

JUNE/JULY 2015

collaborate

CORPORATE MEETINGS INTELLIGENCE

TOP CITIES FOR
MEDICAL
MEETINGS
96

Go Local

"One's destination is never a place,
but a new way of seeing things."

-Henry Miller, American Writer



Attention, culture vultures. From Nevada to North Carolina, local businesses and hotels are creating new ways to express their states' authentic appeal through teambuilding, F&B, locally grown gifts and one-of-a-kind hometown experiences. Planners, here's to rediscovering a sense of place for your attendees.

By the Editors, with Erin Bernhardt and Kathryn Drury Wagner

Local Accents



HEIDI GELDHAUSER



“Ask not what your teammates can do for you. Ask what you can do for your teammates.”

—Magic Johnson, basketball icon

Clockwise from top left: Cowboy cookout after clay shooting at Barnsley Resort; the JW Kitchen Stadium for culinary competition; evening hikes at Enchantment Resort; heading out for a nature walk at Weekapaug Inn.



ARIZONA One of only eight places in the world labeled a dark sky community for its incredible stargazing, Enchantment Resort in Sedona wants guests to see its dark side. Adventurous groups can join a two-hour Full Moon Red Rocks Hike through illuminated canyons. Or plan an interactive stargazing session led twice weekly by a local expert at twilight.

GEORGIA Show incentive winners a bang-up time with a luxury trip to Barnsley Resort in the enchanting foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, about an hour north of Atlanta. The property is made up of alpine cottages in an outdoors-aficionado paradise. A Fortune 50 beverage company and others have used the sporting clay course as a team bonding experience. The resort provides group and individual instruction with a half round of sporting clays on shooting grounds carved out of the tree cover. Guests get instruction, and then hang out for an outdoor cookout and bonfire.

FLORIDA At South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island, the sand is used for more than laying out. For a beachside teambuilding experience, event coordinators can encourage communication in a South Seas regatta challenge. Crews compete to build and race miniature sailboats constructed from limited supplies. The resort also has ocean kayaking and a beach Olympics activity along two and a half miles of Captiva coast with staff referees who provide instruction, scorekeeping and an awards ceremony.

MICHIGAN Food Network's cooking competition show "Iron Chef" is now a hit culinary clash at JW Marriott Grand Rapids. The staff keeps the playful standoff a complete surprise for groups who assemble in a meeting room upon arrival. Once inside the JW Kitchen Stadium, cheering staffers greet participants and introduce their mentor chefs. Divided into competing teams, groups bond over going head-to-head in a two-course meal cook-off.

RHODE ISLAND Funny names are abundant around Weekapaug Inn on the banks of the Quonochontaug Pond in Westerly, but so is natural beauty. Naturalist and Director of Recreation Mark Bullinger grew up in the area, digging for clams, fishing local waters and working at the inn during the '70s. In 2012, he returned after a \$20 million renovation and now leads groups around salt ponds, marshes and the coastline for one-of-a-kind experiences like barrier beach walks, horseshoe crab-mating rituals, and, of course, brilliant storytelling. Consider hosting an off-site clambake on the property and hiring Bullinger to lead breakout groups into the wilderness.

VIRGINIA On the Chesapeake Bay, the appropriately titled Tides Inn has an unusual excursion on its activity lineup: Carters Creek treasure hunt. Participants staying at this Irvington, Virginia property are given clues and riddles to decipher and have to follow them to discover a treasure. Pirates and thieves have a storied history on the bay, and the activity plays it up.