Soho celebrity haunt the Groucho Club bought by developer Artfarm

T
he once notorious Groucho Club frequented by celebrities including Noel Gallagher, Stephen Fry and Lily Allen has been sold to independent development business Artfarm.

Located in the heart of London's Soho the world famous club has acted as hub for the arts, literature and media community in London for almost 40 years. It currently has 5,000 private members gloabally.

It joins venues such as the Fife Arms in Braemar, Roth Bar & Grill in Somerset, Manuela in Los Angeles and the soon-to-open Audley Public House and Mount St. Restaurant and Rooms in London's Mayfair, as part of the Artfarm portfolio.

Ewan Venters, boss of Artfarm, said: "As a member for some time myself, I understand the special place the Groucho occupies in London's cultural landscape.

"Under Artfarm's ownership, the future of the club is assured. We will respect the history and traditions of the club, and we look forward to engaging with its membership to create a long-term future for the Groucho that builds on its eclectic appeal and maverick ethos."

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The Groucho was founded in 1985 by a group of women publishers as an alternative to London's male-dominated private members clubs and quickly gained notoriety among the capital's social scene.

Its name derives from the famous Groucho Marx line – "I don't want to belong to any club that will accept me as a member" and it quickly became a haunt of the key figures of the 'Cool Britannia' scene during the Nineties.

Francis Bacon, Jeffrey Bernard and other Soho scoundrels have also held court within its walls.

Nick Hurrell, chairman of The Groucho Club, said: "I am delighted that we have reached agreement with Artfarm, who are the perfect owners for the Groucho. Their mix of cultural engagement, pedigree in art and excellence in hospitality sits very well with the particular spirit of a members' club that has been an important part of London's cultural life for many years."