

# Sites You Can Count On

## Readers Name Their Meeting Site Top Picks

For many meetings and events planners, site selection is one of the most important tasks of the job because the perfect venue and destination is one of the foundations for a successful event.

So, this year, when we put the call out to our readers to nominate meeting sites for *ConventionSouth's* annual Readers' Choice Awards, we asked readers to recommend only the best. Some of you crafted detailed nominations for sites you felt displayed exemplary professionalism from site selection to the end of the event. In fact, one reader said of their nominated site, "They take my scheduled event up one step and make me look so good!"

We received hundreds of nominations for the best meetings destina-

tions, convention centers, hotels and venues located within

*ConventionSouth's* 14-state editorial coverage area, and the following were chosen based on the number of nominations and the detailed comments made by our readers. We believe the following select group of meeting sites not only meet but exceed the high demands of meeting planners today—in both physical attributes and their commitment to hospitality and customized service. ■



### ~ ALABAMA ~

**Auburn Opelika Marriott Hotel & Conference Center at Grand National** (Opelika)  
www.marriottgrandnational.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**The Battle House, a Renaissance Hotel** (Mobile)  
www.rsabattlehouse.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Point Clear Resort & Spa** (Point Clear)  
www.marriottgrand.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Marriott Montgomery Prattville Hotel & Conference Center at Capitol Hill** (Prattville)  
www.marriottcapitolhill.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa** (Florence)  
www.marriottshoals.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Mobile Bay CVB**  
www.mobilebaymeetings.org  
See Ad On Page 51

**Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center**  
www.renaissancemontgomery.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel** (Mobile)  
www.riverviewmobile.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa** (Birmingham)  
www.rossbridgeresort.com  
See Ad On Page 25

**Von Braun Center** (Huntsville)  
www.vonbrauncenter.com

**The Wynfrey Hotel** (Birmingham)  
www.wynfrey.com  
See Ad On Page 26

### ~ FLORIDA ~

**The Boardwalk Beach Resort** (Panama City Beach)  
www.boardwalkbeachresort.com

**Emerald Coast CVB Inc.**  
(Fort Walton Beach, Destin, Okaloosa Island)  
www.destin-fwb.com  
See Ad On Page 35

**Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort**  
(Panama City Beach)  
www.edgewaterbeachresort.com  
See Ad On Page 30

**Ginn Reunion Resort** (Orlando)  
www.reunionresort.com

**Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB**  
www.sunny.org

**Goodwood Museum & Gardens** (Tallahassee)  
www.goodwoodmuseum.org

**Orlando/Orange County CVB Inc.**  
www.orlandoconventions.com

**Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate**  
www.omniorlandoresort.com

**The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota**  
www.ritzcarlton.com

**Sarasota CVB**  
www.sarasotafl.org

**Tallahassee Area CVB**  
www.VisitTallahassee.com

### ~ GEORGIA ~

**Athens CVB**  
www.visitathensga.com

**The Classic Center** (Athens)  
www.classiccenter.com

**The King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort**  
(St. Simons Island)  
www.kingandprince.com

**Rialto Center for the Arts** (Atlanta)  
www.rialtocenter.org

**World of Coca-Cola** (Atlanta)  
www.woccallanta.com

### ~ KENTUCKY ~

**Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa** (Lexington)  
www.griffingatemarriott.com

**Morehead Conference Center** (Morehead)  
www.moreheadcc.com

### ~ LOUISIANA ~

**Baton Rouge Area CVB**  
www.visitbatonrouge.com

**Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center**  
www.hiltoncapitolcenter.com

### ~ MISSISSIPPI ~

**Lake Terrace Convention Center Hattiesburg**  
www.laketerrace.com  
See Ad On Page 31

**MSU Riley Center** (Meridian)  
www.msurileycenter.com  
See Ad On Page 32

**Vicksburg CVB**  
www.visitvicksburg.com

**Vicksburg Convention Center**  
www.vccmeet.com

**Vicksburg Auditorium**  
www.vccmeet.com

AWARDS & RECOGNITION: MEETING SITES

~ NORTH CAROLINA ~

**Fayetteville Area CVB**  
www.visitfayettevillenc.com

**The Flame Restaurant & Banquet Centre** (New Bern)  
www.theflamerestaurant.com

**Foxfire Golf & Country Club** (Foxfire Village)  
www.golffoxfire.com

**New Bern/Craven County CVB**  
www.visitnewbern.com  
See Ad On Page 28

**New Bern Riverfront Convention Center**  
www.newbernconventions.com

**SeaTrail Golf Resort & Convention Center** (Sunset Beach)  
www.seatrail.com

**Village of Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area CVB**  
www.homeofgolf.com/meetings

~ SOUTH CAROLINA ~

**Absolutely Charleston, Inc.**  
www.absolutelycharleston.com

**Charleston Area CVB**  
www.meetcharleston.com

**Columbia Conference Center**  
www.columbiameetings.com

**Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center**  
www.columbiaconventioncenter.com

**The Inn at USC** (Columbia)  
www.innatusc.com

**Legare-Waring House** (Charleston)  
www.legarewaringhouse.com

**Marriott Spartanburg at Renaissance Park**  
www.spartanburgmarriott.com

**Pawleys Plantation Golf & Country Club** (Pawleys Island)  
www.pawleysplantation.com

**Sands Ocean Club/Sands Beach Club Resort** (Myrtle Beach)  
www.sandsresorts.com

~ TENNESSEE ~

**Hardin County CVB** (Savannah)  
www.tourhardincounty.org

**Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center** (Nashville)  
www.gaylordopryland.com

**The Peabody, Memphis**  
www.peabodymemphis.com

**Pickwick Landing State Park Inn & Conference Center** (Pickwick Dam)  
www.tnstateparks.com

~ TEXAS ~

**Athens Visitors Initiative Program**  
www.athenstx.org

**The Cain Center** (Athens)  
www.caincenter.cjb.net

**Hyatt Regency Dallas at Reunion**  
www.hyattregencydallas.com

**Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort & Spa** (Austin)  
www.lostpines.hyatt.com

**Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa** (San Antonio)  
www.hillcountry.hyatt.com

~ VIRGINIA ~

**Roanoke Special Events Center**  
www.roanokeciviccenter.com

**Readers Name New & Renovated Top Honors**

**Best New Hotel For Small Meetings**

**The Ellis Hotel, Atlanta, Ga.**

**Project Notes:** The newly restored boutique hotel opened its doors in 2007 after a \$28 million restoration. It offers 127 guest rooms, 2,200 square feet of meeting space and a boardroom.

**Commentary:** As one meeting pro pointed out, "The new hotel has a convenient location in downtown and is upscale yet affordable."

**Best New Hotel For Large Meetings**

**InterContinental Hotel Tampa (Fla.)**

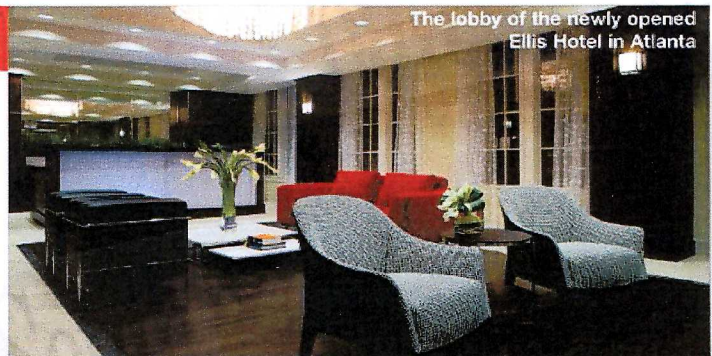
**Project Notes:** The hotel opened in 2007 with 323 guest rooms, 17,000 square feet of meeting space, and various amenities such as a state-of-the-art fitness center, a rooftop pool and a full-service concierge program.

**Commentary:** As one planner pointed out, "This is a beautiful property with excellent service that is convenient to the airport and downtown."

**Best Renovation Project**

**Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville, Tenn.**

**Project Notes:** Of the recent multimillion-dollar enhancements made to the resort, guest rooms have been renovated to offer a "contemporary feel," a 27,000-square-foot spa was added, and food and beverage areas were redesigned. In 2011, the resort is set to add more than 400,000 square feet of meeting space and a new 400-room hotel, bringing total offerings to 3,281 hotel rooms and more than 1 million square feet of function space.



**Commentary:** As one planner noted, "Guest rooms are beautiful and fresh, and the new restaurants are excellent with tasty quick options."

**Best New Meeting Facility**

**The Jackson (Miss.) Convention Complex**

**Project Notes:** Jackson, Mississippi's Capital City Convention Center is set to open after the new year and will then be combined with the recently opened Mississippi Telecommunications Conference and Training Center. Together, the two facilities will be referred to as the Jackson Convention Complex. The convention center portion will add a 90,000-square-foot multipurpose hall, bringing the exhibition space of the entire complex to more than 110,000 square feet.

**Commentary:** As one meeting pro pointed out, "This is an outstanding project, and we are looking forward to utilizing it." ■