

FOOD & wine



Goats Lane, Clarinbridge, and Péalra na Mara, Oranmore

Goats Lane, Clarinbridge

Goats Lane Café, what a great name for a café and so easy to remember. It is apparently the original name for the road down by the side of Kelly's post office and shop in Clarinbridge. This new venture has just been opened in the last couple of weeks by Deirdre and Phyllis Flanagan and is an oasis of home cooked treats. Previously I have bought cakes, brownies, and breads from Deirdre and Phyllis at various markets in Kinvara, Oranmore, Clarinbridge, and Ardahan, and often times, with the rain pouring down around them, I thought, fair play to them. No more setting up their tent and perhaps

getting drenched while trying to bring their goodies to their customers. The one cast iron guarantee you have when treating yourself in Goats Lane is that everything will be home baked and cooked fresh, and as you can see in the picture there is a pretty nice selection. I have always loved the brownies but this time I had the slice of lemon curd cake, which looking quite formidable on the plate, although it was light and delicious, definitely a repeat order of this is required at a future date. The café seats about 20 people but I foresee that people will be sitting out in the small and lovely back yard, especially if they can put a glass roof over it. As it is on my route to and from Galway, I called in a couple of times already and each time it was close

to a full house. Deirdre and Phyllis also serve a selection of lunch dishes, mainly vegetarian but always at least one meat dish. My friend had the Goats Lane savoury tart, a large helping of quiche with goat's cheese (what else?), spinach, and pine nuts with home grown salads, €7.50. It disappeared from the plate before I could even say, 'Can I try some?' His verdict was a 10/10 (and can I tell you he is a hard man to please). I had the vegetable soup, €4, made from their own vegetables grown at home, and it was delicious. I had the bridge baked ham panini with mature cheddar, tomato relish, and salad, also delicious. I noticed a dish called 'The Plank' on the menu, this is their own homemade hummus, tapenade, pesto, and spiced dipping oils with a bread selection, €7, which I will order next time I visit. Goats Lane Café is open six days a week and I recommend you call in, particularly for the cakes and coffees. Take away is an option also.

Péalra na Mara, Oranmore

This new café/restaurant opened during the summer. It is located

around the corner from the new Bank of Ireland in Oranmore. This is also a great name and easy to remember. Although it may not be obvious, you can use the underground car park just beside the entrance, very handy in bad weather. It is open seven days a week, from 8am to 10.30pm, but opens a little later on Sundays at 10am. I was there during the evening midweek, but I did have a look at the several other menus. The breakfast menu seems great value, it offers a small breakfast of two sausages, two rashers, and two free range eggs for €4.95, which includes a free regular tea or coffee, toast, and a sparkling or still water. A nice treat some Saturday morning would be the chef's breakfast of smoked salmon, sautéed spinach, two poached eggs, and homemade hollandaise sauce, €7.95, included of course is the previously mentioned tea/coffee and toast. The lunch menu has a lot of pasta dishes for €7.95 and you can add a soup and tea/coffee for a total of €9.95, which is a very good deal. It also serves chicken, meatballs, fish and chips, steak sandwich, and more. The evening menu is priced very keenly but I chose the only relatively expensive starter of seared



Deirdre Flanagan at Goats Lane Café.

scallops with herb salad sprinkled with lime and olive oil dressing, €10. I often cook scallops at home but I like to order them when I am dining out (minus any cooking smells) and from a commercial kitchen's really hot griddle, they always taste great. They were excellent and are a great source of that all-important vitamin B12, so think of them as food for the memory. My dining companion did not have a starter as she decided on a main course only. There is a very big selection of pasta dishes and it offers a really good deal of two pasta main courses plus a bottle of wine for €35. I was tempted by the couscous dish as the chef proprietor is from Algeria, but was swayed by

the fish of the day which was monkfish. The fish of the day alternates, it can be turbot, halibut, or monkfish, depending on what is fresh on the day, and costs €21.95. This dish is served with a choice of potato types and a choice of vegetables. The monkfish was a large portion and cooked to perfection, as was the potato gratin. You can choose different side dishes, mine was a selection of roast vegetables, this was slices of courgette, red pepper, onion, and aubergine and really, really, good. The fish was served with some slow roasted tomatoes and French beans on the main plate. My dining companion had the Tuscan Parcel, this consisted of mixed baby

leaves, sun-dried tomato pesto, and goat's cheese, wrapped in filo pastry, baked to a crisp, and served with mint organic yoghurt, €14.50. This tasted good, but be aware if ordering it that it takes quite a while to cook. The menu is very wide ranging with duck, lamb, steaks, fish, chicken, and pasta. I finished my meal with a very pleasant home made tarte tatin and ice cream, €5.95. If you have not been there yet why not call in and try something from the very wide ranging menu. For further details look up www.pearlanamara.ie and to call for reservations phone (091) 483900.

Authors to visit Galway tomorrow to celebrate Irish cheese

Enthusiastic foodies Glynn Anderson and John McLaughlin have written the definitive guide to the farmhouse cheeses of Ireland, a celebration of cheese and cheesemakers. During Bord Bia's Farmhouse Cheese and Craft Beer Weekend, taking place from today (Thursday) to Monday, they will be out and about, taking part in events and signing copies of their very tasty book. Tomorrow (Friday) from 4.30pm they will be in the Oslo Bar and Microbrewery in Upper Saltchill. *Farmhouse Cheeses of Ireland - A Celebration* (The Collins Press, price €24.99) is the first book to feature every locally produced farmhouse cheese in Ireland. It contains detailed descriptions of each cheese and the cheesemakers along with extra information on cheesemaking and the Irish cheese industry. There are fantastic photographs throughout to accompany the text. "Ireland is home to a range of cheeses whose excellence is recognised internationally and yet many Irish people may not be aware of all of them," said Glynn Anderson. "The cheeses featured in the book are from the four corners of Ireland, including cheese coated in ash, blue cheese, seaweed cheese, sheep's cheese, goat cheese, and even biodynamic cheese. We were also lucky enough to get some well-known Irish chefs such as Catherine Fulvio and Darina Allen to give us their favourite recipes they make with Irish farmhouse cheeses." Among the many award-winning cheeses featured in the book is Galway-based Killeen Farmhouse Cheese which has had a fantastic year. Killeen won Supreme Champion at the Irish Cheese Awards 2011 and also scooped three major category awards at the British Cheese Festival Awards in September. *Farmhouse Cheeses of Ireland - A Celebration* is available now from all good bookshops and online at www.collinspress.ie

OSCARS SEAFOOD BISTRO

Dominick Street 091 582180 www.oscarsbistro.ie

Marty's Connemara mussels Oscars Seafood Bistro Style
Mussels are so easy it's ridiculous; but they must always be of fantastic quality and incredibly fresh.
 Serves 2:

- Ingredients*
 1 KG Marty's Connemara mussels
 2 shallots chopped very fine
 1/2 glass of white wine
 50 ml cream
 A little chopped flat leaf parsley & chopped scallions to finish
 2-3 lemon wedges to garnish



- Method:*
 1. Heat a thick based pot until good and hot.
 2. Add the white wine, and chopped shallots and bring to the boil.
 3. Add all the mussels at once, and then place the cover onto the pot keeping the heat as intense as possible.
 4. After about four minutes most of the mussels should be open, now add the cream, chopped parsley and scallion.
 5. Replace the lid and cook for about another minute so as all the mussels are cooked, but not overcooked.
 6. Serve straight away maybe with some fresh brown bread and a cold Galway Hooker beer.

