



Bars & Mixology Trends:

What's Shaking in the UK Events Scene?



The Rise of the Experiential Bar

The bar is no longer just a place to queue for a drink—it's a destination in its own right. In 2025, bars and mixology have taken centre stage at UK events, becoming one of the most anticipated and talked-about elements of any celebration. Whether you're hosting a wedding, corporate gathering, private party, or festival-style soiree, the drinks experience is now designed to be immersive, expressive, and unforgettable.

From personalised cocktails that reflect the host's story to mobile gin bars parked beside riverside venues, and low-alcohol luxury that caters to wellness-conscious guests, today's bar setups are all about creativity, craft, and connection. Mixologists are stepping into the spotlight, turning every pour into a performance and every sip into a statement.

Here's a look at the top bar and mixology trends making waves across the UK event scene—one glass at a time.

1. Signature Cocktails with a Personal Twist



The classic open bar is being replaced (or elevated) with signature cocktails that reflect the event's personality — or even the couple or brand hosting it.

At weddings, couples are designing his & hers (or theirs & theirs) cocktails named after inside jokes, favourite holidays, pets, or even how they met.

Corporate events are leaning into branded drinks that use colours, names, or ingredients that echo the company ethos.

Example ideas:

- A lavender gin fizz for a riverside wedding
- A spicy mango margarita for a summer brand launch
- A smoky old fashioned called “The Founder” at a corporate dinner

2. Mobile Bars & Statement Setups

Pop-up and mobile bars are redefining the drinks experience—bringing creativity, flair, and flexibility to events of all kinds. From vintage vans and converted horse boxes to mirrored cocktail bars and neon-lit whisky stations, these setups offer more than just beverages—they're part of the visual storytelling.

Whether parked riverside, tucked into a woodland clearing, or rolled into a city rooftop, mobile bars add instant atmosphere and a personalised touch.



Popular formats include:

- Riverside gin bars serving local spirits with botanical garnishes and artisanal tonics
- Spritz stations where guests customise their fizz with bitters, fruit infusions, and herb accents
- Craft beer & cider taps featuring selections from UK microbreweries and small-batch producers
- Espresso martini carts for that late-night pick-me-up with a touch of glamour

These bars are perfect for weddings, brand activations, and private parties—offering both function and flair. They're designed to become a styling feature of the event, often complete

with custom signage, florals, and lighting. Many hosts are even naming signature cocktails after themselves or their pets, turning the drinks menu into a playful extension of the event's personality.

3. Low & No Alcohol Cocktails (That Are Actually Good)

The low and no-alcohol movement is no longer niche — it's mainstream. Guests increasingly want the flavour and complexity of a cocktail without the heavy alcohol content.

Expect menus with:

- Alcohol-free G&Ts using distilled spirits
- Kombucha-based cocktails with botanical syrups
- Aperitif-style spritzes with less than 5% ABV
- Fermented mixers like shrub, kefir, or tea infusions

**Top tip: Include at least 2–3 quality non-alcoholic options on your menu to make sure every guest feels included.*



4. Sustainable & Locally Sourced Ingredients



Eco-conscious events are extending their values to the bar, with sustainability now a key ingredient in drink design. From sourcing to serving, hosts are prioritising local, seasonal, and low-waste practices—proving that great taste and environmental responsibility can go hand in hand.

Trending sustainable bar practices include:

- Cocktails infused with herbs and garnishes grown on-site or sourced from nearby gardens and farms
- UK-made spirits crafted from surplus produce or sustainably farmed ingredients
- Minimal single-use plastics, with compostable or reusable glassware and bar tools
- Edible garnishes like dehydrated citrus wheels, pressed flowers, and herb sprigs that reduce waste and elevate presentation

At riverside and countryside venues, this “local-first” approach feels especially fitting—tying the drink experience to the landscape and creating a deeper sense of place. Guests not only enjoy beautifully crafted beverages but also appreciate the thoughtfulness behind every pour.

5. Craft Ice, Edible Garnishes & Elevated Presentation



How your cocktail looks is just as important as how it tastes. Events are investing in elevated presentation, with drinks that feel *designed*. It's all about creating a moment — and yes, it's highly Instagrammable.

Look out for:

- Crystal-clear ice cubes with branding or botanicals frozen inside
- Cocktail toppings like foams, dehydrated fruits, or flavoured smoke
- Colour-themed cocktails that match your palette or branding
- Glassware variety, with coupe glasses, rocks tumblers, or vintage finds

6. Bar Theatre & Guest Interaction

The best bars are now part of the entertainment. Guests want to interact with bartenders, learn about what they're drinking, and even get involved in the process.

Trending now:

- Cocktail masterclasses at private events or corporate team days
- Tableside mixology, where bartenders build drinks at your table
- Flavour-pairing menus where each cocktail is served with a matching bite
- Molecular mixology with smoke, foam, or dramatic reveals



This immersive approach creates talking points and adds a real sense of theatre to your event.

7. Pre-Batched & Bottled Cocktails (Done Right)

For events with large guest numbers or tight turnarounds, pre-batched cocktails are a smart solution — and thanks to better ingredients and techniques, they now taste just as good as those made à la minute. Look for suppliers who bottle in recyclable or reusable packaging and use fresh, natural ingredients.

Perfect for:

- Welcome drinks served quickly and elegantly

- Outdoor events without a full bar setup
- Gifting or favours (e.g. mini bottles of the couple's signature cocktail)

8. Espresso Martini Obsession (Still Going Strong)



It's official: the UK's love affair with the espresso martini is not going anywhere in 2025. But it's evolving....

New twists include:

- Salted caramel espresso martinis
- Cold brew-based recipes
- Vegan or dairy-free versions
- Espresso martini *bars* for the after-dinner dance floor kick-off

Some couples are even swapping bubbly for espresso martinis during the toast — bold move, but we approve.

Final Thoughts - Raise the Bar

In 2025, bars and mixology are more than just a service—they're a statement. It's about craftsmanship, creativity, and connection. Whether you're shaking cocktails beside a river at golden hour or serving spritzes from a vintage van under the stars, the drinks you offer help define the mood, spark conversation, and elevate the entire guest experience.

So, if you're planning an event this year, don't treat the bar as an afterthought. Design it. Personalise it. Celebrate with it. Because when done right, your bar isn't just where drinks are poured—it's where memories are made.

Planning a Stylish Event with a Show-Stopping Bar?

At Riverside Marquee, our team will help you create unforgettable drink experiences — from signature cocktails by the Thames to late-night espresso martinis under the stars.

Get in touch to explore our bar packages, custom options, and creative ideas for your celebration.