

# The GOLDEN STATE Effect

Four ways California leads on meetings

LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA

Produced in collaboration with



# MEET THE HEART OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



JW Marriott, Anaheim Resort



Westin Anaheim Resort



Anaheim and Orange County are outside of the ordinary. Home to 42-miles of coastline, elevated dining and libations, a mixture of refined offerings and recreation, Anaheim offers an array of venues that wow. Plus, with nearly 300 days per year of sunshine, the forecast calls for fun-filled events, networking opportunities and receptions.

Anaheim is ready for business. To start planning, visit [visitanahaim.org/meetings](http://visitanahaim.org/meetings).



# GREAT HEIGHTS & SIGHTS

These rooftop venues show off California's stunning outdoor landscapes

BY DANIELLE LEBRECK

CHARMAINE'S ROOFTOP BAR & LOUNGE, PROPER HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO



**O**utdoor events have always been in vogue in California. With its pleasant, Mediterranean climate in many areas of the state and eye-popping views of mountains, deserts, oceans, cityscapes and more, it's no wonder that when meeting in California, attendees crave time outside.

The best way to enjoy these views is from a high vantage point, of course, and some of California's most popular meetings destinations have added rooftops to their venue repertoire. Following are eight rooftop venues perfect for private events during your next meeting in California.

### Charmaine's Rooftop Bar & Lounge, Proper Hotel, San Francisco

In the heart of San Francisco's Mid-Market District—within walking distance from attractions including the Civic Center, Davies Symphony Hall, War Memorial Opera House, Moscone Convention Center, SoMa, the Theater District and more—sits Proper Hotel, the brand's flagship property in a landmarked Beaux-era flatiron building with 131 guest rooms.

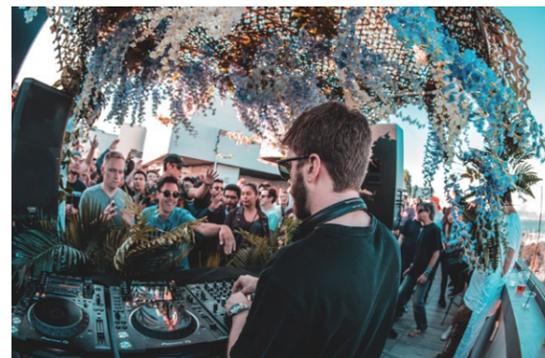
Atop the property is Charmaine's Rooftop Bar & Lounge, one of the city's few rooftop bars that is popular for private events. Self-described as where "the energetic chic of a European terrace meets 'California cool,'" the indoor-outdoor space can host up to 150. Partial and full buyouts are available, and for cooler-weather days where guests want to flow inside, spaces like the Indoor Fireplace Room beckon, while outdoor firepits are available for those who thrive in crisper air. Executive Chef Jason Fox offers an all-day menu and chic cocktails.

### Rooftop at VIA, Hotel VIA, San Francisco

In San Francisco's dynamic South Beach neighborhood across the street from Oracle Park, boutique Hotel VIA's rooftop space,

Rooftop at VIA, is no stranger to hosting high-profile events. From venture capitalists celebrating big funding deals and DJs spinning beats to San Francisco Giants events like a Buster Posey personal party, Will Clark's jersey retirement party, the 2012 World Series 10-year reunion and the Wall of Fame induction party for Hunter Pence, Rooftop at VIA can pretty much do it all.

The 3,000-square-foot space can host up to 225 people and treats guests to a sweeping view of San Francisco's skyline, Oracle Park, the Bay and Bay Bridge, the South Beach harbor and more. Amenities include



ROOFTOP AT VIA, HOTEL VIA, SAN FRANCISCO



Dive into savings of over \$600,000 and make a splash with your next meeting or convention.

**Immerse yourself in a completely turnkey meeting experience.** Hot, sunny days. Bright, electric nights. LBC is the perfect destination to turn corporate-style events into the extraordinary. A brilliantly designed campus of unique spaces sets the stage for magical experiences – indoors, outdoors, online. Spark conversation and connection in a glittering atmosphere filled with **our ready-to-go meeting solutions** – decorative chandeliers and built-in, programmable lights, a cool collection of stylish furniture and décor – **all saving you up to \$600,000.**

**Easy and affordable,** this unconventional city saves you thousands and makes for a refreshingly different meeting experience unlike anywhere else.

visitlongbeach.com @VisitLB





a full-service bar, private cabanas, firepits, heat lamps and club and view seating.

### Western Metal Rooftop, Petco Park, San Diego

While Petco Park opened in 2004, its Western Metal Rooftop building was built a century earlier. Originally constructed in 1909 as the warehouse for Western Metal Supply Co. and declared a historic landmark by San Diego in 1978, the storied building is now one of the ballpark's most unique features.

The building received an upgrade when the Padres began construction on Petco Park, and it now has three decks from which fans can watch the games. The rooftop is also accessible by fans and can be used for private events.

"We have honestly hosted about every type of event you can imagine," said Allie Asuncion, director of Petco Park Events, of the Western Metal Rooftop. "Black tie galas, holiday parties, networking receptions, general sessions, breakout meetings, product launches, tradeshow and game day watch parties."



WESTERN METAL ROOFTOP, PETCO PARK, SAN DIEGO

### Agua Viva, The Conrad, Los Angeles

Debuting July 2022, The Conrad, Los Angeles is the first of its brand in the Golden State and brings with it to Downtown L.A. 305 rooms, 12,000 square feet of meeting and event space for up to 300 guests—including a 4,800-square-foot ballroom with a connecting terrace—a 7,000-square-foot spa and multiple creative culinary concepts and cocktail bars. The Frank Gehry-designed property is located in the Grand Avenue Arts Corridor and within The Grand LA building, nearby cultural venues like the Music Center, the Broad Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The 10th floor of The Conrad features a

16,000-square-foot rooftop terrace complete with an outdoor private pool deck and Agua Viva, the hotel's open-air rooftop restaurant from Michelin-starred chef and humanitarian Jose Andres. The restaurant's menu straddles hemispheres, combining Latin and Asian flavors in dishes like Txule Burger, coconut ceviche and whole-fried sea bream.

Groups can buy out Agua Viva and the pool deck for private events. The space has been used for receptions, private dinners and live music from DJs and bands.

### Bar Lis, Thompson Hollywood

The French Riviera beckoned movie stars in the 1960s with summer spritzes and luxury. Now, in the heart of Hollywood, everyone can get a taste of the famed Cote D'Azur on the rooftop of the Thompson Hollywood Hotel. Smiling down on views of the Hollywood Hills and Downtown L.A. is Bar Lis, the crown jewel of the hotel, which opened in August 2021. The space is operated by Ten Five Hospitality, which also conceived the idea for a French Riviera-inspired space.

Upon entering, guests will walk down a 60-foot walkway lined by 30 cypress trees, then be greeted by a 10-foot antique water fountain. Gallery-style retro photography and a disco ball complete the 1960s rewind inside.

The lounge offers flexible options for social dining, group gatherings and private events, and the atrium has a retractable roof. The Women in Film Pre-Oscars party was recently held at Bar Lis, for example. In total, the venue can host up to 400 people.

### Desert 5 Spot, tommie Hollywood

Also opened in 2021, tommie Hollywood offers another unique rooftop space near Hollywood's famed Sunset Boulevard. Desert 5 Spot is a 7,000-square-foot rooftop pool and lounge that evokes 1970s Palm Springs and offers sweeping views of Downtown L.A. and the Hollywood Hills.

Conceived and operated by Ten Five Hospitality, this unique space has attracted events like the American Idol Two Decades Celebration party and boohooMAN x Landon Barker Collection Launch. A private entrance to Desert 5 includes vibrant mushroom wallpaper and a Seesburg '67 jukebox. After exiting the elevator, retro furnishing sourced from vintage dealers and thrift



DESERT 5 SPOT, TOMMIE HOLLYWOOD

shops complement yellow and pink decor, along with cacti and yucca populated throughout the space. Custom-built neon signs, Gibson guitars and more add to the retro desert vibe.

Live music and DJs spinning the hits of Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and more are a regular occurrence at Desert 5.

### La Serena Villas, Sugar High Rooftop Lounge, Palm Springs

Originally built in 1933, small luxury boutique hotel La Serena Villas in Palm Springs offers guests a dose of history mixed with five-star amenities resulting from its 2016 redevelopment. The property is perched over an acre of landscaped grounds in downtown Palm Springs within walking distance from famed Palm Canyon Drive, lined with historic buildings, boutique shopping and a plethora of restaurant and bar options.

Guests don't have to leave La Serena Villas for exceptional food, though. Its onsite restaurant, Azucar, serves up modern cuisine made from fresh, local ingredients. For private events, planners need only look up to Sugar High, the rooftop lounge above the restaurant. Intimate gatherings for up to 65 can use the space for cocktail parties, or up to 46 can enjoy fully hosted dinner events. The space has hosted events such as birthday and anniversary parties, micro weddings, rehearsal dinners, corporate dinners, retreats, wine tastings, tequila tastings and more. Attendees will also enjoy the stunning backdrop of the nearby San Jacinto mountains.

### Offshore 9, The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel, Huntington Beach

A trip to the beach cities of Orange County simply isn't complete without an event overlooking the ocean, and the rooftop terrace on the ninth floor of The Waterfront Beach Resort in Huntington Beach provides groups with one of the best views in the area. Offshore 9 is the highest coastal rooftop lounge in Orange County and can host groups of up to 135 for stunning views of the Pacific Ocean.

Light bites, specialty cocktails and a large list of wines and champagne are available at the rooftop. The space has hosted events such as happy hour mixers, networking receptions, paint and wine teambuilding events, yoga classes and more. [M](#)

# NOW PLAYING

## LA Meetings



EXT. COLISEUM — NIGHT  
Meetings as powerful  
as your imagination



MeetLA.com

In the Capital of Creativity, the 'next big thing' is always in production. The magic of Los Angeles turns planners into producers ... and your attendees have the starring roles. Los Angeles is **Now Playing**. We're just waiting on you.



# Green Machine

Three California cities leading in sustainability

BY TAYLOR SMITH



CONVENTION CENTER SOLAR PANELS, PALM SPRINGS

**T**he Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970 following the Santa Barbara Channel Oil Spill in 1969. After the April 22, 1970, gathering of more than 20 million people across the U.S., Senator Gaylord Nelson's Earth Day was officially established.

Since then, California has remained a trailblazer in sustainability, implementing efforts and initiatives across the state that continue to make it a leader in the country—and the world—in environmentalism and eco-friendly practices.

When it comes to the meetings and events industry, cities throughout California continue to adapt to their changing environmental needs, and welcoming visitors comes with a reminder to be environmentally friendly while in town. The following California destinations keep sustainability at their core while welcoming groups to experience their natural wonders.

## Santa Barbara

Going back to where it all began, it's no wonder Santa Barbara's rich history and environmental efforts have stuck since the Santa Barbara Channel Oil Spill more than half a century ago. When visiting, those choosing to fly into the Santa Barbara Airport will begin their journey in a LEED-certified building, said Beth Olson, director of sales for Visit Santa Barbara.

"Being that we started Earth Day over 50 years ago, it's always been part of our DNA," Olson said. "As far as being a green, environmentally conscious destination, neon signs are not allowed in Santa Barbara. We have two, but they're grandfathered. They've been there since around 1927, but nobody's allowed to bring more. There are no billboards. There's no neon. There are no buildings allowed over five stories tall because they don't want to take away from the views of the mountains to the sea."

Electric bike stations are available all over town for visitors to utilize, and all public transportation is fueled by liquid natural gas. "The whole concept of walking and biking and being outside is at the forefront," Olson added. "We have a farmers market six days a week because people are aware of, 'Where did you grow my strawberries? Where did these eggs come from? And are they cage-

free?' All of this stuff we've been doing forever and ever, and now it's becoming trendy, so we're doing it a lot more."

The City of Santa Barbara also has its own Sustainability and Resilience Department, currently consisting of the Energy & Climate Division and the Materials Management Division, that are responsible for energy efficiency and renewable energy, reducing city-wide greenhouse gas emissions, recycling, compost and picking up litter and waste. Clean energy incentives include creating green buildings with induction cooktop kits, which people can reserve and try firsthand through the City of Santa Barbara Sustainability and Resilience Department itself.

The University of California, Santa Barbara was ranked as the No. 10 Green



BEN HERNDON

SANTA BARBARA ADVENTURE COMPANY CHANNEL ISLANDS KAYAKING

# ALL TOGETHER

If you're looking to plan a one-of-a-kind retreat or a meeting to remember, look to Monterey County. With cutting-edge venues, spaces for groups of all sizes, and no shortage of stunning backdrops, we're all in on making your event all inspired.

[MeetInMonterey.com](http://MeetInMonterey.com)



MONTEREY MEETINGS  
ALL INSPIRED



School in the *Princeton Review's* 2022 Guide to 420 Green Colleges. Bren Hall, housing the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, is one of the greenest buildings in the nation and earned triple LEED Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Santa Barbara also has 20 oceans-friendly certified restaurants, meaning the seafood served is caught in a way that is not depleting the fisheries.

"Even within harvesting our local food, not only do we try to do it locally, but we try to do it in a way that doesn't hurt the environment," Olson said.

### Greater Palm Springs

Groups planning to visit Greater Palm Springs can also immerse themselves in the eco-friendly atmosphere of the destination, and one of Visit Greater Palm Springs' top priorities is gathering the resources necessary to help meeting and event

organizers plan sustainably.

While the towering San Gregorio Pass wind turbines, which produce 100% carbon-free power as the default option for the community, are hard to miss, solar

panels and zero-waste initiatives being implemented by hotels, resorts, partners and convention centers are harder to see, but Greater Palm Springs is yet another California destination leading the way in eco-friendly efforts.

"Our convention center does a fantastic job," said Lauren Bruggemans, director of community engagement and sustainability with Visit Greater Palm Springs. "It's powered by solar panels. They compost their waste from their meetings and catering. It's top of mind to them. They have specific signage when it comes to waste and putting things in the right place."

The Palm Springs Convention Center is powered by 2,574 solar panels, uses recycled paper products in restrooms and installed metered water faucets and low-flow toilets. Motion sensors throughout the facility are used to save energy, catering is paired with biodegradable plates and flatware and green housekeeping and cleaning products are used throughout the

convention center.

The center also captures 98% of all waste from food prep areas in both kitchens and recovers nearly all waste from plated meals at scrapping stations, reducing the convention center's waste stream to landfills by 95%, or approximately 400 tons, per year.

Resorts in the area have also installed industrial composting systems through ORCA, a leading technology in the food-waste recycling industry, as the city moves toward being compliant to the SB 1383 state ordinance, which requires jurisdictions conduct education and outreach on organics recycling to all residents, businesses, haulers, solid waste facilities and local food banks and recovery organizations.

### Monterey County

A longtime leader in the fight to combat the harmful effects of climate change, Monterey County is also a leader in sustainable meetings, and as it continues to be a top consideration among planners, Monterey County CVB (MCCVB) provides planners and attendees with the resources and information needed to make more sustainable choices through its Sustainable Meetings Guide.

From securing eco-friendly venues and accommodations to connecting planners with local organizations covering team-building opportunities such as environmental beautification and community engagement, the guide provides options for green meetings throughout Monterey County, said Teresa Savage, vice president of business development at MCCVB.

"With the shifts that we continue to see here, and more people and companies embracing the need to be more conscious, sustainable initiatives are no longer just an added bonus—they are a requirement," Savage said. "As such, the region offers a wide variety of environmentally conscious venues, lodging and dining options, in-destination transportation alternatives, volunteer opportunities and experiences that

bring sustainability to the forefront at every stage of the meeting planning process."

Globally recognized programs such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch benefit not just the waters of Monterey Bay but oceans worldwide, helping consumers choose more sustainable dining options.

"From protecting and preserving the Big Sur coastline to innovating water conservation at the famed Pebble Beach golf courses," Savage said, "we have seen our communities come together to collectively make positive impacts on the environment."

Portola Hotel & Spa, an environmentally conscious hotel that "has gone above and beyond to make significant strides in sustainability," Savage said, offers meeting and event planners the opportunity to commit to its Reduced Waste Conference Initiative, which includes the sourcing of organic and local ingredients, composting of pre- and post-consumer waste and a post-meeting recap of the waste diverted from landfills, as well as a list of locally sourced food and a carbon footprint analysis of the event.

MCCVB was also one of the first DMOs in the country to launch a dedicated sustainability platform with the introduction of its Sustainable Meetings program in 2015, Savage said. The City of Monterey also offers a number of LEED-certified lodging properties and venues, including The Monterey Conference Center, with sustainability efforts impacting indoor air quality, energy, water usage and more.

"It is one of only a few conference and convention facilities in North America to boast this highly coveted certification," Savage said. "From the materials used in construction and water-use reduction—including water-efficient landscaping—to onsite renewable energy and air quality control, meeting planners looking at Monterey County for their next event can rest assured that they will never have to forgo quality in order to protect the environment." 



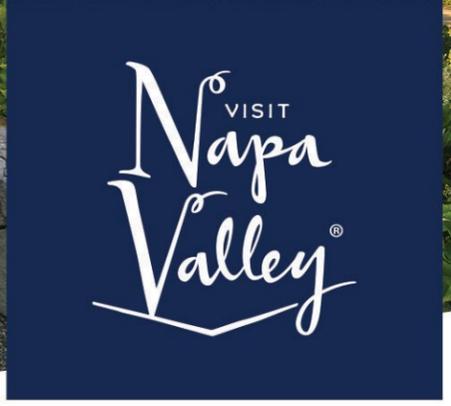
MONTEREY SEA OTTER

SEEMONTEREY.COM

# THE NAPA VALLEY, an IDYLIC LANDSCAPE to STRATEGIZE YOUR BUSINESS OUTLOOK.

*Beyond Napa Valley's stunning outdoor venues, world-class wineries and restaurants, idyllic scenery, and 250+ days of sunshine, you'll discover a spirit of collaboration that gives meetings in Napa Valley a flavor of their own. Here, creativity, inspiration, and innovation safely come together so you can crush that meeting.*

**BOOK YOUR NEXT OUTDOOR MEETING  
AT VISITNAVALLEY.COM/MEETINGS**



**#CRUSHTHATMEETING**



SAN DIEGO PRIDE

# Dedication *to* Inclusion

How two California destinations are strengthening their DEI missions

BY DANIELLE LEBRECK

**S**triving for inclusive meetings where attendees feel welcome has long been a mission of many destinations in California, which is one of the most diverse states in the U.S. We've previously highlighted how cities like San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland and Los Angeles have championed DEI initiatives, from creating equity councils to career programs.

This month, we explore what two more major Southern California meetings destinations—San Diego and Greater Palm Springs—are doing to lead in the DEI space.

### Expanding Leadership

A rising number of DMOs are creating positions of leadership on staff that are dedicated to advancing DEI efforts. Visit Greater Palm Springs (VGPS), for example, hired Lauren Bruggemans in June as director of sustainability and community engagement. In the newly created role, Bruggemans' efforts will work to grow and enhance workforce development, sustainability, DEI, accessibility and promotion



LAUREN BRUGGEMANS

of the benefits of tourism locally.

"My philosophy is that if we are going to start an initiative, we must be able to impact the topic in a positive manner and it must be measurable," said

VGPS President and CEO Scott White of Bruggemans' hiring. "I knew in order for these initiatives to have a positive impact on our industry and our region, we need a leader that has experience in these areas, has passion for our destination and will be innovative."

As Bruggemans has gotten started, she has been working to promote diverse vendors in Greater Palm Springs and

supporting the recent launch of the Native California campaign with Visit California.

"This is really promoting cultural heritage and indigenous heritage tours, and that's something we'd like to continue to support," Bruggemans said. "We have this really rich cultural history here and we just want to be able to assist in any way to amplify the efforts of our indigenous communities and help in any way so as to develop a product or a tour that could really showcase their culture and heritage."

San Diego Tourism Authority (SDTA)—led by president and CEO Julie Coker—has people on staff who continue to strengthen their commitment to DEI. Veronica Rivera, national sales director at SDTA, received a scholarship from MPI during the pandemic to become a certified Inclusive Events Strategist, for example, and was also named by *San Diego Business Journal* as a Leader of Influence LGBTQ+ Top 50 in 2022 in association with the San Diego Equality Business Association.

### Events With Inclusivity at the Fore

Many cities in California are known for their inclusivity. Global meetings and events are taking notice, and this is exemplified in the International Associations of Pride Organizers (InterPride) selecting San Diego as the site for its 2023 Annual Gen-

meetings mean  
*more*



In Greater Palm Springs, we put **more** inspiration into everything—including our meetings.

**MORE** air service: over 30 nonstop routes

**MORE** enhancements: over \$100 million in hotel renovations

**MORE** venues: a 261,000 sq. ft. convention center & unlimited outdoor meeting space

Add *more* to your next event in this Southern California meeting oasis.



Featured Property: Palm Springs Convention Center

visit  greater  
palm springs  
find your meeting oasis

meetingsinpalmssprings.com



GILLIAN WARE

eral Meeting & World Conference.

Gillian Ware, national sales director for SDTA, worked with San Diego Pride—the official hosts of the conference—to book the event in San Diego.

“San Diego Pride is a very well-established pride organization,” said Ware, noting the group’s importance

and history in the San Diego community. “I had worked with them on other programs and they said they wanted to bid on this and needed the destination’s help. I worked with them very closely to help them find viable hotels and put together a bid book to present to the board.”

Ware said that the bid book also included information on San Diego’s diverse neighborhoods, how the hospitality industry can work together with San Diego Pride and InterPride, what attendees can do while they are in town and an overview of why San Diego is an ideal choice to host the event. She noted that San Diego Pride has been a member of InterPride since the beginning, which also likely played in the city’s favor.

“San Diego is a welcoming city. No matter who you are or what you do, San Diego welcomes with open arms,” Ware said.

Working with San Diego Pride to bring InterPride to San Diego is just one way that Ware actively works in the diversity market. As national sales director, she regularly connects with diverse organizations across the country and puts them in touch with local organizations in San Diego to help support their events based on their needs, while also highlighting diverse groups and businesses in the city.

### Investing in Diverse Vendors

Offering a diverse network of suppliers is something meeting and event professionals are increasingly on the watch for as they weigh which destination they will select for their next program. In late 2021, SDTA launched its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Tourism Accelerator, a pilot program—and one of the first of its kind in the country—that is designed to promote DEI in the local tourism industry by providing free membership, mentoring, education and networking opportunities to businesses owned by people of color, LGBTQ+, women and veterans.

According to a news release from SDTA, Bank of America and San Diego Gas & Electric are the co-sponsors of the pilot program and will offer participants a suite of services valued at over \$10,000, including:

- Complimentary membership in SDTA and free admission to select SDTA events, as well as special access to SDTA senior staff, board members and program investors.
- Coaching from a dedicated mentor who is a successful operator or owner of a tourism or hospitality business.
- Financial coaching from Bank of America and legal training from Procopio.
- A \$500 voucher for a course through UC San Diego Extension.
- A \$1,000 credit to use on SDTA’s digital advertising platforms.
- A free quarter-page ad in the *San Diego Business Journal* for those businesses that are not already advertisers.

Julie Coker, SDTA’s president and CEO, said for San Diego’s tourism industry to thrive, it needs to reflect the diversity of the destination, build equity and promote inclusion to better serve the region’s residents while making it more welcoming for visitors, for both leisure and meetings.

“The aim of this Tourism Accelerator program is to extend industry support with real pathways to leadership within the local tourism community for the diverse businesses shaping San Diego’s vibrant cultural identity,” Coker said in a release launching the program. “Now more than ever, we need people with a wide range of experiences and perspectives to help rebuild our tourism industry to ensure that it is one that provides opportunity for all.”

The year-long program has a cohort of 10 participants, though SDTA is currently working to raise additional funds to extend and expand the program.

**NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED PEOPLE WITH A WIDE RANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES TO HELP REBUILD OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

*Julie Coker  
President and CEO, SDTA*

The selection criteria include:

- Applicants must be people of color, LGBTQ+, women- or veteran-owned tourism and hospitality businesses based in the San Diego region.
- Organizations must have operated for at least one year to qualify.
- Business categories may be, but are not limited to, restaurants, retail, activities and attractions, museums, transportation and meeting and event services.
- Excluded businesses: Any type of accommodation, airline or cruise line.
- Current or former members of the SDTA (and all affiliated organizations) are not eligible.

A diverse panel reviews the applications while also considering the viability of the business model, business needs and commitment to community service as part of the selection process.

Carolina Viazcan, vice president of sales at VGPS, also said that highlighting diverse vendors to meeting planners in Greater Palm Springs is a priority for the DMO.

“We do try to make sure that the vendors we use have a really good representation of what we want to be proud of, to be connected with,” Viazcan said. “Also, we buy a lot of gifts that we think are important to share with our customers that have a strong meaning behind them—a story.”

Some notable gifting partners Viazcan mentioned include Destination PSP, which sells houseware, souvenirs, customized apparel and other merchandise that reflect the destination’s personality, and Molly Moon Crafts, a small, woman-owned Coachella Valley business that specializes in candles made from sustainable sources and plants a tree for every candle sold.

VGPS also has a video series named “Art & Sol” that highlights artists, designers and performers who call Palm Springs home and puts the destination’s rich arts and culture scene in the spotlight.

“It’s really a commitment and a priority of this organization to really ensure that we’re including our small local businesses that have a diverse footprint in everything that we do,” Bruggemans said.



CAROLINA VIAZCAN



There’s dining.

Then there’s savoring farm-to-picnic-table charcuterie

and small batch Syrah in the radiant rose garden of a Spanish Colonial icon.

Toasting the moment is just a short flight or drive away.

That’s more than beautiful, it’s

# SANTA BARBARA BRILLIANT

*Meet What’s Possible in The American Riviera®*

**SANTA BARBARA**  
MeetInSB.com



# GOLDEN STATE TECH-TONICS

**C**alifornia has always been a beacon for those blazing their own trails.

Meetings Today touched base with three California-based technology companies to ask why the Golden State is such a magnet for tech, and what makes their products relevant in the changing dynamics of meetings and events programs.

## JiffleNow

For Ravi Chalaka, CMO and VP of product for Northern California-based JiffleNow, the Golden State, and the San Francisco Bay Area in particular, remains the capital of tech.



RAVI CHALAKA

talent, do you have the skills? If so, you're welcome here. It's the place to be."

JiffleNow specializes in scheduling automation and managing and reporting on meetings and events for large enterprises.

"One of the most important activities that happens during events is engaging with people. That is the No. 1 reason people want to attend an event or people want to sponsor an event," Chalaka said. "Almost all of our customers are exhibitors, such as IBM, Cisco, etc., who have their own events and then have meetings with hundreds of their customers."

When the volume of these meetings is so large, automating the process eliminates mistakes such as the incorrect entry of time

zones, allowing a sales team, for instance, to easily nail down times and locations for a sit-down with customers.

"We collect the data up front, so people can go prepared to be the most effective during that meeting, and then after the fact, those meetings can go into different reports for follow-up," Chalaka said. "Before JiffleNow, I had to have four or five people to manage the meetings, and after JiffleNow, I just need one person, and with less headaches," he said. "We would go to an event and 80% of the people were using spreadsheets and pulling their hair out!"

## Certain

Representing what may be a legacy company in an industry famous for skyrocketing startups and mergers and acquisitions, Certain stemmed from Certain Software, a San Francisco-based company that launched in 1994, with Certain born in 2011.

"The company has very strong roots in San Francisco, but now, like many companies, we're operating in areas that transcend any geography," said Peter Micciche, CEO of Certain, an enterprise event automation solution that delivers event data to marketers. "California is a great seedbed from which they take their knowledge and move it around the world."

"California continues to have a very strong influence," he continued, "but that influence is balanced by technology and influence from around the globe."

Micciche said a differentiator when it comes to Certain's model as an end-to-end event management platform is its focus on delivering data-driven marketing results to clients, including Fortune 500 companies that run tens of thousands of events per year.

"We saw early on that events are going to generate data, so we built into events technology to support that and drive that," he said. "What we're finding is field mar-

*California caused a technology earthquake that still reverberates throughout the world*

BY TYLER DAVIDSON

eters, event marketers, etc., are tuned into the fact that data is telling you exactly what your buyers are interested in. So, we have a rich mobile app that integrates with our software so that when you analyze it, it tells you what your customers want and need."

## BIZLY

"The reason why I moved here is because I had always heard about the Silicon Valley dream—building a startup, having a high concentration of talent here, and having a culture to build a great product. And there's a strong AI community here," said Ron Shah, CEO of BIZLY, a Palo Alto, California-based software company.

BIZLY specializes in streamlining meeting and event scheduling, with many top Fortune 500 companies using its software to book rooms with one click, especially helpful when booking

rooms to meet with clients during larger conventions.

Shah is impressed by the openness of California, both in business and socially.

"Overall, the United States is a fertile ground for new ideas, but California and the [San Francisco] Bay Area in particular, when you say you're working on a new idea, people want to hear about it," Shah said. "There is truly a community here for inventors. Within seconds of arriving at any event in the Bay Area, people ask you to introduce yourself and ask, 'What are you working on?' So, there isn't that apprehension—people are very, very open to connecting here around new ideas." 



PETER MICCICHE



RON SHAH

# Our Gate is Open™



## MEET WHAT'S POSSIBLE IN SAN FRANCISCO!

There's never been a better time to meet in the City by the Bay. See why San Francisco continues to be named as one of the World's top cities. We look forward to welcoming you!

[sftravel.com/meeting-planners](https://sftravel.com/meeting-planners)

