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# Meeting *news*

## NORTHWEST

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# Meet on the Islands

*With warm hospitality in a stunning location, the San Juan Islands await your next meeting or special event.*

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### MEET HERE Central Oregon

Mountain scenery, outdoor recreation and an abundance of excellent venues make this area an attractive choice for planners. **Page 26**

### FEATURE Airport Conference Centers

Offering convenience and modern facilities, the region's airports are a first-rate option for your next meeting or conference. **Page 18**



### + Site Selection Savvy

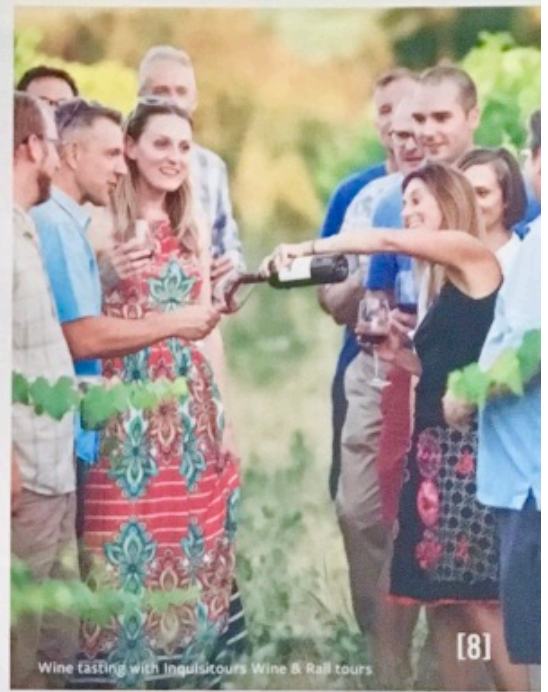
Check out our tips for successfully navigating this important aspect of the planning process. **Page 16**

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© The cover image, clockwise from top left: San Juan Islands, Port of Portland, Nethermere  
 This page: Vancouver from the air; The Party Team; Aaron Grubb Photography; Zura Gonzalez Photography

## Inquisitours Wine and Rail Tours

### TAKE YOUR NEXT MEETING ON THE ROAD

Take to the rails and roads of eastern Washington for your next corporate incentive or group retreat. Inquisitours recently launched their lineup of tours exploring the oft-forgotten, but no less stunning, dry side of the Cascades. Group attendees will bond over the sights, smells and tastes of the Columbia River Valley.

Tours leave from and return to Seattle, making them a perfect addition to a pre-scheduled conference. Or take your whole meeting on the road. Travel by train, leaving Seattle behind with views of Puget Sound and the Olympic mountains, then traverse the Northern Cascades. By the train ride's end, passengers are transported to the sunny dry side of the state, where they'll spend two nights in the Bavarian-themed town of Leavenworth. Activities abound in this little mountain hamlet, including a walking tour of the picturesque town. Guided by two locals, your group will learn the story of this once down-and-out logging community banding together to create the authentic German-style getaway that put them on the map. There's plenty of beer and brauts, of course, as well as shopping, wine tasting and walking trails along alpine Icicle Creek. Zip lining and kayaking excursions can also be arranged.

Then it's onto a spacious motor coach to explore the Columbia River Valley's canyonlands, history and agriculture, with apple and wine tastings, scenic stops and a long luxurious lunch among the vines of a Columbia Valley AVA vineyard. Following along the route of explorers Lewis and Clark, you'll end the day in Walla Walla, a former stop along the Oregon Trail and now a wine destination with a friendly small-town vibe.

Your group will experience the pioneering history of the area at Fort Walla Walla Museum, before an optional tour of wines of the world, all found within a

block in Walla Walla's downtown wine district. The highlight of the tour is a group dinner at one of Walla Walla's premier farm-to-table restaurants. By this point in the trip, the conversation flows like wine, and attendees chat as if they've known each other for years. The final day's ride back to Seattle takes a different route through the valley, continuing with entertaining stops along the way and a picnic lunch.

The tour has a healthy mix of scheduled activities and free time, perfect for squeezing in a little business along the way. Inquisitours also offers private group tours, and they can cater to company needs, whether that means extending or shortening excursions, equipping the motor coach for presentations and WiFi, or creating team-building activities.

Tour groups range in size from eight to 120. "While we've run many sizes, our ideal number is between 36 and 40 people, as we find it makes for a very enjoyable group dynamic," says Robin Glaeser, who has experience in creating retreats and team-building activities. She co-owns the business with her husband, Guy who has been guiding tours throughout the country for over twenty years.

Other excursions include the cities of Pendleton and Portland, Oregon, and can be arranged to leave from Portland. Tours typically run from May through September. BY CATIE JOYCE BULAY

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