



## **FreshStay - The World's Largest Directory of Lodging Properties featuring Better Indoor Air Quality celebrates 2nd Anniversary**

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One hotel is located in the heart of Manhattan. Another caters to steel workers in northwest Indiana. One in Toronto gets guests from all over the world. Despite the different cultures and geography, all three hotels have one big thing in common: They are all completely smoke-free.

As members of the online hotel directory with integrating booking FreshStay(R) ([www.FreshStay.com](http://www.FreshStay.com)), all three hotels have pledged a 100% smokeless experience to their guests. Guestrooms, hotel lobbies, and meeting rooms are clean and free of the lingering odor and health risks of smoke, making it easier for guests to stay comfortable, healthy and relaxed in their home away from home.

'A lot has changed over the past 10 or 15 years. No matter where they are staying, hotel guests expect clean, comfortable rooms where they don't have to hold their noses when they walk in,' says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality, which founded and operates FreshStay. 'It's not enough to just have separate smoking and non-smoking rooms anymore. The smell of smoke can seep in through walls and lingers on clothes, upholstery and furniture. For some people this is an annoyance. For many, it's a major medical concern.'

'That's why we say FreshStay.com is the choice of 'Frequent Breathers' everywhere. With more than 3,500 non-smoking lodging facilities in the United States, Canada and elsewhere around the world, FreshStay is absolutely committed to providing travelers smoke-free choices wherever their journeys may take them,' Burger adds.

With FreshStay, it's easy to find exactly what you're looking for. Search by state and refine your search by city, or pick the Bed & Breakfast/Inn option for cozier, quieter stays. With FreshStay's online booking process, when you find the hotels you want, you can book your stays easily, immediately and securely.'

### **Big City**

The Wingate by Wyndham Manhattan Midtown has been smoke-free since opening just more than a year ago, and has been a part of FreshStay for nearly just as long. As a hotel that stylishly caters to both business travelers and tourists coming in to The City That Never Sleeps, Director of Sales Jeffrey Reich-Hale knows smoky guestrooms and public spaces can ruin the whole guest experience.

'People really want that clean air, so we take our no smoking policy very seriously,' Reich-Hale says. 'We put up warning signs and we will charge guests who violate the policy up to \$500. Fortunately, we don't often have to do this, since we're finding that almost all of our guests love the smoking ban. It's wonderful to have guests come up to us and tell us, 'It's so great what you're doing.'

'What's funny is that even smokers don't mind not being able to smoke in the hotel. It makes the experience better for everyone,' he says.

Reich-Hale says that being non smoking since the hotel's opening has really saved a lot of money. Not only is it less costly and time-consuming to clean the rooms, but he's not finding burns and cigarette stains on furniture and linens.

'It's really great to have a resource like FreshStay out there to bring in those people who are going to follow the rules, who really understand the importance of a smoke-free environment,' Reich-Hale says. 'The ones who care about - their health, the clean air environment and the health of others, those are our favorite kinds of customers.'

### **Blue Collar**

Located in a hard-working town, where many travelers are connected to the nearby steel mills, the Country Inn & Suites by Carlson in Portage, Ind., was one of the first 100% smoke-free hotels in the area when it opened in July 2006. Director of Sales Yolanda Carmin said it sometimes can be tough being the first local adopter of such a movement, especially in such a blue-collar town, but the policy has made a huge difference for guests.

'It's important to us to stay clean and fresh. Restaurants are all pushing toward smoke-free, it's important to us to stay on that track,' Carmin says. 'And when you're in a hotel, it's not just going into a restaurant for a few hours. You're spending an entire night there. That smoky smell stays on your skin, clothes and suitcase. Our hotel strives for that 'home away from home feel,' and if you don't smoke at home, why should you have it here?'

Carmin says that despite some initial trepidation, the hotel has been a huge hit with smokers and non-smokers alike. The property's occupancy rates throughout October and November have been around 80 percent.

'I've been with other properties, and the rooms that allowed smoking were the ones with the most wear and tear - mattresses, comforters, carpet, drapes and furniture with burn holes and in need of replacement,' Carmin adds. 'We

put in Tempur-Pedic beds in many of our rooms, and we didn't want to put those at risk by allowing smoking. It's amazing what a difference it makes to be non-smoking.'

Along with going smoke-free and installing Tempur-Pedic mattresses, Carmin says the other decision that's really paid off for the Country Inn & Suites is partnering with FreshStay.

'We're looking for the most positive angles to promote our hotel, and we believe one of them is being 100% non-smoking,' Carmin says. 'What better way is there to get in contact with all of those people who are looking for 100% smoke-free lodging experiences than FreshStay? If that's what they're looking for, we want to let them know we're an option for them - and to do that effectively, being listed on FreshStay is a must.'

### **International Exposure**

As one of the most diverse cities in the world, Toronto is home to large populations from Europe, Asia and, of course, North America. So finding a way to cater to each of those cultures can be difficult. However, the Novotel Toronto Airport Hotel has found common ground among its guests by going 100% smoke free when rebranding itself and reopening about two years ago.

'The majority of surveys and research show people all over the world prefer hotels where there is no smoking,' says Jim Kennedy, Director of Sales and Marketing. 'We also found that it wasn't good enough to just have non-smoking rooms, floors or areas. We needed the entire building to be smoke-free to truly see the benefits of the program.'

Kennedy says some guests from some parts of Europe or Asia where smoking is still very prevalent initially might be surprised to find they can't smoke indoors, but once hoteliers explain the reasons and the guests experience the advantages of clean, refreshing, healthier guestrooms and public spaces, the comment cards come back with very positive responses from even them.

'When we reopened, we had new furniture and amenities, and we didn't want those to get ruined from sitting in a smoky atmosphere,' Kennedy adds. 'Cost-wise and maintenance-wise, it's been hugely successful, as we don't have to spend as much time and money refreshing rooms, cleaning the carpets, upholstery and other furniture. It's also been very beneficial to our employees who don't have to work in those kinds of conditions.'

Kennedy says that hotel has maintained a steady occupancy rate of 80 percent to 82 percent with the smoke-free policy, and by teaming with FreshStay.com.

'FreshStay is perfect for us from a marketing perspective,' he says. 'People are focusing on certain things they are looking for in lodging, like being smoke-free. And more people are looking online to book their hotels. FreshStay helps us find that niche of healthy, non-smoking guests. That's where we want to be.'

### **Healthy Hotels**

In its December 2007 issue, Health magazine rated the Top 11 Healthiest Hotels in America.

The magazine teamed up with AOL Cityguides editors, and determined the winners using three criteria - delicious, nutritious dining options, comfortable rooms (bedding and beds primarily), and high-quality fitness options.

The winners included:

- Hotel Vitale in San Francisco,
- Madison Marriott West in Madison, Wis.,
- Four Seasons in Boston,
- The Watertown in Seattle,
- Topaz Hotel in Washington,
- Westin Times Square in New York,
- The Peninsula Chicago,
- Mandarin Oriental in Miami,
- W in Atlanta,
- The Venetian in Las Vegas, and
- Houstonian Hotel Club and Spa in Houston.

Oh, by the way ... Know what else most of these Top 11 Healthiest Hotels have in common?

Simple: They're 100-percent smoke-free...

And, oh yeah, quite a few are reaping the rewards of being listed on FreshStay.com with its national exposure and quick-and-easy integrated secure booking.

### **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](http://www.freshstay.com)), EcoRooms & EcoSuites ([www.EcoRooms.com](http://www.EcoRooms.com)) Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), the greenSPA(TM) luxury amenity and dispenser system, Custom Linen Re-Use programs, Guestat(TM) programmable thermostats, High Performance showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit [www.PineappleHospitality.net](http://www.PineappleHospitality.net), or call Ray Burger at 636-922-2285.

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