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INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

THE EXECUTIVE SOURCE FOR PLANNING MEETINGS & INCENTIVES

The Foodie Side of Las Vegas

Groups Flock to the
Dining and Entertainment
Capital of the World
Page 26



Tom Colicchio
American Celebrity Chef
Founder Craft Restaurant Group

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014 Vol. 21 No. 5



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Enzo Febraro, the Naples-born executive chef of Allegro at Wynn Las Vegas, incorporates fresh, imported ingredients in Italian-American favorites.

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No passport is required to meet in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, a destination with magnificent Caribbean beaches.

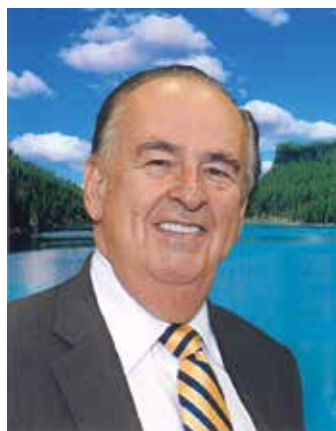
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Publisher's Message

Quality Is Always a Winner

In the 1950s when you asked little Johnny what he wanted to be when he grew up, he usually answered fireman or policeman, and little Sally dreamed of becoming a nurse or a teacher. Rarely did a kid say, "I want to be a top chef." Until now that is. To rise to executive chef, albeit a celebrity chef, is right up there on the happiness meter as the profession tied for second in CareerBliss' 20 Happiest Jobs in America.



But it's a long, tough road to fame and happiness as evidenced by the backgrounds of many award-winning chefs such as Tom Colicchio, who graces our cover this month. Colicchio, the founder of Craft Restaurants, started his career at age 17 in the kitchen of a local restaurant in his hometown. In 1994, Colicchio and restaurateur Danny Meyer, his then business partner, opened Gramercy Tavern in Manhattan, and the rest, as they say, is history. Today Colicchio is recognized as the head judge on Bravo's hit reality show "Top Chef" and for his contribution to the Las Vegas

restaurant scene: Tom Colicchio's Craftsteak at MGM Grand Las Vegas, which has been garnering rave reviews since 2002, and his most recent addition — Tom Colicchio's Heritage Steak at The Mirage, headed up by Anthony Zappola, a talented executive chef. In the Las Vegas cover story on page 26, Zappola says that corporate meeting attendees are attracted to Las Vegas celebrity chef restaurants "because of their quality" and the promise of a "great experience."

And well they should be as Las Vegas boasts more than 60 celebrity chef restaurants — more than any other destination in the world, according to the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

Gary Pearson is a fan of the celebrity-chef experience in Las Vegas. Director of corporate meetings and events for Aon Service Corporation, Pearson says, "Restaurants are a huge attraction because you have all of these well-known chefs that everybody sees on TV and hears and reads about. Las Vegas is one of the few cities that gets all these chefs to come from all over the country and the world to open a restaurant, and it's a big draw." Pearson also notes that attendees love to share their experiences once they get back home. "It's something that people can brag about," he says. "Some of our people also come in early and stay later to hit their favorite restaurants."

Harvey Grotsky

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Vallarta - Nayarit

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Harrah's Atlantic City Waterfront Conference Center to Open August 2015

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ — Caesars Entertainment announced that the \$125.8 million Waterfront Conference Center at Harrah's Resort Atlantic City is set to open in August 2015. The 100,000-sf conference center — the largest convention center-hotel complex between Baltimore and Boston — will increase the meeting facilities at Harrah's Atlantic City to 125,000 sf.

Boasting state-of-the-art technology and audio-visual capabilities, the new center will connect to the 2,500-room Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, situated on the harbor in the Marina District. Meeting planners will have plenty of options with 63 individual meeting rooms, 300 possible meeting configurations and general sessions for up to 5,000 attendees. Two 50,000-sf, pillarless ballrooms will each be divisible into as many as 27 breakout rooms.

Located on The Boardwalk, Bally's Atlantic City and Caesar's Atlantic City also are Caesars Entertainment properties in Atlantic City. Caesars allows planners to mix and match properties and venues within a destination and book through a single contact — with one contract and one minimum. Planners can use restaurants, host meetings and have events (à la carte) in Caesars properties within that destination. In addition to Meeting Diamond status, planners will be automatically enrolled in Total Rewards — Caesars exclusive member benefit program that earns credits for every dollar spent on qualifying purchases.

Caesars Entertainment connects meeting planners to 20 nationwide destinations and 40 properties.
www.harrahresort.com

Elbow Beach Bermuda Reopens Renovated Meeting Space

PAGET, BERMUDA — In the first step of a multiphase renovation, the Elbow Beach Bermuda Resort has debuted three newly renovated meeting room spaces in a beautiful island resort located less than a two-hour flight from major East Coast gateway cities.

Elbow Beach boasts three meeting rooms, state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor function space, the fastest high-speed technology on the island and videoconferencing facilities. The resort's meeting space features interiors accented with cool marble and



The Paget Meeting Room at the Elbow Beach Bermuda Resort.

warm woods, natural light and views of the beach and turquoise waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

The revitalized meeting space is

ideal for smaller corporate meetings, incentive programs and board meetings, which allow the resort to individualize a client's program. Buyouts of the 98-room resort during certain times of the year are also available.

In addition to the new meeting space, Elbow Beach Resort has five dedicated event rooms — two in the main building, two in a private building in the gardens and one in the Lido restaurant overlooking the ocean. There is a total of more than 7,400 sf of versatile event space.

www.elbowbeachbermuda.com

Four Seasons Hotel Las Vegas Debuts New Event Space

LAS VEGAS, NV — The nearly 30,000 sf of event and function space at the nongaming Four Seasons Hotel Las Vegas offers a fresh approach to modern luxury with restyled ballrooms and meeting rooms.

The hotel's iconic grand staircase serves as the gateway for meetings and events on the second floor. Six meeting rooms, ranging in size from 200 sf to 2,100 sf, feature warm hues and earth tones inspired by the outdoors.

Two expansive ballrooms, the 5,000-sf Acacia Ballroom and 10,000-sf Four Seasons Ballroom, boast a champagne-inspired color palette. On the hotel's main floor, the easily accessible 2,000-sf Palm Room features dramatic arches, a built-in bar and natural lighting.

The restyled meeting space joins two newly designed executive boardrooms, which debuted as part of the hotel's guest room renovation in 2012.
www.fourseasons.com/lasvegas



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1 The Loews Don CeSar in St. Pete Beach, Florida recently hosted the Florida & Caribbean Group of the Society for Incentive Travel Executives (SITE) for an educational program for members and students from Eckerd College. Pictured are (l to r) Terrie Strouse, Loews Don CeSar Hotel; Erica Shimokoshi, Eckerd College; Kaelynn Willis, Eckerd College; Suzanne Scully, Visit St. Pete Clearwater CVB; Catherine McKenna, Visit St. Pete Clearwater CVB; Kevin Rosa, Loews Don CeSar Hotel and Emily Karson, UCF. **2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8** FICP symposia, which are offered three times per year, offer planners and invited hospitality partners superior education, a balanced networking environment and the opportunity to experience a first-rate destination. These enthusiastic planners attended the FICP Summer Symposium held in late August at the Omni King Edward in Toronto, Canada. Attendees enjoyed compelling keynote addresses, education sessions detailing event-based mobile apps, healthy meeting choices and a lively "Ask the Experts" panel session. Networking activities included an evening event at the modern Arcadian LOFT and a Beatles-themed evening of music and dancing at the lavish Omni King Edward. **5** FICP Summer Symposium attendees set the tone for the 2014 FICP Annual Conference, which will be held at the Hilton Waikoloa Village in Hawaii November 16–19, 2014.



Boost Your Strategic Thinking While Improving Your Memory of Minutia

How strategic is your thinking? Do you crave information? Do you believe that more is actually better? Do you desire data, data and more data?

If you hunger after more and better ideas at all cost, your info-craving habits actually zap your brain's energy. The persistent pace of focusing on details makes it more difficult for your brain to decipher and understand the big picture.

Details or Big Ideas

According to cognitive neuroscience expert and author Sandra Bond Chapman, Ph.D.*, when you focus on remembering minutia and details, it adversely affects your ability to engage in strategic thinking.

One way to improve how you learn, ignite your imagination and boost your big picture thinking is to practice strategic thinking.

The access to more information is not, on its own, making us smarter. More likely, quite the opposite is true, says Chapman.

Exposure to large volumes of information steals and freezes your brainpower.

However, according to Chapman's research, when you focus and engage in strategic, abstract thinking, you improve your ability to remember the details. You boost both your strategic and detailed thinking!

Defining a Strategic Brain

So what exactly is a strategic brain?

When you use your brain strategically, it filters informa-

tion by deliberately sorting input and output. The approach is two-pronged:

1. Attend to necessarily essential information.
2. At the same time, filter out extraneous data that is less critical to the task at hand.

In contrast a nonstrategic brain takes in all information, according to Dr. Chapman. You need to strive to build a strategic brain, not a detail-focused brain. A strategic brain is a brain changer. And a life changer, she says.

A strategic brain also helps you handle the details better!

Multitasking Causes the Brain to Lose Balance

Multitasking doesn't really exist. It's a myth.

What we call multitasking is actually alternate tasking. Shifting attention from one task to a second task and then back to the first one.

Each brain shift requires increased mental effort. As the brain shifts, working memory from the first task is lost. Instead of doing one task well, two tasks are done poorly.

Our need to respond quickly to emails, texts and phone calls, cross items off our to-do list and juggle countless demands is masked as productivity.

In reality, when we multitask and constantly respond to distractions, we are running over nails and broken glass that flattens our tires into mental exhaustion, says Chapman. We lose our brain balance.

Improving Your Brain's Gatekeeper

Your brain's frontal lobe acts as a gatekeeper. It can focus on certain information while blocking the rest.

One way to improve how you learn, ignite your imagination, and boost your big picture thinking is to practice strategic thinking. You have to adopt the principle that less is more says Chapman. You have to engage your gatekeeper.

Here's one way Chapman suggests to improve your strategic thinking:

Practice focusing on one core task for a minimum of 15 minutes. Don't let any interruptions distract you. Be hyper-vigilant to keep the focus on that one task.

Then take a break.

Repeat that process several times a day for several days and weeks. Only with practice can the brain then filter out the superfluous information flooding our senses.

Chapman says, we must remember this paradox:

Your brain works smarter when you make it slow down.
I&FMM

Jeff Hurt is executive vice president, education and engagement, Velvet Chainsaw Consulting, and is based in Dallas, Texas. Velvet Chainsaw Consulting exclusively services companies and associations with their annual meetings, conferences, education and events. They also help technology, service and membership organizations establish and execute plans and processes that result in improved business results. Hurt has worked in the events/nonprofit arena for more than 20 years including Keep America Beautiful as a consultant/trainer/writer; Keep Texas Beautiful as education coordinator; professional development manager for Meeting Professionals International; professional development manager for Promotional Products Association International; and director of education and events for the National Association of Dental Plans. Originally published by Jeff Hurt in "Velvet Chainsaw Midcourse Corrections." Contact Hurt at 214-886-3174 or jhurt@velvetchainsaw.com. www.velvetchainsaw.com

**Hat tips to Sandra Bond Chapman, Ph.D., the author of Make Your Brain Smarter: Increase Your Brain's Creativity, Energy, and Focus, (Free Press, January 1, 2013). Chapman is the founder and chief director of the Center for BrainHealth, and a Distinguished University Professor at The University of Texas at Dallas. In "Make Your Brain Smarter," renowned cognitive neuroscientist introduces the latest research in brain science and shows how to tailor a program to strengthen your brain's capacity to think smarter. In this all-inclusive book, Dr. Chapman delivers a comprehensive "fitness" plan for a healthier brain and includes strategies to reduce stress and anxiety, increase productivity, enhance decision-making and strengthen how your the brain works at every age. www.brainhealth.utdallas.edu*



2014 World Class Award Winners



CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau
Austin, TX

Discover Palm Beach County
West Palm Beach, FL

Experience Colorado Springs
Colorado Springs, CO

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau
Miami, FL

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
Las Vegas, NV

Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau
Long Beach, CA

Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp.
Nashville, TN

New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau
New Orleans, LA

San Diego Tourism Authority
San Diego, CA

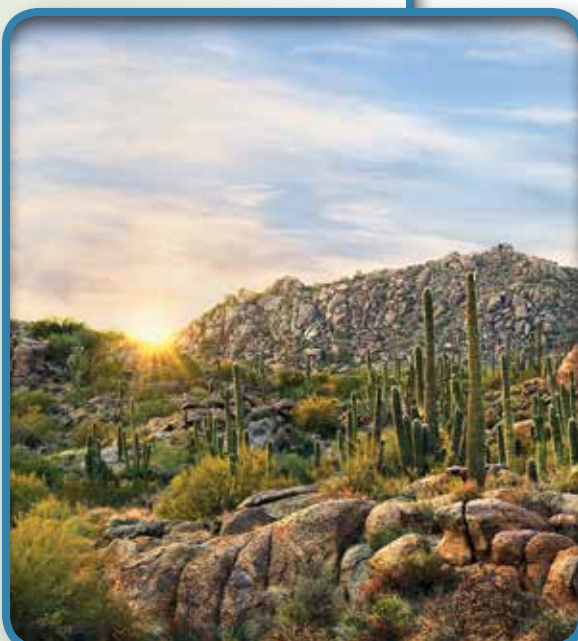
Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau
Scottsdale, AZ

Visit Jacksonville
Jacksonville, FL

Visit Orlando
Orlando, FL



Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau



Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau

We honor the deserving winners of the 2014 World Class Awards with this special section devoted to the hard-working, extraordinary management and staff of the best of the best — the convention and visitors bureaus, and hotels, resorts and conference centers that exceed the high standards of excellence according to these criteria:

Convention & Visitors Bureaus

- Superior service and support
- Promotional assistance
- High level of supplier, facility and venue information, coordination and liaison with local attractions and transportation
- Comprehensive assistance with accommodations and site inspections

HOTELS, RESORTS & CONFERENCE CENTERS

ARIA Resort & Casino
Las Vegas, NV

Caesars Palace Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

The Diplomat Resort & Spa
Hollywood, FL

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center
Nashville, TN

Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando
Orlando, FL

M Resort Spa Casino
Las Vegas, NV

MGM Grand Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, NV

The Mirage
Las Vegas, NV

Ponte Vedra Inn & Club
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

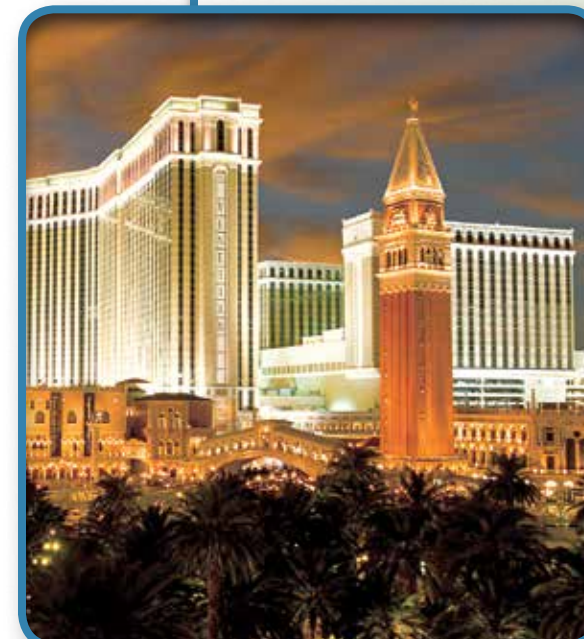
The Resort at Pelican Hill
Newport Coast, CA

Rosen Shingle Creek
Orlando, FL

Vdara Hotel & Spa
Las Vegas, NV

The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino
Las Vegas, NV

Wynn Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV



The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino



Wynn Las Vegas

Hotels, Resorts & Conference Centers

- Superior staff service
- Excellence in accommodations and meeting facilities
- Trouble-free food and beverage functions
- Smooth setups and arrangements for social functions
- Exceptional ambience
- Convenient and accessible location

Some of these fine winners of the 2014 World Class Award are profiled on the following pages. **I&FMM**



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Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms: 48,000

Meeting Space: More than 500,000 sf

Convention Center FYI: The Miami Beach Convention Center boasts more than 1 million sf of flexible space, including more than 500,000 gross sf of exhibit space and more than 150,000 sf of meeting and prefunction space.

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

Miami is the place to hold your event if you want to attract the most attendees, and have them rave about it after they return home.

Today, the city's sprawling metropolitan area, which includes distinctive enclaves such as Downtown Miami, the Brickell financial district, Coconut Grove, Coral Gables and Miami Beach, combines ultra-modern urban chic with a laidback, old-school resort charm.

Attractions

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, designed by global superstar architect Cesar Peli, hosts a world-class season of theatre, symphony concerts and performances by Miami City Ballet. The New World Center, designed by legendary architect Frank Gehry and home base of the world-renowned New World Symphony headed by maestro Michael Tilson Thomas, features SoundScape Park, where visitors can watch performances or films projected onto a 7,000-sf wall.

A major new attraction, Museum Park, includes the new Pérez Art Museum Miami and the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, a 250,000-sf facility that will open next year.

Meeting Infrastructure

While Miami boasts cultural sizzle aplenty, it's the city's vast and diverse meeting infrastructure that gets the attention of planners.

The Greater Miami area now has nearly 50,000 hotel rooms, from unique and charming boutique hotels to major-brand convention properties.

One thing that further contributes to Miami's appeal is that virtually all of its hotels offer outdoor function spaces that showcase spectacular views of Biscayne Bay from downtown, or the Atlantic Ocean from Miami Beach. And Miami's subtropical climate means warm weather that allows for comfortable outdoor events throughout the year.

The ability to exploit local color includes rooftop pool decks, lushly landscaped tropical patios and gardens, expansive lawns overlooking world-renowned golf courses, and palm-lined courtyards and terraces with breathtaking views.

Miami Beach Convention Center

Meanwhile, Miami offers world-class convention and conference facilities. For decades, the Miami Beach Convention Center has been one of the most popular facilities in the world. Located at the heart of the Art Deco Historic District, the complex is within easy walking distance of all of South Beach's best known restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The convention center will soon begin a \$500 million renovation and expansion project.

Another facility popular for smaller conventions and conferences is the Miami Convention & Conference Center, located between Downtown Miami and the edge of the Brickell financial district. It's a foundational element of the James L. Knight International Center/Hyatt Regency complex and features a 444-seat auditorium, a 117-seat tiered acoustically balanced lecture hall and 20 meeting rooms.

Imagine the meeting your attendees will want to come to.

It's so Miami.

I&FMM



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So someone tried to tell you why meeting in Miami's so inspiring, so exciting and so productive. Know this. No tweet, snapshot or posting will ever be enough. You so have to meet here to get it. 305-539-3071 | **MiamiMeetings.com**

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Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms: 14,500

Hotels/Resorts: 75

Special Services & Amenities:

The Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau assists planners with a wide array of free services, including RFP processing, formal bid proposals, customized site inspections and complimentary promotional materials.

Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau

Scottsdale, the destination where meetings go beyond convention, welcomes financial and insurance meeting groups with a stunning Sonoran Desert setting, idyllic weather, top-tier accommodations and meeting venues, and hassle-free transportation both in the air and on the ground. Top it all off with a hospitality community that extends VIP-level service to both planners and their clients, and it's easy to see why Scottsdale is a top choice of meetings professionals from around the world.

Accommodations & Facilities

Scottsdale is home to more than 70 distinctive properties that range from five-diamond resorts and chic urban hotels to fully equipped, mid-level lodgings.

For meetings that require an abundance of flexible meeting and event space, Scottsdale boasts more than a dozen properties offering in excess of 50,000 sf of total indoor and outdoor space, including the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess (106,000 indoor/50,000 outdoor), The Phoenician (90,000 indoor/90,000 outdoor), JW Marriott Camelback Inn (44,000 indoor/100,000 outdoor) and the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale (35,000 indoor/35,000 outdoor).

Scottsdale also features more than 45 unique off-property venues that are perfect for special events, theme parties and teambuilding programs. Options include the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, Penske Racing Museum and Los Cedros USA, a working Arabian horse ranch.

New & Notable

The Tony Nelssen Equestrian Center (TNEC), a new multiuse facility at WestWorld of Scottsdale, debuted in January 2014. TNEC features a 120,000-sf, climate-controlled Equidome with 3,400 permanent seats and a concourse for vendors and other activities, as well as the adjoining 117,000-sf North Hall and 37,000-sf South Hall, which allows the facility to host multiple functions simultaneously.

Golfers have been getting in the swing at TopGolf since its grand opening in summer 2014. The 65,000-sf venue features three levels of semi climate-controlled golf bays from which players hit micro-chipped golf balls at dartboard-like targets that track each shot's distance and accuracy. TopGolf can accommodate groups of 10 to 1,200 in its boardroom, banquet rooms and large rooftop terrace.

And coming in fall 2014, The Millennium Scottsdale Resort & Villas will reopen following a complete renovation of the property, and the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale will raise the curtain on a ballroom renovation.

Easy Accessibility

Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (airport code PHX), the main facility serving Scottsdale, is located less than 10 miles from downtown and offers nearly 1,200 daily flights to and from cities around the world. For private planes, corporate jets and charters, Scottsdale Airport (airport code SCF) offers first-class service at its two award-winning, fixed-base operators. And once your group is on the ground, the options for getting around town range from buses and charters, and executive sedans to horse-drawn carriages and free downtown trolleys.

I&FMM



Go beyond convention.

Interested in Meeting in Scottsdale? "Site See" and Fly Free!

Fly free on us to experience a customized site inspection and you'll see first-hand all the award-winning resorts, outstanding meeting facilities and world-class amenities that consistently make Scottsdale one of the top U.S. meetings destinations. Customized. Time-efficient. With free air. Visit FlyFreeonUs.com for conditions and details.


Scottsdale

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Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms: 7,000

Meeting Space: 2.25 million sf

Special Services & Amenities: Business Center, Venetian Showroom, Canyon RanchSpaClub, nightly entertainment, 30+ onsite restaurants, outlets and lounges. Located minutes from McCarran International Airport.

The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

One Lens. Many Facets. Take a look inside. The feeling is akin to lifting a kaleidoscope to your eye: a mesmerizing display of new amazements crop up at every turn. Discover the many facets of The Venetian, The Palazzo, Sands Expo and The Venetian Palazzo Congress Center, the premier resort and convention venue in Las Vegas, and watch a world of wonderful experiences unfold.

Industry professionals delight in the venue's streamlined event planning services. A team of seasoned experts, supported by a staff more than 8,000 strong, offers dedicated assistance with every aspect of your event, to transform each imagined detail into reality.

Meeting Facilities

The complex welcomes meetings, conventions and exhibitions of all sizes, in more than 2.25 million sf of flexible meeting space. The Congress Center features an impressive 85,000-sf, pillar-free ballroom, as well as 298 conference rooms. The adjacent Sands Expo is renowned for its state-of-the-art convention facilities, with 1.9 million sf of newly renovated meeting and show space.

Together, the properties form the largest LEED-certified green building on the planet, while the Sands ECO 360° initiative ensures that every effort is made to minimize environmental impact.

Universal Appeal

Located in the heart of the Las Vegas Strip, only minutes from McCarran International Airport, the travel and logistical convenience of this venue is unrivaled. The universal appeal of such an iconic destination in one of the world's great entertainment capitals also makes it highly desirable to attendees. Guests adore the Old World romance of The Venetian, with the unforgettable charm of a gondola

ride accompanied by a live serenade or an enchanting stroll along the Grand Canal. The Palazzo offers the perfect complement, featuring sophisticated, modern Italian design that immerses guests in exclusivity and elegance.

The 7,000 suites at this opulent all-suite resort, averaging 700 sf each — roughly twice the size of the typical Las Vegas hotel room — cater to the needs of business travelers and corporate group attendees.

The Ultimate All-in-One Venue

At the end of the day, business naturally transitions to pleasure, creating networking opportunities that cultivate relationships, both new and old.

Guests choose from among 32 dining options, including an impressive list of James Beard Award-winning celebrity chefs. Some of the standouts include steak houses such as Wolfgang Puck's CUT, Mario Batali's Carnevino or Delmonico by Emeril Lagasse.

Fashion enthusiasts are drawn to the 300 boutiques of the Grand Canal Shoppes, while those looking for a quiet retreat will find their sanctuary at the award-winning Canyon Ranch SpaClub.

The Venetian, The Palazzo, Sands Expo and The Venetian Palazzo Congress Center form the ultimate all-in-one venue, where everything is within reach. From unparalleled hospitality, to award-winning service, to impeccable meeting facilities, this multifaceted destination creates the kind of extraordinary experiences your guests will remember fondly for years to come. **I&FMM**

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Facts and Features

Guest Rooms: 2,716 rooms and suites at Wynn and 2,034 at Encore

Meeting Space: 260,000 sf

Special Services & Amenities: Wynn Las Vegas and Encore offer 19 fine and casual restaurants, two award-winning spas, world-class nightlife and the only golf course directly connected to a resort on the Vegas Strip.

Wynn Las Vegas

Corporate meeting planners can expect the best of both worlds from the luxury resorts of Wynn Las Vegas and Encore. On one hand, there is the consistency of the world-class quality, service and support that meeting planners across the globe have come to count on from first arrival to final departure; on the other hand, with an industry-enviable ability to create and re-create resort properties and meeting spaces that are continuously fresh, relevant and exciting, groups can expect to encounter new experiences, new tastes and sights and thrills with each visit. It is no wonder that Wynn and Encore have such a high return-guest ratio and have earned more Forbes Travel Guide Five Star Awards than any other independent casino resort in the world.

Meeting Facilities

Within the more than 260,000 sf of meeting space, groups large and small are brought together in beautiful, well-appointed spaces, customized to fit their specific needs. Terraces and balconies allow for a breath of fresh air while floor-to-ceiling windows afford gorgeous views.

Planners looking for a dramatic difference can book the resorts' internationally renowned nightlife venues — XS, Surrender, Tryst and Encore Beach Club — for private events.

Dining Experiences

Holders of more Forbes Travel Guide Four Star Awards than any other resort in North America, the award-winning dining experiences at Wynn and Encore offer exciting options that can accommodate intimate get-togethers or grand

gatherings. Many of the restaurants at Wynn and Encore offer unique outdoor/indoor possibilities with lake, lagoon and waterfall views. Or for a truly personalized touch, the Wynn catering department is renowned for creating unforgettable culinary events.

Ways to Escape

An impressive array of recreational options offers guests unique experiences suited to their individual interests. The Spas at Wynn and Encore have a full menu of revitalizing services, saunas and plunge pools. Claude Baruk, international celebrity stylist, has joined the award-winning salons of Wynn and Encore where exceptional cut, color and luxurious rejuvenating treatments are offered.

The Wynn Golf Club is a magnificent par-70 course with 18 holes of challenging beauty and the shopping Esplanades of Wynn and Encore offer shoppers an exclusive foray into the boutiques of some of the most sought-after designers in the world.

Guests will be mesmerized by the spectacular show "Le Rêve – The Dream" voted "Best Show in Las Vegas," for four consecutive years by the Southern Nevada Hotel Concierge Association. Set in the resort's intimate aqua theater, aerialists and synchronized divers take guests on a breathtaking, dream-like journey.

At the end of the day, guests relax in the elegant comfort of amenity-rich suites, featuring breathtaking views, touch-screen privacy and lighting controls, and an oversized marble bath.

With extraordinary service, luxury spaces and accommodations, planners can elevate their next meeting to an unforgettable group experience at Wynn Las Vegas and Encore.

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Caribbean Cachet

Island Incentives That Top Performers Love to Brag About

The inviting view of Caneel Bay from Turtle Point, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands.

By John Buchanan

Year in and year out, the Caribbean — and in particular the Bahamas — ranks as one of the world's most popular destinations for both meetings and incentive programs. Mere mention of the words “Caribbean” or “Bahamas” conjures images of a relaxing, rejuvenating experience that also delivers a dose of exotica that is convenient and cost-effective.

And the region continues to boost its long list of options.

Among the biggest news at the moment is the \$3.5 billion Baha Mar resort complex in the Bahamas, making its debut late next spring as the largest single-phase project in the history of the Caribbean.

Set on 1,000 acres along 3,000 feet of Cable Beach in Nassau, the hugely ambitious project — primarily financed by a \$2.45 billion loan from the Import-Export Bank of China — will include the 1,000-room Baha Mar Casino & Hotel with a 100,000-sf Las Vegas-style casino; a 700-room Grand Hyatt; a 200-room Rosewood; and a 300-room SLS Lux. The resort also will feature 200,000 sf of convention facilities, a Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course, an ESPA spa, and 40 restaurants, bars and clubs.

Another new hotel that is generating a lot of enthusiasm is the 343-room room Westin Grand Cayman Seven Mile Beach Resort & Spa, formerly The Westin Casuarina, which is located in a prime location along Seven Mile Beach in tony, exclusive Grand Cayman. The name change included a multimillion-dollar renovation that reinvented the property from its lobby to guest rooms to meeting space.

Named to *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold List, The Westin Grand Cayman Seven Mile Beach Resort & Spa offers easy access to Grand Cayman's best attractions, including scuba diving, shopping and golf.

Westin Grand Cayman has seven meeting rooms and more than 8,000 sf of indoor and 50,000 sf of outdoor function space, which can accommodate

groups of up to 500 people. Along with outside meeting and event space, the hotel offers the Governor's Ballroom, which has 5,800 sf with western exposure through floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Caribbean Sea. On the south end of the resort, the Galleon Ballroom offers an additional 2,600 sf of space, with a prefunction area ideal for registration, breakfasts and breaks.

Marriott International has opened the 150-room JW Marriott Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. The hotel is located in the Piantini financial district and outside Blue Mall, which features restaurants and high-end shops. “Santo Domingo remains one of the most vibrant cities for new development in the Caribbean,” Marriott said in a statement. Facilities at the new JW Marriott Santo Domingo include the

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Vertigo 101 Lounge with a restaurant, bar and glass floor terrace that rises 101 feet above the city below. It also features the Winston Grill & Patio restaurant and complimentary in-room Wi-Fi.

Positive Feedback From Attendees

Sandy Monkemeyer, senior vice president at insurance company Captive Resources in Schaumburg, Illinois, is a heavy user of the Caribbean. She books board of directors meetings for client companies into Caribbean destinations about 60 times each year between January and June.

Monkemeyer uses the Caribbean during high season, she says, “because we really want to take full advantage of what the destination and hotel have to offer so people can have a good time in addition to conducting their business. The Caribbean gives us a good opportunity to accomplish all of those things.”

Caribbean getaways also generate positive feedback from her well-heeled attendees. “And that’s especially true when there’s 10 feet of snow in the Midwest and we send them off to a warm Caribbean island for five days,” Monkemeyer says.

Her regular rotation of destinations includes Grand Cayman, the Bahamas, Aruba, Nevis, St. Kitts, Barbados, St. John, Puerto Rico and St. Maarten, as well as less familiar islands such as Curaçao.

“What our people love about a place like Curaçao, which is really now coming into its own, is that when they tell their neighbors they’re going to Curaçao, people don’t always even know where that is,” Monkemeyer says.

“When it comes to many other Caribbean destinations, their neighbors and friends can say, ‘Oh yeah, I’ve been there, done that.’ So we also like places that most people have never been to. That gives the meeting a little more cachet and makes people feel special.”

Monkemeyer’s favorite hotels include Atlantis Paradise Island in the Bahamas, Ritz-Carlton in Grand Cayman and Hyatt Aruba. “Our attendees are always extremely pleased

with the Hyatt Aruba,” she says. “We’ve been using them for ages, and they always do a great job for us.”

She also likes The Ritz-Carlton and Marriott in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. “We like both of those properties very much,” Monkemeyer says. “It’s just a question of which one fits a particular group better.”

Atlantis, Paradise Island in the Bahamas is an ocean-themed resort offering 3,400 guest rooms including The Cove, a resort within a resort that features 600 oceanview suites. Atlantis is also known for having the largest open-air marine habitat in the world. The conference center can accommodate up to 4,000 attendees and includes the 50,000-sf Imperial Ballroom, 40,000 sf of prefunction space, 30 breakout rooms and three boardrooms. There are 21 outdoor event spaces — totaling 300,000 sf — that take advantage of tropical settings including, of course, the beaches, lagoon, waterscapes, marine habitats and more. And with 21 great restaurants on-property (including chef Bobby Flay’s Mesa Grill and Chef Nobu Matsuhisa’s Nobu), planners can stage an exceptional dine-around program without ever leaving the resort grounds.

Popularity Meter

The fundamental reasons why the Caribbean is a perennially popular destination are fairly obvious.

“One big reason why the Caribbean is so popular with U.S.-based companies — especially incentive programs that take place in the first and second quarter of the year, as a lot of incentive programs do because they’re recognizing people for their performance during the previous year — is that it’s an ideal option for many companies that time of year,” says Kara Katen, director of operations at Event Travel Management in Denver. “And that is especially true for those companies that want to get away from a brutal winter back at home. So they want to go somewhere that people can head to the beach. The weather in the Caribbean is very consistent in the first and second

quarter. And the accessibility of the islands is also very good, so people can get there in a timely fashion.”

Katen’s colleague, Katarina Stastny, senior account manager at Event Travel Management, adds, “The Caribbean is a great destination because it’s close to the U.S. and provides easy access. There are direct flights to the various islands from different U.S. cities. It’s closer than going to Hawaii. And it’s also more affordable than Hawaii. And it offers beautiful beaches and beautiful weather. You also get to experience different cultures and cuisines, which also make it a great experience”

Westin St. Maarten

This past spring, Monkemeyer used the 317-room Westin St. Maarten Dawn Beach Resort & Spa for five board meetings.

“The Westin St. Maarten has a nice variety of meeting space, with a total of more than 20,000 sf, which is a huge factor for us,” she says. “They also have very nice outdoor areas that we use for receptions and dinners. If you go into the local town, the downtown area also has a lot of nice smaller restaurants that allow us to break attendees down into small groups and do dine-arounds. And the quality of the food is very good in those restaurants.”

Because Monkemeyer likes to offer fun activities as part of her agenda, a catamaran cruise and snorkeling are typically included.

She likes The Westin St. Maarten so much that she is now planning a 650-attendee meeting for next year.

“Another one of the big pluses about St. Maarten is the airlift,” she says. “And that’s particularly important during shoulder season.”

“On some of the islands, airlift gets infrequent and it can be a problem for some people to get there. But places like St. Maarten, Aruba and Grand Cayman have airlift that is pretty steady and pretty good during the year.”

Jamaica and Half Moon

For a five-day incentive program for 56 attendees last April, Katen selected



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the legendary Half Moon a RockResort in Rose Hall, Jamaica, which features 197 rooms and suites, 31 luxury villas and 27,000 sf of meeting space. Half Moon also features an 18-hole Robert Trent Jones Sr.-designed golf course, a 68,000-sf Fern Tree at RockResorts spa and six restaurants.

“We decided on Half Moon because we did not want a traditional all-inclusive resort, which Jamaica and some other Caribbean islands are known for now,” Katen says. “We also chose Half Moon for several other reasons. One is that we really liked the layout of the property and the different categories of accommodations they offer.”

Because of Half Moon’s assortment of accommodations, Katen also was able to create a hierarchy among qualifiers. “The people who were at the top of the list in terms of their sales had the better rooms,” she says. “But everybody’s room was fantastic.”

Katen also liked Half Moon because there are so many things to do onsite. “The resort is very spread out, so even if it’s crowded, you never feel like you’re fighting for a pool chair or space on the beach,” she says. “We also liked the fact that onsite there is golf, a spa, an equestrian center, tennis courts, volleyball and a dolphin lagoon. There is just so much to do on-property that you don’t have to feel like you have to go anywhere else to have a great time.”

Another factor in Half Moon’s favor, Katen says, is that “It’s not your typical Jamaican beach resort. It has a vintage old school feel about it. And it’s not a party-style hotel. It’s a very sophisticated environment. And that’s exactly what this group was looking for.”

Airlift into Montego Bay also was a factor in choosing Jamaica as the destination. “We chose it based on its accessibility from all over the world and the cost of the fares,” Katen says. “We try to avoid red-eye flights whenever we can, and that was another advantage of Jamaica. It has good airlift and generally offers convenient schedules and flying times, especially from the U.S. and Canada, but also for our international attendees from Europe and Asia. And

the airlift also allowed all of our people to get in early enough on the first day to enjoy that first day and not lose it to travel, which is also something that we look for.”

Highlights of the program included a reception on a terrace that overlooks a croquet lawn. “We had an instructor come out with a couple of coaches to teach people how to play croquet,” Katen says. “It was just something out of the ordinary. Everyone dressed in white so we could make it as close to a real croquet tournament as possible. It was very elegant. People loved it.”

Because of the uniqueness and difficulty of the game, Katen created the evening as a teambuilding exercise — literally and figuratively. “It really set the tone for a week of camaraderie and networking,” she says.

The group also made an offsite trip to Dunn’s River Falls and James Bond Beach, from the movie “Doctor No” in Ocho Rios. “And afterwards, we went for a traditional Jamaican jerk lunch.”

Attendees also were given the opportunity to choose between a round of golf, a spa experience or river rafting on the Martha Brae River as à la carte leisure activities.

“The whole program was just a great experience,” Katen says. “I liked Half Moon so much that I would definitely take another group there.”

Caneel Bay, USVI

Lance Abbott, president of BevCap Management, a McKinney, Texas-based insurance company, hosts two board meetings each year. His first-ever excursion to the Caribbean was a three-day meeting for 40 attendees at fabled, 166-room Caneel Bay situated within Virgin Islands National Park on St. John.

“I had vacationed in St. John before,” Abbott says. “So I suggested it to our board. We have a meetings committee, and they talked about it and decided to go, based on my personal recommendation and the reputation of Caneel Bay.”

Although it was a serious board meeting, one of the reasons for selecting the destination and hotel was to

build in some R&R. “We chartered a large 60-foot catamaran and did some island-hopping for the day, including going over to the British Virgin Islands, which are beautiful,” Abbott says. “About half the group chose to do that and the other half went hiking on St. John. Others just hung out on the beach. We also had folks who just relaxed, including some who used the spa.”

The Caribbean, and especially an exclusive property such as Caneel Bay, perfectly fits the culture and objectives of BevCap’s board meetings, Abbott says. “One of the things we try to do when we book our board meetings is that we try to find something that you might not expect,” he says. “We look for unique properties. For example, we’ve been to places like Calistoga Ranch in the Napa Valley area in California.

“We just like unique properties that provide a unique experience. And one of the things we liked about Caneel Bay is that it’s a small property, so we could be sure there would not be large meetings going on while we were there. We also liked the fact that there are no phones in the rooms, no TVs. And to us, those kinds of things make it a nice getaway.”

Abbott staged a dinner on the beach one night. “They served fresh lobster and had carving stations,” he says. “It was just a great experience to be right there on the beach as the sun set over their dock. And they created a very intimate event, which to us is another difference from going to a large hotel where there are lots of people around.”

The actual board meeting was held in the historic estate house on the resort property. “It is just a great venue,” Abbott says. “It’s an open air area with beautiful tropical plants and flowers, with the surf down below. It’s just a great environment for a small meeting.”

One of the reasons board members and other invited guests, such as key vendors, like BevCap’s meetings, Abbott says, is that “we choose nice locations. And our people have a chance to do something different from your typical Chicago or Las Vegas meeting.”

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Chef Masa Takayama carries simplicity to its next level of purity at barMASA at Aria, and coffee artistry excels at Sambalatte at Monte Carlo Las Vegas Resort and Casino.

The Foodie Side of Las Vegas

Groups Flock to the Dining and Entertainment Capital of the World

From its early days as a railroad watering stop in the Nevada desert, Las Vegas always had a reputation for good (or at least a lot of) food. In the '50s and '60s as casino after casino opened, Las Vegas was the king of the smorgasbord — an all-you-can-eat, often-comped buffet boasting hundreds of tasty treats. Visitors flocked to Las Vegas enticed by the promise of “free” buffets and

“no-charge” cocktails at the slots and gaming tables. Not anymore. As Las Vegas has evolved into a sophisticated, cosmopolitan city of the world, it also has achieved a lofty status as a premier culinary destination boasting a stunning variety of fine-dining restaurants and more than 60 celebrity chef restaurants — more than any other destination in the world, according to the Las Vegas

Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA). The dining scene is so fine that many insurance and financial services meeting and incentive planners stage events in Las Vegas to give their attendees and top performers the opportunity to savor the experience.

Dining Enhances the Experience

Gary Pearson, director of corporate meetings and events for Chicago-

based Aon Service Corporation, a global provider of insurance, reinsurance and risk management, says that dining at big-name restaurants enhances the destination experience for all attendees. “Restaurants are a huge attraction because you have all of these well-known chefs that everybody sees on TV and hears and reads about,” he says. “Las Vegas is one of the few cities that gets all these chefs to come from all over the country and the world to open a restaurant, and it’s a big draw.”

Pearson notes that attendees love to share their experiences at celebrity chef restaurants with friends after returning home. “It’s something that people can brag about,” he says. “A couple of nights they get to go out on their own. They know each other so they form pairs or groups to go out to dinner to their favorite places. Some of our people also come in early and stay later to hit their favorite restaurants.”

More meeting pros have added a restaurant category to their site selection process as the millennial generation, which is replete with “foodies,” wants destinations that can cater to them. Las Vegas is often a first choice.

Patty Kindness, national sales manager for AlliedPRA Destination Management Las Vegas, says Las Vegas has diversified its portfolio when it comes to dining. “Las Vegas dining has undergone a complete overhaul in the last 10 to 15 years. Most of the Las Vegas restaurants that are known around the world are found in the hotels and have famous chefs,” she says.

Las Vegas’ dining scene is part of the reason that Aon will hold a three-day meeting for 140 clients and executives at The Mandarin Oriental in



“The corporate meeting attendees seem to be attracted to Las Vegas celebrity chef restaurants because of their quality. ... You know you’re going to get a great experience.”

Anthony Zappola
Executive Chef
Tom Colicchio’s Heritage Steak
Las Vegas, NV

November. It will be the meeting’s eighth consecutive year in Las Vegas.

Pearson plans to take full advantage of the Mandarin’s catering services to hold the group’s closing dinner offsite at a place to be determined. Such offsite dining allows Pearson to provide creative dining experiences for attendees and, at the same time, meet the hotel’s food and beverage minimums. “We need to satisfy the minimum to keep our rates as well as the meeting rooms free, so we look for options to use the hotel’s food and beverage,” he says.

Why Has the Celebrity Chef Scene Snowballed?

David McIntyre, senior vice president of food and beverage for MGM Resorts International, has the answer. “The celebrity chef scene in Las Vegas has exploded, and I believe that’s a reflection of the rise in culinary-themed TV — including staples such as Bravo’s “Top Chef” and new prime-time network shows.

“As the entertainment authority in Las Vegas, MGM Resorts International delivers many dynamic offerings including your favorite TV personalities such as Top Chef’s Tom Colicchio with his signature restaurant, Craftsteak, at MGM Grand and his latest addition, Heritage Steak at The Mirage. We also are home to some of the world’s most celebrated, award-winning chefs including Joël Robuchon, Julian Serrano and Michael Mina. Las Vegas features the best of the best, and next year, convention attendees will be able to experience new restaurants such as



*American celebrity chef
Tom Colicchio, founder of
Craft Restaurant Group.*

“Restaurants are a huge attraction because you have all of these well-known chefs that everybody sees on TV and hears and reads about.”



Gary Pearson
Director, Corporate Meetings and Events
Aon Service Corporation
Chicago, IL

over the world and have the opportunity to display their talents from intimate settings to grand-scale events.”

Dominguez describes what meeting attendees can look forward to on their next trip to Las Vegas. “You will continue to see more unique casual experiences

and a move to outdoor food and beverage opportunities. Food trucks and ‘street food’ are extremely popular, flexible and fun for groups.”

And from the chef’s point of view, Anthony Zappola, the executive chef at Tom Colicchio’s Heritage Steak, suggests that quality is always a winner. “The corporate meeting attendees seem to be attracted to Las Vegas celebrity chef restaurants because of their quality. Las Vegas has always been known for shows and having fun. Now with the celebrity chef restaurants, choosing a good venue is equally important. And with a celebrity chef restaurant you know you’re going to get a great experience,” says Zappola.

Executive chefs, who often work directly with a meeting planner to fashion a menu, have a great advantage working among so many other top-rated restaurants within one hotel. As chef Zappola, explains, “The good thing about Las Vegas is we have many resources within the ho-

tel that can meet almost any request. If a guest asks for something specific, chances are someone from the hotel uses that product. We can expedite the process much faster than a free-standing restaurant.”

Other celebrity chefs making their mark include Enzo Febbraro, the Naples-born executive chef of Allegro at Wynn Las Vegas; and Paul Bartolotta, of Bartolotta Ristorante Di Mare at Wynn Las Vegas. Additionally, there’s Thomas Keller, Bouchon at The Venetian; Maurizio Mazzon, Canaletto at The Venetian and Il Fornaio at New York-New York; Bobby Flay, Mesa Grill at Caesars Palace; Emeril Lagasse, Emeril’s New Orleans Fish House at MGM Grand and Delmonico Steakhouse at The Venetian, just to name a few.

One of the most well-known celebrity chefs of all time is Wolfgang Puck. His name is connected to Postrio at The Venetian; CUT at the Palazzo; Trattoria del Lupo at Mandalay Bay; Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill at MGM Grand; and Spago and Chinois at the Forums Shops at Caesars Palace.

Culinary Scene Attracts Groups

Las Vegas’ culinary scene is a key reason why New York City-based Advent Software, a provider of investment management services and software, decided to return in September after meeting elsewhere last year. The company held a 2½-day meeting at Wynn Las Vegas for 1,200 employees, clients and investment management professionals. “Last year we met at another property in another city, and I heard grumblings about the food not being that good,” says Holly Crisson, Advent’s events and conferences manager. “That’s why it was important for us to have a better experience for our people this year, and we definitely saw that at the Wynn. The food wasn’t just plentiful, but it was good quality.”

Advent enjoyed culinary options at a Wynn Las Vegas restaurant with views of the golf course. “We did a small invitation-only event at The



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Buyouts are available for up to 70 guests for the main dining room at Andre's Restaurant and Lounge at the Monte Carlo Las Vegas Resort and Casino.

Country Club restaurant for about 100 clients we wanted to recognize," says Crisson. "We chose the restaurant primarily for its wine selection. That was the big draw. They did wine-tasting with very high-end bottles of wine before dinner."

Advent plans to hold the same meeting at Wynn Las Vegas in 2015. It will be the meeting's fourth visit to Las Vegas since 2007. In the beginning, the company wasn't so sure about meeting in Las Vegas. "When we started looking at Vegas, there was some potential concern about going there," says Crisson. "But what we found was that we get more attendance — around 10 percent — and more engagement because folks don't have to leave the property. You can do everything in one hotel. It's so much easier than getting on a bus to go someplace. You naturally lose people when you do that."

Great Dine-around Options

Perhaps no other destination offers so many properties with so many self-contained dine-around options. "We do a lot of them," says Kindness. "We use big-name hotels and some lesser known ones as well. We collaborate with our clients up front about their objectives and then build options. There are so many options in Vegas that we really need to have a strategic conversation with clients. We go

by several things, including what type of food they want and whether they want to be on The Strip."

Earlier this year, Kindness planned a dine-around at the Wynn Las Vegas for about 250 bank executives and managers at four of the property's restaurants — Lakeside Seafood, Society Café Encore, Botero and Allegro.

Last year, Kindness planned a dine-around at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas for about 200 bank executives. "They have about eight fantastic and very diverse restaurants all on one floor," she says. "Proximity to each other is important as well as diversity. Our clients who stay at the Cosmopolitan or close to it find that a viable option for dine-arounds."

In addition to the dine-arounds, banking executives at the meeting earlier this year enjoyed several other only-in-Las Vegas experiences. "We used the Beer Garden area at Chateau Nightclub and Gardens at Harrah's," says Kindness. "It's across the street from Bellagio's fountains. So you get a great view. The theme was The Five Senses. When guests arrived, they were greeted by a woman dressed as Marie Antoinette serving champagne. We brought in hookahs, live animals and a band that played international music."

Kindness also planned an event at the Mob Museum. "We drew people into the history of that era," she

says. "A lot of people really got into it by dressing up in fedoras and boas and got into the history of Vegas through the interactive exhibits. We had music from the "rat pack" (singers Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin)."

New Restaurants

New restaurants open frequently in Las Vegas. Here are a few of the most recent openings.

The French restaurant db Brasserie opened at The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino. Chef Daniel Boulud offers a contemporary and international version of a French brasserie. The restaurant provides updated brasserie cuisine and Boulud's classic burgers served at his restaurants in New York City. Two private dining rooms are available for groups.

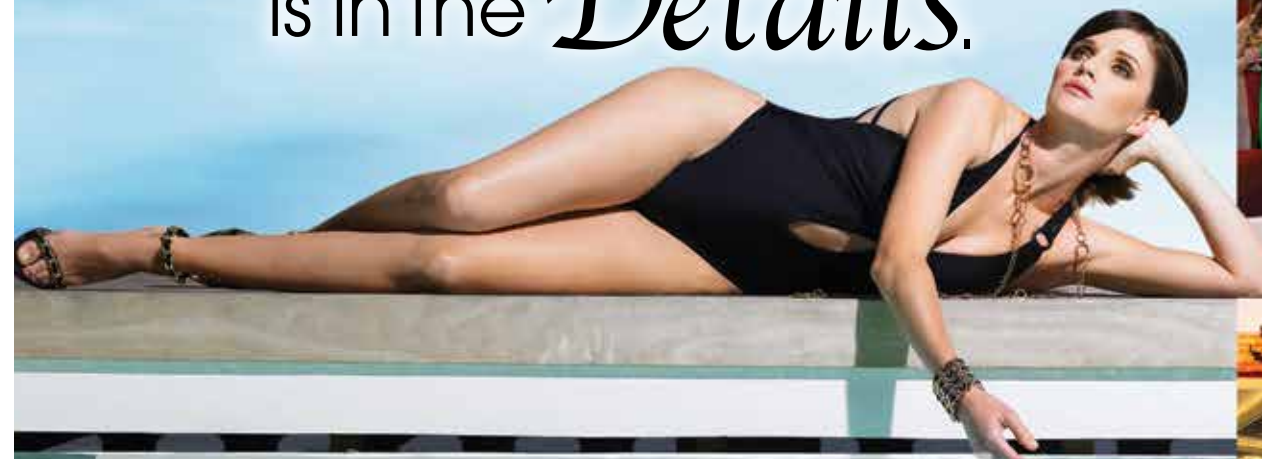
Giada opened on the second floor at The Cromwell Las Vegas, a new boutique hotel and casino. The restaurant includes a dining room, lounge and terrace that accommodates 300 guests. Giada, the first restaurant by chef Giada De Laurentiis, features views of the Bellagio fountains.

Della's Kitchen, a restaurant featuring regionally and locally grown ingredients, opened recently in the Delano Las Vegas, a new hotel on The Strip. The restaurant has its own greenhouse that grows herbs for the breakfast and lunch menu. Menu items include healthy and basic foods such as paninis, salads, and beef from grass-fed cows.

Set in Delano's lobby, Franklin offers a cocktail-centric drink menu with more than two dozen craft beers by the bottle and a selection of wines by the glass that are entirely exclusive to Franklin. Guests also enjoy a selection of small bites and appetizers. As day turns to night, Franklin features live entertainment throughout the week, including performances and beats from the hottest up-and-coming deejays.

Made.LV restaurant has opened at Tivoli Village shopping complex. The restaurant is operated by Elizabeth

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“Las Vegas dining has undergone a complete overhaul in the last 10 to 15 years. Most of the Las Vegas restaurants that are known around the world are found in the hotels and have famous chefs.”

Patty Kindness
National Sales Manager
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Las Vegas



Blau and Kim Canteenwalla who also own Honey Salt in Las Vegas. Made.LV is modeled after the modern American tavern.

This winter, James Beard award-winning chef Michael Mina will unveil Bardot Brasserie, a nod to Hemingway’s Paris, in the space of American Fish at Aria Resort & Casino.

Several celebrity chef-run restaurants have won prestigious awards. For example, AAA Five Diamond Award winners include Picasso and Le Cirque at Bellagio, Restaurant Guy Savoy at Caesars Palace and Jöel Robuchon at The Mansion at MGM Grand.

New and Noteworthy Venues and Hotels

The Monte Carlo and New York-New York revitalization will include The Park, which will offer an array of common spaces for socializing, relaxing, exploring and sampling the surrounding tastes, sights and sounds. Casual restaurants and bars with outdoor seating will include Shake Shack, a modern roadside burger stand; Bruxie, a fast-casual, gourmet waffle restaurant born out of Orange County serving a signature take on The Sandwich;

Sake Rok, a theatrical hotspot featuring sushi, Japanese cuisine and private sake label; Beer Garden, showcasing sustainably raised farm-to-table meats, craft beer, live music and social games; a Robert Mondavi Jr. Wine Experience, boasting more than 100 wines by the glass accompanied by gourmet cuisine; and Dierks Bentley’s Whiskey Row, a contemporary country bar and restaurant. The Park is anticipated to open in 2016 in conjunction with the arena.

A new venue recently opened at Caesars Entertainment’s The Linq. Titled F.A.M.E., which stands for Food Art Music Entertainment, the venue specializes in the street foods of Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, China and Vietnam along with live entertainment that includes lion and dragon dances, Taiko drum performances and Gangnam-style music.

Pure Nightclub at Caesars Palace



The Mob Museum courtroom accommodates 175 for a reception.

has been acquired by Hakkasan Group and is currently closed to undergo a complete remodel. The new nightspot is scheduled to open in early 2015.

The Mob Museum, the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement, recently added two new displays of rare gambling artifacts as part of a collaboration with the Museum of Gaming History. The first display features rare, early- to mid-20th century casino chips, pho-

tographs and other memorabilia from the 1946 opening of Bugsy Siegel’s Flamingo Hotel. The second display presents artifacts from legendary illegal gambling halls around the U.S. Located in downtown Las Vegas, The Mob Museum offers a variety of unique venues for private events.

Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton announced a March 1, 2015, completion date for the expansion of the Tropicana Pavilion. The expansion will increase the resort’s total meeting and convention facilities to 100,000 sf.

Caesars Entertainment announced that The Linq Hotel & Casino will welcome its first guests beginning on October 30, 2014. The Linq Hotel & Casino, combined with The Linq retail, dining and entertainment promenade, is located at the center of The Strip.

Delano Las Vegas opened in the Mandalay Bay complex, bringing the chic style of its iconic sister property in South Beach to the Las Vegas Strip.

Station Casinos is planning to invest \$20 million over the next year to create four new restaurant concepts at its Green Valley Ranch Resort in Henderson.

Westgate Resorts’ newest property, the former Las Vegas Hilton, will be renamed Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino. The landmark hotel is adjacent to the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The Best of Both Tables

How far has dining in Las Vegas evolved? The new exclusive chef’s table at Bellagio Buffet tells the tale: To create one-of-a-kind experiences, Bellagio executive chef Edmund Won, explains, “Buffets represent the ultimate indulgence, and the Chef’s Table is our way of offering the attentive service of a fine dining restaurant with the variety of offerings afforded at a buffet. Our goal is to engage guests with this blend of luxury, chef interaction and entertainment.” **I&FMM**

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The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs has named **Jeff Johnson** as vice president of marketing and sales. With more than 30 years of experience in hospitality brand management, marketing and sales, he most recently served as a chief strategist at HyperDisk Marketing, which creates marketing solutions for hospitality brands such as Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Hotels & Resorts and Trump International.

Hilton Anatole, Dallas, Texas, has named **Ruth Leis** as director of sales. She formerly served as executive director of sales at MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

Bhavna Venugopal was name director of corporate sales for The National Conference Center, Leesburg, Virginia. She most recently served as senior sales manager at the Omni Bedford Springs Resort and Spa in Pennsylvania.

Jamie Bruce was named vice president of sales and marketing at Trump National Doral Miami. He was senior vice president of sales and revenue management at Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas.

Wyndham Grand Jupiter Harbourside Place, Jupiter, Florida, has named **Elena Peroulakis** as director of sales

and marketing. She most recently was director of sales and marketing at Palm Beach Marriott Singer Island Beach Resort & Spa, Singer Island, Florida.

Hyatt Herald Square New York has named **Nina Jones** as director of sales and marketing. She was most recently assistant director of sales at the Park Central Hotel in New York City.

The Wigwam, Phoenix, Arizona, has named **Patrick Connors** as vice president of resort sales and marketing. He most recently served as director of sales and marketing at Riviera Palm Springs, California. **I&FMM**

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