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# INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

THE EXECUTIVE SOURCE FOR PLANNING & INCENTIVES

## The Great Divide

Create Programs With  
Multigenerational Appeal

Page 18

## All-Season Meeting & Incentive Destinations

Exclusive Experiences

Make Great Rewards

Page 12

## CSR-Enhanced Teambuilding

Delivering a 'Return  
on Emotion'

Page 22

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DOWNLOAD/VIEW  
TABLET VERSION**

Melissa Van Dyke,  
President, The Incentive  
Research Foundation

## 2018 World Class Awards

The Best of the Best CVBs, Hotels,  
Resorts and Conference Centers

Page 26



The Magic Carpet... soaring high over the sea

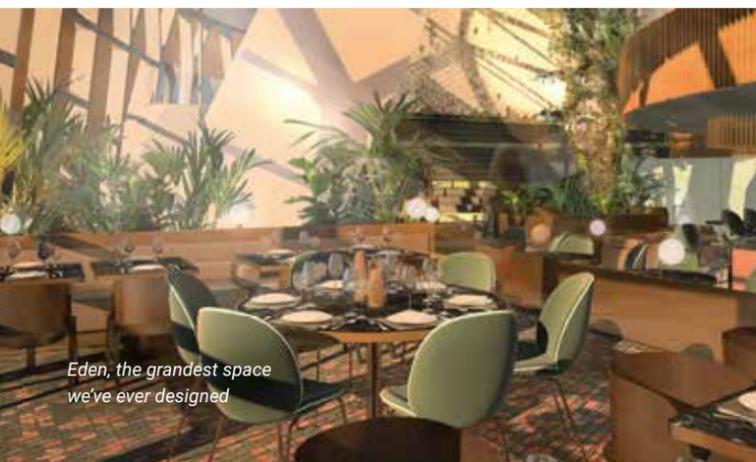
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# INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

THE EXECUTIVE SOURCE FOR PLANNING MEETINGS & INCENTIVES

OCTOBER 2018

Vol. 25 No. 5

Credit: Will Steady



Insurance and financial planners are drawn to New York City, "The Financial Capital of the World," and its year-round perks. **PAGE 12**

## FEATURES

### 12 All-Season Meeting & Incentive Destinations

Exclusive Experiences Make Great Rewards  
By Cynthia Dial

### 18 The Great Divide

Create Programs With Multigenerational Appeal For Attendees to Connect  
By Christine Loomis

### 22 CSR-Enhanced Teambuilding

Delivering a 'Return on Emotion'  
By Patrick Simms

### 26 2018 World Class Award Winners

The Best of the Best CVBs, Hotels, Resorts and Conference Centers



Multigenerational programs encourage attendees to interact and create educational experiences. **PAGE 18**



Planners find that charitable teambuilding programs create an emotional bond and boost the morale of employees. **PAGE 22**

## DESTINATIONS

### 42 For the Fun of It

Las Vegas and Reno: Memorable Meetings, Natural Wonders  
By Steve Winston

Credit: Berkshire-HorseWorks

## DEPARTMENTS

### 4 Publisher's Message

### 6 News & Notes

### 9 Snapshots

### 10 NewStrategies

How to Innovate and Succeed in Business  
By Scott Steinberg

### 50 Corporate Ladder



Las Vegas is more than just a magnificent meetings destination — attendees can explore many other attractions day or night. **PAGE 42**

Credit: Peppermill Reno Hotel Resort

# Publisher's Message

## More Business Meetings and Learning Than Ever

The eighth IMEX America in Las Vegas was a record-breaking event with more than 13,000 participants, among them 6,000-plus attendees and more than 3,000 hosted buyers. The show further extended the range of features by offering a remarkably large and diverse range of experiences meeting the growing demand for interactive live experiential activities that are redefining the scope of the industry itself. Overall, there was great energy and enthusiasm from attendees. If you missed this year's event, plan now to be there in Las Vegas September 10-12, 2019.



If weather concerns are a factor when planning your events, take a look at "All-Season Meeting & Incentive Destinations" on Page 12. From sunny beach resorts including all-inclusive destinations to urban favorites, the choice of destinations is widespread with everything possible to make a successful event.

Also in this issue, "The Great Divide" on Page 18 covers creating programs with multigenerational appeal for attendees to connect. According to Melissa Van Dyke, president, The Incentive Research Foundation on our cover, "Including appropriate wellness, giveback and status components can be well-received by all generations." In addition, she advises planners to "create places and spaces for attendees of various generations to purposefully connect." She also states, "For that reason, it's important that planners include experiences wherein attendees can seek best practices, advice and problem-solving from their peers, while at the same time, designing space for those same attendees to mentor and learn up and down."

The evolution of corporate teambuilding over recent decades has made planning these activities easier. See "CSR-Enhanced Teambuilding" on Page 22. According to Katrina Kent, director, The Event Group, TD Ameritrade, "Combining teambuilding and community service ... really helps meeting participants connect to a greater purpose and each other." Impact 4 Good, a company that offers community service-oriented teambuilding programs for corporations, continues to see an uptick in business. Alan Ranzer, managing partner and co-founder, Impact 4 Good, says, "When you do something to give back to the community under your company's name, you feel good about who you work for."

Don't miss the 2018 "World Class Award Winners" beginning on Page 26. The winners were determined by our subscribers with an open ballot. The winning destinations and facilities met specified criteria and are worthy of consideration for your next event.

Harvey Grotsky

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## MGM Resorts International Receives Nine Awards at Stars of the Industry Hospitality Awards Gala

LAS VEGAS — MGM Resorts International was presented with nine awards by the Nevada Hotel and Lodging Association (NHLA) during the 8th Annual Stars of the Industry Hospitality Awards Gala in Las Vegas. The event honors exceptional employees working within Nevada's hospitality industry.

Chuck Bowling, president and COO of Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, was named the Hotelier of the Year, the NHLA's highest honor. The Hotelier of the Year is recognized by industry peers for his or her exemplary achievements, contributions and leadership.

MGM Resorts International was also recognized as the Sustainability Leading Company of the Year. This award honors an industry property or business that has developed a culture toward integrating environmental management practices that improve everyday operations, while maintaining quality service and meeting guest expectations. [www.mgmresorts.com](http://www.mgmresorts.com)

## Anaheim Marriott Electrifies Meetings With New Charging Banquet Seating

ANAHEIM, CA — Anaheim Marriott is taking the meeting experience to the next level for both meeting planners and attendees.

According to Phil Aldax, director of event management, "The hotel invested in new chairs for our meeting and event space which enable attendees to charge their devices right at their seats during the function, rather than having to race outside to find an outlet at breaks."



Anaheim Marriott works diligently to set itself apart from other properties across the country with similar space by elevating the food and beverage experience, creating flexible meeting setups and layouts, as well as

innovative technological features like these charging seats. The hotel features 169,662 square feet of flexible function space, spread across 23 event rooms with 44 breakout rooms. The largest space is the 25,410-square-foot Platinum Ballroom, which can accommodate up to 3,585 people.

[www.anaheimmarriott.com](http://www.anaheimmarriott.com)

## Orlando Announces Exciting Growth at Convention Center, Meeting Hotels

ORLANDO — America's most-visited destination is growing its capacity for meetings, conventions and events



AGUEL

with new developments at the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) and surrounding convention hotels.

The OCCC is moving forward with a \$605 million campus improvement plan that will bring expansions and new meeting and exhibit space in the North and South concourses, further increasing the center's 7 million square feet of function space.

The expansion includes the Convention Way Grand Concourse, which features additional meeting space and an 80,000-square-foot ballroom with a grand entrance to the North-South building along Convention Way. The 200,000-square-foot Multipurpose Venue is a flexible, divisible, column-free space with a combination of retractable and floor seating to accommodate between 18,000 and 20,000 guests.

The center brings more than 200 conventions and events and hosts 1.4 million attendees each year.

"As a leading meeting and convention destination, Orlando is known for continually investing in the region's growth, and this next phase of the Orange County Convention Center is another testament to our commitment to this industry," says George Aguel, president & CEO of Visit Orlando. "The expansion at the center will create a wealth of new opportunities for groups of all sizes and will serve as a catalyst for additional development throughout our convention district, including new hotels, restaurants and entertainment options." [www.orlandomeeting.com](http://www.orlandomeeting.com)

## SITE, FICP and IRF Release Landmark Study of the Incentive Travel Industry

Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE), Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) and Financial and Insurance Conference Professionals (FICP) have released the first joint study of the global incentive travel industry. Incentive Travel Industry Index Powered by SITE Index, IRF Outlook and FICP is a landmark for the industry, providing unprecedented, consolidated insights into the current state of incentive travel and where it is headed.

Conducted in association with J.D. Power, the study is a wide-ranging analysis of business conditions, attitudes and expectations impacting the incentive travel and motivational events industry worldwide. With over 1,000 respondents from more than 80 countries, it is the largest survey ever conducted of senior players in the incentive travel industry, doubling responses from past individual efforts and netting new insights based on combined questioning. Survey respondents were balanced between incentive travel buyers and suppliers, with buyers representing incentive agencies and corporate users, while more than half of the sellers are DMCs. The majority are tenured industry professionals with an average of 17.3 years of experience — approximately half are located in the U.S.

While the survey findings show that incentive travel is on the rise, growth isn't happening unchecked. For instance, costs to operate an incentive travel program are going up.

"Over two-thirds of planners are taking steps to contain costs.... Fortunately, the nature of incentive travel programs allows companies to adjust them to reflect concerns with costs," says IRF President Melissa Van Dyke. [www.ficpnet.com](http://www.ficpnet.com)

## Margaritaville Beach Resort Grand Cayman Reopens After Extensive Renovation



GRAND CAYMAN, CAYMAN ISLANDS — After a multiyear extensive renovation, the new Margaritaville Beach Resort Grand Cayman will officially relaunch on November 1. The massive overhaul includes the property's 285 guest rooms, the addition of more than 8,500 feet of meeting and event space, a new fitness center and a completely reinvented culinary program.

The guest rooms, all with a balcony or patio, feature signature brand touches to deliver fun and a true sense of arrival at what is intended to be a laid-back escape rooted in relaxation.

The 8,500-plus square feet of meeting space is a design juxtaposition of formal meets fun. The highlight is the nearly 4,700-square-foot ballroom, which is already a sought-after venue for special events. Complementing this is the prefunction area (2,112 square feet), four breakout rooms and an executive boardroom (377 square feet), all boasting 14-foot ceilings. [www.margaritavilleresortgrandcayman.com](http://www.margaritavilleresortgrandcayman.com)

## Hosts Global Welcomes New DMC Members in Canada and Costa Rica

Hosts Global has added two new alliance members, Downeast Destination Management Company (DMC) servicing Canada's Atlantic region and Premio DMC Costa Rica. Both companies have decades of experience as their region's local expert in planning and executing meetings, conventions, incentive programs and special events.



MACKAY

"Downeast and Premio DMCs are fantastic additions to our global consortium," says Marty MacKay, DMCP, president of Hosts Global's alliance of DMCs. "Both firms ... represent the shared principles of our Hosts Global community and operate in destinations that are in high-demand from our clients."

Hosts Global members are selected based on stringent criteria to ensure the global alliance is comprised of only best-in-class DMCs. The addition of Premio DMC Costa Rica and Downeast DMC strengthens the consortium's presence in Central America and service capabilities along Canada's Atlantic region. [www.hosts-global.com](http://www.hosts-global.com)

## Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa Reveals Newly Renovated Ballrooms, Meeting Spaces



PALM BEACH, FL – Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa, the intimate Forbes Five-Star oceanfront retreat situated along Florida’s gold coast, revealed its newly redesigned ballrooms and meeting spaces, which encompass more than 30,000 square feet of indoor space on two levels in the resort’s north tower.

The renovations feature contemporary designs by RTKL Associates and modern furnishings that complement the hotel’s classic architecture.

Taking center stage of the renovation are the three ballroom spaces — The Grand Ballroom, Ocean Ballroom and Plaza Ballroom — which feature sophisticated furnishings and a neutral color palette. To complement the newly redesigned spaces, advanced technology was installed, including a state-of-the-art sound system and LED lighting throughout. Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa offers a range of event services and can accommodate groups from 10 to 700 in its variety of indoor and outdoor spaces. [www.eaupalmbeach.com](http://www.eaupalmbeach.com)

## Pacific World Notes Top Emerging Destinations

SINGAPORE – Pacific World, a global destination and event management company, has identified several emerging destinations and destinations to look out for as MICE options in the coming years. Each location combines the allure of a new and exciting destination with the capacity to provide guests with an exceptional, curated MICE experience.



SINCLAIR

“Over the past two years, interest in new destinations and unique experiences has increased significantly. This trend in the leisure travel realm is also impacting the incentives and meetings sector,” says Selina Sinclair, global managing director of Pacific World.

Emerging Destinations for 2019: Bhutan; Namibia; Greater Bay Area – South China; Bordeaux, France; Bodrum, Turkey.

Destinations to Look Out For in 2019: Sumba, Indonesia; Phu Quoc, Vietnam; Apulia, Italy; Gangneung, South Korea. [www.pacificworld.com](http://www.pacificworld.com)

## Westin Charlotte Unveils New Modern Event Space

CHARLOTTE, NC — The Westin Charlotte has unveiled its newest social event space, Six One Five, an urban-chic venue adjacent to the hotel, ideal for every type of Charlotte event.

With a unique feel, this new meeting space offers a large prefunction area and a flexible function space with expansive views of Charlotte. “Six One Five allows the team to continue to innovate and personalize events to create lasting memories that are different from our ballrooms,” says Pamela Bower, director of sales and marketing.

From within the space, guests are treated to views of the expanding Southend from floor-to-ceiling windows. The terrace creates the perfect multi-use setting for outdoor events or executive gatherings. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)

## Hyatt Regency Sonoma Debuts Its Event Space Redesign

SONOMA, CA — Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country debuts a rustic-chic sanctuary set on eight acres, featuring 90 additional guest rooms and a complete redesign of 40,000 square feet of event spaces, the lobby and all other public areas.

The lobby showcases timeless interior design with handcrafted details and rustic touches. As an extension of the lobby, the function spaces are also distinctive and inviting with bronze, iron and seeded glass.

Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country features extensive meeting and event spaces, including 15 indoor meeting rooms totaling 18,000 square feet and an additional 20,000 square feet of outdoor space, accompanied by an 80-foot-long water wall, ideal for special events. [www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)



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**1** The 2018 Financial and Insurance Conference Professionals (FICP) Fall Symposium was held October 3-5 at Cliff House Maine in Ogunquit, Maine. A noteworthy line-up of speakers and sessions focused on industry trends defined the event, while several memorable networking events provided the opportunity for colleagues to connect. **2** During a celebration hosted by Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI) and Global DMC Partners, hospitality professional Bryson Taylor (center, holding check) received recognition as The Above and Beyond Foundation’s Heart of Hospitality Award winner as well as a cash grant of \$10,000. Mary Jo Valentine Blythe, founder and CEO of The Above and Beyond Foundation (second from right), says Taylor was selected for embodying the true spirit of hospitality, consistently going above and beyond in his role, regardless of the situation at hand. **3** Barcelona Convention Bureau (BCB) and 13 of its partners — A+ Solutions, another Konzept, In Destination Mangement, Kuoni Destination Management, Pacific World, She Spanish Heritage, Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I, Hilton Diagonal Mar, Majestic Hotel & Spa Barcelona, Melia Barcelona Sarria & Sky Hotels, CCIB - Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona, Portaventura and Blai Limousines — came together for a Volunteer Day at Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah, on October 14. The activity helped showcase BCB’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative to U.S. incentive and corporate meeting planners. **4-5** Left: NYC & Company Board of Directors Vice Chairman Charles Flateman (second from right) and Discover Puerto Rico CEO Brad Dean (center), surrounded by executive team members, signed a first-ever official partnership to boost tourism between New York City and Puerto Rico at a press conference on October 23. Right: Dean and Flateman flank the event’s host, Lin-Manuel Miranda (center). **6** Javier Aranda, director of the Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board (center), meets with chefs Josue Jimenez (left) and Mauricio Leal (right) during a media tour to promote Puerto Vallarta’s new offerings in adventure, gastronomy, culture and more.



When we're talking about innovation, we're merely discussing more creative and resourceful approaches to problem-solving.

## How to Innovate and Succeed in Business

Strategic innovation ranks among the most frequently cited topics in business today, especially for organizations operating in fast-changing and often hugely disruptive business environments. It's therefore no surprise that many executives are equally concerned about how to drive innovation inside their own organizations, and crafting all manner of meetings, events and strategic retreats designed to help leaders both remain relevant and stay ahead of changing times and trends. In the face of today's fast-moving, hugely volatile business world and the ongoing disruptions it often brings, it goes without saying: Many organizations and individuals continue to struggle with the concept of innovation. Thankfully, it may help with the process of reimagining and reinventing your business to be more cutting-edge going forward — and designing programs and events around these themes — to recall that, according to leading experts (and Merriam-Webster's dictionary), innovation is far simpler than you may suspect. By definition, it's simply the introduction of something new.

Certainly, innovation often refers to the concept of game-changing, breakthrough discoveries and technologies. But more importantly, as we discovered while researching my new book *Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty*, it can just as easily refer to new concepts, new marketing strategies or new ways of repositioning your business or brand to be more meaningful or relevant to current and prospective members. As challenging as the concept of innovating often sounds, really, when we're talking about innovation, we're merely discussing more creative and resourceful approaches to problem-solving. And, in truth, you may be surprised at just how simple the process of making your organization more agile, more responsive and more competitive is when you come right down to it. In fact, all it often takes for us to be more successful is just a greater sense of perspective — and an immense willingness to make some seemingly simple, but hugely powerful shifts in strategy and thinking.

As the following examples help illustrate:

- Getting ahead in business today isn't about having more resources, it's about being more resourceful.
- Succeeding in challenging environments isn't about

having to be a genius — it's about being more ingenious instead.

- Slight shifts in strategy and approach (evolutionary) can be every bit as powerful as game-changing breakthroughs (revolutionary).
- Innovation is simply a matter of perspective — and process of constant reimagining and reinvention.
- Businesses of every size and background can absolutely leverage core principles of innovation to succeed more frequently going forward.
- As they remind us, simple tweaks in strategy and approach can often produce powerful windfalls — and help your organization succeed more frequently and stay better in tune with changing times and trends.

### Case Study 1: Association for Chemistry and Economics

Over 15 years old, Germany's Association for Chemistry and Economics (VCW) has more than 30,000 members. Its population is hugely diverse, spread across many sectors and has myriad goals and interests.

Determined to foster communication among these members to help further the profession, the VCW desired to create a network that would allow participants to collaborate with scientists and engineers in every field to be more successful and raise awareness for the organization. That's because, in the modern age, it knew teamwork would be key to innovation, and accelerating the speed at which it could adapt would be vital. Partnerships with universities, private industry players, public organizations and allies in other fields such as economics would be crucial to its continuing success. Likewise, the VCW also wanted to find a way to drive ongoing innovation on a huge scale.

As a solution, it invented the idea of Social Chemistry — creating an open online portal for the crowdsourcing of ideas, and pooling of resources, to allow members and interested private and public enterprises to: 1. Suggest new concepts 2. Discuss topics of interest and 3. Access collaboration tools for making cross-company initiatives a reality. Not only did the platform let participants submit and share ideas for new projects — it also allowed them

to comment on or vote for winning ideas, team up to participate on these solutions and share suggestions by email. Moderators could also view reports, quickly gauge engagement levels — and easily attach project leaders/contributors, assign deadlines and tasks and send reminders to help fuel creativity. Users could also follow all the latest comments, ideas and messages from contributors, creating a heightened degree of interest in and empathy for any given project.

After five weeks, 11 jury members weighed votes and submissions against four criteria — originality, applicability, feasibility and thoughtfulness of the idea — and winners could potentially see their ideas turned into action. In the wake of these efforts, not only did the number of ideas generated greatly exceed expectation, a significant portion of visitors to the site contributed suggestions, commenting rates were through the roof and the VCW generated a plethora of new initiatives for the industry. It also uncovered important new concepts that the association could build on or encourage members to explore further, and trends the VCW discovered that it needed to be aware of, by undertaking the project.

### Case Study 2: Medtronic

When medical device leader Medtronic wanted to expand its already-successful business throughout Western Europe and beyond, it didn't double-down on cutting-edge devices. It reinvented its business model instead, extending its offerings to include services and establishing new business units that partnered to put owned-and-operated labs inside hospitals.

Medtronic increased its business and provided partners with significant improvements in customer service and cost-savings by doing so. Having earned their trust, it's also built a sizable business around ancillary services such as supply chain management and performance benchmarking.

### Case Study 3: Orange Telecom

French telecom giant Orange wanted to double the size of its innovation initiatives but didn't want to invest millions in R&D or hordes of high-priced working professionals. Instead, it decided to outsource the entire process and offered APIs — plug-and-play back-end software solutions — to internal employees and external developers so they could create new uses for Orange's technologies.

Using just one of these solutions, the company has been able to seamlessly integrate social and second-screen experiences from hundreds of film and TV companies into many of its services in less than a year.

### Case Study 4: Newell Rubbermaid

When Newell Rubbermaid's Contigo brand wanted to find a way to differentiate its products in the hugely crowded and contested market for portable containers and cups, it didn't invest a fortune into dozens of abortive product roll-outs, attempting to guess what working professionals on the go would want. It simply studied today's busiest travel sites, where commuters tended to congregate. After discovering that passengers were constantly wiping off their mugs' mouthguards on napkins, sleeves and handkerchiefs, it introduced a new line of travel mugs with special covers designed to keep out dirt.

### Case Study 5: Mastercard

After deciding it needed a new idea for a mobile payment app, Mastercard didn't invest millions of dollars or months of time and effort. It simply put the call out to employees at Innovation Express, a global series of hackathon events where business people, designers and software developers team up to create new business plans and products in record time. Two days later, Qkr — which can let you order food from your seat at a stadium or pre-order school lunches for children right from your pocket without ever setting foot in a cafeteria — was born.

As you can see, innovation isn't always about game-changing breakthroughs or technology. It's about finding more effective ways to use the tools and resources that are available. While it's not always obvious to the casual observer, innovation is far easier than you think. All it takes to successfully outmaneuver the competition, or overcome a problem, is simply a greater sense of perspective and an immense willingness to be more creative with how you apply the tools at-hand.

I&FMM

*Scott Steinberg is an award-winning professional speaker. He is among today's best-known trends experts and futurists, a bestselling expert on leadership and innovation and the author of "Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty" and "Millennial Marketing: Bridging the Generation Gap." His website is [www.AKeynoteSpeaker.com](http://www.AKeynoteSpeaker.com).*



A trip to a special destination is a huge motivator for hard-working employees.

Credit: Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau

## Where Can Groups Go on the Island of Hawaii? Almost Everywhere!

Although two-thirds of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is currently closed to the public and early news reports indicated the entire island of Hawaii was disturbed by Kilauea's active lava flow, in truth, the most recent incident of the volcano's 35-year-old eruption affects only about 10 square miles of the 4,028-square-mile island.

Here's the scoop straight from the Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau: It's business as usual with such everlasting enticements as east Hilo's multicultural eating opportunities and interactive science centers; the Hamakua Coast's hidden rain forest, waterfalls, zip lining and horseback riding. Pushing the adventure envelope are such options as night dives or snorkeling to view manta rays and a helicopter tour over the lava fields of Kilauea, Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea volcanoes.

For a bit of science, there's star gazing atop the dormant Mauna Kea (named the world's tallest mountain when measured base to peak). Volcano Winery produces a unique character wine from grapes grown on vines at the 4,000-foot elevation of Kilauea volcano. And a tour of the Kona Coffee Living History Farm gives a peek into the still-producing coffee estate.

New to the scene are these one-of-a-kind tours. Volcano Bike Tours, which explore portions of the renowned "Red Road," also include a hike to a black sand beach. KapohoKine Adventures offers the opportunity to follow the path of British explorer Captain James Cook by foot and zodiac boat. Hawaii Forest and Trail (which supports relief efforts in communities affected by recent Kilauea volcano activity) serves up a full-day Epic Island Journey tour including an off-road adventure in exploration of a 150-year-old working ranch and a hike through native forestlands, complete with views of Kilauea volcano.

Official word: The Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau is monitoring the Kilauea volcano activity and continues to spread the message that it is safe to visit the island of Hawaii and all of the other Hawaiian Islands. — CD

# All-Season Meeting & Incentive Destinations

## Exclusive Experiences Make Great Rewards

By Cynthia Dial

Whether it's a "day as a rock star" in a recording studio in Austin (also known as the "Live Music Capital of the World"), a catamaran cruise off the island of Hawaii at sunset or a Broadway play performed exclusively for your New York group courtesy of a theater buyout, the goals to inspire, energize and motivate can be accomplished across the board and across the world.

Here are some destinations that appear custom-designed to incentivize, along with info from some of the industry's key, in-the-know players.

### Aloha and Mahalo

"Hawaii is a fabulous option for all-incentive programs," says Debbie Grassi, vice president of sales with Lynette Owens & Associates, an incentive/meeting management/event planning firm in Rancho Sante Fe, California, specializing in insurance and financial

service markets. "Each island offers a uniquely different 'feel,' so coming to Hawaii but visiting a different island each trip gives attendees a different experience every time."

One client example Grassi cites is a group of 125 West/Midwestern attendees of a major IMO whose incentive took them to Maui. Its meeting planner's selection of island activities included a snorkel/cruise/lunch excursion, swim with the turtles, luau and a day drive to Hana — not your typical teambuilding ventures. The IMO planner says the feedback he received of the rewards trip to paradise was a thumbs-up from all, even those originally from Hawaii, for whom the incentive was like a trip back home. Would he do it again? "In a heartbeat," he confirms.

"We encourage visitors and attendees to embrace the Islands and engage in inspiring programs and rejuvenating experiences that leave them feeling invigorated and, ultimately, allow them to take a little bit of Hawaii's 'Aloha Spirit' back home with them," says

*"We encourage visitors and attendees to embrace the Islands and engage in inspiring programs and rejuvenating experiences that leave them feeling invigorated."*



**Mary Neister, CMP**  
Vice President MCI  
Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau  
Honolulu, HI

Mary Neister, CMP, vice president MCI, Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau.

Among these activities, Neister mentions authentic Hawaiian experiences for teambuilding — outrigger canoeing, throw-net fishing, harvesting kalo from loi (irrigated agricultural terrace) and helping to restore centuries-old loko ia (fishponds) built by early Hawaiians. For groups looking to support Hawaii's sustainability and reforestation efforts are activities involving the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative (HLRI), which has planted more than 340,000 "legacy trees" across 1,000 acres on the island of Hawaii (creating the only "legacy forest of its kind").

Planning something "different" is always memorable, shares incentives specialist Grassi. "Cattle drives, visiting a dormant or active volcano, watching sunrises from atop a dormant volcano and then biking down it — anything

that is different from where they live, people will remember forever."

Her assessment of an incentive to the islands: "Hawaii offers it all — warm weather, eternal sun, beautiful beaches, great resorts, fabulous restaurants and friendly people — all within the safe boundaries of the U.S. Plus, no passport is required."

According to the Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau, Hawaii is experiencing a 63 percent growth in the number of incentive bookings, which accounts for a 75 percent growth in room nights for that segment. Neister's assessment: "The outlook on Hawaii's incentive business remains very strong, as organizations bringing incentive programs to the Hawaiian Islands recognize that not only does employee productivity increase when Hawaii is the 'prize,' but

attendees also return feeling rejuvenated and inspired to focus on personal and professional growth."

### California Dreamin'

"When setting up an incentive trip, it really starts from the moment they receive the award," says Jennifer Garcia,



A property that offers boating and other water activities ranks high for incentive trips.

*"I try to make each attendee feel like the trip was planned with just them in mind."*



**Jennifer Garcia**

Executive Administrative Assistant to CEO  
InterWest Insurance Services LLC  
Sacramento, CA

executive administrative assistant to CEO, InterWest Insurance Services LLC, a Northern California company comprised of nine offices throughout the state. She continues that it's about having personal touches — from the invitations and making all their arrangements to greeting their arrival with a welcome card and gift basket, and ensuring everything throughout the event runs smoothly. "I try to make each attendee feel like the trip was planned with just them in mind."

Having used a variety of locations in coordinating the Chairman's Award Weekends for groups from 16 to 85, a tradition for the past 10 years, Garcia details her frequent choice of Lake Tahoe.

"For us, the Lake Tahoe region is close enough to be a destination area, but without traveling too far. It's unique in that you can spend the morning snow skiing and the afternoon in a boat on

the water. I'm not sure there are many locations you can do both in the same day."

As InterWest Insurance's incentive focus is family-friendly, Garcia highlights this region's endless variety of activities: golfing, horseback riding, fly-fishing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking,

boating, Jet Skiing and waterskiing; and with winter comes downhill skiing (it's the setting of the 1960 VIII Winter Olympics). She singles out Resort at Squaw Creek for its access to the slopes (winter teambuilding activities include broomball, dogsledding and snowshoeing) and the AAA Four Diamond, 422-room waterfront Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino — noted for its private beach, Stillwater Spa and Grand Lodge Casino.

"We stick to the Tahoe and Napa areas for our incentives," says Garcia. "Why travel to farther away locations when you have world-class locations just hours from you?" Beyond the central location of the Napa region (Calistoga, St. Helena, Yountville) to this Northern California-based company, the planner adds, "It's wine country and that, in itself, sets it apart from other regions."

Among its numerous appeals are hot-air ballooning, skydiving, wine tours, the Napa Valley Wine Train, plus harvest season — (its busiest season, rates are higher, and it's more difficult to

negotiate, but it provides an above-and-beyond experience). Two of the planner's preferred locations include Harvest Inn (St. Helena) and Napa Valley Lodge (Yountville). Of practical but additional appeal is the region's proximity to three major international airports — Oakland, San Francisco and Sacramento.

**My Kind of Town**

"We treat incentives as an opportunity to celebrate success of the organization while having an adventure in a new place or in a common place in a new way," says Renee Black, principal and senior meeting planner for planitomaha, a Midwest-based company dedicated to event and meeting management solutions.

Selecting Chicago time and again, most recently for this year's April event attended by 500 attendees of a market leader in financial services, utilizing the Hilton Chicago, Black applauds the city's versatility. "Chicago has many options for large and small high-end programs because they have multiple properties with 5,000-square-foot ballrooms, as well as 20,000-square-foot ballrooms. And, as a meeting planner, I appreciate that the (air) lift is excellent — with almost every market having a direct flight to the city."

With the additional offerings of sports, the arts, restaurants, tour attractions and excellent shopping, the planner summates, "Many of these items translate to the ability to book a rooftop venue such as The Ivy, rent space at Willis Tower, take a boat excursion on Lake Michigan and arrange a private Second City show (a top attendee favorite)." Another hit for Black is always a "taste of Chicago," where the planner's group is presented with a selection of the city's most famous foods, including an authentic deep-dish pizza.

Known for its innovative culinary scene, the latest on Chicago's radar is the September opening of VU, the South Loop's first rooftop bar presented by the James Beard-nominated Concentrics Restaurant Group. Set 22 stories above McCormick Place, designed for al fresco and indoor drinking, dining and lounging and touted as one of the



*There's no lack of excitement — day or night — in Las Vegas, the "Entertainment Capital of the World."*

Credit: Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

city's hottest venues, it also offers a karaoke room, boardroom, club bar and solarium bar — making it more enticing for planners.

**Winning is Las Vegas**

When taking an incentive trip to the Entertainment Capital of the World, there is no shortage of options to add an exclamation point to any event.

According to Amy Riley, senior director of business sales, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, "Just as Las Vegas is an around-the-clock destination, it's also an unbeatable place to bring incentive groups all year long."

Las Vegas averages 320 days of sunshine and less than five inches of annual rain, the weather is a perfect fit for hosting outdoor functions and events, as well as golfing, hiking and pool parties.

Additionally, many newly opened or planned venues, such as ARIA, Park MGM and CAESARS FORUM, have incorporated outside options into their event spaces. With the combo of high-profile events and professional sports franchises now calling Las Vegas home, the city is also emerging as a top destination for sports fans. And, in winter, there's an abundance of lounges, reception areas and shows guaranteed to keep attendees engaged.

Top teambuilding ops include driving an exotic high-end car at SPEED-VEGAS, toasting colleagues atop the world's tallest observation wheel during its "happy hour," hands-on culinary experiences alongside celeb chefs, backstage tours of major stage productions and helicopter excursions over the Strip and the Grand Canyon.

Las Vegas hosts nearly 22,000 annual

meetings, has nearly 150,000 rooms and an international airport with nonstop service from more than 130 cities. Riley says, "Insurance and financial planners often have particular needs for their groups which may require a certain level of confidentiality. The beauty of hosting these types of events here is that there are plenty of things for attendees to explore and enjoy while also providing privacy for groups."

**Austin Has No Limits**

Known by many incentive planners for its festivals — from Austin City Limits Music Festival and Formula 1 United States Grand Prix to Austin Food + Wine Festival and South by Southwest Music Festival — this is Austin. What additionally differentiates the city as an incentive destination? Visit Austin's Courtney Sculley, director of northeast and international sales, offers a three-word, one-thought response: "Location, location, location."

She explains that Austin is far enough south where visitors can enjoy the outdoors year-round. It's only a three-hour flight from either coast, making a national or global recognition program easily accessible from most locations. And its walkable downtown offers six unique entertainment districts but is less than 30 minutes from the rolling Hill Country and award-winning golf and spas.

This is a city where beyond-the-norm activities can include sampling a selection of its 1,400 different food trailers via an Austin Eats Food Tour, checking

out its craft beer scene through a private brewery tour of Jester King in the Hill Country, learning how to row at the Austin Rowing Club on Lady Bird Lake and getting behind the wheel of some of the world's fastest Audi Sport vehicles on the nation's only Formula 1 circuit with a pro driver as your guide (including the racing world's Eric Paradis).

"Austin is positioned to provide a 'WOW' experience without the perception of a highly scrutinized, exotic location," says Sculley.

She gives stats: The Texas city offers more than 250 live music venues and 200 restaurants within the central business district. "For planners, navigating 'all' the live music and entertainment options is overwhelming, and we often hear, 'There are too many options!' We are one of few DMOs that has its own music office tasked with hiring local talent for VIP events," she says.

"Incentives are a growing market in Austin," Sculley adds. "We believe it's a testament to our new luxury hotel product."

Since 2017, Austin has welcomed a 1,048-room Fairmont Austin and the \$75 million renovated LINE Austin as part of



*"Just as Las Vegas is an around-the-clock destination, it's also an unbeatable place to bring incentive groups all year long."*

**Amy Riley**

Senior Director of Business Sales  
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority  
Las Vegas, NV

the Sydell Group. Other projects opening next year include The Proper Austin Hotel (244 rooms), Hotel ZaZa (160 rooms) and Commodore Perry Estate (53 rooms). Currently, there are more than 10,000 downtown rooms, with almost 40,000 citywide.

Even its airport, Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS), a state-of-the-art facility, provides a fun and efficient



Hotel Xcaret Mexico, an all-inclusive resort in Riviera Maya, is a Caribbean delight. Everything a guest wants — food, sun and fun — is right there onsite.

Credit: Hotel Xcaret Mexico

## New York on a Budget? No problem.

According to NYC & Company's Cito, "Incentive planners seeking value can plan a January incentive trip, when the most affordable hotel rates of the year are available." He mentions such options as NYC Restaurant Week, NYC Broadway Week, NYC Off-Broadway Week (offering 2-for-1 tickets) and NYC Must-See Week featuring 2-for-1 admission to museums, attractions, performing arts productions and more.

Regardless of the timing of an incentive trip, no-cost, year-round activities can be found — ranging from walking the Brooklyn Bridge or the Highline to museum visits on free-admission days.

Lastly and of interest to summer-seeking, budget-minded planners, Cito adds that July and August are a second period of value when available rates are more competitive. — CD

time. Among its perks are 350 daily flights with nonstop service to more than 80 destinations, Southern hospitality-style customer service, a selection of local food (including breakfast tacos, brisket and Shiner Bock beer), 1,500 live music performances last year and the expansion of nine new gates in 2019.

### Fun in the Caribbean

What better incentive than the lure of the warm sun and white-sand beaches of the Mexican Caribbean? Mexico's year-round tropical climate gives visitors the chance to relax and enjoy whenever they want.

Designed with incentives in mind, Hotel Xcaret Mexico is an all-inclusive resort in Riviera Maya, very close to the

only all-inclusive concept in Riviera Maya with unlimited access to Xcaret, Xel-Ha, Xplor, Xplor Fuego, Xavage, Xoximilco and Xenses parks, as well as tours to Xenotes and Xichen, food and beverages, transportation between parks and airport shuttle.

"Hotel Xcaret is the ideal destination because our All-Fun Inclusive concept grants guests complimentary access to our parks and excursions," says Wendy Canul, groups director at Hotel Xcaret Mexico. "That's, of course, in addition to our stunning venues located throughout our 'caletas' and private beaches, which offer guests the unique opportunity of interacting with nature while enjoying top-notch accommodations, service and gastronomy provided by the hotel."

The upscale resort boasts more than 35,000 square feet of multifunctional indoor and outdoor meeting space. Other luxurious amenities include infinity pools, three gyms and 10 restaurants.

### Start Spreading the News

"The need for incentivization continues to grow, as gift cards do not offer the same motivation as trips to enviable destinations," says Jerry Cito, senior vice president, convention development at NYC & Company, the official destination marketing organization for New York City.

Discussing the city in terms of the time of year, the New York City specialist lists the best of each season. Winter brings the exuberance of the holidays

— lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree, private walking tours of decked-out department store windows and VIP views overlooking Times Square for the New Year's Eve Ball Drop.

In spring, the city's more than 1,700 parks, playgrounds and recreation facilities come alive with Central Park and Prospect Park becoming car-free this year. Now open are the waterfront developments of Hunter's Point South (phase II) in Long Island City, Domino Park on the Williamsburg waterfront and Pier 3 at Brooklyn Bridge Park.

In fall, the proliferation of high-end retailers and exclusive behind-the-scenes shopping opportunities are unmatched for incentive participants with a passion for purchasing, including such perks as VIP access to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Recognizing this city as the Big Apple of incentives is a meeting planner from a major Midwestern fraternal insurance company, where his group of 900 enjoyed a harbor dinner cruise on the Fourth of July (complete with fireworks, of course), a visit to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum and a Broadway play (if the group is large enough, a theater buyout is possible).

What is the greatest appeal of the nation's largest city to the incentive market, especially to insurance and financial planners? Cito says, "New York City is the financial capital of the world and is home to iconic destinations, including Wall Street and the New York Stock Exchange."

A city where everything is possible, this is an incentive destination where even functions at the UN are not off the table and zip lining in a compact city of more than 8 million is also available at the Bronx Zoo.

New York is where a planner can charter a cruise to Ellis Island for the private use of the historic terminus, arrange batting sessions with former Yankee players, coordinate VIP entry to the opening and/or closing ceremonies of the U.S. Open and watch sunrises from the top of the Empire State Building. Bottom line: It's a sky's-the-limit kind of town. **I&FMM**

*"The need for incentivization continues to grow, as gift cards do not offer the same motivation as trips to enviable destinations."*



**Jerry Cito**

Senior Vice President, Convention Development  
NYC & Company  
New York, NY

center of Playa del Carmen. The property has 900 rooms distributed in "Casas," different buildings that pay special tribute to the Mayan region.

The resort offers plenty of perks, as well as the opportunity to visit the best parks in Riviera Maya and Cancun. All-Fun Inclusive by Hotel Xcaret México is



HOTEL  XCARET  
MEXICO

**ALL-FUN INCLUSIVE™**  
HOTEL ALL INCLUSIVE + PARKS & TOURS + TRANSPORTATION & AIRPORT SHUTTLE

With the ultimate ALL-FUN INCLUSIVE™ experience, the most amazing eco-parks in the world will become your attendees back yards

An impressive Convention Center and unlimited group access to our Parks: Xcaret, Xel-Há, Xplor, Xplor Fuego, Xoximilco and Xenses, as well as Tours to Xenotes and Xichén

hotelxcaret.com

# The Great Divide



## Create Programs With Multigenerational Appeal For Attendees to Connect

By Christine Loomis

There's overall agreement among experts that a generational divide currently exists within company employee pools and among attendees at meetings and in incentive programs. The problem is that there has been no consensus on how to close it. Much of the discussion has previously focused on how to determine — and then cater to — each generation's different needs.

Today, that conversation is shifting.

Some experts and organizations are noting that we may have gotten it wrong. Instead of focusing on differences, the means to closing the divide lies in honing in on all of the similarities that generations share, and in recognizing that defining people by their specific generation may not be productive at all.

In 2015, the Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) tackled this issue in a report. As the summary pointed out, the discussion around this topic and the conclusions reached by many experts inside and outside of the meetings industry have been hampered by the fact that there is no consensus on the basic

descriptions of the generations — or the specific years they represent — let alone anything else.

"For organizations hoping to tailor their incentive and engagement programs for employees and customers, the debate concerning the generations can be confusing and even overwhelming," the executive summary states. "Like economists, no two generational experts fully agree on the description for each generation, a truth that is well-documented both in the expert interviews conducted for and summarized in this paper, and in the dozens of papers, books and articles referenced throughout."

Most importantly, the report emphasizes that in addition to the specific generation into which someone is born, there are many other factors that influence a person's needs, preferences, interests and goals in life, work and meetings, well apart from the year they were born.

Melissa Van Dyke, president of IRF, notes that since that report, meeting

and incentive organizers have found many new ways to approach this topic, not the least of which is to drop the stereotypes.

### Stereotyping

"What we found from a look across many different types of studies on generations is that a person's generation is only one aspect of what influences their event experience desires," she says. "Life stage, including if they have finished school, if they are married, if they have children and how tenured they are in their current career, can oftentimes have a much greater impact on what attendees are looking for from an experience."

Jessie States, CMP, CMM, head of meeting innovation for MPI, agrees that stereotyping is not an effective approach, and as a result, the 2018 World Education Congress will have new elements in place.

"The science behind stereotyping is enlightening. That is, it's cognitively easier for humans to place people into

groups (age, for example) than to understand the complexities of each individual, especially when dealing with large numbers of people, such as attendees at a conference or tradeshow. Placing our boomers or millennials — even our centennials — into boxes can make it easier for us to manage their expectations," States says.

"But there are challenges associated with assumptions, e.g., boomers are tech-inept and millennials can't function without it. Not everyone or even most everyone fits into the cookie-cutter parameters that we create. And as each of our attendees, regardless of age, increasingly seeks unique, curated experiences, we may well be doing our events and participants a disservice by placing people into age-based buckets. It is for this precise reason that we have added WEC Experience Coaches this year."

### Motivating Forces

Experts agree that there are many factors capable of driving human motivation, some tied to age or life stages but others to different things entirely.

"People are motivated by different rewards — oftentimes unrelated to age," States says. "They may be driven or inspired by experiences (incentives), money, time off, shortened work weeks or a flexible environment. These may be driven by familial needs (young family, older parents) or career goals (title,

*"Not everyone or even most everyone fits into the cookie-cutter parameters that we create."*

Jessie States, CMP, CMM

Head of Meeting Innovation  
Meeting Professionals International  
Dallas, TX



authority) or material desires. Knowing your employees and what drives them as individuals is key to providing motivation for them to sell more, perform more efficiently or even just stick around longer."

Van Dyke also notes that some

## A Winning Approach

Melissa Van Dyke, president of the Incentive Research Foundation, says that one approach for planners and event organizers is to focus on things that are known to be a win for all generations, such as the following:

- **Acquiring goods and status that are meaningful:** Have attendees choose from an amenity bar rather than dictating their amenity. Provide opportunities to acquire status throughout the event via mobile apps or small competitions.
- **Bonding:** Build in calculated time for purposeful interaction. Regardless of the meeting format, find time for attendees to solve problems together and generate wins for the organization as a group.
- **Creating:** Attendees don't just want knowledge. Our instinct is to immediately USE the information we learn. Have attendees engage in some way to create a work of art or even complete a quiz together based on the information they just received.
- **Defending:** At the core, we want to know we are good at what we do. Find a way to recognize all attendees for their contributions to the event and the organization.

I&FMM

elements are relevant across multiple generations. One factor that has emerged since the foundation's 2015 report is wellness.

"The most recent meeting trend we've seen that has an impact on and is being driven in different ways by a multigenerational workforce is wellness," she says. "Whereas younger generations have fewer economic resources, they do have a desire to live 'Instagrammable' lives focused on 'wellth,' or finding ways to show their dedication to a healthy, wellness-oriented lifestyle. Boomers and Gen Xers are driving this trend, as well, with a desire for more health and comfort central to their well-being at work. This is increasing their interest in wellness products and services included in their experiences."

### Misconceptions

Much of the discussion related to generational divides, at least in the meetings and incentive world, revolves around fostering and increasing engagement at conferences, events and incentive programs. But how to engage is not always clear.

"In some spaces, there's a misconception that solving the generation 'issue' will increase engagement," Van

Dyke says. "In reality, however, the program that is crafted for a group of late-20-somethings, who are single and less traveled, could and should look very different than the program for the same age of attendees who are married with children and have traveled extensively."

At the end of the day, States says, creating welcoming experiences for all attendees is the key to any program.

"Instead of approaching the planning process with questions of how we will accommodate a certain age cohort, we should consider all of the ways our attendees are indeed different," she says. "We've identified more than 30 ways our participants differ from one another, and I am sure there are many more. From culture, gender and physical ability to skill set, socio-economic status and even just event goals, there are a vast array of ways we need to create welcoming and inclusive experiences that far outweigh our preconceptions about age as a determining factor of behavior or needs. MPI is focused on creating industry-leading education around inclusivity and continues to promote the importance of hosting welcoming experiences for all attendees."

### Making Programs Relevant

The key here lies at least partially in determining and offering those elements that have broad cross-appeal.

“For instance, including appropriate wellness, giveback and status components can be well-received by all generations,” Van Dyke says. “Likewise, engaging your attendees with mobile technology before, during and after an event is no longer a nod to millennials; rather, it’s an important way to help all busy attendees keep up-to-date on the experience without carrying around a stack of paper.”

In addition, she advises planners to “create places and spaces for people of various generations to purposefully connect. Human instinct is to gravitate toward those who are like us. However, when done thoughtfully, through purpose-built teambuilding, CSR or roundtable activities, for example, bringing different generations together to solve current business or social issues can be the highlight of the program ... for both the business and the organization.”

That’s not to say that age is entirely irrelevant. As States points out, differences in age can also mean differences in skill set and career maturity.

“For that reason, it’s important that meeting professionals plan experiences wherein individuals can seek best practices, advice and problem-solving from their peers, while at the same time, designing space for those same individuals to mentor and learn up and down,” she says.

“Relevance comes from finding

solutions to the challenges your attendees face and creating behavior change that moves them forward, regardless of age or where they are in their careers,” she adds. “Including technologies with-



*“The best networking and educational experiences come when we stretch ourselves to diversify our interactions, and that includes engaging with those much older and younger than us throughout the meeting experience.”*

Melissa Van Dyke, President  
The Incentive Research Foundation, Eureka, MO

in your design that create connections and engagement can lead to those types of solutions, but should not be the only way for people to connect with one another. Analog solutions, such as unique session formats (fishbowls, open space, dotmocracies), can be just as compelling as the tech-based engagement platforms that are so popular today. Creating a mix of these solutions can service all attendees better than any one method can.”

Age, States says, “does impact movement, mobility, sensory ability and much more, but so do other conditions that are age-unrelated. So, ensuring that your breaks provide for enough time to move from place to place, that your presentations include fonts that are large enough to read, that your meals

and breaks and menus are sufficient for an older or younger audience ticks off more than just the age box as you look toward designing inclusive experiences.” In the end, States says, her best

advice for planners is: “Host your multi-generational programs just as you would any meeting or event. Treat each individual as an individual, provide a variety of technology-based and analog experiences and ask questions that help you cater to the needs of your participants, whether they be physical or intellectual, mental or spiritual needs.”

#### Attendee Responsibility

Conference and incentive attendees themselves have a lot of skin in this game. If they work all year to qualify for an incentive trip, it should meet their needs and be everything they expected — whether they’re a millennial or a baby boomer.

If employees take time away from work and family to attend a conference,

that in 2016, a full 61.8 percent of baby boomers ages 55 to 64 would still be employed, and 18.6 percent of those age 65 and older would remain in the workforce.

Those statistics and estimates make clear that the trend of four or five distinct generations working together is likely to be the norm for many years to come, meaning meeting and incentive planners must find ways to bring all of these generations together in productive conferences and programs that increase engagement, motivation and productivity across the generational board. **I&FMM**

about 55 million millennials, (16- to 34-year-olds at that time) formed the largest share of the U.S. civilian workforce. The remainder of the workforce included about 53 million Gen Xers (ages 35 to 50 in 2015) and about 44 million baby boomers (ages 51 to 70 that year).

There were another 4 to 5 million of the “traditionalist” generation, meaning those still in the workforce who were age 71 and older.

A 2015 report from Catalyst, a global nonprofit focused on building better workplaces for women, noted

## How Many Generations Are We Talking About?

It’s clear that there will always be multiple generations working and meeting together, but perhaps more generations than in years past because baby boomers are not leaving the workforce.

As the IRF report noted in 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics at that point showed that the workforce was about 157 million people strong and growing, with four distinct generations working side by side, and “a fifth generation set to enter in 2016.” Welcome Generation Z, those born after 1995.

According to the report that year,

## Planner Strategies & Solutions

In Appendix C in the 2015 Incentive Research Foundation report, planners expressed their ideas for engaging multiple generations and creating opportunities in incentive programs and offsite meetings. The answers were divided into two groupings.

#### Ways Meeting Planners Are Bringing Generations Together

- Bring the different generations together with a common thread, make it different every time.
- Feature theme parties — they tend to appeal to many generations.
- At the dinners, do assigned seating so boomers and millennials are sitting together rather than with their friends.
- Include cross-generational teambuilding events and a wider choice of activities and content sessions.
- Include icebreaker activities that everyone participates in, and a hospitality suite to promote group interaction.
- Pick a destination that has a variety of activities — a simple golf and spa destination doesn’t work, especially if it’s remote. Find a destination that can accommodate a variety of interests within close proximity to the hotel/resort.
- Create different programs for different generations.
- Invite the multiple generations to join in the planning sessions.
- Include outside team activities — scavenger hunts/ treasure hunts/ races, etc., so that all are involved and help them get to know each other socially.
- Build consensus through marketing communications that appeal to all generations, and select locations that appeal to everyone.
- Engage all generations as a team in a project for charity.
- Design competitions that level the playing field across generations.

#### Ways Planners Are Creating Unique And Distinct Options

- Offer a website tailored for group program options so that everyone can easily see the range of options available.
- For Gen Xers especially, one of the leisure activities should be a car rental, so they can go off on their own and explore the region.
- Tailor the communications around your program to the preferences of each generation.
- Always try to have a couple of breakouts that are specific to each generation so they don’t feel bored. With activities, make sure they run the full gamut, from surfing to shopping.
- Allow a room and activities credit so each guest can select their own activity/spa choice instead of one group activity.
- Offer optional activities that appeal to different generations. There is usually some crossover but this works, as there tends to be higher satisfaction rates after programs.
- For evening functions, consider VIP after-parties for younger crowds and a chill-out traditional pub area for the older generation.
- Make GoPro cameras available to each guest for the duration of the trip with the learning lab included (for those who don’t know how to use it).
- Allow participants to build their own amenity mix.
- Create different focus areas, such as a jazz corner near the bar or a DJ at the pool.
- Add GPS scavenger hunts to engage millennials. **I&FMM**

it should deliver something of value to every employee who attends in terms of education, networking and/or developing new skills. And by doing so, the conference delivers ROI to the company, as well.

The question is what part do attendees themselves play in ensuring that value? One definitive way is by stepping outside of their normal comfort zone and being open to possibilities.

“Our instinct is to network with those with whom we are most comfortable, those who are like us,” Van Dyke says. “But the best networking and educational experiences come when we stretch ourselves to diversify our interactions, and that includes engaging with

those much older and younger than us throughout the meeting experience.”

States agrees. “Attendees will be well-served if they choose to interact with people who are different from themselves, be it in terms of age, gender, culture, race, physical ability, socioeconomic background or any other kind of differentiator,” she says.

“We learn most from people with different experiences and challenges, who have discovered solutions unlike our own, who have found knowledge in unique ways. Creating spaces and places for our disparate attendees to connect, engage and learn from one another is the calling of all meeting professionals, and helping our attendees find

each other and the solutions they seek together will drive greater results for the meetings we hold.”

These are all valid points, and planners have much to work with just in terms of what’s offered in this one article. But the fact is that the answers we come up with today will not be the final answers for the future. Just as our views on this topic have evolved over the past decade, they will continue to change as we move into and think about what is to come.

“The generational question will always be part of the conversation,” Van Dyke says. “What will change is which generation we are currently talking about.” **I&FMM**

# CSR-Enhanced Teambuilding

## Delivering a 'Return on Emotion'

MassMutual Life Insurance Company held a teambuilding event with horses at Berkshire HorseWorks' ranch in Richmond, Massachusetts.

By Patrick Simms

The evolution of corporate teambuilding over recent decades has made planning these activities easier. Today, there are more structured opportunities for groups that want to improve their cohesiveness. Many of them are offered by CVBs, DMCs, specialized teambuilding companies and even hoteliers. The options have gone far beyond ropes courses and bike building. In the '80s and '90s, "no one had pages of [teambuilding] opportunities," recalls Wayne M. Robinson, CMP, CMM, assistant vice president at FM Global and incoming FICP chair. The opportunities for corporate social responsibility (CSR) were not as robust and well-organized as they are now.

"For most DMCs today, it's a part of their proposals. In fact, there are companies who only manage CSR programs,

and the programs are well-defined: who benefits, how the funds or materials are disseminated, not-for-profit status, as well as logistics, such as transportation, activity descriptions, what groups need to bring and so on."

Diverse and well-structured teambuilding programs benefit planners looking to implement an activity that is both targeted to their group and easy to run. But, many programs are advantageous to entities beyond the planner and attendees.

Charitable teambuilding is going strong, particularly since the recession of 2008. During that time, many insurance and financial companies added a philanthropic element to their teambuilding. Alan Ranzer, managing partner/co-founder of Impact 4 Good, describes the motivation: "If we're going to

have a meeting and show that we're not just having a boondoggle, let's make sure we're doing something to make a difference at the same time."

Thankfully, improving the public's perception of offsite meetings was not the only motivation for philanthropic teambuilding. After the economy improved, that kind of program remained a staple due to its dual benefit.

"It's not a trend; this is something that has continued and grown ever since," says Ranzer, who has collaborated with FICP on some of its philanthropic initiatives. "There are more and more companies like mine that are offering CSR opportunities to their clients because they are so popular."

This year, Impact 4 Good, a company that offers community service-oriented teambuilding to corporations

(including several insurance and financial firms), continues to see an uptick in business.

"We've already done three times as many events as last year with insurance companies," Ranzer reports. "What we're finding is that companies really take CSR seriously. The companies that are doing it right don't look at CSR as a check-box item for their meeting; they understand that it's just as important as the speakers you select, the outings, the training sessions" and other components.

When CSR is combined with teambuilding, the activity delivers a stronger "return on emotion" in two respects. First, participants connect more deeply with one another, compared to teambuilding that lacks a charitable aspect.

"When you can do something that is going to touch you personally, and you share in that experience of changing someone's life together with your colleagues, it creates an emotional bond in a way that non-community service teambuilding cannot," Ranzer explains.

Second, participants connect more deeply with their company. "It endears you to your company," he says. "There's been so much written about employee engagement in the last five years. When you do something to give back to the community under your company's name, you feel good about who you work for. So, you're more willing to give all your discretionary effort to your company. They aren't just giving you a paycheck, but also this uplifting

experience when they allow you to impact people's lives on business time."

When FM Global held its worldwide conference in Boca Raton, Florida, "we contacted a local charity affiliated with a religious organization," says Robinson. "We were able to assemble packages for schoolchildren in South America. It was nice because we got an email with pictures from the kids who were happy to receive their packages."

These returns on emotion are especially valuable when a company is undergoing challenges that can negatively affect the morale and attitude of its employees.

"I've had clients that are coming together in times of downsizing or when major decisions have to be made, and when you use a CSR activity to kick off those events, it can really take the edge off and have people open up emotionally, which sets the tone for the time you're together," Ranzer relates.

An example of a firm that has achieved that greater return on emotion from CSR-oriented teambuilding is TD Ameritrade. Katrina Kent, director, The Event Group, notes that "combining teambuilding and community service has been quite successful for us and really helps meeting participants connect to a greater purpose and each other. We've worked with several of our core community partners, including Habitat

for Humanity, the American Red Cross and the United Way, to customize teambuilding experiences of all shapes and sizes. Some examples include competitive 'builds' for Habitat in teams (which team can build the most fences or chairs



*"Combining teambuilding and community service ... really helps meeting participants connect to a greater purpose and each other."*

**Katrina Kent**  
Director, The Event Group  
TD Ameritrade  
Jersey City, N.J.

the fastest) and various tournaments with Special Olympics, as well as 5K races for charity — and our meeting participants comingled."

Kent's team has found that "approaching organizations directly is successful because most partners are equipped and eager to work with us on the opportunity."

Post-event, measuring the impact of the activity is often easier when teambuilding is combined with CSR. "You often have quite tangible output to measure, whether that's X dollars raised or houses built, etc.," says Kent. "You can really see and feel the impact in a powerful way."

### Balance is Key

The greater diversity of teambuilding experiences available today means that planners can be selective. More criteria comes into play, beyond the time available during the meeting for the activity. For example, planners may consider how competitive (if at all) they want the activity to be.

In Kent's opinion, "Friendly competition juices everything up. When people are working hard for something that they care about, friendly competition makes it just a little more enticing."

But in general, elements like competitiveness, physicality or intellectual



Working with charitable organizations and doing community service gives groups the opportunity to bond through philanthropic teambuilding.



challenge should only be emphasized if the participant demographics call for it.

“Balance is key,” Kent asserts. “Even when you’re doing a physical activity or something like a trivia challenge that may be geared more toward extroverts, it’s important to consider the experience for all and plan accordingly for

**“When you do something to give back to the community under your company’s name, you feel good about who you work for.”**



**Alan Ranzer**  
Managing Partner/Co-founder  
Impact 4 Good  
Bethesda, MD

various levels of engagement. At the end of the day, these things are great tools to bring people together, and inclusivity is key.”

Regarding the selection of the teambuilding’s community beneficiaries, one guideline is the group’s philanthropic history, which indicates the kind of causes that will move attendees and/or the C suite.

“Another thing to keep in mind is what’s happening locally,” says Ranzer. “We have clients that have planned or are planning to run programs in Puerto Rico; well, we all know what happened there in terms of (Hurricane Maria in 2017). If you’re doing things in California, there (could be) wildfires. If planning in the Carolinas, (there could be another hurricane). So knowing what has happened on the ground locally is another indicator of the type of (charitable) activity that might be good for your group.”

Finding new activities and new causes can also spark a little more enthusiasm among participants. For instance, teambuilding through equine therapy organizations is fairly uncommon, and thus can intrigue attendees. Richmond, Massachusetts-based Berkshire HorseWorks is one such option, and partnering with the 501(C)(3) organization is

an indirect form of CSR: Berkshire provides financial assistance to at-risk youth, families and veterans who could not otherwise afford equine therapy.

Groups that want to teambuild at Berkshire HorseWorks have several upscale lodging options in its surrounding resort area, such as Cranwell Spa & Golf Resort and Canyon Ranch Lenox. Recently, Berkshire HorseWorks — in collaboration with Stable Connections — partnered with the Boulderwood estate in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to offer exclusive retreats for families and organizations of all kinds.

Boulderwood is an 11-bedroom shingle and fieldstone home situated on 75 acres and abutting the 12,000-acre Beartown State Forest. Built in 1900 by Yale Professor Henry Farnum, the house is located near many cultural attractions including Tanglewood, Norman Rockwell Museum, The Mount and Shakespeare and Company. Groups have meeting rooms with basic AV equipment available, and PBS host and Executive Chef Carol Murko prepares all meals. Berkshire HorseWorks would hold all equine activities at Boulderwood for the client.

MountainOne Insurance Agency, Inc. has held a four-hour teambuilding event at Berkshire HorseWorks’ ranch for 15 high-performing salespeople.

“The primary goal was to be a reward and get them out of the office for about a half a day to do something fun,” relates Jonathan Denmark, LIA, CLTC, CISR, CLCS, president and COO of MountainOne Insurance Agency. “The secondary goal was to get some salespeople that don’t typically work with others in situations where they have to get to know each other’s style, work together to solve a problem and build a stronger team overall.”

The program actually began before the group was onsite. EAGALA-certified

Hayley Sumner, founder and executive director of Berkshire HorseWorks, visited MountainOne’s office a week in advance.

Denmark describes the meeting: “At that point, we had not told the team what we were doing. She asked people questions on defining conflict and culture in your personal lives vs. your professional lives, and putting some tags to them. So, what does conflict look like? And, people said things like stress or competition. And, what does culture look like? And, people would say things like family, unity and togetherness. So, she set the stage in getting to know our team a little bit. By the end of the presentation, she was showing people pictures of horses on the screen and saying, ‘How does this horse make you feel?’ It might be sprinting or standing there in a fold.”

At the ranch, the theme of emotionally connecting to horses continued.

“Hayley had laid out about 100 different pictures of horses. Everyone had to pick out a picture of a horse that represented their role at Mountain One Insurance Agency, and then describe it to the entire group,” says Denmark. “So, someone who may have been a new producer may pick out a picture of a young horse following its parents, and she would explain, ‘This is me. I’m still learning, I’m following.’ Others would



**Jonathan Denmark, LIA, CLTC, CISR, CLCS**  
President and COO  
MountainOne Insurance Agency  
Pittsfield, MA

**“It was kind of an interesting lesson that says not every client is the same, and it’s really important to match up the right person with the right client.”**

pick out the black stallion [representing their role as a sales leader]. So, it was interesting to see people outside of their comfort zones explaining and trying to relate to these horse pictures.”

Next, the attendees met outside



Credit: Berkshire HorseWorks

Groups had to perform tasks as a unit to successfully complete different activities on the ranch.

the paddock for the first teambuilding exercise. The task was to have a team member lead one of two horses outside the fence. No talking was permitted once team members entered the paddock, so they had to make plans before entering.

“As a team, we had to work among ourselves to [determine] who has experience with horses,” Denmark explains. “We identified a couple people, and those people became the leaders, and we kind of emboldened them. They went inside the paddock, communicated with the horse nonverbally by touching and combing its hair, put the reins on and led it outside the paddock totally silent. And, of course, the whole team exploded with applause after they successfully did this.”

Denmark extrapolates the experience to a business scenario: “It was kind of an interesting lesson that says not every client is the same, and it’s really important to match up the right person with the right client.... And, we were

able to make people who wouldn’t typically be leaders, leaders in this situation.”

The second teambuilding exercise had attendees work out conflicting agendas. They were given index cards with conflicting instructions on what to do with the horses, without knowledge of one another’s agendas.

“It was just absolute chaos with 15 people trying to do different things with the horses. So, that was really interesting in having to kind of sell our agenda to one another while following the instructions on the index card,” says Denmark.

Overall, Denmark feels the equine activity “really humanized people. It broke down a lot of the thick barriers and made them a little more vulnerable. We had a session afterward where we talked about what everyone learned about themselves or others, and the feedback was absolutely incredible. I also think it helps with retention when you do something like that for your salespeople. They say, ‘This is really

unique. My company and my leader really care about me. They want us to improve in these situations.”

### Let the Games Begin

Unique types of CSR-oriented teambuilding can also be conducted at the group’s hotel or meeting venue if travel time is a factor.

Ranzer gives the example of Financial Literacy Monopoly, one of many programs designed and offered by Impact 4 Good. The game naturally resonates with insurance and financial groups, and benefits local high school and middle school students who also participate.

“The questions to earn Monopoly properties are all about financial literacy. Before the game starts, we bring in local kids to be on their teams. And, as they’re going through these questions, they’re actually teaching these kids what these concepts are,” Ranzer explains. “One analyst said to me: ‘It’s refreshing to do something that makes sense for who we are. We’ve done scavenger hunts and things that can be fun, but there’s a reason that all of us are financial analysts. To be able to pay it forward and teach kids about these concepts really allows us to view our work in this industry in a different way.’”

After the game is over, Impact 4 Good gives Kiva cards to the teams. “They go on to kiva.org and search the world over for [low-income entrepreneurs and students] who are looking for small loans. The Kiva cards we give them have a monetary value, and as a team, they will fulfill a loan application and pick which project they want to add money to,” says Ranzer.

The program thus goes the extra mile by teaching kids, who are the community beneficiaries of the activity, to be philanthropic themselves. Ultimately, teambuilding that is steeped in CSR not only helps to unify workforces.

It also indirectly helps to unify communities by promoting the value of social responsibility. Ideally, community members themselves will be also achieving a “return on emotion” through good works. **I&FMM**



# 20<sup>th</sup> Annual 2018 World Class Award Winners

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**Fontainebleau Miami Beach**  
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**Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center**  
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**Loews Coronado Bay Resort**  
Coronado, CA

**Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando**  
Orlando, FL

**M Resort Spa Casino**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Ocean Reef Club**  
Key Largo, FL

**Sea Island Resort**  
Sea Island, GA

**Trump National Doral Miami**  
Miami, FL

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Lake Buena Vista, FL

**Wynn Las Vegas**  
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#### Citywide Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 3,400

**Meeting Space:** 500,000 square feet indoor and outdoor

**Special Services & Amenities:** Atlantis is your portal to a truly Bahamian experience featuring five distinct hotels, unparalleled meeting and convention space, an open-air marine habitat, a 141-acre waterscape, 5 miles of white-sand beaches and so much more.

## Atlantis, Paradise Island

**A**tlantis, Paradise Island, the lush, oceanside resort in The Bahamas, recently embarked on a new chapter (“Bahamas at Heart”) tied to a meaningful connection with the property’s 7,300-plus employees and the rich history, art, people, food, marine life and festivities of the country.

### A Refreshed and Refined Stay

Atlantis features five distinct properties at which to stay, from the iconic The Royal to The Beach and The Coral to the newly built luxury properties, The Cove and The Reef. The Coral, newly renovated, has reopened as a fully redesigned family escape, while The Cove recently celebrated a series of new design collaborations, restaurants and guest experiences, each paying homage to Bahamian culture.

### Ocean-themed Resort

The ocean-themed resort is built around Aquaventure, an innovative 141-acre waterscape of thrilling slides and river rides, pools and white-sand beaches, and features one of the largest open-air marine habitats in the world, with more than 50,000 marine animals from 250 species.

In addition to various habitats across the property, guests are able to visit Dolphin Cay, the 14-acre marine mammal habitat and education center, whose first residents were rescue dolphins and sea lions from Hurricane Katrina.

A portion of the cost of each of the on-property marine interactions goes back to the Atlantis Blue Project Foun-

ation, the resort’s nonprofit organization dedicated to saving sea species and their extraordinary habitats.

### Meetings

With the largest conference center in the Caribbean, Atlantis boasts 200,000 square feet of indoor meeting space highlighted by the 50,000-square-foot Imperial Ballroom and 25,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom.

The 60 meeting rooms on-property allows Atlantis to accommodate groups of 15 to 4,000 and more than 20 distinct outdoor venues totaling 300,000 square feet entertain parties of up to 5,000.

### Exceptional Experiences

Atlantis is also known as one of the ultimate culinary and nightlife destinations in the Caribbean, housing a collection of more than 40 restaurants and lounges from world-renowned chefs including Nobu Matsuhisa, José Andrés and Todd English.

The resort also has one of the Caribbean’s most renowned casinos, with more than 47,000 square feet of gaming options spread across the property.

Other amenities include the Atlantis Marina, Marina Village marketplace, Mandara Spa, Kids and Teen Clubs, award-winning 18-hole Tom Weiskopf-designed golf course, tennis courts and duty-free shopping complemented by some of the biggest names in the industry.

### What’s Coming

Atlantis plans to announce more renovations and property upgrades in the coming months, including news of redesigned rooms and suites at The Royal & The Reef in 2019. **I&FMM**

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www.diplomatresort.com



#### Citywide Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 1,000

**Meeting Space:** 209,000 square feet

**Special Services & Amenities:** 10 culinary outlets, from casual to fine dining; water recreation: Jet Ski, ocean kayak and paddleboard rentals; poolside cabanas; full-service spa with fitness centers; onsite marina; convention center with comprehensive technology, audiovisual, onsite catering

## The Diplomat Beach Resort

**F**resh off a \$100 million transformation in April 2017, The Diplomat Beach Resort — Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards 2016 and 2017, voted one of the Top Resorts in Florida — is Hollywood, Florida's most iconic property, boasting 1,000 guest rooms and suites.

Additionally, The Diplomat is the largest in hotel convention space in South Florida with the most expansive ballroom south of Orlando.

The Diplomat Beach Resort features more than 209,000 square feet of indoor flexible function and meeting space and continues to serve as the premier location for business travel and large-scale conferences, weddings and milestone celebrations.

With recent upgrades in comprehensive technology, and unbeatable ocean views, travelers and locals can expect thoughtfully designed and unique spaces meant to create memorable meetings, events and retreats.

- 50,000-square-foot unobstructed Great Hall able to accommodate up to 5,000 guests
- Four ballrooms, including

20,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom overlooking the Atlantic, able to accommodate up to 850 guests

- 39 breakout rooms, ideal for smaller events
- Outdoor special event areas, including the pool deck and South Palm Court
- Comprehensive technology and onsite IT and audiovisual

#### Onsite Amenities

Each of the resort's 10 dining destinations is rooted in strong culinary

sensibilities and exudes brand individuality, creating distinct spaces and experiences, from famed restaurateur and chef Michael Schulson's award-winning Japanese-inspired Monkitaail — voted Best New Restaurant by *USA Today* and *Sun-Sentinel*, Best Hotel Restaurant by *USA Today* in 2017 and OpenTable's Diners' Choice Awards in February 2018 — to celebrity chef Geoffrey Zakarian's Point Royal — a Coastal American restaurant.

Guests can recharge at the resort's 24-hour fitness center, full-service spa overlooking the Atlantic Ocean or enjoy two beachfront pools.

There are also 25 private waterfront cabanas, including four designed by the iconic lifestyle and fashion brand, Trina Turk. Other water activities include Jet Skiing, ocean kayaking, paddleboard rentals and the property's newest addition, the Dip + Slide water play area.

#### Perfect Location

The Diplomat Beach Resort continues to serve as the largest convention hotel in South Florida and the premier location for business travel and large-scale conferences, weddings and milestone celebrations.

Located at 3555 South Ocean Drive, Hollywood, Florida, the resort is spread across the Intracoastal Waterway and Atlantic Ocean, just steps from North Miami Beach, bordering Fort Lauderdale.

The Diplomat is within a 15-minute drive from the Fort Lauderdale International/Hollywood International Airport and only minutes from popular attractions like Hollywood's historic oceanfront Boardwalk and world-class shopping at Aventura Mall, Bal Harbour Shops or Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale. **I&FMM**



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- 50,000 Sq. Ft. of Exhibition Hall with no columns + 30 Ft. Ceilings
- 4 social ballrooms
- State of the Art Technology
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#### Citywide Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms:** 55,394

**Hotels/Resorts:** 426

**Meeting Space:**  
1.2 million square feet

**Special Amenities:** In addition to the nearly 500,000 square feet of exhibition space and more than 180,000 square feet of meeting space, the new Miami Beach Convention Center includes a 60,000-square-foot grand ballroom, a 20,000-square-foot junior ballroom and 84 breakout rooms.

## Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

**A**vibrant and dynamic global hub, Miami offers a stunning array of creative venue options for even the largest meeting needs, including the new Miami Beach Convention Center, now open!

Located in the heart of South Beach, the new Miami Beach Convention Center is a bright, glass-encased facility as innovative and tech-rich as it is beautiful.

In addition to the nearly 500,000 square feet of versatile exhibition space and more than 180,000 square feet of meeting space, the new Miami Beach Convention Center includes a 60,000-square-foot grand ballroom, a 20,000-square-foot junior ballroom and 84 breakout rooms.

The space will feature a terrace where attendees can step out, mingle and soak up the city's signature sunshine and ocean breeze. The new Miami Beach Convention Center is also environmentally friendly and LEED Silver-certified.

#### WHAT'S NEW

Along with the new Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami continues to reinvent itself with new hotels, meeting spaces and enhanced infrastructure. Some recent additions to the city include:

- **Brickell City Centre**

Spanning 9.1 acres, Brickell City Centre includes a 352-room hotel, an open-air shopping center, two luxury condo towers, two office buildings and an entertainment center.

- **Brightline**

The new express train service provides intercity travel in Florida. In May, Brightline began service connecting Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm

Beach, with service between Miami and Orlando to follow soon.

- **Frost Science Museum**

The Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science opened its doors to the public in May 2017 at its new home in downtown Miami's Museum Park. The 250,000-square-foot facility combines a planetarium, aquarium and science museum on one campus.

#### ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Few places in the world deliver such a thriving mix of international sophistication, natural tropical beauty and authentic cultural diversity as Miami. From picture-perfect weather, pristine beaches and top-rated attractions, to lavish hotels, eclectic dining and a thriving cultural scene, the city offers endless possibilities for entertainment and exploration.

One of the best places to start is with the city's diverse array of neighborhoods, where visitors are encouraged to explore the deep, rich cultural roots that make Miami such an incredible melting pot. Discover the heritage of the Caribbean in Little Haiti or the Bahamian foundations in West Coconut Grove. Immerse in the African-American experience of Historic Overtown or the region's still-thriving Native American community in South Dade.

When it comes to arts, Miami is also a burgeoning hotbed. Stroll through the street arts district of Wynwood or visit one of the city's fascinating museums, such as Perez Art Museum Miami or The Bass Museum of Art. Wherever you look, cultural gems await to be found.

Miami is also easy to get to, with Miami International Airport (MIA) offering more than 400 flights from around the globe daily and serving more airlines than any other airport in the U.S. **I&FMM**



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#### Citywide Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 275 accommodations

**Meeting Space:** 30,000 square feet

**Special Services & Amenities:** Ocean Reef Club is an exclusive island retreat with natural beauty and exceptional amenities, creating an unsurpassed backdrop for business meetings, retreats, incentive travel and special celebrations.

## Ocean Reef Club

Ocean Reef, a private club at the northernmost tip of Key Largo, offers beautiful, modern and functional meeting space that perfectly complements the luxury accommodations, distinctive dining and amenities that routinely wow groups who meet there.

With 30,000 square feet of meeting space, including both breakout rooms and flexible spaces, boardroom and a state-of-the-art cooking school, you'll want to consider treating your group to this island paradise.

### PRESERVING NATURE

Ocean Reef Club is settled among one of the most beautiful, yet fragile, environments in the world — 2,500 lush tropical acres just a few miles from the most extensive living coral reef in North America. Because of its unique location, Ocean Reef not only dedicates itself to environmental preservation, but partners with organizations like the nonprofit Coral Restoration Foundation (CRF), who create offshore nurseries and restoration programs for threatened coral species.

Through this partnership, groups meeting at Ocean Reef can take snorkeling or SCUBA diving trips to the nursery and help plant coral on the reef.

### TEAMBUILDING

Whether your team goes to see the famous Christ of the Abyss statue at the coral reef or attends the cooking school, which can hold demonstrations for up to 100 people, teambuilding at Ocean Reef Club has the feel of a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Consider the Eco-Kayak Scavenger Hunt, a very popular program among meeting attendees at Ocean Reef. Here, participants travel through mangroves and bird rookeries while admiring the clear waters that show off nature's sea floor.

Each team is given a map, a clue to get to their next location, a card that shows them exactly what they may see, a net and guidelines to find these objects.

### PLANNING YOUR NEXT MEETING

For meeting planners looking for a distinctive Florida Keys destination, Ocean Reef Club is like no other and less than an hour's drive from Miami International Airport.

Aside from the many teambuilding opportunities, groups will find a variety of eclectic meeting spaces indoors and out, including Buccaneer Island, which features a saltwater lagoon, sandy beach and two oceanfront pools.

It's the perfect setting for cocktail receptions, dinners and theme parties; 30,000 square feet of meeting space that blends contemporary comfort with advanced capabilities.

As well, Ocean Reef has the distinction of having two golf courses — a rarity in the Florida Keys — 10 tennis courts, six pickleball courts, salon and spa, myriad restaurants and lounges, and newly renovated accommodations, including oceanview rooms and suites, spacious villas and beautiful homes.

Plus, consider chartering a boat to enjoy some reef fishing a few miles offshore, where you'll come face-to-face with almost 600 species of fish.

Contact Ocean Reef Club at [www.meetingsatoceanreef.com](http://www.meetingsatoceanreef.com) or (800) 843-2730. **I&FMM**

## Like our coral reef, the beauty of a meeting is in the details.

At our legendary private club, meeting participants find inspiration amidst the unmatched beauty of our island retreat. Where camaraderie and productivity are enhanced by our tropical ambience, exceptional amenities, impeccable service and noteworthy attention to detail. Our recently built Carysfort Hall is the centerpiece of our 30,000 square feet of available meeting space that also includes a state-of-the-art cooking school.

Amidst our charming surroundings you'll also find:

- Over a dozen dining options
- Fishing, diving and snorkeling
- Tennis & Games Center
- The Spa at Ocean Reef

To see how your participants can experience this private club contact your Personal Meetings Manager at 800.843.2730 or email [orc-sales@oceanreef.com](mailto:orc-sales@oceanreef.com)





**David Furnish**  
Director of Sales and Marketing

100 Cloister Drive  
Sea Island, GA 31561  
888-857-7519  
FAX: 912-638-5803  
sales@seaisland.com  
www.seaisland.com



#### Citywide Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms:** 390  
**Meeting Space:** 40,000 square feet (interior)  
**Meeting Rooms:** 23  
**Special Services & Amenities:** Three championship golf courses, the country's finest Golf Performance Center, 5 miles of private beach, Beach Club, five pools, tennis, squash, Yacht Club, Shooting School, sailing, water sports, hunting and more.

## Sea Island

Steeped in golf tradition, Sea Island is home to three championship golf courses, including Seaside and Plantation, site of the PGA TOUR's RSM Classic, hosted each fall by Davis Love III, Sea Island touring professional, two-time Ryder Cup Captain and 2017 inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Created in 1928 by Walter Travis, Plantation was redesigned in 1998 by Rees Jones and features ocean views and plentiful lakes. Created in 1929 by Colt & Alison, Seaside was redesigned in 1999 by Tom Fazio. With 15 holes flanked by views of the ocean, sound and marsh, Seaside is Sea Island's signature course. Retreat Course, originally designed by Joe Lee, was renovated in 2001 by Davis and Mark Love and features a unique, dramatic layout.

#### Golf and Lodge Enhancements

Located between Seaside and Plantation, The Lodge at Sea Island is in the midst of a \$25 million enhancement program, which includes the addition of recently opened Driftwood Course, an 18-hole putting course. Six new cottages with a total of 14 sleeping rooms, an oceanfront pool and pool house debut ahead of the 2018 RSM Classic in November. In early 2019, a new 17,000-square-foot Golf Performance Center opens with six instruction and club fitting bays, cutting-edge putting studio, full-service golf club workshop, gym with locker rooms, retail area, and indoor and outdoor meeting and event spaces. Phil Kenyon, recently named Director of Putting Instruction and one of the most sought-after putting instructors in the world, is designing the new putting studio for teaching and putter fitting.

The existing Center continues to serve as one of the finest instructional centers in the country, teaching every aspect of the game to all skill levels, from juniors to Open and Masters Champions. Championship golf courses, exceptional resort facilities, family-friendly atmosphere and top-notch instruction have combined to attract more than two dozen touring professionals who live and/or train at Sea Island. In addition to Davis Love III, the list of local residents includes Zach Johnson, Matt Kuchar, Harris English, Brian Harman and Patton Kizzire, among others.

#### An Overview

Since 1928, Sea Island has been known as an exceptional destination appealing to those who appreciate gracious service and heartfelt hospitality.

With four Forbes Five-Star experiences — The Cloister at Sea Island, The Lodge at Sea Island, The Spa at Sea Island and the Georgian Room restaurant — it is the only resort in the world to have received four Forbes Five-Star Awards for 10 consecutive years.

The only U.S. resort to host a G-8 Summit of world leaders, Sea Island provides exceptional settings and service for conferences and executive retreats.

Guest accommodations are available at The Cloister, a Mediterranean masterpiece; The Lodge, reminiscent of an English country manor; or The Inn at Sea Island. A cottage option is also available. Located on the Georgia coast midway between Jacksonville, Florida (JAX, 60 minutes) and Savannah, Georgia (SAV, 75 minutes), Sea Island is served by two additional airports, including Brunswick (BQK, 20 minutes) and the private McKinnon St. Simons Airport (SSI, 10 minutes). **I&FMM**

## The Broadmoor

Nestled in the foothills below Pikes Peak on 5,000 stunning acres, The Broadmoor is the longest-running consecutive winner of the Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond awards. Here, authentic Western experiences combine with European elegance and a setting that inspires at every turn.

#### The Broadmoor Turns 100

To celebrate The Broadmoor's Centennial, a fresh, new look was unveiled. The rooms and suites in the historic Broadmoor Main sport a color palate to complement those of Broadmoor West. The lobby of Main, while maintaining all its historic aspects, is now spacious. The grand staircase to the mezzanine level floats ethereally upward, unencumbered by surrounding walls, and comfortable chairs and a sofa that frame two new fireplaces.

The Golf Club celebrates the 100-year legacy of the tournaments and golfing greats that shaped the history of our storied courses.

The entryway welcomes guests and members in exquisite style. The hallways are lined with cases that tell the story of how golf came to be, from course designers Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones Sr. to the legendary professionals who called The Broadmoor home.

Even the dining experience is new with a reimagined restaurant now called The Grille, with a menu filled with Broadmoor classic cuisine and featuring an impressive and expansive new bar.

#### Meeting Venues

With 185,000 square feet of flexible space, unparalleled accommodations and activities, The Broadmoor wows even before an event is underway. From the 60,000-square-foot Broadmoor

Hall to extraordinary, intimate spaces sprinkled throughout the resort, it has played host to countless conferences and special events since first opening in 1918.

For a complete change of pace, groups of up to 60 can stay and meet at Cloud Camp, where 22 well-appointed lodge rooms and cabins with spectacular 360-degree vistas are complemented by the 1,500-square-foot Overlook, a fully equipped, A/V-ready meeting space.

#### Adventure Comes Naturally

A spirit of adventure is part of any Broadmoor experience. Set off on a nature-infused horseback ride, hiking or mountain biking trip; enjoy championship golf or luxuriate in the Forbes Five-Star spa. Experience guided fly-fishing or instruction, rock-climbing instruction and falconry, or fly over wilderness canyons with The Broadmoor Soaring Adventure zip line tour's 10 lines and two rope and cable suspension bridges that end at the base of Seven Falls.

#### Tastefully Yours

With 20 restaurants, cafes and lounges, including Colorado's only Forbes Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond Penrose Room, The Broadmoor has a wide variety of dining options from which to choose. Herbs and vegetables are grown at Broadmoor Farms, and meats, fish and fruits come from ranchers and growers nearby.

The Broadmoor also offers a diverse, creative culinary experience for banquet functions, all designed to please even the most discerning palate. **I&FMM**



**Pepper Dombroski**  
Director of Sales

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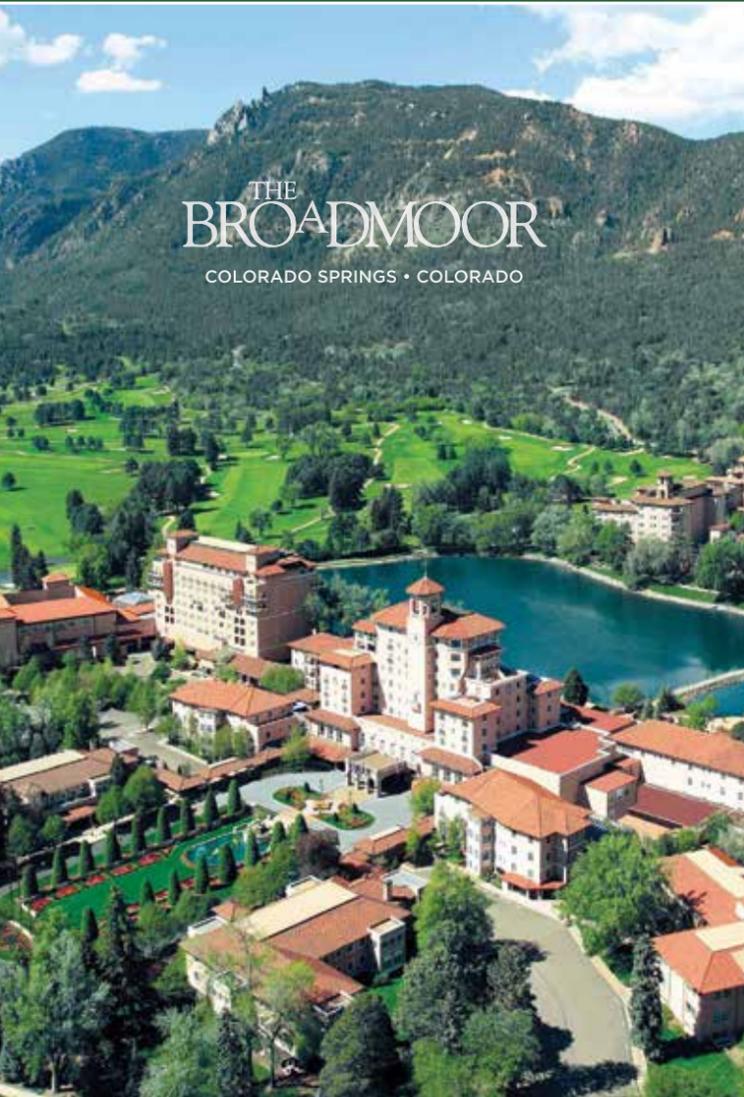


#### Citywide Facts and Features

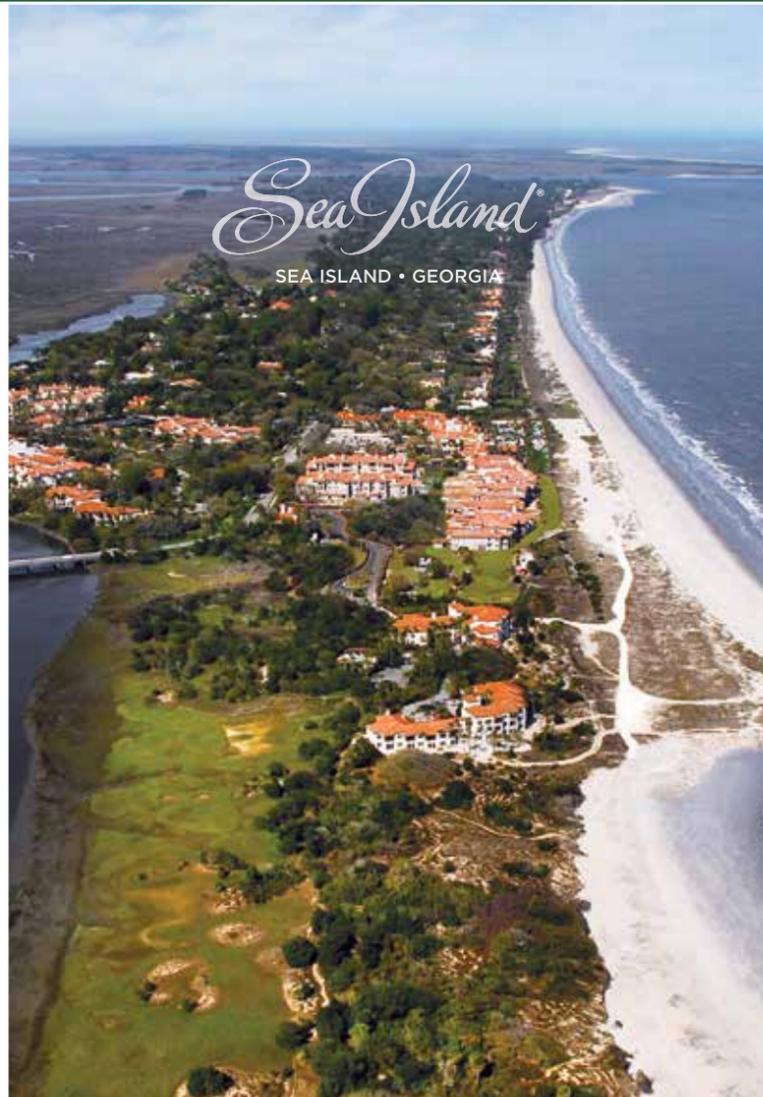
**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 784 rooms including 115 suites and 44 cottage rooms  
**Meeting Space:** 185,000 square feet  
**Special Services & Amenities:** More than 60 indoor and outdoor event venues and an award-winning audio/visual service. Three mountain Wilderness Experience properties. 20 restaurants, cafes and lounges. Spa, golf, tennis, zip line, pickleball, falconry.

# THE BROADMOOR • *Sea Island* COMPANY

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COLORADO SPRINGS • COLORADO



*Sea Island*  
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*Recognized a total of 251 times with Forbes Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond awards.*

For 190 years, The Broadmoor and Sea Island have provided distinctive, magnificent settings and extraordinary experiences for groups ranging from intimate board meetings to trade shows. Each resort features world-class golf, dining, spa, and outdoor adventures to enhance your event. With both of these iconic properties in a 100-year family trust, our guarantee is that while the setting will vary, the consistent quality of meetings and meticulous attention to detail never will.

We invite you to call to begin planning your next event.

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## THE BROADMOOR

*Recipient of the Forbes Five-Star award for 58 consecutive years, The Broadmoor is a strikingly unique destination for memorable meetings and events. The Broadmoor has offered guests an incredible way to experience the unique gateway to the American West for nearly a century.*

### **Meeting Space— Unique**

With 185,000 square feet of sophisticated event space, The Broadmoor understands the unique needs and attention required to create memorable, successful meetings. From boardrooms and Broadmoor Hall's 60,000 square feet at the main campus to Cloud Camp's Overlook at 9,200-foot elevation, we have the space to make your meeting memorable.

### **Activities— For Everyone**

Meeting attendees can hike scenic trails, experience horseback riding and mountain biking, or archery. Broadmoor Outfitters offers expert instruction in fly fishing, falconry, zip lining and much more. Championship golf courses, and our Forbes Five-Star Spa provide rest and reward.

### **Accommodations— Variety**

The 784 guest rooms, suites, cottages, brownstones, and The Broadmoor Estate House feature the elegant touches and amenities at the main campus. Provide adventure at one of the three Broadmoor Wilderness Experiences: Cloud Camp, The Ranch at Emerald Valley, and The Broadmoor Fly Fishing Camp.



## *Sea Island*

*Where extraordinary facilities, activities and Southern hospitality blend to create exceptional meetings. Come see why we are the only resort in the world to receive four Forbes Five Stars for ten consecutive years and the only one in the U.S. chosen to host a G8 Summit.*



### **Meeting Space— Flexibility**

With more than 40,000 square feet of indoor space and an island full of outdoor gathering options, Sea Island venues range from boardrooms to ballrooms, accommodating 5 to 500 people. From food and décor to technical expertise, our seasoned team brings creativity and attention to detail to every conference, executive retreat, and customized meeting.

### **Activities— Variety**

Sea Island provides an extensive array of options for your meeting attendees including customized team building activities, outdoor experiences such as fishing, water sports, shooting school and falconry, a 65,000-square-foot spa and fitness center, three championship golf courses, and the nation's finest Golf Performance Center.

### **Accommodations— Choice**

Our 390 rooms and suites ensure we have a room type to meet your needs from The Cloister, nestled between the Black Banks River and the Atlantic Ocean to The Lodge, surrounded by two of our golf courses to The Inn, our select-service property. Or for those seeking outdoor adventure, we offer Broadfield, our 5,800-acre sporting club.



**Gino Marasco**  
Director of Sales & Marketing

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meetings@swandolphin.com  
www.swandolphinmeetings.com



**Citywide Facts and Features**

- Guest Rooms/Suites:** 2,270
- Meeting Space:** 331,000 square feet
- Special Services & Amenities:**

  - 86 Meeting & Breakout Rooms
  - Onsite DMC & AV Services
  - 17 Restaurants and Lounges

## Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin

In 2017, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort underwent a comprehensive renovation of the Walt Disney World Dolphin lobby. This \$12 million redesign was the final stage of the largest makeover in the resort's history. The new lobby has been completely transformed into a sleek contemporary space and features new dining and beverage options, as well as more space for attendees to socialize.

"This lobby marked the final piece of an exciting transformation for the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort," says General Manager Fred Sawyers. "This space is designed specifically to cater to today's guests and offer an inviting place where they can come together to relax, network and grab something to eat or drink."

The centerpiece of the new lobby is a dazzling custom crystal chandelier, which sparkles above the fountain. Other new features include an exciting new geometric ceiling, increased lighting, all-new contemporary décor and furnishings, with more than double the amount of seating.

The lobby redesign is the final stage of a \$150 million project which also includes the transformation of all 2,270 guest rooms, along with upgrades to the hotel's meeting space. The renovated guest rooms feature all the latest technology, including large HD TVs and all-new upgraded furniture centered on the famous Westin Heavenly Bed. The design continues into a completely new bathroom, featuring residential-style vanities and a backlit mirror on iridescent glass tiles.

A recipient of the many prestigious

meeting and other awards, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort is a nationally respected and recognized leader in the convention resort arena.

### Meetings & Events

The resort offers more than 331,000 square feet of meeting space, 86 breakout rooms and 2,270 guest rooms and suites.

When it comes to the business of meetings, the award-winning team is highly regarded for their ability to exceed expectations. Meetings are supported by an award-winning banquet, catering and culinary team that delivers customized solutions with a passion for each customer.

Whether your event is in the ballroom, on the beach, on the causeway or in one of our signature restaurants, the creative opportunities abound. For the adventurous, nothing beats a private event in the theme parks to add that magical touch while supporting your meeting theme.

The resort is recognized as a top "Foodie" destination in Orlando, featuring 17 world-class restaurants and lounges, including the famed celebrity Chef Todd English's bluezoo, Il Mulino New York Trattoria and Shula's Steak House, which serves the best beef money can buy.

The resort is situated in the heart of the Walt Disney World Resort, within footsteps of both Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Boardwalk. Complimentary transportation is provided throughout the resort, and guests enjoy the Extra Magic Hours Benefit and FASTPASS+ access. On property, guests can enjoy one of the resorts' five pools, two health clubs, tennis courts or indulge at the luxurious Balinese-inspired Mandara Spa.



# AN ALL-NEW PERSPECTIVE ON MEETINGS AND EVENTS



All-New Walt Disney World Dolphin Lobby

The Walt Disney World Dolphin lobby has undergone a \$12 million re-design, the final stage of a \$150 million renovation project, the largest makeover in the resort's history. It has completely transformed into a sleek, contemporary space featuring new food and beverage options and offer an inviting area for guests to relax or network. A recipient of the prestigious Meetings & Conventions Hall of Fame Award, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin is a nationally respected and recognized leader in the convention resort arena. The resort offers more than 331,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, 86 meeting rooms, and 2,270 guest rooms and suites which feature the Westin Heavenly® Bed. Attendees can also relax in the luxurious Mandara Spa, indulge in one of our 17 world-class restaurants and lounges or enjoy our unique Disney Differences.



Award-Winning Dining



All-New Guest Rooms And Suites



Impressive Meeting Venues



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CAESARS FORUM, a 550,000-square-foot conference center, will have direct access to 8,500 hotel rooms at Caesars' nearby resorts when it opens in 2020.

# For the Fun of It

## Las Vegas and Reno: Memorable Meetings, Natural Wonders

By Steve Winston

When a few businessmen stood in the Nevada desert near a military base just after World War II, they saw what others didn't see.

Where others saw a hot desert with a small town and a base with dwindling post-War personnel, they saw a gleaming city rising out of the sand. Where others saw financial folly, they saw fortunes being made. Where others saw dusty, windswept streets, they saw grand hotels and bright lights.

Truth be told, they probably didn't foresee Las Vegas becoming one of the world's great meeting places. But there's no disputing that title now. In 2017, there were 19,767 corporate meetings and conventions in Las Vegas, making that "folly" of a city one of the world's great meeting destinations.

People like to meet in destinations where they can have fun after the meetings end for the day. And many planners say their meetings in Las Vegas are very productive because the attendees are happy to be there — and invigorated by the number of after-meeting options.

The same thing has happened to the Reno/Sparks/Lake Tahoe region to the north, once a little-known frontier

outpost, but now also a great meeting destination — with both bright lights and perhaps America's most beautiful alpine lake.

### LAS VEGAS

The big news here is the upcoming expansion of the **Las Vegas Convention Center**. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has approved a nearly \$1 billion project to expand and renovate the center. That project is Phase Two of an improvement plan for the Convention Center District.

When this phase is



**Stacy Weber**  
Meeting & Event Manager  
Moss Adams LLP  
Seattle, WA

*"It's difficult to find the volume of meeting space — and, accordingly, the selection — that Las Vegas has, in any other destination."*

finished at the end of 2020, it will add 1.4 million square feet to the center, 600,000 of which will be for exhibition space. Phase Three will be a total renovation of the facility, to be completed by 2023. When that phase is done, Las Vegas will have the most technologically advanced convention center in America.

The **ARIA Resort & Casino** has just completed its own enhancements, adding 200,000 square feet to the original 300,000 of meeting space. These spaces bring the desert inside, with native trees and plants and plenty of natural light.

With 4,004 guest rooms, it can accommodate almost any group. Attendees can choose from among 16 restaurants and eight bars/lounges, and they'll be surrounded by interesting artworks.

**Caesars Palace**, of course, is a longtime Las Vegas landmark, as is its casino. Its 300,000 square feet of meeting space is away from the casino, but easily accessible from anywhere in the hotel. In addition, there's a 4,100-seat auditorium and a wonderful non-traditional space at the 4.5-acre Garden of the Gods Pool Oasis.



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LAS VEGAS

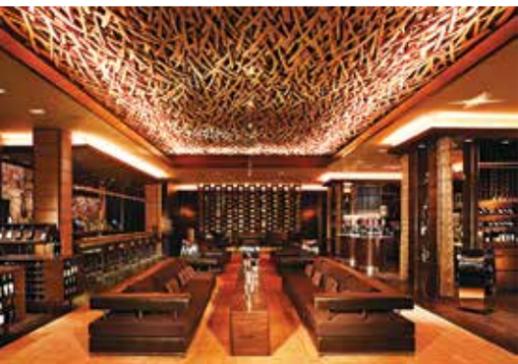


In July, Caesars Entertainment Corporation broke ground on **CAESARS FORUM**, a \$375-million, 550,000-square-foot meetings facility tagged as “the convention center of the future.” It will be finished in 2020, with direct access to 8,500 hotel rooms at Caesars’ nearby resorts.

The **Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas** is a combination of striking modern design and luxurious accommodations. There’s great diversity in both the size and the design of the various meeting spaces here, which means there’s a configuration for every need. Ones like **The Chelsea**, with 40,000 square feet of attention-getting “industrial chic” design, help encourage attendees’ imaginations to run free.

Stacy Weber is meeting and event manager at Moss Adams LLP, one of the largest public accounting firms in America. She brought 800 attendees to the Cosmopolitan in June for the Annual Industry Group Conference.

“We chose Las Vegas for several reasons,” she says. “For one thing, it’s easy to get there from anywhere. For another, it’s difficult to find the volume of meet-



There are more than 400 wines by the bottle and live music to enjoy at Hostile Grape Wine Cellar at M Resort Spa & Casino.

ing space — and, accordingly, the selection — that Las Vegas has, in any other destination. The Cosmopolitan staff was also very helpful with the planning and onsite. I had never worked with that large a group before ... but they do it quite often. This was our first paperless event; we used an app for the conference, and registration was online.”

The **Four Seasons Hotel Las Vegas** affords attendees access to the nearby

**Mandalay Bay** casino. At the Four Seasons, there’s 38,300 square feet of technologically advanced meeting space in 15 function rooms and on-site meeting staff to help out, if needed. Here, attendees enjoy dramatic views of the desert, world-renowned performers, a five-star spa and a steakhouse that’s considered one of America’s best.

The **Hilton Lake Las Vegas Resort & Spa** is actually in Henderson, in the Las Vegas suburbs. It looks more like it’s in Italy, though, with European architecture and pastel colors, with some guest rooms situated right over the lake. There’s 100,000 square feet of meeting space, from boardrooms to ballrooms. And this hotel is a member of Connect+, a group of Hilton hotels providing advanced meeting-planning and support services.

**M Resort Spa & Casino** is also in Henderson, with 390 guest rooms and 92,000 square feet in multiple configurations known for their great views through floor-to-ceiling windows. There’s additional space in some interesting non-traditional venues — among them the Hostile Grape Wine Cellar. Spa Mio has an excellent reputation, and it includes a state-of-the-art fitness center. The resort has eight eateries and five bars.

**Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino** is a favorite for big meetings because the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center** is one of the largest meeting facilities in America, with 2.1 million square feet. This resort is known for its shows, including Cirque du Soleil; Shark Reef Aquarium, in which you walk through a glass tunnel; a 12,000-seat Events Center and “Mandalay Bay Beach,” with real sand and cabanas. The resort’s guest rooms have recently been remodeled.

Right next to Mandalay Bay is its sister property, **Delano Las Vegas**, an

all-suite resort. There are four floors of meeting space and 31 modern meeting rooms here, offering great flexibility in both design and functionality, and the Mandalay Bay Convention Center is available for larger groups.

*“We needed a big hotel like the MGM because we had ... 350 different sessions in breakout rooms, 23 of which were concurrent at any given time.”*

**Linda Sinnott**  
Associate Director,  
Meetings & Conferences  
Association of International  
Certified Professional  
Accountants  
Durham, NC

The stylish **Skyfall Lounge** offers artisan cocktails and a great view of the city, and the **Delano Art Series** brings striking artworks to Las Vegas.

**MGM Grand** is the largest hotel in the United States, with 6,852 guest rooms. The big news is the upcoming addition of 250,000 square feet of conference space later this year, connecting to its present 600,000. Two dozen eateries run the gamut of cuisines and cultures and countries, and feature some of the world’s top chefs. There are 14 nightclubs, bars and virtual reality experiences, along with renowned entertainers.

The Strip’s newest hotel/casino is **Park MGM**, which just opened in May, in what was once the Monte Carlo. It boasts a unique sort of urban-garden design. There are 2,700 guest rooms and 77,000 square feet of meeting space, along with an excellent spa, three pools, live shows by celebrities such as Lady Gaga, a Starbucks and a distinctive French steakhouse called **Bavette’s**.

**Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton** has won numerous “Best of Las Vegas” honors. There’s 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space, including a conference center for 2,500 people. Sitting right on the Strip, this hotel has a pool with waterfalls, a notable spa, a newly renovated casino, a nonstop run of great shows and even a beach club.

**The Mirage** has a convention center with 170,000 square feet, and every event space is on ground level for easy access. There’s a strong sustainability ethic here, and the property has won several awards for it. The resort includes

M E E T T H E F U T U R E



# CAESARS FORUM



\$375 MILLION CONFERENCE CENTER  
OPENING 2020 IN LAS VEGAS

CAESARSFORUM.com | CaesarsMeansBusiness.com





The MGM Grand is expanding its conference center by 250,000 square feet.

Siegfried & Roy's Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat, which boasts bottlenose dolphins, white lions and tigers, and leopards. The hotel also has imaginative concepts like Yoga With the Dolphins.

At **Vdara Hotel & Spa**, attendees can meet in 16,500 square feet of space incorporating natural elements such as wood, sandstone and pebbles. Afterward, they can relax and refresh at the **Espa Spa**, which was awarded a five-star rating by Forbes Travel Guide, and have items delivered to their rooms by robots. The hotel has 1,495 guest rooms, 14 eateries and an onsite Starbucks.

Gary McLain is vice president of Resource Management Services, Inc., a California company that produces educational conferences and networking events for the collections industry.

He brought 500 people to a networking event at the **Red Rock Casino Resort & Spa**, just outside of town late last year.

"We've been staging events in Las Vegas for the past 20 years," says McLain, "and our attendance at these meetings is always at least 10 percent higher than anywhere else we've been. We chose the Red Rock this time precisely because it's not on the Strip ... we wanted to keep our people together. But, wherever you are in Las Vegas,

you can never really go wrong. There's so much to see and do. If you're looking for healthy attendance figures ... this is the place to get them. And, we're going back for the next two years."

**The Venetian** and **Palazzo** are two luxurious adjoining towers under the same management (the Sands Corp.), and visitors to each have use of both facilities. Meeting facilities are in the Venetian. Between the meeting rooms,

ballrooms, Sands Expo Halls and other very unique spaces, the Venetian offers a whopping 2.25 million square feet and a full production team, along with more than 30 restaurants.

Both hotels feature canals and gondola rides and Medieval Italian architecture. The Palazzo has a dozen innovative restaurants, top performers, stylish nightclubs and entertainment venues, several pools, a beach club and upscale shops.

The former **Mandarin Oriental** is now the **Waldorf Astoria Las Vegas**, and the hotel reflects the luxury and sophistication for which that nameplate is known. The 389 guest rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, providing memorable views, and the 17,028 square feet of modern meeting spaces have huge windows letting in natural light that enhances both energy and productivity.

Away from the Strip, with a more relaxing vibe, the **Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort & Spa** sits, of course, on the lake. The 44,630 square feet come complete with a meetings team to handle every detail. Afterward, you might get in some golf at the Jack Nicklaus



Attendees can unwind poolside at the Wynn Las Vegas, one of the many amenities it shares with its sister property, Encore.

course next door, or work out in the fitness center. Later, you can "work out" any post-workout kinks at the prestigious **Aveda Spa Lago**.

Just one block from the Strip, the **Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa** is nonetheless an oasis of quiet luxury amid the hustle and bustle of this fascinating city. There are 826 guest rooms, as well as 29,629 square feet of bright meeting space with interesting art, along with

an onsite meeting services staff and a staffed business center, a full-service restaurant, a fitness center and a spa.

**Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino** has the perfect location for both business and pleasure — adjacent to the **Las Vegas Convention Center** and a block from the Strip. It also has some of the best meeting/convention facilities in the city, with 225,000 square feet of recently renovated space, and the 700,000-square-foot **Paradise Event Center** — as well as a dozen restaurants that will take your attendees on a culinary trip around the world.

One Las Vegas company, **Wynn Resorts**, has more Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star awards than any other independent hotel company on Earth. One of its award-winners is **Encore at Wynn Las Vegas**, the epitome of luxury in a town renowned for luxury hotels.

With 2,716 guest rooms in the Wynn and 2,034 in Encore, its sister property next-door, there's also 260,000 square feet of interestingly designed meeting space between them. This combined resort property can also claim more four-star restaurants than any independent resort in North America.

Among the two hotels, there are more types of entertainment — from the **Moody Blues** to dueling pianos — than time to see them all, in a variety of themed venues, plus unique experiences, such as "La Reve – The Dream," billed as a "thrilling acrobatic fantasy of water and fire." And there are two world-class spas, luxury shopping and fitness facilities.

You don't have to sell Linda Sinnott on Las Vegas. She's the associate director of meetings and conferences for AICPA, the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants. She brought nearly 4,000 attendees from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants to the **MGM Grand** in June for the organization's annual meeting.

"This was our second consecutive year at MGM," Sinnott says. "And the reason we returned was obvious — Las Vegas generates larger attendance. And



# The Difference is in the Details

Positioned at the south end of The Strip is **M Resort Spa Casino**, a boutique Forbes Four-Star retreat, perfect to host your next meeting or conference. With over 92,000 square feet of open and dynamic conference space, state-of-the-art technology, impeccable service and breathtaking views, M Resort delivers a unique experience sure to impress your guests.

Meeting and event attendees will enjoy the uniquely-designed guest rooms, suites, seven signature restaurants and award-winning spa.

Customize your next meeting or conference at M Resort Spa Casino.

Call 1.866.551.1540 to speak with a qualified professional from our sales team.



we needed a big hotel like the MGM because we had — believe it or not — 350 different sessions in breakout rooms, 23 of which were concurrent at any given time.”

The organization’s opening session was held at the Events Center and among the speakers was David Gergen of CNN.

“We worked with HelmsBriscoe to negotiate with the property,” Sinnott says, “and the CVA (Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority) gave us some valuable insights and information. We also use technology whenever we can. We used Cvent technological tools for registration, conference apps and a content management system, and the majority of our sessions were live online.”

#### RENO/SPARKS/TAHOE

In a contest to name Reno’s downtown arch in 1929, a Sacramento man entered the winner — “Biggest Little City in the World.” This is one little city with a lot of the advantages of larger cities. It’s a place, too, with one foot in the Old West and the other in the mountains surrounding it and in the magnificent alpine lake in the middle of them.

Reno, the neighboring city of Sparks, and Lake Tahoe are popular meeting destinations because they’re in the big leagues when it comes to hosting them. The destination is diverse, it boasts a colorful history, it has a wide range of meeting hotels and resorts, and it has the 600,000-square-foot **Reno-Sparks Convention Center**, with everything on one level.

There are also 10 impressive casino-resort hotels, each between 800 and 2,000 rooms, and each with meeting space up to 200,000 square feet.

In addition, most of these resorts are within minutes of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

Reno-Tahoe has a stunning natural landscape, offering meeting attendees an impressive range of outdoor recreational opportunities. With 300 days of sunshine, they can experience the fun year-round, whether it’s paddleboarding in North Lake Tahoe (largest

alpine lake in America) or rafting Reno’s Truckee River. Reno is also a blossoming cultural hub, evidenced by the eye-catching murals now appearing on downtown buildings.

The largest meeting/convention space in all Reno casino resorts belongs to the **Grand Sierra Resort and Casino** with 200,000 square feet and 1,900 guest rooms. The list of amenities is just as impressive and includes a full-service spa, fitness center, mini-golf, go-karts, “skydiving” experience, bowling alley, movie theater and an indoor simulated golf course, along with great views of the mountains.

The **Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino** also offers spectacular views. To get to the lake, just walk outside your door. The four-star hotel has modern, airy rooms, some with fireplaces, and its 80,000 square feet includes the only lakeside ballroom in Tahoe. There’s golf, a sporting goods shop and free shuttle to the shops and restaurants of Incline Village.

The city of Sparks boasts the **Nugget Casino Resort**, with an upgraded meeting space (110,000 square feet), new casino games, beautiful new lobby and a fresh “mountain-lodge” feel to the whole place. The fitness center, too, has been upgraded. There are seven award-winning restaurants and an onsite Starbucks. There’s big-name entertainment, too, with performers such as Michael Bolton, Wayne Newton and John Fogerty.

Surrounded by the mountains and lakes of Northern Nevada, **Peppermill Reno Hotel Resort** is an environmentally conscious hotel — and, with 1,621 guest rooms, a good one for meetings. This hotel is a mixture of modern American design and Classic European furnishings. It boasts 15 bars/lounges and 10 restaurants. The Tuscany Ballroom has 62,000 square feet, and there

are two other ballrooms and several meeting spaces.

**Eldorado Resort Casino** draws acts such as Culture Club and the B-52s to its Reno property. It attracts meetings, too, with amenities such as its 5th-floor outdoor pool and hot tub, fitness center, upscale shops like Swarovski Crystal, a business center, free Wi-Fi and an array of nightclubs. Nor does it hurt that Eldorado has a flexible ballroom, meeting spaces and a 25th-floor boardroom with breathtaking views.

Reno also has **Atlantis Casino Resort Spa**, an AAA Four Diamond resort with floor-to-ceiling windows for great views of city and mountains.

Atlantis is the only resort directly attached to the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, and its own facilities include two ballrooms,

22 meeting rooms and a boardroom, all with state-of-the-art technology. With good restaurants and 10 lounges/bars, your attendees certainly won’t go hungry or thirsty.

Small wonder that Las Vegas and Reno/Sparks/Tahoe attract so many financial and insurance meetings. Planners know they’ll persuade more attendees here.

They know there’s exciting outdoor recreation available almost every day of the year. They know there are breathtaking panoramas everywhere you look. They know there are more four- and five-star and Four- and Five-Diamond resorts here than just about anywhere else in America. They know their attendees can have dinner every night in a different award-winning restaurant, followed by performances by world-famous entertainers.

They know, too, that their attendees will be genuinely excited about going to Las Vegas or Reno/Tahoe.

Which means, of course, they know their meetings will be productive ones. What else could a planner ask for?

*“Wherever you are in Las Vegas, you can never really go wrong. There’s so much to see and do.”*

**Gary McLain**  
Vice President  
Resource Management  
Services, Inc.  
Santa Fe  
Springs, CA

**I&FMM**



## MGM RESORTS HAS MORE CONVENTION SPACE IN LAS VEGAS THAN ALL THE CONVENTION SPACE IN MANHATTAN COMBINED.

MGM Resorts is leading the way by continuing to expand their already robust meetings and conventions footprint with innovative and collaborative spaces designed to accommodate client growth. ARIA, Park MGM, Mandalay Bay and MGM Grand will debut an additional 850,000 square feet of space, topping off their Las Vegas citywide presence at four million square feet. MGM Resorts continues to lead the way in “meeting” expectations for groups of all sizes.

**Book your Vegas convention today.** For more information, please contact Michael Dominguez at [mdominguez@mgmresorts.com](mailto:mdominguez@mgmresorts.com).





**AGÜERO-DUPLÁ**



**SAIGHAL**



**SQUITIERI**



**JACKSON**



**GONZALEZ**

Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI) announced three new additions to its global sales team: **Daniel Agüero-Duplá**, director of global sales; **Divya Saighal**, director of sales, south GSO region; **Christine Squitieri**, director of sales, northeast GSO region. Most recently, Agüero-Duplá served as associate director of sales at Hotel Café Royal in London, and Saighal served as director of housing at EM2 Sports. Prior to joining ALHI, Squitieri was the national sales

manager for the Ocean Edge Resort & Conference Center in Brewster, Massachusetts.

Discover The Palm Beaches has appointed **Mike (“MJ”) Jackson** as its new senior director, group sales. Jackson joins DTPB with more than 20 years of experience in hospitality and sales management. Prior to this, he was a national sales manager with Destination DC.



**SCHWARTZ**



**WILSON**

Fontainebleau Miami Beach announces the promotion of **Louis Gonzalez** to director of group sales. Prior to Fontainebleau Miami Beach, Gonzalez held sales and convention operation positions at several Florida resorts.

**David Schwartz** has joined Haven Riviera Cancun Resort & Spa as director of group and incentive sales. Schwartz has spent more than 30 years in the incentive travel industry and has represented some of the finest hotel brands in the Caribbean and Southern U.S.

**Vanessa Wilson** has been named the director of sales and marketing at Hilton Washington DC National Mall. Previously, Wilson served as the director of sales and marketing at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center and the Hilton Washington, DC North Gaithersburg Hotel.

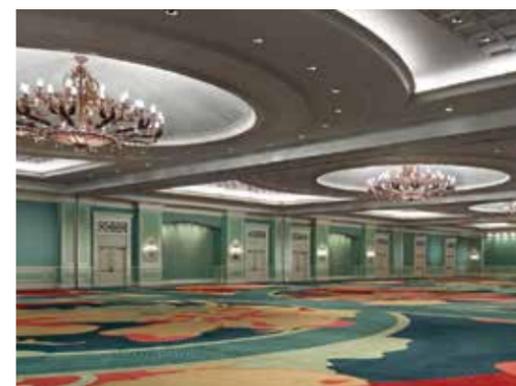
**I&FMM**

Credit: Discover The Palm Beaches/Moya Photography



## NEW MEETING SPACE THAT DEFIES CONVENTION.

With a \$40 million expansion, Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate now features new indoor and outdoor meeting space, event space, studio suites, a market-style restaurant and expanded pool areas—including Orlando’s only resort wave pool.



### MEETING SPACE

The Osceola Conference Center now features six new flexible breakout rooms with a fresh, sleek design, and a 6,500-square foot Grand Salon, designed for special events and weddings, highlighted by a Terrace and Patio that offers groups the option of an event lawn, fire pit and promenade, ideal for hosting outdoor evening events.

GUEST ROOMS: 862
SUITES: 71
TOTAL MEETING SPACE: 248,111
LARGEST MEETING SPACE: 28,800
MEETING ROOMS: 48
THEATER CAP: 3,200
BANQUET CAP: 2,400
CLASSROOM CAP: 2,000

### ACCOMMODATIONS

With 862 total guest rooms, groups have a range of choices from the deluxe and premier accommodations, luxury two and three bedroom villas, and the all new Sunset Lodge and Suites, a new three-story building comprised of 93 spacious, upscale studio suites and connecting guest rooms.



### RECREATION AND AMENITIES

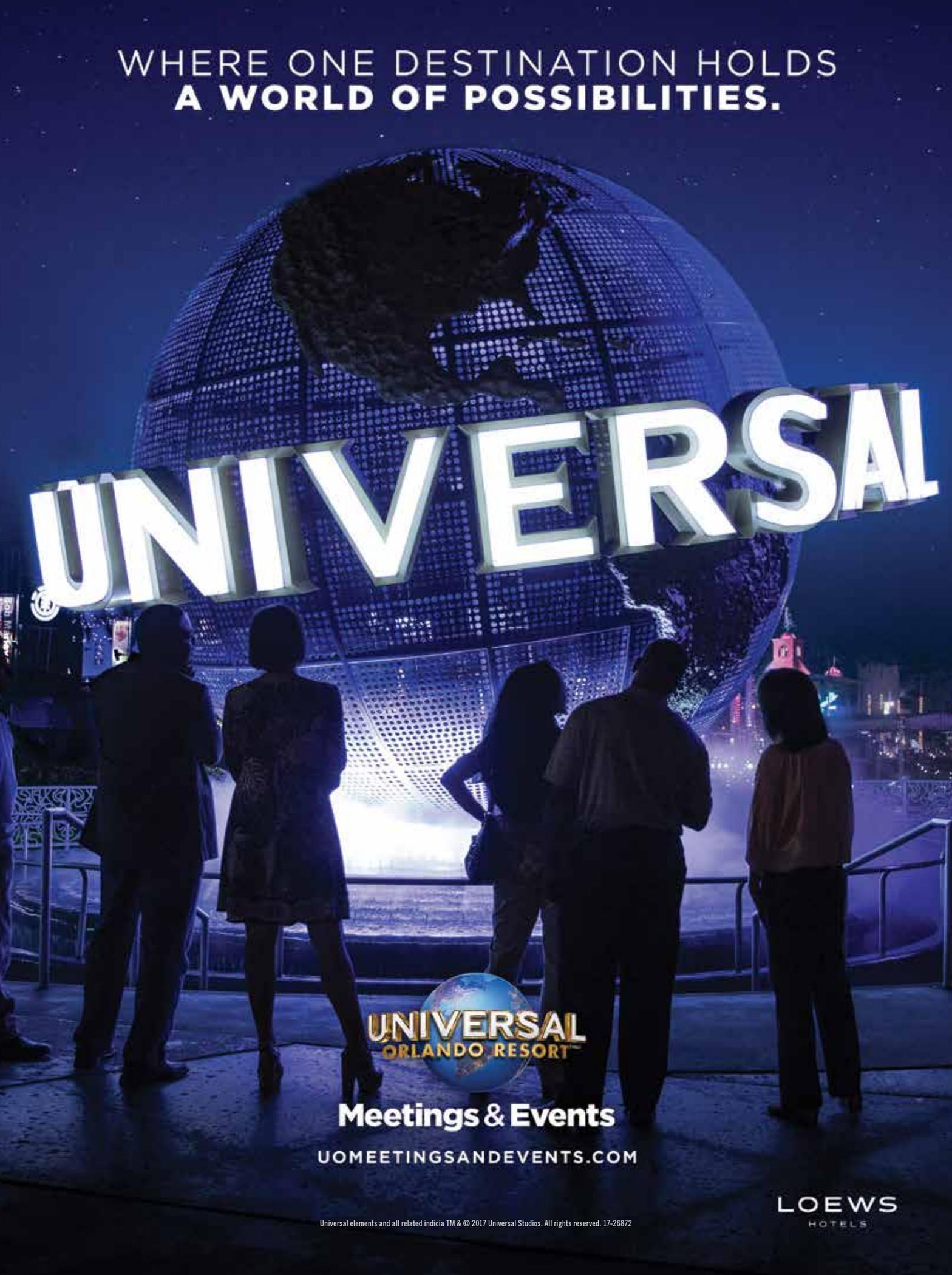
ChampionsGate is home to 36 holes of Greg Norman designed Golf and the David Leadbetter Golf Academy World Headquarters. In addition to superb golf, guests enjoy 15 sprawling acres of pools and recreation highlighted by Orlando’s only resort wave pool. Ten on-site restaurants and a signature Mokara Spa round out the resort’s amenities.

**OMNI RESORTS**  
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**A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES.**



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