

TOP TABLE



PHIL COULTER picks the Beach House, Buncrana, Co Donegal

The Beach House sits right at the pier, looking over Lough Swilly to Portsalon, Fanad Head and beyond, out into the Atlantic. Glorious. The fish is as fresh as it comes, landed at Greencastle a few hours before you're eating it.

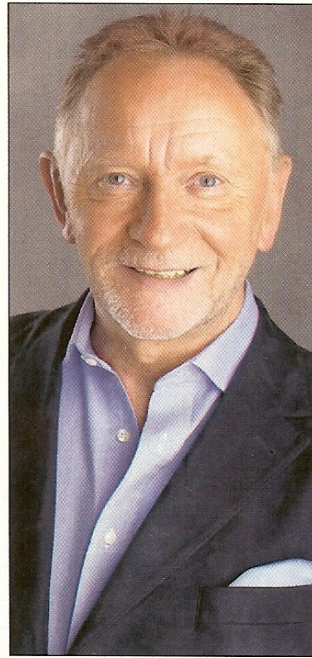
I spent all my Summer holidays as a kid in or around Buncrana, swimming in the sea, fishing for mackerel off that pier, so the place is full of wonderful memories. Sitting on the deck at the Beach House on a balmy Summer's evening, sipping chilled wine watching the sun set on Lough Swilly is about as good as it gets.

The atmosphere is relaxed, warm and welcoming. Not fussy, not fancy, no frills or flounces. Reminds me a bit of a few places I know on Cape Cod.

My favourite dish is the fishcakes to start, containing crabmeat, smoked haddock and other flavoursome stuff that I can't figure out – and they won't tell me! Main course would have to be fresh fish, like John Dory.

They're let the succulent texture and flavour shine through and not smother it with over fancy sauces.

My favourite drink is a slow pint of Guinness before the



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grub, and a nice bottle of Sauvignon Blanc with it.

Since the much-lamented passing of St. John's in Fahan,

which was a favourite haunt of old friends and neighbours like John Hume and Brian Friel,

The Beach House is flying the flag on that side of the Swilly.

The staff are all local girls and boys, very natural, very keen, very obliging and

extremely chatty.

Following sell-out shows, Phil will be performing on Sunday Dec 9 in The Helix and Tuesday Dec 11 in the Cork Opera House. ●

I go for Nobile Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand. It's not as celebrated as Cloudy Bay but definitely in the same class, I reckon.

