

World's Decadent Hotel Amenities

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The hotel industry started more than a century ago when stagecoach outposts gave overland travelers a refuge from the elements--and little else. Nowadays, however, five-star properties offer well-heeled guests spa treatments, personal butlers and even room service for pets.

Such popular services and experiences could be helping keep occupancy rates high. Luxury hotels have yet to suffer from the sluggish economy, with occupancy falling just 1% between January and May 2008 as compared to the same time period in 2007, according to Smith Travel Research, which collects data on the lodging industry.

While that's an insignificant dip for a market that made \$29 billion in revenue last year, luxury hotels are still fighting for customers, creative, high-end amenities and services help them stand out. Stephanie Ricca, editor of the trade magazine *Luxury Hotelier*, says that top-tier properties are in "reinvention mode."

"Having a similar-looking property in different cities around the world isn't going to work anymore," Ricca says. "They have to keep things fresh."

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