

# The London Eye: 25th Anniversary [B2]

Inizialmente concepita come una struttura temporanea, è diventata un elemento emblematico e imprescindibile dello skyline della capitale britannica.

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On the **dawn of the new millennium**, an **eye-catching landmark** was erected in London. A giant **Ferris wheel** called the London Eye was built on the south **bank** of the River Thames, next to County Hall and **opposite** Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. It was meant to be a temporary structure to celebrate the inauguration of new era as a temporary structure. A quarter of a century **later**, it has become permanent and is one of the city's most-visited tourist attractions.

## A WINNING DESIGN

The London Eye was the result of a 1993 competition sponsored by the Architecture Foundation and newspaper The Sunday Times. No official winner was declared, but the design by husband-and-wife team Julia Barfield and David Marks of Marks Barfield Architects was given the **go-ahead**. At 135 metres tall and 120 metres in diameter, it was the biggest **Ferris wheel** in the world at the time. Construction started in 1998. A year **later**, it was assembled horizontally over the Thames and then pulled into its vertical position. As a **cantilevered Ferris wheel**, it is supported only on one side. Prime Minister Tony Blair inaugurated the London Eye on 31 December 1999 but **due to a technical glitch**, it did not open to the paying public until March 2000. And the public has been paying continuously since then. The attraction has a **staggering** 3.5 million visitors a year. With tickets priced at £30 per adult, and while it has changed owners several times since it was built, it draws a healthy **revenue**.

## BREATHTAKING VIEWS

**Riding** the London Eye is a unique experience. The thousand-tonne wheel can carry eight hundred people per revolution, in thirty-two **egg-shaped** capsules, each representing a London **borough**. The comfortable **pods** offer **breathtaking** views of the city. On a clear day, you can see as far as forty kilometres, all the way to Windsor Castle. It takes thirty minutes to complete a round. Rotating at a **leisurely** 0.5km per hour, its movement is continuous, with guests **jumping on and off**.

## ROMANTIC DESTINATION

Now a **fixture** on the skyline, the London Eye has become part of the city's **fabric**. **Every New Year's Eve**, it serves as the centre point of a spectacular **fireworks display**. The **late** acclaimed architect Sir Richard Rogers observed in 2007: "The Eye has done for London what the Eiffel Tower did for Paris." Having witnessed more than five thousand marriage proposals, it has also become one of the most romantic spots in the world, along with the Eiffel Tower itself.

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# Glossary

- **go-ahead** = via libera
- **due to** = a causa di
- **staggering** = impressionante
- **revenue** = guadagno
- **borough** = quartiere
- **fabric** = struttura
- **dawn of the new millennium** = all'inizio del XX secolo
- **landmark** = attrazione
- **late** = defunto
- **cantilevered** = a sbalzo
- **technical glitch** = problema tecnico
- **bank** = sponda
- **opposite** = di fronte a
- **leisurely** = senza fretta
- **fixture** = punto fermo
- **Riding** = salire su
- **egg-shaped** = a forma di uovo
- **pods** = navicelle
- **breathtaking** = mozzafiato
- **jumping on and off** = salire e scendere
- **Every New Year's Eve** = notte di Capodanno
- **fireworks display** = spettacolo pirotecnico
- **eye-catching** = appariscente
- **Ferris wheel** = ruota panoramica