

ON the SCENE

WALT DISNEY WORLD SWAN AND DOLPHIN RESORT, LAKE BUENA VISTA, FLA.

A NEW TOWER, NEW TECHNOLOGY AND SOME DELICIOUS BITES

By Jennifer Juergens

Living in Orlando, I have the great fortune of being invited to many of the grand openings and renovations of hotels in the No. 1 meeting destination in the country, in many respects. So, I've seen amazing changes to the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in the past few years, including the \$150 million transformation of the resort's guest rooms, lobby areas and all meeting spaces.

And they're not stopping there.

The hotel just announced a new 14-story tower scheduled to be completed by 2020 and located next to the Swan Resort. The tower will include over 22,000 square feet of meeting space; 349 guest rooms; a landscaped, 16,800-square-foot elevated deck with a fire pit and pool; a 90-seat restaurant; and a 50-seat lounge.

But the folks at the Swan and Dolphin Resort had another reason for inviting meeting planners from across the country and meetings press to the hotel; to see the latest in artificial intelligence-based Wi-Fi and patented virtual Bluetooth technology that will enhance connectivity and personalize location and guest experiences in the resort.

The technology, developed by Mist, offers better Wi-Fi, in-building navigation, asset tracking, event analytics and proximity notifications for customers and guests in its 2,200 guest rooms and conference facilities.

This will give meeting and

show organizers a turnkey solution for delivering meeting information, schedules, floor plans and directions to attendees. Data from wayfinding navigation, attendee event analytics and guest foot traffic will provide valuable information to corporate clients about where to best display items at tradeshow or to add customer service and sales staff.

"This technology has the capability to transform the meetings industry," said Audrey Cornu, vice president of Internet for Tishman Hotels Corp., owners of the resort.

"This state-of-the-art tracking allows plan-

ners to learn more about their attendees, communicate with them more effectively and ultimately create better events. Combining our meetings expertise with Mist's technology capability was an ideal partnership to create practical solutions for groups."

On this FAM, the technology was demonstrated on us in a fun way by adding a chip to our badges to track how much time we spent at each



GROUNDBREAKING OF THE NEW TOWER

station during one of the resort's signature events, the Dolphin Banquet Kitchen Dinner.

We started out drinking champagne and eating oysters and crab cocktails in a meat freezer converted for the evening into a cool-blue-lighted bar and moved on to the actual kitchen where more than 20 chefs made and served dishes like succulent seared sea scallops and braised pork belly, and key lime pie and blueberry cobbler for dessert.

The next morning, the analysis was in. To demonstrate the Mist technology and using the tracking chips on our badges, Cornu was able to decipher who

were the carnivores in the group and who had a sweet tooth by seeing how long we each stayed at a particular station.

I learned, not surprisingly, I'm a dessert lover. 



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