

Diageo announces £73 million Guinness microbrewery and culture hub to be built in London

3 years ago



Diageo, maker of Guinness, today announces its plan to invest £73 million in 'Guinness at Old Brewer's Yard', a new microbrewery and culture hub in Covent Garden, London, set to open in Autumn 2023. Old Brewer's Yard first brewed beer back in 1722. 300 years later, Guinness will be bringing the site back to life.

The investment to create 'Guinness at Old Brewer's Yard', builds on the success of the Guinness Store house in Dublin and the opening of Johnnie Walker Princes Street in Edinburgh in 2021. It demonstrates Diageo's confidence in London and the UK as a go-to destination for tourists and its commitment to the hospitality sector, which employs almost 2 million people in the UK. Guinness sales in Great Britain have grown by over 30% in the last six months and 1 in every 10 pints sold in London is now a Guinness.

The new 50,000 sq ft venue will create up to 150 jobs for the Capital and provide a community space within the Covent Garden area. The site will also become the Southern UK hub of Diageo's award-winning Learning for Life Bartending and Hospitality Programme. The programme has provided skills and improved the employability and livelihoods of over 5,500 people across the UK to date. The ambition is for over 100 London based students to graduate from the 'Guinness at Old Brewer's Yard' programme each year, with a proportion of the employment opportunities to be ring-fenced for Learning for Life graduates.

Dayalan Nayager, Managing Director, Diageo Great Britain, said: "We're excited to create a new home for Guinness in the heart of London. 'Guinness at Old Brewer's Yard' will strengthen London's hospitality community and be a must-visit destination for thousands of visitors to enjoy. Government support over the

last two years has been vital for pubs and bars. Coming out of the pandemic, the long-term vitality of the trade will be significantly helped by the alcohol duty review and continued freezes in duty.”

Mark Smith, Head of Central London Retail said, “This transaction clearly demonstrates London’s resilience and continuing appeal as the number one global retail destination. And with its vibrant shopping/dining scene and rich brewing history, Covent Garden was the natural home for Guinness in London. Culture, community and sustainability will be at the heart of this project and when it opens Guinness at Old Brewers Yard will no doubt become a must-visit destination for Londoners, domestic and international tourists alike.”

Rob Abernethy, Chief Executive of the Mercers’ Company, added: “We are delighted to welcome Guinness to our Covent Garden estate. We have worked closely with Diageo to develop proposals which will restore Old Brewer’s Yard’s historic origins in a contemporary context. The significant level of investment is a major boost to London’s recovering economy and will provide a one-of-a-kind immersive experience, shining the spotlight on Covent Garden as a global visitor destination. Old Brewer’s Yard will provide a wonderful platform for the Mercers’ Company to continue its philanthropic work, helping to create positive change so that everyone has the chance to lead a fulfilling life.”

In line with Diageo’s ‘Society 2030: Spirit of Progress’ action plan, the newest home for Guinness will be carbon neutral by 2030 and accessible to all when it opens. Key to the new site will be a community programme, details of which will be designed following a consultation period with local residents. A similar programme took place during the pandemic at the Guinness Open Gate Brewery in Baltimore, USA where they created 500 loaves of their “Brewers Bread” every week using ingredients sourced from within the brewery and donated them to the local Maryland Food Bank

Diageo and Guinness are investing £30m in helping pubs, bars and restaurants in Great Britain recover from the pandemic through its “Raising the Bar” scheme, launched in 2020. Over 30,000 outlets across the country have benefitted from the scheme to date, through support such as hand sanitiser, PPE kits and parasols and ‘snugs’ for outside occasions.

‘Guinness at Old Brewer’s Yard’ is set to open in Autumn 2023, subject to planning permission and consultation period. Old Brewer’s Yard is owned by the Mercers’ Company

The new site will cover locations linking Mercer Walk, Langley Street, Neal Street and Shelton Street, and will include:

- A world-leading microbrewery which will produce limited edition beers and offer guests tours with Guinness beer specialists to taste/enjoy and learn about the iconic stout, its storied history and ambitions for the future.
- Event spaces and central covered courtyard hosting events across food, drink, the arts and special cultural occasions, which will be open for use by the local community.
- Guinness store selling rare items via collaborations and partnerships bespoke to the London experience.
- Chance to try exciting new brews, some only available at ‘Guinness at Old Brewer’s Yard’.
- Rotating cuisine and events at a stunning open-fire kitchen, restaurant and 360 degrees glass rooftop space within the development.

JLL acted on behalf of Diageo and The Mercers' Company was advised by Knight Frank.

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