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3 guestroom trends for 2018

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Guestrooms at Tru by Hilton hotels have no closets, shelves or desks. Photo credit: Hilton.

It's not enough for a guestroom to have a comfy bed and a big TV. With brands fighting for market share and travelers making new demands, guestrooms are catering to different niches by offering new perks, or sometimes offering much less than they used to.

For the coming year, guestrooms will have to be...

1. Functional

Business-focused hotels are working hard to attract the **next generation** of professional travelers—and the WorkLife rooms at IHG's Crowne Plaza hotels were designed to accommodate three primary needs of these guests: The beds provide a place to sleep, the desk provides a place to work and the seating area (either a small loveseat or a sofa with a chaise lounge) provides a place to relax.

The first thing one notices when walking into a WorkLife room is that the beds are not flush against the wall. Instead, the vinyl-padded headboards (with LEDs behind them) are positioned at an angle, making it easier for guests to climb out of bed from either side without needing the bed to be positioned in the center of the room. The headboards also have three electrical outlets and two USB ports on each side of the bed—another nod to the increasingly connected world business travelers live in.

A moveable table by the loveseat can hold food or a computer as needed, or guests can work at a traditional desk along a wall. Naturally, electrical outlets and USB ports are prominent.

2. Simplified

Midscale hotels, meanwhile, are looking to reduce building costs, and are leaning toward smaller, stripped-down rooms (easier to do with flat-screen TVs on the wall instead of sitting on a bureau).

Hilton's Tru brand, which officially **launched in May**, has 231-square-foot guestrooms (compared to Hampton's average of 340 square feet) that do not have closets or chests of drawers that would need to be cleaned and maintained, but use hooks and rods on the walls for storage. The rooms also scrapped a desk in favor of a chair with a large arm that can hold a laptop computer or a notepad.

Similarly, IHG's new Avid brand, announced in September, will also eschew closets or drawers. Instead, the team developed a "working wall," where a central mounted beam along the back wall connects elements including a full-length mirror, a vertical lamp, a mounted TV screen, hooks for hanging items and plugs with USB ports. The guestroom's desk has also been redesigned as a ledge mounted against the wall with open space beneath for additional storage.

3. High-Tech

The problem with incorporating technology into hotels is how quickly the technology changes. That won't, of course, stop hotels from trying, and as trends settle into new normals, these properties are finding ways to make the guest experience better with a high-tech in-room elements.

With Alexa, Siri, Cortana and Google's Assistant becoming permanent residents of people's homes, it's no surprise that they're finding their ways into hotel guestrooms, too. For example, The Time Hotel in Nyack, N.Y., installed Amazon Alexa in its guestrooms, while the Best Western Plus Hawthorne Terrace in Chicago now has the Amazon Echo Dot.

As we noted **earlier this week**, AccorHotels is debuting a new "Smart Room" concept designed to improve guestroom accessibility. Developed by the design solutions department of AccorHotels in association with designer Didier Versavel, the concept room is equipped with features that meet the needs not just of guests with reduced mobility, but all travelers.

Features include a connected tablet that can adjust light and music (through a Devialet Phantomspeaker), close curtains, tilt the guestroom bed's headboard and control audiovisual equipment; LED lighting with footboard motion sensor facilitating movement at night; sleep aids, including Dodow, a device that promotes both concentration and sleep, or Dreem, a headband with integrated brain energy sensors and a relaxation system; and customizable olfactory atmospheres with Sensorwake to create an awakening experience to the aromas of either coffee, tea or sea breeze, as well as shower capsules perfumed with essential oils created by Skinjay.

And then there's the The Confidante Miami Beach, which is **installing machines** that serve wine by the glass in its guestrooms. Because if there's something millennials love more than technology, it's wine.