



FreshStay.com Reaches 5,000 Members

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Smoke-free Comfort Suites properties help FreshStay.com hit a major milestone. FreshStay.com now has more than 5,000 reasons for hotels to go smoke-free. With the addition of nearly 200 new hotels, including numerous Comfort Suites hotels, FreshStay.com now has more than 5,000 properties that are committed to being [100% non-smoking](#).

"Reaching 5,000 hotel partners is a milestone that we are not only proud of, but it speaks to the growing commitment throughout the hospitality industry to the health and comfort for Frequent Breathers everywhere," says Ray Burger, Founder of FreshStay.com. "Eliminating smoking isn't just a trend, or isolated in a few geographic regions anymore. It's proven to improve guest satisfaction and increase profitability."

"We truly believe that it should be standard operating procedure for all hotels, motels, inns, and B&Bs everywhere."

As the world's leading online directory of smoke-free hotels, FreshStay.com now has partners in all 50 states, Canada and around the globe.

Among those properties are more than 600 Comfort Suites hotels within the U.S.

"The Comfort Suites brand made the decision to go smoke free in 2007," says Christina Williamson, senior director of brand planning and management for the Comfort brand family. "We knew that providing a healthy, smoke-free environment to our guests and our employees just made good business sense. Comfort Suites is focused on providing a relaxed and renewing healthy environment that enables guests to leave hotels feeling refreshed, so it was also a strong fit with our brand promise."

"Today we have more than 640 domestic Comfort Suites hotels and all are 100% smoke free."

"We appreciate the support of this important lodging initiative that Choice Hotels and Comfort Suites properties provide to guests that prefer Better Indoor Air Quality when they travel," says Burger.

Changing Times

For each of FreshStay's 5,000 partners, each has its own unique reasons for extinguishing smoking. Many are reaching out to their increasingly health conscious guests. Some are just tired of cleaning up the smoke, ash, and burn marks that come from allowing smoking. Others have found that isolating smoking rooms or smoking floors is simply an exercise in futility.

Then there are those who are tired of turning away paying guests because the only rooms left to book are the smoking rooms.

"More and more midscale guests are demanding a cleaner, fresher stay and healthy accommodations. The number of guests requesting smoke-free accommodations has risen significantly in the past decade," says Williamson. "We saw the opportunity to meet our guests' needs. At Comfort Suites hotels, we have larger than average guest rooms that are 100% smoke-free so guests can truly experience a ton of 'Breathing Room' when they stay with us."

Since the site launched in 2006, FreshStay.com has not only seen its roster grow, but it has implemented numerous upgrades, making it easier for socially responsible travelers to find and book the perfect property.

Listings are broken down by state and by city, with an integrated booking option booking your next stay is as easy as a few clicks of the mouse.

In that time, there has also been a growing awareness on the effects of second-hand smoke, and a movement amongst numerous states and cities to ban smoking indoors.

"An increasing number of state laws are restricting smoking in hotels and other public places, so it's not just a concern for hotel guests," says Williamson. "People have become more sensitive to the smell of smoke, so for Comfort Suites hotels, we found that the best thing to do was to go entirely smoke-free, rather than allowing some rooms within the hotel to remain smoking rooms."

"We had strong data to support the decision to go smoke-free, but there was some apprehension about turning away any customers," she adds. "In the end, the program has turned out to be a great success. The great majority of customers have a strong preference for a [smoke-free room](#). Knowing that all our rooms at Comfort Suites hotels are

100% smoke free has actually created more loyal guests for the Comfort Suites brand.”

Burger says that FreshStay.com will continue to evolve beyond 5,000 members. Not only will FreshStay.com continue to reach out to both hotels and travelers looking to embrace the smoke-free experience, but FreshStay.com will look to include other indoor air quality enhancements. Many FreshStay members have incorporated clean rooms that don't just eliminate smoking, but also filter out allergens for the most fresh-smelling, restful room possible.

Williamson agrees this is where the hospitality industry is headed.

“People need to be able to relax and sleep peacefully in their hotel rooms, and air quality has a significant impact on their ability to do so,” she says. “Beyond smoke-free rooms, there is an increasing trend to address other sensitivities and allergies in our rooms. We continue to look for opportunities to make our guest more comfortable in this way.”

Reaching New Guests

Williamson mentions that one of the key guest targets at Comfort Suites hotels is the business traveler. Research shows that the business traveler is particularly interested in fitness and health. In addition to more traditional amenities such as a fitness center and ergonomic chairs, Comfort Suites finds that business travelers really appreciate a [smoke-free hotel](#) experience.

Another new member of FreshStay.com, Matt W. Markopoulos of the South Beach Biloxi Hotel & Suites in Biloxi, Miss., says that smoke-free hotels reach across a broad spectrum of guests.

“Being smoke-free is better for overall air quality and benefits everyone,” he says. “Guests with allergies know they can count entering a fresh room without worrying about the lingering scent of smoke from past guests or guests across the hall”

“If a non-smoker is placed into a smoking room, that creates an unpleasant atmosphere, it's an impression that could be irreversible in the eyes, and nose, of your guests.”

Opened in October of 2010 with 100 guest rooms on the Gulf Coast, the South Beach Biloxi is a unique ultra-luxury hotel with suites ranging in size from 450 square feet to 1,950 square feet!

“We find partnering with FreshStay.com is a unique differentiator to us, reaching out to an audience that is looking for a smoke-free experience,” Markopoulos says.

Williamson agrees.

“Making the decision to go smoke-free has sustained Comfort Suites as a bold and innovative hotel brand. Comfort Suites guests appreciate the fact that they can visit any of our hotels and experience a healthy, smoke-free environment,” she says. “Being a part of FreshStay helps us get that message out and target the right kind of guests we are looking for.”

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality™ brings fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines — including FreshStay® (www.freshstay.com), EcoRooms & EcoSuites (www.EcoRooms.com), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities™, EO® , ecossential elements, Sonoma Soap Co. , Earth Perfect, Earth Simple, Save Your World, Pharmacopia, and greenSPA™ amenities, AVIVA and WAVE dispensers, Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Earth Key Cards, Sleeves and Folders, Energy Management Systems and Controls, High Performance showerheads, 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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