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When Hurricane Irma blew his event out of its original site, Kevin O'Keefe, show director for the International Contemporary Furniture Fair, found refuge in a mid-market city



The 40,000-square-foot Microsoft Square is one of L.A. Live's numerous attractions

LOS ANGELES

Downtown and beyond, Los Angeles is booming

— BY ALEX PALMER —

Los Angeles has been developing at breakneck speed, with new properties and group offerings cropping up on a seemingly daily basis.

“Interest and desire for meeting in Los Angeles is at an all-time high, a fact largely attributable to our city’s unrivaled intellectual capital, incredible mix of ‘only-in-LA’ experiences and venues, and endless sunshine,” says Darren K. Green, senior vice president of sales at Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board. “Fantastic new hotels are opening their doors with frequency, diverse chefs are exploring creative territories, and noteworthy cultural institutions are choosing to call LA home.”

Much of this growth has been centered in the city’s downtown. Once an area low on most visitors’ lists, it’s become the vibrant center of town, thanks to L.A. Live’s expansive attractions (including restaurants,

hotels, and event venues) and nonstop developments happening nearby.

The biggest of these is the InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown, opened this past summer, offering 889 luxury rooms, 95,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space, and a sky lobby on its 70th floor. At 1,100 feet in height, it’s the tallest building west of Chicago.

The 350-room Hotel Indigo Downtown Los Angeles, recently opened its doors, offering 12 meeting rooms and 22,343 square feet of flexible meeting space, including entertainment suites, a pool deck, and social lounge. It just unveiled a number of new group offerings that play off of its speakeasy-style Metropole Bar + Kitchen, including an “Underground LA” walking

tour of Los Angeles’ subterranean tunnels, jazz-infused group yoga sessions, and a “Typewriter Poetry Breakout Session” of impromptu poems written for attendees.

Next month will see the opening or reopening of two more properties in the downtown area: NoMad Los Angeles, a 250-room property taking over the 1923 building that housed Giannini Place (and offering 1,000 square feet of retail and meeting space); and the 268-room Hotel Figueroa, which is completing a \$30 million renovation that is transforming its Moroccan aesthetic into a more contemporary design with a Spanish flare.

But plenty is happening in the Los Angeles area far from downtown. The chic Manhattan Beach area is growing as a meetings destination with the opening next month of the Westdrift Manhattan Beach — LA’s first Autograph Collection Hotel, which will have more than 35,000 square feet of event space and 18 meeting rooms (as well as a nine-hole golf course) all infused with a beachy, modern feel. In



The 1920s decor of Hotel Indigo has inspired new group activities

Century City, a \$1 billion modernization of the Westfield Century City shopping center will transform this mixed-use area into a 1.3 million-square-foot destination of more than 200 shops, restaurants, event venues, and more.

As Green sums it up: “A truly irresistible magnet for collaboration, Los Angeles is the perfect destination right now for meeting professionals to connect individually and innovate collectively.” ■ *Questions or comments? Email apalmer@ntmlc.com*

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