

Give Your Meeting an Upgrade

Luxury Properties Aren't Just for Incentive Programs — They Reward Meeting-Goers, too

While a natural choice for incentive programs, luxury properties have a broader appeal in the meeting planning world. A four- or five-star lodging

choice can be appropriate for a board of directors meeting or other high-end gathering involving the C-suite. On the client-facing side, it can be the kind of setting that impresses customers (or potential customers) and conveys the quality of the host company's brand. And the reward aspect of a luxury property need not be restricted to incentive programs: Splendid surroundings and amenities effectively reward a company's associates at the annual meeting, for example.

Meeting on the Lake

With that perspective in mind, Lowe Boats has partnered with the Chateau on the Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center in Branson, Missouri, for the last

three installments of its Annual Boat Dealer Meeting. Approximately 300 of the Lebanon, Missouri-based company's dealers attended, and "the end to make it a true vacation."

By Patrick Simms
Chateau on the Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center, located in the picturesque Ozark Mountains, certainly has luxury credentials, having received the AAA Four Diamond Award for 18 consecutive years. Offering 301 newly

refurbished guest rooms and 43,500 sq ft of meeting space, the resort has been a nice fit for the Lowe Boats group, while its full-service marina on Table Rock Lake accommodates the boats. "The convenience of the marina to the beautiful accommodations at the Chateau make it a perfect location," Ramsey says. "We put 20 new boat models at the marina for the dealers to try out. With our show

and boats on the water, lots of dealers take advantage of that time to try and run as many of the new models that they can. Other dealers enjoy the pool and The Library when not in a training session or meeting."

Yet another context in which a luxury property can be ideal is the celebration of a company milestone. Last year was Lowe Boats' 45th anniversary, and a property like the Chateau was ideal for the momentous occasion — not only in terms of amenities, but also service.

"We wanted to have a huge cake with our 45th anniversary logo on display to celebrate," Ramsey relates. "Every bakery had limitations on their oven space. The staff at Chateau found someone who would build this huge display cake out of Styrofoam, and complete it with icing and our logo. Everyone commented how great the cake looked. Then they rolled it in the back while the wait staff

served cake from sheet cakes to our guests. Everyone assumed they were eating the cake that was on display."

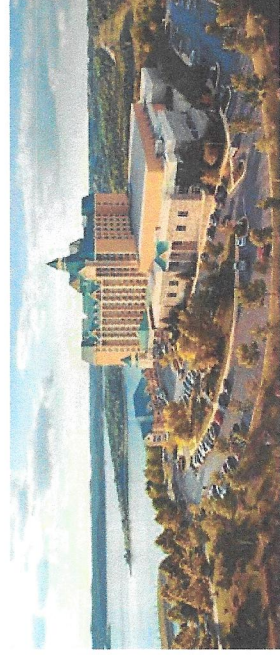
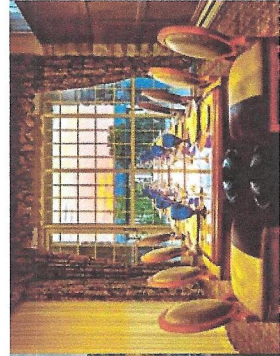
To round out the celebration, the awards dinner was followed by live entertainment at the resort's outdoor pool and a fireworks display.

Mountain Luxury

Also partnering with a luxury hotel for non-incentive meetings is Boston Scientific Corporation, a Marlborough, Massachusetts-based medical device company. The legendary Broadmoor, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, has hosted several small conferences for the company in addition to a 400-attendee annual sales meeting in January 2016.

For the annual meeting, participants fly in from all across the country, and we have a global contingent that comes to this meeting as well," says Mike Jones, vice president of sales for the company.

Above: The Lodge, one of four housing options at Sea Island Resort on Georgia's coast. **Right:** The Mizner Ballroom at The Cloister at Sea Island. **Below:** Chateau on the Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center in Branson, Missouri.





Beverly Ramsey
Marketing Manager
Lower Boats
Lebanon, MO

"The luxurious feel of the Chateau makes our show a reward for our dealers' hard work. It's important that they feel they are appreciated with plush accommodations, wonderful meals and entertainment during our new product show."

you can do that as well." The 784-room resort offers three Wilderness Experience properties: The Ranch at Emerald Valley, Cloud Camp and Fishing Camp. The panoply of outdoor event spaces are part of an overall 185,000-sf of function space, including the 60,000-sf Broadmoor Hall and 62 meeting rooms.

Opened in 1918, The Broadmoor represents Colorado's history as much as it does luxury. Last October, The Broadmoor introduced the refurbished Estate House, a 12,000-sf historic mansion ideal for groups looking for Great Gatsby-style elegance. Built in the 1920s, the home still features original woodwork, art and other period accents. A lavish grand parlor is suited to a cocktail reception of up to 120, private dinners for up to 60, or meetings. The refined dining room seats up to 16 and is serviced by The Broadmoor's acclaimed culinary team. At the resort proper, groups can avail themselves of Colorado's only Forbes Five Star, AAA Five Diamond restaurant, the Penrose Room. A five-star spa and fitness center is also onsite, as well as three championship golf courses.

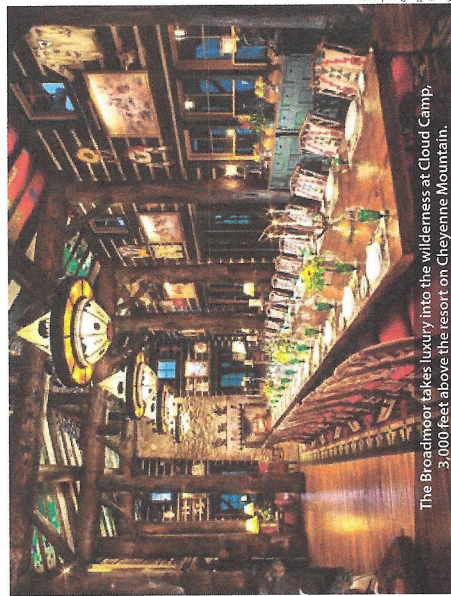
From fish camp to fine dining, The Broadmoor exemplifies how "luxury" encompasses a range of unique offerings. Josh Lesnick, president and CEO of Associated Luxury Hotels, parent company of Associated Luxury Hotels International,

notes, "Today's luxury customer is truly changing and evolving, as are their needs. At Associated Luxury Hotels International, we work with so many spectacular independent luxury resorts and hotels, and each one has its own unique, special way of meeting and exceeding the needs of their guests. That is ultimately what it's all about with today's luxury customer. Delivering new and exciting experiences that truly feel personalized and deliver unexpected extras touches that create powerful memories."

High-Demand Segment

As far as new hotels joining the luxury ranks in the U.S., there are relatively few in the pipeline, according to recent data from STR. In February 2017, there were 8,490 luxury-segment rooms in construction, which represents a 10.7 percent increase over February 2016. However, that compares to 27,457, 62,083 and 63,274 under construction, respectively, in the upper upscale, upscale and upper midscale segments for February 2017.

"We don't have a lot of new builds going on in North America right now at the luxury level," says Rhea Stagner, CIO, DVP, sourcing and supplier relations at Maritz Travel – A Maritz Global Events Company. Combined with a high-demand market, the situation for planners often calls



The Broadmoor takes luxury into the wilderness at Cloud Camp, 3,000 feet above the resort on Cheyenne Mountain.

"The luxury part of the resort makes people feel this is a really impressive spot. Comments from surveys included 'Wow, what a venue to have the annual sales meeting in!'" That kind of reaction led Boston Scientific to rebook The Broadmoor for its 2019 annual meeting.

Situated at the gateway to the Colorado Rockies, The Broadmoor and surrounding area is "a really desirable place to go, a very scenic resort and location," says Jones. "But more important is how the local team works with us, making our entire team feel welcome." The resort also makes the sales group feel more connected with numerous team-building opportunities, from bowling to paintball to hiking.

Indeed, this luxury resort is just as suited to the outdoorsman as to the epicurean. "Depending on what your flavor is, whether you like luxury or wilderness, they have it for you," says Jones. "So if instead of fine dining you want to go out and do flyfishing with a packed lunch,

Las Vegas Winner

Another luxury option in the American West is Wynn Las Vegas. The Wynn name is practically synonymous with luxury: Wynn Resorts has received more Forbes Five Star Awards than any other independent hotel company in the world. And the brand is well attuned to the meetings market, with a combined 290,000-sf of function space between Wynn Las Vegas and Encore Las Vegas, paired with a total of 4,750 guest rooms. Luxury shopping is among the dis-



Mike Jones
Vice President of Sales
Boston Scientific Corporation
Marlborough, MA

"The luxury part of (The Broadmoor) makes people feel this is a really impressive spot. Comments from surveys included, 'Wow, what a venue to have the annual sales meeting in!'"

Desert Jewel

Much like The Resort at Pelican Hill, many of Arizona's luxury properties are known for connecting with their natural environment. The AAA Five Diamond Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, for example, is set against the backdrop of Arizona's McDowell Mountains, in the heart of the Sonoran Desert. The Spanish colonial-style resort's 750 rooms include 69 Fairmont Gold rooms and suites. Notable amenities include five heated swimming pools, the 44,000-sf Well & Being Spa and Bourbon Steak, the Four Diamond steakhouse by acclaimed chef Michael Mina. The resort opened an additional 102 guest rooms in summer

2016, yielding its current total. The expansion included three luxury suites, a new Sunset Beach pool, 35,000-sf Sunset Lawn and new Western town event space. This summer, the resort will expand and renovate its 2,600-sf Fairmont Gold Meeting Center and add a new 1,000-sf breakout room. A sliding Nanotec bifolding glass wall (with privacy blinds) opens the space to a 6,000-sf patio overlooking the TPC Golf Course and McDowell Mountains. It's ideal for a small but high-end corporate meeting.

California Cachet

For example, Orange County, California, sees considerable demand from groups interested in luxury properties due to a constellation of resorts including the five-diamond Monarch Beach Resort, in Dana Point; five-star Montage Laguna Beach; five-diamond Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel; and the five-star, five-diamond Resort at Pelican Hill, in Newport. Maritz Travel has a significant history with the latter property, showing its versatility for more than just incentives. "We were one of their very first customers and had a strong relationship with their sales team prior to opening," says Stagner. "We have done a little bit of everything there, from 20-person board of directors meetings to 20-person dealer owner meetings all the way up to 500-person incentives."

The resort offers 204 opulently appointed bungalow guest rooms and suites with private terraces; 23,000-sf of function space; a five-star spa; and world-class restaurants, including Andria, serving authentic Northern Italian cuisine. Pelican Hill Golf Club boasts 36 scenic holes by Tom Fazio; this spring, Pelican Hill Golf Academy debuted a new 3-D golf evaluation. Also onsite is the Coliseum Pool, an immense circular pool with tiered decks and luxurious cabanas. Among the special events Stagner's

Sweeping Pacific Ocean views — and the circular Coliseum Pool — are enjoyed by guests of The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast.

Luxury Hotels
& Resorts
PAGE 16

Making Sense
of Big Data
PAGE 24

Las Vegas—Where
Business Is a Winner
PAGE 52

Finding Value From
Coast to Coast
PAGE 60

Legal Liabilities in
the Digital World
PAGE 34

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

MAY 2017 VOL. 35 NO. 5 \$12.00

WWW.TheMeetingMagazines.com

CORPORATE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

Planning Medical Meetings

From PhRMA Guidelines to
F&B Caps and a Seller's Market,
the Challenges Are Many

PAGE 28

**CLICK HERE TO
DOWNLOAD/VIEW
TABLET VERSION**

Arizona
Destination Planner
The Magnificent Mix of Desert and
Mountain Beauty Draws Groups
PAGE 39