



INSITES AND INSPIRATIONS | SUMMER 2023



“Summer breeze makes me feel fine.”
Seals and Croft

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SITE Canada President's Message



Dear members and friends,

We're off to an exceptional first half of the year! The industry is in full swing and SITE Canada has set off with a strident step. While it's tempting to say it's clear skies from here on out, that would be getting ahead of ourselves. We may have summer sunshine beaming down, but there are clouds that linger overhead.

The Big Picture

In some ways, we remain in the shadow of the seismic transformation over the past few years. We've seen our fair share of the great resignations, shortages of skilled employees, stubbornly high inflation, burnout on multiple levels, and turmoil in many parts of the world.

Despite the hardships, there is increasingly good news as our industry continually and cautiously assesses the terrain, and moves forward to evolve mandates, teams, and modus operandi. Relating to client needs, there's a tremendous focus on people, culture, and experiences. We see a growing number of exciting trends that are being blended with incentive programs. Incorporating wellness culture and closer interaction with the natural world are now placed higher on the must-do lists. The desire for immersive, authentic cultural experiences has never been stronger. As are sustainability touchpoints with F&B for instance – how and what we serve, along with eco-disposal systems, to environmentally friendly transfers – bicycles anyone? Sizeable shifts in perspectives are impacting the way we approach our work alongside the rise of transformative AI shortcuts affecting our operational options. A lot is happening in our world!

SITE Global Report

The “why” of incentive programs is deftly underlined in the latest research project from the SITE Foundation, entitled Participants inSITES, which surveyed nearly 1,000 incentive travel reward earners across various markets and industries.

I very much enjoyed the three-part series which unveiled key findings of what drives clients to engage in incentive programs. In the final installment, the series discusses how participants find the bottom line is not the only measure of success and that improving company culture, employee engagement, and inclusiveness are vital to incentive programs. It's a rewarding viewing, delving into the nature, purpose, and direction of incentive travel from the perspective of corporate end users, event planners, budget holders, and qualifiers. Check it out here: <https://siteglobal.com/participant-insites>

SITE Canada Initiatives

Staying relevant with all our programming and seeking ways to innovate and try new things are top of mind within the leadership of SITE Canada.

In January, SITE Exchange kicked off a dynamic year, bringing together planners and suppliers in one-to-one connections in beautiful Banff. I'm pleased to announce our next SITE Exchange will be in historic and inspiring Quebec City January 8th – 11th, 2024. More details soon to come.

Another new initiative is the May Mixer with a focus on connecting with incentive colleagues in Southwestern Ontario. We launched this networking program in partnership with Langdon Hall & Destination Toronto. By taking this opportunity to co-host with such a prominent DMO amid a gorgeous, intimate setting, we attracted new planners and sponsors, while extending SITE Canada's brand into the growing region of Southwestern Ontario. We look forward to doing more of this type of collaborative networking in future.

We can't speak about SITE's quest for innovation without mentioning our stellar sustainability committee

which brings top-of-the-line webinars and updates on how we can make eco-conscious choices in our industry. As the Earth's stewards, we would do well to remember Audrey Hepburn who wisely said, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." On our website you can find resources such as the RFP Checklist and SITE Canada's Plant Based Recipe Book. Find more here: <https://sitecanada.org/index.php?page=resources-2>

Great gatherings are our jam! Our annual Summer Social was a bright and happy affair despite the rain moving us from Delta Toronto's SOCO rooftop into the ballroom. Our volunteers coordinated with grace and guests embraced the switchover with good cheer, enjoying their time catching up with industry friends, mingling with new members, and bidding on a bounty of travel deals at the auction table. A highlight of the night included a donation on behalf of SITE Canada to Second Harvest who we've chosen as our 2023 charity. We're so grateful to our hardworking events committee and supportive Summer Social sponsors for making this such a terrific evening.

On the Horizon

August is eventful with our board of directors holding a mid-year retreat to strategize our 2024 objectives. One of our top agenda items is the proposed ambassador program to iron out plans to create SITE Canada activity in Eastern and Western Canada where we have member representatives. We'll also be attending CMEE August 15th and 16th at the MTCC in Toronto so please stop by our SITE Canada booth 635 to say hello. If you would like to volunteer at our booth, please [CLICK HERE](#). We will confirm your volunteer shift at the beginning of August.

SITE newcomers, we hear you! You asked for a way to become better familiar with SITE, so we are creating an **Onboarding New Members** video to welcome our first timers, navigate our program offerings, and learn how to get the most from your SITE Membership. We will walk through the many fantastic resources such as the worldwide membership directory, online learning, and upcoming events listings from over 90 chapters. We are planning this welcome orientation webinar – aka Membership 101 Guide – for early fall.

Professional development is the primary driver of our Education Day happening October 25th in Toronto. We are designing a compelling lineup of speakers and very relevant programming; we'll keep you in the loop for registration details. So, mark your calendar – Education Day is a must-go SITE Canada signature event. To always know what's up and not miss out on SITE Canada's next big happening – watch for our emails and follow us on our social media channels: LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Help spread the word!

Strategic Partners + Sponsors

We truly appreciate our amazing partnerships with prime players in our industry. We encourage our members to select our industry supporters wherever possible. SITE Canada proudly recognizes the following.

- Air Canada – Canada's largest domestic and international airline serves more than 200 destinations and connects all continents. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information on group bookings.

- Ignite Magazine – Ignite’s mission is to provide information, inspiration, guidance, and great ideas to event planners. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for their magazine.
- The Incentivist – a website and newsletter dedicated to inspiration, insights and intelligence to global incentive travel professionals. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information and to sign up for their newsletter.
- D.E. Systems – an Event Management Platform providing support of event registration with MyConferenceSuite’s registration platform. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

We also acknowledge the steadfast circle of sponsors who helps us deliver networking and educational events, as well as makes contributions to our fundraising events through generous auctions donations. They are integral to our success.

SITE Canada is an incredible chapter that I’m so proud to be leading this year. Working with enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers who comprise our board of directors and committees is one of the many reasons I love the role of president. We really do care, and it shows in all that we strive to provide our membership.

Please consider volunteering, whether it’s a one-off or ongoing commitment, we are happy to have you join us. It’s an excellent way to get more in the know about SITE and our industry. Have you ever considered joining us on the SITE board as a director? We are recruiting interested current SITE members – apply by emailing me at gisele@straighttalkincentives.com. We’re a fun group! Time spent with SITE can open fresh pathways and bring about new friendships, as it certainly has for me! Reach out anytime. We’d love to hear from you.

May you all have a lovely summer.

Gisele Robert
SITE Canada President 2023



We're Growing!

Over the past year, SITE Canada has welcomed the following new members.

Lana Bromley Northwest Territories Tourism
Joyce Brown-O'Connor MCI Group Canada
Anita Carlyle MCC Events
Stan Cook Rock+Water Stan Cook Travel
Jennifer Dolnik Techne Events
Stacy Doyle Fox Harb'r Resort
Heather Drew Reach Global Marketing
Shalene Dudley Latitude Concierge Travels Ltd.
Cassie Hartoon Columbia Sportswear Canada LP
Judy Healy Toronto Metropolitan University
Lori Heller Little Canada
Kalinda Jessett Canaccord Genuity
Matina Kalkounis Scotiabank
Terrilyn Kunopaski tante consulting inc.
Sonia Langevin iA Wealth
Devin Lewis Bermuda Tourism Authority
Scott Lockey Cvent
Marina Lupescu TD Bank
Lindsay Moran Unwrapit
Breia Noble Accor
Julia O'Grady ITM Events
Tracey Pictor Moniker
Leah Rose-Davis Fairmont Hotels & Resorts
Magdalena Schneider MCC Planners Inc.
Nicole Simunac Events&Co.
Patrick Skelly Fairmont Western Mountain Region
Krista St. John Blue Nest Events
Melissa Symonds Shangri-la Toronto
Marie-Chantal Thibault Tremblant Resort Association
Greg Tsai The Westin Resort & Spa, Whistler
Angela Visconti Strategic Site Selection
Brad Williams Platinum DMC Collection
Melanie Zegers Lorandus Meetings and Communications

Getting to Know Your SITE Canada Board Members!

Welcome Shelley Bartle-Reed, Director of Global Sales, Associated Luxury Hotels International

Having won the SITE Chapter Education award two years ago, the Education portfolio is one that receives huge attention and yields great rewards in terms of membership satisfaction and revenue generation. This



year's director is new to the portfolio, but not new to the industry!

Let's get to know Shelley Bartle-Reed a bit more, and find out what makes her inner passion thrive.

Q: How do you feel about being on the SITE Canada Board of Directors? What value does this bring to your personal and professional life?

A: I am truly enjoying my first time serving on the SITE Board – making a contribution to help the industry adjust to a post-pandemic reality and developing stronger relationships with my amazing colleagues and committee members is very rewarding.

Q: When you were asked to become the Director of Education, what was your first reaction on how you could enhance the portfolio?

A: I was nervous as I had some big shoes to fill but I was excited to explore some different approaches to developing the annual Education Day event and also help put more of a focus on attracting the next generation of hospitality professionals to join our industry!

Q: What are your goals and expectations of the Education portfolio? What can we expect from your direction?

A: My goal is to try to bring some new ideas to what Education Day offers to our members through on going collaboration with my committee members and considering all ideas that are brought forward – there is a wealth of experience on our team and it is exciting to brainstorm together!

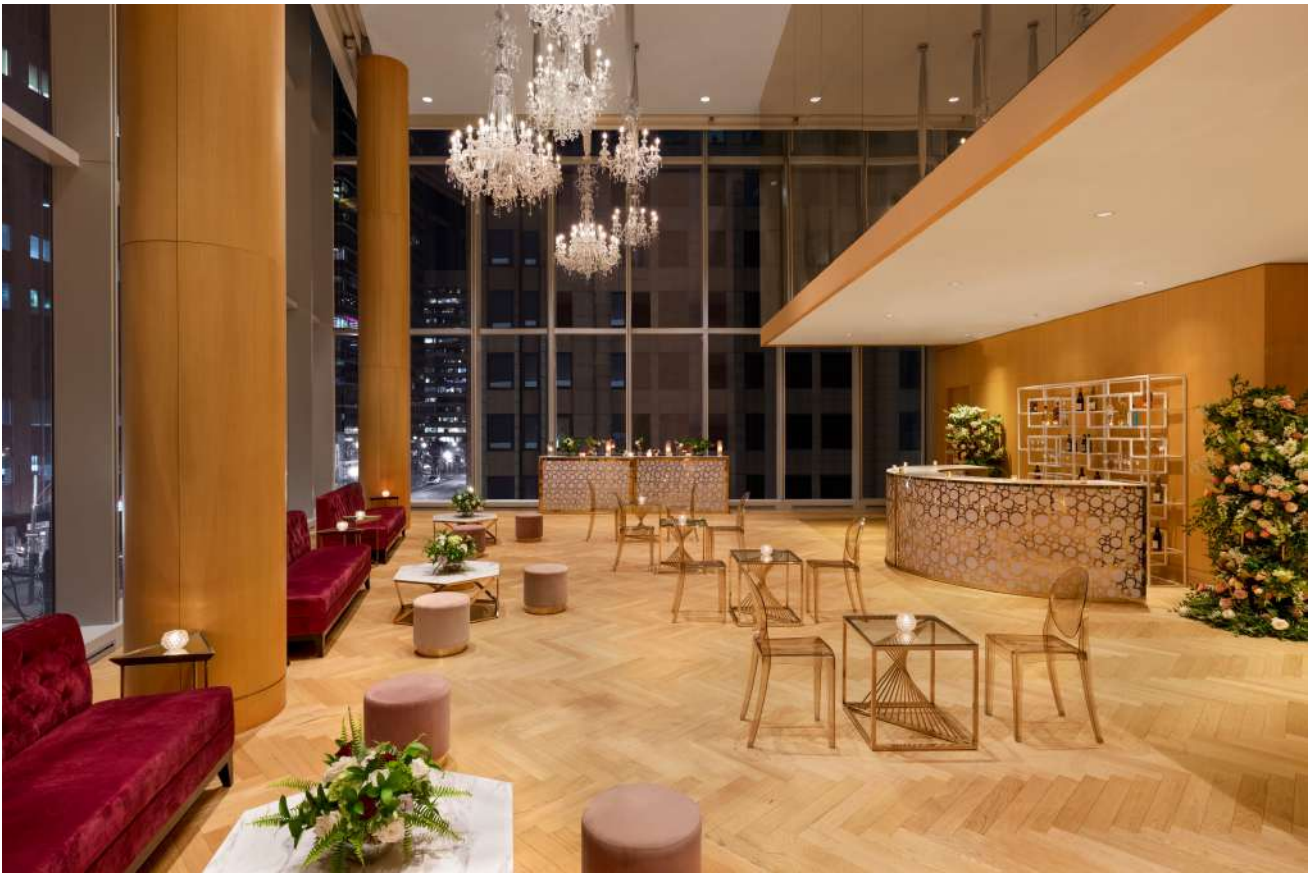
Q: Are you going to introduce any new concepts into Education Day this year and, if so, can you give us a glimpse of what these might be?

A: We definitely have some new ideas that we are working on right now – one of the most important is considering how we can incorporate and highlight the next generation of hospitality students and leaders during all aspects of the event – we're also thinking about how we can do something a bit different from traditional breakouts - stay tuned for more on these!

Q: What three adjectives would you use to describe the SITE Canada members and our culture?

A: Supportive, Smart and Fun!

We look forward to what Shelley will be producing with her Education Committee on October 25th. Stay tuned for registration announcements and our speaker lineup. We want to see everyone in person this year!



Event Space Spotlight

Museum Room at Shangri-La Toronto

Shangri-La Toronto has established itself as an elegant sanctuary in the heart of the city. The hotel is located between the business and entertainment districts, within walking distance to the city's best shopping, sports, live theatre, and cultural venues. Art, fashion, and entertainment meet in style upon entry to the hotel. The décor reflects an understated opulence, from a hand-crafted Italian Faziloi piano in the lobby, to Asian-inspired works of arts, and breath-taking couture dresses on display.

The third floor hosts the hotel's main event spaces. One of the most show-stopping areas being The Museum room, complete with 13 Italian crystal chandeliers, glistening over newly renovated herringbone floors. This space is used for events of all kinds. With floor-to-ceiling windows and inspiring views of the city, the abundance of natural light is spectacular. With a warm welcome, hospitality from the heart, and customized package offers, Shangri-La Toronto offers guests the very best in meeting and event options.

For more information about the Museum Room and other space at the Shangri-La Toronto, [CLICK HERE](#)



Jamaica - A Way of Life

Destination Jamaica stands out as one of the Caribbean's leading choices for meeting & incentive programs. Well-known for the lovely beaches and wide variety of resorts and venues, Jamaica's allure goes well beyond her physical beauty to evoke a sense of belonging for everyone who sets foot on her shores. You are home here! Hospitality is more than a tradition on the island, it is a way of life. From the swashbuckling Hollywood glitterati who made Port Antonio world famous in the 1920's, to ordinary travelers who came afterwards to enjoy the mystique, cuisine, natural beauty, culture and more importantly, the warmth of the people; there is a Jamaican experience for everyone!

Today, Jamaica's tourism product is undergoing a massive transformation. Newer, larger resorts are being built to accommodate the increased focus on the MICE business. International resort brands like Princess, Hard Rock, Secrets, Viva Wyndham, Planet Hollywood, Unico, Margaritaville, Karisma, Ritz Carlton, and others have either started construction, announced projects, or are in exploratory stages of development.

The convenient connectivity of Jamaica's premier airport – The Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay – makes Jamaica a meeting planner's dream destination, where all delegates can get to their destination the same day during sunlight hours, regardless of where in Canada they are coming from! There is year-round flights to Jamaica from Canada, every day of the year, multiple flights on most days. That means your programs can be of any length, from quick three-night retreats to four or five nights, or week-long destination programs. That means more time to enjoy the destination and maximizing the benefits of your program.

The team at the Jamaica Tourist Board is here to help you make it your best program ever!

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details!



site Canada



Terrilyn Kunopaski Principal tante consulting inc. Toronto, ON

We asked Terrilyn to share what she is looking forward to as a SITE member:

As a new SITE member, I am most looking forward to expanding my professional network and exploring a segment of the travel industry I've only peripherally familiar with up until now!

As part of our Member Snapshot initiative, we conduct short interviews with our members about their industry, career, etc. See below for Terrilyn's full interview.

Provide a brief overview of your professional role and where you see your organization headed in this industry.

tante consulting inc. is a boutique firm focused on supporting destinations and experience providers on: strategic planning; content, branding and storytelling; and partnership development in the North

American market. We believe in harnessing the power of tourism in pursuit of economic, social and environmental sustainability and justice. tante works with a diverse community of collaborators with complementary skillsets, to help our clients achieve their goals.

tante celebrated its one-year anniversary in May 2023. Where are we headed? We will continue to work with organizations who see opportunities to evolve the tourism sector to be more values-driven, inclusive, and representative of the world we represent.

What are you most excited about in 2023?

For 2023, I'm most excited about growing my network, making new connections with values-driven tourism professionals, and expanding the business and the work we do!

What is the best piece of advice you ever received about being in this industry?

Don't be afraid to be a disruptor.

Tell us one thing about yourself, that you do for fun.

"tante" is the French word for "aunt," representing my favourite job in the world. For fun, I love spending time with my nephews, two of whom are in Ontario and one in Alberta. I enjoy long walks exploring new corners of Toronto, trying new restaurants and playing cards. I also enjoy the occasional day on the river fly fishing!



**Nicole Simunac Founder + Principal Planner Events&Co.
Toronto, ON & Zagreb, Croatia**

What are you most excited about in 2023?

For 2023, I am most excited to continue expanding my service offerings in Croatia and promote it as a top destination in the MICE industry to my fellow Canadians.

As part of our Member Snapshot initiative, we conduct short interviews with our members about their industry, career, etc. See below for Nicole's full interview.

What are you looking forward to as a SITE member?

As a SITE member, I am incredibly excited about the opportunities and experiences that lie ahead. Joining this prestigious organization means joining a community of like-minded professionals who

share a passion for incentive travel and excellence in our industry. I look forward to the extensive networking opportunities, professional development resources, industry advocacy and immersive experiences that await me. Being part of this esteemed community will enable me to connect with industry leaders, enhance my skills, contribute to the incentive travel industry, and create unforgettable experiences for my clients and organization.

Provide a brief overview of your professional role and where you see your organization headed in this industry.

I founded my event planning company seven years ago after over a decade working in events and sponsorships for Hudson's Bay. Since starting Events&Co., I have produced event programs all across Canada, New York, Chicago, and London, UK. I have also succeeded in expanding Events&Co.'s reach to Croatia, where the team is proud to offer event planning services specializing in incentive travel, luxury destination weddings, and other corporate destination planning services.

What is the best piece of advice you ever received about being in this industry?

The best piece of advice I ever received about being in the incentive travel industry is to prioritize the human element above all else. While logistics, destinations, and activities are important, ultimately, it is the people and their experiences that make incentive travel impactful. Understanding the unique motivations and desires of participants, building personal connections, and tailoring experiences to their needs are the keys to creating truly memorable and successful incentive programs. By focusing on the human aspect, we can deliver extraordinary travel experiences that inspire, motivate, and leave a lasting positive impact on individuals and organizations.

What career advice would you give to your younger self?

I would emphasize the importance of building a strong network. I would tell my younger self to cultivate meaningful relationships within my industry; to connect with mentors, colleagues, and professionals who inspire me. Network both online and offline, attend industry events, and actively engage in professional communities. Your network can provide guidance, support, and opportunities throughout your career.

Tell us one thing about yourself that we would not know.

For years, I have had the dream to write a book – a beautifully photographed and passionately written travel guide meets food memoir meets love letter to my time spent in Croatia and now, I am finally making that dream into a reality. Stay tuned!

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Colombia - The New World-Class Meetings Destination

Colombia's meetings industry is booming. According to the latest report from ICCA, Colombia remains in the top 30 destinations with the most significant number of events held, going from 29th to 28th place worldwide and occupying third place in South America. Some of the most important events hosted in Colombia in recent years are the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, the 16th World Summit of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, and FIEXPO, among others.

One of the reasons why Colombia is attractive to planners is the competitive prices. According to a study by ProColombia - the promotion agency of the country - and the firm STA Consultores, the cost of an event in Colombia is 60% more affordable than in Mexico and 75% more affordable than in the United States. Furthermore, the country has excellent infrastructure with 27 convention centers, more than 120 non-traditional venues, and 455 hotels with meeting rooms across the territory.

With unparalleled air connectivity, Colombia connects to the world with over 1,200 weekly international flights operated by 25 airlines. Canada is directly connected via Toronto and Montreal, with Bogotá and Cartagena, through Air Canada and Avianca. Air Transat also connects Cartagena with Toronto between November and April.

This industry in Colombia is also known for its innovation, quality of service, and strong sense of sustainability across the tourism chain. There is a global trend in the meetings industry to spread awareness around huge events, and Colombia aims to become a key player. Carmen Caballero, President of ProColombia, said, "We are committed to being an exemplary meetings destination. We want planners to think of our country as a place where they can leave a legacy and do business with a touch of

culture and, above all, with a touch of consciousness,” she concluded.

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

The graphic consists of a dark blue background with a grid of colored squares. At the top center is the logo for 'site Canada', where 'site' is in red and 'Canada' is in dark blue. Below the logo, the text 'Society for Incentive Travel Excellence' is written in small grey letters. The grid contains the following text in white and black:

- Top-left square (teal): **SAVE**
- Top-right square (dark blue): **OCTOBER 25**
- Middle-left square (dark blue): **SITE CANADA EDUCATION DAY**
- Middle-right square (yellow): **THE**
- Bottom-left square (red): **DATE**
- Bottom-right square (dark blue): **OCAD UNIVERSITY
130 QUEEN'S QUAY E**

INTERESTED IN SPONSORING EDUCATION DAY? [CLICK HERE](#)



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AIR CANADA





sitecanada.org