

WORDS HANNAH BRANDLER

AMONGST WOMEN

The choice of members' clubs, co-working spaces and networking groups for women has never been bigger

The past few years have seen a wave of women-only private members' clubs, co-working spaces and networks open up to meet the needs of female entrepreneurs. Spaces may differ in what they offer but they all share a mission – to empower women in industries that have been largely dominated by men, arming them with the tools to advance their careers through networking events, pitch days and influential speaker series.

The trend isn't limited to the UK – many clubs have properties abroad or partner with reciprocal venues; a bonus for female business travellers in search of a welcoming workspace in unfamiliar cities.

While restricting membership solely to women can in itself lead to accusations of sexism, it should be kept in mind that such clubs are attempting to help balance the scales; there are only six female chief executives in the FTSE 100 and, on average, they earn 54 per cent of the salaries of their male counterparts, according to the Equality Trust. All the same, men are still able to attend some of the venues listed.



LEFT: The Wing in Fitzrovia
BELOW: University Women's Club
OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: The Allbright in Mayfair

MEMBERS' CLUBS

The Wing

Founded by Audrey Gelman and Lauren Kassan in New York's Flatiron district in 2016, the Wing has eight locations across the US and is opening in London this month in a five-storey townhouse on Great Portland Street. New York's Bryant Park and Williamsburg are on the cards for autumn, and Seattle and Toronto for next year. Boasting an A-list clientele – members include Cara Delevingne and Lena Dunham – the Wing encourages members to network, scout business partners, attend events and mentor one another. Inviting workspace areas feature communal tables and phone booths, and they also have bookable conference rooms, cafés, beauty salons and libraries. London membership costs £1,836 per year, and all-site access US\$2,700 per year. Free memberships are offered to those whose work supports the advancement of marginalised women and girls. the-wing.com

The Allbright

Named in honour of former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright – who said “there's a special place in hell for women who don't help other women” – the Allbright was launched by Debbie Wosskow and Anna Jones in Fitzrovia last year. They have since opened a five-floor Mayfair club with a co-working space, phone booths, a loft-

style event venue, two roof terraces, a restaurant, gym and treatment rooms. A West Hollywood club opened last month and New York and Washington DC are in the pipeline. Members get access to reciprocal clubs around the world and men can attend as guests. Pitch days are held in Mayfair and LA in partnership with HSBC Private Banking, inviting female-led businesses to present to investors. Multi-club membership costs £1,300 per year (plus a £300 registration fee), although the Allbright academy, comprising of three digital courses with monthly intakes, is free. allbrightcollective.com

University Women's Club

Not a newcomer but a club with a proud history dating back to 1886, this traditional venue is located in a grand Georgian house in Mayfair. Aimed at professionals, students and graduates, it has a wood-panelled library, a drawing room, a dining room overlooking a terraced garden, and 22 homely bedrooms. Men are welcome as guests and can stay if booked by a member, although the third floor is women-only. Members get free room hire for two events per year. Membership starts at £456 per year (plus a £300 joining fee), with discounts for under 26s. It has reciprocal arrangements with clubs worldwide. universitywomensclub.com





CO-WORKING SPACES

One Girl Band, Glasgow

“We’re all about community over competition,” says One Girl Band, a network open to those self-identifying as women. Lola Hoad set up the community in 2015, hoping to prevent loneliness among freelancers and entrepreneurs. Initially a co-working space in Brighton, it relocated to Axiom Warehouse in Glasgow this year, a light-filled 24-hour venue with showers. Events include coffee mornings and talks by industry professionals. Resident (£225 per month) offers full-time access, a dedicated desk and storage unit, while Secondary (£105 per month) provides a hot desk three days per week. Both require a £30 sign-up fee and include free entry to events. Day passes cost £15. onegirlband.co.uk

Blooming Founders, London

Open to men and women but with a female focus, Blooming Founders was launched by Lu Li in 2015 to help budding female entrepreneurs to succeed through networking, co-working and a speaker series. It began as a meet-up event, and has since set up in two Shoreditch locations: its HQ on Curtain Road and a shared space at co-working hub Cocoon.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Tate director Maria Balshaw speaks at a Marguerite event; Blooming Founders Lu Li; a Congress London talk

Membership packages start from £30 plus VAT. Events include pitch days and masterclasses. The HQ has a terrace, and a small meeting room can be hired. bloomingfounders.com

NETWORKS

Marguerite, London

Named after Marguerite “Peggy” Guggenheim, this network for women in the arts was founded by Joanna Payne in 2015. It has more than 300 members and holds 40 events annually. Packages range from Outside the Bubble (£60 a year, no joining fee), providing access to the community, event transcriptions and a third off tickets, to Marguerite 1938 (£1,680, plus £450 joining fee), which gives unlimited access to events plus eight exclusive ones. margueritelondon.com

Congress London

Launched in 2016 by a group of women across multiple industries, Congress holds events on the last Tuesday of every month, alternating between sessions by industry experts and smaller group meet-ups, also known as Cliques. There’s no membership cost but events are priced at £5-£10. If you’re new to the network, Congress will introduce you to relevant members. A virtual

Clique provides support for non-Londoners. congress-london.com

TRAVEL PLATFORMS

She Travel

Anna-Liisa Tampuu, head of risk analysis at emergency response company Northcott Global Solutions, launched this members’ platform in July. It provides a space to ask questions on its region-specific forums, acquire travel advice from security analysts, or meet like-minded professionals at events worldwide. Country-risk overviews highlight threats, medical information, and traditions and customs. Group chats are women-only but men can attend events. Membership costs £60 per year for individuals; corporate packages start at £6,000. shetravel.co.uk

Maiden Voyage

Founded by Carolyn Pearson in 2008 as a social community for female travellers, this online platform now has 12,000 members from more than 100 countries and has launched a brand standard for certified female-friendly hotels. It offers travel tips and city guides, plus employer training. Individual membership free; corporate packages from £3,500. maiden-voyage.com **BT**

LUKE FULLALOVE

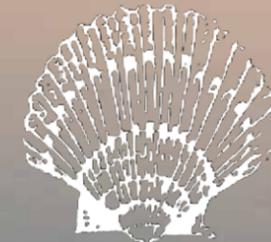
Want Nothing More.

The life you’ve always dreamed of exists - the wide beaches, the salty air, the time to dream bigger and play longer.

It’s the magic of **Kiawah Island, SC** and we’ll help you discover it. Dive in.



PAM HARRINGTON EXCLUSIVES



Real Estate Sales & Rentals

Kiawah Island • Seabrook Island • Historic Charleston

pamharringtonexclusives.com

Luxury Real Estate

843.768.3635

Kiawah Island
Vacation Rentals

843.768.0273

Seabrook Island
Vacation Rentals

843.768.0808

Home of the 2021 PGA Championship