

The Scottish Sun, Saturday July 17 2010 written by Roger Hannah

Drovers Return

One Visit To Luxurious Ballachulish Hotel Won't Be Enough

It's the age-old dilemma for those long weekend breaks. Scotland or the continent?

We decided to stay at home and follow in the footsteps of chieftains, clansmen and adventurers.

The Ballachulish Hotel, one of Scotland's most celebrated drovers' inns, was our destination.

And how thrilled we were as we watched the sun set at the "crossing of the waters".

*For just as we surveyed the majesty of Loch Leven and Loch Linnhe, a friend called to say his flight home from Munich had been cancelled.*

That's part of the beauty of Ballachulish and the West Highlands paradise which surround it.

It's within a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Glasgow.

So accessible, so incredible and no flights.

The Ballachulish Hotel was the perfect base from which to investigate everything this wonderful area has to offer.

From the moment we stepped inside the hotel – parts of which date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century – we felt at home.

The welcome was warm with kind-natured staff asking the kids' names and not forgetting them for the whole weekend.

A little touch, but it made a big impact on an eight-year-old and a five-year-old!

The family room was large, airy and comfortable – and the luxurious Celebration and Loch View rooms boast the best and most spectacular views across Loch Linnhe.

The public rooms on the ground floor were spacious and well furnished.

And Bùlas Bar & Bistro provided the relaxation and nourishment which is at the heart of every luxury weekend stay.

Bùlas was awarded the Scottish Hotel Food Innovation Award, and the standards clearly haven't dropped with an exquisite menu.

The roast red pepper and goat's cheese tart was a started which rightly comes recommended, and the chicken with haggis was my main choice.

But a catch of the day and special of the day, plus a wide and varied choice for the kids, ensures everyone is happy.

And, for once, there was no excuse for not working off those extra calories.

Visiting the Highlands many a year ago, Queen Victoria commented in her diary on the “beautiful hotel” as she crossed the Ballachulish Ferry.

*Set against the massive Ben Vair mountain range in a spectacular lochside location, there's attractions on all sides and there really is something for every visitor.*

Nearby destinations include Glencoe, Fort William, Oban, Mull, Iona, Skye and Inverness.

Anoach Mor, just outside Fort William, hosted the World Mountain Bike Championship just days after our gondola trip up the mountain.

For those with less of the daredevil tendency, The Dragon's Tooth Golf Course was right next door to our hotel and guest can play for free when arranged via reception.

And the baronial splendour of The Ballachulish Hotel also makes a wonderful setting for a traditional Scottish wedding.

Go: Ballachulish

Rooms cost from £72.75 and the Ballachulish Hotel has special offers. The Golf Package includes a round of golf, après-golf drink, dinner, bed and breakfast for £64pp. Wet and wild includes canoeing or pedalo hire plus dinner, B&B for £74pp. Walking breaks are from £64pp and include a map of various local walks, free refreshment, dinner B&B. Call 0844 855 9133 to book.