

Suite Talk

OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



your partner in planning.

Greetings!

Welcome to the May edition of *Suite Talk*! ➔

It's hard to believe we're nearly halfway through the year! As we near the halfway mark of 2025, it's a perfect time to pause, reflect, and most importantly - plan ahead. The landscape of meetings and events continues to evolve, influenced by shifting global dynamics, political climates, and rising costs. Now more than ever, staying strategic about your event planning and budget is key—and we're here to help guide you every step of the way.

In this issue, we're diving into timely topics that will help you navigate this ever-changing industry with confidence, including:

- FAM Trip Do's and Don'ts
- Our destination spotlight to inspire your next program
- A look at exciting new hotel openings around the globe
- And so much more!

We've also noticed a growing trend among the industry lately; more and more organizations are looking beyond North America for their meetings and incentive programs. Whether it's to navigate political uncertainty, stretch their budgets, or simply inject more variety and excitement into their events, international bookings are on the rise, and our team is ready to support you wherever your next meeting takes you.

As always, Strategic Site Selection is here to deliver expert guidance, fresh ideas, and affordable venue options that align with your vision and your goals.

Let's make the second half of 2025 your most impactful yet.

Happy reading!



It's a FAM Trip! How to Show Up Like a Pro



FAM Trip Etiquette: Do's and Don'ts from our Experts

FAM (familiarization) trips are one of the most effective tools for planners to get to know a destination, hotel, or venue up close. Think of it as a backstage pass to a venue or destination. But they're also a professional privilege—not just a free getaway. Done right, a FAM trip can enhance your credibility, expand your knowledge, and strengthen supplier relationships.

There's an art to attending a FAM trip—and no one knows that better than our Global Directors, Angela Visconti and Helene Getty. They have participated in countless FAMs. Based on their wealth of experience, here's their guide to making the most of your next familiarization trip.

FAM Trip DO's

- **Bring the Right Guest (If Allowed):**
Ask if you can invite a client who has potential business in the location. There's no better way to help them fall in love with a destination than by experiencing it firsthand.
- **Be a Pro, Start to Finish:**
Represent your company and your clients with professionalism and integrity. Every interaction counts—from the first site visit to the final airport transfer.
- **Show Up and Engage:**
Be on time for every scheduled activity. Ask questions, take notes, and engage with both the hosts and other attendees. You're there to learn and build relationships.
- **Express Gratitude:**
FAM trips are a significant investment of time and money by the host. A sincere thank you—whether in person and in writing (or both)—goes a long way.
- **Share What You Learn:**
Don't keep those golden nuggets to yourself! Post your takeaways on social media, recap highlights with your team and clients, and make sure others benefit from your experience.

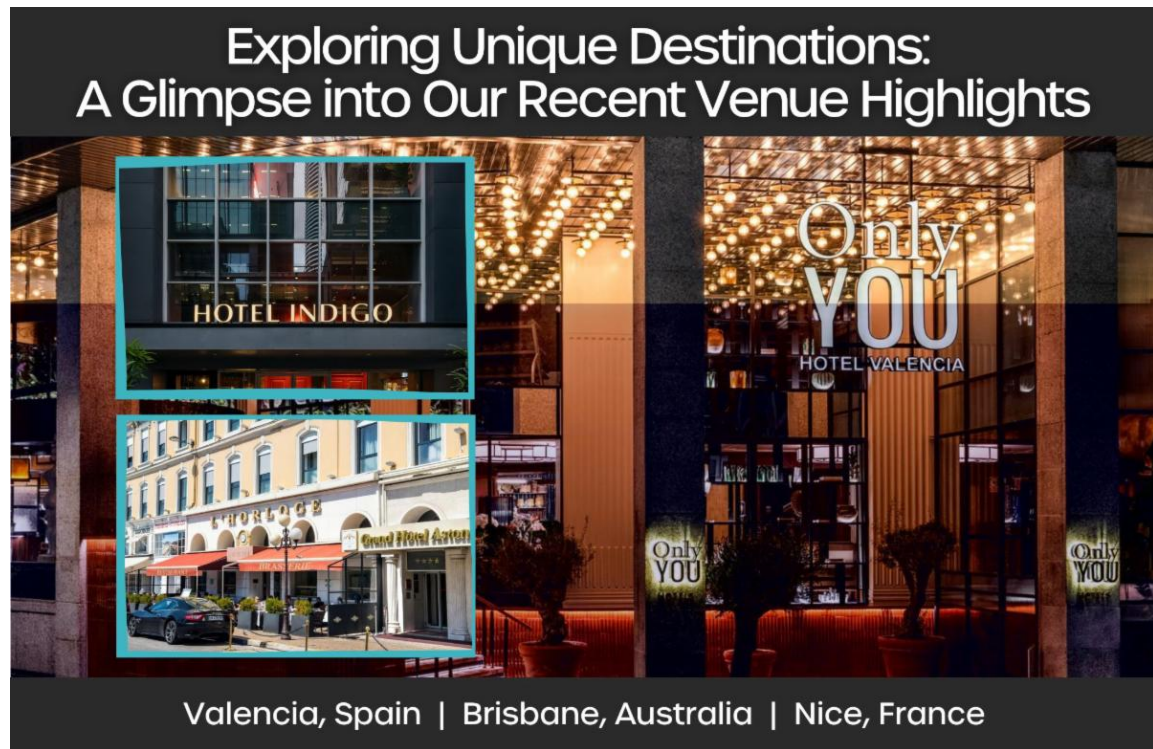
FAM Trip DON'Ts

- **Don't Overdo It:**
Whether it's the buffet or the open bar, moderation is key. This is a business trip—pace yourself accordingly.
- **Don't Be a Downer:**
If something isn't to your liking, keep it professional. Complaining or creating drama reflects poorly on you and your organization.
- **Don't Bring a Plus-One (Unless Invited):**
FAM trips are tightly organized with specific invitees in mind. Never assume a guest is welcome without explicit permission.
- **Don't Forget the Purpose:**
You're not just a tourist. The goal is to assess the destination's suitability for your clients and programs. Keep your focus on that.

The Bottom Line

FAM trips are more than just a perk of the job—they're a chance to build trust, discover hidden gems, and return with actionable insights that benefit your clients and colleagues. At Strategic Site Selection, we believe in making every moment count—and that includes the moments spent discovering what's possible on the road.

Ready to make the most of your next FAM? We're here to guide you, every step of the way. Contact us at info@strategicsiteselection.com and let's get started!



Exploring Unique Destinations: A Glimpse into Our Recent Venue Highlights

Welcome to the latest edition of the **SSS Destination Report**, where we spotlight unique and inspiring hotels from around the world to help you plan unforgettable meetings and events. At Strategic Site Selection, we pride ourselves on sourcing venues globally so we're spotlighting three exciting hotels around the world that are making waves with our clients. From the historic streets of Valencia to the cultural vibrancy of Brisbane and the timeless elegance of Nice, these properties offer unique experiences and inspiring settings for your next meeting or incentive program.

Valencia, Spain

Hotel Spotlight: [*Only YOU Hotel Valencia*](#)

Hotel Description:

Snuggled just off Valencia's main square and only a short stroll from the city's famous cathedral, the Only YOU Hotel Valencia is a chic, 5-star boutique hotel that offers a fresh and lively alternative to the standard chain experience. Part of the renowned Palladium Hotel Group, this recently renovated property reopened in 2021 and has quickly become a standout for modern luxury and a youthful vibe.

Why We Love It:

- A total of 191 stylish rooms that balance comfort with contemporary flair.
- Over 11,500 sq ft of versatile meeting space across 16 rooms, this is ideal for gatherings of all sizes.
- Two exceptional restaurants that take you on a delicious culinary journey: *El Mirador de Only*

YOU (Mediterranean cuisine) and *SLVJ* (Japanese cuisine), both offering elegant, cozy atmospheres.

Standout Features:

- Iconic location just steps from Plaça de l'Ajuntament and the Valencia Cathedral.
- Gorgeous interior design that add an artistic touch to the hotel: velvet sofas, marble accents, and bright, modern spaces.
- A true sense of place - they ensure that each guest gets personalized treatment and can feel a strong sense of the local character.

Group Activities in Valencia:

- Explore the futuristic City of Arts and Sciences.
- Bike tours through the old Turia riverbed, now a lush city park.
- Paella cooking classes in the birthplace of the dish.
- Sunset catamaran cruises along the Mediterranean coast.

Brisbane, Australia

Hotel Spotlight: [*Hotel Indigo Brisbane City Centre by IHG*](#)

Hotel Description:

Located in Brisbane's lively North Quay, Hotel Indigo Brisbane City Centre reflects the city's urban creativity with bold design and local artwork. This boutique hotel captures the spirit of Brisbane through its retro-industrial charm, hidden stories, and welcoming vibe. Just a short walk from foodie hotspots, the riverfront, and cultural landmarks, it's the perfect home base for work and play.

Why We Love It:

- Each of the 212 guestrooms are vibrantly styled, inspired by Brisbane's artistic heritage.
- Striking large-scale art installations by local artists throughout the hotel.
- Great for intimate meetings and events, with two meeting rooms and restaurant spaces available for private use.

Standout Features:

- *Izakaya Publico: a Japanese restaurant with street art murals and a speakeasy-style bar.*
- Eye-catching lobby design featuring a Tuk Nook coffee cart and dramatic murals.
- Only 250m from Brisbane Quarter, home to top-tier dining.

Group Activities in Brisbane:

- River kayaking tours or sunset cruises along the Brisbane River.
- Art walks through the South Bank cultural precinct.
- Private dining and cocktail making classes in top local restaurants.
- Guided hikes to Mt. Coot-tha for panoramic city views.

Nice, France

Hotel Spotlight: [*Hotel Aston La Scala*](#)

Hotel Description:

Set in the heart of Nice, overlooking the lush Promenade du Paillon and moments from Place Massena and the Old Town, Hotel Aston La Scala is an ideal base for business and leisure. This stately 7-story building, dating back to 1870, blends classical architecture with modern interiors and offers panoramic views of the French Riviera.

Why We Love It:

- Its unbeatable location—steps from the beach, Old Town, and major convention centres.
- 149 contemporary rooms and suites designed for comfort and serenity.
- Over 10,000 sq ft of meeting space across 11 rooms, perfect for international events.

Standout Features:

- Rooftop terrace with outdoor pool and sweeping city views.
- Eclectic interior design blending old-world charm with modern touches.
- Steps away from tram lines for effortless transportation around the city.

Group Activities in Nice:

- Guided walking tours through the charming streets of Old Town.

- Rooftop wine tastings or cocktail receptions with sea views.
- Day trips to nearby Monaco, Cannes, or Antibes.
- Art and history museum visits, including the Matisse Museum and Marc Chagall National Museum.

For more hotel inspiration and planning support, reach out to us at info@strategicsiteselection.com — your next unforgettable event destination awaits!



New & Noteworthy: IHG Hotel Openings to Watch in 2025

Fresh luxury, bold design, and inspired venues from Mexico to Japan

At Strategic Site Selection, we keep our finger on the pulse of the global hospitality landscape to help you plan events that are not only seamless—but also unforgettable. As 2025 unfolds, a new wave of hotel openings from IHG is bringing luxury, culture, and meeting-ready spaces to some of the world's most dynamic destinations. Here are three standout properties we're keeping an eye on this year:

[InterContinental Presidente Monterrey, Mexico](#)

Opened: January 2025

Rising above the upscale San Pedro Garza Garcia neighborhood, this brand-new InterContinental property offers breathtaking views of the Sierra Madre de Chipinque mountains and over 1,600 square metres of flexible meeting space across two floors—ideal for corporate events of all sizes.

The hotel's 293 guestrooms, including 25 luxurious suites, are designed with tranquility and refinement in mind. With high-end finishes like Italian marble and custom Spanish furnishings, guests enjoy a curated blend of style and comfort. Culinary options abound at the hotel's three dining venues—Lilou, Epicentro, and Chapulín—showcasing both international and Mexican flavors.

Perfect for: Incentive trips, executive retreats, and conferences with a mountain-meets-metropolitan feel.

[Kimpton Los Monteros Marbella, Spain](#)

Opened: February 2025

Located just 500 metres from the Mediterranean Sea in Marbella's most exclusive enclave, this newly reimagined luxury resort is redefining coastal charm. The 195-room property (with 60 suites) blends rich Andalusian culture with contemporary design by award-winning firms El Equipo Creativo and Cristina Carulla Studio.

With 5,000 square metres of outdoor event space, a grand ballroom, a rooftop venue, and a private beach club, this Kimpton is ideal for elevated gatherings and unforgettable celebrations. Michelin-starred chef José Carlos García brings world-class dining to each of the resort's vibrant food and beverage offerings.

Perfect for: Destination meetings, incentive getaways, and beachfront brand launches with culinary flair.

InterContinental Sapporo, Japan

Opening: October 2025

IHG makes its luxury debut in Sapporo with this striking 149-key resort nestled in Hokkaido's nature-filled capital. Located on the top floors of the AXA Sapporo Nakajima Park Project, this property boasts a high-end residential design aesthetic, panoramic views, and access to the city's scenic gems like Nakajima Park and the Toyohira River.

Highlights include a show kitchen dining experience, a kappo-style Japanese restaurant, and a forest-inspired lounge and bar. With a blend of nature, design, and wellness amenities, the hotel offers a sophisticated base for both business and leisure.

Perfect for: Executive retreats, culturally immersive programs, or ski-season meetings with a luxurious twist.

With global shifts in travel patterns, political climate and event strategies, we're seeing a rise in interest for meetings outside North America—not just for affordability, but also for fresh experiences that captivate attendees. These new IHG openings offer ideal options for clients looking to infuse excitement, elegance, and global flavor into their events.

Whether you're dreaming of a rooftop in Marbella or a mountainside boardroom in Monterrey, our team is here to help you make it happen—on time, on budget, and with impact.

✉ *Ready to explore one of these destinations for your next event? Get in touch with us at info@strategicsiteselection.com. We'll help you bring your vision to life, wherever you want to go.*



MPI WEC- MPI's annual flagship event for meeting and event professionals. It's a three-day conference that offers cutting-edge education, networking opportunities, and business-building experiences. The 2025 MPI WEC will be held in St. Louis.

SUPPER SERIES HIGHLIGHTS

A Night of Connection at the St. Regis Toronto

The second installment of Strategic Site Selection's Supper Series was nothing short of extraordinary. Held at the elegant [St. Regis Hotel](#) in Toronto, the evening brought together a group of our valued clients for an unforgettable night of connection, conversation, and culinary excellence.

At its heart, the Supper Series is about more than just a meal — it's about building deeper relationships. These intimate gatherings give us the opportunity to thank our clients in person, hear their insights, and learn how we can better support their goals in the ever-evolving meetings and events landscape. Just as importantly, it creates space for our clients to connect with one another in a relaxed, engaging setting.

From the warm ambiance to the impeccable service provided by the St. Regis team, every detail came together to create a seamless and memorable experience. The conversations were thoughtful, the energy was high, and the food... absolutely exquisite. We left the evening feeling inspired, connected, and deeply grateful.

A heartfelt thank you to our clients who took time from their busy schedules to join us — your presence made the night truly special. And a huge thank you to the St. Regis staff for going above and beyond in every way.

This is what the Supper Series is all about... meaningful moments that strengthen relationships and remind us why we do what we do. We can't wait to do it again. If you are interested in joining us at the next one in our series, please reach out to us at info@strategicsiteselection.com!



Client Connections at Paradox Vancouver

At Strategic Site Selection, we know that strong partnerships are built on more than contracts, they're built on connection. That's why we were thrilled to recently host an intimate client dinner at the stunning [Paradox Hotel Vancouver](#), and what a night it was.

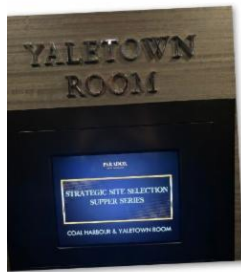
This wasn't your typical business dinner. Yes, we talked shop, but more importantly, we created space for authentic conversations, shared experiences, and the kind of meaningful interactions that help us all grow

together. In today's fast-paced industry, taking a moment to slow down, connect face-to-face, and truly get to know the people behind the emails is more important than ever.

Every detail of the evening — from the soft lighting and elegant décor to the carefully curated playlist — helped set the tone for something special. We saw new relationships take root, long-standing ones deepen, and insightful conversations unfold in a relaxed, welcoming setting.

A heartfelt thank you to our incredible clients for joining us. Your presence, your energy, and your openness remind us why we do what we do, and most of all, who we do it for. And a sincere thank you to the entire team at Paradox Vancouver for your impeccable hospitality and for helping us deliver a truly unforgettable evening.

Client dinners like this one aren't just events on our calendar, they're the moments that fuel our purpose. Here's to many more nights of connection, collaboration, and community.



WE ARE HIRING.

We have
some amazing
opportunities
available.



We're Hiring! Join the Strategic Site Selection Team!

Exciting news—we have three amazing opportunities available for talented professionals looking to grow in the meetings & events industry! If you're passionate about building relationships, driving business growth, and making an impact, we'd love to hear from you!

Director, Global Accounts – [Apply here](#)

Director, Business Development – [Apply here](#)

At Strategic Site Selection, we connect people and create meaningful experiences. If you're looking to grow your career with a team that values innovation and collaboration, we'd love to hear from you!

Know someone who'd be a great fit? Tag them or share this post!



20 Years Strong — And the Countdown Is On!

Strategic Site Selection's *Last Call* celebration is right around the corner, and this year, it's bigger than

ever!

We're marking **two decades of connection, collaboration, and unforgettable moments**— and we're throwing a celebration worthy of the milestone. From the people to the partnerships, *Last Call* has always been about bringing our community together, and 2025 will be no different.

Want to Be a Part of It?

We're currently seeking **sponsorship partners** to help us bring this special evening to life. If your brand is looking to engage with top professionals in the meetings and events industry, this is your moment.

Reach out to:

Mark Dosman – markd@strategicsiteselection.com

Kristi Piukkala – kristip@sandbox-events.com

This is more than an event — it's a celebration of everything we've built together.
Let's make this year's *Last Call* one for the books.

info@strategicsiteselection.com | contactus@sandbox-events.com



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