

california

meetings + events

MEETINGSMAGS.COM // WINTER 2019

Best of 2019

24 categories including: BEST COASTAL RESORT, CRAFT BREWERY WITH MEETING SPACE, NEW VENUE, ATTRACTION/THEME PARK, MOUNTAIN RESORT, CONFERENCE/CONVENTION CENTER *and more!*



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BEST 
OF 2019

**The votes have been tallied and it's time for the reveal in
our third annual celebration of the Golden State's finest.**

Congratulations to all!

Your picks for the best venues, activities and attractions in California include some innovative newcomers along with stellar, repeat champions. Here's who you, our readers, say are the best of the best.

By Janet Fullwood and Shelley Levitt

**BEST DESTINATION MARKETING
ORGANIZATION/CVB (POPULATION
UNDER 500,000)**

Visit Napa Valley

visitnapavalley.com | 707.226.5813

It was a year of immense challenge in Napa Valley as the October 2017 wildfires that burned hundreds of thousands of acres in three counties precipitated a slump in leisure and business tourism. The fires did not deter new growth, however, and Visit Napa Valley has been proactive nationwide in spreading the word that vineyards and businesses on the valley floor experienced little or no impact. Five new hotels, seven new museum exhibits, a new film festival, a new winery, 12 new tasting rooms and four new restaurants have opened since the blazes. Visit Napa Valley stands poised to curate a full-sensory, tailored attendee experience in the legendary wine region.

Runners-up: Greater Palm Springs Oasis; Monterey County CVB

**BEST DESTINATION MARKETING
ORGANIZATION/CVB (POPULATION
OVER 500,000)**

**San Francisco
Travel Association**

sfttravel.com | 415.974.6900

San Francisco has been shattering tourism records year after year, with visitor volume hitting 25.5 million in 2017. Nevertheless, the San Francisco Travel convention sales team offers complimentary hotel and site selection for groups booking as few as 10 room nights, along with attendance-building tools, promotional materials and other services for groups of any size. A revamped Moscone Convention Center is boosting business even more, while four new hotels, all with rooftop venues, opened in the central city in 2018, adding to overall room count. Diversity is the name of the game in this city of distinct neighborhoods, and with beautiful scenery, out-of-the-box venues, and an unbeatable food

scene, San Francisco Travel is never short of suggestions to help attendees make the most of their visit.

Runners-up: San Diego Tourism Authority; Los Angeles Tourism & Visitors Bureau

**BEST CONFERENCE/CONVENTION
CENTER UNDER 100,000 SQUARE FEET**

Monterey Conference Center

montereyconferencecenter.com
800.742.8091

After a \$60 million renovation project, the sparkling Monterey Conference Center reopened in January 2018. With state-of-the-art technology and a location in downtown Monterey, the Center sits adjacent to the Monterey Marriott and the Portola Hotel & Spa to offer 41,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, 19,150 square feet of exhibition space, and 1,200 hotel rooms. As befits its location and commitment to sustainability, the Center works with Aqua Terra Culinary as its

Winners

caterer; the local company specializes in using responsibly sourced farm-to-table products.

Runners-up: Redding Civic Auditorium; Riverside Convention Center

BEST CONFERENCE/CONVENTION CENTER OVER 100,000 SQUARE FEET

Moscone Center

San Francisco | moscone.com
415.974.6900

Meeting planners danced around construction and restructured their gatherings for years while a \$551 million expansion of San Francisco's convention center, with attendant neighborhood improvements, was underway. The ribbon was cut on Jan. 3, bringing the city's vibrant convention scene back to full force. And no wonder planners love it: the expansion brings the center's total exhibit space to more than 504,000 square feet of continuous space, including 157,000 square feet of flexible meeting space in the Moscone North and South wings. A new ballroom, multiple terraces with skyline views, the ability to create up to 82 meeting rooms, and two pedestrian bridges are among the many other improvements. Plus, the entire center is LEED Platinum Certified. And the location couldn't be better, with 19,545 hotel rooms within eight blocks and more on the way.

Runners-up: Palm Springs Convention Center; San Diego Convention Center

BEST DOWNTOWN MEETING VENUE OUTSIDE CONFERENCE OR CONVENTION CENTER

Hilton San Diego Bayfront

hiltonsandiegobayfront.com | 619.564.3333

Landing the top spot in this category for the third year in a row, this 1,190-room AAA Four Diamond property has enduring appeal. For starters, a location that's ideal for meetings: adjacent to the San Diego Convention Center, on the waterfront, across the street from Petco



Moscone Center

Park, and within easy walking distance of the restaurants and shops of the Gaslamp Quarter. A standout among the 165,000 square feet of flexible meeting space is the 7,000-square-foot terrace—the largest in the city—that overlooks the San Diego Bay.

Runners-up: The Masonic; The California Science Center

BEST WINERY WITH MEETING SPACE

Castello di Amorosa

Calistoga | castellodiamorosa.com
707.967.7084

Castello di Amorosa is renowned for hosting some of Napa Valley's most impressive events in a distinct style that can only be offered in a 13th-century-style castle. Featuring 18,000

square feet of indoor event space and over 8,000 square feet of outdoor event space, venues at the Castello include outdoor terraces, wine caves, hidden rooms, an opulent dinner hall and an expansive courtyard. Small or big, they have a space that fits your need for wine-focused educational events. The hospitality staff are artful masters in setting the stage, providing creative ideas, and arranging every last detail. Wine education events include a tour of the property, a wine presentation, and a wine tasting. Guests will be led by a castle expert through the picturesque property while tasting the portfolio of wines before dining in one of the distinct spaces.

Runners-up: Callaway Vineyard & Winery; Folktale Winery & Vineyards