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Rejuvenate

APRIL/MAY 2014

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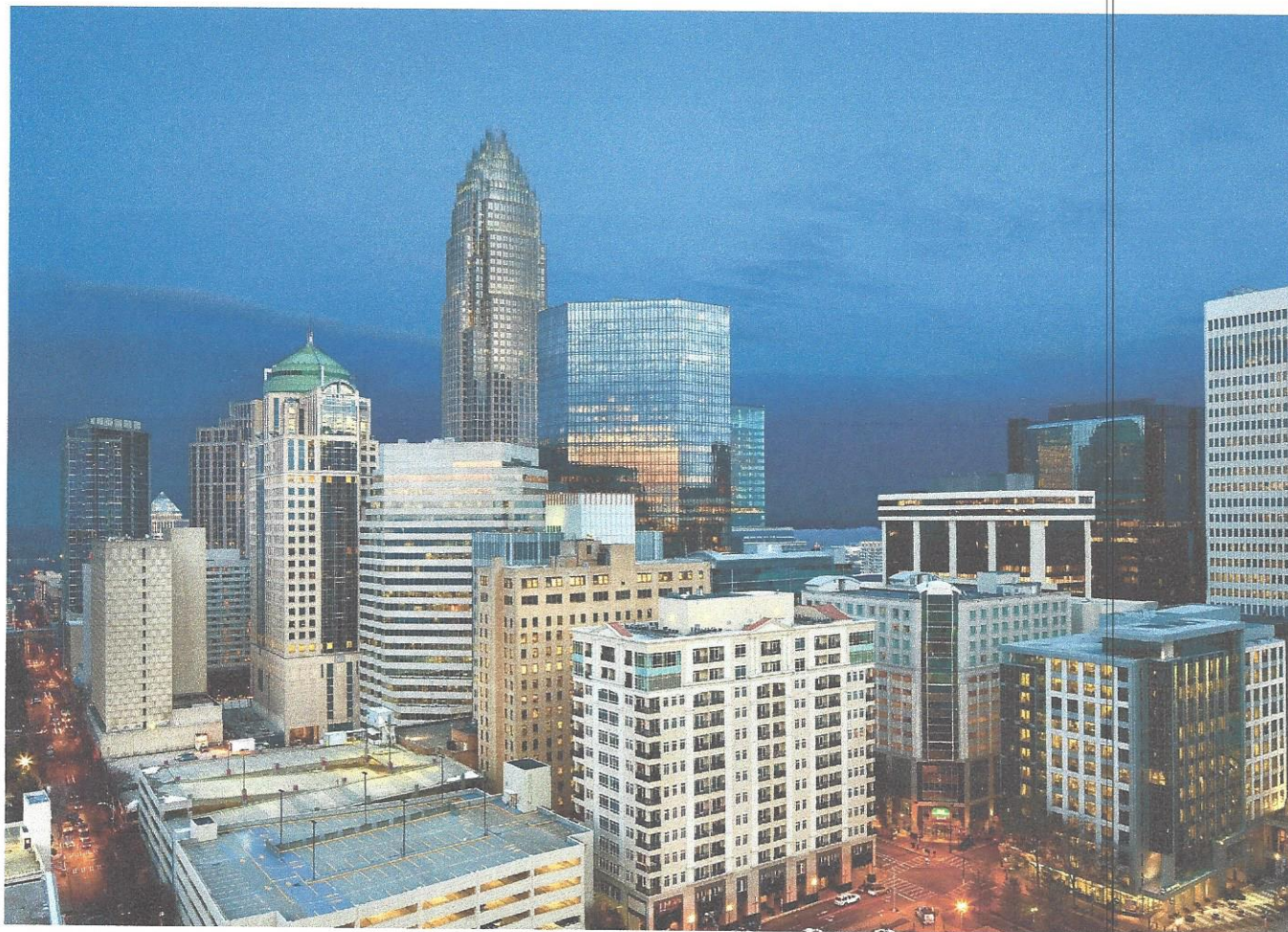
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Charlotte

North Carolina

By Michael J. Solender

When Charlotte hosted the Democratic National Convention in 2012, the entire nation saw what savvy convention planners have known for some time: Charlotte's "got a lot." The largest city in the Carolinas, Charlotte has convenient access, memorable venues, and attractions appealing to art lovers, outdoor adventurers and urban explorers alike. Charlotte Douglas International Airport is seven miles from the heart of the city's bustling Uptown, where there are more than 4,100 hotel rooms within walking distance of Charlotte Convention Center.

Take a ride along Glory Road 2.0, the signature exhibit at NASCAR Hall of Fame connected by an

elevated walkway to the convention center; or head two blocks north to Levine Center for the Arts, a cultural gem in the Queen City's crown, which hosts The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts & Culture, Mint Museum of Craft & Design and Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Each contains function space and opportunities for events.

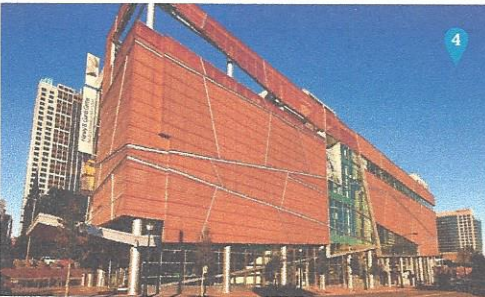
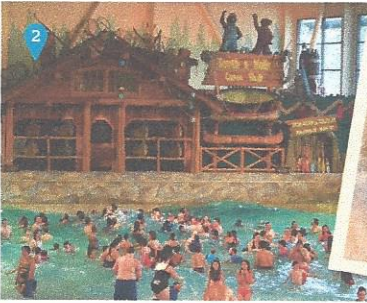
Large Venues

Charlotte Convention Center [1] has 370,000 square feet of total meeting and exhibition space including two large ballrooms, measuring 35,000

and 40,000 square feet each; 37 meeting rooms; a ballroom terrace; theater and classroom seating set-ups; and award-winning catering services.

The nearby Charlotte Marriott City Center has 438 guest rooms and 20,000 square feet of meeting space. It's located in the prime Trade and Tryon street area in the heart of Charlotte's business district, which is the largest U.S. banking center outside New York City. Omni Charlotte has 374 guest rooms, 16,000 square feet of meeting space and 13 meeting rooms. Attendees can take in city views from the hotel's rooftop pool.

The family-friendly Great Wolf Lodge is



13 miles northeast of the city in Concord, N.C. The lodge has 402 guest rooms and 8,200 square feet of meeting space, as well as an indoor water park [2]. The lodge is near Charlotte Motor Speedway and ZMax Dragway.

Fun and Function

Make lasting impressions with experiences that will envelop your attendees in the contemporary Southern hospitality Charlotte is known for. Adventure seekers can get their thrills at U.S. National Whitewater Center [3]. This one-of-a-kind Olympic training facility has mountain

biking, rock climbing, a ropes course, zip lines, running trails, a 46-ft. free-fall Mega Jump, and a multiple-channel whitewater river for rafting, canoeing and kayaking, as well as a large outdoor pavilion and indoor facilities.

Sports fans can take in a Charlotte Bobcats basketball game Uptown at Time Warner Cable Arena; catch the NFL's Carolina Panthers at Bank of America Stadium; or sit back and enjoy the Charlotte Knights, the city's Triple-A baseball team, at BB&T Ballpark, which opened in April. The park is also an option for off-site events with almost 5,000 square feet of space on the upper

club level. The LEED-certified, 8-acre park has 10,000 seats and views of the Charlotte skyline.

Sea Life Charlotte-Concord Aquarium brings guests up close to more than 5,000 creatures including sharks, stingrays, jellyfish and sea horses. The "Tropical Bay of Rays" exhibit area serves as function space for special events. The aquarium is located in Concord Mills, a 1.4 million-sq.-ft. shopping mall and popular tourist destination in North Carolina.

Dining and Attractions

After a long day at a convention, attendees have dining options ranging from old-fashioned Southern comfort food to New South cuisine from the best chefs in the region. At King's Kitchen, award-winning North Carolina chef Jim Noble turns out home favorites such as Aunt Beauf's pan-fried chicken, grilled meatloaf, Stone Fisheries fried flounder and his famous pimento cheese. Mimosa Grill has contemporary Southern cuisine favorites such as Lowcountry shrimp and grits, and brown butter pumpkin ravioli.

Billy Graham Library, long home to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, is one of the most routinely visited sites in Charlotte. The library

Charlotte is home to the largest man-made whitewater facility in the world.

is organized around the themes of "The Man," "The Ministry," "The Message" and "The Mission," with the prominent message being the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On-site dining facilities and self-guided tours make this a popular destination.

Adjacent to the convention center is The Harvey B. Gantt Center [4], which celebrates African-American culture through dance, music, visual and literary arts, film, educational programs, theater productions and community outreach. The museum has rotating exhibits and a permanent collection. It also has three levels of event space, including the 747-sq.-ft. rooftop pavilion and the 1,397-sq.-ft. Performance Suite, good for presentations, film screenings and lectures.

During free time, attendees can head over to Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden [5], 20 miles from Uptown Charlotte. The gardens have hundreds of varieties of indigenous flora and specialty flowers, trees, grasses and shrubbery. The orchid conservatory alone is worth the trip. On-site function space includes the Great Hall for up to 300; Wren Room for up to 120; and Four Seasons Garden, the site's largest outdoor space, which accommodates more than 300.