



## ROSS LEWIS'S RICH DISH

AS USUAL, there was plenty of speculation last month ahead of the Michelin restaurant awards that Dublin's swanky Chapter One might land a third star. That didn't end up on the menu but the good news for owner **Ross Lewis** is that he has scooped a rather bigger prize.

These days the Parnell Square restaurant is fronted by Finnish wonder-chef

**Mickaël Viljanen** but before his arrival in the kitchen in 2021, Lewis oversaw operations and landed the first star. (Viljanen



Ross Lewis

doubled the count in 2022.)

While Lewis had announced that he was going to "release equity" and it was reported that the two boys had "entered a business partnership... with the two chefs as co-owners", the split is not as even as it might sound.

Unsurprisingly, Lewis remains by quite some way the biggest player. Before the 2021 "equity release", the company behind Chapter One was Lindley Ltd – owned by Lewis through his

company Mindhaven Ltd, which had 50%, while the other half was held by Lewis personally.

In 2022, the business name 'Chapter One By Mickael Viljanen' was registered by a new company called Shenbob Ltd, where Lewis is listed as having no less than 95% of the shares and his fellow

director and 'co-owner' just 5%. Lindley, meanwhile, was wound up at the end of 2022, boasting net assets of a tasty €34m.

Now Mindhaven has been taken off the menu, with **Myles Kirby** in charge of the winding up. This time, 100% shareholder Ross is sitting on net assets of a three-star €1.1m.

As for dessert, the latest figures for the new Chapter One reveal the two directors shared emoluments of just on €1.5m in the year to April 30 last, including "directors pension" of €450,000. Yum, yum.

*JOHN MOREHART, squire of the splendid Bellamont House and its 1,000 acres outside Cootehill, Co Cavan, has been getting busy again.*

*It will be recalled (see The Phoenix 8/3/24) that the loaded American lawyer has not been shy when it comes to objecting to issues in his neck of the woods. He had a rare setback in the High Court last month when attempting to stymie the latest expansion plans by the Abbot Ireland agri-food plant. Judge Richard Humphreys, however, refused to allow the Yank lodge his appeal late in the day.*

*Morehart also had a run-in with local businessman Ollie*

*Gibson, at one stage briefly forcing the latter to cease his boat tours on the lakes of the Bellamont estate.*

*Now Morehart has lobbed in a submission on plans by Monaghan County Council to develop the Dromore River Blueway, involving the building of infrastructure along the river, upgrading slipways and adding new pathways, a play area, picnic tables etc.*

*In his submission, Morehart welcomes the "concept" of a blueway but highlights the fact that the proposal "impacts on private land", noting that the council's "clear intention is to increase the number of visitors, boats and other recreational vehicles onto the lands and lakes in the area". The blueway will, he claims, impact on wildfowl sanctuary, which requires "undisturbed grazing lands" for the likes of the whooper swan, great crested grebe and lapwing.*

*Another local landowner who made a submission is Jack Tenison. He has expressed concern over the "wider consequences" of the proposed works and the "potential adverse impact".*

## PEDRO DE AZAMBUJA'S DOUBLE FAULTS

WITH AN asking price of no less than €5.5m, the Georgian Kilquade Hill House outside Greystones in Co Wicklow is one of the pricier piles to come on the market in recent times. According to the *Irish Times*, this "manageable sporting estate" on five acres was "totally transformed" over a three-year period with the help of "craftsmen from all over Europe". There were, however, a few hiccups along the way that the *IT* forgot to mention.

It should come as no surprise that the owner of Kilquade Hill House turns out to be someone with very deep pockets. Since November 2013 the property has been registered to the ultra-low-profile Portuguese-Brazilian moneybags, **Pedro Castrioto de Azambuja**.

While Pedro knows his way around, the classic car collector needs a learner plate when it comes to navigating the planning laws here. Happily, despite several run-ins with Wicklow County Council planners, the impressive Kilquade Hill House is today fully compliant with the regulations.

De Azambuja has submitted an awful lot of planning applications since 2013, with a number of these subsequently withdrawn for assorted reasons.

After a false start, the first

green light was given in March 2014 when the squire of Kilquade Hill House obtained permission for a couple of extensions to the existing 1820 house on the south and west elevations.

Six months later a new application was lodged for the construction of a mixture of one- and one-and-a-half-storey outbuildings, to include gym and spa facilities as well as a spacious garage for Pedro's "extensive classic car collection". (A dossier on the fleet was supplied to the planners to demonstrate the need for such a large structure).

Council planners, however, paid a visit for a site inspection and were less than impressed by the fact that extensive works had been carried out (and were ongoing), including the unauthorised demolition of a number of structures to facilitate the new planning application. This resulted in the plan being refused on the grounds that the work carried out represented "the consolidation of unauthorised development on this site".

Shortly before Christmas

2014 the irrepressible Pedro was back behind the wheel and lobbed in an application for retention of the demolition of "a large portion" of the house itself. Retention was also sought

for the new two-storey extension that was being constructed but not in accordance with the planning permission.

De Azambuja's advisers informed Wicklow Co Co that the demolished

deteriorated to the extent that the structural engineer advised demolition, while the 1970s extension that had been taken down was deemed "poorly constructed".

Moreover, it turned out that the applicant considered that the removal of the structures did not require planning permission: "Our client, who is a layman in these matters, mistakenly and understandably considered that the demolition of these buildings was exempted development."

The retention application eventually got the thumbs up and was followed by a successful 2015 application to retain the

demolition and replacement of the "decaying and obsolete" outbuildings.

That was not the end of the planning headaches, however. In its puff piece on Kilquade Hill House last week, the *IT* paid special attention to the tennis court, describing the Wicklow estate as "one of the few private houses in the country with a tennis court built to International Tennis Federation regulation size for competitions".

It turns out, however, that the floodlit court was installed without any planning permission.

This omission resulted in the council issuing an enforcement notice in July 2016, followed two years later by a planning application from Pedro for, yes, you've guessed it, retention of the floodlighting on six lampposts.

Not surprisingly, the light pollution impact on the two neighbouring houses to the south had not gone down well with **Denis** and **Oonagh Ryan** and **Joseph** and **Patricia O'Connor**, who objected to the application, which duly got the thumbs down.

The lights and poles have since been removed, so at last all is in order, as long as the new residents of Kilquade Hill House don't fancy playing tennis at night.



Kilquade Hill House