

## Golden Opportunities for Meetings

There's a saying that's available on t-shirts, art prints and posters that says, "California is always a good idea." Judging by the popularity The Golden State has attained as a meeting destination, many planners and attendees would agree — and maybe even grab one of those t-shirts to take back home.

California is one of those versatile destinations where a group could meet over and over again, yet have a totally different experience each time. From San Jose all the way down the coast to San Diego, virtually every type of hotel, venue, setting and activity can be found here under the California sun.

By Karen Brost



## SAN JOSE

As home to the busy Silicon Valley, it's not surprising that San Jose offers excellent airlift. In addition to San Jose International Airport (SJC), the area also is served by the San Francisco and Oakland airports. Combined, the three airports offer 1,400 flights per day. As an added advantage for attendees, SJC offers free high-speed wireless Internet throughout the airport, and 25 percent of the seats have power outlets built in.

San Jose has a compact, walkable downtown with more than 200 dining and entertainment options, and it claims to be one of the safest, cleanest big cities in America. In addition to offering more than 90 hotels and the 367,000-sf San Jose McEnery Convention Center, the city has a variety of unique venues for private events, including historic theaters, museums, sports venues and the Happy Hollow Park and Zoo. The city also was the first to be selected to test Facebook's new Wi-Fi service called Terragraph, which will be installed in the downtown area later this year.

Planners searching for a venue that reflects the Silicon Val-

ley's spirit of innovation may want to book an event at The Tech Museum of Innovation, a 132,000-sf venue that offers hundreds of exhibits in seven halls on three levels as well as an Imax Dome Theater and a rooftop terrace. The venue, which is within walking distance of the convention center and downtown San Jose hotels, defines itself as "the most inventive place on earth and a showcase of the latest blockbuster exhibits, high-tech gizmos and wondrous gadgets that continue to define Silicon Valley."

Team San Jose has developed a unique planning service model. "Team San Jose's one-stop sales solution gives you one contact to book your entire event in San Jose," says Mark

McMinn, director of sales and destination services for Team San Jose. "We provide all your destination needs from a CVB perspective as well as from a convention center perspective. We manage hotel room blocks and housing, convention center bookings and event services, customized food and beverage menus, marketing support and technically savvy special events." ■



The Tech Museum of Innovation.



## Grows On Trees **HERE**

Bright people meet in San Jose, the smartest city in America - as named by the Today Show. San Jose leads the nation in patent generations. The Valley's palpable sense of dreams turned to revolutionary reality is enough to inspire every group visiting Silicon Valley. Meet in San Jose and connect to the best free Wi-Fi experience in the nation. Our Wickedly Fast Free Wi-Fi meets the demand of the largest tech companies in the world and enables complete connectivity and maximum productivity. San Jose is the birthplace of big ideas. We invite you to meet, connect, and innovate here.

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**SanJose**  
Innovation starts here



# SAN DIEGO

The San Diego Tourism Authority has a forecast for your next meeting: “High chance of positive brainstorm, 100 percent chance of budget-friendly solutions, and blue skies and bright ideas.” California’s second largest city boasts a mild Mediterranean climate and more than 70 miles of coastline, and that’s just the beginning. The city spans more than 4,200 square miles, but it is divided into a dozen different neighborhoods, each with its own unique personality. For example, Coronado, located across the bridge from downtown San Diego, is known for its charming small town ambiance, iconic Hotel Del Coronado resort and long stretches of white sand



Credit: Gaslamp Quarter

The Gaslamp Quarter in downtown San Diego is a popular dining and entertainment district that also is home to meeting hotels.

beach. Another popular neighborhood is downtown San Diego, which includes the historic Gaslamp Quarter dining and entertainment district, and is the site of many of the city’s major meeting hotels along with Petco Park, home of Major League Baseball’s San Diego Padres.

Also located in downtown San Diego, the Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego is a waterfront hotel located adjacent to the Seaport Village shopping area and less than a 10-minute walk from the San Diego Convention Center. It contains more than 1,600 guest rooms, including 76 suites, 168 Grand Club rooms, 40 accessible rooms and even a pet-friendly floor.



Credit: Manchester Grand Hyatt

The Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego overlooks San Diego Bay.

Basic wireless Internet is complimentary in all guest rooms. The hotel also offers 316,000 total sf of flexible event space, including 136,000 sf of dedicated indoor meeting space and a total of 42 breakout rooms.

Later this year, The Pendry, part of a new hotel brand by Montage Hotels & Resorts, will open in the Gaslamp Quarter. The property will feature 317 loft-style guest rooms and 23,000 sf of meeting and event space. Other amenities will include Spa Pendry and a fitness center as well as a lobby bar, beer hall, street-side market café, a signature restaurant and nightclub.

As you’d might expect from a lively oceanfront community, San Diego offers plenty of options for offsite activities. Urban Adventure Quest offers scavenger hunts where teams of two to five people armed with a smartphone or Internet-connected tablet solve clues and complete challenges while they learn local history along the way. The company offers a choice of two locations, one in San Diego’s Balboa Park and the other in downtown San Diego. Each team’s score is tracked and immediately posted on the San Diego leaderboard for all to see.

San Diego is home to more than 60 wineries, 130 craft breweries and seven small-batch distilleries, making it a great location for “spirited” tours of these types of facilities. San Di-



Attendees enjoy the terrace overlooking the marina and San Diego Bay at The San Diego Convention Center (left, center).

Credit: San Diego Convention Center



Credit: Hilton San Diego Bayfront



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## MEETING PLANNER *tested*, ATTENDEE *approved*.

Grand Hyatt San Diego offers 316,000 sq. ft. of flexible event space, 1,628 guest rooms, and 8 on site dining options. Conveniently located in the heart of downtown San Diego just 3 miles from the airport next to the Convention Center, Gaslamp Quarter and Petco Park this is the perfect space for any event, big or small.

Meeting attendees will be inspired by premium ocean and city views, perfect year-round weather and recently renovated meeting space, guest rooms and onsite dining options.

For more information regarding special promotions and open dates email or call us today.

### MANCHESTER GRAND HYATT SAN DIEGO

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Credit: Port of San Diego

A new esplanade at the Port of San Diego was recently completed in an effort to create a more pedestrian-friendly Embarcadero.

ego Beer and Wine Tours offers a variety of different options, including wine and food (or beer and food) walking tours and a winery train tour and a beer train trolley tour. The company also can arrange to provide an interactive brewmaster, wine-maker or spirits sommelier event at the hotel or private event venue of the group's choice.

Naturally, many groups meeting in San Diego like to work in a trip to the beach, and a company called Beach Butlers is glad to provide all of the gear necessary for a fun day of sand and sun. The company can arrange for all of the necessities, such as cabanas, chairs, umbrellas, coolers and sunscreen along with sand and surf toys, and even lunch. The company offers these services exclusively at the 1.5-mile-long Coronado Beach,

which is an ideal setting for swimming, boogie boarding, body surfing, volleyball and just kicking back and relaxing.

A few years after the Naval Training Center, San Diego, closed, the city of San Diego acquired the property and created Liberty Station, a center for commerce, history and the arts. Liberty Station now offers groups a choice of 11 different private event venues including Brick, a venue in the arts district that can accommodate up to 400 guests, and Luce Court and Legacy Plaza, a beautifully landscaped outdoor event venue that's highlighted with fountains, rose gardens and dozens of palm trees. Also scheduled to open at Liberty Station is The Lot, a six-theater movie house and event venue.

Permanently docked in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier is the USS Midway Navy aircraft carrier, the longest serving American aircraft carrier of the 20th century, from 1945 to 1992, when it was decommissioned. In 2004, it became a permanent museum that now hosts some 300 private events each year, accommodating from 100 to 3,500 attendees.

The San Diego Tourism Authority has streamlined the RFP process with an innovative tool called iLead. Designed for single-property meetings that require 10 or more sleeping rooms, iLead only delivers meeting specifications to San Diego hotels that best meet the group's needs. Hotels respond in real time using an electronic proposal template, and all responses are compiled in a summary format that can be downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. Information also is linked to the responding hotels' websites, Google Maps and the San Diego Tourism Authority's Meeting Planner Guide.

## California Dreaming

So if, as they say, "California is always a good idea," all planners have to do is decide which California destination will be the very best idea for their next meeting. And there is certainly no shortage of options. ■

The USS Midway Museum hosts some 300 private events each year on the Navy aircraft carrier that is permanently docked at Navy Pier in downtown.



Credits: San Diego CVB and (inset) USS Midway Museum



## Opening Fall 2016

Introducing the new brand from Montage Hotels & Resorts

- Located in the heart of the Historic Gaslamp Quarter
- 317 rooms including 36 suites
- 14,500 square feet of flexible meeting space
- 6,300 square feet of pre-function foyer space
- Roof top pool bar and lounge
- Poolside Cabanas
- Three Blocks to Convention Center
- Two Blocks to Petco Park
- 4 Miles to San Diego International Airport
- Room Service
- Spa and State-of-the-Art Fitness center with 4 treatment rooms
- Six unique bar and restaurant concepts



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