

# Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

## Motivate and Inspire

With Extraordinary  
Experiences in  
Faraway Places

PAGE 24

## Planning Family-Friendly Meetings

PAGE 12

Mary MacGregor,  
president of  
Site Global and  
vice president,  
account development,  
for Minneapolis-  
based BCD Meetings &  
Incentives, recently staged  
a meeting for corporate  
clients who combined serious  
business with leisure activities  
at Disneyland Paris (pictured).





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# Corporate & Incentive Travel

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*Attendees who arrive for a gala dinner at the Chateau de Chantilly are made to feel like royalty with this grand welcome. Chateau de Cantilly houses France's second most important art collection after the Louvre.*



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*When kids are on the agenda, planners can easily find engaging programs to keep them busy, such as this junior golf lesson at Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland.*

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## The Challenge of the Next 20 Years

Jonathan M. Tisch, chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels, believes the need to modernize America's aging transport infrastructure is the greatest need for the industry. In his opening remarks at the 33rd Annual NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference,



Tisch appealed to 1,800 tourism and hospitality industry leaders to band together and speak with one voice to help improve America's infrastructure. "As economies around the world mature and prosper, millions of additional people now have the means to travel — either for business or leisure. At this moment of incredible opportunity, the process of traveling is becoming more stressful, less convenient and more nerve-racking. When you take a step back and look at the big picture, you quickly realize the entire U.S. Hospitality and Travel industry faces a serious problem:

Our aging infrastructure simply cannot handle today's demand for travel," explains Tisch.

Moreover, Tisch calls for the modernization of our nation's airports "to fit both the needs of today's travelers and accommodate heightened security requirements."

Our cover story in this issue offers a glimpse of international destinations, including those that are improving their infrastructure to better accommodate meeting groups. For example, England is spending more than \$11 billion dollars to upgrade and expand light rail, subway and highway transportation systems, and build new Olympic meeting facilities, which will continue to serve groups after the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

According to the FutureWatch 2011 study by Meeting Professionals International, the number of meetings and events held in Europe by groups originating in the U.S. will grow 6 percent this year. That growth is expected to continue due to the resurgent global economy and the growth of multinational corporations. Gracing our cover this month, along with Sleeping Beauty's Castle at Disneyland Paris, is Mary MacGregor, president of Site Global and vice president, account development for Minneapolis, MN-based BCD Meetings & Incentives. She staged a 1,400-attendee global sales kickoff meeting for a major corporation at Disneyland Paris that took advantage of all that this "self-contained and exclusive resort" offered.

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher

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& Incentive Travel**  
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## KSL Resorts Takes Over Scottsdale's Montelucia Resort & Spa

SCOTTSDALE, AZ — KSL Resorts, the independent luxury resort management company, has announced that it has taken over management of the 293-room Montelucia Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, AZ, from InterContinental Hotels & Resorts. KSL Capital Partners acquired the resort from a syndicate of banks that had foreclosed on the property. KSL Resorts' portfolio includes La Costa Resort & Spa, Hotel del Coronado, Beach Village at the Del, Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa, Barton Creek Resort & Spa, Vail Mountain Lodge & Spa and The Homestead.

"One of our major objectives over the past few years was to re-enter the Arizona market with a marquis resort," said Scott Delacio, president and CEO of KSL Resorts. "We have had a long history in the Phoenix area managing The Arizona Biltmore from 2000 to 2006. We know this market well and believe KSL Resorts management will benefit the resort in its efforts to reach its full potential. Montelucia Resort is a beautiful property, and we are honored to be the stewards of yet another one-of-a-kind resort." While KSL Resorts now manages the resort, Montelucia will be designated an InterContinental Alliance Resort, a special marketing relationship. The resort will continue to welcome guests of the InterContinental family, including participants of their Priority Club Rewards and Ambassador Programs. [www.montelucia.com](http://www.montelucia.com)



Montelucia Resort & Spa.

## MEETING VALUES



### Eldorado Hotel & Spa, Santa Fe, NM.

Meeting Planners receive from one to four of the following perks based on the total number of room nights booked in 2011: five comp upgrades; five VIP amenities; comp meeting space with F&B minimum; 15 percent discount in Nidah Spa; 20 percent attrition; comp one-hour reception; two comp spa treatments. Valid for groups of 60 or more total room nights over select dates. Contact Director of Sales and Marketing Doug Libby, [dlibby@eldoradohotel.com](mailto:dlibby@eldoradohotel.com), 505-995-4566.

■ **Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.** The Get M.O.R.E. program, valid from now through December 31, 2011, includes five percent off rooms and catering revenue; double Marriott Rewards points; 1/35 comp guest room; 35 percent allowable guest room attrition; and free parking for all group attendees. 904-285-7777, [www.sawgrassmarriott.com](http://www.sawgrassmarriott.com)

■ **Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Kiawah Island, SC.** Planners are offered 1/25 villa; 1/25 villa upgrade; one gift certificate for two-night villa stay when booking program with minimum 50 villa room nights; Continental breakfast with contracted lunch and dinner based on 25 villa nights; 2010 pricing for 2011, all contracted F&B, private group banquet events; 10 percent off contracted golf and standard AV; comp meeting space and fitness center access. Summer meeting rates start at \$199; fall rates start at \$159. Rates are valid over select dates now through October 31, 2011. 800-576-1585, [www.kiawahresort.com](http://www.kiawahresort.com)

■ **Millennium Hotels and Resorts, New York, NY.** The Perfect 11 package, valid at Millennium Broadway and Millennium UN Plaza hotels, features 11 percent off the Day Meeting Package and AV equipment; 11 comp wireless Internet access; 11 comp incoming packages; 11 room upgrades; double airline miles for 11 guests. Bookings must be made and used between July 1, 2011 and August 31, 2011 and must include a minimum of 50 Day Meeting Packages. Guest room perks require 25 booked guest rooms. Contact Persida Mitic at [pmitic@mill-usa.com](mailto:pmitic@mill-usa.com), 212-702-5004. Meeting package code for both hotels: 11NYCP11.

## Norwegian Cruise Line Launches Website for Meetings Partners

MIAMI, FL — Norwegian Cruise Line recently launched several new tools to support meeting planners in exploring and booking meetings, incentive groups and corporate events (MICE) aboard its fleet of 11 Freestyle Cruising ships. A new MICE-dedicated website was launched to meet the needs of

meeting and incentive groups as well as full ship charters. A planning brochure contains a pull-out fleet guide that provides a comprehensive comparison of group space and options for each of Norwegian's 11 ships.

In addition to the new website

and collateral, the Norwegian MICE team has been visiting key markets, including New York City and Atlanta in a series of educational seminars, which showcase how MICE groups are valuable for travel partners and demonstrate the best way to attract them. Upcoming MICE events are scheduled in Chicago and Toronto. [www.events.ncl.com](http://www.events.ncl.com)

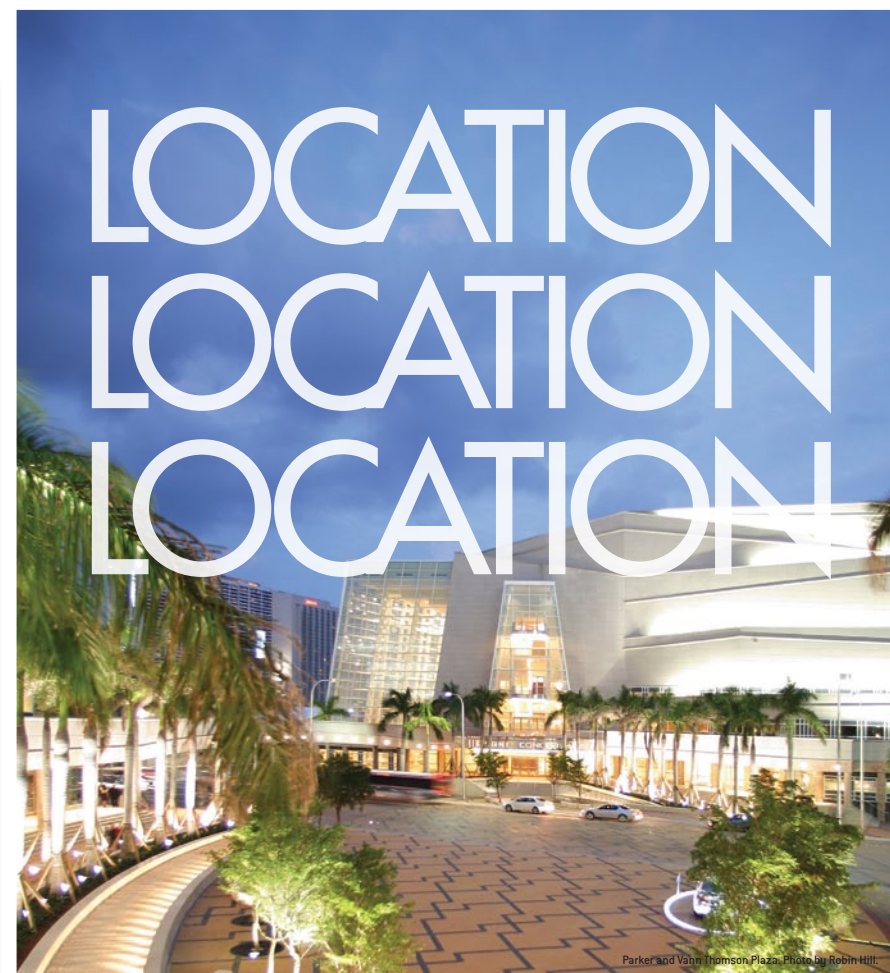
## In Memoriam: Hank Kostas

Hank Kostas, who for 29 years served as regional vice president at BI Performance Services, a Minneapolis-based company that designs corporate award and recognition programs, passed away on Tuesday, May 24. Most recently, he was an independent management consulting professional in the greater New York City area. An accomplished, competitive golfer who scored three holes-in-one, Mr. Kostas will be fondly remembered as one of the best "A" players at hospitality industry golf tournaments. Donations in memory of Mr. Kostas may be sent to Myeloproliferative Disorders Research Fund at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, to the attention of Dr. Ronald Hoffman, 1 Gustav Levy Place, New York, NY, 10029.

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# Events Calendar

**JULY 20-22, 2011**

**DMAI 97TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

Sheraton New Orleans Hotel  
New Orleans, LA  
202-296-7888  
www.destinationmarketing.org

**JULY 23-26, 2011**

**MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL  
WORLD EDUCATION CONGRESS**

Orange County Convention Center  
Orlando, FL  
Contact: 972-702-3053  
www.mpiweb.org

**AUGUST 4-6, 2011**

**ISES EVENTWORLD 2011**

St. Louis Union Station Marriott  
St. Louis, MO  
Contact: 312-321-6853  
http://ew.ises.com

**AUGUST 6-9, 2011**

**ASAE ANNUAL MEETING & EXPOSITION**

America's Center Convention Complex  
St. Louis, MO  
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**SEPTEMBER 7-8, 2011**

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& EVENT TECHNOLOGY EXPO**

Walter E. Washington Convention Center  
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**OCTOBER 4-6, 2011**

**THE MOTIVATION SHOW (IT&ME)**

McCormick West  
Chicago, IL  
630-434-7779  
www.motivationshow.com

**OCTOBER 11-13, 2011**

**IMEX AMERICA**

Sands Expo at the  
Venetian/Palazzo Hotel  
Las Vegas, NV  
Contact: +44 1273 227311  
www.imexamerica.com

**OCTOBER 13-15, 2011**

**SITE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Bellagio  
Las Vegas, NV  
Contact: 312-321-5148  
www.siteglobal.com

## Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem Hotel Debuts



*Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem.*

BETHLEHEM, PA — The new Sands Hotel at the Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem opened in May. The largest full-service hotel in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, the 300-room Sands Hotel has more than 5,000 sf of meeting space, 3,000 sf of prefunction and exhibit space, an indoor pool, fitness room and complimentary Continental breakfast. Guest rooms will feature wireless Internet, media hubs and flat-screen HD televisions. "In-Room Dining from Emeril's Kitchen," an exclusive in-room private dining service for hotel guests by chef and restaurateur Emeril Lagasse is a new concept offering breakfast, lunch and dinner, along with special selections from the menus of Lagasse's three resort restaurants located at the Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem. [www.pasands.com](http://www.pasands.com)

## Peckinpaugh Named President of Maritz

ST. LOUIS, MO — David Peckinpaugh, former vice president of business development for HelmsBriscoe, was appointed president of Maritz Travel Company, a global leader in meetings, events and incentive travel, located in St. Louis, MO. Peckinpaugh assumes his role June 13 and will be responsible for the leadership, strategic vision and general management of Maritz Travel. Interim president Jane Herod will continue to serve as Maritz Travel's chief operating officer, expanding her current leadership role within the business.



PECKINPAUGH

"Dave is an experienced meeting professional who has served the industry for more than 20 years. He has the expertise to move Maritz forward, better helping our clients drive more growth, performance and engagement with their employees, channel partners and customers through the effective use of meetings, events and incentive travel programs," said Steve Maritz, chairman and CEO. "Dave's strong track record of results in managing a complex business plus leadership roles with various hoteliers and resorts, gives him a solid understanding of what makes the participant experience engaging, a critical element in driving the performance of people." Prior to HelmsBriscoe, Peckinpaugh served as president and CEO of the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau and the chief marketing officer of Experient Inc. [www.maritz.com](http://www.maritz.com)

## Walt Disney Family Museum Hosts Meeting Planners

ANAHEIM, CA — The Disney Destinations Sales team hosted Northern California-area meeting professionals for a special event at The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco on May 24. Joe Rohde, senior vice president and creative executive at Walt Disney Imagineering, provided an insider's look at Aulani, a Disney Resort and Spa, which will open August 29 on the island of Oahu. Walt Disney's daughter, Diane Disney-Miller, also made a special appearance, personally welcoming the group to the museum. *Left to right:* Randy Garfield, executive vice president, Worldwide Sales and Travel Operations, Disney Destinations, and president, Walt Disney Travel Company; Joe Rohde; Diane Disney-Miller; Jennifer Miller-Goff, Walt Disney's granddaughter; and Robert Donahue, director, resort sales and services, Disneyland Resort. [disneymeetings.com](http://disneymeetings.com)



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Michael Colombo

# Apps Reign in the Kingdom of Content

## The Internet Age Has Given Way to Its Heir Apparent — the Age of Apps

**T**he Internet Age cliché, “Content is King,” sounds about as relevant today as Netscape is to the browser wars. We live in a new era. The Internet Age has given way to its heir apparent, the Age of Apps, and now content is only one element in a much richer experience that extends far beyond the printed page, the television screen and even the Web browser.

The “Content is King” cliché holds as a core premise that there are a limited number of content distribution channels, and so usage is directly related to the value of the content being distributed.

While Web 2.0 delivered an excess of new tools and resources for creating and distributing content online, there was really only one new distribution channel that needed to be considered — the Web browser. Today, however, the content consumption experience is changing significantly at an abrupt pace.

### The New Connected Experience

In the short term, the changes impacting how people interact with digital content will undoubtedly come in the forms of ubiquitous broadband connectivity, exciting new devices, and the addicting applications and services that are being used on them. Of those three, it is the applications that will be at the center of the connected experience. The best networks, along with the best devices will be the ones that provide a great platform for applications and then get out of the way. As an example, the success of Apple’s i-devices is in many ways about how transparent the hardware is. The iPhone has three buttons...the rest is apps.

Those i-devices have already driven more than 10 billion mobile application downloads, but that’s just the birth of the movement. The number of mobile applications downloaded globally across devices is going to rise to 60 billion by 2013 according to some forecasts. In emerging markets such as Russia, revenue from mobile apps has already outgrown handset revenue.

Although apps are the context for digital content, an application’s success has as much to do with the experience that it delivers as it does the content it contains. Many applications deliver similar content, but few rise to the surface of the app stores.

### Thinking Beyond the Browser

The kingdom of content is vast, and while it certainly includes consumer content — music, movies, books, news, social chatter, etc. — it also includes business content. Some of this business content, such as market research or financial data, might be the product of the business providing it while other content, such as sales and marketing information, is distributed internally to empower sales.

As more and more sales reps are equipped with smartphones and tablets, B2B app stores will become largely filled with sales enablement and customer relationship management applications that will redefine the sales conversation in the Age of Apps. In virtually any scenario you can think of, someone will need to open an app for you to make a sale.

### Reigning Over the Kingdom of Content

So, what is a good app strategy? It be-

gins with the app store. The user experience is the “product” that goes into the app store, not the content. While content is a critical component of the experience, a real premium needs to be placed on both designing and engineering memorable and seamless experiences.

Delivering a world-class experience is only half of the strategy though. Equal focus needs to be paid to your access strategy. It is not just about the apps that you make, but it is also about the apps that other developers are making. If third parties can easily access your content, then your content becomes more valuable to them. Whether

that would enable staff to create custom Web-based movies on the fly, showcasing Marriott properties and area attraction for corporate customers. Unable to find an off-the-shelf solution, they developed the Marriott “Flash on the Fly” application — a first in the hospitality industry. Now both technical and non-technical sales staff can easily build customized, engaging presentations that tell the Marriott story while maintaining a consistency of brand and message.

### Get Ready for the Age of Apps

As apps are rendering obsolete every-

*The number of mobile applications downloaded globally across devices is going to rise to 60 billion by 2013 according to some forecasts.*

or not you will be featured in the next “killer app” depends on both the demand for your content, as well as its availability to developers. In the Age of Apps, often the latter trumps the former. Today, developers are a new audience for you and a potential partner in your business. You need to make sure you are meeting their needs.

### Flash on the Fly Brings Worldwide Properties to Local Audiences

Take Marriott for example. Recognizing that meeting planners and corporate travel advisers operate on a global scale, the company was looking for a sophisticated and state-of-the-art sales enablement tool

thing from record stores and bookstores to local libraries, they will also relegate spreadsheets, floor plans and catering menus to the back office of business communications. Both the rise in wireless connectivity and the enormous array of new connected devices will put apps — mobile, Web, tablet, TV, etc. — at the heart of the user experience, whether those users are consumers, business customers or sales professionals.

Applications will provide the context for consuming content of all kinds, and those who deliver the most compelling context will better engage their target audiences. They are the ones who will reign in the Age of Apps.

C&IT

*Michael Colombo is Partner and the CEO at Maark, a strategic and interactive B2B marketing agency headquartered in Boston, MA. Contact Colombo at mcolombo@maark.com, or visit www.maark.com*



## Planning Kid-Friendly Meetings

“Family Matters” isn’t just the title of a popular sitcom from the ’90s. It has become a rallying cry of sorts for companies that have seen the advantages of allowing attendees to bring their spouses and kids to meetings.

“Clearly over the last few years, this trend has started to emerge more and more,” explains Mike Lyons, executive vice president of AMR Meetings & Incentives located in Newtown Square, PA. “I think part of that is because family/life/career balance becomes such an issue for all of us who are kind of connected 24/7. I think there has become more of a guilt factor, and I think that companies are becoming more lenient about the fact that it makes sense to be able to bring family members along, particularly if they can extend the trip or come to the meeting destination before the meeting.

“What’s great about that is that once the meeting participant comes out of the meeting, they can immediately hook up

## Family Matters

with the rest of the family,” he continues. “The agendas now are being adjusted slightly so the families might have one night on their own completely free so that they can go off and do their thing. This is particularly true if they’re in a place like Orlando.”

### Only in Orlando

With its wide choice of meeting properties and host of theme parks operated by Disney, SeaWorld and Universal



A butterbeer break at Hogwarts Castle: Universal Orlando Resort’s meetings and events team customizes family-friendly themed events at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Studios, Orlando is a popular choice for family-friendly meetings. And a new player is soon coming to town. Legoland Florida, a 150-acre theme park, is slated to open in the fall in Winter Haven, just 30 miles from Walt Disney World.

Visit Orlando, the marketing arm of the Orlando Convention & Visitors Bureau, makes it easy for planners to promote a family-friendly agenda. The orga-

nization will develop a free website that attendees can visit to get details about the meeting’s schedule, registration and housing as well as information on the area’s attractions. Visit Orlando also can make the Orlando Magicard available to attendees. The card, which is valid for up to six people, offers discounts at 67 businesses, including restaurants, attractions, golf courses and shopping malls.

### Sweet Success

If there’s one word that’s sure to make families sit up and take notice, it’s “Hershey,” and Hershey, PA, offers plenty of sweet options for family-friendly meetings. The area offers two meeting properties. The 665-room Hershey Lodge features 100,000 sf of function

as well.” The Hotel Hershey offers both an indoor pool and a children’s wading pool. The hotel also regularly hosts family activities such as s’mores roasts and chocolate bingo.

### A Spellbinding Experience

Jodi Swailes, senior buyer-geographic

“Scotland offered more of the ‘Hogwarts’ feel — rolling countryside, imposing castles, as well as the home of the author J.K. Rowling.”

Jodi Swailes, Senior Buyer-Geographic Specialist  
ITA Group, West Des Moines, IA



space, and The Hotel Hershey offers 278 guest rooms, 23,500 sf of meeting space and The Chocolate Spa, which is sure to be a spouse-pleaser with its calorie-free Cocoa Massage.

The Hershey area also offers a wide range of attractions and special event venues, including the Hersheypark theme park, the Giant Center sports arena, Hershey’s Chocolate World, an antique auto museum and Hershey Gardens. Planners even can arrange for their groups to get a visit from a Hershey character such as a walking Hershey’s bar or Hershey’s Kiss. The area is also home to the Hershey Leadership & Development Center, which offers team-building activities such as geocaching, kayaking and fly fishing.

Donna Falk, owner of Travel Concepts in Oakhurst, NJ, booked a family-friendly meeting for an electrical industry group at The Hotel Hershey. She explained why her client felt it was important to allow attendees to bring their families. “Seeing their families and children having fun tends to relax the participants. If the children are happy, all is well.”

She described some of the factors that she looks for in a family-friendly property. “We like to have an indoor pool for the children, along with some activities,

specialist for ITA Group located in West Des Moines, IA, is planning a positively magical program as the second leg of an August incentive program for an automotive client. The Harry Potter-themed program, which will include 22–25 families, will start out in London then head to Scotland for a two-night stay at the Gleneagles Hotel, a five-star, 232-room golf and spa resort set on 850 acres in the beautiful Perthshire countryside. The hotel is conveniently located within an hour’s drive of both the Glasgow and Edinburgh airports.

Swailes explained why Scotland was a good fit for her client. “It worked as a nice split with London because it has easy access by train and went along with the theme of this particular program. So besides all the sites they will see in London, Scotland offered more of the ‘Hogwarts’ feel — rolling countryside, imposing castles, as well as the home of the author J.K. Rowling.”

The group will take its own “Hogwarts Express” to its “castle,” a.k.a. the Gleneagles. “Its location in the countryside is a complete departure from the program in London, and the hotel offered a lot of activities that would appeal to families,” Swailes states. These activities include family lessons in falconry and archery. “The hotel also came up with some great ideas for activities onsite that had a Harry Potter twist to them,” Swailes adds. Magic workshops and broom-making classes are among the activities the hotel will offer for the group’s budding wizards.

The Gleneagles is also home to three of Scotland’s top championship golf courses as well as The Spa at Gleneagles. The resort offers a choice of 13 private rooms for events.

If Scotland is too far afield, consider the wildly popular Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort. Universal’s meetings and events team can



Scotland’s Gleneagles Hotel offers a full agenda of family activities including falconry lessons.

By Karen Brost



arrange customized Harry Potter-themed events in the Wizarding World, located in Universal Studios, as well other as other themed events in its other park, Islands of Adventure. All themed events can be designed to include family members of all ages. Groups can receive exclusive tickets that allow them to enjoy the parks within the time constraints imposed by their meetings. Universal Express allows onsite hotel guests to bypass regular lines for attractions, rides and shows.

### Hawaii's Family Values

Hawaii is another family-friendly destination, a fact that certainly hasn't escaped the attention of Disney, a company that knows a thing or two about keeping kids happy. This August, Disney is scheduled to unveil Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, in the Ko Olina resort community on the western shore of



Celebrating a construction milestone at the new Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa in Ko Olina, Hawaii, construction workers and staff assembled in Mickey Mouse formation on the beach fronting the resort. Aulani is scheduled to open on August 29.

ing meetings, kids will enjoy spending time at Auntie's Beach House, a 5,200-sf kids' club offering wildlife and nature programs, traditional Hawaiian games, vid-



"Clearly over the last few years, this trend has started to emerge more and more. I think part of that is because family/life/career balance becomes such an issue for all of us who are kind of connected 24/7."

**Mike Lyons**, Executive Vice President  
AMR Meetings & Incentives, Newtown Square, PA

Oahu, approximately 17 miles from Honolulu International Airport.

The new resort will feature 830 rooms and villas and 50,000 sf of function space, including the 15,000-sf Aulani Conference Center. It also will have four restaurants, two lounges and an 18,000-sf spa. While mom or dad is off attend-

eo games, arts and crafts and, of course, Disney movies. "Auntie" is a title of respect given to all elder women in Hawaii.

Also located on Oahu, The Kahala Hotel & Resort has introduced "The Kahala Family Values Connecting Rooms Plan" to allow families to spread out between two spacious rooms. The oceanfront luxury resort, which is tucked away in a quiet residential neighborhood 10 minutes from Waikiki, also offers evening babysitting services as well as the Keiki Club, which provides supervised full-day and half-day programs for kids. The

Kahala, which features 306 guest rooms, 32 suites and 24,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space, is also home to the Dolphin Quest Encounter, which makes it possible for guests to experience the thrill of swimming with Atlantic bottlenose dolphins in the resort's natural lagoon.

### Customized Kid-Sitting

So once attendees have been given a green light to bring their kids, how do you keep them occupied while the meetings are going on? Lyons has found an answer. "I've worked in the past with a company out in California called KiddieCorp," he explains. "The woman who is the president of that company has found a really great niche." KiddieCorp, which is headquartered in San Diego, specializes in providing supervised activities for kids in a safe, secure setting so parents can attend their meetings worry-free. The organization primarily organizes programs for kids ages six months to 12 years and has been in business for 25 years. The programs, which are provided onsite at the hotel, resort or convention center, are customized based on the specific needs and schedule requirements of the client.

KiddieCorp's president, Christine Tempesta, described some of the trends

KiddieCorp designs customized childrens' programs for corporate groups at hotels and convention centers.



Photo courtesy of KiddieCorp

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she is seeing in planning family-friendly activities. “Probably as much as ever, safety is a big concern. We’ve always given out references, but I see more of an interest in actually checking them out. Groups are also looking at our insurance more carefully. Instead of just ‘do you have insurance?’ they want to know the limits and what it covers. I think all of that due diligence is really important.”

“People are still budget conscious,” she continues, “but I get the impression that if people feel they’re getting a good value, they’re not nickel and diming. They just want a complete package. They want to know, ‘Are the kids going to have a great time? Is your staff experienced? What situations have you been in? Have you done programs exactly like ours?’”

KiddieCorp provides a variety of program options. Currently, some of the most popular choices are those that relate to the environment or recycling. For example, the staff might take kids on an eco-friendly scavenger hunt or help them create a mural in the shape of the group’s corporate logo. “The kids will glue on recyclables like water bottle caps onto it so it looks really cool from a distance,” Tempesta explains. “We’ve even had them take a mural into the closing reception to show what the kids have done.”

KiddieCorp is very security-conscious and maintains strict procedures for checking kids in and out of the program. Check-in stations are strategically located so that no one can slip by unnoticed. “Parents appreciate that,” Tempesta adds.

Connie Gutierrez, CMP, is director of meetings for Meetings and Concierges Source LLC in Scottsdale, AZ. She has worked with KiddieCorp to provide child care services for the franchisee meetings she plans for her client The Little Gym.

“The Little Gym offers gyms for children, so the headquarters does encour-

age the attendees to bring their children,” she notes. “Plus, it’s usually a husband and wife that own a gym, so they’re going to have their kids with them.” She explained that offering the KiddieCorp program allows both parents to focus on the meeting while avoiding the need to bring a grandparent along. “They’re great to work with. It’s a great addition to any group that has children involved.”

For its most recent program, The Little Gym chose KiddieCorp’s “Around the World with Friends” theme, where kids learn to say “hello” in several languages while they learn about different countries. “They brought toys and props from different regions so that the kids get a taste of what’s going on,” Gutierrez explains. “When I went to check on the kids, there was this little 2-year-old running round with this huge sombrero on. I could not stop laughing. He looked hilarious!”

The meeting was held at the 378-room DoubleTree Paradise Valley Resort in Scottsdale. The Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired resort features 40,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space.

The Little Gym program included kids from three months of age to 12, but Gutierrez explained that KiddieCorp also can plan activities for older kids. “They’re really good about providing games and video games for the older children, as well. They select what games are played so they know they are kid-friendly and appropriate.”

The foodservice provider Sysco Los Angeles Inc. in Walnut, CA, has been working with KiddieCorp for the past 14 years to provide child care services at its trade show.

“They don’t advertise that they have child care,” Tempesta explains, “but they don’t allow kids on

the show floor, so the attendees can be more focused. The vendors really like it because they’re not asked to dodge kids.”

She described another advantage of offering child care at trade shows. “If a family does bring their kids, or didn’t pay attention to the preshow instructions, they won’t be turned away. They’re still welcome. Most of them are very happy to bring their kids over to us.”

Tempesta noted that some clients will set up their child care centers in an awkward space on the trade show floor that no exhibitor would want. “We’ve even gotten little white picket fencing,” she says. “It’s so convenient because it’s right on the show floor. People can go by and see the child care. I love seeing their faces because they think it’s just a novelty.”

Offering child care has advantages to the sponsoring organization, as well. “It gives people a good feeling about who they’re being sponsored by,” Tempesta notes.

### Chain Gangs

Other options for arranging child care during meetings are the built-in kids’ camp programs offered by many of the major hotel chains. For example, the

**Loews Loves Kids** program offered by Loews Hotels provides supervised recreational activities for kids. Parents can choose from morning, afternoon, all day and evening sessions.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts offers the **Love Your Family** program at its meeting hotels and resorts. The program can include fireside storytelling, stargazing and dive-in movies.

Hyatt has teamed up with National Geographic Kids to provide **Camp Hyatt** at selected properties. The program offers eco-friendly activities, animal crafts, photo safaris and locally themed activities such as hula dancing lessons in Hawaii and searches for Native American arrowheads in Texas.

**Marriott** also offers kid-friendly program at many of its resorts. For example, the Marco Island Marriott Beach Resort in Florida offers the “Tiki Tribe,” a program designed to keep kids ages 5–12 busy with fun activities such as scavenger hunts, pizza parties, and arts and crafts. The JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa in Thailand offers separate programs for tots and teens. The younger ones can participate in the supervised Little Turtles Activities Program while teens can watch movies, play video games, play pool or table tennis, or enjoy other activities that set them apart from the little kids.

Westin Hotels & Resorts offers the **Westin Kids Club Discovery Room** onsite at all Westin resorts to provide supervised activities for kids ages 4–12. Kids who are registered for the program receive a special “Discovery Pack” filled with items such as a disposable camera, canteen and a collectible travel passport.

### Bringing Up the Kids

Lyons feels that it’s the planners who should bring up the subject of family-friendly meetings to the decision-makers who are calling the meeting. “Rather than waiting for that V.P. of sales or V.P. of marketing to think of it on their own, I think it’s incumbent on the meeting professionals to say to their folks who are

putting these things together from a content standpoint, ‘One of the things that we’re seeing in our industry more and more is that some of our peer companies are actually inviting family members so that it helps with their work/life balance.’”

“Keep in mind that these V.P.s who are making these decisions also have families and probably, because of their positions and titles, they are the ones who are traveling a lot themselves,” he continues. “I’m sure they get some heat from their spouse and their kids, saying ‘daddy or mommy, you’re gone all the time.’ For them to say, ‘We’re having a meeting, it’s going to be in Orlando, we’re going to allow people to bring their family, and we’re going to have stuff for you guys to do while we’re off at the meeting,’ would be extremely well received. Meeting planners should be floating these ideas to those people

so they can say, ‘Good idea! That will go over big in my household!’”

Lyons summed up the advantages of inviting spouses and kids to tag along to meetings. “First of all, the company comes off as being a sensitive company, a family-friendly company that’s not just all about work. That gets big points for the company itself, and hopefully, it helps retain employees because they’ve got family-friendly policies in place. The feedback from the families is going to be extremely positive, because they get to spend time with that parent who is off and traveling a lot. Now they can say, ‘We get to be there when dad or mom is working at this meeting and we get to stay in the same room in the hotel, we get to share some meals, and boy, the company was great because they put together some activities for us.’ It’s a win-win across the board.”

C&IT



“The Little Gym offers gyms for children, so the headquarters does encourage the attendees to bring their children.”

Connie Gutierrez, CMP, Director of Meetings  
Meetings and Concierges Source, Scottsdale, AZ

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# As the Pendulum Swings



## Negotiating the Ups and Downs from a Buyer's to a Seller's Market

When it comes to negotiations between planners and hotels, the ground has shifted as a result of the slowly recovering economy — but how much?

While planners and hotel executives agree that what has been a spectacular buyer's market (for those who were still able to hold meetings) has modified somewhat, the fact is that hotels are still having trouble getting rates back to pre-recession levels and that planner buying power remains significant.

A recent report from the Global Business Travel Association projected travel prices in 2011 to increase between 2 percent and 4 percent; it also shows

that group travel rose 6 percent in 2010 and should rise 7 percent in 2011.

For now, that is not enough to swing power back to the suppliers. However, many observers on both sides believe that is not going to last much longer as availability tightens and rates creep up.

"The pendulum has shifted toward a seller's market," says Michelle Johnson, Chief Gathering Officer of C3 in Stratham, NH, who cautions, "It's important for suppliers to understand that when it was a buyer's market, we wanted the conversation to be one way. I hope the relationship survives that. During the downturn, I drove hard on

concessions, but not on rate. I didn't think it was a service to anybody to go to a luxury resort and get a \$129 rate just because I could. It was not in the best interests of our clients either because they would think they could get that rate again."

Ginny Morrison, vice president of sales and marketing for Lane Hospitality, a development and management company, says, "I still think that from the corporate meeting perspective, it's a pretty aggressive

situation out there. While the corporate transient business has rebounded very nicely, the group and meeting end is still pretty sketchy. We're still out there in the trenches fighting for what we can. The good news for planners is that they still have negotiating power.

"Planners have become very savvy," says Morrison. "We have taught them well as far as negotiating aggressively. Also, they have so much more information, so many more electronic tools. They can find out fairly quickly what other people are paying."

But, Morrison adds, "Planners are on a tight budget themselves. The economy is recovering but there is still instability out there because of what's going on in the world."

Courtney Lowe, director of sales and marketing at Woodstock Inn & Resort in Woodstock, VT, agrees that the transient business is coming back, adding, "Once you get the transients, then groups will follow. When demand builds we will start asking for rate."

Lowe says that his sales managers have been charged with understanding costs more than they used to. "When we were getting high rates," he says, "we didn't pay as much attention. Now

we need to make sure we are bringing in the right type of business that will drive revenue."

Chris Gaia, vice president of marketing at Maritz Travel, says the trend for rates overall in the group space is upward, adding, "We've seen rates firm, depending on the market. What we've been counseling clients is that if they can bundle some projects, that might work out well."

"We are seeing availability getting tighter," Gaia continues, "and hotels are getting more sticky on holding to their hold periods. They would hang on with you for three to six weeks, but not any longer."

One heartening note: Michael Dominguez, vice president of global marketing for Loews Hotels, says, "I've never seen better partnerships between planners and suppliers as in this recession. It's not that the concessions weren't heavy, but within the market we had it was acceptable." But now, says Dominguez, "costs are increasing dramatically and rates will have to grow. It's still tough but it's getting better because people want to meet."

Still, says Dominguez, "Pressures are facing everybody. You have a planner who has been getting rocking deals for a couple of years; now they have to go to their bosses and explain that the same meeting will cost 20 percent more this time."

In another positive sign, Greg Malark, COO of HelmsBriscoe, a large meetings management firm in Scottsdale, says that his company had a record month in March in terms of meetings and room nights booked; it was also a record for a non-December. "Demand is increasing," says Malark, "and hotels are responding with slight price increases and certainly less flexibility on terms and conditions."

Despite that, says Malark, "caution is in the air as planners are waiting until the last minute to finalize a contract."

And Malark agrees that "It's a great time to be signing multiyear deals, particularly if you need a lot of space; rates will be going up and flexibility down."

But Johnson cautions, "We had a client last year with a multiyear bundle. They were acquired by another company which didn't like the multiyear contract. We were able to get out of it because of the acquisition. When you bundle, the corporation should know what they're getting into; you usually can't go back and renegotiate."

As with business in general, relationships are key in all this. Says Johnson, "We pride



**Ginny Morrison**, Vice President of Sales and Marketing  
Lane Hospitality, Northbrook, IL

ourselves on working with vendors; we do not mark up vendor costs. If we get 30 percent off, our clients get 30 percent off."

### Market Matters

"What we have seen nationally," says Dominguez, "is 'literally a tale of two coasts. The West Coast will not recover until Las Vegas does. Las Vegas has dumped so much inventory into the market that anybody meeting on the West Coast will have to explain to their bosses why they're not going to Las Vegas. There are a few exceptions, especially Los Angeles because of the all the downtown development which allows them to do citywides that they could not do before."

On the other hand, says Dominguez, New York is back in terms of pricing power.

Morrison agrees. "It does depend on what part of the country and what time of year. We have 17 hotels all over the country — and some regions are recovering better. Places like the mid-Atlantic are still very competitive, and slower government business has a lot to do with that."

And Gaia says that planners have to look to the market in a broader way — including airlift. "Lift is a big deal," he says. "You can get a great rate but it's no use if you can't get your people there."

### Cutting Concessions

During the recession, hotels did their best to maintain rates by adding value options that stressed food and beverage, and other amenities. According to Morrison, "We have focused a lot

***"Planners have become very savvy. We have taught them well as far as negotiating aggressively. Also, they have so much more information, so many more electronic tools. They can find out fairly quickly what other people are paying."***

on value and trying to understand the planner's needs. We will put together a package based on that. Most of our properties do have a value-added package that includes breaks, AV, free high-speed Internet. If it's not in the package, we can work with them to help them out."

Proving the continuing toughness of the market, some hotels are being unusually creative in reaching out to planners. Loews recently rolled out a Loews Service Guarantee that, upon the signing of a contract, the planner will be given a direct phone number to Jack Adler, president and COO, to be used if the planner is in any way dissatisfied with their group's experience at any Loews property.

Lowe at Woodstock, says, "In the last couple of years we got really creative when it comes to value added. A lot of those things will carry forward — especially those items that are not much of

By Harvey Chipkin



a cost to us but that benefit planners. Those are the kinds of things we learned about over the last couple of years.

"When it comes to negotiations," says Lowe, "we have to be more re-

leisure time to attendees — saving money while making attendees happy."

Gaia says it's always good to know the financial shape of a hotel — as well as the market in which it's located. "We

***"Terms and conditions are getting harder to negotiate. Things that were simply thrown in as part of the package are now back on the table."***



**Chris Gaia**  
Vice President, Marketing  
Maritz Travel  
Fenton, MO

spend a lot of time," he says, "with hotels and brands talking about refurbishings, openings, and we have an extensive review of our trip reports. If these hotels have had financial pressure, we can go back to them and work something out."

In the toughest years of late 2008 and 2009, says Andrew Labetti, general manager of The Benjamin in New York City, "there was a lot of waiving of meeting room rental; now we are able to charge again. Usually we did that when it was attached to rooms business."

And sometimes concessions are driven by circumstance. Says Johnson, "We had an event in Boston, and 30 days out the lobby was under major construction and was not complete when we got there. We ended up with 10,000 extra meeting planner points for the client; and 50 percent off a reception cost."

### Booking-Window Watching

Some planners believe that booking windows have shortened permanently, which will have a significant impact on negotiations from now on. In general, says Gaia, "Our message is that this market has become comfortable with being short-cycled and reactive; We are trying to



**Greg Malark, COO**  
HelmsBriscoe, Scottsdale, AZ

***"It's a great time to be signing multiyear deals, particularly if you need a lot of space; rates will be going up and flexibility down."***

get people to understand that the short cycle is about to change."

That doesn't mean the windows will remain as short as they have been. Says Dominguez, "We are hearing that the booking windows are finally starting to grow. Once that happens our pace will start to look better. With booking windows moving further out we will gain pricing power. Also, the fact that there is no luxury product in the pipeline also will help with pricing power."

### From Heads in Beds to Bedbugs

The long economic downturn does not seem to have brought permanent changes to contractual issues, but may have planners looking more closely at "standard" clauses.

Lowe says contracts have been evolving for a while, mostly because of legal changes. As far as attrition, says Lowe, "Planners have for the most part been very good at estimating blocks; they really know what they're going to need so attrition has minimized for us. They simply don't want the hassle of negotiating that. If they do underbook we will give them more rooms at the agreed on rate."

"In the old days," says Labetti, "attrition was a rigid policy; now it's more flexible. That's because of the uncertainty of the market and the short booking windows."

Says Morrison, "I know a lot of companies which have set contracts that they're sending us. They say, 'Here is

our attrition policy and that's what it is.' However, we are willing to negotiate. The reality is that the booking window is short so attrition is less of an issue. However, if a planner is worried about it they should bring it up right off the bat."

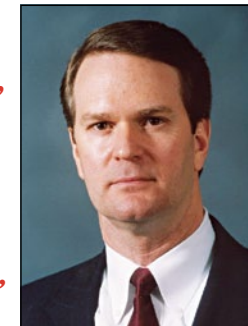
When it came to attrition over the last 18 months, says Dominguez, "history meant nothing because it was such an unusual situation.

That's why it's important to communicate early and frequently. Even if there's a hint that more rooms might be needed, the planner should let the hotel know."

"Attrition policies are better," says Johnson. "Planners are simply not going to sign contracts until everything is confirmed. We should just get used to this situation because it is not going to change back to the way it was. It's not just a trend anymore."

Some issues have arisen that are not typical and frequently not covered in contracts. Ben Tesdahl, an attorney in Washington, DC, who works with planners, says that one potential is-

***"There is something new all the time: bedbugs, the disease of the day, whatever. Some hotels will honor those and consider them force majeure and some won't. Bedbugs for one are usually not covered; you would have to build that into the force majeure."***



**Ben Tesdahl, Esq.,**  
Powers, Pyles, Sutter & Verville, P.C., Washington, DC

sue involves hotels that have gone into receivership. He explains, "The hotel you booked a few years ago is now on shaky ground and might not be quite the same hotel you thought it was. Your contract may or may not cover that. It may only let you out if they have filed for bankruptcy."

That issue is still worth thinking about, says Tesdahl, who adds, "The recession is not really over. If gas goes to \$5 a gallon the economy could dip again. I would think about building a clause about your rights if there is receivership situation."

Another recession-related issue says Tesdahl, involves rates that actually decline after a meeting is booked. He says that a planner should be able to contact for a lower rate if the hotel's rate goes down.

Despite the severity of the economic crunch, says Tesdahl, it really does not

fit the force majeure category of "events beyond your control." He explains, "You would have to fight pretty hard to get something like that approved. However you should try thinking of anything that might go wrong. Say there's a fuel shortage, and people can't get to a meeting. That should be considered."

And, says Tesdahl, "There is something new all the time: bedbugs, the disease of the day, whatever. Some hotels will honor those and consider them force majeure and some won't. Bedbugs for one are usually not covered; you would have to build that into the force majeure."

Tesdahl says legal advice can be a

35 emails about rooms. It's a huge benefit that I don't even have to pay for; HelmsBriscoe works out its own deal with the hotel."

Malark says there is no standard HelmsBriscoe contract because "clients are concerned about different things. We have standard contractual clauses and agreements, but every meeting we buy is on a one-off basis and is customized to that meeting."

### Perennial Power Positions

No matter the economic cycle, some principles stand when it comes to negotiating power. One is day of arrival.

Says Morrison, "Sundays and Thursdays are still golden days; they are traditionally slower. Also, if the length of stay pattern is well suited to the specific hotels, the planner will have a huge advantage. The planner should be straight up and say they're looking for an opportunity to save."

Labetti at The Benjamin says, "If a meeting is coming in Sunday for a Monday meeting, we will be more apt to put in some concessions."

Another perennial power position stems from booking rooms rather than simply meeting space. Says Morrison, "If you're going to book 100 rooms for four nights with large F&B, you will get a really good value."

Similarly, booking a series of meetings at the same property or same-branded hotels will create volume deals. "If this recession taught us nothing else," says Dominguez, "it's that we are all connected to one another. We need to elevate the dialogue about how we partner our objectives."

And, adds Dominguez, "One thing we lost during this period is that this is supposed to be about fun. That's why we started a National Holiday Program where we would send planners appropriate gifts on National Potato Chip Day or National Yo-yo Day." **C&IT**



# Motivate and Inspire Attendees

## With Extraordinary Experiences in Faraway Places

In December, as part of her final television season, Oprah Winfrey arranged the ultimate incentive to Australia for 302 audience members. And, like many meeting planners facing unknown challenges in a foreign land, she was filled with trepidation. According to the documentary-style show "Season 25: Oprah Behind the Scenes," Winfrey was concerned about large crowds, the heat and flies. Make no mistake, however, Oprah made it quite clear that she loved Australia:

"When I say I love Australia, I mean what I say...I love Australia. It was one of the most life-changing, mind-expanding, once-in-a-lifetime extraordinary experiences for all of us, and I would never want any of my comments taken out of context to make it seem otherwise," she said in a statement.

Professional meeting planners certainly don't have the budget or the resources that Oprah commands, but they have the same goal: to make the next meeting, event or incentive the best ever, the most memorable and the ultimate extraordinary experience. As if that's not difficult enough, nowadays meeting professionals must also take into account the nature and unpredictability of events that can impact the best laid plans — especially when they are charged with staging an event in a faraway land.

These days, the violence in the Middle East and North Africa, the ramifications from Japan's devastating earthquake, the extreme interest in London's Royal Wedding and 2012 Olympic Games, all must be taken into consideration.

While corporate groups tend to stay

away from unstable countries, some flock to destinations with unique events such as England. For example, Mary MacGregor, president of incentive travel industry association Site Global and vice president, account development for Minneapolis, MN-based BCD Meetings & Incentives, says, "For groups, the wedding is secondary to the Olympics. Events like that put a country in a global spotlight and present an opportunity for a destination to put on its best face. You have corporate clients who look to be opportunistic."

Even the news of Osama

***"For groups, the (Royal Wedding) is secondary to the Olympics. Events like that put a country in a global spotlight and present an opportunity for a destination to put on its best face. You have corporate clients who look to be opportunistic."***

**Mary MacGregor**, Vice President, Account Development  
BCD Meetings & Incentives Minneapolis, MN

Bin Laden's death and the volatility in the Middle East did not derail all meetings scheduled for the region, according to Jane Schuldt, CITE, president of Minneapolis-based World Marketing Group. "I'm handling a board meeting for an international business that is coming up soon in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The company hasn't skipped a beat in terms of planning," says Schuldt. Noting the lack of political unrest in the UAE, she adds, "People who have a sophisticated understanding of the politics and geography of the region won't be as quick to pull out of certain countries."

Overall, more corporations are looking outside of the United States for des-

tinations. The number of meetings and events held in Europe by groups originating in the U.S. will grow 6 percent this year, according to the FutureWatch 2011 study by Meeting Professionals International (MPI). The projected increase for Asia is 3 percent.

That growth will continue due to the resurgent global economy and the growth of multinational corporations. As companies expand and merge, they select meeting destinations and attendees to represent their global diversity. Incentives are a big part of the mix. Joe Lustenberger, director of marketing for Euromic Events

& Destination Partnership, a Chicago-based alliance of independently owned DMCs serving nations worldwide, says, "Companies are trying to grow their businesses, and they need to have motivational incentives. I see interest in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. We are watching to see if we have any rebound for Egypt. It was a good destination for U.S. travel but it will take a bit longer to recover." According to Lustenberger, Prague, Istanbul, Paris, Monte Carlo and Ireland are also popular destinations.

### England

England has long been a magnet for corporate meetings and incentives. The



Photo by Alain Sebille

recent Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and the 2012 Summer Olympic Games have boosted London's popularity more than ever.

U.S.-based corporations and their overseas operations will hold receptions, meetings and social events connected with the Olympics, says Schuldt. "The wedding, I set aside because it's a one-off event. In terms of the Olympics, there will be incentive programs, but to a large degree companies will use it to say, 'Thanks for being a great customer, here's your invitation,' she adds. "Companies have already reserved headquarter properties and have been traveling back and forth making preparations," offers Schuldt.

Attendees will find an expanded meetings infrastructure in London. England is spending more than \$11 billion dollars to upgrade and expand light rail, subway and highway transportation systems, and build new Olympic meeting facilities, which will continue to serve groups after the Olympics.

Existing convention facilities include the ExCel Exhibition Centre, the largest such facility in London. The center has five onsite hotels that provide a total of 1,500 guest rooms. An additional 7,000 rooms are located within a short walk. Meeting facilities include two exhibition halls totaling about 700,000 sf and an auditorium that holds more than 500 people.

Another conference and exhibition facility, the Business Design Centre, features more than 64,000 sf of exhibit space, and meeting rooms provide about 11,000 sf of space. The Mermaid Conference & Events Centre features a 600-seat auditorium and two rooms that handle up to 170 and 100 guests, respectively.

Hundreds of special event venues provide groups with a variety of options, many of which are connected to England's rich history. Tate Modern, a

Gala dinner event in the Galerie des Cerfs at the Chateau de Chantilly, which houses France's second-most important art collection after the Louvre.

By Derek Reveron



world-famous art museum, is home to works from the year 1500 to the present. The facility offers four event spaces, the largest of which accommodates up to 350 guests. The original Madame Tussauds wax museum opened about 200 years ago and is one of London's most-visited venues. Groups can hold meetings in five interactive themed rooms such as the Chamber of Horrors and Hollywood Premiere Night. Kew Gardens offers one of the world's largest collections of plant life and beautiful scenery for events. Kew offers six meeting venues, including a conference room, cottage and conservatory for dinners, receptions and theater-style settings. Capacities range from 40 to 400 guests.

London's sizzling nightlife offers everything from nightclubs and world-class theater to jazz, salsa and rock venues. Dinner cruises on the Thames are very popular. Vessels can accommodate up to 500 guests.

Few cities are loaded with more must-see sites, such as the world-renowned Westminster Abbey, where in April millions watched as Prince William and Catherine Middleton tied the knot. The Abbey has been the coronation site of English kings since 1066 and is the home

***"People who have a sophisticated understanding of the politics and geography of the region won't be as quick to pull out of certain countries."***

**Jane Scholdt, CITE**, President  
World Marketing Group, Minneapolis, MN



to the tombs of 17 English monarchs and luminaries such as author Charles Dickens and scientist Sir Isaac Newton. Facilities available for events include Abbey Gardens, which accommodates up to 100 people, and Westminster Abbey Museum, which hosts 150 guests.

Of course, no group visit to London is complete without a trip to Buckingham Palace, the official royal residence since 1837. Tours showcase rooms with thou-



The Houses of Parliament is home to the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the north bank of the River Thames in the heart of Greater London.

sands of paintings, French furniture and wild flowers.

Completed in 1711, St. Paul's Cathedral — the site of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana, is one of London's most popular sites. Guests can ascend the 530 steps to the Golden Gallery and take in a panoramic view of London.

The city's varied inventory of hotels offers more than 100,000 guest rooms with more coming online. Several new hotels are scheduled to open in the London area before the Olympic Games arrive. New properties include the Four Seasons Hotel and Residences Heron Plaza, the InterContinental London Westminster coming late 2011 and Starwood's W London-Leicester Square Hotel. Last year, the 214-

room DoubleTree by Hilton London and the 137-room London Syon Park, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel opened.

## Ireland

Ireland is the third largest island in Europe and offers a unique culture developed over thousands of years. Dublin is the largest of the island's 11 urban areas and the most popular destination, attracting more than 8 million visitors a

year. Corporate groups will find everything they need in the Dublin area, including about 17,000 hotel rooms and an array of meeting facilities. Last year, the Convention Center Dublin (CCD) opened with seating for 5,000 visitors. Located near the CCD, the Royal Dublin Society building offers 215,280 sf of flexible meeting space.

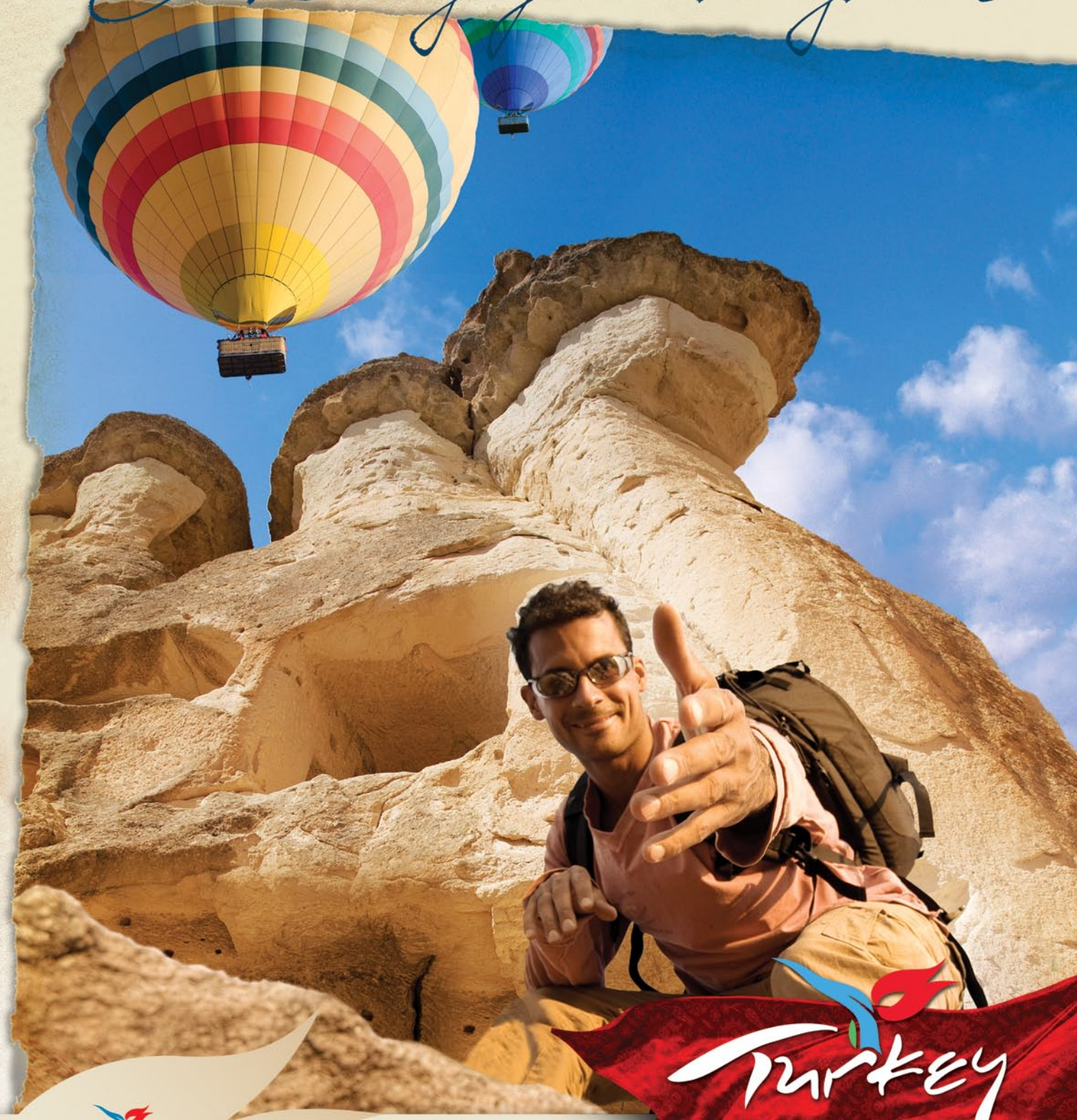
Ireland has a range of unique venues. Dublin Castle, established in 1201 A.D., offers a variety of meeting and conference rooms, each with its own décor. The main conference hall accommodates up to 330 people in theater-style seating, 120 attendees in a boardroom setup and 128 visitors classroom style.

The Dublin Writers Museum celebrates the several famous writers who hail from Ireland, such as poet William Butler Yeats and author James Joyce. The facility features two meeting rooms, which accommodate up to 60 and 100 people, respectively. What would a trip to Ireland be without a visit to the Guinness Storehouse, which produces Ireland's most beloved brew? The seven-story building offers meeting space for up to 2,000 event guests.

Ireland boasts plenty of attractions, including some of the oldest and most historical castles in Europe. Trim Castle, built during the 12th century, is a medieval masterpiece. Cahir Castle, a military fortress, is one of the country's most well-preserved medieval structures. The Kilmainham Gaol Historical Museum showcases the history of Ireland's fight

Cappadocia, famous for its "Fairy Chimneys", is a World Heritage Site of exceptional geological wonders.

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for independence from British rule. The building once housed political prisoners.

Located in Phoenix Park, the 59-acre Dublin Zoo sits on the banks of the scenic River Liffey and includes 235 species of animals and birds from around the world.

Attendees can get a true Irish pub experience at the Brazen Head, which opened in the 1660s.

***“We planned the meeting to reduce the carbon footprint through transportation. We selected restaurants that were within walking distance of the hotel where chefs prepared locally grown food.”***

Corporate groups that have enjoyed Dublin include a U.S. division of a company headquartered outside of the U.S. The group held a five-day incentive earlier this year arranged by Willow Grove, PA-based Harith Productions and stayed in a top Dublin hotel. Activities included visits to castles, a tour of the Guinness factory and a trip to a countryside farm. There, the group learned Irish cooking from a chef.

Activities were designed to be environmentally friendly and budget conscious. Harith Wickrema, president of Harith Productions and professor of tourism and hospitality management at Temple University, explains, “We planned the meeting to reduce the carbon footprint through transportation. We selected restaurants that were within walking distance of the hotel, where chefs prepared locally grown food to prevent adding to the carbon footprint through transportation.” Why did the group choose Ireland? “The group had been to other destinations before, and we wanted to give them another choice. Ireland is not like Paris, London or Rome,” says Wickrema.

## France

Who doesn't love France? It's one of

the world's most alluring countries with unparalleled history, culture, nightlife and dining options. Paris is, by far, the country's most popular destination for meetings and incentives. It's an ethnically diverse city of 2 million people that attracts up to 11 million visitors a year. It's understandable if meeting planners



**Harith Wickrema**, President  
Harith Productions, Willow Grove, PA

have a tough time choosing from among all of the venues, entertainment and cultural sites. After all, there are 163 museums, hundreds of art galleries, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, boat cruises along the Seine River, the Moulin Rouge cabaret, the Champs d'Elysees, hundreds of fine restaurants, the nearby Palace of Versailles and on and on.



Open since 1992, Le Château de la Belle au Bois Dormant — Sleeping Beauty's Castle at Disneyland Paris — now receives more visitors than the Eiffel Tower, a global icon since 1889.

Paris provides more than 75,000 hotel rooms and more than a dozen exhibition halls of varying sizes. The largest such facility is the 2.3-million-sf Paris Port de Versailles, which hosts more than 200 events annually. The Port de Versailles provides eight flexible meeting rooms.

The Palais des Congres de Paris, contains 204,500 sf of exhibit spaces plus 18 meeting rooms and four amphitheaters. The Palais also has a 100-store shopping mall, and nearby hotels provide more than 4,000 guest rooms.

Paris is at the head of the class when it comes to unique meeting venues. The Louvre, constructed during the 12th century, is the world's most famous art museum. It is home to more than 35,000 artworks, including the Mona Lisa.

Several meeting and reception areas are available, including a 27,000-sf hall and 420-seat auditorium.

Constructed for the Exposition Universelle in 1889, the Eiffel Tower offers great views of the city. The tower's first-floor 3,200-sf room is available for meetings and events.

CNIT Paris La Defense is a multi-purpose meeting complex located in La Defense, the city's primary business district. The triangular-shaped building provides 308,000 sf of meeting space divided among two auditoriums and 35 meeting rooms.

Paris is loaded with must-see, must-do attractions and activities: The Avenue Champs d'Elysees; the Arc de Triomphe, built during Napoleon's rule to celebrate his army; the 3,300-year-old Obelisk de Louxor, a gift to King Charles X from Egypt in 1829; and luxury retail shops.

Few structures in the world are more famous than the Cathedral of Notre Dame, a gothic structure built during the 12th century. Just outside of Paris, Disneyland Paris offers hundreds of rides and attractions as well as

seven Disneyland Paris hotels, including the Disneyland Hotel.

A major corporation recently held its global sales kickoff meeting in Paris for about 1,400 salespeople and executives worldwide, according to MacGregor. The five-day event was held at Disneyland Paris. “Because it's a self-contained and exclusive resort, they took advantage of all Disneyland Paris offered. We used outdoor venues, theme parks and three of the hotels,” says MacGregor.

MacGregor says the Disneyland Paris was a good destination for the group's combination of business and pleasure activities, which included an awards dinner for top performers, teambuilding activities, a scavenger hunt and breakout sessions for regional sales staffs.

## Turkey

Turkey is rooted in an ancient civilization that was once a key center of three of the greatest empires in history — Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman. Turkey features one of the world's most scenic coastlines, traditional villages, high mountain ranges and cosmopolitan cities. Istanbul, the largest city with a population of about 13 million, is a modern destination with a burgeoning meeting and tourism infrastructure. Located on the Bosphorus Strait in Northwestern Turkey that separates Europe and Asia, Istanbul was named the 2010 European Capital of Culture by the European Union.

Many of Istanbul's major meeting venues are located in three districts. The Airport and Exhibition District features the 5.3-million-sf World Trade Center Istanbul. It offers a 1-million-sf exhibition center, a convention center that accommodates 4,000 guests and two luxury hotels.

The Business and Financial District, which sits along the Bosphorus Strait, is home to the 323-room Grand Cevahir Hotel and Convention Center. It contains 22 meeting rooms, an auditorium that seats 1,013 people and a 27,000-sf ballroom.



More than 100 attendees enjoy entertainment under the stars at a petroleum industry shore excursion at ancient Ephesus, Kusadasi, Turkey, following dinner in the courtyard.

The Conference Valley, located within the financial district, boasts the Istanbul Convention & Exhibition Centre, with a 75,300-sf exhibition hall and 26 meeting rooms.

Istanbul's unique venues include Dolmabahce Palace. Constructed in 1856, the palace is the former home of Turkey's first president and six Ottoman Sultans. Located along the Bosphorus, the palace offers a garden that accommodates as many as 1,200 people for private events. The Marmara Esma Sultan, an 18th-century mansion, features three event spaces totaling 24,000 sf.

Groups will never run out of places to have fun in Turkey. Kervansaray Restaurant & Night Club is home to an entertainment revue, with singers performing traditional Turkish songs and belly dancing. Groups of up to 800 guests are welcome. There are modern malls as well as the Grand Bazaar, one of the world's oldest and largest covered markets. More than 5,000 shops sell everything from food and furniture to Turkish clothing and jewelry.

No visit to Istanbul is complete without touring the Hagia Sophia, a masterpiece of byzantine architecture constructed as a church between 532 A.D. and 537 A.D. Another option is the iconic Blue Mosque, which was built in 1616 and features six minarets that dominate the city's skyline.

Istanbul is home to more than 900 hotels with meeting space. “The city has some great facilities in terms of meeting hotels,” says Lustenberger. “You have the Four Seasons, the Hilton, the Ritz-Carlton and others.” New hotels in Istanbul include two Hilton properties: The 171-room DoubleTree by Hilton Istanbul-Old Town opened earlier this year. In Konya, the 210-room Hilton Garden Inn opened last year with meeting rooms that can accommodate 220 guests and a large ballroom that can hold 475 people.

## Australia

The land down under is so cosmopolitan and lively that many visitors don't want to leave. Australia offers tropical, arid and Mediterranean climates that make it possible to engage in diverse activities. There is also an exhaustive supply of hotels, meeting facilities and activities.

**Melbourne:** One of Australia's most popular destinations, Melbourne is located on the shores of Port Phillip Bay, about a five-hour drive from Sydney. Multicultural Melbourne has a population of about 4 million people and receives more than 2 million international visitors annually. The city has several world-class meeting venues, including the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. Located on the banks of the River Yarra and a short walk from 17,000 hotel guest rooms, the facility



includes 322,000 sf of exhibition space, 52 meeting rooms and a 466-seat auditorium. The center holds the highest environmental rating, six stars, granted by the Green Building Council of Australia.

Known as Australia's sports capital, Melbourne features several athletic venues that accommodate groups. These include Melbourne Cricket Ground, a stadium featuring 30 meeting rooms; and Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, which hosts rugby and soccer matches, and seats more than 31,000 people.

Another venue, the Royal Botanical Gardens of Melbourne, features a large collection of plants from Australia and around the world. Established in 1816, the gardens offer 11 event spaces, including two lodges, restaurants, lawn areas and pavilions.

There's also gaming: The Crown Casino and Entertainment Complex includes three hotel towers that offer a total of more than 1,500 guest rooms and more than 55,000 sf of meeting space.

Groups have a full plate of entertainment options to enjoy. A staple of Melbourne nightlife, the two-story

people. Each year, millions of shoppers flock to Queen Victoria Market, a vast outdoor shopping area with hundreds of vendors operating from stalls. Here, visitors can buy Australian foods,



**Joe Lustenberger**, Director of Marketing, North America  
Euromic Events & Destination Partnership, Chicago, IL

***"Companies are trying to grow their businesses, and they need to have motivational incentives. I see interest in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. We are watching to see if we have any rebound for Egypt."***

candy, clothing, jewelry, seafood and much more.

Federation Square is a popular district that is home to several museums, bars, restaurants, art galleries and shops. Unique venues at "Fed Square" include the Atrium, which accommodates 1,000 people, and BMW Edge, an amphitheater that seats 500 people.

Melbourne has more than 40,000 hotel rooms, including the 380 guest rooms available at the Citadines on Bourke Melbourne hotel, which opened last year.

**Sydney:** Known as "the harbor city," Sydney is Australia's largest city. Sydney has it all — nightlife, more than 30 beaches, harbor cruises, magnificent wildlife and avant-garde architecture.

Modern structures include the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, which is located downtown near more than 16,000 hotel guest rooms. The center offers an auditorium that seats 3,500 people, 33 meeting and function rooms and exhibition halls.

Acer Arena, a performance and entertainment venue located at Sydney Olympic Park, offers two event spaces that total about 57,000 sf. The city's unique venues include many with scenic views of Sydney Harbor, such as Cargo

Bar. Groups can rent the upper deck for as many as 600 guests or reserve another space for 300 guests. One of the most unique venues in the world, the iconic Sydney Opera House offers enthralling views of the harbor and space

for groups of 20 to 1,000 people. Groups desiring an outdoor setting can consider the Royal Botanical Gardens of Sydney.

Sydney's bustling nightlife features the Basement, a popular 25-year-old club that features live jazz, soul, R&B, folk and funk performers. The facility is available for groups of up to 400 people.

Sydney offers plenty of upscale shopping at Pitt Street Mall, Australia's busiest retail complex. The mall features more than 600 stores and attracts up to 14,000 visitors per hour. Star City Casino is Sydney's only gaming facility. It features two gaming floors, seven restaurants and shows at two adjoining theaters. The casino offers 35 hotel rooms.

### Final Thoughts

A few months after Oprah and company visited Australia, she cleared up any lingering doubts as to how she felt about the experience: "I have so many great memories. The Reef was breathtaking, Sydney was spectacular, and I was mesmerized by Uluru and so glad I went there. ...My visit to Australia was the trip of a lifetime for me, my staff and our 302 guests. ...We will never forget it. And I can't wait to come back."

Oprah's words are but "such stuff as dreams are made on" and resonate for every meeting professional staging an event in an international destination. **C&IT**



Fireworks illuminate the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre in Australia's largest city.

Butterfly Club cabaret and cocktail lounge is located in a Victorian structure. Guests can enjoy live music, performing arts and several bars. Groups can reserve the entire club or meet in a space that accommodates up to 45

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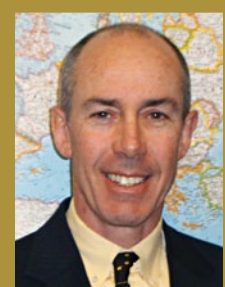
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The Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort, Fort Lauderdale, FL, has named **Brigette Bienvenu** as director of sales and marketing. She most recently served as director of sales and marketing at the DoubleTree by Hilton Grand Hotel Biscayne Bay, Miami, FL.

Conrad Miami, Miami, FL, has named **Philippe Thevenet** as director of sales and marketing. He formerly served as director of sales and marketing at the Conrad Indianapolis in Indiana.

**Stephanie Snapkoski** was named director of sales and marketing for Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, McLean, VA. She most recently served as the director of sales and marketing for Sandcastle Hotels & Resorts, Alexandria, VA.

The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO, has named **Rori Coombs** as director of national sales responsible for the Southeast and Northeast regions. She most recently worked as a meeting planner for the Northeastern Association of Equine Practitioners, Lockport, NY.

**Mark Peterson** was promoted to senior sales manager at Beau Rivage, Biloxi, MS. He formerly served as convention sales manager at Beau Rivage.

**Christine Madden** has returned to the Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau in her former position as director of sales after spending two years as the bureau's East Coast sales representative. She has been with the bureau since 2002.

**Stephanie Windham**, CMP, was promoted to vice president of sales and marketing for Aria Resort & Casino and Vdara Hotel & Spa at CityCenter, Las Vegas, NV. She most recently served as director of sales at Aria.

**Chris Bracken** was named director of sales and marketing at Doral Golf Resort & Spa, a Marriott Resort, Miami, FL. With nearly 30 years of hospitality experience, Bracken most recently served as director of sales and marketing for the Portofino Hotel & Yacht Club in Redondo Beach, CA.

Lansdowne Resort, Leesburg, VA, has named **Kim Martinez** as director of sales. She previously served as director of sales at the Marriott Grand Resort & Spa, Point Clear, AL.

**Robert McPherrin** was named director of sales and marketing for the Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX. McPherrin, who has more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry including 20 years in hospitality sales, previously served as assistant executive director at the Grapevine (TX) Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Journeymasters, an incentive travel company, has named **Adam Poirier** as director of sales. Before joining Journeymasters, he was senior corporate sales manager for Godiva Chocolatier. Formerly, he was a longtime director of corporate sales for the Sharper Image.

Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs, CO, has named **Darla Cook** as sales manager for the Southeast territory. With more than 22 years of experience in the areas of corporate sales and conference management, she most recently served as group sales manager for DoubleTree World Arena Hotel, Colorado Springs, CO.

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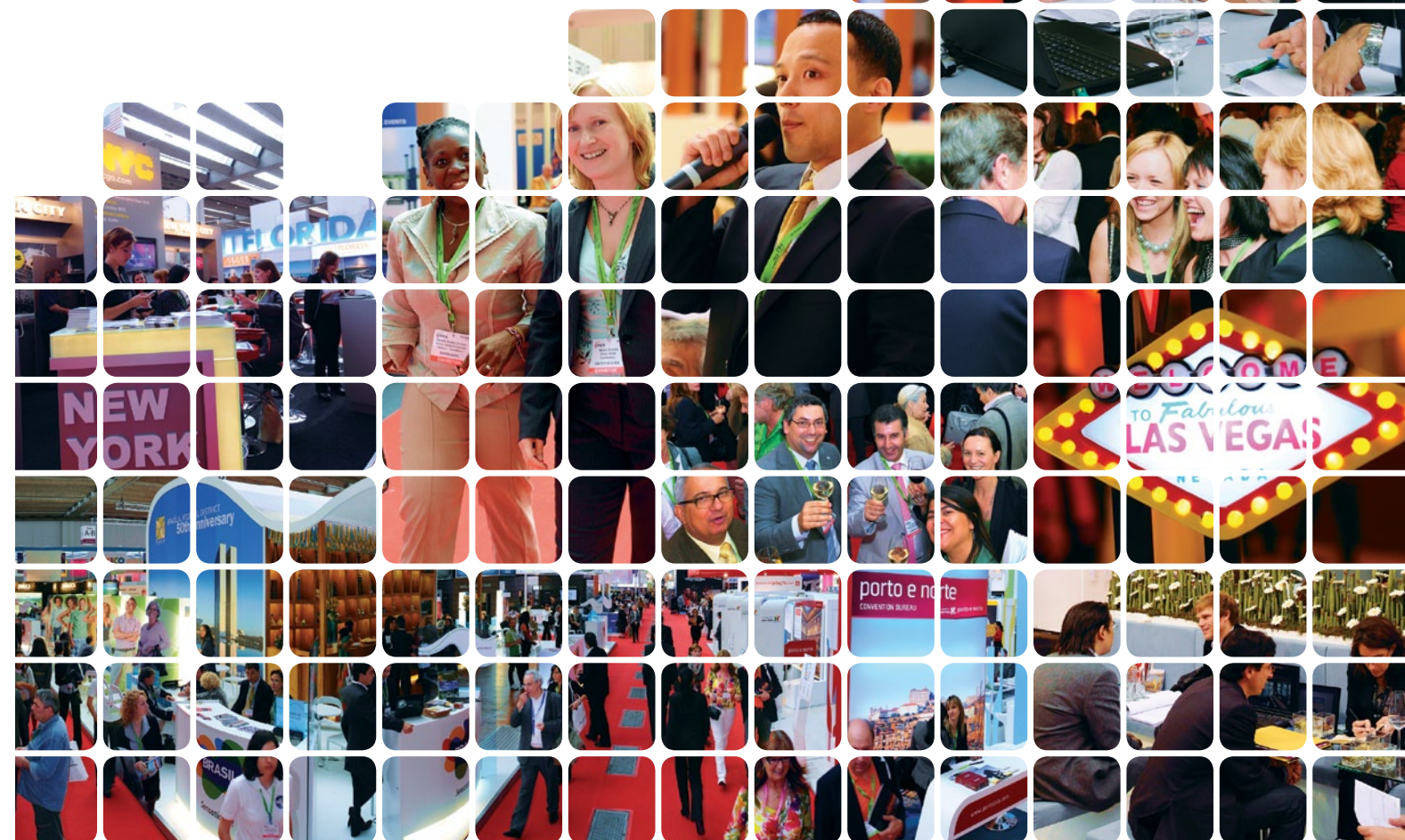
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Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-933-8448	www.miamimeetings.com	Ita Moriarity	meetingsinfo@miamimeetings.com
Hammock Beach Resort	888-696-6730	www.hammockbeach.com	Jason Kern	groupsales@hammockbeach.com
Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa	850-267-9600	www.hiltonsandestinbeach.com	Matthew Price	sales@hiltonsandestinbeach.com
Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa	505-771-6000	www.tamaya.hyatt.com	John Grenon	john.grenon@hyatt.com
Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino	800-545-6040	www.innofthemountaingods.com	Jo Kazhe	jokazhe@innofthemountaingods.com
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority	877-847-4858	www.lvcva.com	Michael Goldsmith	mgoldsmith@lvcva.com
Loews Hotels at Universal Orlando	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-452-7829	www.visitlongbeach.com	Iris Himert	irish@longbeachcvb.org
M Resort Spa and Casino	866-551-1540	www.themresort.com	Drew Varga	hotelsales@themresort.com
Monte Carlo	702-730-7300	www.montecarlo.com	Group Sales	conventionsales@montecarlo.com
The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club	800-866-1946	www.naplesbeachhotel.com	Group Sales	groupsales@naplesbeachhotel.com
New York-New York Hotel and Casino	800-852-6061	www.nynyhotelcasino.com	Group Sales	nynymeetings@nyforme.com
Norwegian Cruise Line	866-NCL-MEET	www.events.ncl.com	Brandon Townsley	btownsley@ncl.com
Ocean Reef Club	800-843-2730	www.oceanreef.com	Richard Weinstein	ORCSales@oceanreef.com
Ponte Vedra Inn & Club	800-234-7842	www.pontevedra.com	Tony Fitzjohn	sales@pvresorts.com
Reunion Resort	888-418-9614	www.reunionresort.com	Jean Spaulding	jspaulding@reunionresort.com
Rosen Centre Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosencentre.com	Todd Frappier	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Plaza Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosenplaza.com	Victoria Hall	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Shingle Creek	407-996-9939	www.rosenshinglecreek.com	Leslie Menichini	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Royal Caribbean International	800 762-0458	www.royalcaribbeanincentives.com	Lori Cassidy	royalmeetingsandincentives@rccl.com
San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau	877-973-6338	www.sandiego.org/positiveresults	Group Sales	meetings@sdscvb.org
Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa	480-607-2350	www.sanctuaryaz.com	Group Sales	info@sanctuary.com
Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau	505-955-6210	www.santafe.org	Mary Pat Kloenne	mpkloenne@santafenm.gov
The Scottsdale Plaza Resort	480-922-3300	www.meetatplaza.com	Kelly Moenter-Nofal	meet@scottsdaleplaza.com
Sony Premium Incentive Sales Program	866-596-4823	www.sony.com/motivation	Authorized Sony Representative	N/A
South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-797-8050	www.southpointmeetings.com	Maureen Robinson	sales@southpointcasino.com
Talking Stick Resort	480-850-7777	www.talkingstickresort.com	Group Sales	sales@talkingstickresort.com
Tourism Australia	310-695-3207	www.events.australia.com	Samantha Holmes	sholmes@tourism.australia.com
Tulalip Resort Casino	360-716-6500	www.tulalipresort.com	Troy Longwith	sales@tulalipresort.com
Turkish Culture and Tourist Office in New York	877-For-Turkey	www.goturkey.com	Group Sales	ny@tourismturkey.org
Universal Orlando Resort	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
The Venetian/The Palazzo	702-414-4202	www.venetianpalazzomeetings.com	Chandra Allison	chandra.allison@venetianpalazzo.com
Visit Orlando	800-662-2825	www.orlandomeeting.com	Karen Harrington	convention.sales@orlandocvb.com
Walt Disney World Resort	321-939-7112	www.disneymeetings.com	Anne Hamilton	meetings@disneyworld.com
Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort	800-524-4939	www.swandolphinmeetings.com	Eric Opron	meetings@swandolphin.com
The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-836-5934	www.westin.com/lasvegas	Sandra Horvath	shorvath@westinlv.com
The Westin La Cantera Resort	210-558-2229	www.westinlacantera.com	Patty Pedraza	patty.pedraza@westin.com

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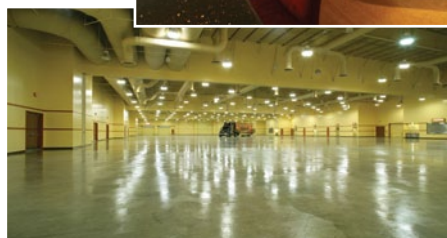
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