



Only connect

How creative agency Bodega is reinventing the members' club.

On a warm autumn evening, a dozen or so guests have gathered for dinner at Maison Bodega, a restored early-20th-century mansion on the leafy fringes of Minneapolis. Tonight's meal is the first instalment of a new initiative of Bodega, a creative agency established in 2014 by Liz Gardner and Josef Harris.

Salonnière, named to evoke the salons of 18th-century France, is a modern take on a members' club. For a monthly subscription that begins at \$199 (€168), you can gain access to publications, an online hub and events such as tonight's nine-course French dinner. This meal is part of a conceptual series called *For the Corpse*, created with Los Angeles-based photographer Aubrey Devin.

"In the process of bringing our 100-year-old building back to life, we discovered that it had been home to several matriarchs who had facilitated creative and civic conversations," says Gardner. In the early 1900s, it hosted classes for women on managing their incomes; later it was a venue for readings of new plays and performances of pieces of jazz and classical music. "Salonnière felt like a natural extension of that history," says Gardner.



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Salonnière gives its events and subjects for discussion a theme that is updated every three months. Its membership largely comprises people from the creative and design industries but other sectors are also represented, says Harris. The goal is to start conversations and relationships. "We invite our audiences to spend time mulling and meandering," he says. "We felt that there was an opportunity to bring more information to the trends we're seeing. That would allow designers, business leaders and others to make better decisions."

The members' club has helped Bodega to reach a wider audience and find interesting projects. "It is crucial for entrepreneurs to understand new opportunities and it's vital for us to be multidisciplinary," says Mad Lenaburg, a designer at Bodega. "The relationship between Salonnière's digital hub and its events has allowed us to better understand our ideas. We hope those conversations and connections will ultimately move the culture forward." — TLE bodegaltd.com; salonnierepaper.com

Key takehome

Don't just start a business: start a community instead. By bringing people together through your brand, you will improve your project pipeline and develop your ideas further in the process.



The FROM THE EDITORS AND BUREAUX OF MONOCLE MAGAZINE ENTREPRENEURS

• THE BUSINESS HANDBOOK FOR PEOPLE WITH BRIGHT IDEAS

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The main thing is to use your head

That's what I call sitting pretty!

I'll lend a hand

I smell a gap in the market

My own pot of gold...

Ready? Come on in...

We're rising to the occasion



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