

## Hotel guests and their sticky fingers

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Industry insider dishes on the funny - and surprising - things people lift

In my last column, I told you about a cheap way to take home some of the items found in a typical hotel room. But by cheap, I didn't mean the ol' five-finger discount. Yep, guests steal things from hotel rooms every day, and you'd be amazed at some of the things they pinch. Maybe they're just desperate because they don't live near a liquidation store.

Here are a few of my favorite funny stories about hotel theft, and also a few tips about what items not to waste your time stealing:

Grabbing every last toiletry you can find in your room is not theft. (I can't count the number of times people have actually called the front desk to see if there's a charge for them. I even had a guest ask if the charge for the cotton balls was per ball or per bag. I know hotels like to nickel-and-dime these days, but c'mon, people.) However, raking dozens of shampoo/conditioner combos off the housekeeper's cart into a duffel bag is going too far. And I've seen that happen dozens of times. (Although I do confess to sneaking a couple of extra mini-mouthwashes myself. They're so handy, and yet so rare.)

When I was working at the front desk of a small hotel, a guest once asked where he could buy a cheap suitcase, as he was going home with lots more stuff than he'd brought. I jokingly asked if his wife had done lots of shopping at the upscale department store down the road, but he explained that he'd found some beautiful artwork he loved. After he checked out, the housekeeping staff discovered he'd taken every last painting off the wall of his suite.

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