

IN & AROUND

BURLINGTON ARCADE

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Nestled in the heart of Mayfair between Bond Street and Piccadilly, Burlington Arcade is England's longest standing shopping arcade, housing 40 specialist stores and policed by The Beadles.

Burlington Arcade began its life in 1819, under Lord George Cavendish, brother of the 5th Duke of Devonshire, who had inherited the adjacent Burlington House. Since its opening, the Arcade has been policed by The Beadles - guards wearing frock coats and braided top hats in the original livery colours of Lord Cavendish. The Beadles were originally recruited to enforce a strict set of behavioural rules in the Arcade, many of which still apply to this day, such as no running, no bikes and no whistling. Historically, whistling has always been forbidden as it was used by pickpockets as coded signals in the 19th century.

'Burlington Arcade is where retailers with unique stories to tell operate and do business. For us, maintaining the heritage and "magic" of the Arcade is of the utmost importance when leasing a unit here,' says Ellie Lewis, head of retail marketing at Meyer Bergdorf, joint owner of the Arcade with Thor Equities. 'When approaching a leasing decision we look into such areas as craftsmanship, individuality, and the level of service offered to ensure that it meets and exceeds the standards of our visitors, who appreciate a high quality offer that is typical of its historical notoriety, and often travel from far and wide just to visit it.'

The Arcade's current offer includes, among others, designer hat store Maison Michel, Swiss-French watchmaker Bell & Ross, lingerie brand La Perla and Manolo Blahnik's women's and menswear store. Most recently, it has become London's go-to place for destination fragrance houses such as Roja Dove, Frederic Malle, Kilian, True Grace, and soon-to-open Atkinsons.

The Arcade plays host to a wide range of events including private shopping evenings and dinners for its retailers, as well as annual public art exhibitions. The most recent is the current exhibition, Birds by Mathilde Nivet. 'We have also had an in-store takeover collaboration with Royal Academy of Arts and Mayfair Art Weekend, and an exclusive Anthony Gormley sculptural installation called Cinch, which can be viewed at the Burlington Gardens entrance,' adds Lewis.

'Mathilde Nivet is well known within the luxury sector for her bespoke creations for brands such as Chanel, Hermes, and Christian Louboutin, where she has created window concepts. Inspired by this, we wanted to showcase her talents on a larger scale for our visitors to enjoy. It took Mathilde several months to create the 300 individual paper birds installation which are all individually handmade and installed,' says Lewis.

'We continue to nurture and develop Burlington Arcade in line with our leasing strategy. It is continually evolving and is enjoying a resurgence as a world-leading luxury destination. We will soon be announcing some very exciting news, so watch this space.'

Spanish fashion designer, Manolo Blahnik sums up the Arcade: 'I have adored the Burlington Arcade from the very first visit: it has that intimate feeling and one always feels welcome, especially when the Beadles greet you at the entrance. It is an elegant place with history and tradition and the shops that occupy it share the same qualities as I find essential in beautiful, handmade products. Honestly, I could not think of a better place to be.' **RF**

