

## PARADISE ISLAND

How to give participants the incentive they will dream about

### **Patricia Velásquez**

Smart Woman Summit voice promises permission to begin

### **Convention Centers of the Future**

Think outside the white box

### **NextGen Casinos**

Integrated resorts win on logistics and strategy



Congratulations to the  
**2026 Smart Stars  
Winners**

Your short-list for  
community-recommended  
event partners



## Partners Unveiled

**W**hen only the best will do, the Smart Meetings Community can always turn to their peers as a trusted source to learn the real deal on the grandest ballroom, who has a fabulous conference services team and where to turn for a drama-free citywide.

Since you don't have time to call everyone in this dynamic cohort, we asked them for you and put it in this handy guide you can tear out, bookmark and save for the next big gathering. You nominated, voted on and shared your experiences in venues all over the world, and we listened. From boutique hotels to golf resorts and convention centers—41 categories of airlines, cruise lines, destinations and hotels in all—we flagged the partners who will help you elevate your attendee experience.

The following are the best of the best. Tell them you heard about them from your MeetSmart besties, and let us know what made your short-list of stellar partners this year.

In appreciation for all you do,

*JT Long*

Vice President and Content Director  
Smart Meetings

## BEST ECO/GREEN

- Hotel Terra Jackson Hole
- The Ranch at Laguna Beach

## BEST EXECUTIVE RETREAT

- Cloudland at McLemore Resort
  - Conrad Orlando
  - Fairmont El San Juan
- Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino
  - Montage Laguna Beach
  - Montage Palmetto Bluff
  - Salamander Middleburg
    - Southall Farm & Inn
- The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne, Miami
  - The Seagate Hotel, Golf & Beach Club
    - Williamsburg Inn
- Wyoming Inn of Jackson Hole

## BEST FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROGRAM

- Alila Napa Valley
- Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa
  - Four Seasons Hotel New Orleans
    - The Umstead Hotel & Spa
      - The Wigwam

## BEST GOLF RESORT

- Black Desert Resort
- Destination Geneva National
  - Destination Kohler
  - Edgewood Tahoe
  - Nemaquin Resort
- Ocean Edge Resort & Golf Club
- Omni Homestead Resort & Spa
- Park Hyatt Aviara Resort, Golf Club & Spa
  - Pebble Beach Resorts
  - PGA National Resort
  - Pinehurst Resort

## BEST INTEGRATED RESORT CASINOS



### Caesars Palace

The grandeur and lavishness of Caesars Palace extends triumphantly into stately meeting facilities. Its 300,000 sq. ft. of meeting space is comfortably set apart from the casino area, yet remains within easy reach of your attendees. With an outstanding range of flexible venues with countless configuration options to suit any group, large or small, a meeting at Caesars Palace is a most successful event, each and every time.

855-633-8238

[meet@caesars.com](mailto:meet@caesars.com)

[www.caesarsmeansbusiness.com](http://www.caesarsmeansbusiness.com)



**CAESARS**  
ENTERTAINMENT

## BEST CVB/DMO



### Explore Asheville

Asheville, North Carolina, is a city inspired by nature that's deeply rooted and ever evolving. Here, a creative spirit flows from the Blue Ridge Mountains and weaves its way into everything, from homegrown brands and innovative food culture to invigorating outdoor experiences and an inviting art scene. Asheville is where connections are made and purpose is inspired.

[www.exploreasheville.com/meetings](http://www.exploreasheville.com/meetings)

Always.  
**ASHEVILLE**