

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES

PRESTIGE



COVER FEATURE

Billy Joel's
Masterpiece

TRENDING

Pickleball at
Home is a Hit

WANDERLUST

Hotels For
Tech Lovers

LUXE LIFE

Rugs For
All Rooms



LUXURY COLLECTIONSM

SMART STAYS

By Roger Grody



Photo credit: Courtesy of Tony Kocymian MGM Resorts International (above)

Above:
Twilight views of ARIA
Resort & Casino and
Vdara Hotel & Spa.

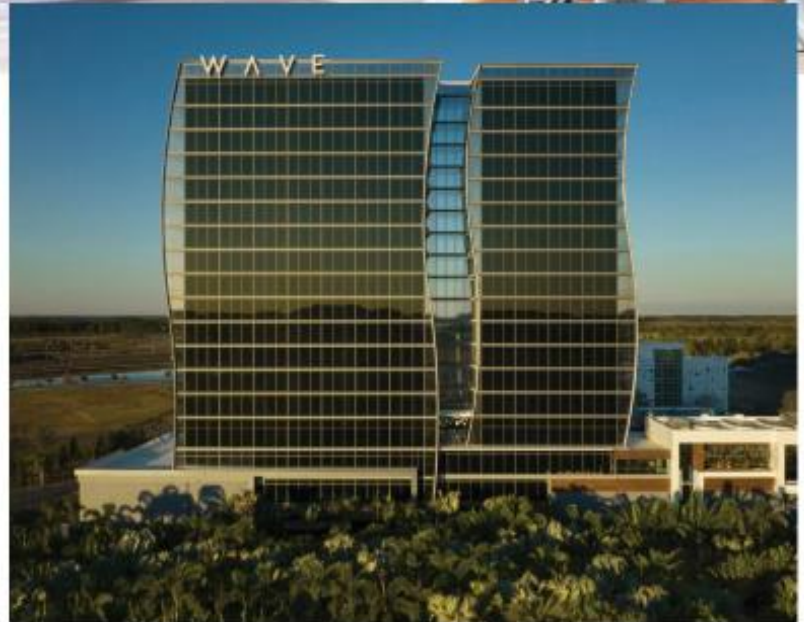
Technology not only makes hotel guests more comfortable but also allows greater control when customizing their experiences.

Many advances currently being promoted by residential developers—smart home technologies that control locks, lighting, and entertainment from the touch of a cell phone—are being more rapidly adopted by hotels. A suite of technologies, from using artificial intelligence (AI) to predict guest preferences to deploying super-fast Wi-Fi 6, are becoming standard in the hospitality industry. Some technologies increase efficiencies behind the scenes while others, such as contactless check-in and super-thin (“wallpaper”) TVs, enhance the guest experience.



A poll commissioned by Mews, a leading hospitality technology platform, reveals that increasing numbers of travelers favor advances like keyless entry and in-room smart tablets. For instance, more than 40% prefer to check in via a hotel's website or app, and nearly 80% reported they would not object to a completely automated front desk. "The most innovative hotels are moving away from a room-centric vision of hospitality into one which embraces experiences," said Mews Founder Richard Valtr. Suggesting technology seamlessly connects guests to their passions, he added, "We love it when hotels use technology to create immersive and truly remarkable guest experiences." In response to the findings, Ryan Krukar, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Gravity Haus, a collection of membership lodges in the Rockies, said, "Technology empowers our customer service teams to create unique 'excite and delight' opportunities for guests, resulting in lifelong memories."

Located in Orlando, Florida, the Lake Nona Wave Hotel is an exceptional example of technology-driven hospitality. The sleek, gently curved tower is wrapped in soothing blue glass that uses AI to dynamically adjust to sunlight, blocking unwanted ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Consistent with its emphasis on well-being, Lake Nona Wave's 234 guestrooms feature voice-automated controls and restorative beds that improve sleep quality through AI-enabled functions tailored to each guest. The hotel is so tech-savvy that it once experimented with a robotic butler named Rosie—an homage to the automated housekeeper in the futuristic, 1960s Jetsons television series—that delivered cocktails to guests in the lobby.



Top left:

A look at the facade of The Beatrice in Providence, RI.

Middle:

An aerial view of the innovative architecture of the Lake Nona Wave Hotel in Orlando, FL.

Bottom:

Luxurious seating in the mezzanine at The Beatrice.

Photo credit: Courtesy of The Beatrice (top left), courtesy of Lake Nona Wave Hotel (middle), courtesy of The Beatrice (bottom)



“
We’ve streamlined our check-in process to allow mobile room keys and offer text communications leading up to and during guests’ stays, so they always have first-class concierge services.”

*Jennifer Curtin,
 General Manager
 The Beatrice
 Providence, Rhode Island*

Above:
 Expansive views from the
 Penthouse living room at the
 Lake Nona Wave Hotel.

Right:
 Deluxe Suite bathroom at
 The Peninsula Tokyo.

The Wave app enables keyless check-in for guests who wish to skip the reception desk and head directly to their rooms. Providing information about hotel services and events, the app also controls room temperature, lighting, window curtains, and entertainment options. “Lake Nona Wave Hotel is continuously adding high-tech updates to maintain its reputation as one of the nation’s most technologically advanced hotels,” said Director of Sales and Marketing James Tattersall. “Travelers can also tap into the future by riding Beep, a network of autonomous vehicles, to dining destinations around the community,” he added. Addressing the reception to these advances, Tattersall reports, “Guests really value how technology is organically woven into their experience.”

Many technology-forward hotels are funky properties—Hotel Zetta in San Francisco and Yotel in New York are among them—that cater to a youthful clientele comfortable with digitized environments. However, high-end properties also participate in this movement to enhance operating efficiency and guest satisfaction. The Peninsula, one of the premier luxury brands in the world, has equipped its Tokyo hotel with technological advances that elevate comfort. For example, a guest can create the perfect mood through lighting and music, chat on a hands-free phone, or watch a steam-free flat-screen TV, all while luxuriating in one of The Peninsula’s signature spa-like deep-soaking tubs.

The Sinclair Hotel in downtown Fort Worth, Texas—the Art Deco landmark is part of Marriott’s distinctive Autograph Collection—uses Power over Ethernet (PoE) technology to incorporate cutting-edge amenities like keyless entry, digital showers, and touchscreen mirrors into a 1930 structure that originally housed oil company offices. Another unlikely fusion of historic charm and technology is found at The Beatrice, a hotel whose 19th-century structure may not immediately scream modernity to passersby. A chic 46-room boutique property in Providence, Rhode Island, The Beatrice provides state-of-the-art ultraviolet air purification systems, keyless room entry, heated bidet toilets, and towel racks to complement the property’s traditional amenities. General Manager Jennifer Curtin reported that the hotel is

constantly seeking to innovate the guest experience. “We’ve streamlined our check-in process to allow mobile room keys and offer text communications leading up to and during guests’ stays, so they always have first-class concierge services,” said Curtin. The Beatrice’s “Be Rested” package includes Therabody SmartGoggles that provide personalized sleep-enhancing experiences.

The Aria Resort & Casino in Las Vegas allows express check-in from one’s cell phone—avoiding the city’s notoriously long reception lines is a blessing—and provides smart tablets in every room. From the tablet, a guest can schedule room service, spa treatments, or show tickets and, in theory, one day be alerted to when a seat at a particular blackjack table becomes available. The device currently allows guests to sync a morning alarm with the opening of curtains, as well as regulate room temperature or adjust evening mood lighting to complement views of the Strip.

A short stroll from Seattle’s Pike Place Market is Hotel 1000, where technology is fully embedded in the guest experience. Infrared presence-sensing technology alerts housekeeping when guests have left their rooms, eliminating interruptions, and visitors can digitally connect to hotel services. After a day of sightseeing or business meetings, guests can go online to book an in-room spa experience. A “spa butler” then prepares an indulgent bath—with optional champagne and caviar—or arranges a massage at the hotel’s full-service spa.

