

# Franchise Times®

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Hotels & Hospitality

## Future Guestroom?

### Flushing out the latest technology

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Not many years ago, the idea of a self-flushing toilet seemed far-fetched. Similarly, tomorrow's guestrooms may include technology—such as ones described below—that appear too futuristic now, but could one day become commonplace.

### Cell phone remote controls

Using technology by FoneKey, guests can use their cell phones for tasks such as opening their hotel room door to designating room preferences to paying for their bill. Because the mobile phone eliminates the need for a physical key to enter the room, a guest can check in remotely from the airport or during a business meeting. President Don Mossman said FoneKey technology used with a cell phone could open a hotel room across country borders. To date, FoneKey has negotiated its first contracts; the technology will be installed in two hotels in Bombay, India, by 2008. FoneKey CEO Syed Quadri declined to cite prices for the technology.

### Completely washable beds

Move over Sleep Number beds, U.K.-based Ammique is launching a bed with a patented system comprised of thousands of springs, designed to provide a sleeping surface that contours inch by inch to a body's curves. An Ammique bed has no traditional mattress or box spring, and is completely washable, eliminating homes for dust mites and other critters that typically reside in beds. Ammique Marketing Director Marlene Greenhalgh said the beds can last 200 years, but hoteliers will be willing to pay for that level of durability. A king-size Ammique bed runs about \$21,000

### Remote control, flame-free candles

With the touch of a button, guests can have candle ambiance in their hotel room, without the fire hazard, using Flame Free Candles. The flameless wax candles are made of real wax and look and smell like real candles; however, the inside of the candle contains electronics that provide a flickering flame. Each candle kit comes with a wireless remote control, which works up to 100 feet away. For the hospitality market, Flame Free Candles claims its candle trio, which sells for \$120, is its most popular selling item.

## Waterproof TVs

Aquavision waterproof TVs can be installed in showers, saunas and other areas previously considered TV-free zones. The TVs have a slim profile and can be fitted into any stud or solid wall, giving it a 'built in' look. All units feature heated screen areas to prevent the front from misting up in humid conditions or freezing up in cold conditions, and all TVs come with a floating remote control. At around \$2,700 for a 15-inch TV, however, this TV is unlikely to appear in budget accommodations.

## Switchable privacy glass

As seen on the TV show "CSI: Miami," hotels can now, too, incorporate switchable privacy glass—a laminated safety glass panel with liquid crystal interlayer that can be changed from a cloudy white translucent barrier to an optically clear translucent state in 100 milliseconds using a switch. An average-size panel runs \$3,300.

## Has the wake-up call come to this?

Alarm clocks on the prowl: nanda nanda LLC offers an alarm clock called Clocky for \$49 that runs away and hides when guests don't initially wake up. After the alarm sounds and the guest presses snooze, Clocky rolls off the bedside table, falls to the floor and wheels away, bumping into objects until it finds a resting spot. When the alarm sounds again, the guest must get up and track the clock down to turn it off.