

ESTTA Tracking number: **ESTTA621744**

Filing date: **08/15/2014**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	92055278
Party	Plaintiff BD Hotels, LLC
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Date	08/15/2014
Attachments	richard born_08_15_2014_11_40_09_667.pdf(32837 bytes) born richard 07.10.14.pdf(88478 bytes) EX 1_Part1.pdf(5226305 bytes) EX 1_Part2.pdf(5213463 bytes) EX 1_Part3.pdf(5204581 bytes) EX 1_Part4.pdf(5220267 bytes) EX 1_Part5.pdf(2226189 bytes) BornEx2.pdf(78935 bytes) BornEx3.pdf(79831 bytes) BornEx4.pdf(80538 bytes) BornEx5.pdf(76855 bytes) BornEx6.pdf(93671 bytes) BornEx7.pdf(270610 bytes) BornEx8.pdf(445424 bytes)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

BD Hotels, LLC	:	Cancellation No. 92,055,278
	:	
Petitioner,	:	
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
Mr. Michael D. Linczyc	:	Reg. No. 3,424,090
	:	
Respondent	:	

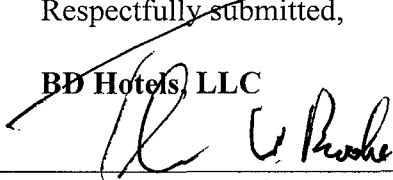
NOTICE OF FILING DEPOSITION OF
RICHARD BORN

Please take Notice that, in accordance with Trademark Rule 37 C.F.R. §2.123 (f),
Petitioner BD Hotels, LLC, files the transcript of the testimonial deposition of Richard Born.

Respectfully submitted,

BD Hotels, LLC

By: _____

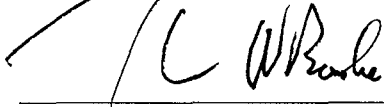

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing NOTICE OF FILING DEPOSITION OF RICHARD BORN was furnished by U.S. Mail and email to counsel for Respondent to the following address on August 15, 2014:

Matthew Swyers, Esq.
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Thomas W. Brooke

#29151155_v1

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

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BD Hotels, LLC

Petitioner, Cancellation No
92,055,278

-against-

Reg No 3,424,090

Mr. Michael D. Linczyc

Respondent.

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EXAMINATION of RICHARD BORN, taken by the
Petitioner, held at the offices of Holland & Knight,
LLP, 31 West 52nd Street, New York, New York 10019,
on July 10, 2014, at 2:05 p.m., before, Stephanie
Morano, a court reporter and a Notary Public of the
State of New York.

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A P P E A R A N C E S:

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BY: MATTHEW SWYERS, ESQ.
via teleconference

1 BORN
2 R I C H A R D B O R N,
3 having been first duly sworn before a Notary
4 Public of the State of New York, was examined
5 and testified as follows:

6 EXAMINATION

7 BY MR. BROOKE:

8 Q What is your name?

9 A Richard Born.

10 Q What is your address?

11 A 871 7th Avenue, New York, New York
12 10019.

13 Q. My name is Tom Brooke from Holland &
14 Knight here on your behalf or on behalf of BD
15 Hotels, LLC. What is your position with BD
16 Hotels, LLC?

17 A. I am a managing member of the LLC.

18 Q. What are your responsibilities as
19 managing member of the LLC?

20 A. There are two of us and primarily we
21 are in the business of developing and
22 managing and promoting hotels.

23 Q. Can you give us a quick history and
24 review of your educational background?

25 A. Educational background, I was not

1 BORN
2 trained in business. I went to NYU and went
3 to undergraduate NYU medical school. I did a
4 residency in New York University and Mount
5 Sinai Hospital and then I took a leave of
6 absence and went into the real estate
7 business. I started out as a broker for
8 about a year or two and then went into the
9 real estate business and acquired my first
10 hotel in 1987. I teamed up with a partner
11 Ira Druckier and the two of us have developed
12 additional hotels and we currently have
13 ownership interest and management
14 responsibilities in 25 hotels.

15 Q. How did it come about that you started
16 using the name The Pod Hotel?

17 A. We had owned for many, many years a
18 hotel called the Pickwick Arms on East 51st
19 Street and it was originally an SRO. It had
20 many residential tenants and we started
21 operating it as a transient hotel under the
22 name Pickwick Arms. At a point in time we
23 realized that the hotel was tired and in need
24 of a major renovation. The hotel had many,
25 many small rooms and we were faced with the

1 BORN
2 ninety percent occupancy since the day we
3 opened. We're currently in talks with
4 developers in Washington, Boston. We've
5 acquired a site in California.

6 Q. Do you want any of this to be
7 confidential?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Let me know if we need anything to be
10 confidential.

11 A. No. There's nothing that I've said so
12 far that's not out in the press already.
13 Frankly, I've been interviewed many times by
14 the press just along this. We acquired a
15 building in Los Angeles that we are working
16 on a design for a Pod. We have acquired a
17 site in Times Square where we just began
18 excavation for a Pod in New York City and one
19 in Williamsburg where we have sight control
20 and we plan to start construction in about a
21 month.

22 Q. Williamsburg, Brooklyn?

23 A. Yes. We're engaged in conversations
24 with a group in South America that wants to
25 buy the rights to develop Pods and have us

1 BORN
2 branded in South America. We have a term
3 sheet that we are negotiating with an
4 opportunity fund based in London who would
5 like to develop, as the term sheet described,
6 fifteen Pods in various cities in Europe as
7 well. All under our branding and management
8 so I think we've -- notwithstanding a small
9 speed bump we had due to the recession, I
10 think we're marching ahead.

11 Q. Tell us how you promote and advertise
12 your services.

13 A. One of the great things about Pod that
14 we realized is that the concept and the name
15 is so evocative that we have not had to spend
16 a lot of money on paid advertisement. We do
17 a lot of public relations. We have a public
18 relations firm, Nancy J. Freidman & Company.
19 There have been over 3,000 articles published
20 since 2007 and literally in every corner of
21 the globe. Additionally, we try to spend a
22 lot -- again, the other beauty of the Pod not
23 having to spend money on paid advertisement
24 is that we drive a lot of business directly
25 to our website by purchasing keywords and

1 BORN

2 publications, but since we're only
3 talking about the US market here, I
4 collated out all the foreign
5 materials.

6 (Exhibit 1, Document, was marked for
7 identification.)

8 Q. I'm going to put in front of you,
9 Mr. Born, a stack of articles. If you could
10 quickly look through this. I think we're
11 going to stipulate that these are documents
12 that both I've seen -- just tell us what some
13 of these are?

14 A. I'll just pick randomly from the top.
15 This is an article by Terry Ward called Tiny
16 Hotels on AOL Travel website. It really
17 starts out with an article -- it discusses
18 us. It also discussed Yotel and a hotel
19 called Cube, but it focuses on us. The main
20 interviewee for this was Vanessa Guilford who
21 works for us full-time and she is our chief
22 designer.

23 The second article is February 2nd,
24 2007 in USA Today. I don't see a title.
25 It's the Checking In section and it is

1 BORN
2 exclusively about us. The next one is
3 August 2007 Time Out New York. It's an
4 article about us. There's another article in
5 2007 on a magazine called Dwell. I'll just
6 skip fifty or sixty articles. There's an
7 article in Detroit Hotel Free Press Hotels
8 court high-tech guests. They highlight three
9 or four hotels. Among them is The Pod Hotel
10 in New York City which is us. If I can skip
11 again -- I'm not sure if these are all in
12 order.

13 Q. They should be roughly in
14 chronological.

15 A. There's an article here in Vast
16 Company March 2009, seven compact hotels big
17 city style. The first one they feature is
18 The Pod Hotel in New York City. It looks
19 like GQ magazine features The Pod Hotel.
20 There's Hotel Chatter. New York Pod Hotel
21 launches training program for young adults
22 with autism. That was a campaign we did for
23 summer jobs for handicapped children. MSNBC,
24 January 2010. Top ten tech-savvy hotels. It
25 lists a group of hotels. This is a worldwide

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2 list and among the worldwide list, there is
3 only one listed in New York City and that's
4 The Pod Hotel. This looks like New York
5 Daily News, a Midtown east gem in May of 2010
6 which a review of The Pod Hotel on 51st
7 Street. New York Times technology section.

8 Q. That gives a flavor and these are all
9 very typical of the types of stories about
10 you, right?

11 A. Right. I haven't even scratched the
12 surface and haven't gotten to the point past
13 us being just one hotel.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. If I flip through further on when we
16 have the second hotel and when we are
17 announcing a third and a chain then the
18 volume gets even bigger. Again, I'll bother
19 you a little more. Los Angeles Times,
20 January 2011. New York, two hotels show the
21 power of one with a one-day sale and they
22 feature the two Pod Hotels. The Miami Herald
23 features The Pod Hotel. MSNBC features The
24 Pod Hotel. On and on and frankly I think
25 we're just scratching the surface with this.

1 BORN

2 I believe my public relations company has
3 counted the amount of press stories about or
4 mentions of the Pod in the thousands rather
5 than the hundreds since we opened about seven
6 years ago.

7 Q. Are you aware of anyone else using the
8 name Pod Hotel or Pod as a trademark for a
9 hotel in the United States?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Did there come a time when you took
12 action to protect your name through a US
13 trademark registration?

14 A. Well, we filed for a trademark
15 registration for The Pod Hotel almost
16 immediately or I think just before we began
17 using the name. I believe through your
18 office.

19 Q. Let me put in front of you what we
20 will mark as Exhibit 2. This is a copy from
21 the US Patent and Trademark office website.
22 Registration number 3575140, The Pod Hotel.

23 (Exhibit 2, Document, was marked for
24 identification.)

25 Q. What does it say?

1 BORN

2 A. It says The Pod Hotel Word Mark The
3 Pod Hotel.

4 Q. What does goods and services say?

5 A. Hotel, bar and restaurant services.
6 First use is January 1st, 2007 and this
7 filing date of this is March 4, 2008.

8 Q. I'll show you now what we'll mark as
9 Exhibit 3.

10 (Exhibit 3, Document, was marked for
11 identification.)

12 Q. It has registration number 3575141.
13 The Pod Hotel, hotel concierge services?

14 A. That's right, and the same dates.

15 Q. You have both yourself and through our
16 law firm written third parties who attempted
17 to use or thought about using or have
18 actually used the name Pod, haven't you?

19 A. Correct. Whatever we come across --
20 sometimes I come across it, sometimes an
21 employee comes across it, sometimes a friend
22 or an attorney will come across it, sometimes
23 you will come across it and make us aware of
24 it. My instruction to you will always be to
25 issue a cease and desist letter to that party

1 BORN

2 to inform them that we have and use the
3 trademark.

4 Q. Now, did there come a time when you
5 became aware of the fact that somebody owned
6 a US Trademark registration for the name
7 Metro-Pod?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What did you do when you heard about
10 that?

11 A. I spoke to you and asked you to be in
12 touch with them and inform them that we owned
13 the trademark. It didn't appear to me that
14 the word Metro-Pod was being used for the
15 purpose of selling hotel services at all. It
16 appeared to me that they were in the business
17 of marketing a design of a hotel room more
18 than anything. I asked you to reach out to
19 them and ask them not to promote themselves
20 as providing hotel services.

21 Q. Let me show you what we'll mark as
22 Exhibit 4.

23 (Exhibit 4, Document, was marked for
24 identification.)

25 Q. This is for registration 3424090 for

1 BORN

2 Metro-Pod and you can take a look at this.

3 A. It lists as goods and services
4 provision of hotel and restaurant services.

5 Q. If you go to the second page, you will
6 see owner --

7 A. The owner is Michael D. Linczyc
8 Individual with a UK address. Excuse me.
9 Individual UK with an address in Short Hills,
10 New Jersey.

11 Q. Did you do some sort of investigation
12 into Mr. Linczyc in his operations and his
13 use of the name?

14 A. Yes. I looked at his website. He
15 didn't seem like he was in the hotel
16 business. I called him up and met him in my
17 office. I can't remember exactly when. I
18 spoke to him on the phone and subsequently
19 met him in my office. I forgot why we
20 discussed what he thought or we thought might
21 be some commonality of business that we could
22 potentially do together unrelated to that
23 conversation. He came into my office. We
24 talked about it. He told me what he was
25 doing. He showed me from his, I think, a

1 BORN
2 laptop that he brought with him a group of
3 designs for rooms. One of them called
4 Metro-Pod. He said he was using the name for
5 the purpose of promoting this hotel room
6 design and that was his primary business or
7 that was his business. I don't know if there
8 were primaries needed. I asked him at the
9 time if he would consider changing his
10 registration because he was not providing
11 hotel services, but he was in the design
12 business. He actually indicated that he
13 would be receptive to doing it and we agreed
14 to talk further between our lawyers and see
15 if we could work something out. Apparently
16 there was a change of heart on his part and
17 he then refused to voluntarily alter his
18 trademark on the name Metro-Pod.

19 Q. Are you familiar with the hotel
20 Westminster in Livingston, New Jersey?

21 A. Yes, I am. I happen to know the owner
22 of the hotel and he introduced me to the
23 current general manager of the hotel.

24 Q. How do you know the owner?

25 A. Socially, not business.

1 BORN

2 Q. He introduced you to the general
3 manager and what happened?

4 A. I asked the general manager if he knew
5 Michael Linczyc and he said that Michael
6 Linczyc --

7 MR. SWYERS: I'm going to
8 object on this ground because it would
9 be hearsay to testify to a person what
10 they said if they are not a party to
11 this action. I will object on hearsay
12 grounds.

13 MR. BROOKE: You can continue
14 to testify and we can take it up with
15 the court or take it up with the
16 board, but go on.

17 A. Well, the general manager told me that
18 Mr. Linczyc had worked at the hotel around
19 the time of its opening for a couple of years
20 and was involved in design of the hotel
21 property and design of some of the logos and
22 potentially marketing brochures. He was not
23 aware of his involvement of anything having
24 to do with actual operations or of actual
25 hotel bookings or reservations at that time.

1 BORN

2 Q. To your knowledge, was Mr.
3 Linczyc ever operating the hotel Westminster?

4 A. No. There was a general manager that
5 he worked for and he was never -- to my
6 knowledge other than design, he did not have
7 other functions there.

8 Q. To your knowledge, did Mr. Linczyc
9 ever provide any hotel services?

10 A. No.

11 Q. To your knowledge, did he ever provide
12 any restaurant services?

13 A. No. I did further speak to the
14 general manager of the hotel more recently,
15 several months ago as we were preparing for
16 this deposition to ask if there was any
17 change and --

18 MR. SWYERS: Just a continuing
19 objection on the hearsay.

20 MR. BROOKE: That's fine.

21 Thank you.

22 A. Prior to having contacted the general
23 manager recently, I had spoken to Michael
24 Linczyc again pleading with him not to have
25 to drag us through this process and trying to

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BORN

2 understand why exactly he is trying to hold
3 onto the trademark for hotel services since
4 he is not providing hotel services and he
5 told me he is in the active business of
6 procuring hotel reservations and promoting
7 hotel rooms which I wasn't aware of
8 previously. He said sure, look at my
9 website. I'm promoting hotel services and
10 then upon pressing him several times, he said
11 I primarily book rooms at the Westminster
12 Hotel. I called up the general manager and
13 he was surprised to hear that. He said it
14 could be possible that Michael Linczyc has
15 some way of booking rooms indirectly through
16 his systems, but he was completely unaware of
17 the fact that Michael Linczyc had anything to
18 do with the Westminster Hotel at any time in
19 the near history potentially for a long
20 period of time.

21

MR. SWYERS: Again, just a

22

continuing objection on the hearsay.

23

MR. BROOKE: Matthew, do you

24

have your computer there and your

25

browser open?

1 BORN

2 MR. SWYERS: Yes.

3 MR. BROOKE: Because I'm going
4 to show Mr. Born the Metro-Pod and the
5 Westminster websites. I'll let you
6 get to your browser and get it open.
7 We're going to go to Metro-Pod.com.

8 MR. SWYERS: Our client's
9 website?

10 MR. BROOKE: Correct. Right
11 now we're looking at www.metro-pod.com
12 and I will put a paper copy in front
13 of him at some point.

14 Q. Do you see the website, Mr. Born?

15 A. Yes, I do.

16 Q. It says here, "Metro-Pod has been
17 providing services to obtain bed and board in
18 hotels, boarding houses or other
19 establishments providing temporary
20 accommodation for nearly ten years." In your
21 experience as somebody who has been in the
22 hotel business now for over 25 years, does
23 that indicate that Metro-Pod is providing
24 hotel services itself?

25 A. No. There are several things wrong

1 BORN
2 with this. The first thing that's terribly
3 wrong with this is if you look at Metro-Pod's
4 old websites, they don't talk anything about
5 reservations, making reservations, staying in
6 hotels. It only talks about room designs.
7 It's only, I think, since about 2011 or '12
8 that they actually even claim to be a conduit
9 to booking hotel rooms. If you look at their
10 website here, you have --

11 Q. The one in front of us?

12 A. The one in front of us, there are
13 three things that come to mind. The first
14 thing, all they're doing is taking you either
15 to other people's reservation services being
16 Hotels.com, Booking.com, Worldhotels, or to
17 the Westminster Hotel so I'm not sure what
18 service they plan -- the first three are
19 fairly generic booking engines that anybody
20 could use for hotel services and the last is
21 just a hotel where one can go directly. The
22 other thing that I find somewhat offensive
23 is -- because I really haven't seen this
24 website or haven't seen it in awhile, that he
25 actually changed the graphics of the Pod and

1 BORN

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Let's try each one of these and see
4 what happens here. If we click on the link
5 for Hotels.com, it's now taken us to --

6 A. Hotels.com.

7 Q. Is that a Metro-Pod website?

8 A. No. The troubling thing with this is,
9 firstly, he's not as his trademark
10 application says providing hotel and
11 restaurant services. All he's doing is
12 providing a link to a means to make a
13 reservation which is very different than
14 providing hotel services. The other thing
15 that is terribly problematic for me is that
16 if somebody wants to book a room in the Pod
17 Hotel and they come upon his website by
18 mistake and click through to Hotels.com, they
19 can then book my hotel if they search for
20 Pod, but I'm going to have to pay them a 21
21 percent commission. This is the real crime
22 of what he's doing here. To the extent
23 somebody is looking to come to my hotel and
24 falls upon him by accident and then goes
25 through him to any of the three choices he's

1 BORN

2 giving them, I will then be paying
3 commissions for these engines now booking my
4 rooms. I pay Hotels.com 21 percent by the
5 way, just so you know.

6 Q. We've gone back to the Metro-Pod
7 website and if we go down to where it says
8 click to make a reservation, you got a finger
9 pointing and if you click on that, we now go
10 to a totally different website, don't we?

11 A. Yes. This is the website for the
12 Westminster Hotel.

13 Q. The web address here is
14 www.westminsterhotel.net?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. I'll put in front of you what we will
17 mark as Exhibit 6 and this is a paper copy.

18 (Exhibit 6, Document, was marked for
19 identification.)

20 MR. BROOKE: Matthew, just to
21 make sure we're all on the same page
22 literally, we're at
23 www.westminster.net if you click
24 through.

25 MR. SWYERS: If I may, so the

1 BORN
2 record is clear, what did you click
3 on? Was it the click to make a
4 reservation and that took you through
5 to Westminster?

6 A. There is a little finger pointing a
7 hand on the lower right side of the screen.

8 MR. SWYERS: Thank you. And
9 above it, it says "Click to make a
10 reservation"?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. This is the Westminster Hotel website,
13 isn't it?

14 A. Yes, it appears to be.

15 Q. The Westminster Hotel actually is a
16 hotel in Livingston, New Jersey, isn't it?

17 A. Yes, correct.

18 Q. Do you see anything on this website in
19 front of us now either in the paper copy or
20 on this that says anything about Metro-Pod?

21 A. Nothing about Metro-Pod, nothing about
22 Pod. This clearly is not a hotel that one
23 would describe as a Pod in any way.

24 Q. In fact, what does it describe itself
25 as?

1 BORN

2 A. NJ -- I assume that means New Jersey.
3 Luxury hotel, spa and event venue.

4 Q. That's not the sort of services that
5 you offer?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Again, the paper in front of you which
8 we marked as Exhibit 6 is this website that
9 we're looking at now on the screen, isn't it?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Now, we're going to back up and hit
12 the back button on our browser here and take
13 us back to www.metro-pod.com, right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. A moment ago we clicked on the red
16 finger pointing arrow on the bottom right of
17 the screen, didn't we?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. If we click on this sort of menu
20 option that says check now in red and there's
21 five diamond and it looks like a reservation
22 that says World Hotels and at the bottom it
23 says Livingston, NJ weather. Do you see
24 that?

25 A. Yes. It's funny because all that

1 BORN

2 A. Metro-Pod is not providing hotel
3 services. Metro-Pod is functioning as a
4 conduit to allow you to make a reservation.

5 Q. I'm going to put in front of you your
6 affidavit that you had earlier signed in this
7 case and we'll mark this as Exhibit 7.

8 (Exhibit 7, Document, was marked for
9 identification.)

10 Q. Are you familiar with this affidavit,
11 Mr. Born?

12 A. Yes. It appears to be what I signed
13 back in November of 2013.

14 Q. Is there anything about this that has
15 changed or anything that you need to clarify
16 about this?

17 A. I do not believe so.

18 Q. If you flip back to attachment one,
19 you'll see what the Metro-Pod website looked
20 like at the time you signed this declaration;
21 isn't that correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You'll see there that it says,
24 "Metro-Pod will re-conceptualize the lodging
25 experience and break --

1 BORN

2 A. From the pack with a stunning new
3 dimension for hotels in the 21st century."

4 Q. I believe it says "definition".

5 A. New "definition for hotels in the 21st
6 century." That's a joke. I assume that's a
7 joke because Metro-Pod doesn't do anything
8 but take you to the Westminster or Hotels.com
9 website. I'm not sure they're
10 re-conceptualizing the lodging experience.

11 Q. To your knowledge, Metro-Pod never
12 offered any lodging experiences on its own,
13 did it?

14 A. I believe that's correct.

15 Q. At that point, there was no link to
16 Hotels.com or any of these other services?

17 A. I don't see it. This only shows, I
18 believe -- if this third page is attachment
19 two?

20 Q. That is correct.

21 A. Attachment two which I assume is the
22 second page of this is the Westminster
23 website.

24 Q. Correct, but if you go back to the
25 Metro-Pod site --

1 BORN

2 A. Yes. It is only offering reservations
3 at the Westminster Hotel.

4 Q. At that point, one could not make a
5 reservation through Metro-Pod, it was simply
6 a link to Westminster?

7 A. Correct.

8 MR. BROOKE: I'll show you now
9 what we'll mark which was previously
10 produced and I sent to you yesterday,
11 Matthew, a Pod Hotel Pro Forma
12 Operating Statement 2011 on the first
13 page. The second page has months from
14 2010. Then there's a third page with
15 2009. On the fourth page there's a
16 handwritten note which says 2007.

17 (Exhibit 8, Document, was
18 marked for identification.)

19 Q. Take look at this and tell me if you
20 know what it is?

21 A. These are income and expense
22 statements from The Pod Hotel, the 51st
23 Street Pod dating back to 2007, 2008, 2009,
24 2010, and 2011. It breaks down the income
25 generated, occupancy rates, average room

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BORN

rates, and expenses for a four-year period of time.

Q. This shows you had enjoyed quite a few sales, that you have been quite successful with this business?

A. Right, right. It shows \$17 million in gross income in '07. It was a little lower in '08 and then rising in '09, '10 and '11. \$18 million in '11. It's higher than that now and the second Pod on 39th Street which has now been running for two years is likewise generating over \$20 million a year in sales.

MR. BROOKE: Can we go off the record?

(Whereupon, an off-the-record discussion was held.)

MR. BROOKE: That's all I have now.

MR. SWYERS: Mr. Born, Matt Swyers for the Trademark Company. I have no questions for you.

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BORN

MR. BROOKE: Thank you for your
time.

(Whereupon, at 2:44 p.m. the Examination of the
Witness concluded.)

RICHARD BORN

Subscribed and Sworn to before me
this 10th day of July, 2014.

STEPHANIE MORANO
Notary Public

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BORN

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, STEPHANIE MORANO, hereby certify that the Examination of RICHARD BORN was held before me on the 10th day of July, 2014; that said witness was duly sworn before the commencement of his testimony; that the testimony was taken stenographically by myself and then transcribed by myself; that the party was represented by counsel as appears herein;

That the within transcript is a true record of the Examination of said witness;

That I am not connected by blood or marriage with any of the parties; that I am not interested directly or indirectly in the outcome of this matter; that I am not in the employ of any of the counsel.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this day of , 2014.

- - - - -
STEPHANIE MORANO

BORN

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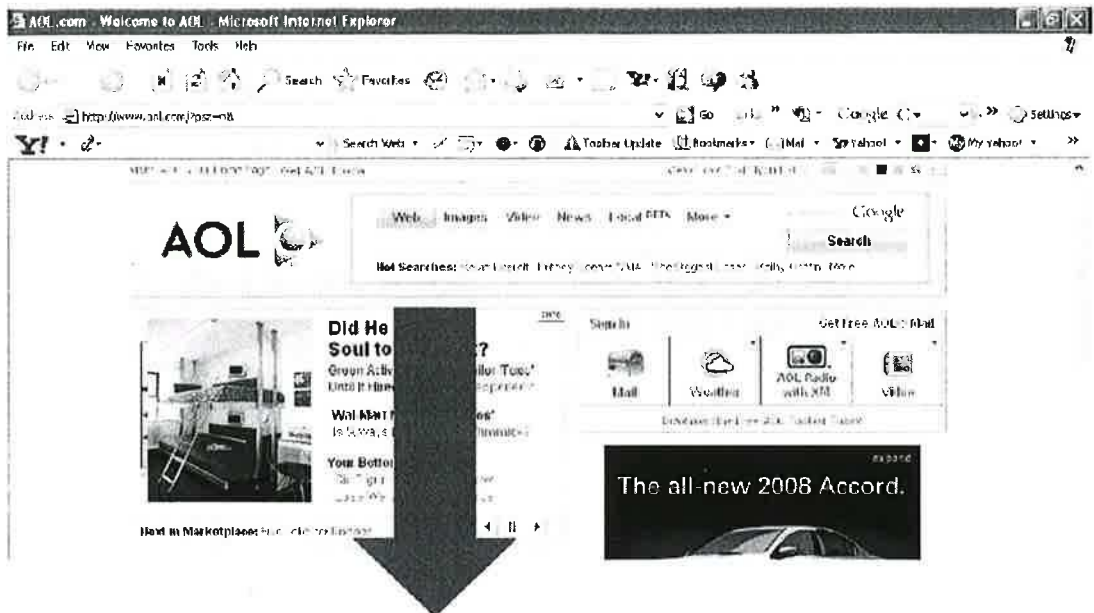
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March 10, 2007

Tiny Hotels

By TERRY WARD

There are LCD TVs and iPod docking stations in every room. Sleek Eames-inspired furnishings. And a chill rooftop terrace where you can relax on comfy cushions as the sun goes down over Midtown Manhattan. If the above description sounds like that dream NYC loft you'd buy if only you'd win big in Atlantic City, rest assured it can be yours for a far fairer price -- if only for a night or two. Open since mid-January 2007, The Pod Hotel in Manhattan delivers big designer bang with small rooms designed to save guests cash without scrimping on style. Private bunk bed rooms for two people with shared bathrooms and showers start at just \$89 per night.



That's right, in Midtown Manhattan.

Vanessa Guilford, 31, a 1997 graduate of the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, was head designer and construction manager for The Pod Hotel (formerly The Pickwick Arms Hotel, before the complete revamp).

Guilford said she looked to transportation -- planes, trains and boats -- for inspiration when it came to creating hotel rooms that didn't feel compromised due to limited space.

"A lot of the inspiration is coming from public transport -- it's clever use of space, and the design features," said Guilford.

She said that the bunk bed rooms were inspired by sleeping cars in trains.

"The challenge with that was trying to make a cool room with a bunk bed -- something that can seem very juvenile," Guilford said.

"We just kind of took the bunk bed and redefined the bunk bed as you know it," she said, describing how she designed stainless steel platforms that cantilever off vertical posts to support the mattresses.

Stainless steel cubby sinks reminiscent of what you'd see on a train or airplane are tucked into niches in the walls, and both the upper and lower bunk beds have their own TVs and reading lights, so even though guests might be sharing the room with a friend, they can still enjoy the privacy of their own little world.

Single and double rooms at The Pod Hotel are scant larger than the bunk accommodation, but all the necessary comforts await.

Beds, covered with bright 1920s inspired fabrics, feature roll out storage drawers underneath that resemble what you'd find in the captain quarters on a yacht.

In rooms with private bathrooms, oversized rain showerheads and stylish subway tiling are nice surprises not usually found in the budget range.

"We wanted to offer our guests unexpected surprises that you don't expect in a budget hotel," said Guilford.

And how's this for a surprise?

The shared bathrooms (for use by guests in the bunk bed rooms and some single rooms) are downright luxurious, with elegant stone walls and floors and, get this -- spa style body spray jets that shoot from the walls.

Even the signals over the shared facilities that let guests know whether they're occupied or not were inspired by transportation -- they're similar to the lights you see in an airplane, indicating whether the lavatories are free.

Another big-things-come-in-small-packages hotel that takes its inspiration from transportation is the YOTEL hotel concept, due to open its first two hotels inside the terminal buildings of London's Heathrow and Gatwick Airports in the Spring of 2007.

YOTEL's founder, Simon Woodroffe, came up with the idea for the tiny hotel after being upgraded to first-class during a flight.

The YOTEL promises to be an exciting new crash pad concept that lands somewhere between the Japanese capsule hotels and first-class on, say, Singapore Airlines.

The rooms are miniscule, to be sure -- around 11 square yards. But plush trimmings such as luxury linens, monsoon showers and flat screen TV's will ensure that the quality of the experience makes up for the quantity of inhabitable space.

The best part about the YOTEL? The rooms can be rented for time frames as short as four hours -- what better antidote than that to the layover from hell? Expect to pay about \$80USD to overnight at the YOTEL, less for shorter stays.

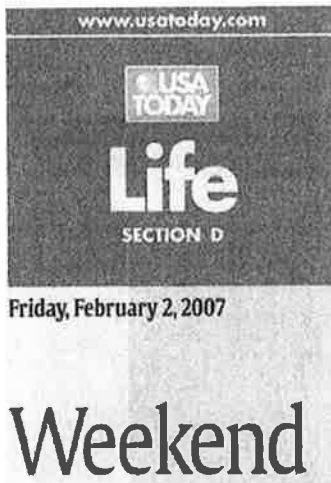
Here are a few other tiny hotel picks for when you're looking to live large in a popular part of town, on limited means:

Piccadilly Backpackers London: Hostel accommodation is reduced to smaller proportions than ever here, with 6 private capsule-style beds (just climb in and lock up for the night) situated in each shared dorm room (regular dorms rooms are also available). Pod rooms start from 17 pounds (about \$34) per night. [Piccadilly Backpackers](#).

The Cube Hotel: With outposts in ski towns in Austria and Switzerland, this hip hotel appeals to a social 20-something crowd, Dubbed CUBE boxes, the rooms -- for two, four, six or eight people -- all have private bathrooms and showers. Single travelers can snag a bunk in the 4 or 8 person rooms. [The Cube Hotel](#).

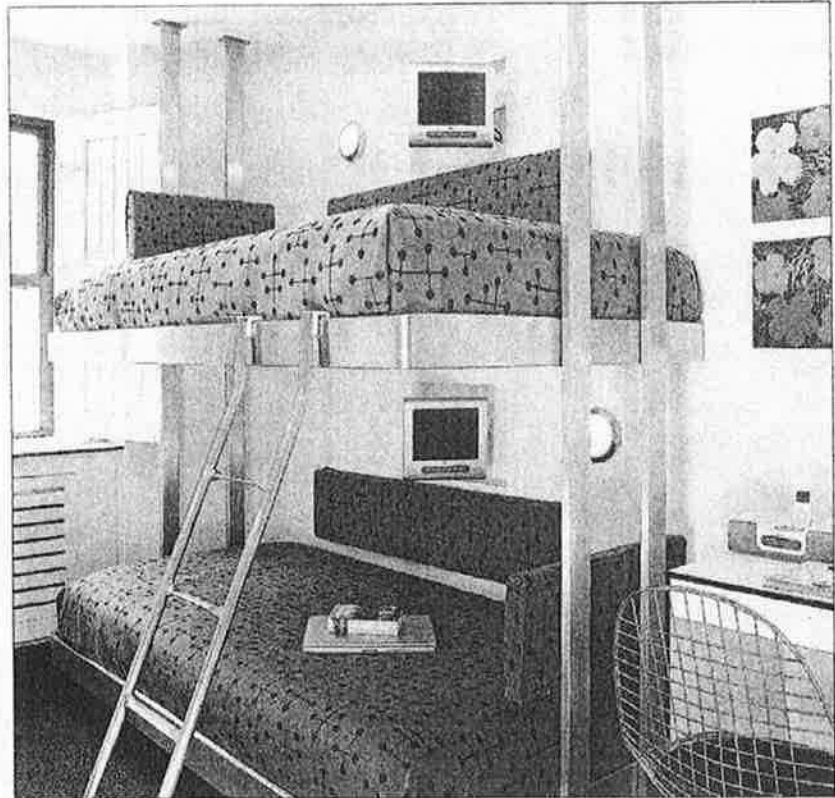
Qbic Hip Hotel: Set to open in Spring 2007 in Amsterdam and Antwerp this stylish new Benelux chain follows the cube concept, with tiny rooms smaller than 8 square yards. To make up for the lack of elbow room, guests enjoy perks such as extra long beds and LED mood lighting. Rates from 39 euros (around \$51) per night. [Qbic Hip Hotel](#).

February 2, 2007



Checking in

An occasional review of a hot new hotel



Built for Pod people: "Bunk Bed" rooms are short on space but long on chic. And each sleeper gets his own TV.

By Gene Sloan
USA TODAY

What's new: The Pod Hotel. New York

Claim to fame: The city's newest budget property

The scene: Finding a hotel in the heart of New York under \$100 a night isn't easy. Finding one with style? An almost impossible task — until now. Targeted at the "stylish spendthrift," the 1-month-old Pod Hotel in Midtown offers tiny-but-chic rooms (or "pods," as they call them) with shared baths for as little as \$89 a night. Rooms with private baths officially start at \$139, although they've been selling for as little as \$115 in recent weeks. Well located on 51st Street just a few blocks from the Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Center and Fifth Avenue shopping, the no-frills property, formerly the Pickwick Arms Hotel, is the latest creation of New York-based independent hotel operator BD Hotels, which is known for The Chambers, the

Maritime and The Mercer.

Who'll like it: Budget-conscious hipsters

Who won't: Light sleepers (not because of the sounds of New York, which are adequately muffled, but because of the endless opening and closing of the shared bathroom doors in the hallway; ask for a room at the ends of halls, where you don't hear it).

Bedding down: Rooms are tiny but hip with white walls, boxy minimalist blondewood furniture, Eames-inspired fabrics and a flat-screen TV anchored to the wall. High-tech touches include iPod docking stations and free WiFi Internet. Just don't expect 400-thread-count Frette linens and designer soaps. Behind the veneer of minimalist cool decor, this is a budget property, with thin sheets and motel-like toiletries appropriate for its price point. Bathrooms (in rooms that have them) are a marvel of space utilization, with tiny built-in sink areas made of stainless

steel, a small toilet and a super-narrow, subway-tiled shower (squeeze past the toilet to get in). It's cramped but cool.

Wining and dining: There's no in-house restaurant, but an outdoor garden and cafe will open in the spring. Dining and drinking out, however, is not a problem, thanks to plentiful coffee bars, take-out eateries and restaurants within a two-block radius.

Indulgences: Each of the beds in the space-saving "Bunk Bed" rooms (perfect for kids) has its own fold-out, flat-screen TV (just bring headphones if you plan to watch a different channel from your bunk-mate's).

Vital statistics: 347 rooms (152 of them share baths)

The deal: Rooms with shared baths start at \$89; rooms with private baths start at \$139.

Information: 800-742-5945; thepodhotel.com

August 2007



The Pod Hotel

230 E. 1st Street at Third Avenue, (1-212) 333-0100 or www.thepodhotel.com Subways: L, N, R to 72nd Street. Rates \$89 and up single; double-shared baths, \$133 and up private bath. Rooms 317. Credit AmEx, D.K., M.C.V.

The Pod Hotel opened in early 2007 and offers cheap and cheerful rooms, perfect for people who want a little style without the sky-high rates. The rooftop café is great for an afternoon snack. A short walk away you'll find the Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Center and plenty of shopping on Fifth Avenue. *See also 0117 Pod People.*

Pod people Travelers on a budget can bunk together in style at the recently opened Pod Hotel. Cramming yourself into a tiny hotel room is nothing new in New York, but at least you won't have to shell out all your hard-earned cash —rooms here start at the refreshingly low price of \$89. Amenities include tiny flat-screen TVs, iPods (naturally) and a rooftop café.

dwell

February 13, 2007

A (Small) Room at the Pod Hotel



A double room at the Pod Hotel

Text: Michael Cannell

Category: News / Permalink

A 100-square-foot hotel room for two may be a tough sell, even in New York. But the owners of the [Pod Hotel](#) are betting that even cubbyhole quarters can be a draw with the right design. The Pod Hotel opened last month in midtown Manhattan with 347 preposterously tiny rooms, many of them smaller than the bathrooms found in nearby luxury hotels.

The Pod Hotel is the first of its kind to open in the United States, though the concept is gaining momentum elsewhere. Capsule hotels have operated in Japan for more than two decades, and the stripped-down [easyHotel](#) opened in London in 2005. Later this year another London-based company called [Yotel](#) will offer sleeping compartments inside terminals at Heathrow and Gatwick, the two London airports. The compartments are designed by Priestman Goode, the design firm that helped create the interiors of Virgin Atlantic aircraft.

Like Yotel, the Pod Hotel borrows from transportation's efficient use of space. Bunk beds suggest sleeper cars on trains, and the 152 rooms without bathrooms have wall-mounted symbols turn green when a shared hallway bathroom is available, a detail borrowed from airplanes.

The hotel's architect, Vanessa Guilford, also provided a layer of mid-century styling. The

bedding has a dot pattern based on a signature design by Charles and Ray Eames, and the lobby has reproduction Florence Knoll sofas and club chairs. "The idea was to keep it all cheap and cheerful," Ms. Guilford said, "and to simplify it as much as possible."

The New York Times

HOUSE & HOME

January 4, 2007

CURRENTS



Photographs by Michael Weschler

HOTELS

For Budget-Minded Hipsters, Rooms That Economize on Space

Imagine if Ian Schrager opened a youth hostel. Such is the concept behind the Pod Hotel, which is opening on East 51st Street in stages this month, with rooms becoming available as they are completed.

Formerly the Pickwick Arms, a drab Midtown lodging, the Pod Hotel holds 347 rooms barely larger than walk-in closets. A 100-square-foot hotel room for two may be a tough sell, even in New York. But the owners are betting that guests (target age: 18 to 25) will overlook the cramped quarters if they offer high design at a low price. Rates start at \$89 a night for a compact single room, above left, made for the traveler who just wants to dive into bed.

"Our guest is the stylish spendthrift," said Richard Born, a principal of BD Hotels, which also owns Manhattan hotels like the Maritim and the Mercer.

The Pod Hotel is the first of its kind to open in the United States, though capsule hotels have operated in Japan for more than two decades. The stripped-down easyHotel opened in London in 2005, and the chain has since spread through Europe and Asia.

Vanessa Guilford, the Pod Hotel's designer, has echoed transportation's efficient use of space. Bunk beds suggest sleeper cars on trains, and in rooms without bathrooms, a symbol above the door turns green when a shared hallway bathroom is vacant — a detail borrowed from airplanes. Flip-down coat hooks are the same as those found on Amtrak trains.

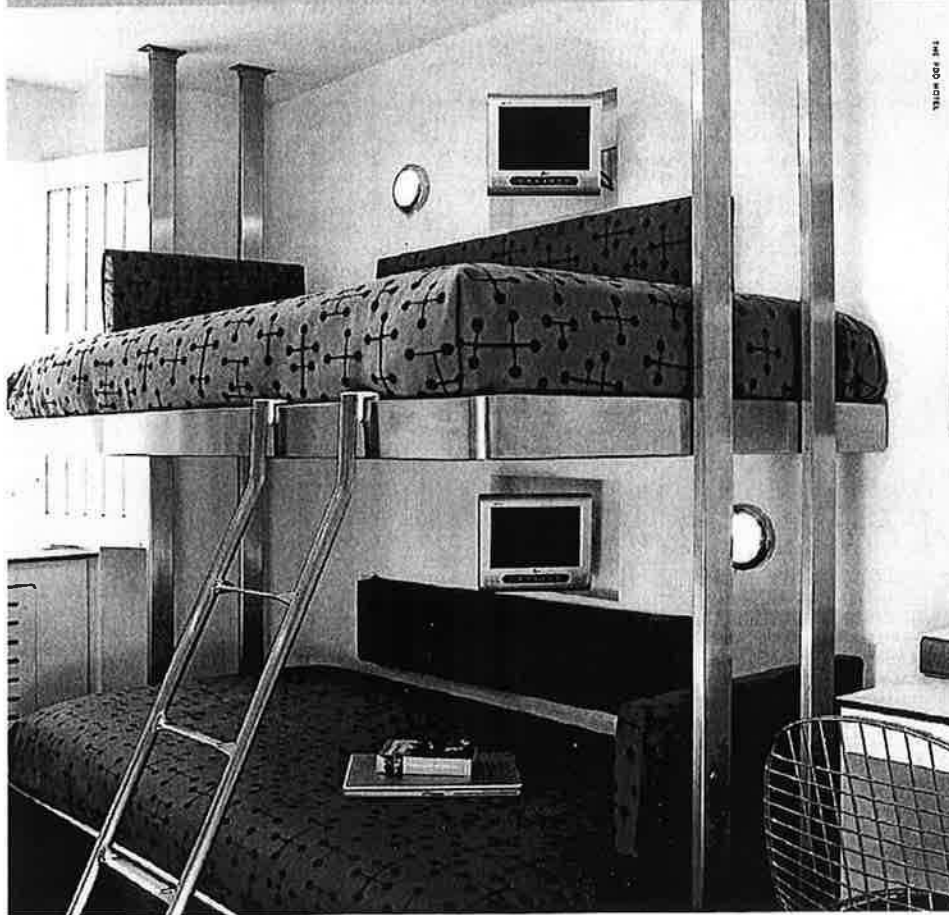
"The idea was to keep it all cheap and cheerful," Ms. Guilford said, "and to simplify it as much as possible." In the lounge, above right, a mural by James Rizzi sets the tone. The Pod Hotel is at 230 East 51st Street. For reservations, (212) 355-0300.

MICHAEL CANNELL

US AIRWAYS magazine

July 2007

ALL OVER THE MAP



NEW YORK

NIFTY (AND THRIFTY)

If you'd rather spend your cash on a new pair of shoes or on a visit to a hot restaurant instead of on an expensive place to stay, then you should check out **The Pod Hotel** on East 51st Street. Designer Vanessa Gullford took space-saving ideas from trains, planes, and boats to create these new streamlined

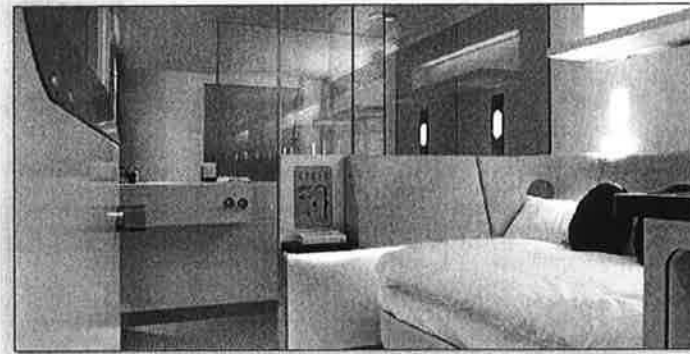
and affordable lodgings. Rooms feature simple, modern styling and plenty of 21st-century conveniences such as iPod docking stations, free Wi-Fi, and LCD-screen TVs. A rooftop deck with an outdoor garden and a cafe are set to open this summer. But the best part is the price: from \$89 a night for a room

with bunk beds to \$229 a night for the family-size Townhouse Studio. One note: 152 of the hotel's 347 units have shared bathrooms. The hotel's Web site features a blog where guests can share their stories, as well as information on free events and attractions around the city. Visit thepodhotel.com.

February 1, 2007

Hostel Treatment

Two new hotels go small, aim big



February 1, 2007—With seven-star resorts, underwater complexes, and bank-breaking room rates hogging headlines in the travel world, it's a surprise (and relief) to learn that not all new hotels are vying for the Russian oligarch market. Take the Pod Hotel, which opens this month in midtown Manhattan and offers rooms starting at a mere \$89 a night and ranging in size from 80 to 160 square feet, i.e., the area of a walk-in closet. We know what you're thinking, but the place actually punches above its weight. Designed by Vanessa Guilford, who helped shape the nautical aesthetic of the Maritime Hotel in New York, each "pod" boasts Eames-inspired furniture, an iPod docking station, LCD TV, and free Wi-Fi, and though the scene is more Semester at Sea than *QE2*, it's still a big step up from the Holiday Inn.

Over in London, meanwhile, the long-awaited, regrettably named Yotel hotel chain opens its first outpost in April. Located inside a terminal at Gatwick Airport, the Yotel's 100-square-foot rooms (above) feature full-size beds, flat-screen TVs, and rain-head showers, as well as decor ripped from a sci-fi movie. And since you can book a room in four-hour increments, you can duck in for a power nap on an extended layover. Look for more Yotel openings in Heathrow and central London later in the year, though—unless you're Rocky Balboa or a tragic white rapper—don't count on "yotel" getting any easier to say.

The Pod Hotel, rooms from \$89 a night, 230 E. 51st St., (212) 355-0300, www.thepodhotel.com. The Yotel at Gatwick Airport, rooms from \$80 a night, www.yotel.com.

Travel

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2007

Syndicated from The Washington Post to:

OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

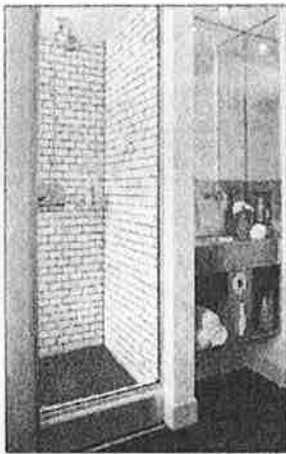
NYC's Pod Hotel: Little Rooms, Big City

It took all of five minutes at the Pod Hotel to see that its designer knows how to use space. The shower, desk and wash basin tucked neatly in corners. A pull-out drawer underneath the bed. Tiny hooks for jackets arranged along a wall.

At this new Midtown Manhattan property, efficiency is the mantra. The 347 diminutive guest rooms come in several smartly executed configurations. A compact rectangle with a twin bed would be fine for a solo traveler. Bunk beds (each with its own tiny television) are cool for pals on a road trip. Townhouse suites with fridges, queen-size beds and futons would be a nice fit for a small family. Guests can choose a room type and book it on the hotel's Web site or through the reservation desk.

New York hotel rooms tend to run smaller than in other American cities, and Pod rooms are on the snuggest end of the spectrum: They average 100 square feet, compared with an average U.S. hotel room size of 325 square feet (according to PricewaterhouseCoopers, a global services company).

But it's the rates — among the most affordable in New York for lodging of this quality — that give the Pod book-it-now appeal. Double rooms with a private bath start at \$109 a night, plus taxes, and a single with a shared bath goes for \$89. Prices may fluctuate according to season and demand, front desk manager



Baths are compact at the Pod Hotel, where the average room has 100 square feet.

Lee Schlesinger said, but he added that the Pod aims to remain cheaper than the competition. The average cost of a night's hotel room in New York was \$240 in 2006, by Pricewater-

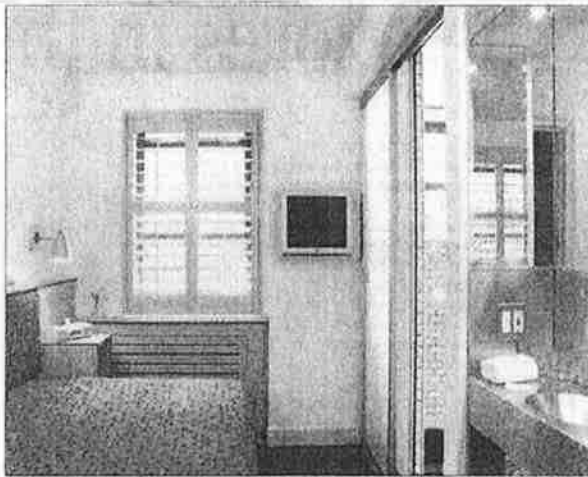
houseCoopers' account.

The Pod is proof that you can be hip on a budget. The rooms are all equipped with iPod docking stations, LCD televisions and free Wi-Fi. The bright lobby is dominated by an illuminated scalloped reception desk. The guest-room decor is an inviting mix of mod and 1950s retro styles — dotted bedspreads, chrome bathroom fixtures and rain-style showerheads.

More edgy features are planned, including self-service check-in kiosks in the lobby, a rooftop bar and an in-house blog where guests can swap travel tips.

Nonetheless, the hotel — which lacks a bar, restaurant and comfy couches in the lobby — is clearly better for travelers seeking a launch pad for exploring than a place to lounge around. The Pod was conceived with youthful adventurers in mind, Schlesinger said. The other guests I ran into in the lobby were part of that scene — a 20-something office manager from North Carolina visiting Manhattan for the first time, a young couple from Spain on a shopping trip, four girlfriends from Connecticut in town for a Broadway show.

The surrounding streets also have appeal. Near the corner of 51st Street and Second Avenue, the hotel is far enough from the Times Square hoopla to be quiet but still only a 20-minute walk to Broadway theaters. The Museum of Modern Art is a few blocks away. Sev-



Double rooms with private baths start at \$109 a night — cheap by New York standards.

eral cheap eats, including Pax Wholesome Foods, a chain property featuring healthy selections at affordable prices, are within a few blocks. Montparnasse, a French bistro-style restaurant next door, offers a three-course pre-theater dinner for \$22.95. Venturing around the city? The Lexington Avenue subway is a couple of blocks away.

Among the downsides: Almost half the rooms have shared baths, and the walls are thin enough that you hear doors shutting

down the hall. Recently transformed from the outdated Melwick Arms, the hotel is still in a state of transition. And you can't have much of a party in the lobby.

But that's small stuff. The Pod helps make a weekend in New York a little more affordable for travelers watching their budget.

— Gary Lee

Pod Hotel, 230 E. 51st St. between Second and Third avenues, 212-686-0300; www.podhotel.com

- *Alameda Times-Star (Alameda, CA)*
Circulation: 67,834
- *Argus (Hayward, CA)*
Circulation: 33,444
- *Connecticut Post (Bridgeport, CT)*
Circulation: 88,892
- *Daily Review (Hayward, CA)*
Circulation: 39,418
- *Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, CN)*
Circulation: 151,718
- *Gazette (Montreal, CN)*
Circulation: 142,867
- *Miami Herald (International Edition)*
Circulation: 5,994
- *New Hampshire (Sunday News)*
Circulation: 95,200
- *Pioneer Press (St. Paul, MN)*
Circulation: 251,565
- *Salt Lake Tribune (Salt Lake City, UT)*
Circulation: 7,158
- *San Francisco Chronicle*
Circulation: 434,881
- *San Mateo County (San Mateo, CA)*
Circulation: 35,656
- *Sunday Sentinel (Keene, NH)*
Circulation: 13,337
- *Sunday Times (Pleasanton, CA)*
Circulation: 42,501
- *The Oakland Tribune (Oakland, CA)*
Circulation: 65,213
- *The Sacramento Bee (Sacramento, CA)*
Circulation: 341,157
- *Today's New Herald (Lake Havasu City, AZ)*
Circulation: 7,889
- *Tri-Valley Herald (Pleasanton, CA)*
Circulation: 43,587
- *Vancouver Sun (Vancouver, CN)*
Circulation: 206,239
- *Windsor Star (Windsor, CN)*
Circulation: 80,000

(Reaching a total circulation of: 1,954,550)

The Guide to Modern Design

Metropolitan Home

25th Anniversary

July/August 2007

travelbuzz

Big Deals

Good things come in small packages, like these new hotels that provide a wealth of design to those with pint-size pocketbooks. By Katherine Lagomarsino



Yotel, London
 What do you get when you cross a first-class plane cabin with a Japanese capsule hotel? A 100-square-foot, thoughtfully arranged space with stylish touches: a double bed with luxury linens, an eat-in "grazing" menu with cabin service, a flat-screen TV and soundproof walls—all conveniently located in London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports. The hotel is perfect for the traveler with an early-morning flight or the weary business executive hoping to catch a rest before a meeting. From about \$50 for four hours or \$110 per night (Yotel.com).



The Pod Hotel, New York City
 Located in midtown Manhattan, it's just steps from the Museum of Modern Art and Rockefeller Center. Inside, the look is decidedly efficient (doubles are 10 by 12 feet) yet stylish with traces of pure luxury such as granite and marble showers, rain showerheads and stainless-steel sinks. The high-tech frills are of the sort that will actually be used: LCD TVs, an iPod docking station and free Wi-Fi access. What else would you expect from BD Hotels, the group responsible for some of the city's trendiest hostilities: the Chambers, the Marlene and the Mercer? From \$139 per night (230 E. 51st St.; 800/412-5945, ThePodHotel.com)

Hotel Indigo, Houston
 InterContinental Hotels has launched this new upscale brand, which takes a design detour from its more traditional siblings. Of the eight hotels in the mini-chain, one of the newest is in Texas's largest city, on Hidalgo Street near the Galleria shopping area. Although the rooms may be compact, perks include oversized beds, spa-style bathrooms and a vibrant, saturated color scheme featuring the predominant hue of, what else, indigo. Rooms begin at \$110 per night (5160 Hidalgo St.; 877/864-3440, HotelIndigo.com)



Everybody's Doing It

The well-designed budget hotel is taking off worldwide. Keep your eye out for these new lines, set to open in the coming months.

Aloft: In 2008, Starwood will launch a wallet-friendly version of the stylish W in several U.S. cities (StarwoodHotels.com/AloftHotels).

Qbic: The new European line to open in Amsterdam and Antwerp will feature Habitat beds and Philippe Starck fixtures, from about \$50 per night (QbicHotel.com).

Nylø: The hotel line (its first will be in the Dallas area) will offer exposed brick-and-glass public spaces and an entire hypoallergenic floor dedicated to allergy sufferers at less than \$150 per night (NyløHotels.com). ☞



February 28, 2007

Peas in a Pod

Hotel Networking in a Pod

The lack of living space in NYC can be a precarious thing.

You never know when a down-on-her-luck Lithuanian model who's fallen victim to a hotel reservation crisis needs to be put up for the night, while at the same time your friend visiting from out of town is taking up much of your precious square footage.

One might suggest the newest (and may we add, the most cost-effective) solution to this dilemma: *The Pod Hotel*.



Recently soft opened, The Pod Hotel (formerly the Pickwick Arms) has transformed its rooms into futuristic closets of luxury that cost you anywhere from \$89 to \$179, though prices can vary based on the season.

The "pods" come in different sizes varying from nostalgic bunk beds to twin double beds, but we recommend the "spacious" Queen rooms, which typically have a \$169 price tag and the largest beds in the facility. And the in-room flat-screen LCD TV, free Wi-Fi and bedside iPod docking stations will perfectly complement nightly shower concerts under glorious rain-like showerheads.

With a roof-deck bar and lounge opening this spring and an "inter-Pod" social network in the works so you can see who's staying in the hotel ahead of time, you can rest easy knowing that your friend is in good hands.

Which frees you to carry out your social duty of rescuing homeless models everywhere.

The Pod Hotel, 230 E. 51st St (between 2nd and 3rd Aves), 212-355-0300, thepodhotel.com

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Los Angeles Times

TRAVEL

January 21, 2007

TRAVEL LOG

Paying to reach the gate faster

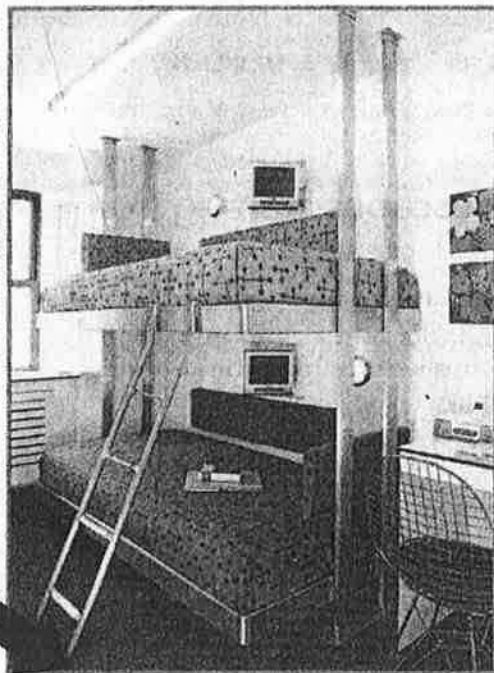
WANT to get through airport security faster? That will cost you, under a program that claims to expedite your trip through checkpoints and that is going nationwide.

Registered Traveler permits fliers who hold a special ID card to skip certain security steps or get in faster lines at Transportation Security Administration checkpoints.

To qualify for the cards, fliers must file an application and agree to be fingerprinted and have their irises scanned (for biometric identification). They must also agree to background checks and to pay \$99.95 per year.

More than 30,000 people participate at Orlando International Airport in Florida, where the program began in 2005.

Registered Traveler was to have expanded last week to Terminal 7 at New York's JFK airport and to Indianapolis. This week, the service is to debut in San Jose and Cincinnati, said journalist and entrepreneur Steven Brill, chief executive of



Pod Hotel

STYLE: Guestrooms at the Pod Hotel in New York go for as little as \$75 per night.

Verified Identity Pass Inc. in New York.

Brill's company, one of several government-authorized vendors, is the only one that has implemented the program, which it calls Clear.

The program has drawn fire from privacy advocates and from the airline industry, which says it will divert TSA resources from other screening duties. The TSA has said it will not compromise airport security.

Brill said no date had been set for LAX to

adopt the ID program. Info: www.flyclear.com.

— JANE ENGLE

N.Y. lodging on shoestring

A mainstay of cheap sleeps in Manhattan is getting a hip makeover while remaining affordable.

The Pickwick Arms in Midtown East is now the Pod Hotel, with 347 guestrooms going for as little as \$75 per

night. That's less than what the nearby Courtyard New York Manhattan/Midtown East (\$259) and even the Vanderbilt YMCA (\$83) wanted for a Jan. 29 stay. (These rates, checked online, may no longer be available.)

Amenities include free WiFi, iPod docking stations, LCD-screen TVs, a restaurant and, soon, a rooftop lounge and a garden.

The downside? Guestrooms, many with shared baths and bunk beds, are as tiny as 90 square feet. Rates are higher than at Hostelling International New York City, which was asking \$25 per night for a dorm bed for Jan. 29. (You would also be dozens of blocks away, on West 103rd.)

The Pod, run by BD Hotels, which owns the Mercer, the Chambers and other New York hotels, is aimed at ages 20 to 35, its owners say. But anyone seeking style on a shoestring is welcome. (800) 742-5945, www.thepodhotel.com.

— JANE ENGLE

Getting in on film festival

WITH Oscar nomination buzz as backdrop, the Santa Barbara International Film

Festival kicks off 11 days of premieres, panels, parties and prizes starting Thursday.

The renovated Fours Seasons Biltmore (1888) 424-5866; www.fourseasons.com/santabarbara) in Montecito promises three nights of red-carpet-type treatment Thursday through Saturday for \$18,635, starting with a helicopter ride from LAX to Santa Barbara.

The rest: meals; daily spa treatments for two; limousine rides to the film festival; hairstyling and more on awards day; an unlimited pass to the festival and related events; and more.

Nearby San Ysidro Ranch (1805) 565-1703; www.sanysidroranch.com) has less pricey treats starting at \$4,999 for two, which includes three nights in a restored suite, tickets to opening night film and gala, six tickets to screenings and more. The offer is good Thursday through Saturday.

Specials at Hotel Santa Barbara (1800) 549-9869; www.hotelsantabarbara.com) begin at \$285 for two, which includes a one-night stay, dinner and four film admission tickets. For more hotel-film packages and festival information, go to www.sbiff.org.

— BENOIT LEBOURGEOIS

DAILY NEWS

June 24, 2007

Seek inner peas at Pod Hotel

East Side rooms are a tight fit but won't squeeze the budget

BY NICOLE CARTER
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

THE POD PEOPLE have arrived — the Pod Hotel people, that is.

The hip new hotel nuzzled between Second and Third Aves. on 51st St. in Manhattan offers travelers the opportunity to board in style without breaking their budget.

With rooms starting at \$89 a night, the Pod Hotel is the first in the U.S. to tout the power of the "pod," a concept that promotes socializing between guests and maximizes small spaces.

And, yes, a majority of the rooms are small.

But general manager David Bernstein insists that's not a problem. "Sure, we could have knocked down some walls to make bigger rooms at \$400-500 a night," he explained. "But we knew we had a market here, so we left the rooms as the sizes they are and charged less."

The 347-room hotel, formerly the Pickwick Arms Hotel, is redecked in mod furnishings and must-have amenities: flat-screen TVs, free wireless Internet and iPod docking stations in every room.

The concept for the Pod Hotel comes from smaller, doorless rooms designed for travelers in Japan, but built here with more privacy.

The smallest rooms are



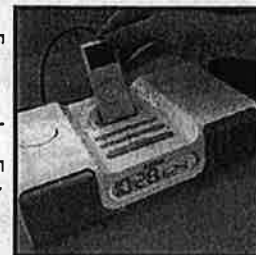
News reporter Nicole Carter watches TV from Pod Hotel bunk. Photos by Tanya Braganti

about 100 square feet. They include bunk beds and a transit-inspired vanity station that looks like a cleaner version of an airplane sink. Single rooms and bunk bed rooms don't have private bathrooms — a sign above the door lights up to let you know which of the four shared bathrooms are occupied.

Double rooms, priced at \$139 a night for about 150 square feet, come with a private bathroom, bigger flat-

AMENITIES

- Home docking station: Plug in your iPod (photo, r.) and keep your favorite music with you when you're away from home.
- Vanity: Sink stocked with towels and soap.
- Flat-screen TV: LCD TVs on flexible mounts in every room.
- Directions: On the back of every door, a reminder to "Make room for fun."



screen TV and more storage space as the bed frame provides drawers.

Outside the pods, the lobby features ample schmoozing room with chairs and couches, a spacious outdoor cafe, and an airy rooftop deck.

And lone voyagers worry not, the hotel provides a community blog where you can link up with other travelers and reserves large tables at neighborhood restaurants — in case you're without a dinner date.

ncarter@nydailynews.com



March 25, 2007

THE REMIX

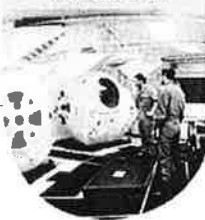
Capsule Collection

Pod hotels — a new wave of budget accommodations offering a pint-size, though not unstylish, place to rest one's head — are landing everywhere. How did it happen? Here, one plausible theory. **ARIC CHEN**



1967 In Montreal, the architect Moshe Safdie unveils Habitat 67, a spectacular stack of concrete housing units that unleashes a passion for modular living.

1968 Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey" puts three crew members in hibernation capsules. If they can do it for months, a night or two can't be bad.



1973 The economist E. F. Schumacher publishes his book "Small is Beautiful," inspiring a movement

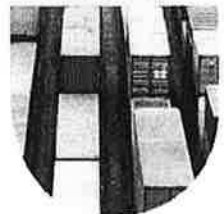


1977 Kisho Kurokawa designs the Capsule Inn Osaka, considered the first pod hotel. It looks like a morgue, but guests still squeeze in today.



1991 Ian Schrager's Paramount Hotel opens in New York. With its very, very boutique rooms, it proves that swank wins over square footage.

Late '90s Globalization, sustainability and design converge as architects start a fad for shipping containers repurposed as housing.



2007 Small is groovy. Cheap is cheerful. Pod hotels take over the world: joining easyHotel (above left), in London and Basel, are Yotel, inside London airports (www.yotel.com); Cube (above right); backpacker bunkhouses in Austria (www.cube-hotels.com); Qbic, in Antwerp and Amsterdam (www.qbichotels.com); and the new Pod Hotel in Manhattan (www.pickwickarms.com).



2003 Isaac Mizrahi hits the Target with his first collection for the discount giant, pulling fashionistas and the masses into that realm where high meets low.

2001 Sleek, stylish, small and portable, the iPod makes its debut. Enough said.



1999 JetBlue launches, replicating Southwest's budget, no-frills formula — but with the frills. Parsimonious travelers everywhere rejoice.



The New York Times

January 21, 2007

SQUARE FEET

CHECKING IN

How Long Can the Hotel Industry Stay in High Gear?

By ALISON GREGOR

THE hotel industry has made a stellar comeback since bottoming out about five years ago, with occupancy and room rates rising sharply nationwide. Analysts expect another strong year in 2007, though they caution that the opening of hotels planned when the industry began its expansion may cool off the market.

"What we've had the past three years were really exceptional levels of growth that we haven't seen since the early 1980s," said Bjorn Hanson, a principal at PricewaterhouseCoopers, which tracks the hotel industry.

"This year we may not see the increasing pricing power that we had in 2006, but it's still a very impressive forecast," Mr. Hanson said. He predicted that revenue earned per hotel room would increase 5.9 percent this year, compared with about 8 percent annually from 2004 through 2006.

Revenue gains have been driven largely by rising room rates, which reached a national average of \$17.35 a night from January to November 2006, up 7 percent from \$16.16 in the comparable period of 2005, according to the most recent data from PricewaterhouseCoopers. In Manhattan, the average room rate climbed to \$259.21 a night, also through November 2006, up 12.9 percent from \$228.64 in the same period in 2005.

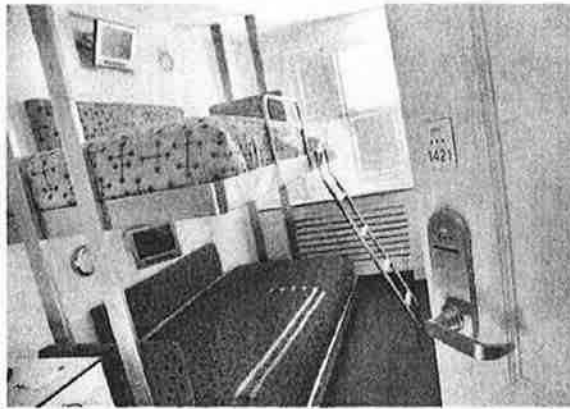
Consumer demand for hotels should stay robust in 2007, analysts say, as long as the economy and corporate profits remain strong. A weak dollar is also helping to attract foreign travelers, while prompting more Americans to travel domestically instead of abroad, they added.

But rising room rates may not be helping some luxury hotels. "High pricing has caused some trading down," Mr. Hanson said, noting that, nationwide, some of the less expensive upscale brands like Courtyard by Marriott have managed to attract more guests. "It isn't that the luxury segments lost business," he said. "But due to large rate increases, they just didn't gain some of the business anticipated."

Some hotel analysts said they feared that pricing in New York City, in particular, where room rates soared almost 30 percent in 2005 and 2006, may begin to drive away some customers.

"When you talk to meeting planners and business travel coordinators, there really is a perception out there that New York has gotten to be, in some cases, prohibitively expensive," said John A. Fox, a senior vice president at PKF Consulting, which specializes in hotels.

The lodging industry in New York City, though, has been remarkably resilient since 2001, when the market was weakened by the



Among the recently opened hotels in Manhattan is the Pod Hotel, above and right, with bunk beds, some shared baths and a roof deck. A redesign of the former Pickwick Arms, it is aimed at young travelers. Soon to open as a boutique hotel is the Hotel 1373 Fifth Avenue, at left.



Photographs by Patrick J. Murphy for The New York Times. Bottom left, Douglas Chowdhury/The New York Times

dot-com bust and the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. Some hotels went out of business, while others converted to residential condominiums, taking an estimated 4,000 rooms off the market and leading to the run-up in room prices.

At the same time, high prices for land and surging construction costs have thwarted hotel development, making existing hotels more valuable, analysts added.

As a result, the price of hotel sales has risen sharply. "In 2002, I could count on one hand how many hotel sales there were in Manhattan," said Dan Fasulo, director of market analysis for Real Capital Analytics, which follows the commercial real estate market.

Last year, 19 hotels changed hands, representing about \$2.9 billion in sales volume

and more than 4,500 units, Mr. Fasulo said.

Ishtimhar Hotels, which is controlled by the royal family of Dubai, was the largest buyer of commercial real estate in Manhattan last year, with \$2.1 billion worth of acquisitions, according to Real Capital Analytics. The transactions included the purchase of the 270-room W New York Union Square for \$755 million and a 12 percent interest in the 208-room Mandarin Oriental, New York, said Ishtimhar, which put the Mandarin's value at \$340 million.

Nolan Hecht, director of the hospitality transactions group at Cushman & Wakefield, the commercial real estate brokerage firm, said the fast pace of sales should continue in 2007.

"I expect even Manhattan hotel owners,

who were typically long-term generational holders, to be tempted by the current valuations, which make it an overwhelmingly compelling issue to liquidate," he said.

An estimated 3,500 hotel rooms are proposed for development in 2007 in New York City, about two-thirds of them in Manhattan, which has a total of about 65,000, Mr. Fox said.

Dean Schwank, a senior vice president at the Urban Land Institute, said that conversions into condominiums had significantly reduced the number of full-service hotels, leaving the sector ripe for developers. "There will be more full-service development planned for prime locations in 2007," he said.

The hotels scheduled to open this year in New York City are relatively small. Mr.

Hanson said, the largest being the 287-room Plaza, which will reopen after being shut in 2006 to convert much of the structure into condos. Though the city is seeking a developer to build a hotel for the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, it is not anticipated to open until 2010; it would have about 1,500 rooms.

Some analysts say there may be overbuilding of limited-service and resort hotels in some parts of the country. But small, independent properties called boutique hotels, which offer specially designed rooms and upscale amenities, remain popular in major cities that attract international travelers, noted Daniel H. Lesser, a senior managing director with the hospitality group at CB Richard Ellis, the commercial real estate brokerage firm. "They've become very much an accepted hotel product that travelers feel comfortable with," he said.

The Hotel 1373 Fifth Avenue, at 25th Street in Manhattan, is a boutique property that is opening this month. The hotel, with 70 rooms, will be managed by the Magna Hospitality Group and was created by Sam Chang, a property developer who has been banking to create midmarket, budget and limited-service hotels in the city.

With free wireless Internet, iPod docking stations and flat-screen televisions, the hotel aims to attract professionals, said Peter Bode, the director of sales. Rooms are priced at \$149 to \$299 a night.

"We thought there was strong potential for a midmarket, nonbranded boutique hotel in that neighborhood," Mr. Bode said.

Already open in Manhattan is the Pod Hotel, a 317-room property developed by BD Hotels, the boutique specialist. The hotel, a redesign of the former Pickwick Arms at 210 East 51st Street between Second and Third Avenues, is larger than most boutiques but shares many of their features. It is aiming to lure travelers ages 26 to 35 with rates starting at \$39 a night. There are bunk beds and shared baths for some units, as well as iPod docking stations, free wireless Internet and flat-screen TVs.

New hotel brands, many created to attract young guests, have been proliferating, Mr. Hanson said. About two dozen hotel brands have been proposed for the United States in the last five years, including Hyatt Place, introduced by the Hyatt Corporation, and Element, owned by Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide.

"There are so many of these start-up brands that there will be some consolidation," he said. "The good news is that these brands are being introduced at a time when there's accelerating construction."



March 27, 2007

Slide Show

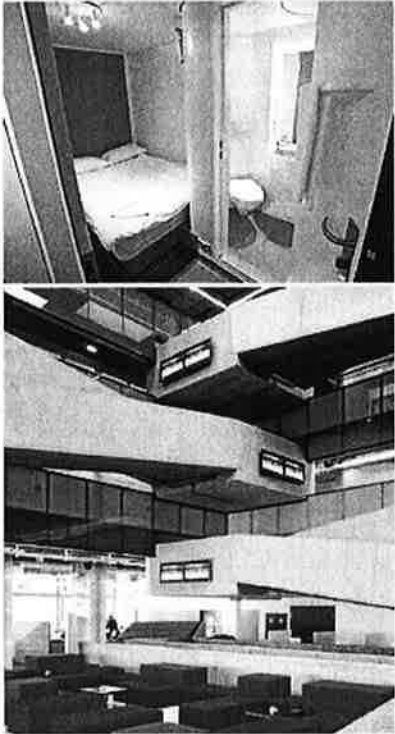


**THE REMIX
Pod Hotels**

A new wave of budget accommodations are landing everywhere. How did it happen? Here, one plausible story.

The New York Times
ON THE WEB

TO BEGINNING PREVIOUS



2007 Small is groovy. Cheap is cheerful. Pod hotels take over the world: joining easyHotel (top), in London and Basel, are Yotel, inside London airports (www.yotel.com); Cube (bottom), backpacker bunkhouses in Austria (www.cube-hotels.com); Qbic, in Antwerp and Amsterdam (www.qbichotels.com); and the new Pod Hotel in Manhattan (www.pickwickarms.com)

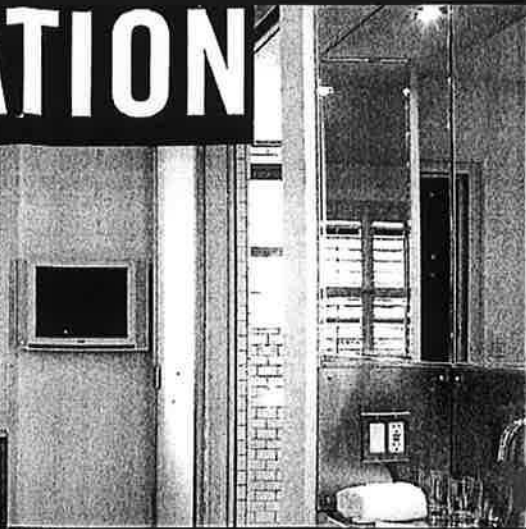
Courtesy of easyHotel (top); Eduard Hueber

Z!nk

the element of style

July 2007

VAPORIZATION

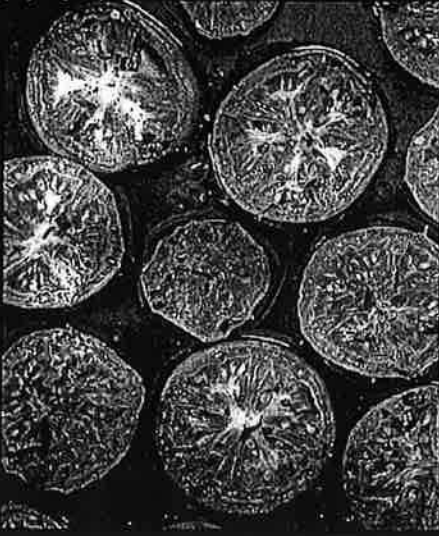


MY-POD

Budget travel steps up a notch when the new Pod Hotel hatches in NYC. A leap above the hostel route, The Pod Hotel adds amenities like iPod docking stations, free WiFi, LCD-screen televisions and a POD community blog. You can even bond with fellow thrifty travelers on the rooftop deck or community café. Add the streamlined, efficient design of Vanessa Guilford, and even the economy-sized rooms seem like a style choice. ThePodHotel.com

THE SIMPLE LIFE

In the old days, ladies needed to know how to cook so they could snag a husband. While the days of hubby snagging may be gone, it's nice to imagine sitting down every night to a home-cooked meal. Problem is, this fantasy only exists if you learn basic culinary skills. Luckily, a new cookbook, appropriately titled *The Basics: The Techniques of Continental Cooking* by Filip Verheyden and Tony Le Duc, teaches simple cooking with tips on everything from poaching an egg to preparing the perfect soufflé. Homarus.be



GIVE ME FEVER

Nothing kills a buzz more than an inferior drink. And top-shelf liquor can only do so much when a simple thing like cheap tonic ruins a stiff cocktail. Fever-Tree hopes to guard against this catastrophe with a new line of artisanal mixers worthy of pairing with the finest of spirits. Available in premium Indian tonic water, ginger ale, club soda and bitter lemon, they contain natural botanicals and spring water. With the mixer tasting so good, you almost don't need the liquor. Fever-Tree.com

The Miami Herald

June 7, 2007

NEW YORK

Here are the newest bright lights in the big city

Manhattan's newest hotels cater to niche travelers — and those who bring their iPods.

BY LISA ABEHO
Special to The Miami Herald

NEW YORK — Flat screen TVs and high thread counts are so 2005.

In the ever-competitive world of New York City hotels, the one feature a new hotel must have, from all appearances, is an iPod dock.

A niche helps too, of course. With its operatic design — including walls dripping with contemporary art — and deeply luxurious rooms, Ian Schrager's Gramercy Park Hotel, for example, is clearly tailored to those higher altitudes where extreme beauty meets extreme wealth. But the Gramercy Park is not alone.

Aimed at subgroups that range from Macy's shoppers to history buffs, the hotels that opened in Manhattan in the past year mostly cater to very particular audiences. All of whom, apparently, travel with their iPods.

A few notables, from uptown to downtown:

POD HOTEL

Popular with young Europeans and families, the new Pod hotel does the seemingly impossible, offering clean, functional rooms with a touch of Ikea style at (relatively — this is still New York) low prices.

As you might expect for a hotel named Pod, the rooms are small, but they are well-designed, with bedding that zips into bright twill covers for tidiness' sake, flat-screen TVs (two in the rooms that have bunk beds — one on each level), and free wireless connections.

Those on a tight budget can opt for a room with a shared bath — a light in the rooms lets you know when the individually-sized, spotlessly clean toilet and shower rooms are unoccupied. Rooms with private baths are bigger, and more popular with Americans.

A rooftop deck, complete with happy hour and video camera that will stream the action onto screens in the lobby, opens this summer. In the meantime, a gaggle of British girls hang out in the convivial public space, talking excitedly about where they will go for waffles.

Pod Hotel: 230 E. 53rd St.; 212-355-0300 or 800-742-5945; www.thepodhotel.com. Prices start at \$109 for a single with shared bath, and \$189 for a double with private bath.



SARA FLECKMAN/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

NEW TO NYC: The Pod Hotel, above, is popular with young Europeans and families. At right, the Night Hotel is made up to look like a trendy nightclub with a dramatic black and white interior.



August 2007

Best of New York: Hotels

The Pod Hotel

Formerly the stodgy Pickwick Arms, the Pod Hotel is "hostelling for the 21st century, updated for global flashpackers."—Jay Cooke. 347 rooms, some with bunk beds and shared baths. A tech haven: iPod docks, Wi-Fi, dimmer-controlled lights, LCD TVs. Bold furnishings. 230 E. 51st St.; tel. +1 212 355 0300.
www.pickwickarms.com

The Miami Herald

April 5, 2007

DESTINATIONS



NEW YORK THE FRUGAL HIPSTER

It took all of five minutes at the Pod Hotel to see that its designer knows how to use space. The shower, desk and wash basin tucked neatly in corners. A drawer underneath the bed. At this new Midtown Manhattan property, efficiency is the mantra. The 347 diminutive guest rooms come in several smartly executed configurations. A compact rectangle with a twin bed would be fine for a solo traveler. Bunk beds - each with its own tiny TV - are cool for pals on a road trip. Suites with fridge, queen-size bed and futon would be a nice fit for a small family. But it's the rates - among the most affordable in New York for lodging of this quality - that give the Pod book-it-now appeal. Double rooms with a private bath start at \$109 a night, plus taxes. A single with a shared bath goes for \$89. And of course, all rooms are equipped with iPod docking stations.

Details: Pod Hotel, 230 E 51st St. between Second and Third avenues. 212-355-0300 or 800-742-5945; www.pickwickarms.com.

- WASHINGTON POST SERVICE

SARA FREDERICK/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

SOUTH CAROLINA HOT EXHIBITS

Got a burning desire to learn about the history of fire-fighting? Opening later this month is the North Charleston and American LaFrance Fire Museum and Educational Center. It will house a collection of 18 antique firetrucks, a hand-operated fire pump and two horse-drawn steam engines. Among the exhibits are a movie theater, a talking robot and the Great Escape, which gives young visitors the chance to experience the thrill of flying down a fire pole.

Details: The museum is scheduled to open April 28, and its website, www.legacyheroes.org, is under construction. For information about visiting the Charleston area, www.charlestoncvb.com or 843-853-8000.



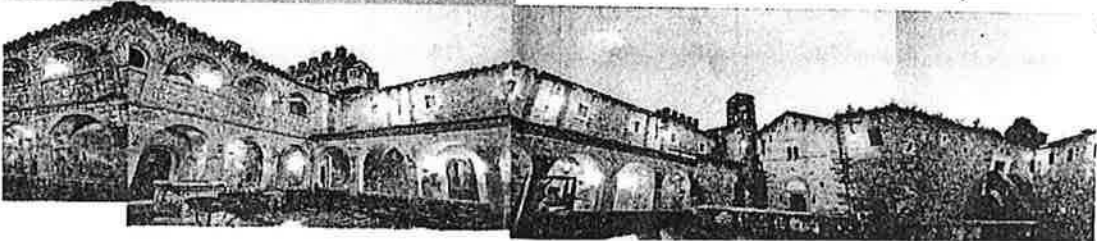
TOMAS VAN HOUTRUYE FOR THE NEW TIMES

BELGIUM GOOD SPORTS

The European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation has awarded the 2007 European gay and lesbian games to Antwerp. The organizing EuroGames Team Antwerp expects 3,000 sporty types and thousands of supporters to flock to the city July 12-15 for a program of volleyball, football, style dancing, swimming, badminton, wrestling, hockey and bowling. In addition to the athletics, the city hosts the Zomer van Antwerpen world music and theater festival July 2-Aug. 2.

Details: www.eurogames.org/2007.

COMPILED BY CHARLES BUHMAN/MIAMI HERALD STAFF



Hotel Business

THE NEWSPAPER FOR LODGING DECISION MAKERS

VOL. 16 NO. 5 MARCH 7-20, 2007

March 2007

10 HB • March 7-20, 2007

HOTEL BUSINESS® News

A room with a queen bed at the Pod Hotel in New York, which was formerly known as the Pickwick Arms.



BD Hotels opens budget Pod Hotel in NY with high style, design

By Bruce Serlen

NEW YORK—It would be a novel idea for any major U.S. market, but for New York, the country's largest hotel market, it might seem obvious. BD Hotels' Pod Hotel on East 74th Street, which opened in January, is a hip budget hotel with a percentage of its 147 rooms offering bunk beds and shared bathrooms and starting at a rate of \$89 a night.

The design is stylish and highly functional, according to Richard Born, a co-founder of BD Hotels along with Tra-

Drucker. All rooms feature iPod docking stations, LCD televisions, flat-screen flat-bedded rooms and complimentary wireless high-speed Internet access.

Warty 13 blocks in New York, the BD portfolio ranges from luxury—the Mercer and the Chambers—to the more mid-priced Wellington and a Holiday Inn. But the Pod, which was formerly the Pickwick Arms, is still in a class by itself.

"Yet a lot of the projects we've done are in a class by themselves when we built them," Born said. "The Pod just emphasizes this even more by being the op-

posite end of the spectrum than, say, the Mercer. The common denominator is their use of style and design within their price category to create a product that the marketplace believes to have value."

In developing the hotel, the partners had a choice. "We could have taken the 80,000-square-foot building and taken the 100 to 150 rooms and made up approximately 170 traditional hotel rooms. That shows it laid out," Born noted. The cost of doing that would have probably been at least \$10 million more than the cost of our renovation because we would have had to gut out the entire building.

The project made sense in terms of the potential return on investment. "On a dollar-for-dollar basis, the hotel should generate more money than if we reduced the number of keys by almost two-thirds," Born said.

In addition to 90 rooms with bunk beds, room configurations include singles, dou-

bles and queens (many with private baths).

There's also an advantage in standing out from the crowd. "If we built a traditional hotel with 300 square-foot rooms, for example, we'd be competing with everyone else in the neighborhood," he said. "We'd still do OK, but we'd have to sit there and wouldn't have built a product that's in a class by itself from a competitive point of view. Because the Pod was different, there's been a lot of interest in what we're doing."

The hotel's hip, minimalist design by Vanessa Carlton became a key differentiator. "What's so special about the Pod isn't that it's the cheapest place to stay," Born noted. "Rather, it's an affordable place where it's not just a bed, a designed environment, where the technology can stay and feel good that they're staying in a stylish hotel, albeit in the Mercer or the Chambers."

continued on page 14

BD Hotels exploring possibility of bringing Pod concept to other markets

continued from page 10

People today like to stay in environments that say something about themselves, Born believes. "The hotel either expresses their own image of themselves or projects an image of themselves. At the Pod, people on a budget can say here and still say, 'Hey, I am current. I am stylish. I am sophisticated.'"

The name Pod was chosen precisely because of its hip and technology overtones. "If you thought you were making a reservation at the Pickwick Arms and didn't know what we were about, there'd

be some understandable confusion. By calling ourselves the Pod Hotel, you get it right away," he said. "And even though the hotel is designed with a young traveler demographic in mind, that doesn't mean that people in their 50s and 60s wouldn't want to stay here."

While the hotel was in development and since it's been open, Born and Drucker have been contacted by developers in other cities about the possibility of building additional Pod Hotels. "I certainly it's going to be real estate driven," Born said. "It would be difficult economically to build a Pod from the ground up, for example, because if you're invest-

ing that much money, it might make more sense to build a full-service hotel."

Regulatory issues are likely to come up. "We're not even sure you can build rooms without bathrooms in many areas. I know you can no longer do it in New York," Born explained.

Aesthetically, conversions make more sense for the Pod Hotel than a new build would, he added. "The end key is to start with something—a former job, a YMCA or a Single Room Occupancy building—that you can make affordable, but still stylish," he said. "They also need to have a large enough number of keys for their economics to work."



Room configurations at the new Pod Hotel in New York include bunk-bedded rooms.

Los Angeles Times

July 26, 2007

Capsule reviews of Europe & New York pod hotels

Diminutive digs.

By John Lee, Special to The Los Angeles Times
July 26, 2007



Yotel: The Yotel that opened in Britain last month is in the international arrivals hall, South Terminal, Gatwick Airport; 011-44-20-7100-1100, www.yotel.com. Rooms start at \$51 for four hours, \$113 for overnight. Premiums start at \$82 for four hours, \$170 a night. Yotel is scheduled to open a Heathrow Airport outlet in August 2007, and rumors persist that its first overseas foray will land at

Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport later this year.

Qbic: Amsterdam is already home to Qbic, a designer pod property with a similarly futuristic look. Rooms start at \$54, and upcoming outlets are planned for Antwerp, Belgium, and Maastricht, Netherlands. 011-31-43-321-1111, www.qbichotels.com.

➔ **Pod Hotel:** Not to be outdone in the tiny stakes, New York's East 51st Street is home to the Pod Hotel where lounge-y, mod-style rooms start at \$89. (800) 742-5945, www.thepodhotel.com.

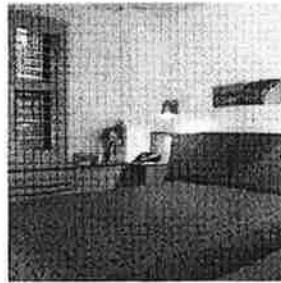
Base2Stay : A little more high-end, central London is home to the recently opened Base2Stay, which offers small rooms with designer flourishes, optional kitchenettes and rates from \$165 a night. www.base-2-stayhotel.co.uk.

EasyHotel: London also has three small-format, low-cost easyHotels combining windowless rooms and basic amenities from \$51 per night. There's also a Basel, Switzerland, property and another planned for Budapest, Hungary, this year. Information: www.easyhotel.com.

ARRAY

INSIDE THE NEW YORK DESIGN CENTER

May/June/July 2007



The Pod Hotel

230 East 51st Street, 212.355.0300

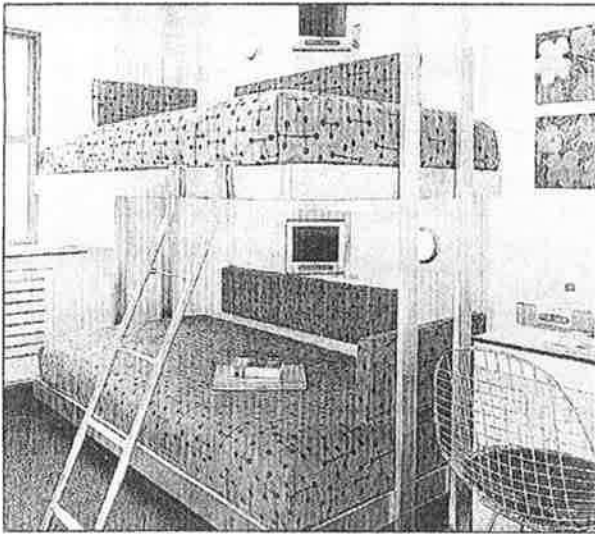
www.thepodhotel.com

Traveling comfortably, compactly and with your iPod is usually the most ideal way to go. Now take that concept to your destination hotel and you have the Pod Hotel, the new boutique hotel founded by Richard Born and owned and operated by BD Hotels. The pod-sized rooms which come in several configurations are fitted with iPod docking stations, free WiFi and LCD screen televisions. Designer Vanessa Guilford, whose resume includes work on the Maritime Hotel, was inspired by the use of the space in mass transit — you'll see how some rooms resemble a larger-sized stylish sleeper train cabin, and how the idea of occupied signs in airplanes are used for shared bathrooms. If you want to stretch your legs a little farther, the hotel has a mod lounge which holds a collection of mid-century furniture and that opens to an outdoor area, plus a recreational roof deck. The Pod Hotel caters to the young traveler (rates start at \$89) and "the traveler who appreciates aesthetics, adventure and the experiences of the city over a lavish hotel room." Still, the hotel offers great amenities and is a worthy place to rest your head in style.

Newsday

(New York)

March 4, 2007



Pod Hotel rooms include iPod docking stations.

Pod people get style on a shoestring

A mainstay of cheap sleeps in Manhattan is getting a hip makeover while remaining affordable.

The Pickwick Arms in Midtown East is now the Pod Hotel, with 347 guest rooms going for as little as \$75 a night. That's less than the nearby Courtyard New York Manhattan / Midtown East (\$259) and even the Vanderbilt YMCA (\$83) wanted for a Jan. 29 stay. (These rates, checked online, may no longer be available.)

Amenities include free WiFi, iPod docking stations, LCD-screen TVs, a restaurant and, soon, a rooftop lounge and a garden.

The downside? Guest rooms, many with shared baths and bunk beds, are as tiny as 90 square feet. Rates are higher than at Hostelling International New York City, which was asking \$25 a night for a dorm bed for Jan. 29. (You

also would be dozens of blocks away, on West 103rd.)

The Pod, run by BD Hotels, which owns the Mercer, the Chambers and other New York hotels, is aimed at visitors from age 20 to 35, its owners say. But anyone seeking style on a shoestring is welcome.

— *The Los Angeles Times*

The Pod Hotel, 230 E. 51st St.
800-742-5945,
thepodhotel.com

► JOIN UP

► THE DEAL

► THE VAULT

► REACH OUT



March 26, 2007

Hosting an out-of-town guest can drive nails into your soul -- whether it's planning his evening, or sitting on his face because you've forgotten he's commandeered your couch. Avoid this predicament and put him in The Pod.



Created by the Maritime guys, the Pod's a slicked-up budget hotel with high-tech rooms that cost less than drinks at the Maritime. Basic rates range from \$99 for a shared-bathroom Single, up to \$199 for a bathroomed "Double Double" or Queen -- ideal for college roommates, or the parents who crash at your place because it's "practical", not because your dad's a failure. Each room's equipped with flat screens and iPod docks to keep your people occupied/vegetative during the day. At night, the concierge can secure them dinner reservations, or even entrance into clubs -- with no stressful tour guide responsibilities, you'll be free to enjoy their companionship, or ditch them for a better crowd.

To further distinguish themselves from lesser/filthier budget places, The Pod's installing a lobby lounge -- it won't be serving 'til June, so for now it's BYOB. They're also throwing free, Cuervo-sponsored happy hours on Fridays and Saturdays from 5-7pm -- an excellent time for you to show up unwanted and invade your out-of-town guests' space.

Set your people up at ThePodHotel.com



www.sunspot.net

August 26, 2007

24 hours in New York City

By Stephen Henderson

With all due respect to Frank Sinatra and his swaggering saunter of a song, "New York, New York," if there's one thing better than waking up in a city that never sleeps, it is never sleeping in a city that never sleeps.

While planning my latest visit to Gotham, my list of everything I wanted to see, eat and buy grew so long, I realized my only choice was to disregard any need for that waste of time called slumber. Because I planned to visit on a Wednesday, the city's already vast menu of activities expanded further still, offering the opportunity to see both a Broadway matinee and a theatrical performance later that evening.

Sleep, I soon realized, is for suckers. Brave talk. But could I make it? Would I survive a nonstop 24 hours of biting at the Big Apple? Hedging my bets, I made a reservation at The Pod Hotel, a new spot geared for thrifty hipsters, where my berth of a room was clean, stylish and shockingly small. (I expected more for \$89.) As things happened, I didn't see much of this cubicle.

What follows, then, is my day: a round-the-clock dash of Manhattan merrymaking, or Gotham-A-Go-Go.

9 a.m.

Since Barney Greengrass opened in 1908, this restaurant has allowed generations of Upper West Siders to start their days with prodigious breakfasts of "Jewish Soul Food," meaning smoked fish, bagels and cream cheese. Over the past century, luminaries such as Groucho Marx, Isaac Bashevis Singer and Nora Ephron have lingered here, sipping coffee while perusing The New York Times.

As I sit down with my paper, I overhear three old men loudly debating whether or not a Barack Obama presidency would be good for Jews. (Their tentative verdict? Yes.) I order an omelette with sauteed onions, along with a side of sturgeon and Nova Scotia lox. The portions are such that by the time I finish, I realize I will probably want to skip lunch.

10 a.m.

A pleasant walk of a few blocks south and east, along tree-lined streets of residential brownstones, brings me to the American Museum of Natural History, at the front of which is a triumphant statue of Theodore Roosevelt on horseback. You may already be familiar with this revered cultural institution from last year's movie *A Night in the Museum*, starring Ben Stiller, or you may recall how fondly it was visited by Holden Caulfield, protagonist of J.D. Salinger's classic novel of 1945, *The Catcher in the Rye*.

What most fascinates me is how the museum combines dioramas unchanged for many decades (here are my old friends, mannequins from the Kwakiutl tribe), alongside up-to-the-moment attractions such as the space show *Cosmic Collisions*. Newest of the 46 permanent exhibitions is the Hall of Human Origins, which offers a cleverly curated introduction to paleoanthropology, or the study of early humans through fossil evidence.

As I gaze at a 40,000-year-old Neanderthal skull and learn more about early hominids such as Lucy, Turkana Boy and the Peking Man, I marvel anew at how multitrunked is the family tree of which *Homo Sapiens* (um ... that's us) are only the latest, green sprout. Scholars now believe that one of the main reasons we prevailed over other hominid species was because of our ability to share information through expressions such as writing and painting.

11:30 a.m.

I wonder about this key role that artistic creativity played in the development of the human species when, after a quick taxi ride

through Central Park, I arrive at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. One could easily spend a whole day here, tracing the development of humanity from cave paintings to Andy Warhol.

On this visit, though, I limit my attentions to the new Greco-Roman wing. These glorious galleries opened in April, the culmination of a 15-year, \$220 million project, and display more than 3,500 objects from the Hellenistic period to the Late Roman Empire.

Highlights in these light-filled halls include statues of Hercules and Dionysus, an enormous head of the Emperor Constantine, and an Etruscan parade chariot decorated with scenes from the life of Achilles. There's an indoor fountain as well as a tessera floor modeled on that of the Pantheon in Rome, with pieces of hand-cut Italian tile laid in sand bedding, without grouting.

1:15 p.m.

Headed to midtown, I jump on the subway. You can't really say you've been to New York unless you've at least tried to master the city's underground mass transit system. For most trips, taxis are not only much more expensive, but also take quite a bit longer.

It's actually pretty tough to get lost, I find, as tracks are clearly marked "Uptown" and "Downtown," and nearly every station has a large map of the subway system and the street configurations above.

Note: The subway has been transporting riders since 1904. Stations are safe, but a bit dirty - you may even spy a rat or two scuttling about the tracks. In the right frame of mind, this only adds to the thrill.

1:45 p.m.

I come above ground near the TKTS booth, the indispensable kiosk selling that day's performance of Broadway shows at half-price. While a newer, bigger booth is under construction in Duffy Square (47th Street and Broadway), TKTS is temporarily located outside the Marriott Marquis Hotel, on 46th Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue.

A digital sign out front tells me what shows are available for the 2 p.m. matinee, but I've already seen *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Wicked*, *Frost/Nixon*, *Chicago* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

Since *Hairspray* celebrates its fifth birthday on Broadway this month and since the movie version is in theaters, I deem it appropriate to see the show based on a movie in preparation for seeing the movie based on a show. *Hairspray*, I'm happy to report, looks better than ever, and is currently given an especially poignant touch by actor Jerry Mathers (of TV's *Leave it to Beaver*), who looks 70-going-on-7 in his role as Wilbur Turnblad, Tracy's father.

4:30 p.m.

I emerge from the Neil Simon Theatre into a scrum of dazzled theatergoers and midtown office workers headed home for the night. Sidewalks are slow going as I wander down Broadway to 42nd Street, where the Ripley's Believe It or Not! Times Square Odditorium opened this summer.

I hadn't been to a Ripley's since I was Beaver Cleaver's age and envisioned some good old, cheesy fun - a freak show, but with a post-modern spin. Sadly, what I found was find is a hodgepodge of junk ranging from shrunken heads and a slab of the Berlin Wall to a few strands of President John F. Kennedy's hair and a collection 300 beer steins. Any mystery these dubious items possess is utterly dispelled by their display in a warren of brightly lit rooms that have all the antiseptic appeal of a dentist's waiting area.

To my mind, then, the only thing "unbelievable" is that the entrance fee to Ripley's for an adult is \$25.

5:30 p.m.

At Spotlight Live, a twentysomething secretary from Smith-Barney is belting out an off-pitch rendition of Britney Spears' "Toxic," cheered on by her liquored-up co-workers. "Eat, drink and be famous," is the slogan of this new, state-of-the-art karaoke club and restaurant in Times Square, where each table has a touch screen on which guests can scroll through an extensive inventory of tunes or vote on those singing.

Wannabe American Idols can consult with hair and makeup artists before getting onstage, where professional back-up singer/dancers await to provide moral and vocal support. Those who prefer to be American idle can simply tuck into surprisingly refined cuisine by Las Vegas star chef Kerry Simon (mini-burgers and truffle fries, or bamboo-steamed halibut) and enjoy the show.

Or not. Ear plugs aren't listed on the menu, though you might wish they were after hearing yet another chanteuse attempt the theme song to Fame.

"I'm gonna live forever. I'm gonna learn how to fly, high! / I feel it coming together. People will see me and cry!"

Indeed.

7 p.m.

On the subway again, this time farther downtown to Pier 17 at the South Street Seaport, behind which is pitched the Spiegel tent, a temporary cabaret venue. Here, playing until Sept. 30, is Absinthe, a bawdy burlesque that features roller-skating acrobats, knife-jugglers on pogo sticks, a nearly naked young woman who wriggles in and out of an enormous balloon, and a drag queen host/hostess who channels Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland and Janis Joplin with equal aplomb.

Like the green liqueur for which this family-unfriendly show is named, the proceedings cast a nearly hallucinatory spell. So much so that I decide to return for an 11:30 p.m. performance of La Vie, another curious entertainment playing in repertory.

9:30 p.m.

Immediately outside the Spiegel tent, an al fresco restaurant, bar and even a miniature dance floor with a disco ball, all provide jaw-dropping views of the East River and the Brooklyn Bridge. I reluctantly meander a few blocks away to Hanover Square in search of dinner.

Nestled among the gleaming high-rises of Manhattan's Wall Street is India House, a brownstone built in 1854 that's done in the Renaissance Revival style of an Italian palazzo and once housed the New York Cotton Exchange. In 1914, it became a businessmen's luncheon club, and today it is a warm, white brick and dark wood restaurant called Harry's Cafe and Steak. While dining on an excellent trout amandine, I chat with Harry Poulakakos about his eponymously named spot, and the nearby restaurants such as Ulysses and Gold Street that are open late in this enclave of historic 19th-century buildings along Pearl and Stone streets.

"The city has never been in better shape," Poulakakos says. "[Former Mayor Rudy] Giuliani made it safe, [current Mayor Michael] Bloomberg has kept it that way." People like to be out late at Manhattan's southernmost tip in the summertime, he tells me, because this area is 10 degrees cooler than anywhere else in the city.

1 a.m.

I think of Poulakakos' words when, after La Vie, I feel completely safe while walking across Wall Street and skirting around Ground Zero, where work is nearing completion on the foundational structure of the Freedom Tower.

Ambling uptown, through SoHo, window shopping at the art galleries, I stop for a quick pick-me-up cappuccino at Aroma Espresso Bar. This is the first U.S. branch of a popular chain of coffee shops started in Israel and is a favorite of insomniac New Yorkers not only because it's open 24 hours, but also because a free piece of chocolate is dispensed with every coffee drink.

3 a.m.

Still heading uptown, I arrive in the Meatpacking District around 14th Street, where clubs and restaurants such as Lotus, Spice Market and Hiro Cocktail Lounge at the Maritime Hotel are all bustling with rowdy patrons.

Avoiding these gaudier attractions, I suddenly crave what is said to be New York's best BLT sandwich. It's served at Florent, a 24-hour cafe on Gansevoort Street that is something of an after-hours crash pad for club kids as well as youthful celebrities such as Uma Thurman and Parker Posey. Everyone is welcome here, as the saying goes, "from grannies to trannies," and yes, the BLT is a star in its own right - crisply comforting, with not too much mayonnaise.

Licking my lips, I continue walking through Greenwich Village and Chelsea.

4:30 a.m.

Juvenex is a spa that's open all night in the Little Korea neighborhood, which is just east of Pennsylvania Station, where the Amtrak train arrives from Baltimore.

I had been told that Juvenex is primarily patronized in the morning's wee hours by those who want to get a head start on curing their hangovers. When I arrive, however, there are only a few other patrons visible, so I have this 5,000-square-foot facility practically to myself.

Choosing a round of treatments called the "Basic Purification Program," I'm shown to my locker and given a disposable bathing suit. Then I sweat in a large stone-walled sauna and soak in a hot tub where several dozen lemons float on the water's surface. Ambient,

New Age music plays, complete with the chirping of birds.

Linda, my gruff attendant, leads me to a vinyl-covered massage table, where she douses me with bucket after bucket of hot water, and sets to work vigorously buffing my body in a technique called the Korean-style Salt Scrub. Just when my skin is tingly and pink, and I think I have nothing left to exfoliate, Linda slathers me down with cucumber puree and lets me marinate for a while before sending me on my way.

6:30 a.m.

The sun is coming up. Good morning, New York! I'm tired but wired. I pass by Tiffany's and think of Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Up ahead, a few blocks away, I see the glowing glass cube above the Apple Computer store on Fifth Avenue - also open 24 hours.

I descend the groovy glass staircase and enter into the world according to Steve Jobs - a high-tech playground for adults, where salespeople are low-pressure but eager to explain all the latest gizmos such as the iPhone. In fact, visiting this sleek store feels less like consumerism and more like clairvoyance - as if I'm being given a privileged view of the future.



On my way back to The Pod Hotel to crash for a few hours, I decide I need a nibble. A muffin, maybe?

Happily, Manhattan's most major muffin is found at Sarabeth's Kitchen, a restaurant on Central Park South. This is the latest outpost of a growing empire (there are five locations in Manhattan and one in Key West, Fla.), that began in 1981, when Sarabeth and her husband, Bill Levine, opened a small shop on the Upper West Side where customers could see fruit jams being cooked in a kettle and ladled into jars. As I sip my morning coffee and reminisce over my day in New York, I ponder Sarabeth's improbable success - a jelly tycoon? - and what it may say about New Yorkers.

Sure, Manhattanites like to pretend they are rough and tough; that they live in the big, bad city. But get beneath that gritty exterior, and the Big Apple has a sweet, gooey, eager-to-please spot, right at its very center.

THE REAL DEAL

www.therealdeal.com

NEW YORK REAL ESTATE

Vol. 5 No. 3 March 2007 \$3.00

March 2007

We heard...

Guests to log in to pod lodgings



The Pod Hotel is aimed at tech-savvy guests.

When guests stay at the Pod Hotel in Midtown, they will be able to mingle in person as well as in cyberspace.

Recently opened at 230 East 51st Street, the hotel is launching a blog in mid-March where young guests can chat, find local events and make plans to meet up. It will be similar to the Living with Legends blog about the Hotel Chelsea, legends.typepad.com.

The Pod Hotel is geared toward attracting wired, gadget-savvy guests. The space-efficient rooms at the economy hotel come equipped with iPod docking stations, wireless Internet and plasma televisions. Rates start at \$89 for a 100-square-foot unit with bunk beds.

"I didn't want to charge \$300 to \$400 a night and compete with all the other hotels," said David Bernstein, general manager of the Pod Hotel. "I've always liked the lower end of the market."

Guests, who Bernstein says include "anyone who thinks they're 18 to 25 years old," can stay in rooms with a private bath or share bathrooms with other guests.

The rooms don't get much larger than 200 square feet, but the Pod Hotel has a concierge, a rooftop deck and an indoor/outdoor café. Plans are also in place to open a restaurant next door in a few years.

According to Bernstein, the Pod Hotel has rented approximately 70 percent of its 348 rooms a night since opening in mid-January.

The Pod Hotel is Bernstein's fifth hotel renovation in Manhattan. He is also responsible for On the Ave Hotel at 222 West 77th Street; Milburn Hotel at 242 West 76th Street; Hotel Thirty Thirty at 30 East 30th Street; and Hotel 57 at 130 East 57th Street.

"This one has been the most fun," Bernstein said. "I wanted this to not only be inexpensive lodging but a place where guests can have fun."

The New Look

May/June 2007



58 • HOTEL BUSINESS • May/June 2007

The New Look

Pod Hotel

CONCEPT: When converting the former Pickwick Arms Hotel on the East Side of Manhattan into the 347-room budget Pod Hotel earlier this year, Richard Born and Ira Dukker, partners in New York-based BD Hotels, were convinced that a hotel at that price point—room rates start as low as \$89 per night—didn't have to have plain, down-at-the-heels design. "In fact, stylish design doesn't really have anything to do with price if you look at some of the students and other young people who have been our guests," said Born. BD Hotels gave designer Vanessa Guilford the task of creating a trendy, modern look that would attract the next generation of travelers.

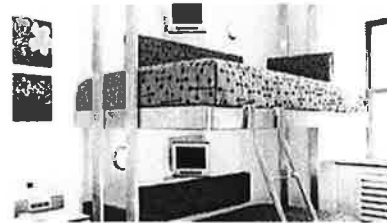
EXECUTION: Taking her inspiration from mass transit's clever use of space and innovative design features, Guilford incorporated space-saving solutions into the guestrooms at the Pod Hotel (including bunk beds in some rooms) similar to what one would find aboard trains, airplanes, and boats. "Likewise, the hotel's lighting and furnishings were influenced by mass transit's streamlined design approach and functionality that always seems relatively fuss-free," she explained.

In a respectful nod to mid-20th-century design pioneers Charles and Ray Eames, Guilford used an interpretation of their signature dot fabric from the late-1940s on the guestroom bedding and headboard upholstery. As further homage, she chose a reproduction of their 1951 metal mesh chair for the guestroom's desk chair. "Both designs still feel contemporary 60 years later," she said.

Making a concerted effort to appeal to today's younger set of travelers, particular focus was also placed on technology. Accordingly, the rooms—which range from singles to double doubles to queens in addition to the unique bunk-bedded inventory—all include LCD-screen televisions, iPod docking stations, and complimentary WiFi access.

RESULT: Guests have responded very favorably to the hotel's "cheap chic" style that is well communicated by the design, according to Born. "Our target audience—who are 20 to 35-years old, value both practicality and style and that's what we tried to deliver," he said. "And we back it up with a lot of in-room technology, which is another element that young people today really respond to."

— Bruce Seaton



Design Details: Project Owner: BD Hotels Designer: Vanessa Guilford Project Cost: N/A Theme/Influence: Stylish, contemporary design on a budget Signature Features: Eames-inspired fabric on bedspreads; bunk beds in a percentage of rooms; LCD televisions, streamlined lighting and furniture Purchasing Agent: IWA Major Vendors: Interface Flooring, Wausau Tile, NeoMetro, Trespa, Wolf Gordon

TRAVEL +LEISURE

(Travel & Leisure Online)

March 27, 2007

Hot Deals | WEEKLY TRAVEL BARGAINS

Pod People

New York hotel from \$89

THE DEAL

Young people are drawn to Manhattan like ants to a picnic. The problem is, a bite of the Big Apple can be too expensive for many—last year, NYC hotel room rates averaged \$245 a night. But one newly opened hotel, on East 51st Street, lets visitors pay as little as \$89 a night if they're willing to accept tiny rooms (and in some cases, shared bathrooms). The good news is that those little rooms (designed to use the space-saving features of cabins on a sailboat) have some nice extras besides a bed—like iPod docking stations, free WiFi access, LCD-screen TVs with cable, phones with voicemail, and small safes. The 347-room hotel is a makeover of the old Pickwick Arms, and its owners say they are targeting the 20- to 35-year-old market. If you're in one of the 152 rooms with shared bath, a display panel in your room will tell you when the bathroom is occupied. The property's name sums it up nicely: it's called the Pod Hotel.

THE DOLLARS

from \$89 a night.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information, visit the [Pod Hotel](#), 212/355-0300.

This Hot Deal is valid from March 27, 2007 to March 27, 2008



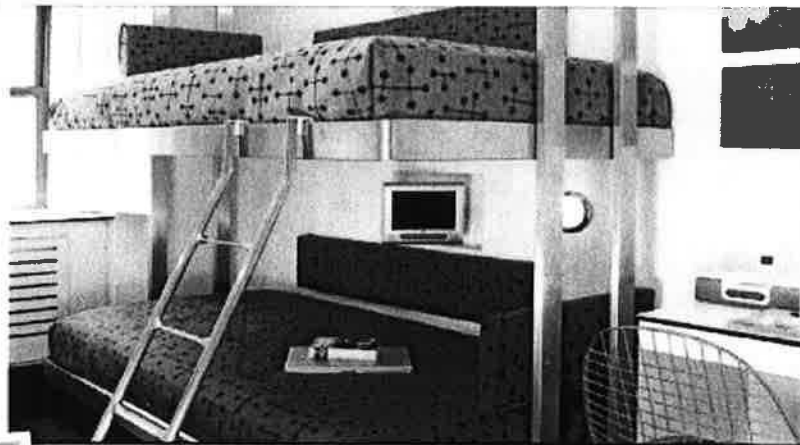
March 7, 2007

Insider > March

The latest news and hottest happenings

Docking Station New Hotel

The first Pod Hotel is opening this spring in New York City's Midtown East, offering young travelers the kind of social opportunities more commonly found in the backpacker scene in Europe. The hotel has 547 guest rooms that feature modern must-haves including free Wi-Fi and LCD televisions. The outdoor garden and rooftop deck provide space for guests to gather, with a futuristic youth hostel vibe—new friends may come in handy for directions around The Big Apple, and if not, just ask the online concierge. www.thepodhotel.com



Kiosks of the Future Airport Shopping

Whether a PSP game would make the perfect last-minute gift or you're desperately in need of some high-quality earphones to help you relax during the trip, Sony ACCESS has it all. These new automated retail kiosks are aiming to satisfy on-the-go travelers at the Indianapolis and Dallas/Fort Worth airports. Thanks to Sony, buying electronics is now as easy as grabbing a bag of chips.

Time Machine The Ancient Americas Exhibition, Chicago

Public Opening March 9

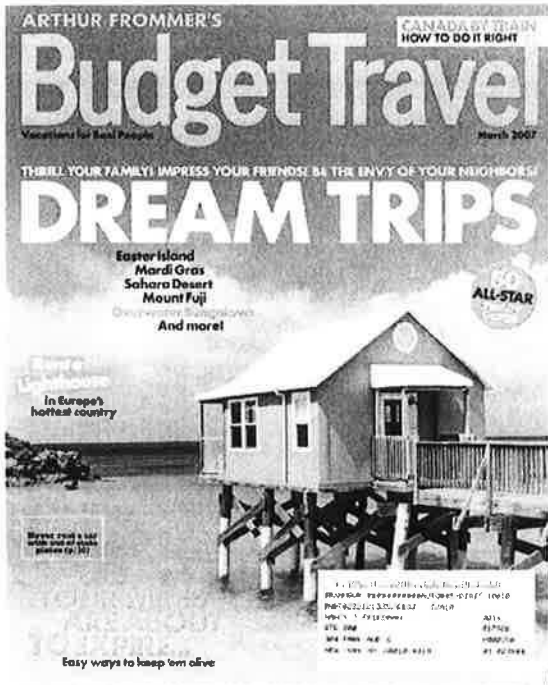
The Field Museum is taking a look back in time and exploring 13,000 years of cultural evolution in the Western Hemisphere. This new, permanent exhibit is based on groundbreaking research that is expected to shatter long-held preconceptions. Travel through the Ice Age and touch replicas of mammoth teeth, and explore the connections between the foods we enjoy today and the diet of the hunter-gatherers. Each gallery offers activities for the kids, as well as displays that can keep the adults happy, too. www.fieldmuseum.org



3-2-1 Blast Off! Workshops

The museum at the John C. Stennis Space Center in south Mississippi has a calendar packed with workshops for kids of all ages. In March, they can learn how to be rocket scientists, discover the ways that NASA has begun to use the iPod and find their place in the solar system. Stennis is America's largest rocket engine test complex—it is here that every main engine is proved flight-worthy before being shipped to the Kennedy Space Center for installation. www.nasa.gov





March 2007



Fossane's owner Sven Egil Sørensen (with Kari)

THIS JUST IN! The dated Pickwick Arms Hotel in midtown Manhattan has been reinvented as the sleek Pod Hotel. Rates for a single with a shared bath start at \$89 a night. Queen rooms with private baths start at \$159. All have LCD TVs, iPod docking stations, and free Wi-Fi (pickwickarms.com) • Norwegian Coastal Voyage has announced new itineraries for the *Fram*. Starting in May, the ship will cruise between Reykjavik, Iceland, and Greenland (coastalvoyage.com) • Also in May, Air Greenland will offer nonstop service to the U.S. for the first time. Flights connect Kangerlussuaq and Baltimore • The Walt Disney Company donated its impressive 525-piece collection of African art to the Smithsonian in 2005. Eighty of the sculptures, masks, and carvings—many of which have never been exhibited before—will be on display at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., from Feb. 15 to Sept. 7, 2008 (africa.si.edu, free) • Famous since 1747 for its animal figurines and hand-painted tableware, Munich-based Nymphenburg Porcelain has opened a shop in Chicago's River West neighborhood. It's the company's first American outpost (nymphenburgusa.com) • Good news for jet-lagged visitors to Oahu: There's now a 24-hour restaurant inside the Prince Kuhio Waikiki Hotel. The menu at Mac 24-7 ("Mac" stands for modern American cooking) includes everything from pancakes to grilled salmon (mac247waikiki.com) • Fans of a certain 1970s Swedish supergroup will be thrilled to know that an ABBA museum is slated to open in Stockholm in 2008.

as picnic that often include sigojnns porridge studded with smoked ham.

The Vadlas also run *Sanitas*, on Lake Riskedal. Originally a summer camp for underprivileged boys, the house stood abandoned for 30 years until the Vadlas rescued it. Opened in 2005, *Sanitas* overlooks a small beach and the lake beyond, where guests go swimming and boating. The nine bedrooms are divided into two apartments, each with its own kitchen and bathroom.

Thirty minutes north of Høiland Gard, *Fossane* represents a kind of homecoming for owner Kari Egil Sørensen. "I grew up here and then moved away," she says, "but the farm is always deep inside you. When my husband, Sven, and I came back, I felt like I wanted to share my childhood and culture." The Sorensens rent three cabins (each accommodates as many as six guests), including Kari's great grandfather's home, which the couple moved from its original site in a neighboring valley. "We're really preserving two farms in one," says Kari. "The cabin she was born in is painted red and



Dinner at Høiland Gard

crowned with a thatched-grass roof. It's utterly authentic, with painted cupboards, hand-carved beds, and heirlooms, including a pair of clogs whittled by Kari's grandfather. "You can fish in the lake and the fjord, which is less than a mile away, or hike in the mountains," Kari says, "but what's most important is what you can't do. We don't put any televisions in the cabins, so our visitors only hear the sound of the waterfall, the birds, and the sheep bells."

It's equally peaceful at *Mo Feriehytter*, a former dairy farm on the banks of the wide Suddalslågner River. Owner Jone Moe's three cabins sleep anywhere from four to seven. The largest is designed as a contemporary retreat, with pillowy couches and a TV, though the cabin hasn't completely lost its Nordic soul—a pair of antique skis hangs on one of the pine-paneled walls. Jone's daughter, Kjersti, inherited the farm's ancestral cabin, which the Moes don't rent out because it's full of family memorabilia. "My brother and I are the eighth generation on this farm, and it's important to care for our legacy," says Kjersti, a trained mountain guide who takes guests out hiking, canoeing, and fishing.

Just across the Suddalslågner River, at *Mo Laksegard*, is a converted farmhouse with a heated swimming pool and a hot tub. The three apartments and three cabins (all designed to sleep up to six) have amenities that are unusual for farmstays, including

crowded with a thatched-grass roof. It's utterly authentic, with painted cupboards, hand-carved beds, and heirlooms, including a pair of clogs whittled by Kari's grandfather. "You can fish in the lake and the fjord, which is less than a mile away, or hike in the mountains," Kari says, "but what's most important is what you can't do. We don't put any televisions in the cabins, so our visitors only hear the sound of the waterfall, the birds, and the sheep bells."



Nigerian mask

LOCATION	Fossane	Mo Laksegard
Høiland Gard Høiland 011-4751-75 27-28, Høiland garden, Norway \$25 per person includes breakfast	Fossane Normedalen 011-4751-75 15-32, Fossane has four cabins and 10 beds	Sandbygd 011-4752-79 76-151, moes mo (farmstays) only 1 from 2007
<i>Sanitas</i> Høiland 011-4751-75 27-28, Høiland garden, Norway \$25 per person includes breakfast	<i>Mo Feriehytter</i> Suddalslågner 011-4751-75 15-32, Fossane has four cabins and 10 beds	<i>Mo Laksegard</i> Suddalslågner 011-4752-79 76-151, moes mo (farmstays) only 1 from 2007

Aug. 27, 2007

HOTELS

Could these tiny rooms be the next big thi

Japanese style pod hotels are catching on in Europe and New York.

By ARTHUR MURPHY
Special to the Chronicle

Though three of four new hotel chains consist so far of only a single hotel apiece, their decision to offer tiny, cruise-ship-like rooms is a significant trend which might herald the future of lodging. And though they are found in just a few cities, the new "Chalfie" — easyHotel, Yotel, Pod Hotels and Qbic — might provide you with a cheap overnight stay if you're passing through.

Their tiny rooms are often compared to the coffin-like capsule hotels in Japan, in which travelers pay roughly \$40 a night for a 6-foot-high by 6-foot-long unit that's little more than a place to lie down. The truth is that the new designs have a lot more in common with cruise-ship cabins, in which every inch of space is utilized.

EasyHotel came first. When it decided to transform a rundown, 18-room hotel and breakfast in central London into a hotel with 34 much-smaller rooms, it used metal panels as walls, similar to what can be found on cruise ships. Bathrooms have been compared in size to those on airplanes.

Still, any quality a traveler has about staying in such a property might be overcome by the low price. The cheapest rooms during the winter begin at about \$30 and in

winter cautious guests might spend \$75-\$100 per night. These prices are phenomenal bargains for London, where midlevel, \$200-per-night hotels are common.

The Swedish group now has three properties in London, one in Basel, Switzerland, and another opening in October in Budapest, Hungary. It hopes to open 60 more hotels in the next few years, including seven planned for the Middle East and 10 in Germany. In line with its efficient, money-saving model, reservations are accepted only via its website, www.yotel.com.

Yotel, which has its base property at London's canwick airport, makes no secret that its rooms have a similarity to those on cruise ships. Units are room called cabins. Aimed primarily at international travelers with long stopovers in the airport, the tiny cabins, which can be had for as little as four hours at a time (for about \$30), are equipped with 20-inch flat-screen TVs (an extra charge), iPod docking stations and work areas.

Yotel's parent, the same UK outfit that's responsible for the Yot Sushi restaurant chain, has plans to open pod-style hotels in major European airports and has ambitions in the United States as well. Its second hotel is well under way at Heathrow's Terminal 4, and another is scheduled to open at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in early 2008. Reservations at www.yotel.com.

Based in the Netherlands, Qbic opened the first of its futuristic properties in Amsterdam this past July. Rooms are an interesting, cube-shaped design. Lobbies are outfitted with self-service check-in areas (a credit card or a reservation number will get you your room key), along with a vending machine selling treats from local bakeries, toothbrushes, phone cards and magazines. Room rates start as low as \$26, though the price a guest pays is partly based on when the reservation is made — the earlier you book, the less you pay.

Another Qbic hotel is opening later this year in Amsterdam, Belgium, and a third is slated for business in the Netherlands city of Maastricht in 2008. (011-31-43-321-3111 or www.qbic-hotels.com.)

Finally, New York City's Pod Hotel opened earlier this year with rooms starting at just \$89. The least expensive units are singles with shared bathroom, and during peak travel months even those can hit the traveler back \$139, \$179 to a winter rate for the same room. In New York — and especially in such a blue ribbon locale as a few blocks from Fifth Avenue — those rates are a bargain. The Pod has a hip, boutique look and rooms come with flat-screen TVs and iPod docking stations. (800-742-9045 or www.thepodhotel.com.)





March 19, 2007

READ MORE: [HOTELS, NEW YORK](#)

CHEAP DATES AT POD HOTEL



The Pickwick Arms, a former Midtown trash receptacle, has remade itself as the Pod Hotel, known for iPod-friendliness and sub-\$200 rack rates. Much like its previous incarnation, those under-\$200 rates are hard to find except on weekdays and/or for singles, bunks, or shared bathrooms. But hey, these are "hip, convenient accommodations for the stylish and spendthrift traveler." Pack in those backpackers like grubby little sardines, and no one will know the difference. In the Pod's defense, they do apparently have a bitchin' roof deck, with bar supposedly to come.

NYC's Pod Hotel: [Little Rooms, Big City](#) [Washington Post]
[Pod Hotel](#) [Official site]

Earlier: [Midtown's Pod Hotel: You Mac People Need To Seek Professional Help, Seriously.](#)

Comment    [+]



Midtown Manhattan budget lodging from \$89

by Sarah Pascorella, SmarterTravel.com Staff - 03/19/07 at 3:43 pm ET

The Pod Hotel, a new budget property in midtown Manhattan, offers rates starting at \$89 per night. The hotel caters to twenty- and thirty-somethings looking for standard accommodations at a lower price tag than other Midtown offerings. The Pod Hotel has 347 guest rooms, 195 with private baths and 152 with shared baths.

I compared the Pod's rates to other Midtown hotels and found their prices were competitive, particularly if you don't mind sharing a bath. Sample per-night rates for spring weekends include:

Advertisement

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** Per person based on r/t purchase.

Book by 3/22, only at ba.com >

- The Pod Hotel: From \$149 single occupancy, shared bath; \$159 double occupancy in a bunk room, shared bath; \$209 double occupancy, private bath
- Ramada Inn Eastside: From \$185, double occupancy, private bath
- Americana Inn: From \$200, double occupancy, semi-private/shared bath
- Howard Johnson Midtown Manhattan: From \$219, double occupancy, private bath
- Best Western President Hotel: From \$245, double occupancy, private bath

To ensure you're getting the best deal, be sure to check a variety of property prices for the weekend you wish to visit. Additionally,

compare apples to apples (double or single occupancy, shared or private baths) to know the value of the offerings for your stay.

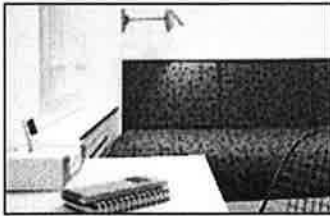
For reservations at The Pod Hotel, call 800-742-5945 or visit the property website.

If you're traveling from out of town and need to book a flight, you can find the lowest prices for your route by comparing airfares from multiple travel providers with our price-comparison tool.

The Citysearch logo, featuring a circular icon with a magnifying glass and the word "Citysearch" in a sans-serif font.

May 18, 2007

The Pod Hotel



Message from The Pod Hotel

High style and high tech converge at the Pod Hotel, which offers hip, convenient accommodations for the stylish and spendthrift traveler. Formerly the Pickwick Arms, the hotel is located in the heart of New York City's Midtown East neighborhood. There's a Pod for every person, and an endless range of possibilities. You can set your music and your mood with our iPod docking stations and our dimmer control lighting system, plug into the Internet with free WiFi access, and catch your favorite shows on LCD TVs. Each Pod is climate controlled and equipped with efficient, stylish furniture that's designed to maximize your comfort and your living space.

Paid advertisement by The Pod Hotel.

Editorial Review for The Pod Hotel – by Julia Israel

The Scene

The quick, efficient style of mass transit—sans grime and disrepair—embodies this midtown find for the young, hip and budget-conscious. At every turn, you'll be reminded of your travels: from the lobby's wood paneled walls that conjure up a yacht to the camper-sized rooms. And inside each room, or pod, in-room sinks are modeled after those in airplane bathrooms with above-door lights flashing "occupied." Joining the Mile High club just got a lot more convenient.

The Details

It's the technology—iPod docks, flat-screen TVs, and free WiFi—that really jazzes up the 347 rooms. Beds double as funky couches, with atomic pattern coverlets hiding the accoutrements of sleep. A third of the rooms (choose from queen, double, single, bunk beds and a few larger rooms) share access to hall bathrooms, while glass doors to the in-room W.C.'s make privacy scandalously optional.

Editorial content is independent of paid advertisers. Any expenses are paid for by Citysearch.

Insider Tips

Where to Sit

The concierge reserves tables for 10 at nearby restaurants. Guests are encouraged to opt in on the communal Pod dinners.

The Extras

Upon making a reservation, guests are given a password to an exclusive Pod blog where they can make friends with those who'll be staying during their visit.

Save Money

Sign onto the hotel's website to join their email list; it will key you in to periodic specials and discounts.

What to Drink

The rooms' mini-bars light up with "happy hour specials"—discounts on beverages for specific times of day.



May 25, 2007

Hotel Video Tours: The Pod Hotel

Another day, another Hotel Video Tour. This time we snuck into The Pod Hotel (formerly the Pickwick Arms) to check out those slick renovations we told you about last year.

The verdict? Boy these rooms are small! Then again, you won't be paying *that* much--at least by New York standards. This room went for \$197 last night, which is pretty standard.

One thing you won't notice in the tour are the under bed storage drawers. (Then again, where will you put your unpacked bags?) Still, the free WiFi and iPod dock are good for the kids, and the mini flatscreen TV is super cute. You'll want to leave it on so you don't hear all the racket in the hall--the walls are just as mini as the rest of the place.

Related Stories:

- [Hotel Video Tour](#) [[HotelChatter](#)]
- [Pickwick Arms Gets More Mod Rooms](#) [[HotelChatter](#)]

Hotel Reviews:

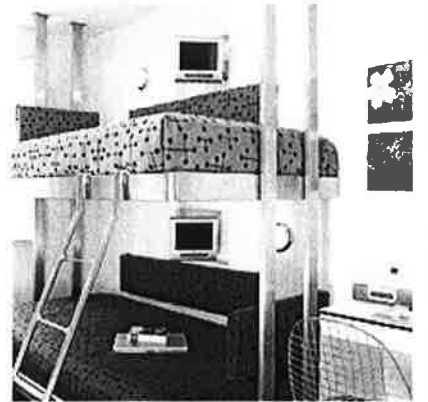
- [The Pod Hotel](#)



February 22, 2007

Pod Hotels: Small, Stylish, and Dirt Cheap

Budget travelers really want to be Pod People -- and no, that's not the plot of a new sci-fi thriller. A growing segment of the hotel industry believes that price-conscious, stylish travelers will happily stay in truly tiny spaces as long as they're well designed. In these lodgings, which have been dubbed "pod hotels," you sacrifice space and amenities like staff and restaurants -- and sometimes even private bathrooms and windows -- in exchange for greatly reduced rates and ramped-up style.



Pod Hotel, New York

Pod hotels have been around Asia for decades, but they've been slow to materialize in Europe and the U.S. That said, it appears that a full-scale invasion is planned in locations around the world in 2007. In general, they are great for a short stay or for people who don't spend much time in their hotel rooms. Those who suffer from claustrophobia should book elsewhere. If you're eager to experiment with a pod hotel, here are a few recommendations.

The U.S.

New York City's new Pod Hotel is cheap and cheerful, with prices starting at \$89 (\$139-plus for a private bath) and a great location on 51st Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. The cool retro-design rooms have iPod docking stations, dimmer-control lighting systems, free Wi-Fi access, and semi-largish screen LCD TVs. An outdoor café is slated to open in the spring. Don't expect luxe linens or fab toiletries, and obviously the rooms are small. That said, the rooms aren't that much smaller than NYC hotels charging triple the price.

amNewYork

At Pod, style on a shoestring **The Los Angeles Times**

March 4, 2007

A mainstay of cheap sleeps in Manhattan is getting a hip makeover while remaining affordable.

The Pickwick Arms in Midtown East is now the Pod Hotel, with 347 guest rooms going for as little as \$75 a night. That's less than the nearby Courtyard New York Manhattan/Midtown East (\$259) and even the Vanderbilt YMCA (\$83) wanted for a Jan. 29 stay. (These rates, checked online, may no longer be available.)

Amenities include free WiFi, iPod docking stations, LCD-screen TVs, a restaurant and, soon, a rooftop lounge and a garden.

The downside? Guest rooms, many with shared baths and bunk beds, are as tiny as 90 square feet. Rates are higher than at Hostelling International New York City, which was asking \$25 a night for a dorm bed for Jan. 29. (You also would be dozens of blocks away, on West 103rd.)

The Pod, run by BD Hotels, which owns the Mercer, the Chambers and other New York hotels, is aimed at visitors from age 20 to 35, its owners say. But anyone seeking style on a shoestring is welcome.

**The Pod Hotel 230 E. 51st St. 800-742-5945,
thepodhotel.com**

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Budget Travel

December 17, 2007

HOTEL DEALS

New York at a Price That's Right

Budget Travel editors have picked eight hotels as reliable, affordable places to stay in New York City.

Monday, December 17, 2007

New York City hotels charge nearly \$300 a night on average. But with some persistence, it's possible to book a far more affordable place that's central, comfortable, and—sometimes—even charming. Be sure to plan well in advance. Most hotels recommend you make reservations at least one month before your arrival. Others encourage you to book months ahead. Some hotels require a certain minimum-night stay.

Some booking strategies

While not new, the blind-booking websites [Priceline](#) and [Hotwire](#) are terrific sources for discounted rooms in Manhattan (and elsewhere). These sites won't name the hotel (or airline or car-rental company) you're working with until your bid has been accepted and your credit card has been charged. But rest assured, these websites work with respected hotels, so you should receive a quality room in Manhattan if you bid on three- and four-star hotels. For help with your bidding, check out [biddingfortravel.com](#) and [betterbidding.com](#), which are user's guides to Priceline and Hotwire.

Be sure to consider mid-market national chains such as Hampton Inn and Courtyard by Marriott, which have been moving into New York City. These hotels offer newly constructed buildings and often provide substantial breakfasts, unlimited local calls, and free Internet access in their lobbies. Best of all, these mid-market chains charge up to 30 percent less than comparable local independents. For more info, read our article [New Hotels in New York City](#).

Still, there's the obvious trade-off: try as they might, hotel chains lack local character. If independently owned lodging with some personality is what you want, consider *Budget Travel's* picks for affordable New York City hotels.

[Launch the Slide Show](#)



AFFORDABLE NEW YORK

These hotels range from homey to stylish to downright cosmopolitan—all at a price that's right.

• [Launch the slide show](#)

ABINGDON GUEST HOUSE

Hood The West Village, a downtown area with tree-lined streets and no skyscrapers. Landmarks include the Village Vanguard jazz club and chef Mario Batali's Babbo.

First Impression The English countryside meets the city in these two dainty, 19th-century town houses.

The Rooms Each of the nine rooms has tasteful features; the Garden Room, for example, has green

walls, exposed brick, and an adjoining outdoor garden. Bathrooms are private, whether en suite or adjacent to a room.

Plus Quiet and discreet, with no lobby or front desk, the Abingdon feels more like your own pad than a temporary stopover.

Minus The Abingdon has a strict check-in policy; you must arrive by your appointed time. There's a two-night minimum stay on weeknights, and a four-night minimum stay on weekends.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in all rooms. (There's no public lounge.)

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 21 Eighth Ave., 212/243-5384, abingdonguesthouse.com, doubles from \$189.

THE CHELSEA LODGE

'Hood Chelsea is a midtown, semi-residential district best known for its galleries that showcase contemporary visual art.

First Impression This picturesque, 22-room town house charms with its quirky decor, including large wooden geese mounted to lobby walls.

The Rooms The immaculate rooms feel like country-chic escapes because of their rustic furniture and polished wood floors.

Plus Large windows, high ceilings, and soothing colors open up the small rooms.

Minus While there is a shower and a sink in every room, toilets are shared.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms and public spaces.

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 318 W. 20th St., 800/373-1116, chelsealodge.com, doubles from \$129.

THE COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL

'Hood Tribeca, the Triangle Below Canal Street, is an area defined by residential lofts. It lures fewer tourists than nearby, better-known SoHo.

First Impression This hotel works well for travelers who care more about their accommodations' address than the ambience. The hotel feels generic and suburban, despite its name.

The Rooms The 125 small rooms have basic furnishings and just enough space to be comfortable without feeling puny.

Plus The rooms' high ceiling fans add a homey touch to otherwise ordinary digs.

Minus Chambers Street can be noisy. Ask for a room in the back of the hotel.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms and public spaces.

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 95 W. Broadway, 888/895-9400, cosmohotel.com, doubles from \$175.

HOTEL QT

'Hood Midtown, just down the block from the flash and frenzy of Times Square.

First Impression Hotel impresario André Balazs's magic touch is evident from the moment you step into the lobby of his hotel. You check in at a funky, Euro-style kiosk stocked with fashion mags—a glimpse of the lobby pool and swim-up bar beckons through a glass pane.

The Rooms The 139 rooms come in several configurations ("Platform bed or bunk beds?"). Heavy windows block out the sounds from 45th Street.

Plus A DJ spins five nights a week by the small pool and swim-up bar. A sauna, steam room, and tiny

fitness room are open all day and night.

Minus The rooms will feel cramped, so Hotel QT is a good bet only for travelers who plan to max out their time in the common areas or elsewhere in the city.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms. Expected to debut in public spaces this winter.

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 125 W. 45th St., 212/354-2323, hotelqt.com, doubles from \$265.

HOTEL 17

'Hood Gramercy, whose leafy and quiet streets are bounded by 14th Street, Third Avenue, 23rd Street, and Park Avenue South.

First Impression It's not hard to see why Woody Allen filmed *Manhattan Murder Mystery* here, given the glamour of the hotel's old-fashioned, wood-paneled lobby and its narrow, winding corridors.

The Rooms The decor varies, but most of the 122 rooms maintain a stately, old-world feel, thanks to the muted color palette, dark wood trim, and mahogany beds and armoires.

Plus The staff is exceptionally friendly and happy to volunteer travel info, such as where to find the best local restaurant for a late-night bite.

Minus Not all rooms have private bathrooms. Be sure to specify your preference when booking.

Free Wi-Fi? No.

Credit Cards Accepted MC, Visa.

Details 225 E. 17th St., 212/475-2845, hotel17ny.com, doubles from about \$120.

THE LARCHMONT HOTEL

'Hood Greenwich Village, but five blocks away from Union Square, a busy shopping district that's home to artisans, street performers, and the Greenmarket, a famous farmer's market.

First Impression The Larchmont strives to be a classy throwback by offering a lobby with dark furniture and windowed counters. But its cheapish roots show through during check-in and checkout times, when the lobby typically gets crammed with luggage.

The Rooms No-frills rooms are outfitted with basic bedspreads, light pink walls, and rattan furniture that carries a faint whiff of the Caribbean. Rooms have sinks, but bathrooms are shared. One exception: There is a family room that sleeps a family of four and that has a private bathroom.

Plus The Larchmont feels safe and secure. New guests have to be buzzed into the lobby; once they've checked in, lodgers receive their own set of keys and can enter through a separate hall.

Minus The modest rooms and shared bathrooms are reminiscent of dormitories.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in the lobby, café, and some of the rooms.

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 27 W. 11th St., 212/989-9333, larchmonthotel.com, doubles from \$109.



THE POD HOTEL

'Hood This part of Midtown is brimming with restaurants and bars and is not far from Bloomingdale's, Central Park, and the Museum of Modern Art.

First Impression The spacious lobby establishes the Pod's rep as a haven for the young and hip, with its funky murals, asymmetrical couches, and retro light fixtures.

The Rooms Colorful, mod-print linens brighten up the 360 sleek rooms. The tiny work spaces, brushed-metal sinks, and minuscule bathrooms (in most rooms) are marvels of efficiency.

Plus The common areas make the place—travelers can relax on the hotel's chic, outdoor patio and take in the bird's-eye view from the roof deck.

Minus The hotel has its name for a reason—the rooms are tiny. Note: Single and bunk-bed rooms have shared bathrooms.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms and public spaces.

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 230 E. 51st St., 800/742-5945, thepodhotel.com, singles with shared baths from \$89.

SECOND HOME ON SECOND AVENUE

'Hood The East Village, a gritty zone that's home to many lively bars, cheap eats, and NYU students.

First Impression Peaceful and private, with no lobby or front desk, Second Home feels like its name. A skylight spills natural light into the airy duplex with wood floors. (The owner hates carpet.)

The Rooms New York properties are notorious for their small spaces, and that's why Second Home's five large rooms—and high ceilings—are such a refreshing surprise. Plus, no two rooms are the same; each has distinct flavor, such as Peruvian or Caribbean.

Plus Soundproof windows block out noise from busy Second Avenue outside.

Minus Two of the rooms share a bathroom. And there's only a tiny sign outside the guesthouse. Look for the Body Evolution studio, which shares the building. Enter through the red door. Also, there is a two-night minimum stay on weeknights, and a three-night minimum stay on weekends.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms.

Credit Cards Accepted AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details 221 Second Ave., 212/677-3161, secondhomessecondavenue.com, doubles from \$132, includes taxes, coffee, and tea.

December 9, 2007

LIFE/TRAVEL Travel: This Week

No-frills hotels pack essentials into small spaces

12:00 AM CST on Sunday, December 9, 2007

Elliott Hester www.elliotthester.com

More hotels are installing self-service kiosks that allow guests to bypass the front desk and check in (or out) without interacting with hotel staff. Taking the concept one step further, Qbic Hotel in Amsterdam has eliminated the front desk.

Unveiled in July as a "cheap chic and no frills" budget-conscious hotel, Qbic is predominantly self-service. The hotel staff cleans the rooms, but there are no check-in clerks, no bellmen, only a roving concierge to assist a new generation of low-maintenance travelers.

I strolled through the nearly deserted lobby, past ultramodern furniture and flat-screen computer stations where two guests surfed the Internet for free. At the check-in kiosk, I navigated through the on-screen instructions, signed my name with a digital pen, and was issued a room number and card key. The process took about a minute.

Then, it was up the elevator, down the hall and into one of the most spacious standard hotel rooms in Europe.

Central to Qbic's room design is the futuristic Cubi, a cube-shaped modular living unit that is as stylish as it is functional. Each Cubi measures 75 square feet. The unit contains one extra-long bed, a flat-screen television, a radio, a work-and-dine set, free wireless Internet and a petite bathroom, parts of which were devised by French designer Philippe Starck.

Aside from the Cubi, which took up less than half the space on the wooden floor, my room was furnished with a sleek chaise longue, a tiny end table, a rolling wardrobe cabinet and a treelike clothes stand with wooden hangers dangling from the branches. With so much floor space, I could have hosted a cocktail party and invited 40 locals.

As is the case with all Qbic rooms, mine had no telephone (there's no room service or front desk to call), no closets, not even a door to the bathroom section of the Cubi. For all but the most intimate couples, the lack of privacy could be an issue.

In the grab-and-go corner of the lobby, vending machines are stocked with travel essentials. There's even a one-day membership for a nearby fitness center.

By streamlining staff and eliminating traditional hotel accoutrements, Qbic is able to offer room rates from 39 euros (about \$60) to 139 euros (about \$200), including taxes. For spacious, fashionable, inexpensive digs in Amsterdam, the 35-room property has no rival.

Qbic is one of several avant-garde hotels catering to young, no-frills travelers.

The sardine can-size rooms at easyHotel are barely large enough to accommodate a bed. The company's concept is that customers will accept less space for a better price. With five hotels in Europe and plans for 38 additional hotels in 17 countries, the concept seems to be working.

Yotel offers standard and premium cabins at London's Gatwick Airport that resemble sleeping compartments in train cars.



In New York City, the Pod Hotel is a welcome option. The hotel's name speaks to the pea-in-a-pod feel of the tiny rooms.

Capsule Inn in Tokyo may have the world's smallest sleeping quarters. The inexpensive "rooms" are really coffin-size capsules that slide like drawers in a morgue.

Shared bathroom facilities are unavoidable at some no-frills hotels; check on this when you make reservations.

Elliott Hester is the author of Plane Insanity and Adventures of a Continental Drifter. His Web site is www.elliotthester.com.



September 24, 2008

Hot Plates

Bite-size dish on new restaurants: Inside Park, Porchetta, Mr. Jones, Walter Foods, Archipelago, Philippe Express

By Alexis L. Loinaz and Matt Rodbard



Archipelago

Hisanobu Osaka, former sous-chef at Morimoto, fuses Japanese ingredients with traditional French and Italian cooking techniques at the old Dani space (some samples: poached chicken, tofu, sesame *and* chicken liver pate on a brioche; roasted lamb with Japanese eggplant). A *shojoki* menu, which pretty much translates to pre-dessert nibbles, offers up the most interesting choices: abalone risotto; grilled *onigiri* (seaweed-wrapped rice triangle) with green tea chicken consommé and a pretty bitching Italian cheese plate—parmigiano reggiano with truffle honey and gorgonzola dolce with mango puree are included. (333 Hudson St. at Charlton St., 212-243-3345)

Haven

World travel is the inspiration both on the plate and on the walls at this plush two-story global small-plates spot in Midtown, furnished with tchotchkes from the owners' own travels. Think Victorian-Gothic-ish high drama (red-and-gold walls, chandeliers), plus Buddha statues from Bali, swords from Hong Kong, masks from Mali and trinkets from India. The menu, from former Mercer Kitchen chef Kay Choe, has racked up its own frequent-flyer miles: Portuguese octopus, lobster risotto and Szechuan dumplings, among others. Sure, it's on East 51st Street, but who says you can't bring the *par-fay* to Midtown? "Meatpacking is dead and overplayed, and the Lower East Side is out," says co-owner Bershaw Shaw. "Why not bring Midtown back?" (244 E. 51st St. between Second and Third Aves., 212-906-9066)

Trader Joe's Brooklyn

It's been almost two years in the making, but Trader Joe's has finally crossed the East River...beating Whole Foods to the punch. The 14,000-square-foot trail mix peddler occupies an old bank built in 1923—a time when banks were constructed like ornate fortresses, proven by the structure's dramatic arched windows and 30-foot ceiling. The Atlantic Avenue location will sell over a thousand items from the quirky and heavily discounted Trader Joe's private label. Unfortunately, there will be no Two Buck Chuck sold here (that's the cheap-but-drinkable wine the chain is famous for). (130 Court St. at Atlantic Ave., 718-246-8460)

Also open:

The name may sound all-American, but Korea-based chain **New York Hotdog and Coffee** actually serves chicken or beef franks topped with traditional Korean trimmings: bulgogi, kimchi, curry and more. The coffee's from Van Houtten. It's the first U.S. outpost for the chain, with four more locations to come in L.A. (245 Bleecker St. between Carmine and Leroy Sts., 917-388-2608)

Nolita cantina **Pinche Taqueria** branches out with a second location, this one on Lafayette Street. Yep, those famous fish tacos made the trek, too. (333 Lafayette St. between Houston and Bleecker Sts., 212-343-9977)

After being ousted by a Michael Kors store, beloved Soho diner **Jerry's** has reopened as a "café" in Tribeca with the same retro feel and a few familiar menu items (see: 100-Year Brick Chicken). (90 Chambers St. between Church St. and Broadway, 212-608-1700)



Midtown's The Pod Hotel has opened its own outdoor garden restaurant called **The Pod Café**. No, iPod Nanos are not the special of the day. (230 E. 51st St. between Second and Third Aves., 212-355-0300)

Multi-genre performance space (**Le**) **Poisson Rouge** can now add "restaurant" to its lineup: The Village spot is now offering a full dinner menu, with dishes like braised short ribs with parsnip puree. (158 Bleecker St. between Thompson and Sullivan Sts., 212-796-0741)

Empanada Joe's is on a roll: After opening its first location on the Upper West Side just last month, it's unveiled a new one in Times Square. Next month: a third outpost, in Chelsea. (683 Eighth Ave. at 43rd St.)

Uptown Chinese spot Philippe goes hi-tech at **Philippe Express**, which features self-serve touch-screen kiosks for speedy ordering and noshing. The ATM of dumplings, if you ask us. (469 Sixth Ave. between 11th and 12th Sts., 212-929-8949)



The Pod Café

Be the first to review

Neighborhood: Midtown East
230 E. 51st St.
New York, NY 10022
212-355-0300

Travel

Posted on Sun, Sep. 28, 2008

Finding a 'deal' for a New York hotel

BY TERESE LOEB KREUZER

Visitors to New York City are often shocked by the small size of the hotel rooms and the high prices. Take heart: there *are* deals.

Granted, in a city where the average hotel rate is \$350 per night, a bargain might involve a relative value -- such as a room-rate discount in a luxury property that is still expensive but less than you'd usually expect. Or it might be a package that vacuums out your wallet but throws in some extras to take away the pain.


Or it might be a bona fide bargain: A clean, centrally located room that you need a shoehorn to get into but that's really cheap. How does \$89 a night in midtown Manhattan sound? (The catch: You'll have to share a bathroom.)

Another way to get a deal is to situate yourself in an outlying part of Manhattan or even in one of the other boroughs, where prices are cheaper. Yes, you'll have to use New York's subways if you don't want to blow a wad on taxis -- but the savings may be worth it.

And finally, a deal may come your way if you visit New York between the last two weeks of December and the end of February, when hotels have traditionally found business to be slow.

This year, there's another wrinkle in the picture: What effect will the downturn in the economy have on rates? Right now, New York hoteliers are reporting their usually busy fall seasons, with few cancellations. But that could change. Keep an eye on hotel websites for the latest prices. Also watch for deals at the big online websites (Expedia, Orbitz and Travelocity), Hotels.com, Travelzoo and at the city's own website, NYCvisit.com.

BUDGET

 • **Pod Hotel**, 230 E. 51st St., 212-355-0300 or 800-742- 5945; www.thepodhotel.com; rooms from \$89-\$229.

You can't get any more centrally located than the Pod Hotel, which is near Rockefeller Center, the United Nations and those temples of fashion, Bloomingdale's and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Budget travelers may remember the property as the Pickwick Arms. It opened in its current incarnation in January 2007 with 347 pint-sized rooms, including 152 with shared bathrooms. The cheerfully decorated rooms have iPod docking stations, free WiFi and LCD-screen TVs -- must haves for the 20- and 30-somethings for whose tastes and needs this hotel was designed. But it also gets a budget-conscious business clientele and lots of Europeans. The Pod Café serves breakfast daily and light fare at other times of the day.

• **Cosmopolitan Hotel**, 95 West Broadway (at Chambers Street); 212-566-1900; www.cosmohotel.com; Rooms from \$185.

This 125-room hotel opened in 1845 claims to be the longest continuously operating hotel in New York City. It is family-owned, cherished by a devoted staff and spotlessly clean. Formerly a true budget hotel with few frills, the decor in the rooms has been upgraded and the prices have risen accordingly. In high season, prices start at \$250 a night for a room with a double bed and go to \$310 a night for a room that could sleep six with two Queen-sized beds and a sofa bed; in January and February, prices are around 15 percent lower.

Among this hotel's charms are its two terrific restaurants. At The Soda Shop, you can get a full dinner for under \$15. The Café Cosmopolitan serves breakfast, lunch and dinner for equally modest prices. The West Side IRT subway right outside the door takes guests to midtown in 15 minutes or less. The Hudson River with its parks and gardens is just down the street.

FOR FAMILIES

• **Flatotel**, 135 W. 52nd St., 212-887-9400; www.flatotel.com. Rooms from \$389.

"I have three children!," said Brenda Pesce, VP of marketing for Flatotel. "I know what it's like to travel with children." Parents might like privacy and the option of feeding a hungry crowd without having to use room service or plunk down a bundle for breakfast in a restaurant.

Flatotel is an upscale midtown hotel with 210 guest rooms and 70 suites that caters mostly to business travelers. However, on weekends and during holiday periods when business travel falls off, the hotel is a good option for families. The suites have one- to three- bedrooms and fully equipped kitchens. Even the one-bedroom suites can sleep up to five people. Depending on availability, rates for one-bedroom suites start at \$465 a night. Guests whose stay includes a Sunday night will get 25 percent off the hotel's published corporate rates and 15 percent off food at breakfast, lunch and dinner in Moda, the hotel's dining room.

- **Affinia 50**, 155 E. 50th St.; 212-751-5710 or 866- 246-2203; www.affinia.com. Rooms from \$255.

The Affinia hotel group is family-owned and run, with five Affinia properties in Manhattan, all of them mid-priced and in convenient midtown locations. The hotels are proud of their little extra touches, like a selection of pillow types and kits that guests can borrow during their stay that will help them navigate the city or practice yoga.

The Affinia 50 has 140 spacious suites equipped with full kitchens and 70 guest rooms. In January and February, rates for one-bedroom suites that can sleep up to six people dip to \$400 a night. Between Jan. 5 and 14, the Affinia hotels will offer a nine-day sale enabling guests to book rooms for anytime in the first quarter at locked-in rates.

OFF THE TRACK

- **Millennium UN Plaza**, One United Nations Plaza, 44th Street between First and Second Avenues; 212-758- 1234; www.millenniumhotels.com; from \$269 per night.

So what if this 427-room hotel is a little out of the way? It has gorgeous views of the East River and the United Nations -- plus a full-service health club and indoor swimming pool for guests to use at no extra charge.

Rooms start at \$269 a night, but the Millennium UN Plaza Hotel is offering a B&B package that includes standard accommodations and a buffet breakfast for two in the hotel's Ambassador Grill, for \$299 per room per night. Rates go even lower during the holidays and January and February, so with an advance purchase package (pre pay, non-refundable), that standard room could cost \$199.

- **Marrakech Hotel**, 2688 Broadway; 212-222-2954; www.marrakechhotelnyc.com. From \$229 in high season; from \$129 in January and February.

A five-story, walk-up building on Broadway near Columbia University houses a 126-room hotel largely staffed by friendly college students. This hotel appeals to travelers who don't mind climbing up to five flights of stairs to get to their rooms and want something with a lot of personality. The Moroccan decor is sprightly and attractive. The Business Center is minimal as is Internet access in the guest rooms, but the lounge offers free WiFi. There are a number of moderately priced ethnic restaurants in the neighborhood, including a Thai restaurant called Souk affiliated with the hotel. The West Side IRT subway is right outside the door. When the subway is running on schedule, it's around a 20-minute trip to midtown.

SUNDAY NIGHT STAY

- **Westin New York** at Times Square, 270 W. 43rd St.; 212-201-2700 or 866- 837-4183; www.westinny.com.

A number of hotels offer discounts to guests whose stay includes a Sunday night (go to www.nycvisit.com for a complete list) but the Westin New York's offer is particularly attractive. Sunday rates start at \$279 a night and include two complimentary cocktails and complimentary breakfast on the morning of departure.

Rates through the end of the year normally start at \$444 a night for standard guest rooms, which measure 325 square feet. That's pretty big for New York City and the Westin New York couldn't be more conveniently located for theater and shopping.

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

• **Millenium Hilton**, 55 Church St.; 212-693-2001; www.hilton.com; from \$209.

Depending on how you feel about having a room that overlooks Ground Zero, this could be the hotel for you. The construction noise goes on daily, but the hotel issues earplugs to all guests and provides white noise machines on request. With 569 rooms, the hotel is full of business travelers from Mondays through Thursdays, but its plush, attractive guest rooms are a bargain for leisure travelers on weekends.

One package offers a Sunday night stay with continental breakfast for two for \$199. Another package, designed to appeal to shoppers, includes transportation vouchers to Woodbury Common Premium Outlets (an hour north) plus South Street Seaport and Grand Central Terminal shopping discounts for \$200 a night. The rack rate for standard rooms on weekends could range from \$209 to \$249 a night, and that includes the use of the hotel's inviting swimming pool, with its views of historic St. Paul's Chapel where George Washington worshipped after his first inauguration as president of the United States.

LUXIST

November 5, 2008

NYC Holiday Hotel Packages for Every Traveler

Posted Nov 5th 2008 11:02AM by Lisa Palladino

Filed under: [Dining](#), [Journeys](#), [Services](#), [Events](#), [Holiday Guides](#)



Holidays in New York City can be a lot of things: charming, classic, thrilling ... overwhelming, chaotic, expensive. While some travelers arrive in search of the quintessential Silver Bells experience, others may want to discover something new or stick within a budget. Luxist's friends at Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations, Gabrielle Etrog Cohen and Gina Masullo, came up with a comprehensive list of places to go and things to do for all NYC travelers as well as package deals, including hotels.

THE FAMILY: Crowd-pleasers for all ages-within a budget.

The show: The Off-Broadway production of *The Gazillion Bubble Show* is the first and only interactive stage production of its kind, complete with fantastic light effects, lasers, and jaw-dropping masterpieces of bubble artistry.

The sites: Gawking at the Macy's displays, a visit with the polar bears in Central Park, photo ops at the Rockefeller Center tree.

The meal: Dim Sum Go Go offers more than 24 kinds of dumplings, plus four variations on the dough-wraper theme, four sauces, and microwave-safe takeout containers. Kids will love the creative finger food and parents will love the dim sum delicacies (beet flavored dumplings?).

The hotel: Apple Core Hotels -- a family-friendly vibe in the city's most exciting neighborhood.

The deal: Apple Core Hotels invites guests to explore New York -- including a trip to Toys "R" Us Times Square to create a stuffed animal at the Filled-With-Love interactive design shop. Apple Core's "Filled with Love" package is available January 2 - February 14, starts at \$159.99 and includes accommodations in the heart of New York City, stuffed animal and breakfast, and in-room coffee. Children under 13 stay free.

THE EXPLORER: Tired of Rockefeller Center and Macy's? This year, celebrate the holidays downtown.

The show: Catch Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman in their Public Theater debut with their new musical, *Road Show*, the story of two brothers' quest for the American dream.

The sites: The recently opened New Museum of Contemporary Art has multiple exhibits for the winter season including Mary Heilmann's "To Be Someone" exhibit. The building is an exhibit of its own -- take time to check out this architectural masterpiece that The New York Times called "a hypnotic urban object." Explore the Essex Street Market, a Lower East Side staple since the 1940s and home to more than 20 merchants specializing in culinary products including gourmet cheeses, meats, fresh fish, and general grocery items.

The meal: Warm up with a hot chocolate tour! Take advantage of the multitude of bakeries and chocolate specialty shops downtown, sampling a unique hot chocolate at each chocolaterie. At MarieBelle, taste the signature Aztec Hot Chocolate, or stop by Jacques Torres for distinctive Wicked Hot Chocolate that features allspice, cinnamon, sweet ancho chili peppers, and smoked chipotle chili peppers

The hotels: Snag a reservation at the classic European style Bowery Hotel, where guests can warm up in the lobby with wintry cocktails and snacks as they cocoon up in one of the oversized vintage velvet armchairs. In 1912, it sheltered Titanic survivors, and now, following the restoration of this landmark building, The Jane hotel is opening in stages in the West Village. With 100 micro rooms for the backpacking set, this edgy hotel will be completed in early 2009 and is currently renting the 20 completed rooms.

The deals: For Christmas week, The Bowery will offer special reduced rates starting at \$450. The more intrepid traveler can relive history in one of The Jane's \$99 cabin rooms -- ideal for travelers with more "dash than cash".

THE NON-TRADITIONALIST: With so many options, why stick to the basics?

The show: Direct from London, the recently opened *Break Out* is an electrifying, hip-hop and break-dance meet cops-and-robbers comedy show.

The sites: Sip Trinidadian mojitos (made with bitters) and take in Brazilian jazz at the subterranean Little Branch; shop the Antiques Garage flea market in Chelsea for collectibles, vintage clothing, and antiques.

The meal: Max Brenner, Chocolate by the Bald Man: This Wonka-esque eatery serves chocolate pizza -- need we say more?



The hotels: Located in the Meatpacking District, Hotel Gansevoort is an urban oasis topped by an expansive rooftop with 360-degree city views and the exclusive Gansevoort Spa. The nation's first Pod Hotel, launched in early 2007, offers rates starting at \$89, a signature Pod Community Blog, an outdoor garden café, a rooftop deck, and concierge specializing in affordable activities.

The deals: Hotel Gansevoort has a package perfect for enjoying the cold weather season in style. The Coming in From the Cold package starts at \$700 a night and includes a choice of one 60-minute or two 30-minute Peppermint Body Massages at Gansevoort Spa, relaxing scented candles and bubble bath gels, complimentary personalized Hotel Gansevoort robe, bottle of red wine, chocolate fondue welcome amenity, Hotel Gansevoort music CD, and continental breakfast at Ono.

THE NEW CLASSIC: For a modern spin on tradition, visit some of the city's newer and lesser-known gems.

The show: Forgo the Rockettes and experience the original *Christmas Spectacular* at New York City Ballet's The Nutcracker at Lincoln Center.

The sites: The free Bryant Park ice skating rink; the breathtaking Top of the Rock observation deck; holiday lights and animals at the Holiday Lights at The Bronx Zoo.

The meal: Rolf's French Bavarian Brasserie, where locals and visitors throw back German pilsner and hearty fare under a jaw-dropping number of holiday lights, garland, and traditional dolls that hang from the ceiling.

The hotel: Located within close proximity to Union Square, Chelsea, and the Fashion District, The Carlton Hotel on Madison Avenue serves as the perfect home base during the holiday shopping season.

The deal: The Carlton's Winter in the City package combines cozy delights including a comfort foods menu at Country, a Geoffrey Zakarian restaurant; a private consultation with a Saks Fifth Avenue furrier; an NYC snow globe and free passes to ice skate at Rockefeller Center's iconic rink. Rates start at \$385.



August 11, 2008

Aug 11, 1:42 PM EDT

It's easy to have fun in NYC on a budget

By BETH J. HARPAZ
AP Travel Editor

NEW YORK (AP) -- You don't need big bucks to enjoy the Big Apple big time. Travel like a New Yorker on the subway. Eat like a New Yorker on the street. And see the city like a New Yorker by visiting public spaces, landmarks and famous places, many of which can be enjoyed for free. Here are some strategies.

GETTING AROUND: Subway fare is \$2. A MetroCard with unlimited rides on subways and buses is \$7.50 for the day or \$25 for seven days.

FAMOUS PLACES: Stroll the serpentine paths of Central Park on your own or take a free walking tour from the Central Park Conservancy, <http://www.centralparknyc.org> . Carousel rides are \$2. For \$8, you can hang out with polar bears and penguins at the zoo (\$3 for ages 3-12).

At Fifth Avenue and 50th Street is Rockefeller Center. The elegant art deco skyscrapers, Channel Gardens, and statues of Prometheus and Atlas are worth seeing in person, no matter how many times you've seen them on TV.

Grand Central Terminal, at 42nd Street and Park Avenue, is worth a visit too. Spend a few minutes inside gazing at the arches, cathedral windows and ceiling that make the place so grand.

Head west on 42nd Street to Times Square, but wait until after dark to fully appreciate the neon lights. Don't worry - the place is packed, even at night. You'll be perfectly safe.

Take the No. 1 train to the South Ferry stop and hop on the Staten Island ferry. It's free and offers fantastic views of the Statue of Liberty and city skyline, not to mention the manmade waterfalls on the East River, in place through Oct. 13. Details on other vantage points and boat rides for viewing the falls at <http://nycvisit.com/waterfalls/> .

Free ferries to Governors Island - <http://www.govisland.com/> - also offer waterfall views with boats Friday, Saturday and Sunday through Oct. 12.

Another way to see the city from the water is by kayak. The Downtown Boathouse - <http://www.downtownboathouse.org> - offers free kayaking weekends through Oct. 13 on the Hudson River on the city's West Side.

For a thrilling view of Lower Manhattan's urban canyons and skyscrapers, walk across the Brooklyn Bridge.

ENTERTAINMENT: Whether your taste runs to David Letterman, Stephen Colbert or Maury Povich, if your favorite TV show is filmed in New York, you may be able to see it live for free. Details at <http://www.nytimes.com/> .

A few Broadway shows hold nightly lotteries for cheap front-row tickets (\$21.50 for "Avenue Q," \$26.50 for "In The Heights," check Web sites for details). It's a great deal if your plans are flexible. Or try the TKTS booth in the Marriott Marquis Hotel, West 46th Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue, which sells tickets at up to 50 percent off for that night's performance at many Broadway and off-Broadway shows.

Many city parks host free shows in the summer, but they mostly end in August. In September and October, though, parades and street fairs abound. The West Indian-American Day Parade is a massive carnival-style pageant every Labor Day along Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. Look for politicians and other celebrities in the Columbus Day Parade along Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, 44th to 79th streets, noon-3 p.m. The Feast of San Gennaro street festival takes place on Mulberry Street in Little Italy, Sept. 11-21.

MUSEUMS: Most museums have some free hours. Arrive early and be prepared for crowds. (What, you thought you were the only one on a budget?)

The Museum of Modern Art, 53rd Street and Fifth Avenue, hosts free Fridays, 4 p.m.-8 p.m. The Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison and 75th Street, has "pay what you wish" admission Fridays, 6 p.m.-9 p.m. The Brooklyn Museum (Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop on the No. 2 or 3 train) has free admission the first Saturday night of each month except September, 5 p.m.-11 p.m. The arts-and-entertainment event draws huge crowds, from young hipsters to families to older folks.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street, always has a "suggested admission" of \$20, which means that no, you really don't have to pay the full amount. Don't be embarrassed; New Yorkers on a budget do it all the time. (One of my high school teachers famously sent us off to the museum with this advice: "A polite quarter will do!")

In Lower Manhattan, the National Museum of the American Indian is always free. Its thought-provoking exhibits include ancient artifacts; masterpieces of pottery, basketry, apparel and other objects; and contemporary art. The museum is housed at One Bowling Green in the former U.S. Customs House, an architecturally stunning 1907 Beaux Arts building.

FOOD: For breakfast, a bagel with cream cheese is the real deal. (Don't you dare put jam on that bagel!) And don't ask how many calories it is; just know that you won't be hungry for hours. In many parts of the city, corner coffee carts sell decent java, pastries and donuts for about \$1.

A cheap lunch might be a hot dog from a cart, a slice from a pizzeria or a sandwich to go from a deli. Also popular are "halal" grill carts selling falafel, chicken in pita and other Middle Eastern fare for \$5 or less.

For a sit-down splurge, try Dawat, 210 E. 58th St., an Indian restaurant with impeccable service and an outstanding menu created by the writer and actress Madhur Jaffrey. There are several \$16 lunch specials. Dinner entrees run more but even at night, you can get a half-order of tandoori chicken for \$14.

Supermarkets often sell whole cooked rotisserie chickens to go for under \$10. Add a loaf of Italian bread, a readymade salad, and find a park for a picnic for two. Or round up some friends and order a few dishes to share in an ethnic restaurant. Chinatown has many inexpensive restaurants but one of my favorites is Joe's Shanghai at 9 Pell St. You may need a map to find it, but the dumplings are divine. At Aura Thai, 462 Ninth Ave. near 36th Street,

panang curry with chicken, beef or tofu is \$8.95.

Dessert for two: Split the six-for-\$9 selection of truffles and pralines at Max Brenner's, 141 Second Ave. at Ninth Street.

NEIGHBORHOODS: Spend an afternoon exploring. Take the No. 7 train to Jackson Heights and soak up the sounds, sights and smells of the Latin and Asian shops and restaurants. Walk across 125th Street in Harlem. Wander around the Lower East Side, where bargain stores still sell housedresses on racks, but trendy bars and cafes are encroaching on the old neighborhood. Don't forget Coney Island, last stop on the D, F, or Q trains to Brooklyn. If you're tempted by laughter, screams and music from the amusement park, a ride on the Wonder Wheel is \$6 while the Cyclone roller coaster is \$8. Stroll the boardwalk or wade in the ocean for free.

Big Apple Greeters - <http://bigapplegreeter.org> - offers free, personalized tours led by volunteers who love sharing their inside knowledge of the city. Request the neighborhood of your choice or let them surprise you with an authentic corner of the city you might otherwise never see. Reserve three to four weeks ahead.



ACCOMMODATIONS: If you don't have a friend or relative to stay with, the Pod Hotel - 230 E. 51st St., <http://www.thepodhotel.com/> - has some rooms under \$200. Or pretend that Sunday is the new Friday, and book a Sunday-Monday stay through NYC Sunday Stays at <http://www.nycvisit.com/sundaystays> with room rates 20-30 percent off, free breakfasts and other deals.

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Detroit Free Press

April 25, 2008

Hotels court high-tech guests



CyberSpeak
Kim Komando

For years, hotels have tried to provide the best creature comforts and services. And now, many are adapting to the digital age. So when you book hotel rooms, pay attention to the amenities offered.

These days, Wi-Fi is standard at many hotels. Some provide free service in the lobby. You may need to pay to use it in your room. Interestingly, lower priced hotels are more likely to offer free in-room high speed Internet access than pricey establishments.

Getting online is just the beginning. Many hotels provide 24-hour business centers stocked with computers and printers. Others offer far more tech amenities. Here are just a few:

MGM Grand, Las Vegas

Each suite has a high-definition flat-panel television and many suites have several. There are even sets built into the bathroom mirror.

To complement that, you'll find a DVD player and an advanced stereo system. There is also Internet access in each room.

Additionally, a remote control helps you adjust settings in the room. You can close the drapes or change the temperature with the click of a button.

The Four Seasons, Manele Bay, Hawaii

At the Four Seasons, you'll find flat-screen TVs and DVD and CD players in rooms. Some also offer stereo players for your iPod. Additionally, the rooms are equipped with both wired and wireless Internet access.

The hotel also has an entertainment center guests can use that contains large flat-panel TVs. Or, if you are missing your Microsoft Xbox or Sony PlayStation, guests can play games for free in the hotel's public video game room.

Hotel Sax, Chicago

The Hotel Sax has partnered with Microsoft and launched The Studio: An Experience by Microsoft. In the entertainment lounge, guests can try Microsoft's newest technologies.

There are Xbox games, laptops and a music library downloadable to Zunes. There's also a home theater setup for watching select movies.

You'll find Xbox 360s and improved sound systems in the rooms. Additionally, every room has instant messaging to communicate with the concierge. Guests can also communicate with concierges outside the hotel, thanks to text messaging.



Pod Hotel, New York

Like other hotels, the Pod offers flat-panel TVs and Wi-Fi access. You'll also find iPod docking stations.

But the Pod has something other hotels don't. It has created a social network for guests. They can exchange sightseeing advice or make arrangements to meet up.

Other amenities

In many hotels, your cellphone may not work in your room. The Mandarin Oriental in New York has a system that just about guarantees cellphone coverage anywhere in the hotel. The hotel also provides loaner cellphone chargers in case you leave yours at home.

Of course, these hotels may be out of many travelers' budgets. But you'll find tech-savvy hotels in your budget. Decide what you need and how much you're willing to spend. Then start asking the hotel questions.

Most travelers need Internet access. So ask about the costs for Internet access. Are entertainment systems provided in the rooms? High-definition TVs are becoming more common. Surround sound systems are less common. Ask about iPod docks.

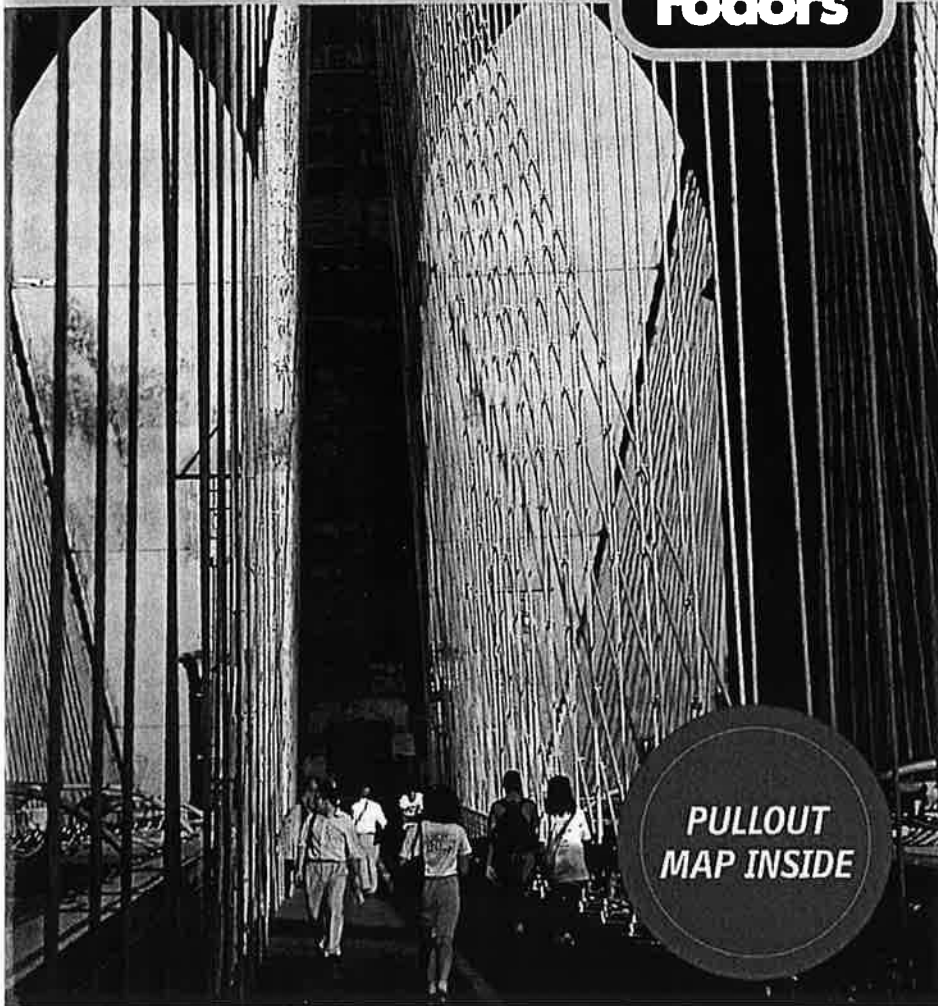
DVD players in the room are handy, especially if you are traveling with children. Most rooms won't include stand-alone gaming consoles. But you may be able to rent an Xbox or Nintendo Wii. Don't be surprised if you have to pay by the hour for the privilege.

Kim Komando hosts the nation's largest talk radio show about computers and the Internet. To get the podcast or find the station nearest you, visit: www.komando.com/listen. To subscribe to Kim's free e-mail newsletters, sign up at: www.komando.com/newsletters. Contact her at gnstech@gns.gannett.com.

2008

New York City 2008

Fodor's



**PULLOUT
MAP INSIDE**

chandeliers, murals, and Corinthian columns in the Rotunda lounge. Chintz and dark wood adorn the grand and traditional guest rooms, whose gleaming black-and-white art deco bathrooms are spacious for New York. Although still a quintessential old New York place to stay, mutterings of rooms that need updating and more modern amenities make the exorbitant prices hard to justify. ☎2 E. 61st St., between 5th and Madison Aves., Upper East Side 10021 ☎212/838-8000 or 800/332-3442 ☎212/758-1615 🌐www.tajhotels.com/Pierre/ 📠150 rooms, 52 suites ♣In-room: safe, refrigerator, Ethernet. In-hotel: 2 restaurants, room service, bar, gym, concierge, laundry service, parking (fee), some pets allowed, no-smoking rooms ☑AE, D, DC, MC, V 🚇Subway: N, R, W to 5th Ave.



¢-§ **Pod Hotel.** Formerly known as Pickwick Arms, this hotel has been completely renovated with retro-cool decor, morphing into one of the best deals in town—if you can tolerate cramped quarters. The tiny rooms (some are just 100 square feet) borrow space-saving ideas from mass transit, with sink consoles like those in an airplane restroom, and built-in shelves tucked under the beds. But you may be willing to trade space for the convenient location and the standard, modern amenities like in-room iPod docking stations, free Wi-Fi, and largish LCD TVs. The common areas are cheerful and modern, with an outdoor bar-café and roof deck slated to open soon. Don't expect luxe linens or fab toiletries. Do expect to book well in advance, as budget-minded hipsters and stylish spendthrifts of all ages are sure to keep this hotel hopping. ☎230 E. 51st St., between 2nd and 3rd Aves., Midtown East 10022 ☎212/355-0300 or 800/874-0074 ☎212/755-5029 🌐www.thepod-hotel.com 📠347 rooms, 195 with bath ♣In-room: Wi-Fi ☑AE, DC, MC, V 🚇Subway: 6 to 51st St./Lexington Ave.; E, V to Lexington-3rd Aves./53rd St.

§-\$\$ **Roger Smith.** The elusive Roger Smith lends his name to this colorful boutique hotel and adjacent gallery. Riotous murals cover the walls in Lily's, the onsite bar-café. The art-filled rooms are homey and comfortable, and some have stocked bookshelves and fireplaces. An eclectic mix of room service is provided by five local restaurants. Guests have access to the nearby New York Sports Club (\$10 fee). Rates can drop by as much as \$75 per night in winter and summer, so ask when booking. A complimentary continental breakfast is included. ☎501 Lexington Ave., between E. 47th and E. 48th Sts., Midtown East 10017 ☎212/755-1400 or 800/445-0277 ☎212/758-4061 🌐www.roger-smith.com 📠102 rooms, 28 suites ♣In-room: kitchen (some), refrigerator, dial-up, Wi-Fi. In-hotel: restaurant, room service, bar, laundry service, parking (fee), some pets allowed, no-smoking rooms ☑AE, D, DC, MC, V 🚇Subway: 6 to 51st St./Lexington Ave.; E, V to Lexington-3rd Aves./53rd St.

\$\$\$\$ **The St. Regis.** A one-of-a-kind New York classic, this 5th Avenue beaux arts landmark is a hive of activity in its unparalleled public spaces. The King Cole Bar is an institution in itself with its famous Maxfield Parish mural. Guest rooms, all serviced by accommodating butlers, are straight out of the American Movie Channel, with high ceilings, crystal



March 4, 2008

Best Geek Hotels in the World 2.0

3/04/2008 at 10:34 AM

Tags: Geek Hotels, Lists, HotelChatter, Tech Hotels, Awards, Hotel News

As most people who suffer from technophilia know, a lot can change in a year. In the year that we released our first Best Geek Hotels List, the iPhone beat out every other cellphone on the market, the MacAir usurped the MacBook and saved shoulders worldwide, Guitar Hero and Rock Band raged, and Facebook surpassed MySpace, at least in our group of friends.



While most hotels are still rather slow to adopt technology -- hello, working free WiFi please?-- we did find a new crop of geek hotels that were worthy of superlatives. Some of these hotels have been geeking it out for a while and some are still in beta. But much of the source code remains the same:

Being geek is a cultural endeavour, so after searching every henhouse, outhouse, and boathouse around the world we have put together our list of the world's top geek hotels for 2008. From artificial intelligence, to high end gadgetry, to geek service, and geek movie worship, the hotels on this list have a certain je ne sais quoi de geek.

1. THE HOTEL SAX, CHICAGO

The **Hotel Sax** is the only hotel in the world any self-respecting video gamer would check into. The reason why? The hotel's sixth floor Studio is powered by Microsoft and thus is complete with Xbox 360s and its most popular games like Madden '08, Halo 3, Guitar Hero, Scene It, Dance, Dance Revolution and our personal favorite RockBand. Plus there's more:

Guests can play Xbox games, connect with other gamers around the world via Xbox Live service, work in a social setting, download and listen to music from the hotel's music library via Microsoft's Zune music player or kick back and watch HDTV content and select movies in the home theater environment managed by Windows Media Center Technology.

There's even a technology butler on hand in case anything goes wrong, like the Xbox freezes up.

The studio is open from 4pm to midnight only for hotel guests which means you won't have to fight with outsiders to wail on the guitar but it will mean ponying up \$200+ for a hotel room and dealing with a security staffer at the door.

2. HOTEL AVANTE, MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA, USA



[View Larger Map](#)

The **Hotel Google**. What? You didn't know Google had its own hotel? Well they don't, officially, but they might as well just name this JDV Hospitality property the official Hotel Google. Like the famous search engine, Hotel Avante is egalitarian but presents a wide array of options to the user. Large,

comfy beds, flat screen televisions, cordless phones, and free, four bar wireless. There is also a heated pool and a music listening lounge.

Back up in the rooms this hotel keeps your mind occupied with Photoshop forerunner, Etch-a-Sketch, a Rubik's cube, a deck of cards, a slinky, tape, and scissors. Furthermore, if you need a lift to the Googleplex, Hotel Avante offers regular shuttle service between the hotel and Google, just ask at the front desk.

If you are looking for sweeping vistas of Silicon Valley (who would?), you have the wrong place, but if you want a comfortable cutting edge business hotel at a decent price within a stones throw of Google headquarters -- query filled.

3. THE WESTIN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



A deja vu is usually a glitch in the Matrix. It happens when they change something. Right? Well, both Matrix efficianados and confusionados can retrace Neo's steps at the Westin Sydney Hotel. The Deja Vu scene was filmed here, in one of the hotels staircases. If you want to compare and contrast the movie scene and the reality, just pop in the original Matrix DVD and leap to 01:20:01, or 01:20:34. You will notice in the Westin Sydney hotel:

The tiles were rotated 45 degrees relative to the axes of the stairs, where as in the Matrix, they're aligned with the direction of the stairs.

The real world deja vu hotel is a 31 story, 416 room hotel in the midst of downtown Sydney.

Some folks use this hotel as their jumping off point to retrace all of Neo's steps in Sydney, while others take a stab at creating their own Matrix inspired deja vu scene in the stairwell. No joke. Oh, and also the Westin Sydney is actually a illuminated, thriving hotel and not an old dilapidated building as 1 Martin place appears to be in the world of Wachowski.



4. THE POD HOTEL, NEW YORK

Drink With Me	8	12
Eat With Me	1	1
Shop With Me	0	0
Go Out With Me	1	1
Drink With Me	3	13
Eat With Me	1	1
Shop With Me	1	2
Go Out With Me	1	2

The Pod Hotel, aka the Facebook Hotel, is the hotel du jour for the social media generation, offering small and affordable rooms tricked out with the latest gadgets to keep the youngins happy like flat-screen TVs, iPod docking stations and free WiFi. Of course, the over 30 set is welcome but will probably want the rooms sans bunk beds and shared baths.

But the Pod Hotel is one of the first hotels to have its own social

networking site, **The Pod Community Blog**. How it works: Once guests make their own online reservation they can opt to become a member of the Pod Community. They can choose their login and password and then start to participate in a bunch of forums: Drink with Me, Eat with Me, Shop with Me, Go Out with Me. And since the networking is for people looking to hang out with others during their hotel stay, each forum is grouped by month.

A sample conversation from the Drink With Me forum goes like this:

Scott, 27, from Australia, first time to NYC. Catch up for a drink or sightseeing? 18th - 20th March.

Right now, it looks more like a message board than a tricked out Facebook page but we wouldn't be surprised if soon members can start uploading their beer pong tourney pics and Scrabulous results.

5. EMIRATES PALACE, ABU DHABI



In Dubai, they can pretty much build whatever they want and a high-tech luxury hotel is no exception.

Sure most of the place is probably in bad taste--there is such a thing as too opulent believe it or not--but The Emirates Palace is totally tricked out from the guestrooms which feature hand-held computers to control every light, switch and power outlet to the employees who ride around on Segways and to the "unbreakable bubble" of WiFi that extends beyond the guestrooms to the pool and to the private beach.

Even more impressive: USA Today discovered that upon a special high-level request (think royal family, presidents, Dr. Evil)

The computer and broadcast network — and its 3.5 terabyte storage network — can be cut off completely from the outside world, like the U.S. government's secure intranet

Meanwhile, regular billionaire guests can rest assured that their internet connection is protected by the hotel's full-time network security officer who monitors its 16 firewalls and intrusion detection systems.

[Photo: Rooroy]

6. LANGHAM PLACE HOTEL, MONGKOK, HONG KONG



At the Langham Place Hotel, we can't decide what is more geek-worthy--the fact that every hotel room uses the Cisco 7970 color Internet Protocol (IP) phone or the animated Smart Angel Tracy who instructs you on how to work the in-room technology -- she plays the Kelly LeBrock role here.

The Cisco phone in itself is pretty impressive. It's a touch-screen phone that can be configured by the guests at any time and from any computer to pull up weather temps, news, stock quotes and even family photos. Guests can even upload their information online before their trip and once they arrive, all of that will be displayed on the phones'

color touch screen. Plus the hotel will save your information for the next time you return.

As for the angel, Tracy is an animated version of the hotel's real life "Pink Ladies", the hotel's guest services agents. She's the one who first greets you when you walk into your room, on your TV screen that is. For those who may not be so tech-inclined will give you an instruction on how to use everything in the room from the Cisco phone to the video-on-demand system to the iPod docking station and the oh-so-important air-conditioning controls.

And if you have any issues, the hotel has a S.M.A.R.T. Centre staffed with humans to help you out. Other tech benefits to this hotel: "omnipresent" WiFi that works everywhere, in-room mobile phones and an in-room electronic safe with built-in charging facility for all those gadgets that you travel with. Oh and you can Skype the hotel.

[Photo: Belfast - JJ]

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

1. **Hotel Monaco Seattle:** For hosting Guitar Hero sessions and tournaments on Friday nights.
2. **The Seaport Hotel, Boston:** The hotel's iConcierge called Seaportal found in every guest rooms which gives you free WiFi, free VOIP calls and allows you to call up ring up any human staffers you might need.
3. **UK's City Inn Hotels:** For putting iMacs into every guestroom.

LET US KNOW YOUR FAVORITE GEEK HOTEL

Skip IRC and just hit up our tip line, which is always open. We want to hear about your favorite geek hotel haunts around the world.



April 2, 2008

Hyatt Launches Online Community Site for Its Gold Passport Members

4/01/2008 at 9:58 AM

Tags: Hyatt Hotels, Yatt'it, Hotel Websites, Hotel Technology, Hotel News



HYATT™



yatt'it
a hyatt travel community

Perhaps Hyatt Hotels were intrigued by the Pod Hotel's Facebook-like community site or maybe they were just trying to keep up with Starwood Hotel's Lobby blog but either way we know have yatt'it, an online community travel site for Hyatt's Gold Passport members. 

Designed for members of the Hyatt Gold Passport loyalty program, but rich in benefits for all travelers, yatt'it is the first travel site to offer expert insight and tips from local Hyatt concierges in over 40 destinations worldwide along with advice from confirmed frequent travelers. In addition, partnerships with well-trusted sources like Frommers.com and FlightStats.com will quickly establish yatt'it as a valuable online resource for worldwide travel tips.

Aside from Frommer's and FlightStats were guessing that should you need a hotel recommendation, there are plenty of Hyatt options on the site. Also, if you're on the go you can access the site from your phone at mobile.yattit.com.

We think the idea is kinda cool and the interface looks rather easy to navigate. We're not sure how much we would use it but it's still helpful and people who are obsessive about their Hyatt loyalty program rewards will definitely dig it.

However, may we ask one question? **Who came up with yatt'it?** Not only is it weird-looking and sounding, it actually makes us think of boating. Yatt'it. Yacht It. Perhaps they should have chosen a name that's a little more hotel-centric.

What do you think of yatt'it? Let us know in comments below.

HOTELS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WORLDWIDE HOTEL INDUSTRY

March 26, 2008

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Pod Hotel Launches Blog, Online Concierge
New York City's Pod Hotel has created an exclusive "Pod Community" with the debut of its POD COMMUNITY BLOG, a customized message board for those with active reservations at the hotel.

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Pod Hotel Launches Blog, Online Concierge

-- Hotels, 3/26/2008 8:21:00 AM

NEW YORK (March 2008) – The Pod Hotel, one of New York City's most affordable, hip and innovative hotels, is creating an exclusive "Pod Community" with the debut of its POD COMMUNITY BLOG.

The POD COMMUNITY BLOG is a customized message board designed exclusively for those with active reservations at the hotel. It allows guests to interact with one another as well as ask questions or make requests before and/or during their stay at The Pod Hotel.

"The Pod Hotel caters to the socializing sensibilities of the hotel's target audience – 20- to 35- year-old stylish, spendthrift travelers," said General Manager David Bernstein. "As the online social networking trend continues to grow, we designed this unique feature to create a sense of community among our tech-savvy Pod guests and allow them to connect with the hotel in a new way."

Taking the concierge's role to a new level, the blog acts as a resource and guide for guests. Users can log on to learn more about the city and the hotel as well as get the most up-to-date information about the latest "happenings" around NYC. Additionally, questions that guests post on the site are monitored and answered directly by the concierge on a daily basis.

Guests can also access the "Survival Guide" on the site which is updated daily by the hotel's concierge. The Survival Guide is a comprehensive listing of all of the affordable and fun things to do in NYC, such as free events, "cheap eats", BYOB restaurants, happy hours and sample sales. It also provides guests with honest reviews and suggestions including tips for shopping, information about restaurants, galleries, museums, clubs, concerts, gyms and internet cafes. The Survival Guide also provides guests with step-by-step directions from the hotel to their desired destination.

"Guests feel that our custom Survival Guide is one of the biggest perks of staying at The Pod Hotel," said Bryan Raughton, the concierge for The Pod Hotel. "With the new POD COMMUNITY BLOG, guests can now enjoy having access to the Survival Guide prior to their arrival at the hotel so they can plan their itineraries in advance."

Guests can become an active member of the POD COMMUNITY BLOG as soon as an online reservation for The Pod Hotel is made. After a reservation is booked, the guest is sent an e-mail which includes a link to the blog and a unique user ID code. This enables the guest to create a profile for the POD COMMUNITY BLOG and begin communicating with other guests who are staying at the hotel. The site has four accessible categories – "DRINK WITH ME," "EAT WITH ME," "SHOP WITH ME," and "GO OUT WITH ME"— where guests can post requests and interact with one another. Users log on to the site and request for other guests to join them for a drink, a meal, a shopping spree or a night out on the town in the respective category.

ABOUT THE POD HOTEL:

THE POD HOTEL, a 347-room budget boutique property located on East 51st Street in the heart of midtown Manhattan, was designed specifically for the stylish spendthrift traveler. The hotel provides its guests with comfortable, yet trendy accommodations that are equipped with 21st Century must-haves such as iPod docking stations, free WiFi and LCD flat screen TVs for an affordable price. Inspired by mass transit's streamlined design approach, the hotel offers a variety of room configurations including single, double, queen, double-double and bunk-bedded rooms to meet the needs of any traveler. In addition to its stylish, mod-designed furnishings, the hotel also features an exclusive POD COMMUNITY BLOG, an outdoor garden café and a rooftop deck. THE POD HOTEL is owned and operated by BD Hotels, which currently owns 15 hotels with over 4,000 rooms, and is the largest independent hotel owner and operator in New York City.

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

April 28, 2008

Downsized hotels priced to match

Building on a trend that started in Japan, pods spread to Europe and now the U.S.

The Wall Street Journal

Forget a room with a view — or even much room. The latest development in the hotel industry has travelers bunking in tiny, sometimes windowless, quarters.

In London, a new hotel books rooms by the hour, has an entryway that looks like a spaceship and windows that open into an indoor hallway. In the Netherlands, the new Qbic hotel rents “cubis” the size of a walk-in closet. Opening soon is an Amsterdam hotel made entirely of small, prefabricated pods.

Rising hotel room rates and growing travel delays are creating a new niche: pod hotels, small spaces where travelers can spend the night — or a few hours — for relatively little money. The concept — in Japan for decades — is new in Europe and spreading to the U.S.

Most pod hotels don't have grand lobbies, gyms or meeting rooms, areas that can be considered dead space for generating revenue at regular hotels.

With limited services and amenities, they also save on labor. A pod hotel has as few as one full-time employee for every 12 rooms, compared with an employee for every two rooms at a typical budget hotel.

At the Pod Hotel in Manhattan, a standard room with a bunk bed and a shared bathroom starts at \$89 a night.

Though rooms can measure as small as 65 square feet, the ones in Europe and New York are slightly roomier than their Asian counterparts, where stacked capsules can be as small as 20 square feet — with 3-foot-high ceilings. (Ceilings in the new-breed pods are regular height.)

Georgia Hinton, Corona, Calif., decided to give a pod a try. She booked a room at an EasyHotel in Basel, Switzerland.

“It was very affordable, considering

everything else is so expensive in Europe,” she says. But she was surprised to learn there was no elevator and little room for luggage. “There’s really no extra anything.”

Capsule-style hotels took off in crowded Japan in the 1980s. They were popular with businessmen who stayed at the office so late they missed the last train home.

One of the first Western iterations came when EasyHotel opened in London in 2005, launched by the founder of EasyJet, the low-cost European air carrier.

With windowless rooms as small as 65 square feet and rates that started at less than \$20 a night, the hotels quickly spread. Rates have risen, but guests are still charged extra for maid service and use of a remote control for the TV.

“We’ve always tried to develop down to the minimum standards,” says Lawrence Alexander, EasyHotel’s chief executive.

“I looked at Japanese pod hotels and said, ‘Nobody’s going to want to sleep in those,’” says Simon Woodroffe, chief executive of the company that owns Yotel, two pod-style properties in London.

At Yotel, rates range from \$50 for a four-hour nap to \$160 for a full stay. It takes less than 30 minutes to ready a room for the next guest, compared with two or three hours at a typical hotel. Daily occupancy runs 150 percent to 180 percent since rooms can turn over more than once.

In some dense urban areas or near big airports, developers are running out of space to build budget-style hotels, says Ben Walker, a research manager with London-based TRI Hospitality Consulting.

With windowless rooms, the pods can be built basically anywhere, which means operators could potentially open them in old office buildings, malls or even underground parking lots. This model won’t work in some countries. In the U.S.



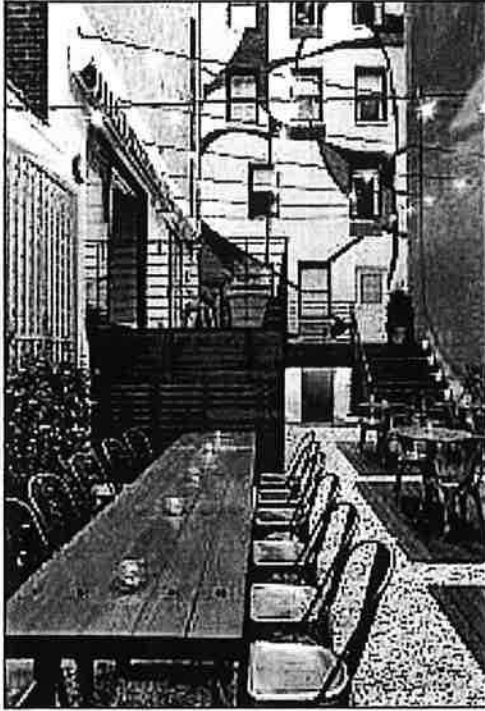


Photo provided by [The Pod Hotel](#)

STRICTLY MODERN: Although such hostels typically offer fewer amenities, New York's Pod Hotel has an outdoor garden. Its room rates start at \$89 a night.

and Germany, for instance, windows are legally required in hotel rooms.

Steve Borgford, Seattle, heard about the Yotel at London's Heathrow airport and decided to try it out during a layover.

"I'm the type who tries everything," he said. "I wanted to rest, but I was also just very curious to see what it was like."

Los Angeles Times

March 7, 2008

Daily Travel & Deal Blog

Scouting the best airfares, hotels, cruises and vacation packages

Strike in Germany, best geek hotels & best airline commercials



Good morning travelers! Did you see the article "Personal trek, with millions" about the Hajj — Islam's ritual pilgrimage to Mecca? It might have millions of people participating, but did anyone consider that it could result in just as many claustrophobics? That's what happened to me after I was crammed amid the masses for the 1997 Hong Kong Handover. [LAT]

Are you going to Germany today? Keep your eye on Lufthansa news. Workers at eight airports are threatening to strike and 142 domestic and European flights might be cut. [BBC]



HotelChatter named their Best Geek Hotels for 2008. Hotel Avante in Mountain View was the only one that made the list from California. [HotelChatter]

Meanwhile, Gridskipper targeted a much less brainy audience in their post the Best Airline Commercials Around. [Gridskipper]

Need a pic fix? Veronique de Turenne of the new blog L.A. Now is going to start featuring Your Scene photos every morning. If you want to get in the spotlight, make sure you submit your photo. Right now she's focusing on pics of California. Don't be shy, show off your handiwork. [LAT]

— Jen Leo, Los Angeles Times Travel Deal Blogger



April 2, 2008

Totally geeked-out, hi-tech hotels

From Guitar Hero events to HD TVs, guests stay connected and entertained

By Peter Greenberg

TODAYShow.com contributor

updated 11:24 a.m. ET, Wed., April. 2, 2008

For years, hotels have prided themselves — and marketed themselves — for their creature comforts and special services, their geographic locations and rooms with a view, all in an attempt to attract, keep and grow their market share. But now, a number of them have come to a new realization about their guests — that we don't really change our lifestyle when we change our location.

As a result, many hotels have embraced the notion of connectivity. No, it's not just providing Wi Fi access in each room. It's going way beyond that. Welcome to the totally geeked out hotels, where technology rules.

In Seattle, the Hotel Monaco, a Kimpton property, now hosts Guitar Hero III tournaments, where geeks and wannabes can rock out every Friday night during the hotel's hosted wine hour from 5PM to 6PM. It has proven to be quite popular among guests. The staff has a list of songs — and their difficulty — on a clipboard and guests take turns trying to beat their best score — or at least try to get through a heavy metal guitar solo.

At the Nine Zero hotel (also a a Kimpton property) in Boston, hotel executives have equipped one room — the Cloud Nine Penthouse suite with special iris scan technology. No metal key. No plastic key card. You — and only you — can open your door by walking up to the scanner embedded in the door — which then recognizes you by scanning your eye... and you're in.

Another hotel in Seattle has geeked-out stuff. The Hotel 1000 has no dead zones when it comes to wireless — which means the system works literally everywhere in the hotel. But it doesn't stop there.

- Digital thermometers with infrared signals scan each guest room for motion, and it will alert the system to activate the guests' desired temperature, if it detects movement. For those guests who frequent the hotel, their guestroom will be preset to their preferred temperature
 - Electronic doorbell with silent staff button offers guests high-tech privacy. All the hotel staff has to do is push a silent button above the guestroom's doorbell, which will let the staff know if the room is occupied. An infrared signal scans the room to detect movement and notes "do not disturb" if the room is occupied. The guestroom will be serviced once the room is not

occupied

- Just by pushing a button, guests can let housekeeping know if they prefer privacy or are ready for housekeeping to service their room to be serviced. An indicator immediately notifies the service team if guests want their room serviced
- It is one of the first hotels in the country to offer guests High Definition televisions and surround sound for movies, TV channels and Sirius music
- Guests can choose from eight different art genre collections for their guestroom, which will appear on the HD TVs; a description of the art, including the artist's name, date and gallery where it is housed
- Guests receive complimentary local and long distance domestic phone calls on VOIP phones. The phone's color display shows guests their airline flight details, stock quotes, local restaurants and activity information, text messaging, weather, and the ability for the guest to retrieve their car from valet by entering their ticket number
- Guests can enjoy a real golf experience in a virtual setting by using the hotel's infrared tracking system, which creates two planes each with over 680 independent sensors calculating the velocity, spin and trajectory of the ball. Guests can choose from 50 courses, such as The Old Course at St Andrews, Pebble Beach, Pinehurst or Valderrama.

A number of hotels are now partnering with companies like Microsoft and Nintendo to create a ramped up geeked out experience. In Chicago, the Hotel Sax has launched "The Studio: An Experience by Microsoft." Hotel Sax is the first hotel ever to partner with Microsoft to offer state-of-the-art Microsoft technology.

"The Studio – A Microsoft Experience" is a entertainment lounge that lets guests experience the newest entertainment and guest service technologies from Microsoft. In The Studio, guests can play Xbox games, connect with other gamers around the world via Xbox live service, work in a social setting on provided Hewlett Packard laptops, download and listen to music from the hotel's music library via Microsoft's Zune music player or watch HDTV and select movies in the home theater environment. And for the serious gamer, there's Madden '08, Rock Band, Scene It and Dance Dance Revolution.

In-room automation allows guests to access Xbox 360s. Some rooms even are customized with improved sound systems. Each room has access to instant Messaging. Guests directly can contact the concierge with Instant Messaging; therefore the concierge can be more proactive with guests, especially for those guests who frequent the hotel.

For guests with Windows Mobile Smartphones, or Windows-enabled technology, guests can stay in touch with the concierge. Guests can use the IM application to ask the concierge a question while strolling about the city. The concierge even can overlay discount coupons. For

guests who don't have Windows Mobile Smartphones, or Windows-enabled technology, they still can stay in touch with the concierge through text messaging.

At the Hotel Avante, in Mountain View California, proximity to geekdom has its benefits. It's a stone's throw from Silicon Valley, headquarters of Google. And the interior of the guest rooms reflects that proximity. Guestroom desks with glass-topped drawers are divided into right-brain (creativity) and left-brain (logic) categories. Guests will find a yo-yo, Etch-a-Sketch, Slinky and Rubik's cube in drawers on the right side. The left side of the desk has tape, scissors, stapler, staple remover, pencils, post-it notes (the "work" part of work/play)

The furniture located in guestrooms are on wheels, so if you're itching to redecorate your room, go right ahead. And of course downstairs is — the Wi-Fi lounge. Yes, bring your laptop.

Then there's a hotel that is geeked out to get you outside the hotel. In Denver, the Hotel Teatro offers an Adventure Package — a high-tech way for guests to experience the outdoors. The package lets guests borrow a preprogrammed GPS unit, which has directions to local biking, climbing, fishing, hiking, running and local outdoor retailers.



In New York, the Pod Hotel isn't known for large rooms. In fact, the current joke is that the rooms are so small that you need to walk outside the room in order to change — your mind! (With apologies to Henny Youngman). The hotel has been nicknamed the "Facebook Hotel" and it even has its own online community, called the Pod Community Blog, so guests can network with each other and make plans for sightseeing, drinks or a night on the town. The site has four categories: "drink with me," "eat with me," "shop with me," and "go out with me." It's a customized message board also doubles as a resource guide for guests.

Their recently-launched blog community has a concierge who prints out daily "Survival Guides" that have useful travel tips and information on free events and activities in the city, and the guides are updated daily.

If you're looking for "geek chic", then check into the Hotel Gansevoort in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. When guests check-in to the hotel, they can request Nintendo's Wii gaming system in their rooms. And, that's coupled with iPod docs, Sony home theater systems, and 42" flat-screen TVs.

And, last but not least, taking the Wii gaming system up a notch or two, the Parker Meridien Hotel in New York has a special licensing deal with Nintendo. The hotel has converted a former squash court in its health club into a specially programmed Wii exercise program. You don't just play the WII — you work with the hotel's trainers in a high-energy workout — tennis, and of course... boxing. And I can attest by personal experience that this isn't an exercise program

for couch potatoes — after an hour of extreme wide screen tennis or boxing, you are sweating, winded — and entertained.

Peter Greenberg is TODAY's Travel editor. His column appears weekly on TODAYshow.com. Visit his Web site at PeterGreenberg.com.

April 2008

Check Out: Traveler's iTunes Playlist • Hot Springs Nat'l Park • Los Angeles on Foot • Bermuda Long Weekend

 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Bonus Map!
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The Source

Trends, books, and ideas we're talking about this month. By ANDREW NELSON

BOOK
The Social History of American Hotels



Pitch: Checking out 200 years of checking in. **Backstory:** *Hotel: An American History* (Yale University Press) recounts the nation's story through its hostelries—from the lousy inns of George Washington's day (insects were a constant problem) to the gilded opulence of the Waldorf-Astoria to the sleek boutique Ws of today. Hotels, you'll learn, undermined Victorian morality by promoting romantic dalliances yet fostered democracy with their communal dining and living experiences. **What we think:** Who knew lobbies and room service could be such a history lesson?

PRODUCT
Lost and Found



Pitch: Tracking Fido. **Backstory:** As the number of travelers with pets increases, so do the chances a sightseeing critter might wander off. Fret no more. New GPS devices such as GlobalPetFinder (www.globalpetfinder.com) and RoamEO (www.roameoforpets.com)—can alert owners when the animal strays beyond preset boundaries. One relays the info to a separate tracking device; the other to your cell phone. Expect to pay \$350 and up. **What we think:** Can we get one for spouse and the children, too?

HOTEL
I, Pod



Pitch: Capsule hotels spread across the globe. **Backstory:** The Japanese are credited with inventing the concept of minuscule \$14-a-night rooms in 1979. Now the idea is taking hold all over. Mini-rooms starting at \$22 are now available in Hungary and Switzerland. At Gatwick and Heathrow airports, Yotel offers "cabins" (from \$52) instead of rooms. Manhattan's skyscraper-high rack rates engendered the Pod Hotel (rooms measure 90-to-160 square feet) starting at \$99 a night, LCD TV included. **What we think:** Squeeze me, not my credit card. We'll book it.

DESTINATION
Roatán Island



Pitch: Paradise Lost? **Backstory:** With its coconut trees and grass-thatched shacks, this remote Honduran island resembles Gilligan's—but now the scuba divers' haven is bracing for some Thurston Howell-priced development. Encouraged by the Honduran government, cruise-ship companies, developers, and airlines are planning to turn the island into a big-time port, ponying up more than \$80 million to do so in the next two years. **What we think:** Growth will mean local jobs, but the uncrowded beaches and jungles and Roatán's easygoing vibe will, sadly, be gone with the spend.

TREND
Ni Hao Wow



Pitch: Chinese tourists head to U.S. **Backstory:** Streamlined visa requirements approved by mainland China and the U.S. late last year will soon spark a flood of visitors from the Middle Kingdom. Biggest draws are expected to be cities with large Chinese-American populations such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. Globally famous destinations like Universal Studios and Disneyworld should benefit too, as will purveyors of luxury goods. **What we think:** Come spend, but Americans, get ready for some cultural diplomacy. How to explain the concept of "THOP" or Nicole Richie?

PLAYLIST
Spanish Beat

If your knowledge of the music of Spain doesn't run past Carmen and the Gipsy Kings—both French in origin, by the way—then here's your guide to Spain's rich musical mosaic. From the passionate *flamenco puro* of Andalusia to the wild Iberian pop of Madrid and Barcelona, to the pulsing dance floors of Ibiza, Spain has it all. —TOM PRYOR



- Concierto de Aranjuez MALES DAVIS
- The Language of the Flowers ENRIQUE MORENTE
- Los Managers PATA NEGRA & RAFAEL AMADOR
- Entre Dos Aguas PACO DE LUCIA
- Volando Voy CAMARÓN DE LA ISLA
- No Estamos Lokos KETAMA
- La Tarara RADIO TARIFA
- El Lunar de María PERET & JARABE DE PALO
- Indios de Barcelona MANO NEGRA
- Avalancha HEREDOS DEL SILENCIO
- Cruz de Navajas MECANO
- Amar Fugaz LA UNIÓN
- La Raja de Tu Falda ESTOPA
- Aserejé LAS KETCHUP
- Tanguillos Marineros OJOS DE BRUJO
- Lágrimas Negras BEBO VALDES & DIEGO "EL CIGALA"
- Mi Niña Lola BUIKA
- Volver ESTRELLA MORENTE

Music to Travel By
 Log on to www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/resources/downloads.html for a direct link to this playlist and others on iTunes.



October 11, 2008

PCW Business Center

Hotels a Geek Can Love

Diann Daniel, CIO

Saturday, October 11, 2008 3:30 PM PDT

Hotels are increasingly becoming high-tech. And with good reason: People want their 24/7 connectivity and other techie requirements even when they're away from home. So hotels that want to become (or stay) successful are making sure they offer amenities like wireless or even the latest video games.

That's where our nine Geek Hotels come in. These hotels have found a way to go above and beyond standard hotel niceties. Some offer both luxurious surroundings and futuristic tech conveniences, some have found a way to offer tech amenities at a reasonable rate, and some are using technology to bring people together.

Modular High-Tech

High-tech in both construction and amenities, the CitizenM hotel's founding philosophy is "Affordable Luxury for the People." (Rooms start at \$100.) Located in Amsterdam at the Schiphol Airport, the hotel is constructed of pre-fabricated rooms that were built and assembled offsite. HotelM offers amenities like self check-in, the ability to store personal room preferences on an RFID keycard and free wireless. Rooms also feature a "MoodPad," which guests can use to control shades, temperature, and the flat-screen entertainment center. It also controls the ambient lighting to create atmospheres from "romance" to "relax."

Luxury in the Meatpacking District

Located in the ultra-hip Meatpacking District in New York City, rooms at the Hotel Gansevoort (which start around \$500) offer free wi-fi, 42 inch LCD TVs, CD players and alarm clocks with iPod docking stations. They also offer in-room safes for your laptops or purchases at the area's many designer boutiques. Of course, the Meatpacking District is also home to trendy restaurants galore, and guests can choose to work off those meals the high-tech way: By requesting a Wii console delivered to their room and working up a sweat playing one of the sports games. Tennis anyone?

Motion Detection at Your Service

Seattle's Hotel 1000 offers high-tech amenities like video phones that allow guests to see when the valet delivers their car to the hotel entrance. Rooms, which start at about \$300 a night, boast digital thermometers that use infrared signals to scan the room for motion and activate the desired temperature if a guest is detected. Infrared signals in the room are also used to let staff know when the room is occupied. All key

systems in the hotel rooms are connected to the IP converged network, allowing information exchange via HTNG-based XML interfaces.

A Room That'll Talk to You

The ARIA Resort and Casino will open in late 2009 on the Las Vegas Strip. The high-tech hotel will feature rooms that "greet" guests as they enter (noting if it's their first time), turn on the lights automatically, and part the curtains to showcase the room's city or mountain view. Guests have access to integrated one-touch control of guestroom features, including lighting, room temperature, television/video systems, music, wake-up calls, draperies and requests for services through a single, easy-to-use remote control (controls will also be available from a nightstand touch screen). And all settings will be remembered and incorporated every time a guest returns to the room.

On-the-Road Rock Star Workouts

The \$200 a night (average) boutique Seattle Hotel Monaco offers an array of unusual low-tech amenities--a pet-friendly policy includes walking and sitting services and gourmet dog cookies. And those who've left their furry friends at home can have a goldfish delivered to their room. But it's one of the Monaco's geekier offerings that has been attracting a spotlight: A Guitar Hero social hour. From 5:00 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday nights, guests can unleash their inner rock god outside of their own living room--and in the company of strangers.

Tech Pampering in Japan

Rooms at the Peninsula Tokyo offer a host of amenities: wall panels that show outdoor weather conditions; in-room fax machines, nail dryers and espresso machines; and Internet radio automatically programmed to the guest's country of residence. A wired phone in the room can be synchronized with guests' personal mobile phones and a portable phone in the room will function anywhere within the hotel as an in-room phone and, upon leaving the property, converts to a mobile phone for outgoing calls within the Tokyo metropolitan area. And on a more personal front, bathrooms have heated, self-lifting seats. All this and more for about \$575 and up.



"Facebook" Hotel in the Real World

Roomy it's not. But the Pod Hotel gives travelers the chance to secure high-tech lodgings in the Big Apple starting at just \$89 a night. The Pod's rooms--from townhouse-style studio suites and bunk-bedded rooms with shared bathrooms--are equipped with iPod docking stations, LCD-screen televisions with cable (and in the bunk-bedded rooms, there is one television per bed), free wireless, telephones with voice mail and small safes built into the wall. The hotel also promotes its Pod Community Blog, which functions as an online concierge, a forum to connect with other guests and a way to discover a myriad of city and hotel information.

The Microsoft Experience

Besides its luxury and room tech offerings, Hotel Sax in Chicago offers guests a lounge to play Xbox games, connect with other gamers around the world via the Xbox Live service, download and listen to music from the hotel's music library via Microsoft's Zune music player or relax and watch HDTV content and movies in

the home theater environment managed by Windows Media Center technology. The lounge features games such as Madden '08, Halo 3, Guitar Hero, Rock Band, Scene It and Dance Dance Revolution. And for those who feel a bit more private, some rooms offer the ability to tuck in with Xbox game stations all alone.

J-Pop Décor, Games and Tech

The Best Western Hotel Tomo in San Francisco's Japantown shows its anime, J-pop and comics inspiration with graphic murals in each room, bright colors, and modern whimsical lobby furniture. Each room offers iPod docking stations, flat screen TVs, free wireless and playful glow-in-the-dark desk mats. Rooms start around \$139, although gamer suites will put you out about \$500. Gaming suites come equipped with PlayStation 3, Wii, "fatboy" beanbag-style chairs, a 6-foot LCD projection screen, and a mini-fridge equipped with caffeinated beverages to keep you going all night.



April 3, 2008

Greetings!

Welcome back to the Travel News Roundup from PeterGreenberg.com.

This week, our [Travel Deals](#) include ultra-low prices at all-inclusive resorts, a Mother's Day getaway in Laguna Beach, and a girlfriend getaway in Daytona Beach.

News You Can Use

It's another big week in travel news. Peter discusses gun-wielding pilots, plane "inspection-gate," and the Passenger Bill of No Rights in [The Travel Detective Files](#).

Can't get enough travel news? Check out our [News Analysis](#) on Heathrow's grand opening meltdown, the story that involves the TSA and a nipple ring, and ATA's bankruptcy.

Seriously? Still need more? Well, that's why we have our [Daily Travel News Roundup](#), served bite-sized, every day.

Feature Stories

Want to work abroad but don't want to pull pints for a pence? Read on to learn how you can earn money overseas in [Road Work: Unusual Jobs Abroad](#).

Breaking down in the Kalahari Desert probably isn't high on your To-Do list. Find out how one couple coped and wound up



experiencing extraordinary human kindness in [Grateful Traveler: What's Ours Is Yours](#).

Whether it's hurricane season or flu season, travel insurance can be your best friend. Click to read Peter's [Top 10 Reasons for Travel Insurance](#).

Searching for meaning in your travels? Check out Virtuous Traveler Leslie Garrett's story on [Community-Based Tourism: Creating Authentic Travel Experiences](#).

[Photos & Videos](#)



Geek-chic is in, and Peter's got the scoop in his *Today* show segment on [Totally Geeked-Out, Hi-Tech Hotels](#).

Got the checked-baggage blues? Watch Peter's video that offers his [Top Tips for Not Losing Your Luggage](#).



And, take a gander at photographer Robert Landau's latest batch of travel pics from beautiful [Auvergne, France](#).



Minimal Frills; *Maximum Value*


February 20, 2008

Dear Nancy,

Sure, Manhattan is expensive. But that doesn't mean you have to blow your budget on a fancy hotel room. Our Quikbook.com team has combed the city to bring you the best for the least. If you'd rather save your bucks for shopping, shows and chic restaurants, check out these 13 budget-friendly hotels. Rates start at \$119 a night and top out at around \$200. And remember, you don't have to pre-pay and there's no charge for changes or cancellations.

New York

Pod Hotel ...from: **\$119**



Stay within steps of Rockefeller Center for an unbelievable \$119 a night at this newly opened bastion of minimal chic. It's low on price, but high on style. What do you get for that low price, besides a great location? For starters, everything is spanking new and super cool. Plus free Wi-Fi access, LCD TVs that flip down when you want to watch and an iPod docking station (but, of course!). **Click here to book now.**

Marrakech ...from: **\$149**

The Marrakech Hotel is an exotic treat situated on Manhattan's Upper West Side at West 103rd Street and Broadway. Several prominent New York attractions can be accessed within easy walking distance of the hotel such as Columbia University, Grant's Tomb, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Museum of Natural History, Central Park and a large number of specialty bookshops. Uniquely simple guest rooms are decorated with a palette of warm tones and brushed with a hint of Mediterranean flair. [Click here to book now.](#)

Windsor Hotel Inc. ...from: **\$155**

This Downtown hotel, located in the heart of Chinatown, offers clean, comfortable and affordable accommodations. Guests find themselves steps away from Little Italy and SoHo and the area offers convenient access to Tribeca, and the lower East Side via public transportation. Guestrooms feature bare bones essentials such as telephone, work desk and high-speed Internet access. [Click here to book now.](#)

Hotel Thirty Thirty ...from: \$163

It's stylish, minimal and chic. Its monochromatic, modern decor looks expensive, but it's surprisingly affordable. At 30 W. 30th Street, it's in a great central location - close to terrific neighborhoods like Gramercy Park, Murray Hill and Union Square. Relax in the stylish cocktail bar or settle into Zana's for a great Mediterranean meal. Feel like bringing the pooch? Hotel Thirty Thirty is pet friendly. On a quiet block between Park and Madison Avenues, it's so nice to come home to. [Click here to book now.](#)

Eastgate Tower Suite Hotel ...from: \$169

If you're looking for the best of form and function, the Eastgate Tower is the spot! It's a modern yet peaceful Midtown setting with close proximity to corporate offices, Grand Central Station, the UN and famed NYC shopping. Guest suites emphasize that "home away from home" feeling with fully-equipped kitchens, comfy oversized sleeping rooms and Wi-Fi Internet access. And while you're there, don't miss the Sonora Restaurant - best known for its regional Italian faves. [Click here to book now.](#)

Wellington Hotel ...from: \$179

The Wellington Hotel boasts a convenient Midtown location within walking distance of the Theater District, Rockefeller Center, Lincoln Center and famed Fifth Avenue shopping. Hotel highlights include a 24-hour business center; theater, sightseeing & transportation desk; and wireless Internet access. [Click here to book now.](#)

Washington Jefferson Hotel ...from: \$180

"Smart, stylish, sophisticated and affordable," is the hotel's promise. For only \$180 a night, the Washington Jefferson hotel delivers! Located on West 51st Street, this newly remodeled hotel offers a central location within walking distance of the Theater District, Times Square, Rockefeller Center and other points of interest. Guestrooms feature value packed extras such as free wireless Internet access, Frette linens & towels, Gilchrist & Soams bathroom amenities and goose down comforters. [Click here to book now.](#)

Bedford Hotel ...from: \$195

This hotel, with its large, comfortable rooms, is a reasonably priced alternative for Midtown. Most rooms feature fully equipped kitchenettes, and high speed internet connections are complimentary. Midtown sights, the UN, department stores along Fifth Avenue and Rockefeller Center are just a few blocks away. [Click here to book now.](#)

Gershwin ...from: **\$185**

Each of the unique 13 floors at the Gershwin Hotel boasts its own installation of original art from renowned modern artists. The hotel also hosts an "Artists in Residence" program, which supplies upcoming artists with a place to live, work and exhibit their art. The lobby was renovated in 2003, and much of the original art remains. [Click here to book now.](#)

Milford Plaza ...from: **\$179**

The Milford Plaza, also known as "The Lullaby of Broadway," is located in the heart of Broadway's Theater District around the corner from Broadway theaters, and a short walk from Radio City Music Hall, Rockefeller Center, Fifth Avenue shopping, Herald Square, and Times Square. The hotel also offers an onsite Theater, Sightseeing and Transportation Desk designed to help guests make the most of their stay in New York. [Click here to book now.](#)

Best Western President ...from: **\$189**

If you're looking for a location at the center of everything NY, try this clean-n-simple gem located in the heart of the Theater District. The Best Western President Hotel is located four blocks from 5th Avenue and within walking distance to Rockefeller Center, Radio City, easy access to dining, entertainment and the finest shopping. [Click here to book now.](#)

Jolly Hotel Madison Towers ...from: **\$200**

Don't let the funny name fool you. This very clean and quiet hotel puts you right in Midtown, close to it all. Recently renovated, the spacious rooms are crisp and fresh and the spa is so nice to come home to. With an exceedingly courteous staff, there's a lot to be jolly about. [Click here to book now.](#)

Park South Hotel ...from: **\$219**

Quikbook.com customers knew a good thing when they found it. Pure luxe in a location that's a little off the beaten path. This small and stylish gem is still centrally located, but it's tucked away on a side street - with amenities and style worth at least \$100 more than they charge. [Click here to book now.](#)

Spring 2008



LOCATION PAGE:

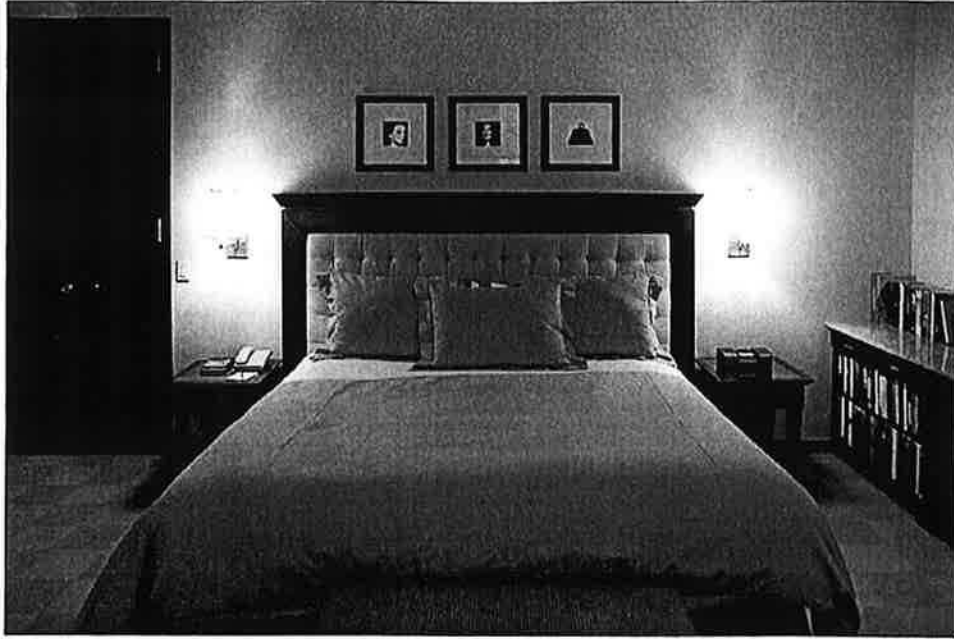
NEW YORK HOTELS

By Sara Cavaralli | Photos by Keith Tetleyan

When you travel for a shoot, do you go the extra step and put your tighty-whities in the drawer? Or are you that guy who lives out of his suitcase? Regardless, where is this flight-torn duffel bag of yours being parked? Some manage to sleep in the same bed time and again, but most find themselves tucked into unfamiliar sheets. *Which bed do you like best? It's a tough one to choose, the more the better.* There is an immeasurable number of hotels in this fair city, with attributes as varied as their clientele. Prices vary too, but in New York it's safe to say that they can go higher than the Empire State Building. *Resource Magazine* would like to take you on a tour of some of our favorites places. Room service not included.



CASABLANCA HOTEL | 147 W 43rd St. - NY, NY 10036 | 212.869.1212 | www.casablancahotel.com



LIBRARY HOTEL | 299 Madison Ave. - NY, NY 10017 | 212.983.4500 | www.libraryhotel.com

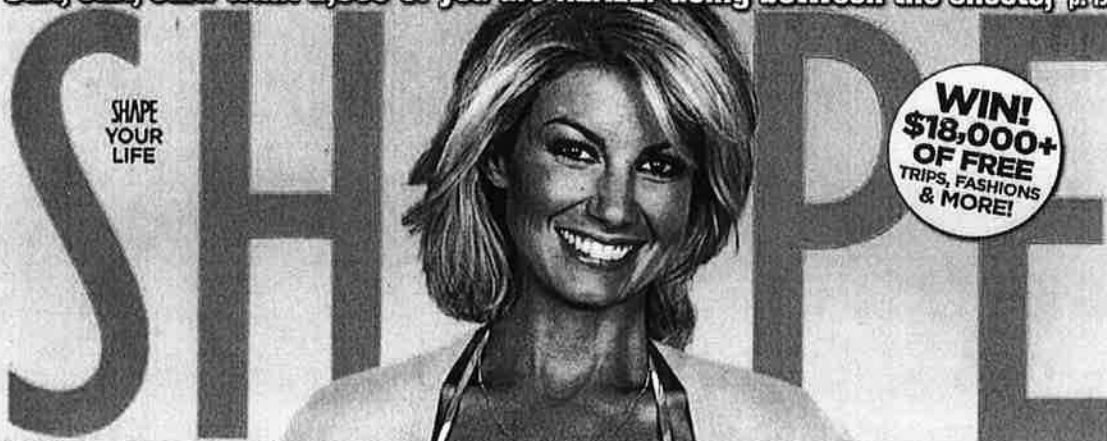


THE POD HOTEL | 230 E. 51st St. - NY, NY 10022 | 212.355.0300 | www.thepodhotel.com



December 2008

SEX, SEX, SEX! What 2,800 of you are REALLY doing between the sheets, p. 134



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The makeover you
won't believe, p. 96

December 2008

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miss them!)

**HEAD-TO-TOE
LOOKS
FOR LESS, p. 72**

PLUS
How to say "no"
WITHOUT feeling guilty

venture out

line.com spill the beans about how much they paid and where they're staying," explains panelist Pauline Frommer. The site was created to promote informed bidding—once you find out what others have won, you know what kind of deals are possible, both on *priceline.com* and when you're trying to haggle with hotels, she says. On one recent search, we saw a \$61 nightly rate for the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel and Spa in Santa Rosa, California. The lowest published rate we found was \$194.

TREND: POD HOTELS

WHO DOES IT BEST...FOR LESS The Pod Hotel NEW YORK

So what exactly is a pod? It's a basic yet comfortable room with all the necessities: a bed, a television, and a bathroom (often shared). "This is the



Get free WiFi, two TVs, and more at the Pod Hotel

hospitality industry's equivalent of the no-frills airline," says panelist Mark Jolly. "In New York, average room rates are now at \$300-plus a night. But at the Pod Hotel in midtown Manhattan, a standard room with a bunk bed and a shared bath starts at just \$89 a night." (Rooms with private bathrooms from \$139; *thepodhotel.com*)

TREND: SAFARIS CLOSE TO HOME

WHO DOES IT BEST...FOR LESS Safari West CALIFORNIA

With a growing number of animal species joining the "threatened" list, safaris are gaining in popularity. Unfortunately, flights to Kenya can break the bank. But one of the very best destinations doesn't even require a passport: The 400-acre Safari West, in the heart of Sonoma wine country, looks and feels like an African-style



The tents at Safari West feel more like cottages

tented safari camp. You can spend mornings hiking the surrounding hills and peering down on zebra and kudu, then take a half-day game drive in the afternoon (try to snag an upper-level seat for the best views). There are 600 different animals on the property, including impala, addax (nearly extinct in the wild), and Watusi cattle. A one-night stay in a cozy tent (think raised wooden platforms, queen-size beds, full bathrooms, and a large deck) is only \$250. (*safarivest.com*)

WIN IT! One reader will score a two-night stay for two in a king luxury tent, a private safari drive, two massages, two lunches and dinners, a cheetah encounter, and more.

TREND: ECO-FRIENDLY HOTELS

WHO DOES IT BEST...FOR LESS The Cody WYOMING

"Since the first generation of green hotels was so well received, more and more properties are scrambling to prove they're eco-friendly," says *Shape* panelist Peter Greenberg. Most of the wood used to build the Cody, which is just 45 minutes from Yellowstone

National Park, was reclaimed from the Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone when it was renovated; the property's shuttle is a hybrid Chevy Tahoe; and designers used Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified tiles throughout the hotel. But don't think for a minute you'll be sacrificing luxury: Each room is outfitted with plush bathrobes; flat-screen TVs; and, in many cases, hot tubs as well as fireplaces. Best of all are the abundant activities, which range from sports, like skiing, hiking, cycling, rock climbing, rafting, and fly-fishing, to more exotic adventures, such as wildlife watching and the annual Cody Rodeo. (Rooms from \$99; *thecody.com*)

WIN IT! One reader will score a two-night stay for two in a king Jacuzzi suite, including breakfast.

NICOLE ALPER is a freelance writer in New York City.

SHAPE'S TRAVEL ADVISORY PANEL



Peter Greenberg is the travel editor for the *Today* show, author of the *New York Times'* *Travel Detective* series, and host of the *Peter Greenberg Worldwide* radio show.



Mark Jolly, who has traveled to more than 60 countries, is the founder and editor of *globorati.com*, a travel news Web site considered by many experts to be the insider source for globetrotters.



Pauline Frommer is the creator of *Pauline Frommer Guidebooks*, a series geared toward budget travelers. Pauline also co-hosts *The Travel Show* with her father, Arthur Frommer.



You'll spot giraffes and lemurs during your stay

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SERIAL NUMBER	78539454
MARK SECTION	
MARK	METRO-POD
ATTORNEY SECTION (new)	
NAME	Matthew H. Swyers
FIRM NAME	The Trademark Comapny
STREET	344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
CITY	Vienna
STATE	Virginia
POSTAL CODE	22180
COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	1-800-906-8626
FAX	1-877-351-5480
EMAIL	admin@thetrademarkcompany.com
AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE VIA E-MAIL	Yes
CORRESPONDENCE SECTION (current)	
NAME	MATTHEW H SWYERS
FIRM NAME	THE TRADEMARK COMPANY PLLC
INTERNAL ADDRESS	SUITE 151
STREET	344 MAPLE AVENUE WEST
CITY	VIENNA

STATE	Virginia
POSTAL CODE	22180
COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	646 279-4845
FAX	973 379-6594
EMAIL	linczyc@msn.com
CORRESPONDENCE SECTION (proposed)	
NAME	Matthew H. Swyers
FIRM NAME	The Trademark Comapny
STREET	344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
CITY	VIENNA
STATE	Virginia
POSTAL CODE	22180
COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	1-800-906-8626
FAX	1-877-351-5480
EMAIL	admin@thetrademarkcompany.com
AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE VIA E-MAIL	Yes
GOODS AND/OR SERVICES SECTION	
INTERNATIONAL CLASS	043
GOODS OR SERVICES	Provision of hotel and restaurant services
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SPECIMEN DESCRIPTION	screen shot
OWNER SECTION (current)	
NAME	Linczyc, Michael D.
STREET	20 South Terrace
CITY	Short Hills
STATE	New Jersey
ZIP/POSTAL CODE	07078

COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	646 279-4845
FAX	973 379-6594
EMAIL	linczyc@msn.com
LEGAL ENTITY SECTION (current)	
TYPE	individual
COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	United Kingdom
LEGAL ENTITY SECTION (proposed)	
TYPE	individual
COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	Other
PAYMENT SECTION	
NUMBER OF CLASSES	1
NUMBER OF CLASSES PAID	1
SUBTOTAL AMOUNT	100
TOTAL FEE PAID	100
SIGNATURE SECTION	
SIGNATURE	/Matthew H. Swyers/
SIGNATORY'S NAME	Matthew H. Swyers
SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney of Record
DATE SIGNED	05/02/2014
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	1-800-906-8626
PAYMENT METHOD	CC
FILING INFORMATION	
SUBMIT DATE	Fri May 02 13:05:24 EDT 2014
TEAS STAMP	USPTO/SECT08-97.67.147.15 4-20140502130524620877-34 24090-50069b3b6c048a130c6 4e193c1991b1e3147cefd7054 ad376255d94167746a6c7b-CC -8300-2014050212584218288 6

**Declaration of Use and/or Excusable Nonuse of Mark in Commerce under Section 8
To the Commissioner for Trademarks:**

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 3424090

REGISTRATION DATE: 05/06/2008

MARK: METRO-POD

The owner, Michael D Linczyc, a citizen of Other, having an address of
20 South Terrace
Short Hills, New Jersey 07078
United States

is filing a Declaration of Use and/or Excusable Nonuse of Mark in Commerce under Section 8.

For International Class 043, the mark is in use in commerce on or in connection with **all** goods or services listed in the existing registration for this specific class: Provision of hotel and restaurant services ; or, the owner is making the listed excusable nonuse claim.

The owner is submitting one(or more) specimen(s) showing the mark as used in commerce on or in connection with any item in this class, consisting of a(n) screen shot.

Specimen File1

The registrant's current Correspondence Information: MATTHEW H SWYERS of THE TRADEMARK COMPANY PLLC

SUITE 151
344 MAPLE AVENUE WEST
VIENNA, Virginia (VA) 22180
United States

The registrant's proposed Correspondence Information: Matthew H. Swyers of The Trademark Comapny
344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
VIENNA, Virginia (VA) 22180
United States

The phone number is 1-800-906-8626.

The fax number is 1-877-351-5480.

The email address is admin@thetrademarkcompany.com.

The registrant hereby appoints Matthew H. Swyers of The Trademark Comapny

344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
Vienna, Virginia 22180

United States
to submit this Declaration of Use and/or Excusable Nonuse of Mark in Commerce under Section 8 on behalf of the registrant.

The phone number is 1-800-906-8626.

The fax number is 1-877-351-5480.

The email address is admin@thetrademarkcompany.com.

A fee payment in the amount of \$100 will be submitted with the form, representing payment for 1 class(es), plus any additional grace period fee, if necessary.

Declaration

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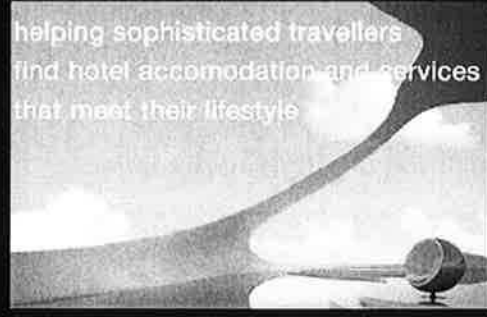
Signature: /Matthew H. Swyers/ Date: 05/02/2014
Signatory's Name: Matthew H. Swyers
Signatory's Position: Attorney of Record
Signatory's Phone Number: 1-800-906-8626

Mailing Address:
The Trademark Comapny
344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
Vienna, Virginia 22180

Serial Number: 78539454
Internet Transmission Date: Fri May 02 13:05:24 EDT 2014
TEAS Stamp: USPTO/SECT08-97.67.147.154-2014050213052
4620877-3424090-50069b3b6c048a130c64e193
c1991b1e3147cefd7054ad376255d94167746a6c
7b-CC-8300-20140502125842182886



Metro Pod has been providing services to obtain bed and board facilities, including houses or other residential units providing temporary accommodation for nearly 10 years. Metro Pod also provides operational services for business accommodation, particularly through travel agencies or brokers, see below for our recommendations.



helping sophisticated travellers find hotel accommodation and services that meet their lifestyle



click to make a reservation



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ROUTING SHEET TO POST REGISTRATION (PRU)

Registration Number: 3424090



Serial Number: 78539454



RAM Sale Number: 3424090

RAM Accounting Date: 20140502

Total Fees: \$100

Note: Process in accordance with Post Registration Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

<u>Transaction</u>	<u>Fee Code</u>	<u>Transaction Date</u>	<u>Fee per Class</u>	<u>Number of Classes</u>	<u>Number of Classes Paid</u>	<u>Total Fee</u>
§8 affidavit	7205	20140502	\$100	1	1	\$100

Physical Location: 900 - FILE REPOSITORY (FRANCONIA)

Lost Case Flag: False

In TICRS (AM-FLG-IN-TICRS): True

Transaction Date: 20140502



Declaration of Use and/or Excusable Nonuse of Mark in Commerce under Section 8

The table below presents the data as entered.

Input Field	Entered
REGISTRATION NUMBER	3424090
REGISTRATION DATE	05/06/2008
SERIAL NUMBER	78539454
MARK SECTION	
MARK	METRO-POD
ATTORNEY SECTION (new)	
NAME	Matthew H. Swyers
FIRM NAME	The Trademark Comapny
STREET	344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
CITY	Vienna
STATE	Virginia
POSTAL CODE	22180
COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	1-800-906-8626
FAX	1-877-351-5480
EMAIL	admin@thetrademarkcompany.com
AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE VIA E-MAIL	Yes
CORRESPONDENCE SECTION (current)	
NAME	MATTHEW H SWYERS
FIRM NAME	THE TRADEMARK COMPANY PLLC
INTERNAL ADDRESS	SUITE 151
STREET	344 MAPLE AVENUE WEST
CITY	VIENNA

STATE	Virginia
POSTAL CODE	22180
COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	646 279-4845
FAX	973 379-6594
EMAIL	linczyc@msn.com
CORRESPONDENCE SECTION (proposed)	
NAME	Matthew H. Swyers
FIRM NAME	The Trademark Comapny
STREET	344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
CITY	VIENNA
STATE	Virginia
POSTAL CODE	22180
COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	1-800-906-8626
FAX	1-877-351-5480
EMAIL	admin@thetrademarkcompany.com
AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE VIA E-MAIL	Yes
GOODS AND/OR SERVICES SECTION	
INTERNATIONAL CLASS	043
GOODS OR SERVICES	Provision of hotel and restaurant services
SPECIMEN FILE NAME(S)	<u>\\TICRS\EXPORT16\IMAGEOUT</u> <u>16\785\394\78539454\xml1\ S080002.JPG</u>
SPECIMEN DESCRIPTION	screen shot
OWNER SECTION (current)	
NAME	Linczyc, Michael D.
STREET	20 South Terrace
CITY	Short Hills
STATE	New Jersey
ZIP/POSTAL CODE	07078

COUNTRY	United States
PHONE	646 279-4845
FAX	973 379-6594
EMAIL	linczyc@msn.com
LEGAL ENTITY SECTION (current)	
TYPE	individual
COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	United Kingdom
LEGAL ENTITY SECTION (proposed)	
TYPE	individual
COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	Other
PAYMENT SECTION	
NUMBER OF CLASSES	1
NUMBER OF CLASSES PAID	1
SUBTOTAL AMOUNT	100
TOTAL FEE PAID	100
SIGNATURE SECTION	
SIGNATURE	/Matthew H. Swyers/
SIGNATORY'S NAME	Matthew H. Swyers
SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney of Record
DATE SIGNED	05/02/2014
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	1-800-906-8626
PAYMENT METHOD	CC
FILING INFORMATION	
SUBMIT DATE	Fri May 02 13:05:24 EDT 2014
TEAS STAMP	USPTO/SECT08-97.67.147.15 4-20140502130524620877-34 24090-50069b3b6c048a130c6 4e193c1991b1e3147cefd7054 ad376255d94167746a6c7b-CC -8300-2014050212584218288 6

**Declaration of Use and/or Excusable Nonuse of Mark in Commerce under Section 8
To the Commissioner for Trademarks:**

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 3424090

REGISTRATION DATE: 05/06/2008

MARK: METRO-POD

The owner, Michael D Linczyc, a citizen of Other, having an address of
20 South Terrace
Short Hills, New Jersey 07078
United States

is filing a Declaration of Use and/or Excusable Nonuse of Mark in Commerce under Section 8.

For International Class 043, the mark is in use in commerce on or in connection with **all** goods or services listed in the existing registration for this specific class: Provision of hotel and restaurant services ; or, the owner is making the listed excusable nonuse claim.

The owner is submitting one(or more) specimen(s) showing the mark as used in commerce on or in connection with any item in this class, consisting of a(n) screen shot.

[Specimen File1](#)

The registrant's current Correspondence Information: MATTHEW H SWYERS of THE TRADEMARK COMPANY PLLC

SUITE 151
344 MAPLE AVENUE WEST
VIENNA, Virginia (VA) 22180
United States

The registrant's proposed Correspondence Information: Matthew H. Swyers of The Trademark Comapny

344 Maple Ave. West, Suite 151
VIENNA, Virginia (VA) 22180
United States

The phone number is 1-800-906-8626.

The fax number is 1-877-351-5480.

The email address is admin@thetrademarkcompany.com.

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Signatory's Name: Matthew H. Swyers

Signatory's Position: Attorney of Record

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c1991b1e3147cefd7054ad376255d94167746a6c

7b-CC-8300-20140502125842182886



Metro Pod has been providing service to those that need hotel facilities, working offices or other special needs providing temporary accommodations for usually 14 days. Metro Pod also provides residential services for long-term accommodation, particularly through lease agreements or leases, see below for our recommendations.



helping sophisticated travellers find hotel accommodation and services that meet their lifestyle



click to make a reservation



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Transaction Date: 20140502





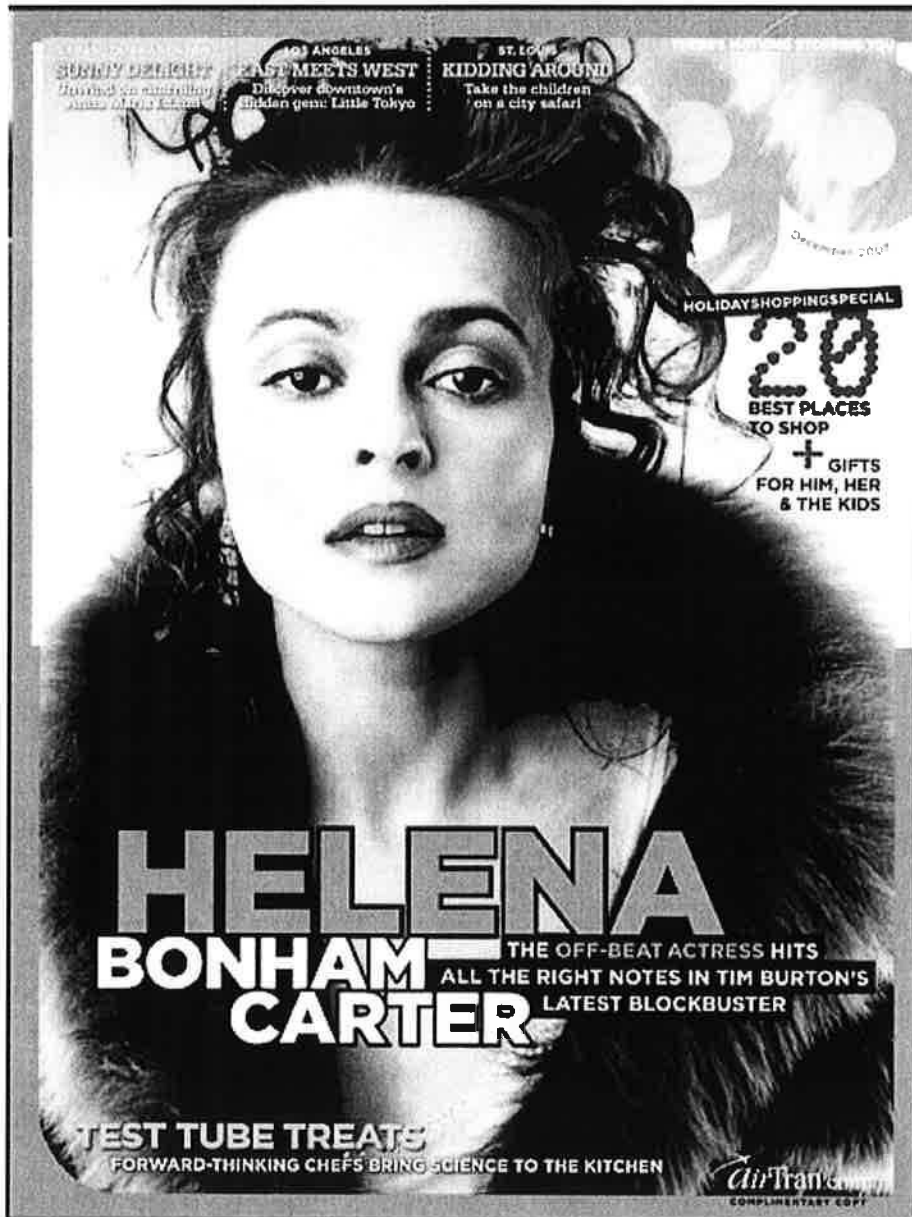
Ten O'Clock News
WNYW-TV CH 5 (FOX) New York
02/01/2007

DMA: 1

10:00 PM - 11:00 PM

00:43:53 TZ; Hotel Room: The **Pod Hotel** in Manhattan offers high style at low prices. V; Interior hotel room. I; Unidentified Man, says prices start at 89 dollars. An 89 dollar room includes bunk beds for two, a flat panel TV, closet space and a washing station with a shared bathroom. A room for 109 has it's own bathroom. Each room comes equipped with an iPod docking station. V; iPod stereo. Toni Senecal reporting. 00:45:40

December 2007



SUNNY DELIGHT
Mustard on mustard
Amber Alert: Est. 1961

LOS ANGELES
EAST MEETS WEST
Discover downtown's
Biklan gem: Little Tokyo

ST. LOUIS
KIDDING AROUND
Take the children
on a city safari

December 2007

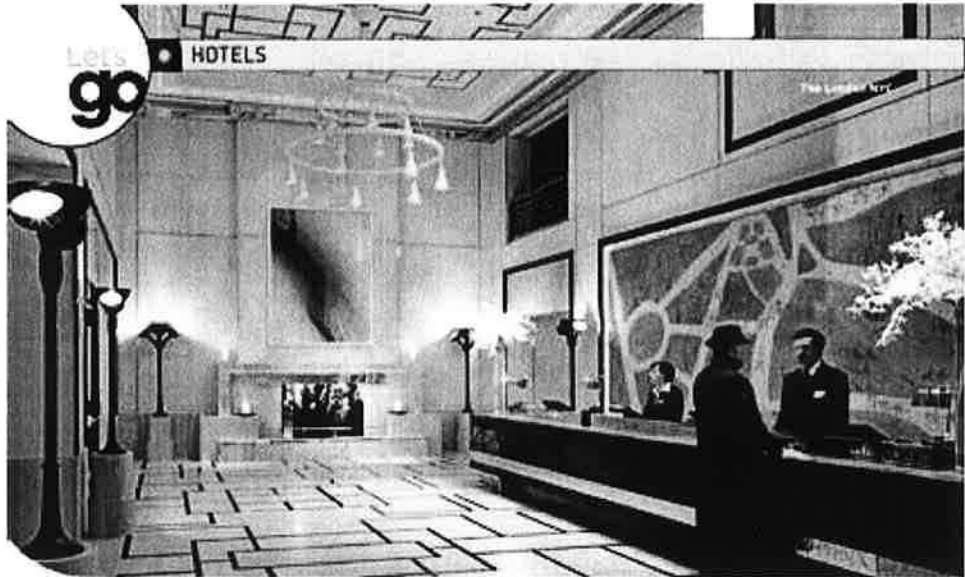
HOLIDAYS HOPPING SPECIAL

20
**BEST PLACES
TO SHOP**
+ GIFTS
FOR HIM, HER
& THE KIDS

**HELENA
BONHAM
CARTER** — THE OFF-BEAT ACTRESS HITS
ALL THE RIGHT NOTES IN TIM BURTON'S
LATEST BLOCKBUSTER





TEST TUBE TREATS
FORWARD-THINKING CHEFS BRING SCIENCE TO THE KITCHEN

AirTran
COMPLIMENTARY EGP



NEW TO NEW YORK

The Big Apple makes room for more visitors each year, with new and improved hotels opening all the time. Here is a look at a few that recently hit the scene.

HOTEL	ROOMS	EAT/DRINK	FEATURES	PRICE/NIGHT
 Hotel A 1234 5th Ave, NYC 1234-5678	88	On-site restaurant and bar	24-hour concierge service, fitness center, pet-friendly	\$150-\$200
 Hotel B 5678 1st St, NYC 9876-5432	230	Breakfast included	Free parking, rooftop terrace, business center	\$80-\$120
 Hotel C 9876 3rd Ave, NYC 1234-5678	561	Multiple dining options	Spa services, conference facilities, valet	\$200-\$300
 Hotel D 1234 7th St, NYC 5678-9012	347	Local dining partnerships	Historic building, eco-friendly, pet-friendly	\$100-\$150



The Miami Herald

October 7, 2007



BROADWAY AND BEYOND – THE LATEST IN SHOPPING, DINING AND THE ARTS



NEW IN THE CITY



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NYC & CO., METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, JOAN MARCUS, RICE TO RICHES, MARK LENNIHAN/AP

SCENES IN THE CITY: At top are Manhattan's skyline and a detail from the Bacchante Sarcophagus at the new Greek and Roman Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Above, from left, is Sierra Boggess as Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, the Rice to Riches rice pudding parlor in SoHo and shoppers at the trendy Uniqlo store.

WHAT'S HOT

Top 10 reasons to visit now

BY CHARLES PASSY
Palm Beach Post

NEW YORK — Perhaps more than any major city, New York is a work in progress. Every year sees the opening of countless restaurants, attractions and points of interest, making this sprawling metropolis a never-ending source of delight to even the most frequent of visitors.

Moreover, the very character of the city changes over time: Neighborhoods are revitalized, new streams of immigrants arrive, prime waterfront property undergoes redevelopment.

With that in mind, we've picked 10 things that are new about New York.

Which is not to say the classic New York destinations — the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park —

•TURN TO WHAT'S HOT, 10J

shouldn't be on your itinerary.

But if you want to experience the here and now, consider these as a starting point.

● **Spotlight Live:** What's better than becoming the next American Idol? How about performing in Times Square for a potential audience of millions? That's the pitch behind Spotlight Live, a multilevel club that promises an experience akin to karaoke on steroids.

Here, you don't just sing to pre-recorded tracks; you have your own back-up group of vocalists and dancers join you on stage. And your performance is beamed directly to a JumboTron screen on Times Square outside the club, plus streamed on the club's website.

Granted, if you're the shy type, this isn't likely to be your thing. But the club still

makes it worth your while. For starters, you can always opt to do your singing in a private booth. And the club ups the fun factor with a surprisingly good restaurant menu of comfort food gone upscale: Think homemade potato chips, mac-and-cheese and cotton candy.

Best of all, prices are within reason: There's no fee to sing (though you'll pay if you want a keepsake recording or video of yourself). And bar and menu prices are moderate, with several entrees and offerings under \$20. (You'll need to spend at least \$25 per person if you want to sit at one of the tables close to the stage, but there's no minimum at the bar.)

Info: 1604 Broadway (at 49th Street); 212-262-1111; www.spotlightlive.com.

● **The New Greek and Roman Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art:** The Met has no shortage of artistic treasures, but some of its "newest" ones have actually been part of the museum for decades (and are themselves centuries old).

We're talking about the statues, busts, wall paintings and the like that are part of the Greek and Roman collections, now housed in a stunning new series of galleries — a "museum within a museum," as the Met bills it. Art lovers will also appreciate the fact that among the 6,000 works on display, dating from 900 B.C. to the fourth century A.D., are several that haven't been seen in generations.

The Met offers an audio guide to the galleries for a small fee.

Info: 1000 Fifth Ave. (at 82nd Street); 212-535-7710;

www.metmuseum.org; suggested admission: \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors, \$10 for students, free for children 12 and under.

● **The Pod Hotel:** With room rates for many New York hotels soaring well past the \$200-a-night mark these days, visitors are hard-pressed to find an affordable option, let alone one that adds a measure of hip urban style to the equation.

Enter the Pod, a new Midtown lodging fashioned from the former Pickwick Arms hotel.

The name might bring to mind the Japanese-style pods, which are more like sleeping capsules than true hotel rooms. But these pods are rooms — albeit, not much bigger than a closet in many instances. They do, however, pack in such cool amenities as LCD-screen televisions and iPod docking stations. (Some rooms have private bathrooms, others have shared ones.)

If you're looking to grab a bite, the concierge puts out a daily tip sheet with great ideas for funky (and often low-cost) restaurants to visit. Room rates start at \$89, but be advised that the Pod's priciest rooms can still climb above the \$200 mark.

Info: 230 E. 51st St.; 212-355-0300 or 800-742-5945; www.thepodhotel.com.

● **Broadway on the cheap:** It used to be that if you wanted a discount ticket to a Broadway show, your only option was to stand on line for hours at the TKTS booth and see what was available.

But theatergoers now have a new range of choices. For starters, most shows now have their own "rush" policies that allow you to buy a ticket on the day of the performance, sometimes for as little as \$20 for an orchestra



seat! (Check out the show-by-show specifics at the Talkin' Broadway website, www.talkinbroadway.com.)

Other options include various savings codes, mailing lists and student programs. For a breakdown of not only Broadway offerings, but also Off Broadway and other performing-arts ones, go to the online Frugal TheaterGoer's Guide to Discount Tickets (<http://home.nyc.rr.com/frugaltheatergoe>).

● **Rice to Riches:** The ice-cream parlor is an American institution. But a rice-pudding parlor? Well, you may not find one of those on every street corner, but you will find Rice to Riches in New York's always trendy SoHo neighborhood.

This one-of-a-kind emporium has taken a Baskin-Robbins approach to the classic comfort food, offering about 20 different flavors with such unique names as "Coconut Coma," "Fluent in French Toast" and "Chocolate Chip Flirt."

And don't forget the toppings — not hot fudge or sprinkles, but "Flourish" (toasted pound cake) and "Heartthrob" (homemade raspberry jelly), among others. All this in a store with a part-kitschy, part-futuristic vibe. The prices run from \$3.75 for a six-ounce "diva" serving to \$35 for a party-sized "Moby" container (toppings are extra).

Info: 37 Spring St. (between Mott and Mulberry streets); 212-274-0008; www.ricetoriches.com.

● **Ripley's Believe It or Not! Times Square:** Sure, there are Ripley's museums (or "odditoriums," as they're called) spread throughout the country, including ones in Key West, Orlando and St. Augustine. But a Ripley's in New York? Actually, Robert Ripley, the collector and his-

torian of the oddball and obscure, lived and worked in the city for much of his life and maintained a New York museum through 1939 (a later version existed in the early '70s).

Now the entertainment company that bears his name has returned, with a multi-story space right on 42nd Street, the very heart of the city.

It has all the usual Ripley exhibits — on the world's tallest man, the cruelest of torture devices and the occasional animal born with an extra appendage. But the New York "odditorium" also boasts more of a high-tech, video-age approach (and it has an impressive collection of 24 shrunken heads — more than the American Museum of Natural History, Ripley's publicity folks boast).

A visit won't take much more than an hour (and unlike other tourist attractions, the museum stays open til well into the evening, 9 a.m.-1 a.m. daily); admission is \$24.95 for adults, \$18.95 for children.

Info: 234 W. 42nd St.; 212-398-3133; www.ripleysnewyork.com.

● **Hudson River Park:** For decades, New York's waterfront was an embarrassment. After the shipping industry moved elsewhere, the piers along the Hudson River were largely abandoned and left to rot. The water itself became a polluted mess.

But slowly that waterfront has been reclaimed by the city and state, and, pier by pier, it's being transformed into a lively series of parks, recreational centers and green spaces.

It's called the Hudson River Park, and it runs from Battery Park to Midtown.

While much of it is still under construction, several

stretches are open to the public, including soccer and other athletic fields at Pier 40 (Houston Street), an outdoor movie theater and concert venue at Pier 54 (14th Street) and a great spot for sunning at Pier 45 (Christopher Street).

Would you believe the park even has a few good fishing areas? At Piers 46 (Charles Street) and 84 (43rd Street), rods, reels and bait are available. (Note that many park activities are limited to the summer months.)

Info: www.hudsonriverpark.org.

● **Uniqlo:** It calls itself the "brand of the Rising Sun," and, sure enough, Uniqlo is a unique window into the world of Japanese culture and fashion.

Now this clothing manufacturer and retailer, which specializes in youth-oriented casual wear (aka garb with an attitude), has planted itself in New York, with a global flagship store in SoHo.

The store itself is a visual delight, with exposed brick walls and a glass elevator; it even seems to have its own soundtrack — namely, pulsating techno music.

But it's the clothing — much of it affordably priced — that catches your attention, whether you're talking T-shirts with bizarre slogans and intriguing graphics or a Japanese robe-like garment known as a yukata ("Not to be confused with a traditional kimono," the store says).

Info: 546 Broadway; 917-237-8800; www.uniqlo.com.

● **Gordon Ramsay at the London:** You may know him as the crazed chef behind the Fox-TV series *Hell's Kitchen*. But New Yorkers now know him as the latest star in their culinary-mad city.

British chef Gordon Ram-

say has landed at the London, a swank Midtown hotel.

You can enjoy his cuisine, which blends French and contemporary elements, at his namesake restaurant, where an eight-course "Prestige" menu runs \$120. But a more affordable and casual alternative is Maze, his adjoining "small plates" restaurant that offers a three-course lunch for \$35.

Among the midday meal offerings, the red wine-braised short ribs and Valrhona chocolate fondant with green cardamom caramel, sea salt and almond ice cream are recommended. And don't forget the drink menu. Even at a pricey \$16, the Diablo Gordon Ramsay, a whiskey-based cocktail with a fiery kick of ginger beer, is

worth it.

Info: 151 W. 54th St.; 212-468-8888; www.gordonramsay.com/gratthelondon.

● **The Lower East Side:** In a sense, this historic New York neighborhood, where hundreds of thousands of immigrants settled in the first half of the 20th century, needs no introduction.

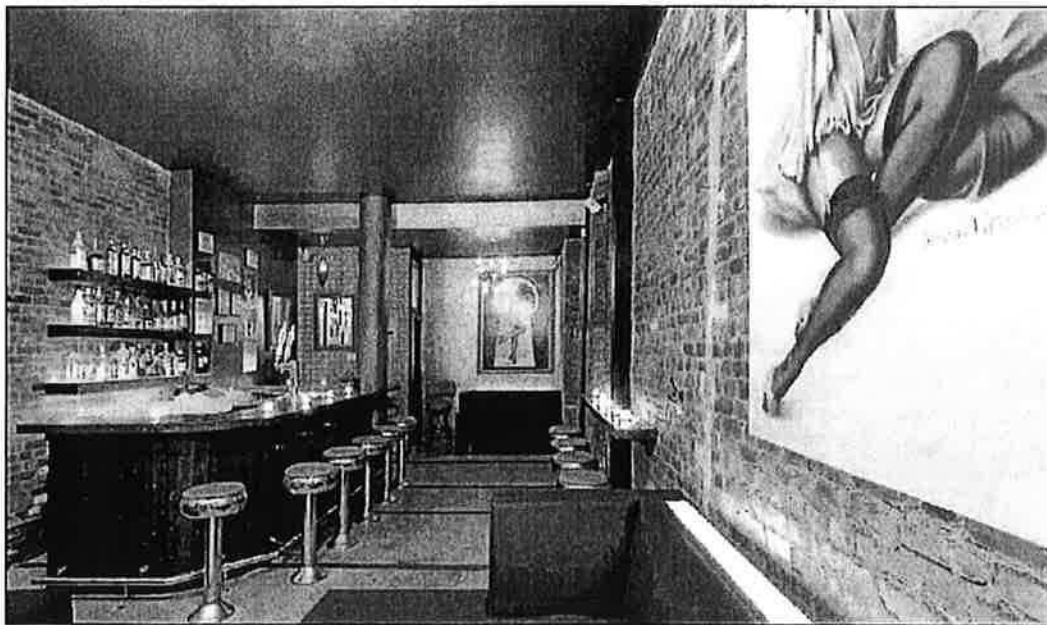
But while the Lower East Side retains some of its classic New York elements — the discount clothing stores, the tenements, even one of the last of the famous New York delicatessens (Katz's) — it's also become a hipster's haven in recent years, with trendy restaurants and bars.

One bar example: Nurse Bettie (106 Norfolk St., 917-434-9072, www.nursebetties.com), a shrine to pinup

girls of yesteryear.

The best way to experience it? Take a walk down Orchard Street, where the past and present happily co-exist.

On one side of the street, you'll find the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (108 Orchard St., 212-431-0233, www.tenement.org), where you can learn a little about the neighborhood's history; on the other, you'll find Il Laboratorio del Gelato (95 Orchard St., 212-343-9922, www.laboratoriodelgelato.com), a small, sophisticated shop that prides itself on making some of the city's best gelato and sorbets, with flavors ranging from blood orange to Greek yogurt.



TOM SIBLEY/WILK MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

NURSE BETTIE: This shrine to pinup girls of yesteryear is just one of the trendy bars that have moved into the Lower East Side.



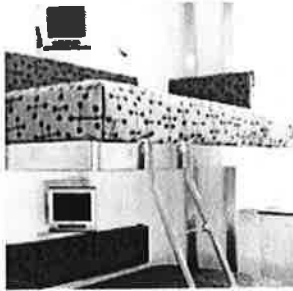
September 28, 2007

Vacation Doc: Not Your Ordinary Hotel Room

1 | 2 | 3 | Next >

For a cheap and unique place to rest your head, stay in a "pod" or a "love" hotel—both concepts for which we can thank Japan.

By Pauline Frommer



Related Destinations

By an odd set of circumstances, I was once seated next to the CEO of the convenience store chain 7-Eleven at a dinner party. And over the course of the evening, the conversation kept returning to Japan. It seems that in the world of convenience store products, many of the new ideas—like those little cans of syrupy cold coffee, and those fluorescent-looking vitamin waters—are coming from the Land of the Rising Sun.

Once I started thinking about it, I realized that, as with beverages, Japanese innovations are also shaping the way Westerners travel. The trend started back in 1964, when the introduction of Japan's Tokaido Shinkansen made train travel cool again, and more importantly, super-speedy (at close to 200 mph, there's a reason it's known as the "bullet train"). Though we here in the U.S. have been tragically slow to adopt this fuel-efficient technology, high-speed rail travel is now *de rigueur* in Europe. Japanese influence is also felt in airports and malls across the U.S., where teriyaki wings, sushi and big bowls of noodle soup are becoming almost as ubiquitous as burgers and fries. But where we're really "turning Japanese" is in the world of accommodations, and that's very good news for cost-conscious travelers.

From "capsule" to "pod" hotels

In the 1980s, the Japanese took their bento box aesthetic and created what is now called the "capsule" hotel. Aimed at drunk or tardy Japanese salarymen who missed the last commuter train home, these warehouse-like hotels feature floor after floor of sleeping cubicles, stacked one on top of the other. Depending on your point of view, the visual effect is either space-age or morguelike, but inside the cubicles they're surprisingly comfy: large enough to sit up in, and equipped with a TV. Since bathrooms are shared and the quarters are cramped, most capsules in Japan accept only men. But for businessmen or male budget travelers who just need a place to crash, they offer clean, convenient and affordable digs at about \$40/night.

It took two decades for the capsule concept to come West, but in the last seven years or so, a number of Occidental imitators have sprung up (albeit with many refinements, including coed rooms and more space). Closest in ambiance are the **easyHotel** (www.easyhotel.com) properties, founded by marketing genius Stelios Haji-Ioannou, the man behind easyJet, easyCruise and easyInternetcafé. Featuring prefabricated, usually windowless, Day-Glo orange-and-white rooms, the digs here are Lilliputian, with double beds a mere inch or so from the wall. Closetlike bathrooms

with shower, toilet and sink all in one (it gets pretty wet) complete the picture. But they're darn cheap for London and Basel, Switzerland (the cities that currently have easyHotels; more are in the pipeline), costing as little as \$50/night for two people. (For the best rates, book months in advance; prices go up the closer to the travel date you get.)

An airport-based, slightly more upscale version of the capsule hotel, **Yotel** (www.yotel.com), was created by the folks behind the sushi chain YO! Sushi. Its smallest rooms are only 7 square meters (22 square feet), but they cram into the space a bed (big enough for two small or very friendly people), a 20-inch flat-screen TV, a bathroom with shower and even a fold-out work desk and stool. The look is Jetsons, there's even room service and prices start at about \$50/night. Right now, there are Yotels in the U.K. at both Gatwick and Heathrow airports, with a third opening in early 2008 in Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, and more are said to be on the horizon.

The Netherlands and Belgium are home to three **Qbic Hotels** (www.qbichotels.com), the high-design, low-cost offspring of designer Philippe Starck. Set in Amsterdam and Maastricht, Netherlands, and Antwerp, Belgium (the city centers, not the airports) they, too, hover in the \$50/night range. They'll have competition from the newest pod, **Citizen M** (www.citizenm.com), which is expected to open at the Amsterdam airport on Oct. 31, and in central Amsterdam not long after. According to their spokespeople, Citizen M's (the name means "Citizen Mobile") will soon open in Paris; London; Berlin; Barcelona, Spain; Stockholm, Sweden; and more. The "Industrial Flexible Demountable" rooms will be sized like those on a yacht, but feature such niceties as extra-large beds, separate toilet and shower mini-pods (within the room), floor-to-ceiling windows and free movies on the 26-inch LCD-screen TVs.

Here in the U.S., the "pod" concept has come to New York City with the **Pod Hotel** (www.thepodhotel.com), where rooms start at just \$89/night (amazing in a city where the average rate is now \$300/night). I visited the pod when it was still under renovation and talked with the folks there about the innovative ways they're making the most of these Lilliputian rooms. Some have bunk beds, others feature singles wedged into one corner, and still others have queen beds—but they're all cunningly designed so that you can store your luggage easily and hang out in comfort (thanks to pop-out TV screens and reading lamps) in the wee rooms. The décor is cheery, with primary-colored fabrics and Scandinavian-looking blond-wood-and-steel furnishings.

Art imitates love

A final innovation in the lodging world is Japan's so-called "Love Hotels." At their most basic, they're faceless places where lovers can meet for an hour or two. But many are elaborate fantasy palaces, designed for staging involved sexual scenarios. They feature rooms created to look like medieval dungeons, alien processing centers, igloos, carousels and even Spiderman's lair.

While most hotels in the West aren't taking such an unabashedly erotic approach to their marketing, many are finding that fantasy rooms are a smart way to spruce up an older property. So they invite local artists to transform what are often creaky older hotels into dazzlingly eccentric new ones, with the help of paint, papier mache and chicken wire, and a lot of imagination. Because most of the hoteliers recognize that the properties are still on the musty side, they don't charge outrageous

rates to stay in these unique environments. And budget travelers have the fun of bedding down in a faux pyramid, or a thousand leagues under the sea, for less than they'd pay in a boring old motel.

In the arts mecca of New York City, at least four hotels have taken this approach in some or all of their rooms—**The Carlton Arms** (www.carlton-arms.com), **The Gershwin Hotel** (www.gershwinhotel.com), **The Chelsea Hotel** (www.hotelchelsea.com) and **The Chelsea Star Hotel** (www.starhotelny.com). The results range from kooky to absolutely spectacular. I've visited bedrooms designed to take you back to elementary school (complete with chair/desks and chalkboards you can draw on); rooms with beds marooned in a fantasy forest with branches overhanging the bed; a gorgeous Hindu temple plastered with murals of Ganesh and painted in the jewel tones of India; and many others that were colorful, surreal and had themes only the artist could explain. Best of all, you'll be paying as little as \$29/night (at the Gershwin or Chelsea Star for a bed in a dorm room) to \$109/night for a private double room (at all but the two Chelsea Hotels, where the rates are a bit higher).

A similar approach is taken by the **Artisan Hotel and Spa** (www.theartisanhotel.com) in Las Vegas, basically an aging motel made super-chic by the appropriation of paintings by the great masters. Each room is named for a different artist. The walls of that room are crammed with large and small reproductions of that artist's work; the bedding and walls are in the same color palette as the paintings. Rates are usually significantly lower here than they would be at hotels of the same cool quotient on the nearby Strip, starting at about \$99/night.

There are plenty of other examples of artist-transfigured lodgings, such as the fabulous **Hotel Fox** (www.hotelfox.com, from \$140/night) in Copenhagen, Denmark; the new **Hotel des Artes** (www.sfhoteldesartes.com), with specials as low as \$294/week) in San Francisco; the **Gladstone Hotel** (www.gladstonehotel.com, from \$175/night) in Toronto; and the **Hotel Pelirocco** (www.hotelpeirocco.co.uk, from \$100/night) in Brighton, England. But part of the fun of these places is finding them yourself, isn't it?

So domo arigato, Japan. And let's keep the innovations coming.

Pauline Frommer is the creator of the new Pauline Frommer guidebooks, geared towards budget-conscious adults. Her book Pauline Frommer's New York City was named best guidebook of the year by The North American Travel Journalists Association. In addition, she won a Lowell Thomas Medal from the Society of American Travel Writers for her magazine work. She co-hosts a weekly radio show on travel with her father, travel expert Arthur Frommer, that's heard on over 110 stations nationwide.

News from...

NJFPR
NORTH JERSEY PUBLIC RELATIONS

Circulation: 85,000,000
daily

September 13, 2007

HOTELS

Could these tiny rooms be the next big thing?

Japanese-style pod hotels are catching on in Europe and New York.

BY ARTHUR FROMMER
King Features

Though three of four new hotel chains consist so far of only a single hotel apiece, their decision to offer tiny, cruise ship-like rooms is a significant event which might foretell the future of lodgings.

And though they are found in just a few cities, the new "chains" — easyHotels, Yotel, Pod Hotels and Qbic — might provide you with a cheap overnight stay if you're passing through.

Their tiny rooms are often compared to the coffin-like capsule hotels in Japan, in which travelers pay roughly \$40 a night for a 3-foot-high by 6-foot-long unit that's little more than a place to lie down.

The truth is that the new designs have a lot more in common with cruise-ship cabins, in which every inch of space is utilized for a practical purpose.

EasyHotel came first.

When it decided to transform a rundown, 18-room bed and breakfast in central London into a hotel with 34 much smaller rooms, it used metal panels as walls, similar to what can be found on cruise ships. Bathrooms have been compared in size to those on airplanes.

Still, any qualms a traveler has about staying in such a property might be overcome by the low price. The cheapest rooms during the winter begin at about \$50, and in warmer seasons guests are likely to spend \$75-\$100 per night. These prices are phenomenal bargains for London, where midlevel, \$200-per-night hotels are common.

The easyHotel group now has three properties in London, one in Basel, Switzerland, and another opening in October in Budapest, Hungary.

It hopes to open 60 more hotels in the next few years, including seven planned for the Middle East and 10 in Germany. In line with its efficient, money-saving model, reservations are accepted

only via its website, www.easyhotel.com.

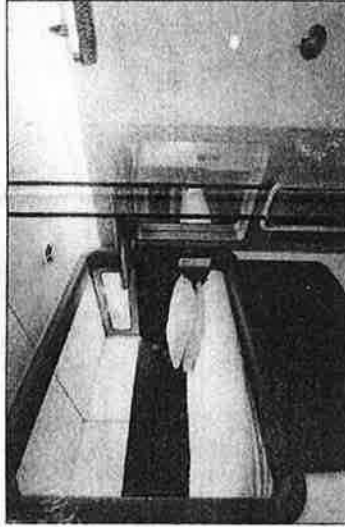
Yotel, which has its lone property at London's Gatwick airport, makes no secret that its rooms have a similarity to those on cruise ships. Units are even called cabins.

Aimed primarily at international travelers with long stopovers in the airport, the tiny cabins, which can be had for as little as four hours at a time (for about \$50), are equipped with 20-inch flat screen TVs (no extra charge), iPod docking stations and work areas.

Yotel (from the same UK outfit that responsible for the Yot Sushi restaurant chain) has plans to open pod-style hotels in major European airports and has ambitions in the United States as well.

Its second hotel is well under way at Heathrow's Terminal 4, and another is scheduled to open at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in early 2008. Reservations at www.yotel.com.

Based in the Netherlands, Qbic opened the first of its



THE NEW COZY: The first Yotel opened this summer at London's Gatwick Airport, and the company has plans for more at major European airports and in the United States.

futuristic properties in Amsterdam this past July. Rooms are an interesting, cube-shape design.

Lobbies are outfitted with self-service check-in areas (a credit card or a reservation number will get you a room key), along with a printing machine selling tickets from local bakeries, bookstores, phone cards and magazines. Room rates start as low as \$66, though the price a guest pays is partly

based on when the reservation is made — the earlier you book, the less you pay.

Another Qbic hotel is opening later this year in Antwerp, Belgium, and a third is slated for business in the Netherlands city of Maastricht in 2008. (011-31-43-21-1111 or www.qbicohotels.com.)

Finally, New York City's Pod Hotel opened earlier this year with rooms starting at just \$89. The least-expensive units are singles with shared bathroom, and during peak travel months even those can set the traveler back \$159; \$89 is a winter rate for the same room.

In New York — and especially at such a fine midtown location — these rates are a bargain. The Pod has a hip, boutique look and rooms come with flat-screen TVs and iPod docking stations. 800-742-5945 or www.thepodhotel.com.

The News Journal

November 26, 2007

SavvyTravel

In the city that never sleeps, these cut-rate hotels pass the test

The Washington Post

What does \$276.58 buy? Plenty, right? Not in New York, where that sum is merely the average cost of one night in a hotel. Consider these alternatives.

Chelsea Lodge

318 W. 20th St. between Eighth and Ninth avenues, www.chelsealodge.com.

WHAT WE PAID: \$138.42, including tax. Rooms are \$119 single, \$129 double.

THE PROPERTY: Tired but tidy decor, but in a great neighborhood.

OUR ROOM: The first things we spotted in our second-floor room, which looked down on a pretty, tree-packed courtyard, were the Hershey kisses on the pillow. Nice. A twin bed against one wall was neatly made with soft sheets, and a flat-screen TV sat on an old chest of drawers. A fan on the tall ceiling moved the air nicely, and a sink had just enough space for all our toiletries.

The toilet itself was down the hall, but no complaints here about the surprisingly spacious in-room shower. (OK, we had to shimmy a little to avoid dripping all over the bed when we stepped out, but we're fine with anything that avoids that awkward trek to a shared shower.)

THE BATHROOM: Our floor had a pair of well-stocked WCs, both of which were predictably tiny, with nondescript tile, sparkling fixtures and a fan/light on a timer.

WOULD WE GO BACK? Absolutely.

Pod Hotel

230 E. 51st St. between Second and Third avenues, www.thepodhotel.com.

WHAT WE PAID: \$162.24, including tax, for a single pod with a shared bath. (Rates can go as low as \$89 for the same unit.) A bunk-bed pod with a shared bath starts at \$99, and queen pods with a bathroom start at \$149.

THE PROPERTY: With a lobby much

swankier than we'd imagined (sleek furniture, soft lighting) and a more sophisticated, older crowd than the prices would suggest, the Pod Hotel — formerly the *Pickwick Arms* — makes a good first impression. The streets surrounding the Pod, in Midtown East, are relatively sedate, and you're more likely to bump into worker bees than other tourists.

OUR ROOM: Ours was a sleek little affair — too big to call a closet, too small to use for batting practice. A built-in couch/bed took up most of one side and was attached to a desk holding an iPod docking station (sweet). The 15-inch flat-screen TV embedded in the wall was larger than we'd expected, and the wood shutters on the small window were a classy touch. A tiny sink in the room was perfect for tooth-brushing and shaving, but all the mirrors — no doubt to make the room seem bigger — were a bit much. We loved the copious storage space (an open-air closet, hooks everywhere, large drawers tucked under the bed) and the free safe. Coolest touch: Lighted numbers above our door indicated which bathrooms (there were four on our floor) were available, so we didn't need to pace around in our flip-flops.

THE BATHROOM: We walked about five seconds down an empty hallway in shorts and a T-shirt to shower; a generous pile of soft towels is provided in each pod.

Never thought we'd say this about a shared bath, but ... wow. Clean, moodily lit, spotless and odor-free, the bathroom boasted gorgeous tile and was awash in New Agey music from hidden speakers.

WOULD WE GO BACK? You bet, though we'd like to try a pod with an in-room bath next time — that \$149 rate for a queen is just amazing.

Chelsea Star Hotel

300 W. 30th St. at Eighth Avenue, starhotelny.com.

WHAT WE PAID: \$115.74 for a double,

including tax, but rates range from \$29.99 for a dorm room to \$359 for a deluxe apartment suite with private bath (taxes extra).

THE PROPERTY: From the outside, the Chelsea Star, a skip from Penn Station and not much more to Midtown's main attractions (Times Square, Central Park, Rockefeller Center, etc.), has minimal signage and a speakeasy mystique. International guests pulled from a Benetton ad were checking in, logging on (two computers are available for \$2 per 20 minutes; also free WiFi) and vegging out in the lived-in lounge, which comes with a TV, books and hot coffee until 11 a.m. An outdoor deck with umbrella-covered tables stays open year-round.

OUR ROOM: The 16 single and double rooms with shared bath are campily decorated, with such themes as Coney Island, Esther Williams and "The King and I." For both of our stays, we were assigned the Shakespeare room, which had a romantic sweep of curtains over the bed and etched prose on the wall. (Insomniacs can memorize the ceiling-to-floor sonnet.) The room was mostly about the mattress (covered in thin white sheets); a TV suspended from the ceiling, a tiny alcove with hangers and a nightstand with a clock took up the remaining space. In a rare New York moment, we actually were able to open our window, a good idea that turned tragic once rush hour kicked into gear. Otherwise, the hotel was nearly as quiet as a nunnery.

THE BATHROOM: The bathroom-to-guest-room ratio is about 1 to 4, but there always seemed to be a line when we wanted to use them. That said, the bathrooms are spacious, mod and immaculate.

WOULD WE GO BACK? In a snap. However, we would like to sleep in Orbit or with Cher next time — no offense, Shakespeare. We may also slightly adjust our bathroom habits — maybe shower in the evening and forgo our midnight glass of water.

October 28, 2007

Section 7

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Travel



**SUPERJUMBO
IS GO**
Reports from
the first flight

PLUS
The next big
leap in air
travel

PARTY TIME

From New York to Belgrade, six classic nights out

G
P. 26

PARTYTIME

Six cities, six Time Out writers, six ways to paint the town red — pack your glad rags for a night to (try to) remember



MILAN

Jan Fusco

7pm

The Milanese version of happy hour is much more relaxing than our desperate booze cruise. Until about 9.30pm they can feed back and munch on bialle (flatbread) are served — often free — at the bar. Join in at *Blancobar* (Corso Sempione, Metro Duomo; 02 59 02 34 93-34 69; www.blancobar.milano.com), where DJs play soul, jazz and rare groove, and Italian trays are dished up with aplomb.

9pm

Those nibbles have just warmed you up, so now it's time to eat. Head for *Tracce Peck* with its two Michelin stars and consistently good reviews of its saffron risotto and farcical veal (Via Victor Hugo; 02 87 67 74). Alternatively, for the Peck magic without the formality and high prices, try the more casual *Peck Luffen Bar*, which is popular with young brats (Via Cesare Cantù; 02 86 93 917).

11pm

Since it opened in 2009, the Sheraton's *Blanca Garden Bar* (Viale Piave; 02 20 58 11) has earned a reputation and has become the place for the Milanese fashion elite to gather. Sit casually while gazing at the catwalk fashion week in January and June. In summer the garden is fabulous. But the pièce de résistance is the *Blanca Garden Hotel*, which is also in the vicinity.

1am

One of the oldest and best clubs in Milan is *Plastic* (Industria 52-513 by one drink; Viale Luitprand; 02 73 39 99; www.plasticclub.com). Depending on the night, there's funky jazz, electronica, rock, Italian music or pop. Weekdays, the ex-industrial *Alcatraz* (Industria 53 by one drink; Via Valtellina; 02 69 01 65 52; www.alcatrazclub.com) is a top music scene. At weekends it goes into the largest dance space in the city.

Let's go

Where to sleep: *Hotel Home* (Florence; 042 46 17 59; www.hotelhome.it) offers comfortable (fantastic location), stays in the middle of the Marais, and extraordinary neo-gothic decor by Jacques Garcia. Doubles start at €135. If you have exacting standards when it comes to interior design, but are on a budget, try *Le Quartz* (Remparts; 13 Marais; 1 48 06 61 97; www.lequartzhotel.com). It's part of French Airline's chain of affordable boutique hotels, with doubles from €64. Get there by train, with Eurostar (01275 612755; www.eurostar.com) or by plane. Airlines flying to Paris include Air France (0520 142 3513; www.airfrance.co.uk) and EasyJet (www.easyjet.com).



PARIS

Jonathan Derbyshire

Start with pre-prandial drinks at *Le Baron Rouge* (Rue de la Harpe; 01 53 11 43 33), a delightfully rustic and convivial bar a short walk away on a side street in the 11th arrondissement. Choose your wine from an extensive long list and drink it by the glass, experimenting with the locals, standing either at the bar or by one of several outdoor bars in the playground outside.

Close by is *Le Square* (Traverse, a less-than-popular with Parisian media types as much for its glitzy *belles* (young interior) as for its cuisine (Rue Antoine Lavoisier; 1 43 43 06 03; 349 for food). A 10-minute walk into the 11th arrondissement, *District Paul Bert* is unpretentious but serves wonderful traditional fare. Steaks are served one-way (Rue Paul Bert; 1 43 72 24 01; dinner for two €36).

You'll need to walk off your dessert, so stroll up the hill to *Alcatraz* (outlet, the 10th arrondissement) where they're replaced (Djazz) and by the name of Paris's hippest bars. Many host live music, among the best are *Sudra* (de l'Église; Rue de l'Église; 1 44 62 02 86; www.sudra.com) and *Le 101* (Rue de la Harpe; 1 40 54 35 05; www.le101.com), where the emphasis is on indie rock.

Though you wouldn't guess it from looking at its shabby exterior, *Café des Sports* (Rue de Ménilmontant; 1 46 56 18 18), in the 20th arrondissement, is home to one of Paris's hottest dancefloors, packed for free DJ sessions most nights. And if you're danced off your feet, you can cool off in the bar at *Le Colonne* (restaurant opposite Rue de Ménilmontant; 1 46 23 10 10; www.lecolonne.com).

Where to sleep: *Hotel Home* (Florence; 042 46 17 59; www.hotelhome.it) offers comfortable (fantastic location), stays in the middle of the Marais, and extraordinary neo-gothic decor by Jacques Garcia. Doubles start at €135. If you have exacting standards when it comes to interior design, but are on a budget, try *Le Quartz* (Remparts; 13 Marais; 1 48 06 61 97; www.lequartzhotel.com). It's part of French Airline's chain of affordable boutique hotels, with doubles from €64. Get there by train, with Eurostar (01275 612755; www.eurostar.com) or by plane. Airlines flying to Paris include Air France (0520 142 3513; www.airfrance.co.uk) and EasyJet (www.easyjet.com).



AMSTERDAM

Steve Kyrer

To get your evening off on the right foot, head to the historic, standing-room-only *Wyndham Folklore* (Pijpsteeg; 00 31 20 639 2692; www.wyndhamfolklore.nl) for an early evening aperitif. Its epic menu of ligatures and joints (Belgian pint is quite something). Near a window, *Barrow* (11 (Lancehede; 00 370 1786; www.barrow.nl)) offers traditional home-brewed beer and a terrace.

Deal with the munchies by scaling the heights of Dutch cuisine — Indonesian. There are two worth trying: *Tempaple* (Droevestraat; 20 623 6213; www.tempaple.nl) and *Tempaple* (Droevestraat; 20 623 6213), but its half-price neighbour *Tempaple* (Droevestraat; 20 427 9865) is worth a try. Also try the mixed *Tempaple* (small plate selection of 10 or so different dishes).

There are several relatively new joints catering to a fun — but not too full on — night out. *Sugar Factory* (Hillegomsestraat; 20 626 5006; www.sugarfactory.nl) mixes weekly performances with quirky groove-oriented DJs. *Comb* and *Big Top* at *Blitz* (Droevestraat; 20 521 5001; www.blitz.nl) are also worth a try. *Blitz* (Droevestraat; 20 521 5001; www.blitz.nl) are also worth a try. *Blitz* (Droevestraat; 20 521 5001; www.blitz.nl) are also worth a try.

Clubbers after all-nighters should head to the trendy, legendary *McBacon* (Lombardstraat; 23 44 20 531 8181; www.mcbacon.nl) or *Paradiso* (Weeringsdwars 6-8; 20 426 4321; www.paradiso.nl), an eclectic space in a converted church — both are good, check locally for DJs. Jazz joints are best directed to the *Blindens* (Piet Heinkade 3; 20 988 2188; www.blindens.nl) for decent live music.

Where to sleep: the *Grand Hotel* (Amstel; Amsterdam; 00 31 20 6090; www.amsterdamgrandhotel.nl) near Central Station, is a new, monumental hotel housed in the first example of the Amsterdam school of architecture and includes epic interiors along with all mod cons, doubles from €134. For something more designer, try *Hotel* with a range of rooms to five-star rooms ranging from €66 to €315. *Lloyd Hotel* (20 541 5004; www.lloydhotel.com) is located in the up-and-coming eastern district and a 10-minute train ride from Central Station. Getting there on the bus: Airlines flying to Amsterdam include KLM (0870 307 4074; www.klm.com), BMI (0870 607 0555; www.bmi.com) and EasyJet (www.easyjet.com).



BERLIN

David Ritzner

On an otherwise drab street, in Mitte, on Berlin's main trail, has diverse and worthwhile joints scattered among flashier attractions. One is *Amplitude* (Oranienburger Straße 27; no phone), offering excellent cocktails in cool and casual lounge surroundings. For mainly casual, more self-consciously stylish atmosphere, try the bar at *Silhou* (Hosa-Luxemburgstrasse 11; 00 49 30 9706 4290; www.silhou.com).

The place for dinner is the *Grill Royal* (Friedrichstrasse 103b; 30 2887 9288; main course £14) – expansive, traditional, down on the basics of the *Beef Stew*. If you want quieter, more picturesque surroundings and an imaginative modern European menu, visiting local ingredients, go for *Mosaic* (Bergstrasse 22; 30 280 7121; main course £19) and its wonderful neo-classic courtyard.

As an aid to digestion, you'll be wanting a drink. *Greenwich* (Gospstrasse 3; 30 2809 5366) is stylishly upmarket, offering a long bar, a similarly lengthy program and decent digestifs. But if you're after cosy and casual, try *Alte Berlin* (Münchstrasse 45; no phone), an old-style Berlin *Eckbier* (corner pub). Peering in the front door at the bar, it isn't immediately apparent that there's a beautiful saloon in the back.

Bababoom (Industrie 27; Dorostrasse 10; 30 6950 5287) is a great basement, where local boys-made (very) good jazz often play when they're in town. As night turns to morning, head for the former industrial neighbourhood district of *Industriegebiet* and the *Bergstra/Panorama* bar (Industrie 110; Am Wriezener Bahnhof; no phone), a techno palace in an old East German power station.

Where to sleep: the no-nonsense (but) apartments at *Lex* (1 30 956 2600; www.lex-hotels.de) are stylish, comfortable and well located. Each has a sitting area, kitchen and raised shower. From £94. Or there's *Hotel 810* (0660; www.hotel810-hotels.com), where both bed and bath are part of the same wooden unit, so you can roll into bed after a soak. The vibe here is young and friendly, and there's a beautiful Japanese-styled spa. Doubles are from £99. Getting there: airlines flying to Berlin include Air Berlin (0871 500 8937; www.airberlin.com), *Jet2* (www.jet2.com), BA (0870 570 9850; www.ba.com), Ryanair (0871 246 0000; www.ryanair.com) and *Jet2* (0871 226 1237; www.jet2.com).



BELGRADE

Tonia Popper

Not even grandma and the kids miss happy hour in Belgrade – come the evening, whole families fill outdoor cafes along *Kneza Mihaila*, the old town's bustling, pedestrian-only thoroughfare. Here abundant bars and nearby streets such as *Halkejska* – try *OK NO* (Omladinska 17; 00 381 11 262 9072; 9am-2am), where the decor has a cool mining theme, with pickaxes and miners' lamps on the walls.

Serbs love gilled meats. The hump-shaped *philetino* (or *cepaneci*), made with minced lamb, beef and pork, are favourites. You'll find them on street-corner stalls – just follow your nose. For classier and classier Serbian meals, try the pretty, cobblestoned, old Belgrade quarter of *Skadarlija*, where *Tri Sestice* (Skadarska 59; 11 374 7501; 11am-1am) serves hearty, meaty fare and fish.

Time to take in the modern side of town: the hustling and tree-lined *Stralinska Bana* is Belgrade's busiest bar strip and has plenty of decent places to drink. Two that attract the cream of the glitzy crowd, with crisp decor, good menus and excellent cocktails, are *Secna* (Stralinska Bana 17; 11 218 5366) and *Ipanema* (Stralinska Bana 68; 11 528 3069; noon-midnight).

It's party time on dozens of adjacent boats docked in two patches of riverside in Novi Belgrade. Crosses through *Povvataca* (Novski keji 10), near the *Garza* Bridge, as it attracts bigger-name DJs, but by the others, too – just hop on board. In the old town, there's usually a mob at *Underground* (Pariska 1a; 11 262 9081; www.underground.com), a nightlife institution, in the catacombs of once *Kafemogla* (Café 1).

Where to sleep: two intimate five-star hotels in the heart of town that will pamper you in 19th-century splendour are the *Metropolitan Palace* (1 330 5300; www.metropolitnpalace.com) and *Hotel Admiral Club* (1 302 8260; www.hoteladmiralclubbelgrade.com). Rooms go from about £120 to as much as £370 for a suite, and the pricier rooms are extremely spacious and furnished with gorgeous antiques. Both have good bars and restaurants. An affordable, comfortable, central three-star is the *Hotel Splendid* (1 323 5444). Its somewhat spartan doubles start at £24. Getting there: fly to Belgrade from Heathrow to BA Flyers (020 7470 2907; www.flylondon.com) or BA (0870 820 9850; www.ba.com).



NEW YORK

Helon Yun

Drink a toast to the setting of the sun and also to the Big Apple's inimitable skyline at the largest rooftop bar in the metropolis, *250 Fifth* (230 Fifth Avenue at 23rd Street, 30th floor; 00 1 212 725 4360). It gives you the opportunity to combine excellent warms (priced at £15 for two) with jaw-dropping views of the Empire State and MetLife buildings.

The most coveted table for two is at *You're Fun* (also *Gravim*, Carter's exclusive supper club), the *Waverly Inn* (16 Bank Street at Waverly Place; no phone; dinner £74 for two). But you're unlikely to get it, so try the 19-seat, Spanish ballroom *Destination* (239 E 11th Street at Second Avenue; 212 979 0112; £24 for two for dinner), a better bet for those who'd rather be impressed by their food than by their neighbour.

Fancy a gig? The *Heldrum Ballroom* (431 W 16th Street, between Ninth and Tenth Avenues; 212 414 5994; www.heldrumballroom.com) has musical decor, an impressive stage, state-of-the-art PA and a commitment to cutting-edge music. It offers a truly varied mix of live acts, readings and festivals, from David Bowie to James Blunt, via Moby or Kanye West's DJ, A-Trak.

It's been hours since your last cocktail. There are some (often) exquisitely crafted, and consequently highly potent, libations on offer at *Be It* (277 Church Street, between Franklin and White Streets; 212 219 9994; £12 for two drinks). Once you're feeling head for sick, bounce up *Walt* (119 W 4th Street; 212 414 4245; www.waltcbsv.com; £15 for two drinks). Excellent interior cocktail bar *500* and *Ingram* (D). A-Trak.

Where to sleep: on a nicely trendy strip in the East Village, once lined with flophouses, the recently opened *Flowers Hotel* (212 503 9100; www.theflowershotel.com) offers an outdoor bar and chess room, along with push doorkies starting at £256. If you'd rather not blow all your cash on lodgings, try the more modest but centrally located *Pod Hotel* (212 355 0300; www.thepodnyc.com), where doubles cost £121 and more. Getting there: airlines flying to New York include Virgin Atlantic (0870 580 2037; www.virginatlantic.com), BA (0870 850 9850; www.ba.com), Continental (0845 607 6760; www.continental.com) and *American Airlines* (010 7269 0222; www.americanairlines.com).



December 7, 2007

Snug spaces, high style for much, much less

Tiny hotel rooms are a hot trend

By Laura Bly
 USA TODAY

Weary travelers have a new option for easing the pain of a long layover in one of the world's worst airports: Yotel, a low-cost, high-concept "pod hotel" inspired by first-class airline cabins, opens today in Terminal 4 of London's Heathrow.

Yotel, which launched its first property in London's Gatwick Airport this summer, charges from about \$52 for four hours in a standard single "cabin" and \$115 for an overnight stay; a double cabin starts at about \$82 for four hours and \$169 a night.

It's the latest example of a new breed of budget hotels, offshoots of Japan's coffinlike "capsule hotels," that combine snug spaces (rooms are typically 75 to 100 square feet) with tech-conscious design (many feature self-service check-



Yotel

ins, iPod docking stations and free wireless, wall-mounted, flat-screen TVs and adjustable mood lighting).

A look at some major players:

► **easyHotel:** Part of the company behind Britain's low-cost airline easyJet, these orange-hued hotels are in London (Kensington, Victoria and Earl's Court, from about \$52 a night), Basel and Zurich, Switzerland (from about \$47 and \$49 a night), and Budapest, Hungary

(from about \$22), easyHotel.com

► **Qbic:** Open in Amsterdam and Maastricht, Netherlands, Qbic's "fun, sassy and efficient" hotels feature extra-long beds, Philippe Starck bathroom design and vending machines with homemade food from local caterers. Priced from about \$57 a night. QbicHotels.com

► **Pod Hotel:** Rates at the former Pickwick Arms in central Manhattan start at \$99 a night for a tiny but chic

room with twin bed and shared bath down the hall; double rooms with private bath from \$139. ThePodHotel.com

► **Nitenite Cityhotels:** Open now in Birmingham, England, with expansion plans for New York City, the U.K. and Germany, Nitenite hotels feature ergonomically designed, yacht-style rooms in neutral colors. Rates from about \$82 a night, double. Nitenite.com

► **Hotel SO:** Compact rooms at this eco-conscious hotel, launched last month in Christchurch, New Zealand, include free Internet phone calls. Rates from about \$53 a night, with optional \$11 "servicing charge." HotelSO.co.nz

► **Tune Hotels:** Cheap is the byword at this garish red hotel in central Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: rates start at about \$3 a night, though towels and air conditioning are extra. TuneHotels.com

► **CitizenM:** Amsterdam's CitizenM (short for "mobile") opens early in 2008. Rates will start from about \$101 a night for a room with mood lighting ("any color except tartan") and a king-size bed "as big as your dreams, but not as weird." CitizenM.com

Japanese style: Yotel opened a pod hotel this week at Heathrow; Gatwick Airport has had one since June. The rooms offer travelers a place to rest on long layovers.



October 19, 2007

Modular hotels: Tiny space, big experience, low price

By Christine Sarkis, SmarterTravel.com

Capsule hotels, pod hotels, overnight caskets: Whatever you call them, modular hotels, long embraced by Japanese businessmen, have evolved into a hip and affordable travel option that has gained traction in parts of Europe and the U.S.

The westernized pod-hotel concept offers more space than its Japanese counterpart—think cruise ship cabin, not sleeping coffin. Plus, the modular rooms are generally built with double occupancy in mind, and many even have en-suite bathrooms. Often stylish and priced well under nearby hotels, this new batch of modular hotels embraces sleek design, efficient spaces, and integrated technologies such as Wi-Fi and flat-screen televisions.

Here's a review of the modular hotel up-and-comers. And of course, if you'll be in Japan, you can experience the original in cities such as Tokyo and Osaka. Find current exchange rates for hotel prices using USATODAY.com's currency converter.

EasyHotel

Locations: There are three in London (South Kensington, Earl's Court, and Victoria); one in Budapest, Hungary; one in Basel, Switzerland, and one to open mid-November 2007 in Zurich, Switzerland.

FIND MORE STORIES IN: London | Yotel | Amsterdam Schiphol

The scoop: Room types vary by location, but expect to find mostly six to seven square meter (75 to 97 square feet) "small rooms" (with or without windows) that come equipped with a private bathroom and shower, plus a flat screen TV (though it costs £5 to get 10 channels). The slightly larger "standard rooms" offer the same amenities in an eight to nine square meter space. Rooms at the London hotels start at £30 per night.

First impression: The London easyHotels' private bathrooms and clean new spaces are a step up from the typical hostel at a comparable price.

Price check: A small room with no window at the easyHotel Victoria on November 7 was £35; a small room with a window was £45.

Yotel!

Locations: Yotel! at Gatwick Airport is now open in the International terminal. The Heathrow location (in Terminal 4) opens later this autumn, and Amsterdam Schiphol opens in early 2008.

The scoop: Inspired by airplane cabin upper class suites, Yotel! is sticking to the theme and opening its capsule-style hotels not just near airports, but actually in airports. With rates from £25, it's the cheapest glimpse into first-class you'll find.

Yotel! offers two types of "cabins." Standard cabins measure seven square meters (75 square feet), and include a bed the website claims is large enough for two, bathroom with shower, work desk with stools, storage areas, free Wi-Fi, and flat screen TV with programming that includes television, radio, games, internet, and current airport arrival and departure information. There's an on-screen cabin service menu from which you can order food 24 hours per day.

Premium cabins have all the standard amenities plus more, including a bed that folds itself into a couch at the touch of a button, bedside tables, and a fancier bathroom. And, at 10 square meters (108 square feet), it's a bit roomier.

You can book in four-hour increments or overnight. The airport location makes Yotel! a good option for layovers or early-morning, late-night, delayed, or canceled flights. Rates for four hours start at £25 for a standard cabin, or £40 for a premium cabin, and additional hours cost from £5 for standard cabins.

First impression: Sleek and modular, the perks seem ideal for everyone from business travelers with early departure times to exhausted vacationers waiting out flight delays.

Price check: An overnight stay on November 7 was available for £55.

Qbic

Locations: The first hotel is already open in Amsterdam. Hotels in Antwerp and Maastricht will open in early 2008. Qbics are located in city centers.

The scoop: Design, novelty, and efficiency are the defining characteristics of Qbic Hotels' signature "cubi" rooms. Cubis include extra-long beds, private bathrooms with designer touches, flat-screen TVs, work-and-dine spaces, and free Wi-Fi, in rooms averaging a palatial (by modular standards) 30 square meters (323 square feet). You can even change the color of your space to yellow, red, or purple by pressing a button. Rates start at \$39 per night.

The hotel's lobby has a self-service check-in terminal, vending machines with food from local bakeries and caterers, and a digital concierge with information about local restaurants and cinemas.

First impression: Stylish and well-equipped, and the dining area sets it apart from other pod hotels as a comfortable place for a slightly longer stay.

Price check: For the evening of November 7, the rate was \$79.



Pod Hotel

Locations: Just one in New York City's Midtown East neighborhood.

The scoop: Formerly the Pickwick Arms, the Pod Hotel's variety of room types suits a variety of travelers. Queen and double rooms have private bathrooms and larger beds, while single and bunk rooms cost less and have shared bathrooms. Clean minimalism with the occasional touch of bold color characterizes the rooms. True to its claim of high style and high tech, all rooms have iPod docking stations, free Wi-Fi, and flatscreen TVs.

With advertised rates from \$89 per night, New York City's Pod Hotel offers a more typical hotel experience than most modular hotels beyond the rooms, with a concierge, lobby lounge, restaurant, and rooftop bar.

First impression: Though it calls its rooms "pods," the sizes look comparable to the average New York City hotel room. Based on a price check, it looks like rates can be a fair amount higher than the advertised lowest rate of \$89, though they seem in line with typical New York City hotel prices.

Price check: For the night of November 7, a single room with shared bathroom cost \$159, and a double with private bathroom \$249.

Nitenite cityhotels

Locations: Just Birmingham, England, right now, though the coming soon list includes London, New York, and Berlin, among other cities.

The scoop: Designed to "emulate the feel of a luxury yacht cabin," the nitenite hotel in Birmingham strives for an affordable and hip guest experience. All of its 104 guest rooms have en-suite bathrooms, flat-screen televisions, and Wi-Fi. Standard double rooms are just under seven square meters (75 square feet). Rates start at £55 per night.

First impression: Sleek design and soothing lighting makes the rooms seem slightly larger than they are.

Price check: For the night of November 7, rates were £50, even cheaper than the advertised rate.

More modular, or just mod, budget hotels

The modular craze is part of a larger phenomenon of affordable boutique hotels. To the delight of travelers who don't want to choose between affordability and style, hotels offering some combination of modern design, technology-rich rooms, modular layout, and affordability are cropping up all over the place. Here are a few examples of hotels that share one or more of the key characteristics of modular hotels.

In London, you can find affordability, style, and technology at base2stay, which touts itself as a synthesis of boutique and budget hotels. Its "aparthotel" rooms come equipped with mini-kitchens and wired workstations. Rates at this Kensington hotel start at £89 per night. Also in London is the Hoxton Hotel, an "innovative new business hotel" with cheap rates and an emphasis on style.

Big Sleep Hotels in Cardiff, Wales, and Cheltenham, England, dub themselves "design hotels at affordable prices." Rooms in Cardiff start at £58 and suites at £99. Standard rooms in Cheltenham start at £85.

And newcomer CitizenM, which will open its first location at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport in early 2008, will focus on "affordable luxury for the people." CitizenM likens its rooms to those you'd find on a luxury yacht or private jet, placing it more squarely in the module hotel category. Another soon-to-open modular hotel, Christchurch, New Zealand's Hotel SO, will begin welcoming guests in late 2007, and promises flat screen televisions, Wi-Fi, MP3 music player plug-ins, and high-quality bedding at rates from \$89 NZ, double occupancy.

Expect to see more of these hotels pop up in cities in the coming years. The combination of good value, appealing design, and high-tech amenities is sure to inspire a following among those willing to sacrifice a little space.

[Read previous columns](#)

SmarterTravel.com features expert travel advice and unbiased coverage of travel deals.



By Carl Court, Bloomberg News

The new Japanese-style Yotel! at London's Gatwick Airport is now open in the International terminal. The Heathrow location (in Terminal 4) opens later this autumn, and Amsterdam Schiphol opens in early 2008. Here is a glance of the Premium Cabin.

NYC hotels at a price that's right

BudgetTravel

(Budget Travel) -- New York City hotels charge nearly \$300 a night on average. But with some persistence, it's possible to book a far more affordable place that's central, comfortable, and -- sometimes -- even charming. Be sure to plan well in advance. Most hotels recommend you make reservations at least one month before your arrival. Others encourage you to book months ahead. Some hotels require a certain minimum-night stay.

Some booking strategies

While not new, the blind-booking Web sites Priceline and Hotwire are terrific sources for discounted rooms in Manhattan (and elsewhere). These sites won't name the hotel (or airline or car-rental company) you're working with until your bid has been accepted and your credit card has been charged. But rest assured, these sites work with respected hotels, so you should receive a quality room in Manhattan if you bid on three- and four-star hotels. For help with your bidding, check out biddingfortravel.com and betterbidding.com, which are user's guides to Priceline and Hotwire.



Be sure to consider mid-market national chains such as Hampton Inn and Courtyard by Marriott, which have been moving into New York City. These hotels offer newly constructed buildings and often provide substantial breakfasts, unlimited local calls and free Internet access in their lobbies. Best of all, these mid-market chains charge up to 30 percent less than comparable local independents. For more info, read [New hotels in New York City](#).

Still, there's the obvious trade-off: try as they might, hotel chains lack local character. If independently owned lodging with some personality is what you want, consider Budget Travel's picks for affordable New York City hotels.

Don't Miss

BudgetTravel.com: [10 easy ways to save money](#)

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ABINGDON GUEST HOUSE

Hood: The West Village, a downtown area with tree-lined streets and no skyscrapers. Landmarks include the Village Vanguard jazz club and chef Mario Batali's Babbo.

First Impression: The English countryside meets the city in these two dainty, 19th-century town houses.

The rooms: Each of the nine rooms has tasteful features; the Garden Room, for example, has green walls, exposed brick and an adjoining outdoor garden. Bathrooms are private, whether en suite or adjacent to a room.

Plus: Quiet and discreet, with no lobby or front desk, the Abingdon feels more like your own pad than a temporary stopover.

Minus: The Abingdon has a strict check-in policy; you must arrive by your appointed time. There's a two-night minimum stay on weeknights, and a four-night minimum stay on weekends.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in all rooms. (There's no public lounge.)

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 21 Eighth Ave., 212/243-5384, abingdonguesthouse.com, doubles from \$189.

THE CHELSEA LODGE

'Hood: Chelsea is a midtown, semi-residential district best known for its galleries that showcase contemporary visual art.

First impression: This picturesque, 22-room town house charms with its quirky decor, including large wooden geese mounted to lobby walls.

The rooms: The immaculate rooms feel like country-chic escapes because of their rustic furniture and polished wood floors.

Plus: Large windows, high ceilings and soothing colors open up the small rooms.

Minus: While there is a shower and a sink in every room, toilets are shared.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms and public spaces.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 318 W. 20th St., 800/373-1116, chelsealodge.com, doubles from \$129.

THE COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL

'Hood: Tribeca, the Triangle Below Canal Street, is an area defined by residential lofts. It lures fewer tourists than nearby, better-known SoHo.

First impression: This hotel works well for travelers who care more about their accommodations' address than the ambience. The hotel feels generic and suburban, despite its name.

The rooms: The 125 small rooms have basic furnishings and just enough space to be comfortable without feeling puny.

Plus: The rooms' high ceiling fans add a homey touch to otherwise ordinary digs.

Minus: Chambers Street can be noisy. Ask for a room in the back of the hotel.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms and public spaces.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 95 W. Broadway, 888/895-9400, cosmohotel.com, doubles from \$175.

HOTEL QT

'Hood: Midtown, just down the block from the flash and frenzy of Times Square.

First impression: Hotel impresario André Balazs' magic touch is evident from the moment you step into the lobby of his hotel. You check in at a funky, Euro-style kiosk stocked with fashion mags -- a glimpse of the lobby pool and swim-up bar beckons through a glass pane.

The rooms: The 139 rooms come in several configurations ("Platform bed or bunk beds?"). Heavy windows block out the sounds from 45th Street.

Plus: A DJ spins five nights a week by the small pool and swim-up bar. A sauna, steam room, and tiny fitness room are open all day and night.

Minus: The rooms will feel cramped, so Hotel QT is a good bet only for travelers who plan to max out their time in the common areas or elsewhere in the city.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms. Expected to debut in public spaces this winter.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 125 W. 45th St., 212/354-2323, hotelqt.com, doubles from \$265.

HOTEL 17

'Hood: Gramercy, whose leafy and quiet streets are bounded by 14th Street, Third Avenue, 23rd Street, and Park Avenue South.

First impression: It's not hard to see why Woody Allen filmed Manhattan Murder Mystery here, given the glamour of the hotel's old-fashioned, wood-paneled lobby and its narrow, winding corridors.

The rooms: The decor varies, but most of the 122 rooms maintain a stately, old-world feel, thanks to the muted color palette, dark wood trim and mahogany beds and armoires.

Plus: The staff is exceptionally friendly and happy to volunteer travel info, such as where to find the best local restaurant for a late-night bite.

Minus: Not all rooms have private bathrooms. Be sure to specify your preference when booking.

No free Wi-Fi

Credit cards accepted: MC, Visa.

Details: 225 E. 17th St., 212/475-2845, hotel17ny.com, doubles from about \$120.

THE LARCHMONT HOTEL

'Hood: Greenwich Village, but five blocks away from Union Square, a busy shopping district that's home to artisans, street performers, and the Greenmarket, a famous farmer's market.

First impression: The Larchmont strives to be a classy throwback by offering a lobby with dark furniture and windowed counters. But its cheapish roots show through during check-in and checkout times, when the lobby typically gets crammed with luggage.

The rooms: No-frills rooms are outfitted with basic bedspreads, light pink walls and rattan furniture that carries a faint whiff of the Caribbean. Rooms have sinks, but bathrooms are shared. One exception: There is a family room that sleeps a family of four and that has a private bathroom.

Plus: The Larchmont feels safe and secure. New guests have to be buzzed into the lobby; once they've checked in, lodgers receive their own set of keys and can enter through a separate hall.

Minus: The modest rooms and shared bathrooms are reminiscent of dormitories.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in the lobby, café, and some of the rooms.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 27 W. 11th St., 212/989-9333, larchmonthotel.com, doubles from \$109.



THE POD HOTEL

'Hood: This part of Midtown is brimming with restaurants and bars and is not far from Bloomingdale's, Central Park, and the Museum of Modern Art.

First impression: The spacious lobby establishes the Pod's rep as a haven for the young and hip, with its funky murals, asymmetrical couches and retro light fixtures.

The rooms: Colorful, mod-print linens brighten up the 360 sleek rooms. The tiny work spaces, brushed-metal sinks and minuscule bathrooms (in most rooms) are marvels of efficiency.

Plus: The common areas make the place -- travelers can relax on the hotel's chic, outdoor patio and take in the bird's-eye view from the roof deck.

Minus: The hotel has its name for a reason -- the rooms are tiny. Note: Single and bunk-bed rooms have shared bathrooms.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms and public spaces.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 230 E. 51st St., 800/742-5945, thepodhotel.com, singles with shared baths from \$89.

SECOND HOME ON SECOND AVENUE

'Hood: The East Village, a gritty zone that's home to many lively bars, cheap eats and NYU students.

First impression: Peaceful and private, with no lobby or front desk, Second Home feels like its name. A skylight spills natural light into the airy duplex with wood floors. (The owner hates carpet.)

The rooms: New York properties are notorious for their small spaces, and that's why Second Home's five large rooms -- and high ceilings -- are such a refreshing surprise. Plus, no two rooms are the same; each has distinct flavor, such as Peruvian or Caribbean.

Plus: Soundproof windows block out noise from busy Second Avenue outside.

Minus: Two of the rooms share a bathroom. And there's only a tiny sign outside the guesthouse. Look for the Body Evolution studio, which shares the building. Enter through the red door. Also, there is a two-night minimum stay on weeknights, and a three-night minimum stay on weekends.

Free WI-FI? Yes, in guest rooms.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 221 Second Ave., 212/677-3161, secondhomesecondavenue.com, doubles from \$132, includes taxes, coffee, and tea.

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San Francisco Sentinel

January 5, 2008

CHARMING, FASHIONABLE NEW YORK HOTELS – At moderate price



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Plus: Soundproof windows block out noise from busy Second Avenue outside.

Minus: Two of the rooms share a bathroom. And there's only a tiny sign outside the guesthouse. Look for the Body Evolution studio, which shares the building. Enter through the red door. Also, there is a two-night minimum stay on weeknights, and a three-night minimum stay on weekends.

Free Wi-Fi? Yes, in guest rooms.

Credit cards accepted: AmEx, MC, Visa.

Details: 221 Second Ave., 212/677-3161, secondhomesecondavenue.com, doubles from \$132, includes taxes, coffee, and tea.



Where can a group blow off steam?

LINE UP THE PINS Get rid of some excess energy by bowling at 300 New York, an alley revamped in May at Chelsea Piers. The waterfront facility has 40 lanes, a lounge, and arcade games. There's plenty to eat there, too, and if you want to separate your group from the crowd, book the private room in the rear, which has eight lanes and its own bar. (Pier 60, between 23rd St. and the West Side Hwy., 212.835.2695, www.300newyork.com)



SHOOKER 'EM Amsterdam Billiards & Bar is a popular pool hall that opened in January 2007 with upscale furnishings: oak panelling, Oriental rugs, plush couches, and a 50-foot zinc bar. The venue can arrange for pool-table rentals and an open bar for groups of 10 to 20, or parties of 500 can take over the entire space. (110 East 11th St., 212.995.0333, www.amsterdambilliardclub.com)

BOND BY THE BIG SCREEN In warm weather, treat your team to an alfresco movie at the outdoor garden café of the Pod Hotel. Just off the lobby lounge of the budget-friendly hotel, and enclosed by surrounding buildings, the cozy nook opened last summer and has a 15- by 20-foot movie screen, plenty of seating, and potted plants. (230 East 51st St., 212.355.0300, www.thepodhotel.com)



MIX A TUNE Let your team play DJ at Dubspot, a DJ, VJ, and electronic music production academy in the West Village. The venue opened in December 2006 and offers a range of classes for beginners, from mixing and scratching 101 to creating a song from, well, scratch. The eight stations in the studio can accommodate as many as 20 people. Group classes start at \$125 per person for a two-hour session. (348 West 14th St., 877.382.7768, www.dubspot.com)

FIND AN HERBAL REMEDY For a more Zen approach to relaxation, go for tea at the T Salon in the Chelsea Market. This new branch of Mirlam Novalle's specialty tea store opened in May and has bamboo ceilings and floors; it serves snacks as well as tea-based cocktails and offers more than 200 types of loose-leaf teas. Groups of 100 can take over the entire venue and enjoy private afternoon tea service. (75 Ninth Ave., 212.243.2259, www.tsalon.com)



Who's Going Where

LG Mobile Phones sponsored the VH1 Save the Music Foundation's 10th anniversary gala in September. The event, honoring Bill and Hillary Clinton, was held at the Tent at Lincoln Center. One of the largest event spaces in Manhattan, the 21,000-square-foot tent is available from late March until early June; it holds 2,000 for receptions. (West 62nd St. at Amsterdam Ave., 212.755.8300, www.lincolncenter.org)

The American Cancer Society hosted a dinner dance in May on the roof of the St. Regis Hotel. The 4,300-square-foot venue holds 220 for receptions and can be combined with the penthouse. The 256-room hotel below has 15,000 square feet of event space. (2 East 55th St., 212.753.4500, www.stregis.com)

Big names in tennis came together for the 27th annual Legends Ball honoring the 2007 Hall of Fame induction class (which included Pete Sampras) at Cipriani 42nd Street in September. The 13,000-square-foot space seats 500 or holds 2,000 for receptions. (110 East 42nd St., 212.499.0599, www.cipriani.com)

The New York Jets sponsored a dinner and auction to raise money for hunger in May. The event took place at Guastavino's, a 25,000-square-foot space that holds 2,200 guests under its elegant granite arches and vaulted ceiling. (409 East 59th St., 212.980.2711, www.guastavinoss.com)

Bentley hosted the North American debut of its new coupe at the Boat House in Central Park in April. The venue is the only place in Manhattan to host an affair by the lake: the Lake Room seats 300 or holds 500 for receptions. (East 72nd St. and Park Drive North, 212.517.2233, www.centralparkboatouse.com)

ON BIZBASH.COM

Find event vendors or search for venues by neighborhood in our comprehensive resource directory.

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Traveling King

Martin Luther King believed that travel could also be a road to peace
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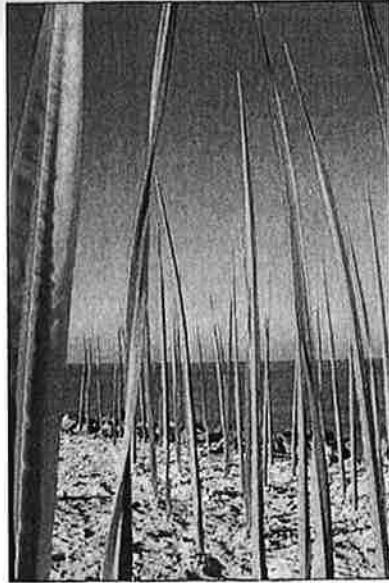
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TRINIDAD TOBAGO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PLAYA DEL CARMEN SEATTLE NEW YORK ATLANTA



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STYLE + VALUE



LATIN HYMN

Renowned photographer Olivier Föllmi traveled through the Amazonian rainforest to the Atacama Desert to experience the diverse landscapes and peoples of Latin America. Föllmi shares his travels in his latest book, *Latin America* (Harry N. Abrams Inc., \$55), whose colorful, oversized pages are as vibrant as the emotions Föllmi captures. The best part: double gatefold pages that open to reveal stunning landscapes such as Palenque in Chiapas, Mexico. Info: 800-927-6860 or www.hnabooks.com.

-Kelly Mack



Hangin'

CONCH, IF YOU LOVE SCULPTURE

Should you encounter a 12-foot-tall Loch Ness monster in Key West, Florida, it's not your third Rum Runner talkin'; it's time for Sculpture Key West. The first exhibit at West Martello Tower starts January 20—and it's free. And the second exhibit starts February 24 at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park, where you can walk or ride your bike and pay just \$1.50 to get in. Both shows run through April 19. Info: 305-295-3800 or www.sculpturekeywest.com.

Hip Hotel

POCKET-SIZED In New York

City, where space is always at a premium, The Pod Hotel (230 East 51st Street) offers rooms as snugly engineered as cabins on a (rocket) ship. Expect trendy touches like home players, free-Wi-Fi, built-in storage systems and rain showers. Rates start at \$99, double occupancy—for a room with bunk beds. Info: 800-742-5945, 212-355-0300 or www.pickwickarms.com.—J.L.



“TRAVELING is not just seeing the NEW; it is also leaving BEHIND.”

—JAN MYRDAL

A SPOT O' TEA?

Cue Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." Finally, a Web site that offers Britain's very best. Britainsfinest.co.uk dispatches "teams of inspectors" to select venues for its "Historic Houses," "Gardens" and "Hotels of Excellence." And only four or five stars will do. Once you've chosen that cozy cottage-turned-B&B, then check out the corresponding road map with photos, contact details, prices and description, which fits in your car's "glove box." **BRITAIN'S FINEST** Sterling!

SOUVI CUTIE

Why did we buy this tacky coffee cup with the Leaning Tower of Pisa handle (€5 or US\$7.30)? Simple: Our tour of Pisa, Italy's Campo dei Miracoli started early—very early. We were the first ones there to see the tower, comically crooked beside the Duomo and the Baptistery. We needed coffee, and we got the next best thing. It's cute, right? Info: torre.duomo.pisa.it.



PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) BY: SUZUKI KUZUNA; COURTESY OF THE POD HOTEL; BY JOHN BUZZALA; AND BY CUPLEY ALDREDE/STYLING

January 13, 2008

Squeezing inn at two airports

By John Lee | Special to the Tribune
January 13, 2008

Hotels rarely brag about their tiny rooms, but at Yotel -- a quirky concept sleepover at London's Gatwick Airport and a recently opened second outlet at London's Heathrow -- small is very definitely in vogue.

An offshoot of Britain's popular Yo! Sushi restaurant chain, the sci-fi-style approach is aimed at transiting airline passengers or those who simply want to rest before or after their flights.

Guests at the subterranean Gatwick property stay in compact pod cabins, complete with cozy beds, shower units and a plethora of traveler-friendly features. And with rooms costing as little as (British pound)25 (about \$50 at the current exchange rate of 2 to 1) for a four-hour block, you should have plenty of spare cash to trawl the surrounding airport shops.

My stay began at the glass-encased check-in desk, accessed via an elevator in the South Terminal, where I was greeted by eager staff dressed like Star Trek crew members. One of the smiling Trekkies escorted me along the purple-hued, ambient-lit corridor before ushering me into my minuscule cube room.

Like a futuristic railcar sleeper compartment, the 75-square-foot cell had a bathroom along one side -- a minimalist all-in-one with an excellent shower, a square toilet unit and a sink just big enough to wash your hands one at a time.

Opposite the bathroom, the bed was enclosed in a vinyl-lined shell -- part-padded cell, part-doorless cupboard -- accessed several feet off the ground via a flip-out step. On the wall, between the bathroom and bed, was a fold-out table, mirror, hanging hair dryer and overhead luggage rack.

Climbing to test the bed, I stretched out and flicked through the cable channels on the wall-mounted TV just beyond my toes -- movies are available for a (British pound)5 fee (\$10) per movie -- then accessed the free-use Internet with the keypad provided. Gratis wireless is also offered for those packing their own laptops. With no windows, the room had a cocooning, cave-like ambience that was ideal for snoozing.

Despite the design pluses, not all was perfect in my standard-class Yotel room. The main drawback was lack of storage. Although the bed appeared to be mounted on a box that could have stowed large suitcases, this space was deployed by the adjoining cabin for its bed area.

Advertised as being suitable for two, these standard beds are quite narrow -- even skinny couples would have to be locked together all night to prevent rolling onto the floor. You'd also have to know each other quite well since the bathroom is behind a peek-a-boo glass screen. In addition, there was no rail for hanging wet towels -- I improvised by stringing mine between the soap dispenser and the control for the shower.

Yotel's larger (and pricier) premium rooms solve many of these issues by providing under-bed stowage and wider mattresses. They also include iPod docks and a seat for those fold-out tables, ensuring business travelers don't have to prop themselves up in bed to work from their laptops.

No matter what class you pay for, Yotel's on-screen food menu provides room service for everyone. Strangely, there's no sushi on offer but there are plenty of snacks (all (British pound)2) and a few entrees like lamb curry and steak pie ((British pound)6 to (British pound) 8 1/2).

Rather than eating in my high-tech hole-in-the-wall, though, I headed out blinking into the terminal and trawled the sandwich sellers, coffee shops and Krispy-Kreme doughnut joints, hoping I would still fit through the door of my mini-room once I returned.

IF YOU GO

YOTEL DETAILS

Yotel is in the international arrivals hall at Gatwick Airport's South Terminal and in Terminal 4 at Heathrow. Standard rooms are from (British pound)25 (\$50) for four hours and (British pound)55 (\$110) per night ((British pound)40 and (British pound)80 for premium rooms; \$80 and \$160, respectively). In standard rooms, beds are 6 1/2 feet long by 3.3 feet wide. Beds in premium rooms are the same length, but 4.3 feet wide. 011-44-20-7100-1100; <http://www.yotel.com> .

With similar rooms and pricing, a Yotel is planned for later this year at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport.

OTHER OPTIONS

Yotel isn't London's only small-concept property. First out of the gate in 2005, Kensington's EasyHotel is a converted mews building with 34 mostly windowless rooms offering basic amenities for prices starting at (British pound)25 (\$50) per night. The chain has since opened additional branches in the city's Victoria and Earls Court areas. 011-44-20-7216-1717; <http://www.easyhotel.com>

Higher up the scale, Base-2-Stay opened earlier this year in Kensington and offers small rooms with designer flourishes, optional kitchenettes and nightly rates from (British pound)89 (\$178). All rooms have air conditioning and flat-screen TVs, and guests can access a nearby health club. 011-44-20-7244-2255; <http://www.base-2-stayhotel.co.uk>

Other cities have also homed in on the small-is-beautiful vibe. Amsterdam-bound travelers can squeeze in at Qbic, a designer pod property with a Yotel-like futuristic look. Rooms start at 39 euros (\$57), and additional outlets in the Netherlands are planned for Antwerp and Maastricht. 011-31-43-321-1111; <http://www.qbichotels.com>



Closer to home, there's New York's Pod Hotel at 230 E. 51st St., where rooms start at \$99. The wide array of configurations here includes singles, doubles and bunk-bed quarters, and each room features flat-screen TVs and iPod docking stations. 800-742-5945; <http://www.thepodhotel.com>

-- John Lee

January 27, 2008

NEW YORK CITY

Cut the costs of a N.Y. visit

By Kristin Jackson

SEATTLE TIMES

NEW YORK - We sat in the big yellow taxi, immobilized in Manhattan gridlock. The taxi driver sighed heavily, then asked if I minded if he honked his horn.

"Go for it," I replied. He gave a long, angry blast. We both felt better, although, of course, it didn't make the traffic mess any better.

In a fall visit to New York City, that was the only unruliness I came across - a taxi driver who asked before he ignored the city's no-honking law.

Once a capital of crime and rudeness, the city has become a kinder, cleaner and more law-abiding place.



How nice have New Yorkers become? As I studied my city map on subways and street corners, locals approached me three times to ask whether they could help. Service at restaurants was quick and polite. Streets are safer: I walked through Times Square at midnight, strolled the Lower East Side, and lingered in the fall sunshine in Bryant Park. On my first visit decades ago, those were drug- and crime-ridden places that I avoided.

What's made the city nicer? Tougher policing, especially a crackdown on petty crimes; more prosperity and jobs; and perhaps the lingering aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack, which brought New Yorkers together.

Whatever the reasons (and some locals bemoan the dwindling of the gritty, working-class side of the city), it's much more welcoming to visitors.

There is, however, one big problem: Manhattan hotels are staggeringly expensive and often booked solid; the city is booming with about 44 million visitors a year. Here are suggestions on saving money on hotels, and other tips on visiting New York:

When to go

Prime time is September through December, with new plays and Broadway musicals, new museum exhibits, good weather in early fall, and lots of holiday fun from Thanksgiving to New Year's.

But it's also the busiest and most expensive time of the year for hotels, with prices spiking sky-high around Thanksgiving and Christmas.

For the lowest hotel costs, go in January and February, when tourism drops off and hotels drop their rates, often by a third or more. The weather is crummy, but it's easy to escape the cold in museums, shops, theaters and nightspots. And the crowds are thinner.

Spring has good weather, but hotel rates are higher than in winter. Summer is sticky-hot and jammed with tourists, and hotel rates stay high.

Getting around

Use the subway, buses or taxis. Don't even think of renting a car. Manhattan street parking is like gold dust; hotel garages charge about \$50 a night, and traffic congestion is awful. From Newark and JFK airports, use the airport buses and subway/commuter trains to get into city. I goofed and took a cab to Newark airport. It took almost two hours because of spectacular gridlock (it's a 40-minute trip in lighter traffic), and it cost \$88. At least a cab from JFK airport to Manhattan is a flat rate of \$45 (plus any tolls). Get airport transit information at www.panynj.gov.

Must-see sights

Central Park. Take a break from the nonstop action of New York streets amid the park's 843 acres of greenery. Its Strawberry Fields area has a peaceful garden and the Imagine memorial in honor of John Lennon, the Beatle who lived by the park and was murdered outside the Dakota in 1980. Bethesda Terrace, with outdoor stairways and promenades, draws street performers. Or just stroll the miles of paths, rent a bike, take a rowboat or gondola ride around the park's little lake.

www.centralparknyc.org.

Metropolitan Museum. Egyptian mummies, Rembrandt portraits, impressionist paintings - there's something for anyone at this grand and elegant museum. It's open Saturday evenings for those who want a different night on the town. Fifth Avenue and 82d Street; 212-535-7710, www.metmuseum.org. For 20th-century and contemporary art, head to the Museum of Modern Art, 53d Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues; 212-708-9400, www.moma.org.

World Trade Center site. Just across from the where the twin towers stood, families of victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attack have helped set up Tribute WTC, a small visitor center. Its heart-wrenching displays include a firefighter's charred uniform, videos of the airplane strikes, and copies of the missing-person posters that blanketed Lower Manhattan. Daily walking tours are led by survivors and relatives of victims. 120 Liberty St.; 1-866-737-1184, www.tributenyc.org.


Empire State Building. The New York icon has stunning views - and crowds. Go early in the morning to beat the tour buses, and buy your ticket online to avoid the ticket-purchase line; you'll still need to line up for a security check. Ignore the many souvenir booths (including overpriced photos) as you wait for elevators up to the observation deck on the 86th floor. Fifth Avenue at 34th Street; www.esbnyc.com.

Bryant Park. A perfect place for people-watching in the heart of Midtown. There's a free ice-skating rink in winter and free wireless Internet access (popular in warm weather with hundreds of people who lounge on the park's wrought-iron chairs and benches). Next month, the block-square park will host Fashion Week shows in huge tents, drawing an ultra-stylish crowd; last fall, the *Sex and the City* movie was filming in the park. Between 40th and 42d Streets and Fifth and Sixth Avenues; the imposing New York Public Library edges the park. www.bryantpark.org.

Places to stay

Midtown Manhattan, which includes Broadway theaters, Times Square and the Empire State Building, is the most convenient area for most visitors. It's packed with hotels and, as the name suggests, is in the middle of everything.

Book way ahead. I started looking for a Midtown hotel more than a month before my mid-October trip and found few vacancies except for luxury rooms costing more than \$500 a night.

 An old-fashioned Midtown favorite, the Hotel Metro (212-947-2500, www.hotelmtronyc.com), was booked solid. I tried, with no luck, to get one of the truly tiny rooms at the Pod Hotel. Prices start at about \$100 a night for a Pod mini-room that's barely bigger than a queen bed. That's a deal by Manhattan standards (1-800-742-5945, www.thepodhotel.com).

I ended up at a Marriott chain hotel, the Residence Inn Times Square (1-888-236-2427, www.marriott.com), with an excellent Midtown location. My large, comfortable room had a king bed, sofa bed, kitchenette, and peekaboo view of nearby Bryant Park. The room rate includes a big buffet breakfast and a pasta buffet on some nights. A room like mine was a pricey \$479 a night; it drops to \$199 in late January. By Manhattan standards, that's a good price for a good room.

Chain hotels have popped up throughout Manhattan. They lack the charm of older hotels but offer the reliability of newer, standardized rooms. Older New York hotels can be a room lottery - will you get lucky and get a nice room, or a cramped, worn one that faces a brick wall? Other chain hotels in Manhattan include Hampton Inn, Holiday Inn Express, La Quinta, Hilton Garden Inn, Embassy Suites, and Marriott's Courtyard Inn. Just be ready for sticker shock, since they often charge more than double the rate of such hotels in other cities.

Need a real budget option? The Hostel International New York hostel (212-932-2300, www.hinewyork.org) is farther from the action, on the Upper West Side, but rates start at \$29 a night for a bunk in a dorm room. The West Side YMCA has a great location, by Central Park; rooms are small and very basic, with shared baths, and cost about \$100 a night (212-875-4100, www.ymcanyc.org/westside).

Get information on hotels through NYC & Company, the city's tourist promotion office (212-484-1200, www.nycvisit.com). An online resource for visitors' comments on hotels is Trip Advisor, www.tripadvisor.com.

Hotel deals

Hotel rates vary by day as well as season; Sunday is the cheapest night of the week, because weekenders have gone home and business travelers haven't arrived. To boost occupancy, about 40 Manhattan hotels offer a Sunday-night discount. Called Sunday Stays, rooms are reduced 20 percent or more and include perks such as free breakfast and a free cocktail. It's run with NYC & Company (212-484-1200, www.nycvisit.com). Always ask about other price breaks - many hotels give AAA, AARP, corporate and military discounts.

Priceline is another option. Bid on a room in a certain category of hotel at www.priceline.com; you find out the specific hotel after making a nonrefundable payment. Priceline works best in slow periods (such as January and February) when New York hotels have empty rooms and are willing to fill them at discounted prices. One drawback: If you need a two-bed room, there's no guarantee you'll get one. Hotwire.com has a similar room-discount program.

One way to beat the high hotel prices is to stay outside Manhattan, but much of the pleasure of a New York visit is being in the heart of the city.

Theater deals

You don't need to pay \$100 for a good seat at a Broadway musical. Get discounted theater tickets through:

The **Times Square TKTS** ticket booth has same-day discounted tickets for up to 50 percent off (www.tdf.org). Because of construction, the ticket booth is temporarily at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on West 46th Street, off Broadway. Or get a membership in the **Theatre Development Fund**, which runs the discount booth, so you can buy discounted tickets online.

Playbill and Theatermania offer discounted tickets in advance for Broadway and Off-Broadway shows (www.playbill.com, www.theatermania.com).

Broadway tickets also are available through StubHub, a ticket-resale Web site (www.stubhub.com).

Cheaper eats

You could spend a lifetime eating in Manhattan and splurge at countless elegant restaurants.

To eat more cheaply, head to small ethnic places. I went twice to a Midtown Korean restaurant, Cho Dang Gol, at 55 W. 35th St., which had excellent dinners for about \$20 per person.

Search for restaurants (and reviews) through the New York Times Web site by type of cuisine, location and price (www.nytimes.com/pages/dining). Or check the New Yorker magazine's reviews (www.newyorker.com/arts/food/index).



January 30, 2008

Pod Hotels

If you don't mind sleeping in a tiny hotel room, you could save a lot of money on your next trip.

Something called a "pod hotel" offers small rooms with no frills, at low prices, and often in central locations.

You may have seen images of the stereotypical Japanese pod hotels, with miniscule cubicle rooms designed for business travelers on the go.

Now, several international brands are following the trend. The Pod Hotel in midtown New York, offers "pods" with shared baths for as little as \$89 a night. Rooms with private baths start at \$139.



At Heathrow and Gatwick airports, you can rent a room at Yotel from \$51 to \$82 dollars for four hours, and \$10 per hour after that. The room includes a bed, bathroom with shower, and free Wi-Fi.

In the centers of Zurich, Budapest and London, you can find easyHotels for about \$89 dollars per night.

MAKE REAL MONEY WHILE YOU SLEEP PAGE 28

Upstate

LIVING THE AFFLUENT **LIFESTYLE**

Malinda Williams
Loving life, her new man and her new movie

TAVIS SMILEY
on our past, present and future

PLUS:
THE CAST OF
A RAISIN IN
THE SUN

BOUTIQUE HOTELS
you'll never want to leave

Donna Hill, L.A. Banks, Yolanda Joe...
reveal the stories, scenes & characters they adore


TIME FOR LOVE
43 IDEAS to spice up any relationship

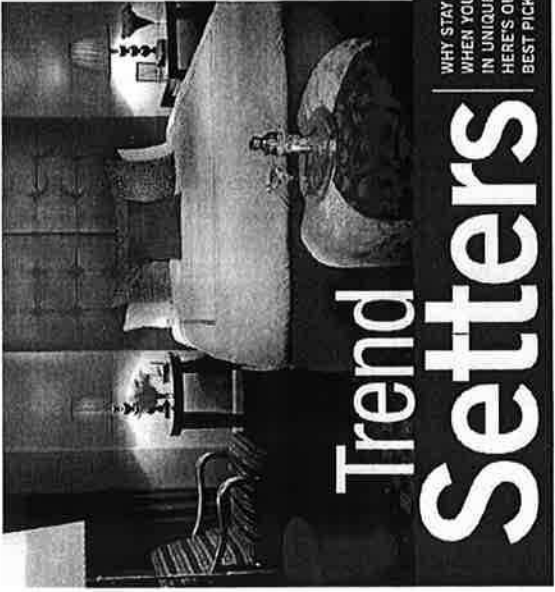
L.A. LIVING: 5 More

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www.upstate.com





Trend Setters

WHY STAY AT AN ANONYMOUS CHAIN WHEN YOU CAN IMMERSE YOURSELF IN UNIQUE, CHIC BOUTIQUE HOTELS? HERE'S OUR GUIDE TO A FEW OF THE BEST PICKS GOING

HOTEL ROUGE WASHINGTON, D.C.
If you're the type of traveler that requires constant stimulation, Hotel Rouge will become your five-star in the nation's capital. You'll want to party in nearby Dupont Circle when buses of color and terraces stimulate your senses, while the personalized room options (rates start around \$289) and range of amenities, including complimentary high-speed wireless, in-room spa service and a red wine hour every weekday, will ensure that you return home sizer time (1315 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C.; 800-738-1222).

SHADK HOTEL MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIF.
This trendy, 38-guestroom boutique hotel (rates start at \$255) gives you every reason to spend a day in the Shady. Colored lights set the mood at sundown, and chic California King Tempur-Pedic beds allow you to lounge poolside at the Skydeck and nibbling away at the contemporary Zinc Lounge restaurant. But your day of relaxation won't be complete without an in-room visit from Shady's partner, Tubby Spa (1221 N. Valley Dr., Manhattan Beach, Calif.; 310-546-4995).

HARBOR COURT HOTEL SAN FRANCISCO
This recently renovated 131-room hotel (rates start at \$195) features an eclectic decor that includes vibrantly colored copper, plum and orange walls. The waterfront location allows easy access to the sights this city is famous for, cable cars, Fisherman's Wharf and Union Square. The rooms even boast great views of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island. After saving here, fill 'er hand not to leave your heart in San Francisco (166 Stewart St., San Francisco 94606-797-0282).

HOTEL 616X, CHICAGO
As smooth as a musical instrument, Hotel 616x (rates from \$169) shows its guests an ideal combination of luxury and style. Marble floors, plush furnishings, Wi-Fi access, electronic docking stations and celebrity-themed artwork packages will make any guest feel like a star. Located in the midst of six renowned Chicago restaurants, the former House of Blues hotel brings "Sway" back to the Marina City complex (193 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.; 312-245-0393).

GLENN HOTEL, ATLANTA
Atlanta's first downtown boutique hotel has bowed the flow of a post-drama runway. Spacious and it's easy to see why it draws the city's finest. From the impeccable selection of the rooftop bar and the mixed pleasures of the thoughtfully designed rooms to the always-sizzling downstairs bar and restaurant, Atlanta's movers and shakers make the Glenn the place to see and be seen all week long. Rates can start as low as \$189 (110 Marietta Street NW, Atlanta; 404-521-2250).

HOTEL VALENCIA RIVERWALK, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
Hotel Valencia sits along the main waterway of San Antonio's Riverwalk, with architecture reminiscent of a Tuscan farmhouse. The 12-story, 210-room luxury hotel (rates start at \$219) is a gateway in itself. Relax and slumber in the famous seven-layer Hotel Valencia bed. Lounge in the open-air courtyard, dine on Spanish-inspired New American cuisine at Citrus and sip cocktails at Whir (150 East Houston Street, San Antonio, Texas; 866-842-0200).

METROPOLE SOUTH BEACH, MIAMI BEACH
A courtyard filled with bamboo, palm trees and river rock, details will greet you as you enter the chic and comfortably designed digs of the Metropole South Beach, which features 42 inviting one- and two-bedroom apartment-style suites, furnished with marble bathrooms, Kohler rain showers, fully equipped Italian appliances, 40-inch plasma televisions and 300-thread-count Egyptian linens. The 24-hour concierge and personal Golf Services are added bonuses. Rates start at \$200 (155 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Fla.; 977-260-3477).

ELLIS HOTEL, ATLANTA
The warm, chocolate tones of the Ellis are accentuated by whimsically ornate touches, a smart, modern nod to Atlanta's eclectic crowds. Although it offers premium access to the city's attractions and such draws as a secured-entry women-only floor with a added amenities, the spot's true appeal comes from its functionality—it has two conference rooms and offers event planners to make any occasion memorable. Rates start at \$114 (126 Peachtree St. NW, Atlanta; 866-841-8822).

POD HOTEL, NEW YORK
For the young, trendy, frugal traveler, just the thing at Hotel Manhattan is centrally located Pod Hotel. In the spirit to be hip, colorful and fun, the hotel's decor is hard to get to bed for every one—a room with iPod docking station, free Wi-Fi access and LCD technology. Try a Queen room for a club as the downtown San Tin, which starts at \$95 per night (100 E. 42nd St., New York; 212-695-0300).

HOTEL DREXEL, HOUSTON
Chic, colorful and trendy, Houston's Hotel Drexel is a gathering spot for the city's beautiful people. Couples are left for a playful room with a king bed, intricate splashes of color and a scenic view, while those traveling solo will like the link room, which includes extra amenities, a self-fulfilling 1950s-era, mid-century modern style—beating the 10 percent of your energy, will go to book an entire research, water began around \$225 per night (1955 West Loop South, Houston; 713-981-1940).

GLASS HOTEL, CHICAGO
The Glass Hotel, Chicago's first all-glass hotel, is a landmark in the city's skyline. The hotel features a modern, minimalist design with a focus on clean lines and natural light. The rooms are spacious and bright, with large windows overlooking the city. The hotel is located in the Loop, near the Millennium Park and the Art Institute of Chicago. Rates start at \$150 (100 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.; 312-245-0393).

THE METROPOLE HOTEL, MIAMI BEACH
The Metropole Hotel is a classic Miami Beach hotel with a modern twist. The hotel features a mix of traditional and contemporary decor, with a focus on comfort and style. The rooms are spacious and bright, with large windows overlooking the ocean. The hotel is located in the South Beach area, near the Lincoln Road and the Biltmore Hotel. Rates start at \$180 (155 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Fla.; 977-260-3477).

May 4, 2008

READERS' PICKS NEW YORK

A Room With a View (Maybe) in Gotham

TOP reader suggestions on visiting New York, compiled from user comments on the Travel section's Web site. You can read more comments, as well as post your own, on this and other cities, at nytimes.com/travel.

WHERE TO STAY

On the Upper West Side, the **Linnaea** (201 West 74th Street; 212-875-1000, 800-492-6122; www.thelinnaehotel.com) is a great hotel. I have stayed there several times over the years. It is one block from the subway, two blocks from Zabar's and three blocks from Central Park and the American Museum of Natural History. It is clean and modern and the staff is friendly and helpful. The area has several good restaurants within a few blocks and some quirky shops to browse in close by.

Posted by *Pamela Pruitt*

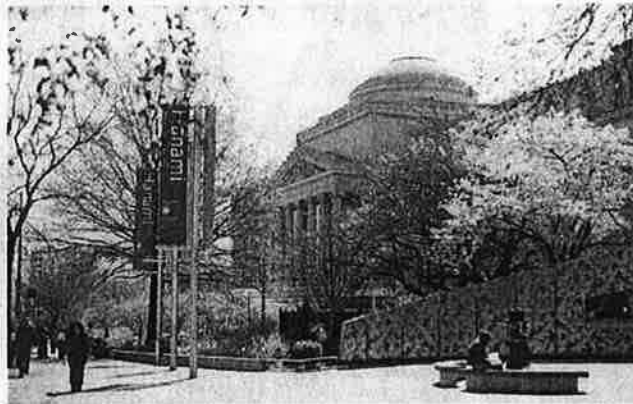
As crazy as it sounds, the **Econo Lodge Times Square** (302 West 47th Street; 212-246-1991; www.econolodge.com) is a great hotel. Two years ago I needed a place to stay on a whim and I stumbled on it. Yes, the rooms are very small, but it has a great shower and if you are not entertaining people it's fine. Also, housekeeping puts little water bottles and bags of chips for free every day when they clean. I found a room for \$111.99 a night. This is a real gem if you can stand a very small room.

Posted by *John Tockeff*

Just returned from six days in NYC. My daughter and I stayed at the **Pod Hotel** (230 East 51st Street; 212-355-0300, 800-742-5945; www.thepodhotel.com) at 51st & Third. Had a bunk bed room; own TV and light at each bed. Comfy and very clean. Great air-conditioning. Fantastic location. So much within walking distance: cafes, stores, subway. Four bathrooms/showers on floor; with light in room letting you know which was occupied. Never had to wait. Bathrooms very clean (one had a sauna). Hotel also has rooms with private baths, but bunk rooms was economical for us; can't beat \$99 a night (prices vary depending on availability). Staff was helpful and friendly. Would gladly return.

Posted by *Janet Prucke*

Just back from a one-night stay at the **Mansfield Hotel** (12 West 44th Street; 212-377-8760, 800-255-5167; www.mansfieldhotel.com) in a "petite chambre" suite. Good furniture (think Pottery Barn), new window-unit A/C in each room of the suite (really, really loud), low lighting (not good in the bathroom). Good location (easy walk to Times Square, NYPL, Empire, etc.). Overall pretty, spacious room for a NY



DAVID WITKIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

hotel. Prices vary, corporate rate was under \$400 after fees and taxes.

Posted by *Melody D. Parker*

In Chelsea, the **Inn on 23rd** (131 West 23rd Street; 212-463-0330, 877-367-3323; www.innon23rd.com) is a lovely B&B. Friendly, cozy, reasonably priced; close to subway so it is easy to get around. Comfortable rooms are spacious enough for three; management is gracious and helpful. One warning note: Dorothy, the cat, may pique your allergies.

Posted by *Linda Knappo*

Have stayed at the **Cosmopolitan Hotel** (95 West Broadway, at Chambers; 212-596-1900, 888-895-9400; www.cosmohotel.com) in Tribeca area for past three years and love it. The hotel is no-frills but has clean, large rooms with sofa beds. The best part is the price. If you are looking for a clean, low-priced hotel then this is the place.

Posted by *Karen Cunningham*

I stayed at the **Bryant Park Hotel** (40 West 40th Street; 212-959-0100; www.bryantparkhotel.com) this past Labor Day ... very reasonable for NYC ... great location ... the ambience is somewhat "hipster" but the staff lacks that "too-cool-for-school" attitude. I would definitely go back.

Posted by *Shaun Rangan*

WHERE TO EAT

Mimi's Restaurant and Piano Bar (984 Second Avenue; 212-688-4802). Good Italian food at reasonable prices.

A great piano bar, with diners encouraged to sing. Some wonderful voices out there! A wonderful New York experience.

Posted by *James M. Reilly*

I can recommend two Chinese restaurants: The first is **Oriental Garden** (14 Elizabeth Street; 212-619-0085). I go for seafood and they make it well at a reasonable price. Décor is good, good lighting. Plan reservations on weekends. The second is **Wu Liang Yu** (36 West 48th Street; 212-368-2393). Hot, spicy. It's about the authentic taste, not compromising for Western taste buds. Décor is pleasant, if a bit dark. Plan reservations during peak times.

Posted by *Ran Zhang*

We live in Nottingham, England and come to NYC two or three times a year. We go to **Di Fara Pizza** (1424 Avenue J; 718-258-1387) at East 15th Street in Brooklyn (it will be worth the wait!); **Caserta Vecchia** (221 Smith Street; 718-524-7549) also in Brooklyn. Excellent Southern Italian food. For a genuine New York diner, try **Broadway Restaurant** (2664 Broadway; 212-863-7074) at Broadway between 101st and 102nd Streets. Great food at great prices, with great staff.

Posted by *Andy Lons*

WHAT TO DO

The **Brooklyn Museum of Art** (200 Eastern Parkway; 718-639-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org) is one of the best art museums in the country and adjacent to it is the **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** (1030 Washington Avenue; 718-

623-7200; www.bbg.org). Plan on going when the Japanese garden is in full bloom.

Posted by *Denise Fox*

For the book lover, **Argosy Books** (118 East 59th Street; 212-753-1133; www.argosybooks.com) on the Upper East Side is almost unique. Five floors, family owned. The fifth floor, rare books, is a delight. The **Cloisters**, in Upper Manhattan, is a bit off the beaten path. The expensive taxi ride is worth it if you enjoy a bit of Europe transplanted, stone by stone, to New York.

Posted by *Bob Davis*

Check out the great playground basketball on Sixth Avenue just south of West Fourth Street (free), then stroll to Washington Square Park and hang out. On weekends there are an array of street performers. The rest of Greenwich Village is a walker's paradise.

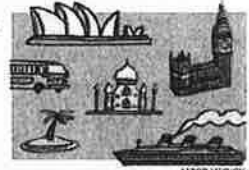
Posted by *Dan Broad*

If you like classical music, NYC offers a ton of opportunities to hear great music, including New York Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall concerts. But for the more budget-conscious, or if you only like certain styles like Romantic, Baroque, early Classical or contemporary, there are several other choices. One is the **Musica Bella Orchestra** of New York (www.musicabella.com), of which I am a member, a nonprofit donation-only orchestra that gives concerts every month or so on the Upper West Side and in Park Slope in Brooklyn.

Posted by *Eronne Cho*

Q&A

Last-Minute Options For an Olympics Fan



I am a college student planning a trip to Beijing for the Olympics in August. Do you have any recommendations for safe, budget accommodations?
— Nathan Jirko, Beverly, Mass.

Unfortunately, at this date, you are almost certain to find most hotels in Beijing booked for the Summer Olympics. Like the tickets to the Games themselves, space has been scooped up by wholesale operators. So your surest bet for a hotel room is to book with a tour operator that still has space available.

Last August, Austin Conskine's article "High-Stakes Olympic Events: Getting Tickets and a Room" gave the names of several tour operators offering Beijing Olympics packages, and at least two still have space available. Let's Travel China (800-801-3183; www.letstravelchina.com) and Mongol Global Tour Company (866-225-6377; www.mngtour.com) have tours that include accommodations during the Games. These packages, though, do not include tickets. For that you will need to look for availability through **CoSport** (877-457-4647; www.cosport.com), an official Olympic ticket agent, or a resale broker site like **TicketLiquidator.com**; both still show availability for some events and have hotel package deals.

In her Practical Traveler column, "Not Too Late for a Dash to the Games" (Feb. 24, 2008), Michele Higgins offers some online search options, including **HostelWorld.com**, **Hostel.net** and a site with rooms to rent in locals' homes, **Homestay Beijing 2008** (www.homestaybeijing2008.com), all of which still show availability for August.

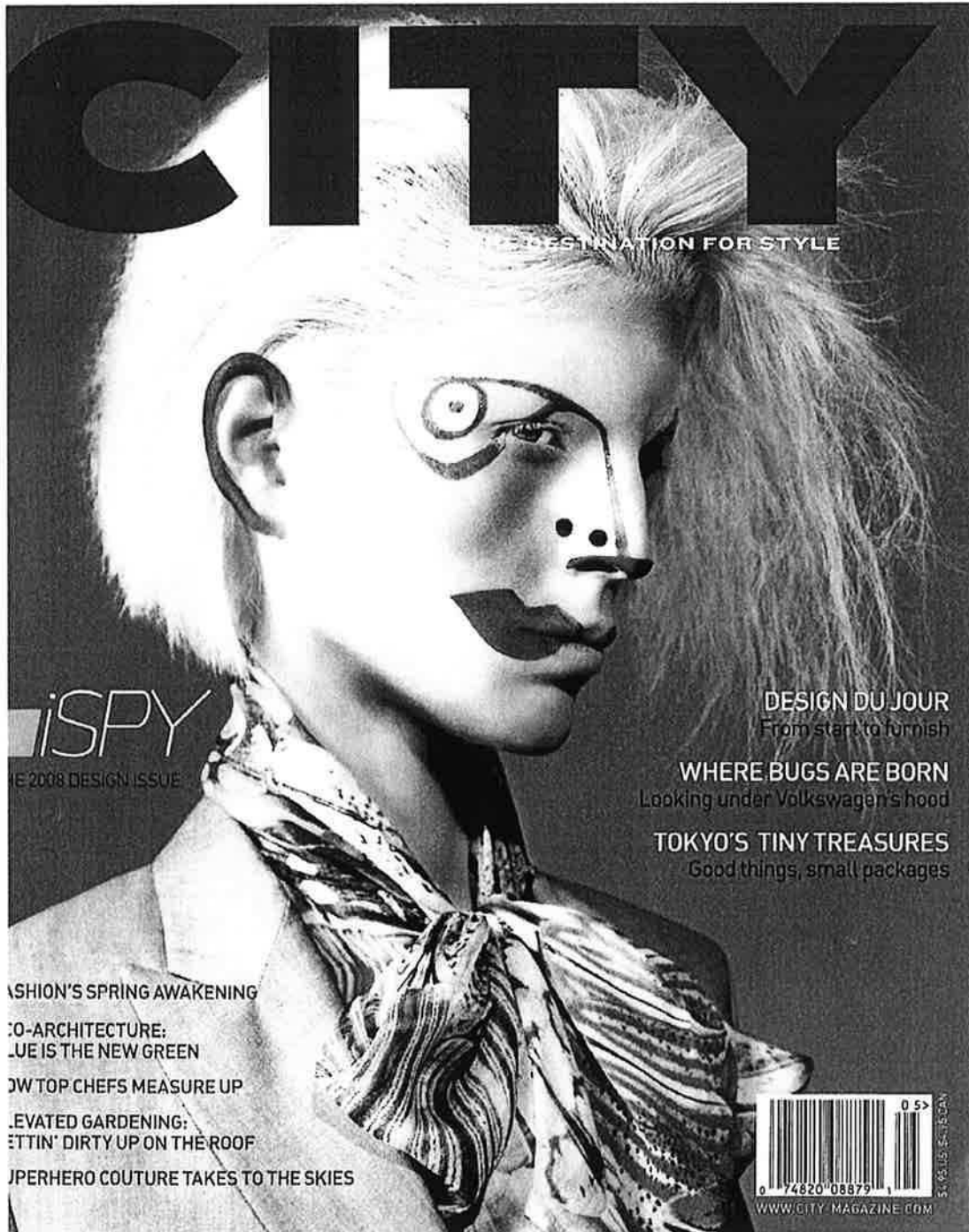
If you get to Beijing, you might check out "35 Hours in Beijing" (Dec. 9, 2007), Jake Hooker, a New York Times correspondent, as a guide to explore the city when you're not watching athletes go for the gold.

DAVID G. ALLAN

ONLINE MORE TRAVEL ADVICE

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