

Lifting the experience

Organisers and agencies are using a wide range of temporary structures to deliver a wide range of event and customer experiences. Here, event professionals discuss how temporary structures can transform the look and feel of an event and we reveal new products hitting the market





■ THE ORANGERY BY FEWS MARQUEES

When MCH Group announced in January that it had taken the decision to cancel the 2023 edition of Masterpiece London, the news sent shock waves through the art world. The art fair was one of the jewels in the art and antiques market; its wrapped façade an indication of the high standards and attention to detail that its organisers upheld.

MCH Group cited escalating costs and a decline in the number of international exhibitors for the cancellation and said that it was not commercially viable to run the annual event. However, Harry Van der Hoorn and Thomas Woodham-Smith, the original founders of Masterpiece London, disagreed that there was no market for an art fair on the prestigious grounds of Royal Hospital Chelsea. Subsequently, they launched The Treasure House Fair, a five-day event featuring more than 50 of the best British and international arts and antiques dealers.

At more than 3,000 square metres, The Treasure House Fair was much smaller than Masterpiece London, which was previously housed in two huge Evo structures from Neptunus. The temporary structure specialist was called on once again to work with the team behind The Treasure House Fair.

Ben Keast, managing director of Neptunus, explained: "The Treasure House Fair was built using Alu Hall and Alure Globe structures to make the most of the setting. This included the wonderful Obelisk at the centre of the site where visitors were able to sit on an open terrace in the sunshine. The fair was entered through an open clear roof structure from the north end of the site utilising an alternative entry route to the river-side entrance previously used for Masterpiece London. This immediately gave a very different feel to the event."

LOOK AND FEEL

The grounds of Royal Hospital Chelsea remain one of the key event locations that Neptunus supplies temporary structures to each year. Home to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Neptunus has been supplying the Royal Horticultural Society's main hospitality infrastructure for more than a decade.

2023 saw Neptunus awarded a further three-year extension to its contract that saw the business provide hospitality facilities for the show's VIPs, corporate clients, and exhibitors.

Keast continued: "We worked closely with the RHS and their new caterer, The Eventist Group, to make improvements to the show's Ranelagh

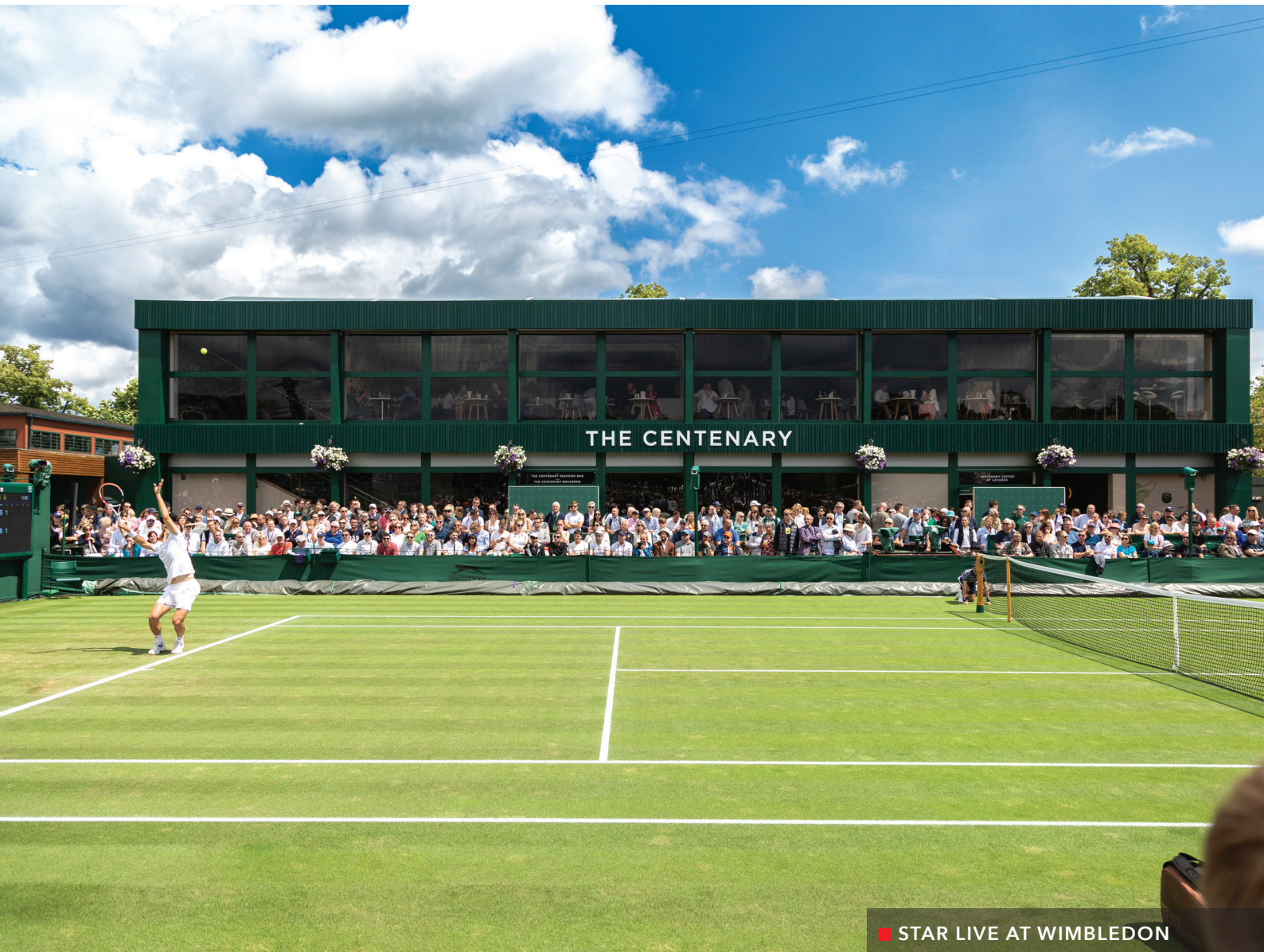
Gardens hospitality facility. We invested in new roof skins for the main dining area to allow more light in and created a brighter environment for diners. We also provided a space in the very tight confines of the site for toilets to be built within a structure, as well as refining the back-of-house areas to be more efficient."

Sarah Jerrold, operations manager at the RHS, said that Neptunus' solution-focused approach enabled the organisation to enhance the quality, look, and feel of the hospitality offer at Chelsea this year.

BEST FACILITIES

This is a common thread amongst event professionals, particularly those that organise large-scale and high-profile events where demand for hospitality is high. Organisers constantly strive to offer guests the best facilities and stand out in a marketplace that is all competing for the same disposable income.

Arena - which is currently building 43 temporary structures (22,000 square metres) for the Ryder Cup at Rome's Marco Simone Golf and Country Club - recently delivered 104 structures, totalling 32,000 square metres, at Hoylake for The Open. Plus, it built 5,825 square metres of covered structures at LIV Golf. ▶



■ STAR LIVE AT WIMBLEDON

Arena provided three different styles of hospitality structures – all on scaffold subbases up to three metres high with tiered viewing decks on two of the structures – and also completed the fit-out.

Ross Robertson, managing director (UK and Europe) of Arena Structures, said: “LIV Golf is continually looking to take its event to a different level.

“We won the project just before Christmas and provided LIV with structures and full fit-out. When you look at the design renders and the finished photos, it was hard to tell which is which. It looked sensational.”

DRASTIC CHANGE

The use of quality temporary structures can radically change an event. This year, Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) chose to drastically change the way it delivered its graduation ceremonies. RHUL engaged First Sight Media to produce and deliver the ceremonies and move away from using a permanent venue.

Sarah Tridgell, events officer at RHUL, explained: “Our vision was to build a high-end temporary structure in the grounds of our beautiful Founder’s building.

“We moved to a temporary structure to enable us to deliver student-centred ceremonies. This move allowed all our students and guests to enjoy the ceremonies together rather than across two venues.”

The ceremonies were housed within a 25m x 30m structure from Losberger DeBoer that could seat 800.

Rich Belcher, managing director at First Sight Media, who managed the ceremonies’ technical production, said: “All along, our key deliverable was production values. RHUL didn’t want them to drop because we were somewhere new. In fact, the opposite was true – they wanted to create something memorable, worthy of a graduation ceremony.”

Tridgell added: “The structure has exponentially changed the way we deliver graduation. The structure allowed us to design a space that would be fit for purpose with the student, staff, and guest experience as a number one priority.”

DETAILED PLANNING

First Sight Media had just three months to pull the project together. During this time, it created eight versions of the floor plan;

detailed planning and the right suppliers were key to delivery.

Robertson concurred. Arena has had a busy summer and has spent months looking at logistics, schedules, and plans. Robertson said that the team placed The Open in the centre of its scheduling calendar and scheduled all event builds prior to The Open and after The Open from that central point. That required meticulous planning. Robertson continued: “It was important for the operations team to integrate with the project teams to create schedules in conjunction with our clients, who are exact in what they want.”

Arena Group has recently invested just under £3 million in new kit, including new Manhattan structures, as well as standard stock such as A frames and curved roofs.

It’s indicative of the market, as temporary structure suppliers now feel more confident about the market and have taken steps to launch products and invest in new structures.

NEW PRODUCTS

Fews Marquees, 10 x 15, Neptunus, English Marquee Company, GL events UK, and Losberger DeBoer all have new structures available for hire or about to enter the market. ▶

For example, 10 x 15 – headed up by new managing director Tom Basnett – has taken stock of the largest Sperry Tent in the world [20m x 70m], GL events UK will unveil a structure at the Ryder Cup called QWAD, Neptunus has launched the Alure Globe Dome, a circular structure with a free span of 20 metres, side wall heights of 3.85 to five metres, and 314 square metres of floor space, and English Marquee Company has added a UK-built glass marquee product (up to 30 metres in length) to its portfolio.

Sam Peters, managing director of English Marquee Company, said of the new glass marquee: “Due to their modularity, glass marquees look stunning on their own, or can be combined with our other structures to create a dynamic set up with almost endless variants. The glass marquee can be used as a porch to a frame marquee to create a dramatic entrance to a structure. We then have the ability to connect a series of clearspan structures to the frame tent, creating covered walkways and spaces for production and green rooms. The whole set up can be raised using our scaffolding system to counter any variance in ground height.”

INNOVATION

Fews Marquees has introduced two structures to the market, the Orangery, and the Wave. The Orangery – a graphite grey aluminium event structure – is available in up to 25-metre widths, three-metre or four-metre leg heights, and is a premium structure that can be adapted with deck-level cassette floor and sliding doors. Plus, the structure can be “winterized” with double glazing, insulated walls, and a twin-skin thermos roof.

Alternatively, the Wave is a new megastructure, available in widths of 55 and 70 metres, and it’s perfect for hosting large-scale events, as it has an internal height of up to 22 metres.

Ian Few, managing director of Fews Marquees, says that the Orangery is the perfect canvas for a high-end dinner or party, maximizing available light and a flexible space with the windows adding an extra layer of quality. He said: “We have three key products that give us a point of difference in the UK market, two of which are new in 2023.



■ ALURE GLOBE BY NEPTUNUS

“The Orangery is an exciting new product for us. It’s a very popular structure type and it allows us to offer a unique space to event organisers in the UK. In addition, it can provide a more permanent solution for venues that want an attractive additional space for weddings, parties, and other gatherings.”

He continued: “Wave is simply one of the biggest structures currently available, providing the kind of vast event spaces required by festivals, product launches, and major exhibitions.

“From a strategic perspective, the introduction of these new products is critical to the future growth of the business. While they represent a significant investment for Fews, they offer a point of difference, giving us the ability to serve the event industry with many types of structures, and allowing us to enter different markets which may not have been previously open to us.”

Keast added: “It’s vitally important to keep innovating and refreshing our offer to our clients. While the events sector in the UK remains strong, eventgoers are being more selective about what they go to. Consequently, suppliers need to ensure standards are high, budgets are met, and deadlines are reached whilst still offering that point of difference that

makes an event stand out from the crowd. This is why we are introducing a new product to our extensive temporary structure range, a new Alure Globe Dome.”

DELIVERING IMPROVEMENTS

Lee Dalton, sales director of Roder UK, and president of MUTA, described 2023 as an “interesting year” and said that the industry has been able to quote with more confidence.

He commented: “It certainly feels as though we have caught up on the backlog of work from COVID, which isn’t a bad thing, as we’ve been able to plan workloads and quote with a little more confidence.

“In addition to the run of festivals and shows, it’s been great to see MUTA members provide structures for key sporting events throughout the summer including Wimbledon, Goodwood, The Open, and Silverstone.”

In late 2022 Star Live won a multi-year contract with The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) to supply temporary structures for The Championships at Wimbledon, Wimbledon Park, and the Qualifying Competition at The Bank of England Sports Centre.

The brief from The AELTC was clear: improve on-site build times to minimise disruption, create structures with a premium aesthetic and ▶



■ QWAD BY GL EVENTS UK



■ LOSBERGER DEBOER AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY



■ ENGLISH MARQUEE COMPANY

an air of permanency, deliver improvements across structure specifications, and integrate sustainability at the heart of the solution.

Over a ten-week period, Star Live delivered nearly 50 temporary structures across three Wimbledon sites – a mix of PVC roofed structures and Star Live’s modular structure – the StarBox. The use of StarBox proved a major success. The product was extensively deployed for a variety of uses across SW19, including hospitality, media, partner activations, and retail and the same StarBox units will be used as hospitality suites at the Ryder Cup in Rome.

Another key focus for The AELTC in 2023 was enhancing the Southern Village to create a destination that would rival the popularity of the hill in terms of attracting visitors. Part

of the solution Star Live delivered included consolidating the Southern Village onto a single level, resulting in a seamless transition from the bar and seating areas, across the decking, and into the temporary structures that housed retail outlets and brand activations from names such as American Express, Ralph Lauren, Vodafone, and Babolat.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Another highlight in terms of structures was the Centenary Restaurant, a double-deck temporary building measuring 15m x 30m. Originally introduced to Wimbledon in 2022 to commemorate 100 years of Centre Court, this year saw Star Live work with the branding team at AELTC to deliver multiple

enhancements to harmonise the aesthetics of the structure with the permanent facilities on-site. Through the addition of cladding, fascias, custom green window frames, complemented by a low-curved roof, the structure blended into SW19 and was representative of the iconic Wimbledon brand.

Grahame Muir, CEO of Star Live, said: “We are seeing more and more clients wanting temporary structures that don’t look and feel like traditional tented solutions. Structures that are fast to build with minimal on-site construction required, combined with the flexibility to transform the appearance, and create the illusion of a permanent building is what event organisers, promoters, agencies, and venues are looking for.”

Rob Statham, head of UK and Europe at Spacecube, the modular structure specialist, concurred with Muir. He believes that there is a big push from organisers and agencies to move away from big white marquees.

He explained: “Clients want a clean and cosmetic finish and modular is the building block to do that.

“Modular gives you so much choice. In fact, on one recent project, there was 30 to 40 iterations before a design was signed off because it gave a client options; options to create a space that suited what they were trying to achieve. They weren’t trying to fit an activation into a predefined space.”

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Spacecube built seven structures at Silverstone for the British Grand Prix, creating hospitality units for Peroni, Red Bull, and ▶

Ferrari on behalf of Match Hospitality. Plus, after meeting at Event Buyers Live, the company also worked with LS Events to create a two-storey, 300 square metre summer house within the VIP area of BST Hyde Park. But that's not all. Spacecube also delivered several activations at Goodwood Festival of Speed (FoS), working with Avantgarde for MG, and Reactor Group for Pirelli.

Statham commented: "It was great to be back at Goodwood FoS. The grid was great, and it felt as though it was back to its heyday. There was a move away from brands stuffing their stands full of cars. No stand looked like they had just dumped a dealership on it. Agencies were more experimental, and it was clear that agencies had taken a different route in terms of the creative. Goodwood showed that people were pushing boundaries and moving away from more traditional structures."

Hyundai engaged Collaborate to produce its activation at FoS that comprised stand build, the global launch of its IONIQ 5 vehicle, and live broadcast of the launch.

Luke Daniels, operations director at Collaborate, said: "Our brief was to 'win at FoS' which gave our entire creative department the freedom to go down the bespoke route and to the extent of producing a custom structure."

Hyundai's three-storey activation with roof terrace featured the hard work of 23 "rock star" contractors that worked collaboratively to deliver the space.

Daniels says that Collaborate's ethos is to work with the right people to deliver the best results. But Hyundai's stand was not the only project that Collaborate managed at FoS. The agency delivered activations for eBay, Roger Dubuis, and Aston Martin plus others, using end of use shipping containers, structures from Showblock and Losberger DeBoer, and Spacecube respectively.

"We have a good relationship with structure companies and the likes of Showblock and Losberger," Daniels continued.

"As an agency, relationships are key and so is the ability to have a short conversation and a chat about availability. I want to get under the hood of what a structure can do, understand its limits, and see how far you can push the system. I want to see what hasn't been done before, so that we can create interesting things for our clients.

"We want to work with the experts in the areas that we are not so that we can understand what is feasible and what isn't," he concluded. ■



■ ARENA AT THE OPEN



■ COLLABORATE AT GOODWOOD