

# Smart meetings

July 2023

## CIVIC PRIDE

HOW PUBLIC ART  
CONNECTS ATTENDEES  
WITH PLACES

Three Dancing Figures sculpture by Keith Haring  
in front of Moscone Center, San Francisco

### TOP SPEAKERS

Keynotes  
worth noting

### BRIGHT & SHINY

New and renovated  
venues to consider

### UP & COMING

Second-tier cities  
on the rise

### OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Asia and Europe  
opens again

## Winning Meetings in Motor City

Detroit saw strong growth for meetings in 2022 after hosting more than 200,000 attendees, generating \$200 million in direct spending. Detroit's status as a top meeting destination was bolstered further by Time magazine placing Detroit on its third annual list of 50 of the most extraordinary travel destinations across the world. The nomination notes that despite the city filing for bankruptcy in 2012, the heartbeat of the city moves to the pulse of innovation and is the home to a massive foodie scene. It is home to the country's first electric-vehicle charging road—keeping Motor City moving into the future.

Detroit has seen an assortment of boutique hotels emerge across the city in recent years, altering the hospitality landscape and elevating the guest experience. Author of *Building the Modern World: Albert Kahn in Detroit*, Michael Hodges wrote, "There was a good deal of wealth in Detroit in the 1920s," explaining that the city has maintained a wealth of historic buildings that were left vacant or underutilized for some time. Detroit's need for redevelopment and available space created the perfect opportunity to redefine tourism in the area and breathe new life into ancient spaces. A prime example of this movement is **The Henry, Auto-graph Collection**—widely known for its collection of modern art and offers 26,295 sq. ft. of meeting space including the 1,200-square-foot Presidential Ballroom with an overall capacity of up to 1,200. Housed within the David Whitney Building, which first opened in 1915, the 136-room **Aloft Detroit**

was designed by famed American architect, Daniel Burnham, introducing spectators to a four-story terra cotta and marble lobby topped with a massive skylight. The Aloft Detroit features 10,262 sq. ft. of event space and eight breakout rooms.

## Detroit's Huntington Place

Planners can take advantage of the roughly 2.4 million square feet of meeting space at **Huntington Place** behind floor-to-ceiling windows that offer up sweeping views of the Detroit River and Windsor, Ontario, skyline. The property features the 40,000-square-foot Grand Riverview Ballroom that can accommodate up to 2,250 guests for banquets, the 50,000-square-foot Huntington Place Square exterior plaza and vehicle drop-off area perfect for various activities with a total of 100 meeting rooms. There is also an atrium that can accommodate up to 1,200 for a standing reception—all conveniently located in Detroit's downtown area.


## Stroll the Eastern Market

Brunch enthusiasts will appreciate the 2.5-hour brunch tour, **Explore Eastern Market**, which takes guests to various attractions including restaurants, shopping, art and architecture—all while sampling different foods. Groups can also take advantage of a 2-hour private

van tour with **Destination Detroit Tours** and includes a complimentary hotel pick up and includes visiting some of the city's top attractions.

## Second tier trending

The popularity of hosting events in second-tier cities has only gained momentum recently as trends such as art-forward boutique hotels and farm-to-table dining sensibilities continue to gain momentum. As companies continue to weather the storm of high inflation by making cuts and modifications to event offerings, locating host cities with lower costs of living will likely be favored by meeting professionals who don't want to skimp on providing a top-notch event experience.

What's more, these destinations provide attendees with the opportunity to learn something new about a host city that may not share the notoriety of some country's larger and more celebrated destinations. However, being a part of the inner circle of knowing about a cool city will make an impact that will have groups talking about for years to come. 

Huntington Place photos by Huntington Place



Huntington Place, Detroit