

# Machrihanish Dunes taking pre-booking for restored Royal and Ugadale Hotels

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The Machrihanish Dunes operation in Kintyre, led by the imaginative entrepreneur, Brian Keating with American multi-billionaire, David Southworth, is announcing details of the major restorations of its two major Victorian hotels, alongside offering pre-booked 'three for two' nights introductory offers at both, for early in 2012.

The Ugadale is across the road from the first tee of the Old Tom Morris course at Machrihanish Golf Club and adjacent to the unique Machrihanish Dunes course, will have 22 ocean-view rooms and suites, a splendid Scotch malt whisky bar, a restaurant aimed at fine dining and a spa.

The Royal, a Scots baronial style building that defines the long curving sea front at Campbeltown, will have 23 guest rooms, the Black Sheep Pub and a harbourview restaurant, also intended to be a fine dining venue.

Guests staying at The Royal will have the use of a complimentary shuttle service running day and night for guests who wish to stay 'in town' but fancy a run out to the Atlantic side of the Mull of Kintyre, to The Ugadale Hotel, the Ugadale Cottages, the Spa, The Old Clubhouse Pub or the natural links of Machrihanish Dunes Golf Course, with its fairways grazed by a flock of Hebridean black sheep.

The special introductory offers – for Classic and Superior rooms at both hotels – apply if you book before the 21st December 2011. (Some dates may be unavailable because of major advance bookings.)

Earlier this summer, in July, the Sunday Post ran an article where it compared the resistance in Aberdeen to the Donald Trump development of a world class golf resort at the historic dunes of the Balmedie Estate, to the open-armed welcome afforded David Southworth, with the Machrihanish Dunes the first golf course to be built on a Site of Special Scientific Interest – in the historic dunes at Machrihanish.

Needless to say, the personal style of the two developers are very different and the force of the article – by Bill Gibb – favours the quiet unpretentious Southworth.

Another Argyll businessman with a forward looking inventiveness is Colin Craig, MD of West coast Motors whose latest initiative, the year-round 12-seater fast passenger ferry service from Campbeltown to Ballycastle and Cushendall on Northern Ireland's Antrim Coast.

Colin Craig's view is that, while the golf courses are important and support the activity tourism that is Argyll's great strength across the board, it is the restoration of the Royal and Ugadale hotels that is the key to economic development in Kintyre.

Campbeltown is a merchant establishment of some authority whose day has been and is to come again. The regeneration of The Royal will open up this intriguing town to new visitors, with its views across the marina and harbour to the lovely Davaar Island, guarding the entrance to the expansive Campbeltown Loch. Just along the promenade from The Royal is, of course, another unique feature of Campbeltown, its utterly charming, red-roofed Art Deco cinema, The Picturehouse, the last of its genre in the UK still to be a working cinema. The town has a Town Hall like no other. walk up the main street away from the loch and see what takes your eye. It also has Aqualibrium, a combined library, play centre – and swimming pool with the best view of any in the UK. The town is also soon to have a 3G All Weather sports pitch, adding to recreational and competitive opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

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Machrihanish is unknown to most, even in Argyll, but was well known to Victorian tourists, coming in to Campbeltown by Puffer and carried across the neck of the Mull to Machrihanish by a light railway and for whom the splendid Ugadale was originally built. Machrihanish is a little gem, with its scattering of Victorian mansions and cottages looking down the length of the magnificent West Beach with its two world class golf courses in the dunes. Follow the narrow road around the headland and there is a timelessly attractive rocky coastline with a seal colony close inshore and an other little beach, The Cauldrons. There is a seabird and wildlife observatory close to the hotel. With The Ugadale open, offering quality accommodation, food and a spa, along with immediate access to the golf courses and the surfing on West Beach, this little watering hole can rediscover the popularity of its Victorian origins.

The regeneration of Campbeltown can regenerate Kintyre as a whole. The availability of these hotels, along with the Kintyre Express passenger ferry from and to Northern Ireland, the interest of Loch Lomond Seaplanes in running a Golf Express service between the Ayrshire courses, the Kintyre courses, and the Machrie course on Islay (with its own accompanying hotel to undergo a major sophisticated restoration) and the presence of Campbeltown Airport between Campbeltown and Machrihanish are the most substantial foundations for economic sustainability – if Campbeltown gears up to take serious advantage of these massive assets.

If the airport operators, HIAL, could be persuaded to undergo an attitude transplant, facilitate and encourage leisure flying, this remarkable part of Argyll could be airborne and stay there.

**NOTE:** *Anyone wishing to take advantage of the Introductory 'three for two' offer at The Royal Hotel in Campbeltown and/or The Ugadale Hotel in Machrihanish, should visit the company's website (<https://www.myfidelio.net/webui/AvailabilitySearch.aspx?chain=IQ&property=UKUGA&language=en-GB>), click on 'Special Rates' (below the reservation service boxes at the top right) and enter promo code: 3FOR2.*