



Delta Airlines on May 2 unveiled its custom Airbus A350 Team USA aircraft livery in Toulouse, France. The plane celebrates Delta's eight-year partnership with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, which runs through the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The celebration in Toulouse, the home of Airbus' global headquarters, featured Delta's Chairman's Club—a peer-selected honoree group of the airline's top 100 employees from divisions across the company—being as part of the reveal moment for the first time.

## Six Major Hotel Brands Named in Price-Fixing Antitrust Suit

By Jordan Bradley

A class action antitrust lawsuit was filed in a San Francisco federal court on April 26 alleging that six major hotel brands used AI-powered software to inflate room rates.

The lawsuit names Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc., Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, Inc., Four Seasons hotels and Resorts US Inc., OmniHotels & Resorts Inc., Hyatt Hotel Corporation and Choice Hotels International Inc., as well as Integrated Decisions and Systems, Inc. (IDeaS) of Minnesota and its parent company, SAS Institute, Inc. The plaintiffs are eight individual consumers who have stayed at one of the named hotel brand properties at least once in the last four years, according to CBS News.

The complaint alleges that the six hotel brands used software called G3 RMS created by IDeaS and SAS Institute that is billed as a revenue management system, but it has been used by the companies as a price-fixing tool across several major markets, including San Francisco, Oakland and Fremont, California Metropolitan areas.

According to the complaint, the de-

## New York Bar Association Distributes Guidelines in AI Report

By Todd McElwee

Addressing generative artificial intelligence (AI) within the legal profession, the New York State Bar Association (NSBA) has issued a report including guidelines for Empire State attorneys' use of the technology.

The release also reviews AI-based software, technology and integrity of the judicial process and is the work of the association's Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

"NYSBA seeks to proactively address how AI may best assist those

who interact with the legal system while evaluating how tightly it needs to be regulated and what protections we should institute safeguard against misuse or abuse," said Richard Lewis, President, NSBA. "From self-driving cars to ChatGPT to 3-D printed guns, AI has transformed our world. If this is our Promethean moment in AI evolution, now is the time to better understand, embrace, utilize and scrutinize this technology."

Task Force guideline recommendations touched on protecting confidential information, fees, representation,

not using AI tools to automatically generate phone calls, chat board posts or other forms of solicitation, or contracting with another person to use the tools for such purposes and more.

"Artificial Intelligence is the latest technological evolution that at one moment awes us and the next fills us with anxiety," said Vivian Wesson, Chair of the Task Force and Executive Vice President and General Counsel at The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church. "We are aware of the enormous impact it will have on

*Please turn to page 2*

## U.S. Travel's IPW Selling USA in L.A.

By Todd McElwee

The global travel industry will feel the California love on May 3-7 when U.S. Travel Association's IPW lands in Los Angeles.

Coming online in 1969, IPW is the largest international inbound travel show to the United States. It drives more than \$5.5 billion in economic impact in future travel to the nation.

U.S. Travel will welcome 5,700 delegates to IPW, including 2,000 buyers and media from nearly 70 countries—a 20% increase in attendance from 2023.

Over three days, more than 100,000 business appointments will occur.

"U.S. Travel's IPW brings the world to America, securing future travel to the U.S. by connecting travel exhibitors with international travel buyers and media," Geoff Freeman, President & CEO, U.S. Travel, told *USAE*. "Los Angeles, with its incredible diversity and global accessibility, is a perfect city to host IPW and the thousands of travel professionals who are building back inbound travel to the United States. It's been more than a decade

*Please turn to page 3*

## Inside



Page 3

Page 2  
Andrew Weir Tapped to Lead Destination Toronto

Page 3  
CESSE Opens ACCESSE24 Registration

Page 4  
IAEE and UFI Sign Memorandum of Understanding

Page 5  
Todd O'Leary Appointed Head of Visit Alexandria

## Destinations International Releases 2023 Annual Report

By Jonathan Trager

Destinations International (DI) on April 29 released its 2023 Annual Report, which the association said "highlights a year of remarkable growth and strategic achievements, reinforcing DI's role in enhancing the effectiveness and impact of destination organizations worldwide."

DI notes the following key highlights from the report:

- A record-breaking year with 107 new destination organization members, expanding DI's reach across 30 countries and territories.

- Enhanced utilization of the Event Impact Calculator (EIC), particularly among small destination organizations and in sports tourism.

- The introduction of the Community Vitality Wheel, a new tool to illustrate the essential role of destination organizations in community vitality.

- The launch of the 2023 DestinationNext Futures Study, the largest and most extensive survey of destination organizations around the world. More than 800 destination leaders from 62 countries responded to

*Please turn to page 4*

# NEWS

## Andrew Weir Tapped to Lead Destination Toronto

By Jonathan Trager

Destination Toronto has announced the appointment of Andrew Weir, who has been a member of its leadership team for 18 years, as its new President & CEO.

Weir most recently served as executive vice president of Destination Toronto. He succeeds Scott Beck, who departed from Destination Toronto late last year to helm San Francisco Travel.

Weir, who takes the reins of the group on May 1, said he's "deeply honored and excited to lead Destination Toronto at this critical time."

"Toronto is Canada's most-visited destination, and for good reason," Weir said. "The genuine diversity and vibrancy of our arts, food, festivals and neighborhoods, against one of

the world's truly spectacular skylines, continue to excite and attract visitors from around the world. The opportunity of tourism and meetings in Toronto is immense and we have seen the power of visitor spending to elevate our economy and community."

In his most recent role with Destination Toronto, Weir led strategic partnerships between the tourism industry, broader business leadership and government. Prior to that, as chief marketing officer, he championed an organizational transformation to align sales and marketing through brand storytelling.

"Having conducted a thorough North American search, we are thrilled to announce Andrew Weir as Destination Toronto's new President & CEO," said Rekha Khote, Chair of Destination



Andrew Weir

Toronto. "Andrew is the right leader for our organization, bringing a deep understanding of Toronto's visitor economy, a vision for the business, and the ability to bring people together.

We are confident that his established strong community connections will act as a catalyst for driving innovation and growth in critical areas of the business."

Weir has served on numerous boards across the industry, including Destination International's DMAP Board and as chair of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) from 2021–2023. He holds a bachelor's degree from York University and master's degree from Western University, both in political science and government.

"Congratulations to Andrew Weir on his appointment as President & CEO of Destination Toronto," said Councilor Shelley Carroll, Budget Chief & Mayor's Economic Development & Culture Champion. "This announcement comes at a pivotal time in our efforts to elevate the impact of the visitor economy, creating new pathways for growth that benefit our entire community."

## Michelin Guide Unveils Inaugural Selection of U.S. Hotels, Michelin Keys

By Jordan Bradley

The Michelin Guide released its first selection of hotels throughout the United States to be awarded Michelin Keys for outstanding experiences and stays on April 24.

In its first release, the Michelin Guide selected 124 hotels in Atlanta, California, Chicago, Colorado, Florida, New York and Washington D.C. that received either one, two or three Michelin Keys based on anonymous stays or visits conducted by Michelin Guide inspectors. The guide is designed to provide prospective hotel guests guidance on the best hotels that stand apart because of "their unique hospitality concept, distinctive character, warm welcome and extremely high level of service."

"With this new distinction, the Michelin Guide has opened up a brand-new chapter in the service it provides for travelers, which has been its lifeblood for the past 124 years," said Gwendal Poullennec, International Director of the Michelin Guide.

In its first U.S. guide, only 11 hotels—seven in California and four in New York—received three keys, including the Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur, California; the SingleThread Inn in Healdsburg, California; the Casa Cipriani New York in New York City; and the Aman New York in Manhattan.

Structured similarly to the Michelin Star system for restaurants, the Michelin Key awards one key for "a very special stay," two keys for "an exceptional stay," and three keys for "an extraordinary stay."

"Steadfast in our field-based approach, the Michelin Guide inspectors drew up this unprecedented list to share their best hotel experiences in the US. Every establishment awarded one, two or Three Michelin Keys is a gem sculpted by talented professionals," Poullennec said. "Using the Michelin Guide digital platforms, travelers can filter their search and book awarded hotels for stays that we hope will be unforgettable."

Across the United States, 33 hotels



were awarded two Michelin keys in California; Florida; New York; Washington, D.C.; and Chicago, and 80 hotels were awarded one Michelin key.

Michelin has released ratings for hotels in France, Spain and portions of the United States, and it expects to

reveal rankings for Italy and Japan in May and July, respectively. All Michelin Guide hotel recommendations are available on the Michelin Guide website, the company said. Michelin will also release its Key guide for hotels in other U.S. destinations later this year.

## AI Report

continued from page 1

our profession but are also familiar with the many risks it poses regarding confidentiality. The technology is advancing at an alarming rate and so it is imperative that we address it at this time."

NYSBA said prioritizing education and legislation focusing on educating

judges, lawyers, law students and regulators is imperative. Legislatures and regulators should identify risks associated with the technology that are not addressed by existing laws, which will likely involve hearings and studies involving experts in AI, and as needed adopt regulations and legislation to address those risks. The Task Force also wants to see the examination of the function of the law

in AI governance.

ASAE said the task force was responding to recent high-profile embarrassments in the legal profession, including an incident in 2023 where two New York lawyers were sanctioned by a federal judge for using generative-AI tool ChatGPT to create a legal brief that included fake case citations. The report includes a discussion of the case and how AI tools and large

language models can "hallucinate" content, wrote Mark Athitakis, contributing editor for *Associations Now* magazine.

"This report offers no conclusion," the report ended. "As AI continues to evolve, so will the work of NYSBA and the groups tasked with ongoing monitoring. As a profession, we must continue to refine the initial guidelines

Please turn to page 3



# HOTS

*HOTS Monster in the Closet... A North Carolina family was shocked to discover a hive of more than 50,000 bees in the closet of one of the family's children after the child complained of a monster in the closet. According to a report from People Magazine, Ashley Massis Class said that her eldest daughter "was saying she heard monsters in her bedroom wall, but we'd been watching 'Monster's Inc.'" The Class family set about reassuring their daughter that there were not, in fact, monsters in her closet only to*

*be proven kind of wrong when the family noticed bees coming and going from the 100-year-old farm house's chimney. After several attempts to address the bees, a beekeeper was able to find a hive that the bees had built directly over the Class's eldest daughter's bedroom. Over a handful of days, the beekeeper was able to move the bees and a 100 pound chunk of honeycomb. HOTS thinks that's some sweet vindication.*



*HOTS Gold Dust Volcano... An active volcano in Antarctica, Mount Erebus, has been discovered spewing literal gold. According to an April 25 report from Accuweather.com, Mount Erebus spews as much as \$6,000 worth of gold into the atmosphere per day. The volcano emits plumes of gas and steam regularly, researchers said, that contain tiny crystals of metallic gold. Gold from these plumes has been*



The AMC Institute staff enjoyed a spring day on the Potomac River in late April. Left to right: Director of Business Development & Marketing Anita Nelson; Director of Membership & Programs Thomas Pigg; President & CEO Tina Wehmeir, CMP, CAE; Content and Digital Marketing Manager Stephen Rabil; and COO Karin Soyster Fitzgerald, CMP, CAE.

*found as far as 621 miles away from Mount Erebus. HOTS thinks it might be time to dig out the ol' gold pan and buy a ticket to Antarctica.*

WEEKLY NEWS OF ASSOCIATIONS, CLUBS AND HOTELS

# USAE

PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR 1982 – 2021  
Anne Daly Heller

---

PUBLISHER, USAE & CUSTOMNEWS, INC.  
Ross E. Heller  
rheller@usaee-mail.com

COO  
James Heller  
james@usaenews.com

MANAGING EDITOR  
Jonathan Trager  
jon@usaenews.com

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER AND ASSOCIATION EDITOR  
Todd McElwee  
todd@usaenews.com

HOTEL EDITOR  
Jordan Bradley  
jordan@usaenews.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
Diane Nichols  
dkn@usaenews.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
Danielle Erbe  
danielle@yespleasebrand.com

MARKETING & CIRCULATION DIRECTOR  
Christy Pumphrey  
christy@usaenews.com

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
George Roman  
george@georgeromanmedia.com

To ensure publication, all Letters to the Editor must include a telephone number and mailing address in order to verify authenticity.  
Complete copies of USAE are available for all paid subscribers online. Log onto <https://usaenews.com> and locate the log-in and password boxes. Specific log-in and password information is provided to subscribers via e-mail.  
To receive another copy, please contact the paper's circulation department at (301) 986-8496 or via e-mail at [christy@usaenews.com](mailto:christy@usaenews.com).

USAE (USPS 702-930; ISSN 0894-8194) is published weekly except the week of Christmas Day by CustomNEWS, Inc. Subscription rate is \$175/year, add \$65 in Canada and Mexico. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to USAE, 6809 Delaware Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

usaenews.com

CustomNEWS, Inc.  
6809 Delaware Street  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

(301) 986-8496 • ©2022 by CustomNEWS, Inc.

## CESSE Opens ACCESSE24 Registration

By Todd McElwee

Registration has gone live for the Council of Engineering and Scientific Society Executives' (CESSE) ACCESSE24. The premier leadership conference tailored for STEM society professionals will take place from July 23–25 at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel.

"We're excited to bring ACCESSE24 to our community once again," said Louise Ristau, CAE, Executive Director, CESSE. "This conference is not just about professional development; it's about bringing together the organiza-

tions creating an impact on our world so that they can collectively evolve and grow their respective work. We invite professionals from all levels to join us in Toronto for an unforgettable experience."

This year's conference will dive deep into four central themes:

- Leadership: Fostering effective strategies to lead and inspire teams.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility: Embracing and promoting a diverse STEM community.
- Artificial Intelligence and Innovative Technology: Exploring the latest advancements and their implications

for STEM societies.

- Sustainability: Committing to responsible practices for the future of STEM.

Interested individuals can register by June 11 to take advantage of early bird rates. Members pay \$695 and nonmembers \$795. Both prices rise \$50 after the early bird period. Guests pay \$295 with meeting planners able to register for free with a paid registration from the same organization.

Find more information at [cesse.memberclicks.net](https://cesse.memberclicks.net).

## IPW

continued from page 1

since this signature event convened in Los Angeles, and it will lead to years of new visitation and benefits for the city, the state of California and the country overall."

New this year is the California Plaza at IPW by Visit California. U.S. Travel said the over-the-top activation features 43 partners and more than 100 brands in a 50,000-square-foot outdoor extravaganza outside the Los Angeles Convention Center.

"Network before and after show hours each day of IPW, and eat, drink, be entertained with major activations and celebrity cameos popping up at Golden State destinations," the association said.

IPW's social slate featured a performance by Diana Ross during the opening reception on May 4 at the at

the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in Exposition Park.

Sunday Luncheon on May 5 served as a sendoff off for Brand USA President & CEO Chris Thompson, who is retiring after four decades in the industry. Rock band, Dogstar (guitarist/vocalist Bret Domrose, drummer Rob Mailhouse, and bassist Keanu Reeves) performed before leaving to tour Europe.

"Tourism continues to be an indispensable economic engine for Los Angeles, impacting the livelihoods of more than 530,000 tourism-related careers for Angelenos," said Adam Burke, President & CEO, Los Angeles Tourism. "LA is one of the world's most exciting, inclusive and ever-evolving destinations, and we are privileged to host IPW this year, a watershed moment for Los Angeles' tourism industry. With sustained global interest in the City of Angels, and with more demand generators now than ever be-

fore, we are confident that LA will see the benefits of IPW for years to come."

On May 6, Broadway comes to L.A. with performances from the hit shows at the NYC Center Stage luncheon. It is sponsored by New York City Tourism + Conventions and Broadway Inbound. Experience Kissimmee will welcome Ziggy Marley to the luncheon stage on May 7.

Find more information at [ipw.com](https://ipw.com).

## AI Report

continued from page 2

suggested in this report and audit the efficacy of proposed rules and regulations. We liken this journey to the mindset of ancient explorers: be cautious, be curious, be vigilant and be brave."

Find the entire report [here](https://nysba.org) and read more at [NYSBA.org](https://nysba.org).

# NEWS

## Choice Hotels Releases 2023 ESG Report

By [Jordan Bradley](#)

Choice Hotels International released its 2023 Environmental, Social and Governance Report on April 25, detailing the company's latest sustainability initiatives.

Some of Choice's initiatives included new and expanded requirements through the company's "revamped" Room to be Green Program, which promotes environmentally-friendly practices throughout Choice's portfolio of 7,500 hotels globally.

"This past year was pivotal for our business and our sustainability journey," said Patrick Pacious, President and CEO of Choice, in the report.

More than 2,600 Choice hotels are participating in the Room to be Green automated utility tracking dashboard to encourage more efficient energy through three levels of sustainability

practices. As part of the program, all Choice hotels are required to replace incandescent light bulbs with CFL/LED bulbs, utilize a linen and towel reuse program to save water, provide recycling bins for guests and team members, and more.

"At Choice, we're committed to building a better tomorrow, today. By championing sustainable practices, we're helping hotel owners save time and money and appeal to guests and corporate clients," said Megan Brumagim, Vice President of Sustainability at Choice. "Embracing and committing to sustainability is not just the right thing to do, it's also good for business. We are proud of the progress we've made and are energized to continue our sustainability journey."

Also throughout 2023, Choice updated its corporate and franchi-



see human-trafficking prevention training; committed to setting new science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions across global properties; opened its new headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, with the goal of reaching LEED Gold certification; expanded its electric vehicle charging options for guests, and selected 35 hotels to participate in a pilot program that utilizes third-party sustainability audits to implement new and improved sustainability efforts.

"Our sustainability practices

aren't just good for our communities and the planet—they are also good for business. Finding new ways to reduce water and energy use at our Choice-branded hotels, for example, can benefit the environment while also boosting our franchisees' bottom lines," Pacious said. "We are proud of the progress we made in 2023 and look forward to continuing our evolution and growth, all while keeping people at the forefront of our efforts, welcoming every guest everywhere their journey takes them."

## IAEE and UFI Sign Memorandum of Understanding

By [Todd McElwee](#)

IAEE and UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, announced they have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) they said re-establishes a regular exchange between the associations that benefits their respective members while also promoting the industry at large.

"IAEE is pleased to expand upon its international partnerships through this MOU with UFI," said IAEE Chairperson Marie Browne, Group Vice President, RX Americas. "Cultivating relationships that enrich our member offerings and bring attention to the remarkable contributions exhibitions and events make to the global economy is among IAEE's top priorities. We look forward to working with UFI to deliver these benefits."

Initially, the associations will focus on advocacy by driving support for the Exhibitions and Conference Alliance's (ECA) annual Legislative Action Day on May 30 in Washington, D.C. IAEE will

also contribute to Global Exhibitions Day on June 5, the global industry awareness day for the industry for which UFI serves as the project lead and office.

UFI President Geoff Dickinson, CEO of dmg events, said collaboration "has been the genetic code of UFI since its beginnings 100 years ago."

"Today, more than 70 exhibition and event industry associations from around the world are members of UFI, a testament to UFI's role as the leading global body of our industry," Dickinson said. "Besides that, we partner in other ways for the good of the industry. With our new North America Chapter, we want to make sure to deepen the relationships with the associations where we currently don't have them, and we certainly hope that this MoU with IAEE will herald the beginning of a new chapter here."

Other areas covered by the agreement include collaborations on upcoming events such as the China Expo



IAEE and UFI have signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Left to right: IAEE President & CEO Marsha Flanagan, CEM; UFI President Geoff Dickinson; IAEE Chairperson Marie Browne; and UFI Managing Director & CEO Kai Hattendorf.

Forum for International Cooperation (CEFCO), of which both associations

are co-organizers, and a dialogue around research-related issues.

## Antitrust Suit

*continued from page 1*

fendants allegedly have agreed to supply IDeaS "with proprietary, non-public, and sensitive information about their room availability, demand, and pricing. The information is provided continuously, in real time, so that IDeaS always knows what all of its client-competitors have available in a given market," according to CBS News.

The software then provides pricing recommendations updated at least daily that are tailored to each client and designed to maximize revenue, the suit

alleges. According to the complaint, these recommendations from the G3 RMS software are frequently adopted by the hotel operators.

The plaintiffs allege that "by sending their sensitive confidential pricing and occupancy information to a third party to process, analyze, and develop supra-competitive prices, the [defendants] are able to achieve the same result as if they secretly met in a back room and exchanged their information and agreed to a supra-competitive price."

Representatives from all six hotel companies named in the suit did not reply to a USAE request for comment by press deadline.

## DI Report

*continued from page 1*

the survey of key tourism trends and strategies.

- Continued advancement in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, including the launch of the first EDI Summit and the new Social Impact Assessment Tool, now aiding more than 200 destination members.

In addition, DI reports that the DI Foundation raised more than \$1.2 million in 2023. These funds support projects such as incubating new tools and resources and our 30 Under 30

Emerging Leaders Program, as well as new programs such as the HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) scholarship program.

"2023 was a transformative year for Destinations International, driven by unprecedented membership growth and the successful launch of innovative tools and resources that support our global community," said Don Welsh, President & CEO of DI. "As we release this annual report, we are inspired by the achievements of our members and the resilience of the travel and tourism sector."

Two view the full 2023 Annual Report as a PDF, please [click here](#).



# NEWS

## Todd O'Leary Appointed Head of Visit Alexandria

By Jonathan Trager

Visit Alexandria in Virginia has announced that 27-year industry veteran Todd O'Leary will serve as its new President & CEO effective July 8.

O'Leary will succeed Patricia Washington, who announced in December 2023 her planned retirement after more than a decade running the organization. Washington will continue with Visit Alexandria through the end of June.

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater graduate will oversee all operations for Visit Alexandria, including the organization's strategic plan, community stakeholder communications and continued efforts to strengthen Alexandria's revenue generation, reputational excellence and resident

quality of life.

"I am deeply honored and excited to be appointed president and CEO of Visit Alexandria," said O'Leary. "Alexandria is an incredible destination with a solid reputation that I've long admired. I'm excited to work with the members, board, staff and community at large to further the positive impacts of Alexandria's tourism industry."

O'Leary mostly recently served as vice president of marketing and communications for Sonoma County Tourism. He has also worked for the San Francisco Travel Association and VISIT Milwaukee.

"We are delighted to welcome Todd as the next president and CEO of Visit Alexandria," said Visit Alexandria Chair Kate Ellis. "Todd's ample experience across the travel and tourism

industry matched with his personable demeanor and vision for the future of Visit Alexandria will be critical as the organization prepares for its next phase of growth."

O'Leary was recently honored as one of the 2022 Hospitality, Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) Top 25 "Extraordinary Minds" in the hospitality industry.

"My time as president and CEO of Visit Alexandria has been immensely fulfilling, and I am thrilled to pass the baton to such a warm, energetic and strategic leader in the tourism industry," said outgoing Visit Alexandria President and CEO Patricia Washington. "Over the next few months, I will work closely with Todd, our Board of Governors and staff to ensure a smooth leadership transition."



Todd O'Leary

## Hyatt Collaborates on New Guide to Accommodate Neurodivergent Guests

By Jordan Bradley

Hyatt Hotels Corp. released on April 25 a new guide in collaboration with KultureCity, a leading nonprofit "on sensory accessibility and acceptance for those with invisible disabilities" to better accommodate neurodivergent guests. According to Hyatt and KultureCity's guide, key ways that hotels can be more accommodating to neurodivergent individuals by making sure that hotel layout information is available online, training staff in best practices when greeting and accommodating neurodivergent individuals, allowing travelers the flexibility to choose a room best suited to their needs, offering digital check-ins and in-room sleep offerings like noise-cancelling headphones.

The Cleveland Clinic defines neurodivergent as "a nonmedical term that describes people whose brains develop or work differently for some

reason." This can be attributed to diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia or attention-deficit disorder. According to KultureCity, one in every four individuals in the United States "has a sensory need or an invisible disability."

"When someone walks through our doors, as a colleague, guest or customer, we want them to feel cared for so that they can be their best; this is our purpose as a company, and our work with KultureCity and the NYU professors is a realization of that care," said Mark Vondrasek, Chief Commercial Officer at Hyatt.

The guide was created based on a survey of more than 1,000 neurodivergent individuals or their caregivers conducted by KultureCity and New York University professors Dr. Recep Karaburcin and Dr. Vanja Bogicevic from the Jonathan M. Tisch Center of Hospitality.

"Individuals with invisible disabili-

ties are often misunderstood and our collaboration with Hyatt aims to change that by directly listening to the community," said Sean Culklin of KultureCity, autism self-advocate, and a member of the neurodivergent community.

Almost 70% of neurodivergent travelers and caregiver respondents said they would self-disclose their neurodiversity if that would make the hotel booking process and stay smoother, according to the KultureCity survey.

Hyatt said in order for self-disclosure to be of benefit, onsite staff would need to be trained in the best practices for neurodivergent individuals, which focuses on being mindful of guests' sensory sensitivities.

Another way hotels can help neurodivergent individuals have more easeful stays is by providing 3D virtual tours and floor plans of the hotels and guest rooms. According to KultureCity's survey, more than 50% of respon-

dents would like to see more property visuals in advance of their stay.

The survey also found that "more than 60% of caregivers believe that pre-assigned rooms could make the check-in experience better" and being able to select the rooms that best fit their individual needs would help as well.

"With KultureCity carving the path for inclusion and awareness and Hyatt leading the way to have an open conversation to uncover areas of improvement, we can provide the tools and resources for the hospitality industry to encourage neurodivergent travelers, so they too can immerse themselves in the transformative powers of travel," said Culklin.

Hyatt properties in the U.S. are already implementing some of these practices through the Hyatt Has It program, Hyatt said, by offering sensory aids such as headphones and fidget tools, which help neurodivergent individuals avoid overstimulation.

## Wyndham Announces Three Finalists in Search for Greensboro Six Mural Artist

By Jordan Bradley

Three artists have been selected as finalists to create an original outdoor mural commissioned by Wyndham Hotels and Resorts honoring civil rights pioneers, The Greensboro Six in North Carolina: Vincent Ballentine of Brooklyn, New York; Raman Bhardwaj of Greensboro and Abel Jackson of Charlotte, North Carolina.

The artists were selected by a committee comprised of Greensboro community members and organizations from more than 50 artists across the country.

Combined, the trio have more

than 80 years of experience creating art, Wyndham said. Ballentine is a multi-disciplined artist whose work has been commissioned by the NCAA, MTV and BET. Bhardwaj's work has created art for national brands including the Charlotte Hornets. And Jackson has a background in fine art, custom portraits and murals.

The mural is slated for installation at the Gillespie Golf Course, where the Greensboro Six gained national attention for playing a round of golf at a then-segregated golf course.

"The Greensboro Six left a lasting legacy at Gillespie—one that deserves to be memorialized for generations



Three finalists have been selected in the national search for artists to create a mural commissioned by Wyndham Hotels & Resorts honoring the Greensboro Six. Artists from left: Vincent Ballentine, Raman Bhardwaj and Abel Jackson.

to come. Our chosen finalists have unparalleled talent and passion for their craft, and the quality of their work makes us confident these men will have a permanent place to be

celebrated in our community," said Ryan Wilson, CEO of First Tee - Central Carolina, one of the organizations that has partnered with Wyndham on the project.



# BUFFALO

Meet in a one-of-a-kind weirdly wonderful place where arts meets sports meets à la carte meets wings in bars meets the great outdoors meets the great indoors, right next door to a wonder of the world. This is Buffalo—a sneaky cool place full of greatest hits and hidden gems, where you and your colleagues are never more than a moment from what's next.



## YOU'RE WELCOME.



Add inspiration to the agenda with a breakout session at the world-class Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

### **MEET BUFFALO.**

Check out the City of Good Neighbors for yourself—on us. Enjoy a two-day site visit, with complimentary airfare and hotel stay for qualifying groups of up to four people. Did we mention? You're always welcome.

*Restrictions may apply.*

**PLAN YOUR BREAKOUT**

visit  
**Buffalo Niagara**