

Roots & SHOOTs

Bangwallop – a unique venue in Salcombe dedicated to all things photographic

When photographer Lorna Yabsley is asked why she chose Salcombe to house her new photographic venue, Bangwallop – she answers in three parts. “First, I was lucky enough to be born here,” she says. “Second, it has its very own brand identity – it’s our little corner of Mayfair in the Westcountry, and third, families often come here on holiday, which presents a rare opportunity to do a family shoot.”

Bangwallop gallery, with shopping, drinks bar and studios, is housed in an industrial waterside building in Island Street – Salcombe’s newly emerging arts quarter and traditional boat-building area.

Lorna, who has worked in the photographic industry for the past 25 years, said: “I recognised some time ago that in this fast-changing and competitive industry I needed to evolve with it and grow my business in order to survive.

“I knew that we were producing really good high-end work, but we weren’t getting the audience we needed or deserved. The advent of digital not only totally changed an established way of working, it also put photography as a genre in uncharted territory.

“Now we all own a camera, there is a huge surge of interest in the subject. So, as a small company with big ideas, we faced a huge challenge, and to meet this we decided to grow and cater for the new emerging market of the photographic-hungry public.”



Finding premises proved a five-year struggle for Lorna but now she and her team are firmly established in Island Street, and are offering a wide choice

of services and products.

The large gallery at Bangwallop showcases the best image-makers in the business. Edgy design-led products from cult cameras to Crumpler bags are on sale in the shop and the studio and production room are home to the existing business. For clients who wish to browse through collections there’s ‘The Pod’ which houses a virtual gallery for clients to browse at their leisure through photographic collections.

Bangwallop offers lots of refreshing and cost-effective shoots. In fact, some are free and you are offered the images as finished prints from as little as £25. As well as a range of family shoots and the classic portrait photography, clients can book a ‘nude you’ shoot, which Lorna explains are ‘creative, arty shots – nothing tacky’, and cover shoots with full make-over.

February 2009 will see the launch of Bangwallop’s school, which will offer everything from simple talk events to seminars and residential courses. Landscape photographer Joe Cornish will lead the first intensive three-day course,

which will culminate in a print-making workshop. Participants will have full access to Bangwallop’s technical facilities, which include four Mac digital workstations, two viewing rooms, and a studio complete with technical support from gallery staff.

Lorna admits the seasonal nature is a challenge, but she says the business has so many arms that it can’t operate at full tilt 24/7. “We need quieter periods to produce the work, organise the gallery schedules, and recharge our creative batteries,” she said.

“We are anticipating the school will regenerate the quieter months, which is good for the town and us, and you’d be surprised what good value we are. You can come into Bangwallop and buy a cup of workman’s tea at the bar for £1.25, look at the exhibition for free, have a free shoot and spend as little as £25 on the print. Also, take a tour of Salcombe in our little tuk tuk taxi for as little as £5.00 or buy an original signed print for as little as £50.”

“On the other hand,” she added, “if you’re lucky enough to be able to afford it, take home a signed limited-edition framed work of art for a four-figure sum.” □

Open all year round, seven days a week. For more information about forthcoming exhibitions/events and the full range of photographic services call ☎01548 843100.