



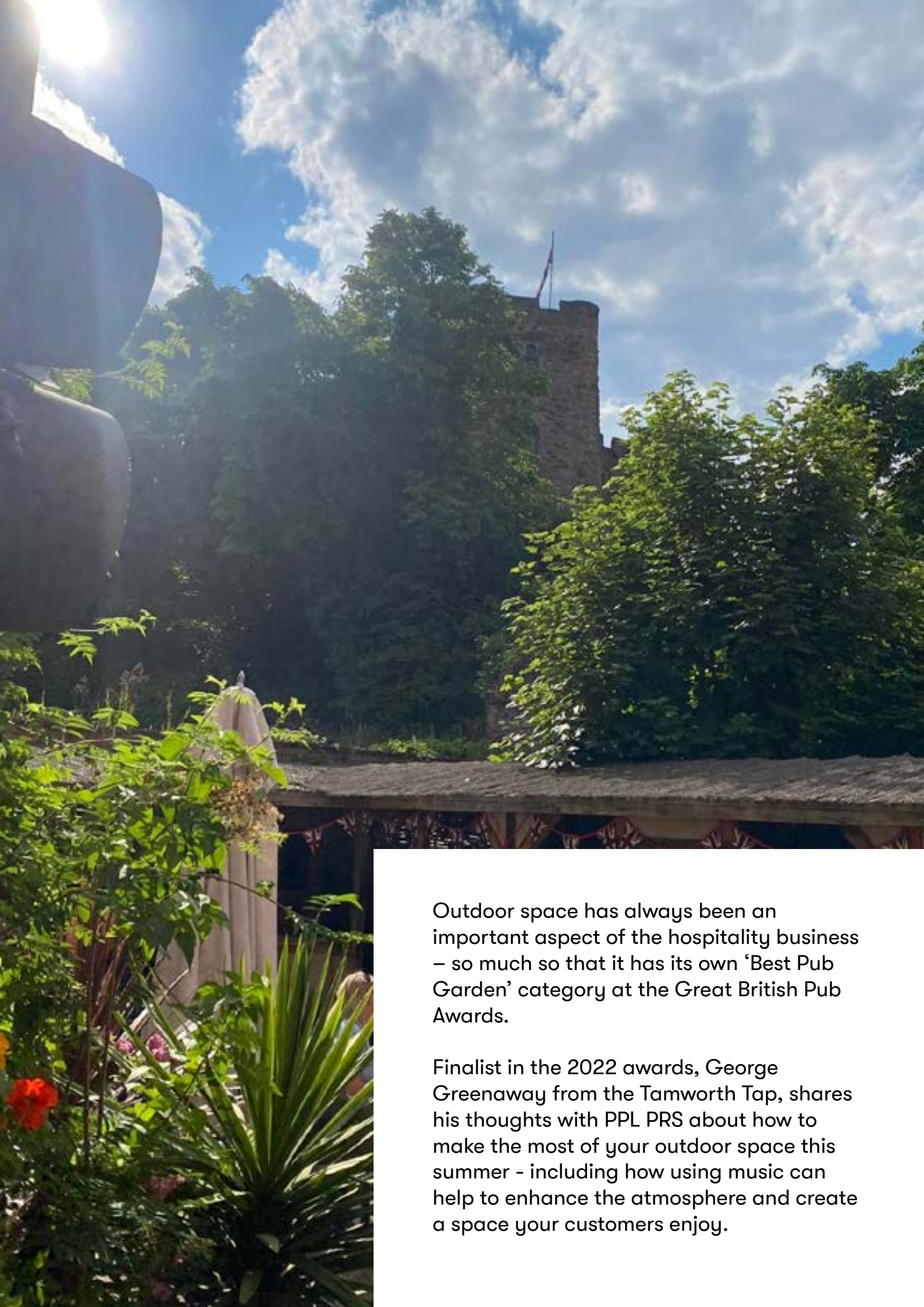
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In conversation with
Tamworth Tap





Outdoor space has always been an important aspect of the hospitality business – so much so that it has its own ‘Best Pub Garden’ category at the Great British Pub Awards.

Finalist in the 2022 awards, George Greenaway from the Tamworth Tap, shares his thoughts with PPL PRS about how to make the most of your outdoor space this summer - including how using music can help to enhance the atmosphere and create a space your customers enjoy.



Q. The Tamworth Tap has been around for 4 years now, and includes its very own brewery and shop, but where did it all start?

A. The original business model was a micro-brewery and off licence with the aim to supply quality cask ales and bottles through our shop and to local pubs and CAMRA beer festivals. This stemmed my interest in real ales and brewing as a hobby. We operated from a disused former Tourist Information shop front in the middle of the town centre. We had lots of local interest and requests from passers-by tapping on the window to open a tap to try our ales on site. It was never the intention to open a pub in the early days, as I had a career but eventually, I succumbed to a pop-up taproom night. This quickly developed into two nights (Friday and Saturday) and eventually the whole week, resulting in me leaving my job, as we realised the huge potential of the overall site combined with our attention to detail and unique offering.



Q. It's a beautiful building which you told us you have been busy restoring, how much of a priority was the outdoor space when it came to improvements?

A. The outside area took overall priority when speculating over re-opening outdoors only, post pandemic.

We installed a kitchen (in case we could open only if serving food), we built new toilets accessible from the garden and invested in new furniture and heaters to maximise the socially distanced seating.





You're in an old part of the town with lots of history, when visiting the garden, what can customers expect?

Our garden has a real wow factor when entering, especially for the first time. The contrast to the street as you walk down the fairy-lit alley way is enchanting. The unique aspect of the castle emerges, along with courtyard buildings that resemble a bygone era, enhanced by the breweriana and retro signs. Shelters in a Saxon style are dimly lit and upholstered for comfort.

Each year the yard explodes in colour with an abundance of floral displays and hanging baskets. In the evening ambient lighting accentuates features such as the Saxon wall, Georgian buildings, planted areas and access ways and candles on each of the tables provides the finishing touch. The cobbled walkway opens up to reveal the view from top to bottom of the Saxon wall. Nestled at the bottom is the live music stage flanked by seating and tables.

There looks like there are plenty of features in the garden, including the ancient Saxon castle wall, is there any area of your garden that is a particular favourite?

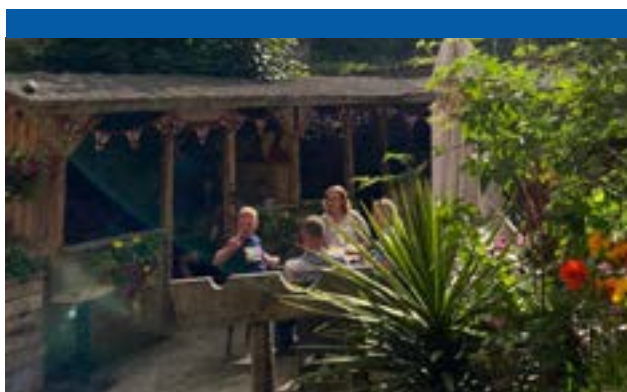
My particular favourite is the castle views. There really aren't many beer gardens that have a castle! We even send in weather watcher pictures to BBC weather and have featured several times in the weather bulletin (*the views are that spectacular*).





Other than restoring it back to its original glory, what influence did you take when it came to the design and feel of the outdoor space?

We wanted to bring the indoors out, giving drinkers the comfort of indoors during the lifting of lockdown but operating through restrictions. This has continued on with the popularity of the garden. The walls enclose the garden to give a cave like atmosphere in the evening highlighted by wall uplighting. It led to celebrating the perimeter and exposing as much of the brickwork as possible.



Fortunately, it seems you already had the basis of an appealing garden space thanks to the beautiful surroundings. How does music add to the overall atmosphere and help you to create a space your customers enjoy?

Our music works with the time of day, the day of the week and the season. Even the weather is a factor.

We create playlists that suit that particular situation and are filed as Christmas, sunny day, Sunday morning etc. We have so many comments on how customers have enjoyed the playlists, even asking where they can buy the CD.

I'm certain we keep customers a little longer as they can't leave because of the music.

And what about your staff, what are their thoughts on the music you use?

Our staff love our playlists. They also enjoy the interaction with customers who discuss the music. We never play inverted music. It's all deliberately chosen for its genre.



You mentioned that you have a variety of customers, some are tourists, some are locals etc. how do you decide what music to play, and do you tailor your music according to their tastes?

Our music suits the building, the time of the day, week and year. It's unique to our venue and evokes positive reactions from tourists and locals alike.

Your garden includes a stage and space to regular host live music events, how important are these for your business and the local community?

We have a huge local music following and showcase the best local acts. We are always punctual with start times and move acts inside during poor weather. Customers can be confident that the act will always perform. It gives a high profile, local platform to launch careers. These types of events bring people into the town and support other hospitality venues.



We all love a garden in the summer, but it's also as nice to enjoy a cosy drink by the fire in the cooler months too. How do you replicate the right atmosphere inside your premises throughout the rest of the year?

We installed a wood burner in the main bar during lockdown. The burning wood smell and the warmth hits you when you enter the pub during the cold winter months evoking a true traditional cosy pub of bygone years.



When thinking about the music you use for the rest of the year, does the music you play vary by season? E.g. by the fire indoors over the winter months / Christmas months and in the sunshine outside

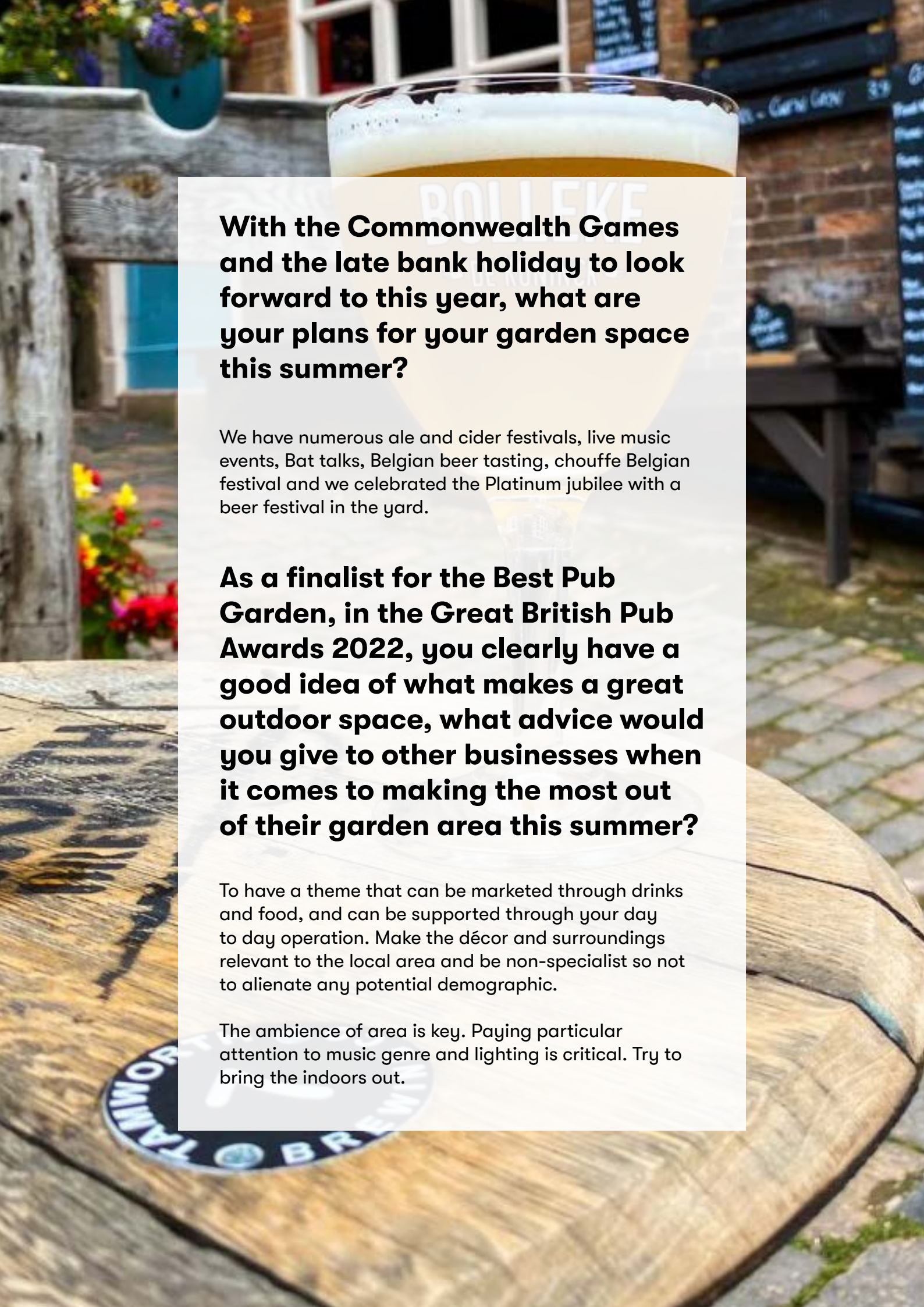
Absolutely. We have playlists for all occasions, times of day, days of week and seasons. We theme them for remembrance, hot summer days, Sunday mornings and Christmas just as an example.



In the same way that music can make us feel a certain way, do you try to tap into any of the other senses when thinking about the atmosphere you want to create?

Yes we do. On a very hot day, when the bbq is lit, you have the smell from this alongside unmistakably summer tunes. Similarly, at Christmas time, there is the roar of the fire and the smell of mulled wine - which when matched with a carefully selected themed playlist really helps to accentuate the senses.



A glass of beer with a thick head of foam sits on a wooden table in a pub garden. The background shows a brick building with a chalkboard menu and a wooden fence. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box.

With the Commonwealth Games and the late bank holiday to look forward to this year, what are your plans for your garden space this summer?

We have numerous ale and cider festivals, live music events, Bat talks, Belgian beer tasting, chouffe Belgian festival and we celebrated the Platinum jubilee with a beer festival in the yard.

As a finalist for the Best Pub Garden, in the Great British Pub Awards 2022, you clearly have a good idea of what makes a great outdoor space, what advice would you give to other businesses when it comes to making the most out of their garden area this summer?

To have a theme that can be marketed through drinks and food, and can be supported through your day to day operation. Make the décor and surroundings relevant to the local area and be non-specialist so not to alienate any potential demographic.

The ambience of area is key. Paying particular attention to music genre and lighting is critical. Try to bring the indoors out.



Whether it's turning a bar into a beer festival or a courtyard into a concert, creating the right atmosphere in your outdoor area this summer can help to boost the mood and make your business stand out.

These are just some hints and tips of how to enhance your outdoor space this summer and how using music can help you to get the most out of the months ahead.

To find out more and to try out music for yourself, visit pplprs.co.uk/get-the-musiclicence/



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