



LET'S GO

Crowning jewel

The new spa at Dromoland Castle stands out for its results-driven treatments and attention to detail, writes Klara Heron



There's always been something special about Dromoland Castle; I've been lucky to visit the Co Clare hotel a handful of times over the years, usually for photoshoots set against the beautiful castle grounds. But recently, a new jewel inside the castle is bringing the wow factor.

The Castle Spa at Dromoland has been thoughtfully reimaged. I was invited down to sample one of the new treatments, created by none other than Dr Barbara Sturm. The celebrity-backed skincare range is driven by advanced science and a philosophy of healing rather than acting aggressively towards the skin.

The products are free of synthetic fragrances and harsh preservatives and are suitable for all skin types. These are luxury treatments, make no mistake, but getting results is at the heart of each one, and Dromoland has become the first spa in Ireland and the UK to have them exclusively available.

I tried the Dr Barbara Sturm Super Anti-Ageing Facial, a 75-minute treatment that is all about reinvigorating the skin to give it a youthful glow. I don't know about looking younger, but I did notice that immediately after the treatment my skin was visibly lifted, tighter and brighter.

This was in no small part thanks to the facial massage that was delivered expertly by my extremely talented therapist. I have never had a massage – or I should say, face sculpting – like it and it was hands-down the best I've experienced. The movements are all part of the signature Dr Barbara Sturm training, and as much as they are all about those results, I also found it deeply relaxing.

The treatment is 75 minutes in length, which helps, as the therapist dedicates a long portion of time to soothing rubs and strokes that focus on a specific section of the face at a time. I honestly got a shock when I looked in the mirror afterwards – my jaw was streamlined, I suddenly had cheekbones, and deeper lines that usually stand out (to me, anyway) across my



forehead and brow were virtually gone. And the all-over glow was unmistakable. I made a mental note to book back in for this exact facial ahead of my wedding, although with it being abroad, I wasn't sure how long in advance I could book it.

So, you can bet I kept a close eye on my skin for the days and weeks after the facial. For about 10 days afterwards, my skin continued to glow. The products used clearly had lifted dead skin away and the smoother surface helped, but the deep hydration and penetration from the massage surely did their job as well. The sculpting effect lasted even longer. Up to about two weeks on, lines appeared less obvious and makeup sat well. Good news for my travel plans!

The facial is €300, like I said it is a luxury treatment, but the dedication shown to having both high performing products as well as highly skilled application is something that extends across the spa offering. If that's outside of your budget, there are facials and body treatments using OSKIA (a super nourishing range) and Seabody (a science-led, ocean-powered West of Ireland brand) starting from €180.

As well as the impressive menu, the attention to detail at the spa is something of note. The robes, by Irish designer Deborah Veale, look and feel really beautiful – no scratchy generic white robes here. Likewise, the cashmere blankets in the relaxation area are designed by Irish label, KDK – it's always a joy for me to see an emphasis on local talent.

My locker had a phone charger, encouraging me to leave it locked away so I could fully relax while also being incredibly handy. And on the form to be filled out on arrival, there was question on what kind of music I'd like to listen to during my treatment – such a small detail, yet something I really appreciated.

Upstairs, beyond the Castle Spa, there is plenty of reasons to book a break to Dromoland. The afternoon tea is a treat all in itself; the estate grounds with its exquisite golf course, walkways and gardens are a pleasure to spend an afternoon on; and, perhaps most of all, the team who work at the castle is wonderful. From the concierge to the restaurant servers, everyone I met was inviting, informative and up for a chat; the kind of five-star service that feels warm and welcoming rather than removed.

One final note, if you are visiting Dromoland, is not to miss the boutique, Charlotte & Co. As a huge fan of Irish design, it was brilliant to peruse a hotel shop that stocks 100% Irish labels – most of whom I knew, but, delightfully, a handful I didn't. To see a venue that caters to many overseas guests proudly put local talent on display is wonderful. More of this, please. **ICM**
Rooms from €720 per night, see dromoland.ie.



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