

Politicians will see double in publican-senator's bar



CHEERS: Terry Leyden in his Replica Dail Bar in Castlecoote, Co Roscommon, with his wife, Mary

JOHN DRENNAN - 25 August 2013

THE Dail and Seanad Members' Bar, described as a "sanctuary" by former Taoiseach [Brian Cowen](#), is the most exclusive club in the land.

However, while only current and former TDs and senators may enter its hallowed portals, those who wonder what the famous Dail bar actually looks like can have their curiosity sated courtesy of Senator Terry Leyden.

The [Fianna Fail](#) senator, who, famously, once almost burnt the Dail down with a scented candle, has built a copy of the politicians' own private pub in the lounge of his new Castlecoote Lodge Bar and Replica Dail and Seanad Lounge in Co Roscommon.

Mr Leyden will open his own Dail Bar with a "gala launch involving a marquee and [Mary O'Rourke](#)" on September 6. And every TD and senator is invited.

Curious punters may also be served by the senator-cum-publican.

"I'll be called to serve if the pressure is on," he said, but added that his main role will be as a front-of-house man.

"I'll do the meet-and-greet and the reminiscences about the Dail Bar," he said.

Mr Leyden's new venture has already sparked an exchange between the senator and Finance Minister [Michael Noonan](#), who, on being invited, asked: "Where did you get the money to open a bar?"

Mr Leyden replied: "From your bank, minister - AIB."

The senator said it was an "attempt to do something in a difficult time - we're the first bar to open in the west of Ireland in a year".

Mr Leyden, whose political career began in 1977, has seen and often played a role in all of the dramas of the [Jack Lynch](#) and Charles Haughey eras.

But he tactfully said most former Taoisigh were not frequent visitors to the Dail Bar.

"Although Jack would come in for a few Paddys, Mr Haughey never visited the place and Bertie came in rarely," he told the Sunday Independent.

Mr Leyden had a close political relationship with Mr Haughey and Mary 'Mammy' O'Rourke, and recalled the time when 'Mammy' told 'The Boss' about [Bertie Ahern's](#) infamous attack on the "kebabs" in Fianna Fail [he meant cabals].

Ms O'Rourke told Mr Haughey she thought the remark was very clever, only for the former Taoiseach to reply that Mr [Ahern](#), who was considered to be his protege, "wasn't that bright".

The senator also told how he was approached by a senior SF/IRA figure in the wake of the scented candle incident and was asked: "Where were you when I needed you?"

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