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# EXPERIENCE INTELLIGENCE REPORT EMEA EDITION



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# EDITION JUNE INTRO

Experiential culture is evolving. Audiences crave **surprise** over scale, food as cultural access, sound as emotional design, and sensory spaces that offer pause in a fast-paced world.

If you have questions about any of this content, or would like to learn more, please reach out to your GPJ account representative or [Heidrun.Scholtjen@gpj.com](mailto:Heidrun.Scholtjen@gpj.com)

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*Artists are turning live music into unrepeatable experiences.*

02

*Deep listening spaces ground audiences in the present.*

03

*Travelers are chasing flavors over views.*

04

*Brands are building sensory sanctuaries in busy urban spaces.*

# 01

## *Artists are turning live music into unrepeatable experiences.*

**Fans seek the thrill of discovery, turning live music into a playground for mystery and meaning.**

Across EMEA, artists are abandoning the expected in favor of the unforgettable. On a hidden Welsh beach, fans are ferried in by boat to witness the **UK's most remote gig**, with no lineup, no phones, and no clue what's coming next. In London, a rumored Oasis reunion sparked mass buzz over a **one-night-only secret show**. Meanwhile, creators like DJ AG are **transforming how performances happen**. Turning fans into curators and collaborators, and delivering sets in intimate, crowd sourced spaces. In a region known for its underground culture, these surprise shows tap into a growing hunger for unfiltered, 'in-the-know' experiences.

### **What it Means**

As Gen Z **reshapes music culture**, concerts are no longer just ticketed events. They're stories, scavenger hunts, and shared secrets. The new currency isn't scale, it's serendipity. Fans want to feel **part of something fleeting and special**. In EMEA, this has evolved into a taste for the unexpected: remote venues, pop-up gigs, and location-first storytelling. It's a powerful shift from passive spectatorship to active participation

**Key Takeaway** *As fans reject the overproduced and over-promoted, brands and artists have a fresh opportunity: create live experiences that feel exclusive, unrepeatable, and deeply local. Think secret sets, cryptic invites, and world-building that rewards curiosity.*



## 02

**Artists are turning live music into unrepeatable experiences.**

**Audio is emerging as a primary medium for presence, not just ambience.**

Over the past few years, 'listening bars' have gone global. Originating in post-World War II Japan, these bars traditionally called 'kissas' discourage talking and offer audiophiles a place to gather to listen to vinyl records played on high-fidelity stereo equipment in comfortable lounge settings. Brands are capitalizing on the trend with whiskey brand Monkey Shoulder teaming up with KEF Audio to launch a new record store and listening bar in London hosting a number of well known artists, and Stone Island at Milan Design week. More niche experiences, like immersive sound exhibitions, feature artists using sound as their primary medium.

### What it Means

In an overstimulated world, sound is emerging as a tool for emotional grounding and sensory focus. For experiential marketers, it's a chance to create intimate, embodied environments where audio isn't just background, but the backbone of a vibe, through presence, connection, and storytelling.

**Key Takeaway** *Audio is no longer just atmosphere—it's the experience. As listening bars and sound-first activations gain global traction, brands have a chance to craft immersive environments where sound becomes a portal to connection, emotion, and presence. Event organizers should explore audio as a central design tool—curating spaces where listening becomes a shared, meaningful ritual.*

# 03

## *Travelers are chasing flavors over views.*

**Food & Beverage has transcended sustenance to become a central pillar of global exploration.**

Culinary arts tourism is exploding and expected to reach **\$54 billion by 2032**. On Scotland's **Isle of Skye**, once known mainly for its landscapes, chef-led experiences and destination bakeries are turning the island into an unlikely culinary hotspot. In the UK and France, **'bakery pilgrims'** are rising: food lovers waking at dawn and traveling hours just to queue outside cult bakeries for one perfect croissant or bun. Meanwhile, **influencer-hosted food retreats** are also gaining traction, with creators selling out curated culinary tours to places like Sicily at luxury price points. Brands and investors are taking note - **Secret Food Tours**, offers curated food experiences in 80+ cities and posted £17.9 million in revenue last year.

### **What it Means**

Food is emerging as a powerful form of cultural intimacy—a way to experience history, identity, and **place**. Today's travelers aren't just looking to eat local; they want to understand it. This shift opens the door for brands to create experiences where taste leads the narrative.

**Key Takeaway** *Food has evolved into a profound cultural connector, offering immersive storytelling through taste and experience. Event marketers should design sophisticated, authentic culinary journeys that highlight local heritage and leverage influencer partnerships to create memorable, differentiated events that resonate deeply with discerning audiences.*

# 04

## *Brands are building sensory sanctuaries in busy urban spaces.*

**In overstimulated cities, spaces that encourage calm are creating deeper moments of connection.**

Across EMEA, brands are creating sensory-led experiences that offer a break from overstimulated city life. In Abu Dhabi, the newly opened **teamLab Phenomena** invites visitors into a reactive digital world of light, air, and sound, an evolving environment that prioritises presence over spectacle. In London, **Loewe's Timeless Garden** transformed Selfridges' Corner Shop into a maze of oversized botanicals, interactive scent stations, and fragrance customisation. Also in Abu Dhabi, **Prada Mode 2025** offered a multisensory escape, moving from a tranquil acoustic dome to a vibrant open-air social space.

### **What it Means**

Consumers are looking for more than visual noise. In urban centres, there's **growing demand for spaces that slow people down and re-engage the senses.** These experiences offer value not just through design, but through how they make people feel: grounded, curious, and present. For brands, it's a chance to move beyond spectacle and build emotional stickiness.

**Key Takeaway** *Well-designed sensory experiences stand out in overstimulated cities. For experiential marketers, this means moving beyond Instagram backdrops to build rich, immersive spaces that invite interaction, not just observation.*



# OUT-THERE EXPERIENCES

## Tassels, tech, and text-to-speech

At some 2025 graduations, instead of a person reading names on stage, an AI voice takes over after students scan their phones.

## Ride, Reveal, Repeat in the Go-Get Garage

Uber's hands-on playground featured the app's latest upgrades with test rides, interactive demos, and surprise innovations on every corner.

**People, brands and marketers continue to push the boundaries of physical and digital experiences, with new and creative executions popping up across the globe.**

## A gastronomic getaway on the high seas

Spanning a week of culinary programming, from chef-led cooking demos and wine pairings to shore excursions and tapas tastings, guests savor nonstop, immersive food and wine experiences along Spain's vibrant Mediterranean coast.

## Dolce&Gabbana style in exclusive locations

This summer, Maria Grazia Chiuri expands the Dioriviera experience across nine exclusive pop-up locations, including Ibiza, Capri, Forte dei Marmi, and Marbella. From May to August 2025, visitors can explore the collection's signature coastal elegance and playful luxury in these stunning European destinations.