



colorado
meetings+events
BEST 
OF 2018

The meetings and events industry's version of the Olympic games means new podium finishes, repeat winners, returning medalists and plenty of friendly competition.

By Julie Scheff



Event Rents

This year started off with an incredible display of sportsmanship, commitment, persistence, patience, a little luck and years of hard work for many Olympic athletes. The same scenario holds true for each and every one of the *Colorado Meetings + Events* contestants in a display of friendly competition. We are privileged and honored to introduce the 12th annual *Colorado M+E* Best of 2018 winners, including numerous first-time designees in our readers' choice awards.

PHOTOS: SARAH PORTER, JOE & JOYCE KEUM

colorado
meetings+events
BEST OF 2018

Winners

NEW TO THE PODIUM

BEST RENTAL SERVICE PROVIDER

Butler Rents (tie)

Denver
butlerrents.com | 303.388.5971

Event Rents (tie)

Englewood
eventrents.net | 303.972.0975
Runner-up: Allwell Rents

BEST MEETING/EVENT PLANNING COMPANY

Kinsley Meetings

Littleton
kinsleymeetings.com | 303.798.3664
Runners-up: Red Door Alliances; Imprint Group

BEST RESTAURANT/BAR WITH PRIVATE DINING SPACE

Rialto Cafe

Denver
rialtocafe.com | 303.893.2233
Runners-up: Maggiano's Little Italy; The Fort

BEST CATERER IN DENVER METRO

Catering by Design

Denver
bydesign-collective.com | 303.781.5335
Runners-up: Epicurean Group; Biscuits & Berries

BEST RENOVATION PROJECT AT HOTEL OR EVENT VENUE (Completed Between Oct. 1, 2016 – Sept. 30, 2017)

Hotel Boulderado

Boulder
boulderado.com | 303.442.4344
Runners-up: St Julien Hotel & Spa; Warwick Denver

BEST MEETING/EVENT VENUE IN DENVER METRO (No Hotel)

Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Denver
denvercenter.org | 303.893.4100
Runners-Up: Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre; Topgolf Centennial

New to the Podium

Most of these businesses are first-time winners, but have been key contributors to the industry for many years.

Event Rents and **Butler Rents** tie for Best Rental Service Provider. This is a big deal, as Event Rents has captured 12 consecutive wins and is sharing the prize this year. Butler Rents has been in business for 50-plus years and has 80,000 square feet of warehouse space filled with a wide range of products, colors, sizes and styles. Keeping them on their toes was Event Rents.

"We are so grateful to our clients for afford-

ing us many opportunities in 2017 to push the boundaries of traditional occasions. From mountainside tents to glamorous city events, we have had a blast helping to make each special event just that, truly special," says Hilary Hadden, director of marketing, Event Rents.

Kinsley Meetings takes the podium as Best Meeting/Event Planning Company. There have been some changes and mergers in the industry, and a proven veteran, Kinsley Meetings, trumped the competition. The company is owned by a successful husband-and-wife duo and has been in operation for more than 20 years. From small meetings to ones for the masses, this couple certainly has figured out the winning combination.

The Perfect
Petal

Winners

BEST ATTRACTION OUTSIDE DENVER METRO

Vail Mountain

Vail | vail.com | 970.476.5601

Runners-up: Rocky Mountain National Park;
Garden of the Gods Visitor & Nature Center

BRONZE MEDALISTS

BEST EVENT DÉCOR/FLORIST

The Perfect Petal

Denver | theperfectpetal.com | 303.480.0966

Runners-up: DesignWorks; Eclectic Hive

BEST DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Imprint Group

Denver

imprintgroup.com | 303.623.1492

Runners-up: ACCESS Colorado;
Convention Designs

BEST CATERER OUTSIDE DENVER METRO

A Spice of Life

Catering + Events

Boulder | aspiceoflife.com | 303.443.4049

Runners-up: Garden of the Gods Gourmet;
Picnic Basket Family of Companies

BEST TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER

Presidential Worldwide Transportation

Denver

presidentialworldwide.com | 303.286.1114

Runners-up: Jay's Valet; Colorado Mountain
Express

SILVER MEDALISTS

BEST HOTEL OR RESORT WITH MEETING/EVENT SPACE IN DENVER METRO (More than 200 Guest Rooms)

The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa

Denver | brownpalace.com | 303.297.3111

Runners-up: Hyatt Regency Denver at
Colorado Convention Center; The Westin
Westminster

Rialto Cafe lands the medal for Best Restaurant/Bar with Private Dining Space. "Rialto Cafe is celebrating our 20th birthday in 2018. Having been a part of the iconic 16th Street Mall and the downtown Denver landscape since 1998, we've seen the good and the bad," says Wendy Klein, director of sales and catering for Rialto Cafe. "This year showed marked growth in our little 'big' city! As Denver grows, so do we. We've had the opportunity to flex our creativity and innovation just to keep up with it all."

Catering by Design takes the top prize for Best Caterer in the Denver Metro. Competition in this category is always fierce; in fact, one competitor has taken the victory eight out of 12 times. However, this year, it was new trends mixed with classic approaches and polished customer service that won this company their gold. Plus, CEO and co-owner Ingrid Nagy is currently international president for the International Live Events Association.

Hotel Boulderado, this year's Best Renovation Project at a Hotel or Event Venue, may be new to the competition but dates back to 1909. This Boulder property reconfigured its iconic lobby, refreshed and opened up the Mezzanine, and upgraded SPRUCE Farm & Fish restaurant, including a new exterior entrance and the addition of a coffee bar. Rowland+Broughton Architecture/Urban Design/Interior Design spearheaded the renovation project.

Denver Center for the Performing Arts takes top vote in the Best Meeting/Event Venue in Denver Metro (No Hotel). Last year it was a first-time triple sweep when Red Rocks won this category and two others, but DCPA and the many options it provides meeting and event planners won the 2018 vote. "This year was filled with a steady flow of events that ranged from a 50-person day meeting to an 800-person breakfast for Denver Startup Week and some absolutely breathtaking weddings. It was a fun year for our team—so fun that we have added another event manager!" says Dawn Williams, director of event sales and marketing.

Vail Mountain takes the gold for the Best Attraction outside Denver Metro in a surprise move on the podium. The international ski

venue has endless terrain with 5,289 skiable acres. However, it's the meeting and events team combined with streamlined hospitality and customer service that truly keep the groups coming back to and voting for this epic ski icon.

Bronze Medalists

Companies that tirelessly perfect their craft and have been seen on the podium a variety of times in the past.

The Perfect Petal in Denver once again captures the Best Event Décor/Florist nod after wins in 2008 and 2009. "This year stood out because of some remarkable key event design powerhouses in the form of Serra Dorozan and Emmarie Warren. Serra single-handedly energized our hotel department and hotel events by knitting together off-the-chain designs with creative budgeting. Emmie blew our special event sales out of the water with her lightning-fast response times, appealing optimism and ability to turn one adjective into a multilayered experience," shares owner Cindy Ollig.

Imprint Group receives cheers from spectators/voters as Best Destination Management Company. The product of a merger between two longtime Denver companies, The Arrangers and Starkey Productions, and known as AXS Group until last year, this company didn't switch its course of action or its focus. Voters clearly recognized the new name and the continued impeccable and creative service.

A Spice of Life Catering + Events takes the win for Best Caterer outside Denver Metro in a bit of an upset after a back-to-back victory by the previous winner. This is not its first spicy move, as the Boulder-based company has been in business since 1987 and has won two times before in this competitive category.

Presidential Worldwide Transportation expertly slalomed through the competition to win Best Transportation Provider. "The year began with the launch of our new client-focused website that not only highlights the services and



**Multimedia
Audio Visual**



**Fun
Productions**



offerings that make us a leader in the market but one that also showcases the ways we have taken executive transportation to the next level in Colorado and beyond,” says Shane Stickel, president/CEO. “And, we created our VIP Beer Tour packages, offering tours and tastings at some of Colorado’s most unique breweries and taprooms. These will launch in 2018.”

Silver Medalists

Meet these back-to-back winners that know all about podium finishes.

The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa is capping off a momentous year by a repeat win for Best Hotel or Resort with Meeting/Event

Space in Denver Metro (More than 200 Guest Rooms). “Last year marked the 125th anniversary of The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa, and we celebrated all year long,” says Mark Shine, director of sales and marketing. “Our anniversary party included two Colorado governors and other special friends who have supported us for so many years. We also had one of our strongest years from a meetings standpoint as more meeting planners learned of our recent extensive renovations and expanded meetings space.”

5 Star Talent and Entertainment wins for the second consecutive year as Best Entertainment Agency. “5 Star Talent and Entertainment has been in business forever and continues to provide first-class entertain-

ers for any event, big or small,” remarks voter Robin Berhost, director of sales for Biscuits and Berries Catering.

Breckenridge Tourism Office solidifies its status with a fourth win over the years as Best Destination Marketing Organization (Town/Area Less than 25,000 in Population). “Breckenridge is a grounded and authentic experience no matter the group function; it feels fun, friendly and casual,” says Austyn Dineen, public relations director.

Multimedia Audio Visual takes the back-to-back win for Best Audio-Visual Provider through being very proactive in creating memorable attendee experiences. “Today, it isn’t just investing in equipment, it’s investing



**Red Rocks Park
and Amphitheatre**

colorado
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BEST OF 2018

Winners

BEST ENTERTAINMENT AGENCY

5 Star Talent and Entertainment

Denver | 5staracts.com | 303.635.1210

Runners-up: Imprint Group; Elite Entertainment

BEST DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION (Town/Area Less than 25,000 in Population)

Breckenridge Tourism Office

Breckenridge | gobreck.com | 888.251.2417

Runners-up: Vail Valley Partnership; Winter Park & Fraser Chamber

BEST AUDIO-VISUAL PROVIDER

Multimedia Audio Visual

Englewood

multimedia-av.com | 303.623.2324

Runners-up: J&S Audio Visual; PSAV

BEST SPECIALTY RENTAL PROVIDER

Fun Productions

Aurora | funproductions.com | 303.732.5419

Runners-up: Eclectic Hive; Chairs Covers & Linens Denver

GOLD MEDALISTS

BEST ATTRACTION IN DENVER METRO

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre

Morrison

redrocksonline.com | 303.697.6047

Runners-up: Denver Botanic Gardens; Denver Zoo

BEST OUTDOOR MEETING/EVENT VENUE

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre

Morrison

redrocksonline.com | 303.697.6047

Runners-up: Denver Botanic Gardens; Spruce Mountain Ranch

BEST HISTORIC VENUE

The Broadmoor

Colorado Springs

broadmoor.com | 855.634.7711

Runners-up: The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa; Denver Union Station

in our ability to use all facets of our technologies and event design so attendees take away that 'I can't miss this event next year!' feeling. It's why MAV continues to branch out in so many different areas of production," explains owner Neal Cohen.

Fun Productions captures another victory as Best Specialty Rental Provider, which is in its second year as a category. "After 26 years in business, we finally stopped renting spaces and bought a 14,000-square-foot building. We love our new home and are much more efficient in a space designed for what we do," owner Dawn Abbott says. "As a founder and owner, my favorite part of 2017 was the work we did on empowering and engaging staff to work toward being a self-managed team."

Gold Medalists

The following companies have proven to be true leaders in their field by standing tall on the podium for many years.

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre wins the Best Attraction in Denver Metro for a sixth time in the category's history. Director of Marketing and Communications Brian Kitts says, "Red Rocks continues to be one of the most famous concert venues in the world and one of the most beautiful event locations in Colorado. More than 2.3 million people visited the venue in 2017, and only half

of those for concerts. The other half come for a chance to experience Colorado's clear skies, spectacular scenery and friendly hiking and biking trails—all within easy access of the Denver area." Adding another gold, Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre also brought home the Best Outdoor Meeting/Event Venue title again as well.

The Broadmoor, celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2018, has a three-peat on its hands in two categories: Best Historic Venue and Best Hotel or Resort with Meeting/Event Space outside Metro Denver (More than 200 Guest Rooms). "As The Broadmoor enters its centennial year, we truly qualify as a historic venue; while the hotel has a historic legacy, there is no doubt the reinvestment in the people and the property are what make it legendary," says Barry Brown, vice president, sales and marketing. "When the Broadmoor opened up 100 years ago, we were recognized as the gateway to the American West and brought luxury and culture to an otherwise undiscovered area. Today, we continue to be a leader in hospitality and continue to set the standard for legendary service and facilities."

All Digital Photo & Video secures its eighth win as Best Photographer/Videographer. Owner Cal Cheney and his employees have demonstrated that a hands-on, storytelling approach is successful. "A continued great economy and influx of newcomers made for another good year when it comes to excellent volume and attracting topflight talent. I had to tell another business owner not to get too cocky, because he hasn't been through a downturn. I don't want to even use the 'R' word when everything is rolling along so well right now," notes Cheney.

Spruce Mountain Ranch is both an event center and working ranch, a combination that has delivered the vote for Best Meeting/Event Venue outside Denver Metro (No Hotel) five times from 2012 to 2018. "We believe in order to live and work by high standards, you can never be satisfied and must be consistently seeking out ways to be even better than the year before," says Tara Ames, owner of Spruce Mountain Events. "We love what we do, and we hope that it shows."

Olympiads

The true definition is a four-year time span between Olympics. Colorado Meetings + Events' Olympiads have won their respective categories for at least four consecutive years or more.

VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau wins Best Destination Marketing Organization (Town/Area 25,000-plus in Population) for the 12th year in a row. Not only is the culinary scene in town booming, so is meetings business. "The most exciting news for Denver as a city was securing Outdoor Retailer for 2018-2022, an undertaking that involved many parties, including the governor's office, mayor's office and our entire hospitality community; they will bring three shows per year to Denver for the next five years. We also announced six new international, nonstop flights, which resulted in a 40 percent increase in international airlift to The Mile High City," says Vice President of Sales and Services Rachel Benedick.

Devil's Thumb Ranch Resort & Spa is being honored as Best Hotel or Resort with Meeting/Event Space outside Denver Metro (200 or Less Guest Rooms) for the fourth year in a row, which is how long this category has existed. "The owners and staff take great pride in preserving and protecting our natural resources and encouraging guests to enjoy all the outdoor recreation options we offer, as well as our team's ability to deliver top-level service from start to finish," says Senior Director of Sales Thad Carlson.

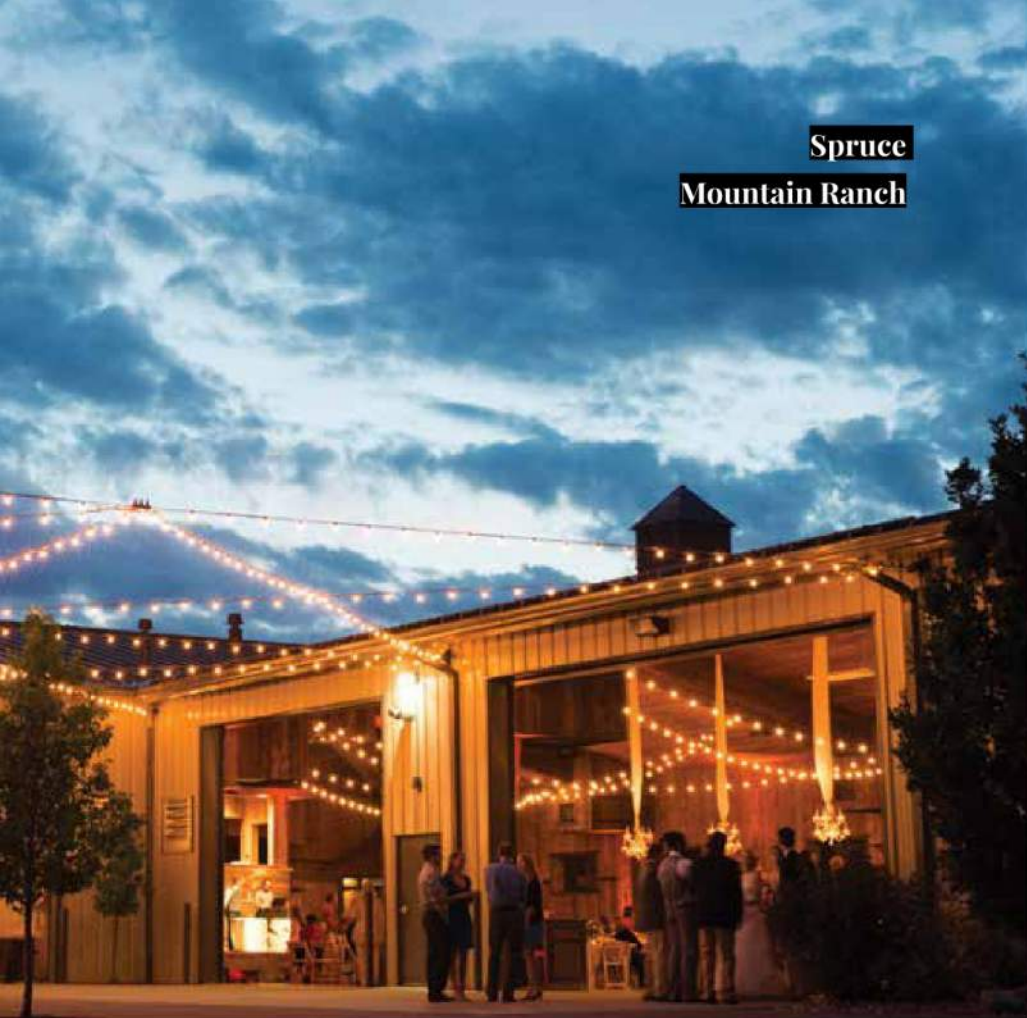
JW Marriott Denver Cherry Creek also has landed Best Hotel or Resort with Meeting/Event Space in Denver Metro (200 or Less Guest Rooms) each year for the category's four-year existence. Director of Sales and Marketing Jenni Gaherty notes, "Launching our new event space THE Deck last spring was a fantastic way to kick off 2017 as it offered event guests an elevated new outdoor space for ceremonies, receptions and corporate lunches. In late 2018, we are very excited to launch a full renovation of the hotel, including a complete refashioning of the meeting space and all 196 guest rooms and suites." ❧



PHOTOS: SPRUCE MOUNTAIN RANCH; DEVIL'S THUMB RANCH RESORT & SPA

**Devil's Thumb Ranch
Resort & Spa**

**Spruce
Mountain Ranch**



colorado
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BEST OF 2018

Winners

**BEST HOTEL OR RESORT WITH MEETING/
EVENT SPACE OUTSIDE DENVER METRO
(More than 200 Guest Rooms)**

The Broadmoor

Colorado Springs

broadmoor.com | 855.634.7711

Runners-up: Beaver Run Resort & Conference Center; St Julien Hotel & Spa

BEST PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER

All Digital Photo & Video

Lafayette

alldigitalstudios.com | 303.494.2320

Runners-up: Elevate Photography, Allée Photography

**BEST MEETING/EVENT VENUE OUTSIDE
DENVER METRO (NO HOTEL)**

Spruce Mountain Ranch

Larkspur

sprucemountainevents.com | 719.484.0800

Runners-up: Keystone Conference Center, Sanctuary Golf Course

OLYMPIADS

**BEST DESTINATION MARKETING
ORGANIZATION (Town/Area 25,000-plus
in Population)**

VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau

Denver | denver.org | 800.233.6837

Runners-up: Colorado Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau; Boulder Convention & Visitors Bureau

**BEST HOTEL OR RESORT WITH MEETING/
EVENT SPACE OUTSIDE DENVER METRO
(200 or Less Guest Rooms)**

Devil's Thumb Ranch Resort & Spa

Tabernash

devilsthumbbranch.com | 970.726.5632

Runners-up: C Lazy U Ranch; Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa

**BEST HOTEL OR RESORT WITH
MEETING/EVENT SPACE IN DENVER
METRO (200 or Less Guest Rooms)**

JW Marriott Denver Cherry Creek

Denver | jwmarriottdenver.com | 303.316.2700

Runners-up: The Oxford Hotel; the ART, a hotel