



The Groucho Club to open permanent new venue in Yorkshire

**Groucho Bretton to be housed in Bretton Hall, renowned former arts institution
First time Groucho has opened new club outside London in its history
New club will be set within world famous Yorkshire Sculpture Park**

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The Groucho Club, the renowned private members club which has acted as a hub for the arts, literature, and media community in London for almost four decades, is to open a permanent location outside the capital for the first time in its history.

The new club, to be called Groucho Bretton, will be housed in Bretton Hall, the former home to Bretton Hall College, which has its own equally storied history as an innovative and much-loved community of artists training as teachers through specialised courses in design, music and visual and performance art.

Located in the heart of the world-famous 500-acre Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) in Wakefield, Groucho Bretton will also have 40 bedrooms, open to non-members, who will receive the benefits of membership throughout their stay. Leading the project will be Elli Jafari, recently appointed CEO of The Groucho Club who joins the club in April 2024.

Artfarm, owners of the Groucho Club, and Yorkshire real estate investor Rushbond Group have an agreement in place with Wakefield Council to develop the site, and Groucho Bretton, with the support of YSP, will build on both the Groucho and Bretton Hall's reputation for attracting like-minded, culturally engaged individuals contributing to the creative and artistic life of the area and beyond.

Scheduled to open in 2026, Ewan Venters, CEO of Artfarm, said today: "This is possibly the most exciting venture in the 39-year history of the Groucho. We have done pop-ups at literary and music festivals in the past, but this will be the first time we have set up a permanent home outside of London's Soho. Groucho Bretton will have a life of its own, separate from the original Groucho, but equally with a uniquely eclectic style and personality rooted in both people and place."

Jonathan Maud, chairman of Rushbond Group, said: "The international significance of Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Bretton Hall, coupled with the Groucho Club's reputation for creativity and companionship has all the magic ingredients to make Groucho Bretton a successful venture."

Councillor Denise Jeffery, Leader of Wakefield Council, said: "The longstanding reputation of Bretton Hall as an innovative arts institution, makes for a perfect setting for Groucho Bretton. It's great that Bretton Hall will be entering a dynamic new phase of its history, enhancing our area's reputation as a cultural centre."

Clare Lilley, Director of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, commented: "For three generations, Yorkshire Sculpture Park has been loved by millions of people who are enthralled by its unique union of exceptional art and heritage landscape. Groucho Bretton takes the estate into a new era, and importantly will conserve and bring back to life the magnificent eighteenth-century building that was once the centrepiece of the estate and has lain empty for 16 years."

Ewan Venters continued: "The heritage of Bretton Hall is one of the factors that originally attracted us to this site, and our plans will be respectful of these traditions while reinventing its appeal by creating modern spaces for our members, new and old, locals or visitors, to work, to play, to meet, to take part in events and to help us turn Groucho Bretton into a place where everyone feels at home. We want people to feel they are part of a family and a community, not just a members' club."

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ABOUT THE GROUCHO CLUB:

The Groucho Club is a private members' club based in Dean Street in the Bohemian heart of London's Soho. It was founded in 1985 by a group of mostly women publishers and has been for almost 40 years a spiritual home for people in arts, literature, publishing, film, music, advertising, and media, most of whom were working in the area. With celebrated restaurants and bars, famous event and party room hire, bedrooms, and exclusive member services, The Groucho Club is the benchmark for the new generation of members' clubs. The club celebrates art in all forms, and its members enjoy an expansive contemporary collection that adorns every inch of wall space in its building. It was bought by Artfarm in August 2022.

ABOUT ARTFARM:

Headed by CEO Ewan Venters, Artfarm was founded in 2014 by Iwan and Manuela Wirth, co-founders of the internationally respected art gallery Hauser & Wirth. That year, Artfarm opened its first restaurant, Roth Bar & Grill, as part of Hauser & Wirth's art centre in Bruton, Somerset. In 2018, it opened The Fife Arms in Braemar, Scotland, a Victorian coaching inn that underwent extensive restoration to return the building to its former glory. Other Artfarm properties include Manuela restaurant in Los Angeles, Fish Shop in Ballater, Durslade Farmhouse and Farm Shop in Somerset, Mount St. Restaurant, The Audley Public House and Farm Shop in Mayfair, London. Artfarm also acquired The Groucho Club in 2022.

Artfarm believes that the most sustainable creative developments weave together art, community, learning, people, and place. Artfarm is pioneering a new way of working which protects the environment, invests in people and infrastructure, and supports communities. Working in both rural and urban settings, the company hosts diverse audiences in sites which connect with their heritage and future.

ABOUT RUSHBOND:

Founded in 1986, property investment company Rushbond PLC has led the transformation of a wide range of projects and developments across the Yorkshire region, by adopting a careful and considered approach to designing sustainable places, fuelled by innovation and creativity. Rushbond's core philosophy is to create exceptional places of value for all. Working in collaboration with partners, occupiers and local people, Rushbond creates distinctive and meaningful places where communities thrive across the hospitality, retail, leisure, education, office and residential sectors. Whether repurposing important heritage locations, reimagining and breathing new life into existing buildings or developing new homes and workspaces, Rushbond endeavours to support the growth and ambition of Yorkshire as a leading region in the UK.

ABOUT BRETTON HALL

Prior to its establishment as a college, Bretton Hall had been part of an estate where Henry VIII once spent three nights, and the present building was designed by Sir William Wentworth around 1720. Bretton Hall College was established in 1948 and quickly built a reputation for innovation in the teaching of design, music and the visual and performing arts. It has an eclectic mix of alumni, including the playwright John Godber, the theatre director Michael Fentiman, the actor and director Mark Gatiss, the comedian Mark Thomas and actors Femi Elufowoju Jr. OBE and Shelley Conn. In 2001, the college merged with Leeds University and the site was subsequently acquired by Wakefield Council.

ABOUT YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK (YSP):

Founded in 1977 by Sir Peter Murray and, since 2022, led by Clare Lilley, YSP is an international destination for modern and contemporary sculpture. It is an independent charitable trust and registered museum situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West and South Yorkshire. With an exceptional learning programme, rolling exhibitions, and permanent and changing sculptures sited in the landscape, across its history, YSP has worked with over 1,000 artists from more than 40 countries. They include Ai Weiwei, Fiona Banner, Tony Cragg, Leonardo Drew, Barbara Hepworth, Damien Hirst, Robert Indiana, KAWS, Lindsey Mendick, Henry Moore, Annie Morris, David Nash, Sean Scully, Chiharu Shiota, Yinka Shonibare CBE, David Smith, James Turrell, Joana Vasconcelos, Bill Viola and Erwin Wurm

FURTHER INFORMATION

FOR ARTFARM: Please contact Amanda Dobinson. amanda.dobinson@artfarm.com. +44 (0)7826 664914

FOR THE GROUCHO CLUB: Please contact Simon Kelner. simon@sevendialspr.com. +44 (0)7775 788898

FOR YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK: Please contact Kirsty Young. kirsty.young@ysp.org.uk. +44 (0)1924 832 515

FOR RUSHBOND: Please contact Anita Morris. anita@anitamorrisassociates.co.uk. +44 (0)7976 584592

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