

# Connect

SPRING 2020

ASSOCIATION

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Planners and venues work together virtually to plan for when meetings and events come back in full force.

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PLUS:  
**15**  
over  
**50**  
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Milwaukee Art Museum

# BREW CREW

Milwaukee is buzzing with development that will score events for years to come.

By Michael J. Solender

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN'S LARGEST CITY**, is ready for its close-up. As of press time, the burg by the lake was slated to host the 2020 Democratic National Convention in August, delayed due to COVID-19. In September, nearby Whistling Straits Golf Course is still scheduled to be the home of the Ryder Cup, one of golf's most prestigious international events. Improvements and additions to help secure these events and encourage attendees to visit again will benefit planners for years to come.

The Greater Milwaukee area has more than 17,000 hotel rooms with more than 5,000 in the downtown core. Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport is only 8 miles from downtown and offers nonstop flights from more than 45 cities. Chicago, Cleveland,

Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis, Minneapolis and St. Louis are all less than a six-hour drive away. Milwaukee fights above its weight class offering historic and culturally significant venues, a hot culinary scene, a wide variety of accommodations, an easy-to-navigate footprint and great value. Here's what meeting-minded Milwaukee has on tap.

## VENUES

### **Wisconsin Center**

The largest of three settings (Miller High Life Theatre and UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena are the other two) that comprise the Milwaukee convention campus, this facility features 189,000 square feet of exhibition

space, a 37,500-sq.-ft. ballroom accommodating 4,000 attendees, 28 meeting rooms, a full-service business center and more than \$1 million of public art. Recently hosted events include Harley-Davidson's 115th-anniversary celebration (150,000 attendees), Church of God in Christ's international women's convention (10,200) and Northwestern Mutual's annual meeting (10,000). Three hotels, Hilton Milwaukee, Hyatt Regency Milwaukee and SpringHill Suites Milwaukee Downtown, connect more than 1,300 rooms via skybridge.

### **Fiserv Forum**

The gleaming anchor gem is the crown of the new 30-acre entertainment district and public plaza in

downtown Milwaukee, Fiserv is home to the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks. As such, it has Bucks-themed event spaces including an intimate Green Room and the Panorama Club, which can host 450 atop the arena with open views into the atrium and playing bowl, and an outdoor patio with vistas of downtown Milwaukee.

### Milwaukee Public Market

One of the Midwest's truly spectacular food halls, Milwaukee Public Market features the best of the region's purveyors, artisanal growers, makers and chefs. MPM delivers a tasty option for groups to enjoy a special taste of the region with cooking classes, demos, and wine and beer tastings. Market buyouts and meals for up to 150 seated or 200 at a cocktail-style reception are also available.

### Milwaukee Art Museum

The visually arresting Santiago Calatrava-designed MAM is perched along the western shores of Lake Michigan and is one of the city's most engaging event spaces. Up to 1,700 can be hosted in the dramatic Windhover Hall, an ascending 90-foot-high atrium holding events from giant yoga classes to formal seated dinners. Lubar Auditorium has 265 seats in a fully AV-equipped lecture hall for presentations. Multiple indoor-outdoor catered event spaces offer flexibility for planners.

### Harley-Davidson Museum

Twenty acres, three buildings and hundreds of vintage "hogs" greet groups at the Harley-Davidson Museum where special Harley-themed event spaces like The Garage host events for up to 10,000.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

### Potawatomi Hotel & Casino

Groups find 500 rooms at the 19-story Potawatomi Hotel & Casino—built in 2014 with a second tower added in 2019—just minutes from Milwaukee's city center. The property offers gaming, a spa, and specialized event and hospitality spaces for VIP entertaining.

### Saint Kate

This independent arts hotel is one of the new kids on the block, having opened in summer 2019 with 219 rooms. Located in the hub of Milwaukee's theater district, Saint Kate embraces all forms of artistry with two dedicated gallery spaces, a 90-seat black box theater, a performing artist-in-residence program and pop-up musical, theateric and dance programs.

### Kimpton Journeyman Hotel

Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward hosts this 158-room property, which has a stunning rooftop lounge that offers dramatic city views and is a favored option for receptions. The property received the AAA Four



### New CEO



**Peggy Williams-Smith** was the only candidate for Visit Milwaukee's new president and CEO, jokes Omar Shaikh, chair of the CVB's board of directors. The truth is Williams-Smith was the only one right for the Milwaukee job, which she accepted in September 2019. She has been a Milwaukee staple since graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1994. She most recently served as senior vice president of Marcus Hotels & Resorts, a national company based in Milwaukee where she worked for the past 13 years. Williams-Smith is the first woman to hold the CVB's CEO title.



Fiserv Forum

Diamond award in 2019 and was selected by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best hotels in Milwaukee in 2019.

## DINE AROUND

### Bartolotta Catering & Events

No restaurant group means more to Milwaukee than that started by brothers Joe and Paul Bartolotta from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Paul, a two-time James Beard Award-winning chef, brought his culinary wizardry to beloved fine and casual dining concepts in the city with Ristorante Bartolotta, Bacchus, Harbor House, The Rumpus Room, The Grain Exchange and a dozen other well-regarded establishments. Co-

founder Joe, always the front-facing extrovert, focused the business on key tenets of hospitality: employees, guests, vendors, community and the bottom line. Instrumental in Milwaukee's award of DNC 2020, Joe passed away in 2019, and The Bartolotta Restaurants have doubled down on its commitment to realize his mission and do Joe proud.

### Lakefront Brewery Beer Hall

No visit to Milwaukee is complete without a visit to this award-winning brewhouse. Cheese curds, brats, German pretzels and Lakefront's fabled fish fry pair with specialty Pilsners, ales, lagers and sour beers handcrafted by one of Milwaukee's most highly regarded breweries.