

**Killeavy**  
Castle Estate

**Press Kit**



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## A Tapestry of Heritage and Mythology

Located in the heart of the Ring of Gullion, Killeavy Castle Estate offers guests the opportunity to explore an area that is steeped in Irish mythology.

Featured in ancient tales of the Cailleach, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, and Cú Chulainn, Slieve Gullion is a striking presence in the landscape, allowing visitors to step into a world where heroes once roamed and nature speaks a language of its own, that has echoed through time.

With woodland walks throughout the 365-acre estate and direct access to Slieve Gullion, nature is right on the doorstep for guests of the hotel.



## Journey into the Heart of Killeavy Castle Estate

It has been said that nature is the purest portal to inner peace...

Nestled within the ancient heartlands of County Armagh, Killeavy Castle Estate beckons travellers to embark on a journey through nature, myth and heritage. Here, amidst the lush woodlands on the slopes of Slieve Gullion, where heroes of Irish mythology once walked, the estate stands as a testament to centuries of history and the enduring spirit of the land.

Named AA Hotel of the Year Northern Ireland 2023, Killeavy Castle Estate comprises a four-star boutique hotel, castle accommodation and self-catering lodges in the heart of the Ring of Gullion. Boasting an award-winning 2 AA Rosette restaurant, a casual bistro bar, and spa facilities, Killeavy Castle Estate provides the perfect haven to relax, switch off and reconnect with the spirit of nature and heritage in the spectacular surroundings of the estate.



## A Mission to Share the Spirit of Killeavy

Generations of families have called Killeavy home, each leaving an indelible mark on its landscape. The current family of Killeavy Castle Estate are the Boyles.

Born in Ireland and raised in Australia, Mick Boyle's ties to South Armagh run deep, harking back to his parents' birthplace in Killeavy during the 1930s. His return to Killeavy in 2013 was not just a reconnection with familial history but the awakening of a mission to preserve, and share with the world, the heritage of a place that has shaped generations.

Together with his wife, Robin, he meticulously restored the 19th-century castle at its centre, expanding the estate to offer a tranquil retreat for those seeking a deeper connection with nature and history, leaving their own indelible mark on the landscape.



# Embracing Sustainability to Preserve the Past for Future Generations

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The owners of Killeavy Castle Estate are passionate about creating a legacy of sustainability and environmental consciousness. Encompassing every aspect, from the initial castle restoration and build of the hotel to the day-to-day operations, Killeavy Castle Estate stands as a steward of the land that surrounds it.

Awarded geopark status in 2023, the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark that Killeavy Castle Estate is based in, boasts a wealth of geological history, natural beauty, and mythical landscapes ripe for exploration by visitors to the area.

The estate's dedication to sustainable tourism is a conscious effort to tread lightly on the earth, ensuring that every guest experience not only reflects the rich heritage of the estate but also contributes to the preservation of this pristine landscape for future generations.

Here, nature intertwines with history, offering an unparalleled opportunity to explore ancient heartlands and reconnect with the essence of Ireland's mythic landscapes. Come, unravel the tapestry of Killeavy, where heritage meets mysticism, and stories of old come to life. Your journey awaits at the heart of South Armagh and Killeavy Castle Estate is ready to welcome you.



## Presenting Gullion at Killeavy: Where Culinary Excellence Meets Mystic Landscapes

Gullion at Killeavy is an exquisite dining haven, celebrated for its exceptional food and captivating panoramic views of the Ring of Gullion. Boasting a prestigious 2 AA Rosette award, Gullion at Killeavy is a testament to the commitment to culinary excellence that defines Killeavy Castle Estate.



## Farm to Fork Gastronomy: A Symphony of Flavours

Gullion at Killeavy is not just a restaurant; it's a celebration of the finest produce sourced from the estate's farm, walled gardens, and the surrounding landscape and suppliers. Here, the culinary journey extends beyond the plate, inviting patrons to savour the rich stories embedded in each dish. The menu seamlessly weaves together the bounty of the land on the estate with offerings from leading local artisans, producers, and fisheries, creating an immersive gastronomic experience.



## Inspired by Slieve Gullion: A Mystic Culinary Tale

The restaurant draws inspiration from the mystical Slieve Gullion, a mountain steeped in Irish folklore and literature. Legends of Cú Chulainn, Ossian, and the Calliagh Berra come alive in the tales spun on its slopes. Gullion at Killeavy transports diners into this magical realm, where each culinary creation is a harmonious blend of flavours and narratives.

## A Journey from Farm to Fork

At Killeavy Castle Estate, we take pride in a transparent and immersive farm-to-fork journey that highlights the natural cycle of food from the ground to your table. This journey is a testament to our commitment to sustainability and quality, showcasing the meticulous care and passion that go into every dish served at Gullion at Killeavy.



Our culinary expedition begins with a thoughtful selection of ingredients, where each component of your meal is traceable back to its origins on our estate. The journey involves an intricate process of nurturing, harvesting, and preparing food, ensuring that every bite conveys a sense of place and the essence of our land.

Our estate is home to lush gardens and a dedicated farm where seasonal produce and exceptional meats are cultivated and reared with respect for nature. This produces a bounty of ingredients that inspire our 'Taste of the Estate' menu, where the freshness of the farm and the creativity of our kitchen converge.



The menu is a reflection of our culinary artistry, with each course designed to introduce guests to the diverse flavors and stories of our estate.

Join us at Gullion at Killeavy for a journey that blurs the line between nature and nourishment, where every dish is a tribute to the farm-to-fork philosophy and every bite is a story waiting to be savoured.





Allow us to introduce you to some of the team behind Killeavy Castle Estate...

## Mick and Robin Boyle, Proprietors of Killeavy Castle Estate

Born in Ireland and raised in Australia, Mick Boyle's ties to South Armagh run deep, harking back to his parents' birthplace in Killeavy during the 1930s. Mick's Killeavy-born parents emigrated to Australia almost 55 years ago, where they raised a family and remained connected to their roots, returning to visit the area with their family over the years.

Having established a successful long-standing civil engineering firm, Abergeldie, as well as The Jaramas Foundation, a family philanthropic trust with a mission to protect the planet back in Australia, it was during one of Mick's visits to Killeavy in 2013, that he not only reconnected with his familial history but was inspired to combine his passions and embark on a mission to rebuild, preserve, and share with the world, the heritage of a place that has shaped generations.

Together with his wife, Robin, he meticulously set about restoring the 19th-century castle at its centre, expanding the estate to offer a tranquil retreat for those seeking a deeper connection with nature and history and offering a greener tourism experience that has become an award-winning tourism destination and was named AA Hotel of the Year Northern Ireland 2023.



## Matthew Hynds, General Manager

Armagh native, Matthew Hynds is the General Manager at Killeavy Castle Estate. With a strong commitment to excellence and a passion for hospitality, Matthew leads Killeavy Castle Estate's award-winning team in delivering unforgettable experiences for valued guests.

Matthew has a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry, with a rich heritage deeply intertwined in the field. Growing up with both sets of grandparents owning public houses, he developed a profound appreciation for the industry from a young age. A graduate in Event Management from Ulster University, Matthew's journey has taken him through various management roles in prestigious hotels and 4 and 5-star properties across Ireland and Europe before joining Killeavy Castle Estate in the role of Operations Manager, where he spent two years overseeing operations across all areas of the estate before his promotion to General Manager.

For Matthew, hospitality is all about people. He thrives on witnessing customers leave the property with lasting smiles and memories, which he believes is the ultimate success of any hospitality endeavour.





## Darragh Dooley, Executive Head Chef

Executive Chef, Darragh Dooley, originally from Galway, joined Killeavy Castle Estate ahead of its opening in 2019. With more than two decades of experience working in the hospitality sector in Ireland and Canada and having held positions at some of Ireland's other top hotels including The K Club, Castle Leslie and Cashel House, Darragh has extensive knowledge of what it takes to make a restaurant great.

With a passion for a farm-to-fork approach to dining, and an appreciation for fresh, flavourful produce, Killeavy Castle Estate presented the opportunity for Darragh to put his passion on a plate, using produce sourced from the onsite working farm and estate gardens and trusted local suppliers to curate seasonal menus that take guests on a culinary journey through the estate and the local area, showcasing the skills of his expert team of chefs that has earned the restaurant 2 AA Rosettes.



## Dario Percic, Head Chef

Head Chef, Dario Percic originates from Split in Croatia and has almost 15 years of experience as a chef.

During his career as a chef in Croatia, Dario worked extensively with seafood and fresh, locally sourced ingredients selected daily from the market in Split. Dario's role at Killeavy Castle Estate continues this focus on fresh, seasonal, locally sourced ingredients, with the estate gardens and farm providing fresh ingredients and produce daily and the estate prioritising a commitment to excellence and sustainability that resonates with Dario's own values and is reflected in every meal presented to guests of the hotel.

Along with Executive Chef, Darragh Dooley Dario guided the kitchen and restaurant team at Killeavy Castle Estate to a 2 AA Rosette award win for the restaurant.





## Gareth Black, Estate Butcher

With 35 years of butchery experience, specialising in farm-to-fork produce, Gareth Black is the Estate Butcher at Killeavy Castle Estate.

Working from our onsite Farm Store, Gareth prepares meat for the Gullion, Bistro Bar and the weddings and events catering throughout the estate. Using produce from animals that have been hand-reared on the estate, including our own Killeavy Longhorn beef and Cheviot lamb, Gareth delivers the finest quality cuts and flavours, making every dining experience at Killeavy Castle Estate excellent for all guests.

In addition, Gareth produces farm-to-fork meats, cured bacon and air-dried beef that is sold alongside other local produce like estate honey, chutneys, and vegetables in our Farm Store.



## Jamie Curran, Farm Manager

Jamie, the farm manager, has a background deeply rooted in agriculture, beginning with early experiences on McGary's farm, Armagh. Progressing to the service of Lord Ballyedmond on the Ballyedmond Estate in County Down, Jamie handled diverse responsibilities involving caring for the cattle, sheep, dairy, pigs, deer, and poultry. Acquiring expertise through animal sector studies and pursuing degrees in animal nutrition/business management, Jamie expanded skills at PKF FPM, dealing with financial aspects for farm clients.

Arriving at Killeavy with a blank canvas in September 2016, Jamie rejuvenated a dilapidated farm, sourcing hardy English Longhorn cattle and Cheviot sheep from Scotland. The farm transitioned to a closed system, exclusively introducing male animals to mitigate contamination risks. Lambs are now retained for the farm shop, while beef caters to both the farm store and the hotel. Jamie also oversees the care of the estate's two Irish wolfhounds, Foxall and Papworth II.

Jamie collaborates closely with his co-worker, Séan Harper, in the farm's day-to-day operations. Together, they manage everything from daily tasks to farm maintenance while attentively monitoring crucial statistics to ensure optimal performance and efficiency.







## Séan Edgell, Head Gardener

Originally from the North Coast, Séan has lived in England, Scotland and Germany. Séan is passionate about bringing the best produce from the garden to the kitchen to complete the farm-to-fork experience, constantly chasing excellence.

Seán works on the estate to maintain the grounds and bring vibrant life to the gardens whilst working with Chef Darragh to grow the produce that will bring guests the best experience and taste to the dinner plate. Ranging from classic vegetables to specialised microgreens, there is no challenge in producing a diverse and tasty harvest that this fantastic garden team will not rise to.

The farm-to-fork strategy aims to accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system. This strategy also contributes to our journey of becoming a carbon-neutral destination and helps mitigate climate change while reversing biodiversity loss.



## Sustainability at Killeavy Castle Estate

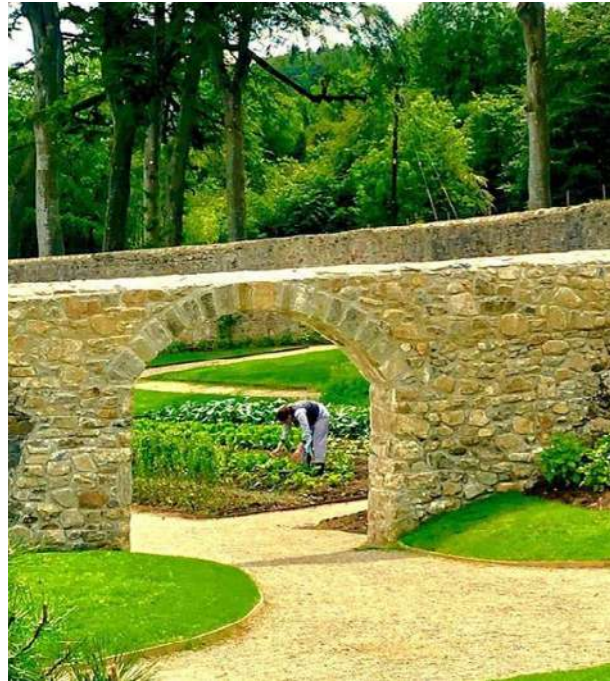
Killeavy Castle Estate is an accredited member of Green Tourism and has been certified by Sustainable Travel Ireland in recognition of its commitment to sustainable practices in hospitality, from the foundational build stage of its hotel to day-to-day operations.

From the very inception, the estate's architectural design and building materials reflect a dedication to minimising environmental impact, incorporating smart seasonal concepts to reduce reliance on artificial lighting, maximising sun exposure and using sustainable wood finishes throughout the site.

Since the opening in 2019, the Directors, Management, and Staff at Killeavy Castle Estate are committed to preserving and enhancing the natural environment. They continuously strive to enhance its environmental practices, including waste management, eliminating single-use plastics, and conserving water and energy. Killeavy Castle Estate operates all business practices in-line with its own sustainability policy in reference to UN Sustainable Development Goals and all relevant standards.



## Farm-to-fork



In the realm of agriculture, the estate's working farm is the heartbeat of its farm-to-fork ethos. Some of the finest produce is sourced from the island of Ireland as well as using as many local suppliers as possible to champion what can be produced here on the estate's doorstep. The 1-acre vegetable garden produces a diverse array of seasonal vegetables, while the Farm Store, opened in 2022, showcases products ranging from the estate's Longhorn Beef to local artisanal goods.



## Day-to-day



Moreover, sustainability at Killeavy Castle Estate extends past the plate. The estate minimises plastic usage, with all its bottled water filtered in-house and served in glass bottles in the hotel bedrooms and food and beverage outlets, and all takeaway cups used on site are compostable. Waste is diligently managed, with food waste repurposed on the estate farm, grass and tree cuttings composted, and plastics recycled.

The estate's commitment to energy efficiency is evident through the use of electric buggies, LED lighting, and a Building Energy Management System (BEMS) regulating heating and water usage and the availability of EV charging points for guests. Even the spa incorporates sustainability, utilising only responsibly sourced flowers and herbs from the estate gardens in its signature treatments.



## Journey to Net Zero



Moving beyond the hotel, in a pioneering stride towards environmental stewardship, Killeavy Castle Estate has embarked on a transformative Landscape Restoration Project. Covering 365 acres of woodland and farmland, the 15-year, £1.5 million Landscape Restoration Plan encompasses the restoration of the sprawling 365 acres of woodland, farmland and mountain that make up Killeavy Castle Estate in the Slieve Gullion area of the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark. With a dual purpose to invigorate recreation and tourism in the region while safeguarding and elevating the existing High Nature Value (HNV) habitat, this ambitious initiative seeks to enhance biodiversity, fortify ecosystem resilience, and contribute to carbon sequestration, extending a biodiversity corridor across the landscape. Simultaneously, Killeavy Castle Estate is harnessing the power of solar energy to further its commitment to sustainability. The forthcoming introduction of solar panels in April this year is a strategic move poised to significantly propel the estate towards its goal of achieving net-zero emissions by the close of 2024.

This holistic approach to sustainability positions Killeavy Castle Estate as a beacon in the hospitality industry, bringing eco-tourism in Ireland to a new level and embodying a harmonious balance between four-star comfort and a profound respect for the environment which surrounds it.

In summary, Killeavy Castle Estate had addressed sustainability within the operations through:

- A farm-to-fork approach to dining across the estate
- Eliminating food waste
- Eliminating single-use plastics across the estate
- Recycling plastic and cardboard across the estate
- Taking a sustainable approach to building heating and water systems throughout the estate to reduce emissions.
- Undertaking a landscape restoration project that will see 50,000 native trees planted on the slopes of Slieve Gullion surrounding the estate. The first 22,000 will be planted in March 2024.
- Installation of solar panels saving 60 tons of carbon per year.





**Killeavy**

Castle Estate

**Bringing you closer to what's important**

[killeavycastle.com](http://killeavycastle.com)