



Gerard Byrne painting *Summer Shadows*, National Botanic Gardens of Ireland
Photo Esther Wang

Painting an Exotic Exchange

PLACE, plants and perspectives are trademarks of the works of artist Gerard Byrne.

The place is the Irish National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, where the artist has spent half his life painting exotic plants and botanical specimens. The perspectives are Byrne's juxtapositions of shape and hue, hallmarks of his energetic paintings. Indeed, it is the subject matter he finds in the National Botanic Gardens that frees his palette and imagination to create works that pulse with light and colour.

This September his work will be on show half a world away in Singapore, where hibiscus, figs and ginger

are as commonplace as ash, birch and cherry are in Ranelagh. Invited to exhibit by the Irish Ambassador to Singapore, Patrick Bourne, and supported by Ireland Funds Singapore, not only will Byrne's Irish work be shown in the island nation, he will travel there to paint those species he has become so familiar with at home. He has also been offered a one-month 'Painting in Residence' position at the Singapore Botanic Gardens by the gardens director, Dr Nigel Taylor.

It's a two-way cultural cultivation. Expect the familiar and the exotic to populate Byrne's canvases; it will be a true exotic exchange no matter what perspective you take on it.

www.gerardbyrneartist.com

Craic agus Ceoil at Napper Tandy's

AT Napper Tandy's premium Irish restaurant and bar on Merrion Row, there is a fantastic line-up of festivities planned for the St Patrick's Day festival week. Its newly renovated and expanded venue has plenty of space for groups of all sizes. Kicking off with the All-Irish Table Quiz on Monday, there will be some great prizes to be won! Tuesday sees the Cheltenham Racing Festival begin, and you can catch all the racing action there with free bets from Paddy Power. Explore 10 Dark Secrets of 1798 with the dinner show on Wednesday night. Enjoy

some of the best Irish live music acts on stage throughout the week with traditional ballads, classics, rockabilly and covers to keep you entertained.

Express lunch will be on offer at €9.50 Monday to Friday and the kitchen will be offering traditional Irish dishes over the weekend at €8 each so you can refuel throughout the day.

Saturday is a big day for rugby and all the games will be shown on its many big screens. Conveniently located just around the corner from Merrion Square's St Patrick's Festival Village, be sure to get down early, grab a snug and enjoy the craic agus ceoil!
www.nappertandys.ie

Stepping Away from the Crowds

IF you're not one for parades and prefer to get away over the long weekend, you couldn't pick a better place than Ballymaloe Guest House. "Dine in a country house" is how Myrtle Allen initially promoted dining at Ballymaloe House, when she opened her family dining room to the public in 1964. As the family vacated their bedrooms, they became a public offering and Ballymaloe Guest House was born.

Today, it is still internationally celebrated as the home of modern Irish food and hospitality, and continues to gain popularity and win awards internationally. It was voted 'Ireland's Favourite Food Experience 2019' by *Independent.ie* readers and won global recognition for having the world's best 'Trolley of the Year 2019' in the World Restaurant Awards – an award acknowledging the



importance of table side service and Ballymaloe House's extraordinary dessert trolley.

The Ballymaloe Grainstore is one of the many extraordinary family businesses spawned from this initial business proposition. Originally quite literally home to the working farms grain, the Grainstore is now a fantastic split-level multi-purpose venue. It hosts a variety of musical, comical and theatrical events, as well as art exhibitions and annual fairs and festivals. Upcoming for 2019 are big names such as Hudson Taylor, Hot House Flowers, Des Bishop and Sean Keane, and the programme is always being updated.

It's also the perfect location for seminars, conferences, weddings and private parties too! See www.ballymaloe.grainstore.com and www.ballymaloe.ie

Local Stories Matter

MARCH promises to be a special month at the County Museum, Dundalk with the idea of a Local History Month taking shape at the venue. Over the course of the month, the museum has organised a variety of events inspired by the premise that local stories matter.

Amongst a calendar of events featuring talks for all ages on elements of local history (including a lecture by Dr Diarmaid Ferriter on the very nature of the north/south border), the museum also houses two temporary exhibitions.

The first is The Sinking of the SS Dundalk, which charts the story of the U-boat attack on the SS *Dundalk* in October 1918 with the loss of 20 lives onboard. The second, When an Engineer Imagines, celebrates the career and achievements of one of Ireland's greatest ever structural engineers – Peter Rice. Some of Rice's accomplishments include the Sydney Opera House, the Pompidou Centre and London's Lloyd's Building.

More information about these events can be found by contacting the museum at 042 9392 999 or visiting www.dundalkmuseum.ie