variety of features, including terraces, statues, ornamental lakes, grottos, and vibrant flower beds. The Italian Garden, Walled Gardens, Dolphin Pond, Japanese Gardens, and Triton Lake are some of the highlights within the grounds.



Wicklow is such a fantastic base for nature lovers. The county offers an unrivalled variety of gardens, with unique flowers and plants due to its temperate climate. Wicklow is known locally as "The Garden of Ireland". The hills and valleys yield quaint villages, classical mansions, and beautiful gardens.

Return to Powerscourt for our overnight. ***Breakfast and lunch included today.***

25 May – Our first visit this morning at **10.30AM** will be to ***Mount Usher Gardens***. Situated along the banks of the River Vartry near the village of Ashford, Mount Usher Gardens are renowned for their natural beauty. They are often referred to as one of Ireland's finest examples of a "Robinsonian" garden. We will have an included lunch at the café before continuing the days touring.





Our second stop today will be the **Glendalough Monastic Site and Visitor Center**. Glendalough, which means "Valley of the Two Lakes" in Irish, is home to one of the most important monastic sites in Ireland. It combines the rich cultural heritage of Ireland with the breathtaking beauty of the Glendalough Valley, making it a memorable experience for visitors. Glendalough Monastic Site and Visitor Center is a must-visit destination for history enthusiasts, nature lovers, anyone

seeking a tranquil outdoor experience. The Visitor Center, located near the monastic site, provides information about the history and significance of Glendalough. It offers exhibitions, displays, and audio-visual presentations that give visitors insights into monastic life and the surrounding natural environment.

The final stop today will be a visit to the **Avoca Mill**. Set in the charming village of Avoca Co. Wicklow, the Mill could easily be overlooked as a picture-perfect relic of times gone by. Within the whitewashed walls lies a hub and heart of the Irish weaving industry. These dedicated local craftspeople have been working here for many years. Visitors are welcome to soak up the atmosphere and observe the weaving journey in progress. Having seen first-hand the care and attention which goes into each piece, visitors are able to shop for a souvenir or enjoy some of the delicious homemade sweet and savory treats from the café.



Return to Powerscourt for our final night in Wicklow. **Breakfast and lunch included today.**

26 May – After checking out we head to Cork, with a stop along the way for a guided tour of **Mount Congreve Gardens**. Built for Reverend John Congreve in the 1760s by the local architect John Roberts, Mount Congreve House was kept in the family until Ambrose Congreve's death in 2011. It now serves as a welcome and interpretive space for all garden visitors to complement the world-renowned gardens and best-in-class visitor center.



A second visit today will be a special one. Lunch will be included for us here as well. Currently two incredible stops are requested and one of them will be confirmed in our final itinerary. **Lismore Castle, a hosted lunch with a tour of Castle and Gardens OR Curraghmore House, garden prepared lunch and visit with in house Lord and Lady and Garden tour. Which of these are TBA in our final documents?**

Our last visit today will be to **Tourin House**. A historic mansion in County Waterford, Ireland. The Georgian architecture and lush gardens make it a captivating destination. Explore the well-preserved interiors and immerse yourself in the elegance of the past. The gardens, with their vibrant flowers and tranquil riverside, offer a serene escape. It is a must-visit for history and garden enthusiasts alike.





Our day ends at check-in at **Castlemartyr Resort**. With a storied history that includes Strongbow, Walter Raleigh, the Knights Templar and more, the Castlemartyr Resort was officially opened for guests in 2008. Nestled amid East Cork's woodlands, the luxury 5-Star Castlemartyr Resort is a destination richly steeped in Irish history and tradition. Situated on 220 acres, Castlemartyr Resort consists of a grand 18th century country manor house that sits adjacent to the ruins of an 800-year-old castle.

Lunch included in today's touring. Castlemartyr for 2 nights with breakfast.

27 May - This morning we will visit Glounthaune, where we will stop for a visit to the **Hillside Garden, the award-winning garden of Mary Byrne**. Hillside is a remarkable sprawling garden as quoted by Jane Powers (leading news correspondent for the Irish Times). It is enviably situated on a gentle south facing slope, enclosed by woodlands with a view overlooking Cork Harbour and the Lee Estuary. Sprawling over two acres combing centuries of old age trees, Pine, Beech, and Larch with an under story of hazel and holly, and a haze of blue bells in the Spring. Panted with Rhododendrons and Azaleas.



Some time for lunch on our own at the local Elm Pub before our tour continues to **Hester Fordes Coosheen Garden**. Our guided tour today will include tea and cakes. Situated on the estuary of Cork harbour 'Coosheen' houses a unique collection of plants providing year-round interest. It has been described by Shirley Lanigan in her book *The 100 Best Gardens in Ireland* as 'nothing short of a tour de force'. Hester Forde is known for her love of plants, which makes this a must-see garden for any enthusiast. A series of raised beds and troughs are home to rare and unusual smaller perennials, alpines, and bulbs. It is truly a

woodland garden in a suburban space and is home to an expansive collection of fashionable woodland plants that create a wonderful tapestry of foliage in the springtime.

Return to Castlemartyr for our overnight. ***Breakfast included today.***

28 May - Leaving Cork and making our way to Kerry this morning. On the way we will be visiting **Blarney Castle and Gardens** with a special guided tour emphasizing the castle grounds, horticulture, and conservation. Those who wish will be able to visit the Castle itself. With a café on the grounds visitors can enjoy lunch in their own time here too.





Next, we will make our way to ***Kilravock Gardens***. Set by the sea in the southwest of Ireland in the vicinity of the village of Durrus, Kilravock Gardens hosts many rare or unique plants, many originating from the southern hemisphere. Plants prosper here throughout the year, due to the influence of the Gulf Stream and the immediate microclimate.

Our days' exploration concludes upon reaching the ***Lake Hotel in Killarney***. It is known for its stunning views of the lake and the surrounding mountains, as well as its rich history and luxurious accommodation. The hotel is conveniently located near popular attractions such as Muckross House and Gardens, Ross Castle, and the Ring of Kerry.



Lake Hotel x 3 nights with breakfast and one dinner as stated.

29 May - A morning with ***Jaunting Cars into the National Park with stops at Muckross Abbey, the House – and onto Ross Castle where guests can take a cruise on the Lake*** – and finish tour here. Guests will have the balance of the day free to enjoy their lunches and tour the shops in Killarney Town.



Dinner at The Lake Hotel this evening and the ***Celtic Steps Show***. Immerse yourselves in the raw talent of popular Irish dance with the authenticity of traditional Irish music. The Celtic Steps Show aims to provide a magical evening us, taking us on a journey through the nation's colourful past and history to present day Ireland through the language of music, song and of course, dance.

Return to Lake Hotel for our overnight. ***Breakfast and dinner as stated at our hotel this evening.***

30 May - Morning visit to ***Kells Bays House and Gardens***. This stunning estate is in County Kerry, Ireland. The Victorian mansion and 40-acre gardens offer a tranquil retreat. Highlights include the Bamboo Glade, towering bamboo plants, tree ferns, palm trees, and a thrilling Skywalk with panoramic views. It is a must-visit for nature lovers and history enthusiasts alike.





Afterwards we will do an adjacent tour of the Ring of Kerry called the **Skellig Ring** that takes in Valentia Island and Portmagee. We will have time for lunch along the way in Valentia, on our own. The Skellig Ring along the Wild Atlantic Way is a glorious scenic drive that encircles a wild and rugged stretch of Ireland's coastline. It has been made more recently popular or as equally to the renowned Ring of Kerry, due to all the Star Wars filming done here and on Skellig Michael Island Monastic site (government-controlled limitations of visitors on the island per day and only reachable by boat, not included in our tour). After our stop for lunch, we will continue via Ballinskelligs, Waterville (favourite holiday stop of Charlie Chaplin), and Sneem where we can make a stop for ice cream.

Back to the Lake Hotel for our final night in Killarney. ***Breakfast included today.***

31 May – Today we transfer to **Adare Manor**. Our luxury hotel and golf resort located in the village of Adare in County Limerick, Ireland. The manor house itself is a Neo-Gothic architectural masterpiece that dates to the 19th century. The property sits on a vast estate spanning over 800 acres of beautiful parkland, including formal gardens, woodlands, and a river. A stop for lunch on our own will be included.



Along the way we will visit **Knockpatrick Gardens** is a serene botanical paradise in County Limerick. With vibrant flowers, manicured lawns, and peaceful pathways, it offers a tranquil escape for nature lovers and garden enthusiasts.

Our days touring concludes upon reaching Adare Manor x 2 nights, breakfast and one dinner included as stated.

01 June – This morning will visit **Doreen Drennan Art Studio and Garden** for a tour as well as visit to her art studio. Doreen is an Award-winning impressionist painter who has documented the West of Ireland the Wild Atlantic Way and the Burren through the medium of oil paint for over 30 years. As an award-winning gardener, it was extremely important to her to design a garden that worked with the natural shape and elements that sit at the edge of a property bordered by a river and an ancient stone bridge. The soil in the Burren region is scarce as it is a Limestone area. Each species planted was carefully selected to suit the exposed location. Shelter belts were strategically placed for protection from Atlantic winds which allowed for planting of a variety of perennials. Hydrangeas, Alders, Fuchsia, Rosa Rugosa and Elaeagnus became staples here. Clearing access to the river allowed wild ferns, foxglove, loosestrife etc. to emerge.

“Doreen views the garden as her living painting and creates accordingly as the garden evolves.”

Leaving Doreens, we will make our way to the *Cliffs of Moher* to enjoy a visit and Audio Tour. Our audio tour features 13 chapters (each an approximate 2-4 mins long) covering the UNESCO Global Geopark, the Cliffs of Moher exhibition, folklore, music traditions and more. We will also have some time to get lunch on our own from the café.

Evening farewell dinner at the Carriage House at Adare Manor – Breakfast and dinner included today.

02 June – Tour ends after breakfast and check-out. Two group transfers are included for guests to Dublin Airport (early morning 6AM departure from Adare Manor) or to Shannon Airport.

TOUR LAND COST PER GUEST BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY:

\$ 10,405.00 per person for members of Pacific Horticulture

\$ 10,505.00 per person for NON Members – We suggest considering joining before registering for the tour. <https://pacifichorticulture.org/membership-registration/>

Single supplement \$2990.00

THE IRELAND PRICE INCLUDES:

- 11 nights First Class accommodation
- All hotel taxes and service charges
- Breakfast daily, 4 special lunches and 2 dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Deluxe transportation by private motor coach
- Arrival airport transfer (If arriving by 1:00pm)
- All sightseeing and entrances as per the itinerary
- A local expert guide, John Ducie - Bio: I am a native of Dublin with a passion for sharing Ireland's culture and heritage with visitors and love meeting them and showing them the absolute best experiences possible. I am an experienced guide, a Failte Ireland (Irish Tourist Authority) Approved National Tour Guide, and a member of the Approved Tour Guides of Ireland. I am a Graduate of The National Botanic Gardens of Ireland in horticulture and a professional horticulturist, garden historian, landscape designer, and part-time tutor on the Garden Design Academy of Ireland professional diploma course. I have a Hons B Business (First Class) and a post-graduate certificate in Sustainable Development. I am a past Vice President of The National Trust for Ireland, a past President of the European Network of National Heritage Organizations, and a past Chairman of the Heritage Gardens and Designed Landscapes Committee for Ireland. I was a member of the World Heritage Site Management Plan Committee for Bru na Boinne for many years where the famous Newgrange Passage Grave Tomb is located. I currently guide the wonderful Powerscourt Gardens in Co Wicklow for specialist groups where I am researching a book on the history of the world-famous gardens. I am also a professional Genealogist and Family Historian who graduated with the National University of Ireland Certificate in Genealogy and Family History and a Member of the Association of Professional Genealogists.
- Escorted by Linda McKendry, award winning garden designer and travel coordinator for Pacific Horticulture.
 - Tax-Deductible Donation of \$350 to Pacific Horticulture

COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Airfare (Booked Independently, please provide your air schedule ASAP) Feel free to contact Shannon Cummins at Shannon@sterlingtoursltd.com to discuss any air questions. She can direct you to online links such as Kayak, Google, or your preferred Airline itself, to book your Air on your own. If you wish to use miles, be sure to contact your CC company to assist you. If you have a wonderful Travel Agent that you work with, they may be able to book your air for you too. Sterling Tours Ltd only oversees land arrangements, NOT AIR.
- Tips to your guide and driver
- Travel insurance, we suggest you read our Terms and Conditions page and access the link for a quote with Travel Guard. Please see additional information in our Terms and Conditions.
- The process of getting a quote online is quite simple or you can easily contact them from their information provided to get your quote and coverage sorted too.