



GREGORY'S GREAT SOUTH AMERICA TRIP

Our January trip to South America was a holiday full of contrasts, and one we will never forget.

We joined our Cruise Ship Infinity in Valparaiso which was to be our home for the next 14 days. We visited the great Chilean Lake District, saw volcano's and the Skua Glacier, the cities of Puerto Mont, Puerto Arenas, and Ushuaia. We rounded Cape Horn, visited the Falkland Islands, and finally Buenos Aires where the cruise ended.

We flew on to the Iguazu Falls which must have been the highlight of our trip. They are magnificent; the widest in the world with over 140 different falls, the volume of water was just awesome.

Onto Rio de Janeiro were the Carnival was in full swing. We were visually entertained by a continuous stream of vibrant colour and dance, ingenious floats and costumes.

It was some atmosphere, and we tried to enter into the spirit of it all.

One lasting memory of Rio must be the statue of Jesus towering over the city, and seen early one morning with no other tourists around it was an extremely moving experience.



Garden

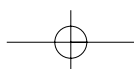
Helen Christie

After an unseasonably wet summer in 2004, I took over the position of Head Gardener in the Autumn, assuming responsibility for something resembling a paddy field in Asia rather than a kitchen garden in the highlands of Scotland.

The storms in January this year caused severe damage, however not to be deterred, we gardeners have already started planning for later this year. These plans include an increase in the cut flower border, with many plants and bulbs having been planted already.

Herbs are such an important part of what we grow, so I am increasing our already extensive range to include Roc Samphire, Ginger Mint and Garlic Chives to name but a few. In addition, we are working hard to ensure that we produce as much of our own fresh fruit and vegetables as possible. Finally (and when was a gardener's job ever done?!) we will be working on the borders around the hotel to make certain they provide a bright, cheery welcome to you all.

In a setting such as Torridon, I am sure it comes as no surprise that wildlife figures in our garden too. A nesting pair of wrens, plenty of Robins, Buzzards, Eagles and somewhat less welcome, the mole in the main lawn! As I write this, the daffodils are blooming and the birds are singing. We're all looking forward to a good summer so please do come and visit us when you return to Torridon this year.



Summer Sanctuary Offer

Three nights of peace and tranquillity from £99.50 pp per night.

Breaks are inclusive of the following: Full Scottish breakfast Complimentary tea and shortbread on arrival 4 course dinner in our award winning two rosette restaurant



Romantic Breaks

Stay a minimum of 2 nights from £165.00 pp per night

between June and September. Price is for a Superior Room inclusive of dinner, bed and full Scottish breakfast along with Louis Roederer champagne, Torridon chocolates and flowers for your arrival. For those really wanting to pamper their loved one we can offer Molton Brown gift packs.

Spoil yourselves with a real romantic treat in the highlands of Scotland – let the world pass by and relax!

Winter Luxury Breaks

Between November 2005 and March 2006, stay with us for a minimum two nights from £82 per person inclusive of Dinner, Bed and full Breakfast. The world can be your oyster, head into the hills for anything from a gentle stroll to a guided ice climb or hole yourselves up by the log fires and watch the world go by!



Competition Winner



The winning entry is

'Hey Larry, why so sheepish? I robbed the lamb chop but the mint saw us....'

Congratulations to Carole and Denise Baker – a voucher for a two night Bed and Breakfast stay is on its way to them. Thank you all for your entries, we had a lot of fun receiving them and deciding on a winner.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to win a complimentary Bed & Breakfast stay by filling in and returning the enclosed questionnaire. All returned forms will be entered into a draw... We truly appreciate your feedback!!

New for Autumn and Winter 2005

Looking beyond this summer, Robert is busy preparing what promises to be a wide and varied programme of events to entertain you all during Autumn and Winter into 2006.

There will be themed Whisky, Wine, Champagne evenings with gourmet dinners prepared lovingly by Kevin and his team. After our very successful evening in February where over 40 guests were spellbound by Animato Quartet both before and after dinner, they will be returning to the hotel. Kevin will be opening the doors of his kitchen to small groups of would-be chefs, working with you to prepare dinner – he claims he'll serve you but we're waiting to see on that...!

Currently confirmed are the following:

- Whisky Tasting Weekend 4th - 6th November
- Torridon Kitchen Experience every Thursday between November and March
- Beinn Alligin Activity Weekend 28th - 29th October.

This Autumn, come stay with us and experience even more of what Scotland can offer. Keep an eye on our website and email Newsletters where the full programme will be posted.

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News & Views

Loch Torridon Country House Hotel • Issue No 13 Spring 2005



Over the winter new faces have come to stay and of course familiar faces, as many of you have returned to us again. Our special offers have proved very popular and we appreciate your continued support. We hope that you have noticed the improvements we continue to make large or small, and that we continue to exceed your expectations.

has already given a guided sunrise walk in his first week.

Kevin continues to conjure up exciting new dishes in the kitchen and the Spring table d'hote menu arrived. A new cheese board, great new local suppliers and chef diving for his own scallops all contributes to a great menu. The young brigade has new faces on board, and there is a genuine excitement and enthusiasm for the year ahead.



Busy Busy Busy! The new season is upon us and it seems as if the winter has gone by in a flash. Closing in January allowed us to continue with our refurbishment program and a number of rooms have been transformed. The Coire Roill Suite has taken pride of place, where Rohaise has wielded her magic creating a fantastic room. The staff block has been completed and the staff have been very patient with the delays but are very happy to have now moved in. The Ben Damp Lodge has seen completion of the bedroom refurbishment, a splash of colour in the bar and restaurant and a new roof on the leaky conservatory.



Staff have left and new staff have arrived and have completed their training. Many staff have returned to us for the new season and many are starting their third or fourth season with us. The offer of quality ensuite accommodation, professional training both in-house and from outside providers, NVQs, and apprenticeships have all allowed us to retain and attract staff.

Our manager, Robert, has put together a programme of events for the autumn and winter following on from a number of successful events this winter passed. Whether you are interested in wine, whisky, music or cooking there will be something for everyone and we hope you will come and stay.

Chris Wilson has joined us as Activity Manager, and brings with him a wealth of experience and qualifications. We will soon be looking to add a number of exciting new adventurous and more passive activities to those we already offer; infact Chris



Daniel & Rohaise

New Activities Manager

As a keen mountaineer, climber and kayaker and an instructor in all three disciplines a move to Scotland has been on the cards for many years now. When the opportunity to work at Loch Torridon Hotel was offered to me it was an opportunity that I could never turn down.

Now that I am here I plan to expand on the activities that the hotel can offer you during your stay, giving you more choice based around the hotel. Whether you want a guide for a local walk or even a days rock climbing or just simply some advice on the area or an activity, I'll always be on hand to help you out.



Chris Wilson.

Activities

Archery & Clay Pigeon Shooting

Both sports remain a firm favourite with our guests and rightly so. With only a little practice both these activities can be picked up by anyone. Both the archery and clay pigeon shooting continue on the grounds of the hotel giving stunning back drops to these noble sports

Archery: £25 pp

Clay Pigeon: £40 pp

Bike Hire

Our bike hire offers residents a unique opportunity to visit the surrounding areas without the fuss and bother that comes with a car. You can hire them for half or a full day and we even have slightly smaller bikes for the wee ones.

From £10 pp

Guided Walks

Ever seen anywhere in Loch Torridon you've always fancied seeing but never known how to get there. With our fully qualified guide we can take you there. Whether you want to walk amongst our stunning glens or find those remote and secret lochs, our guide can guarantee you a trip you will never forget

£55 per person 1:2 Half day / £90 per person 1:2 Full Day

What's New?

With the arrival of Chris Wilson our new activities instructor, the hotel is now developing and will be able to offer a whole host of new, safe and exciting activities for our guest try.

Mountain Guiding

Part of the appeal of walking in Scotland is the diversity of the landscape. Each area has something different to offer and Loch Torridon is no exception with its

majestic mountains towering above the shore lines, it truly is a unique place. Though these mountains can seem dangerous to climb they can be tackled very safely with our resident fully qualified instructor. Imagine for yourself panoramic views of Lochs that look more like mirrors, glens that seem to stretch on for ever and a feeling that you are truly stood on top of the world.

From: £130 pp per day 1:1

Rock Climbing & Abseiling

Fancy something exciting and unbelievable rewarding? Then a half day or a full day of rock climbing and abseiling is for you. This extremely safe and exhilarating sport is soon going to be offered by the hotel by our new activities manager who has a wealth of experience running climbing and abseiling sessions for all abilities.

From: £50 pp Half Day / £100 pp Full Day

Kayaking

This sport can be enjoyed by all abilities and is a great way to spend a summer's day. In the coming months Loch Torridon Hotel will be offering kayaking on Loch Torridon itself. So if you're looking for a high energy session with lots of water or you would simply like to cruise around the loch and see it from a different perspective then Chris Wilson our new fully qualified activities manager will be more than happy to run a session for you.

**From £50 pp Half Day/
£100 pp Full Day**



KITCHEN CORNER - Summer again ...

Already it is time to think of Summer – where did the winter go?

Although I have cooked here for 3 years now, I am still finding new, exciting local suppliers; I have to be Kevin Brome 007 here to root out the quiet yet incredibly passionate people who provide such perfect produce. We have Smoked Salmon from Sleepy Hollow ('The best I have ever tasted' - Raymond Blanc), hand-dived Scallops from Loch Ewe, where I am about to embark on a dive to learn more about the jewels of the Loch and Loch Duart Salmon which has the only fish with 100% score from the new RSPCA freedom food scheme; which surely goes to prove that happy fish is great tasting fish!! If all of that wasn't enough, I am just about to track down most of the farmhouse cheese producers in Scotland for the new cheese board we are planning for the restaurant this year.



So as you can see, I have been busy keeping my hand in sourcing the very best and freshest ingredients for your pleasure. Old chefs are leaving us and new ones are here, we now have a French Pastry Chef Stephane who produces the most memorable puddings and is a true professional to work with. Barry has now moved into

the role of my second, or Sous Chef, and we all wish him the best of luck – I'm not easy at times! James is going on his travels soon and Jason continues from strength to strength as apprentice chef. It is great to see both old and new faces in the hotel and I hope that we will look after you all this year again, as you have come to expect. Before I forget, do take a look at the programme of events which will be appearing on the website soon; there will be an opportunity to come and cook with me and I might even pour the wine for you!

Must go as I have 200 scallops to open...

Bye for now
Kevin

RECIPE



Fragrant Summertime Salad of Roast Sea Scallops

Ingredients:

Servings: 2
6 x Large fresh Shelled Scallops (leave Roe on)
1 x Ripe peach
2 sliced Red Onions
1 tablespoon toasted hazelnuts segments of 1 pink grapefruit
1 x Cos Lettuce

Dressing:

1 x tbsp Double Cream
1 x tbsp Olive Oil
1 x tbsp Lime Juice
1 x tbsp chopped Mint
(Cool all these ingredients in fridge, mix together and season with salt and pepper).

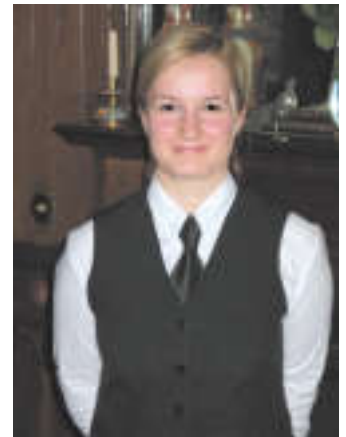
Roast Scallops in a hot fry pan with a little olive oil and butter, then season with Salt and Pepper and a small squeeze of Lemon Juice. Set aside and keep warm.

Mix all other ingredients together with dressing and serve with hot scallops on the top. Enjoy!

Staff Cornered: Marta Wojtkowiak

Marta Wojtkowiak joined the hotel staff in the early part of 2004 in the housekeeping team. Having studied Hospitality Management in her home town of Poznan, Poland, she was eager both to improve her English language skills and learn more about our industry.

After a short while, she made the move from Housekeeping to the Dining Room, which showed her dedication to improving her language skills in wanting a complete customer facing role. Since making the move, she has gone from strength to strength and many guests have enjoyed not only her cheery conversation, but her warm smile too!



Fact File Favourites:

Favourite Food: Pancakes
Favourite Drink: Hendricks Gin & Tonic
Favourite Colour: Green
Favourite Tree: Chestnut
Favourite journey: Switzerland by train
Where born: Wolsztyn, Poland

Favourite part of being in Torridon: Meeting guests from different parts of the world
What she has found the most exciting about being in the UK: Learning Scottish Culture
What she misses most from home: Family



'Future Chef'

Some of you may well have seen Alison Beaton in two guises – waitress at the Ben Damph Bistro and carol singer on Christmas Eve. Well she donned yet another cap recently when she entered Springboard UK's 'Future Chef' competition at regional level. By costing out, planning and executing her own dish she came second after fighting off some stiff competition in Thurso.

Well done Alison!!

BEN DAMPH LODGE

After the winter, the Ben Damp is looking to improve on the success of last season. Several staff have returned from the 2004 season and Chef Manager, Lis Broome is very excited about developments.



The new menu builds on the previous success of last year with more local suppliers and some new and exciting foods alongside some old favourites; organic wild boar sausages from Beauly, the best Scottish beef from our butcher in Gairloch and loch salmon from the Torridon Smokehouse in Sheildaig.

The lodges have been refurbished and both bar and restaurant given a face lift. There is a good choice of malt whiskies available along with a new and improved selection of fine Scottish real ales. What's more, our summer programme of live music is filled for most weekends so we look forward to some great toe tapping evenings.

We're all looking forward to welcoming guests, both new and old, to the Ben Damp for what we are sure will be our best season yet!



An Australian in Torridon

While walking through Annat village today, with the sun glistening on the mountains and snowflakes falling from the sky, I started to ponder my time spent in Torridon and the question I am asked so frequently – 'How does a city girl from Western Australia find herself all the way up in the North West of Scotland?'

The truth is that I still ask myself the same thing.....

I arrived in Torridon in the summer of 2003, expecting to stay for three months and yet here I am almost two years on and I have never looked back. Having fallen in love with all the qualities which attract so many of you here time and time again, I find it increasingly difficult to imagine leaving what has become my second home. I've seen so many people come and go – all with a sadness at having to leave this special place; some still telling me to this day how much they miss Torridon and wish that they were here again.

So, while my jar of Vegemite still takes pride of place by the toaster, another question comes to mind. Has living in Torridon set too high a standard for anywhere in the 'real world' to live up to? I suppose time will tell....

Rohaise on Training at Loch Torridon

I have just come out of an Induction Meeting with four new members of new staff, Chris our new Activity Manager, Jo & Julie in Housekeeping and our Kitchen Porter Jacek, all keen and enthusiastic at the start of the new season. Induction to me is one of the most important parts of our training process. At this point I stress to new members of the team that Daniel and I cannot run Loch Torridon on our own. The moment they start working here they are an integral part of the business, something which Daniel and I very much appreciate.



From the Induction everyone is open to a structured training programme and currently five member of the team are studying for their NVQ certificate. Jo Ridehalgh our Head Housekeeper is about to complete her level 3 and due to her hard work and dedication it has taken her just 18 months to finish.

As part of our continuous training programme, we recently had an afternoon for all the staff dedicated to FISH. Not four hours discussing the difference between a bass and a haddock but on a Management Philosophy that has spread from its founder in Seattle, USA to companies globally around the world.

The idea is that we all should have fun at work, fun creates energy and that energy makes a better and more positive environment for both staff and guests. I think it is working, there are definitely happier tunes coming from the Kitchen, but tell us what you think when you are next here.