

## Starwood Hotels Announces the Launch of aloft Hotels

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Ten years after Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (NYSE:HOT) shook up the hotel industry with the launch of W Hotels, the innovative hotel giant will again reinvent hotel design with the debut of its newest brand, aloft hotels.

Created to shake up the staid, traditional select service segment of the hotel market, aloft is designed to deliver urban-influenced, modern and vibrant design and an energetic guest experience at an affordable price point.

Conceived by the same team behind W Hotels, which broke through the clutter of conformity in the upscale hotel arena, aloft was inspired by the idea that the select service market was ripe for reinvention. The design process began in 2005 when aloft hotel's leadership team conceived of an urban-inspired, high-tech, environment with high ceilings and open, multi-functional spaces which would give travelers high design at a more accessible price point. Over the course of two years, the team would challenge and redefine the conventions traditionally associated with the select service space. The result is open, light and vibrant, multi-functional spaces that speak to the needs of today's highly social, self-sufficient traveler, without sacrificing on style or quality.

aloft was inspired by the ongoing democratization of design and an emerging segment of high style, low cost brands such as Mini Cooper, Target and West Elm. Featuring loft-like guest rooms, a buzzing bar scene in the open lobby, an urban-inspired grab-and go cafe and industrial design elements throughout, aloft hotels are a far cry from the conventional cookie cutter hotel brands that populate the select service space.

"Today's savvy, design-conscious consumers understand that great style can be both accessible and affordable," said Brian McGuinness, Global Brand Leader for aloft hotels. "Generation X and Y travelers who grew up with MTV, iPods and IKEA expect great design wherever they go, whether it's Rogers, Arkansas or Rancho Cucamonga, California."

Starwood had enjoyed a successful partnership with David Rockwell and Rockwell Group in designing the first-ever W Hotel--W New York and the soon-to-follow W Union Square, not to mention Rockwell's impressive designs for the Academy Awards' Kodak Theatre, Nobu Fifty Seven and the Broadway musical "Hairspray." As a result, Rockwell was selected to collaborate on the new hotel concept.

"Working with Starwood's aloft team was a fantastic experience - they really share our approach to design," said David Rockwell, founder and CEO of Rockwell Group. "For aloft, our goal was to re-imagine the select-service hotel model by creating a concept that would encourage guests to spend more time in the public areas, using innovative and surprising materials, and focusing on smart design."

Select service hotels have traditionally been defined by the fact that they are completely unmemorable - dim lighting, low ceilings, heavy traditional furniture and polyester comforters on the bed. aloft strove to reinvent the select service market, designing hotels to appeal to business travelers and consumers within each locale that are open, energetic and visually engaging.

### **Exterior**

First time visitors to aloft will immediately understand that aloft is different from any other hotel experience. Guests are greeted by special features and visually distinctive iconic structures on the exterior, including a colorful, sloping signature carport cover and building roof-line, and colorful glowing linear light sources on the building facade inspired by the notion of travel and motion.

### **re:mix**

The urban living experience is expressed in the re:mix lobby, a flexible space that lends itself to both daytime and evening socialization, featuring a sunken living room with a two-sided glass fireplace which opens to an outdoor patio, a customized pool table and a 24/7 grab 'n go gourmet pantry influenced by a New York deli (re:fuel by aloft). The centerpiece of the experience is the bar area, w xyz. which transforms from a quiet, playful space by day to an eclectic, electric lounge at night. Special programming and theme nights create a constantly changing atmosphere to meet and mingle. The space incorporates industrial design elements such as exposed ductwork on the ceiling, polished concrete floors and a bar top made of crushed glass backlit with colored LCD lights. The comfort and sociability inherent in these design features all contribute to a casual place to stay and play day or night.

### **Guest Rooms**

All guest floors have a large picture window that looks onto a backyard and provides natural light in the corridors. Typically, the two guest rooms options are a 275 square foot room with a king size bed and a 325 square foot room with two double beds. Both are loft-like spaces with 9-foot-high ceilings and oversized windows. The rooms exhibit a calming palette with touches of blue and purple, an abundance of natural light, and a selection of custom furniture such as a multi-functional headboard which serves as a wall partition, built-in storage space, nightstand and a place for artwork. The bathrooms are simple, serene and cleanly designed, with oversized walk-in showers with glass doors. Guests will be delighted to find that beds represent the style in many downtown lofts, featuring a custom platform bed and crisp, white cotton sheets and duvets on the beds--custom designed for aloft hotels. No polyester here!

re:fuel by aloft

In select-service hotels, functionality is key. re:fuel by aloft was designed with versatility in mind. During the day, the space is bright and industrial with an urban cafe meets grab-and-go design. At night, the space is transformed by recessing the lights into a red transparent canvas, providing a luminous and evening chic experience.

### **Aloha! Desk**

Even the front desk is stylized. The circular aloha desk serves as a stylish alternative to the traditional check-in desk and sits in the center of the lobby entry to welcome guests and be part of the experience. Equipped with check-in capabilities, a staff member to assist with guests' needs and a register for guests to pay for items purchased from the re: fuel by aloft pantry and the sundries "shop". Here design meets function. A custom mirror, located in front of the desk and comprised of numerous small panels arranged to create a kaleidoscopic effect, serve as a way for staff members to see the entire area of the lobby. Guests can also check in via high-tech kiosks which allow guests to select floors and rooms, much like selecting seats on aircrafts.

### **About aloft hotels**

All aloft guests have the option to join and earn Starpoints in Starwood's award-winning, industry leading Starwood Preferred Guest(R) program.

The first aloft hotel opened at the Montreal Airport on June 5. Since then hotels in Ontario-Rancho Cucamonga, CA, Rogers-Bentonville, AR and Lexington, MA. have opened their doors A total of 18 hotels are scheduled to open in 2008 including Chicago O'Hare, IL, Charleston, SC, Minneapolis, MN, Philadelphia Airport, PA, Portland, OR, as well as Beijing, China. More than 50 aloft hotels are scheduled to open in 2009 including Brooklyn, NY, Denver International Airport, CO, Dallas, TX, Atlanta, GA, Las Vegas, NV and Toronto, Canada. To date, the aloft brand has already announced more than 90 development projects in more than 10 countries.

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