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CRYSTAL  
AWARDS

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HAUTE

AWARD CATEGORY EXCELLENCE IN INCENTIVE TRAVEL: NORTH AMERICA

PROGRAM NAME MARRIOTT US & CANADA TOP PERFORMERS

CLIENT MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL



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This event was special, not only because we were in a beautiful location and created stunning environments, but because we were able to work with a client who embraced experimentation and allowed us to completely rethink recognition. Instead of a grip-and-grin cattle call, we created an experience where each achiever saw their name (quite literally) in the stars while being serenaded from the stage. Both extroverts and introverts loved it: it met them at their comfort level. To hear everyone's cheers at the end...that was an amazing reward.

- Alisa Walsh, CEO, Haute

A new playbook that placed emphasis on authentic recognition made Haute's June 2023 "Constellation of Wonder" incentive in Arizona truly transformative.

This 2023 incentive marked their client's first group incentive travel reward since the pandemic. The client, a large international hotel chain, opted for a buy-out of an incredible Ritz-Carlton property in Arizona, and immediately instructed Haute to forget past traditions.

With a newly broadened base of top performers from sales & revenue, field, and event management taking part in the program, Haute was asked to start from scratch in building a new incentive program that would create authentic connections between leaders and participants and generate positive feelings of welcome and recognition throughout the entire gathering — and beyond.

Taking this mission incredibly seriously, Haute started by infusing personal touches throughout the reward. They provided each attendee with a personalized booklet to entertain and inform during their airport transfer.

Participants were also rewarded via dedicated time with company executives, a customized gifting suite, and — one of Haute's proudest achievements from the program — an innovative awards gala that smartly spotlighted each award-earner.

Haute wanted to avoid a graduation-like gala, where hundreds of achievers would merely walk across the stage for a photo opp. Instead, they used special lighting effects, other décor, and talented live musicians to create a truly electric atmosphere.

Qualifiers were sorted into six groups, with each group highlighted during a specific act of the night's two-hour program. Ballroom lights were dimmed, with the lighting effects playing up each group's turn in the spotlight. The band played a custom-arranged song specific to the group of qualifiers being recognized, and continued as a carefully curated video highlighted more specific achievements and accomplishments.

Each table got into the act and had fun as the night progressed, finding ways to further celebrate winners at their own tables. It was a perfect reflection of what made this group so unique in the first instance, with everyone working hard to ensure qualifiers felt supported both publicly and behind the scenes.

It was this exact energy, too, that enabled Haute to achieve truly excellent results for their client. The team was able to focus planning efforts beyond décor, entertainment, and dining. They widened their lens and concentrated on the fuller message that needed to be conveyed to attendees: taking time, for instance, to work with 40 host executives to meticulously review program details so everyone knew exactly what needed to be done to make earners feel recognized and welcomed all week.

And it paid off: program feedback was exceedingly positive, with Haute earning a 4.8 out of 5 program rating from participants. More importantly, participants left with renewed awe and admiration for the power of human-to-human connection and quality time: winning ingredients that will undoubtedly power future team successes!