

## Irish Tourism Awards celebrate 'vibrant' industry trailblazers

### Irish Tourism Industry Awards

Pól Ó Conghaile

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Best Cultural Experience (Under 100,000 people), Dearbhail Troy of Cnoc Suain. Photo: Paul Sherwood

Best Leisure Tourism Innovation (County) - Westport House, with sponsor Daragh Hanratty - Head of Aviation Marketing Cork Airport, and Minister Shane Ross. Photo: Paul Sherwood  
Best International Access Initiative: Winner (Dublin Airport). MD of Dublin Airport Vincent Harrison with Paul Carty of Guinness Storehouse and Tourism Minister Shane Ross. Photo: Paul Sherwood  
The spectacular Red Arrows Photo: Gareth Chaney, Collins  
Westport House Picture: Fennell

Westport House, GPO Witness History and the Bray Air Display are among Ireland's most innovative tourism products.

That's according to the 2017 Irish Tourism Industry Awards, which were celebrated last night at the Clayton Hotel Burlington Road in Dublin.

The awards are designed to boost visitor numbers and honour the "shining examples of a vibrant industry", said Minister of Tourism, Shane Ross, who congratulated 14 category winners at the gala event.

Other winners included Dublin Airport for Best International Access Initiative, King John's Castle in Limerick for Best Leisure Tourism Initiative (city) and the Aer Lingus College Football Classic for Best Festival/Event.

The Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme also received a special award.

#### **Irish Tourism Industry Award-winners 2017:**

- **Best International Access Initiative:** Dublin Airport
- **Best international Marketing Initiative:** MCI Dublin for the World Buiatrics Congress
- **Best Leisure Tourism Innovation (city):** King John's Castle, Limerick
- **Best Leisure Tourism Innovation (county):** Westport House, Mayo
- **Best Business Tourism Innovation:** Green Light Events – Google Sales Conference
- **Best Environmental Tourism Innovation:** Lullymore Heritage & Discovery Park, Co. Kildare
- **Best Local Authority Tourism innovation:** The Lough Derg Marketing Group (a joint initiative of Tipperary, Clare and Galway County Councils)
- **Best Innovative Place to Stay:** River Valley Holiday Park, Co. Wicklow
- **Best Festival/Event Experience (over 50,000 people):** Bray Air Display
- **Best Festival/Event Experience (under 50,000 people):** Aer Lingus College Football Classic 2016
- **Best Adventure Experience:** Vagabond Tours of Ireland
- **Best Food & Beverage Experience:** Airfield Estate, Dundrum, Dublin
- **Best Cultural Experience (over 100,000 people):** GPO Witness History, Dublin
- **Best Cultural Experience (under 100,000 people):** Cnoc Suain, Connemara, Co. Galway
- **Special recognition Award:** Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme

The Irish Tourism Industry Awards are organised by the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) together with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

They are designed to boost overseas visits and to recognise innovation, excellence and significant contributions in the developing, marketing, selling and delivering of Ireland's visitor experiences at home and overseas.

Judges included Maurice Pratt, Chairman of the Uniphar Group; Noirín Hegarty, Operations Director with Lonely Planet; Philip Browne, Chief Executive of the IRFU; Simon McKeever, Chief Executive, the Irish Exporters' Association and Marian O'Gorman, Chief Executive, the Kilkenny Group.

2016 was a record year for Irish tourism, with some 9.6 million arrivals.

For more on the awards, visit [irishtourismindustryawards.ie](http://irishtourismindustryawards.ie).