

SHADES OF GREEN: IRELAND'S ISLANDS

By Yvonne Gordon

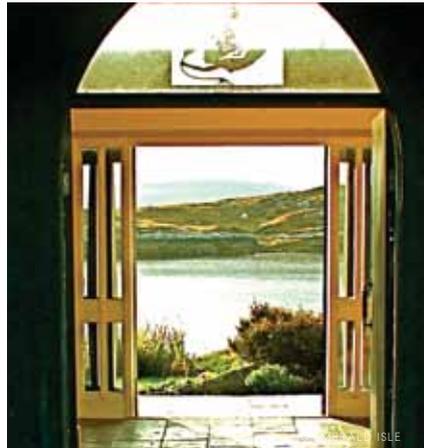
The diverse collection of islands surrounding Ireland, the Emerald Isle itself, boasts spectacular scenery. Clinging to the country's rugged coasts and windswept waterways, Ireland's islands offer craggy shores, unspoilt beaches and green farmland.

Ireland has hundreds of islands. Some of the larger ones, such as the Aran Islands off the west coast, have populations of a hundred or more people, while others are uninhabited. According to island broker Dominic Daly – known as the “Island Man for Ireland” – only one or two private islands come onto the Irish market for sale every year, making the current conditions of the Irish property market a stunning opportunity to acquire an incredibly rare property.

Daly grew up beside Cork Harbour in the south of Ireland and his offices are nearby in Cork city. He has always been interested in maritime-related things, so it's no surprise that his real-estate portfolio includes islands. Having sold his first Irish island in 1970, Daly has over 40 years' experience selling islands.

Crediting the clean air, tranquility and opportunities such as fishing and hunting as part of the reason for Irish islands' popularity, the Irish

broker says they are great places for vacations and as places to re-energize. He recognises there are those who are simply drawn to island life. “That sense of isolation, the sense of independence, people who like to get away from it all,” he says.



There are some incredible properties for sale on Daly's books at the moment, in the south, west and northwest of the country. Carbery and Cold Islands are on the south side of Dunmanus Bay, West Cork, one of the most picturesque areas in the south of Ireland, famed for its food produce. The islands sit in a peaceful bay, overlooked by the Sheep's Head and Mizen Head peninsulas that jut out into the Atlantic Ocean. The main 34-acre island, Carbery, has a small sandy beach and floating landing pontoon. A new four-bedroom house, clad in warm gray West Cork stone, overlooks the beach. The house has its own generator house and a private water well. Cold Island, just to the east, is a grassy, rocky outcrop of around four acres, which is home to a lively seal and otter colony.

Daly states that Carbery Island is an attractive proposition because of its modern house, and because the local community gives great support to people living on the island. Furthermore the bay is ideal because it



MERMAID ISLE
€ 3,950,000

has no commercial activity apart from fishing. Carbery and Cold Islands are for sale for £1,250,000.

Another gem in the south of Ireland is Mermaid Isle, a stunning property on Kenmare Bay, County Kerry that includes a 12-acre coastal property and half (13 acres) of the 26-acre Illaundrane Island. Mermaid Isle has a 4,500-square-foot, three-bedroom house on the mainland with two outdoor hot tubs, a library, gym, laundry, studio and offices. There are mature gardens, boat launching areas and moorings. There is also a separate two-storey cottage. The property is just a few miles from the picturesque town of Sneem.

On the island itself, Illaundrane, separated from Mermaid Isle by a small bay, there are the ruins of stone houses, an ancient well and ancient monuments, as well as tilled fields. Cows graze on the island, which has attracted a host of creative guests, from painters and sculptors to writers and filmmakers. The owner compares Illaundrane to a wildlife nature preserve, with its wealth of bird species, friendly seals and pods of visiting dolphins. Mermaid Isle is for sale at €3,950,000.

Off the spectacular northwest coast of Ireland, Inishdooley Island is part of a string of four islands off County Donegal and it is a neighbouring island to the Irish-speaking Tory Island, famed for its traditional Irish music, dance and stories. Inishdooley is 96 acres in size and lies three miles off the mainland. It has stunning views, a rich heritage, and a natural, unspoiled landscape. Price on application.

If an offshore island doesn't appeal, the majestic River Shannon estuary also has a number of sheltered islands. Shore Island, on the estuary between counties Limerick and Clare, is just three and a half miles west of international gateway Shannon Airport. The 30-acre island is currently used for cattle grazing and there are a number of old ruins, which Dominic Daly states may be helpful for obtaining planning permission to construct a dwelling. As well as being suitable for farming, there is plenty of fishing, particularly for lobster, crab and shrimp. Shore Island is for sale for €900,000.

Further inland along the estuary, the secluded Quay Island off Bunratty, County Clare — home of the restored 15th century Bunratty Castle — is also well located for flights to and from Shannon Airport. Daly says the 24-acre island is a great starter island. The island can be accessed by foot from Moy Point at low water, or by boat from Bunratty jetty. He adds that the land is good quality and there's a fresh water supply, some ruins and a small lighthouse. Quay Island's guide price is around €400,000.

For more on these islands, contact Dominic Daly at +353 21 427 7399 or through www.dominicdaly.com. For more on Mermaid Isle, visit www.mermaidisle.net.




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