

Hilton debuts its Tru brand in Oklahoma City



Hilton has opened the first of its new midscale brand—Tru by Hilton—in Oklahoma City.

The debut of the first Tru by Hilton Oklahoma City Airport hotel marks another milestone. It is Hilton's 5,000th hotel.

The McLean, Va. Company first unveiled plans to start a new midscale brand 16 months ago at the Americas Lodging Investment Conference in Los Angeles.

In that time, Hilton has signed 425 deals with various owners, says Alexandra Jaritz, global head of Tru by Hilton.

Ten new properties are slated to open this year and 75 next year.

With Tru, Hilton says it is targeting a “value-conscious” customer. The price point will be in the \$100 range, depending on the location and time of year.

“You get functionality, you get fun in a spirited atmosphere, all the things you want but you get it at a good value,” Hilton CEO Christopher Nassetta tells USA TODAY.

The new Tru in Oklahoma City has a 2,880-square foot lobby with various areas for working or lounging. The front desk features a social media wall with real-time content. A 24/7 “eat. & sip.” market offers snacks and refreshments, single-serve wine and beer, and light-meal options and sundries.

A complimentary “Top It” breakfast bar has 30 options for sweet and savory dishes, including bagels, donuts, yogurt, granola, hard-boiled eggs, and oatmeal.

Rooms have platform beds, 55-inch TVs with 150 channels from DIRECTV, eight-foot wide windows, and several outlets for powering devices.

A fitness center gives guests access to barre, resistance bands, free weights, cardio and more.

As for technology, there is complimentary Wi-Fi, mobile check-in, room selection and digital key entry to rooms available through the Hilton Honors mobile app.

“There are a whole bunch of customers that we haven’t been able to serve that we want to serve,” Nassetta says.

Hilton has offered options in the mid-scale sector before with the Hampton Inn brand. But Hampton has become more upscale. The company wanted to get back into the mid-scale space to attract people looking for modern conveniences at reasonable prices. While many hotel companies say they are introducing such brands for Millennials, those travelers in their 20s and 30s who are starting to spend more, Hilton says it is looking for a broader market.

“Tru is not just focused on the Millennials,” says Jaritz. “They are certainly part of our target market but this brand has been developed for a customer that shares a common mindset, a zest for life. There are value and travel attitudes they share.”

With Tru, and the Tapestry Collection that Hilton recently introduced, the company now has 14 brands.

But with Tru, says Phil Cordell, global head for focused service and Hampton brand management, Hilton is trying to create a mid-scale brand with many more amenities than travelers typically get in that space.

“The way to think about it, think about a brand like H&M. They have more modern design, they’re affordable to a large group of consumers,” he says. “Very similarly, Tru is doing that not in the fashion industry, but in the lodging experience.”

