

BFI SOUTHBANK'S REDEVELOPED BFI RIVERFRONT OPENS TO PUBLIC



With spectacular new views of Waterloo Bridge and the River Thames

BFI today announces that the redevelopment of the riverfront side of BFI Southbank, the BFI's flagship venue on London's South Bank, has been completed and is now, following a soft launch, open to the public. The redevelopment of *BFI Riverfront* reaffirms its status at the hottest spot on the South Bank, creating a vibrant new bar and restaurant operated by Benugo, as well as a brand new public balcony with previously unseen spectacular views of the South Bank, River Thames and Waterloo Bridge.

The redevelopment, the design of which was won by architects Carmody Grooke following an invited RIBA competition, greatly enhances the visitor experience at BFI Southbank, with a dramatic new entrance to the venue from the South Bank. The ground floor area – including Benugo's *BFI Riverfront* bar and restaurant – has been fully refurbished and extended by around 100m². A new bar sits alongside a restaurant specialising in pizzette, cooked to order in a new state of the art pizza oven. Also on the menu are anti-pasti like Polpette, Burrata and Calamari Fritti and classic pasta dishes like Pork Ragu Gnocchi, Butternut Squash Tortelloni and Sauteed Prawn Linguine. Special breakfast and kids menus are also available, as is a gelato bar serving four delicious flavours from Hackney Gelato. The ground floor bar will now cater for around 200 more guests and will spill onto the expanded outside terrace area, with plenty of room to indulge in a post-work drink.

Upstairs in the new *Balcony Bar*, visitors can soak up incredible views of the South Bank, the north side of the River Thames and get a unique perspective of the historic Waterloo Bridge; the dramatic concrete structure of the bridge which was formerly concealed, has now been unveiled so that the underside of the bridge forms the unique ceiling of the bar. This upstairs bar also includes an outdoor balcony spanning the entire width of the bridge and beyond, a welcome additional outside space for the venue.

BFI Riverfront will be open daily from 8am serving breakfast, with a late license from Thursday – Saturday and DJs and club nights on selected evenings. The redevelopment is part of the ongoing modernisation of BFI Southbank, following on from the addition of the BFI Reuben Library in 2012 and the refurbishment of the Mediatheque and BFI Shop in 2017. *BFI Riverfront* expands both the venue's space and commercial potential with the opportunity to hire both bars and the restaurant for private events and parties.

This year, we'll celebrate New Year's Eve in the brand-new *BFI Riverfront* with a stylish party hosted by Benugo. On New Year's Eve, access to the South Bank is restricted, so ticket holders will be given exclusive access to the area for the evening, affording them an amazing view of London's largest firework display, away from the crowds; tickets also include free bowl food all night and free champagne on arrival and at midnight.

As part of the redevelopment of *BFI Riverfront* and thanks to funding from **Heritage of London Trust**, restoration work has also been undertaken on the original **National Film Theatre sign**, which has held pride of place on the side of Waterloo Bridge for decades. The sign was designed by the architect of the original NFT, **Norman Engleback** (born 5 October 1927; died 4 December 2015), and is believed to have been erected to coincide with the opening of the NFT, now BFI Southbank, in 1957. Engleback, who worked for the London County Council from 1951, was a leading hand in some of the capital's most distinctive post-war buildings including the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, and the Hayward Gallery Complex. The sign is a much-loved example of outstanding mid-century modern design and was originally wired for power, but has been non-functioning for decades.

Working closely with master craftsmen at **Newman's Displays**, the sign has been refurbished, the housing has been cleaned, the electrical wiring has been refurbished, and low energy lighting has been installed. The process of refurbishment has used as much of the original sign as possible, including the original light panels, housing and typography. Part of the workforce refurbishing this sign is Peter Coots who was an apprentice to the fabricator who originally built the sign (whose name was Bill Hinton). Luke Engleback, son of original designer Norman Engleback, has also visited Newman Signs to observe the restoration process.

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Notes to Editors:

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About the BFI

At the BFI we support, nurture and promote the art of film, television and the moving image. A charity, funded by Government and earned income, and a distributor of National Lottery funds, we are at the heart of the UK's fast growing screen industries, protecting the past and shaping their future across the UK. We work in partnership with cultural organisations, government and industry to make this happen. We bring our world-class cultural programmes and unrivalled national collections to audiences everywhere, and promote learning about our art-form and its heritage. We support the future success of film in the UK by nurturing new voices and fresh ideas, enriching independent British film culture, challenging the UK's screen industries to innovate and defining Britain and its storytellers in the 21st century.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

About Carmody Groarke

Carmody Groarke is an architectural practice founded in 2006 by Kevin Carmody and Andy Groarke. The practice has developed a reputation for working internationally on a wide range of arts, cultural, heritage and residential projects, both new build and within the context of historic buildings.

Completed projects include the new entrance to the British Film Institute Southbank, the permanent memorial to the 7 July London bombings, the New Architecture Gallery at the Royal Institute of British Architects headquarters, Frieze (London) Art Fair 2011-2013, Maggie's Cancer Care Centre Clatterbridge Merseyside, an artist's studio for sculptor Antony Gormley and a new Members' Room for the V&A.

Current projects include the new Windermere Jetty Museum in the Lake District, an extension of the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester, a major renovation of Dorset County Museum in Dorchester, a temporary museum at Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Hill House, a new international arts venue for S1 Artspace within the listed Park Hill housing development in Sheffield, several private houses and a private art gallery. The studio is also designing a series of exhibitions including a major exhibition at the Royal Academy for Bill Viola Michelangelo.

The practice has earned international recognition, winning several architectural competitions and awards for completed projects including the Architect of the Year Award from Building Design. Monographs of the studio have been published in the international periodical, 2G and in the Spanish publication, El Croquis No.195.

Project Team

Architect - Carmody Groarke
Heritage Consultant - Donald Insall Associates
Project Manager - AECOM
Structural Engineer - Price & Myers
Planning Consultant - GL Hearn
Quantity Surveyor - AECOM
Lighting Designer – Cinimod
Services Engineer – Aecom

About Benugo:



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Benugo was founded in 1998 in Clerkenwell, London by brothers Ben and Hugo. They had a vision to create superb, natural food to give London something that was a real experience. This vision has remained unchanged and Benugo continues to innovate. Clerkenwell remains the original Benugo café and now the Benugo brand has over 100 sites stretching the UK in locations such as London, Manchester, Oxford and Edinburgh, from their award-winning high street stores to concessions within some of the most iconic buildings in the UK including The Natural History Museum, Science Museum and Edinburgh Castle.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Riverfront can be found via the link below:

<https://bfi.sharefile.com/d-s89599c7abee43648>

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