

Destination Luxury

A TRAVEL &
INDULGENCE
GUIDE



An attainable icon: As part of its centenary celebration the Ritz London Hotel offers guests use of a brand new Rolls-Royce.

It's the fantasy of nearly every business traveler. First you're sipping pre-flight champagne in an airport club lounge; then you're enjoying a delicious meal while nestled in a comfortable first-class airplane seat. You arrive at your destination, rush out of the departure gate, and jump in an S-Class Mercedes waiting for you in the parking lot. The fantasy continues when you enter your five-star hotel, where you are dazzled by the view from your suite.

This daydream is now reality. Business travel has taken a decidedly luxurious turn as executive jetsetters look for top-of-the-

Travel has taken a luxurious turn as jetsetters look for upscale amenities.

line amenities—everything from first-class flatbed airplane seats to pillow-top mattresses to in-room massages—to take the edge off the strain of coping with airport security guidelines, cramped flights, and high gasoline prices.

The trend is being fueled by a number of concurrent factors: a buoyant economy, thanks to stock market and real estate gains; an increase in corporate incentive travel; and a shift in how affluent business people (many baby boomers) want to spend their money. The happy outcome for premium-class travelers is a degree of luxury limited only by human ingenuity.



A view of Boston Harbor.

The trickle-down effect: features like high-speed Internet and spa-like bathrooms are becoming standard at midpriced hotels, too.

Industry numbers give perspective on the dynamics of the marketplace. Last year the typical luxury traveler (the top 25% of consumers in terms of income) spent an average of almost \$26,000—a 41% jump from 2004, reports Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing, a firm that tracks luxury spending. This year the average is expected to exceed \$28,000, an 8% increase.

What's most coveted by these road warriors? Experiential luxuries—such as a night on the town, the chance to play on a champion golf course, soak in a jacuzzi, or enjoy catharsis at a spa, according to industry consultants.

Planning a globe-hopping sojourn where you'll need some cossetting? Read on to find ways to put more cachet into your next trip.

BOSTON

With increasing demand for hotel rooms and a vibrant local economy, Boston's on a roll this year when it comes to new upscale hotel openings, and most of the action is centered downtown.

The city's first skyscraper, a 15-story art deco gem on Broad Street near Quincy Market, has been reborn as the Hilton Boston Financial District. Thirty-eight shades of brick comprise the exterior, be-

ginning with a dark brown at the base and progressing to a light buff at the top. The shaded brick creates an enhanced sense of height and light, lending the impression that the sun is always shining on the building. All 362 rooms sport Hilton's new Serenity Bed, which features a Serta Suite Dreams mattress, a down duvet and mattress topper, and high-quality linens and pillows. (www.hilton.com, 89 Broad Street)

In addition to a new Westin, which opened earlier this year, South Boston's waterfront will get another outstanding hotel this fall when the InterContinental Boston opens on the Fort Point Channel (convenient to Logan International Airport). The sleek blue-glass and granite, 424-room hotel will offer a full spa and a 24-hour fitness center for guests (with an indoor pool).

It's also planning a 24-hour French brasserie called Miel, featuring organic Provençal cuisine from two-star-rated Michelin chef Jacques Chibois. For something more multicultural, guests can check out the salsa dancers serving sushi and tequila at the more casual, high-energy

Double Take at Doubletree



Sweet Dreams: Doubletree's luxurious bed.

The next time you check in to a Doubletree hotel you should notice the results of a recent multimillion-dollar, chain-wide brand renovation, which includes new, more contemporary interior designs and furnishings, better Internet technology, and more luxurious beds.

If the signature chocolate-chip cookies upon arrival don't do it for you, then docking your iPod in your room may be music to your ears. There's also superfast Internet connectivity in all of Doubletree's 160 hotels, where you can easily log on in your room or go wireless in lobbies and meeting rooms. It's part of their new "Take Five Technology Solution," which also allows you to print documents from the laptop in your room to a central printer in the hotel business center.

Expect spacious work desks, comfortable chairs, task lighting, and power outlets at desk height from this revamped brand, as well as a new bedding concept, which includes plush-top mattresses, higher thread-count sheets, and down comforters.

Doubletree has set an aggressive goal to increase their current hotel portfolio to 200 full-service hotels throughout North America and Latin America by 2008. Right now, you can check out Doubletree upgrades at its newest properties in top business travel destinations like Anaheim, Birmingham, Denver/Tech Center, New York City's JFK Airport, and Pittsburgh International.

For pleasure-seekers, one of the chain's newest properties recently opened after a multimillion-dollar redo in the heart of Honolulu's Waikiki district—be sure to see the collection of artwork by world-renowned marine life artist Wyland. For more on the ongoing revamp at Doubletree, see www.doubletree.com.



The presidential suite at the InterContinental Hong Kong offers spectacular views of Victoria Harbour.

Sushi Teq restaurant. (www.intercontinentalboston.com, 500 Atlantic Avenue)

HONG KONG

As the gateway to China's roaring economy, Hong Kong attracts more upscale business and leisure travelers than any other city in the region. As a result, you'll find more hotels per square foot there than anywhere else in the world—many of which are on the cutting edge of chic.

For example, earlier this year, the InterContinental Hong Kong Hotel unveiled Asia's most spectacular presidential suite—a two-story, five-bedroom, \$2.5 million masterpiece, which is the largest hotel suite in Hong Kong (see photo). This suite has a duplex living room with plate-glass windows showcasing the ho-

Savor the moment: It's experiential luxuries—i.e. a soak in the hot tub—that execs long for.

tel's panoramic views of Victoria Harbour and Hong Kong Island. Most spectacular is its expansive wraparound terrace (2,500 sq. feet), with a rooftop infinity swimming pool and Jacuzzi overlooking the harbor. The dining room, master bedroom, bathroom, and private gym also have panoramic harbor views. (Luxury insiders should also know that the master bathroom sports a "Neorest" toilet by Toto of Japan, which includes a remote-control heated toilet seat with front and back wash, and a choice of cool or warm drying!) The suite costs \$11,183 per night, which includes 24-hour personal butler service, round-trip airport limousine service by guests' choice of the hotel's Phantom VI Rolls Royce, Bentley, or Mercedes limousine, plus access to Club



Sites for the Cyberelite

To better create your next luxury experience, log on to these helpful websites:

● **NOTA BENE.** Turn to the Latin words *nota bene*, which means take note, and what you get is a travel guide quite unlike those in your local bookstore. These travel destination publications give readers advice on everything—from how to book a dinner party at London's Dorchester Hotel to rejuvenating one's body and spirit at Como Shambhala Retreat at Cocoa Island in the Maldives. The focus is on tried-and-true glamour rather than the trendy or avant-garde. Shanghai, Napa Valley, and Cote d'Azur, are just some of the recent titles. Subscribers also receive updates and access to a members-only website. (www.nbreview.com)

● **LUXURY LINK.** If you are into top-end travel but get a bit queasy over the price, then log on to the LuxuryLink website. Here you can bid for high-end packages from a number of online auctions. Just as an example, a minimum bid of \$3,600 will get you seven nights and airfare for two to Grenada; the retail value comes in at \$6,000. Check the dates and package validity before putting in your bid. www.luxurylink.com.

● **LUXURY TRAVEL.** Travelers, and especially baby boomers who are aware of the clock ticking, are collecting experiences and memories—rather than that little memento—when they're on the road. That is why the website *Luxury Travel Magazine* now has a search engine based on deluxe experiences, rather than location or price. (www.luxurytravelmagazine.com) Everything from eco-trips to "once-in-a-lifetime" vacations are available.

InterContinental (its executive lounge), wireless high-speed broadband Internet access and personalized concierge services. (www.hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com, 18 Salisbury Road, Kowloon)

Hong Kong's venerable Mandarin Oriental, long an institution among elite world travelers and power brokers, has finally reopened after an extensive nine-month, \$140 million renovation. Original balconies have been enclosed to increase room size and allow for larger, more luxurious bathrooms. A spa and wellness center have been added, along with a restaurant created by Michelin three-star rated French chef Pierre Gagnaire. The esteemed Mandarin Grill has also been redesigned by British designer Sir Terence Conran—gone are the cavernous dark



The duplex living room at the Hong Kong InterContinental.

spaces; instead, natural daylight will stream in through new windows. (www.mandarinoriental.com, 5 Connaught Road, Central)

LONDON

The luxury sector is one of the fastest-growing segments of the London hotel market, with over 4,000 luxury rooms set to open over the next five years, according to the *London Hotel Development Monitor*. And while a lot of the focus may be on new rooms, high-end lodging has long been a tradition.

The era of modern luxury was born when Cesar Ritz opened the doors to the Ritz London Hotel 100 years ago. Since returning to private British ownership in 1995, the legendary hotel has undergone

a complete refurbishment. Today, it has been restored to its original glory, and looks even more stunning than it did in 1906. Throughout its distinguished history, the Ritz has continued to attract the rich and famous, and has deservedly taken its place among the grand hotels of the world. In honor of its centenary, the Ritz offers guests the use of a brand new 2006 Rolls-Royce. The Phantom Rolls is "Ritz blue" with custom-fitted interiors in smoke-gray leather and walnut burr trimmings (see photo on S2).

Just west of the Ritz, down Piccadilly at the corner of Park Lane, the InterContinental London Park Lane reopens this fall after a \$113 million state-of-the-art renovation. Situated adjacent to both London's tranquil Hyde Park and Green Park, InterContinental's London flagship will feature 387 guestrooms, plus 60 spacious designer suites. (Luxury insiders should be sure to ask about the stunning split-

This year the
typical luxury
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level London Suite, with breathtaking views of the city's historic skyline.) Other perks: a new 2,025-square-foot chic urban spa, with five treatment rooms including one discreet VIP room, and two private spa suites; an entire floor of meeting space with floor-to-ceiling windows; a busy lobby bar; and the new Italian restaurant named Theo Randall at the InterContinental, led by one of Britain's most talented young chefs. (See www.london.intercontinental.com)

MEXICO CITY

Luxury lovers headed south of the border should be pleased to know that Mexico City is enjoying a building boom of high-end hotels, as the vibrant capital city continues to draw more business travelers and curious tourists.

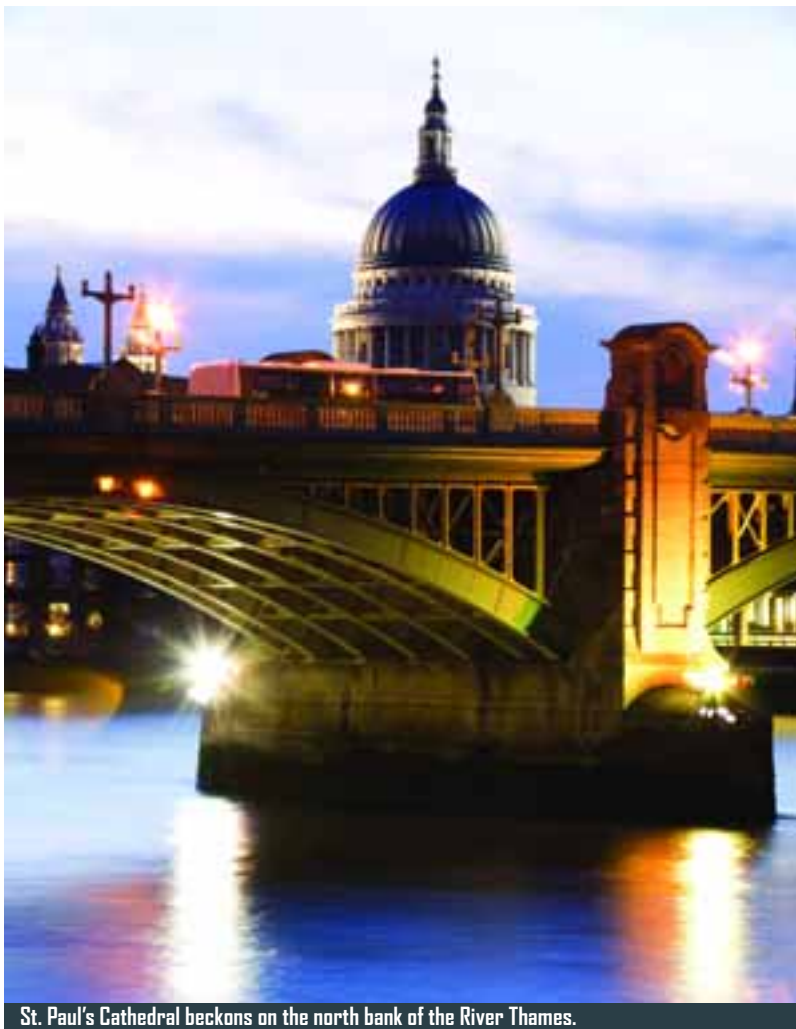
In a preview of its big international expansion plans, Embassy Suites Hotels opens its first property in Mexico this

Long Haul Luxe

If your travel takes you to London, getting there in a big, luxurious business-class seat is becoming easier due to the recent emergence of two business-class-only carriers on the route across the pond. EOS Airlines, which launched last year, flies Boeing 757s with just 48 lie-flat sleeper seats between New York and London's smaller Stansted Airport. Here's a nice touch: EOS passengers have access to the opulent Emirates Airlines lounge at New York's JFK airport.

MAXjet Airways is a new all-business-class transatlantic airline with flights from New York, Las Vegas, and Washington to London, using Boeing 767 aircraft outfitted with just 102 business-class seats (no coach); it offers standard business-class amenities like pre-departure cocktails and multicourse meals. With the planned addition of two new aircraft early next year, MAXjet says it is exploring adding flights between London and Boston, Los Angeles, and/or San Francisco.

Good news for all: Many larger airlines have responded to these carriers' lower fares by quietly offering periodic business-class sale fares in the \$2,000–\$4,000 range for transatlantic flights (a substantial discount off the normally steep \$6,000–\$8,000 fares). In addition, last summer Delta Air Lines and American Airlines rolled out enhancements to their business-class offerings, adding state-of-the-art, on-demand individual entertainment systems, new seats, and gourmet meals.



St. Paul's Cathedral beckons on the north bank of the River Thames.

The Luxury of Choice

Most hotel frequent-stay programs force members to choose to earn either airline miles or hotel program points for their visits. But the Hilton HHonors program allows you to choose how you want to earn both hotel points and/or airline miles for the same stay—a practice known as “Double Dipping.” The flexible HHonors program even offers three different ways to earn, depending on your travel style.

For extended hotel stays, go for the “HHonors Points and Variable Miles” option. With it, you can earn ten HHonors Base points plus one airline mile per eligible dollar spent.

For shorter trips, the best option is “HHonors Points and Fixed Miles,” because you’ll earn ten HHonors Base points plus 500 airline miles per stay (100 miles at Hampton Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, Homewood Suites by Hilton, and Scandic Hotels).

Then again, if you just want to accumulate HHonors points, choose “Points and Points” to earn ten HHonors Base points plus five bonus points (instead of airline miles) per each eligible dollar spent. For details, see hiltonhhonors.com.

As you reach the highest tiers in the HHonors program, enjoy even more perks. Hilton HHonors Gold and Diamond VIPs can choose extra room amenities or bonus points. They also receive complimentary upgrades (when available) and no blackout dates on their HHonors reward stays (see www.hiltonfamily.com for restrictions).

Since the Hilton HHonors program is available at more than 2,700 Hilton Family hotels worldwide, you’ll be on your way to complimentary nights and flights in no time. The Hilton Family of Hotels includes Hilton, Conrad, Coral by Hilton, Doubletree, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hampton Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Hilton Grand Vacations Club, Homewood Suites by Hilton, Scandic Hotels, and Waldorf=Astoria Collection Hotels.



The posh penthouse suite at the Beverly Hilton.



The busy and fashionable Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City.

month, the Embassy Suites Hotel Mexico City-Reforma, in the heart of the city’s upscale business and financial district. The hotel features all the amenities frequent Embassy Suites guests have learned to love, such as a daily complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast, an evening manager’s reception, high-speed Internet access, a swimming pool, retail stores, and four boardrooms. Guests can also request one of several conference suites, which offer the standard, spacious Embassy Suites bedroom/living room design in addition to an adjoining conference room with seating for up to six people. (www.embassysuites.com, Paseo de la Reforma, No. 69)

In 2007, expect new Embassy Suites Hotels in Lima, Peru and Valencia,

Around the world, there is a building boom of high-end hotels to meet pent-up demand.

Venezuela, in addition to the nearly 190 locations in the U.S. and Canada.

There's more news on the luxury front in Mexico City's Reforma district: It will soon be home to a new super-luxury St. Regis hotel in a building designed by renowned architect Cesar Pelli. Expect the opulence and pampering the St. Regis is known for, such as an exclusive Remède Spa, butler service, and fine restaurants. (Opening in 2007, www.stregis.com)

NEW YORK

Fueled by record visitor volume and a strong economy, New York City will add nearly 5,000 new hotel rooms over the next two years. While many of the new rooms are in the midpriced hotel category (see "Hampton Inn Goes High End" p. S16), current luxury revamps are focused

A buoyant economy, and an increase in corporate incentive travel is fueling the boom in luxury travel.

Moving Beyond Park Ave.

For 75 years the Waldorf=Astoria hotel has stood on Park Avenue in New York City, epitomizing luxury and grandeur. This year its owner Hilton Hotels announced grand plans for expanding the venerable brand around the world.

The new Waldorf=Astoria Collection is already creating luxury experiences for well-heeled guests at several posh properties: The Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa on Maui (its 50,000-square-foot Spa Grande is one of the largest spas on the planet, uniting Thalassotherapy, ancient Eastern and Hawaiian philosophies. The resort also boasts a fantastic sculpture collection), the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in Phoenix (think shopping, sunsets and unique Frank Lloyd Wright design), and the La Quinta Resort & Club near Palm Springs (the legendary hideaway of Hollywood elite, plus 90 holes of some of the country's best golf). Construction begins this year on a brand new 500-room Waldorf=Astoria in Orlando, located on Bonnet Creek near Walt Disney World.



Maui's Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa

The new Waldorf=Astoria Collection hotels will incorporate some of the well-known features of the landmark New York property. For example, signature lobby clocks for each hotel are under development so guests can always say, "Meet me at the clock," a phrase anyone who has stayed at the Waldorf in New York has used over and over again.

Frequent travelers should be pleased to know that since the collection is part of the Hilton Family, they can earn and redeem Hilton HHonors points at the hotels. Luxury seekers can expect as many as ten Waldorf=Astoria hotels in gateway cities worldwide in the coming years as the brand takes advantage of the growing demand for luxury rooms. (www.waldorfastoriacollection.com)

The Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa



The Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa



The lobby of New York City's Waldorf=Astoria hotel epitomizes grandeur. The famed clock (top).

Hampton Goes High End



Rest easy: Cloud Nine beds at Hampton

According to a recent survey of business travelers by the consultants at Accenture, 81% are seeking higher-end overnight accommodations and are upgrading to midpriced hotels from lower-priced ones as corporate travel budgets loosen up.



The new Hampton Hotel in Chelsea.

Part of the reason for the shift is the fact that midpriced brands are becoming increasingly upscale as they attempt to reel in more business travelers with creature comforts like new beds and bigger,

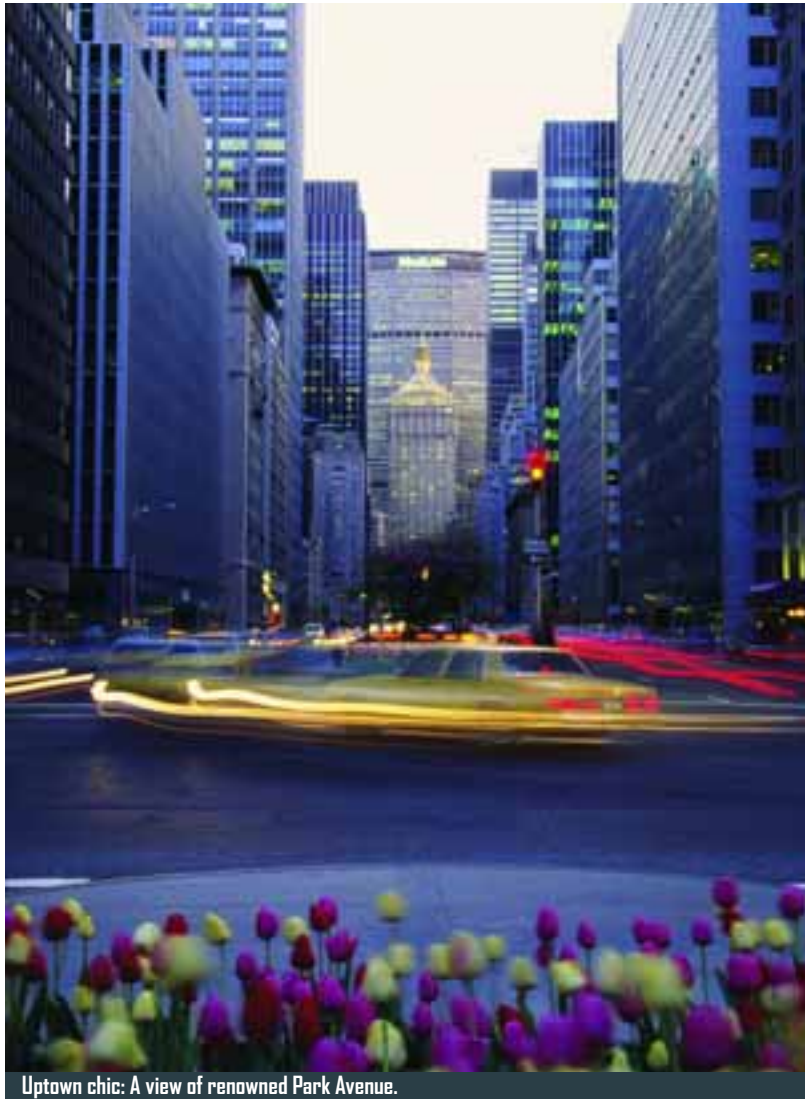
brighter bathrooms. That's why business at chains like Hampton is experiencing a growth spurt.

Cloud Nine—that's what Hampton hopes you will be on, as it rolls out its new signature beds this year. Designers have stripped away old-fashioned bedspreads and put in plush mattresses, 200-thread count sheets, down-like comforters, and a selection of pillows. By December you can expect to snooze on Cloud Nine beds at all 1,400 Hampton Hotels.

The new beds represent the latest in a string of upgrades to the Hampton experience—all of which are complimentary, such as a hot breakfast, high-end bath products, a curved shower rod, high-speed Internet access, and redesigned, easy-to-use alarm clock/radios.

You'll find all these amenities at the recently opened 65-room Hampton Inn on the edge of Manhattan's Seaport/Financial District, near Manhattan's Financial District. Open only a few months, the hotel has become a hit with the Wall Street crowd and is frequently sold out.

This year, more new urban Hampton Hotels are opening in Boise, Chicago's Theater District, and Nashville. (www.hampton.com)



Uptown chic: A view of renowned Park Avenue.

In Manhattan, style czars are giving hot hotel properties extreme makeovers.

on bringing fading stars back up to high standards.

Style czar turned hotelier Ian Schrager (of Studio 54 fame) has given the 82-year-old Gramercy Park Hotel a makeover to the tune of some \$200 million—bringing an aging grand dame into the avant-garde. Remodeled by a brigade of iconoclasts including painter Julian Schnabel, it's potentially one of this year's hottest Manhattan properties, located due south of the Empire State Building on tranquil, wooded Gramercy Park, where the hotel says John F. Kennedy chased squirrels as a child. (www.gramercyparkhotel.com, 2 Lexington Avenue at 21st Street)

Uptown, on Central Park South, luxury-seekers should keep an eye on the 75-year-old Essex House hotel, which was recently rebranded with the name of the

Dubai-based hospitality group, Jumeirah. Great things are expected from the current \$70 million redo, as the hotel's deep-pocketed owners also run the famed seven-star Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai—the frequently photographed glass and steel high-rise built to look like a billowing sail. (www.jumeirahessexhouse.com, 160 Central Park South)

For many frequent travelers, nothing is more luxurious than a brand new hotel in New York City, and over the last three years Hampton has opened three new hotels in Manhattan—in Chelsea, near Madison Square Garden, and in the Seaport/Financial District. Each offers upscale, contemporary room interiors that are a notch above standard Hampton rooms, plus standard amenities like hot breakfast and high-speed Internet access included in the daily rate.

Those Prying Eyes



A tool for road warriors: the 3M privacy filter.

If you frequently get the feeling that airline seatmates are peering over your shoulder as you tap away on your laptop, your intuition is probably correct. A recent survey (commissioned by 3M) of 600 business travelers found that 45% admit to sneaking glances at other people's screens in public. Yet nearly half of those being peeped on said that they are not able to do much about it. To remedy the situation, most move seats, shield their screens, or simply turn off their laptops.

To keep wandering eyes at bay, 3M's laptop privacy filters make on-screen data visible only to those directly in front of the screen, while peepers viewing from the side see a blank screen. The filters fit directly over laptop screens, which helps reduce glare and provides a valuable extra layer of protection for easily damaged LCD monitors. The screens are easily removed when you want others to view your work from the side, and they come in a variety of sizes to fit nearly every laptop. Prices start at about \$50. For details, see www.3mprivacyfilter.com.



Looking for a Tiger Woods moment? You'll find it at La Quinta's Dunes Golf Course in Palm Springs.



Sleep, eat, or work in style aboard EOS Airlines' comfortable jets to London.

PALM SPRINGS

For much of the last century, Palm Springs was the hideaway of Hollywood stars and Southern California power brokers eager for great golf and desert heat. That changed in the 1970s when the incrowd found other playgrounds and the area went into a brief decline. But over the last ten years, the Palm Springs area has been rediscovered and is now renowned for its vast collection of mid-century architectural gems and a growing number of new resorts.

Business travelers who have enjoyed the luxury of a spacious two-room suite at any of Embassy Suites' nearly 200 properties in the U.S. will now get all that space when taking a break in Palm Springs at the brand new Embassy Suites Hotel and Spa-La Quinta. In addition to the 146 suites, the resort also features 144 privately owned casitas.

Nestled on approximately ten acres, the hotel will feature more than 11,000 square feet of indoor meeting space, five outdoor pools and whirlpools, and a 5,000-square-foot full-service spa. In addition to two-room suites, the hotel also offers individual casitas with separate living



areas and fully equipped kitchens. The hotel offers a complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast each morning, and a two-hour manager's reception each evening with beverages and light snacks. High-speed Internet access is available throughout the resort. (www.embassy-suites.com, Santa Rosa Plaza)

TOKYO

Tokyo is in a typhoon of luxury lodging development, which means you can expect increasingly competitive rates in a city long recognized as one of the world's most expensive for travelers.

The dominance in the luxury category of the so-called Big Three—the Hotel Okura, the Imperial Hotel, and the New Otani—is being challenged as the city welcomes a new super-luxe Peninsula Hotel next year, located a stone's throw from the Imperial Palace. Also in 2007, a new 250-room Ritz-Carlton, housed in the top eight floors of a dazzling new skyscraper, will open in Tokyo's bustling Roppongi district.

Opened just last year, the 290-room Conrad Tokyo in Shiodome is still drawing crowds lured by the desire to eat at the Gordon Ramsay at the Conrad Tokyo



Not just for royalty: the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

Industry Resources

● BUSINESS TRAVEL NEWS

When it comes to corporate travel policies and partners, more professionals trust this publication. It's the only newspaper written for buyers of corporate travel products and services—22 years and counting. www.btonline.com.

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Good to Go

If you don't want a bad cold to ruin a well-deserved luxury vacation or a can't-be-missed business trip this winter, now is the time to start employing healthy travel habits.

Since dirty hands spread cold and flu germs, make it a point to wash your hands as frequently as possible when on the road. If you can't find soap and water, pack along a bottle of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

You can also give your body a fighting chance against the germs and viruses that abound in planes, trains, airports, and automobiles with products like Airborne, which helps boost your immune system with seven herbal extracts and a proprietary blend of vitamins, electrolytes, amino acids, and antioxidants.

The product was created by California schoolteacher Victoria Knight-McDowell to fight the onslaught of germs in her classroom. The entrepreneur—who grew up in a house where her mother brewed immune-boosting herbal remedies to maintain her family's health—developed the Airborne formula in the early '90s, then launched her company in 1997. First year sales were about \$25,000.

Since then, the fruit-flavored fizzy tablets (that you mix with a glass of water) have become a phenomenon, disappearing off the shelves faster than stores can keep them in stock. This year sales are expected to exceed \$100 million worldwide, and the product line has been expanded to include a special On-the-Go powder in individual packets—perfect for packing along on your next trip.

To learn more about this amazing story, and to find out where to get Airborne products, log on to www.airbornehealth.com.

restaurant—the first outpost in Asia of the legendary three-star Michelin chef. For an entertaining meal, try to sit near the open kitchens, or for a cultural experience, take a tour of the nearby Tsukiji fish market. (www.conradhotels.com, 1-9-1 Higashi-Shinbashi)

As demand for luxury continues to rise, both business and leisure travelers can expect more frequent and robust travel experiences anywhere in the world. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the pampering. —Chris McGinnis ■

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