

AN
EVENTFUL



25 YEARS
SOMERSET
HOUSE



CONTENTS

Welcome

5

Step inside 25 weekend

6

Somerset House turns 25

7

Somerset House at 25: a historic venue reimagined

9

Insights from the inside

24

Catering for change

30

Flourishing ideas

42

Amplifying impact

50

25 for 25 trend-watching into 2025

60

Creativity in action

64

A large, light-colored stone building with classical architectural details, including columns and a balustrade. The facade features several arched windows and a central entrance. In the foreground, a paved area with a few people and a small information kiosk is visible.

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM JENNY FREESTONE

*Commercial Director,
Somerset House Trust*

This year, Somerset House Trust celebrates 25 years of transformation - as a cultural institution, and as a standout destination for events and brand experiences. What was once a government office and car park is now one of London's most iconic venues, where creativity meets commerce and culture meets community.

We are known for our outstanding cultural programme, but we are much more. Since opening to the public in 2000, Somerset House has evolved into a dynamic hub for over 2,000 cultural innovators, and as a trusted partner for brands, agencies and organisations looking to craft authentic experiences rooted in culture and creativity.

Our mission is to preserve and develop Somerset House for public use, and to champion creativity that reaches beyond the arts into wider society. From pioneering brand activations and immersive product launches to inclusive talent programmes and landmark exhibitions, everything we do is rooted in purpose and driven by our spiritline to 'step inside, think outside'. Everyone, regardless of age, stage or background, is invited to engage with creativity and new perspectives.

2025 has been a landmark year with our 'Step into 25' campaign. It's been a celebration of the creators, collaborators and clients who have helped shape our journey - and of the events that have brought people together in unforgettable ways. As we look ahead to the next 25 years, we remain committed to sustainability, innovation and inclusivity, ensuring Somerset House continues to be a place where ideas come to life and audiences connect.

"As the Home of Cultural Innovators, we have values we live by, a heritage we honour, and an ever growing community."

Jenny Freestone

HERE'S HOW WE BROUGHT OUR 25TH BIRTHDAY TO LIFE FOR OUR VISITORS AND CLIENTS

[Step Inside 25 Weekend](#): A free weekend of events, celebrating creativity, community and culture at Somerset House

One of the many special occasions marking our 25th birthday this year. Somerset House invited visitors to step inside and explore rarely seen spaces and engage with our vibrant creative community like never before. Step Inside 25 transformed our site into a living showcase of our creative community, that celebrated the past, present, and future of cultural innovation. Highlights:

[Open to All](#): Public access to open studios, behind the scenes and hidden spaces.

[Immersive Art](#): Installations by Turner Prize-winning artist Tai Shani, and in lesser-known spaces like The Deadhouse and Maker Street from Somerset House Studios residents such as Nick Ryan and GAIKA.

[Creative Workshops](#): Drawing sessions inspired by previous exhibition, Peanuts and interactive pop-ups.

[Culinary Moments](#): Bespoke menus and drinks provided by our incredible lineup of on-site restaurants and pop-up vendors.

[Community Connection](#): Celebrated 25 years of creativity with over 3,000 residents (both past and present) and guests.

[Somerset House Turns 25](#): A multisensory celebration of creativity, collaboration and cultural impact

On 9th September 2025, Somerset House marked its 25th birthday with a spectacular evening reception in the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court - spotlighting the Courtyard as a premier destination for events and cultural gatherings. Highlights:

[Immersive Design](#): Award-winning production house Event Concept transformed the Courtyard with seasonal installations, mirrored bars, and a DJ deck animated by synchronised lighting and video.

[Architectural Elegance](#): Key Structures installed two sleek clearspan marquees with uninterrupted views of the historic site, combining precision with contemporary flair.

[Seasonal Menus](#): Moving Venue curated a bespoke menu celebrating British produce - from Vadouvan spiced carrots to raspberry tartlets - with chefs engaging guests in culinary storytelling.

[Floral Artistry](#): SAGE Flowers brought abstract beauty to life with bold, surrealist arrangements inspired by Tai Shani's work.

[Soundscapes](#): Euphonica curated a vibrant musical experience featuring DJ Kiimi and live musician Josh Cutler.



SOMERSET HOUSE

As part of the 25th Birthday event, a [new promotional video](#) was launched showcasing the importance of venue hire at Somerset House and the vital role it plays in supporting our cultural programme, nurturing our creative community, and preserving our Grade I listed site.



AT 25



SOMERSET HOUSE:

A historic venue reimagined

Somerset House has always been a place of significance. Dating back to 1547, it began as a palace built by the 1st Duke of Somerset Edward Seymour, later becoming home to Princess Elizabeth and Queen Anne of Denmark. Rebuilt in 1775 by architect William Chambers, it housed the Royal Academy, the Navy Board, and eventually the Inland Revenue - whose final officials departed in 2013.

Today, this neoclassical landmark on the Thames is not just a cultural icon - it's a dynamic venue with a thriving cultural programme and the perfect platform for creative events. Originally commissioned by George III to accommodate civil servants, its architectural gems - including the Nelson Staircase, the Deadhouse and Edward J. Safra Fountain Court - now serve as dramatic backdrops for brand activations, product launches, receptions, dinners, and immersive experiences, as well as a leading film location.

Behind the classical façade lies one of the UK's largest creative community. Somerset House is home to over 600 creative enterprises and around 2,000 individuals, forming a thriving ecosystem of artists, designers, and entrepreneurs. It offers studio spaces, co-working hubs, and structured support for creative industries — making it a unique fusion of a workspace, a cultural venue, and a hub of innovation.

A platform for creative encounters

For event organisers, Somerset House offers a truly unique canvas - a rare blend of historic grandeur and contemporary creativity. Its venue hire portfolio includes intimate meeting rooms, private balconies with riverside views, rooftop access, atmospheric underground chambers, and the iconic Courtyard. Each space is a stage for incredible experiences, adaptable for everything from high-impact conferences and gala dinners to fashion shows, film shoots and immersive brand activations.

With over 3 million annual visitors and a growing reputation for hosting standout events, Somerset House has become a trusted partner for brands, agencies, and institutions. Seasonal programming adds to the appeal: the Summer Series has featured artists like Adele, Amy Winehouse, Olivia Dean and Little Simz, while winter transforms the Courtyard into a festive ice rink for Skate at Somerset House – with seasonal restaurants, bars and retail pop-ups.

Looking ahead

As Somerset House celebrates 25 years of cultural innovation and commercial growth, it continues to push boundaries with genre-defying exhibitions, bold new commissions, and events that showcase the breadth of its resident talent. For forward-thinking event professionals, it remains an iconic venue - where heritage meets innovation, and every experience is designed to make an impact.

Step inside and think outside: discover a space that invites fresh perspectives, fuels creativity and redefines what's possible in event design.



“

What marks us out is the sheer concentration of artists and makers that work here. Just 25 years ago, Somerset House was home to government offices - mainly belonging to the Inland Revenue - and the courtyard had been paved over to be used as a car park. It's been an extraordinary transformation from dusty municipal offices to a bedrock of creativity. We've breathed new life into a building that teams with history and connecting this rich past with future-thinking creatives is what makes Somerset House truly unique.*

Diana Spiegelberg,
Former Deputy Director of Somerset House Trust
*Forbes



Special achievements

- Welcomes over 3 million visitors annually, with 259k engaging digitally through online programmes
- Launched Somerset House Studios in 2016 - 62 Somerset House Studios artists and their teams occupy over 15,000 sq.ft of studio space
- Somerset House Exchange, our creative co-working space, is home to 550 members
- Supports over 300 creative-tech & maker members from 77 organisations at Makerversity, which provides specialist workshops
- 133 creative enterprises occupy 194 offices
- Supports 65 Black Business Incubator businesses as part of a commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Delivers 262 days of free exhibitions and displays each year
- Supports 1000+ young people aged 18-30 through career development programmes
- Developed a thriving commercial events programme, including flagship experiences such as SKATE at Somerset House



Awards and recognition

London Venue & Catering Awards

2025 – Gold: Best Venue with Outside Space

2024 – Gold: Most Versatile London Venue (500+ attendees)

Bronze: Best Venue Team

2023 – Gold: Best Venue with Outside Space

2019 – Silver: Best Summer Party Venue

2018 – Gold: Best Christmas Venue

2017 – Gold: Most Versatile London Venue (1000+ attendees)

Campaign Awards

2025 – Runner up: Best Team

The PA Show Supplier Awards

2024 – Best Christmas Party Venue

Timeline of major milestones

2000 – Somerset House opens to the public with the Hermitage Rooms and iconic ice rink

2001 – First Courtyard gig by Lambchop; Summer Series begins

2009 – Hosts London Fashion Week for the first time

2016 – Launch of Somerset House Studios

2018–2024 – Landmark exhibitions including Good Grief Charlie Brown, Get Up Stand Up Now, Cute, and The Missing Thread

2025 – Celebrates 25 years with genre-defying exhibitions, bold commissions and new initiatives





Commercial Projects

Over the past 25 years, Somerset House has built a reputation not only as a cultural powerhouse but also as a trusted home for some of the UK's most celebrated commercial events. These long-standing partnerships reflect the venue's versatility and commitment to excellence.

Sony World Photography Awards: Our longest-running commercial partnership, showcasing over 300 photographs by more than 60 photographers across the West and East wings of Somerset House.

Photo London: Celebrated its 10th edition in May 2025, this fair has become a leading platform for photography, featuring world-class galleries and artists, and reinforcing Somerset House's role as a hub for visual culture.

1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair: Hosted exclusively at Somerset House since 2013, this pioneering fair champions contemporary African art, with galleries from across the globe. Its success has led to expansions in Marrakech and New York, but its London home remains unchanged.

London Original Print Fair (LOPF): Hosted onsite since 2022, LOPF has flourished at Somerset House. Its 40th edition in March 2025 showcased a rich spectrum of printmaking, from emerging talent to established talents.

Collect: This international fair for contemporary craft and design features over 400 artists and 40 galleries, celebrating innovation and material excellence.

London Design Biennale: Hosted biannually since 2016, the Biennale brings together global design thinking. A standout moment was Forest for Change by Es Devlin in 2021 - a bold installation that transformed the Courtyard into a living forest, challenging perceptions and sparking dialogue.

Each of these events has played a vital role in shaping Somerset House's identity as a leading cultural destination - where commercial ambition and creative vision go hand in hand.



SOMERSET HOUSE ON SCREEN:

A cinematic icon in the heart of London

Somerset House has become one of London's most sought-after filming and photography locations over the last 25 years - a versatile, neoclassical backdrop that has starred in everything from Hollywood blockbusters to high-profile fashion campaigns.

Major productions filmed at Somerset House include:

- Napoleon (2023) – Directed by Ridley Scott
- Operation Mincemeat
- Suffragette
- X-Men: First Class
- Love Actually
- London Has Fallen
- The Essex Serpent
- Black Doves
- Strictly Come Dancing
- Campaigns for H&M and other global brands

From the atmospheric Deadhouse and Lightwells to the sweeping River Terrace, Maker Street and Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court, Somerset House offers a rich variety of locations - each with its own cinematic character.

Beyond the screen, the venue also plays host to premieres, after parties, and launch events for productions like Top Boy, Jurassic Park, and Mission Impossible, reinforcing its role as a cultural and creative landmark.



TEAM EVOLUTION:

From corporate events to creative collaborations

Over the past decade, Somerset House's Commercial Department has also undergone a strategic and creative transformation – growing not only in scope but in size, with the team doubling in number and expanding its remit across Venue Hire, Commercial Projects, F&B and Live Events.

This evolution has been shaped by a dynamic, female-led leadership team. Jenny Freestone, now Commercial Director, joined in 2016 and has overseen significant growth in income and internal progression. Luci Sorrell, Head of Sales, and Kara Clark, Head of Projects, have each risen through the ranks, bringing fresh thinking and deep industry insight to their roles. Alongside them, Rebecca Moore Head of Commercial Operations, and Stephanie Bevan-Moss Head of Projects, continue to drive innovation across Somerset House's commercial offer.

Live events now play a central role in our portfolio, from intimate brand launches to large-scale cultural showcases that transform Somerset House's spaces into unforgettable experiences. The flagship winter event, Skate at Somerset House, exemplifies this ambition: a world-renowned ice rink paired with bespoke hospitality packages, exclusive brand activations and curated dining experiences. Skate offers a unique opportunity for clients to align with an iconic London tradition while engaging their audience in a premium, immersive setting.

Food and drink has also evolved significantly, with partnerships and menus designed to elevate every celebration. From tailored catering for corporate and private hires to pop-up concepts during major events, the F&B offering delivers exceptional hospitality that reflects Somerset House's creative spirit.

From immersive brand activations to high-profile cultural showcases, the department delivers experiences as ambitious and diverse as the audiences Somerset House attracts.



We've grown into a department that not only delivers events but helps define what cultural and brand engagement looks like in London.

Rebecca Moore,
Head of Commercial Operations

The shift from 'events team' to 'commercial department' wasn't just a name change – it reflected how far we'd come in shaping experiences that go beyond the expected.

Jenny Freestone,
Commercial Director

When I joined we were a small team focused on corporate events. Today, we're working with global brands, creative agencies, and cultural partners - it's been quite an evolution.

Luci Sorrell,
Head of Commercial Sales



SUMMER SEASON 2026:

A new chapter

Somerset House's event offering has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past 25 years — evolving from traditional corporate receptions to a dynamic programme of cultural showcases, brand activations, and immersive experiences. This evolution reflects the venue's commitment to creativity, flexibility, and meaningful impact.

Summer 2026 marks a bold new chapter for Somerset House's event programme, with a landmark [collaboration between Somerset House and Moving Venue](#) offering an exclusive opportunity to host events in London's iconic Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court.

For a limited season in June and July, this iconic open-air space will be transformed with elegant, purpose-built structures that blend seamlessly into the Grade I-listed architecture - offering a breathtaking canvas for summer parties, corporate events, brand activations, weddings, and private celebrations.

With over 40 years of experience, Moving Venue brings exceptional hospitality, seasonal menus, and refined service to every occasion. The aesthetic is luxuriously pared-back yet infinitely adaptable: sculptural furniture, olive tree planters, and beautifully curated bar installations create a timeless atmosphere that empowers brands to create their own vision.

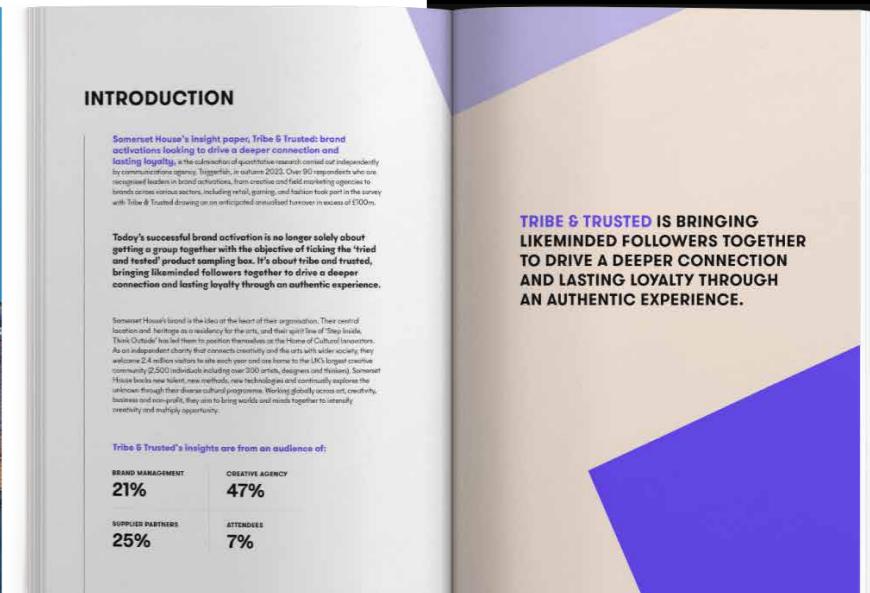
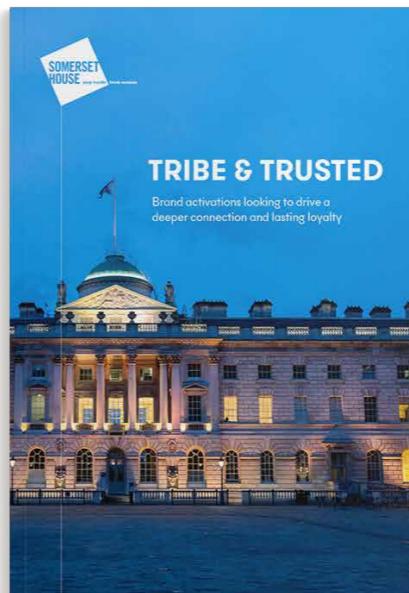
With scalable flexibility (accommodating up to 2,500 guests), premium production, and creative freedom at its heart, the Summer Season offers event organisers a rare opportunity to align with Somerset House's cultural legacy while delivering impact and innovation.

This collaboration also reflects Somerset House's broader ambition: to offer event organisers not just a venue, but a platform for storytelling, innovation, and cultural alignment.

CREATING SPACE FOR CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION

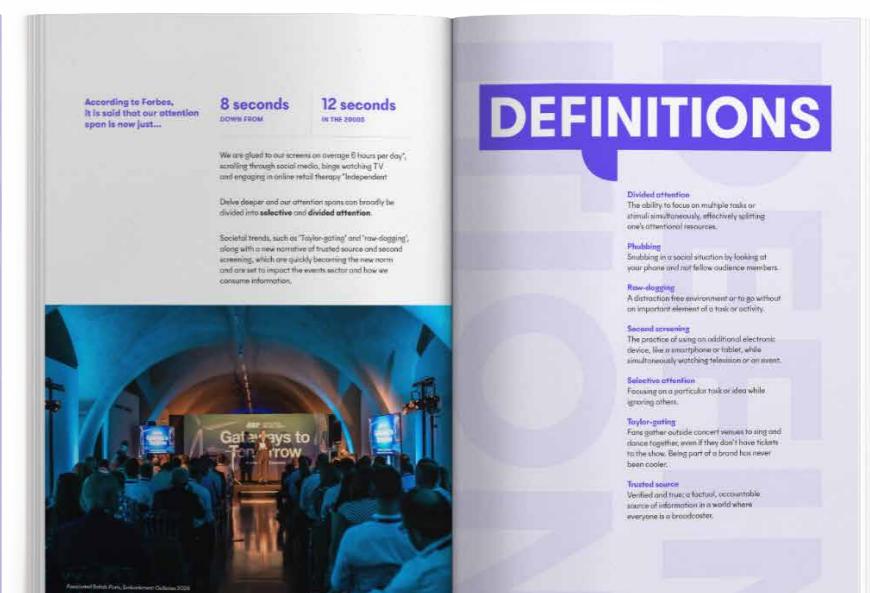
Somerset House is more than a venue - it's a platform for dialogue, collaboration and industry evolution. Through our annual Insight Papers - Tribe & Trusted and Listen Up! - we've explored how brand activations and business events are shifting toward deeper engagement, emotional connection and inclusive design.

Our panel events and thought leadership initiatives bring together voices from across the creative and commercial sectors, fostering conversations that challenge norms and spark new ideas. Whether it's exploring the impact of second screening or the rise of experience-led marketing, we're committed to shaping the future of events - and creating space for meaningful connection.



Tribe & Trusted:

A revealing insight into the motivations behind brand activations and what today's attendee expects.



Listen Up!:

A transformative insights paper exploring the future of business events

INSIGHTS FROM

THE INSIDE



WHAT'S DRIVING EVENT STRATEGY NOW

As Somerset House celebrates 25 years of cultural and commercial innovation, we asked seasoned professionals from across the live events industry to share their perspectives on the current landscape - and where it's headed.

The survey results show a strong representation



64.3% Corporate organisers

21.4% Creative agencies

14.3% Ancillary suppliers

The respondents bring a mature and seasoned voice from the live event sector with almost 60% having worked through more than a decade of economic cycles, including:

- The 2008 global financial crisis
- The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on live events
- The post-pandemic recovery and digital transformation
- Current economic uncertainty and sustainability pressures



37% have been in the industry for 11–20 years

22.2% have been involved for more than 20 years

29.6% have 6–10 years of experience

Budgets are cited as the most influential factor shaping today's events landscape, aligning with broader industry trends where brands increasingly recognise the value of face-to-face marketing and are investing more in high-impact, well-produced events.

Spending is shifting from traditional media to experiential formats that foster deeper connections. Events are now seen as ROI-driven platforms, not just brand-building tools.

This marks a return to human-centred marketing, with events acting as a counterbalance to digital saturation.

Event marketing continues to lead budget growth in UK marketing spends, +10.9% on Q3 of 2025*. This marks the second consecutive quarter of strong growth, driven by renewed demand for face-to-face engagement and measurable impact in lead generation.

Despite economic caution, events outperform other categories—main media (0%), PR (+2.5%), and sales promotions (-0.9%)—highlighting their strategic importance.

* IPA Bellwether Report – Q3 2025 Event Marketing Outlook

Virtual and hybrid technologies follow closely at 40.7%, reflecting their continued relevance post-pandemic. Meanwhile, diversity, data personalisation, and engagement metrics each received 25.9%, showing growing attention to audience experience and inclusivity.

Sustainability, social media, and production advances rank lower, suggesting that while they are important, they are not yet primary drivers of change.

The survey highlights that brands are prioritising quality and connection in their live event strategies.

40.7%

The top-valued element is high-quality content and speakers reflecting a shift toward thought leadership and meaningful engagement.

29.6%

Networking opportunities follow, underscoring the importance of relationship-building in face-to-face environments.

While interactive formats (11.1%) and destination appeal (7.4%) matter, they're secondary to substance and connection.

The survey shows that AI and automation are widely seen as transformative for the future of events. Nearly half of respondents (48.1%) believe these technologies will be extremely important, especially in areas like planning, personalisation, logistics, and audience engagement.

29.6%

Consider them somewhat important, suggesting broad optimism about their potential to streamline operations and enhance attendee experience.

7.4%

View AI as unimportant, indicating limited scepticism. This reflects a growing confidence among brands that intelligent tools will elevate event quality and efficiency, reinforcing their increased investment in live experiences.



CATERING
FOR

CHANGE



Supplier Spotlight

25 YEARS OF CULINARY INNOVATION AT SOMERSET HOUSE

Over the past 25 years, the catering landscape at Somerset House has undergone a radical transformation. From formal, indulgent menus to conscious, creative dining experiences, our catering partners have helped shape a new era of event hospitality - one that reflects the values of sustainability, inclusivity, and storytelling.

We spoke to seven of our leading caterers who have delivered unforgettable events at Somerset House to explore how tastes, techniques, and expectations have evolved - and what the future holds.



From foie gras to food miles: How menus have changed

Menu design has shifted from luxury-driven, red meat-heavy offerings to a more conscious, ingredient led offer with lighter plant-based dishes that celebrate seasonality and provenance. Clients now seek menus that tell a story - whether through hyperlocal sourcing, nostalgic reinventions, or interactive formats.



“

AP
&Co.
Est. 1981

Guests are curious about where their food comes from and are drawn to dishes that tell a story, whether that's through local sourcing, low food miles, or collaborations with artisan producers. One of our most popular concepts, the *Food Miles Menu*, celebrates British ingredients and shows guests exactly how far their food has travelled from producer to plate.

LETTICE EVENTS

We've seen clients move away from wanting the most luxurious or showy menu to wanting something deeply personal. Everyone wants their event to feel unique, and we love that. We champion that approach by weaving in our clients' favourite dishes, family recipes, or products they love, creating menus that truly reflect them. It's all part of a bigger shift towards meaningful, sustainable food — seasonal ingredients, local producers, low waste, and a sense of purpose behind every plate.

CLEMENT WORRALL

The UK dining scene has evolved to embrace the best of all food trends - from ingredient-led creativity to high-end street food. We've gone from molecular gastronomy to pizzette and fried chicken at legal events, and now we're seeing a swing back toward fine dining, with beautifully presented, delicate dishes.



Dietary requirements: From afterthought to centre stage

Twenty-five years ago, vegetarian options were rare. Today, around 30% of guests have specific dietary needs. Caterers now design inclusive menus from the outset, using innovative techniques to ensure flavour and creativity aren't compromised.

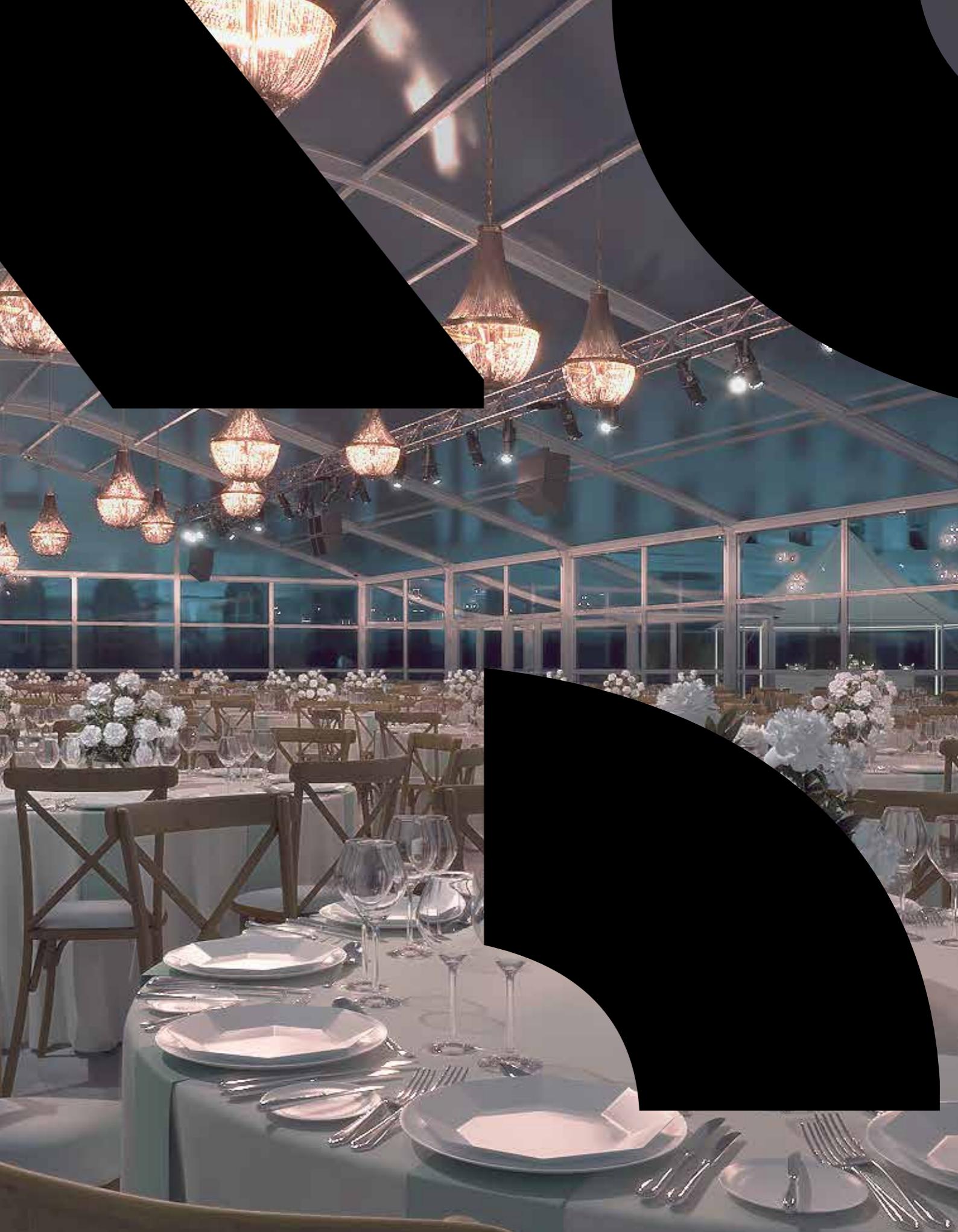
“

MOVING VENUE

The scope and volume of dietary requests has increased significantly over the past 10 years, where vegetarian options were very uncommon these dishes now make up a significant proportion of the requests. We have gone from special dietary making up 5% of our total menu production to 25%. Indeed, the focus upon developing vegetarian and vegan dishes has increased with a significant part of our menu now catering to those who would like a plant centric diet.

LETTICE EVENTS

What's really changed is the expectation - guests don't want to feel like an afterthought. So, we design menus that are naturally inclusive from the start, not separate versions tacked on at the end. Our chefs love the challenge of creating dishes that everyone can enjoy, using clever swaps and seasonal ingredients to keep flavour front and centre. It's gone from being a logistical headache to something we genuinely celebrate - another way to make each menu more personal, thoughtful, and accessible to everyone around the table.





Experiential dining: Food as theatre

Food is no longer just sustenance – it's part of the event experience. From chef-led stations and edible branding to immersive themed dinners, clients want their catering to engage, entertain, and elevate the occasion.

“



Guests now want to engage with their food, see it prepared, and understand where it comes from. Live cooking stations, interactive themed experiences, and shared informal dining have become popular alternatives to traditional plated service. This change reflects a wider transformation in the events industry, where creativity and engagement are key.

CLEMENT WORRALL

The desire for more street-food driven menus into events, due to the fact that simple, no-frills places (Yard Sale Pizza, Padella, Salon, etc.) serving superb quality, simple, ingredient led dishes became some of the coolest dining experiences in London, has really opened up the range of menu options we can deliver at events. Serving Pizzette, or Fried Chicken at an event of Temple Bar Lawyers is not something we could have dreamed of doing 20 years ago.



Sustainability: From trend to standard

Every caterer we spoke to identified sustainability as a defining force in modern event catering. From zero-waste kitchens and carbon tracking to regenerative sourcing and food donation, the industry is embracing responsibility with creativity.



“

AP
&Co.
Est.1981

Sustainability has become one of the most defining forces in modern catering [...] Our chefs continually innovate with zero-waste techniques - fermenting, pickling, and infusing to extend ingredients' lifespan and add depth to our menus. Across operations, we monitor waste, recycle over 90% of event materials, and partner with Plan Zheroes to redistribute surplus food. From custom "Food Miles" menus to menu-matching for reduced deliveries, every detail reflects our belief that luxury and sustainability can - and should - coexist beautifully.

zafferano

Around 35% of our menus are now plant led, and we are particularly proud of our innovative vegan menus. We have committed to reducing food waste across the board and created a collection of Zero Waste "Root to Fruit" and "Nose to Tail" menus. We always offer a "Wild Card" canapé option, a seasonal zero waste canapé, specially created with fresh products already being used in the kitchen that week. We've even created a Zero Waste "Trash Can Pudding Parlour" and infused our own gin with citrus skins and leftover botanicals.

Post event, we work with the Felix Project to distribute any re-usable surplus food and partner with Plan Zheroes to combat plate waste. We also declared war on single use plastics, recycle everything from glass to cooking oil, and have invested in light sensors, heat pumps and electric charging points at our state of the art Zaff HQ.

by word of mouth®

We actively measure and record all our food waste through AI powered technology Orbisk and have partnered with this company to provide a revolutionary onsite service for our clients, providing precise data about their food waste and resultant carbon emissions (**1kg of food waste = 4.5kg CO2**). This process can be used to give insights into future improvement; for example, if a large amount of meat was wasted, we would suggest serving fish or a plant-based option for an equivalent event, meaning long-term sustainable choices can be influenced by data.

Spotlight events: Creativity in action

Three of our caterers share their favourite events

AP&Co: A spectacular dinner held in the Embankment Galleries, themed around the evolution of communication. Guests began their journey stepping through a giant replica of a Nokia 3210 - an instantly nostalgic entrance. They were greeted by servers wearing classic Walkmans and 1990s-style headsets, offering canapés inspired by retro technology and cocktails themed around games like *Snake*.

The dining space was designed in striking monochrome, with white florals and crockery contrasting against black tables. Each place setting featured a menu styled as a mobile phone screen and amuse-bouches were served in mock "phone boxes" to continue the playful theme. Dinner unfolded as a three-course celebration of colour and light, with shifting hues transforming the atmosphere as courses were served.

To close, guests were treated to espresso martinis and petits fours inspired by 2024 digital messaging before exiting through a giant smartphone portal - a clever nod to how communication has evolved.

Lettice: Working on the Soil Exhibition in partnership with Somerset House, the brief was to focus not just on environmentally friendly options but to go further, looking at regenerative ideas that we could harness through our catering offer.

At the opening, we created a bespoke mocktail which was a circular drink, using all parts of its mint base to curate a refreshing spritz. We devised menus for corporate clients to book for their events which we grounded in utilising all elements of an ingredient, with a heavy focus on plant-based eating, to celebrate the best of home-grown dining.

Jimmy Garcia Catering: Catering for Dunelm's AW25 showcase in Somerset House's stunning East Wing was an unforgettable event. The space was spectacularly transformed to unveil their new collection, and we were delighted to play a part in bringing their vision to life. Our elegant breakfast canapé menu, paired with Bellinis and coffees, perfectly complemented the iconic architecture and striking design.

Looking ahead: The future of event catering

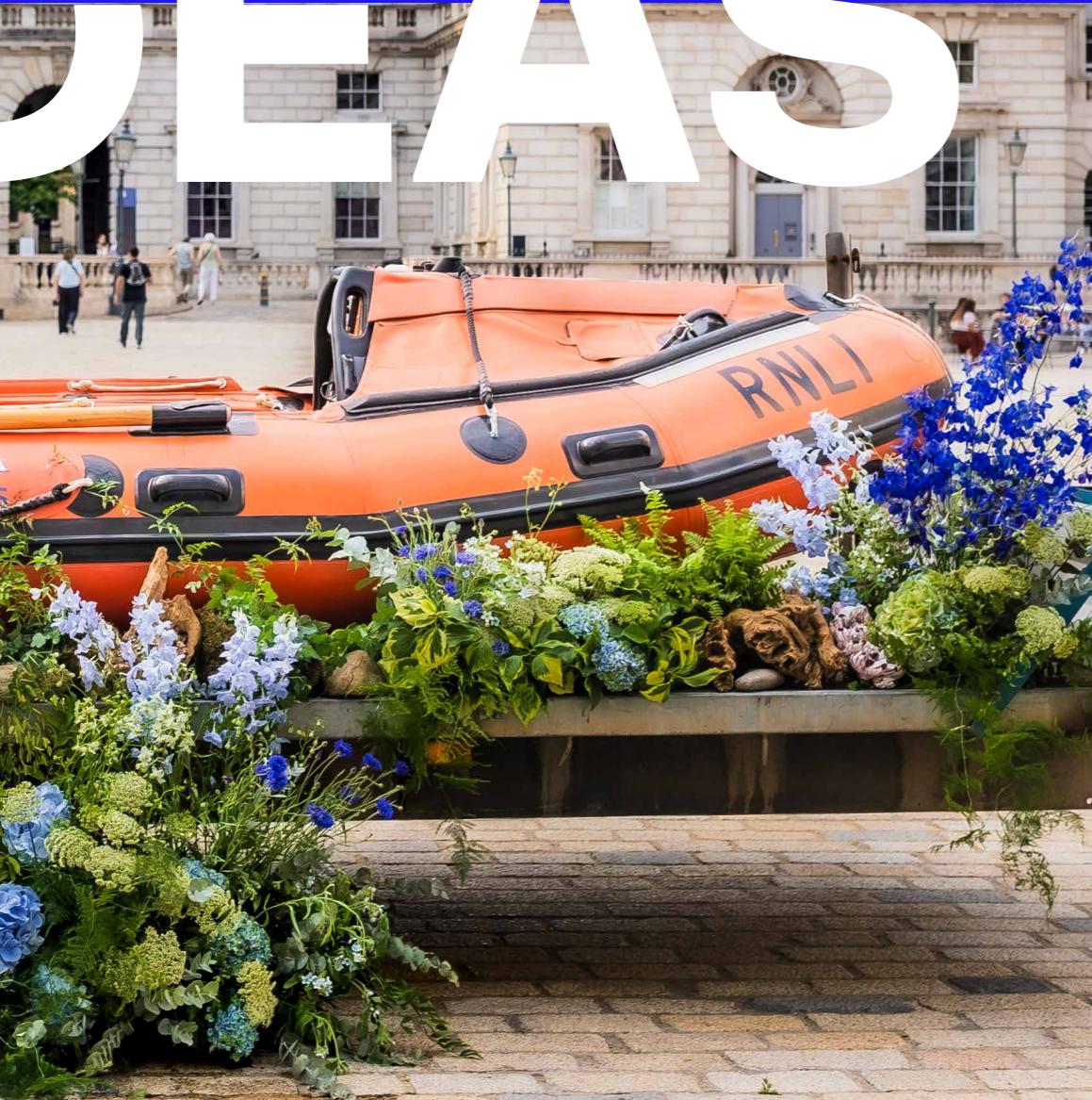
As we look to the next 25 years, you can expect more:

- Hyperlocal sourcing and food provenance mapping
- Circular food systems and carbon-conscious menus
- Experiential formats that blend storytelling with sustainability
- Inclusive, plant-forward dining that reflects diverse tastes and values



FLOURISHING

IDEAS



Supplier Spotlight

25 YEARS OF FLORAL INNOVATION AT SOMERSET HOUSE

Over the past quarter-century, floristry in the events world has blossomed into a dynamic, expressive and sustainable art form. At Somerset House, our floral partners have helped transform spaces into immersive experiences, using flowers not just for decoration, but for storytelling, emotion and impact. We spoke to three of our florist partners to explore how the industry has evolved - and what's blooming next.



From centrepieces to storytelling: How floristry has changed

Floral design has shifted from traditional arrangements to bold, immersive installations that serve as focal points and content-worthy moments. Social media and digital platforms have democratised the industry, allowing creatives from all backgrounds to showcase their work and redefine what floristry can be.



“ ”



The industry has opened up in incredible ways, welcoming freelancers, independents and creatives from all walks of life to experiment freely and build portfolios based on their individual tastes. It's fostered a more inclusive, innovative and diverse floral community. This shift has been driven largely by the rise of social media, which has given individuals the ability to showcase their work, build an audience, and connect with potential clients and collaborators from day one.

PINSTRIPE
&
PEONIES

The internet, Pinterest, Instagram, all the apps! Clients have a plethora of visual ideas and trends available to them within seconds that could, 25 years ago only be found in a print copy of Tatler or Vogue.

LAVENDER  GREEN
FLOWERS

Event briefs are increasingly prioritising the use of flowers and plants as 'content encouraging' focal points or multi-sensory, tech-enhanced storytelling elements of the event, which leads to more installation style pieces as focal points.





Sustainability: From trend to transformation

Eco-conscious floristry is no longer optional – it's expected. From foam-free designs and composting to local sourcing and donation programmes, florists are leading the way in sustainable creativity.



Over 70% of our events are now zero waste. All flowers and plants that are able to be donated via our Floral Freecycle programme, are gifted to local charities and organisations that re-use them for enrichment activities or sell them on to fundraise for their charities. Over the past 4 years Lavender Green have raised an impressive £100,000 via this initiative – all of which is offered to our clients at no additional fee. All flowers and plants that are too wilted to be donated are sent off to be composted.

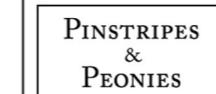


“



In recent years, we've seen a major shift away from single-use plastics and non-sustainable materials. One of the most exciting developments is the introduction of biodegradable floral foam, which is set to make a real impact on reducing the environmental footprint of event floristry in the UK.

We've reimagined our supply chain, collaborating more closely with British growers and adjusting our material to align with greener practices. The growth of British flower farming - much like the rise of British wine - has made a huge difference. The increasing number of boutique flower farms in and around the M25 means we can source incredible and unusual British varieties at their best throughout the growing season.



We have several giving back initiatives that whilst benefiting the community around us, also help ensure nothing goes to waste. The Floral Angels - who are a charity who repurpose donated flowers from events to take to hospices, care homes, women's shelters – have been working in our studio alongside our florists twice a week since 2016. 90% of flowers that come back from our events are repurposed in this way and our flowers contribute to 65% of their annual donations.

For the past three years, we have been sponsoring our local school, Herbert Morrison Primary, to create an outdoor space for the children to learn from and enjoy. The garden is thriving with plants and props from our events, thanks to our two P&P gardeners who visit every Tuesday throughout the year. [...] On days when the Floral Angels aren't in the studio, our florists create Lonely Bouquets which we take out onto the streets, tube and busses and give to passers-by to brighten their (and their loved ones) days.



Immersive experiences: Florals as theatre

Floristry is now a collaborative, multi-sensory discipline. Designers work closely with production teams, planners and venues to create environments that feel alive and transportive.

“ ”

SAGE

Every design is created with colour, texture and scent at the forefront, working closely with lighting, staging and spatial design to ensure a 360° experience. The multidisciplinary approach allows us to reimagine what's possible for event floristry to create environments that feel alive, transportive and memorable.

LAVENDER  GREEN
FLOWERS

Designers are now leveraging florals as multi-sensory, tech-enhanced storytelling tools – incorporating elements like lighting, scent, movement and digital projection to create immersive focal points that capture attention and deepen emotional engagement through the event experience. This open and collaborative approach with other suppliers ensures that every partner contributes to crafting a holistic, memorable experience for guests.

PINSTRIPE
&
PEONIES

Events are and always will be wonderfully immersive experiences, the challenge we find is encouraging people to enjoy the experience with their eyes rather than through the camera lens of their phones. We love that they want to share the experience, but we also want them to be in the moment themselves. We find that our promotional showcase events tend to be the ones that allow us go to town on the more immersive experiences and we work most closely with Wise and Light Motif from your approved list on these.

Spotlight events: Creativity in action

Pinstripes & Peonies: Our favourite event was a few years ago, providing floral designs for the Laver Cup Opening Night/ Awards Dinner. This was our first large scale event in a marquee in the Courtyard of Somerset House, working alongside wonderful suppliers and the world's greatest tennis players.

Looking ahead: The future of floristry

Expect more:

- Locally grown, seasonal flowers
- Foam-free, reusable structures
- Circular floristry and donation initiatives
- Florals as immersive, emotional storytelling tools
- Inclusive, diverse voices shaping the industry





AMPLIFYING **IMPACT**

Supplier Spotlight

25 YEARS OF AV & PRODUCTION INNOVATION AT SOMERSET HOUSE

From simple sound setups to immersive, tech-enhanced spectacles, the AV and production landscape has transformed dramatically over the past 25 years. At Somerset House, our production partners have helped redefine what's possible - blending creativity, technology, and sustainability to deliver standout experiences. We spoke to three of our partner production companies to explore how the industry has evolved and what's next.

From passive viewing to immersive engagement

Audience expectations have shifted from passive attendance to active participation. Today's guests want to be part of the action - interacting with content, shaping their journey, and sharing experiences in real time.

“,



Guests want to participate in the action, not just watch it! We now design events around experience — creating immersive environments with strong visuals and moments made for sharing. Attention spans are shorter, so everything needs to be dynamic, sensory and memorable.



“,



Audience engagement has evolved from passive attendance to active participation. In the early 2000s, simply hosting a well-promoted event was enough to draw a crowd. Today, the threshold for attendance is dramatically higher. People are time-poor, hyperconnected, and bombarded with invitations, so showing up has become a conscious trade-off. The onus now sits squarely on the organiser to deliver something truly unmissable. At EC, we call this Curated Exclusivity: crafting events that drive attendance through a blend of FOMO, social proof, and genuine value. Audiences also expect far more; they want immersive, emotionally resonant experiences with world-class production values. Whether B2B or B2C, if people are going to devote their time, the experience must feel transformative, not transactional.

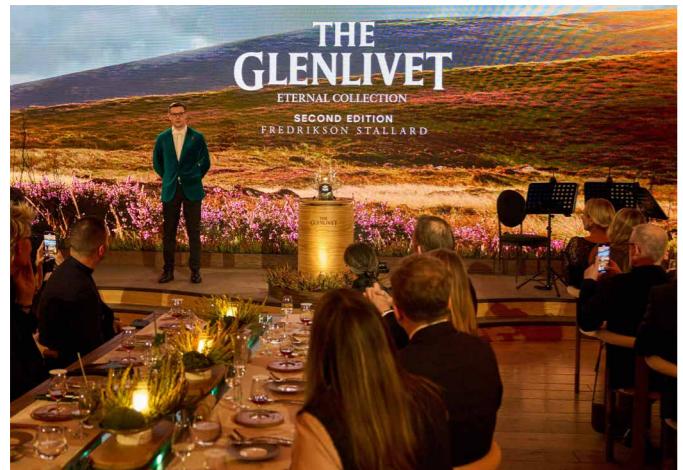


Audiences now expect much more from an event – it's not just the content that's shared but also the build-up, the networks that are formed and the sharing of the experience more widely. Events now come with a lot of pre-planning information, and the desire for organisers to collect data about attendees – what they liked and what they want more of. In terms of at the show, we've seen the rise of audience participation, much larger budgets and planning of the programming of the smaller sessions and group work rather than just the headline keynotes, engaging more people in more ways.



Technology: From backdrop to centre stage

Production technology has moved from behind-the-scenes support to a central creative force. Projection mapping, LED walls, and hybrid formats have become standard, while AI, AR, and XR are redefining what's possible.



“



Technology has enabled immersive storytelling: projection mapping, video content, LED walls, interactive installations. Audiences increasingly expect to step into a world, not just watch a performance. Entertainment is more integrated: lighting, visuals, soundscapes, environmental cues, interaction. Complementing that is the rise of personalisation and hybrid experiences - both as production challenges and entertainment opportunities.



AI is already streamlining live production — from tracking performers to adjusting lighting and sound automatically. It boosts precision and accessibility, helping make events more inclusive for everyone. We view it as a creative partner that enhances human expertise and works alongside us for even more remarkable outcomes.



The next big thing will be content personalised by attendee. With the rise of AI as well as technologies like AR/MR and immersive audio making every single attendee feel like they are having a completely custom experience this will become increasingly important.



Personalisation and hybrid formats

Events are becoming more tailored and flexible, with technologies enabling bespoke experiences and extended reach.

Supplier Spotlight

“



AI-driven design is enabling bespoke experiences at scale, tailoring environments, content, and interactions to individual preferences. This trend is expected to grow, with events becoming more emotionally resonant and human-centric despite their tech-heavy nature. Attendee curation: Attendees increasingly expect to shape their own journey. Technologies like smart badges, interactive hubs, and AI-personalised agendas allow for self-directed exploration, boosting engagement and recall. Hybrid Performances: The blending of live and digital elements, such as XR-enhanced performances or remote holographic participation, are only going to continue to evolve, offering flexible formats that cater to both in-person and virtual audiences.



We're seeing lots of exciting innovation through AI, robotics, and holographics — like ABBA Voyage — making immersive experiences more accessible to the wider public. At the same time, there's a renewed appreciation for authentic, human performance. The future is about tech enhancing creativity instead of replacing it, and we're excited to continue leaning into that.



We can't ignore the rise in virtual and hybrid events over the period, as organisers look to widen their reach and extend the life of their event through online sessions and recordings much longer than we've seen before.

Sustainability: From optional to essential

Sustainability is now embedded in every stage of production
- from design and logistics to post-event reporting.

“



Sustainability is non-negotiable now and has been part of our ethos for many years. Clients look for eco conscious approaches, and venues are leading by example! We're proud to already be a carbon neutral company and we're now focused on the future and a target of net zero – continually adopting smart solutions that reduce environmental impact and support the industry's journey towards a more sustainable future.



Sustainability is no longer a peripheral concern; it's a strategic driver shaping how live events are designed, delivered and experienced. Year on year, we have seen the average emissions per event increasing, whilst the number of events disrupted by extreme weather has increased by 86.5%. Clearly, the industry needs to drastically shift how it operates, embracing sustainability and reducing its planetary impact. At EC, this shift has been clear; clients and venues alike are prioritising measurable impact, with sustainability embedded from concept to execution. This shift is influencing every stage of event planning, from venue selection and supplier partnerships to creative design and post-event reporting. Tools that track carbon footprints and waste outputs are now being embedded into planning workflows, allowing teams to make informed choices early on. Creative production is also evolving. Scenic builds will favour modular, reusable components; digital-first content will reduce print waste; and storytelling will reflect climate-conscious values.”



From sustainable materials to reduced transport emissions through greater use of in-house teams, we are seeing it from top to bottom. Cost remains a factor but the overall driver means these approaches are becoming the norm instead of the expensive alternative option – it is a promising future to be part of.

Spotlight events: Creativity in action

Event Concept: For the Uniqlo LifeWear brand experience during London Fashion Week, the goal was to bring UNIQLO's LifeWear philosophy to life through a free exhibition from three perspectives: art, science and craftsmanship. The key messaging needed to focus on innovation, quality, value and sustainability. The solution In collaboration with design consultancy Pentagram, EC delivered expert event management, technical production, and intricate scenic construction and build. Six zones were created in The Embankment Galleries to showcase the UNIQLO brand, including an introduction area with films and infographics via a videowall; large-scale art pieces made of UNIQLO garments and installations such as the HeatTech room designed by Japanese agency Rhizomatiks.

The result:

6 zones transformed | 750m custom-build space | 72 hour rolling installation
2 late night events | 14 individually designed exhibition spaces | 225 crew onsite

Looking ahead: The future of AV & production

Expect more:

- AI-enhanced personalisation and analytics
- XR-powered immersive storytelling
- Modular, sustainable scenic builds
- Hybrid performances and holographic content
- Data-driven design and attendee mapping

25 FOR 25

TREND-WATCHING
INTO 2050



BUDGETS & RETURN ON EXPERIENCE

1. **ROI-driven events.** Events will be measured by outcomes like lead generation, emotional engagement, and content reach.
2. **Sustainability-linked spend.** Carbon tracking and zero-waste commitments will become standard budget considerations.
3. **Hybrid monetisation models.** Subscription access, digital twins, and post-event content will extend revenue streams.
4. **Decentralised sponsorship.** Blockchain and smart contracts may enable peer-to-peer funding and micro-investment.
5. **Data-led design and delivery.** Analytics will guide everything from content strategy to logistics and sustainability.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

6. **AI-personalised experiences.** Attendees will receive tailored agendas, content, and interactions based on real-time data.
7. **Digital twins.** Virtual replicas of live events will allow remote participation and deeper analytics.
8. **XR & mixed reality.** Augmented and extended reality will redefine storytelling and audience engagement.
9. **Neural interface.** Thought-controlled interaction may become possible, transforming accessibility and immersion.
10. **Smart wearables.** Devices will track mood, movement, and engagement to adapt experiences dynamically.

DESIGN EXPERIENCE

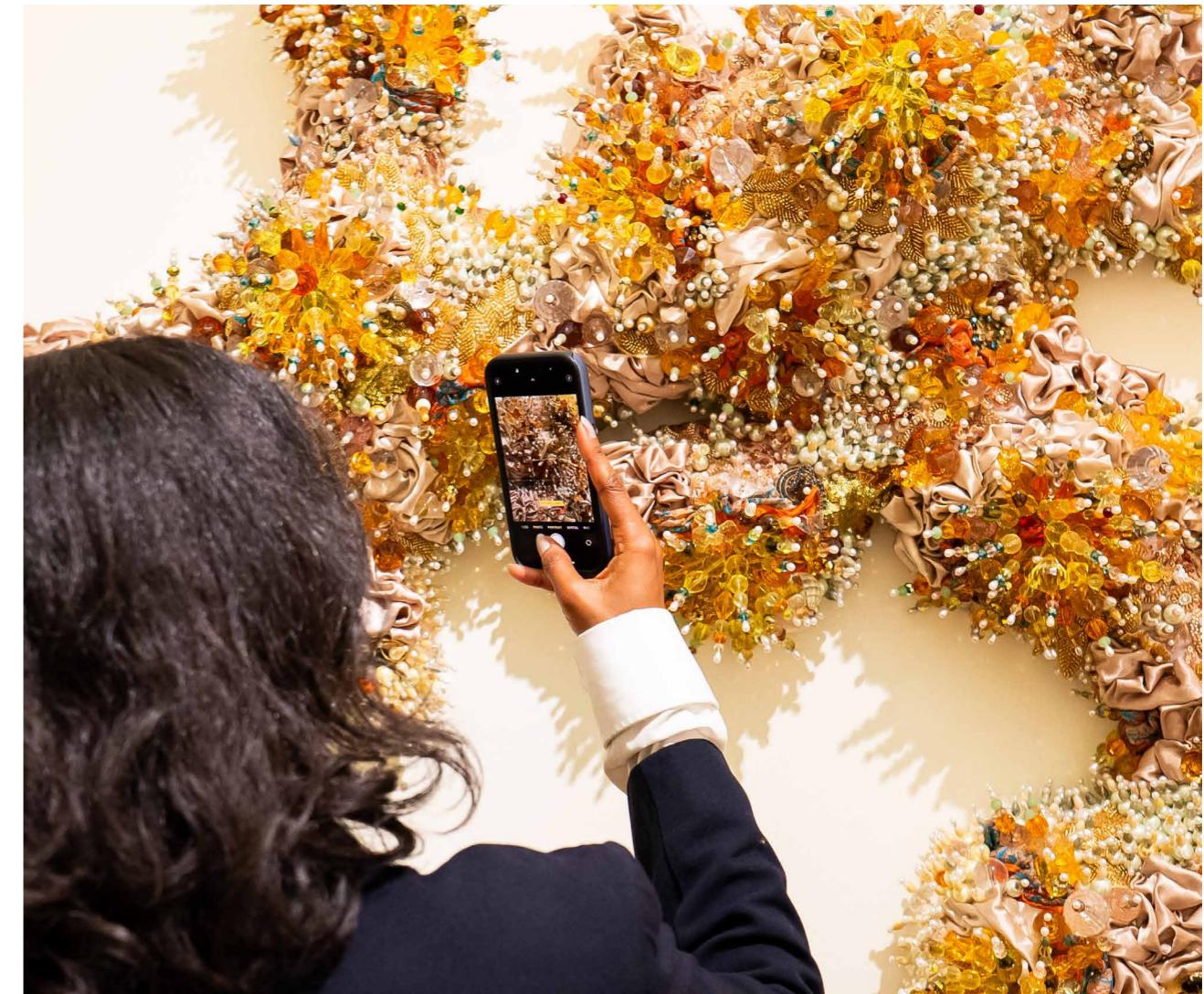
11. **Modular Scenic Builds.** Reusable, scalable structures will dominate event design for flexibility and sustainability.
12. **Sensory-Enhanced Spaces.** Multi-sensory elements (scent, texture, sound) will deepen immersion and emotional impact.
13. **Circular Event Systems.** Hyperlocal sourcing, zero-waste principles, and carbon-conscious planning will shape catering and production.
14. **Venue as Platform.** Spaces like Somerset House will evolve into cultural storytelling platforms, not just hire locations.
15. **Interactive Products.** Branded items and installations will respond to user engagement, becoming part of the experience.

CONTENT & COMMUNITY

16. **AI-Generated Content Streams.** Real-time content creation will be driven by AI, tailored to audience reactions.
17. **Emotionally Intelligent Environments.** Lighting, sound, and content will adapt to attendee mood and behaviour.
18. **Community-Curated Programming.** Online communities will co-create event formats, agendas, and themes.
19. **Global Inclusivity Through Tech.** Real-time translation and universal access tools will dissolve language barriers.
20. **Hyper-Personalisation at Scale.** Events will offer tailored journeys for each attendee, powered by behavioural data.

SUSTAINABILITY & DELEGATE WELLNESS

21. **Carbon-Negative Cities.** Events will align with regenerative urban goals and climate-conscious infrastructure.
22. **Mental Health Tech.** AI therapists and mood regulation tools will support wellbeing in workplaces and events.
23. **Longevity Planning.** Event design will adapt to longer lifespans and evolving life stages of delegates.
24. **Global Citizenship.** Events will reflect borderless identities and inclusive narratives.
25. **Memory Ownership.** Personal data and memories will become assets, raising new privacy and consent considerations.





CREATIVITY IN
ACTION



CASE STUDY 1:

Wayne McGregor's Infinite Bodies Private View Receptions Launch



Overview

On 13 November 2025, Somerset House's Commercial Venue Hire team hosted an exclusive breakfast private view for 50 agency and corporate clients to launch the [Wayne McGregor: Infinite Bodies exhibition](#) as an event space for private view receptions, complemented by a carefully curated catering package from Zafferano.

This landmark exhibition, the finale to Somerset House's 25th anniversary celebrations and explores McGregor's visionary choreography and his groundbreaking collaborations with leading artists and technologists. The experience integrates cutting edge AI and immersive technologies, making the exhibition not only visually stunning but also interactive – inviting guests to engage with digital installations that respond to movement and presence.

In an era where innovation and experiential design are key drivers for memorable events, this exhibition offers something truly distinctive – an environment that feels dynamic, forward-thinking and future ready. It demonstrates Somerset House's commitment to pushing creative boundaries, giving brands and agencies the opportunity to host events in a space that sparks curiosity, conversations and a lasting impression.



Experience

Guests enjoyed a private view of *Infinite Bodies* out-of-hours, followed by a bespoke breakfast menu curated by Zafferano, inspired by McGregor's dynamic approach to movement and form. The event showcased the package's offer: private gallery access, tailored catering, and immersive experiences designed for impactful client events. As a special touch, Dr Cliff Lawson, Director of Exhibitions at Somerset House and a co-curator of the exhibition, gave an insightful introduction to the exhibition during breakfast.

Impact

The launch generated strong interest in the Wayne McGregor package, reinforcing Somerset House as a destination for culturally aligned, creative event solutions. Guests shared overwhelmingly positive feedback:

“ ”

Just wanted to say a big thank you for having us at your event yesterday. The exhibition was fantastic, and we enjoyed every minute

Goodwin Law

Thank you so much for the amazing time last week. We loved the exhibition, and it was amazing sampling the catering for breakfast'

Brook Green DMC

This enthusiasm translated into tangible commercial outcomes, including one confirmed evening reception package, three additional package enquiries, and two bespoke event enquiries for the Embankment Galleries.



CASE STUDY 2:

Dior's Fort Sauvage Immersive Pop-up Activation

Overview

In September 2025, Dior transformed Somerset House's [Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court](#) into Fort Sauvage, an immersive pop-up celebrating the 10th anniversary of its iconic fragrance, Sauvage. This ambitious activation unfolded over multiple phases: a five-day build, six live days, and a three-day de-rig. The schedule included an opening night, private event, a dedicated PR day and four consumer-facing days, creating a dynamic blend of exclusivity and public engagement.

Somerset House partnered with creative agency My Beautiful City, who brought in the initial enquiry and collaborated closely with the team to deliver the event seamlessly on site. This partnership ensured Dior's vision was executed to perfection, combining the iconic setting with My Beautiful City's expertise in creating high-impact brand experiences.



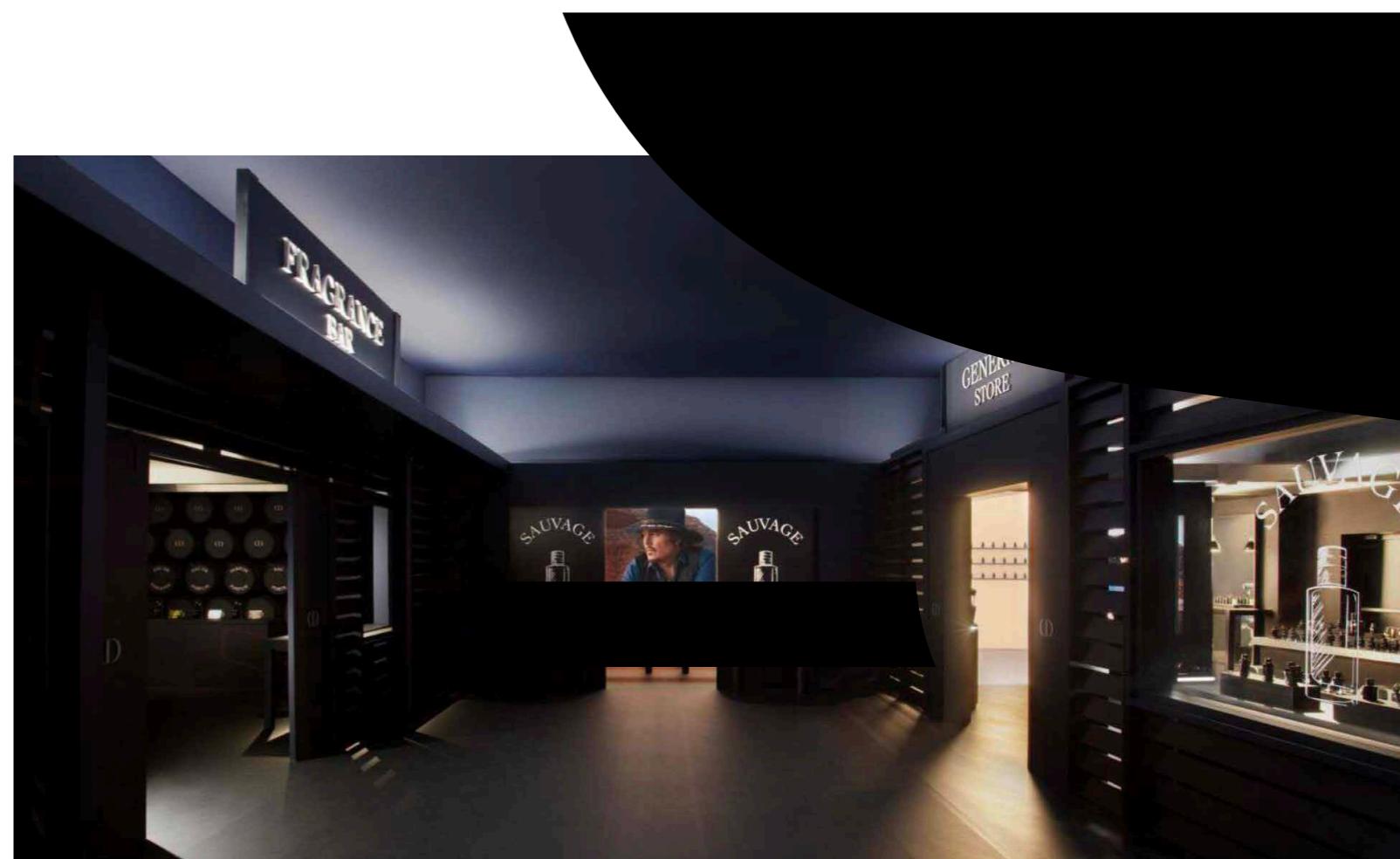
Experience

Fort Sauvage reimagined the Courtyard as a cinematic Wild West frontier, blending luxury retail with interactive, narrative-driven design. Guests journeyed through a series of immersive spaces, each crafted to engage Dior's audience:

- Fragrance Bar - A multisensory experience showcasing Sauvage's five olfactory moods.
- Wild Theatre - A dedicated screening space for Dior's latest campaign film by Jean-Baptiste Mondino starring Johnny Depp.
- Interactive Saloon-Style Games - Engaging touchpoints that encouraged playful exploration.
- Grooming Lounge - Hosted by Dior Beauty Ambassador Hayden Cassidy, offering grooming and expert-led consultations.
- General Store - A curated retail space completed the multisensory journey.

Impact

The activation generated global media attention with coverage in the Standard, The Glass Magazine and Yahoo Life and reinforced Somerset House's reputation as a premier destination for high-profile luxury brand activations. Fort Sauvage demonstrated how heritage spaces can host bold, experiential concepts that fuse culture, commerce, and creativity - setting a benchmark for immersive brand storytelling.



CASE STUDY 3: MMGY Global's MOJO Summit



Overview

In November 2025, Somerset House welcomed MMGY Global, a leading integrated travel marketing company, for its MOJO Summit. This annual event brought together destination leaders from around the world to explore trending topics and challenges shaping the travel industry, and Somerset House was the perfect backdrop.

Experience

The summit unfolded across multiple heritage spaces at Somerset House. [The Portico Rooms](#), flooded with natural daylight and featuring balconies overlooking the Courtyard, hosted panels and discussions. [The Navy Board Rooms](#) offered an intimate setting for networking, while the grand [Seamen's Hall](#) provided an atmospheric stage for the closing banquet dinner.

By combining these spaces within one venue, MMGY Global was able to host every element of the summit - from breakfast and panels to the evening banquet - without the need to look elsewhere, creating a seamless and cohesive guest journey.

Catering was delivered by Butch Salads, an accredited Somerset House supplier, who curated a vibrant culinary experience throughout the day. Guests enjoyed breakfast pastries and seasonal fruits, followed by a colourful lunch buffet and afternoon cakes. The banquet dinner featured bresaola with figs and goat's curd, Tuscan beef peposo with radicchio salad, and Butch Salads' signature chocolate and amaretto torte.

Production & AV was expertly managed by Rockit, who provided full event production across all spaces, including staging and furniture, microphones and PA systems, screens and show laptops, lighting and background music, room setups, and an onsite technician to ensure a polished, seamless experience.

Floristry was delivered by Lavender Green, who styled the event with elegant table centre arrangements, bud vases, and table lamps, adding warmth and sophistication to the heritage spaces.

Entertainment came courtesy of Euphonica, whose talented violinists performed live, creating an atmospheric soundtrack that elevated the guest experience.



Impact

The summit reinforced Somerset House as a hub for global thought leadership and demonstrated its commitment to championing independent suppliers for exceptional event experiences.

This was the largest event Butch Salads has delivered since joining Somerset House's supplier list in 2023, as part of its initiative to support and platform emerging businesses. This programme helps ensure the accredited list remains accessible, inclusive, and provides opportunities within the industry - particularly for small, independent suppliers looking to break through into London's unique venues scene. Butch Salads proudly describe themselves as an LGBTQ+ and woman-owned catering company, and their success with this event reflects both their growth and the impact of this initiative.

As an annual event, MMGY Global are already looking to return to Somerset House next year – further cementing the venue as a trusted partner for high-profile industry gatherings.

CASE STUDY 4:

Red Lion Chambers Summer Party



Overview

In Summer 2025, Somerset House hosted Red Lion Chambers' annual summer party on the [River Terrace](#), partnering with Clement Worrall to deliver a relaxed yet high-end hospitality experience for over 100 guests, including 25 KCs. The brief: create an informal, welcoming atmosphere that reflected the prestige of the client and the beauty of the outdoor setting.

Somerset House's central location was ideal for this event, given its proximity to their offices and regularly hosting the company for events, such as their silk parties.



Experience

Five vibrant food stations showcased ingredient-led, seasonal menus with global influences - from aubergine shawarma and sumac-marinated monkfish to jerk bacon piadini and smoked lamb merguez flatbreads. Highlights included a spritz cocktail station, bespoke floristry and natural materials to elevate the styling.

For the very first time, we installed a stretched tent on the River Terrace, complete with festoon lighting, to enhance the event space and provide additional wet-weather coverage if required. This addition created a stylish, flexible environment that allowed guests to enjoy the stunning Thames views while ensuring comfort and continuity whatever the forecast. The event combined unfussy elegance with bold flavours and aromas designed to draw guests into summer.

Impact

Client feedback was exceptional, describing it as "the single best event they had ever hosted" with the space already reserved for a return in 2026. Following the success of the stretched tent, it will return next summer as part of a new seasonal package, with Somerset House partnering with Clement Worrall to offer an elevated summer experience.



CASE STUDY 5:

Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy Conference

Overview

In September 2025, Somerset House hosted the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy for its one-day conference, which brought together 80 stakeholders from civil society, academia, and industry to explore responsible technology governance and the future of technology policy in the UK.

Somerset House was chosen for its central London location, flexible spaces and reputation as a vibrant hub for innovation and cultural exchange. The client also valued the ability to book on a package basis.



Experience

The event was one of the first to utilise Somerset House's new Conference Package in the Portico Rooms, designed for impactful, collaborative meetings. Delegates engaged in panels and breakout sessions addressing live issues across Minderoo's three focus areas: tech & work, tech & trust, and tech & the environment.

The Portico Rooms offered natural daylight, fresh air from elegant balconies and stunning views across the Thames and Courtyard. In addition to the main space, two breakout rooms were provided for smaller group discussions and workshops to run concurrently.

Catering was delivered by Clement Worrall, offering a sustainable, seasonal menu including light breakfast, energising snacks, and a vibrant standing lunch in the Navy Board Rooms. Light Motif delivered a fully managed AV solution for the event, providing staging, video and audio systems, seating, and an expert technical crew to ensure a polished, seamless experience throughout the day.

Impact

As the first event to use the new Conference Package, Minderoo's workshop demonstrated its success in combining heritage spaces with modern functionality. The positive feedback reinforced Somerset House as a destination for thought leadership and positioned the Portico Rooms as a go-to venue for conferences.



SOMERSET HOUSE

In collaboration with
TRIGGERFISH

events@somersethouse.org.uk | +44 (0)20 7845 4618
<https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/venue-hire>