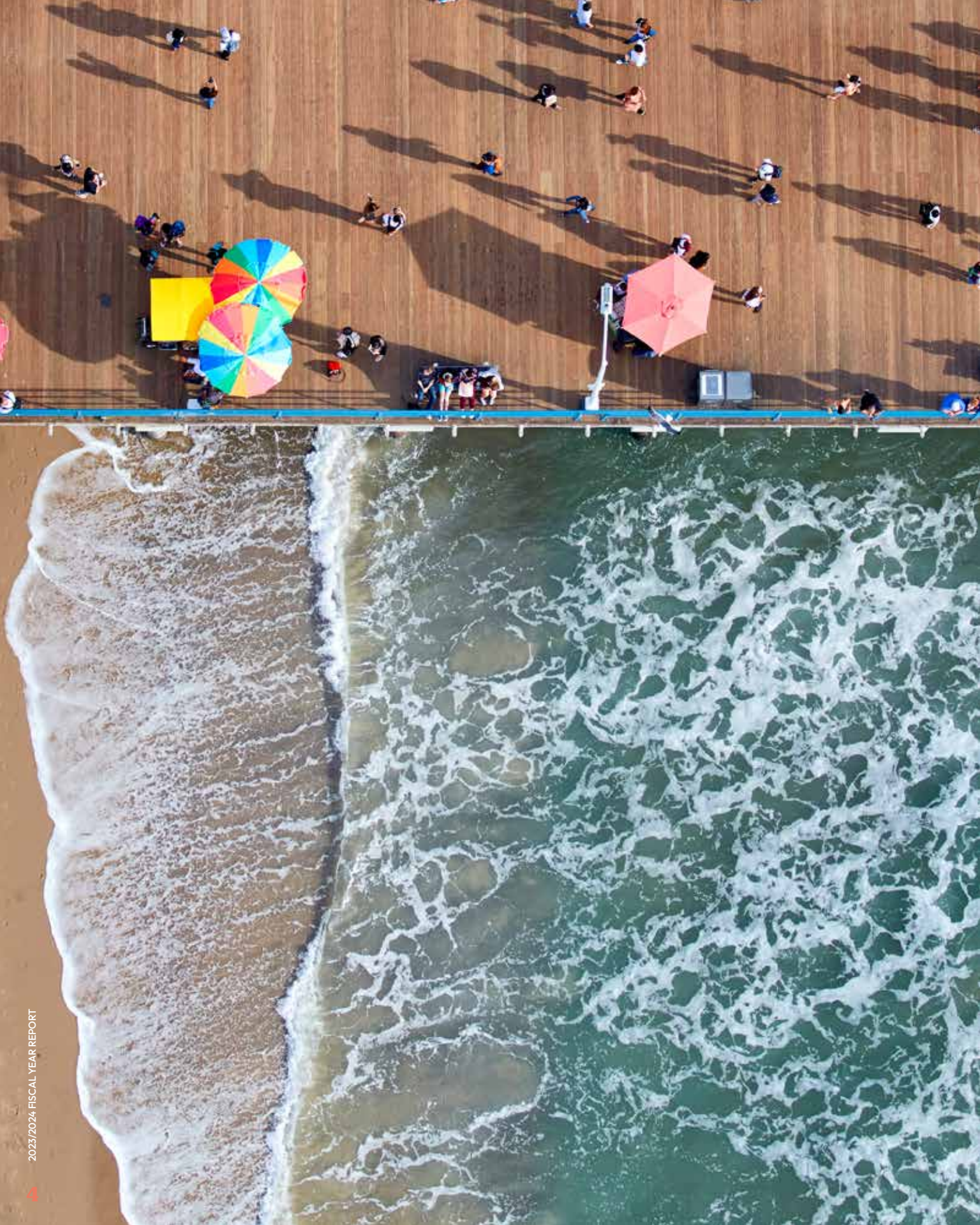


**SANTA  
MONICA**  
TRAVEL & TOURISM

# Fiscal Year Report

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024





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# Introduction

# 2024

## Dear Santa Monica Destination Partner,

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors and Santa Monica Travel & Tourism (SMTT) staff, we are pleased to share our annual 2023-2024 Fiscal Report, covering July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

When asked what makes Santa Monica different from other beachside destinations, my first response is that it is our uniquely collaborative and creative community that truly sets us apart. Each of you are a testament to that and play an integral role in making Santa Monica a world-class hub for hospitality, innovation and a place where there's deep love and respect for our natural surroundings.

Much of our work this past fiscal year centered around a return to marketing efforts in our top international markets. These visitors tend to stay longer, use public transportation and spend more in our city. Over the past 12-months we resumed work in five key markets including Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland, France and Germany. Our efforts paid off. In 2023, 24.1% of overnight visitors were international, compared to 21% in

2022, reflecting that we are amid the revival of our global travel market.

Taking a look around our beachside city, it's not hard to see why interest in Santa Monica remains strong. This spring, JW Marriott Le Merigot made its re-imagined debut as Sandbourne Santa Monica, bringing an elevated coastal luxury vibe and culinary concept from Chef Raphael Lunetta to this beachfront gem. Later in 2024 we will welcome Regent Santa Monica Beach, marking the return of the Regent Hotel brand to the U.S.

Santa Monica welcomed an influx of new business openings in the last year further speaking to our city's ongoing economic recovery. Over 30 new restaurants, shops and fitness studios set up shop in the destination with a notable return of brick-and-mortar stores along Montana Avenue, Main Street and the Third Street Promenade in Downtown. From the return of the iconic L.A. staple Fred Segal to the re-opening of Nike and sustainable second-hand retailers like OpenClosit and El Husuba, fashion is having a moment. Always at the

forefront of fitness and wellness trends, Santa Monica welcomed the popular pickleball clubs PicklePop and Pickletown as well as gym DMN8 and fitness studio Fitstop. We could not be more excited to welcome so many new neighbors to our community.

A longtime hub for arts and culture, the spotlight continues to shine on Santa Monica as a destination for international exhibits and events. For the second year in a row, Frieze Los Angeles returned to Santa Monica Airport's Barker Hangar, welcoming 32,000 visitors from 48 countries for record-breaking art sales. The same weekend, the city hosted the Los Angeles Wine & Food Festival, bringing more than 30 chefs from across the region to highlight culinary wonders.

Looking forward, the ever popular SaMo PRIDE returns in June, transforming the entire downtown neighborhood – Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica Place and Santa Monica Pier – with its month-long celebration of events and activities that honor our LGBTQ+ community. Also, this fall Cirque Du Soleil will return to the Santa Monica Pier with its Kooza Show. Our city estimates that Cirque du Soleil could generate \$20 million in tourism revenue for local businesses based on a study completed after a ten-week run in 2009.

To complement the variety of accommodations and attractions, our famed Michelin-starred restaurants and casual beach-front cafes continue to inspire growth for our celebrated culinary scene. Our beachside city also welcomed a variety of food and beverage options with multiple new French, Italian, and Coastal Cuisine eateries including LouLou Santa Monica, Sogno Toscano and Isla.

In partnership with the City of Santa Monica, SMTT continues its leadership work on the Experience Management Plan (EMP). This 10-year roadmap outlines the evolution of the Santa Monica experience for all who find themselves in the destination. Five (5) committees – comprised of residents, businesses, nonprofits and city staff representatives – are working towards a collective vision of the future

by outlining experiences the city may offer. They will also identify courses of action for related community organizations, business owners and operators, city staff, city council and individuals. The committees include: Ensure Santa Monica is a Safe and Clean Place to Live and Visit; Highlight and Leverage Cultural Happenings; Promote Diversity of Retail, Dining and Evening Experiences; Support Livability for the Santa Monica Community; and a Governance Committee.

While challenges remain, I'm confident that we're making progress every day. While the road may not be easy, if we come together and continue working towards recovery, we can achieve great things. Your support is essential to our success. Have faith in one another and in our community. With kindness as our cornerstone, along with mutual respect, collaboration, dedication, and resilience, we will uphold the values of Santa Monica.

As a new fiscal year is on the horizon and we prepare for a busy summer season, we look forward with continued optimism. Thank you for all that you do each and every day to make Santa Monica a beautiful place to live, work and play!

In gratitude,



**Misti Kerns CMP CDME**  
President/CEO,  
Santa Monica Travel & Tourism



## Who We Are

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism (SMTT) is a private, non-profit corporation formed in 1982 and is funded by the City of Santa Monica's general fund and the Tourism Marketing District (TMD) assessment. The purpose of SMTT is to promote Santa Monica as a conference, business and leisure travel destination. As a sales and service organization, SMTT acts as the marketing representative for local businesses and the community as a whole.



### EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

**Misti Kerns, CMP CDME** – President/Chief Executive Officer  
**Evan Edwards** – Chief Operating Officer  
**Rachel Lozano** – Chief People Officer

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**Ozzie Otero** – Director of Sales  
**Aleksandr Sigalus** – Director of Global Business Development  
**Kristin Farrel** – Global Sales & Services Manager  
**Kylie Escobar** – Global Sales & Services Assistant  
**Tatum McGovern** – Global Sales & Services Assistant

### CLIENT SERVICES

**Alyssa Dorn** – Client Services Manager  
**Alexis Faust** – Client Services Coordinator  
**Jenna Kirkeeng** – Client Services Assistant

### COMMUNICATIONS

**Lauren Salisbury** – Senior Director of Communications  
**Michelle Cassidy** – Communications Manager  
**Emily Ohara** – Public Relations Manager  
**Indigo Sargent** – Social Media Manager  
**Kim Mulder** – Public Relations Coordinator

### MARKETING

**Mandy Eck** – Senior Director of Marketing  
**Emily Sweeney** – Marketing Manager, Community  
**Cayla Turain** – Marketing Manager, Trade & International  
**Franki Inomata** – Graphic Designer  
**Jodi Feigenbaum** – Marketing Coordinator

### OPERATIONS/ACCOUNTING

**Shannon Holt** – Finance Manager  
**Jacqueline Saquic** – Assistant Accounting Manager  
**Cassidy Lawless** – Accounting Coordinator  
**Ellen Keegan** – Executive Assistant

### VISITOR SERVICES

**Aaron Seals** – Senior Manager, Visitor Services  
**Luis Vazquez** – Visitor Services Coordinator  
**Savannah Davison** – Travel Specialist  
**Michelle Dimas** – Travel Specialist  
**Vinnie Edwards** – Travel Specialist  
**Matthew Nielsen** – Travel Specialist  
**Sue Skaggs** – Travel Specialist  
**Yarely Trejo** – Travel Specialist  
**Juan Vazquez** – Travel Specialist

# Volunteer Leadership

We are grateful for the strategic guidance of our Board of Directors and Tourism Marketing District Committee members.



## 2023/24 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Neil Carrey** – Chair, Resident
- Younes Atallah** – Vice Chair, Regent Santa Monica Beach Hotel
- Charlie Lopez-Quintana** – Treasurer, ETC Hotels
- Darlene Evans** – Secretary, Resident
- Lauralee Asch** – Member, Resident
- Kera Blades-Snell** – Member, Resident
- Karen Ginsberg** – Member, Resident
- Shahid Kayani** – Member, Hilton Santa Monica Hotel & Suites
- Jeff Klocke** – Member, Pacific Park
- Jan Williamson** – Member, 18th Street Arts Center
- David White** – Member, City of Santa Monica/City Manager
- Judy Kruger** – Chamber Liaison, Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce

## 2023/24 TOURISM MARKETING DISTRICT COMMITTEE

- Younes Atallah** – Chair, Regent Santa Monica Beach Hotel
- Julien Labays** – Vice Chair, Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows
- Aileen Carreon** – Treasurer/Secretary, ETC Hotels
- Cameron Haseli** – Member, Ocean Park Inn
- Cheri Perez** – Member, Santa Monica Hotel
- Jessica Rincon** – Member, Le Merigot Santa Monica
- Karina Sedigh** – Member, The Pierside Santa Monica
- Diego Ruiz de Porras** – Member, Oceana Santa Monica
- Juan Viramontes** – Member, Gateway Hotel Santa Monica

## What Drives Us

At Santa Monica Travel and Tourism we have the honor of representing the premiere beach destination in the world.



## Mission Statement

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism works to strengthen our local economy by enhancing and promoting our community as a distinctive, compelling and welcoming travel destination.

## Vision

To ensure Santa Monica is recognized as the premier beach-city destination in the world.

## Brand Promise

Santa Monica...an unforgettable beach city experience filled with eye-catching people, cutting edge culture and bold innovations. It's the essence of the California lifestyle.



A large, blue and white propeller airplane is the central focus, mounted on concrete pillars. The fuselage features the text "Spirit of Santa Monica". In the foreground, a bronze statue of a man in a suit stands next to a dog. The background shows a modern museum building with large windows and palm trees under a clear blue sky.

# Strategic Direction



### Imperatives

### Success Indicators

### Initiatives

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Drive balanced demand for the destination.</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Y/Y TOT.</li> <li>• Maintain domestic travel levels from target markets.</li> <li>• Increase international visitation to pre-pandemic levels (2019).</li> <li>• Grow average length-of-stay to pre-pandemic level by year end 2024.</li> <li>• Maintain stable year-round occupancy range of 65% to 75% FY 2023 and 75% to 82% for FY 2024.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase occupancy during identified need periods.</li> <li>• Re-establish presence in Asia-Pacific markets to ensure optimal ROI for Santa Monica.</li> <li>• Increase occupancy during identified need periods including FAM dates.</li> <li>• Develop and implement next steps for MICE Advisory Board.</li> <li>• Actively support efforts to reduce visa wait times.</li> <li>• Further develop luxury destination offerings and experiences.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Enhance the brand and steward the destination experience.</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Y/Y increase in positive visitor sentiment.</li> <li>• Maintain positive social sentiment across different facets: accommodations, dining + retail, wellness and cleanliness + safety.</li> <li>• Increase web performance metrics to pre-pandemic levels: monthly site visits, page views per visit, average time on site.</li> <li>• Increase social followers by 15% on key social platforms.</li> <li>• Complete brand platform and supporting materials.</li> <li>• Grow Santa Monica generated media placements year over year</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh the destination brand.</li> <li>• Identify what has changed with the brand perception of Santa Monica post branch launch.</li> <li>• Re-introduce the Visitor guide and distribution annually.</li> <li>• Pursue integrated marketing campaigns and experiential brand activations in designated target markets.</li> <li>• Grow Public Relations efforts toward top tier lifestyle outlets to increase ad value and circulation of media placements.</li> <li>• Take action on findings of the Santa Monica Experience Management Plan.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Increase awareness of positive tourism impact to community members with press and social media outreach</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve positive tourism economic outcomes as indicated in the Tourism Economic Impact Report.</li> <li>• Achieve consistently positive resident sentiment toward tourism.</li> <li>• Achieve a minimum of \$25K (2023)/\$50K (2024) in charitable/donated/in-kind value through the Santa MoniCARES Foundation.</li> <li>• Increase and maintain engagement level with other Santa Monica boards and organizations.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-launch I Am Santa Monica program locally.</li> <li>• Maintain an influential presence on Santa Monica local and industry boards and key initiatives aimed at advancing tourism.</li> <li>• Strengthen and nurture positive relationships with Santa Monica City Council and City leadership.</li> <li>• Increase fundraising capabilities and expand the Santa MoniCARES program to assist more community nonprofits.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the impact of tourism within our community, region, state and country with increased opportunities for staff and board participation.</li> <li>• Develop a system to track metrics on community sentiment and engagement.</li> <li>• Identify and employ new opportunities for board engagement and development.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Strengthen strategic partnerships.</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate a minimum of \$220K (2023) and \$275K (2024) in-kind or fair share value.</li> <li>• Secure a minimum of \$50K in outside sponsorship dollars to offset program costs. (Y1 = \$25K/Y2 = \$35K).</li> <li>• Participate in four (4) Experience Management Plan (EMP) strategic actions.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with and support the City of Santa Monica's Community Partnership Manager.</li> <li>• Identify and secure corporate brand partnerships for SMTT.</li> <li>• Serve as the Backbone Organization for the Santa Monica Experience Management Plan.</li> <li>• Engage Santa Monica partners to increase fair share participation fees year-over-year.</li> <li>• Develop a strategic plan for increasing in-kind contributions year-over-year.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Ensure operational excellence.</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure accountability as measured by our audit reporting, financials and plan management.</li> <li>• Achieve targeted annual employee engagement scores using the Gallup Q12.</li> <li>• Increase SMTT staff participation in community events that align with our mission, vision and values.</li> <li>• Evaluate and reconcile ROI metrics for all target markets.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve successful funding renewals.</li> <li>• Analyze TID Pilot Program for future earnings.</li> <li>• Achieve five years of audited financials with no more than three reportable conditions.</li> <li>• Review and set target operating costs per employee.</li> <li>• Achieve targeted staff retention level.</li> <li>• Conduct a minimum of one annual team building experience, including monthly wellness activities.</li> <li>• Solidify SMTT's resource needs to ensure consistent high-quality delivery.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a recruiting strategy.</li> <li>• Establish a crisis event telephone tree, both city and regional.</li> <li>• Develop and implement an internal technology plan, including shared file protocols.</li> </ul>                |

# Economic Impact



# Tourism in Santa Monica

Tourism is one of the largest industries in Santa Monica and provides a sizeable economic impact for all those who live, work and play in our beachside city.

**7,182**

Tourism jobs that stay in Santa Monica and cannot be exported (-10.8% decrease from 2022)

**\$938.1 MIL**

Total Annual Visitor Spending (-2.5% decrease from 2022)

**\$62.6 MIL**

Generated by Santa Monica hotels directly to the City of Santa Monica's general fund (5.6% increase from 2022)



**-12.8%**

Decrease in total number of visitors to Santa Monica from 2022



**\$1,398**

The estimated amount of money each Santa Monica household would have to pay in taxes to maintain city services if tourism revenue and the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) did not exist



**\$4.2 MIL**

Retail Sales Tax Revenue Generated from visitors into the City of Santa Monica's General Fund (-7.9% decrease from 2022)



**-7%**

Decrease in international travelers from 2022

## All Visitors

### Top International Feeder Markets

1. Western Europe 17%
2. Canada 12.3%
3. UK/Ireland 12.1%
4. South America 10.4%
5. Central & Eastern Europe 8.5%

### Top Domestic Feeder Markets

1. California 30.8%
2. Arizona 7.8%
3. Texas 7.3%
4. Colorado 4.6%
5. Nevada 3.3%

## Hotel Visitors

### Top International Feeder Markets

1. Western Europe 17%
2. Canada 14.1%
3. United Kingdom & Ireland 12.1%
4. South America 10.4%
5. Central & Eastern Europe 8.5%

### Top Domestic Feeder Markets

1. California 30.8%
2. Arizona 7.8%
3. Texas 7.3%
4. Colorado 4.6%
5. Nevada & Florida 3.3% each

# Experiences

# The Santa Monica Experience Management Plan

## Purpose

Our Experience Management Plan (EMP) provides a 10-year (2022-2032) framework and process that is deeply customized to the local context in Santa Monica with the intention of creating a future where community and environmental needs are considered with the same weight as economic benefits, resulting in a thriving and welcoming community far into the future.

The initial EMP was created, approved and ready to launch in 2020 but was put on hold due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In early 2022, the process of updating and rebuilding the plan began, working with many stakeholders across the Santa Monica community, just as we had in the first version of the plan's development.

With our plan update now complete, we are ready to begin the process of implementation, which will continue to unfold over the coming years through 2032. There is much to do as we lock arms and embark on this important journey.

For the first year of the plan, we will focus on implementing programs for four of our nine key strategies. A committee has been created for each of these strategies consisting of key members of the community. Each committee has been appointed an SMTT facilitator to ensure open communications between all stakeholders in the EMP process:

## Year One

- Ensure Santa Monica continues to be a safe and clean place
- Support livability for Santa Monica residents
- Highlight and leverage cultural and historic experiences
- Promote a diversity of retail, dining and evening experiences

## Year Two And Beyond

- Foster memorable accommodation experiences that enhance the value proposition
- Facilitate the viability of small and unique businesses
- Sustainably invest in making Santa Monica the greenest beach city in the U.S.
- Support and enhance Santa Monica's most important assets
- Enhance mobility for Santa Monica visitors, residents and workforce

A Governance Committee has also been created to ensure that progress is made on each strategy and to prioritize short- and long-term goals. While SMTT is spearheading this process, we will not control or own all the initiatives that will be pursued. A consultant has been retained to facilitate the first year of the implementation phase and guide the process citywide.

The second year of this plan will allow for implementation of areas and ideas that have been outlined in the EMP while further building out the plan for future years.



## Purpose of Our Experience Management Plan

### What is an Experience Management Plan?

A 10-year framework designed to ensure compelling experiences, quality infrastructure and remarkable services for generations to come

### Why is it important to our community?

It provides an inclusive and transparent opportunity to take part in proactively shaping the future of Santa Monica as a destination.

### The guiding principles that have shaped our plan

Stewardship

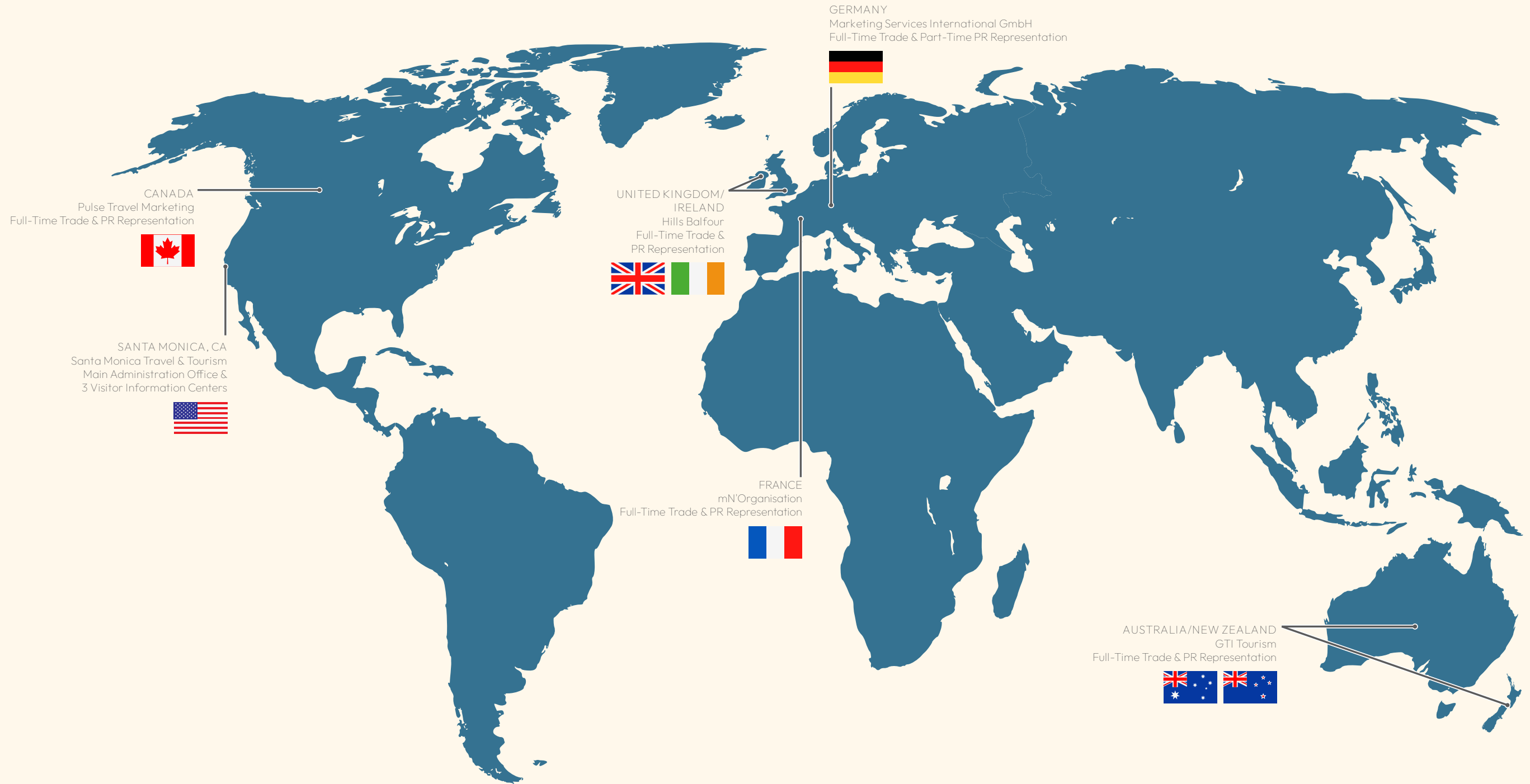
Sustainability

DEIA

An aerial photograph of a coastal city, likely Los Angeles, showing a wide sandy beach, a pier extending into the ocean, and a dense urban area with mountains in the background. The text 'International Representation' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

# International Representation

# SMTT Around the Globe





# United Kingdom & Ireland

## In-Market Activities

- Hosted Sales and Media Mission in London with Chef Mary Sue Milliken and partners from The Huntley Hotel and Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows. Events were by 71 travel trade partners and 35 media.
- Attended Visit USA Summer Affair 2023 in July to meet with tour operators.
- Held Barbie movie private screening event with Brand USA and Santa Monica Place (Macerich), attended by 47 trade partners.
- Participated in Travel Counsellors USA Takeover day, training 20 travel agents.
- Attended Brand USA Travel Week, meeting with 39 tour operators to discuss the destination and sales campaigns.
- Attended Hablo Unplugged Agent Training events in Edinburgh and London, training 91 sales agents.
- Participated on Visit USA Ireland roadshow to build on relationships with key product managers and decision makers.



## Campaigns

- Launched Expedia and Hotels.com Digital Consumer Sales Driving campaign, with bookable CTA links through digital adverts on platforms such as Meta and TikTok.
- To further leverage this campaign, partnered with Hablo a trade networking platform to encourage travel agents to sell Santa Monica to their customers through incentives and quizzes.



## Booking Trends

- The average stay in Santa Monica is 3-4 nights.
- The average lead time from the market is 3-6 months.
- 43% of travelers said they would be interested in visiting California with 51% stating they would be interested in visiting 2-3 cities within their trip.
- More than 70% of consumers say that they prefer to book their holidays via trusted providers for extra security.

# United Kingdom & Ireland

## Outlook and Trends

- 80% of UK travelers plan to take the same number, if not more, trips abroad in 2024 compared to 2023.
- 27% of UK travelers rate the overall 'vibe' of a destination as important when choosing where to go in 2024.
- 25% of UK travelers say the cost of hotels mostly determines their choice of destination.
- "Set-jetting" is a huge trend, with 39% of people having booked trips to destinations they have seen in films or TV shows.
- Choosing more sustainable travel options is growing in importance for Gen Z.
- In 2024, expect to see more UK travelers focus on these authentic experiences, using social media platforms as inspiration to help them 'live like a local'.

## Visitor Information

- In January 2024 there were 226,799 arrivals from the UK to the U.S. (highest overseas arrivals to the U.S.).
- Arrivals had a +11.23% increase on January 2023 arrivals showing positive recovery (National Travel and Tourism Office, 2024).
- The three top motivations for travelers' trips to the United States include treating oneself, reduce stress and recharge, and connect with family/loved ones. September and October are the most popular months for leisure travel.
- Visitors prefer to visit 2-3 cities when visiting the United States. Accommodation preference for visitors to California are luxury hotels.

## Trade Engagements

- In-market Sales Calls: 106
- Trade Events: 12
- FAMs: 1
- FAM Participants: 4
- Ad hoc FAM Trips supported: 7
- Agent/Operators Trained: 401



# Germany

## In-Market Activities

- Exhibited at the Tourism Consumer Show in Munich in partnership with VUSA Germany.
- Attended Visit USA Germany Roadshow in Cologne and Stuttgart, training **72 travel agents**.
- Participated in CANUSA FAM to Santa Monica, training **8 staff**.
- Conducted immersion session with Visit California at MSI office in Frankfurt, training travel agents.
- Attended CRD Touristik in-house trade show with more than **6,000 clients, travel agencies and media** in attendance.
- Launched USA Online education platform on Germany's leading travel trade magazine FVW, training **121 agents**.

## Campaigns

- Launched a holistic SoCal triangle campaign strategy in partnership with Greater Palm Springs and San Diego with America Unlimited and CRD Touristik.
- Ran a sales campaign with Feinreisen, the luxury brand of America Unlimited, that included newsletters and a Google ad performance campaign.
- Ran a multilayered campaign with FTI including newsletters, a dedicated landing page and webinar.
- Launched SoCal triangle sales campaign with Hotelplan, resulting in **71 displays** in travel agencies across as well as social media promotion and a dedicated landing page.



- Participated in a Visit California Opodo campaign that included newsletters and social media.
- Launched campaign with the German Beach Volleyball Association to raise awareness of Santa Monica as beach volleyball destination and host of the 2028 Olympic championships.

## Visitor Information

- German visitation reached 87% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023.
- German travel spending recovered to 99% in 2023.
- Airlift from Germany to California has recovered to 100%, including 73 weekly non-stop flights between Germany and California.
- California remains a popular U.S. destination with a 20% market share.



# Germany

## Booking

- The majority of German visitors to the U.S. continue to book their travel through tour operators and travel agencies.
- Online booking continues to rise in popularity, but not yet for long-haul travel.
- In 2023, 55 million Germans booked trips of at least 5 days in duration, a rise of 3.5%. Of these trips, 9% were long-haul.
- The main booking season for summer travel is November to April.
- All leading United States specialists, including CANUSA, America Unlimited or CRD all reported an increase in bookings for California, with revenue surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- Large tour operators selling holidays worldwide report a slower recovery for the United States with high costs being the greatest challenge.

## Outlook and Trends

- High demand for California in 2024.
- High prices in California remain a challenge, but many Germans are willing to spend more on hotels, activities, rental cars and flights.
- Air service will surpass pre-pandemic levels as Condor increases daily summer service from Frankfurt to LAX.
- Early booking cycle is trending back to pre-pandemic levels with a good share of business being booked by February for summer travel.

## Trade Engagements

- In-market Sales Calls: 19
- Trade Shows: 3
- FAMs: 1
- FAM Participants: 3
- Agents/Operators Trained: 222



# France

## In-Market Activities

- Hosted Sales and Media Mission in Paris in partnership with Chef Raphael Lunetta and French Chef Frédéric Vardon. Events were attended by **22 media and 39 travel agents**.
- Participated on Visiteurs Tour Operator 2023/2024 Educational Roadshow, training **30 agents**.
- Attended IFTM Top Resa 2023 with Visit California, meeting **40 travel advisors**.
- Hosted cocktail making event at IFTM Top Resa, training **109 Agency Managers**.
- Attended Visit USA's series of destination workshops across key cities in France, attended by **271 travel advisors**.
- Participated in Air Canada workshops, training **17 travel advisors**.
- Conducted workshop with Normacom to educate top tour operators.
- Attended Voyamar Tour Operator Annual Convention.
- Exhibited at ILTM Cannes, conducting **34 meetings** with top luxury buyers and media.
- Conducted tour operator training sessions with Kuoni and Maisons des Voyages, training **19 agents**.
- Sponsored Visit USA California training day lunch.



## Campaigns

- Voyamar and Havas Voyages product development campaign launched new destination itineraries.
- Conducted webinar with Voyamar and Haas Voyages to train nearly 100 agents on the itineraries.

## Visitor Info

- The number of French travelers to the United States increased to 1.5 million visitors, up 20.9% compared to 2022.
- In 2023, French visitation to California nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels with visitor spending reaching \$1.14 million and visitor volume 413 million.
- California is a top destination in the United States. The average length of stay in Santa Monica is three to four nights.
- Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is the top port of entry in California. Delta Air Lines, Air Tahiti Nui, Air France offer non-stop flights from Paris to LAX. Norse Atlantic, a new transatlantic low-cost airline, launched its inaugural CDG-LAX flight in Spring 2024.

- In 2023, French travelers allocated an average budget of 2,339 euros per person for their trips. This budget varies by age group, with 18-34 year olds spending around 2,192 euros and those aged 65 and older spending approximately 2,493 euros.
- French consumers are attracted to California for the following activities:
  - › Shopping 88%
  - › Sightseeing 80%
  - › National Parks/Monuments 72%
  - › Small Towns/Countryside 52%
  - › Amusement/Theme Parks 46%
  - › Historical Locations 41%
  - › Art Galleries/Museums 33%
- Demographic profile of French visitors in California:
  - › Gen Z 11%
  - › Millennial 34%
  - › Gen X 32%
  - › Baby Boomer 23%
- 43% of French travelers book through an OTA.

## Outlook and Trends

- In 2023, France's economic landscape has seen significant changes. The growth forecast was lowered and inflation is high. These trends indicate a gradually recovering French economy, facing challenges in growth, regulatory constraints, and youth unemployment.
- These trends are also being shaped by wider economic factors: the cost-of-living crisis and inflation are influencing travel decisions, with consumers becoming more cost-conscious.
- The year 2023 has been marked by the pursuit of "Revenge Travel" and a strong return of long-haul travel +19%.

## Trade Engagements

- In-market Sales Calls: 32
- Event/Workshop: 10
- Trade Show: 1
- Press Visit : 1
- Sales Mission: 1
- FAMs: 1
- Operators Trained: Over 340



# Canada

## In-Market Activities

- Hosted Sales and Media Mission to Toronto and Vancouver with partners from Fairmont Miramar hotel & Bungalows, Hotel Casa del Mar, Shutters on the Beach and Loews Santa Monica. Events were attended by **174 top travel and media**.
- Participated in Visit California Sales Missions to Eastern and Western Canada, meeting with **425 travel agents**.
- Partnered with The Travel Agent Next Door on training campaigns to reach **1,200 travel agents**.
- Launched SpoiledAgent.com dedicated Santa Monica landing page to reach more than **15,000 travel agents**.
- Attended 11 Travel Trade shows across Canada, meeting with **1,050 travel agents**.
- Attended four Virtuoso events, engaging with **230 travel agents**.
- Held 11 Virtuoso training sessions reaching **150 travel agents**.
- Attended ACTA Toronto Summit, meeting with **500 travel agents**.
- Partnered with Porter Airlines to market inaugural Toronto to Los Angeles route. Activities included hosting a press trip and a VIP Virtuoso FAM, attended by **6 travel agents**.
- Held Barbie movie private screening event, attended by **40 trade partners**.



## Campaigns

- Launched Expedia campaign resulting in 5,400 airline tickets sold and 753 Room nights booked.
- Produced MICE awareness campaign with The Incentivist, including a dedicated landing page and comprehensive newsletter and advertising campaign.
- Launched “Take Me To Santa Monica” campaign with Air Canada Vacations, resulting in 152% increase in Facebook campaign impressions and a 28% open rate on trade newsletters.

## Outlook and Trends

- Canada remains the largest international source of inbound visitors to the United States. In 2023 visitation surpassed pre-pandemic levels with over 21 million visitors.
- Air routes rose by 9.9% in 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- Most Canadians travel as a couple (46%) or as a family (23%).
- In a December 2023 study, 55% of respondents said 'Yes' to a question about their likelihood to travel to the United States in the next two years.
- The first two months of 2023 saw 4.76 million Canadians return home from an overnight trip to the U.S. and other destinations; 90% of the activity recorded in January 2019.
- Eight in ten travelers from Canada reside in Ontario, Québec and British Columbia. With the majority booking their vacations using travel agents and online travel agencies.

## Trade Engagements

- In-market Sales Calls: 157 (as of February 29/24)
- Virtuoso Webinars: 1
- Webinars: 10
- Trade Shows: 11
- Agents/Operators Trained: 150
- E-Newsletters: 4





# Australia & New Zealand

## In-Market Activities

- Visit USA Participated in three Visit USA Expos, meeting **627 travel agents**.
- Attended Brand USA B2B day in Sydney, meeting **28 tour operators, wholesalers and airlines**.
- Attended Brand USA Travel Agent Expo in New Zealand, training **300 travel agents and media**.
- Attended Virtuoso Connects in New Zealand, training **47 travel agents**.
- Participated in Qantas' Best of North America Training Day, training **180 travel agents** and Qantas' Virtual Classroom, training **63 agents**.
- Hosted two live Destination Webinars, training **90 travel agents**.
- Partnered with Visit California to host an on-demand webinar series for the itravel network consisting of 19 franchise stores and over **60 travel agents**.
- Conducted a "Christmas on the Road" sales mission distributing custom branded chocolates to over **45 travel agencies**.



## Campaigns

- Participated in the Visit California Day activation at Brand USA's 'USA House' at SXSW Sydney, creating a day of California experiences.
  - › Santa Monica Travel & Tourism featured an 'always on' partner zone with branding and destination imagery.
  - › Hosted 'A taste of Santa Monica with Chef Guy Turland' for 24 guests. The Santa Monica chef talked about his passion for the city and the amazing farmers markets while cooking a Lion's mane mushroom tostada.
  - › SMTT hosted a media lunch attended by 5 top travel journalists.
  - › The total reach of social coverage generated from the media attendees at the lunch was 28.3K.
  - › The total social media reach of the Visit California Day on Instagram was 19.7 million.

## Visitor Information

- The U.S. was the #2 travel destination for Australian travelers in 2023 with California being the most visited state. In 2023 visitation numbers to the U.S. reached over 1.2 million travelers, and 75% of pre-pandemic levels, 2024 is forecasted to exceed 1.3 million visitors.
- Australian and New Zealand travelers to the United States are high spend and long stay visitors, staying an average of 21 days, visiting on average 3 cities per trip.
- Air capacity from Australia to the U.S. has seen a 10% increase in passengers to the US YOY including 63 weekly non-stop flights between Australia and California and 28 weekly non-stop flights from Auckland.

# Australia & New Zealand

## Booking

- 42% of travelers to the USA are looking to travel with their spouse/significant other, with 49% either traveling solo or as a family with young children. Only 2% of travelers are part of a tour/organized group.
- 30% of Australians will seek advice from travel professionals or travel agents when choosing a travel destination and 57% use online travel agency websites.
- According to Brand USA, the majority of bookings from Australia/New Zealand in 2023 were booked on average 90 days in advance with over 56% of travelers not having a specific destination in mind when starting their search.
- March and April are the most popular travel months for travel to the United States.

## Outlook and Trends

- The Australian Dollar (AUD) is relatively weak against the U.S. Dollar, hitting 0.65 in Feb 2024.
- Despite rise in cost of living, Luxury Escapes reports 65% of Australian travelers are keen to spend on room upgrades, 58% of are looking for a five-night minimum accommodation and 42% will save for holiday extra's such as fine dining and spa services.
- 65% of Australians are likely to visit the U.S. within the next 12 months which is a 28.8% increase from the year before.
- There is an ongoing trend seeing big travel companies acquiring luxury travel companies, showcasing how the luxury travel market is blooming despite economic headwinds.
- According to Airservices Travel Sentiment Index 2023 more than a third of Australians are expected to fly more for leisure travel. The study also found that 37% of travelers believe air travel is now essential to their wellbeing, with younger demographics placing the highest premium on air travel's relationship to mental health.

## Trade Engagements

- In-market Sales Calls: 76
- Trade Shows: 8
- Agents/Operators Trained: 1,477





# Travel Trade

# Overview

SMTT's Global Business Development Team continued its focus on tour operators, wholesalers and high-end domestic leisure. We have continued our strategic partnerships with leading consortia, namely Virtuoso and Signature Travel Network. In addition to the annual conferences that both Virtuoso and Signature host in Las Vegas, the annual partnerships included marketing opportunities such as B2B e-blasts, webinars and more.

Overseas, the team further expanded its marketing and sales efforts in key feeder markets - the United Kingdom and Ireland, Germany, Canada, France and Australia and New Zealand. SMTT's initiatives in the above markets are crucial for accelerating the return of international travelers. Prior to the pandemic, international visitors accounted for 62% of all the visitor spending in Santa Monica and 20% of all visitor spending

in the state. The following recap reflects the key trade shows, programs and campaigns that were developed to ensure that Santa Monica remained top-of-mind amongst domestic and international clients.

## DOMESTIC

### In-Market Activities

- Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas, meeting with 140+ top luxury advisors from U.S., Mexico, Canada, Australia and Brazil via one-on-one meetings to highlight unique destination experiences and promote Santa Monica's world-class hotel collection. Co-hosted a breakfast event for 30+ top advisors alongside Visit California, Santa Monica hoteliers and fellow California DMO partners.



- Attended Visit California Connections Luxury Forum and met with 40 travel designers, CEOs and directors from U.S., Canada, UK and Mexico specializing in once-in-a-lifetime trips and honeymoon vacations. Meetings took place over three days via one-on-one appointments and a series of unique destination experiences in the Bahamas. ILTM North America in partnership with Hotel Casa del Mar, engaging 50+ boutique travel advisors from across the Americas.
- Trained 140+ leading U.S. and Canadian advisors at the Signature Travel Network Annual Conference, a member-owned cooperative comprised of the travel industry's leading retail agencies.
- Hosted destination webinars for 100+ North American travel advisors affiliated with Signature Travel Network and Virtuoso in partnership with multiple Santa Monica hotels. The webinars provided a unique opportunity to train advisors on new hotel product and local activities.

### Campaigns

- Renewed annual marketing partnership with Virtuoso. Deployed a series of destination and hotel promotions via Virtuoso's owned channels, including a two-page advertorial in Virtuoso's "Where to Go Next" print catalog (100,000 households & advisors in North America), custom B2B emails for the Australia/New Zealand, Latin America, UK/Ireland, Middle East, and Africa/Asia markets, and updated a dedicated travel advisor training module.
- Partnered with Signature Travel Network to deploy a custom, consumer email campaign targeted to 125,000 luxury advisors as well as a separate themed email promotion sent to 350,000 customers. Both email campaigns drove traffic to Santa Monica's newly updated consumer microsite.

To join SMTT to present your business to potential clients, please contact: [trade@santamonica.com](mailto:trade@santamonica.com).

## GLOBAL

### In-Market Activities

- Attended ILTM Cannes to showcase Santa Monica hotels to luxury travel advisors from around the globe. ILTM Cannes brings more than 1,500 of the world's most well-known and influential luxury travel buyers to France for three days of one-on-one appointments, providing a one-of-a-kind platform to highlight Santa Monica's unique properties, attractions and experiences. Hosted luxury client event in partnership with Visit California.
- Attended Brand USA Travel Week in UK and Brand USA Travel Week India to engage with key players in both markets and re-introduce them to Santa Monica as a travel destination.
- Attended GoWest Summit in Lake Tahoe, Nevada and met with 41 trade and 7 media buyers to promote Santa Monica to global tour operators and media who focus on selling the American West. Participating buyers are projected to bring a total of 2.4 million visitors into the U.S. over the next 18 months.
- Participated in IPW, in Los Angeles, to strengthen and build relationships with 300+ top international tour operators, receptive operators and wholesalers. As the leading inbound travel trade show, past IPWs have generated more than \$5.5 billion in future travel by connecting U.S. travel exhibitors with travel buyers and media to promote their product and negotiate future business. The event secures America's position as a leading global travel destination and showcases the best of what the country has to offer. In addition to the traditional trade show format, SMTT partnered with Visit California on the CA Plaza, as well as hosted a FAM for top international trade and media buyers.

### Campaigns

- Partnered with Visit California and Hotelbeds, the world's largest bed bank and wholesaler, to launch a B2B campaign in fall 2023 to spur room night production from key source markets: Canada, Mexico, UK, France, Germany, with added markets of Australia and Japan. Travel agents and tour operators were targeted via Hotelbeds' print and digital brochures, web banners, social media channels and newsletters. They were driven to a California microsite and Santa Monica landing page, which garnered a combined 29 million pageviews. The campaign produced 5,380 room nights for a total of \$2.1 million in revenue for Santa Monica's hotels.
- Deployed a destination-of-the-month campaign with premium wholesaler Bonotel Exclusive Travel in fall 2023 to reach 4,600 Bonotel clients worldwide and 65,000 travel agents via the Internova network. Tactics included a dedicated landing page, pre-/post- login ads, agent booking portal takeover, email banner ad, a brochure ad, and custom newflashes. The campaign resulted in 434 room nights booked with an ADR of \$516.93, resulting in over \$200K of revenue. Santa Monica was ranked as a Top 5 Booked Destination during the campaign run dates and showed the most month-over-month percentage growth, in comparison to other top destinations.



# Group Sales



# Overview

SMTT's Group Sales team continues to actively represent and sell Santa Monica as a top choice destination for meetings and events by building and fortifying partnerships with industry partners, organizations and associations, as well as attending key events to showcase our inviting beach city to meeting, event and incentive planners.

## Trade Shows

Trade shows are a core strategy and SMTT continues our presence at MICE events and trade shows. Last year, the group sales team attended 9 trade shows to engage meeting planners and place a spotlight on the exciting hotel, events space and destination updates in Santa Monica. Notable trade shows included Retreat Resources, SITE SoCal Holiday Gala, Prestige Global

Meeting Source's Annual Conference, IMEX, Visit California PME Roadshows, MPI WEcon, HelmsBriscoe ABC and more.

## MICE Sales Missions

In February 2024, SMTT hosted a sales mission in Northern California to engage with meeting planners based in Sacramento, San Francisco, Burlingame and Walnut Creek. Throughout a series of lunches, dinners and office visits, SMTT and partners from Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows, Shutters on the Beach, Hotel Casa del Mar, Palihouse Santa Monica and Santa Monica Proper Hotel were able to spend quality time with planners from organizations like Prestige, HelmsBriscoe, Conference Direct and B Line Events. In June of 2024, SMTT also attended its second sales



mission in Canada, inviting top media, travel industry and MICE planners from Toronto and Montreal for networking events, lunches and dinners.

## Industry Relations

SMTT's Group Sales team partnered with industry associations and MICE-focused networking events for additional exposure to our hotels and the destination. Events included the California DMO Luncheon, SITE SoCal Board Install in Santa Monica, Tour Connection, MPI WEcon, SITE Chicago, Prost LA and Prost Beach Cities, Retreat Resources and IMEX. Additionally, SMTT sponsored Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) SoCal's Annual Holiday Gala and hosted buyers to join SMTT in Palm Springs for this incentive experience and charity gala. Santa Monica Travel & Tourism also partnered with hotels to secure new group business by offering customize site inspections, sponsored airport transfers for VIPs and experiences like yoga on the beach and private experience of Pacific Park. SMTT forged a new partnership with American Express Global Meetings and Events and will begin to market with their

global database of meeting professionals. In addition to these key partnerships, the Group Sales team has introduced the destination to meeting planners via familiarization (FAM) trips, which are organized and hosted by SMTT. The team partnered with Fairmont Miramar and HelmsBriscoe for a FAM experience for Jennifer Settles and her team of 40+ planners in the destination.

## Strategic Partnerships

After a successful inaugural year, SMTT has continued its strategic annual partnership with HPN Global (Hospitality Performance Network) and Prestige Global Meeting Source. The partnerships have proven to be of value to SMTT and our hotel partners and include opportunities like virtual webinars and in-person networking with Prestige and their clients at both annual conferences in Frisco and Houston, Texas.



## Conference Direct and HelmsBriscoe

SMTT is excited to continue our annual partnerships with ConferenceDirect and HelmsBriscoe for the seventh consecutive year. ConferenceDirect is a leading provider of global, digital and in-person meeting solutions. As a Strategic Partner, SMTT will be participating in their annual CD Forum trade show in Orlando, Florida to engage and meet with CD bookers who focused on corporate meetings and events. HelmsBriscoe is the largest meeting procurement and site selection organization. Its Annual Business Conference (ABC) will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada this spring, drawing HelmsBriscoe associates from the globe to meet with suppliers and partners. HelmsBriscoe is currently the top producing intermediary company for the destination. Both partnerships have seen year-over-year increases in production for Santa Monica hotel partners and SMTT. In addition to their highly anticipated annual conferences, ConferenceDirect and HelmsBriscoe associates were hosted in Santa Monica for team meetings, incentive experiences and site inspections through the year and SMTT will continue to prioritize facetime with members of both the HB and CD teams. Both HB and CD teams were the main focus of the MICE Sales Mission in February of 2024.

## Bookings

Cvent is an online tool for the submission of RFP/event leads and receiving proposals from hotel partners and responses from CVB/DMOs. SMTT's strategic marketing efforts and attendance at industry events has allowed SMTT to main a 20% or higher 'copy-share' and an increase in awarded room nights and new meeting planners sourcing the destination.

## HelmsBriscoe — Santa Monica

Booked Revenue: **\$1,987,586**

Booked Room Nights: **5,155**

## Conference Direct

Booked Revenue: **\$460,271**

Booked Room Nights: **1,208**







# Local Activities

# Programs

## Street Art Guide

Spanning across Santa Monica's 8.3 square miles and eight distinctive neighborhoods, the city boasts over 170 street art murals. These vibrant illustrations are the result of collaborative efforts between the City of Santa Monica, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), private organizations, and Beautify Earth, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering community connections through street art.

To promote the city as a world-class destination for vibrant street art, SMTT continues to enhance and update the dedicated mural guide landing page, which seamlessly guides visitors to explore each distinctive piece of art with embedded maps. Engaging descriptions provide insight into the stories behind the artwork and the talented artists who brought them to life, offering visitors the option of taking a self-guided tour of our creative urban landscape.

Through strategic promotions on SMTT's website, social media channels, media pitching, newsletters, and with support from the BIDs, Chamber of Commerce, and Department of Cultural Affairs, we've showcased these talented artists, their captivating artwork, and the dynamic energy of our vibrant city.

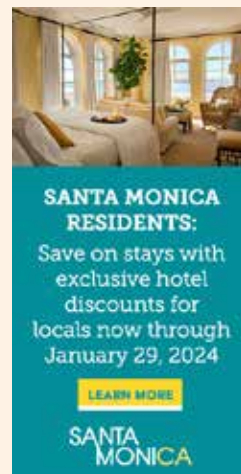
Explore SMTT's Comprehensive Guide to Santa Monica's Street Art Murals at [santamonica.com/murals](https://santamonica.com/murals). Have a mural to add? Email us at [marketing@santamonica.com](mailto:marketing@santamonica.com).

## Extra Bedroom Program

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism hosted its annual 'I Wish I Had an Extra Bedroom' Program for city residents from November 13, 2023 to January 29, 2024.

Each year during the Extra Bedroom Program, Santa Monica's hospitality community comes together to serve their neighbors by offering Santa Monica residents access to exclusive discounted hotel rates and added values such as waived amenity fees, free parking, complimentary upgrades and more. Santa Monica residents are in turn able to host their visiting friends and relatives throughout the holiday season at deeply discounted rates. Twenty-one Santa Monica hotels participated in the 2023/24 program, offering varying discounts and specials, some at up to \$300 off the regular room rate.

The Extra Bedroom campaign was promoted through a variety of both paid and owned digital and print channels, including Santa Monica Daily Press, Santa Monica Mirror, local distribution of postcards to residents and parents of Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District students, press releases, social media, targeted digital display ads, as well as [santamonica.com](https://santamonica.com) and SMTT newsletters.



## I Am Santa Monica

"I Am Santa Monica" is a free, interactive workshop designed to encourage and empower Santa Monica businesses and their employees to become better informed about Santa Monica as a destination and all it has to offer. This is a two-hour interactive learning workshop and tour of Santa Monica, designed to inform and educate local employees about Santa Monica, with a focus on customer service. Trained individuals become "Official Santa Monica Ambassadors" and are armed with a database of facts, figures and "Did You Know" anecdotes about Santa Monica for customer interactions. To date, we have certified over 3,000 Santa Monica Ambassadors through the I Am Santa Monica Program. If you are not an Official Ambassador, sign up for our free workshop at [SantaMonica.com/iam](https://SantaMonica.com/iam).



## Local Programming

Part of what makes Santa Monica one of the top locations for travelers and locals alike is the abundance of year-round events. SMTT is dedicated to supporting and promoting local events and programs as a piece of a larger initiative to grow Santa Monica's status as an innovative, culturally-rich travel destination. As such, the SMTT team partnered with several organizations to support locally-hosted events and programming such as Black History Month; Frieze Los Angeles; Los Angeles Wine & Food Festival; Most Loved Santa Monica; the inaugural LA Times-backed Bergamot Comedy Festival; Arts, Culture & Creativity Month; and SaMo Pride, among others.

While promotional sponsorships varied based on scale and intended audience, a sample of implemented marketing tactics included the following: masthead takeovers on SantaMonica.com, dedicated email blasts, social media content creation and amplification, dedicated landing pages and printed collateral, and spanned as far as the launch of a city beautification project with boots-on-the-ground volunteer hours.

## Santa MoniCARES

Santa MoniCARES, Tourism Supporting the Community, launched in 2017 as a coalition of representatives from Santa Monica Travel & Tourism and community partners. Its mission is to harness the hospitable nature and generosity of Santa Monica's tourism industry to provide support to local non-profit agencies.

Santa MoniCARES focuses on community engagement through its network of tourism-serving businesses to produce a series of events and activities, including targeted fundraising events, that provide funding and in-kind support to local nonprofit organizations that are tackling homelessness, environmental protection, hunger, workforce development, at-risk youth and elderly assistance, cultural programming, and more.

This year's Volley-Ween, a Halloween-themed beach volleyball tournament hosted in October, raised \$7,155. The funds raised were donated in equal parts to Westside Food Bank, Meals on Wheels and The People Concern, Santa Monica nonprofit organizations addressing food insecurity, elderly assistance and housing insecurity, respectively. Also in October, SMTT hosted its annual SOCKtober collection drive. Did you know socks are the number one requested item in homeless shelters and rehab facilities? Aimed at garnering support and sock donations for local distribution, our community came together, gathering a total of 2,150 pairs of socks.

During the months of November and December, Santa MoniCARES, in partnership with the Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows and Le Merigot Santa Monica, spearheaded a clothing and food drive to support our neighbors in need during the winter holidays. Clothing donations were collected at two SMTT Visitors Centers and the Fairmont Miramar while food items were accepted at Le Merigot and SMTT's Main Street Visitor Center. The drives resulted in 1,125 pieces of new and gently used business clothing and 359

non-perishable food items being donated to Chrysalis and The Westside Food Bank.

Our next fiscal year will be even bigger and better with more fundraising events and future community impact. To become more involved and learn more about Santa MoniCARES, please email [cares@santamonica.com](mailto:cares@santamonica.com).

### Meet Our Board of Directors



**Julia Ladd**  
Assistant Vice President  
for Property Management  
at Macerich



**Raphael Lunetta**  
Owner/Partner and Chef  
Proprietor at Lunetta and  
Lunetta All Day



**Ellis O'Connor**  
Principle/Asset Manager-  
MSD Hospitality,  
Fairmont Miramar



**Albin Gielicz**  
Member  
Resident



**RoseMary Regalbuto**  
Member  
Resident

## VEO Helmet Partnership

SMTT continues its partnership with Santa Monica based micro-mobility company Veo to distribute free helmets to riders across the city. The destination boasts an impressive 120 miles of bikeways, including 30 miles of protected green lanes, and this partnership encourages travelers to embrace active mobility safely. Because most visitors do not bring helmets with them, this partnership allows them to ride (or scoot) around town safely. Helmets are one size-fits-most and riders must be 18 to rent e-bikes or scooters. Helmets can be picked up and dropped off at any of our three Visitor Information Centers.

- Walk-In Visitor Information Center 2427 Main Street
- Pier Shop & Visitor Center 200 Santa Monica Pier
- Visitor Information Kiosk 1400 Ocean Avenue

## Tourism Improvement District (TID) Program

On March 7th, 2022, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism began a piloted Tourism Improvement District (TID) program. The TID program works to support the city's efforts for a clean and safe Santa Monica. The program is funded by a voluntary assessment paid by five hotel properties from Pacific Terrace to Bay Street between Appian Way and Ocean Front Walk. Santa Monica Travel and Tourism employs a third-party vendor, Chrysalis, to conduct the 7 day a week cleanup service. The mission of Chrysalis is helping people prepare for, find and keep employment.

Over the course of our fiscal year 2022-2023, 2,853 bags of trash have been collected, 395 pieces of graffiti marks and biohazardous materials removed. Chrysalis staff complete daily end of shift reports that track photos of graffiti marks, the number of times Chrysalis staff have referred homeless individuals to city services, bulky item removal and more.



# Marketing & Public Relations

# SantaMonica.com Statistics

Dates: July 1, 2023 - May 1, 2024

## Visitors to SantaMonica.com

**133,618**

Average Monthly Site Visits

**2.48**

Page Views Per Visit

**54 sec**

Average Time On Site

**25 to 34**

Years Old

Predominant Ages



**MALE**  
**46.4%**



**FEMALE**  
**53.6%**

## SantaMonica.com's Top 5 Landing Pages

(Not including home page)

1. 3rd Street Promenade
2. Inspiration
3. Hotels
4. Parking
5. Things to Do

## Top 5 International Markets Visiting The Site

1. Canada
2. United Kingdom
3. Australia
4. India
5. Germany

# Digital Marketing

## SantaMonica.com

Since the debut of the enhanced mobile-friendly website in the summer of 2022, SMTT has remained steadfast in our commitment to refining the user experience and optimizing content to elevate engagement.

Strategically planned monthly updates build and engage the SantaMonica.com audience effectively, with a focus on bolstering search engine optimization (SEO) strategies for enhanced site visibility. Additionally, a comprehensive overhaul of SMTT’s hotel booking site has been launched to provide accurate information to users, streamline booking processes, and enhance user convenience.

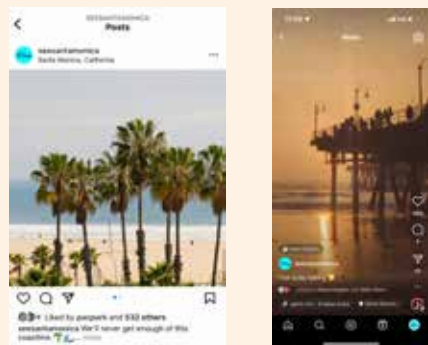
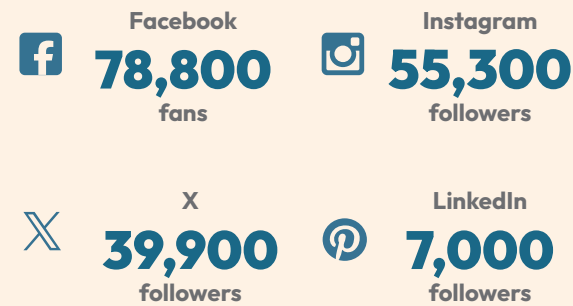
These focused efforts not only underscore SMTT’s unwavering dedication to staying at the forefront of technological innovation within the tourism industry, but also emphasize the organization’s commitment to offering immersive digital experiences that elevate the allure of the destination and foster repeat visits.

## Partner Portal

Did you know that all tourism-serving businesses with a valid City of Santa Monica business license receive a free listing page on SantaMonica.com, which reaches nearly 100,000 monthly users? Businesses have the ability to review, update and maintain the information displayed on their business listing page, including: business name, address, phone number and website, business description, amenities, logo, photos and/or videos, and social media links.

Partners who optimize their listing page through the Partner Portal receive up to 10x more website referral traffic compared to those who do not optimize. To request access to the Partner Portal, fill out the online request form at [santamonica.com/partner-portal](https://santamonica.com/partner-portal). For questions, please email [partnerportal@santamonica.com](mailto:partnerportal@santamonica.com).

## Social Media



## Online Store

Launched in 2018, the online store serves as a digital extension of SMTT’s brand and Visitor Information Centers. Shoppers from all around the world can enjoy a small piece of Santa Monica by purchasing branded destination merchandise such as attire, tote bags, keychains, magnets, and much more!

### Performance:

- Traffic: Over 3,112 visits with an average order value of \$40.07
- Top markets visiting the store: U.S., Canada, Ireland, U.K. and Australia
- Top purchases: Santa Monica Journals, Route 66 pins, Route 66 magnets and Santa Monica toiletry bags

Shop the Santa Monica Online Store at [santamonica.com/store](https://santamonica.com/store).

## 360° Experiences

SMTT has partnered with Threshold 360 since 2018 to capture and showcase 360° virtual reality (VR) tours on SantaMonica.com business listing pages. These videos create an immersive website experience and serve as a sales tool to showcase Santa Monica businesses first-hand. The partnership’s ongoing success remains evident with a robust click-through rate of 13.48%, and SMTT looks forward to this ongoing collaboration, aimed at bolstering local businesses’ online visibility and fostering increased visitation to the destination.

## Updated Reporting Dashboard

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism has embarked on a strategic initiative to enhance its data processing capabilities by integrating Symphony Intelligence Platform into its operations. Symphony enables SMTT to access inbound and outbound travel data for over 300 global cities and all 50 U.S. states, 190 countries including over 30 years of historical data—plus, conduct extensive and visual global market analysis in minutes. Incorporating the organization’s previously built dashboard housing historical data dating back 20+ years, SMTT aims to better utilize market trends and ultimately enhance the effectiveness of its initiatives in promoting Santa Monica as a premier travel destination.



## Santa Monica Rebrand

### FY23-24: Building a Strong Brand Foundation

This past fiscal year marked a significant step forward in solidifying both Santa Monica Travel & Tourism and the destination's brand identity. In collaboration with Noble Studios, we embarked on a comprehensive rebranding journey. Through workshops with key stakeholders and a deep-dive discovery process, we defined SMTT's core values, purpose, and competitive edge. This culminated in the development of a robust Performance Brand Platform, the cornerstone of our future brand efforts.

Building on this foundation, FY23-24 saw the creation of a reimagined logo, a comprehensive brand book and style guide, and a brand messaging framework. The essence of Santa Monica was captured through stunning new photography and videography and launched the initial phase of the rebrand with a refreshed SantaMonica.com website and assets for key industry events.

### Paid Media Campaign

Paid media efforts in FY23-24 were focused on creating awareness and driving consideration for Santa Monica in top feeder markets through a strategic integrated media advertising campaign, while driving traffic to the website and encouraging partner referrals.

We maintain an evergreen campaign approach with the following goals:

- Increase year-over-year growth in ratio of weekday to weekend occupancy.
- Allocate budget strategically to drive more traffic during shoulder seasons.
- Generate increased economic impact by driving visitation and overnight bookings and increasing length of stay by targeting higher household income audiences.

- Differentiate from other California beach destinations and ensure Santa Monica is recognized as the premier luxury (and original) beach-city destination.

Our approach was grounded in thorough research into travel sentiment and media consumption habits. This informed the decision to adopt a strong digital approach, supplemented by regionalized traditional and innovative tactics. We emphasized enhancing brand awareness and boosting traffic, utilizing a range of full funnel channels including paid search, programmatic display, paid social media, video advertising, digital out-of-home (OOH), and print media. Our partnerships with leading platforms such as Google, EDGE Media, TripAdvisor/Expedia, Conde Nast, Sunset, Visit California, and United Hemispheres In-flight Magazine maximized our reach and impact. Specialty campaigns with additional promotion are featured throughout the year including Extra Bedroom, Rose Bowl and SaMo Pride.

### Target Audience/Target Geos

Based on audience research, the most engaged, interested and intent-based audiences include Urban Explorers, Health/Wellness Maven, and Family Vacationers. The primary target markets were New York, San Francisco, Dallas, and Chicago, with secondary markets including Phoenix, San Francisco, and Sacramento.

### Metrics & Outcomes from July 2023-March 2024

Throughout the campaign, key performance indicators (KPIs) were monitored to track campaign success:

- Impressions to date: 24.4 Million
- Sessions to date: 227,943 (24% growth YoY)
- Partner Referrals to date: 24,614 (10% growth YoY)



## Visitor Guide and Map

SMTT released the new Official Santa Monica Visitor Guide and Map in November 2023. Stylishly redesigned in a luxury lifestyle magazine format, the nearly 100-page guide curates the best of where to stay, play, shop and dine in Santa Monica's 8.3 square miles and spotlights our destination as a global trendsetter in sustainability, wellness and community. Readers can discover insider tips, explore hidden gems, and plan unforgettable Santa Monica experiences.

Plus, the new walking map provides convenient navigation through our vibrant city streets. These complimentary publications are a vital tool to help travelers explore and make purchasing decisions both prior to and during their visit. SMTT distributes these annual resources internationally, in target markets domestically and regionally throughout Southern California, and locally to Santa Monica businesses. Visitors can pick up a free printed copy from any of our three Visitor Information Centers, request print materials via mail by filling out a simple web form,

or download digital copies at [santamonica.com/publications](https://santamonica.com/publications). Bulk orders available upon request.



# Public Relations

At SMTT our Communications team works year-round to secure a pipeline of press coverage that positions Santa Monica as the premier beach city for travelers. With this goal in mind, our team works with journalists locally, nationally and internationally to bring bespoke stories to life that highlight our core marketing pillars. As travel from international markets continues to rebound, this past fiscal year we resumed our public relations efforts in 5 key markets: Australia/New Zealand, Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom/Ireland.

In order to secure the most quality coverage as possible, our team regularly hosts top tier journalists, editors and influencers on press trips to highlight what's new and noteworthy in the destination. Through a combination of proactive pitching and media hosting, our team secured an impressive pipeline of press coverage.

Over the past 12 months, our team has found that popular topics in the media also align with key Santa Monica pillars including sustainability, culinary and luxury. To this end, we regularly pitch these angles.

## Sustainability

SMTT is committed to showcasing the innovative sustainability initiatives of our community, which has established itself as a leader in this field. The City of Santa Monica has prioritized sustainability since the inception of the Sustainable City Plan in 1994, and our 2022 LEED Platinum certification has opened up new opportunities to highlight our dedication to sustainability. A notable feature is the solar-powered Ferris wheel on the Pier, which continues to be a prominent symbol of our commitment to environmental stewardship.

## Culinary

Research indicates that food is a top reason why travelers select a destination. In Santa Monica, we have more than 400 restaurants, including an impressive 18 Michelin-recommended establishments. The Santa Monica Farmers Markets, renowned for their

abundance of fresh and local produce, make the city a dream for chefs and foodies alike.

## Luxury

With its stunning beaches, impressive array of luxury accommodations, and high-end shopping venues, Santa Monica offers a sophisticated and exclusive experience for travelers seeking a luxurious getaway. From the iconic Santa Monica Pier to the chic boutiques along Montana Avenue, Santa Monica offers a wealth of upscale attractions for discerning travelers.

Outlets we've hosted in Santa Monica this past fiscal year include:

- > The AU Review
- > AFAR Magazine
- > Body + Soul Australia
- > CTV News Vancouver
- > Cosmopolitan UK
- > Dallas Morning News
- > The Daily Telegraph UK
- > Falstaff Austria
- > Forbes
- > Karryon
- > Marie France
- > Michigan's Big Show
- > Parents Magazine
- > Seattle Times
- > The Sydney Morning Herald Traveller
- > Wanderlust
- > The Weekend Australia



## Secured Press Coverage

### Global Circulation

183,695,311

### Estimated ad equivalency

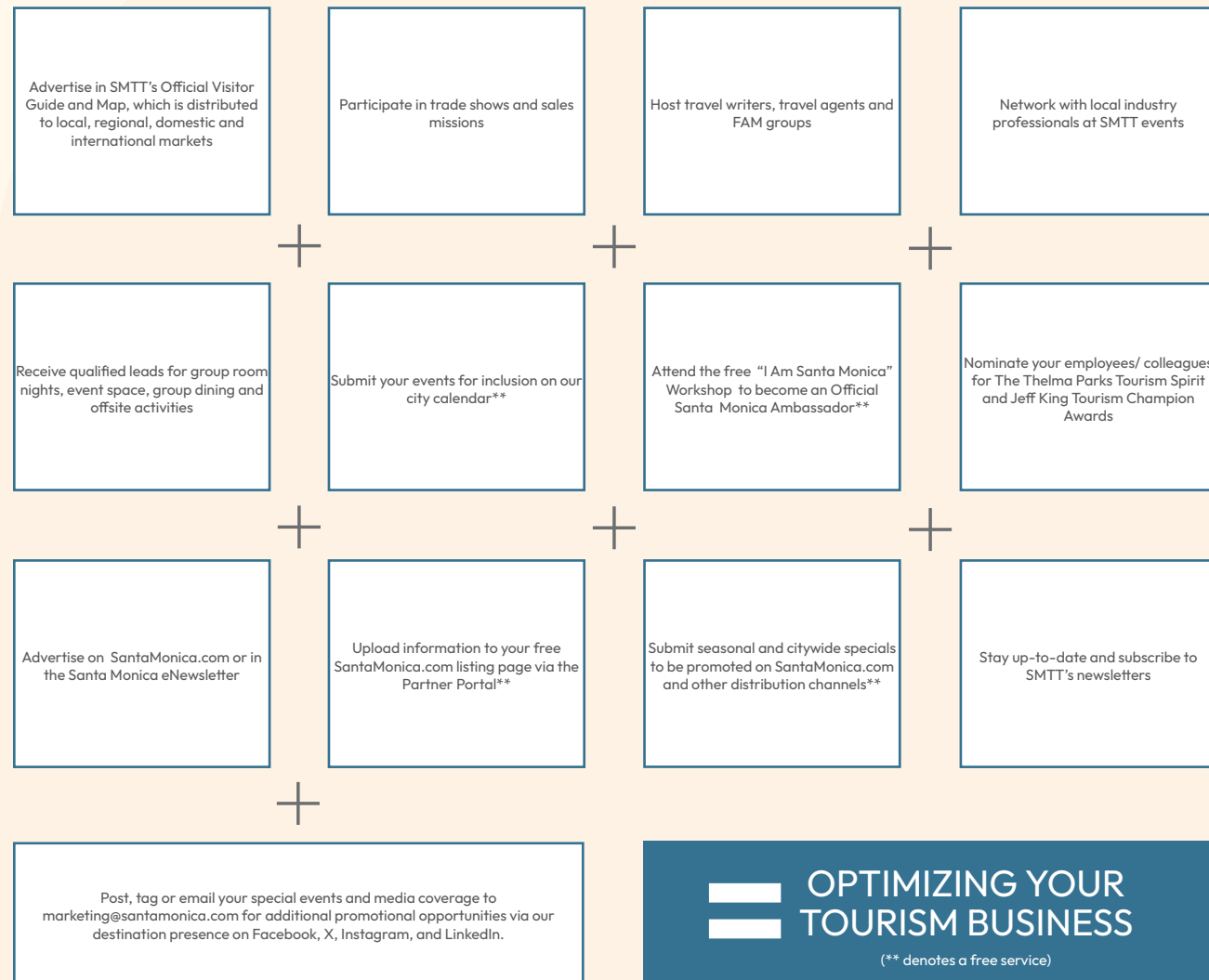
\$1.1 Million



# How to Work with SMTT

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism offers a variety of free and fair share partnership opportunities to raise awareness about your business and services among those planning a trip here or already staying in Santa Monica. The more collaborations you opt-in for, the

better equipped you will be to sustain and grow your tourism business. To learn more about these programs and opportunities, visit [SantaMonica.com/partners/promote-your-business](https://www.santamonica.com/partners/promote-your-business).



## Santa Monica Visitor Information Centers And What They Can Do For You

Santa Monica Visitor Information Centers are your source for all things Santa Monica. We are here not only as a resource to guests, but to you —our travel partners and residents. All Visitor Information Centers provide:

- Friendly and knowledgeable staff
- Official Visitor Guides and Maps
- Hotel information and booking assistance
- Santa Monica-inspired merchandise and more
- Information on attractions, tours, shopping, dining, museums, galleries and entertainment

We look forward to collaborating with our local partners to offer Santa Monica merchandise in their locations. These items can also be used to enrich and expand their welcome amenity programs and for locals to use for family reunions, weddings, holidays and celebrations.

Questions? Please contact us.

Toll Free: 800-771-2322 Phone: 310-319-6263

Text: 424-443-7444 Fax: 310-319-6273

Email: [info@santamonica.com](mailto:info@santamonica.com)

## Santa Monica Visitor Center Locations

We welcome you to visit any of our locations below and see what is new!

- Walk-In Visitor Information Center 2427 Main Street
- Pier Shop & Visitor Center 200 Santa Monica Pier
- Visitor Information Kiosk 1400 Ocean Avenue
- For location hours, visit [SantaMonica.com](https://www.santamonica.com).



## Tourism Glossary

**ADR** – Average Daily Rate. One of the core indicators – along with other metrics, such as occupancy rate and revenue per available room—used to measure the operating performance of a lodging unit such as a hotel or motel.

**DMO** – Destination Marketing Organization. A company or other entity involved in the business of increasing tourism to a destination or improving its public image. For example, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism and Visit California are considered DMOs.

**FAM** – Familiarization Tour. A complimentary or reduced rate travel program for pre-qualified journalists, travel agents, airline employees and top travel buyers, designed to acquaint participants with specific destinations or suppliers and to stimulate the sale of travel.

**FIT** – Individual travel in which a tour operator has arranged blocks of rooms at various destinations in advance for use by individual travelers. These foreign travelers travel independently, usually by rental car or public transportation.

**MICE** – Meeting, Incentive, Conference/Congress and Exhibition/Events. An internationally used term for the events industry.

**OTAs** – Online Travel Agencies are travel websites that provide online booking facilities for hotels, airlines, cars and other travel-related services to users.

**RECEPTIVE TOUR OPERATOR** – A local tour company that specializes in inbound tourism experiences and manages products and services for incoming visitors that are often booked via international tour operators.

**TID** – Tourism Improvement District (TID) program. The purpose of the TID is to support city services in and around several hotels, city parking lots and open-air spaces to improve the experience of the visitor and quality of life for the residents. The TID will not replace city services.

**TMD Tourism Marketing District.** – The Santa Monica TMD includes all lodging businesses located within the boundaries of the City of Santa Monica with an average daily rate of \$100 and above. Santa Monica’s hotels have chosen to assess themselves to generate stable, dedicated funding specifically for tourism promotion. There are no new taxes or government spending required for the Santa Monica TMD.

**TOT Transient Occupancy Tax.** – Tax placed on hotel/motel room rentals that collects into the City of Santa Monica’s general fund, providing funding for street improvements, police and fire, parks and libraries.

**TOUR OPERATOR** – A company that creates and/or markets inclusive tours and/or performs tour services.

**TRAVEL TRADE** – The collective term for tour operators, wholesalers and travel agents.

**WHOLESALE** – Develops and markets inclusive tours and individual travel programs to consumers through travel agents. Wholesalers don’t sell directly to the public.

**WE WELCOME  
ALL RACES ALL RELIGIONS  
ALL COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN  
ALL SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS  
ALL GENDERS  
WE STAND WITH YOU  
YOU ARE SAFE HERE**

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