



Castle Howard's Gingerbread headliner

It hasn't even been built yet, but the elaborate gingerbread replica planned for Castle Howard has already hit the national headlines, as more details are released of its planned design. The stunning creation is set to be the centrepiece of Castle Howard's 2016 Christmas experience.

"As anyone who has visited knows, scale is something that Castle Howard knows a thing or two about, and our Christmas gingerbread house is no exception," comments Victoria Howard, who commissioned the piece.

The model depicts Castle Howard as it was originally designed by Sir John Vanbrugh and as featured in the Vitruvius Britannicus. Buildings by Nicholas Hawksmoor as well as the much later Castle Howard railway station, famously used by Queen Victoria for her visit, will also be created out of spiced biscuit, with a gingerbread train wending its way along tracks laid through the confectionery estate.

Castle Howard turned to the UK's top experts in architectural food, Bompas & Parr, to create this specialist design on a grand scale. The finished product will be a work of art, worthy of any gallery, and on display for a limited period of time during Castle Howard's Christmas opening. "It is an expensive project, but visitors would be disappointed if it was not breath-taking in both its artistry and scale; it is investments such as this that help us attract over 250,000 visitors each year from every corner of the globe. These visits are a core part of generating a sustainable income to preserve and nurture this unique property," explains Victoria. "We change and update our festive experience each year so that it never becomes too familiar to those who come year after year – there is always something new to discover for visitors young and old."

Indeed, new for 2016 will be a Festive Ticket, which not only includes a visit to the house and gardens, but also an exclusive Christmas Afternoon tea served by a warming fire in the Grecian Hall. The menu, which is inspired by traditional Christmas dishes, has been created by former development chef for Betty's, David Haynes.

Christmas is now one of the key periods for visits to many visitor attractions, and Castle Howard has a reputation for putting on one of the finest displays in the country, featuring many Christmas trees, and tens of thousands of baubles, fairy lights and candles. This year, several trailer-loads of foliage taken from the 10,000 acre estate, will add an evergreen touch to bring a flavour of the beautiful grounds inside.

Castle Howard opens for the Christmas season from Saturday 19 November to Friday 23 December.

A special 'Twilight opening' on 18 December will enable families to experience the house as darkness falls, with the house illuminated with hundreds of candles and a festive sing-along in the garden; for the Twilight opening, last entry to the house will be 7.00pm.

Visitors are advised to book Festive Tickets early as availability is limited and they are expected to book up quickly.

For more information on all of Castle Howard's Christmas events, or to prebook, please visit www.castlehoward.co.uk.

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About the Gingerbread House

The gingerbread version of Castle Howard recreates not only the aspects of the stately home with which visitors will be familiar– the silhouette of the grand dome, for example – but also details that appeared in architect Vanbrugh's original plans, as recorded in the Vitruvius Britannicus.

The house itself is surrounded by architectural features which can be seen around the 10,000 acre estate today, including the Temple of the Four Winds, Mausoleum and the 7th Earl's monument. The Castle Howard railway station – famously used by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert when they visited the estate in 1850 – will also be recreated in gingerbread. A Hornby train will run on tracks throughout the display, though the familiar train livery will be replaced by a coat of gingerbread, in keeping with the rest of the artwork.

The model will be illuminated with tiny lights, making the buildings twinkle in the subtle lighting of the room.

The elaborate confection will take ten bakers two weeks to make. It is being constructed by specialist food architects, Bompas & Parr, before it is transported from their London studio to be assembled and installed at Castle Howard.

It is hoped that the gingerbread will be sufficiently well preserved that it can become a regular feature of Castle Howard's Christmas decorations; after six weeks on public display, there are no plans to consume the confectionary masterpiece!

Ingredients used to create the 2.5m by 3.5m artwork include:

- 40kg flour

- 15kg sugar
- 3kg treacle
- 3kg syrup
- 1.5kg ground ginger
- 18kg butter

About Bompas & Parr

Bompas & Parr leads in experience design, immersive research, architectural installations and contemporary food design.

From 2007, when Bompas & Parr was founded as a craft jellymonger, the studio has rapidly grown from just Sam Bompas and Harry Parr to its current complement of sixteen - a team of creative specialists, designers, architects, cooks, technicians and administrators who work across a wide range of projects.

The team works to experiment, develop, produce and install projects, artworks, jellies and exhibitions, as well as archiving, communicating and contextualising the work. Additional to the projects realised in-house, Bompas & Parr contracts structural engineers and other specialists, and collaborates with curators, cultural practitioners and scientists.

Bompas & Parr has published five books, the most recent of which the studio republish *Memoirs of a Stomach*, a lost-and-forgotten 18th century tome brought up to date with visuals from inside the digestive tract of food writer, pop-up chef and Sunday Times columnist Gizzi Erskine.

The studio works with some of the world's biggest companies (Diageo, Cargill, Mercedes-Benz) and the world's foremost cultural institutions (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture, Moscow).

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