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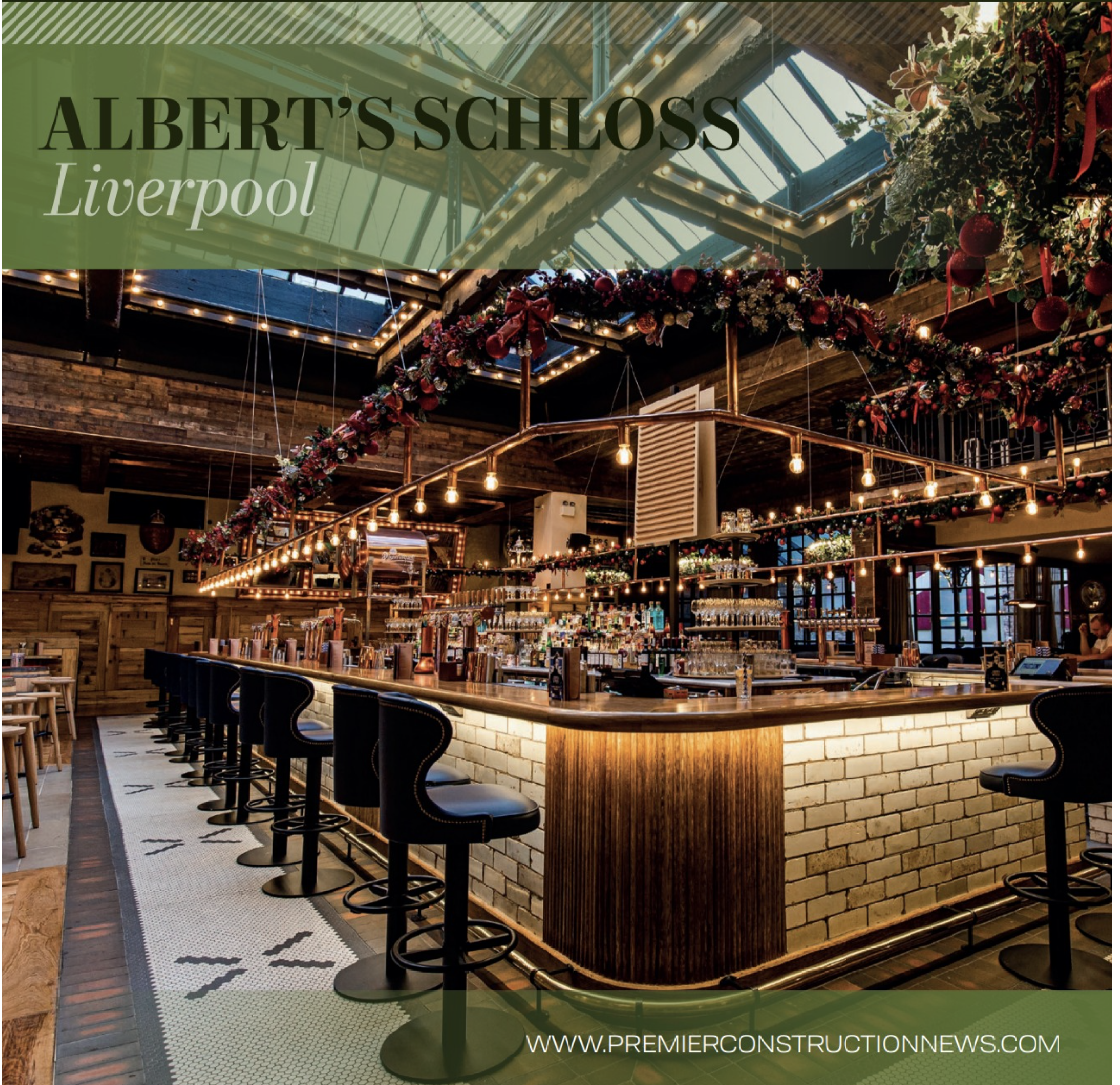
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Belvedere

WHERE BYRON MET HIS LOVER, THE PLAYWRIGHT SHERIDAN ENJOYED ONE TOO MANY, AND THE QUEEN CONSORT'S MOTHER HELD A BALL - BELVEDERE, HOLLAND PARK'S FAMOUS ITALIAN RESTAURANT, HAS BEEN DRAMATICALLY REFURBISHED IN A MAJOR PROJECT ECHOING ITS ORIGINAL RICH HISTORIC SPLENDOUR, WITH ARCHER HUMPHRYES ARCHITECTS ACTING AS THE PROJECT'S INTERIOR DESIGNER AND ARCHITECT.



George Bukhov, Managing Director of Holland Park Restaurant Ltd, and Illya Demichev are the restaurant's new owners and the team behind the refurbishment.

George Bukhov said: *"The restaurant closed at the beginning of the pandemic and the previous operators decided that they did not want to re-open – so we took it over. We spent one and a half years re-designing and refurbishing the restaurant throughout, complete with a new menu – whilst of course retaining its famous original name."*

The venue, with an overall colour scheme of terracotta and cream, is arranged over two levels – with the ground floor including a large central bar with restaurant seating ranged around it, as well as an open pass kitchen complete with pizza oven. There is also a balcony with seating overlooking the fountain in the park.

Upstairs is an intimate salon with a fireplace, a small bar and a Spanish linen panelled ceiling, plus a separate small dining room seating up to 14 people and overlooking the ground floor restaurant.

George Bukhov continued: *"When we took over, the interior design reflected the late 1990s era when it was a Marco Pierre White restaurant, designed especially for fine dining and quite dated. We decided to reflect the historic look and feel of the original interior with beautiful fireplaces upstairs and downstairs, as well as making it a visual extension of the park with lots of plants. We also aimed to make it more of an 'everyday' restaurant rather than just a venue for special occasions."*

And Belvedere certainly has a long and impressive history to reflect!

Built between 1638 and 1640, Belvedere was originally part of the stables and coach house serving Holland House and Park. »

Restaurants

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In the 19th century, the former stables were converted into a splendid ballroom – complete with a viewing gallery, or belvedere – and orangery, created so for the influential Henry Richard Fox, 3rd Baron Holland.

The venue then became something of a political salon which drew some of the era's most prominent figures including Lord Byron and his lover Lady Caroline Lamb, and playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan – not to mention Charles Dickens and William Wordsworth.

Fast forward to 1939 and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were guests there at a ball also attended by Noel Coward.

The ballroom was later converted into a restaurant and named Belvedere.

Having closed during COVID, the restaurant changed hands and was purchased by George Bukhov and Illya Demichev.

The refurbishment works included extensive stripping out, with interesting and original details being uncovered behind the modern plasterboard. These included original brickwork around the building's iconic arches which date back to the 17th century when it was a stables.

Gorge Bukhov commented: *“As this was an important element of the building's history, we spent a considerable amount of time and money restoring the brickwork to its original state. We even found traces of a historic fire on the bricks.”*

“At the entrance, we removed some 1990s wardrobe-style cabinets in the former cloakroom and opened up the space and laid a section of reclaimed early 20th century Italian limestone flooring within this area.

“The original natural terracotta rendered walls were also revealed and retained, as were two beautiful fireplaces – one

downstairs and the other upstairs.”

He added that the original oak parquet flooring was also painstakingly restored by hand rather than using a sanding machine, in order to retain a more original appearance, with its slight undulation.

The original windows and doors were retained, and bespoke period style lantern lighting in keeping with the interior was installed.

All of the furniture and fixtures, including the tables, chairs and banquettes were bespoke made in Italy, as was the new Italian marble-topped central bar. Italian marble was also used for the venue's pizza counter and kitchen pass, adding an extra level of luxury.

George Bukhov concluded *“It is a really lovely building, and we are very pleased with the outcome.”* ■



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Fratelli Boffi is an Italian furniture company specialised in tailor made bespoke projects. Founded in 1928, we are able to transform a raw piece of high-quality wood into pieces of art: we follow the process with passion from the start, and we are always proud of every single piece that goes out of our firm.

Since our inception many years ago, we have worked with some of the best English designers and architects with whom we have developed beautiful UK projects including the Great Northern Hotel UK, Polo Bar and Suits in Westbury Hotel, Hotel Lancaster, and Sofitel St. James Spa to name but a few.

At Belvedere Restaurant we were responsible for the loose furniture, such as benches, armchairs & chairs, tables, stools, and fixed joinery including bar units, bar cabinets, reception desks and wine cooler cabinets.

For us, every bespoke project is a challenge with ourselves, and we always aim to meet all the clients' needs. With this project we are proud of having seen the satisfaction of the client when the fitting was completed. The results were amazing even for us! ■

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