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SPOTLIGHT

The first public art museum in the Western United States, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento finished an expansion project in 2010 and is now able to host events for up to 1,200.



GOLDEN CALIFORNIA

AGLOW WITH SUCCESS

By Linda Hayes

Abundant valley sunshine and fresh ocean breezes instill a sense of well-being for groups that meet in Central California. Swirling wine in a glass while looking out at the land where the grapes were grown can serve as an apt metaphor for planting the seeds of productivity.

In this part of the state, inspiration can be drawn from all kinds of experiences and scenery, whether it's the Pacific Ocean, fertile valleys or redwood-covered mountains. No wonder, then, so many stories of success start here.

**SACRAMENTO & SURROUNDS:
LANDS OF PROMISE**

"California Begins Here" is the tagline of the capital city of **Sacramento**, and that holds true on many fronts, including for the meetings trade, as many associations gather here to focus on core issues.

Ready to host groups with a mix of sophisticated convention facilities, unique special-event venues, a vibrant downtown, approximately 10,000 regional hotel rooms and an international airport, the city's appeal offers promise for planners and attendees alike.

Near the Capitol is the Sacramento Convention Center, which provides 134,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 24,000-square-foot ballroom and 31 meeting rooms. It hosts numerous association functions each year including, more recently, the Service Employees International Union's United Healthcare Workers West and the Religious Conference Management Association.

Just north of downtown, across the American River, is the 350-acre Cal Expo. Down the street, the Red Lion Hotel Woodlake Convention Center Sacramento is set on 18 acres and offers 50,000 square feet of conference facilities for up to 2,000 attendees. And just up Interstate is the 17,317-seat Sleep Train Arena.

In **West Sacramento**, the 15,000-seat Raley Field offers a variety of event suites and recently added a new 5,000-square-foot club area.

Southeast of Sacramento, **Jackson** entertains visitors with distinctly local attractions such as gold-mine tours and walking tours of the historic downtown. Groups can convene at the Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort, which offers flexible meeting space for up to 745.

Northeast of Sacramento, in **Roseville**, larger meeting venues include the

More than 60 million people have ridden the classic Giant Dipper roller coaster in Santa Cruz since it opened in 1924.

Maidu Community Center, Eagles Hall and the downtown Vernon Street Town Square, which now has free Wi-Fi and a shaded stage. In nearby **Rocklin**, event spaces include Rocklin Event Center, the historic Finnish Temperance Hall and the Rocklin Community Center. Another 10 miles north, in **Lincoln**, the Catta Verdera Country Club can host up to 220 or private golf tournaments for up to 144.

**DAVIS & SANTA CRUZ:
TIME FOR RECREATION**

Groups can focus on re-creation and recreation in these two active university towns. In **Davis**, 15 miles west of Sacramento, bicycles are popular forms of exercise and transportation (pedicabs also abound and the city is extremely walkable as well), while agendas fill up quickly with everything from cultural activities to tours of nearby wineries.

On the University of California / Davis campus, venues include the platinum LEED-certified UC Davis Conference Center, which offers 5,400 square feet of meeting space and a catering kitchen, and the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, with a 1,800-seat hall and a 250-seat theater. Other local venues include the Wildhorse Golf Club, with clubhouse space for up to 150, and City Hall, with seating for up to 103.

Two hours south of Davis, picturesque **Santa Cruz** is set between the verdant Santa Cruz Mountains and peaceful Monterey Bay. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has been drawing visitors for more than a century with rides and entertainment. Adjacent is Coconut Grove, a historic landmark overlooking Monterey Bay that has 20,000 square feet of space. Another attraction is the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, which can host special events of up to 335 in rooms with ocean views. More recently, a preponderance of small-batch breweries lead the creation of a unique activity:



VENUE	GUEST ROOMS	FUNCTION SPACE
SACRAMENTO AREA		
DoubleTree Hotel	448	33,800
Hyatt Regency of Capitol Park	503	28,000
Red Lion Hotel Woodlake	306	28,000
Lions Gate Hotel & Cottages	128	25,000
Sheraton Grand Sacramento	503	23,000
Hilton/Sacramento-Arden West	331	18,850
Clarion Sacramento Inn	331	18,800
Crowne Plaza	230	15,000
Sacramento Marriott	262	14,000
Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza	365	13,000
The Citizen Hotel	168	11,000
Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort	85	9,000
Embassy Suites Hotel	242	8,000
Washin/Sacramento	100	7,000
Courtyard by Marriott/Cal Expo	152	5,300
TownePlace Suites by Marriott	110	5,300
Fairfield Inn by Marriott/Cal Expo	74	5,300
DAVIS & YOLO COUNTY		
Days Inn	80	11,885
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY		
Seascapes Beach Resort	285	17,000
Chaminade Resort & Spa	152	15,800
Hotel Paradiso	170	8,000
Hilton/Santa Cruz-Scotts Valley	174	7,864
Kennedy Hilltop Hacienda	30	7,430
Pajaro Dunes Resort	122	6,500
Santa Cruz Dream Inn	165	3,505
Best Western Seaside Inn	149	3,136
MONTEREY		
Portola Plaza Hotel & Spa	379	50,000
Monterey Marriott	341	50,000
Hyatt Regency Monterey Resort	575	43,000
Astorian Conference Grounds	313	31,000
Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa	260	16,000
Embassy Suites Hotel	225	13,000
InterContinental The Clement	208	10,200
Beach Resort Monterey	196	9,000
Hilton Garden Inn/Monterey	204	6,001
Casa Munras Garden Hotel	171	3,500
PEBBLE BEACH		
Inn at Spanish Bay	269	14,000
Lodge at Pebble Beach	161	10,000
CARMEL		
Carmel Valley Ranch	139	10,000
Bernardus Lodge	57	5,154

FUNCTION SPACE IS SHOWN IN SQUARE FEET
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Located in Monterey County off scenic Highway 1, Big Sur's Esalen Institute can host groups of up to 150 people.

VENUE	QUEST ROOMS	FUNCTION SPACE
CARMEL		
Holman Ranch	10	4,800
Carmel Mission Inn	165	4,500
SAN LUIS OBISPO		
Madonna Inn	110	20,000
Embassy Suites	186	12,000
BIG SUR		
Ventana Inn	10	8,745
Esalen Institute	91	6,000
PISMO BEACH		
CW's Resort at Shell Beach	165	10,000
MORRO BAY		
Inn at Morro Bay	98	10,000
PASO ROBLES		
Paso Robles Inn	88	8,000
CAMBRIA		
Cambria Pines Lodge	125	9,178
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY		
Fess Parker's Double Tree Resort	360	45,000
Bacara Resort & Spa	360	25,500
Four Seasons Resort Biltmore	207	15,000
Santa Ynez Valley Marriott	149	12,000
Hyatt/Santa Barbara	171	10,000
Historic Santa Maria Inn	166	10,000
El Encino	70	9,820
Radisson Hotel/Santa Maria	184	9,000
Canary Hotel	97	7,374
Pee Soup Anderson's Inn	97	6,816
El Capitani Canyon	114	5,700
Alisal Guest Ranch & Golf Resort	73	5,500
The Goodland	160	4,500
Days Inn at the Windmill	108	3,834
Hotel Corque	134	3,825
Best Western PLUS Pepper Tree Inn	150	3,358
Courtyard by Marriott/Goleta	104	1,500
VENTURA COUNTY		
Ojai Valley Inn & Spa	308	35,000
Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach	258	19,000
Ventura Beach Marriott	285	16,276
Four Points by Sheraton/Harbor	106	12,000
Wyndham Garden Ventura Pierpoint Inn	77	10,000
OXNARD		
Embassy Suites/Mandalay Beach	248	16,000
Residence Inn by Marriott	252	12,646
Courtyard by Marriott	167	10,432
Ramada	95	8,160

FUNCTION SPACE IS SHOWN IN SQUARE FEET

Brew Cruz, which tours groups of up to 15 to area breweries inside a vintage 1989 Thomas International school bus.

Key event sites include the University of California/Santa Cruz campus and the downtown Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium. At Pasatiempo Golf Course, Hollins House overlooks the city and the bay and welcomes groups of up to 250 or can be set up for banquets of up to 100.

On the accommodations front, Hotel Paradox recently enhanced its meeting spaces with updated outdoor staging and sound capabilities. And at the Chaminade Resort & Spa, which has an IACC-approved conference center, guest room renovations are expected to begin in November. In Aptos, the Seascape Beach Resort has refurbished its lobby, several of its 15 conference and banquet rooms and the Sanderlings Restaurant.

A few miles north of Santa Cruz, in the mountain town of Felton, groups can meet at Roaring Camp, which has indoor and outdoor event space. In addition, attendees can enjoy train excursions, hikes through the redwoods and gold panning. Another place for team-building is Mount Hermon Redwood Canopy Tours, which offers zip line adventures.

Down the coast, in Watsonville, is the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, which offers more than 33,500 square feet of function space. Farther inland, Gilroy is known for the annual summertime Gilroy Garlic Festival, held at the 51-acre Christmas Hill Park. The Gilroy Welcome Center also recently launched a new website—visitgilroy.com—with interactive information about local events and attractions.

THE MONTEREY PENINSULA: ON THE BRINK OF BIG THINGS

Dramatic seascapes and towering redwoods are just some of the iconic images evoked with the mention of Big Sur. And Carmel is known for its art gal-

eries, restaurants and shops, not to mention modern meeting facilities that will keep attendees from feeling cooped up. Together, the two just touch on everything coastal Monterey County has to offer for associations venturing its way.

Recently, the county was chosen to highlight its cities through the Google Maps Street View feature, so planners will now be able to view 360-degree panoramas of Monterey, Big Sur, Moss Landing, Salinas and Pacific Grove.

Aside from its gorgeous scenery, Monterey is home to several attractions with meeting rooms, including the Monterey Bay Aquarium and A Taste of Monterey. Located near Fisherman's Wharf, where seafood-centric restaurants and whale-watching excursions abound, the Monterey Conference Center is scheduled to undergo a \$45 million renovation that will include both physical and technological improvements. Construction is scheduled to begin in late November, with an expected reopening of the first floor in summer 2016 and a grand reopening of the entire renovated facility in early 2017. In partnership with adjacent hotels, including the Portola Hotel & Spa, which recently expanded its event technology, the center currently provides 61,000 square feet of flexible meeting space for up to 1,700.

Also nearby is the Golden State Theatre, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and the Naval Postgraduate School. Near campus is the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel & Spa, which recently renovated its 43,000 square feet of meeting space and installed the latest in technology.

On the tip of the Monterey Peninsula, Pacific Grove features attractions ranging from the historic Point Pinos Lighthouse to the Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail. For events, the 107-acre Asilomar Conference Grounds offers high-tech capabilities, exhibit space and up to 30,000 square feet of meeting space.

In Pebble Beach, world-class golf resorts meet eye-popping coastal backdrops. The three Pebble Beach Resorts—