

# Smart meetings

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**"IT IS  
IMPORTANT  
THAT WE  
SHOW THE  
VALUE OF  
MEETINGS."**

TRINA CAMACHO-LONDON

**"WE HAVE  
TO ARM  
PEOPLE  
WITH THE  
'WHY' OF  
MEETINGS."**

JULIE COKER GRAHAM

## GMID PROUD

**HOW TO TELL YOUR  
MEETINGS INDUSTRY  
STORY LIKE A BOSS**

**SAFE  
ENOUGH?**  
**TIME TO PREPARE  
FOR UNKNOWN  
THREATS**



ARIZONA  
NEW YORK  
COLORADO  
THE DAKOTAS  
MEETINGS AT SEA  
HOUSTON & GALVESTON





# Meet a More Walkable DTLA

## L.A. LIVE! TRANSFORMED DOWNTOWN

BY JT LONG

A decade after the first venues opened in L.A. Live, attendees flocking to events at 20,000-seat Staples Center are discovering that walking to restaurants, hotels and shops is easy—and safe.

"It is basically a 100-acre campus and attendees can do something different every night without ever getting on a bus," explained Heather Allison Smith, director of sales and marketing for **The Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles** and **JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live**, which flanks Microsoft Theater (one of the largest permanent indoor stages in the country) and The Grammy Museum. Javier Cano, vice president and general manager at the dual-branded property, summarized it this way: "The city now has a center."

*Smart Meetings* sent a team down to scout out the best places in DTLA (downtown L.A.) to take your groups in this newly visitor-friendly destination and came back with the following suggestions.

### MEET AND SLEEP

In addition to 875 guest rooms and 141,800 sq. ft. of ballroom and meeting space on three mirrored floors at **JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live**, the property opens out onto Xbox Plaza, which can be closed for special events with up to 5,000 people. Nearby, the completely renovated **Sheraton Grand Los Angeles** offers 496 guest rooms and 30,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including a rooftop fire pit area. Inside the hotel, District on the Bloc restaurant and bar opens onto the city's central retail corridor.

New to the scene is **NoMad Los Angeles**, a luscious, upscale property ensconced in a former Bank of Italy building that preserved the rich marble, soaring Neoclassical ceiling details and vault spaces. It features 10,000 sq. ft. of meeting space and 241 guest rooms. The award-winning restaurant (which goes by the same name as the hotel) and rooftop pool space have become go-to destinations in the buzzy area.

New again is **Hotel Figueroa**, a restored 1926 Spanish Mediterranean-style former women's business hotel. It is now a 268-room boutique property with vintage details, 20,000 sq. ft. of event space, a private courtyard and revolving art installations. Plans for 66-story Figueroa Centre condominium and hotel tower are now on the drawing board.

### EAT AND DRINK

L.A. Live is home to more than 20 restaurant choices, with something for everyone, including Katsuya, an innovative sushi experience and WP24 by Wolfgang Puck, a picturesque dining destination in The Ritz-Carlton. A go-to spot is Boca Restaurant at The Conga Room, where award-winning chefs cook up Latin favorites such as shrimp ceviche and arroz con leche under red chandeliers.

For something completely different, rent out

The Edison, an underground steampunk-styled bar and restaurant in an old power plant, with nightly shows.

### DO

The art scene downtown is both historic and emerging. A personalized, docent-led trip to Broad Museum can add an artistic touch to any gathering. An hour spent in the modern honeycomb of a building will add new perspective to an event. Smart Tip: Don't forget to make your reservation for a few minutes in Yayoi Kusama's Mirrored Infinity Room and prepare attendees for the ultimate L.A. selfie.

The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is set to open in late 2019 next door to Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with one of the largest collections of movie memorabilia and a 30,000-square-foot interactive exhibition space. Expected in 2021 in Exposition Park is the 300,000-square-foot Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. It is billed as a place that blurs the line between high and popular art to focus on all types of storytelling.



Microsoft Theater



Guest room at NoMad Los Angeles

L.A. Live!

Need to Know

10 million

People visit annually

9,944

Guest rooms in DTLA, with almost 3,000 on the way