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JANUARY 2019

Courier

Fresh

**New-look Travel Exchange
wows in Milwaukee**

PAGE 14

MAKE CONTACT ... IN TUCSON

PAGE 22

MEET THE 2019 BOARD

PAGE 6

GOOD BETS

PAGE 26

Kaitlyn Dunneback at Travel Exchange '18 in Milwaukee





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FEATURES



14

Travel Exchange delivered

It was a busy and buzzy week Travel Exchange '18, as members embraced NTA's new-look convention and all that Milwaukee had to offer.



22

Time for Tucson

Fresh ideas and lively dialogue—plus enjoyable and educational outings—await you at Contact '19, which takes place March 27–30 in Tucson, Arizona.



26

A sure bet

Casinos and gaming resorts across North America continue to provide luxurious amenities and a variety of experiences for groups.

COMPASS

30 U.S. West

Alaska | California | Nevada | Oregon | Washington

38 Ireland and the United Kingdom

England | Ireland | Scotland

42 Belgium, France and the Netherlands

DEPARTMENTS

4 From the Editor

6 Voices of Leadership

Business

8 InBrief

Members are engaging on Engage

More than 42 percent of U.S. citizens have a passport

10 Tourism Cares for Puerto Rico

NTA's official philanthropy will take industry members to the Caribbean island May 8–10 for three days of hands-on work projects and information exchanges with local tourism professionals.

11 History becomes adventure

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary showcases Michigan's "Shipwreck Alley."

12 What's On

Take a Bau

Sonoran history at the big house

Community

46 Meet the Members

Hotel Preston

Borton Overseas, Journeys to Extraordinary Lands

47 NTA Events Calendar

48 AfterWords

American Music Theatre's Alyssa Keshel details how the aesthetic changes to the Travel Exchange appointment floor were a metaphor (and an inspiration) for her experience at the show.



VISIT FLANDERS

42

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► MARCH ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

Four Corners U.S.

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah
Ontario, Québec and Niagara Falls
Canada and U.S.

Africa

Greece, Italy and Turkey

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Historical Homes and Gardens
Guide: Sightseeing Rail

DEADLINES

Space: Jan. 4 | Material: Jan. 14

► APRIL/MAY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

Midwest U.S.

Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska
West South Central U.S.

Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas

Latin America

South Pacific

Australia, Guam, Hawaii

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Faith-based Travel
Food and Drink

DEADLINES

Space: Feb. 1 | Material: Feb. 11

AD INDEX

★ New advertisers

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berkely.com

★ **Blue Lake Casino & Hotel** 28
bluelakecasino.com

Delta Air Lines Inside Back Cover
delta.com

Dragon Trail Interactive 41
dragontrail.com

★ **Explore Minnesota Tourism** 7
exploreminnesota.com

Fairbanks, Alaska – Explore Fairbanks 37
explorefairbanks.com

Fairfield Conference & Visitors Bureau 13
visitfairfieldca.com

The Huntington Library, Art Collections & Botanical Gardens 36
huntington.org

Maid of the Mist 5
maidoftthemist.com

Major Marine Tours & Harbor 360 Hotel 33
majormarine.com

Mohegan Sun 27
mohegansun.com

The Museum of Flight 34
museumofflight.org

★ **National Churches Trust Heritage Services** 39
explorechurches.org

Palm Springs Aerial Tramway 35
pstramway.com

Red Lion Hotel Anaheim Resort 36
anaheimredlion.com

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum 31
reaganlibrary.com

Tropicana Casino and Resort Back Cover
tropicana.net

Tulalip Tribes/Quil Ceda Village 3
tulalipresort.com



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Courier aims to facilitate member-to-member partnering by spotlighting member product and destinations worldwide, to provide information on current industry trends and issues, and to inform members about NTA initiatives, events and benefits.



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I'M FEELING IT: Energy. Excitement. Engagement. And it's enveloping NTA.

Granted, I probably spend more time thinking about NTA than you do (explained by the fact that I work at NTA Headquarters every day), but I have to assume you'll be thinking about your association as you're reading the magazine that spotlights you and your colleagues.

I hope that what radiates from these pages is energy ... and excitement ... and engagement.

I believe this issue conveys those "e" words. And to that end, I suggest you turn to the back of the magazine right now. When you read "Reflections on TREX18" (page 48), written by Alyssa Keshel, you can see what your staff and leaders were aiming for when we started reenvisioning Travel Exchange, beginning with the hub of it all: the exchange floor.

If you were with us in Milwaukee in November, you probably still have retinal retention of the bright green tablecloths. If you weren't, you can get a look at (and feel of) the set-up by checking out the photos in our recap, "Familiar, yet fresh" (pages 14–21). The delegates we quote on those pages are definitely on board with positive "e" words.

And whether or not you turned from this letter to read Alyssa's essay, let me give you my favorite part:

"It wasn't about breaking down pipe and drape. It wasn't about the bright green tablecloths. It was about breaking down the barriers of communication and creating a space that seemed to vibrate with energy."

January *Courier* Destination Index

Alaska 36	Michigan 11
Arizona 13, 22–24	The Netherlands 43
Belgium 42	Nevada 37
California 34–35	Oregon 32
Connecticut 29	Scotland 38
England 39	Tennessee 46
France 43	Washington 29, 30
Ireland 40	Wisconsin 15
Germany 12	

There's one of those "e" words. Managing editor Pat Henderson gives an update on another one, which is also the name of NTA's new online community: Engage. Read about it on page 8's InBrief. According to the company that hosts the platform, NTA is exceeding the levels of participation that other organization's normally experience this soon after launch.

One huge reason that the NTA community is eager to connect is the high quality of tour products that DMO and supplier members offer to buyers. Great examples are on display in Pat's exploration of the U.S. West (pages 30–37), Kendall Fletcher's look at Ireland and the U.K. (pages 38–40)—and top-notch casino properties (page 29)—and Gabe Webb's stories on Belgium, France and the Netherlands (pages 42–43).

If you're eager to plug in to NTA's energy, etc., Contact '19 is coming up in late March. You can get details about this event on pages 22 through 25—and on NTAcontact.com.

I hope this first issue of 2019 imparts to you the good "e" vibes that I'm feeling about the NTA community. If it does ... embrace it.

Read on,

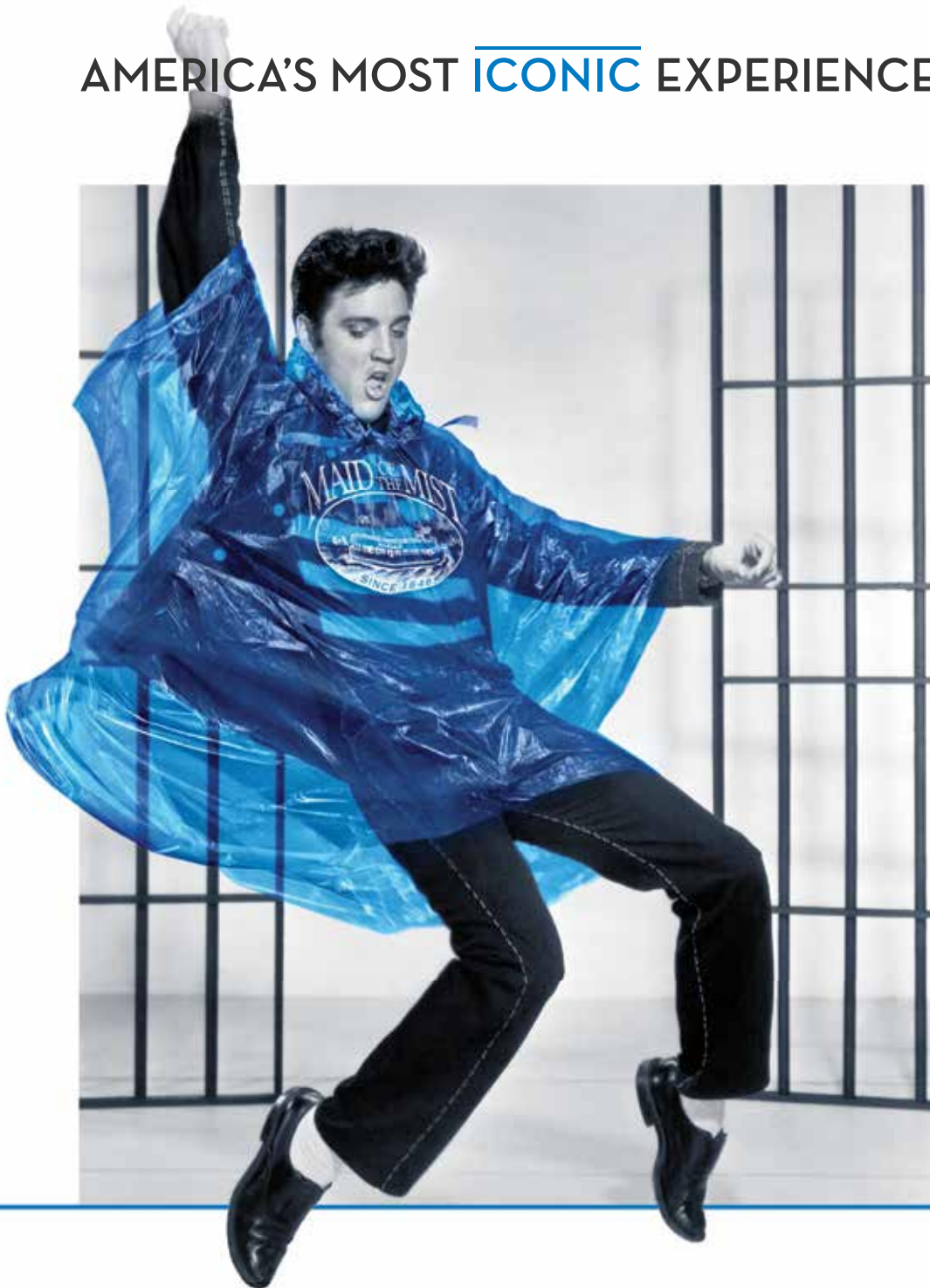
On the cover:

Kaitlyn Dunneback of Witte Travel & Tours shares a business card—and a big smile—at Travel Exchange '18. Photos and reactions from the convention in Milwaukee start on page 14.

Photo: Normand Huberdeau/
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THE NTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS comprises 17 members who represent tour operators, tour suppliers and destination marketing organizations. Chaired by Paul Larsen, the board meets in person and via conference calls throughout the year. Larsen is looking forward to the year ahead.

"As a board, we will work with you, the NTA staff and each other to make needed adjustments and to find new ways for you to plug in to this association," he says. "We invite your input and your ideas as we move NTA forward."

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PAUL LARSEN A TRUE TOURISM STAR

Congratulations and best wishes as NTA's new Board Chair
from all of your friends in Minnesota



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COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Members are engaging on Engage

Since NTA launched Engage, its new virtual community platform, at Travel Exchange, many of you have been jumping right in. At its core, Engage is designed to help you keep the conversation going with other members year-round, whether you are seeking advice on a business matter, want to pitch products or just need an opinion from an industry veteran.

During the first month, members have made good use of the discussion section by posting on a range of topics, both professional and personal. Here are examples of some of the things that your peers are talking about on Engage:

How-tos/Helpful Hints

- A list of 25 terms every travel professional should know
- How to register for an official account on WeChat
- The value of creating one-page tip sheets for working with motorcoach groups

Operations

- Amtrak's booking and cancellation policies
- Management software for tour operators
- New entrance fees at an attraction in Maine



Personal

- A early roll-call regarding who's attending Contact in Tucson
- A get-to-know-me invitation urging members to add short introductory bios

This is just a sample of the variety of topics that have been posted through mid-December. To get in on the discussion—or to start your own—go to engage.ntaonline.com. The most recent topic threads are listed on the homepage, and you can access prior posts if you go to BROWSE at the top and choose "Discussion Posts."

If you are just getting started, check out the recording from the Engage webinar NTA conducted last month at ntaonline.com/education/seminars-webinars.

Got questions? Reach out to Morgan Maravich, NTA's manager of industry and member engagement at morgan.maravich@ntastaff.com.

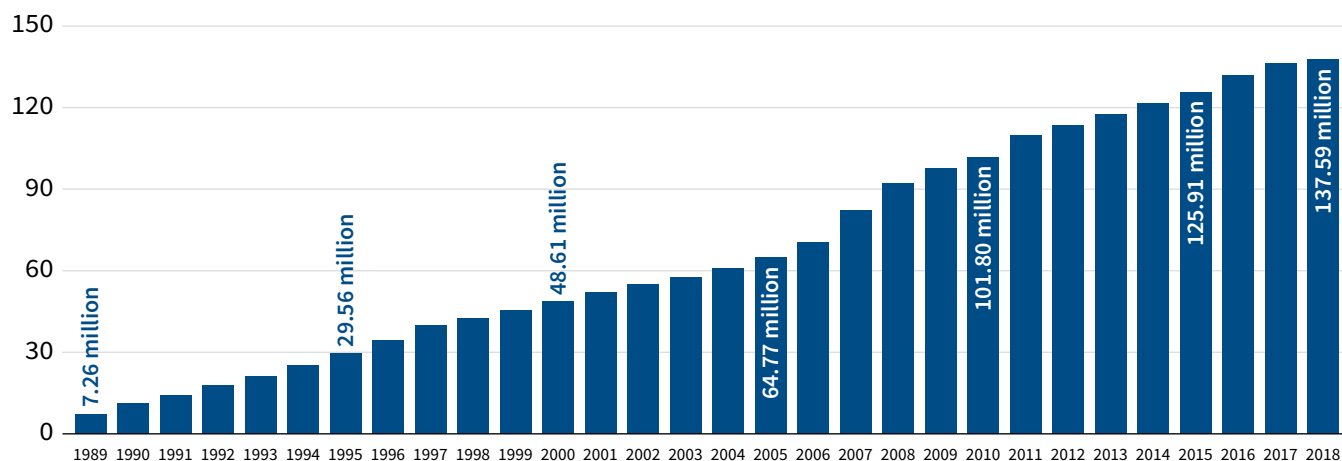
More than 42 percent of U.S. citizens have passports

According to recent data compiled by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, more than 42 percent of U.S. citizens have a valid passport. The bureau's figures show that there are 137.59 million U.S. passport books and passport cards in circulation as of 2018 (against a population estimate of 325.7 million).

The list on the bureau's website (travel.state.gov/passports) includes annual figures dating back to 1989, when just over 7.2 million U.S. citizens had passports. The number of valid passports in circulation has increased every year, often by 3 to 5 million, over the 30-year sample period.

Spikes of up to 12 million per year occurred between 2006 and 2011, when demand for passports was heavier leading up to the implementation of legislation that required U.S. citizens to have passports to visit Canada and Mexico.

Number of Valid U.S. Passports in Circulation (1989 to present)



Source: The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs (travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/after/passport-statistics.html)



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- NTAcourier.com, where you can find and share articles ... about you
- The China Preferred Partner Program, exclusive to NTA
- A Concierge Program that helps multi-property members excel

So let's keep dancing. Renew your NTA membership today and take advantage
of everything your association has for you ... around the next turn.



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Making choices. Making a difference.



BY JESSICA AHERN

EARLY LAST JUNE on a (very, very) hot day in New Orleans, I sat for lunch with my colleague Kati Hagedorn and our partners at NetWork Volunteers as we started the on-site planning for our fall program. We wanted a local spot, somewhere in the neighborhood where we would bring our volunteers. What we got was something so much more.

We enjoyed lunch and good company at Café Reconcile, a social enterprise in Central City that employs at-risk youth and provides culinary and job training to help them with future employment opportunities. Every meal purchased there helps train the students and directly funds their facility. A delicious meal with a higher purpose.

What was reinforced to us that day is that it's all about the choices you make when you travel. We all eat, sleep, tour and shop when we visit a new place or send our customers out into the world. And imagine what kind of impact we could make if we chose to buy local or support social enterprises that reinvest their profits into the community.

Our goal for our New Orleans program was to support nonprofits in the city with our valuable efforts—and also to show our volunteers what they can



Kati Hagedorn (left) and Jessica Ahern of Tourism Cares

accomplish as an industry by supporting companies like Café Reconcile.

The restaurant catered our event-day meals, and a 17-year-old aspiring artist and New Orleans native designed our t-shirts. We gave our “earned” and discarded beads to a local nonprofit with a recycling program staffed by people with special needs. We minimized our use of plastics and donated any leftover food locally.

With our volunteer efforts and direct community investments, we provided \$60,000 to New Orleans in one day. And

it all started with a simple choice.

We are using what we learned in New Orleans and taking it to Puerto Rico May 8–10. Tourism Cares for Puerto Rico is a three-day program designed to harness the transformative power and the collective strength of our industry through hands-on work projects, knowledge exchanges and exploration of business integration.

In addition to our volunteering efforts that bring considerable people-power to the island, we'll also be using our industry's intellectual capital and expertise to advise representatives of the local tourism sector on how they can continue to successfully rebuild and connect to the modern marketplace.

We'll have an opening afternoon dedicated to education and thought-leadership, networking receptions featuring authentic entertainment and locally sourced food, volunteer projects focused on food security and farming, and visits to social enterprises and small innovative businesses in and around Ponce.

Three days of incredible work, bonding experiences and long-term impact. We hope you'll join us in what will be a new chapter of programming for Tourism Cares. More information can be found at tourismcares.org/puertorico. ☺

Jessica Ahern, Tourism Cares' director of volunteer programs, is a familiar face at NTA events.



A team of Tourism Cares volunteers working in a New Orleans neighborhood

History becomes adventure

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary showcases Michigan's 'Shipwreck Alley'

BY STEPHANIE GANDULLA

THUNDER BAY, off the shores of Alpena, Michigan, is one of the most treacherous stretches of water in the Great Lakes. Murky fog banks, rocky shoals and fierce storms earned the area the name "Shipwreck Alley." Today, more than 200 shipwrecks rest within Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The area is part of a larger system dedicated to protecting special underwater places in the United States, including deep-water canyons off the coast of California, humpback whale breeding grounds along the shores of Massachusetts and some of the most diverse coral populations in the South Pacific.

Thunder Bay, however, was designated to preserve a nationally significant group of historic shipwrecks well-kept by Lake Huron's cold, fresh water. This collection represents over a century of commerce in the heart of the continent. It includes old wooden schooners that date to the early 19th century and modern, massive steel freighters.

Together, the remains tell the story of a time when these ships ruled the lakes, linking America's heartland to the East Coast and the world. Individually, they tell a tale about the sailors who made their living taking risks in some of the world's most treacherous waters. Visitors are encouraged to connect with these stories—and the shipwrecks—firsthand.

At the sanctuary's visitor center, the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in downtown Alpena, groups can explore 10,000 square feet of immersive exhibits, feel the power of a Lake Huron storm, walk the deck of a Great Lakes schooner or "swim" over a shipwreck in playful dive tubes. Other features include a shipwreck artifact gallery, a theater, a roof garden, a gift store and a NOAA Science on a Sphere theater, one of only three in the state of Michigan. Visitors often take their adventure to the next level and hop on the glass-bottom tour boat, *Lady Michigan*, to see actual shipwrecks up close.

Access to the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Trail lies just outside the doors of the visitor center, where guests can embark on a journey along boardwalks, riverfront parks and historical docks. The trail winds its way along 225 miles of sanctuary shoreline and, with engaging interpretative signage, connects visitors with Lake Huron's fascinating maritime past and enhances any Great Lakes experience. 📍

Stephanie Gandulla is acting research coordinator at Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. For more information, go to thunderbay.noaa.gov.



The *Monohansett*, a wooden steam barge that wrecked in 1907, can be viewed during a glass-bottom boat tour at Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



Exhibits at the sanctuary's visitor center showcase a time when schooners and steamers ruled the Great Lakes.

Lady Michigan, a glass-bottom boat, takes passengers out on Lake Huron to see shipwrecks.



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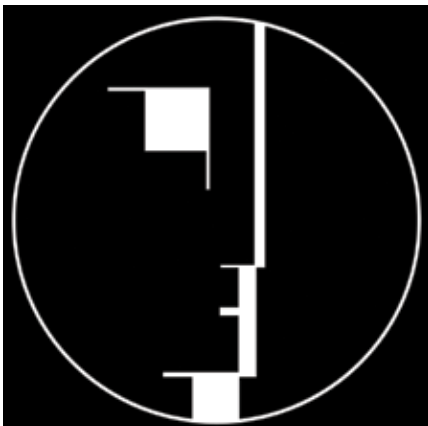


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Staircase in the Weimer Academy (above);
Wassily Chairs in the Dessau Academy (below)



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Bauhaus logo

Take a Bau

This year, the world will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Bauhaus Movement. This influential arts movement traces its origins to Weimer, Germany, when Walter Gropius took over as head of the city's Academy of Fine Arts in 1919.

In the school's 14-year heyday, the innovative and controversial academy became the most influential art and design school in the world. Hundreds of renowned designers, architects, sculptors and visual artists were trained at the prestigious university, which boasted an acclaimed faculty that included masters such as Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.

The Bauhaus style blended elements of fine arts with traditional arts and crafts, and it led to the advancement of avant-garde art and modernism. Because the style impacted both architecture and visual arts, it quickly caught on across Europe and North America and dominated design themes throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

A number of events will be held throughout 2019 to commemorate the lasting impact of the movement. This month the celebration kicks off with Opening Festival: 100 years of Bauhaus.

A week's worth of activities will take place at venues across Berlin starting Jan. 16. Bauhaus-Archiv, the organizing museum, will play host to a number of performances and exhibits.

One of the highlights of the anniversary will be the opening of the new Bauhaus Museum Weimer this April. The attraction will house the largest collection of works and information pertaining to the movement, and specific exhibits about the early years will be featured during the opening.

The museum also will be one of three sites for the Triennale of Modernism, a program that will take place on consecutive weekends in cities related to that early academy. Triennale kicks off in Weimer Sept. 26–29, then will be held in Dessau Oct. 4–6 before moving to Berlin for its finale Oct. 11–13.

A number of additional exhibits, activities and events will take place at other sites in Germany, as well as in cities ranging from London and Rotterdam to Moscow and Chicago.

For more information go to **weimar.de/en/culture/events/bauhaus-turns-100**, or contact any of NTA's members in Germany.

Sonoran history at the big house

One of the largest prehistoric structures in the United States is Casa Grande Ruins National Monument. The National Park Service-managed site is located in Coolidge, Arizona, between Phoenix and Tucson, about an hour from each city.

The monument offers a look at the lives of the Sonoran people who lived in the area, as well as in other places throughout the Southwest, for around 2,000 years. While historians aren't sure of the site's purpose, it is held that the Great House was a meeting spot for the Sonorans, whose innovative farming practices and use of canals were adopted by many other groups across the region.

Tours cover the history and archeology of the ruins, as well as offering insights into Sonoran life. Rangers take visitors into Compound A and point out the features of this ancient site. While groups cannot enter the Great House, based on safety and resource-protection concerns, they can get close to the historical structure. It has been well-preserved, thanks to the portico that was built to protect it in the early 1900s.

The tours are offered multiple times a day from late November to mid-April. Between May and October, the warmer temperatures are a factor in fewer guided walks being offered, especially during the heat of the day. Self-guided tours are available, and interpretive signage provides details on what visitors see.

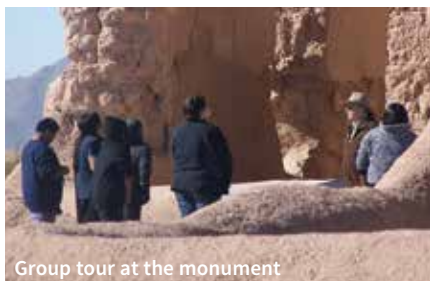
Weekends in the late fall and winter often feature special artists and demonstrations, and a number of programs for students (advance reservations required) are offered during those months. Special tours, such as backcountry archeology walks, are available in the spring.

To learn more, call +1.520.723.3172 or go to nps.gov/cagr.



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Familiar, yet fresh

Travel Exchange delegates made the most of their five days in Milwaukee. A thousand travel and tourism professionals shared ideas and itineraries, meals and meeting rooms, handshakes and hugs.

For first-time attendees, Travel Exchange '18 was a dazzling introduction to a cadre of industry specialists who were eager to share insights and knowledge. For NTA veterans, it was a reunion of kindred spirits and a renewal of valuable business ties.

This version of NTA's convention was comfortably familiar, yet fabulously fresh.

Milwaukee was a new city for Travel Exchange, and TREX had new offerings, too. A reimagined exchange floor was distinguished by the addition of bold colors—and the subtraction of draped walls. The energetic vibe was palpable. And a new networking session, BIZnet, offered a hint of the innovative approaches to collaboration that NTA will build on for future events.

But before we build TREX19 in Fort Worth, let's take a fresh (yet familiar) look back at Milwaukee.





Marvelous Milwaukee

Milwaukee nights proved memorable as delegates feasted on local specialties, enjoyed each other's company and explored enticing venues, including the Harley-Davidson Museum, Discovery World and the Milwaukee Public Museum.



◀ “I had a very productive Travel Exchange '18 in Milwaukee. The one-on-one appointments with tour operators were very positive, and it was great to see all my NTA friends at the networking events!”

—ROXANA RIVERA, NEWSEUM (SECOND FROM RIGHT)

◀ “This was my first experience at the Travel Exchange, and I thought it was very valuable. The most useful part for me was the appointments and the networking opportunities. We have already completed a booking that was a direct result from one of my appointments. I am still new in this field, so a conference like this really checks a lot of boxes for me.”

—KEVIN TRACY, SMITHSONIAN ENTERPRISES (CENTER)

“TREX '18 had new features that I loved—BIZnet and the open convention floor. It was much easier to get around to appointments, and you could really feel the increased energy. Plus, Milwaukee knows how to throw a party!”

—BRITTANY DYKLA, BRILLIANT EDVENTURES (LEFT, AT THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON MUSEUM)

“ I thought it was the best NTA I've attended in years, and I attend every year. Although the appointments are important, it's really about building long-term relationships.”

—HARRY WADE, DUTY FREE AMERICAS



Walls, out ... Energy, in

The business side of the NTA convention carried a whole new vibe on an exchange floor that was redesigned to lower barriers and heighten energy during four days of appointments, conversations and deep discussions.



◀ “Travel Exchange '18 was exceptional due to the new floor format. Without the physical barriers, the exchange floor was more collegial and welcoming. It was easier to see ‘eyeballs’ in the aisles or across the room. There was a new energy on the floor, allowing me to connect with even more people.”

—FRANK FISH, TRAVEL GALLERY (RIGHT)

“ I had really good business appointments and met lots of nice people. As an international member, I really appreciate the warm welcome we get at NTA. ”

—CHARLOTTE JAKOBSEN,
FRANKFURT RHINE-MAIN REGION

“It was a great event. I learned a lot from the seminars and made lot of contacts during the networking events. I came with zero prescheduled appointments due to delay in signing up; however, during the last two days I was able to have close to 40 meetings with tour operators.”

—MADHUSHIKA GINIGE, NKAR TRAVELS & TOURS



◀ “Milwaukee Public Museum’s sponsorship was the perfect opportunity to highlight our world-class museum and to promote our great city as a tourism destination. Many tour operators were amazed by what our city had to offer and how unique and thrilling MPM can be to their group travelers.”

—TIM MALENOCK, MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM (LEFT)



“I discussed product best matches and left with a multitude of sales leads I would not have had the chance to pitch in-person if it were not for Travel Exchange. And networking opportunities on the sales floor and at sponsored social events and educational seminars provided additional business contacts.”

—JEFF HOLTROP, VACATIONS BY RAIL (RIGHT)

“As a first-time attendee, I was eager to make meaningful connections with the tour operators. The appointments were long enough to promote my community and get to know each operator’s business. The open floor plan made the appointments feel relaxed, and it was easy to get to know all my neighbors!”

—ELIZABETH ALBERS, CEDARBURG VISITOR CENTER (RIGHT)



“ I loved the new open floor plan and that NTA is introducing innovative ways for us all to connect. Connections ... that’s what it’s all about, right?!”

—KAREN BALLARD, VERMONT TOURISM NETWORK

“Appointments were high-quality and meaningful, as were the education seminars and networking events. The energy on the floor and the new layout fostered excitement and greater engagement. I walked away with new ideas for tours to new destinations as well as new partners to include in our portfolio.”

—TRACIE WINGO, GLOBUS FAMILY OF BRANDS (CENTER)



Insights and answers

Seminars, forums and Spotlight Sessions offered the ideal blend of peer-to-peer advice and presenters' expertise, and the introduction of BIZnet brought a dynamic blend of shared solutions and business development to the NTA community.

“Travel Exchange was particularly beneficial for DMOs

because it offered sessions like BIZnet. I was able to meet other DMOs and learn from their unique challenges and accomplishments.

There is a wealth of knowledge sitting in the audience, and I appreciate being able to tap into it during that session.”

—ELIZABETH ALBERS,
CEDARBURG VISITOR CENTER (RIGHT)

“TREX18 opened my eyes to better networking skills that I've brought back home to grow business. This event is not only about scheduled appointments. From Day One, I saw that the whole week was one huge appointment.”

—COURTNEY HAWKINS, HOTEL PRESTON
(NASHVILLE)



“Travel Exchange '18 was a wonderful experience, especially for a first-timer—everyone was so friendly and helpful. The seminars were very insightful, and I had great quality appointments. The whole experience exceeded my expectations.”

—KALYNNE DEFEVER, VISIT DETROIT (RIGHT)

“In addition to a productive set of appointments (which resulted in business for Fairfax), I really appreciated the multiple opportunities to connect with peers and clients at the social events. It was also great to have frank conversations with other destinations during the DMO forum.”

—LINDA HOROWITZ, VISIT FAIRFAX



“Travel Exchange is a good reminder each year of all the resources that are available to tour operators through DMO and suppliers to enhance our business.”

—FRANK FISH, TRAVEL GALLERY



“By sponsoring the BIZnet event at NTA I was able to not only promote my destination, but it was a great conversation starter at my appointments. Sponsoring events at NTA is totally worth it because it provides you with more exposure.”

—JENNIFER FONTANA, VISIT REDDING

“Travel Exchange has always provided wonderful networking opportunities to connect and reconnect with wonderful travel partners. And TREX18 was unprecedented!”

—ANJULI DERIEN, VISIT SAVANNAH

“While technology has changed the way we communicate, one thing remains the same: This is a relationship-based industry that is human at its core. Face-to-face contact at NTA TREX is essential to maintaining business relationships and building new ones.”

—CAROL ROSS, PORTLAND ROSE FESTIVAL



Cause for applause

Every meal offered an opportunity to appreciate an array of entertainment and to applaud the impressive achievements of colleagues.



◀ “NTA is a good show for our destination, and we were lucky to be able to sponsor the name badges this year. It served as a conversation starter, and operators thanked us for sponsoring.”

—EVELYN VAZQUEZ,
ST. AUGUSTINE, PONTE VEDRA
& THE BEACHES



Gold winners in *Courier's* 2019 Distinguished Dozen



Chita Rivera hosted a show with spectacular Broadway performances and New York City insights.



Lee Greenwood



Grady Spencer



Bob Everidge Lifetime Achievement Award Bruce Beckham, past NTA board chair and former executive director and CEO of Tourism Cares (attending his 48th NTA consecutive convention)



Woman of Vision Award Cathy Greteman, owner of Star Destinations and two-term NTA board chair



Volunteer of the Year Rich Gilbert, Maryland Office of Tourism Development



James D. Santini Award Tom Armstrong, Tauck in Wilton, Connecticut



Top Young Professionals in NTA Nicole Absher, Destination Gettysburg; Amanda Hinzmann, Ed-Ventures; Ashley Kingman, Travel Portland; Holly Rogers, Explore St. Louis; and presenter Chris Babb. Not pictured: Marcus Sarmiento, OK Tours.



Shining Star Award Norwegian Cruise Line, accepted by Jodi Danyluk

For award details, go to bit.ly/2Dy6CkA.

Contact:

It's business ... but better



WHEN NTA BUYERS GATHER in Tucson, Arizona, for Contact, they'll find a three-day conference where they share ideas, learn together and conduct business with each other.

"I attend Contact because it's a great opportunity to meet in a smaller setting and focus on real business," says Justin Osbon of Image Tours. "You have more opportunity to really think about new and better ideas."

But it's more than that.

"Contact is almost like you're going to a company's off-site meeting," says Renae Scott of Old Savannah Tours. "We get an opportunity to spend more time together and get to know each other better."

Contact is a tour-operator retreat, where buyers focus on tour trends and product development. The event is also open to seller members like Scott, though, who attend as sponsors. And while buyers and sellers spend significant time together, there are no appointment sessions. And operators enjoy the extra time.

"Travel Exchange is where you meet the people. Contact is where you make the relationships," says Agustin Caparros of A Closer Look Tours.



NATH HASSAN

Along with building relationships and portfolios, attendees will also build an appreciation for an Arizona desert destination that is serving up surprises.

"We have many exciting things up our sleeve, from highlighting our fantastic landscape and amazing night skies to showing off the first UNESCO City of Gastronomy," says Jackie Ludwig, director of tourism for Visit Tucson. "Be prepared for food that is so flavorful you can't wait for the next bite."

Schedule at a glance

Wednesday, March 27

Golf outing
Happy hour
Icebreaker at Tohono Chul
Botanical Garden

Thursday, March 28

BIZnet: The Opening Connection
Education sessions
Dine-around

Friday, March 29

Education sessions
Educational outings
DMO and tour supplier network
forums
Reception/silent auction finale
Tour operator networking dinner
Stargazing party

Saturday, March 30

Education sessions
All-member forum
Sightseeing tours
Closing event
at Old Tucson
Studios



NOEL TUCSON

See the sights ...

... During educational outings

On Friday afternoon, tour operators can expand their knowledge of a niche market—and the Tucson area—by joining one of five educational outings.

“We are sharing activities that are group-friendly and can be implemented in any tour program,” says Ludwig.

Science & Technology: Planetarium and Mirror Lab

At the Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium, you'll see where scientists mapped the moon for humankind's first visit. Then journey underneath the University of Arizona football stadium, where the world's largest telescope mirrors are made.

Culinary: Tucson, a UNESCO City of Gastronomy

Janos Wilder, an award-winning chef, will guide you through four centuries of agriculture in the Tucson Basin, and you'll visit The Carriage House that Wilder uses for his cooking school programs.

Outdoor: Traildust Adventure and Jeep Experience

Hit the trail at the 7,000-acre Rocking K Ranch with a naturalist guide who will teach you about the desert's flora and fauna, offer a quick geology lesson and detail Native American history, including showing you ancient Hohokam petroglyphs.



Mission San Xavier del Bac

Culture & History: Museum and Mission

You'll visit the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, which showcases reptiles, mountain mammals and a hummingbird aviary. Next is a visit to Mission San Xavier del Bac, the “White Dove of the Desert,” founded in the early 1700s.

Heritage & Culture: Tubac and Tumacácori

Established in 1752 as a Spanish presidio, Tubac is the oldest settlement in Arizona, today featuring unique shops and re-enactors. The trip includes a visit to the Tumacácori National Historical Park and its Spanish mission.



... on Saturday

Between the final seminar and an exciting closing event, Contact participants—buyers and sellers—can spend Saturday afternoon on one of four sightseeing trips. “We want to showcase activities that create fantastic memories and highlight special areas of Tucson,” Ludwig says. “Sabino Canyon is a personal favorite.”

Sabino Canyon Tram Ride A tram will take you to the top of Sabino Canyon, where you can enjoy a guided nature walk.

Horseback Riding Skilled or novice riders can saddle up at the host hotel and take a journey through the Catalina Mountains.

Pima Air & Space Museum A tram ride through six indoor exhibit hangars—with more than 150 planes—is narrated by an experienced docent.

Micro-brewery Tour Participants can experience Tucson's only mobile artisan craft beer tour and discover why the city is a rising star in the craft beer scene.

... Before or after Contact

Tour operators can sign up for any of three excursions to maximize their time in and around Tucson. Extensive details of the Fam trips are available online at NTAcontact.com.

Cochise County: Land of Legends

Pre-event Fam, March 25–27

Tucson and Beyond

Post-event Fam, March 31–April 1

Golf outing at Omni Tucson National Golf Course

March 26



Kitt Peak National Observatory |
Post-event Fam



The Westward Look Wyndham Resort & Spa is the host hotel for Contact '19. Originally a family home nestled in the Catalina foothills, the property has been offering Southwestern hospitality since 1912.

Keep up with Contact

NTA has launched a microsite devoted to Contact: **NTAcontact.com**, where you can get updated information about registration, seminars and events.

And this year, instead of booking lodging for Contact through NTA, members will make their own reservations with the hotel, using the link provided on **NTAcontact.com**. For guests who book in the NTA block, the hotel will waive the resort fee (\$25 per day).

New is nice

Every year since the first Contact in 2011, NTA has added ways for tour operators to gain business insights—technology, best practices, legal tips—as well as expand their awareness of tour product and niche markets. And Tucson—while exceptional—is no exception. Here are two new highlights for 2019 in Tucson:

Free registration for buyers Buyer registration is complimentary. To secure a spot, buyers need to pay a \$150 deposit when registering. By attending, staying at the host hotel, and participating in BIZnet, they'll get the full amount refunded.

Food for thought Business-packed dinner events are taking the place of a dine-around night on Friday evening. Tour operators will share ideas as they pass the potatoes, and sponsoring DMOs and tour suppliers will discuss a smorgasbord of shared challenges and successes.

Sponsors can connect

As mentioned, tour supplier and DMO members attend Contact as sponsors in order to take advantage of the favorable buyer-seller ratio.

"When I'm a sponsor at Contact with a table display, I get a chance to talk to operators and can really connect with them," says Mindy Shea of Visit Savannah, who hosted Contact '15. "And I've made that connection. I see it in their eyes and I see it in their smiles."

Many types of sponsorships are outlined on **NTAcontact.com**, but those are the existing ones. Members who want to design their own sponsorship package in Tucson can get the tumbleweed rolling by emailing sponsor@ntastaff.com.

The promise of Contact

NTA members who have attended Contact extol the event's relaxed pace, and host-city organizers anticipate a perfect match.

"Tucson is a genuine destination that evokes calm and allows you the freedom to express yourself," Ludwig says. "I am confident that Contact attendees will love our incredible sunshine, our mountains that surround you in every direction and our landscape dense with Saguaro forest. They'll say they didn't know Tucson has so much to offer." 🌵

Join us in thanking our Contact '19 sponsors! ^{so far}

HOST DESTINATION/CITY CO-PARTNERS



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Icebreaker and
Closing Event



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of Tourism**
Host City Co-partner



**Desert Diamond
Casino Hotel**
Host City Co-partner



Explore Charleston
Buyer Networking Dinner



**Lowcountry Hotels
of Charleston**
Buyer Networking Dinner



Norwegian Cruise Line
Thursday Luncheon



**Patriots Point Naval
& Maritime Museum**
Buyer Networking Dinner



Visit Anchorage
Saturday Luncheon

GOLD



Delta Air Lines
Official Airline of NTA's
Contact & Seminars



**Las Vegas Convention
& Visitors Authority**
Thursday Breakfast



Maverick Helicopters
Thursday Breakfast

SILVER



Abingdon Virginia CVB
Board of Directors Dinner



**Atlanta Convention
& Visitors Bureau**
Buyer Highlighters



**Best Western
Hotels & Resorts**
Networking Reception
& Contact Program



City of Gallup
Contact Program



visitdetroit.com

**Detroit Metro
Convention &
Visitors Bureau**
Happy Hour



Discover Klamath
Contact Program



**Eagan Convention
& Visitors Bureau**
Buyer In-room Gift



Explore Minnesota
Buyer In-room Gift



Explore St. Louis
Convenience Station



Georgia Tourism
Contact Program



**Graceland & Guest
House at Graceland**
Notebooks



**Major Marine Tours /
Harbor 360 Hotel**
Contact Program



Memphis Tourism
Name Badges



Old Savannah Tours
Spotlight Session



Radisson Hotel Group
Contact Program



**River Street
Riverboat Company**
Spotlight Session



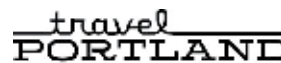
**Space Camp at U.S.
Space & Rocket Center**
Contact Program



Tour Colorado
Contact Program



Travel Oregon
Hotel Key Cards



Travel Portland
Hotel Key Cards



Visit Clarksville
Board of Directors Dinner



The Watson Hotel
Afternoon Refreshments

NTA-member casino and gaming properties

As groups head out on tours across North America, they continue to enjoy myriad amenities and experiences when they visit casinos and gaming destinations. The NTA membership includes a number of properties that offer slots and table games, well-appointed accommodations, gourmet restaurants, luxurious spas, shopping, live entertainment and recreational activities, to go along with group discounts and other perks.

On these pages, you will see expanded information on Washington and Connecticut resort casinos, along with a complete list of member properties that feature gaming (NOTE: list was current as of Dec. 3, 2018).

With this and all other guides that appear in *Courier*, members can enhance their presence. Contact sales@ntaservicesinc.com for details.

CANADA

QUÉBEC

Québec's Casinos

Anie Beauchamp
500 Sherbrooke St. West, 15th Floor
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+1.514.392.0909 (2629)
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UNITED STATES

ARIZONA

Cliff Castle Casino Hotel

John LeDoux
333 Middle Verde Road
Camp Verde, AZ 86322-8560
+1.928.567.7900 (7738)
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cliffcastlecasinohotel.com

Desert Diamond Casino Hotel

Denys Marquez
7350 South Nogales Highway
Tucson, AZ 85756
+1.520.342.3025
dmarquez@ddcaz.com
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CALIFORNIA

Blue Lake Casino & Hotel

Lisa Corral
777 Casino Way
Blue Lake, CA 95525
+1.707.668.9770 (2702)
lcrral@bluelakecasino.com
bluelakecasino.com

Fantasy Springs Resort Casino

Juliett Valencia
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway
Indio, CA 92203-3405
+1.760.238.5613
jvalencia@fantasysprings.net
fantasyspringsresort.com

The Hotel at Black Oak Casino Resort

Maegan Sullivan
19398 Tuolumne Road North
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+1.209.928.9520
msullivan@blackoakcasino.com
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Pechanga Resort & Casino

Freddy Bi
45000 Pechanga Parkway
Temecula, CA 92592-5810
+1.951.365.9077
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pechanga.com

Soboba Casino Resort

Gene Stachowski
2333 Soboba Road
San Jacinto, CA 92583
+1.951.665.1309
gstachowski@soboba.net
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Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino

Norma Schaefer
17225 Jersey Ave.
Lemoore, CA 93245-9760
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tachipalace.com

CONNECTICUT

Foxwoods Resort Casino

George Yerger
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Mashantucket, CT 06338
+1.860.312.7010
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foxwoods.com

Mohegan Sun

Stephen Olender
1 Mohegan Sun Blvd.
Uncasville, CT 06382-1355
+1.860.862.8988
solender@mohegansun.com
mohegansun.com

IDAHO

Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort

Dee Dee McGowan
37914 S. Nukwalqw
Worley, ID 83876
+1.208.769.2663
wmcgowan@cdacacino.com
cdacacino.com

ILLINOIS

Jumer's Casino & Hotel

Hollie Myers
777 Jumer's Drive
Rock Island, IL 61201-7606
+1.309.756.4679
hollie@jumerscri.com
jumerascasinohotel.com

IOWA

Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel

Diane Blomme
1504 305th St.
Tama, IA 52339-9697
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dblomme@meskwaki.com
meskwaki.com

KENTUCKY

Red Mile

Mary Catherine Jones
1101 Winbak Way
Lexington, KY 40504
+1.859.255.0752
mary.white@redmile.biz
redmileky.com

MICHIGAN

Island Resort & Casino

Cody Meshigaud
P.O. Box 351
W399 Highway 2 & 41
Harris, MI 49845
+1.906.723.2121
cmeshigaud@islandresortandcasino.com
islandresortandcasino.com

Kewadin Casino Hotel & Convention Center

Alecia Woodard
2186 Shunk Road
Sault Sainte Marie, MI 49783-9467
+1.906.632.0530
awoodard@saulttribe.net
kewadin.com

Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort

Melisa Brown
6800 E. Soaring Eagle Blvd.
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858-8432
+1.989.775.5498 (55498)
mbrown@sagchipp.org
soaringeaglecasino.com

MINNESOTA

Mystic Lake Casino Hotel

Heidi Keyho
2400 Mystic Lake Blvd.
Prior Lake, MN 55372
+1.952.403.5344
heidi.keyho@mysticlake.com
mysticlake.com

Treasure Island Resort & Casino

Carla Nygaard
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Red Wing, MN 55066-0075
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treasureislandcasino.com

MISSISSIPPI

Beau Rivage by MGM Resorts International

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beaurivage.com

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BONUS \$25 CASINO INCENTIVE PACKAGE*

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Meal/Retail credit can be used in any restaurant, a full buffet or shop at Mohegan Sun.

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Contact Stephen Olender at 860.862.8988
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*In order to receive package, bus group must stay for a minimum of 5 hours. Packages and offer subject to change without notice. mohegansun.com



NTA-member casino and gaming properties

NEVADA

Boyd Gaming Corporation

Jasmin Shaw
4000 West Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89103
+1.702.251.3560
jasminshaw@boydgaming.com
boydgaming.com

Four Queens Hotel & Casino

Pamela Dreyer
202 Fremont St.
Las Vegas, NV 89101-5606
+1.702.385.4011 (3070)
pdreyer@tlccasinos.com
fourqueens.com

Mesquite Gaming

Petra Jones
950 West Mesquite Blvd.
Mesquite, NV 89027-5204
+1.702.346.6800 (6890)
pjones@mesquitgaming.com
mesquitgaming.com

Montbleu Resort Casino & Spa

Anna Soto-Vopalensky
55 U.S. Highway 50
Lake Tahoe, NV 89449
+1.775.586.2077
avopalensky@montbleuresort.com
montbleuresort.com

Silver Legacy Resort Casino

Kimberley Thorndike
407 N. Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89501-1138
+1.775.325.7414
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silverlegacyreno.com

NEW JERSEY

Resorts Casino Hotel

Meg Lewis
1133 Boardwalk
Atlantic City, NJ 08401-7329
+1.609.340.7715
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resortsac.com

Tropicana Casino and Resort

Wanda Sosa
Brighton & The Boardwalk
Atlantic City, NJ 08401-6390
+1.609.340.4366
wsosa@tropicana.net
tropicana.net

NEW MEXICO

Hilton Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder

Diane Hunter
20 Buffalo Thunder Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87506
+1.505.819.2020
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buffalothunderresort.com

Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino

Charles Meeks
287 Carrizo Canyon
Mescalero, NM 88340
+1.575.464.7059
cmeeks@innofthemountaingods.com
innofthemountaingods.com

NEW YORK

Akwesasne Mohawk Casino

Michael Gleason
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Turning Stone Resort Casino

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NORTH CAROLINA

Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel

Matthew Pegg
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harrahscherokee.com

OREGON

The Mill Casino Hotel & RV Park

Amy Bailey
3201 Tremont Ave.
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themillcasino.com

SOUTH DAKOTA

Deadwood Gulch Gaming Resort

Michelle Patino
304 Cliff St.
Deadwood, SD 57732
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outsidesales@deadwoodgulch.com
deadwoodgulchresort.com

WASHINGTON

Emerald Queen Hotel & Casinos

Marty Youngren
5700 Pacific Highway East
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+1.253.922.2000 (3428)
martin_youngren@emeraldqueen.com
emeraldqueen.com

Lucky Eagle Hotel & Casino

Ben Scholl
12888 188th Ave. SW
Rochester, WA 98579
+1.360.858.3107
ben.scholl@luckyeagle.com
luckyeagle.com

Tulip Resort Casino/ Quil Ceda Village

Tracy Banfield
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tulalipresort.com

Yakama Nation Legends Casino Hotel

Lisa Orloff
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legendscasino.com

WISCONSIN

Potawatomi Hotel and Casino

Lisa Pederson
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Leaping whales and luxury

Located between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, Tulalip Resort Casino sits on beautiful, hard-to-miss property with fountains and leaping orcas welcoming guests.

Director of Sales and Hotel Operations Tracy Banfield says the staff works diligently to keep Tulalip the top resort casino in the Pacific Northwest by continuously improving the property and offerings.

"We completed a full guest room renovation in April 2017 and just finished a complete renovation of our meeting space last month," she says. "The resort's eighth restaurant, Tula Bene, just opened, featuring Italian and steakhouse cuisines. We will also be opening a second property one mile to the south of our current location in 2020, featuring another exciting casino with dining, entertainment and a new hotel."

Tulalip is a gem in the consolidated borough of Quil Ceda Village, which was established in 2001 by the Tulalip tribes. It's become a hub of shopping, entertainment and eateries in northern Snohomish County, with the Hibulb Cultural Center & Natural History Preserve, Cabela's and Seattle Premium Outlets close by.

"We are proud to showcase our own tribal artists throughout our property with Coast Salish-style artwork including prints, woodcarvings, baskets, clothing and jewelry," Banfield says.

The award-winning, AAA Four Diamond resort includes 192,000 square feet of gaming, a luxury hotel featuring 370



TULALIP RESORT CASINO

guest rooms and suites, 30,000 square feet of premier meeting and convention space, the full-service T Spa, the intimate Canoes Cabaret; and a 3,000-seat outdoor amphitheater.

"What we provide to our customers is an experience of impeccable service at a premier destination with luxurious accommodations, award-winning dining, a rejuvenating spa and casino excitement—all in one location with an abundant amount of unique activities nearby," Banfield says.

For more information, contact Banfield at tracyb@tulalipresort.com or go to tulalipresort.com.

Foxwoods has all the things

Foxwoods Resort Casino has welcomed motorcoach groups for more than 25 years, according to Sales Manager George Yerger. From bingo to indoor ziplining, the resort has a multitude of things guests can do without ever leaving the Connecticut-based complex.

"We offer multiple entertainment options all under one roof, such as gaming, over 40 dining options, two golf courses, two spas, two theaters and one of the largest Native American museums in the country: the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center," Yerger says.



Foxwoods Resort Casino

FOXWOODS RESORT CASINO

NTA-member Tanger Outlets' first indoor outlet mall is attached to Foxwoods, and shopping groups can browse more than 80 stores of premium brands.

The complex also encompasses four hotels with 2,200 guest rooms, seven casinos, and a 3,500-seat bingo hall offering two sessions a day, seven days a week.

"For your adventure groups, we offer HighFlyer Zipline and Monza, an indoor karting track," Yerger says. "We are also surrounded by several attractions less than an hour away, like Mystic Seaport and Newport, Rhode Island."

Motorcoach parking is complimentary, and all overnight packages for groups include dinner and breakfast, free slot play and retail discounts at the shops and at Tanger Outlets at Foxwoods.

The resort also features 35 casual and fine-dining restaurants, including California Pizza Kitchen, Golden Dragon and Cedars Steakhouse & Oyster Bar. The newest addition, the Rain Maker Buffett, will open in May.

Yerger said they're also focusing on non-gaming attractions, like the newly opened Stoney Creek Micro Brewery and the Top Golf Swing Suite, set to open in February.

For more information, contact Yerger at gyerger@foxwoods.com or go to foxwoods.com.



U.S. West

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

The cradle of cranberries

Groups exploring the southwestern Washington city of Long Beach can add a tasty culinary component to their tours, as the coastal peninsula is a major producer of cranberries. Ragan Myers, tourism and events coordinator for Long Beach Package Travel, has developed the Cranberry Coast Experience, which showcases the region's most popular fruit.

"It's an agricultural and culinary tour experience with cranberry ice cream, juices, teas and a host of other cranberry items to discover and purchase," Myers says.

The fruit has been harvested in the area for more than a century, and its growth and production play a vital part in the local economy. Major manufacturer Ocean Spray has a receiving facility in the area, and more than 100 of the company's co-op of 700 growers are located in Washington.

Myers says the prime months to visit are September, when the bog is

a beautiful crimson color, and early October, when the harvest takes place.

As they tour the cranberry bogs and meet with local growers, groups can get a full picture of the maturation process and harvesting of the fruit. And, if the timing is right, there are even opportunities for guests to wade into the bogs.

One can't-miss attraction is the Cranberry Museum in downtown Long Beach.

"A self-guided walking tour covers different varieties of cranberries, irrigation systems, and how crops are planted and cultivated," she says. "And the gift shop offers groups a chance to stock up on cranberry souvenirs, teas and other locally themed gifts."

Other popular stops include the Skamokawa Creamery, which adds cranberries to its artisan goat cheese; Cranguyma Farms, once the largest cranberry farm west of the Mississippi River; and Adrift Distillery, which produces a cranberry liqueur.

Getting bogged down: Plenty of hands-on experiences related to the southwestern Washington's cranberry culture await in the Long Beach area.



To learn more, contact Myers at rmyers@longbeachwa.gov or go to longbeachpackagetravel.com.

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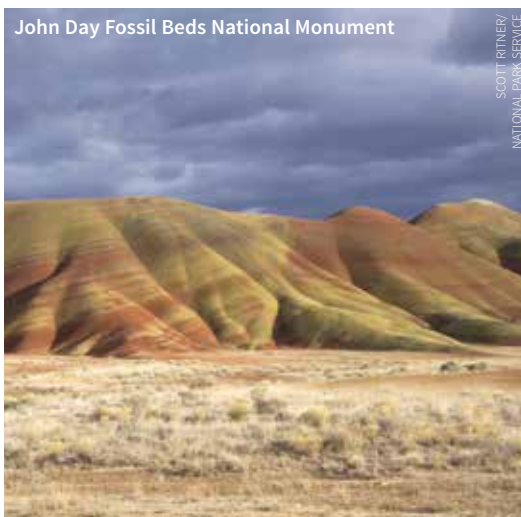
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Crater Lake National Park



Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve



John Day Fossil Beds National Monument



Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

The national parks of Oregon

Among its nearly endless array of intriguing destinations and attractions, Oregon is home to a diverse group of National Park Service-managed sites. Here is a look at five of those places, which combine to offer a look at the state's natural beauty and its role in the history and development of the U.S. West:

Crater Lake National Park *Crater Lake*

The gem of Oregon's national parks, Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the United States. The views from the many lookouts along the 33-mile rim trail that surrounds the dazzling blue waters are worth the trip, and more adventurous visitors can hike down the steep, one-mile trail to the lake's edge.

Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve *Cave Junction*

Miles of winding passages can be discovered below the earth in southwestern Oregon's Siskiyou Mountains. On excursions such as the Discover Cave Tour and the Candlelight Cave Tour, guests can see sculpted marble rock formations as they head underground for exploration.

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park *Astoria*

As they follow in the footsteps of the legendary explorers, groups can take in the beauty at sites along the Columbia River and the Pacific Coast. They can see re-enactments at Fort Clatsop, learn more about the coastal ecosystem along the Kwis Kwis Trail or take a paddling tour from Netul Landing.

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument *Kimberly*

The attraction's colorful rock formations preserve more than 400 million years of plant and animal life. There are three units of the park, with the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center serving as the starting point for group visits. Popular activities range from educational sessions with working scientists to hiking and biking.

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site *Oregon City, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington*

This attraction has four main sites—Fort Vancouver, Pearson Air Museum, the Vancouver Barracks and the McLoughlin House—on the shores of the Columbia River. A number of student groups annually visit the fort, which offers educational and entertaining programs led by interpreters in period costume.

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An attractive group of L.A.-area attractions

The greater Los Angeles area is one of the most visited places in the United States. Millions of travelers head to L.A. annually to check out the Southern California beaches, the ubiquitous movie and TV production studios, Rodeo Drive, the Hollywood sign, the great restaurants and so much more. A number of the region's top attractions are members of NTA, including the following 11:

Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

Los Angeles

NTA contact: Rowena Adalid
academymuseum.org

Set to open later this year, the attraction on Wilshire and Fairfax will be dedicated to the art and science of movies. In addition to seeing the museum's signature permanent installment, "Where Dreams Are Made: A Journey Inside the Movies," guests can see other exhibits that draw from a vast collection of movie items.

Bowers Museum

Santa Ana

Amanda Schobert
bowers.org

Founded in 1936, the Bowers Museum is one of the oldest museums in the Los Angeles/Orange County area. Its vast holdings include Native American, Pre-Columbian, Asian and African art. In addition to taking a docent-led tour, groups can enjoy workshops, special events, lectures, films, teen programs and more.

Catalina Channel Express

San Pedro

Carol Elliott

catalinaexpress.com

Catalina Express provides the most frequent departures to Catalina Island. From its ports in Long Beach, San Pedro and Dana Point, the company runs up to 30 daily departures throughout the year for the one-hour voyages, and it also offers eco tours that showcase the island's abundant wildlife.

Hornblower Cruises & Events

Estelle Miller

hornblower.com

In its 38-year history, Hornblower has provided a variety of tours, ranging from dinner and harbor excursions to nature-based and special-event cruises, from its many California ports. In the Los Angeles area, the company's sightseeing tours depart from Long Beach, Newport Beach and Marina del Rey.



Bowers Museum

BOWERS.ORG



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Developed by the Smithsonian, the exhibition is made possible by the support of Jeff and MacKenzie Bezos, Joe Clark, Bruce R. McCaw Family Foundation, the Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, John and Susann Norton, and Gregory D. and Jennifer Walston Johnson. Transportation services provided by FedEx.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections & Botanical Gardens

San Marino

Jane Sandmeier
huntington.org

This magnificent attraction—part museum, part botanical garden and part library—houses one of the world's finest collections of British paintings. Tours highlight the art, as well as the library's vast holdings. Groups also can see thousands of seasonal blooms in the Huntington's 16 specialty gardens.

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Los Angeles

Jennifer Greenebaum
nhm.org

Boasting an extensive collection of more than 35 million natural and cultural history artifacts, the museum is a popular place for both local and out-of-town guests. Groups can check out numerous exhibits on themed tours, enjoy special events and take part in workshops when they visit.



OUE Skyspace LA

Los Angeles

Heather Jones
oue-skyspace.com

OUE Skyspace offers magnificent vistas of Los Angeles from its 70th-floor observation terraces. Beyond the views, travelers can learn about the city's history through interactive displays, grab a cocktail at the Skyspace Bar and ride Skyslide, a 45-foot fully enclosed slide that goes along the side of US Bank Tower.

Pacific Battleship Center

San Pedro

Jonathan Williams
pacificbattleship.com

The USS *Iowa* was one of the fastest and most powerful ships

ever to sail the world's oceans.

During a visit to the coastal center in the Los Angeles area, groups can take guided tours of the famous battleship and find out about her service from World War II through the Cold War.

Pirate's Dinner Adventure

Buena Park

Anna Castillo
piratesdinneradventure.com

Join the cast and crew for a fantasy-filled adventure that takes place each night of the week, with matinees on Saturday and Sunday. In addition to seeing Pirate's Dinner Adventure regular show, "Legend of the Loch Ness Monster," groups enjoy a four-course meal before the curtain rises.

The Queen Mary

Long Beach

Sandra Richardson
queenmary.com

When launched in 1936, the *Queen Mary* was an ocean liner of unmatched luxury and speed. After serving in World War II, the ship docked permanently in Long Beach in 1967. Groups can tour this floating museum, learn more about its fascinating history and spend the night in one of the 347 staterooms.

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum

Simi Valley

Melanie Salvesen
reaganlibrary.com

Located north of L.A. in Simi Valley, this attraction is one of California's most beautiful and unique destinations. Visitors can see a full-size replica of the White House Oval Office as it was during Reagan's presidency and walk onboard the actual Air Force One aircraft that transported seven U.S. presidents.

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The more you know about Juneau

"Juneau is a great place for travelers because of its scenery and outdoor adventures, as well as its arts and culture scene," says Liz Perry, president and CEO of Travel Juneau. "Alaska's capital city is so compact and walkable that folks can go on a hike or enjoy a water experience within just a few blocks of downtown."

When it comes to hiking, groups have a lot of options. The city has dozens of trails, with views of verdant rainforests, rugged cliffs and picturesque waterfalls beckoning visitors to take a walk in the woods.

"There are hikes for all abilities in Juneau," adds Perry. "And we have more miles of hiking trails than miles of road."

She also recommends checking out Mendenhall Glacier, which welcomes more than 500,000 visitors per year. The ice mass, which is 13 miles from the heart of the city, is half a mile wide and 1,800 feet at its deepest point. It can be explored on foot, with walking paths leading to different vistas of the glacier. The trails offer opportunities for wildlife viewing, which can include everything from eagles and porcupines to black bears.

The city also is home to two history-related attractions, the Alaska State Capitol and the Alaska State Museum. Constructed in 1931 as a territorial government building, the capitol includes large marble columns, a reproduction of the Liberty Bell and a number of murals, photographs and paintings. Self-guided tours of the capitol are offered Monday through Friday.

The Alaska State Museum offers many perspectives on life in the 49th state, including the traditions of its many native tribes. Following a major construction project, the award-winning attraction, which is part history center and part art gallery, reopened in downtown Juneau in 2016.

For more information on things to do in Alaska's capital region, reach out to Visit Juneau's Kara Tetley at media@traveljuneau.com or go to traveljuneau.com.



Alaska State Museum

TRAVEL JUNEAU



Mendenhall Glacier

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Elko Events: From Basques and balloons to cowboy poets

When the Transcontinental Railroad was completed 150 years ago, Elko, Nevada, became a hub for ranchers and cowboys. This high desert community, located in the northern part of the state, pays homage to its Western roots—and other aspects of its rich culture—with a number of annual festivals, including the following six:

National Cowboy Poetry Gathering (January)

This popular event brings together entertainers and enthusiasts for six days of poetry, music, dancing, workshops, exhibits, conversations, food and fellowship rooted in the traditions of the rural West.

California Trail Days (May)

The California Trail Interpretive Center is the site for this weekend festival, which highlights aspects of early pioneer life around Elko and showcases the culture of the Shoshone people.

Elko Mining Expo (June)

One of the oldest and most respected mining gatherings in the U.S., the expo draws close to 8,000 people from across the globe each year. 2019 will mark the 35th installment of this popular event.

National Basque Festival (June)

Elko celebrates Basque culture at the end of June with three days of activities. Festival-goers can watch traditional dancing and athletic competitions, and sample authentic Basque cuisine.

Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival (September)

Each autumn, balloon pilots and enthusiasts converge on Elko to enjoy wide-open balloon flying at the foot of northern Nevada's majestic Ruby Mountains.

Rides & Rods Elko Classic Car Show (September)

This show transports guests back in time to the days of muscle cars and hot rods. In addition to seeing all the classic automobiles and motorcycles, guests can enjoy competitions, live music and food stands.

For more information, contact Tom Lester of the Elko Convention & Visitors Authority at tom@elkocva.com or go to exploreelko.com. 📍



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Ireland and the United Kingdom

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Mull of Galloway

Let's go down that road

The newly restored Moat Brae House is just one of the sites to see on Scotland's newest touring routes, South West Coastal 300 and North East 250.

VisitScotland's Nicole Graham says the south and north-east regions have great opportunities to seek out those roads less traveled.

"In addition to the stunning scenery, rolling hills, beautiful coastlines and one-of-a kind wildlife viewing opportunities, these regions offer accommodation options with greater flexibility and more availability, fantastic new attractions and far less crowds. It's worth extending an itinerary," she says.



Moat Brae House

GRAEME ROBERTSON

The South West Coastal 300, just over 300 miles, encompasses Dumfries and Galloway; Scotland's highest village, Wanlockhead; towns along the Solway Coast like Kippford and Kirkcudbright; and the country's most southerly point, the remote Mull of Galloway. There are harborside pubs and restaurants to find in Portpatrick and rich history to discover on the Machars Peninsula.

During a stop in Dumfries and Galloway, groups can see the Moat Brae House and Garden, which inspired author J.M. Barrie's "Peter Pan." The enchanted Georgian home was saved from demolition and will open in the spring with tours and events for people of all ages.

The North East 250 takes visitors through the whisky distilleries of Speyside to quaint villages of the Moray Firth Coast, and Aberdeen, known as the Granite City. They can see the famous castles of Royal Deeside, like the royal family's summer home, Balmoral Castle, and attend the Braemar Gathering and Highland Games on the first Saturday of September and see Highland dancers and athletes, top pipe bands and possibly the royal family.

Also in the south of Scotland is the newly opened Borders Distillery, located in Hawick in the Scottish Borders. It's the first Scotch whisky distillery to operate (legally) since 1837. Visitors can see the mashing, fermentation and distillation processes during a tour of the facility, which is located in a restored Victorian-era industrial building.

For more information, contact Graham at nicole.graham@visitscotland.com or go to visitscotland.com.

TOP: VISITSCOTLAND/KENNY LAM

Nothing is real (except these cool happenings in England)

Britain will be all abuzz in 2019, from literary festivals to opening an historical house to the public for the first time—one that inspired an iconic song.

“The global travel and tourism industry is more competitive than ever, and VisitBritain is dedicated to enhancing our tourism landscape and bringing market-driven products to life,” says Carl Walsh, director of travel trade, North America. “Through our consumer marketing campaigns, relationships within the travel trade industry and the Discover England Fund, we are able to deliver a range of new, world-class tourism products that keep Britain competitive and exciting.”

Strawberry Field, a former children’s home in Liverpool where musician John Lennon frequented to escape a difficult childhood, will open to the public just over 50 years after The Beatles released “Strawberry Fields Forever.” The large Victorian house, which was donated to the Salvation Army when it closed in 2005, will be transformed to include an exhibition space, a café and gardens, as well as a place that offers employment opportunities and support for adults with learning disabilities. Exhibits will explore the story of the house, the song it inspired and Lennon’s early life.

In October, one of the United Kingdom’s oldest literary festivals turns 70. The Cheltenham Literature Festival showcases world-renowned writers, actors, politicians and poets

who celebrate the written word. The festival is 10 days of more than 500 workshops, debates and interviews, and free family events. Visitors can also enjoy an around-the-world culinary adventure with street food and restaurants in the heart of Cheltenham.

For more information, contact VisitBritain’s Lisa Sjolund at lisa.sjolund@visitbritain.org.



PETE CARR

Strawberry Field gate

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UK churches: ‘Treasure houses of heritage’

There are some 42,000 Christian churches, chapels and meeting houses in the United Kingdom, and visiting these buildings can provide a better understanding of the past and its influence on today, according to Emma Clarke.

“The development and spread of places of worship play a significant part in the history of the British Isles,” says Clarke, project manager of National Churches Trust Heritage Services. “Churches provide a rich architectural heritage that reflects changes in religious practice, architecture and vernacular building styles.”

And because exploring churches (both old and new) is a popular activity among visitors to her country, Clarke is using a website, **ExploreChurches.org**, to help tour operators integrate places of worship into itineraries. The website provides photographs and information about the history and architecture of each building, along with practical details including hours, directions and access details.

“The ExploreChurches website will have booking platform just for tour operators, who can customize an itinerary with experiences that operators can only receive through the website,” she says. “We can arrange hands-on activities, afternoon tea or dinner in the church with the vergers (church official).”

The themes and interests represented in churches are varied:

- A tour of York Minster, which has a tremendous collection of medieval stained-glass windows, can be led by the master glazier. And visitors can make their own stained glass art.
- A visit to Lincoln Cathedral, where part of “The Da Vinci Code” was filmed, can include a stop at the hotel where Tom Hanks stayed.
- In Cornwall, groups can walk in the footsteps of the Celtic saints; discover crosses, standing stones, holy wells and hidden churches; and even camp overnight in churches.
- When visiting St. John the Evangelist church in Herefordshire, groups can also see the Shobdon Arches—all that remains of an 11th-century Norman church.

“Churches are treasure houses of heritage, history and community, and the U.K. has a wonderful, national collection peppered across the countryside and nestling in our towns,” Clarke says.

To learn more, visit **ExploreChurches.org** or email Clarke at emma.clarke@nationalchurchestrust.org.



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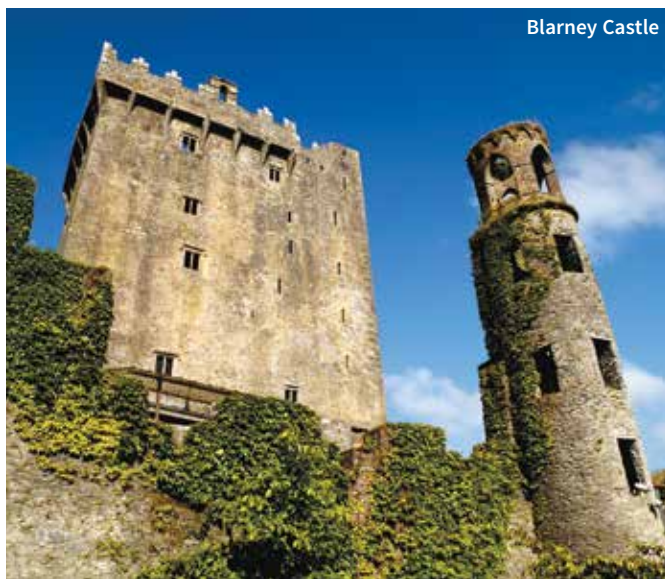
Lincoln Cathedral



Giant's Causeway



Tig Coili pub in Galway



Blarney Castle

Enchanted experiences in Ireland

There are treasures to find in the most-loved areas of Ireland as well as at those places that aren't as well known.

Sean Fenton, owner and manager of Enchanted Ireland Tours, says the company covers land arrangements from the time a group arrives at the airport until they leave, including transportation, accommodations, meals and entertainment.

"Ireland has vibrant cities like Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast, with modern-day shops housed in century-old buildings, and there are quaint towns and villages where you can relax in a pub and chat with the locals," he says. "We also have great food and, above all, the people are friendly and welcoming."

He says his most popular itinerary is 12 to 14 days of highlights that include:


Giant's Causeway A remarkable basaltic formation made of approximately 37,000 columns ranks as one of the natural wonders of the world.

Blarney Castle and Gardens The castle was built in 1446, and visitors can climb the spiral stairs to the top and kiss the famous Blarney Stone, said to bestow the gift of eloquence on all those who do.

And a couple of the lesser-visited sites that can be added to itineraries include:

Dingle Peninsula With an unspoiled landscape, it was once cited as "the most beautiful place on Earth" by *National Geographic*.

The Aran Islands Inishmore, the largest of the three islands, is steeped in history and resembles an outdoor museum, with more than 50 different monuments of Christian, pre-Christian and Celtic mythological heritage.

For more information, contact Fenton at sean@enchantedireland.com or go to enchantedireland.com. 

CHRIS HILL

TOP: CASPAR DIERIK



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Flemish Highlights route

Two wheels and three routes through Flanders

“The Limburg region in Flanders, Belgium, really stands out because of its excellent cycling,” says Marco Frank, trade manager for Visit Flanders. “It’s also an off-the-beaten-path region that is much sought after by discerning travelers.”

Flanders will host the 2021 International Cycling Union Road World Championships, and in advance of the event, Visit Flanders will be highlighting opportunities for cyclists of all abilities to hit the road. The DMO has crafted three suggested routes for cycling holidays, each with a distinct focus: beer, the art of the Flemish Masters and the country’s cultural highlights.

Belgium’s beer culture has been recognized by UNESCO for its historical significance, and as they cycle between breweries and cafés, travelers will be able to enjoy some of the country’s more than 1,000 beers and learn how the craft of brewing originated and how it changed over time.

The Flemish Masters route showcases the inspired works of painters such as Pieter Bruegel and Anthony van Dyck, and many significant events related to Flanders’ famed painters are slated for

the next two years. In 2020, Antwerp’s Royal Museum of Fine Arts is scheduled to reopen following a decade of renovation, and the route is dotted with churches and museums that display and preserve Flanders’ artistic heritage.

The Flemish Highlights route guides riders through Flanders’ small towns, on roads marked by natural beauty and stunning architecture. Cyclists can tour the well-preserved medieval city of Bruges, or they can learn about Limburg’s mining history at the Beringen Mining Museum and its reconstructed mineshaft. They can also pedal along a 200-meter path created through a natural pond, with the water at eye level.

Visit Flanders has created an online B2B portal with information about lodging, bike routes and attractions at flandersbikeholidaystrade.com. For more information, reach out to Frank at marco.frank@visitflanders.com.



A stop along the Beer route

Commemorate the Great War with French Incoming



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Chateau-Thierry American Cemetery and Memorial

French Incoming is a receptive tour operator that specializes in historical and cultural tours for groups, individuals and families. Tours are customized to each group's specifications, and while many of the company's tours feature France's well-known regions, such as Provence and the Loire Valley, the centennial anniversary of the end of World War I is the focus of several of the company's 2019 tours.

An itinerary based on the role of American soldiers in France might include stops in Meaux, just outside Paris, to visit its Musée de la Grande Guerre, which is dedicated to World War I. Travelers can also see the Chateau-Thierry American Cemetery and Memorial at Belleau Wood, where 2,289 soldiers are buried. Other destinations on a suggested five-day itinerary include the battlefields of the Argonne Forest and the town of Verdun.

Contact Pierre-Yves Mazeaud at py@french-incoming.com or go to **french-incoming.com** to find out more about the company's tours.

Leiden: The Plymouth Pilgrims' Dutch detour

The Dutch city of Leiden has long been known as a bastion of intellectual freedom. It is the home of the Netherlands' oldest university—which was established by William of Orange in 1575—and one of Europe's first major newspapers.

And in 1609, Leiden was a refuge for about 100 English religious settlers, many of whom traveled to America in 1620 and founded the Plymouth Colony. To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' journey, the city of Leiden has joined destinations in the U.S. and U.K. to participate in the Mayflower 400/Plymouth 400 program of tours and events.

Visitors to Leiden can learn about the Pilgrims' years in Holland at sites throughout the city. At the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum, groups can tour a circa 1365 home with furnishings from the *Mayflower's* time. In addition to seeing what daily life was like, guests can also view the museum's collection of seventeenth-century maps and engravings. At Pieterskerk, the city's oldest church, visitors will find the burial site of John Robinson, the pastor who organized the *Mayflower* journey.

In addition to seeing the city's *Mayflower*-related sites, visitors can walk along or boat through the local canals. Leiden also has sites with ties to luminaries such as Albert Einstein, John Quincy Adams and Rembrandt. Visitors in the city will have quick access to many of the Netherlands' other historical gems, too: Amsterdam, the Hague, Utrecht and Delft are all within a one-hour train ride.

To learn more about Leiden's Mayflower 400 events and attractions, contact Mincke Pijpers, marketing manager for Leiden, Key to Discovery, at mincke@leidenmarketing.nl, or go to **mayflower400leiden.com**. 📍



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Stephanie Dilling, Wells Gray Tours

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NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY



NORMAND HUBERDEAU/NH PHOTOGRAPHIES

Travel Exchange '18: From Harleys, stingrays and Irish dance steps to taking the first (or 51st) step in building relationships, Travel Exchange in Milwaukee provided a good blend of fun and business.

Meet the Members

Hotel Preston

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

NTA contact: Courtney Hawkins

Office phone: +1.615.361.5900

Website: hotelpreston.com

NTA member since: 2018

I see on your website that Hotel Preston is “a delightfully uncommon Nashville Hotel.” Tell me why.

There is only one Hotel Preston in the world. Our boutique hotel focuses on being social and genuine, without being pretentious. With our food, music and art, we strive to bring Nashville’s authenticity to every guest.

What’s new at Hotel Preston?

The Gallery at Hotel Preston is our newest feature, showcasing local Nashville artists. The Pool House is a lounge where guests can enjoy a refreshing cocktail with a pool view. We have added cabanas to the pool area, and our SaturYaY Pool Party features local DJs spinning poolside.

What are some of the amenities offered to leisure and business travelers?

Hotel Preston has an Honor Bar in every guest room. Guests can enjoy beverages and snacks that are all made in Tennessee, like the famous Goo Goo Clusters, Colts Bolts chocolates, hot chicken crackers and Speakeasy Chips, to name a few.

Where would you love to visit?

I would love to go to Lagos, Nigeria. I know I will fall in love with not only the beautiful beaches, but also its rich culture and food.

What’s the most unusual thing you’ve ever eaten during your travels?

The strangest thing I’ve eaten came out of my grandmother’s kitchen: pig intestines, better known as chitterlings.



For more information, contact Hawkins at courtney.hawkins@hotelpreston.com.

Borton Overseas, Journeys to Extraordinary Lands

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

NTA contact: Linda McCormick, managing director

Office phone: 800.843.0602, ext. 112

Website: bortonoverseas.com

NTA member since: 2015

What are some unique services you offer travelers?

Our destination specialists customize everything for our clients, from FITs to groups of any size. Many times, our clients come to us with a wishlist of what they’d like included in their itinerary, so we create an itinerary based on that. We also make suggestions to add or avoid specific things, so they get the most of their time and trip investment.

What are two of your most popular tours?

Norway is very popular, and everyone is awe-struck by the fjords of western Norway. Our FIT package, Oslo, Bergen and Norway in a Nutshell, features two of Norway’s must-see cities, and the Norway in a Nutshell

trip by train goes over the mountains and includes a fjord cruise. Our Cape, Kruger and the Falls tour features a safari in Kruger National Park and the chance to see the Big Five; Victoria Falls and a Zambezi river cruise in Zimbabwe; Johannesburg; and cosmopolitan Cape Town.

What are your personal favorite destinations?

Any destination where I can observe wildlife is my favorite. It was thrilling to observe penguins, whales and all the other marine life in Antarctica!

What tunes are you listening to these days?

I discovered Sirius radio and love 1st Wave. It takes me back ...



For more information, contact McCormick at linda@bortonoverseas.com.

Continued from page 48

name of the game this year.

As I sat in the final supplier forum on the last day of Travel Exchange and we shared insights, key takeaways and next steps, I kept hearing a chorus of “communication,” “collaboration” and “working together.” One panelist said this was truly the theme of the week, and I really couldn’t agree more.

Throughout the event, and across multiple outlets, we all came together as one big team to share ideas, solve problems, break down barriers and discover new ways to do business and excite our travelers. It was fresh, exciting and reinvigorating to be celebrating and actively pursuing a more collaborative mindset.

We are in this together! We all want to provide the best-possible travel experience for our guests, and the way to do that is by breaking down those walls and opening up a new way of communication and collaboration.

By breaking down the literal barriers of the appointment floor, Travel

Exchange ’18 also broke down the more figurative barriers between attendees. Instead of feeling like I was part of a group of suppliers and buyers, I felt more like a member of one big family—an integral part of giant wheel that wouldn’t turn without each individual piece working together.

I can’t speak for everyone, but I know I felt completely invigorated by the change. Sometimes welcoming change, as difficult as it may be, can lead to some of the best discoveries. For me, TREX18 was one of those experiences.

By embracing the new, I opened myself up to fresh ways of networking, met amazing new travel professionals and friends, and walked away with more connections than ever before. In an ever-changing industry, this was a change I was hugely excited to see.

I left feeling energized and reinvigorated by the new connections I made, the conversations we had, and collaborations that are on the horizon. I left feeling excited to see how far we can all grow together, to continue breaking down



NORMAND HUBEREAU

barriers, and to do things differently than the way they’ve always been done. More than anything, I left feeling encouraged by the sense of community and collaboration.

Our NTA community is thriving, it’s alive, and it’s up to us to keep up the momentum we all built in Milwaukee. The travel industry has always been like a big family, so with all of us moving forward and working together, how can we not win? 🍷

Alyssa Keshel is business development manager at American Music Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Reach her at akeshel@amtshows.com.

NTA EVENTS

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Fort Lauderdale
Oct. 4–8, 2020



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March 27–30, 2019



VISIT TUCSON



Anchorage, Alaska
March 18–21, 2020



VISIT ANCHORAGE/WINBERLY KELLAR



Washington, D.C. | April 10–11, 2019



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Reflections on TREN18

Breaking down barriers and inciting change

BY ALYSSA KESHEL

AS I WALKED through the rows of display booths towards the Travel Exchange show floor, it hit me. Something big was different. The walled aisles that we've grown so accustomed to were gone. Completely gone. In place of the familiar and comfortable pipe and drape and white skirted linens were bright green tablecloths and rows of empty, undivided aisles.

Only one thought went through my mind: How on earth was I going to find my appointments? That's it ... I was going to get lost. This wasn't what I was used to. I'd never seen anything like it before. Around me I could hear other murmured whispers of "it's different" and "we'll see how I feel."

I was apprehensive. I was resistant. It was change, and I wasn't prepared for change. I felt myself putting up a mental wall and preparing to dislike the new setup purely on the principle that it was not the way that it's always been done.

That thought made me stop cold in my tracks. I had just used my least favorite phrase in the world without thinking twice. I was ready to judge something before giving it a chance just because it "wasn't the way it's always been done."

How many times have we heard that before? At work? In our personal lives? It's a phrase that gets tossed around more often than any of us would like. My problem with the phrase is simple: If things are being done the way they've always been done, then nothing will ever change. And if we're not changing, we're not growing.

In our industry, change is inevitable. The travel business is constantly changing



as buyers, destinations and customers interact with our products, which evolve with new markets, demographics and technology. We are constantly adapting the way we think about our destinations and tour offerings to attract new types of travelers looking for experiences, flexibility and independence—and we find new ways to engage and reinvigorate our existing clients and tried-and-true tours.

Change is all around us, but if we resist, how can we hope to move forward as individuals and as an industry?

I resolved right then and there in Milwaukee to start over, to embrace the openness and change, and to celebrate the fact that it was a clean break from the way things have always been done. It's easy to resist change, but by embracing it and walking in with an open mind, I was able to see the beauty of what this change wrought.

It wasn't about breaking down pipe and drape. It wasn't about the bright green tablecloths. It was about breaking down the barriers of communication and creating a space that seemed to vibrate with energy.

Gone were the nods across the aisle, the quiet chatter and the furious

scribbling in note books. Instead there were animated conversations happening between appointments, an excited buzz and chatter across tables and booths, and old and new friends hailing each other through the aisles.

Buyers and sellers alike were taking advantage of the open layout to stop by tables and give hugs or make introductions, and to relax with good conversation at the rocking chairs (which is one of my personal favorite hot spots). People were playing games right outside the appointment area or grabbing a snack on the go.

It felt more relaxed—less stiff and formal—and the layout seemed to invite the kind of casual conversation necessary for building a true relationship. It created an atmosphere of collaboration and conversation that permeated every other aspect of the conference: networking events, education sessions, engaging workshops like BIZnet and even the business card game during the opening luncheon.

It definitely seemed like collaboration and a new way of networking was the



Alyssa Keshel

Continued on page 47

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