

BREWED TO PERFECTION

Colorado serves up local libations and meetings with the right ingredients

By Talia Salem

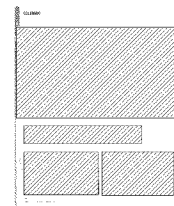
If Colorado had an official drink, it would be beer. This beverage can be seen in the hands of locals and visitors all over, and breweries whipping up these carbonated concoctions can be found in almost any town. Popularly known for its dramatic Rocky Mountain range, the state is fast becoming known for its host of local breweries. “Colorado’s been called the Munich of the West and the Napa Valley of beer,” says Julia Herz, craft beer program director of the Brewers Association, a national, membership-based brewers organization based in Boulder.

“Colorado beer is fresh and crisp and is wonderful because of the water—our water is first-use,” says John Branciforte, director of sales and marketing for Colorado Springs’ Cheyenne Mountain Resort. Rich Grant, vice president of communications for Visit Denver, agrees. “It’s the melting water tumbling down from the glaciers and snowcapped peaks of the Rocky Mountains that make Colorado such a brewing center,” he says.

According to the Brewers Association, Colorado ranks fifth in breweries per capita in the U.S. and second in the number of total breweries (behind California’s 221). Coloradans have been brewing beer since the 1800s (probably to quench the deep thirst of its early miners) and there are now 103 breweries throughout the state, ranging from heavy-weight hops wranglers such as Coors Brewing Company to smaller production breweries such as the Boulder Draft House.

And people are starting to take note. “Colorado has received a lot of notoriety around beer,” Herz says. Beer enthusiasts have been touring the state for coveted concoctions that are hard to find or not available beyond the tasting bar or city limits. “We are starting to see a fair bit of beer tourism,” says Kris Oyler, co-founder of Durango’s Steamworks Brewing Co. “Most likely visitors would not be able to get it elsewhere, unless they come from a regional area,” he says. Herz echoes this sentiment, saying that local brewmasters are known for experimentation. “Colorado brewers are really known for innovation and world-class beer—they often top the list for medal winners,” she says. They push the limits of the genre and continually create new flavors for imbibers to enjoy.

Beer-making closely follows the seasons with the appearance of pumpkin ales in the fall, spiced beer in the winter and light, crisp brews in the summer. This change in offerings mirrors the state’s four seasons. The perception is that Colorado only has one season—winter—which is like Colorado only having one type of beer all



year long—preposterous! “We truly have four seasons,” says JoAnna Eisler, national sales manager for Aspen Chamber Resort Association. “If you aren’t a cold weather enthusiast or a big skier, spring, summer and fall are [just] beautiful.”

Just like its tantalizing array of beer, Colorado brings an overabundance of options to the table for meetings and groups. Each destination offers its own unique set of ingredients to flavor a meeting. Like the well-known tastes of beers like Coors, the state offers your tried-and-true big box hotel brands in addition to the hand-crafted aromas of craft beer in the form of boutique hotels and unique venues.

Adding to the state’s flavor profile are its stunning open spaces, mile-high vistas and abundant wildlife, which go hand in hand with outdoor recreation, from world-class skiing and snowboarding in the winter to hiking, biking, white-water rafting and fishing in the summer. The state ranks eighth in size at 104,094 square miles and 22nd in population (per 2008 U.S. Census), encompassing four national parks, and 42 state parks and more than 25 ski resorts. Coupled with 300 days of sunshine, they make Colorado a recreation enthusiast’s dream.

Plus, you can enjoy your custom-brewed experience even more when you know that your meeting or event has had less of an impact on the beautiful spaces that residents hold dear, as Colorado is on the forefront of sustainability on both the civic and the hotel level. As evidence of this commitment, Denver’s Colorado Convention Center recently hosted the Green Meetings Industry Council’s **Sustainable Meetings Conference** (sustainablemeetingsconference.com) and welcomed the industry’s top minds in sustainability from all over the world. And, following Denver’s lead, cities and towns across the state are launching their own green initiatives.

After all of the delicious ingredients are combined and brewed, the last stage of the process is consumption, and the selection of the proper glass is key. Drinking vessels are created specifically to complement the style of beer, and the size, shape and etching of the glass influence the taste and the diffusion of the bubbles. The glass, and in your case the city, holds it all together and gives your meeting blend a home. Enjoying a cold one is even better when coupled with great service—and Colorado is big on this. The warm Western hospitality here just keeps travelers coming back. “We have the friendliest people here,” says Rachel Benedick,

vice president of sales and services at Visit Denver. “When we hosted the DNC in 2008, that is one thing you heard a lot of people comment on; it’s what we really pride ourselves on.”

So, let your selected destination in Colorado be your glass, bringing together its unique blend of flavors and adding the most to your meeting experience. And just like selecting the right beer, finding the perfect Colorado destination depends on your desired experience. That said, grab a glass, because in Colorado, the cup runneth over.

DENVER’S DRAFT ▼

When most people think of Denver, they probably don’t visualize all that the city has to offer. The Mile-High City is packed with hotels, attractions, activities and more, most within walking distance. “Every time I have a site tour come in, they say, ‘I had no idea you had such great shopping and such great restaurants. I had no idea that it is such a cosmopolitan city,’” says Benedick of **Visit Denver’s** (visitdenver.com).

If Denver were to be a beer, it would definitely be a tasting flight with a pour for every taste and an attraction for every group. Sports enthusiasts will appreciate Denver’s many home teams and their high-tech arenas that make excellent, state-of-the-art meeting sites. Games also offer the opportunity for an incentive or team-building activity. Culture-philes will get their fill at spots such as the large **Denver Museum of Art** (denverartmuseum.org), the intimate **MCA Denver** (mcaDenver.org), the **Denver Zoo** (denverzoo.org), the **Denver Museum of Nature and Science** (dmns.org) and the **Denver Performing Arts Complex** (denvercenter.org), the second largest in the nation, all of which provide out-of-the-box meeting space alongside their cultural attractions.

Every destination claims they have it all, but according to Nicki Clifford, sales and marketing events manager for MWI Veterinary Supply, who took her 200-person regional sales meeting to Denver this past winter, Denver actually does. “Our attendees loved downtown Denver as a location for a meeting,” Clifford says. “The group has a wide variety of sales reps, from the cowboy types to the hippie types, and there is a little something for everyone in Denver.”

And you don’t have to be a few glasses in to appreciate the beauty of this cultured and architecturally diverse city. It strikes you as soon as you enter and are surrounded by historic brick buildings, functioning artifacts of a bygone era, and large art sculptures, from dancing people to cattle

adorning the streets.

Denver has the added allure of convenience. “Denver is centrally located for the three regions that needed to meet,” Clifford says. “The airport is certainly a distance, at approximately one hour to downtown, but well worth the trip [especially] if you plan to stay any longer than three days. Because if you are near 16th Street, everything is close enough for a walk or free trolley ride.”

SAMPLING SUDS

Each fall, the Colorado Convention Center hosts the **Great American Beer Festival** (greatamericanbeerfestival.com) and welcomes brewers from all over the world for three days of sampling suds—last year’s event brought in 49,000 attendees to drink the 2,100 beers and 495 beer entries to be judged for awards.

Beer is so much a part of the way of life that the city’s first business was a saloon founded in 1858, and beer was the elixir that nursed the LoDo (Lower Downtown) district back to life. The city’s now-mayor John Hickenlooper opened his **Wynkoop Brewing Company** (wynkoop.com) in 1988, which then brought more business to the area, turning it into the warehouse-chic neighborhood it is today. Wynkoop has tours and six private event spaces, such as the Mercantile Room for up to 300 guests (Grant recommends sampling Monkey India Pale Ale or Patty’s Chili Beer, which packs a punch with real green chili).

Also in downtown, **Great Divide Brewing** (greatdivide.com) offers free tours and was ranked seventh in *Beer Advocates*’ 2009 All-Time Top Brewers on Planet Earth for its hoppy, big beers. Adjacent to Coors Field, **Breckenridge Brewery** (breckbrew.com/food/pubdenver.html) is a perfect stop, pre-Rockies games, and offers 10 signature beers (try the unfiltered Agave Wheat made with Salmiana Agave). Another popular brewery that has complimentary tours is the famous **Coors Brewery** (millercoors.com) just outside of Denver in Golden. It can brew up to 22 million barrels and package up to 16 million barrels annually, making it the biggest single-site brewer in the world.

MEETING VENUES

If you are seeking meeting venues, there are many glasses in Denver’s flight. “Denver is generally a great meetings location for groups that need a variety of options in close proximity, and the hotel property choices run the full gamut,” Clifford says.

Denver is set up for citywides and the **Colorado Convention Center** (denverconvention.com) is the biggest brew in town. This glass

structure is surrounded by public art (think enormous blue bear looking into the building). The 100,000-square-foot center features a total of 85,000 sq. ft. of ballroom space and the 5,000-seat Wells Fargo Theatre. Next door, the **Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center** (denverregency.hyatt.com) is a state-of-the-art property with everything a planner could ask for, from 1,100 guest rooms and 60,600 sq. ft. of function space to a top-floor restaurant, Altitude, with views of the Rockies, plus a 24-hour fitness center.

The 219-room **Warwick Denver Hotel** (warwickhotels.com) just wrapped up a renovation and offers 10,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. Just outside of downtown in the upscale shopping district Cherry Creek, the **JW Marriott Cherry Creek** (jwmarriottdenver.com) also went through a recent renovation with \$2 million in upgrades to the hotel, which included the addition of the buzz-worthy Second Home restaurant. Located in Westminster (halfway between Boulder and Denver), the 369-room **Westin Westminster Hotel** (westindenverboulder.com) is a beautiful property with 30,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including the separate 3,283-square-foot Lake House with picturesque outdoor views.

Boutique properties are also on tap. The 336-room **Curtis Hotel** (thecurtis.com) served as MWI Veterinary Supply’s Clifford’s headquarters. “We chose the property, first, because they had the right amount of meeting space (totaling 20,000 sq. ft.) and sleeping rooms, but then because the personality of the hotel was unique, to say the least,” she says. “The boutique, light-hearted fun-and-games theme seemed to fit our group. I mean, who is going to remember their experience at a same-old big-box hotel? The Curtis proved to be just what we were looking for—the almost child-like spirit of the place let everyone have whimsical discussions in between meetings.”

Inspired by the theater arts, and located next door to the performing arts complex, the 110-room **Hotel Teatro** (hotelteatro.com) is a perfect fit for small meetings and is embellished with original costumes from theater productions. On the other side of town in LoDo and across from Union Station, the historic 80-room **Oxford Hotel** (theoxfordhotel.com) opened in 1891 and recalls Denver’s past with antique furnishings, original décor and the famous Cruise martini bar.

BOULDER’S BLEND ▼

Located 30 miles northwest of Denver is the college town of **Boulder** (bouldercoloradousa.com). At 5,430 feet above sea level, the city is famous for the University of Colorado and a small-town, casual feel, but with the amenities of a big city, including lots of outdoor festivals, museums, nightlife and culture.

Boulder is bubbling with breweries and offers about a dozen options. The **Boulder Brewing Company** (boulderbeer.com) has been crafting microbrews since 1979 and offers tours in addition to hosting private events (Visit Denver's Grant stands by their Hazed and Infused Ale). **Asher Brewing Co.** (asherbrewing.com) serves up certified organic beverages, and **Twisted Pine Brewing** (twistedpinebrewing.com) pours creative concoctions such as Espresso Stout and Raspberry Wheat, with seasonal debuts of Peppermint Stout and Chocolate Chili Beer.

For brews of another variety, the **Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse** (boulderteahouse.com) is a rare slice of Tajikistan in Colorado. This ornate teahouse was a gift to the city from its sister city, Dushanbe, and is available for private events and tea tastings. Groups can also soak in the tea culture at **Celestial Seasonings** (celestialseasonings.com), which offers complimentary tours of their tea production plant.

Meetings in Boulder are a snap with more than 2,000 guest rooms in a variety of options, from the high-end, 201-room **St. Julian Hotel & Spa** (stjulien.com) to the 157-room **Marriott Boulder** (marriott.com). Other meeting-friendly hotels include the **Millennium Harvest House Boulder** (millenniumhotels.com/millenniumboulder), with 18,000 sq. ft. of function space and 269 guest rooms, and the 160-room **Hotel Boulderado** (boulderado.com), which has been a fixture in Boulder since it opened in 1909. The property features a famous stained-glass ceiling over the mezzanine and 10,000 sq. ft. of function space.

PINTS UNDER PIKES PEAK ▼

At the foot of the Rocky Mountains and the beginning of the Great Plains, **Colorado Springs** (visitcos.com) and its environs quickly make a stunning first impression with the 14,117-foot Pikes Peak jutting into the skyline directly above the city's wide-open spaces.

Colorado Springs has about a dozen breweries, some of them so under the radar that they don't even have websites, so be sure to ask the CVB and locals for insider tips. Grab a pint and take your

crew to the critically acclaimed **Bristol Brewery** (bristolbrewing.com) for hand-brewed ales with all-natural ingredients (Cheyenne Mountain Resort's Branciforte recommends sampling the Compass IPA and the seasonal pumpkin ale).

New to the scene as of this past August, **Trinity Brewing** (trinitybrew.com) dreams up a host of seasonal beers (all whipped up by one brewer), serves healthy eats and can host private tastings in the living room area for up to 50. Built from the ground up, the **Colorado Mountain Brewery** (coloradomountainbrewery.com) is slated to open this spring as a brewpub and restaurant with 3,500 sq. ft. of outdoor space.

In addition to award-winning breweries, the city topped *Outside* magazine's 2009 list for America's Best Cities, citing its easy access to the wilderness of the Rockies (and world-class ski resorts), awesome, sunny weather and the high level of education as reasons.

Cheyenne Mountain's Branciforte says it is a very healthy city, and people come here to get on the mend. "Everyone is a Lance Armstrong, including him—he trained here before the Tour de France," he says. If they are not Lance, they might be other Olympians, as the city is also home to the **Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center** (teamusa.org/about-usoc/colorado-springs-olympic-training-ctr), the headquarters for the U.S. Olympic Committee administration and the Olympic Training Center programs. The massive facility is available for tours and off-sites with plenty of fitness-focused spaces and a 225-seat auditorium.

"If you are looking for a meeting to clear your [attendees'] minds, invigorate them and also have a refocus and a purpose—it's Colorado Springs. We are on the natural side," Branciforte says. Meeting venues range from ranches to Five-Diamond, full-service hotels. Branciforte's 316-room **Cheyenne Mountain Resort** (cheyennemountain.com) can accommodate groups of up to 600 (ideal meeting size is 175 to 210) and offers 40,000 sq. ft. of IACC-certified meeting space, in addition to an 18-hole, Pete Dye-designed golf course. A luxury (and longtime) meeting staple, the **Broadmoor Hotel** (broadmoor.com) is located on 3,000 acres and houses 700 guest rooms and an event center complex with 185,000 sq. ft. of event space.

Unique venues are as prevalent as microbrews, and one such venue is the circa-1883 **Lost Valley Ranch** (lostvalleyranch.com). This Four-Diamond

guest ranch offers a variety of Western-themed meeting spaces, 24 one-, two- and three-bedroom cabin suites, horseback riding and cattle runs.

FULL-BODIED IN FORT COLLINS ▼

An hour outside of Denver, **Fort Collins** (ftcollins.org) is a friendly college town with a blossoming local art scene and a delightful downtown. It is also home to two of the state's most prominent breweries, in addition to a handful of smaller breweries. Truly a household name, the Budweiser-producing **Anheuser-Busch Brewery** (budweisertours.com) is a popular attraction and has complimentary tours as well as a behind-the-scenes Brewmaster Tour complete with a visit with their Clydesdale horse, Hamlet.

Also in the area, the **New Belgium Brewing Company** (newbelgium.com) attracts a dedicated following for its award-winning, Belgian-style beverages. The brewery is known for its flagship beer, Fat Tire, and has been consistently recognized for its sustainability efforts (such as capturing steam released for energy reuse, green building design and on-site waste-water treatment).

Other more intimate options include the **Fort Collins Brewery** (fortcollinsbrewery.com), which offers tastings and complimentary tours, and the **CooperSmith's Pub & Brewing** (coopersmithspub.com), a full-service restaurant and brewery with private event space for up to 200 people.

AMBER ALES IN ASPEN AND SNOWMASS ▼

The Rocky Mountains have long symbolized Colorado, and have been a huge draw for visitors to this region for snow sports in the winter or gorgeous weather and outdoor fun in the summer. These rugged peaks and corresponding valleys and communities are brimming with hotels, ski resorts and unique meeting venues. This iconic range has also become synonymous with beer, as Coors coined the tag line "Tap the Rockies" and placed a picture of the mountain range (which now turns blue when ready to consume) on each can.

However, when you think of ski resorts in Colorado, you are most likely picturing the scene at **Aspen** and **Snowmass** (aspensnowmass.com). And while the region is teeming with skiers and boarders in winter to take in the snow on Snowmass, Aspen, Aspen Highlands and Buttermilk mountains (one pass gets you access to all four), it is a compact, all-season destination. "Aspen is a historic mining town with no off-season. Music

and wildflowers come in the spring, and the fall is beautiful with golden aspen leaves and rugby tournaments," says JoAnna Eisler, national sales manager for **Aspen Chamber Resort Association** (aspenchamber.org).

Aspen is known for food and wine, and hosts their annual **Aspen Food and Wine Classic** (foodandwine.com/classic-in-aspen) from June 18–20. Earlier in the month, Snowmass hosts its **Chili Pepper and Brew Fest** (snowmasschiliandbrew.com), with two chili competitions and a summer ale contest in which more than 50 breweries participate. June is a fun time to bring a meeting to town for these events—but be sure to plan in advance. For regional drafts year-round, the relatively new **Aspen Brewing Company** (aspensbrewingcompany.com) creates small-batch brews that are only found in-state and features tours and tastings (Eisler recommends trying Ajax Pilsner).

Before the tastings begin, meetings of 20 to 200 attendees (sometimes up to 400) take place all over the two towns in everything from lodges to luxury hotels. The 257-room **St. Regis Aspen Resort** (stregisaspen.com) is one of the largest venues in the area and can host gatherings of up to 1,000 people in its more than 20,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. The **Aspen Meadows Resort** (dolce-aspen-hotel.com) features IACC-certified meeting space and the brand new LEED Gold-certified Doerr-Hosier Center, while the mountain chic **Sky Hotel** (theskyhotel.com) is known for its 39 Degrees restaurant and its signature cocktails, a great way to clear your palate for more tastings.

In Snowmass, the **Snowmass Conference Center** (snowmassgroups.com) is one of the largest conference centers in all of the Rocky Mountains, and can accommodate up to 2,000 people. The **Viceroy Snowmass** (viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/snowmass) offers 173 residentially appointed, ski-in/ski-out accommodations and features 9,000 sq. ft. of meeting space.

WHEAT BEERS IN WESTERN COLORADO ▼

Wide-open spaces are what you will find in the beautiful wilderness of Western Colorado, with a few cities interspersed throughout national parks and forests. **Telluride** (visittelluride.com) and **Durango** (durango.org) are surrounded both by the San Juan Mountains and national forest, and evoke a rustic charm that is accentuated by the area's strong mining roots. As you walk through

these friendly locales it may be hard to believe that they were each boisterous mining communities, which in their heydays drew fortune seekers looking for silver, gold, zinc, lead and copper.

The area is full of microbreweries, enough to fill up these spaces and keep the thirst of modern-day miners at bay. Set up an event or an intimate brewery tour at the **Steamworks Brewing Co.** (steamworksbrewing.com), which specializes in wood barrel-aged beers and will host group meals, private food and beer pairings, tastings and more. Other options include **Ska Brewing Company** (skabrewing.com), which offers a craft beer in their new bi-level tasting room, (Carrie Whitley, group destination manager for Durango Tourism, recommends the Pinstripe Red Ale), and the beer veteran **Durango Brewing Co.** (durangobrewing.com), which has been hand-crafting brews since 1990 with fine ingredients—try the seasonal Blueberry Wheat. Alcohol-free suds are consumed at **Zuperfizz** (zuberfizz.com), which makes pure cane sugar sodas in old-time flavors such as root beer, cream soda and ginger ale. In Telluride, **Smugglers Brewpub and Grille** (smugglersbrew.com) serves up ales and lagers made in their basement brewery (available for tours) and is served alongside pub food in their full-service restaurant.


Victorian-era Durango has a lively, history-rich downtown. “It’s full of historic buildings with fabulous art galleries, museums and tons of award-winning restaurants,” Whitley says. Durango’s casual, intimate feel and welcoming community made the city an easy, safe place to plan an event.

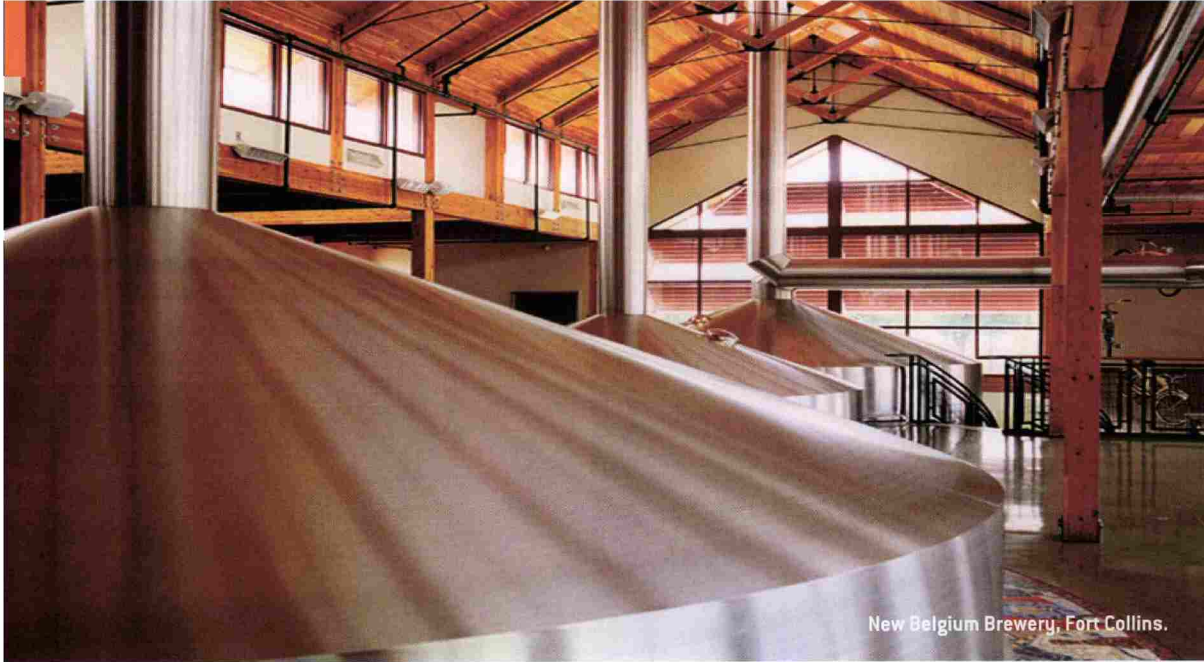
While in town, don’t miss the **Durango Silverton Narrow Gage Railroad** (durangotrain.com), which transports passengers back in time to the mining town of Silverton, with saloons and other western venues for off-sites. The railroad also of-

fers packages with ATV tours and ziplines whizzing through aspen trees, in addition to booking a reception train for up to 46 of your attendees. Hotels range in size to host a variety of groups (up to 200 in one property), with one of the most notable being **The Historic Strater Hotel** (strater.com). This landmark, with an imposing brick façade, features 93 Victorian rooms and 7,000 sq. ft. of function space.

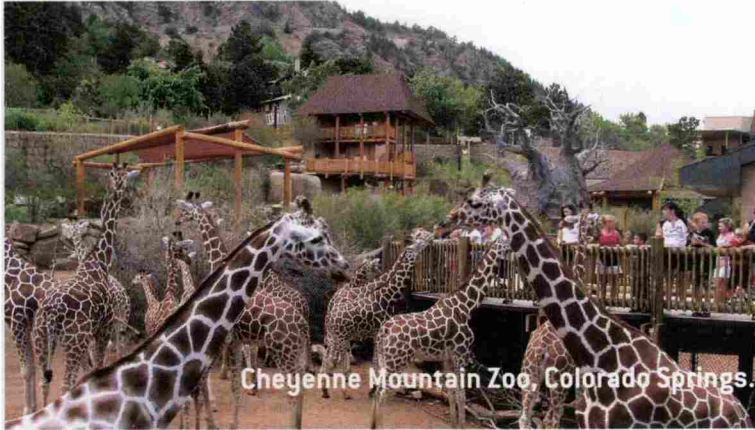
The *Financial Times* described Telluride as a city that “remains deliciously unspoiled, still cocooned in a time capsule of sorts, with a main street positively reeking of 19th-century ambience.” Visitors can experience this first-hand by wandering the six-block-wide and 12-blocks-long National Historic District that showcases the city’s storied past.

Major meeting venues are located in Mountain Village, the next town over, and include the 22,000-square-foot **Telluride Conference Center** in Mountain Village, which has an additional 55,000 sq. ft. of outdoor event space with views of the 14,000-foot peaks. New to the area, the 100-room **Capella Telluride** (capellatelluride.com) has a full-service spa, 5,000-plus sq. ft. of meeting space and a plethora of on-site activities, from an ice skating rink to a golf course.

Also in the Western reaches of the state, **Gateway Canyons** (gatewaycanyons.com) is a scenic retreat located in the stunning red rock canyons of southwestern Colorado. It was “created by the founder of the Discovery Channel, John Hendricks, who envisioned a location that offers fulfillment to the mind and body,” says Marci Kurronen, regional director of sales. “Groups are awed by the beautiful surroundings and leave with a renewed sense of inspiration.” The 54-room property offers 8,778 sq. ft. of meeting space and is well-suited for groups of 25, with plenty to see and do including air tours of the canyon. 



New Belgium Brewery, Fort Collins.



Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Colorado Springs.

GETTING THERE

Colorado's wide-spread destinations can be easily accessed through the state's network of 20 airports.

- **Denver International Airport** (flydenver.com) is the state's main hub and the fifth busiest airport in the nation, providing nonstop daily service to more than 130 national and international destinations. The airport is 45 minutes away from Denver, about an hour from Boulder, 1.5 hours from Fort Collins and within a 2–3 hour drive from the ski resorts and mountain destinations of the Rockies. Companies such as **Colorado Mountain Express** (ridecme.com) provide transfers from DIA and service to mountain destinations like Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Copper Mountain, Keystone, Aspen and Snowmass.
- **Colorado Springs Airport** (springsgov.com/AirportIndex.aspx) is 11 miles from Colorado Springs and services the area with seven airlines and 10 daily nonstop flights.
- **Aspen/Pitkin County Airport** (aspenairport.com) is just 3 miles from Aspen and 8 miles from Snowmass, with nonstops from cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, Salt Lake City and Denver.
- **Telluride Regional Airport** (tellurideairport.com) is located 7 miles from the twin towns of Telluride and Mountain Village and offers direct service to Denver and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.
- **Durango-La Plata County Airport** (flydurango.com) is 4.5 miles from Durango and also offers flights to Denver and Phoenix.



Event set-up at The Curtis, Denver.

BETTER BEER AND BETTER TASTINGS

Beer has long been perceived as being less sophisticated than wine, but the tide is about to change for this ubiquitous malt beverage. “Beer is every bit as high-end as wine. People will look down at beer, but it’s harder to make a good beer than a good wine, it’s much more involved with the process,” says Kris Oyler, food and beverage veteran and co-founder of Durango’s Steamworks Brewing Co. But thankfully for him and his counterparts, beer is slowly shedding its blue-collar image and the stereotype of being bland, yellow fizzy water for a more refined, artisan beverage.

And it is not just the buzz about beer proving that people are changing their view of beer, especially craft beer. Consumption of small-production beer is the on the rise according to a March report from the **Brewers Association** (brewersassociation.org); from 2008 to 2009 there was an increase of 7.2% in volume and 10.3% in sales—even in the down economy, when wine and big-box breweries took a huge hit. Some of your attendees have probably already caught the craft-beer bug and for those who haven’t (yet), incorporating a brewery tour and tasting is a great way to experience Colorado’s local culture.

To get you started on your tasting tour, the Brewers Association website lists every brewery that they know of, whether they are members or not, Herz says. So, plug in your meeting destination on their website (craftbeer.com/pages/get-local/find-a-us-brewery) and a list of breweries will be pulled up. It is key to call ahead to find the capacity of the brewery and to make sure they can accommodate your group on a given day, Herz says.

And if you have never experienced a beer tasting, Oyler says, “Tasting beer is very similar to tasting wine, but you have to swallow you it because you really don’t get the full flavor-spectrum unless you swallow.” Julia Herz, craft beer program director of the Brewers Association, agrees with Oyler and adds that “beer’s ingredients make it a more complex beverage [than wine] because of hops, malt and carbonation.” It is possible to get more layers of flavors from beer than wine.

So, throw caution (and your misconceptions of beer) to the wind and follow Oyler’s tips for getting the most out of a beer tasting:

- **See:** You want to look at the color of the beer. What does the head look like from the carbonation?
- **Smell:** Take a whiff. Do you smell fruit, hops, citrus, floral overtones, malt, sweet or smell tannins? You don’t want to smell butter (it’s good in chardonnary and bad in beer) or anything stale such as the smells of wet cardboard or paper—that means that it’s been oxidized.
- **Sip:** Take a drink, if it tastes good, try some more and make sure you really like it.
- **Swallow:** Pay attention to the different qualities as you swallow. Beer has a bitter quality depending on the style and you perceive that at the back of your mouth. You also perceive the carbonation toward the back of your palate.



Guest room at the St. Regis Aspen Resort.

NEWS

- The 240-room, 45-story **Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residence Denver** (fourseasons.com), in Denver's theater district, has been in construction for a few years and is scheduled to open in late 2010
- Directly across the street from the Colorado Convention Center, the brand-new **Embassy Suites Denver – Tech Center** (embassysuites.hilton.com) is slated to open December 2010 with 403 rooms
- The largest hotel in town, the Adams Mark was reflagged as **Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel** (sheratondenverdowntown.com) following a \$70-million renovation.
- The 336-room Curtis was recently reflagged as **The Curtis, a Doubletree Hotel** (thecurtis.com).
- The 6,500-square-foot **Colorado Mountain Brewery** (coloradomountainbrewery.com) is on track to open soon on the north side of Colorado Springs.
- The **Telluride Regional Airport** (tellurideairport.com) is undergoing a \$58-million runway improvement project in order to improve safety and extend the runway by 200-plus feet.

DENVER	ROOMS/MEETING SPACE	WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE
The Curtis thecurtis.com	336 rms/20,000 sq. ft.	Recently added to the Doubletree portfolio; this colorful hotel has a playful theme and is located across the street from the Denver Performing Arts Complex.
Hotel Teatro hotelteatro.com	110 rms/8,000+ sq. ft.	Theater-themed boutique hotel suited with unique event spaces from wine cellars to upstairs terraces; featuring the lauded Restaurant Kevin Taylor.
Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center denverregency.hyatt.com	1,100 rms/60,600 sq. ft.	Next to the Colorado Convention Center, full-service, city-owned hotel has modern amenities in addition to a one-room spa and indoor, heated lap pool.
JW Marriott Cherry Creek jwmarriottdenver.com	196 rms/5,660 sq. ft.	Fresh from a \$2-million renovation, this hotel offers the 9,300-square-foot Spa at Cherry Creek, two outdoor pools and patio with firepit.
Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel sheratondenverdowntown.com	1,231 rms/133,000 sq. ft.	Denver's largest hotel; recently reflagged hotel following a \$70-million renovation; complimentary 24-Hour fitness center and Wi-Fi in public spaces.
Warwick Denver Hotel warwickdenver.com	219 rms/10,000 sq. ft.	Reimagined following a \$25-million redesign of its guest rooms, suites, public areas and meeting space; rooftop pool for receptions with panoramic views.
BOULDER		
Boulder Marriott marriott.com	157 rms/5,400 sq. ft.	Fresh from a renovation, features 8 meeting rooms, indoor pool, fitness center and the full-service Essentiels Spa.
Hotel Boulderado boulderado.com	160 rms/10,000 sq. ft.	Victorian-style, historic hotel on the National Register of Historic Places; recently refreshed meeting space; three on-site restaurants.
Millennium Harvest House Boulder millenniumhotels.com/millenniumboulder	269 rms/18,000 sq. ft.	Affording views of the Boulder Creek Path and nearby Rocky Mountains; features 15 tennis courts and a host of on-site recreation.
St. Julien Hotel & Spa stjulien.com	201 rms/15,500 sq. ft. indoor/outdoor	Luxury hotel featuring a 10,000-square-foot spa with 12 treatment rooms, a two-lane infinity pool with whirlpool and outside terrace.
COLORADO SPRINGS		
Antlers Hilton Hotel Colorado Springs antlers.com	285 rms/27,500 sq. ft.	Four-Diamond hotel located in downtown with the 54-seat Learning Center and the 9,672-square-foot Heritage Ballroom.
The Broadmoor Hotel Colorado Springs broadmoor.com	700 rms/185,000 sq. ft.	Five-Diamond, Five-Star landmark hotel with 18 on-site restaurants, cafés and lounges, 3 golf courses, a tennis club and a Five-Star, full-service spa.
Cheyenne Mountain Resort cheyennemountain.com	316 rooms/40,000 sq. ft.	Set near Cheyenne Mountain, this suburban hotel has 38 dedicated conference rooms, on-site golf, a lake, 4 pools including a 50-meter Olympic sized pool.
ASPEN/SNOWMASS		
St. Regis Aspen Resort stregisaspen.com	257 rms/20,000 sq. ft.	Located at the base of Aspen Mountain with a full-service Remède Spa, a business center and complimentary Wi-Fi in guest rooms.
The Viceroy Snowmass viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/snowmass	173 rms/9,000 sq. ft.	Ski-in/ski-out resort with residential amenities in the heart of Snowmass Village.
WESTERN COLORADO		
Capella Telluride capellatelluride.com	100 rms/5,000+ sq. ft.	Located in Mountain Village next door to the Telluride Conference Center; luxury property with on-site skating rink in the winter near San Juan Mountains.
Gateway Canyons gatewaycanyons.com	54 rms/8,778 sq. ft.	Located 1 hour southwest of Grand Junction amid beautiful red rock canyon, the serene hotel is ideal for retreats with the great outdoors at arm's length.
The Historic Strater Hotel strater.com	93 rms/7,000 sq. ft.	Landmark, Victorian-style with a bona-fide saloon and servers in Can-Can costumes; ranked on <i>National Geographic Traveler's</i> Stay List.