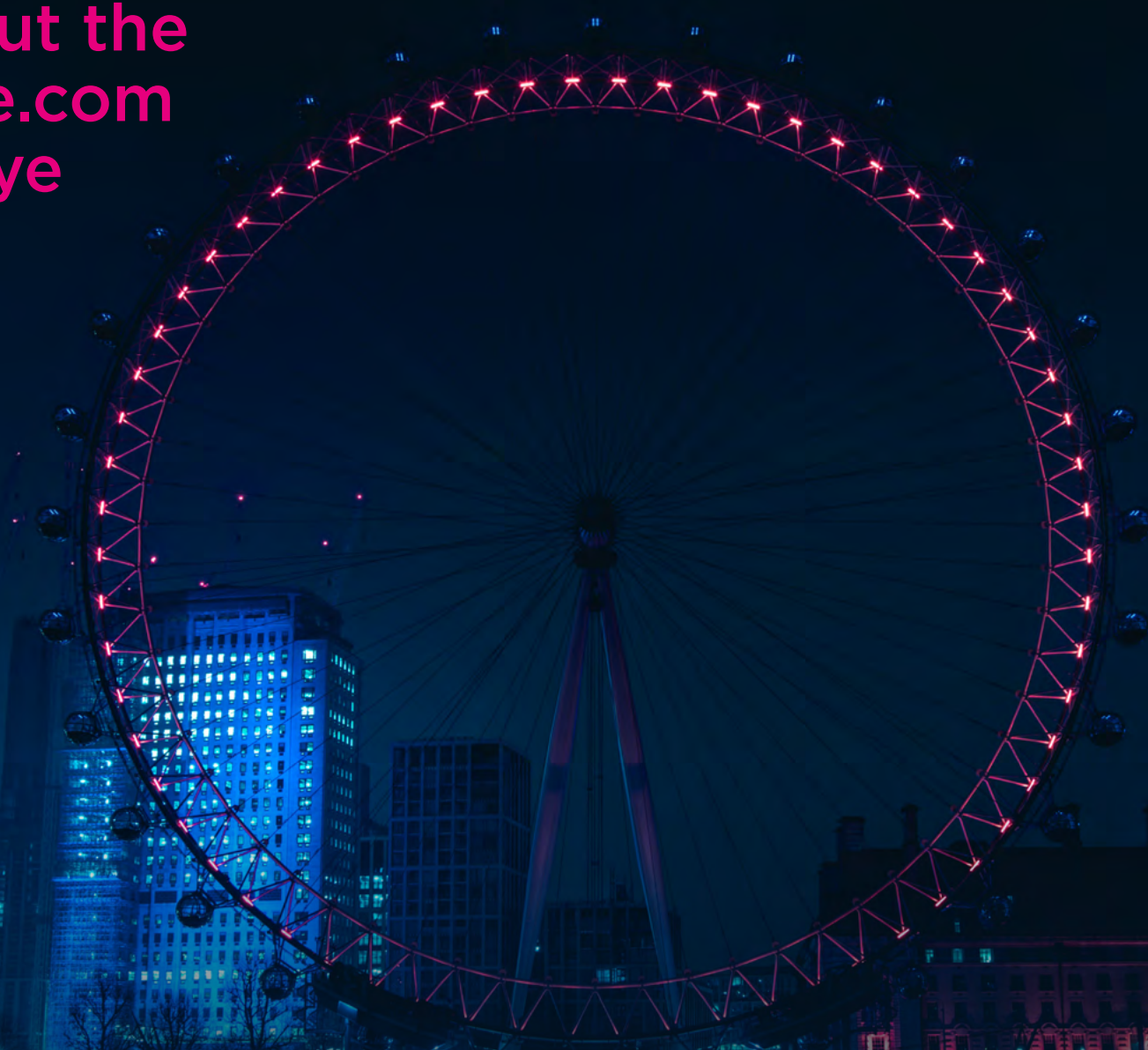


All you need to know about the lastminute.com London Eye



Conceived and designed by Marks Barfield Architects.

Operated by London Eye Management Services Limited, a Merlin Entertainments Ltd.

Photo by Jack B on Unsplash



lastminute.com

London Eye

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London Eye

Discover the world of London's 21st century landmark

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Photo by Alessia Caudiero on Unsplash

Who would have thought that such a simple idea could be so stunningly successful? The world's tallest cantilevered observation wheel at 135m high and sat proud on the banks of the River Thames offers 360 degree, breathtaking views across London.

But there's much, much more to the London Eye than its views and engineering. It plays an integral role in the community, has become an internationally recognised symbol for London, a hugely popular filming location and is also a unique venue for corporate events, launches and entertainment.

A source of pride for the whole country as well as the capital, the London Eye is the most distinctive addition to the world's greatest city this century, loved by Britons and tourists alike.

It's so uncomplicated, but so visionary, it's surprising that nobody thought of it years before it happened.



2020

Since it officially opened to the public on March 9th 2000, twenty years ago, the London Eye has become as iconic a London landmark as Tower Bridge, Big Ben, St Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London.

In fact, it has become the UK's most popular paid for visitor attraction. A remarkable feat of design and engineering, the London Eye gave London's skyline a dramatic new addition and has been offering guests a new perspective on London ever since.

Originally, it was intended as a temporary structure, able to be dismantled and transported to a new location, and had planning permission for just five years. But with millions boarding it every year, its popularity has prompted its lease to be extended. Today it is a permanent fixture on the London skyline and a beautiful symbol of modern London.

The vision

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Photo by Alex Rainer on Unsplash

As the 20th Century drew to a close there was a natural human desire to mark the new millennium in an enduring and substantial way. Newspapers asked readers for their suggestions; competitions were held; everybody had a view.

Two people with a better idea than most were the architects and husband and wife, David Marks and Julia Barfield. They wanted to give London its own 21st Century Eiffel Tower: a structure of beauty that would celebrate London's creativity, innovation and technical prowess, and provide a new perspective on the world's greatest city.

They chose to represent London with a wheel – an age-old symbol of time and change and, therefore, the perfect structure with which to mark the dawn of a new millennium in a city that never stands still.

A feat of design and engineering

The lastminute.com London Eye was designed as a huge bicycle wheel structure that is cantilevered - supported on one side.

The London Eye uses enormous 'A' frame legs supported by colossal foundations and tied back by more cables anchored underneath Jubilee Gardens.

1. It took seven years and the skills of hundreds of people from five countries to make the London Eye a reality.
2. The residents of an alpine village helped to test its boarding procedures.
3. The design is similar to an enormous bicycle wheel, with a central hub and spindle connected to outer and inner rims by cable spokes. It is over 200 times larger than the average bike wheel (and four times wider than the dome of St Paul's Cathedral).
4. The 80 spokes laid together would stretch for 6km - the distance from Trafalgar Square to Canary Wharf.
5. The spindle which holds the wheel structure is 23m long - the height of nine classic London red telephone boxes.
6. The hub and spindle weigh in at 330 tonnes - equivalent to 49 double decker buses and 20 times heavier than Big Ben - the bell inside St Stephen's Tower at the Houses of Parliament.
7. Some 1,700 tonnes of British steel were used in the construction of the London Eye, which makes it 298 times heavier than all the top London football teams (West Ham, Arsenal, Tottenham, Chelsea, Fulham and Charlton) combined.
8. The London Eye was shipped up the River Thames by barge in sections and assembled at the South Bank. It took a week to lift it from a horizontal position to the fully vertical one we all know. The technology employed had previously been used to erect North Sea oil rigs.

9. The total weight of the wheel and pods is 2,100 tonnes - or as much as 1,272 London black cabs.
10. The operation had to be co-ordinated carefully with the tides to ensure that the river was low enough to fit everything underneath London's bridges. It was a squeeze: the clearance under Southwark Bridge was just 40cm in some places.
11. All 32 pods were fixed onto the wheel in just eight days. A decade later they were improved, to make their heating and ventilation systems more efficient and environmentally friendly. The upgraded pods are now expected to last at least another decade.

The London Eye is often mistakenly called a Ferris wheel. This is not the case; first, the pods are completely enclosed and climate controlled; second, the pods are positioned on the outside of the wheel structure and are fully motorised; and third, the entire structure is supported by an A-frame on one side only; making it the world's tallest cantilevered observation wheel.



Things you didn't know about the London Eye.

40 KM

You can see around 40km from the top – as far as Windsor Castle on a clear day.

800 GUESTS

The London Eye can carry 800 guests per rotation – equivalent to 11 London red double decker buses.

32 PODS

There are 32 pods in total; one for each of the London boroughs. For superstitious reasons they are numbered up to 33, with pod 13 left out for good luck.

11 TONNES

Each of the 32 capsules weighs 11 tonnes. To put that figure into perspective, it's the same weight as 1,157,894 pound coins.

30 MINUTES

Each rotation takes approximately 30 minutes, meaning that a pod travels at a stately 26cm per second, or 0.9km (0.6 miles) per hour – twice as fast as a tortoise sprinting; this slow rate of rotation allows guests to step on and off without the wheel having to stop.

2300 MILES

In one year the London Eye will rotate 7668 times, or 2300 miles, as far as from London to Cairo in Egypt, home to other wonders of the world.

424M

The circumference of the London Eye is 424m (1,392ft).

135M

The height of the London Eye is 135m (443ft – equivalent to 64 red telephone boxes piled on top of each other),

KATE MOSS

Supermodel Kate Moss holds the record for the UK celebrity that's enjoyed the most rotations, standing at 25, and Hollywood star Jessica Alba holds the record for an overseas celebrity that's enjoyed the most rotations, standing at 31.

VISITS

The London Eye receives more visitors annually than ancient wonders of the world like the Taj Mahal, Stonehenge and even the Great Pyramids of Giza.

75%

A new LED lighting system has been introduced on the London Eye, which saves 75% more energy than the previous system.

PROPOSALS

Since opening, there have been over 5000 marriage proposals.

CLEAN

All oils on the London Eye are biodegradable, the grease is edible and causes no harm to wildlife and cleaning products are biodegradable and non-pollutant.





Big impressions count

Since launching as a corporate entertainment venue in September 2000 with a Champagne gala event attended by then Prime Minister Tony Blair, the London Eye's Corporate and Special Events department has garnered a reputation as a dab hand at hosting high-profile, high impact parties, launches and ceremonies – anything is possible!

Many customers and clients choose to hire the entire London Eye, but if you want to hire just one pod we can help too. With a range of products from wine and Champagne tasting pods to seasonal treats such as winter cocktails and Christmas canapés, there's something special all year round.

In May 2001 we hosted our first-ever wedding with the happy couple saying 'Eye do' live in front of an audience of five million on GMTV, then Europe's most-watched breakfast show. We've been hosting happy couples ever since – an average of 60 per year.

In 2011 and 2013 the London Eye played host to the famous Red Bull Music Academy events. Beamed across the globe on the internet, the event had famous musicians and DJs performing in each pod to an intimate audience. Simultaneously, thousands of guests enjoyed a silent disco in the shadow of the London Eye hosted by some of the world's most famous DJs. Guests described it as the best party ever.

During the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the London Eye played an integral part in the run up and duration of the games. We hosted hundreds of media and sponsors from across the globe, had the Olympic Torch on top of one of our pods and even featured in both the opening and closing ceremony, highlighting the London Eye's place amongst the capital's historic treasures.

We frequently light up for special occasions from the birth of a Royal baby to celebrating Pride in London, and have turned the pods in to an Ultimate Snow Globe and a garden in the sky.

The lastminute.com London Eye River Cruise

"The live commentary is superb and everyone who takes this river cruise will learn something new about one of the attractions they pass".


Laura Porter, About.com

The lastminute.com London Eye also operates a unique award-winning 40 minute sightseeing cruise on the River Thames with live commentary that brings the city to life, presented by expert guides.

The circular cruise aboard the Silver Bonito, with both covered and sun deck seating, departs from the London Eye pier directly underneath the London Eye, goes as far as Tower Bridge and returns 40 minutes later. Cruising past the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, Shakespeare's Globe as well as Westminster, Millennium and Tower Bridges.

The Silver Bonito can carry up to 250 passengers at any one time and is one of the few fully accessible boats on the river, with full disabled access to both decks. Audio commentary is also available in French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Russian, Japanese and Mandarin.

Filming and photography



Since opening, the Press Office has worked with countless location managers, film crews and photographers on projects ranging from fashion shoots and news items to TV adverts and international feature films. We value the exposure filming and photography gives the London Eye and London as a whole and encourage applications which reflect the London Eye's status as a must do experience in the capital as well as a global icon.

The London Eye has featured in international feature films such as *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, *Wimbledon*, *Thunderbirds* and *Paddington the Movie* along with wellknown TV programmes such as *The Simpsons*, *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock* and *The Apprentice* to mention only a few.

Call a member of the Press Office on 0203 8896766, email pressoffice@londoneye.com or visit www.londoneye.com/filming for application forms and full guidelines.

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to keep up with our news.



A positive impact on the community

We are fully accessible

We go above and beyond industry standards to ensure that we are fully accessible to all. Features include:

- Entrances that feature widened access and ramps for wheelchair users
- Voice and visual alarms
- Slowed-down boarding for guests with limited mobility
- Knowledgeable members of staff who are always on hand to assist
- T-loop systems in our ticket office and on the London Eye River Cruise
- All disabled guests can bring a carer free of charge

A local business

What matters to London matters to us and this is why we proactively contribute to the issues and causes that are important to us and our community. The opening of the lastminute.com London Eye, together with other organisations, played a vital part in the regeneration and continuous enhancement of the South Bank, which now welcomes 28 million visitors a year.

Charitable donations

Because of our iconic status, we are proud to use the lastminute.com London Eye to help charities, big and small. As part of the London Eye's ongoing commitment to the local area, 1% of revenue is donated back into the community, part of the London Eye's original planning permission, known as 'Section 106.'

We also help charitable organisations to promote national campaigns by hosting photo calls and launch events. The constantly expanding list of charities we have worked with includes Help for Heroes, ITV's Text Santa, Royal British Legion and Sport Relief.

For charity requests please email charity@londoneye.com

All of the London Eye's fundraising activity is directed towards the Merlin Entertainments charity Merlin's Magic Wand, who provide magical experiences to children who are seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged and who might not otherwise be able to visit one of our many attractions around the world.

For more info visit www.merlinsmagicwand.org



Fireworks



FOR OVER 15 YEARS,

the London Eye has been the focal point of the Mayor of London's famous New Year's Eve firework celebrations which sees hundreds of thousands of people congregate in the heart of London each year.

4D Cinema Experience



In August 2009 the London Eye introduced a revolutionary 4D film that brings a new dimension to the visitor experience, providing a completely new vision of the city that is both emotional and entertaining – the perfect prelude to an experience on the iconic London Eye.

The film focuses on the journey of a little girl and her father in London in which they visit the London Eye and find a spectacular new perspective of the capital. Their experience is brought to life with colourful parties inside the London Eye eye pods, breathtaking firework displays, which gain an extra dimension with advanced sensory effects, making the watcher feel immersed in the action.

The London Eye 4D Experience is the first live action, 4D attraction film ever produced in the UK and contains the first ever 3D aerial photography over London.

The film brings together a number of 3D filming styles: aerials, time lapse, live action as well as sophisticated visual effects. Capitalising on the latest cutting edge technology, 4D adds a new dimension to traditional 3D technology; using sensory effects such as wind, snow and even smell to bring to life the images on screen.

The bespoke 4D film which is almost four minutes in length was developed especially for the London Eye at the award winning Pinewood Shepperton studios, and was produced by Centre Screen Productions Ltd in association with PLF/Pablo Post.

The team of industry acclaimed award winning talent who have worked on the 4D film have also worked on projects such as the IMAX film 'Bugs!', other 3D cinema projects and various attractions with clients ranging from English Heritage to the Hong Kong Government.

Merlin Entertainments

The lastminute.com London Eye is operated by Merlin Entertainments Ltd, the leading name in location-based, family entertainment. Europe's number one and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin currently operates over 130 attractions, 20 hotels, and six holiday villages in 25 countries and across four continents. The company aims to deliver memorable and rewarding experiences to its almost 67 million visitors worldwide, through its iconic global and local brands, and the commitment and passion of its managers and 28,000 employees.

Among Merlin's attractions are - SEA LIFE London Aquarium, Madame Tussauds, LEGOLAND, The London Eye, Dungeons, Gardaland, LEGOLAND Discovery Centres, Alton Towers Resort, Warwick Castle, THORPE PARK Resort, Blackpool Tower, Heide Park Resort, WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo, Sydney Tower Eye and SKYWALK. All brands which are distinctive, challenging and innovative - and which have great potential for growth in the future.

Visit www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information.

General information



For general information
about the London Eye and
for discount on bookings,
visit www.londoneye.com

Events and special occasions
For events and special
occasions including
corporate entertainment,
hospitality and weddings,
call 0207 4870224 or email
events@merlinevents.com

Customer services
For customer services email
customer.services@londoneye.com

Press enquires
Including photography,
filming and media visits
call 0203 8896766 or email
pressoffice@londoneye.com

**To view the latest news and
press releases** on London
Eye activity and events, visit
www.londoneye.com/news

**The postal address for
the London Eye is:**

The London Eye,
Riverside Building,
County Hall,
Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1 7PB.

Other useful information
The London Eye is open all year
round, except for Christmas
Day (25 December) and for two
weeks in January, when annual
maintenance takes place.

The London Eye ticket
office is open from 9:30am
daily – alternatively save
money and time by booking
tickets online in advance.