

Attention Frequent Breathers(TM): FreshStay(R) Version 2.0 Features Major Web Site Redesign & Fully Integrated Booking Process

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At the all-new FreshStay, 'Frequent Breathers' can find and book smoke-free hotel reservations worldwide with the most comprehensive online directory of nonsmoking lodging destinations - 3,500-plus hotels.

It's now easier than ever for travelers to click and book smoke-free hotel reservations, simply by visiting the completely redesigned FreshStay (www.FreshStay.com) online directory and integrated booking process for more than

3,500 nonsmoking lodging facilities.

With more and more hotels discovering every day the myriad benefits and increased customer and employee satisfaction that comes by providing Fresher Guestrooms and non-smoking environments, the new FreshStay lists hundreds of additional smoke-free lodging facilities.

The relaunched www.FreshStay.com also has greatly improved search capabilities, making it simple for site surfers to find exactly the rooms they want, where and when they want them. Even more valuable, FreshStay now features a fully integrated booking process so site visitors can 'Find & Book smoke-free properties in a few clicks.'

'There's no need to ever visit another travel Web site or to try to navigate through automated messages over the phone to book lodging properties with Better Indoor Air Quality,' says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality, which founded and operates FreshStay.

As FreshStay continues to evolve to better meet the needs of increasingly health-conscious travelers, the Web site soon will let customers know which properties offer other indoor air quality enhancements, beyond 100 percent smoke-free environments.

'Our goal is to continuously improve our positioning as the most comprehensive directory and integrated booking process for lodging accommodations offering Better Indoor Air Quality - from smoke-free environments to other indoor air initiatives,' Burger says. 'We won't stop at smoke-free.'

Burger says that while there's no doubt that providing a 100% smoke-free stay is the amenity of choice, there are a host of other initiatives lodging properties can and should do to improve the indoor air quality at their facilities, including (to name just a few):

- œ Using Green Seal-certified cleaning products;
- œ Painting rooms with low-odor/low-VOC paints;
- œ Offering improved air and water filtration; and
- œ Furnishing guestrooms and public spaces with allergen-barrier products.

'By listing these additional IAQ (Indoor Air Quality) enhancements on our site in the near future, LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) travelers will be able to pinpoint, and give their business to, properties helping to pioneer the next steps in the fresh air movement sweeping the globe,' Burger adds. 'We're expecting the trend of going smoke-free to continue to mushroom to the point where it becomes the norm for the industry, which is why we at FreshStay will stay ahead of the curve by highlighting additional IAQ enhancements.'

FreshStay Version 2.0

What previous visitors to www.FreshStay.com will immediately notice about the new FreshStay is the simple, clean look of the Web site. Lodging choices are broken down into easily searchable categories, breaking up the listings for hotels and bed & breakfasts/inns, with state-by-state and countries search capabilities (expected to be expanded to city-by-city searches in the near future).

Before, FreshStay visitors searched for lodging options by region. FreshStay Version 2.0 offers state listings (with properties listed in alphabetical order within their respective states) - making it much easier and faster to Book Smoke Free. Besides the added convenience to users, the state breakdown was necessary because of the thousands of smoke-free hotels added recently to FreshStay.

Once the right hotel is found, visitors can click on an interactive map for a larger view of the hotel's surroundings, or click on the listing for more information. Best of all, reservations can be made at all hotels listed on the Global Distribution System (GDS) by clicking on FreshStay's 'Book Now' button.

The new FreshStay also allows hotels to feature special deals under the aptly titled 'Special Offers' link. This is surely the first place Frequent Breathers will check for additional travel-related offers from the corporate sponsors of FreshStay. Finally, FreshStay will include a compendium of smoke-free information and IAQ resources in the Smoke-Free Resources and IAQ sections of FreshStay.

'At FreshStay, we understand that even most smokers prefer smoke-free accommodations,' Burger says. 'With the improvements we've made to FreshStay, all their needs and wants for smoke-free stays are assured - now with fast, easy and secure online bookings directly at www.FreshStay.com.'

Giving Travelers a Choice

A plethora of the new hotel listings on FreshStay come from the recent move by Choice Hotels International to go smoke-free at all of its domestic Comfort Suites hotels.

With its about 433 domestic Comfort Suites properties now 100% smoke free, Choice Hotels has made the second-largest smoke-free commitment from a hotel chain in the U.S., behind only Marriott International's approximately 2,700 properties comprising 400,000 guestrooms in the United States and Canada that went smoke-free last summer. Westin-brand properties rank third, with 77 hotels in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean that went smoke free in January 2006.

Jeff Momin, owner of the Comfort Inn & Suites in Seabrook, Texas, says his hotel made the move to smoke-free in January. The upgrade already is paying big dividends.

'It's been great since we made the decision to make all 49 guestrooms smoke free,' says Momin, who also runs smoke-free Holiday Inn Express properties in Texas and Colorado. 'Guests love the smoke-free atmosphere. It creates a healthy environment for all of our guests, as well as our employees, that everyone - even most smokers - can appreciate.'

'This move is really going to benefit us in the long-run,' Momin adds. 'Not only is it easier on our housekeeping staff to keep rooms clean and smelling fresh, but we hear from guests that they'd gladly come back as return customers.'

FreshStay = The Way

Bob Spraker, director of sales and marketing for Shaner Hotels, has high praise for FreshStay and its mission to promote healthy and refreshing lodgings for Frequent Breathers. Shaner Hotels is a management company and franchisee of Marriott International, Hilton Hotels Corp. and the InterContinental Hotels Group. With more than 20 locations in 15 states, the company on April 1 enacted a smoke-free policy across all of its properties.

'One of the things we're seeing throughout the industry is that becoming smoke-free is an emerging trend,' Spraker says. 'As a Marriott franchisee and realizing Marriott corporate's dedication to this initiative, it certainly made sense to follow suit for all of our Marriott-branded properties.'

'Above and beyond that, it just makes sense to become consistent across the board, and to capitalize on the fact that this is becoming an increasingly important travel consideration on the part of the discriminating traveler,' Spraker adds.

Spraker points to the 'hidden benefits' of going smoke-free as one of the biggest advantages the company has seen. These benefits include better appearance from the lack of cigarette burns on tablecloths and countertops, improved safety from fire hazards and, of course, the fact that the guestrooms and public spaces smell a lot fresher and are a lot cleaner.

Shaner Hotels implemented a policy of charging guests who smoke against the rules \$250 cleaning fees (communicated upfront and on signage). Fortunately, it's a charge the firm hasn't had much use for.

'Since we initiated our smoke-free program, we've received very little, if any, negative feedback - which I look upon as a trend of acceptance,' he says. 'To put it into perspective, we have a full-service Marriott in downtown Durham, N.C. There's been no issue raised by the guests. If we can go smoke-free there, we can go smoke free anywhere.'

'We're glad to partner with FreshStay, as it really is for more than just the people who prefer to stay in non-smoking rooms,' Spraker says. 'There are people who can be physically threatened by spending time in guestrooms and public spaces where there's second-hand smoke, and the health of our guests and employees is always of paramount importance.'

Joining the FreshStay Family

Besides the addition of Comfort Suites hotels, the continuing expansion of FreshStay smoke-free listings proves that this trend won't be a passing one. Smoke-free is a way of life for hotels.

Recently, Walt Disney World announced it will ban smoking in guestrooms at more than 20 of its hotels and timeshare resorts beginning June 1. The new policy applies to all guestrooms, patios and balconies. It also designates outdoor smoking areas at all resorts and timeshare properties affected by the change.

In January 2000, Walt Disney World theme and water parks allowed smoking only in designated areas. Smoking also previously had been prohibited in lobbies, common areas, restaurants and convention space. Demand for smoking rooms at the Walt Disney World properties has steadily declined during the past five years, with less than 3.5 percent of Walt Disney World's 24,000 on-site guestrooms allowing smoking. Requests for non-smoking rooms, Disney says, have increased.

'We make adjustments to our operations based on guest demand,' says operations Senior Vice President Erin Wallace. 'This policy complements our efforts to provide our guests with the healthy living options they are requesting.'

As yet another example, all Gaylord Hotels became completely smoke-free this past February in a response to client feedback as well as to provide healthy environments for guests and staff. The includes the Gaylord's existing properties - Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Gaylord Palms in Kissimmee, Fla., and Gaylord Texan on Lake Grapevine near Dallas - as well as the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, slated to open in 2008 in Prince George's County, Md.

'We pride ourselves on offering extraordinary environments at our properties, which include climate-controlled glass-covered atriums featuring acres of indoor foliage and plants,' says John Caparella, executive vice president and COO of Gaylord Hotels. 'It doesn't seem right to pollute those environments with smoke, especially when our clients increasingly request non-smoking rooms. We care about our meeting attendees, and we also care about our STARS (employees) who no longer will have to be subjected to second-hand smoke.'

Health & Safety

According to the United State Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air is often two to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Adding second-hand smoke only makes matters worse.

While a smoke-free environment attracts customers, it also reduces maintenance costs, insurance premiums and employee absenteeism. Additionally, for example, the EPA estimates that restaurants that go smoke-free save \$190 per 1,000 square feet annually in cleaning and maintenance costs. If clean indoor air policies were adopted nationwide, the EPA estimates the total annual savings in building operations costs could be \$8 billion.

From a health standpoint, a report from the U.S. Surgeon General's office says there is no safe level of second-hand smoke. Exposure to second-hand smoke puts an estimated 126 million people in the U.S. at risk of heart disease, lung cancer and death, and increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, respiratory conditions, ear infections and severe asthma. Meanwhile, Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights reports that every legitimate economic study ever done has shown no negative impact to smoking bans, and in a few cases, studies have shown a positive impact.

'It is absolutely phenomenal how many 100% smokefree hotels are listed at www.FreshStay.com! The ever-expanding roster of smoke-free facilities confirms that more and more Americans are choosing destinations free of second-hand smoke, and that going smoke-free can be an economic boon to responsible businesses,' says Cynthia Hallett, executive director, Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights.

'By promoting hospitality establishments that provide safe, healthy and completely smokefree environments for all, FreshStay practices the true meaning of hospitality,' she adds.

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is an EPA ENERGY STAR(TM) partner providing 'fresh ideas for hospitality' - including FreshStay(R) (www.FreshStay.com), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), the greenSPA(TM) luxury amenity and dispenser system, Numi(TM) Organic Teas, Project Planet(TM) Linen Re-Use programs, Guestat(TM) programmable thermostats, Oxygenics(TM) water-efficient showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, and dozens of other products and programs. For More information about Pineapple, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call Ray Burger at 636-922-2285.

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