Southern Charm

If you’re looking for a little southern hospitality for your next meeting or event, these five venues are a sweet tease of what awaits.

From North and South Carolina to Georgia, Virginia, and Florida, there’s something to be said about meeting in the South. It’s a place where history and attractions collide and nature is at your doorstep—and as these five venues show, it’s a place where you can find true southern hospitality for every meeting, conference, and event.

Florida Gulf Coast University
(Fort Myers, FL)

Having just opened in 1997, groups won’t find much of anything “old school” at Florida Gulf Coast University besides its idyllic preserved surroundings. “We are able to offer very new, modern facilities in a really natural environment,” says Ruth Rodrigues, director, campus reservations and records management of the sprawling campus that’s set on 800 acres, half of which have been kept in their natural state. Guests can take it all in while traversing five miles of nature trails and boardwalks.

As such, FGCU was thoughtful in the design, such as creating a 15-acre solar field to power three of its largest academic buildings and achieving Silver LEED certified status for Osprey Hall located in the campus’ “resort-style” South Village where buildings have solar water heaters and parking for energy efficient cars. The campus’ Northlake area is another option that’s on the waterfront with a man-made beach.

Here, each of the 3,000 total beds comes with a private bedroom, a key feature that led to college ranking site Niche naming the university to its list of the 10 campuses with the best residence halls. Accommodations are available from May to August and can be reserved through the certified One-Stop Shop conference department.

During the academic year, day meetings are a great option with accommodations at eight hotels “just five minutes away,” says Rodrigues. For unique spaces, she recommends the Wine Tech Lab, modeled after the Culinary Institute of America, Napa Valley campus and the interactive Client Health Education Center for smaller meetings and events. A ballroom and lecture halls are also available.