

# Cconnect

WINTER 2016

ASSOCIATION



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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 foot-long 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).



# 1.8% INVENTORY

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 pros.

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