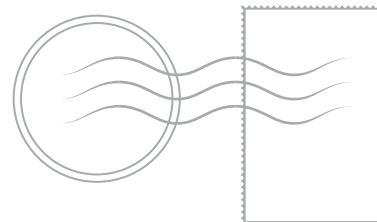


POSTCARD

Anaheim



Extend your customers' stay beyond the theme parks by recommending an authentic US sporting experience, says **Robin Searle**

I am a stadium geek and I'm proud of it. Wherever I am in the world, nothing gets the pulse racing like a tantalising glance of a floodlight pylon or the corner of a stand, offering the chance to explore further and tick another sporting arena off my list.

I don't actually have a list, I should add. Well, not one I've actually written down.

When it comes to assuaging this particular thirst, trips to the US present boundless opportunities. Not only is it home to some wonderful, atmospheric stadiums, a visit to a ball game (or in ice hockey strongholds, a puck game) is a quintessential American experience.

For the British market, Anaheim in southern California is best known for Disneyland. But what your clients may not know is that it also boasts two top-level sports teams.

The sport that lays claim to being America's 'national pastime' is baseball, and visitors to Anaheim can sample this most nostalgic of experiences. Built in 1966, Angel Stadium is the US's fourth-oldest major league baseball stadium and is blessed with the southern California climate – a recent rain-induced 'washout' was only the third in the team's history.

Although modern venues offer more comfort, the home of the Los Angeles Angels feels like a classic American ground, and in 2002 was the scene of wild celebrations when the then Anaheim Angels won their only World Series.

For those who prefer their sporting action a little more fast paced, the nearby Honda Center hosts national league ice hockey in the form of the Anaheim Ducks. Founded in 1993 by Disney and originally called the Mighty Ducks, the team has also tasted ultimate success, lifting the Stanley Cup in 2007.

Unsurprisingly, a slow-paced baseball match and the balletic brutality of ice hockey offer very different spectator experiences. But if your clients want to experience the US like a local (and tick a couple more stadiums off their lists) then recommend they extend their stay in Anaheim to take in a game and 'root, root, root for the home team'. **TW**



NEED TO KNOW

The 'regular' season (before the finals) for baseball runs from April to September with a whopping 81 home games for each team, while the ice hockey season runs from October to April with 41 matches. While there aren't specific booking channels for the trade, tickets can be bought in advance through the respective teams' websites. Book them at mlb.com/tickets and nhl.com/ducks/tickets



FROM TOP: The Los Angeles Angels in action; Robin meets Anaheim Ducks mascot Wild Wing

PICTURE: Angels Baseball LP