

8 Hotels Crowned With Diamonds by AAA

MINNESOTA MEETINGS & EVENTS

WINTER 2007

5th
ANNUAL
AWARDS
ISSUE

IT'S TIME TO
CELEBRATE THE
WINNERS

the

Best

{ OF THE INDUSTRY }

Here they are... the people you selected!

20 OF MINNESOTA'S BEST MEETING PLANNERS, CATERERS, CVBs,
HOTELS, RESORTS, ENTERTAINERS AND OTHERS WHO MAKE
THE MEETING AND EVENT BUSINESS LOOK EASY (page 28)

PLUS

OPEN MIC: PLANNERS SOUND
OFF ABOUT RNC PREPARATIONS

RISE & SHINE: HOT LOCATIONS
FOR BREAK-OUT BREAKFASTS



(RIGHT) The bar lounge at Chambers is informal, yet sophisticated.
(BELOW) The Chambers' lobby is a showcase for contemporary artwork.



Event Planning as an Art Form

BRING A LITTLE CREATIVE FLAIR TO YOUR NEXT EVENT, WHETHER IT'S A CORPORATE MEETING OR A COCKTAIL RECEPTION, BY HOSTING IT IN AN ART GALLERY OR OTHER CREATIVE VENUE. BY REBECCA LUNNA

LAURA FRYBERGER OF FLINGS EVENT DESIGN started her event-planning career at the Savannah College of Art and Design and the college's creative focus meant that all events had an artistic panache. Those early days inspired her to incorporate that into her own company. "I wanted to bring artistic and creative elements into my business," she says. "Holding an event in a place like a gallery helps get everyone out of their mold, especially if it's a corporate event."

Fryberger says that fun committees and party planners who put events together often head toward their comfort zone, tending to stick with more traditional ballroom-type venues. "The beauty of these venues is that you're often working with artists and other creative types." She's realistic about the difference between that experience and dealing with an event staff from a hotel or convention center. "If you're coming from a corporate background, it can be a big change," she says. "But, if you keep that in mind and are organized, the payoff in the end is well worth it." An added bonus that she points out—There won't be any awkward silences as many of these venues have built in conversation starters with art, or other noteworthy items, as a part of the space.

Walker Art Center » MINNEAPOLIS »

Dramatic spaces with a spare, modern feel epitomize many of the venues at this iconic museum, which contains both indoor and outdoor facilities and spaces for intimate gatherings of 65 or large parties of 450. The crisp, but informal, Cargill Lounge faces the new sculpture garden expansion making it an ideal place for a summertime soiree while the Skyline Room captures the cosmopolitan glitter of downtown Minneapolis. Additional rooms, including several theaters, lounges, galleries and even the cinema are also available for rent. Catering is provided by Wolfgang Puck Catering, which operates the museum's acclaimed on-site restaurant.

Bloomington Center for the Arts »

BLOOMINGTON » The Bloomington Center for the Arts, located within the city's Civic Plaza building, hosts events in addition to a robust calendar of performing and visual arts. The center hosts business meetings in its rehearsal space and contains rentable classrooms as well. The 350-plus-seat theater is another feather in the venue's cap. Though planners can use their own caterer they must work with the licensing department of the city of Bloomington to gain approval. Liquor use is limited and must be approved by the City Council.

Caponi Art Park » EAGAN »

Creativity abounds in this intimate, casual 60-acre park where the art is literally all around you. The park, created by Anthony Caponi, a sculptor and retired professor of Macalester College's art department, specializes in small events, such as picnics and working retreats. The staff at Caponi will help guide you through the event-planning process to ensure that it's a smooth and inspirational one. The venue, which includes a Theater in the Woods (a stage set among the landscape) is all outdoors so a sunny day—or a tent large enough to accommodate your group—isn't just nice, it's necessary. And so is renting portable restrooms.

Chambers Hotel » MINNEAPOLIS »

The nation's first luxury art hotel contains more than 200 pieces of original contemporary paintings, sculpture, photographs and projected video from the collection of its owner, Ralph Burnet, as well as chic, upscale meeting venues. Dividable spaces, called the ART rooms, can be used as one, two or three rooms, that accommodate between 10 and 100 people. An intimate banquet space is located next to the Burnet Art Gallery, while a large lounge area with a fireplace works well

for reception style events. The rooftop lounge and outdoor courtyard, with a giant fire pit and an even bigger piece of gorilla artwork by Angus Fairhurst, can also be booked for events. Catering is handled out of Chambers Kitchen, the on-site restaurant, with Jean Georges Vongerichten at the helm.

Great Lakes Aquarium > DULUTH > Swimming with the fishes takes on a much more pleasant meaning at the Great Lakes Aquarium (GLA) in Duluth. The GLA hosts dinner banquets and corporate parties amidst the aquarium's exhibits, which easily host anywhere from 40 to 500 people. A small party room overlooking Lake Superior is also available for booking, as is the stunning lobby with its 24-foot water wall backdrop. Catering by Bellisio's handles the menu, which is coordinated through the aquarium's on-site planner.



Rogue Buddha Gallery

Rogue Buddha Gallery >

MINNEAPOLIS > This rustic-style space spends most of its days as a multidisciplinary and experiential art space that features both local and international artists. For event planners, the location offers 1,500 funky, flexible square feet of creativity. The rehabbed storefront's unique architectural elements, such as tin ceilings and distressed hardwood floors, add to the vibe. The gallery accommodates up to 300 standing and hosts nearly any event that can be devised, from poetry readings and rehearsal dinners to corporate functions.

Northfield Arts Guild >

NORTHFIELD > Carlton and St. Olaf colleges provide an educated air to the quaint town of Northfield, making it an ideal setting for a corporate retreat or learning seminars. The Northfield Arts Guild offers two meeting venues, one upstairs and one down in a historic building



located downtown. The guild's gallery hosts regional artists from within a 100-mile radius of the town and stained glass windows round out the space's colorful feel.

Jon Hassler Theater > PLAINVIEW >

Housed in a former International Harvester implements building in the Rural America Arts Center, the iconic architecture of the Jon Hassler Theater was carefully preserved during a renovation of the interior. The result is a bucolic, artsy site that also features a gallery filled with exhibits of local art. Located in southeastern Minnesota, the 223-seat theater hosts professional performances with equity actors, and also makes both its lobby and theater available for small events of between 50 and 100 people. Catering can be arranged through the theater's staff.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts >

MINNEAPOLIS > Typically used for corporate events, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts contains five rooms available for booking, accommodating between 64 and 600 people. Event attendees can soak in the full museum experience surrounded by stunning artwork in the Regis Fountain Court and Bruce B. Dayton Rotunda, a stunning marble hall located within the museum proper. The museum's newest reception hall features honey-colored maple-paneled walls and barrel-vaulted ceilings. The Villa Rosa Room, Pillsbury Auditorium and Wells Fargo Community Room are also available for events. All catering is done by D'Amico Catering Inc.

Weisman Art Center > MINNEAPOLIS >

Glittering with promise from its perch over the Mississippi, the Weisman hosts events both large and small. Inside the stainless steel building, the Dolly Fiterman Riverview Gallery features striking river views with room for up to 350 people, making it ideal for large



The Weisman Art Center works with seven preferred caterers.

dinners or receptions. It can also be adjoined with the William G. Shepherd Room, which doubles as a lecture space on its own, for larger groups. The museum's most intimate room, the Weisman Family Seminar Room, is the best space for smaller meetings of between 25 and 30 and features architect Frank Gehry's original drawings and blueprints of the museum. Arrangements can be made to have galleries open during events. The museum works with a list of seven preferred caterers.

Rebecca Lunna is a freelance writer from West St. Paul.

*** IN TOUCH**

WALKER ART CENTER
1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
612.375.7533 / www.walkerart.org

BLOOMINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS
1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd., Bloomington
952.563.8881 / www.ci.bloomington.mn.us

CAPONI ART PARK AND LEARNING CENTER/THEATER IN THE WOODS
1205 Diffley Rd., Eagan
651.454.9412 / www.caponiartpark.org

CHAMBERS HOTEL
901 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
612.767.6900 / www.chambersminneapolis.com

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM
353 Harbor Dr., Duluth
218.740.2016 / www.glaquarium.org

ROGUE BUDDHA GALLERY
357 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
612.331.3889 / www.roguebuddha.com

NORTHFIELD ARTS GUILD
304 Division St., Northfield
507.645.8877 / www.northfieldartsguild.org

JOHN HASSLER THEATER
412 W. Broadway, Plainview
507.534.2900 / www.jonhasslertheater.org

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS
2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis
612.870.3049 / www.artsmia.org

FREDERICK R. WEISMAN ART MUSEUM
333 E. River Rd., Minneapolis
612.625.9683 / www.weisman.umn.edu

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