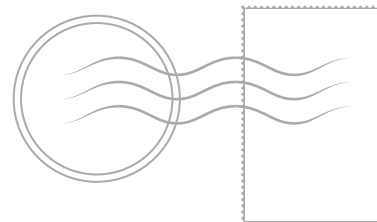


POSTCARD

Calgary



Saddle up to sell a Stampede experience all year round thanks to a new, immersive museum, writes **Natalie Marsh**

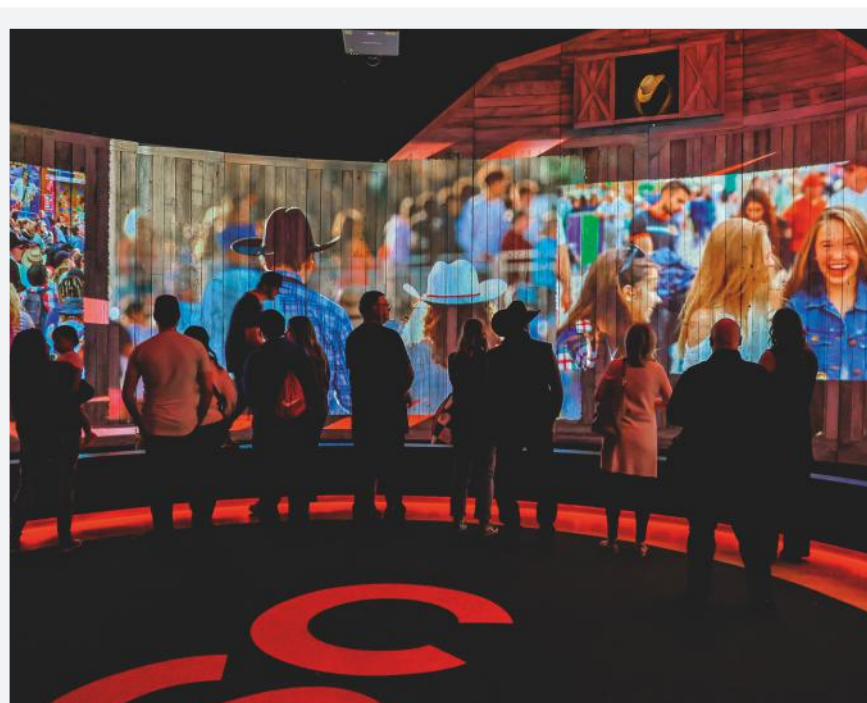
The sounds of drums and people cheering boom out of the speakers as the large 270-degree widescreen shows footage of people marching through the streets. It feels as if I'm right in the heart of the Stampede Parade.

The kick-off event of this annual rodeo extravaganza is just one of the scenes we're shown as part of the Stampede Sensations exhibit at the recently opened Sam Centre. A chuckwagon rider, a member of the area's Indigenous community and a player in the marching band are among those who tell stories of their involvement in Stampede during the emotive 15-minute movie. I'm left with a real yearning to see the city get swept up in stampede fever, which hits Calgary for 10 days every July (this year, from July 4-13).

The Sam Centre is an interactive museum in Stampede Park, which opened last summer to share the history of the Stampede. Visitors can see key artefacts and memorabilia, including artwork, trophies and original rodeo saddles. There are interactive exhibits, plenty of footage from the archives and whether visitors are familiar with the Stampede or not, they'll leave with an appreciation of how it takes Alberta by storm.

While the rodeo is often what jumps to mind first when visitors think about the Calgary Stampede, there's much more to it. The event consists of a powwow (an Indigenous dance and music competition), evening extravaganza, firework displays, dog show and much more, while Stampede Park transforms into a fairground. Each day starts with a pancake breakfast, served to hungry locals both in the park and across the city.

Before the Sam Centre opened, there was a gap in how both locals and visitors to Calgary could experience the Stampede, according to Jennifer Holm, the centre's manager of sales and guest experience. "Before, we would see tour buses occasionally stop at Stampede Park to take some photos outside of iconic buildings or public art," she says. "But now we have a destination that guests can interact with to learn and feel that connection to the Stampede and to Calgary." **TW**



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Audley Travel offers a seven-night trip to Calgary from £2,550 per person, based on two sharing, including Air Canada flights, seven nights' room-only at the Arts Hotel in Calgary and entry to the Sam Centre, for departures in June 2026.

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TOP: Footage from Calgary Stampede on display

ABOVE: Sam Centre museum, Stampede Park

PICTURE: Hames Quality