

TOP TABLE



RONNIE WHELAN picks The Oar House in Howth in County Dublin

I live in Liverpool so I eat out a lot, but none of the places I go compare to the Oar House in Howth in north county Dublin.

It's a small enough fish restaurant that's situated right out on the pier, and every time I'm working in Ireland for RTE's football coverage I try and get out there.

I've also been over to Dublin for weekend long holidays and my wife agrees with me about the Oar House. **You see loads of tourists there as well as locals so you know it has a great reputation.**

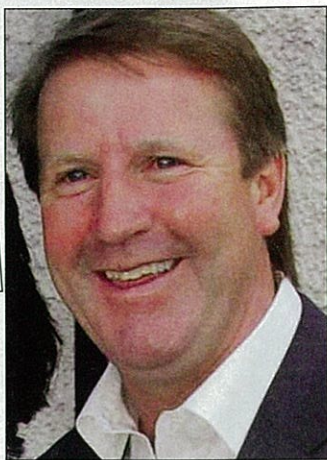
I'm a fish lover, so when I eat out I want to eat fresh fish - and you only get the best fish at this place. Most of the different types of fish they sell on their menus are on display when you walk in, so it's pretty easy to pick which one you want.

They have the most delicious Buffalo Prawns as a starter, and I usually go for their seabass for the main course.

Just talking about it is making my mouth water.

I've only been a dozen or so times so far, but I reckon I could try and double that figure by the by the end of the year.

I know there are a lot of restaurants out there in Howth



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which specialise in seafood, but The Oar House is definitely the best of them all.

The staff are all great craic. They know who I am and are happy to chat with me about football and stuff, but also know when to leave me alone to enjoy my dinner, which is great.

The only thing I will say is that I like a beer with my dinner, which they don't offer. So I usually drink wine when I'm there and, if I'm perfectly honest with you, I don't know much about my wines so I'll go with whatever my guests or the waiter recommends.

Ronnie Whelan is a panelist on RTE's Premiership on Saturday nights as well as for the upcoming international friendlies in advance of the Euro 2012 qualifiers in September. ●



IN HIS recently released flick, *Crazy Heart*, Jeff Bridges plays an ageing country and western singer who wins the heart of a young journalist who interviews him.

And, in an example of life imitating art, the irrepressible Jeff Bridges stole this journalist's heart during our interview this week.

The veteran actor may have celebrated his 60th birthday this year, but he can still charm the ladies - as I found out when I talked to him about his latest movie in the very swanky Soho Hotel in London.

Nominated for an Oscar for the fifth time this year, Bridges is notorious for being one of the most talented, yet unrewarded, actors in Hollywood.

Picking up a Golden Globe last month for his portrayal of alcoholic country singer Bad Blake in *Crazy Heart*, Bridges said in his acceptance speech: "You're really screwing up my under-appreciated status here."

This raises the question whether he'd actually be happy to pick up the Best Actor Oscar in next month's Academy Awards.

"It's not important for me, but it would bring more attention to the movie. The more attention I can bring to it, all the better because I'm a big fan of this movie," says Bridges, looking impossibly cool in his jeans and cowboy boots.

He talks to me like I'm the only person in the room, even though there are six other journalists looking on, eagerly awaiting their few precious minutes with the star.

'One of the toughest things in acting is getting your first job, but I'm a product of nepotism'

At the Globes, Bridges also thanked his actor father, Lloyd, for convincing him to follow him into showbusiness - although he is not as keen for any of his three daughters to walk the same path.

"I took it differently than my

Women swoon and men are in awe as Jeff Bridges enters the room to talk to **SWM**



Niamh **BYRNE**



HOLLYWOOD ROLE MODELS: Jeff and Susan are wed 33 years

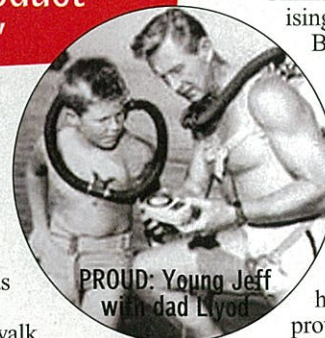
dad. He was so pro-active about the showbiz thing, and encouraged all of us to go into it," he says. "One of the toughest things in acting is getting your first job, but I'm a product of nepotism. Dad got me my first job when I was just six months old.

"So, I was glad I listened to the old man, but as a kid I remember not enjoying having a famous parent. As a kid you want to melt into the crowd."

Unlike his womanising character, Bad Blake,

Bridges has been married to wife Susan for 33 years. And with a house full of women, he adopts the protective role.

"With my three daughters, I decided I'd let



PROUD: Young Jeff with dad Lloyd