



11

You can find fantastic beasts here

A team of craftspeople has brought the mythical creatures of Ireland's Adare Manor back to life

IMPOSING GRIFFINS, HALF-HUMAN SEA serpents, grimacing gargoyles and ravens bearing family crests are among the wild creations that have been lovingly revived at Adare Manor in County Limerick, Ireland.

The 19th-century estate is reopening this month after a multi-million euro makeover, which included restoring over 200 of the stately manor hotel's so-called "grotesques," which adorn the limestone walls, overhangs, windows and other nooks and crannies.

Imposing statues like this were originally Medieval decorative embellishments;

centuries later, they staged a decor comeback within the neo-Gothic architecture of the 19th century.

The majority of the manor's creatures were introduced beginning in 1832 by the original owners, the second Earl of Dunraven and his wife, Countess Caroline—an eccentric couple who admired the romantic elements of the Middle Ages that influenced Gothic Revival architecture.

Adare Manor marketing manager Sarah Ormston says the work of dozens of stone masons, cutters and sculptors has "protected this intricate stonework for the next 100 years" and their cleaning has brought back the original gray and pink tones in the stone.

During the restoration, the hotel staff discovered several characters hiding throughout the 840-acre estate. "We enjoyed finding them tucked away in unique spaces, like the corner of a bookcase," says Ormston. Her personal favorite? A small carving of a cute little couple doing a jig. "I like to think they've been dancing together for over a hundred years and are still having a great time." —GIGI RAGLAND

12

THIS HOTEL IS A GREAT DATE, TOO



Adare Manor's grotesques aren't its only unique architectural detail. The hotel is one of the few remaining examples of the "calendar house" style. The manor takes inspiration from the number of days, weeks or months with 365 windows, 52 chimneys and seven pillars in the Great Hall. The manor's four turreted towers represent spring, summer, fall and winter.