

Village Visitor

Céad Mile Fáilte! (A Hundred Thousand Welcomes)

It has been said that on St Patrick's Day, the whole world is Irish. But simply drinking green beer once a year just doesn't do it justice. Now you can visit a bit of Ireland in Carlsbad for finding unique Irish items, hear some great stories and discover the real Irish spirit.

O'Ireland is a small shop next door to the old Carlsbad Theater on State Street. But in that small shop, owner Tony Cross keeps an incredible amount of unique and wonderful Irish items. After 17 years of seeing how much fun his sister had with her two O' Ireland stores back east, he decided to open one here in Carlsbad. For the past couple of years he has been greeting locals and tourists alike with a big Irish smile that captures the essence of the warmth and hospitality in Ireland. And when the occasional Irish tourist drops in, you'll even hear the Irish accent.



Although the store itself is chock full of everything from jewelry to hats to blankets to pictures, the real fun is to have Tony tell you some of the legends and lore behind many of the items he carries. "The Celtic Knot you see on lots of Irish things, with all its twists and turns, represents the snakes that St Patrick drove out of Ireland", he'll tell you, "Sent them over to Britain, he did too!"

Many items bear the well known Claddagh, two hands clasping a heart. Tony relates a story about how a goldsmith was held captive by pirates for seven years. He fashioned the Claddagh to symbolize his devotion to his beloved in Ireland and, upon his return, found her still faithful to him. As a result, the Claddagh is now the symbol of love, loyalty and friendship with its promise to last forever. You'll find it on glasses, jewelry and just about everywhere.

Twinkling in the window are stained glass Claddaghs and Celtic Knots, by the door is a stand with several authentic walking sticks still sporting the wooden thorns and along the wall are three large racks of Irish jewelry. Beautiful Irish woolen sweaters with their traditional clan weaves are stacked along one wall while handmade Irish blankets sit along another under the window. There's even a cabinet with world famous Belleek China for you collectors.

If you really want to get into the Irish spirit for St Paddy's, O' Ireland has tin whistles and Bodhrans, the goat skin covered drum, if you feel musical. You can get mugs for drinking your Guinness Stout, find a true Irish tweed hat to wear and even find an Irish flag to wave!

Ireland is a lot more than just St Patrick's Day and O' Ireland is just as fun the other 364 days throughout the year. Stop in and meet Tony. If you've been to Ireland, he loves to hear about it—if you haven't, he'll tell you all about it. Many customers relate their fables, stories and lore to Tony as well so it becomes a real experience, especially if you happen to overhear someone say, "Shoor 'an hav ya haird this one, Tony!"

"May you never forget what is worth remembering, or remember what is best forgotten"

O' Ireland is located at 2808 State Street, next door to the old Carlsbad Theater. They're open Tuesday through Sunday from 10AM until 5PM and closed on Mondays.

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