



THE INN ON LOCH LOMOND

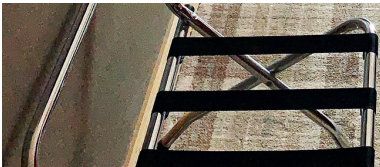
WORDS & PHOTOS BY PAUL CONBOY

Its not hard to see why Scotland is used for dramatic scenes in films or why its rugged and unforgiving landscapes play host to handfuls of tv adverts and magazine shoots selling cars and all terrain vehicles with 4x4 capabilities. Scotland simply has a majestic beauty unrivalled anywhere else in the UK.

It is at times a desolate place, almost isolated with glaciated landscapes which have since carved out huge valleys now filled with fresh water. It is these lochs, highlands and glens which make Scotland a place people all over the world want to visit.

Opened in 1814, the Inn on Loch Lomond is a retreat serving as a hotel, restaurant and bar set in modern and contemporary surroundings. The hotel offers 33 rooms; each are spacious and include all the amenities you would expect from a very comfortable stay. After parking up and checking in we headed up to our room to drop off our bags. Where we would be staying this evening was impressive.

Our room had views of Loch Lomond and across to its neighbouring mountain, Ben Lomond in the distance. The weather was holding out too. This is unusual for Scotland as it gets on average four times as much rain compared to anywhere else in the UK. Given therefore we had arrived early afternoon and the sun shining it only seemed appropriate to venture out. Next door is Inverbeg art gallery whilst a short walk and past the Inn's beach front Beach House you reach the shores of Loch Lomond. Further still and only a short walk alongside the loch and past the Inn's sister hotel, The Lodge on Loch Lomond is nearby Luss. This small and now conservation village busy with tourists was the setting for Scotland's once



popular soap opera 'Take the High Road' and is as picturesque as the physical landscape which surrounds it. The scenery around Loch Lomond is simply stunning. Breathtakingly stunning, in fact. The team at The Inn on Loch Lomond can help with this and are more than willing to provide information on local excursions from cycling tours to popular hiking routes (this is of course West Highland Way territory after all). Whilst other activities to take in this scenery range from boat trips, distillery tours, golf courses, water skiing, kayaking and adventure parks to name just a few and are all available to enquiry from the hotel itself.

The afternoon was drawing to a close and with an appetite to feed we stepped up our pace and headed back from where we had left. Dining at the Inn on Loch Lomond's Mr Cs Bar and Restaurant is excellent. The food is wide ranging, locally sourced and fairly priced. Their all-day menu covers varying tastes from hand stretched stone baked pizzas (gluten free options available) to a grill menu boasting some big flavours like The Inchmurrin – a panko covered buttermilk chicken served with sweetcorn, salsa and a sriracha mayo. Keeping with tradition we ordered the locally sourced West Coast mussels and the Scottish favourite, Cullen skink.

We followed these with a main of succulent haggis stuffed Glen Douglas Chicken and Scotch braised steak pie with vegetables. We ordered a side of chippy chips – actually titled 'chippy





The next morning and having slept well we woke up and made a cup of tea whilst catching another view of Loch Lomond. The clouds appeared to be clearing around Ben Lomond before we took ourselves down to breakfast. Expect a self-service full cooked as well as choices of toast, croissant and cereals.

We each took a coffee and helped ourselves to a bowlful of yogurt and fresh fruit before tackling the traditional potato scone, square sausage and more familiar to most beans, black pudding and scrambled egg to complete our full cooked Scottish breakfast. The Inn at this time was busy. The tables were full, and tourists were planning their day ahead.

The Inn on Loch Lomond serves as a great stay for anyone, group or family wanting to visit the highlands and venture out around the west coast. It is close enough and within reach to grab a piece of city life from nearby Glasgow, Livingstone or Edinburgh. The hotel is around 40 minutes from Glasgow city centre and only 30 minutes from Glasgow airport.

We finished our breakfast and grabbed our bags before checking out and saying our goodbyes. It had been a memorable and comfortable stay to this part of Scotland and the Inn on Loch Lomond was a hotel we would visit again to take in more of this amazing place.

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chips' it is not uncommon to find these on just about every menu in most places across Scotland and they taste as good as you might expect. We finished the evening with a sweet battered and gooey deep fried mars bar. The food is presented well, and portion sizes are plentiful. The service is matched by the food and nothing is too much to ask.

The Inn on Loch Lomond serves over 50 whiskies. A 'dram' (meaning, 'a wee bit') of Scotch is easy to come by and the choices at The Inn on Loch Lomond cover all 5 of the major whisky producing regions across Scotland. It therefore only seemed appropriate to finish up this evening tasting the peaty Islay single malt Laphroaig 10. It served as a good end to our night before we took ourselves to bed.

