



EVENT MB

25
**Event Venues &
Destinations
TO WATCH IN 2019**



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INTRODUCTION

The role that venues and destinations are playing in event delivery is a crucial one. As event professionals strive to deliver experiences for events in 2019, destinations and venues are a key tool in achieving the key stakeholders' objectives.

At the peak of the global economy in 2018, those DMOs, CVBs, and venues that work in partnership with event professionals will have an edge in 2019. Many, many event planners are frustrated with a lack of collaboration, shared objectives, and proper support.

Events mean business and a single event moving out from a venue or a destination could mean a loss of millions when you consider the economic multiplier effect significant events bring.

At EventMB, we have been showcasing the most innovative trends for over 11 years. This is why we decided to showcase what we feel are the destinations and venues you should keep an eye on. If your practice permits, I strongly invite you to select them for your next event. Especially if your audience cares about the major trend identifying each finalist. If you cannot plan an event there, look for clues of the same excellence in your chosen destination or venue. These suppliers and communities are raising the bar for the rest of the industry.

SELECTION CRITERIA AND REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is based on judgment and analysis. We made multiple public calls and blasts to our databases to make sure as many destinations

and venues as possible submitted an entry for participation.

The entry was free. Each entrant filled in a detailed questionnaire.

The selection process was carried out by the EventMB team with the participation of Mike Ferreira, MHA, Owner and Founder of Meetings Made Easy.

While the selection process has been as impartial as possible, because the questionnaire was open to everyone, some of the finalists also happen to be past or current advertisers.

The clients that made it to the final list are:

- ▶ Indianapolis, IN, USA
- ▶ Québec City Convention Centre, Québec, Canada

If you are a venue or destination and would like to be considered for the report or similar opportunities next year, please complete the survey at: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/VenuesDestinations/>

STRUCTURE

The report showcases venues and destinations, grouped according to trends that we see happening in the events market. We tried to be as specific as possible with categories, to make sure you can comfortably compare and contrast different offerings shortlisted and see the opportunities. It would be unfair to compare a boutique hotel with a resort or a global destination with a second tier city.

DESTINATIONS

TREND:

Emerging

The top destinations in this trend are perhaps making it for the first time or gaining traction after flying under the radar of the international attention they deserve. In some cases there may be a troubled past, in some others events have pushed the community to regroup and redefine their core offering for group meetings.

All destinations have their primary markets but changes in accessibility and increasing knowledge of what the destination can offer can open up a destination to planners from new territories.

As the global trend pushes towards experiences over events and bleisure (business and leisure) over corporate, event planners are not blinkered to tier one destinations. There are benefits of looking elsewhere. It can mean better rates from venues and hotels, an intriguing new location for attendees, a different vibe to the event, quirky venues, rich group activities and less of a security concern than the usual suspects.

Podgorica

MONTENEGRO

www.podgorica.travel



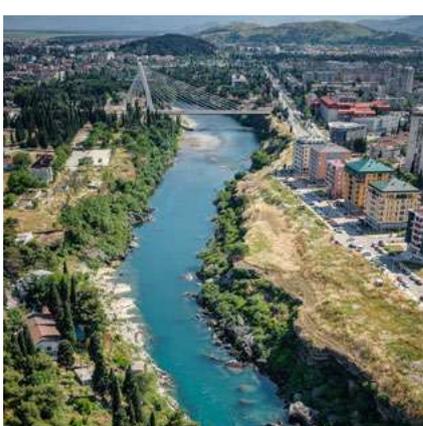
Montenegro is a fresh and undiscovered destination that shares the Mediterranean culture of neighbors Greece and Italy, at a fraction of the cost. Podgorica offers safety and security combined with a massive investment in hotel infrastructure. The wild beauty, nature, landscapes, sea, and mountains are all concentrated within a small country which makes it easy for groups to explore. From the coast up to the mountains is no longer than a 2-hour drive.

The climate allows all year long activities. Experience activities on the coast, sailing or dining in the open air, go rafting in Tara canyon, the deepest canyon in Europe, or hold an event in one of the last primeval forests in Europe, wine tasting and visiting the vineyards. Montenegro has 150 peaks over 2,000m and a very good winter season too, which means that January and February are great for organizing incentives in the ski resorts with lots of different activities, such as snowmobiles and ice bars.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Meetings
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	Under 500 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	April, May, June, September, and October
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	May, June
BEST RATES	January, February, March, April, November, December
LANGUAGES	Montenegrin is the language spoken in Montenegro but English is widely used, especially in the tourism industry
AIRPORT	The nearest airport is Podgorica, 15 minutes transfer time from city to the airport
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Prosciutto from Njeguši. The red wine "Plantaže", made from local Vranac grapes. A local dish is Carp from Skadar Lake with dry plums. Olives and olive oil from the 400,000 olive trees on the Montenegrin coast



Brussels

BELGIUM

visit.brussels/fr/lists/homepage-meetings

Brussels is not a new destination for meeting planning and is a popular choice for associations. After a tough couple of years, Brussels is gaining back the spot it deserves among the top first-tier destinations in Europe.

Brussels is the most European city you will find in the old continent. Well connected to the largest European capitals, it offers an incredible logistic advantage. Brussels is a “world city” where 180 different nationalities mingle, making it a cosmopolitan place with permanent links to the rest of the world.

Beer enthusiasts are well served in Brussels. Besides the Museum of Belgian Breweries on Grand-Place, why not visit the Cantillon family brewery, where you can find out exactly how they brew Brussels gueuze lambic? Alternatively, groups can make their own pralines in one of the traditional chocolatier kitchens. Instagram enthusiasts will need a snap of ‘Moules frites’ (mussels and chips) and ‘anguilles au vert’ (eel in green herb sauce), two Belgian dishes of international renown.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	1,000 - 5,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	Summer: July and August. Winter: December to February
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	The most in-demand months are March to June and September to November
BEST RATES	January, February, March, July, August, end of November, December
LANGUAGES	French, Dutch, English
AIRPORT	Brussels Airport is 16km away, 20-30 minutes by car, 20 minutes by train.
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Chocolate and beer are typical Brussels fare. The Maison des maîtres-chocolatiers belges turns chocolate making into an art. Try Moulin noir de Bruxelles (Brussels black pudding), Américain frites (rough mincemeat with eggs and spices) and Stoemp (mashed potato mixed with vegetables) with a good slice of bacon and Baucisse de campagne (country sausage)



NewcastleGateshead

TYNE & WEAR, UK

www.newcastlegateshead.com/meet

Newcastle upon Tyne (a city on the north bank of the River Tyne) and Gateshead (a town on the south bank) are united by seven bridges to form a single, diverse destination in the North East. NewcastleGateshead is a good value destination offering some of the best per person delegate costs, bedroom rates, and catering prices in the UK, as well as a warm Geordie welcome (people from Newcastle are called Geordie's). There are 7,500 city center bedrooms and 80 direct flights.

With over 2,000 years of history, more castles than any other region in England, and a strong cultural identity, there is plenty for groups to explore. It offers landmark venues, such as the Sage Gateshead, and cool and quirky venues, including Europe's largest treehouse. You can hire the quayside seaside, a mini beach in the city equipped with beach chairs, for private events or have BBQ on the BALTIC river terrace and have the Gateshead Millennium Bridge lit in your company colours.

There has been a boom in medical conferences being hosted and planned in NewcastleGateshead. Research strengths include medical sciences, sustainability, offshore and marine, tech and digital.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	Under 500 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	June
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	March to June and September to December are peak times for conferences
BEST RATES	January and July to August
LANGUAGES	English
AIRPORT	Newcastle International Airport is 15 minutes by car to the city center. Named the best value UK airport for European flights, flying to 80 destinations including daily flights from Dubai, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, and London
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Ham and Pease pudding stottie (made by soaking yellow split peas in ham stock. The stottie cake is a big dense bread disc with a dimple in the middle). Newcastle Brown Ale (an iconic alcoholic brown ale created in Newcastle). Craster Kippers (the best British kipper, a smoked herring). Northumberland Pan Haggerty (potato bake or casserole)



Hong Kong

HONG KONG

mehongkong.com/eng/why-hong-kong.html

Hong Kong is a gateway to mainland China and Asia, where East meets West. It offers visa-free travel for 170 nationalities. Ranked as one of the safest cities in the world, safety and security is a top priority within the city which is an appealing prospect to event planners.

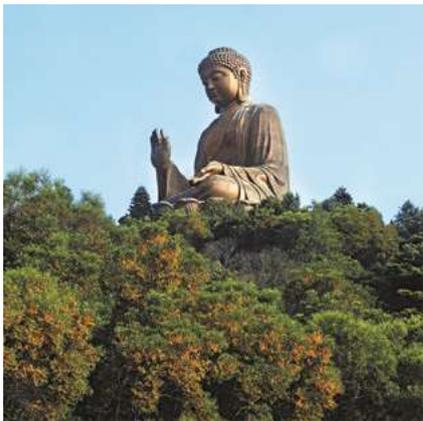
Hong Kong's transport system is one of the most advanced and well-connected in the world, and the international airport is consistently recognized for performance and efficiency. An enormous selection of venues and hotels can accommodate MICE events and there are over 78,000 hotel rooms on offer across the city. Primary venues include the AsiaWorld-Expo, the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and the newly developed Kai Tai Cruise Terminal.

Hong Kong may be Asia's business hub but it also enjoys international notoriety for its intriguing and exhilarating leisure offerings. With sights and sounds that reflect its Chinese heritage and modern mindset, Hong Kong gives the coveted 'wow' factor and leaves a lasting impression.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conventions
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	1,000 - 5,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	May to mid-September, and January to February
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	The peak time for events and conventions would be October to November and March to April
BEST RATES	The best rates can be obtained in January and February, and May to August
LANGUAGES	Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) and English
AIRPORT	Hong Kong International Airport is 38 km from downtown Hong Kong (20-25 minutes via the Airport Express)
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Dim Sum (snack-sized dishes, often steamed, with 2,000 options). Siu Mei (Chinese Barbecued Meats). Hong Kong style milk tea (black tea infused with evaporated or condensed milk). Top snacks include pineapple buns, egg tarts, egg puffs, wife cakes, stinky tofu, fish balls and sticky rice pudding



TREND:

Attention to Planner

Destinations can do a lot to help event professionals deliver memorable experiences but some really do go the extra mile. If you can find a partner that appreciates the business that meetings bring it gives some destinations the extra edge during the selection and event planning process.

Location, location, location may still be a strong deciding factor but experience, experience, experience is the new need many planners have. In order to deliver a flawless experience, planners recognize the need to rely on a DMO or CVB that supports activities such as site inspections, fosters connections to local intellectual capital, and offers special perks for attendees. The following is a list of destinations that go the extra mile for event professionals.

Washington, D.C.

STATE OF WASHINGTON, USA

washington.org/meetings

DC has established itself as a knowledge hub, especially for organizations within the technology, biotech/pharmaceutical, education and medical spaces. The definite consensus among event professionals is that the attention DC offers to support the smooth running of events is unparalleled. This is quite evident also from the DC website which offers a collection of the best deals for event planners from venues and local suppliers.

Washington, DC is a destination that offers access to 17 free to enter museums and a Michelin-starred restaurant scene (one of four cities in the U.S. with this award). Event planners can access a new hotel inventory, to match different budgets and travel discounts on United and American Airlines. Three airports service 69 million passengers each year and offer more than 1,000 daily international and domestic inbound flights.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conventions
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	5,000 plus attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	Summer is ideal as there is a lot of flexibility from the meeting professional standpoint. Congress is typically out of session meaning there is more flexibility with price points and availability
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	Spring and Fall are the busiest times for meetings and conventions in Washington, DC
BEST RATES	August offers the most flexibility for event planners.
LANGUAGES	Predominantly English
AIRPORT	Three local airports - Ronald Reagan National Airport (7 km), Washington Dulles International Airport (42 km) and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (48 km)
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Half-Smoke (a smoked, spicy hot dog). Mumbo Sauce (a sweet, tangy barbecue sauce). Gin Rickey (gin or bourbon, fresh lime juice, and carbonated water)



Indianapolis

IN, USA

www.visitindy.com/meet

Indianapolis lives through the motto of 'it can be done'. A strong community effort has put meetings and events at the center of the business growth of this city, practically built for events. Large conventions can count on the walkable facilities, incredibly connected convention center and a genuine need from the local DMO to genuinely support the planner, share their vision, and make it happen. Whether it is a food truck experience in the streets next to the convention center or a fully branded hotel building in the middle of downtown, you have the feeling that everything is possible in this city. Indy's reputation for exceptional service, friendly welcomes, attention to detail, and eager volunteers has earned a name – Hoosier Hospitality.

As Indianapolis becomes a growing tech hub for the Midwest, more event professionals should consider it for their next event. 12 hotels and 4,700 rooms are connected to the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium by enclosed walkways, more than any U.S. city. The Indianapolis Cultural Trail is an 8-mile greenway, ideal for pedestrians and bikes, which runs through the heart of the convention district. There are 300 restaurants and attractions in walking distance of hotels and the center.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conventions
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	1,000 - 5,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	Year-round, thanks to the network of climate-controlled skywalks connecting hotels to the convention center
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	All year
BEST RATES	Depends on the year and convention and event calendar.
LANGUAGES	English
AIRPORT	Indianapolis International Airport, 15 minutes from downtown
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Indy's signature foods are sugar cream pie, St. Elmo's shrimp cocktail, and pork tenderloin sandwiches, all of which can be incorporated into events



TREND:

Sustainability

Although many venues realize the importance of being sustainable, some destinations are adopting a whole city approach to help save the planet for greater combined results.

CSR is on the minds of corporations and event planners so this joined-up way of working will be appealing to reduce the environmental impact of your event. Attendees are also more attuned to eco-friendly tourism. Protection of areas of conservation, protected buildings and sites is vital so future generations can continue to enjoy them.

Some of the initiatives we are seeing from forward-thinking destinations include:

- ✓ Good public transport networks
- ✓ Safe walking and cycling routes
- ✓ Strong requirements for green building certifications - solar panels, energy efficiency, materials, green spaces, measures to minimize wastage
- ✓ Strong recycling offering
- ✓ Local produce and farm to table initiatives
- ✓ Conservation projects

Denmark

www.businesseventsdenmark.com

Denmark has made sustainability a way of being rather than a fashion. The numbers, initiatives, and commitment of the people of this country provide inspiration to step up the game worldwide for what sustainability means in modern destinations. If you take Copenhagen, 35% of the residents commute by bike, a great alternative for event transportation. Eco-friendly, yes, but also immersive and experiential.

Denmark is a clean-tech and renewable energy world leader. Denmark invented wind energy, and Scandinavia's largest convention center, the Bella Center has its own windmill. Copenhagen has one of the world's most ambitious climate policies with a goal of being the first carbon-neutral capital by 2025. 71% of the rooms available in Copenhagen are eco-certified. Some hotel chains donate to homeless shelters sheets, towels and furniture as they get replaced in their properties. During the UN Climate Change Conference COP15 held in Copenhagen in 2009, 75% of the food for the 30,000+ participants was organic.

Scandinavian Airlines offers the opportunity to offset carbon-dioxide emissions and makes it easier for organizers by offering a carbon offset program for International congresses and events.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Meetings
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	1,000 - 5,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	All year, minus summer
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	March to May and September to November
BEST RATES	January, February, and November
LANGUAGES	Danish and English
AIRPORT	Copenhagen Airport, 13 minutes from downtown
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Hotdogs (a Danish invention) and Carlsberg beer



TREND:

In Demand

Hip, trendy and popular destinations are winning the hearts of tourists, as well as business travelers and event planners. There is a common thread to the destinations in this category. Whenever you mention them to event professionals around the world, they feel immediately inclined to select them.

Generally, these destinations offer great value for money, accommodation options to suit all tastes and price ranges, and many budget airlines offer regular flights, which has benefits for those attending events in these locations.

Often they have a strong cultural element or identity which could be very different and appealing to the visitors from other countries.

Medellin

COLOMBIA

www.procolombia.co



Everybody wants Colombia. That's the consensus among third-party bookers and meeting planners. Medellín is right at the center of the repositioning of a country that has an incredible heritage to offer. The process of transformation this city has lived makes it one of the most in-demand destinations for 2019. An incredibly warm welcome awaits your attendees with a burst of culture, food and some of the best coffee in the world. In a world of 'been there, done that', Medellín offers an incredibly rich alternative to the usual destination selections.

Known as the city of eternal spring, it is the perfect climate to host events all year round. The city offers a perfect combination of nature and urbanism. Colombia is one of the biggest exporters of flowers in the world and the second most biodiverse. Medellín has 4,351 acres of nature where visitors can bird watch over 100 species without leaving the city.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conventions
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	500 - 1,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	April, May, September, October
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	August - November
BEST RATES	First half of the year has more availability and so the prices tend to be lower
LANGUAGES	Spanish
AIRPORT	There are 2 airports, The Olaya Herrera is located within the city and the Jose Maria Cordova International airport is 40 minutes by car/1 hour by bus
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Colombia is famed for its coffee. Dishes that you can't miss include Bandeja Paisa (red beans cooked with pork, rice, ground meat, fried egg, black pudding, avocado, and lemon). Empanadas (a baked or fried pastry). Tamales (masa or dough, which is steamed in a corn husk or banana leaf). Sancocho Antioqueño (soup)



Prague

CZECH REPUBLIC

www.pragueconvention.cz



Prague is at the heart of Europe, offering the best of the culture, architecture, and cuisine you would expect for an experience-filled event. Prague is not only rich in history but also offers modern and dynamic options for your group, from monumental historical palaces to comfortable contemporary venues. There is a strong investment in new venues, such as the Cubex Centre Prague, which offers funky lighting projections and technology.

Walking distance and connectivity, together with excellent value for money, make Prague a safe choice that will inevitably wow attendees. Traveling to Prague is extremely simple too with direct connections to 157 destinations and easy visa requirements.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	Under 500 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	Spring months (March to May) and Autumn, especially October
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	March, April, May and October
BEST RATES	The rates depend on individual providers and venues, the season has almost no impact on the rates
LANGUAGES	Czech. Many are fluent in English and other languages
AIRPORT	Václav Havel Airport Prague is 25 minutes/12 km to the city center
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Beef steak tartare (raw beef that is cut, scraped or minced). Kulajda (a creamy potato soup with mushrooms, dill, vinegar and a poached egg on top). Sviczkova (creamy vegetable sauce with carrots, celery and parsley roots, beef and bread dumplings)



TREND:

Experience Friendly

What if you could use your destination as a playground to deliver the most memorable experience to your attendees? There is only so much you can do with the usual city and the usual venue. If you truly want to wow your attendees, the destination has to be an integral part of your experience mix. There need to be elements built in that wow attendees with little effort. Some smart destinations are building these elements, some others have them by default, making the work of impressing attendees extremely easy.

Napoli

ITALY

www.cbnapoli.com

Authenticity and experience - Napoli is among the most ancient European cities, founded by Greeks 2,500 years ago. A UNESCO World Heritage site, its contemporary urban fabric preserves the elements of its long and eventful history that the Neapolitani carry on in their daily lives with their vivacity and creativity, tradition and food.

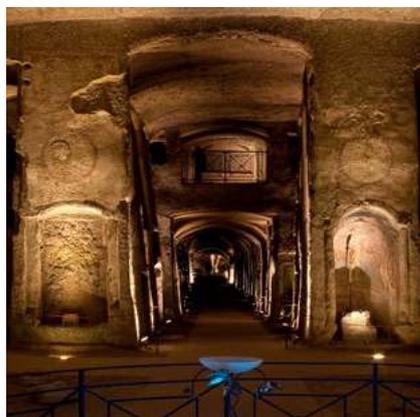
Napoli is really authentic and does not try to be everyone else. Just walking around Napoli is an experience in itself. With an infrastructure that is quickly developing and offering up standard services, the experience level your attendees will witness is unparalleled. Napoli combines the best pizza, coffee, Greek and Roman history, an active volcano, live mozzarella making, catacombs (underground tunnels) and music. What the rest of the world tries to recreate was probably born here and exported to the rest of the world and identified as 'Italian'. A safe choice for your event in 2019.

Situated in the South of Italy, Napoli can host conferences, conventions, and shows in three congress and exhibition centers and conference hotels with meeting rooms of different sizes. Napoli is the ideal destination for cooking classes, wine tasting, and team building.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	500 - 1,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	The mild Mediterranean weather means that Napoli can host events all year round
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	Autumn (October/November) and Spring (from April to June)
BEST RATES	Particularly in Winter (December to the end of March)
LANGUAGES	Italian, English
AIRPORT	International Airport of Napoli - Capodichino. Approximately 5 km from the city center, 15 minutes by car, 20 minutes by bus
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Pizza. Mozzarella di bufala. Local tomatoes. Espresso Coffee. Sfogliatella (pastry). Babà (pastry). Caprese (cake). Neapolitan pastiera (cake). Falanghina (white wine). Aglianico (red wine). Limoncello (lemon liquor). Traditional Neapolitan octopus stew



TREND:

Innovative

Audiences want things to work at their event. Sometimes a venue can make up for what a city lacks, but it's not enough anymore. Connectivity, infrastructure investment and a general feeling that logistics are not a problem are key requirements. 'Everything works' or it's 'top of the class' are concepts you can easily associate to the destinations in this category. But innovation is not limited only to infrastructure. There is an underlying commitment to deliver innovation through technology, business, and design. Many initiatives distinguish the destinations in this category and put them years ahead of their competition.

Reykjavik

ICELAND

www.meetinreykjavik.is

Few nations have evolved as fast as Iceland in the last 150 years. Moving from a community based on agriculture and fishing to a modern hi-tech society with a strong profile in fisheries in harmony with nature, tourism, renewable energy, innovative businesses, and culture. Reykjavik offers high tech infrastructure for the MICE market, with state-of-the-art software and technologically advanced conference halls, convention centers and meeting venues. Iceland is one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, and nearly every household has a computer and is online. The Icelandic government has even formulated its policy on the information society, living up to the slogan: Iceland, the e-nation.

Being midway between Europe and North America makes it convenient to meet in the middle and there are more direct flights to Reykjavik from North America than from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland combined. The landmark Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Center creates opportunities for large and complicated conventions and conferences with high-end facilities and is believed to be the most eco-friendly conference center in the world.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	Under 500 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	All year - all seasons are attractive for different reasons
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	Full year distribution
BEST RATES	February to April and November into mid December will offer a slight difference
LANGUAGES	Fluent English, good Scandinavian languages, sufficient skill in other major languages
AIRPORT	Keflavik International Airport is the largest, approximately 45 minutes drive out of Reykjavik
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Fresh fish. Rye bread baked underground in geothermal areas. Meat from free-roaming sheep. Icelandic yogurt (officially a cheese!)



Melbourne

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

www.melbournecb.com.au

Melbourne is Australia's knowledge capital and innovation hub and a major draw for many international associations. Events in the fields of medicine and science are particularly well-supported by 13 major independent research institutes, nine universities with expertise across health and life sciences, and 10 major teaching hospitals. Over the last five years, Melbourne has hosted 57 events in the medical sector bringing 98,000 delegates to the city.

Melbourne boasts the country's highest concentration of conference facilities located in the center of the city. The convention district offers more than 197,000 square meters of conference space and over 17,000 accommodation rooms, to suit different budgets. Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre is currently undergoing a major expansion that will make it the largest center in the Southern Hemisphere. A multi-purpose area with a retractable 1,000 seat theatre and additional adaptable meeting rooms are two of the flexible features of the new building. The Visualization Studio and award-winning WiFi connectivity are other reasons why forward-thinking event planners love Melbourne as a destination.



SUMMARY FACTS

PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conventions
MOST COMMON GROUP SIZE	1,000 - 5,000 attendees
BEST TIME TO PLAN AN EVENT	All year round
BUSIEST (PEAK) PERIODS	April through to September
BEST RATES	The low season runs from May to August and the best flight and accommodation deals can be obtained during this period (especially mid-week)
LANGUAGES	English
AIRPORT	Melbourne Airport is 25 km from the city center, a 25-minute drive
CULINARY SPECIALITIES	Barbequing meat is traditional in Australia. There are many restaurants which offer a modern twist to Australian "Bush Tucker"



VENUES

Halifax Convention Centre

NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

www.halifaxconventioncentre.com

HALIFAX CONVENTION CENTRE

A new, state-of-the-art facility with more than 120,000 square feet of flexible event space for conferences, exhibitions, dinners, and meetings. It has the ability to divide into two independent convention levels, allowing for privacy and optimal flow, even if multiple events are being hosted concurrently. There is a 30,000 square foot ballroom overlooking the city, 50,000 square feet of multi-purpose convention space, and 40,000 square feet of intimate meeting space across 38 meeting rooms.

The Halifax Convention Centre (HCC) is a certified LEED Gold facility and at the center of Argyle St. (Halifax's entertainment district) with the best dining, arts, and culture. HCC has a state-of-the-art data and voice network for shared and dedicated bandwidth connections, robust WiFi access for up to 10k devices, and custom networking solutions.



Halifax Convention Centre

NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

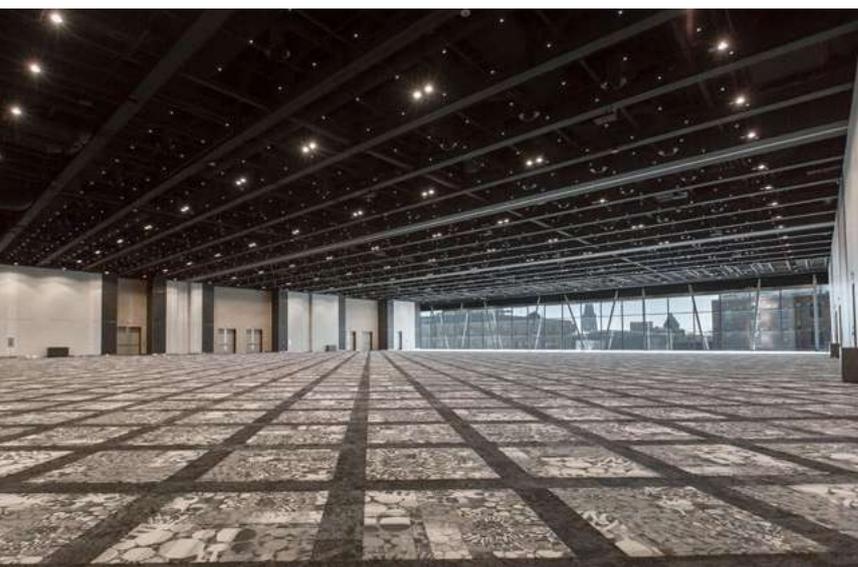
SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Independent event venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	Busiest event periods: September to November and April to June
BEST RATES	Best Rates: December to February
NUMBER OF ROOMS	25 plus rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms of all sizes, from small meeting rooms to multi purpose conference and exhibit space
AIRPORT	Halifax Stanfield International Airport - 32 km from Halifax Convention Centre, 28-minute drive to downtown
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 72-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not yet open

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TREND:

Experience First

As we've highlighted for destinations, there is no experience without a venue that helps deliver on the event objectives. Some venues are built to deliver on experiences; they inherently offer elements that will help to wow, inspire, educate or connect attendees. An event professional should feel free to let their imagination go wild and use venues as active engagement elements of their meeting design. The venues in this category are the most experience-friendly choices in 2019.

Catedral De Sal De Zipaquirá

CUNDINAMARCA, COLOMBIA

www.catedraldesal.gov.co



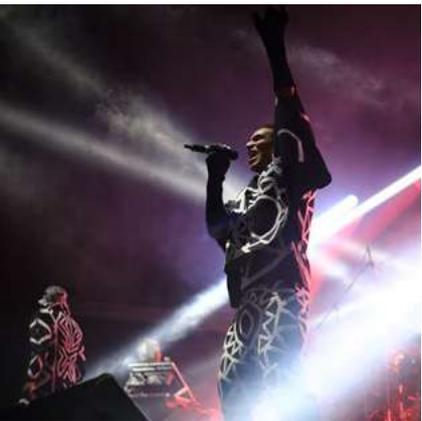
The Salt Cathedral and Salt Park is a unique walking experience into a salt mountain 180 meters underground, with salt deposits more than 60 million years old. The floors, walls, and ceilings are completely carved in salt, and there are conference rooms for 260 and 800 theater style and a VIP room for 14 people.

LED lighting above can recreate different images and events of Colombia, and artistic groups can descend from roofs over 18 meters high. This completely unique venue will certainly offer an experience your group will never forget.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Unusual venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Meetings
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	The first quarter of the year, November, and December
BEST RATES	Standard rates all year
NUMBER OF ROOMS	5-10 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for less than 50 people and up to 1,000 attendees
AIRPORT	Aeropuerto Internacional El Dorado, 52 Kms
RFP RESPONSE TIME	3 to 4 days
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



The Seed

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

www.theseed.com.tr



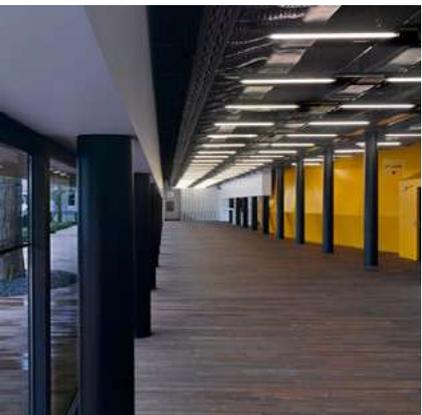
This creatively designed venue is on the banks of the Bosphorus and can host up to 140 people between six multifunctional event spaces, including a conference space, lounge, terrace, loft, bar, and gym. Each of the spaces can create a wow effect. The colors, style, and layout of the decor and furniture are adapted and designed specifically for each event.

All-inclusive packages include AV, decor, furniture, electricity and early/late get out. There is free WIFI (more than 3mb per person), and the flexibility to bring in your own catering. The corporate-friendly and flexible approach means that the event goals are always the primary focus. The venue adapts to the event needs, rather than adapting the project to the venue. This could explain why some of the largest global brands have already worked with The Seed.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Unusual venue/conference center
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Meetings
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	All year round
BEST RATES	Book a year in advance to achieve the best rates
NUMBER OF ROOMS	5-10 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms to accommodate up to 500 people
AIRPORT	Ataturk Airport 38 km, a 40-minute drive
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 48-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



Ksar Char Bagh

MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

www.ksarcharbagh.fr



KSAR
CHAR-BAGH
Guest Palace in Marrakech

Ksar Char-Bagh is a 10-acre palace in the heart of the palm groves of Marrakech, with 14th-century Moorish architecture, brass doors and high arches with mosaic carvings of Andalusia descent. There are only 15 suites, offering an intimate and personalized service and the opportunity for exclusive private hire.

Events can be held in different areas to make the most of the private courtyards, the fountains, the terrace, the Orangery Hall and Smoking Room. Guests can enjoy an authentic Moroccan evening in the rustic Berber farm, an elegant Dinner and party in the gardens, brunch around the pool with show cooking and a picnic in the olive groves. Each detail is designed to surprise and delight to create a truly memorable experience in an environment of refinement, splendor and understated elegance.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	5-star hotel
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Weddings
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	April, May, June, September, October, beginning of November
BEST RATES	July, August, November, December, January, February, March
NUMBER OF ROOMS	5-10 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Small rooms for less than 50 guests
AIRPORT	Marrakech Menara airport is a 30-minute drive away from the hotel
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Yes, 15 double suites of which 3 can be twins



TREND:

Sport Experience

Having access to a stadium when a match is not happening has an intrinsic experience factor. As a result, more and more stadia are stepping up their meeting offering with the ability to offer a blank canvas to event professionals. Stadia are visually stunning by default, they are social-media friendly and inspire fans and non-fans alike. You can breathe the engagement, the passion, the happiness and sadness of thousands of supporters attending games. Stadia often have state-of-the-art facilities where crowd control, accessibility, and security are built in to top standards. Sometimes the areas where events are held are the grandest VIP sections of the building, offering an exclusive opportunity to impress attendees.

Croke Park

DUBLIN, IRELAND

www.crokepark.ie/meetings-events



Croke Park is the home of Irish sport and culture with 110 unique event spaces and 5,000 sqm of flexible space. Comfortable hosting top sporting fixtures, concerts and corporate events, it is a high spec venue with HD WiFi for up to 40,000 devices and more natural daylight than you would expect. Located just 5 minutes from the city center, with 600 free car parking spaces, it is exceptionally well-located within a city famed for its 'craic' and warm welcome.

Croke Park offers unique attractions and healthy timeout options within the stadium itself, including abseiling, a rooftop tour, a team pep talk in the dressing room, and an access-all-areas stadium tour.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Sports stadia with meeting and event space
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	April and May, September to December
BEST RATES	July and August
NUMBER OF ROOMS	25 plus rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for up to 1,000 attendees, exhibition space, sporting and concert venue
AIRPORT	Dublin International Airport, 7km, 15 minutes
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Yes. 232 rooms including single, double, twin, triple/family rooms, suites. Interconnecting and fully accessible rooms available



TREND:

Conventions off the Beaten Track

Conventions are going everywhere. Gone are the days when one city in a country was the designated choice for conventions. Competition is heating up and the destinations in this section have become valid alternatives to the usual convention hubs. While some of the destinations in this category have been around for a while, the rapidly changing economic and infrastructural environment are making the selection choice easier than ever and more event professional find themselves going off the beaten track from the usual convention selections.

Québec City Convention Centre

QUÉBEC, CANADA

www.convention.qc.ca



The Québec City Convention Centre enjoys a strategic location in the heart of a unique city. Set on Parliament Hill, it is surrounded by excellent hotels and just steps away from Old Québec, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as attractions and restaurants.

As well as award-winning customer service, the food at the Québec City Convention Centre is also outstanding, and a far cry from typical convention fare. The kitchen team uses Québec's best local products and regional fare. In-house catering experts design distinctive menus for big groups and intimate events, adding creative flair to your event.



SUMMARY FACTS

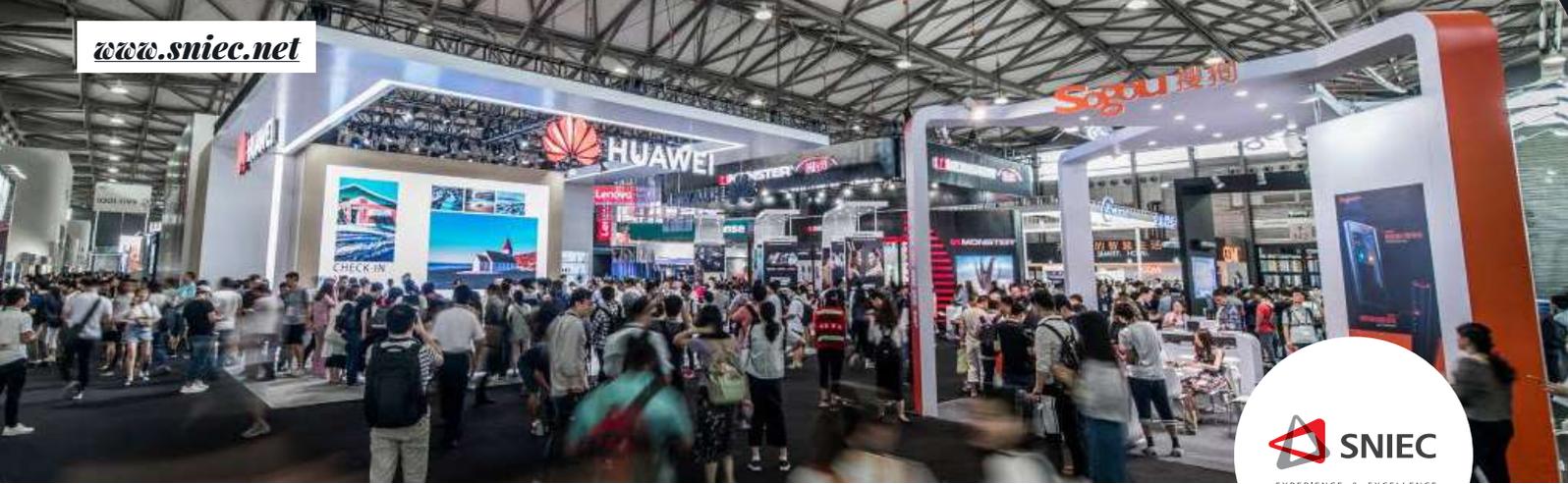
TYPE OF VENUE	Conference and exhibition venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	March to December
BEST RATES	Rates are the same all year long
NUMBER OF ROOMS	25 plus rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for up to 1,000 guests and exhibition space
AIRPORT	Québec City Jean Lesage International Airport, 17 km, 26 minutes
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 48-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



Shanghai New International Expo Centre

PUDONG, SHANGHAI, CHINA

www.sniec.net



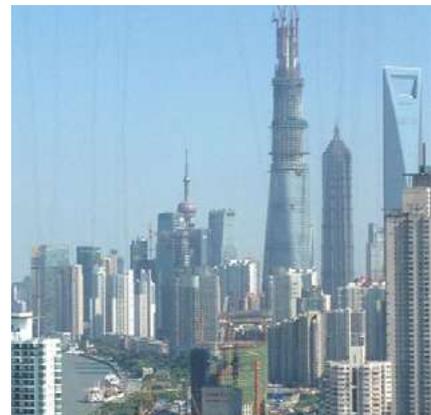
For many European and American event planners, China may be a new step. Shanghai is a metropolis with 25 million people and the commercial hub and gateway of Asia. This is the only Western owned and run exhibition center in China and is the leading international exhibition venue.

With over 2 million square feet over 17 column free buildings, 1 million square feet of outside space, and 3 entrance halls, almost 5 million visitors attend over 100 international trade shows annually. Offering 16 years of experience, the Expo Centre has one goal: to make your show even better and more successful than ever before.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Exhibition center
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Exhibitions
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	All year long, except Chinese New Year and Golden Week
BEST RATES	Same price all year
NUMBER OF ROOMS	25 plus rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Over 500,000 gross square feet of exhibit space
AIRPORT	Pugong International Airport is 10 minutes away if you take the Maglev Train to a taxi
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within a week
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



Aotea Centre

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

www.aucklandconventions.co.nz/venues/aotea-centre



The Aotea Centre is in the middle of a makeover, both inside and out, to create impressive, high-end event environments, for completion by March 2019. The exterior will show-off distinctive design features and environmentally friendly upgrades. This includes a lush green roof with natural vegetation which will provide an additional external area for delegate breaks and entertainment.

Internally, all of the convention spaces are being refreshed and will feature new foyer zones to enhance the overall exhibition space. This complements the recent 2,000 seat auditorium refurbishment. The addition of the new creative space, the Aotea Studios, will include state-of-the-art convention spaces and F&B outlets.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Unusual venue - a performing cultural art venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	August to November
BEST RATES	January & April
NUMBER OF ROOMS	5-10 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms to accommodate over 1,000 attendees and exhibition space
AIRPORT	Auckland airport, 25km, a 23-minute drive
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



TREND:

Bleisure Friendly

According to the Expedia Group, over ***60% of business travelers extend their trip for leisure purposes***. This statistic has determined the rise of the bleisure trend, the mixture of business and leisure.

Executives and business people who travel extensively are adopting the approach that flying in and flying out does not leave them at their best. They are shunning the “all work and no play” mentality of the ‘90s and early 2000s. Instead, they are choosing to build in a few extra days and possibly bring a travel companion along too. Adding a component of adventure, sport, food, to events is on the rise. Some venues are just built for that. You don’t have to allocate extra budget, becoming an easy bleisure friendly choice.

Royal Hideaway Playacar

RIVIERA MAYA, PLAYA DEL CARMEN, MEXICO

www.barcelo.com/en-us/royal-hideaway/hotels/mexico/riviera-maya/royal-hideaway-playacar



This 5-star, all-inclusive resort, is for adults only (18+) and part of the Barcelo hotel group. There are three main meeting spaces for up to 250 people, with state-of-the-art audio visual equipment. It offers a wide, idyllic white-sand beach (one of the largest at Riviera Maya), six pools, a spa and fitness center, gourmet food from six à la carte restaurants and 24-hour room service. It is located only 20 minutes walk from 5th avenue, Playa del Carmen downtown, and pier to Cozumel, making it a great choice for events and easy for attendees to extend their stay to soak up the local sights. Adventure, water activities and scuba diving are also available for thrill seekers.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	5-star hotel
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Weddings
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	February to May, November and December
BEST RATES	Early booking secures the best rates
NUMBER OF ROOMS	5-10 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for 250-500 attendees
AIRPORT	Distance from Cancun International Airport to the hotel is 59 km, approximately 1-hour
RFP RESPONSE TIME	RFP response time: Within 48-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Accommodation availability on site: Yes. 201 rooms in total, including a number of suites.



TREND:

Corporate Friendly

Corporate event planners have high standards and expectations and they need a venue partner to tick many boxes, from accessibility, connectivity, technology and design/style, to innovation. Small, corporate meetings represent the fastest growing and opportunity rich component of the industry. When planning corporate events, 65% of event professionals care most about the choice of venue. The venues in this category are extremely well-connected and offer flexibility in their spaces or a more intimate to make that high-touch C-level meeting easier and involve attendees with a more immersive experience that does not disrupt but helps deliver on the objectives.

QEII Conference Centre

LONDON, UK

qeiicentre.london



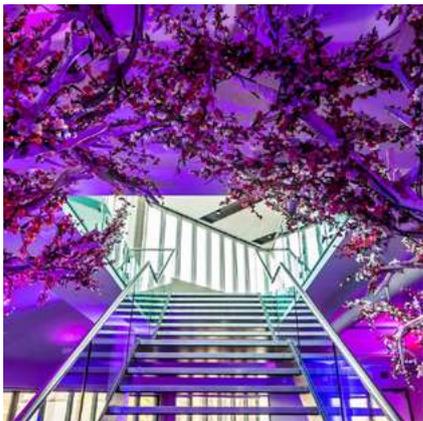
If you are looking for good meeting capacity in central London with unrivaled transport links and top AV capabilities, the QEII Conference Centre always delivers. Whether you need exclusive hire for 2,500 attendees or privacy for a small board meeting, there are 32 flexible conference, meeting and event spaces across seven floors. Surrounded by iconic London landmarks and attractions such as Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, and the London Eye, the venue is perfectly placed for attendees to experience London.

Recent investments by the award-winning in-house AV team include laser projectors, 4K switchers and a fiber infrastructure across the whole center. The venue is fully-equipped to provide security for high-profile events too. In the entrances, security provision can range from hand-held wands to full archways and x-ray scanners.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Conference Center
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	June and November are usually the most in-demand times of the year but all year round is busy
BEST RATES	There is no peak and off-peak times but the sales team will always try and work within event budgets.
NUMBER OF ROOMS	25 plus rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms of various sizes up to 1,000+ delegates
AIRPORT	Heathrow - 47 minutes, Gatwick - 44 minutes, London City - 26 minutes, Stansted - 1hr 5 minutes, Luton - 47 minutes
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



Meet in SoHo

NEW YORK, USA

welcometomeet.com/meet-in-soho

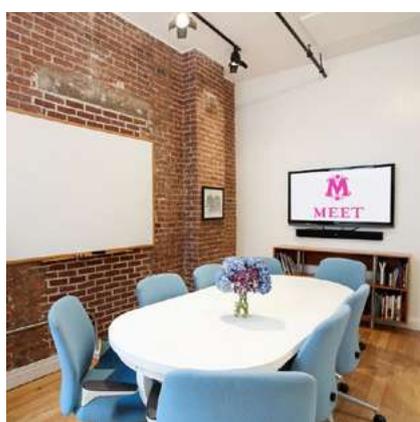


Meet has one focus: to produce full-service, successful meetings in unique and inspiring spaces. Meet believes that the design and feeling of a space contributes to attitude, creativity, and energy levels. The venue is customized for each meeting - matching brand, objectives, and agenda to the space - whether the gathering is for strategy and brainstorming sessions, a focus group, product launch, or pitch meeting. The environment is engineered with evocative design, for creative thoughts to flourish.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Conference and meeting venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Meetings
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	Late spring and late summer
BEST RATES	Different promotions each season
NUMBER OF ROOMS	Less than 5 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for up to 250 attendees
AIRPORT	EWR - 14 miles, 40 min, JFK - 29 miles, 50 min, LGA - 9.6 miles, 35 min
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



10 Watt Venue

MILAN, ITALY

eng.10wattlocation.com



10 Watt is a spectacular space, a factory conversion with high ceilings, beautiful flooring and wonderful textures throughout. The perfect urban location for meetings and seminars, product launches, exhibitions, fashion shows, and anything that requires a large creative backdrop. This design-led venue offers unique and exclusive architecture, Italian style, decoration, and furniture. There are six adjoining open space lofts and hidden rooms, with professional AV and connectivity is available in every room.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Unusual venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Meetings
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	All year except August
BEST RATES	Best Rates: Anytime. Special discounts for planners and DMC
NUMBER OF ROOMS	5-10 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for up to 250 people
AIRPORT	Linate Airport - 11KM, 20 minutes by car/30 minutes by public transport
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



TREND:

Theaters

More and more theaters are stepping outside of the performing arts realm and entering the meeting and events sector. Theaters offer a truly in-the-moment experience for attendees. In an increasingly distracted world, keeping attendees' attention and focus is no easy task. Theaters keep attendees concentrating. They help with 'being present', offering a combination of visual and auditory cues that focus on the content being presented, without external distractions. If the objective of your meeting is to reclaim the attention of your participants and to invest in a content-led event, these theaters are a safe choice.

Maison de la Mutualité

PARIS, FRANCE

www.maisondelamutualite.com

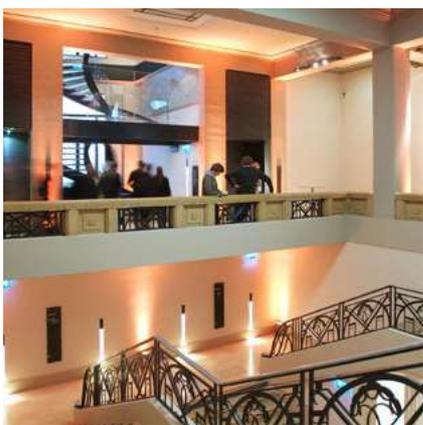
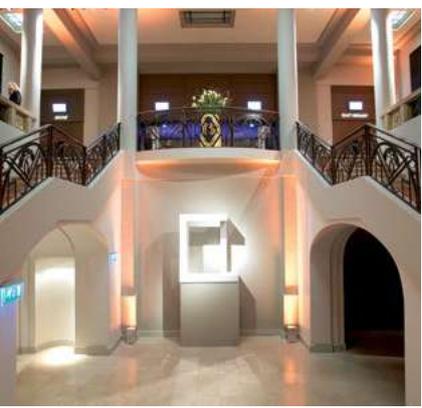


The Maison de la Mutualité is located in the heart of the Latin Quarter between the Pantheon and Notre Dame. This historic monument has a long tradition of hosting congresses, concerts, seminars, and meetings and has been modernized during three years of refurbishment. The auditorium has perfect acoustics and state-of-the-art AV. It can seat 1,728 theater style or the seats on the ground floor can slide partially or wholly under the stage to adapt the layout and capacity of the room



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Conference center
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	September/October/November, May/April/June
BEST RATES	July and late August
NUMBER OF ROOMS	10-15 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms that can accommodate over 1,000 guests
AIRPORT	Paris-Orly Airport and Charles de Gaulles Airport are 45 minutes by car or approximately 60 minutes by public transport
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 48-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



Smock Alley Theatre

DUBLIN, IRELAND

smockalley.com

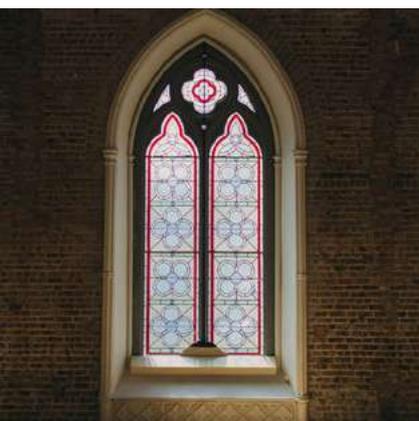


Smock Alley is a renovated 17th-century theater with ornate and unconventional features. The site comprises three spaces, perfect for lectures and presentations. The Banquet Hall is beautiful and impressive with an ornate plasterwork ceiling, plastered walls and stained glass windows from the theater's time as a church. There are wooden floors and oak tables and benches. The Boys' School high and ancient church wall creates a dramatic backdrop for the stage area. A spiral ramp hugs the wall around the theater, allowing for innovative use of the vertical space and interesting vantage points. The newly constructed Main Space is built on the foundations of the Smock Alley Theatre of 1662, with the original walls of that famous first Dublin theater. Newly constructed are 178 seats, dressing rooms, and green room facilities.



SUMMARY FACTS

TYPE OF VENUE	Unusual venue
PRIMARY EVENT FUNCTION	Conferences
BUSIEST EVENT PERIODS	All year
BEST RATES	Flat rate all year round
NUMBER OF ROOMS	Less than 5 rooms/spaces
ROOMS AND SPACES	Rooms for up to 250 delegates
AIRPORT	Dublin Airport, 12 km - 25 minutes by car/40 minutes by bus
RFP RESPONSE TIME	Within 24-hours
ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY ON SITE	Not available



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Julius Solaris is the editor of *Event Manager Blog*. Started in 2007, EventMB is the number one blog worldwide for event professionals. He is the founder of the *Event Innovation Lab*, an immersive training program for Fortune 500 companies and high-growth event teams.

He has been named one of the 25 most influential individuals in the Meeting Industry.

He is the author of over 10 books on event technology and innovation (The Eventtech Bible, The Good Event Management Software Guide, The Event App Bible, Meeting Design, The Future of Event Marketing, The Art of Venue Negotiation, the annual Event Trends Report, Social Media for Events, Engaging Events and The Venue of the Future).



BECKI CROSS

Becki Cross set up UK based event management company and SME, Events Northern Ltd, in 2004. Becki has organized events ranging from conferences to exhibitions, festivals to awards ceremonies, fashion shows to golf tournaments and everything in between. Organizing conferences and corporate events are Becki's passion and she believes that conferences should never be boring!

Becki is the Deputy Editor of EventMB, which she describes as her dream job alongside event planning! Follow Becki on Twitter: [@beckitrain](https://twitter.com/beckitrain).

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Mike Ferreira has over 17 years of experience in the Hotel/Meeting Industry. He is the Owner & Founder of Meetings Made Easy a modern day hotel site selection company based out of Las Vegas, NV. He has personally negotiated/contracted 43+ million dollars in convention revenue all over the globe. He holds a Master Degree from UNLV with a concentration in Business/Hotel/Conference Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree from Cal Poly in Hotel Management.

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DISCLAIMER

This report is based on a research carried out between May and July 2018.

While this report has been sponsored by Halifax Convention Centre, the analysis is completely unbiased.

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