



## Navigating In-Person Events in the “New Normal”

McDonald's Says Thanks to French Franchisees with VIBE's Support



The return to live in-person events has been a long and winding road, especially for brands who prioritized face-to-face gatherings prior to the pandemic. The McDonald's organization was one such company, with a huge multi-day conference held every two years for its franchisees based in France. In previous years, the event has welcomed hundreds of franchise operators as well as their families for a company-wide conference with investors and key brand leadership personnel from around the world.

After a highly successful gathering in 2018, the 2020 event was cancelled during the height of the pandemic due to travel restrictions and other safety concerns. 2022 would be the first year back after four years away, and it was important to ensure guests enjoyed themselves and were excited to be back.

## THE ASK

VIBE was tasked with organizing four evening dinner events for the French guests – including a gala dinner complete with themed activities and entertainment. Each event had to be appropriate for a widely varied audience, as there were 450 total guests consisting of men, women, and children, with connections to many different parts of France.

Another challenge posed to the VIBE team was to find a unique gala venue that had not been previously experienced by guests. Since the main conference happens in Orlando each time it is held, the usual attractions such as theme parks and typical tourist exhibits were not a good fit.

## THE ANSWER

Creating tailor-made experiences from the ground up is one of the things VIBE truly excels at accomplishing. After some quick research to confirm that no new venues or attractions had opened during the COVID hiatus, the VIBE team quickly pivoted towards looking at existing venues in a new or different light. For most people, Dezerland Park, Orlando is a fun-filled entertainment center with an arcade, go-karts, and games. What often gets overlooked is the fabulous automotive museum of rare and classic cars from the movies... the perfect backdrop for an upscale Cars & Movies theme.

Guests got to “cruise” around the venue in their Hollywood-themed apparel, taking photos with the classic vehicles as well as movie props, stand-ups of vintage film stars, and a giant group photo with the McDonald's logo. A professional band and dancers put together acts based around movie soundtrack hits like Grease, Batman, and more. The party continued until 2am with a DJ and dancing.

As for the other dinners, the approach was to present guests with plenty of choices each night and from one evening to the next. Big Fin Seafood, Fleming's Steakhouse, and Fiorenzo Italian Grill made sure there was something to suit any and every palate.

## THE VIBE



Guests were surprised and delighted to find an experience few people knew about and that even the general public could not usually experience at Dezerland Park. The entire gala evening felt like a private venue constructed specifically for the McDonald's France guests and the theme was fun and relatable for guests of all ages. This level of personalized attention was exactly what McDonald's corporate aims for with these events – maintaining and strengthening franchisee relationships for a solid future together.