

A Legendary Beauty

Bicycles rush past me. If not bicycles, then it's joggers or determined parents pushing strollers. In Stockholm, Sweden, the citizens' adherence to exercise is body-numbing just to watch.

I exercise my own way by darting through thick crowds around King's Garden on my way back toward the Grand Hôtel after a souvenir excursion to pick up Dala horses, moose magnets and Viking butter spreaders.

The Grand Hôtel faces the Royal Palace across a part of the Baltic Sea and welcomes business and tourist travelers. This weekend, there is a wedding reception at the hotel. The groom, a wealthy New Yorker, and his Swedish-model bride pack the place with their friends and family, all with enough beauty to rival

YOUR SPOTLIGHT ON

Stockholm, Sweden

BY JASON HENSEL

the hotel's own glamour.

The wedding party will dine in the hotel's exquisite Spegelsalen Room. Modeled after the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, France, the room was the original location for Nobel Prize dinners and can accommodate up to 500 for events. The hotel compliments this space with several other event rooms, such as Winter Garden (750 capacity) and Carl Larsson (60 capacity).

BEAUTY SURROUNDS YOU

Stockholm is a beautiful city. The buildings are beautiful; the people are beautiful; even the ice cream is beautiful.

"Stockholm's beauty is legendary," said Elisabet Elmsäter, a manager for Meet Stockholm and a member of the MPI Sweden Chapter. "Imagine a city center on sparkling water, on 14 islands, where you can take a refreshing dip in



front of the Royal Palace or start your boat tour on the doorstep of your hotel.”

Several water options—from sight-seeing tours in replica Viking ships to speed rafts skirting around the archipelago to standard, double-decker ships—await groups seeking to diversify their events.

Visitors can take a boat from the Grand Hotel to Djurgården Island, where the Vasa Museum, the Skansen open-air museum and Junibacken are located. After docking, a group can stroll toward a venue for its event.

The Vasa Museum is Stockholm’s most popular museum. The venue’s focal point is the warship *Vasa*—the only remaining intact 17th-century ship in the world. The *Vasa* sank on its maiden voyage in 1628

and was salvaged in 1961. Several exhibits surround the ship, and the museum also features a restaurant. Groups of up to 1,400 can rent the museum after hours for events.

Skansen—the world’s first open-air museum—is also a zoological park specializing in Nordic fauna, where visitors are greeted by period-costumed hosts and hostesses. Founded in 1891 for the purpose of showing how people lived and worked in different parts of Sweden over time, 150 historic buildings—

mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries—have been moved here from nearly every part of the country. Facilities in the park can accommodate events for up to 5,000. One of the most popular events among groups visiting the park is a Viking dinner, where a Viking brass band performs songs and Viking hats are donned.

Junibacken showcases the history of Swedish children’s books. The Story Train—featuring the worlds created by Astrid Lindgren—highlights the sites found throughout the facility. (Lindgren’s most famous creation is the character Pippi Longstocking.) After Junibacken closes to the general public, event

RICHARD RYAN/STOCKHOLM VISITORS BOARD/WWW.IMAGEBANK.SWEDEN.SE

Stockholm, Sweden By the Numbers

Rooms: 13,000

Prominent Meeting Facilities: Stockholm Globe Arena (13,000 capacity), Skansen Open-Air Museum (5,000 capacity), Stockholm International Fairs & Congress Center (3,000 capacity), Factory Nacka Strand (2,300 capacity), Stockholm Concert Hall (1,770 capacity), Cirkus (1,650 capacity), München-Bryggeriet (1,500 capacity), Vasa Museum (1,400 capacity), Stockholm City Conference Centre (1,360 capacity), Berns (1,250 capacity), Stadshuskällaren - City Hall Restaurant (1,200 capacity), Aula Magna (1,190 capacity), Arlanda Conference and Business Center (1,000 capacity), Berwaldhallen (900 capacity), Grand Hôtel Stockholm (700 capacity), Clarion Hotel Stockholm (500 capacity), Radisson SAS

Royal Park Hotel (500 capacity), Scandic Star Sollentuna (500 capacity), Stockholm Institute of Education (410 capacity), Scandic Infra City (400 capacity), Sheraton Stockholm Hotel & Towers (400 capacity), Hasseludden Konferens & Yasuragi (350 capacity), Hilton Stockholm Slussen (290 capacity), Scandic Ariadne (270 capacity), Radisson SAS Arlandia Hotel Stockholm (250 capacity), Quality Hotel Nacka (225 capacity), Skogshem & Wijk Conference Centre (210 capacity), First Hotel Amaranthen (180 capacity), Nordic Sea Hotel (150 capacity), Nordic Light Hotel (130 capacity), Radisson SAS Royal Viking Hotel Stockholm (130 capacity)

Getting Started

Stockholm Visitors Board
www.stockholmtown.com

The Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Association
www.hotelsinsweden.com

Swedish Travel & Tourism Council
www.visitsweden.com

Your MPI Connection for Stockholm

MPI Sweden Chapter
Martin Theorin
+46 8 517 100 57
www.mpisweden.org

What's New in Stockholm, Sweden

- **SAS Airlines** became the world's first airline to offer real-time, in-flight wireless Internet access across its entire long-haul fleet in April 2005.
- The **Grand Hôtel Stockholm** has acquired the neighboring Burman Palace, adding 78 guest rooms and seven conference rooms to the hotel by summer.
- A new, 555-room **Clarion** hotel will debut in 2009 near the Stockholm City Conference Center and will include meeting space for up to 800.



The Golden Hall in Stockholm's City Hall is one of the city's foremost banqueting facilities, hosting groups of up to 700. The walls are covered with 18 million mosaic pieces made of glass and gold.

E. DENNIS/STOCKHOLM VISITORS BOARD/WWW.IMAGEBANK.SWEDEN.SE



The Vasa warship was salvaged in 1961—after 333 years in the depths of the sea—and has been restored to its original appearance.



The Absolut Icebar Stockholm, located in the Nordic Sea Hotel, is totally constructed out of ice and can accommodate up to 30.

attendees—armed with beverages—can ride the Story Train, stopping at the venue's Villekulla cottage for dinner. Villekulla can hold up to 150 for events, and the downstairs restaurant can accommodate up to 180.

SUIT UP

Luckily, the goggles and wetsuit protected me from the sharp wind, but there I was, slicing through the water at more than 40 miles per hour. Our speed raft captain skirted several islands as he took our group on a feisty tour of Stockholm's archipelago. While this group activity may not rank high on everyone's favorites list, it can be an exciting way to explore another beautiful side of Stockholm.

We were dropped off on the island of Grinda and made our way to Grinda Wårdshus, a hotel, restaurant and conference center. Well-suited for smaller groups, the hotel has 30 guest rooms and five conference rooms. The venue's restaurant uses ingredients that come mostly from the archipelago, and the menu changes seasonally.

While Stockholm experiences four seasons, visitors usually think of the city in winter terms: cold, windy and snowy. So if it's cold you seek during a warm month visit, head to The Absolut Icebar Stockholm, located in the Nordic Sea Hotel. You will be fitted in a warm parka and led into a 30-capacity bar that is completely constructed out of ice, including the glasses. Due to its popularity, reservations are highly recommended.

A NOBEL MEAL

I've always dreamed of winning a Nobel Prize, and here I was in Stockholm's City Hall, home to the famed award. I'd like to pretend I was there,



JOHAN FRICK-WEIJER

Stockholm International Fairs & Congress Center is Scandinavia's leading exhibition center with a capacity of up to 3,000 for events.

scoping out the place and preparing for my future award. I've even starting working on my speech. For planners, City Hall and the Nobel dinner make for a memorable final night group event.

Each Dec. 10, award recipients and their families gather in the Blue Hall. Though not really blue, the room can accommodate up to 1,300 for events. Next to the Blue Hall is the Golden Hall, with mosaics featuring more than 18 million pieces of gold. A James Bond-themed party based on the movie *Goldfinger* seems fitting for this room, which can hold up to 700.

Groups participating in the Nobel dinner can choose any menu from past Nobel dinners (with a 10-day advance notice). For example, if your company was founded in 1976, then choose the 1976 dinner to celebrate the company's birthday. Your acceptance speech is on your own. **TMP**

JASON HENSEL is an associate editor for *The Meeting Professional*.

Getting to and Around Stockholm

Stockholm-Arlanda Airport is located approximately 20 miles outside the city. Several major airlines, including SAS Scandinavian Airlines, British Airways, Lufthansa and Continental Airlines, operate from the airport's four terminals. Upon arrival, rental cars, taxis and buses are available for ground transportation. The fastest way to travel to and from the airport is by Arlanda Express train. The trip takes approximately 20 minutes, with departures every four minutes to six minutes, depending on the time of day.

English is widely spoken in Stockholm. A valid passport grants North Americans a three-month stay in the country, and the krona is Sweden's monetary unit.

U.S. planners can get information through the Swedish Travel and Tourism Authority in New York or with Meet Stockholm—a special department within the Stockholm Visitors Board, the official convention bureau of Stockholm.