

## FreshStay(R) Grows Fresher

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It's no wonder FreshStay.com's ranks continue to grow - according to new research, up to 40% of all hotels are going smoke-free, and 89% of hotel guests prefer a non-smoking environment

Two new studies highlight the growing acceptance - and demand - for smoke-free hotel environments.

According to the 2008 Lodging Study from the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), nearly 40% of hotels say all of their rooms are now non-smoking. In addition, 86% of the total number of guestrooms are now non-smoking, which is up from 74% in 2006. And as more hotels choose to be 100% smoke-free, the total number of nonsmoking rooms will only grow.

The AH&LA Lodging Study is conducted every two years by Smith Travel Research and has more than 10,000 hotels participating. This is the first year the study asked about 100% smoke-free hotels.

Even more telling, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2008 North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Study, nearly nine of 10 guests (89%) say they prefer a smoke-free hotel environment, up from 79% in 2006.

While the survey showed overall satisfaction with hotels was significantly down this year, a non-smoking environment was one of the key areas where satisfaction was high.

'A positive guest experience and being smoke-free go hand-in-hand in today's environment,' says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality, operator of FreshStay.com, the world's leading directory of smoke-free hotels. 'Being a 100% non-smoking establishment is one way to differentiate yourself in tough economic times and a competitive marketplace.'

'As the AH&LA survey showed, 40% of hotels are now smoke-free. That means travelers have more lodging options than ever if they're part of the growing group of guests who don't want to worry about being next door to a smoking room and smelling the stench of cigarettes wafting through the walls,' Burger adds.

'Through FreshStay.com, guests can guarantee themselves a refreshing, smoke-free room - one that 89% of all guests say they prefer.'

### **What Guests Want**

FreshStay.com is dedicated to promoting the improvement of indoor air quality for Frequent Breathers worldwide who are seeking these accommodations at resorts, hotels, motels, inns, B&Bs and more. FreshStay.com's listings of more than 3,900 smoke-free hotels will help to ensure that guests 'Breathe Easy, Sleep Great' during their next stays at one of these lodging properties.

With location breakdowns by state and city, FreshStay.com makes it easy for guests and groups to find smokefree lodging almost wherever they are traveling. Easy, secure integrated online booking makes it simple to make reservations directly from the Web site.

In its 2008 study, J.D. Power reported the proportion of hotel guests making reservations online continues to increase steadily - 52% in 2008 compared with 44% in 2007.

'FreshStay.com gives guests what they want - smoke-free hotels, - how they want it - by booking online,' Burger explains. 'With our Web-savvy culture, travelers are going to spend more time researching the choice of hotels. They are going to listen to what other users have to say about your hotel. And if they want a guaranteed smoke-free room - whether just out of preference or because of health and allergy concerns - they are going to 'Find & Book It at FreshStay.com.''

### **New to the FreshStay Family**

Ken Richardson, General Manager for the Airport and Expo La Quinta Inn & Suites in Louisville, Ky., says his hotel made the move to 100% smoke-free based on customer response. The city of Louisville has been implementing a ban on smoking in public places, and the last thing guests wanted was to come back to their hotel to sleep easy and be greeted by smoke.

'Guests for the most part (about 99%) love it,' Richardson says. 'The benefits of going smoke-free are manifold: no more soiled rooms, requiring extra cleaning measures. No more burned linens, spreads or chair fabric. And especially no more complaints from guests who were assigned non-smoking rooms on floors with half non-smoking and half smoking rooms.'

Richardson said travelers can now search and find hotels based on their lifestyles and travel preferences. That's why it's key to partner with 'amenity/service Web sites like FreshStay.com.

'We see a lot of results from partnering with these kinds of niche travel Web sites,' Richardson says. 'We also partner with pets.com and petfriendly.com as La Quintas nationwide are pet friendly. It's all about allowing the guest to feel as comfortable away from home as possible. For some of our loyal customers this means ensuring their beloved four-legged friends can also Breathe Easy, Sleep Great on the road.'

## **Rosey Outlook**

For now, the Saga Motor Hotel claims to be the only smoke-free independent lodging property in Pasadena, Calif. But the Saga Motor Hotel's Roger Padayao knows that will not last.

'Our goal is to always improve our guest experience by listening closely to travelers' needs,' Padayao says. 'We believe going smoke-free will increase revenue in the long term, as this trend will catch on in Pasadena. You will see that the Saga Motor Hotel will become a benchmark for other independent hotels to follow suit.'

Beyond the economic impact, Padayao says the hotel went smoke-free to promote a healthy environment for both the guests and employees. As an added bonus, it also reduced the cost of maintenance and insurance. It was quicker and easier for the cleaning staff to do their jobs, and furniture, linens and other hotel amenities don't have to be replaced as often.

'The response from our guests and regulars, including many smokers, has been overwhelmingly positive,' Padayao says. 'They've told us it's a smart business move. And by partnering with FreshStay.com, it gives us another resource to find those guests who are searching for what we have to offer.'

## **More Survey Results**

From the AH&LA 2008 Lodging Study (conducted by Smith Travel Research)

91% of hotels offer wireless Internet access.

35% offer iPod docking stations in their guestrooms.

75% offer a computer in the lobby for guest use.

59% offer a complimentary breakfast.

47% have indoor swimming pools and 58% have outdoor swimming pools.

43% have flat-screen TVs in guestrooms.

57% said they upgraded bedding packages in the past year.

82% percent offer a refrigerator in rooms.

The big question is why would a hotel offer all of these amenities and luxuries if it can't guarantee a guest what the traveler prefers most of all - a smoke-free room?

## **About Pineapple Hospitality**

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is The Co-Founder and Host of the ANNUAL GREEN HOSPITALITY CONFERENCE, an EPA ENERGY STAR(TM) partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(R) ([www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com)), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), the greenSPA(TM) luxury amenity and dispenser system, Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Key Cards, Guestat(TM) programmable thermostats, High Performance showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, and dozens of other products and programs. To get a taste of Pineapple's planet-friendly solutions, please visit [www.pineapplehospitality.net](http://www.pineapplehospitality.net), or call us at 636-922-2285.

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