

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a multi-story building facade. The building is constructed from light-colored stone blocks and features a prominent curved corner. A large, dark-framed window with a grid pattern is visible. Below the window, a dark, curved awning extends over the entrance. The name 'Sophie's' is mounted on the awning in a stylized, illuminated script font, with the letters appearing to glow from within. The sky is overcast and grey.

Sophie's

CASE STUDY // SOPHIE'S STEAKHOUSE

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Sophie Bathgate, Co-owner



ABOUT THE PROJECT



Sophie's Steakhouses, with sites in Covent Garden and Fulham Road, are passionate about steaks. So much so that they age their fore ribs for 28 days, in house, and chefs do much of the restaurants' butchering. Sophie's used to hang the meat in coldrooms back of house.

When they realised that the aging process could be part of the theatre of their restaurants. Now, centre stage in the Covent Garden site, is a Williams coldroom with a huge glass window, displaying the hanging meat. To fit in with the site's chic industrial décor the coldroom is clad in a 'rust' finish.

"We're all about the whole experience," says co-owner Sophie Bathgate. "Big steaks, big Martinis, great ingredients served simply and with style – all backed by quality. Quality food, and quality staff – the waiters really know their stuff and the service is efficient as well as entertaining."

When it came to installing the new coldroom, reliability was critical. "In the Covent Garden restaurant we can get through up to 45 fore ribs a week.

Since we're holding a month's stock at any one time, we have to be able to rely totally on the refrigeration.

The stock value of meat alone is worth a lot of money. More importantly, it's not like we can just order up ready-aged replacements if something goes wrong."

Sophie's Steakhouses have had Williams coldrooms before – in fact, they have one that's still going strong after 13 years' service.

Whilst longevity and reliability were key criteria, the coldroom supplier also had to be able to tailor the installation to create a commercial unit that met the restaurant's very specific requirements. "The guys at Williams were really up for helping us do what we wanted," says Sophie.

The coldroom window is heated, to ensure that customers always have a crystal clear view, and the unit was supplied with a meat rail. Measuring around 8 cubic metres, it is constructed of 90mm foam insulated panels, which deliver optimum thermal efficiency and allow the coldroom to be tailored to the amount of space available.

The panels are camlocked and securely foamed into tongue and groove joints for a tight-locking, stable structure. This design ensures there is no risk of ice build-up in the joints and that the 'thermal envelope' is 100%. The unit's refrigeration system sits on top of its roof.

"We want to shout about the quality of our meat and the fact that it's aged for 28 days," says Sophie. "The coldroom certainly does that for us. It's out front, right by the kitchen, it looks great and we love it. It cements what we do."

Sophie's Steakhouse on the Fulham Road also has a Williams coldroom with a display window to display the meat, which is set into the wall of the cellar.

The Williams coldrooms at Sophie's Steakhouse were installed by SLS Refrigeration, Croydon.



Design Excellence : Cool Technology



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