

FreshStay Members Recognized For Their Commitment to Clean Air

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FreshStay.com unveils Certificate of Recognition for its growing family of 100% smoke-free accredited lodging partners.

With businesses and consumers cutting back on travel and concerns about the economy growing every day, every hotel guest - and every dollar he or she spends - counts that much more.

Nevertheless, members of FreshStay.com - lodging's rapidly growing portal featuring integrated booking for thousands of 100% smoke free lodgings - continue to say 'No Vacancy' to nearly one-fifth of the U.S. adult population: smokers.

Why are they seemingly swimming upstream like salmon? Simple: FreshStay members are reaping repeat business, referrals and premium pricing because of their commitment to clean air - a move that immediately pays for itself while clearing away the clutter of competition.

Accreditation & Recognition

FreshStay.com is the largest, easiest and most comprehensive online directory of smoke-free hotels in the world. As its ranks grow toward a goal of 10,000 by the end of 2009, FreshStay is recognizing its partners for making the health of its guests and staff a priority by completely eliminating smoking from their premises.



Each member of FreshStay.com will receive a Certificate of Recognition to be displayed in their lobby or another prominent location. This certificate will serve as proof accreditation by an independent third party (FreshStay) that the facility is 100% smoke free. It also will demonstrate each hotel's commitment to providing a smoke-free atmosphere and will raise awareness among guests of the benefits of clean indoor air.

But this is not simply a case of principles over profits. Rather, by saying yes to the right customers - the Frequent Breathers who demand a clean room and healthy fresh air - it is the right business decision, too.

'It's not easy maintaining a competitive advantage in this difficult economic environment, but it's critical in the lodging industry,' says Dave Janicke, the CBO (Chief Breathing Officer) of FreshStay. 'Hoteliers' continued commitment to improving and maintaining indoor air quality provides just such an advantage. They no doubt are seeing the amazing difference it makes to be a 100% smoke-free hotel and we're glad to be here to assist.'

Though some initially are skeptical, FreshStay members have found time and again that the elimination of smoking from their facilities lowers cleaning costs, prevents damage to upholstery and furnishing, and keeps guests happier and more likely to stay again and refer their family, friends and co-workers.

Ravi Patel, General Manager for Country Inn & Suites By Carlson in historic Williamsburg, Va., is just one of thousands of hoteliers who have found that to be just the case.

'Being in a family market, we found that smoking rooms were becoming harder and harder to sell in our peak season - the only demand we had for them was in the off season and the offset revenue was not worth the loss in the summer,' explains Patel. 'Also, we only had five smoking rooms, and when they were occupied the entire floor would complain of the smell. So when we renovated we took the extra expense to completely gut those five rooms and make them non-smoking.'

'Since we have eliminated smoking, we have no complaints of the smell on that floor anymore. Now, we have the ability to sell those rooms for a higher rate in peak season versus having to discount them just to get rid of them when we are in a sell-out position.'

LOHAS Outreach

As an added marketing benefit to its members, FreshStay.com is now advertising with LOHAS.com. LOHAS is the acronym for Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, and is made up of a market segment of consumers dedicated to living a healthier, more sustainable life.

LOHAS companies practice responsible capitalism by providing goods and services using economic and environmentally sustainable business practices.

'Consumers who support LOHAS companies are the perfect demographic for FreshStay.com,' Janicke says. 'Typically, LOHAS consumers are relatively upscale and well-educated, and are willing to make the extra effort to patronize companies that share their principles. Because LOHAS customers believe in healthy bodies as well as a healthy planet, this is a perfect

relationship for us and benefits our customers as well.'

Marketing & Membership Talent

FreshStay.com pleased to announce that Tina Pike has joined the team as the Director of Communications.

Tina will be working directly with Dave Janicke to increase FreshStay.com's presence in the travel industry. As the trend of going smoke-free continues to mushroom, Pike will help raise consumers' awareness of current FreshStay members as well as will build relationships with potential new members whose policies fit with FreshStay's smoke-free and enhanced indoor air standards.

Fresh Testimonials

As FreshStay.com's ranks have grown, some of its newest members are already experiencing success since 'butting out.'

Country Inn & Suites

Two of the most-recent converts, the Country Inn & Suites Hotels in Bloomington and Champaign, Ill., rang in 2009 with a smoke-free environment.

With 82 rooms at each property, the hotels have been making major improvements, offering a variety of amenities and hotel services. The properties offer free wireless Internet access, a 24-hour fitness center and business center, indoor pool and hot tub, plus a newly expanded dining room and convenience shop with drinks and snacks for guests.

'With all of the new renovations we have made in the guestrooms and public areas, it made sense now to make the move to smoke-free,' says Roger Taylor, Director of Hotel Operations for the properties. 'Since we went 100% smoke free January 1, 2009, our guests have had many of positive comments about the upgrade. Their comments ring out that the property smells fresh and clean throughout.'

Taylor says the hotel's decision to go smoke-free is based solely on adding to the comfort and health of its guests.

'We are proud to offer a smoke-free environment for our guests,' he says. 'Being a part of the FreshStay network of hotels allows us to reach out to potential guests and raise awareness of our hotels' strict non-smoking policy.'

Mt. Baker Lodging

Mt. Baker Lodging is a vacation rental home agency. The 97 properties represented are non-smoking, privately owned, individually unique and located at the gateway to the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest/Mount Baker Ski Area.

'Having been in operation for more than 22 years, we have always been smoke-free,' says Mt. Baker Lodging President Dan Graham. 'While initially unpopular with guests, this was done originally upon insistence from the property owners. But as the years have progressed, it is now a request we hear more from the guests themselves. My how things have changed since the early '80s!'

The Sofia Hotel

Located in downtown San Diego, the Sofia Hotel opened in January 2007 to much fanfare, but no smoking. Though the hotel is new, the building itself is more than 80 years old and is included in the National Trust Historic Hotels of America for the preservation of the property's heritage.

The facility underwent a year-long renovation in 2006. When it reopened, the hotels' owners and managers decided that smoke-free was the way to go.

Andrea Winslow, General Manager for the Sofia, explained that the hotel is designed to reflect a sense of harmony and balance - with a chic, modern interior located within a historic building. The hotel features fine linens, soothing toiletries, ambient bedside light and a serene 24-hour yoga center, all to help guests relax and rejuvenate while away from home. Allowing the smell of smoke to interfere with that just didn't make sense, Winslow added.

'We recognized the growing demand among travelers to stay in a smoke-free environment,' says Winslow. 'With the amenities and atmosphere we're providing, we thought our guests would really appreciate the healthy environment that being smoke-free offers. Our guests have been very happy. I couldn't imagine going back to smoking rooms again.'

Winslow says that compared to other properties where she's worked that have allowed smoking, there is a huge difference in cleaning and maintenance costs. Maintenance crews spend much less time cleaning up the ashy messes and trying to rid the rooms of the smoke smell.

'We just want to provide a product that guests are looking for. We want them to be healthy and happy,' says Winslow. 'FreshStay is helping us put the right people and products together at the right time.'

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is an EPA ENERGY STAR(TM) partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(R) (www.freshstay.com), EcoRooms & EcoSuites (www.EcoRooms.com) Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), EO(R), Neutrogena(R), Earth Perfect and greenSPA(TM) amenities, AVIVA and WAVE dispensers, Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom

Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Key Cards, Green Earth Key Cards, Energy Management Systems and Controls, High Performance showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, Zero Odor, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call us at 636-922-2285.

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