

TRENDING

Perhaps No Jackets, but Reservations Are Required

Hotels set aside more spaces that only their guests can use.

By ELAINE GLUSAC

In an industry challenged by Airbnb and other home-sharing competitors, hotels are happy to attract locals with laptops and the cocktail crowds to their lobbies.

But popularity risks frustrating guests, who may be forced to retreat to their rooms, which has led to an expansion of guest-only areas like meeting spaces, libraries, quiet rooms and bars.

For hotel operators, these private spaces are similar to the concierge-floor perks, where guests pay a premium for access to a lounge with business facilities and food.

"It's similar to when hotels offer a 'club level' lounge, but in this case, the 'club' is open to all guests," said Henry H. Hartevelde, a travel analyst and the president of Atmosphere Research Group. "Business travelers, in particular, enjoy these facilities, as they can provide a quiet

place to meet, away from the hotel's public spaces."

Some also function as private clubs in the Soho House mold, making amenities enjoyed by club members, such as private restaurants and meeting spaces, available to overnight guests.

"We're big believers in creating a sense of exclusivity," said Michael Achenbaum, the managing partner of the new Curtain hotel in London, which also functions as a membership club.

Its meeting facilities, available to guests and members, includes a boardroom and work tables. "You see people sitting in hotel lobbies working in spaces not designed for the purposes of work," he said.

"We set up the space functionally." Other hotels are opening less defined spaces for quiet time. The Kimpton Hotel Monaco Portland in Oregon hosts a quiet room available to guests who request the key for 30-minute timeouts.

There's no fee to access the room, furnished with an armchair and reading lamp, which provides "a moment of privacy," according to the hotel general manager Ryan Kunzer, for guests to pray,



This library is reserved for guests at the Kimpton Hotel Palomar Philadelphia.

meditate, nurse or read.

Hotel libraries stake out territory between boardrooms and meditation rooms, exclusively giving guests a shared residential-style room to relax in.

The Betsy-South Beach in Miami Beach added a library in December 2016 when it expanded. The Kimpton Hotel Palomar Philadelphia furnishes its 25th-floor li-

brary in a 1929-vintage building with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, binoculars and tufted leather chairs. The guests-only library at the Faena Hotel Miami Beach includes cocktail service.

"Libraries provide a 'third space' for a guest to go to work or read," Mr. Hartevelde said. "I see the libraries as a small way that hotels can attempt to compete

with home-sharing."

Pushed by overcrowding, some hotels are forced to take public amenities private. When the Silo Hotel in Cape Town opened in March 2017, crowds flocked to the rooftop, home to a pool and bar, for views over the waterfront. Shortly thereafter, management closed half of it to ensure that guests of the 28-room hotel could have access.

Popular with afternoon tea takers and bar patrons, the Shelbourne Dublin hotel plans a private bar, open only to guests, this spring.

The new Duniway in Portland, Ore., plans to make its rooftop guest-only beginning in May. Management will offer yoga classes there on Saturdays, and guests will be able to text for food and drink while sitting around the fire pits.

"The space is intended to be very Zen and relaxing, which is a nice alternative to our bustling lobby, which is open to the public," the general manager of the hotel, Eric Walter, said in an email.

Credit the trend to millennial travelers, said Chekitan S. Dev, a

professor of marketing at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration. Millennials, he said, "are interested in what I call 'private public' spaces where private spaces can be secluded, giving them a feeling of exclusivity, while at the same time public, in that they can socialize with a group of friends."

Luxury hotels have a freer hand to cordon off spaces for guests only. The Ivy Hotel in Baltimore makes its spa and ground-floor restaurant available to the public, but reserves a majority of the 1889 property, including a conservatory, library, game room and bar, for occupants of its 18 rooms.

"The concept was always to have the feel of a private house," said the hotel's general manager, Rob Arthur. "With that, you don't want random people traipsing through the mansion."

Not all private spaces are hushed.

The Eldorado Hotel & Spa in Santa Fe runs a nightclub, Casa España, on Friday and Saturday nights open only to hotel guests and to members who pay an annual fee.