

Leaving Home Often Means Leaving 'Green Routines' behind According to New Survey from Element Hotels

2007-07-10

New Extended-Stay Hotel Brand to Make 'Eco-Etiquette' Intuitive with Smart Design

Would Al Gore forget to turn off the lights before running out the door? Maybe, if that door led to a hotel room. Travel can turn even the most Prius-like consumer into a gas-guzzling SUV, according to a survey of frequent travelers commissioned by ELEMENT Hotels, a new Westin-inspired extended-stay brand from Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. [NYSE: HOT]. In fact, a majority of frequent travelers [59%] admit to letting their 'green routines' slip when on the road.

Guests Check In, Then Throw Out Good Green Habits

Even consumers who make an effort to be green forget to pack their good habits when they hit the road. For example, a majority of people [60%] are more likely to leave a bathroom light on overnight in an unfamiliar hotel room than at home, and nearly 70% of frequent travelers open a new mini-bottle of shampoo and conditioner each time they shower on the road. Sixty-three percent of frequent hotel guests are more likely to leave a light on when they leave a hotel room than home. And although only about a third [34%] of respondents believe it is important to change sheets and towels daily at home, three-quarters think it is important to have fresh sheets and towels daily in a hotel.

Saving the Planet, or Saving a Buck?

When it comes to evaluating eco-options, for most consumers the bottom line is the bottom line. In fact, 62% of respondents agreed that 'When I stay in a hotel, one reason I use water and energy less efficiently is because I don't have to pay for it.' And their reported behaviors for water use reflect this attitude. A whopping 70% of frequent travelers agree that they try to conserve water 'as much as possible' at home, while only 18% do the same in a hotel.

A New Approach from ELEMENT Hotels

This disparity is why ELEMENT Hotels will be pioneering a new, smart approach to sustainable hoteling when it opens its doors in 2008. Instead of dictating responsibilities to guests, ELEMENT properties will be designed to make environmentally friendly choices intuitive. Key smart design features include:

œ Clean and green: Shampoo and conditioner dispensers will eliminate multiple mini-bottles.

œ Stemming the tide: Low-flow sink faucets and dual flush toilets and/or low gallonage toilets will allow guests to optimize water use during their time away from home. This small change conserves an estimated 4,358.6 gallons of water per room each year.

œ Smart materials: The ELEMENT design incorporates eco-friendly materials wherever possible, from the floor, which will feature carpets with up to 100% recycled content and recycled carpet cushions, to the walls, where art will be mounted on a base made from recycled tires and where low VOC paints will improve indoor air quality for guests and staff.

œ Recycling reminder: About 50% of the waste generated in hotels is recyclable, but most hotel rooms don't have recycling bins. ELEMENT guest rooms will include bins to help guests maintain their home recycling ritual.

œ A bright idea: CFLs (compact florescent lamps) light bulbs will be used throughout the hotel instead of incandescent light bulbs. This small change will result in up to 75% less energy used.

œ Nature's best: Biophilic design, which maximizes natural light and sightlines to the outdoors, will help guests thrive and connect with their surroundings.

œ Staying smart: An education program will help guests make smart decisions for the environment while traveling and at home.

These small changes are motivated by the ELEMENT brand's commitment to creating an environment where guests can thrive and be at their best, from their room to their world.

In the end, it is about creating a balance. 'No one wants a lecture on the environment when they travel,' points out Sue Brush, Senior Vice President at Starwood. 'The idea behind ELEMENT is to make smart choices intuitive and to support our guests' sustainable lifestyle, so we can simultaneously accommodate our guests and the environment.'

Methodology

The survey was conducted for ELEMENT Hotels by STUDYLOGIC via telephone interviews with 1,041 respondents, screened for a minimum of 3 hotel stays over the past twelve months.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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The URL for this story is:

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