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How Tru by Hilton Is Trying to Win Over Millennials

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Courtesy Tru by Hilton

Tru by Hilton has free Wi-Fi and plenty of outlets for your devices.

Hilton's betting on Tru's bright colors, smaller rooms, and big social spaces.

It's straight out of the first chapter in [Marketing to Millennials 101](#): Young people now value experiences over stuff. They want options and customization, local flavors over familiar ones, and shared spaces over personal isolation. And though Hilton's personality-driven new entrant into the midrange hotel world—[Tru by Hilton](#)—isn't officially geared at millennials, it's taken all of those concepts and rolled them into a hotel that's unlike anything the company has offered before.

Tru takes the feel of the college dorms—small rooms, big social spaces, minimalist furniture, and dry erase boards—and updates it for grown-ups. The idea behind Tru is to get people out of their rooms, and to socialize in the common areas, luring them in with amenities like craft beer, games you'd play in your own den, and colorful, comfortable working areas.



Courtesy Tru by Hilton

Tru rooms aren't huge, but that's part of their plan to get you into the lobby.

Rooms aren't big—only 230 to 275 square feet—so while the 7-foot windows and a 55-inch television makes a guest room an inviting place to start and end the day, anyone who works from hotels will want to head to the lobby. As Tru's social hub, the lobby has plush, inviting booths designed for comfortable work, hanging chairs, and even soundproof booths for phone calls. And since the rooms don't have [coffee](#) makers, working travelers will need to head to the lobby for a hot cup of Lavazza if they're trying to jumpstart the creative process.

The lobby also has a designated “play” zone, complete with pool table with stadium seating, oversized Jenga, Connect Four, and [local craft beer](#), which sounds more the description of a hip, new outdoor bar than a hotel lobby, but is exactly the feel Tru is going for. The front desk sells not only that craft beer, but local wines, hot sauces, and prepared foods.



Courtesy Tru by Hilton

At Tru hotels, even the fitness centers are local and specialized.

The emphasis on “going local” fuses with that other millennial favorite—options and customization—at the morning breakfast bar. Here the traditional bagels, donuts, and cereal are supplemented with local toppings (I had peach glaze and pecans in McDonough, Georgia). It also features some local “twists” on breakfast food—my same stop in Georgia offered savory grits made with bacon. To further the local education, the elevator lobby has dry erase boards where staff and guests can suggest bars, restaurants, and activities nearby (the pens are controlled by the front desk, on the off, off chance someone might come home late and possibly draw something inappropriate).



Courtesy Tru by Hilton

Two Tru hotels are now open, with many (many) more on the way.

The rooms have more outlets than most Starbucks, plus high-speed Wi-Fi, making them more device-friendly than some luxury spots. And since so many millennials grew up watching Dateline exposés with [hotel room black lights](#), Tru beds have machine-washable bedspreads that are changed daily. Even the fitness centers are local and specialized: Screens in the gym have QR codes that guests can scan for running routes near the hotel. Those screens also have workouts customizable for time, putting guests through brutal circuits using TRX bands, physiotherapy balls, jump-up boxes, and other functional training equipment.

The first two Tru by Hilton hotels opened in Oklahoma City and McDonough, Georgia this summer, with 425 in development over the next few years. Though Hilton’s official line is the hotel is for any guest with a “zest for life,” the feel is distinctly millennial. (Rates range from \$90 to \$100 a night.) And by taking something nobody ever thought of as having a personality—a midrange chain hotel—and giving it one, Tru by Hilton may just become the go-to for the [next generation of traveler](#).