



THE *Airds* HOTEL & RESTAURANT



Autumn 2012



As we welcome in Autumn to The Airds we thought it was time to update you on everything that has happened over the last few months and the exciting events we have coming up. A lot has been going on over the past year not least our continued programme of refurbishment, which in a hotel is an on-going process. This always keeps myself and Jenny busy over the winter and last December we were especially frantic as we were somewhat ambitious in what we wanted to achieve. As always it proved stressful in terms of whether we would get it all done in time. This stress however, was soon passed on to our decorators who have got to know (and love!) our ambitious plans, as they keep returning every year to a new list! More on this later.

Many of you over the years have kindly admired my father's paintings, and in fact many guests have purchased them to adorn their own walls at home! Sadly, he passed away earlier this year but his memory will live on for years to come through his artwork, which will continue to fill the hotel walls with views of Scotland, the area around the hotel and work from his many painting trips abroad.

We took the decision earlier this year to move to a more seasonal dinner menu. Many hotels especially out of the city and at the top end of the market have moved to a 'no

choice' evening menu, thus ensuring greater consistency, but this is not something which we like ourselves and therefore thought this was too big a change for us. In creating the new menu we have been careful to ensure that guests receive no less choice than before. We also took the decision that where guests stay 4 nights or more then additional choices would automatically be made available. So far the new menu has proved very popular in that dishes like scallops which are always a firm favourite, are on the menu every night now! Where guests have particular likes and dislikes, as always, the Chef will do his utmost to cater for these.

I am pleased to advise that in terms of our staff we have pretty much the same team as last year. It is nice for guests to see familiar faces when returning and it is also nice for us as owners that staff want to stay! The hotel industry is a notoriously difficult industry in which to both recruit and retain staff and at Airds we pay special emphasis on retention on the basis that we do not then need to recruit! I am pleased to advise that Graham successfully completed level 3 of his professional wine exams this year and Pawel is nearing the completion of his distance learning MBA – I think that we will all be pleased when he has finished as we often feel that we are going through it with him in terms of waiting for exam

results! Janette, I am pleased to say continues to work at the hotel on a part time basis and whilst I am unusually not able to report any actual births so far this year, I am confident that towards the end of the year there will be one, as Janette and her family eagerly await baby number two, due in December. Michal who is now in his third year with us in the restaurant has just been promoted to Restaurant

passed her first year exams and it is always a delight to see her back with us.

As Jenny and I move into our 10th year at Airds we cannot believe how quickly the years have passed, although a few more grey hairs remind us! – we often reflect on our career change back then and whether we did the right thing but when we look outside the window each morning, rain or



Supervisor – a well earned promotion for him and it is lovely to see someone young so enthusiastic and keen to learn. Many of you will remember Karrie who again worked in the restaurant for over 5 years and left us at the beginning of last year to start a law degree. She has returned again this summer, but as a student now wishing to earn money to fund her course! She successfully

shine, and savour the stunning view and then we walk next door to the hotel and listen to the lovely feedback from you our guests, we know that we did the right thing.

Refurbishments at Airds

Last December, when we closed for a period, it was extremely busy for us as we refurbished four bedrooms, two bathrooms, the restaurant and the first lounge - and these were just the big jobs! Our poor decorators were under quite considerable pressure as the rooms were all booked out for when we re-opened and hence there was no room for slippage, as sharing a room with guests was not really an option! Not only did we upgrade the rooms and bathrooms, but also replaced all the televisions in these rooms, fixing them to the wall which in an old building with thick walls is not an easy job! What is interesting is that we were the first hotel in Scotland, some nine and a half years ago, to purchase LCD flat screen televisions and we were regarded at that time as a bit of a trend setter! In addition to internal refurbishment we also employed the services of a tree surgeon who, with a small team, spent four days felling the trees in the garden which were obscuring the views for guests. Unfortunately for them it was four days of torrential rain but this type of work can only be done when we are closed as it is also pretty noisy! The trees also hid the croquet lawn and summer house – yes we do have one! and it has been good to see more guests playing this year. At one time we had a total of 14 workmen either inside or outside the hotel doing various jobs and rather than relaxing



during this time, I found myself moving from one query to another! Still, we will be starting all over again in December this year when we will be refurbishing a number of bedrooms again and also the second lounge; this means that we will now be refurbishing some rooms for a third time during our tenure of the hotel.



3 Night October Break

As summer departs and the autumn colours arrive, why not join us in the Highlands for a 3 night break throughout October.

Enjoy culinary delights and relaxation in front of one of the log fires with rates from only £370 per person for the three night package, inclusive of dinner, full Scottish breakfast and an 'Airds' cream tea on a day of your choice.

During the day enjoy the Highland scenery and perhaps some walking trips.

This offer is only bookable direct with the hotel.



Stay in Touch !

This year I have finally had to embrace social media such as **Facebook** and **Twitter** and had to accept that such 'methods' of keeping in touch are here to stay! Fortunately having a couple of young Managers who seem to love technology and who had actually heard of Facebook and Twitter was an enormous advantage and relief to me and hence I exercised my right as owner to delegate the task of keeping both up to date.

I think that to date Les's (our gardener) dog Molly has received the most number of 'likes' although Graham's new photography skills have been put to the test with the stunning sunsets we have had this year – most of which seem to be 'posted' on facebook.

We encourage guests to become a 'friend' on facebook (it is a whole new language I have had to learn!) as Graham is now starting to put special offers on and last minute availability – could be worth checking out!

Links to our Facebook and Twitter pages are available on our website, or via facebook.com/AirdsHotel and on Twitter @AirdsHotel.



Sustainable Restaurant Association



This year we joined the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) which is an organisation which seeks to advise and judge restaurants on how sustainable they are in terms of recycling, use of local suppliers etc.

They award stars from one to three (with three being the highest) and we were delighted to be awarded the full 3 stars. We have always worked hard at the hotel to become environmentally friendly within the constraints of providing a high level service but have always been modest about our actions.

Until now we have never been judged against our 'peers' and therefore it was so rewarding to receive such a high accolade.



Spa Treatments

I am pleased to advise that we continue to offer a wide range of treatments in the comfort of your own room and we will be putting more information about these on our website. It is interesting to see that over the past couple of years the number of guests treating themselves to massages or reflexology has increased at least two fold and some guests who have not perhaps had a massage before are now firm fans of such treatments, thanks in large to Tamsin whom we get such wonderful feedback about.



Kitchen Garden

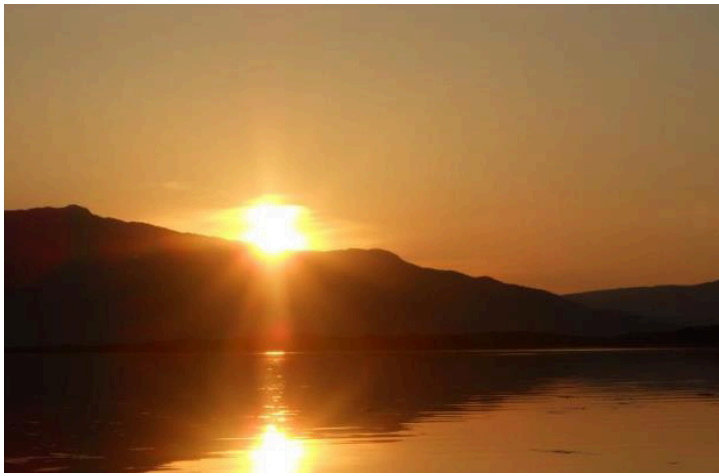


Over the years we have continued to develop our kitchen garden more and more under the expert eye of Les and it is lovely for the Chefs to simply go outside or go into the new polytunnel to pick truly fresh ingredients. Whilst we cannot grow the quantity we need throughout the year, we still manage to produce our own vegetables such as courgettes, cucumbers, celeriac, lettuces, cabbages, kale, spinach and most of the herbs we use as well. We have also developed a small orchard/berry garden which has taken about 6 years to grow and we can now pick our own apples, pears and berries. I have even been known to sneak out and pick the odd lettuce and apples when no one is looking, for my own use!

Gourmet/Wine Dinner – Saturday 27th October 2012

The Chefs once again will be creating a sumptuous seven course culinary extravaganza in October with wines from Australian wine maker Penfolds being presented by Craig Mitchell, the representative of Penfolds in the UK. Craig will lead guests through a wine journey enjoying wines from one of Australia's oldest and most highly regarded wineries. Rates for this start from £360 per room, including the gourmet dinner, matching wines and a full Scottish breakfast the following morning. Non Residents are also very welcome.

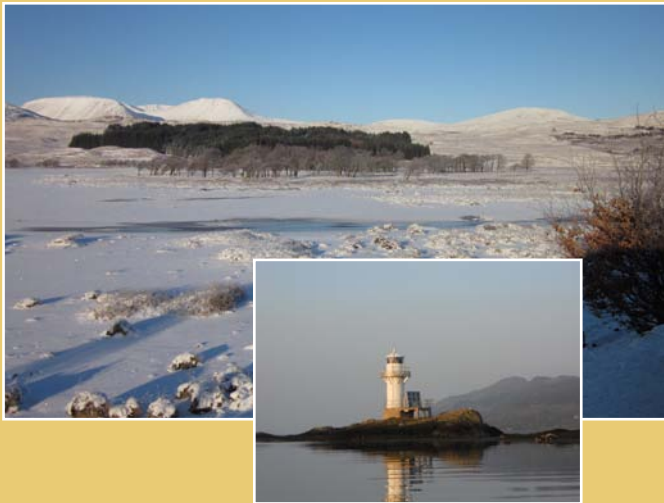




Winter Special Offer 30th October - 4 April 2013

As usual we are offering our normal special offer during the winter period. The offer is for 2 or 3 nights to include dinner and full Scottish breakfast and can be taken any consecutive days of the week. We are also trying out a Pay Before You Stay additional discount whereby, if you pay in full at the time of booking you will receive an extra 8% discount off the offer rates provided you book at least 30 days prior to your arrival date (please note this is non-changeable and non-refundable).

Rates for our 3 night offer start from £297 per person and for our 2 night offer from £210 per person, based on double occupancy. These rates are inclusive of dinner and full Scottish breakfast each day.



Christmas and New Year at The Airds

The festive period is always busy for us at Airds and we would not have it any other way. It is lovely to see so many guests return each year and it is a real country house party atmosphere. We like to keep the atmosphere as relaxed as possible so that everyone feels as though they can kick off their shoes, put their feet up and basically unwind, whilst being pampered by our staff! What could be better. We only have one room and the cottage left for our 3 night Christmas package and limited availability for New Year so please give us a ring or go onto our website for more details.



Valentines Break

Come and enjoy a luxurious romantic two or three night break, to include the 14th February.

As usual we are keeping our rates the same as our Winter Special Package, with the three night package from only £297 per person inclusive of dinner each evening, and full Scottish breakfast each morning, or the two night offer from only £210 per person. I have always personally felt that guests staying over Valentines should not be charged a premium and therefore at Airds we never have.

Do not forget we can also provide those nice little touches like chocolates, flowers and champagne. Please contact us for details.



Easter 2013

Come and enjoy Easter at Airds. This is a wonderful time for a short break as the Spring weather is often kind to us and the landscape is coming to life again with beautiful flowers blossoming in the fields and along the road side. Our 3 night package starts from £390 per person for the 3 nights, based on two guests sharing and includes dinner and full Scottish breakfast each day. We are also offering the Pay Before You Stay option which gives 8% discount off the package rates (non-changeable and non-refundable) provided you book at least 30 days in advance.

We are trying this PBYS offer out this year on a number of special offers just to see how popular they are and if it is obvious that this is something which guests like then we will look to roll it out further.

For more detailed information please contact:

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