

The Boroughs and Beyond

New York City's happening neighborhoods are balanced by the great escapes of Long Island and Westchester



Oheka Castle, Long Island



Prospect Park Zoo, Brooklyn

Montauk Point Lighthouse, Long Island

Belmont Racetrack, Long Island

IF THERE'S ONE THING NEW YORK CITY HAS never offered, it's boredom. From people watching to taking in the Broadway shows, museums, restaurants and nightclubs, the "City that Never Sleeps" has always had unique experiences on tap.

But New York is not content to ride on its reputation. Instead, several areas of the city are creating new reasons to come to town while some venues and attractions are giving visitors pause.

A convention center expansion and a planned mixed-use development promise to give Midtown's West Side a rebirth while just a bit south, a new restaurant and hotel, one of numerous new properties that have opened, is creating a great deal of buzz.

Across the city's five boroughs, at least 25 hotel projects are slated for this year, with 28 more debuting through 2014. As of April, the city featured 90,400 rooms, and in the next eight months another 2,000 rooms will open.

In Lower Manhattan, the new World Trade Center, the 9/11 Memorial and a luxury hotel are prompting a resurgence, plus in nearby Brooklyn there's been an influx of residents and an explosion of retail and dining, prompting the creation of numerous meeting venues and attractions.

"New York City's five boroughs offer meeting planners a diversity of experiences—creative meeting venues, stylish hotels and world-class attractions and museums," boasts Fred Dixon, senior vice president of convention and tourism development at NYC & Company. "The city almost guarantees record-breaking attendance for meetings."

MIDTOWN MANHATTAN

The Jacob Javits Center in Midtown West is finishing a renovation that started with an 80,000-square-foot expansion in 2010. The facility features more than 1.8 million square feet of meeting and exhibition space.

Small changes to keep the building's operations running smoothly—including replacing the roof and making the facility more energy-efficient—are 70 percent complete, according to Barbara Lampen, president of the New York Convention Center Development Corporation. Final upgrades will come in 2013.

And there soon will be reasons to hang around the area surrounding Javits. Construction is set to begin later this year on a proposed complex that will include a hotel, spa, dining, retail, residential units and entertainment. The project is scheduled to open in phases beginning in 2015.

On the East Side's Madison Avenue, the 1,015-room Roosevelt Hotel completed a multimillion-dollar renovation last year. The project included enhancements to all guest rooms and upgrades to the lobby-level Madison Club Lounge. The hotel features 30,000 square feet of meeting space and is particularly known for its rooftop lounge, mad46.

NOMAD

Back in 2001, a restoration of Madison Square Park—which is in Midtown, spanning both the East Side and West Side of Manhattan—gave new life to the area called "NoMad", or north of Madison Square Park. It prompted the opening of stores, trendy restaurants and nightspots. One of its stylish newcomers, The NoMad Hotel, is drawing even more attention to the area.

Located in a turn-of-the-20th-century Beaux Arts building, the property includes several eateries—spearheaded by a Michelin-star-pedigreed chef and restaurateur duo—and a bar simply called "The Bar" that features several lounge areas.

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—Fred Dixon,
senior vice president
of convention and
tourism
development,
NYC &
Company

continued on page 12



The Sphere 9/11 memorial, Battery Park

The 168-room NoMad Hotel provides 4,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space.

LOWER MANHATTAN

Heading downtown, one may be reminded of that horrific day in 2001 that changed the country forever. However, the area is coming back strong, not only with a memorial to honor those who perished and the new World Trade Center, but also with a new, seemingly unlikely hotel that promises to bring groups back to the area.

The 9/11 Memorial, which sits on eight of the Twin Towers' 16 acres, has the names of every person who died in the terrorist attacks of both Sept. 11, 2001 and Feb. 26, 1993 inscribed in bronze.

Eventually, the National September 11 Memorial Museum will reside directly beneath the Memorial plaza. No timeline for the project has been set.

Adjacent to the memorial is One World Trade Center, aka the new WTC. Construction of the 104-story skyscraper is nearing completion, and its spire will reach a symbolic 1,776 feet when finished.

Major developments are taking shape

around the site.

The world's tallest Holiday Inn, a 50-story, 400-room, full-service property, will be part of the complex, while 550,000 square feet of retail space has debuted or is in the works, and a Frank Gehry-designed Performing Arts Center will be built.

Another nearby project will be the conversion of an office building into a Thompson Hotel. That property is being developed by GB Lodging, an affiliate of GFI Capital, which owns The NoMad Hotel.

Next door is the new Conrad New York, a 463-suite luxury property with about 31,000 square feet of meeting space. The hotel sits in Battery Park City, an old part of Manhattan that's having a rebirth, notes Patrick Roy, director of sales at the Conrad.

"Battery Park City isn't new, but like the Conrad brand, both have been dormant over the last 15 to 20 years," he says. "Battery Park is one of the fastest-growing neighborhoods in the city, which means new buildings, attractions and retail."

In fact, the hotel features 11 high-end retailers and has two slots up for grabs. It also boasts a unique partnership with well-known NYC-based restaurateur Danny Meyer—pio-

neer of upscale eatery Union Square Cafe and the much more approachable Shake Shack, which has gone national with Miami and Las Vegas locations. Three Meyer restaurants are adjacent to the hotel, and his company will handle the hotel's catering, giving it a marketing advantage, Roy says.

"Attendees will come away talking about the food," he says. "The conversation will be, 'Were you at that event last night? Did you try those bar snacks?'"

BROOKLYN

Not far from downtown Manhattan is Brooklyn, the city's trendiest borough in recent years, and home to Barclays Center, a sports and entertainment venue due to open in September.

Barclay's is slated to have one of the most intimate seating configurations of a multipurpose arena, with unparalleled sightlines and first-class amenities. It will offer approximately 18,000 seats for basketball and up to 19,000 seats for concerts, and will have 100 luxury suites, bars, lounges, clubs and a restaurant. The venue will be available for groups.

The New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge has been named the official hotel of

Barclays Center. It offers 667 rooms and over 30,000 square feet of meeting space.

Over in Brooklyn Bridge Park is Jane's Carousel, a restored 1922 carousel housed in a transparent pavilion. It is located in the newly renovated Empire Fulton Ferry portion of the park in DUMBO (down under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass).

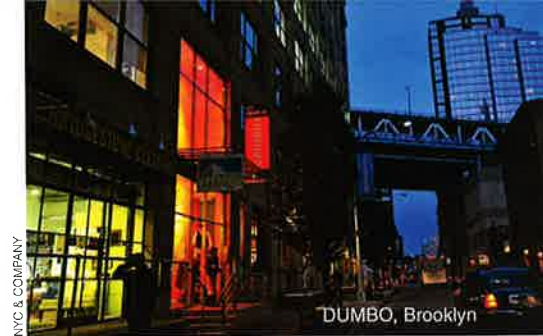
Meanwhile, groups can commune with the animals at the Prospect Park Zoo, which became available as an event venue in April.

Event attendees can have dinner under the rotunda, just steps away from baboons, while the sea lion pool at the heart of the zoo can host guests for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Capacity for the zoo is 1,200 guests.

A recent party at the zoo went well, according to Essie Lash, communications and new media manager at Heart of Brooklyn, a tourism promotion entity.

"The zoo offers an unexpected yet elegant setting," she says. "We were delighted with the quality of the catering and the top-notch service."

The new offerings in Brooklyn and Manhattan are ideal for groups, according to Kelly Curtin, senior vice president of membership and destination services for NYC & Company.



DUMBO, Brooklyn

"There are constantly new and creative venues opening throughout all five boroughs of New York City," she notes.

LONG ISLAND

Even in the areas surrounding NYC, there are many attractions, venues and hotels on tap, in addition to welcoming country-like environs.

"There is so much to do on Long Island," says Joan LaRosa, director of sales at the Long Island CVB and Sports Commission. "At 118 miles long, Long Island has great escapes 30 to 35 minutes outside Manhattan all the way up to two to three hours away."

For groups with a time constraint, the Gold Coast Mansions, a collection of historic estates, sits about 45 minutes away.

The grand estates allow visitors to journey back to a world of elegance and unique architectural style that defined the extravagance

continued on page 14

THE HISTORY

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of the Gilded Age to the Roaring Twenties, personified in the classic novel *The Great Gatsby*, according to Historic Long Island.

Among the six properties are The Vanderbilt Museum and—serving as a hotel—Oheka Castle. The 32-room property features event space for 10 to 450 attendees. Additionally, Oheka offers outdoor function areas, including a 13,000-square-foot formal garden and a 292,000-square-foot lawn.

Still less than an hour outside of New York City, Long Island's museums include The Cradle of Aviation and the American Airpower Museum; Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum; the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Society of Nassau County; the American Merchant Marine Museum and the Nassau County Museum of Art.

And the area has no shortage of sports activities, with many events taking place in venues ready to host meetings and other



gatherings.

At Belmont Racetrack—the last leg of the Triple Crown—there are a number of function spaces, including The Top of the Stretch, a casual spot with charcoal barbeque pits and a capacity for up to 250 people. Several tented areas can host from 120 to 450, and a terrace accommodates up to 1,500 guests banquet-style.

The New York Rangers play hockey at the Nassau Coliseum, a large facility that—apart from the arena—includes a 60,000-square-foot exhibition hall.

Finally, Long Island features over 60 public golf courses, including Bethpage Black at Bethpage State Park, site of several U.S. Open Golf Championships.

LaRosa has numerous suggestions for groups with two to three hours to spare.

“A trip to Long Island Wine Country is relaxing, while celebrity sighting and a Rich and Famous Tour of the Hamptons can include high-end shopping and a trip to one of the Hampton beaches that consistently make the list of the top 10 beaches in the U.S. list,” she says.

But the Hamptons aren't just for the rich and famous.

The 90-room Southampton Inn offers accessible pricing for groups, says Dede Gotthelf, the property's owner.

“We recognize the perception but we're extremely modestly priced,” she says. “The Hamptons are about beauty and nature, not about seeing celebrities and spending a fortune.”

Featuring about 12,000 square feet of meeting space, the inn offers meeting packages with rates of \$179 a night—and less for larger groups—from Nov. 1 to May 30.

Also welcoming groups to the Hamptons are the Montauk Yacht Club and Gurney's Inn. Gurney's was recently upgraded following a visit from reality show *Hotel Impossible*.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Westchester County is home to high-end dining and inviting hotels, as well as a popular racing and bowling venue that features function space.

Grand Prix New York in Mt. Kisco offers attendees the chance to try go-karting, billiards, bowling, an arcade and award-winning cuisine. The 120,000-square-foot facility provides meeting packages, social function options and numerous team-building possibilities, including a team endurance challenge with driver changes and refueling stops, as well as a pit crew challenge with an official Pepsi-sponsored Jeff Gordon Car and a customized curriculum based on a group's size and objectives.

“I've used Grand Prix New York for various team-building programs,” says Casey Ives, events manager for RBS Global Banking & Markets. “Most events there involve multiple components, and the staff is phenomenal at transitioning groups from one thing to another. My attendees always rave about the food as well.”

Great food is also available at a venerated



Coindre Hall, Long Island

area restaurant, Blue Hill at Stone Barns. Housed in a renovated dairy barn, the eatery focuses on using locally grown ingredients and offers team-building projects for groups interested in farming and gardening experiences.

Meanwhile, the local hotel industry has committed millions of dollars in property renovations, including updating guest rooms, meeting facilities and lobbies.

The 447-room Hilton Westchester, with 32,000 square feet of meeting space, completed a \$17 million guest room renovation in May.

A popular spot with groups is The Ritz-Carlton, Westchester in White Plains. It provides 146 guest rooms and suites, and 10,000 square feet of meeting space.

Historic mansions also abound in the area, including Kykuit: The Rockefeller Estate and Lyndhurst, listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Westchester is an appealing alternative to New York City, says Harley Riak, executive director of meetings, incentives and special events at Valerie Wilson Travel in Purchase, N.Y.

“Groups that meet in Westchester avoid the prices of NYC—so that's a no-brainer—and it's easily accessible with White Plains and LaGuardia airports,” he says. “It's such a great area for events.” **MFE**

Search for detailed information about CVBs, hotels and meeting facilities in New York City, Long Island and Westchester by visiting our website at MeetingsFocus.com/NewYork.

CVB Contacts

The Bronx Tourism Council
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