

SUMMER OF LOVE; CHELSEA IN BLOOM

The shopfronts of Chelsea were once again transformed into a floral spectacle during May.

Text: Lindsey Dennis

The inaugural floral art show, Chelsea in Bloom, returned to Chelsea in May for its 13th anniversary. Produced by Cadogan in association with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), the event transformed the streets of Chelsea with breathtaking floral displays.

The aim of the event is to extend the iconic RHS Chelsea Flower Show out into the local community. It has been building year on year and this is the most successful to date, with a record 65 businesses taking part by dressing their shopfronts (which are judged by the RHS) in competition for the Chelsea in Bloom crown.

This year's theme was 'Summer of Love', inspired by the Royal Wedding and the Sixties/Seventies cultural revolution - from the Palace to King's Road. The competition showcases floral displays reflecting the participating retailers' interpretation of the theme in their own unique style.

A record 65 shops, restaurants and hotels participated this year, aside from huge central displays across Sloane Square, Pavilion Road, Sloane Street and Duke of York Square.



'This year, in particular, we have noticed the power of social media fuelling the event and feedback from many businesses on how great it is to feel the benefits of being 'famous' with the continual crowds outside and inside their stores. It is a clear demonstration of the power that bricks and mortar retail has - creating the right experience has never been more essential. This is something that we are continually evolving; how can we support our retailers in creating an inspirational shopping experience? As long-term stewards of Chelsea, our focus is on creating vibrancy through a careful balance of top international flagships, best-in-their-field independent artisans and a great mix of places to eat and drink,' says Hugh Seaborn, chief executive at Cadogan.

This year's Best Floral Display winner was Monica Vinader, taking home the prize for its striking homage to the era of peace and love; the vibrantly kaleidoscopic façade captivated the judges and public alike. 'Monica Vinader is always happy to participate every year in Chelsea in Bloom. This year's theme of Summer of

Love has given us the opportunity to celebrate joy and colour with a large-scale display in the Duke of York Square boutique. The public's engagement has been amazing, with people stopping and taking pictures - it has brought a great atmosphere to the Square and our boutique,' said Hayley Kennedy, boutique manager at Monica Vinader during the event.

Harry's Dolce Vita's display was awarded Highly Commended and People's Champion, with Kiel's close runner up for the latter. The Innovation Award went to Lucas Hugh. 'Winning the Innovation Prize for Chelsea in Bloom means so much as it reflects an essential part of our brand DNA. It's also the first week of opening our first physical store, so to have achieved both that and winning an award feels like a great welcome to the neighbourhood! We've met so many lovely new customers over the last few days, who are really engaging with the brand and appreciating our involvement in such an important community event,' said Anjhe Mules, co-CEO and creative director at Lucas Hugh, during the event. **RF**



1. NARS - Silver award
2. Harry's Dolce Vita - Highly Commended and People's Champion winner
3. Monica Vinader - Best Floral Display
4. Lucas Hugh - winner of the Innovation Award
5. Kiki McDonough - Gold award
6. The Gold-winning Hackett London scheme was designed in collaboration with Harlequin, featuring a vintage bus escorting Hackett men to the Royal Wedding.
7. Kiehl's - Gold award