

Hip cafes make way to lobbies

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As major hotels compete to create hip scenes in their lobbies, they're adjusting menus to deliver more and better food options for guests who like to hang out there.

"The energy they're seeking is that of a cocktail party," says Jody Pennette of CB5 Restaurant Group, a Greenwich, Conn.-based firm that designs restaurants for hotels.

A few months ago, Marriott, on a test basis, launched a new menu for guests hanging out in the lobby. Earlier in 2007, Wyndham Hotels began installing cafes in its lobbies for customers wishing to pick up snacks or light food items, such as sandwiches and salads. Royalton Hotel in New York, Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco and Omni Mandalay Hotel in Irving, Texas, also are embracing the trend.

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