

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS



DATA: YTD M+C **62**



MEETING FOODIES **58**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS **64**

Meet and Eat

Restaurants Boost, Benefit From Meetings & Events

By KATIE MURAR

The second-most asked question at meetings and events is “Which way to the Ballroom?”

The answer is likely along the lines of “Down the hall, turn left, double doors.”

The most-asked question is, “Where should we eat?”

OC’s answer is, “Everywhere.”

Local restaurants are upping their eating game big time as meetings and conventions continue to drive travel to key cities and boost the economic impact to the county overall (see chart, page 62).



Burress: touts ‘farm-to-table’

OC’s epicenter for travel and tourism is often Anaheim—**Anaheim Convention Center** and **Disneyland Resort** and thousands of hotel rooms—but other areas more than hold their

own including coastal areas and key pockets where the foodie revolution continues fighting its culinary battles.

The county’s comestibles are far from an after-thought in the minds of meeting planners—and attendees—and hotel food offerings often compete with stand-alone restaurants attracting larger groups. Hospitality providers responding to the “room and bored” issue then must renovate and reimagine their work and all benefit.

Especially at lunch.



Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach’s wine-loving Watertable

Boon

Restaurants have begun to be seen as a beneficiary and booster for meetings, conventions, incentive-based travel and other events.

“As larger groups come to town, restaurants play a huge part in making a successful citywide event,” **Jay Burress**, president and chief executive of **Visit Anaheim**, which promotes the city for business and leisure travel. “It’s big.”

Restaurants typically earn much higher profit margins on group events, when compared to normal diners.

The Business Journal reported in May on Burress’ group hosting **IPW**, a five-day gathering at the convention center held in June, which showcased the area for groups that bring future event bookings and tourism and restaurants were key to that, putting their best food forward for attendees.

Burress has long wanted greater exposure for area restaurants and Visit Anaheim incorporates them into convention bids and other pitches.

“Having enough off-site venues for entertainment and dining is huge,” when the area

presents a package to groups planning events, said Burress, whose group is often a “matchmaker” between clients and restaurants.

Bussers

Restaurants can drive the local travel industry’s tour bus—and not just at hotels.

“Clients are looking for restaurants that have private rooms and can cater to large groups,” Burress said. “That can offer something unique and personalized.”

The **Ranch Restaurant & Saloon**, an eatery a few miles from the convention center is “aggressive” in approaching group business, according to Marketing Director **Heather Heleloa**.

“We make sure we are an expansion of the convention center,” Heleloa said. “We also work with other restaurants in the area” to coordinate schedules. If the Ranch can’t accommodate a group in the area, another restaurant might.

It’s active in drawing attention to itself online—SEO strategy is a thing for them—and touts customizable space, menus and audiovisual elements to secure groups including **Microsoft**, **Google**, **Kaiser**, and **Boys & Girls Clubs**.

“We are only limited by our client’s creativity,” she said.

Brilliance

Creativity extends to menus—and how to fit everyone into one space.

The Ranch’s Executive Chef **Michael Rossi** can customize meals for groups with

► *Meeting Food 60*



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Meeting Food

► from page 58

bigger budgets. Burrell said he's seen sites craft menus themed to match groups, such as a heart-healthy menu for the **American Heart Association**.

"If a restaurant has farm to table options, that's a huge plus," Burrell said.

House of Blues, at **Anaheim Garden-Walk**, has added items by request, including poke and street tacos.

Senior Sales Manager **Vanessa Burroughs** said the venue loves its group business and would shut down regularly for private events if it could: they're far more lucrative than a standard reservation-filled evening, she said.



Rossi at the Ranch

If there aren't full buyouts, the restaurant "plays Tetris" to fit several smaller groups into its space at the same time.

She said HOB acts as its own meeting planner, working with groups to secure everything from food to linens to the security for guests, if needed.

The restaurant is owned by L.A.-based **Live Nation Entertainment Inc.** (NYSE: LYV), which makes it a magnet for high-profile guests and gives it access to talent for entertaining them.

Beachfront

Coastal restaurants are farther from the convention center, but it doesn't seem to matter; the Pacific Ocean works as a nice backdrop as well.

Monarch Bay Club at Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point closed and reopened earlier this year for a renovation that ex-



Aveo at Monarch Beach

panded its bar and added a private entrance to the beach. The 400-room resort regularly touts its seven other food and beverage venues as part of its meeting space offerings, including **Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak**, which opened last year in the space of its previous **Stonehill Tavern**.

Balboa Bay Resort has been marketing its two restaurants, **Waterline** and **A&O**, as options for small group events or buyouts. The hotel, with about 160 rooms, shuttered its **First Cabin** restaurant for **Waterline** in 2014 and recently went through another revamp with an upgraded patio and private lounge area.

Farther up the coast, **Westin Long Beach**, amid a \$23 million overall renovation, opened the new **Navy Proof Food & Spirits**, which hypes locally sourced seafood and meat, and seasonal ingredients to tie-in with dining trends.

With its "New American" fare, the restau-

rant shops a tableside cocktail service, with drinks created for larger parties, or larger drinks designed for at least two people.

Also marketing a seasonal and local menu is **Watertable at Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa**. It just received an Award of Excellence designation in Wine Spectator's 2019 Restaurant Awards.

Bravo

Indie restaurants in the area—those not tied-in closely with a resort area or hotel—aim at upscale tasting menus and different dinner experiences to encourage group buyouts or events.

Fleming's in Newport Beach, for instance, sounds transcendent notes: "unique, 360-degree culinary experience" to "truly immerse guests using all five senses," said President **Beth Scott**.

The restaurant shuts off a dining room



Sucker lunch: octopus at Fleming's

and adds "virtual panoramic projections and natural sounds" to evoke "ocean, farms and vineyards that inspired the menu selections."

An example: a wagyu ribeye medallion with root vegetables paired with Daou Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon from Paso Robles.

Olea Newport Beach is only open for dinner—it highlights a patio for private receptions—but said group buyouts are popular for private lunches.

Costa Mesa has taken all this a step further: branding the city for several years as a foodie destination, complete with its own trademarked term: Eatcation. The website for the city's destination marketer **Travel Costa Mesa**, frequently highlights venues for group travel. **Old Vine Café** at The Camp, for instance, has been a popular group choice for its fixed-price wine-pairing meals. ■

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Plus: Now through the end of 2019 -- take a thrill ride through the Space Race in the highly-acclaimed and stunningly visual special exhibit Apollo 11: One Giant Leap for Mankind, an interactive celebration of the 50th anniversary of the historic mission that took the first men to the moon. Get up close to real moon rocks, see tools that were used by the astronauts on the mission and walk on the moon alongside Commander Neil Armstrong in an all-new virtual reality experience. Buzz Aldrin toured the exhibit for the July 2019 50th anniversary of Apollo 11 and called it "a wonderful walk down memory lane!"

Receiving Rave Reviews

The Nixon Library was inducted into the TripAdvisor Hall of Fame and has been honored with the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for five consecutive years.

The Nixon Library has received more than 500 five-star reviews in the last two years from guests who have traveled from all over the world.

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Data Analysis

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

Estimated totals for large local gatherings—"citywide events"—in Anaheim, with OC-wide impact, through August. Three shows—NAMM, Natural Products Expo West, WonderCon—saw a combined 267,000 attendees this year.

Events

36

Attendance

714K

Regional Lodging Sales

\$274M

Regional Economic Impact


\$1.1B

Source: Visit Anaheim, CIC Research
Graphic by Brette Miller



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EVENTS Calendar

Compiled by Brian Alvarado

This list of conventions, trade and consumer shows, and other happenings includes events scheduled from Aug. 12 through July 31, 2020.

Information was obtained from Visit Anaheim, the city of Anaheim, the Anaheim Convention Center, the OC Fair & Event Center, and Visit Huntington Beach.

Our calendar isn't comprehensive. Attendance figures are listed where available and are based on prior years and other indicators and expectations. Please check if shows are open to the public before planning to attend.

Single-day events, concerts and professional sports games are excluded.

For more information about particular shows, contact Visit Anaheim at visitanahaim.org; Anaheim Convention Center at anaheimconvention-center.com; the OC Fair & Event Center at ocfair.com; or Visit Huntington Beach at surfcityusa.com.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Event: D23 Expo 2019
Date: Aug. 23-25
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Halo: Outpost Discovery Anaheim
Date: Aug. 30-Sept. 1
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Huntington Beach Civil War Days
Date: Aug. 31-Sept. 1
Location: Huntington Beach Central Park

Event: Tall Ships Festival
Date: Sept. 6-8
Location: Ocean Institute in Dana Point

Event: Surf City Days & He'e Nalu Aloha Pier Fest
Date: Sept. 14-15



Tall Ships Festival sails to Dana Point next month

Location: Huntington Beach

Event: Quilt, Craft and Sewing Festival
Date: Oct. 3-5
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Huntington Beach Airshow
Date: Oct. 4-6
Location: Huntington Beach

Event: Laguna Beach Plein Air Painting Invitational
Date: Oct. 5-13
Location: Laguna Beach

Event: Silverado Days
Date: Oct. 18-20

Location: William Peak Park in Buena Park
Attendance: 60,000

Event: BlizzCon 2019
Date: Nov. 1-2
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Huntington Harbour Boat Parade
Date: Dec. 14-15
Location: Huntington Harbour in Huntington Beach

Event: Cruise of Lights
Date: Dec. 17-23
Location: Huntington Beach

Event: Christmas Boat Parade
Date: Dec. 18-22
Location: Newport Beach

Event: WonderCon
Date: April 10-12
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

AUTOMOTIVE

Event: The Great Labor Day Cruise
Date: Aug. 31-Sept. 1
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Sammy Hagar's High Tide Beach Party & Car Show
Date: Sept. 28-29
Location: Huntington Beach

Event: Orange County International Auto Show
Date: Oct. 3-6
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

FASHION

Event: Opal Gem and Jewelry Show
Date: Nov. 2-3
Location: Business Expo Center in Anaheim

FOOD/BEVERAGE

Event: Pacific Wine & Food Classic
Date: Aug. 17-18
Location: Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort in Newport Beach

Event: OC Night Market
Date: Aug. 23-25
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Orange International Street Fair
Date: Aug. 30- Sept. 1
Location: Old Towne Orange

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Event: Oktoberfest 2019
Date: Sept. 8-Nov. 3
Location: Old World Huntington Beach

Event: OC Japan Fair
Date: Oct. 18-20
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: California Wine Festival
Date: Oct. 25-26
Location: Paséa Hotel & Spa in Huntington Beach

✦ **HEALTH**

Event: Bold Conference 2019
Date: Aug. 13-15
Location: Marriott Anaheim

Event: Anaheim Health & Citizenship Fair
Date: Sept. 21-22
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: NHF Bleeding Disorders Conference 2019
Date: Oct. 3-5
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: ObesityHelp 2019 National Conference
Date: Oct. 4-5
Location: Delta Hotels by Marriott Anaheim Garden Grove

Event: Pri-Med West Annual Conference 2020
Date: May 6-9
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: CDA Presents the Art and Science of Dentistry
Date: May 16-18
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

✦ **MANUFACTURING**

Event: MD&M West
Date: Feb. 11-13
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

✦ **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Event: CSCMP EDGE 2019

Dates: Sept. 15-18
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: 2019 CoreNet Global Summit
Dates: Oct. 20-22
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: 2019 WE Annual Conference
Dates: Nov. 7-9
Locations: Anaheim Convention Center

✦ **RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

Event: SCRC Catholic Renewal Convention
Date: Aug. 30-Sept. 1
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Los Angeles Religious Education Congress
Date: Feb. 20-23
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

✦ **RETAIL/CONSUMER PRODUCTS**

Event: Crossroads of the West Gun Shows
Date: Aug. 17-18
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Reef-A-Palooza
Date: Aug. 17-18
Location: Anaheim Marriott

Event: SoCal World Guitar Show
Date: Aug. 17-18
Location: OC Fair & Events Center

Event: Gem Faire
Date: Aug. 23-25, Oct. 11-13, Dec. 6-8
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Flying Miz Daisy Vintage Market
Date: Nov. 8-9
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Anaheim Home and Garden Show
Date: Sept. 13-15
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: OC Home & Holiday Expo
Date: Oct. 12-13

Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: DesignerCon
Date: Nov. 22-24
Location: Anaheim Convention Center
Attendance: 65,000

Event: The NAMM Show
Date: Jan. 16-19
Location: Anaheim Convention Center
Attendance: 115,000

Event: OC Home & Garden Show
Date: Feb. 21-23
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Natural Products Expo West
Date: March 3-7
Location: Anaheim Convention Center and Anaheim Hilton
Attendance: 80,000

✦ **SPORTS**

Event: 2019 Embassy Ballroom Championships
Date: Aug. 28- Sept. 1
Location: Hotel Irvine Jamboree Center

Event: Sand Sports Super Show
Date: Sept. 13-15
Location: OC Fair & Event Center

Event: Teams Conference & Expo
Date: Nov. 11-14
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Radix Dance Convention
Date: Dec. 6-8
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Western Surfing Association Championship Tour Event #5
Date: Dec. 7-8
Location: San Clemente Pier

Event: World IBJJF Jiu-Jitsu No-Gi Championship
Date: Dec. 12-15
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: USA High School Spirit Nationals
Date: Feb. 14-16
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Western Surfing Association Championship Tour Event #7
Date: Feb. 15-16
Location: Huntington Beach Pier Southside

Event: USA All Star Championships
Date: March 21-22
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: The American Showcase DI & DII
Date: April 3-5
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: Western Surfing Association Championship Tour Event #9
Date: April 18-19
Location: Salt Creek Beach Park in Dana Point

Event: The FitExpo Anaheim
Date: May 30-31
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

✦ **TECHNOLOGY/TELECOM**

Event: MRI Ascend
Date: Oct. 13-16
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: NexGen Conference and Expo
Date: Oct. 22-24
Location: Anaheim Marriott
Attendance: 800

Event: CareerTech Vision 2019
Date: Dec. 4-7
Location: Anaheim Convention Center

Event: SANS Southern California
Date: Jan. 20-25
Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Anaheim

Event: Automation Technology Expo West
Date: Feb. 11-13
Location: Anaheim Convention Center



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