

Top 5 States and Top 10 cities for Non Smoking hotels in the U.S.

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www.freshstay.com adds 25 non-smoking properties during April; California is the number 1 state and Seattle the number 1 city.

FreshStay™ is adding 20 to 30 properties per month to its rapidly growing network of smoke-free lodging establishments. Launched in January, the www.freshstay.com online directory of hotels offering better indoor air products and practices already has more than 225 non-smoking member properties, including an increasing number of boutique hotels, extended-stay properties and resorts coast to coast.

Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality and Founder of FreshStay™, revealed the states and cities that are most active in the nation's growing smokefree lodging movement as follows:

TOP 5 STATES (ranked by number of smokefree properties joining www.freshstay.com)

1. California - 47 smokefree lodging properties in 28 cities;
2. Texas - 15 smokefree lodging properties in 9 cities;
3. Washington - 15 smokefree lodging properties in 7 cities;
4. Florida - 11 smokefree lodging properties in 10 cities; and
5. Missouri -9 smokefree lodging properties in 7 cities.

TOP 10 CITIES (ranked by number of nonsmoking properties joining www.freshstay.com)

1. Seattle - 7 non-smoking lodging properties;
2. San Francisco - 6 non-smoking lodging properties;
3. San Diego - 5 non-smoking lodging properties;
4. Boston, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York City and Spokane, Wash. - 4 non-smoking lodging properties each; and
5. Anaheim, Calif. and St. Louis - 3 non-smoking lodging properties each.

Historic Hotel

The 135-year-old Upham Hotel in Santa Barbara, Calif. - the oldest continuously operating hotel in Southern California - went completely smoke-free in 2003.

'We made some of our 50 guestrooms non-smoking in 2000 and just kept adding to the smoke-free inventory as demand and popularity for such an environment grew and grew ... to the point where it made sense to go completely smokefree three years ago,' said Marjorie Robertson, Upham Hotel's Events Coordinator.

Jan Martin Winn, the property's General Manager for the past 15 years, said the move to smokefree was guest driven. The conversion required the removal of ashtrays, the elimination of bed spreads in favor of new duvet covers, the replacement of carpet and soft goods, thorough room cleaning and deodorizing. Signage and notification changes were made throughout the property, and in print and online marketing materials, driving home the smokefree nature of the establishment and related benefits to guests and the environment.

'There are a lot reasons to make the move to completely smokefree, but more-satisfied guests is the No. 1 driver for us,' Martin Winn said. 'One of our frequent visitors who had always stayed in our non-smoking rooms had not been here for about a year and was absolutely thrilled that the entire property had been converted to non-smoking. That guest's reaction is the rule, not the exception to the rule, for us.'

Robertson said Southern California has been leading the move to smokefree establishments for years and that Upham's employees appreciate the move as much as guests. She added that the hotel's joining www.freshstay.com has bolstered marketing efforts and brand recognition.

Connecting millions of travelers and thousands of groups to hotels committed to providing clean indoor air, www.freshstay.com awards hotels guaranteeing non-smoking rooms at the point of reservation two pineapples, while 100-percent smokefree hotels automatically earn three pineapples. Beyond that, the more fresh indoor air products and practices a property has in place, the more pineapples it earns. In the near future, the Web site will list and rate hotels that offer enhanced accommodations including being cleaned with Green Seal-certified products, having walls covered with low-odor, low-VOC paints, and offering improved air and water filtration and allergen-barrier products.

Extended-Stay

The Inn-Apartments & The Mediterranean Inn, one block west of Seattle's The Space Needle and The Key Arena, comprise 180 guestrooms with kitchenettes (furnished studio apartments for extended-stay guests) and two 800-square-foot meeting rooms. A member of the FreshStay™ online directory of non-smoking lodging establishments, The Inn-Apartments & The Mediterranean Inn opened in 2002 as a smokefree facility.

'We listened closely to our customers and built the hotel smoke-free,' said Stephanie Steadman, Regional Director of Sales & Marketing for The Inn-Apartments & The Mediterranean Inn. 'We were fortunate in that we made the decision to be completely nonsmoking long before we even opened our doors, so there was no time or money investment required to convert the facility to smokefree.'

How's the reception been? All in favor, according to Steadman.

'All guests give us very positive feedback,' Steadman said. 'Everyone is happy that they can breathe freely.'

Steadman added: 'Smokefree is our motto. Guests are informed at check-in that if they break the rules, they incur a \$200 daily fine.'

'We believe in a smoke-free, clean and healthy environment for everyone,' Steadman said. 'FreshStay™ will help us better promote what we're doing and could really help this rapidly growing smokefree movement catch on from coast to coast in hospitality properties of all sizes and types.'

Will people say 10 years down the road that they got in on the ground floor with the smokefree lodging movement and with www.freshstay.com? 'YES!' said Steadman.

Disney Resorts Join

The Disneyland Resort - which comprises three properties: Disney's 745-room Grand Californian Hotel, the 990-room Disneyland Hotel and Disney's 489-room Paradise Pier Hotel - is smokefree. Disney's Grand Californian Hotel made the move in 2001 and the other two properties followed suit earlier this year. All three facilities are members of www.freshstay.com.

A Disney spokesman said: 'The Disneyland Resort's decision to transition all of its hotel guestrooms to smoke free reflects an increase in the demand from its guests for smoke-free hotel rooms. The transition allows the Resort to better accommodate the large number of guests who request non-smoking hotel rooms.'

Rooms were taken out of service on a schedule prior to The Disneyland Resort's official non-smoking policy date, and each hotel was thoroughly cleaned. The cleaning involved the replacement of drapes, cleaning walls and carpets, etc. Based on the policy at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel, smoking guests are to be directed to outdoor spaces designated as smoking zones.

'The moves were made to better serve the vast majority of our guests,' the Disney spokesman added. 'Our cast members also have reported they enjoy being able to accommodate requests for nonsmoking rooms more frequently, and have noted smoking guests find the nearby designated outdoor smoking areas convenient.'

Make the Move

Pineapple Hospitality's Burger said NOW is the time to move to smokefree and to join the www.freshstay.com online directory of hotels offering clean indoor air products and practices.

'All of our members note they are better protecting their guests, employees and their real-estate assets and hard and soft goods,' Burger said. 'Many have seen their occupancies soar along with their customer satisfaction scores, repeat business and referrals. There are a million and one good reasons to make the move to smokefree this year.'

'I'm not saying it's for every property, but I will say that there should be at least one non smoking hotel in every market' he said. 'Even though we're realizing incredible growth - 225 smokefree properties in under four months - we're just scratching the tip of this enormous iceberg of opportunity,' Burger added. 'Before long, we hope to have our smokefree network of hotels number in the thousands and span all corners of the globe. We already have member properties 47 states as well as in Canada and Mexico. Next week we will begin adding Asia and Europe.'

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is an EPA Energy Star™ partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(TM), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities, the greenSPA luxury amenity and dispenser system, GE energy efficient lighting, Guestat programmable thermostats, Oxygenic water-efficient showerheads, the Nature's Mist deodorization system, and dozens of other products and programs. To get a taste of Pineapple's sweet solutions helping hundreds of hotels bolster business and cut costs, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call Ray Burger at 636-922-2285.

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