

FISCAL YEAR
20/21

DESTINATION READY

A YEAR IN REVIEW



visit
California

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

READY

The COVID-19 pandemic created by far the most challenging year in history for California's tourism industry. Throughout it all, Visit California worked tirelessly to protect the California brand and position California's tourism industry for a quick recovery.

Visit California was born from crisis: After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake jolted the world with terrifying headlines and images, industry leaders built an organization to create demand for California and inspire people from around the world to come visit. Since then, Visit California has helped the tourism industry recover from past crises — the Sept. 11 attacks, the Great Recession and wildfires, to name a few.

Visit California is ready to once again drive a resurgence in travel and help thousands of tourism businesses across the state recover from 2020's challenges. These efforts will be supercharged by a one-time injection of \$95 million in state stimulus passed by the State Legislature and signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom — a show of confidence in the tourism industry's ability to lead the state's economic recovery.

While recovery is priority No. 1, the pandemic underscored longstanding challenges to our industry, such as the importance of responsible visitation and the threat of worsening wildfire seasons. Visit California is supporting the industry to alleviate these problems, creating a healthier California for its residents and businesses.

With these forward-looking goals in mind, this annual review encapsulates the past fiscal year while also looking ahead to future initiatives. I hope you are inspired to engage with Visit California to accelerate your recovery, grow your business and create a healthier tourism industry.

Above all, thank you for your continued support.

Dream Big!



CAROLINE BETETA

President & CEO | Visit California

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Beteta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ABOUT VISIT CALIFORNIA

The California Travel and Tourism Commission, doing business as Visit California, is a 501(c)6 nonprofit corporation formed to market California as a desirable tourism destination. Visit California works in close coordination with California's Office of Tourism — while Visit California conducts marketing programs that drive visitation, the Division of Tourism oversees the assessment program that helps to fund these initiatives.

For more information visit [industry.VisitCalifornia.com](https://industry.visitcalifornia.com).

Mission

Visit California is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs — in partnership with the state's travel industry — that keep California top of mind as a premier travel destination.

Born of Crisis

Visit California was founded in the wake of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, which caused a steep decline in the tourism industry's market share. Over its nearly 30-year history, the organization has helped the industry recover quickly from natural disasters and economic downturns. In the year following the Sept. 11 attacks, California was one of only three states to gain market share.

Guiding Principles

Through the pandemic, Visit California measured all efforts on behalf of the industry against its guiding principles. These five foundational principles continued to steer the organization as it shifted its approach to meet the challenges of this crisis.

1. Do what the industry cannot do for itself. Deliver value to and collaborate with tourism-related businesses.
2. Build awareness and preference for the California brand to stimulate travel.
3. Use key metrics and ROI to inform the strategic direction of the program of work overseen by the Board.
4. Reflect the diversity and inclusivity of California throughout the organization, partner agencies and program of work.
5. Employ destination stewardship principles to guarantee the sustainability of travel and tourism in California.

About the California Tourism Assessment Program

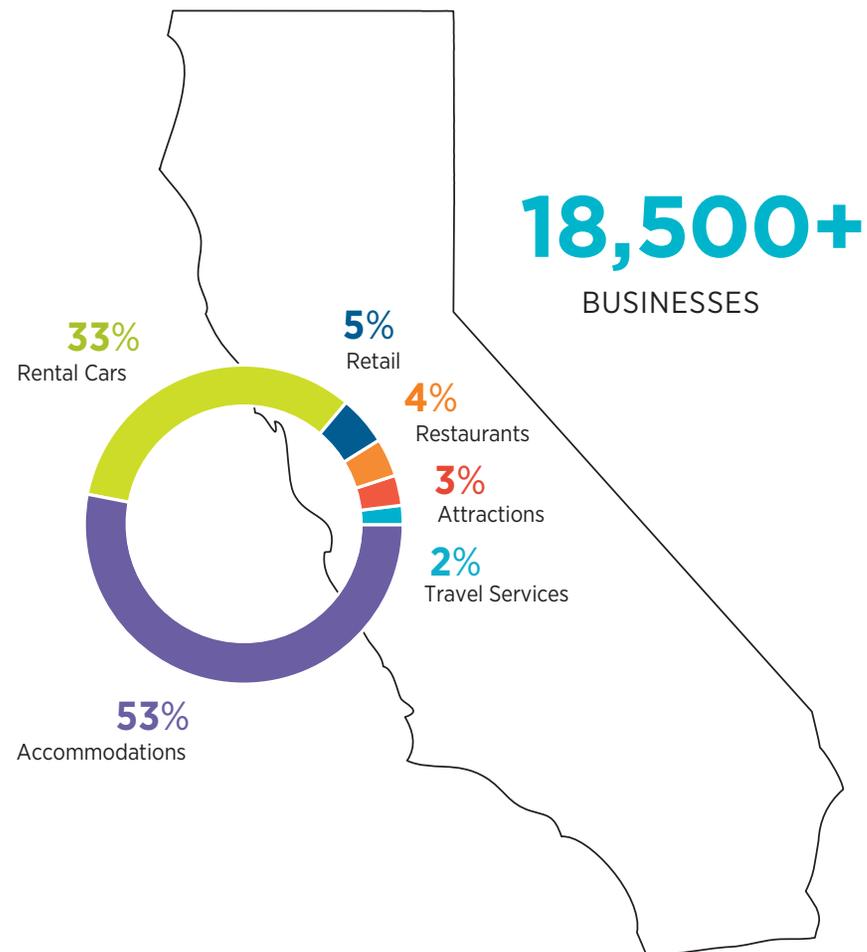
The California Tourism Assessment has helped the industry market California as a world-class destination for more than 25 years. Inspired by agricultural commodity boards, California's tourism industry established a self-imposed assessment with the goal of creating a reliable source of funding for statewide tourism marketing and maintaining California's status as one of the top tourism destinations worldwide.

The California Office of Tourism collects the assessment to fund the Visit California marketing program from all businesses earning revenue from travel spending in accordance with California Tourism Marketing Act, Government Code Section 13995. It is used exclusively to fund tourism marketing activities as directed by the organization's industry-led board of directors.



July 2020 – June 2021 Industry Investment

The investment of each industry segment is leveraged by the collective contribution of more than 18,500 assessed businesses across all segments to benefit the entire tourism industry. Because Visit California's funding is directly tied to visitor spending, the organization's budget dropped in line with the industry's losses in FY20/21.





Yosemite National Park

Fiscal Responsibility

As a 501(c)6 nonprofit, Visit California strives to minimize operational costs and maximize the ROI on the industry's investment.

Visit California carefully considered pandemic priorities and the need to cut expenses in line with industry revenue projections. Operational cuts included a reduction of more than 50% in staffing in May 2020 and a pause on all international efforts.

Visit California Expenditures



According to an external audit, **more than 92%** of Visit California's budget goes directly to marketing programs. Nonprofit organizations generally average between 65% to 80%.

Visit California continued its streak of **perfect unqualified audits** for a 23rd consecutive year.

VISIT CALIFORNIA'S

INDUSTRY-LED BOARD

Visit California is guided by an industry-led board of directors, industry committees and industry task forces who represent every segment and region of California's tourism industry. (As of July 2021)

Officers (As of July 2021)

Gene Zanger

Chair
Partner
Casa De Fruta Parkway, LLC

Karen Irwin

Vice Chair of Marketing
President & COO,
Universal Studios &
Executive Vice President
Universal Parks & Resorts

Dan Gordon

Vice Chair of Operations
CEO
Gordon Biersch

Joe D'Alessandro

Chief Fiscal Officer
President & CEO
San Francisco Travel

Board Members (As of July 2021)

Gary Buffo

President
Pure Luxury
Transportation

Jim Burba

President
Burba Hotel Network

Jason Clarke

General Manager/
Vice President
Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Peter Clarke

Vice President –
CMH Operations West
Intercontinental
Hotels Group

Julie Coker

President & CEO
San Diego Tourism Authority

Michael Dunne

Area Vice President, West
Hilton Worldwide

Jeff Eisenbarth

Senior Vice President –
Western Region
Avis Budget Group, Inc.

Kevin Fat

Chief Executive Officer
Fat Family Restaurant Group

Robert Gleason

President & CEO
Evans Hotels

Dan Harvey

Division Vice President
The Hertz Corporation

John Kelliher

Founder
Grapeline Wine Tours

Tom Klein

Owner
Rodney Strong Wine Estates

William Loughran

COO
Evolution Hospitality

Terry MacRae

Chief Executive Officer
Hornblower Cruises
& Events

Jordan Meisner

Senior Vice President –
Field Operations
Hyatt Hotels & Resorts

Carla Murray

President, U.S. Western
Region, Full Service MxM
Marriott International

Dee Dee Myers

Director
Governor's Office of Business
& Economic Development

Sima Patel

Chief Executive Officer
Ridgmont Hospitality

Ken Potrock

President
Disneyland Resorts

Bobbie Singh-Allen

Executive Vice President
& COO
California Lodging
Industry Association

Kurt Stocks

General Manager
LEGOLAND

Paul Tormey

Regional Vice President
& General Manager
California Region
AccorHotels

Benjamin Webster

Office Managing Shareholder
Littler Mendelson P.C.

Scott White

President & CEO
Greater Palm Springs
Convention &
Visitors Bureau

RESPONDING TO CRISIS

To help California's tourism industry navigate the pandemic, Visit California invested in new research and created platforms to draw attention to the industry's challenges. For the first time since the Sept. 11 attacks, Visit California's Board approved in-state marketing programs to keep California top of mind while travel restrictions were in place.

A Research-Driven Response

Visit California invested in new market research to guide the organization's and industry's response to a rapidly evolving crisis. A COVID-19 research dashboard, released weekly to industry partners, tracked changes in consumer behavior and key economic indicators related to the pandemic. This research helped develop pro-travel and responsible travel messaging that inspired a cautious consumer base and helped

the industry quickly adjust its tactics to keep ahead of volatile market realities.

Research also guided a pivot from a global to a U.S. and in-state consumer audience. Understanding activity preferences, resident attitudes toward travel, perceptions of California's destination readiness and other factors helped the organization time and target domestic marketing.

COVID-19 Research Framework

Visit California tracked three primary conditions to inform its pandemic response and marketing strategy.



Public Health Crisis

Health outcomes and state and regional restrictions impacting travel



Economic Crisis

Unemployment, GDP and consumer confidence as well as lodging, air and other travel-related economic indicators



Consumer Sentiment and Behavior

Perceptions of safety, destination readiness, travel distance and activity preferences, as well as rates of travel and tourism behavior



The Visit California team were our **go-to source** for the most up-to-date California logistics related to the pandemic. They heard our team and supported our questions and strategies.

— Commissioner Will Loughran
COO
Evolution Hospitality

Communicating the Importance of Tourism

A Voice in the Capitol

Visit California leveraged its relationships in the State Capitol to keep tourism top-of-mind. Staff, industry leaders and labor representatives spoke at hearings to help elected officials understand the challenges facing the industry and tourism's role as California's economic engine.

California Tourism Month

Throughout May, Visit California celebrated tourism's economic clout by delivering an upbeat message about California's reopening while also drawing attention to hundreds of thousands of state tourism workers ready to return to work. The monthlong activation delivered pro-industry, pro-worker messaging to the media, elected officials, opinion leaders and California residents.

164

MEDIA PLACEMENTS



Following his endorsement of a \$95 million stimulus for tourism marketing, Gov. Newsom joined state legislators to underscore the industry's central role in jump-starting the state's economy.



At the California Tourism Month press conference in May, Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis encouraged Californians to start planning their next in-state vacation.



Visit California produced a series of videos to share the stories and struggles of tourism workers.

Tackling Wildfire Season Head-On

The pandemic wasn't the only crisis to threaten California tourism. Years of destructive wildfires prompted Visit California to more directly acknowledge the reality of worsening annual wildfires. Through transparent communication with visitors and the media, the organization kept the public better informed, effectively challenging hyperbole around wildfires and the notion that they are unique to California. This approach builds on research done by southeastern states that has effectively mitigated travel loss and brand tarnish surrounding hurricane season.



Inspiring California Dreaming

Visit California adapted to the pandemic with new budget-conscious initiatives to address tourism industry needs while encouraging consumers to keep dreaming about their next Golden State trip. An always-on online content strategy delivered regular inspiration and information to millions of consumers.

Driving Responsible Travel Behavior

A media narrative was created around responsible travel at a time when tourism businesses were struggling to navigate and enforce travel regulations, and rural destinations were facing challenges from record crowds.

The Responsible Travel Code

Launched in June 2020, the Responsible Travel Code laid out the expectations that anyone moving around would keep responsible travel top of mind. The code reinforces a long-term commitment to California stewardship by outlining cultural and environmental sustainability best practices. To drive media coverage of responsible adventures in the Golden State, the organization invited influencers to take #RespectCalifornia road trips.

920+

MEDIA AND SOCIAL
PLACEMENTS

129,000

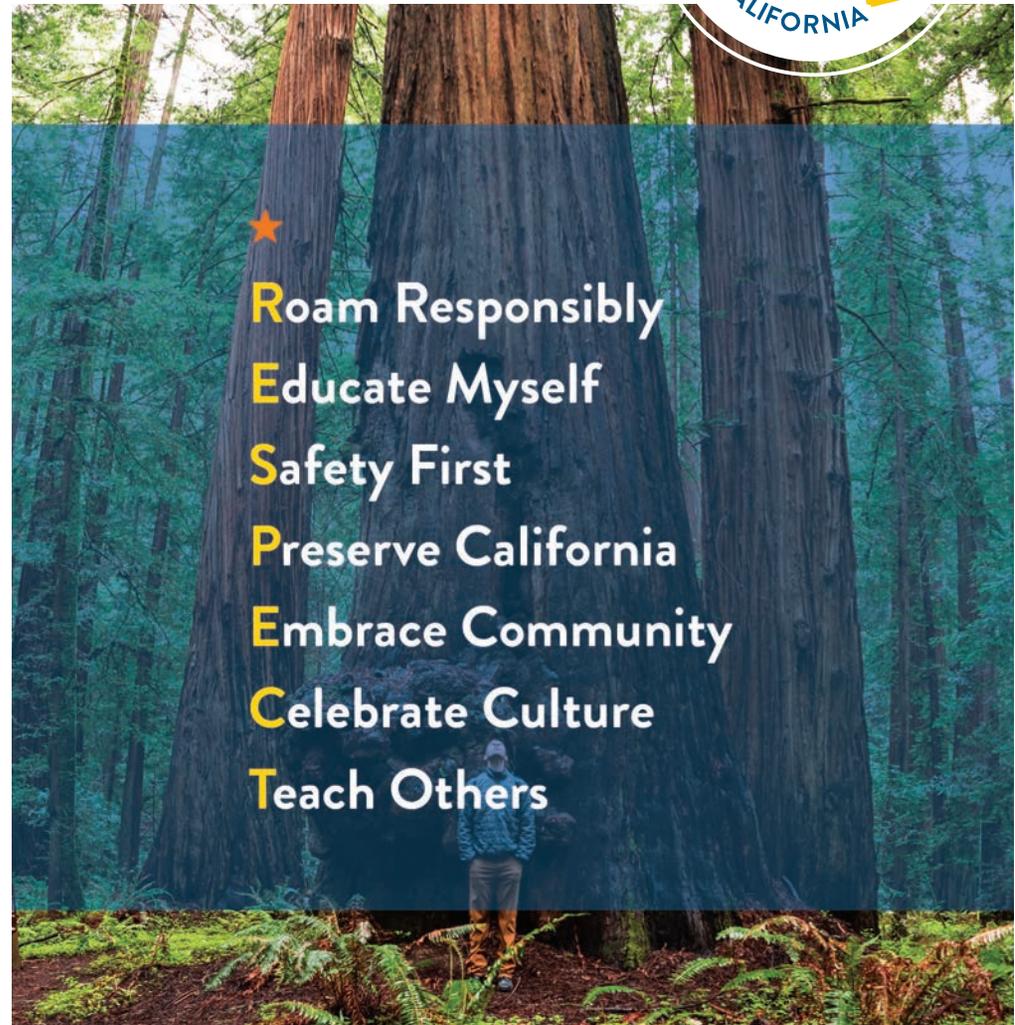
RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL
HUB PAGEVIEWS

200+ million

IMPRESSIONS

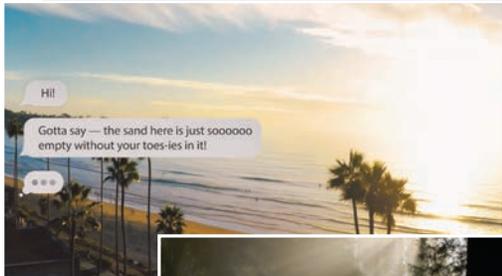
141,600

INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENTS



‘See You Soon’

The “See You Soon” social video campaign inspired future visitation of **all 12 California tourism regions**, with an additional video released in winter to promote snow season.



Top to bottom: High Sierra, San Diego, North Coast, Shasta Cascade and San Francisco Bay Area



Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco

‘Never Normal’

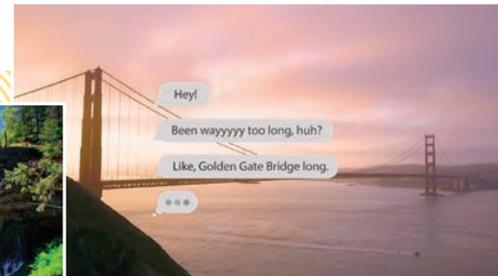
The “Never Normal” PSA inspired adventure even as it communicated an important safety message that Californians easily adapt to a new normal. A modest investment yielded high market penetration through a 3:1 match from the California Broadcasters Association.



Bottaia Winery, Temecula

‘Safe Travels, California’

To boost responsible, local travel while conserving funds for a post-pandemic marketing push, Visit California recorded new safety-focused voiceovers for an unaired in-state travel campaign. The three 30-second “Safe Travels, California” videos showed how industry safety protocols kept guests safe and allowed them to enjoy relaxing staycations.



Uniting the Industry

Partner communications increased during the pandemic to provide up-to-the-minute, industry-wide guidance and one-on-one support. Weekly emails from President and CEO Caroline Beteta updated the industry on the evolution of programs amid the pandemic and offered guidance on how to navigate the crisis.

1,200+

MEETINGS WITH
INDUSTRY PARTNERS

58

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

91

CEO CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

2021 Virtual Outlook Forum

Visit California's first-ever virtual Outlook Forum drew record attendance at a moment when industry collaboration and alignment had never been more important. The event delivered world-class travel and tourism speakers to a diverse audience representing tourism businesses of all sizes and from all state regions.

2021 VISIT CALIFORNIA

Outlook

VIRTUAL FORUM

FEB.
17-19



Caroline Beteta
President & CEO, Visit California

2,636

TOTAL ATTENDEES

60%

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

20

SESSIONS

48

SPEAKERS



Kevin Costner Hollywood Icon



Michael Franti Oakland Musician

JOIN US for Outlook Forum 2022
in San Francisco. More details at
[OutlookForum.com](https://www.OutlookForum.com).

FEATURED INTERSTITIAL DESTINATIONS



REIGNITING TOURISM

As California's tourism industry welcomed back travelers, Visit California accelerated the return of tourism with marketing and initiatives that reached consumers during must-see TV events, on high-visibility billboards, in influential travel magazines, in the news, on the internet and through the most popular travel booking platforms. These integrated efforts boosted visitation to all California regions and industry segments.

Paid Advertising

Visit California was ready and hit the ground running at the start of peak spring trip-planning season with a \$24 million investment in a national and in-state marketing push to share an open for business message. Because the organization had stretched marketing dollars during the pandemic, it was able to advertise at the start of the 2021 peak trip-planning season. These multi-layered campaigns started to win back lost market share from states that reopened for travel sooner by reminding U.S. travelers that the biggest dreams are only possible in California.

\$27 million

TOTAL INVESTMENT

54

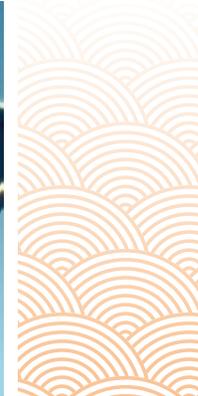
DESTINATIONS FEATURED
IN ADVERTISING

1.1 billion

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

99.3 million

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS REACHED



'What If, California' | National

The "What If, California" national ad campaign showcased California experiences and destinations to reveal the power of possibility in every Golden State vacation. TV spots, digital shorts and an interactive Hulu feature highlighted a variety of outdoor, cultural, family and luxury experiences to inspire U.S. travelers to follow their California Dream by asking, "What If?"

NATIONAL IMPACT

64.3% REACH

6.5x FREQUENCY

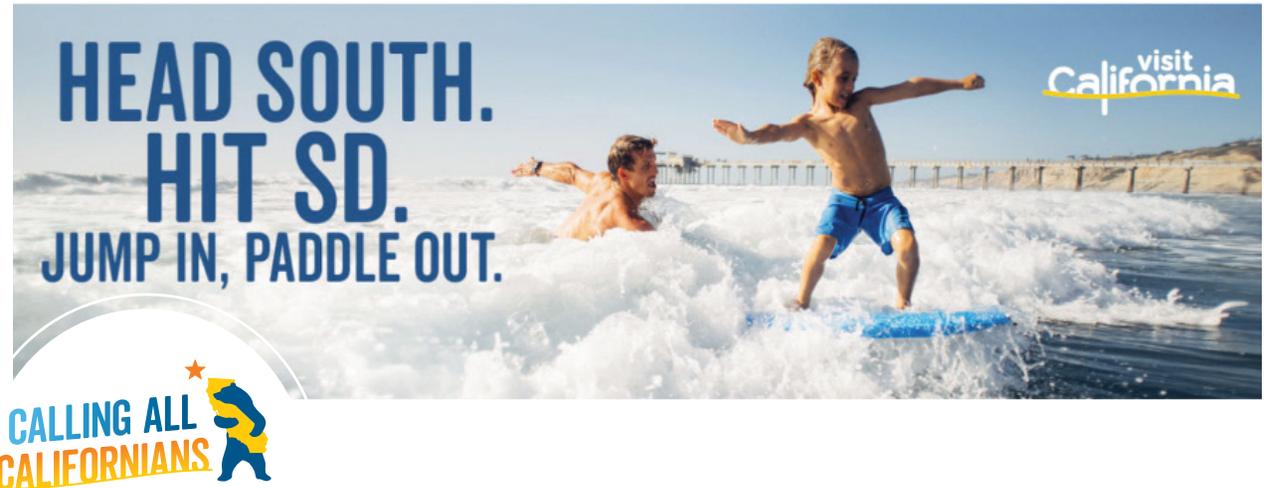
'California Road Trip Republic' | National

The "California Road Trip Republic" platform capitalized on the post-pandemic spike in drive travel by marketing the state's iconic roadways and off-the-beaten-path excursions. Because the campaign's "Born To Be Wild" TV spot had already been filmed and set to air before the pandemic, Visit California was first to market with its national drive travel advertising. Consumers can jump straight into charting their course along California's iconic roadways using the online road trip planner and a new edition of the "California Road Trips" publication featuring Kevin Costner.



‘Calling All Californians’ | In-State

The “Calling All Californians” campaign asked residents — who represent more than 70% of all California travel spending in a typical year — to keep trips in state as an act of civic pride. Through media partnerships, the organization placed 106 billboards in the state’s major urban markets and negotiated discounted coverage during events such as the Academy Awards and NCAA Final Four.



Leveraged Media Co-op | National and In-State

Marketing co-ops significantly extend the advertising reach of California industry partners and benefit the entire tourism industry by amplifying the California brand nationwide. There were opportunities in the fall and spring for California destinations to join the organization’s in-state and national campaigns by providing a match on partner investments, negotiating low media rates and offering free creative services to help destinations co-brand their advertising and tap into the reach and buying power of the state-wide campaign.

\$1.9 million
TOTAL INDUSTRY INVESTMENT

31
INDUSTRY PARTNERS



California Now Network

Online features, print guides, podcasts and social posts promoted the state's reopening of tourism businesses and gave visitors new reasons to take — and extend — their dream California vacations.

9.9 million

UNIQUE VISITORS TO VISITCALIFORNIA.COM

2.8 million

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

12 million

E-NEWSLETTERS SENT

73,000

PODCAST DOWNLOADS

3.5 million

PARTNER HANDOFFS

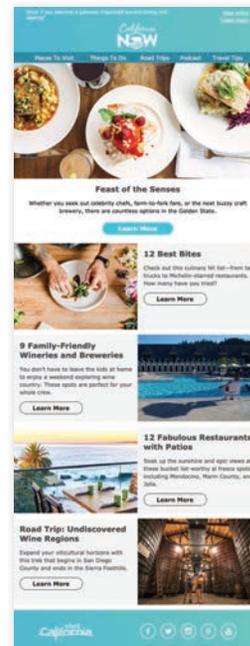


Golden State Tourism on the Go

The California Now Podcast reached its 50th episode this year with fresh celebrity and insider travel insights for visitors on the go. The show's episodes reinforced themes in major marketing campaigns with deep dives into California tourism experiences and the star power of Kevin Costner.

A Targeted Approach to Email Marketing

To inspire domestic and in-state consumers, email and search marketing was tailored to a consumer's geographic location and travel interests. These efforts grew domestic subscribers by 60,000 (+54% YOY) and greatly increased engagement with partner content by growing the open rate from 20% to 30% and doubling the industry average for click-throughs.



A Guide to Possibility

This year's official visitor's guide adopts a "Best of California" format to bring attention to longtime favorites, as shared by local celebrities, experts and tastemakers. More than 500,000 copies are distributed at Welcome Centers, to subscribers of lifestyle publications such as Travel + Leisure and Parents, and available on VisitCalifornia.com.

Parents.

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

Better Homes
& Gardens.

Public Relations

Hosting virtual media events, desksides, press trips and influencer campaigns drove a national conversation around California travel. Resulting coverage highlighted tourism businesses and destinations in high-profile news media viewed by millions of U.S. travelers.

800+

PLACEMENTS

241,000

INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENTS

3.2 billion

IMPRESSIONS

Key Placements

**Condé Nast
Traveler** **Forbes**

San Francisco Chronicle

The New York Times

Los Angeles Times

'Dreaming On' in California

To build media and consumer buzz for the state's June 15 reopening, Visit California hosted a "Dreaming On" in California activation that offered participants a second chance at missed milestones and showed that all dreams are possible in the Golden State. A group of lucky travelers received amazing do-overs: jaw-dropping weddings at Carneros Resort and Spa in Napa Valley, road trips featuring luxurious Marriott hotel stays, Disneyland vacations, family reunions at a San Diego Padres game and a once-in-a-lifetime dinner with celebrity chef Curtis Stone.



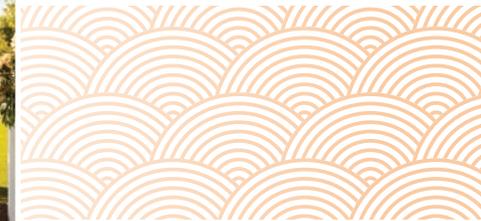
Casa del Mar, Santa Monica



Petco Park, San Diego



Carneros Resort & Spa, Napa Valley



Travel Trade

Through partnerships with the largest domestic travel agencies and a heavy schedule of virtual trade shows, California businesses were promoted directly to travel advisors across the U.S. and consumers actively booking their next vacation. Prominent promotions on consumer booking sites, in-flight magazines and mailers reinforced that California had reopened for business and offered an abundance of experiences for every type of traveler.

Trade Partnerships

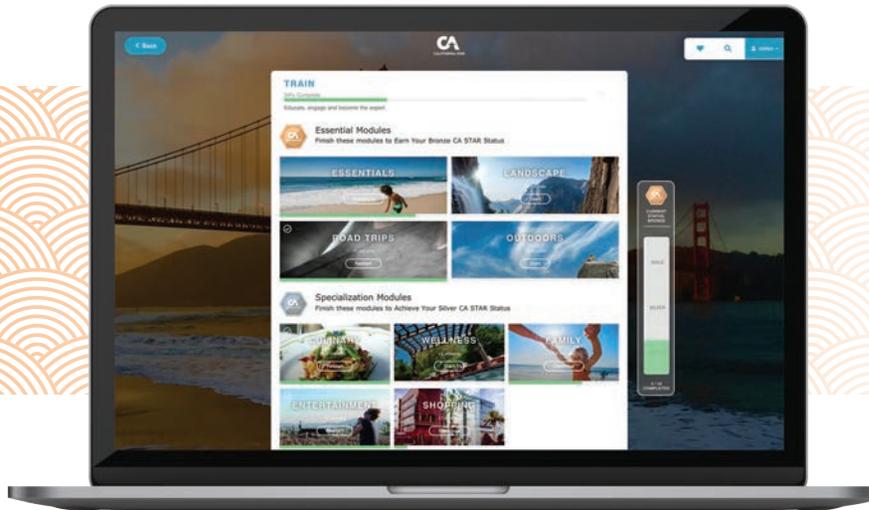


17

TRADE SHOWS ATTENDED

117,000+

TRAVEL ADVISORS REACHED



Building a Domestic Trade Audience

Visit California educated domestic agents unfamiliar with California travel products and unsure how to navigate travel restrictions, creating a vast network of trusted ambassadors. Key to this outreach was the California STAR agent training program, which received a design update and content overhaul to better serve this domestic audience.

RECOVERY: **A LOOK AHEAD**

See what's next for the industry-guided marketing program and access resources to enhance your marketing, gain free exposure and sharpen your research.

State of California Invests \$95 Million in Tourism Marketing

State lawmakers believe the tourism industry can lead the way in California's economic recovery. This one-time stimulus empowers Visit California to extend a direct-to-consumer media spend across multiple marketing channels to cover a full 52 weeks, fund additional campaigns, support local marketing efforts and accelerate recovery for all tourism industry segments.



NEW AND RETURNING MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

The infusion of state stimulus funding will allow tourism marketing to expand and refresh while adding new layers to extend reach. The new initiatives promote California experience pillars that were hard-hit during the pandemic. They also increase the combined ROI on all national and in-state campaigns, as visitors who have seen five or more campaigns spend 100% more in the state.



Extend Current Campaigns

‘Calling All Californians’

This in-state campaign will expand to reach more travelers on the road with four new radio spots and freeway billboard coverage of California’s major urban markets.

‘California Road Trip Republic’

An extension of the “Born To Be Wild” national TV and “Free To Roll” radio spots will inspire drive travel to and within the Golden State.

‘What If, California’

The national “What If, California” broadcast ads will be refreshed with added urban scenes — plus a new celebrity-studded spot will premiere in spring alongside Super Bowl LVI when the big game comes to Los Angeles in 2022.



New Marketing Initiatives

Urban Core

New video and content series will spotlight urban attractions and nightlife, restoring visitation to California’s hard-hit gateway cities.

Family

The “Kidifornia” campaign will relaunch as visitors with children are one of California’s largest audiences and spend 56% more on average. The campaign features a refreshed “Parents Love It” broadcast TV spot and the seasonal digital activation “Catch the Winter Wave.”

Culinary

To accelerate the recovery of California’s No. 1 travel activity — dining — Visit California will resume its beloved “California Dream Eater” digital TV series and adapt the show to new platforms, such as TikTok.

Business and Group Travel

Business travel is a primary driver of urban visitation and lags well behind leisure. To encourage in-person meetings, a multi-channel campaign will launch that conveys the ROI of doing business in the largest economy in the U.S.

FY21/22 Cooperative Marketing Opportunities

Take advantage of Visit California's full range of co-op programs to accelerate your program and growth goals.

industry.visitcalifornia.com/coop

Sponsor California Now Network Content

California Now Network print guides, blog articles, podcasts, consumer e-newsletters and more offer many flexible promotional opportunities to reach your target audience. These range from individual ads to sponsored takeovers of entire articles and emails. California Now promotional opportunities are highly flexible with solutions to meet nearly any budget.

Discounted Program Support

Receive steep discounts and funding on offerings from industry leaders such as Visa, UM and CrowdRiff to support your market research, plus support for travel trade, public relations and content creation.

Leveraged Media and Co-Branding

Tap into the power of the California brand through the leveraged media co-op. Investment in the program has been significantly increased for the coming fiscal year to offer a 2.5x multiplier on your investment:

- 50% match on every dollar invested
- 25% discount from media partners
- 25% bonus impressions
- Ad production added value

The return on investment goes well beyond the upfront dollar match. Widespread industry buy-in to Visit California's co-ops increases the frequency and efficacy of California travel messaging. This in turn greatly increases the program benefit for participants and creates a halo effect that benefits the entire state, as consumers exposed to just five variations of a California ad spend 100% more during their trips. Buy-in options are available for businesses of all sizes and budget levels with multiple media platforms to reach your target audience.



Visit California recognized early on the financial challenge that hospitality businesses faced during the pandemic and moved to **create cooperative campaigns** that would help them to affordably keep their marketing 'on' while keeping California top-of-mind.

— Gary Lillian
President & CEO
Extranomical Tours

Industry Resources

The industry website is your hub for resources throughout the year including partnerships, research and more.

industry.VisitCalifornia.com

Access Free Lodging Data and More

More than **\$1 million** worth of data and insights are available on lodging and occupancy, air passenger traffic, visitor point of origin, economic impact and more.

Submit Content

Be part of the California story and submit ideas for free exposure on a global scale. More than 80% of content submitted is placed across digital and print owned channels.

- **Business Listings**

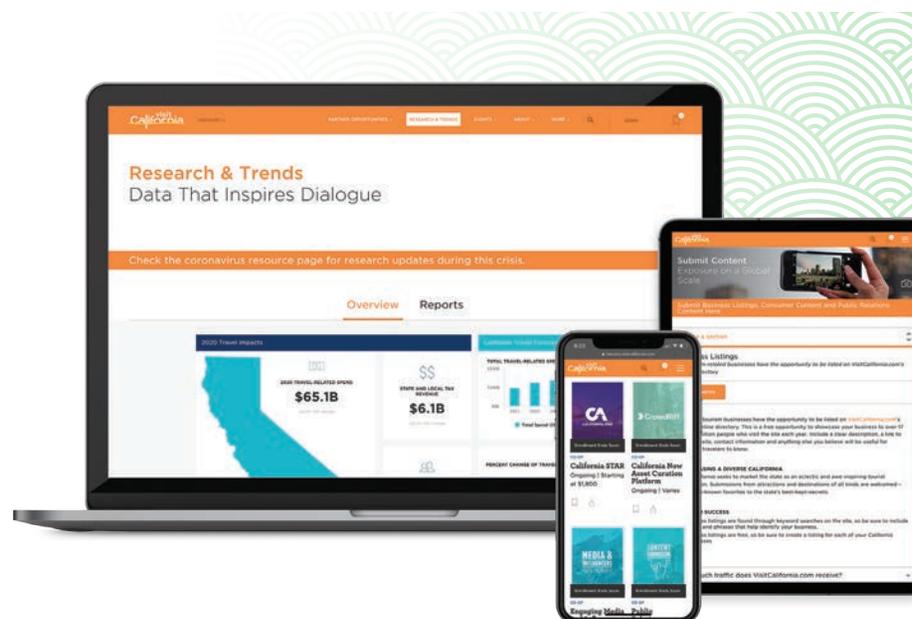
Submit your business to be listed in the online directory hosted on the Visit California consumer website.

- **Consumer Marketing Editorial Ideas**

Share story ideas for consideration, and an editorial board will review them for possible placement on Visit California's website, blog, social channels or podcast episodes.

- **PR Content**

Monthly emails highlight timely topics for story ideas with opportunities to be included in press releases, media pitches and more.



PR Resources

View guides and access partner programs to help your organization increase its media reach, host press trips, work effectively with influencers and more.

Stay Connected

Sign up to receive topical newsletters such as CEO updates, public relations, travel trade, industry news and more.

Partner with Visit California

New resources, marketing programs and collaborative opportunities are created year-round that can enhance your marketing and save money.

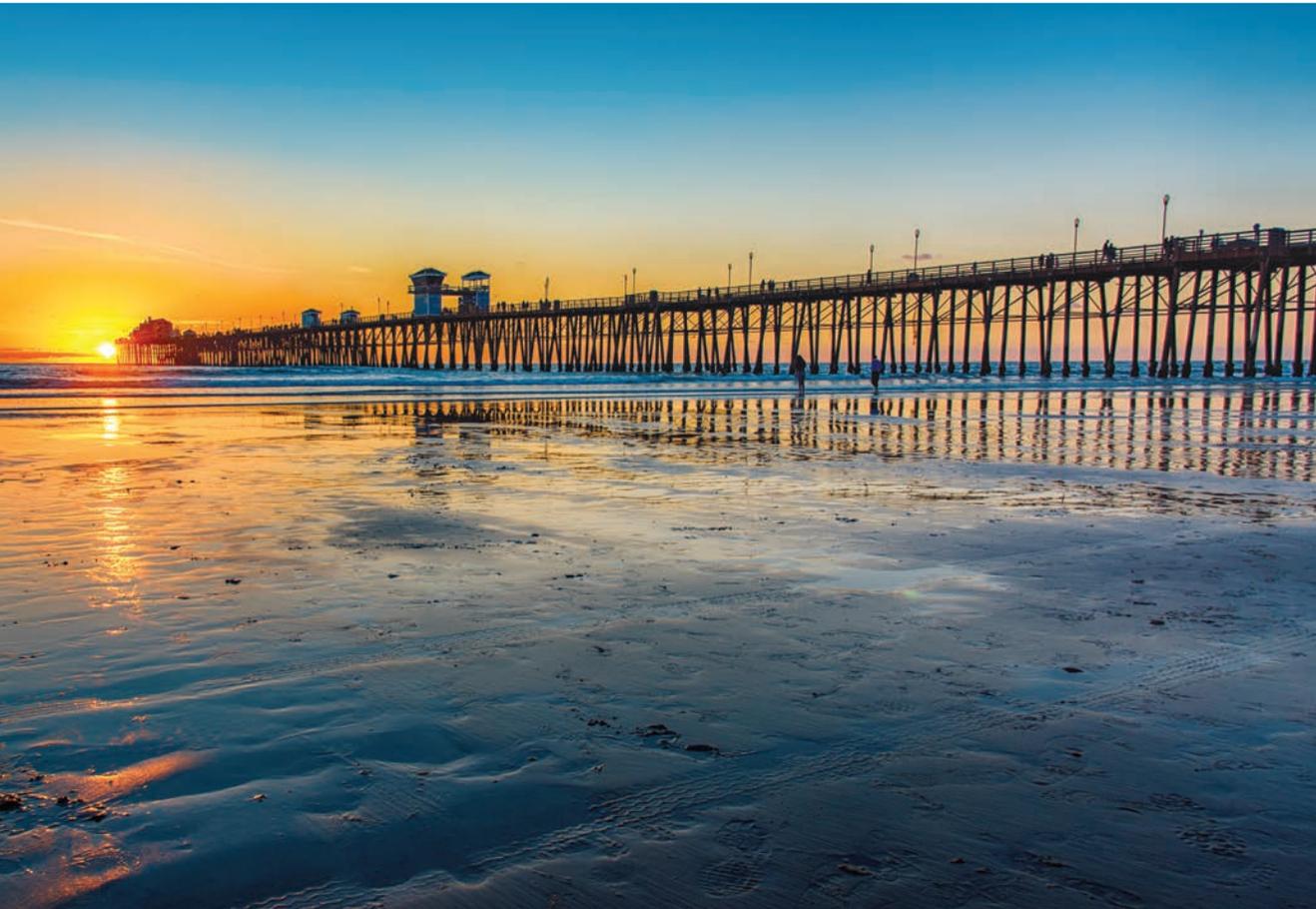
This annual report was paid for by Visit California, a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization funded by California's tourism industry. No state funding was used to produce this report.



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Sacramento, CA 95814

Visit California produces a more comprehensive version of this annual report. To request a full-length print copy and for additional digital content, visit industry.VisitCalifornia.com/YearInReview.

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 604
SACRAMENTO CA



Oceanside, Northern San Diego County

“

It's been a very challenging year, but the support of Visit California has helped all of us **survive and prosper.**

— **Commissioner Jeff Eisenbarth**
Senior Vice President – Western Region
Avis Budget Group, Inc.

