Kate Stockton, CMP, president of Philadelphia-based Stockton & Partners, staged a meeting at the 1930s era Hotel Hershey, in Hershey, PA.
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I’m Henry Fuller, Resort Host, Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa. For 47 years, I’ve been making sure that every day is a good day for our guests. Find out how we can help you create the perfect meeting at hyattmeetings.com.

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A bungy jumper swan diving from the Kawarau Bridge in New Zealand is the highlight of an adventure incentive program but not for the faint of heart.

Attendees danced the night away at their “best event ever.” Destination New Orleans arranged the ‘80s-style party for a client at a premier New Orleans hotel. Photo courtesy of The Plaza

Photo courtesy of Destination New Orleans

Photo courtesy of Tourism New Zealand

THEME VOLUME 30 NO. 11 NOVEMBER 2012

Awards of Excellence
Flip to the back to see...
The Best of the Best for 2012

FEATURES
10 Paving the Way
Follow DMCs Along the Road to Successful Outcomes
By Stella Johnson

14 Out of This World
Spectacular Settings for Unforgettable Experiences
By Karen Brost

DEPARTMENTS
6 Publisher’s Message
By Harvey Grotsky
8 News & Notes
9 Snapshots
22 People on the Move
22 Reader Services

COVER STORY
Meeting at Historic Hotels
Where Quality and Service Are Legendary
By George Seli

The Plaza, A Fairmont Managed Hotel, which reached the century mark in 2007, boasts the quintessential Manhattan location across from Central Park.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS
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Everything Old Is New Again

I spent a week in Las Vegas last month to attend the highly successful second edition of IMEX America. Again, I was very impressed. IMEX Group Chairman Ray Bloom, and his people certainly have figured out how to take a tired concept and make it new again. The hosted buyer idea, while not exactly new, boosts attendance, improves effectiveness and provides a win-win for all parties. This year, IMEX America’s state-of-the-art technology helped schedule more than 38,000 appointments — 60 percent more than the inaugural year. Also, the show attracted 2,400 hosted buyers, 400 more than last year, and 2,413 exhibiting companies, (1,867 last year). More than one business associate of long standing remarked that the upbeat mood at the Sands Expo was reminiscent of the “glory years” of meeting each fall in Chicago at IT&ME. How true! All the excitement and buzz of meeting in Las Vegas surely helps draw record numbers for events large and small.

On the other hand, when your meeting or incentive needs a dose of the “real thing” to drive people to attend, that’s the time to consider historic properties. Many historic hotels are newly renovated with modern features and amenities, yet maintain the historic appeal and charm that will leave lasting impressions.

That’s what Kate Stockton, CMP, president of event planning and meeting management company Stockton & Partners Inc., in Philadelphia did when she staged a meeting for a major U.S. apparel manufacturer and distributor. Stockton, who graces our cover this month, utilized not only the 1930s era Hotel Hershey (in cover photo) but event spaces at Hershey Park as well. In “Meeting at Historic Hotels — Where Quality and Service Are Legendary,” our cover story on page 18, Stockton says, “The hotel has so many beautiful architectural details, along with the grandeur of the gardens. That old-world feeling sets a tone and a brand. And one of the things we like about most historic properties is that they have an intimate feeling; we are usually not the only group there, but it feels like that.”

This issue marks our 28th Annual Awards of Excellence. Flip the magazine over to recognize the best of the best — our 2012 award-winning convention & visitors bureaus, hotels and resorts. Many historic hotels are newly renovated with modern features and amenities, yet maintain the historic appeal and charm that will leave lasting impressions.

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Harvey Grotsky
Publisher
**Mexico’s Tourism Industry Posts Significant Growth**

NEW YORK, NY — Mexico’s Secretary of Tourism Gloria Guevara released the Sixth Government Report on Tourism. The report chronicles a period of strong growth in tourism arrivals — both domestic and international — in addition to public and private sector investment in tourism over the past six years. Tourism, which constitutes more than nine percent of Mexico’s domestic product, is a national priority. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of domestic and foreign tourists increased from 162 million to 191.5 million (18.2 percent increase), a historic record. Mexico aggressively pursued a market diversification strategy to reduce dependence on the United States market, attracting tourists from a wide range of other countries including Brazil, China, Russia, Canada and Korea.

Mexico’s global image was repositioned in part due to organizing and hosting global forums such as the United Nations’ World Tourism Organization, the World Travel and Tourism Council Americas Summit, the World Economic Forum, the G20 meeting of Tourism Ministers in Meinde and the G20 held in Los Cabos and participating in forums such as CEOC and APEC. Secretary Guevara said that today, more than ever, Mexico is seen as a global leader in the tourism industry and is well on track to being a top five destination by 2018.

**Site Introduces New Certification for Incentive Travel Planners**

CHICAGO, IL — The new Certified Incentive Specialist (CIS) certification program by Site is designed to give professionals a greater understanding of the theory and practice of creative and effective utilization of incentive and motivational travel programs to drive business results. Professionals can receive the CIS designation by attending a two-day live education program that addresses the fundamentals of incentives, the value proposition of motivational programs and non-cash awards, the value chain, the composition of the incentive travel market, and the successful planning and delivery of incentives. The first two programs will be held this year on December 7 and 8 in Chicago and December 9 and 10 in Los Cabos, Mexico. Site members receive a preferred registration rate; non-members receive a complimentary Site membership with their registration. To see full program content and learn more about CIS certification, visit www.sitescis.com.

**Enjoying Global Meetings & Events**

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**JW Marriott Brand to Open Luxury Resort in Los Cabos**

CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO — Marriott International’s luxury hotel brand, JW Marriott Hotels & Resorts, announced plans to open a new 300-room JW Marriott Hotel in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico in 2015. The JW Marriott, located within the Puerto Los Cabos master-planned development, will cover approximately 14 acres overlooking the Sea of Cortez and offer 820 feet of beachfront, just seven miles from Los Cabos International Airport. Puerto Los Cabos comprises a number of private residences, a marina, an 18-hole golf course designed by Greg Norman and Jack Nicklaus, restaurants and retail space. The hotel will feature a three-meals-a-day restaurant, a signature specialty restaurant, bar and grill and a pool bar. The resort will have 13,131 sf of meeting space, including a divisible main ballroom, breakout rooms and a boardroom. Recreational facilities include a swimming pool, spa, an indigenous temazcal sweat lodge, jacuzzi, tennis courts and a fitness center.

**The Corporate Travel World (CTW) Asia-Pacific and Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings Asia (IT&CMA) 2012 annual conference, organized by TG Events and co-locating since 2004, was held at the Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld, Bangkok, Thailand in early October. Martin Winter, (chairman of ICCA Asia Pacific Chapter, ICCA Board of Directors and CEO of Gold Coast Tourism (GCT), Australia, and Facilitator Welf Ebeling, regional director of GBTA Asia at the keynote address. Frank Sinatra’s “Come Fly With Me” served as the evening’s theme song as attendees were greeted by models sporting authentic vintage Delta Air Lines flight attendant uniforms from the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s. Marking the 40th anniversary of the phrase “destination management company” and the DMC concept at IMEX America, Chris Lee, (center) DMCP CEO of Access Destination Services with his Dad, company founder Phil Lee, who coined the term “Destination Management” in 1972. They were joined in the Access booth by Pauline Riehecker Kim, Euromic Sweden. Corporate & Incentive Travel Publisher Harvey Gotsky with Eleonara Garcia Ferrell, meetings director, Mexico at IMEX America.**

**SNAPSHOTS**

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Follow DMCs Along the Road to Successful Outcomes

By Stella Johnson

Destination management companies often get tall orders from corporate meeting planners and, as they have proven time and again, they’re always up to the challenge — especially those DMCs that are members of the Association for Destination Management Executives (ADMEI). ADMEI’s mission is to increase the professionalism and effectiveness of destination management through member and industry education, establishment of standard ethical practices and raise the level of awareness of the value of destination management to various audiences. A DMC, according to ADMEI, is a "professional services company possessing extensive local knowledge, expertise and resources, specializing in the design and implementation of events, activities, tours, transportation and program logistics."

In addition, ADMEI accredits companies and destination professionals and provides search tools to help planners find the DMC in a particular location. The following success stories demonstrate how DMCs can be a planner’s best friend.

Retro Party

Destination New Orleans is a full-service DMC providing event planning and destination management for New Orleans special events. Nancy Trosclair, DMCP, the president of Destination New Orleans, is truly a planner’s best friend. She recently planned a retro ‘80s-style party for a major hotel brand. You remember the ‘80s — that decade of extreme shoulder pads, high hairdos and music videos played on large screens, which is now unabashedly replacing the Fabulous ’50s soirees that were once so popular on the corporate scene. The gala affair, fit more for Boy George and Cyndi Lauper than Connie Francis and Ricky Nelson, was staged at a premier hotel in New Orleans. To give a nod to the 1980s, Trosclair planned an evening inspired by Studio 54 but called it Studio ‘84. "Included were lots of neon, spandex and disco balls, as we immersed the 600 attendees in a total 1980s environment and created a dynamic event that the client said was the best one ever. The guests were given costume items like boas, glow sticks and sunglasses in order to dress the part, while original music videos played on large screens and guests danced the night away," says Trosclair.

Trosclair adds that she doesn’t know if she has ever seen a group immerse themselves so much in a themed event such as this one, or have so much fun reliving their younger years. For several weeks after the event, she received notes and messages from the corporate management team and the attendees themselves stating how fabulous it all was.

"After posting some of the photos on our company’s Facebook page, positive feedback continued to roll in," she says. What’s more, Trosclair readily explains, is that Destination New Orleans was able to work exclusively with local New Orleans suppliers for all those special details, including décor elements, catering and the band, making it a win-win DMC event for everyone. "That was the icing on the cake," she says.

Paving the Way

Planners should rarely go it alone when coordinating events of this magnitude, especially when they are planning an event in an unfamiliar city. DMCs pave the way. As Diane B. Lyons, CMP, DMCP, president of New Orleans-based Accent on Arrangements, affords attendees a unique and memorable float ride through the French Quarter in New Orleans. Elegance and Decadence, produced by Accent on Arrangements, afforded attendees a unique and memorable float ride through the French Quarter in New Orleans.

"DMCs work long and demanding hours, like most of our friends in this industry. And great DMCs are customer-service oriented and bring the best supplier/vendor teams together to create amazing events," says Lyons. DMCs in your event location.

DMCs are customer-service oriented and bring the best supplier/vendor teams together to create amazing events. "DMCs work long and demanding hours, like most of our friends in this industry. And great DMCs are customer-service oriented and bring the best supplier/vendor teams together to create amazing events," says Lyons. DMCs in your event location.

"Most importantly, and this is something corporate planners might not think about, we also know which vendors and suppliers are financially stable and will still be open for business when the client’s group finally comes to town."

Furthermore, Lyons emphasizes that a partnership with a destination management company is really important when something unexpected happens. "A strong DMC is your best ally for a successful outcome in that kind of situation," she notes. To offset that possibility, she cautions planners to avoid working with a one- or two-person operation. "What happens if something happens to the No. 1 person?” she asks. Her recommendations for planners include the following:

• First, consult with ADMEI for a list of recommended DMCs.

Diane B. Lyons, CMP, DMCP, President
Accent on Arrangements Inc., New Orleans, LA

"DMCs have brains, creative people and the knowledge and the right connections all in a nice package," says Lyons. "DMCs work long and demanding hours, like most of our friends in this industry. And great DMCs are customer-service oriented and bring the best supplier/vendor teams together to create amazing events. As you go through the process of choosing a DMC, spend the time up front and go through the due diligence. All DMCs are not the same. Engage the DMC in lots of conversations as you go along. They will be your best partners for success."

One of Lyons’ recent success stories revolves around an event called Elegance and Decadence, a client appreciation day in New Orleans for 250 top executives member of a DMC consortium such as the DMC Network? Most consortiums have partners who have high criteria such as minimum amounts of insurance, real offices (not kitchen tables), a minimum of one DMCP on staff and are CPA-certified as financially stable.

• Check references.

"Furthermore, to ensure the success of the corporate event, re-check references. Are they a DMC know or they are a CMP know theirs."

• Identify the kind of insurance they have and what your needs are for your event. Talk to your insurance agent and to your DMC to be sure you are covered for everything.

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The clients were blown away when they arrived in New Orleans. “It was great, no one got hurt, everyone loved the city. They also planned off-road excursions and a citywide scavenger hunt. It was great, no one got hurt, everyone arrived on time, departed on time, and, best of all, the client rebooked,” says Palomino, who suggests the reasons why the client automatically rebooked was because CRE8AD8 provided a turn-key solution for the event — from consultation to post-wrap.

More than anything else, Palomino’s advice to corporate planners is that while it’s a good thing to turn to CVBs for assistance in any city, it’s the DMC that goes the extra mile and provides real value. “DMCs are the knowledge base of any city, organization or region. They know what is going on outside of the hotels and convention centers and beyond. If a DMC offers experiences you may not have heard of before, chances are you’re on a win’ already. A DMC alleviates stress, time and, hopefully, some of the costs.”

Sue Carey, DMCP, Vice President AlliedPIRA Palm Springs in California, observes that a good destination management company must be the expert on the location, on what is unique in the location and how it can enhance the client’s event. “They must have an army of different options available to do so, from catering to decor and entertainment, as well as the transportation and the local docs that can bring the event to life,” says Carey.

An Army of Options

Similarly, Sue Carey, DMCP, the vice president of AlliedPIRA Palm Springs, foilows that the company relayed that their people were speaking about New Orleans for months, and that it was viewed as their best event ever.

Recipe for Success

CEO Gregorio Palomino, CEP, CWP, the founder of CRE8AD8 (pronounced Create-a-Date), a DMC based in San Antonio, TX, says every event is like a recipe. “Change one item and the event could change dramatically in one second or over a period of time,” he says. “Some of the ingredients we always try to consider and somehow incorporate into all our programs are the climate, geographical location, suppliers and vendors, and, of course, the space we need for the event,” Palomino adds. “They have to be, for the most part, LEED-certified and making a positive effort to be green, as well as the best in the business.”

The event was for a Fortune 150 company with salespeople from a major transport company and included four nights in a four-star hotel. “Using our timeline standards and suggestions, every passenger flew from the major cities they were traveling from and arrived within five hours of each other,” says Palomino. The group was greeted by the staff and transported in charter buses with a bartender serving drinks. The basic event consisted of meetings, breakouts, banquet, golf, spa and so on.

However, CRE8AD8 also scheduled some unique activities such as a BMW Driving Experience, and the group learned how to make pastries as part of a teambuilding exercise. They also planned off-road excursions and a citywide scavenger hunt.

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As Sue Carey notes: “The DMC has already done the research and development for their destination. It does not spend time shopping around, they spend time designing and planning the myriad details. And, they can be cost-effective, too, as they are rewarded with special rates from their suppliers and vendors.

Ultimately, using a DMC often saves the client time and money, and creates memorable, successful events as well.

In or other words, “Think of us as the powerhouses and buyers in a city,” says Palomino.
A

At the conclusion of the New Zealand program he created for a client earlier this year, Steve McKee, account executive, meetings and incentives, for Maritz, got just the kind of reaction every incentive travel planner hopes for. “The survey scores that came back were just over the top,” he explains.

He was referring to an extreme adventure-themed incentive trip to New Zealand for a San Francisco technology company included bungy jumping and an awards ceremony at the Skyline Restaurant, a dramatic venue overlooking Queenstown.

New Zealand

The site chosen for the program, Queenstown, is located on New Zealand’s South Island and is one of the country’s top visitor destinations. The area is renowned for its wide variety of outdoor adventures and spectacular landscape, much of which is recognizable to fans of the Lord of the Rings movies, which were filmed here. “I’ve done probably four or five incentive trips to Queenstown over the last 15 years, and it’s just one of those hidden incentive destination gems in the world. Once the guests get there, they just go, ‘This is unbelievable. This is an absolutely spectacular place to be,’” McKee notes.

The program was held in February, which is late summer in New Zealand. “It really was a perfect time for the program,” McKee notes. The group stayed at Millbrook Resort, a five-star property that offers breathtaking views of the nearby mountain range, which is aptly named “The Remarkables.” The 500-acre resort, which offers 27 holes of golf and an award-winning spa, has a charming, historic ambiance and is located just 20 minutes from Queenstown. “It’s kind of got that country feeling, so it was a good choice for them,” McKee notes. “It was a five-night program, which I think is probably about the right time. Once you travel all the way there, four nights can work, but I think five nights is probably the optimum for an incentive trip.”

The group’s welcome reception was held at AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand. “They do a really good bungy jumping demonstration where they have their experts doing jumps and flips, which is really fantastic for the participants,” McKee says. He added that any attendees who wanted to jump themselves, did so at their own expense for liability reasons. “They also had what we would call kind of an extreme adventure day,” he continues. “Half the group went up on helicopters and went on their way to Milford Sound, which was really a fantastic experience in itself. They ended up landing on a glacier where they were welcomed by tuxedo-wearing staff members serving champagne. That was a big ‘wow’ right there. Once they took off from the glacier, they landed on a west coast beach on Milford Sound. There were dolphins that were coming up towards the beach area that they could see. Then they got back up in the air to experience more waterfalls and all the alpine pools and you’ve got these soaring ice-capped mountains. It was just a fantastic, spectacular, breathtaking experience.”

The other half of the group went jet boating up the Dart River and they had a stop at Glenorchy, which is a quaint little town, he continues. Both groups then traveled to a secluded river bed location for a gourmet lunch. “Everything had to be flown in, but we had beautiful colored umbrellas and chairs and picnic blankets and things set out. The experience from the air when the folks flew in on the helicopters was just unbelievable. They’re flying down this river at a low altitude, and they come around a corner, and they see from the air all these colored umbrellas. It was just phenomenal.” He adds that for the jet-boat grouping to see their colleagues arrive by helicopter was quite a sight. “I think we had seven or eight (helicopters).” They all kind of landed in a row. It was just spectacular.”

After lunch, the attendees had a choice of activities, including fly fishing or volleyball, then everyone switched and either took the helicopter tour or did the jet boating excursion. “It was certainly an adventure, exactly what the client was looking for, something just extremely memorable for them,” McKee states. He added that during the rest of the program, the group also enjoyed other activities that included golf, wine tastings and wakeboarding on Lake Wakatipu.

“At the end, they did their awards ceremony up at Skyline (Restaurant) and took the gondola up,” McKee explains. Skyline is a special event venue set high on a mountaintop overlooking Queenstown. “It’s just breathtaking looking down on the city and the lake, and seeing the sun go down. It was just over the top.”

McKee worked with the destination management company ID New Zealand to handle the details of his program. “They’re fantastic to work with, just an excellent partner,” he notes.

Air New Zealand offers nonstop service to Auckland from Los Angeles and San Francisco, with overnight flights that enable travelers to begin their adventures the morning they arrive. The carrier also offers connecting flights to cities within New Zealand. For more information and resources on New Zealand as a meeting or incentive destination, visit the Tourism New Zealand website at www.businessevents.newzealand.com.

Ireland

Richard Lowy, CEO of the event production firm Branded Experiences, received his favorite Gold Award after he planned a four-night client appreciation trip to Ireland. At the end of the intimate, four-day event for approximately 30 guests, his client exclaimed, “I’m in awe of my own program.”

It’s easy to see why. The guests stayed at Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort, a luxurious country manor that dates back to the 1800s and is set on 840 acres in the heart of County Limerick. “We looked all
over Ireland, and I like the Adare Manor, because compared to the other castles, we were the big dog on property,” Lowy says. “From the moment I contacted them, Bernie (McKough) and her team gave us exceptional service. And the property is magnificent.

Guests were welcomed to the estate with champagne and a traditional “horses and hounds” greeting. They then proceeded to the Carriage House at the Adare Golf Club for dinner in a private room that was dramatically lighted with LED lights. “It really took on this magical element,” Lowy describes. After dinner, guests were treated to a performance by the Irish choral ensemble Anuona who were featured artists in the show Riverdance. “They came in wearing hoods and carrying candles in front of them, and the room was dark,” he notes. “They were singing this chant, and they do this resonating harmony. It was very mystical. The people were just blown away.”

The next day, the group traveled by Mercedes coach to see one of Ireland’s top scenic attractions, the Cliffs of Moher, which soar as much as 700 feet above the Atlantic. After lunch at an Irish pub, they visited the Bunratty Folk Park, a recreation of an Irish village where visitors can experience what life was like in the 19th century. “We took them back in time, in another dinner course and another performance by the whole Riverdance troupe, it was time for dessert, and a male vocal harmony group called the Keynotes arrived to sing Danny Boy and Irish chants. “The waiters all came in one line and served the first course. Then we cleared the first course, and these dancers, who were members of Riverdance, came in and literally walked down the middle of the table (and began performing),” he notes. After that, the next course was served while the guests were entertained by an Irish tenor, followed by the return of two of the male Riverdance performers who engaged in a competition. “So now we have half the room cheering for their guy, and the other half cheering for the other guy. This went on for (several) minutes with these guys going crazy, each one getting better and better. This is a really horrible time,” Lowy says. “It was a very interactive experience, he says.”

The group was then treated to a dinner of traditional Irish fare (adapted for American tastes) in the park’s Corn Barn where they were entertained by musician Liam O’Connor. “He is like a rock star in Ireland,” Lowy explains. “He does things on the accordion that you don’t believe are possible, and he just got the audience going. These people were hooting and hollering. Then we brought out this Irish band (named Electric Celli Dou), and those guys just rocked the place with a fiddle and guitars and harmonies.” After that performance, O’Connor and the other musicians led the group back to their motorcoach. “People were singing and the guys were fiddling away. It was like a little pied piper thing going on.”

The group’s other activities included a tour of an historic estate in Killarney called Muckross House, world-class golf and a literary tour of Limerick, the setting for the award-winning memoir, Angela’s Ashes. The group also traveled to dinner one evening in high style, thanks to the lineup of antique cars that arrived to pick them up. But the program’s true pièce de résistance was the black-tie dinner on the final night in Adare Manor’s stunning Minstrels’ Gallery. “It’s an absolutely gorgeous room with massive chandeliers,” Lowy describes. “It’s like you’ve been transported back in time, trying to do. They helped us create this emotional experience in everything they did. They didn’t say ‘We don’t do that,’ or ‘We can’t do that.’ They just did it.”

Macau-China

Macau is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, and despite its rich history, it is probably best known for being the largest gaming destination in Asia. In years past, visitors would fly into Hong Kong and take a one-hour ferry ride to reach Macau, but today, Macau International Airport is becoming a low-cost airline hub. That was also one of the key factors that led the Centre for Aviation, headquartered in Sydney, Australia, to host a conference there for approximately 200 attendees.

“From an event production point of view, Macau is also more affordable than other destinations in the region,” explains Susan Tran, head of knowledge events for the market intelligence organization. “Danny Boyle it’s a magnificent anthem theme song for Ireland,” Lowy explains. “Then we had the Riverdance guys come out again, and they danced while the tenors sang for our big finale number. The table was going crazy and applauding.” To pull off this spectacular program, Lowy worked with the destination management company Ovation Ireland. “Ovation did a great job,” he concludes. “They did not go wrong with Ovation. Normally, we just take a team of people with me when I produce a show. (This time) I went over by myself. I’ve used Ovation before, and they give me 150 percent.” And as for Ireland as a destination? “I can’t say enough. Ovation is fantastic,” he says.

Lowy quoted famous filmmaker Steven Spielberg while he described what it takes to create a successful international program. “He said, ‘You take the surroundings around you, and you build that into the imagination.’ Adare Manor just fit that perfectly. Every one of the staff just felt comfortable, well-equipped and over-sized rooms to a wide variety of retail, leisure and entertainment options.

“It was a real pleasure to work with the Venetian team throughout the conference project, from the initial state of negotiating the contract right through to the catering and event logistics,” Tran comments. “Even though we would have been one of hundreds of clients, we always felt looked after. With all the variables that come with managing an event, the last thing you want is to worry about is the meeting space, but it was a very interac-

Updates from Around the World

England.

London is also becoming a destination for the meeting space, but the quality of the meeting space, the service and the cultural experience in everything they do. They did not say ‘We don’t do that,’ or ‘We can’t do that.’ They just did it.”

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Following on the heels of the successful 2012 Summer Olympics and the record-breaking Paralympics, Games, groups visiting London will benefit from the legacy of the games in terms of new and updated accommodations, sporting venues and transporta-

tion upgrades. London also is becoming one of the most accessible cities in the world, and has a dedicated website at www.inclusivelondon.com, which lists ac-

cessible events for the market intelligence organization. “For anyone wanting to attend events in Singapore, the city of Busan. Hyatt already operates one hotel in South Korea, the Grand Hyatt Seoul, and in 2013, Hyatt Hotels Corporation plans to launch its fifth hotel in South Korea with the opening of the Times Square, an additional 268-room Park Hyatt in the port city of Busan. Hyatt already operates hotels in Seoul and Incheon and on the island of Jeju.

Japan. Prince Hotels & Resorts, which operates 43 hotels throughout Japan, recently revamped its website to add more user-friendly features. Visitors to the website can now book a room, plan a trip or view travel brochure. Eight of the chain’s Japanese hotels are located in Tokyo, the nation’s capital. 

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CRIT
A 1905 conference at the Mohonk Mountain House, a National Historic Landmark in New Paltz, NY, that has remained family-owned since 1886.

One of the things we like about most historic properties is that they have an intimate feeling; we are usually not the only group there, but it feels like that.

SITE SELECTION

Meeting at Historic Hotels Where Quality and Service Are Legendary

By George Seli

A 1928 conference at the Mohonk Mountain House, a National Historic Landmark in New Paltz, NY, that has remained family-owned since 1886.

The Sir Francis Drake Hotel is one example. After Hartville, OH-based Trelleborg Wheel Systems Americas Inc. held a November 2012 tel, he loved it so much,” Aubley relates.

According to Aubley, the renovation model a year and a half ago, they did not get rid of the feeling that you were back in the ’20s,” she explains.

In an era when Las Vegas is boasting "destination hotels" that are over-the-top, theme-park-like adventures, and New York is touting boutique properties geared toward the ecclectic, tech-savvy traveler, meeting planners do well to bear in mind classic properties such as the Sir Francis Drake, which was hailed as “the last word in hotels” by newspapers, with such features as radios in every room and an indoor golf course. Harry Truman was a guest in the early ’40s, and the ’50s saw the introduction of the famous Beefer uniform for the doormen, which remains to this day. Most recently, the hotel has completed a three-year, $30 million renovation of its 416 rooms and lobby, and has reopened.

Harry Denton’s Starlight Room lounge on the hotel’s 21st floor. Renovations to meeting space, which totals 18,000 sf, will be completed late first quarter 2013. But according to Aubley, the renovation was in no sense a reinvention. “They’ve modernized a historic hotel but kept the charm and the same look and feel of the furniture. That was really impressive to our group: When they did the re-
Where ‘Nothing Unimportant Ever Happens’

Hotels like the Hershey, which has been welcoming guests for more than 115 years, certainly become icons in their own milieu. And in the Northeast U.S., there is arguably no more iconic hotel than The Plaza, which boasts the quintessential Manhattan location across from Central Park. The French chateau-style building turned 100 in 2007 following a five-year restoration, and now offers 262 guest rooms along with 21,000 sf of meeting space. Here, at the hotel where “nothing unimportant ever happens,” business sessions take on a sense of grandeur, and attendees can dine at the historic Palm Court, which opened in 1907. Adding a high-tech touch to the own milieu. And in the Northeast U.S.,

November 2012

- The Greenbrier, in White Sulphur Springs, WV, offers 100,000 sf of meeting space, brother to mind, given its distinction as the “Mother of Presidents” and as a focal point for most of the battles of the Civil War. When planners think of Virginia, and its neighbor, West Virginia, two properties heavily steeped in the local culture come to mind: The Greenbrier, in White Sulphur Springs, WV, and The Homestead, in Hot Springs, VA. Michael Despens, Jr., director of corporate events for Los Angeles-based Farmers Insurance, had long been advocating The Greenbrier as a site choice, and finally staged the company’s most elite incentive program, the President’s Council, at the hotel. A National Historic Landmark dating from 1778, the hotel made quite an impression on the 325 attendees, which included the top-producing 5 percent of Farmers’ exclusive agents. “One of my attendees said it looks like a Disneyland on steroids because you walk in there and it’s this explosion of color, with the brightly colored flowed flowers on the outside. But the building is stark white,” Despens describes. “It’s a historical property unlike any other.”

The Homestead, which predates The Greenbrier by 12 years, also offers its share of 262 guest rooms along with its setting within the Allegheny Mountains. In June the Homestead finalized construction of Allegheny Springs, part one of its sweeping $25 million transformation. Allegheny Springs comprises Mountain Rush, featuring three 100-foot water slides, a 400-foot lazy river and private cabanas. The transformation also will add the new Spa and Wellness Center at The Homestead, Jefferson’s Grill restaurant (featuring a farm-to-table menu) and MiniCascades, an 18-hole minigolf course that opened earlier this summer after the award-winning Cascades Course, which complements the Old Course. The 483-room resort boasts 72,000 sf of meeting space and other recreational amenities, such as the South’s first downhill ski area, a 48-stable Equestrian Center and one of the top-rated shooting clubs.

Cattle Barow Showplace
Predating the Grand Hotel by a year is The Driskill, located in the heart of downtown Austin, and originally the showplace of a cattle baron. At 189 guest rooms and 18,080 sf of meeting space, The Driskill is a smaller hotel, but it is sure to make a big impact on attendees with an ongoing roster of live musical acts and the four-diamond Driskill Grill, arguably Austin’s No. 1 restaurant.

Disneyland on Steroids
When one thinks of U.S. history, the state of Virginia naturally comes to mind, given its distinction as the “Mother of Presidents” and as a focal point for most of the battles of the Civil War. When planners think of Virginia, and its neighbor, West Virginia, two properties heavily steeped in the local culture come to mind: The Greenbrier, in White Sulphur Springs, WV, and The Homestead, in Hot Springs, VA. Michael Despens, Jr., director of corporate events for Los Angeles-based Farmers Insurance, had long been advocating The Greenbrier as a site choice, and finally staged the company’s most elite incentive program, the President’s Council, at the hotel. A National Historic Landmark dating from 1778, the hotel made quite an impression on the 325 attendees, which included the top-producing 5 percent of Farmers’ exclusive agents. “One of my attendees said it looks like a Disneyland on steroids because you walk in there and it’s this explosion of color, with the brightly colored flow...
Laura Jung was named director of group sales for the San Francisco Marriott Marquis, responsible for the Midwest and Canadian markets. She was most recently director of group sales for the Hilton Union Square, San Francisco, CA.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. has appointed Mary Casey as senior vice president of sales, North America Division. With more than 24 years of experience with Starwood, Casey most recently was vice president, global corporate sales.

Amy Jacobsen was named sales manager for The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club with a focus on mid-Atlantic and Western U.S. regions. She most recently served as national sales manager at the Loews Don CeSar Hotel, St. Pete Beach, FL.

The Peabody Orlando, Orlando, FL, has named Karen A. Harvey as national sales manager with a focus on group meetings and events. She most recently served as national accounts manager, citywide team, with Visit Orlando.

Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek, Lake Buena Vista, FL, has named John Branciforte as director of sales and marketing. With more than 25 years of hospitality sales and marketing experience, he most recently served as director of sales and marketing for The US Grant, San Diego, CA.

Michael Chagnon was named director of sales and marketing for Villas of Grand Cypress, Orlando, FL. Chagnon, who brings 25 years of experience in luxury hospitality sales and marketing to his new position, was most recently director of sales and marketing for The Equinox, Manchester, VT.

The Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina, San Diego, CA, has named Russ Mitchell as director of sales and marketing. He previously served as director of sales and marketing for The US Grant, San Diego, CA.