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THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

## Out-of-the-Box Meeting Places

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Attendees explore the Sonoma Serengeti at  
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## News & Notes

### Sea Island Launches New Classic-Yacht Experience



Sea Island Explorer features three decks of options for customized private events.

SEA ISLAND, GA — Sea Island, a Forbes Five Star resort on the coast of Georgia, recently welcomed Sea Island Explorer, a new 71-foot custom-built passenger yacht, reminiscent of classic yachts of the 1930s. The three-level vessel gives guests and club members the opportunity to explore the rivers and salt marshes that abound among Georgia's barrier islands. Accommodating up to 49 passengers, the yacht features a double living room on the main level, a covered top deck, a prep kitchen and additional event space on the bottom level, making it ideal for scenic nature tours, pre-dinner cocktail cruises, customized private events and more. Food and beverage can be customized for each occasion. Clay Fordham, a naturalist and Sea Island captain with more than 10 years of experience in local waters, will lead all operations aboard Sea Island Explorer. Sea Island is currently celebrating its 90th "Emerald" Anniversary. [www.seaisland.com](http://www.seaisland.com)

### Julie Calvert to Lead Cincinnati USA CVB

CINCINNATI, OH — The Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau has named Julie Calvert president and chief executive officer. Calvert is currently the founder and executive director of Source Cincinnati and returns to the CVB where she served as a senior executive from 2001-2016.

She succeeds former CEO Dan Lincoln who retired in December.

As president and CEO of the CVB,



CALVERT

Calvert will seek to maximize the economic impact of the region's convention and meetings industry, leading an award-winning team to attract high-volume, high-impact groups to Cincinnati. Calvert will work closely with local civic, corporate and hospitality industry partners to further establish and promote Cincinnati as a world-class meetings and tourism destination.

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

### New Orleans CVB Rebrands as New Orleans & Company

NEW ORLEANS, LA — The New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOCVB) has been rebranded and is now officially known as New Orleans & Company. The former CVB led the development of the city's multibillion-dollar convention and meetings business, grew the visitation of leisure visitors to unprecedented levels and played a key role in New Orleans' ascendance as the world's greatest sports championship destination. New Orleans & Company will focus in its new iteration not only on growing the cultural economy and hospitality enterprises, driving dynamic, sustainable business growth and career-oriented job creation, but also will focus on continuing its evolution as a thought leader, collaborative convener and partner to the workforce, local government and all citizens. [www.neworleans.com](http://www.neworleans.com)

### Omni Boston Seaport Hotel Breaks Ground

BOSTON, MA — Set to open in late 2020 at the corner of Summer and D Streets, the Omni Boston Seaport Hotel will be a catalyst to the development in the Seaport District. The hotel will feature 1,055 guest rooms inclusive of 52 suites that will top out at 21 floors. Culinary experiences will include an all-day restaurant and collaborative workspace, lobby lounge, entertainment lounge, French brasserie and boulangerie as well as an elevated pool bar and grill. The hotel will house approximately 100,000 sq ft of flexible meeting and event space that includes the largest hotel ballroom in Boston's Seaport District, along with breakout rooms, outdoor and prefunction spaces. Guests will have access to an urban rooftop pool deck located on the fourth floor. The pool deck will have an optional space which will allow guests to host year-round events featuring views of Boston's skyline. [www.omnihotels.com](http://www.omnihotels.com)

## Site Selection

# Golf & Spa Resorts

Premier Properties Where Every Attendee Can Find Something to Love

By Christine Loomis

The new Streamsong Black, one of three golf courses at Streamsong Resort, Bowling Green, Florida.

Whether you make golf part of your corporate program or simply give attendees time to play or practice on their own, a golf resort has the power to drive attendance. Ditto spas, which offer healthful therapies and break options that not only make attendees feel better but may even increase meeting engagement.

### IN THE WEST

#### Loews Ventana Canyon

##### Resort & Spa, Tucson, Arizona

Stephanie Franco, CMP, owner of SpotOn Events in San Francisco, booked a client's sales kickoff event at Loews Ventana Canyon. The February meeting drew 330 attendees.

Franco calls Tucson "a warm, beautiful, unique smaller city that not everyone knows. And everyone was friendly and helpful, from the CVB and hotels to offsite venues."

Golf and spa were not part of any

core functions but attendees had access on their own.

Franco says the size of the hotel, newly renovated guest rooms, and flexibility and availability of meeting space were all ideal. "And they offered a great rate," she notes.

"Staff was always ready to say yes to our needs and help walk us through the nuances. For example, we wanted menus to feature a particular food item each day. The chef ran with the idea and developed impressive menus. Our convention services manager, Brandy White, was confident, attentive, detailed and genuine. Our Loews DMC contact, Natalie Marchioni, was very helpful, pulling in the right vendors to help us."

The hotel is spread throughout the canyon, so Franco says planners should allow time for transferring between sessions if functions are in two different locations. "Outside event areas abound, and you should plan for umbrellas dur-

ing the day and heaters at night," she says. "The in-house DMC has the pulse on the best vendors for the space and enhancing events with beautiful decor. We had the most amazing yurt and custom bar in the Coyote Corral at our celebration dinner."

Franco offers high praise for the food and the resort's dining venues. "The food that chef Ken is producing is beautiful and amazing. The banquet staff and hotel staff are wonderful," she adds, "and the lobby bar is excellent for attendee networking."

The group also had a function outside the resort at local restaurant Culinary Dropout, which they bought out. "It was a phenomenal atmosphere and phenomenal food and drinks," Franco says. "Most impressive was the attention to all the details while planning. Our sales-and-operations manager was stellar from start to finish. Thanks Adam Lippe!"

The one challenge Franco faced was a bit unusual. "We had to figure out how to bring in a 40-foot sheep from Burning Man that lights up. We had numerous meetings with the hotel, client, production company and BAAHNS (Sheep Collective) to sort out the details, and it went off without a hitch. It was one of the most successful collaborations I've ever had the joy of being part of and the end result was spectacular."

#### The Boulders Resort & Spa, Scottsdale, Arizona

Another famed Arizona resort was the perfect setting for a national sales meeting in January with 110 in atten-



Kickoff event with 300 attendees, at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort & Spa in Tucson, Arizona.

dance. "A key stakeholder had previously been at The Boulders for a leadership meeting," says Michelle M. Robinson, CMP. "He loved it and wanted his entire group to experience it."

The resort was a good fit for the 2018 sales meeting. All meals were on property, including a dine-around. Robinson calls the spa a stand-out, along with great service and great food. Staff across multiple departments also earned her praise.

Robinson used the Tohono Conference Center for meeting space. "It's great because it's self-contained," she says. "I was able to host my general session, breakfast, lunch and coffee breaks there. It even has a patio. My 'work' room and a boardroom for pop-up meetings was also there."

Golf and spa were among the optional onsite activities. "I had roughly 30 golfers," Robinson says. "I heard the course was somewhat challenging but a great time was had by all. At the spa, attendees could choose between a massage, facial or manicure/pedicure. It's a very nice spa."

Overall, Robinson found The Boulders to be ideal. "The size of the property made us feel as though we had the entire resort to ourselves," she says. "The secluded nature of the resort gave the feeling of an incentive even though we were there for a business meeting. The resort staff was amazing and the landscaping lent itself to beautiful outdoor events, most notably at Promise Rock."

#### **The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Situated at the gateway to the Colorado Rocky Mountains in Colorado Springs is the venerable Broadmoor, which recently completed updates as part of the resort's ongoing Centennial Celebration. The hotel's 100-year-old main lobby has been expanded to include more seating with sofas and gas fireplaces. The resort's Broadmoor Main rooms and suites have been refreshed with new colors, furniture and carpeting.

The Golf Club now has a new, welcoming experiential lobby area for guests and members that celebrates the 100 years of golf history with photos, displays and descriptions. Also new at the Golf Club is The Grille, with signature dishes, a classic bar and Colo-



The newly renovated Fireside lobby in The Broadmoor's world-renowned Golf Club, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

rado mountain views. And in Broadmoor Main, Café Julie's has opened with a design reminiscent of the finest classic Parisian patisseries.

The Broadmoor campus has 784 rooms, suites and cottages, 185,000 sf of function space, three golf courses, a Forbes Five Star spa and fitness center and 10 restaurants, including the Forbes Five Star restaurant Penrose Room.

#### **Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico**

Located between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, the resort sits on 550 acres on the Pueblo of Santa Ana and offers 350 guest rooms and 54,000+ sf of flexible meeting and function space. In addition to its 18-hole championship golf course, Hyatt Regency Tamaya also offers a spa, stables and the Tamaya Cultural Learning Center. In October, the resort announced the completion of a multimillion-dollar renovation to guest rooms, and there's a new spa menu specifically for groups, including pop-up hand treatments and "appreciation circles."

#### **IN THE EAST**

##### **Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Destin, Florida**

Meredith Wade, executive assistant with Coca-Cola Bottling Co. United, says what was paramount for the group's

ULCC 2018 meeting in March was, "the ability to never have to leave the resort."

Additionally, she says of the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, "Our choice was based on a property that is also one of our customers. It has hotel and meeting room availability for our group of about 600, offers extra entertainment and shopping within walking distance to rooms, and the quality of the resort and banquet staff is high."

Specifically, she notes, "We could not have been successful without the help of Brian Lamonica. He was physically present or a phone call away at all times. The banquet staff...were always one step ahead and worked tirelessly to make sure our events went off without a hitch. ...Louise

Lara also needs to be mentioned because she was kind, gracious and patient with our attendees and the spa schedule. The recreation and golf staff also did a great job with the difficult task of organizing all guests and their requests for activities."

The group used the Bayside rooms, which Wade calls "spacious and convenient in terms of distance to meeting facilities, restaurants and shops," adding, "the resort transportation system is well organized for those wanting to reach the nearby Linkside Conference Center or beach, and parking is easy."

Finally, Wade says, "This staff is one of the best in the industry. They're organized, knowledgeable about the property and the surrounding community, and they won't say no. They always do their best to accommodate the customer."

##### **Sea Island Resort, Sea Island, Georgia**

The historic Sea Island Resort in Georgia, which opened in 1928, is situated along the scenic five miles of beachfront on the southern Georgia shore. The resort, a sister property to The Broadmoor, is comprised of the 265-room Cloister, 85-room Inn and the AAA Five Diamond, Forbes Five Star Lodge, with 43 guest rooms. There are also 130 cottages on Sea Island available for rent. The Cloister houses more than 40,000 sf



Twin Warriors Golf Club at Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico.

of function space overlooking the Georgia coastline, including 7,800-sf and 5,000-sf ballrooms. The Sea Island Golf Performance Center offers an indoor video studio, 300 yards of teeing area, target greens, short-game areas and an exclusive club-fitting service. Sea Island Golf Club includes three 18-hole championship courses: Seaside (par 70), Plantation (par 72) and Retreat (par 72). And the resort's spa is truly world class: The Forbes Five Star Spa at Sea Island spans 65,000 sf and includes a 5,000-sf strength and cardio studio, indoor lap pool and three squash courts.

Last fall Sea Island announced plans for a \$25 million enhancement program at The Lodge at Sea Island, which will include six new cottages, a new state-of-the-art Golf Performance Center, an ocean-front pool and pool house, and a new putting course. These new additions are expected to debut in November 2018 in time for the RSM Classic, an official PGA Tour event held annually at Sea Island Golf Club. Additionally, in December 2018, Sea Island's Plantation Course will undergo a full renovation under the direction of Love Golf Design, reopening in October 2019.

#### **Streamsong Resort, Bowling Green, Florida**

The three golf courses at Streamsong feature a rolling, dune-like landscape unlike any other golf experience in the Sunshine State. The property's third course, Streamsong Black, debuted just last year along with a new clubhouse and restaurant. With the addition of Streamsong Black, the resort is the only location in

the world where guests can enjoy three distinct courses designed by four legendary architects, including Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw of Coore & Crenshaw and Tom Doak of Renaissance Golf Design. Streamsong Resort features 228 guest rooms, 25,000 sf of indoor and 40,000 sf of outdoor meeting and event space, five dining options, conference and event facilities, the grotto-style AcquaPietra Spa and infinity pool, as well as bass fishing, sporting clays, nature trails and tennis.

#### **Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa, Point Clear, Alabama**

For Margaret Jaques, manager of events for a health services organization in the Southeast, The Grand Hotel Marriott Resort was the right choice for three meetings held between March and May.



**Margaret Jaques, Manager of Events**  
New Orleans, LA

"The driving distance for our attendees is perfect. We ask attendees to drive in the morning of day one, which is typically a Monday. Our meeting begins with lunch. This means we are not taking time away from our attendees on the weekend and it's cost effective for us because we don't have to pay for rooms the night prior to our meeting. It's win-win for our attendees and our organization."

Moreover, she notes, the resort has a stellar reputation for impeccable service and delicious food, and the grounds

are breathtaking. All events were held on property.

"One of our primary goals is attendee networking," Jaques says. "By hosting all of our events at the hotel, we're able to maximize the amount of time our attendees spend together. The Grand is the perfect spot to accomplish this goal because of the various activities offered. There's really no need for us to go elsewhere while we're there because we're provided with so many wonderful options, impeccable service and delicious food."

Although there are many things Jaques believes planners should know about the hotel, one is of particular note. "The Grand Hotel makes you feel at home. We are not treated like business, we're treated like family. Our attendees have come to know many of the employees and the employees have come to know us. We're welcomed back time and time again and each time is better than the last. As a planner, I feel at home as well; the team there is like my family."

**"The Grand Hotel has truly mastered the trifecta (collaboration, partnership and professionalism) for creating memorable experiences for our attendees."**

Not only do I consider this team family, but there's a level of collaboration, partnership and professionalism that I don't experience with any other venue.



Aerial view of Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Destin, Florida.



The Lodge at Sea Island will soon undergo a \$25 million enhancement.

The Grand Hotel has truly mastered the trifecta for creating memorable experiences for our attendees."

That's thanks in part to the resort staff. "In the transactional hotel world in which we have all come to operate over the last several years, they still take time to learn, ask questions and listen. They have mastered the difficult task of doing what's right for their hotel while advocating for their customer. Only someone who truly understands both sides of the equation can accomplish that and consistently win," Jaques says.

"The professionals who work at the Grand Hotel take pride in delivering an experience that is comfortable but not intrusive, friendly yet professional and most importantly memorable, leaving everyone with a desire to return again and again."

In terms of logistics and services, Jaques says the hotel is big yet it all works well. "While the resort is comprised of many different buildings that house guest rooms and a separate conference center, no guest room is too far from the conference center when you consider the picture-perfect grounds that surround you as you walk from one building to the next. Most meeting rooms are located in the conference center with some space also in the main building. Using both," she adds, "is not a challenge."

Jaques notes that the meeting space is gorgeous, the table linens beautiful, banquet chairs are comfortable and everything is well maintained.

Although the group does not host a golf tournament, there is a volleyball tournament every year. "The recreation department owns it and executes it for us. It's a tradition and we love it."

Jaques says attendees are on their own for arranging spa visits. "The spa

is the perfect getaway from the all-day hectic meetings and our attendees enjoy the opportunity to visit the spa. The staff there is very professional and accommodating."

With much of the hotel under construction during the last event, Jaques says it shows just how responsive and creative the hotel is. "There were unexpected delays in the conference center, which resulted in the space not being 100 percent complete. The hotel came together as a team, met with contractors, devised a plan and put measures in place that resulted in the flawless execution of our event. Not one person commented in

our post-event survey that they noticed anything out of sorts. Our attendees were so blown away by the service and experience at the hotel that they didn't notice the paint on the wall. Kudos to the entire team, especially Sam, director of engineering, for the teamwork they displayed to make our event a success."

Jaques adds, "Take advantage of the wonderful activities on property. There are so many teambuilding activities, free-time activities and relaxing things to do; there's something for everyone."

But perhaps most of all, she notes, "Be prepared to make it an annual meeting. Your attendees will want to return." C&IT



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