



## BELMOND

### BELMOND CHOOSES DESIGN GRADUATE TO COLLABORATE ON BESPOKE DESIGN FOR THEIR [AFLOAT IN FRANCE](#) BARGES

*The Belmond New Designers Award Presented to Giles Fearon for his Mindful Design Inspired By The Concept Of Slow Travel*



**July 1, 2021** – [Belmond](#), in collaboration with [New Designers](#), is delighted to announce the winner of its 2021 Belmond [New Designers](#) Award. The winner, **Giles Fearon** from **Manchester Metropolitan University**, was selected for his project, **Naturalistic Mindfulness**; a proposal for a cluster of glass sculptures shaped naturally by breathing, to evoke a sense of mindfulness. As the winner, Giles has the opportunity to create and install a bespoke creation for Belmond's extraordinary [Afloat in France](#), a collection of river barges offering intimate journeys through the rivers and countryside scenes of France.

Now in its fourth year, the Belmond New Designers Award has already provided five talented graduates a valuable start to their design careers, with previous winners offered the chance to work alongside Belmond's designers to create one off pieces for their iconic properties. The winners in 2020, Alexandra Carr and Hari Gordon, have spent the past year being introduced to the brand and will start work on their creations over the coming months.

Celia Geyer, SVP Design & Project Development, said: "We are delighted to have found a designer who has illustrated exceptional creativity through the craft of glass blowing inspired by the breathing techniques of mindfulness which is in synergy with our slow-travel experiences. Giles' Naturalistic Mindfulness stood out as a design and concept that will inspire our guests to forge a closer tie to the people and places with which they

seek to connect. We are looking forward to working with Giles and unveiling this exclusive design in the coming year.”

## **The Brief**

This year, Belmond asked the Class of 2021 to design an object of desire fit for an extraordinary journey aboard Afloat in France. The brief specified that the design should reflect a celebration of materials that are relevant to the regions that the barges frequent and create a unique experience. Additionally, materials used should reflect the timeless quality associated with the Belmond brand, whilst ensuring that the design is as relevant today as in several years' time.

Entries were submitted digitally, and then shortlisted candidates were interviewed by Belmond's expert panel of judges. The shortlisted entries impressed the judges with their variety in form, materials used, and size. These included a design by Jack Buttlings from Nottingham Trent University for a portable carrier for food, drink and cards that converts into a working picnic table, and a table made of ashwood, by Ralph Shuttleworth who's also from Nottingham Trent University, which was designed to reflect the flow of a river. Entries also varied in their function, with one entry incorporating a combination of ceramics and photography to showcase the intricate nature of water, designed by Valerie Bernadini from Morley College, and another proposing a decorative sculpture, created from wool which is native to France, designed by Louisa Knapp from University of Huddersfield. All finalists illustrated fine craftsmanship, technique and knowledge of incorporating design into slow travel in today's world.

## **Naturalistic Mindfulness**

Giles' award winning sculpture was an amalgamation of inspiration drawn from nature and a design approach influenced by the pandemic, which has seen people pay closer attention to mindful ways of living. The concept plays with the idea of breathing in and out and evokes the stillness associated with a slower mode of travel. It was this connection to the brief, his skilled craftsmanship and his sustainable design ethos that caught the judges' eyes.

Giles Fearon, said: 'I am thrilled to have an opportunity to collaborate with Belmond and its design team to materialise my proposal and install it on the Afloat in France barges. The platform created by New Designers and Belmond through these awards is invaluable and a blessing for young design graduates such as myself to launch into the professional world of design in such unprecedented times.'

As the winner of the 2021 New Designers Belmond Award, Giles will receive a cash bursary and a commission to design a one-off piece to be manufactured and displayed on board a Belmond Afloat in France barge. The Belmond Award aims to not only provide exposure for the designer within a high-end luxury market, but also valuable experience of the design process in a commercial environment: from prototype to production.

Part of the world's leading luxury group LVMH, craftsmanship and design is central to the identity of Belmond's family of hotels, safari lodges, trains and river barges across the globe. The company is a champion of top creative talent around the globe, and has worked with a host of renowned designers and craftspeople – including Paris-based designers Charlotte de Tonnac and Hugo Sauzay of FESTEN Architecture who led the recent renovation of [Belmond Splendido Mare](#) and famed British designer Matthew Williamson, who recently designed the stunning [Suite 'No. 67' at Belmond La Residencia Hotel](#) in Deià, Mallorca.

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## About the Belmond New Designers Award

Belmond has a long history of restoring and preserving historic buildings and heritage sites that form an integral part of a destination's cultural identity. The design and renovation of our properties is undertaken in accordance with our brand guidelines, which were launched in 2018. The Belmond Award builds on the brand's reputation for world-leading craftsmanship and interior design, including collaborations with remarkable creative talents both emerging and established, such as British Designers Matthew Williamson and Tara Bernerd, and French mosaicist Jérôme Clochard on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

Belmond's New Designers judging panel consisted of Belmond's Senior Vice President, Design & Project Development, Celia Geyer; Divisional Managing Director, Trains & Cruises, Gary Franklin, Art and Design Director, Joe Ferry; Brand & Corporate Communications Director, Nicolas Streff, the designers of the Afloat in France barges, and they were also joined by 'Belmond New Designers' Alumni Alexandra Carr and Harri Gordon, who were winners of the award in 2020.

## About Belmond

Belmond has been a pioneer of luxury travel for over 45 years, building a passion for authentic escapes into a portfolio of one-of-a-kind experiences in some of the world's most inspiring destinations.

Since the acquisition of the iconic Hotel Cipriani in Venice in 1976, Belmond has continued to perpetuate the legendary art of travel, taking discerning global travellers on breathtaking journeys. Its portfolio extends across 24 countries with 46 remarkable properties that include the illustrious Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train, remote beach retreats like Cap Juluca in Anguilla, Italian hideaways such as Splendido in Portofino, or unrivalled gateways to world natural wonders such as Hotel das Cataratas inside Brazil's Iguazu National Park. From trains to river barges, safari lodges to hotels, each unique property offers an incomparable experience with its own story to tell. The essence of the Belmond brand is built upon its heritage, craftsmanship and genuine, authentic service. Belmond sees its role as custodians of timeless heritage, dedicated to preserving its assets through sensitive ongoing restoration plans. Belmond is part of the world's leading luxury group LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

[Belmond.com](https://www.belmond.com)