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¡ARRIBA!

The Mexican Caribbean

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HISTORIC HOTELS

Oldies, but goodies

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A Tour Through Time

The Westin St. Francis in San Francisco

Seven Historic Hotels That Charm, Serve (and Maybe Spook) You

By Natelle Fitzgerald

*W*hen you lead your group to a hotel that has been standing for more than 50 years, you're also bestowing a simple gift—the inevitable inclination to slow down and take in the property's history. You can have your Wi-Fi, your in-house caterer and, in most cases, those flat-screen TVs, but historical accommodations offer something beyond a night's lodging and a day spent in the board room. Aside from taking advantage of the usual amenities, guests are free to get lost in the moment—inspect faded murals and old stained glass, and listen to the ghost stories and love stories that pervade these time-honored landmarks.

► 1694

Hilton Santa Fe Historic Plaza

Santa Fe, New Mexico



Dating back more than 300 years, what is now the Hilton Santa Fe Historic Plaza originally began as the home of the legendary Ortiz family. Traveling from Mexico City, Nicholas Ortiz I brought his family to Santa Fe, the capital of the

Spanish colony. He saw the chance for wealth and took it—serving as a protector of the Spanish crown in exchange for land grants. Eventually, the rich merchant-rancher's hacienda covered what is now an entire city block, where the stuff of telenovelas—thievery, romance, politics and familial tragedy—once occurred within its adobe walls.

Today, gathering for hot coffee in the enclosed Chamisa Courtyard Café places you smack dab in the center the Ortiz's original open courtyard, site of the old fountain. Nearby, the 640-square-foot Aspen Room offers space for small gatherings, just as it did three centuries ago as the original family chapel. Over the years, the Ortiz estate passed through the hands of several owners, and by the mid-1800s portions of the property were divided into homes and businesses. By 1973, it had been refurbished and acquired by Hilton.

"To us, it is not just a building we come to everyday to work, but a home that once housed a prominent family that founded Santa Fe," says Karen Butler, director of sales. "We proudly wear the Ortiz family crest on our lapels as part of our uniforms."

The former hacienda now houses much of the meeting space and restaurants, and you can still see pieces of the original adobe wall (behind protective glass) dating back to the mid-1700s. Guests can explore galleries, museums, restaurants and shops only two blocks away from the hotel in Santa Fe's downtown plaza.

► 1792

The first public hotel was established in New York, called The City Hotel.

► 1891

Dolce Hayes Mansion

San Jose, California

Mary Hayes Chynoweth (her twice-widowed name) was the driving force of the Hayes family and the development of what has become a 33,000-square-foot mansion and convention center. Mary, well-known for her uncanny healing powers, spent many of her days making others well. Her foresight was also a prominent reason for her life's success. Interested in the original house and property where the mansion now sits, Mary and her sons gave the owners an offer—which was not ini-

tially accepted. But Mary advised her sons to be patient, and in 1887, 239 acres became theirs for \$47,500.

The first Hayes Mansion was completed in 1891, just a few weeks after the death of Mary's second husband. The triple-residence home comprised three wings that led to a common area where the family entertained guests. A fire in 1899 leveled the 22,000-square-foot mansion to a pile of ashes, and Mary hired the original architect to design another. On Thanksgiving Day in 1905, the Hayes family moved into the rebuilt mansion—almost twice as big as the first—with a similar shape to accommodate the families of her two sons.

Although it's unlikely that Mary's foresight included the property's ability to accommodate meetings (besides her large family reunions), the architectural design that she retained after the fire successfully serves groups of every size today. Each of the three wings contains meeting rooms and all of them have windows looking out to the nearby park. "We call it the Hayes Maze," says Lora Marquez, global sales manager at the mansion. "We are unique, with a very relaxing and open atmosphere—groups don't feel closed in. And planners don't lose their people because we're not right downtown," she says.

The property left the hands of the Hayes family in 1954, when it was sold to three investors, who almost turned the mansion into condos before concerned San Jose citizens halted the plans. The estate offers 33,000 sq. ft. of total meeting space, including the Hayes Ballroom, which was part of an addition built in 2002 after it was acquired by Dolce International. Guests make use of the surrounding 20 acres of the serene municipal park.

► 1904

The Westin St. Francis

San Francisco, California

The St. Francis is a time capsule of the great city of San Francisco. While its front doors lead guests out to Union Square—a bustling block of upscale retail giants—its famed Great Magneta Grandfather Clock has brought guests to each other for decades. A legendary meeting spot for guests, the clock was built in 1907, a year after fires from the Great Earthquake destroyed much of the original hotel.

"We love to emphasize the history of the clock on our tours," says Gena Egelston, marketing and communication manager at the St.





Francis. In fact, the hotel recently conducted a nationwide contest in search of couples with the best romantic story involving the clock. Today, this master timepiece controls all the other clocks in the hotel and continues to serve as the rendezvous point for visitors and locals.

Groups can partake in the splendor of the hotel's grand historic wing, yet also benefit from the modern amenities in the newer tower, which sprouted



"The Stanley is now considered one of the 10 most haunted hotels in the country," says Christine Lederman, senior sales manager for the hotel. "A lot of my groups request haunted rooms and they do the ghost tours." Reported sightings have included Freelan and his wife, Flora, and eerie sounds of children playing in the halls. To add to the fascination, The Stanley was also the temporary home of famous creepy author Stephen King, who stayed for five months to write *The Shining*.

Today, the property comprises the main hotel, the Manor House and the 300-seat Stanley Concert Hall. Imagine small breakout meetings on the cozy verandas; complete with casual furniture and sweeping views of the mountains, they're the perfect spot to listen to the wind drift over the hill and the occasional caws of shiny black crows.

in 1972. The 566-room tower features the Windsor Suite, where Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip once stayed in 1983. Perhaps your VIPs would enjoy the views as well. Or put them in the MacArthur Suite in the original historic section, named after General MacArthur, who used it as his San Francisco headquarters. More than 56,000 sq. ft. of meeting space is found in 34 well-appointed rooms.

► 1908

The first business hotel (the Buffalo Statler) opened in Buffalo, N.Y., with a private bath in each of the 300 rooms.

► 1909

**The Stanley Hotel
Estes Park, Colorado**

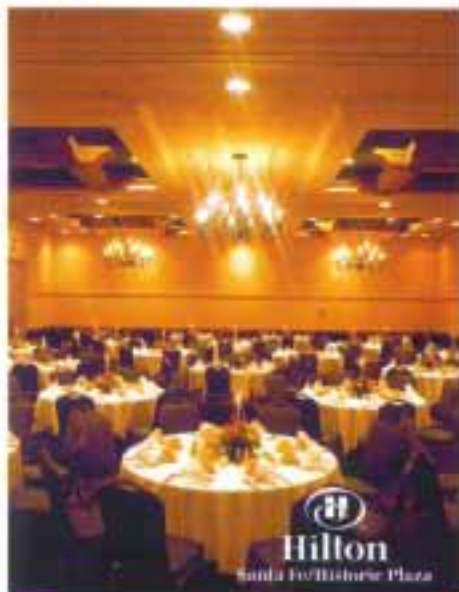
Stark white and red-roofed against a blue sky, The Stanley Hotel contrasts with the Rocky Mountain backdrop harboring mysterious ghost stories and more than 16,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. The original complex was an 11-building resort designed for the summer months and, therefore, lacked heating. However, it was one of the first hotels in the area to have running water, electricity and telephones. The owner, Freelan Oscar Stanley, and his wife, Flora, moved to Colorado to get away from the cold, damp weather of New England, per doctor's orders. After many years spent developing the current-day Estes Park, Colo., the couple passed away. But, as rumor has it, they haven't gone far.

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► 1909

After 1908's Democratic National Convention, a group of Denver businessmen recognized the economic potential of luring important groups to the area, leading to the launch of a convention promotion group that will later become known as the Denver Metro CVB.

► 1914

DMAI (Destination Marketing Association International) was founded as the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB) to "promote sound professional practices in the solicitation and servicing of meetings, conventions and tourism."

► 1914

The Davenport Hotel and Tower
Spokane, Washington



When staying at the Davenport, expect nothing less than classic features like marble floors, plaster pillars and gold-leaf detailing in the meeting space—all grand works of art designed by Kirkland Cutter back at the turn of the century. Tom McArthur, communications director at The Davenport, says that entering one of the ballrooms is like stepping over the frame and into the painting. "The architect wanted

to bring the world to Spokane. And the world in 1914 was western European," he says. Four ballrooms embrace the individual styles of French, Old English, Italian and Spanish, with the largest room offering space for 450 guests.

The hotel has gone through several owners and a few years out of operation, but thanks to the powerhouse team of two skilled local restoration specialists, the 15 unoccupied years of vandalism don't show at all. "It's not a hotel. This is a time machine," McArthur says. "Guests have an emotional reason to return to the Davenport." Or, even buy it, as the current owners did in 2000, after dating here in 1970.

Contrary to its old-world style, the Davenport is fully wired and tech-ready for your group. "People come here not only for the way it looks, but for the way it acts," he says. There is Wi-Fi throughout the building and the guest rooms have outlets for wired Internet access at no extra charge.

"The A/V staff was extremely helpful in supplying our A/V needs within budget, and the free Wi-Fi, hotel-wide, was a big plus, not only for me but also for our attendees," says Christopher Rochette, director of conferences for Airports Council International, North America, who coordinated an association meeting for 140 in October. "The meeting space was functional and very distinctive. You can't find the Davenport in San Francisco or New York."

The old-style treatment extends beyond the doors of the Davenport. If your attendees wish to shop downtown or see a show, they can relax in a black stretch Lincoln Town Car—complimentary within three miles of the hotel.

► 1920

Marketing materials for meetings come into use—as individual convention attendees receive typed letters from the bureaus announcing the convention dates, location of host hotels and a short write-up of the host city.

► 1925 Ashland Springs Hotel

Ashland, Oregon

Within the walls of the Ashland Hotel, you'll find displays of bird nests, eggs and insects—remnants of the natural world that attracted outdoor recreation enthusiasts to this Southern Oregon playground back in the early part of the century. With the allure of hot springs, natural baths, rivers and mountain settings beckoning to the crowds, the town needed a place that would accommodate them. Lithia Springs Hotel, the original name,



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was the first luxury hotel in the area, nine stories tall and equipped with a grand ballroom, an English garden and an adjacent courtyard—all of which are still used today for meetings.

By 1960, in honor of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the name changed to Mark Antony Hotel. "We are very proud of this property," says Karolina Wyszynska, sales and marketing manager. "We greet everybody as if they are coming to stay at our house." Wyszynska has worked closely with Sherry Bonfigli for many years. Bonfigli is a market support representative for Edge Wireless, who has coordinated the annual company party for the past seven years—all of them occurring at the Ashland Springs Hotel.

"After our event each year I ask for feedback from the attendees, and it is always a resounding positive experience and a plea to hold next year's event at the Ashland Springs Hotel," Bonfigli says. While the décor and boutique feel of the hotel are a big plus, it's the warm and friendly service that keeps Bonfigli coming back. "At one point we looked for another

venue because our company's growth was such that we were afraid we had outgrown Ashland Springs," Bonfigli says. "But as I looked around and found nothing that could compare, we decided to continue our traditions at the hotel and just try to squeeze everyone in."

Ashland Springs Hotel has 70 guest rooms, which received upgrades this past fall. Groups of 100 will undoubtedly enjoy the charm of the recently redecorated Crystal Room, which showcases a historic crystal chandelier that is now a six-foot wide centerpiece among antique chairs and gilt-edged mirrors. Five meeting rooms offer a total 5,700 sq. ft.

► 1927

United Airlines carried the first fare-paying customers coast to coast.

► 1927

Mayflower Park Hotel
Seattle, Washington

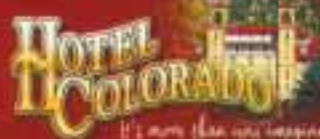


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The Davenport Hotel and Tower

Seattle, Wash.
thedavenporthotel.com

Dolce Hayes Mansion Hotel

San Jose, Calif.
hayesmansion.dolce.com

Hilton Santa Fe Historic Plaza

Santa Fe, N.M.
hilton.com

Historic Plains Hotel

Cheyenne, Wyo.
theplainshotel.com

Hotel Colorado

Glenwood Springs, Colo.
hotelcolorado.com

Hotel Congress

Tucson, Ariz.
hotelcongress.com

Lodge on the Desert

Tucson, Ariz.
lodgeonthedesert.com

The Mayflower Park Hotel

Seattle, Wash.
mayflowerpark.com

Tubac Golf Resort & Spa

Tubac, Ariz.
tubacgolfresort.com

The Westin St. Francis

San Francisco, Calif.
westinstfrancis.com

When you step within the Mayflower's 80-year-old walls, you might wonder why a blue and red capital "B" is framed in the stained-glass window on the mezzanine. Back when hotels were more often named after prominent people (than after corporations), the luxurious property was originally called The Bergonian, in honor of the well-known builder Stephen Berg. The Bergonian featured plush oriental rugs, a smoke shop and \$2 sirloin steaks for two. Today, items taken from neighboring buildings help to maintain its historical elegance—a crystal chandelier from the Fairmont Olympic Hotel's grand ballroom and marble from the nearby 1920s White-Henry-Stuart building.

The current owners, Birney and Marie Dempey, bought the hotel in 1974 after previous investors let the property sit for several years. They brought the six distinct function rooms back to life, totaling more than 4,300 sq. ft. The Plymouth Room, the largest space, seats 100 attendees among the glow of gorgeous chandeliers and brass fixtures. The Board Room, located on the second level, is ideal for a small gathering of up to 16 VIPs. For a cocktail mixer, stop by Oliver's Lounge, the first "day light bar" in the state of Washington. "Before 1976, when Oliver's opened, Washington 'Blue Laws' prohibited anyone from looking into a lounge where hard liquor was sold," says Stacia Williams, director of sales and marketing. Of course, the Blue Laws are long gone, and now bright floor-to-ceiling windows allow the light to stream in from the street in clear view of curious pedestrians.

The hotel is directly connected to the Westlake Center—where four levels and 80 distinct shops lure guests to take a post-meeting shopping break. Your attendees will love the convenience—and The Space Needle and Seattle Center are just a monorail ride away, also accessible from this area. Outside, neighboring stores like Macy's and Nordstroms are modern reminders of Seattle's thriving downtown. Carmen Serrano, administrative assistant for Washington's State Workforce Agency, helped to coordinate a national association conference in October. After the meetings, her attendees ventured to The Space Needle and Pike Place Market. "Everybody loved that the hotel was so close to everything," Serrano says.

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► 1929

Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa

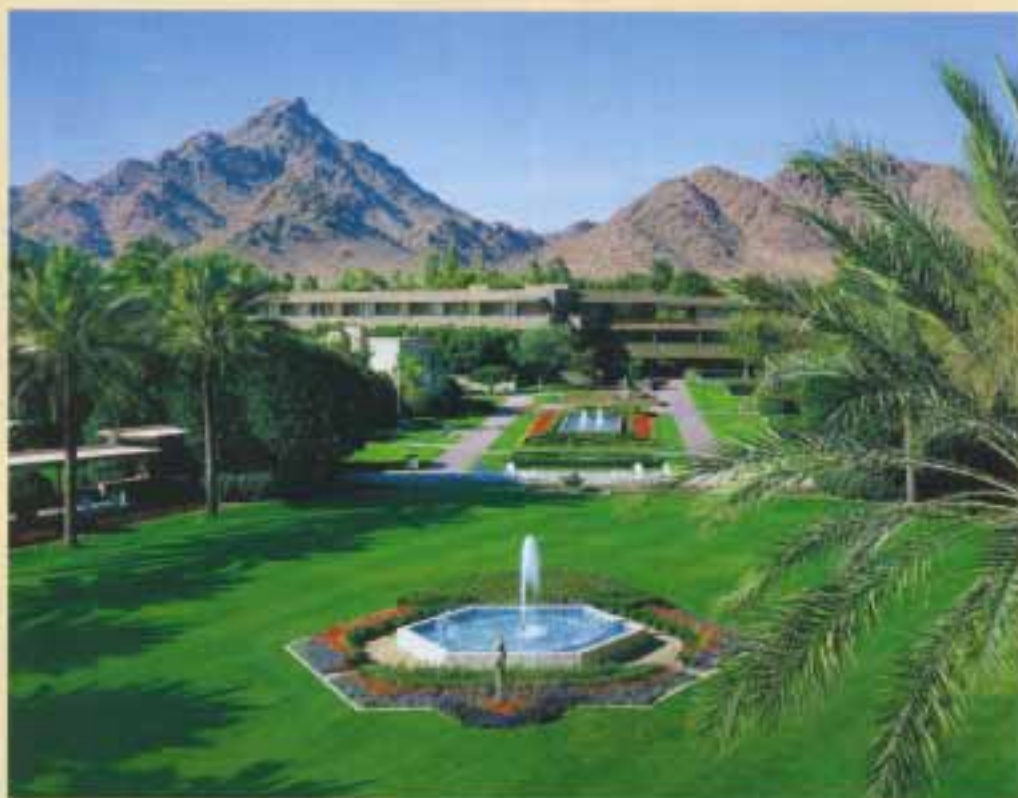
Phoenix, Arizona

Its long list of alluring qualities will excite any attendee, as it did years ago when hot Hollywood stars and U.S. presidents sunned themselves by the pool. The hotel, surrounded by spectacular views of thriving gardens and the Squaw Peak Mountains, is also one of Arizona's largest meeting properties, with more than 100,000 sq. ft.

Architecturally inspired by the styles of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Biltmore is referred to as the "Jewel of the Desert," as you'll see from the opulent natural materials found in the design. Copper roofs echo the surrounding desert tones, while glass blocks flood the interior with daylight. A mere moment in the lobby will stun you with the world's second-largest gold-leaf ceiling (Taj Mahal has the biggest).

Planners find ways to enrich their meetings with the historical quality of the space. "Occasionally groups will ask for a party that is relevant to the hotel, such as a speakeasy theme," says Julia Thorn, director of marketing and communications.

Two historically significant sites are great for meetings. "The Aztec Room and the Gold Room take the guests' breath away with their stunning architectural design and appointments," she says. If that doesn't do it, perhaps show your attendees the eight pools, seven tennis courts and 18 holes of golf. There's something for everyone at this world-class, 738-room Phoenix resort.



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► 1930

Various airlines were consolidated to form American Airways, Inc.

► 1941

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- Expo: Strategies and Solutions for trade show, convention and corporate event management. (expoweb2.pubdyn.com)
- Searchandgo.com
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