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ASSOCIATION

^{5 WAYS} The Best of Quest

We had doubts whether it would come to fruition, but we're so excited it did. The long-anticipated GulfQuest National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico in Mobile, Alabama, is finally open, and it's pretty spectacular. Take a look at five ways groups meeting in Mobile in 2016 (we're looking at you, National Association for Court Management and Mid-South Educational Research Association) can explore GulfQuest. *—Kelsey Ogletree*

1) HEAR FROM LOCALS.

Gulf Coast residents provide the narration for "The Gulf Coast: A Place Like No Other" film, shown in its 80-seat theater.

2) CATCH A VIEW.

Vessels, from tugboats to cargo ships, passing down the Mobile River can be seen from the observation decks.







3) BE METEOROLOGISTS. Track global weather patterns and Gulf of Mexico hurricanes in the "Ocean Planet" exhibit.

4) FLOAT YOUR BOAT.

Groups of up to 20 at a time can virtually navigate around the Port of Mobile, Mobile Bay and Tombigbee River in the "Take the Helm" boat pilot simulator.

5) DINE ALFRESCO.

The only restaurant on the Mobile River, The Galley serves local standouts like footlong shrimp po'boys.



SOUTHWEST SWAGGER

Besides hosting the College Football Playoff National Championship in January, the Greater Phoenix area has a lot going for it in 2016, starting with renos of two major hotel players. -KO

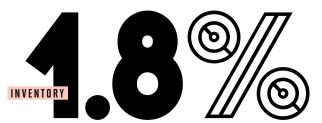
HEIGH-HO, VALLEY HO!

It was "off to work we go" at downtown Scottsdale's midcentury modern-style Hotel Valley Ho. In honor of the property's 10th birthday (since it reopened in 2005), it unveiled a \$4 million refresh with updated guest rooms, lobby and ZuZu restaurant.

WE BILT THIS CITY

The iconic Arizona Biltmore finished a \$30 million renovation in January that included a sophisticated new look for the Mystery Room (formerly a speakeasy during Prohibition, it makes for a cool meeting space).





That's how much the supply of hotel rooms will likely rise year over year from 2015 to 2016—the first growth greater than 1 percent since 2009, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. As a result, "if there is going to be any falloff in group demand, we will recognize it by mid-2016 as planners start the process for their 2017 meetings," says Kevin Barosso, assistant vice president of national sales at Destination Hotels. This means we could be in a buyer's market again by 2017—good news for meeting profs.

Source: Destination Hotels' State of the Industry and 2016 Trend Forecast