

WITH BRANDS YOU'VE

never heard of popping up on what seems like a weekly basis, choosing a place to stay has gotten harder than ever. It doesn't help that so many of them sound the same, look the same, and promise the same amenities. In short, they're all examples of what the hotel industry calls a "lifestyle" hotel—which generally means a sense of style at a reasonable price. To help you figure out the brand for you, *Travel + Leisure* scouted the fastest-growing newcomers to see what makes them tick and how well they live up to their ambitions.



1 HOTELS

The big idea

High-end style with a (relatively) low carbon footprint, for those who like the idea of eco-friendly hotels but don't want to sacrifice comfort.

Where they are now

Miami and Manhattan

Where they're going next

Brooklyn

Starting rate

\$399

As flashy, scene-driven hotels open up at lightning speed in Miami, there's rarely much talk among developers of

environmentalism. But at the 1 Hotel South Beach, sustainability is the driving force. The airy, earth-toned lobby has a living wall and a ceiling made from reclaimed oak from the East Coast. An excellent Tom Colicchio restaurant on the first floor emphasizes farm-to-table cooking. And in our whitewashed, 650-square-foot entry-level room, we found recycled-cardboard hangers, cedar-scented bath products in big, reusable bottles, and a thoughtful welcome note made out of plantable seed paper. The hotel even invested in

a triple-filtered water system to encourage guests to reach for the tap, not the Evian.

A green ethos can sometimes make for awkward service (might I reuse my towels?), but not here: at the 1 Hotel South Beach, the youthful staff is more soulful than preachy. Room-service tea trays, for example, arrive within 10 minutes, bearing a tiny cactus as decoration. And upon checkout, guests who ask for a printed copy of their bill will be met with a polite refusal—the hotel, we were told, is trying to be paper-free. 1hotels.com.

WHY NOW?

Three trends that explain the rise in lifestyle hotels.

1. It's all about the millennials. There are two things budding jet-setters want: constant Wi-Fi and not to feel like a tourist. Hotel companies are listening—and the results appeal to more than just today's twentysomethings. According to Tina Edmundson, Marriott's global brand officer, "Lifestyle hotels tap in to a new creative class, including young entrepreneurial business types who want affordable access to art, culture, and design, as well as more-seasoned, independent travelers who appreciate singular experiences and high standards of service."
2. Travelers want to feel like part of a club. "We know a lot of people are looking for a shared experience among like-minded guests," says Barry Sternlicht,

CEO of Starwood Capital Group, whose new brand, 1 Hotels, is built for luxury seekers with a passion for sustainability. He's not the only hotelier thinking more about psychographics than about demographics. Graduate Hotels caters to alumni in college towns, while InterContinental's Even Hotels focuses on wellness. For all three, the appeal lies in a strong sense of belonging.

3. Affordable real estate and "cool neighborhoods" go hand in hand. Rapidly gentrifying areas may not be ideal for legacy brands, but they're perfect for travelers who want to feel more integrated into the fabric of a city—and be far away from its tourist traps. They're also a dream for developers. Gray Shealy,

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NUMBER OF LIFESTYLE BRANDS THAT HAVE LAUNCHED GLOBALLY IN THE PAST YEAR, AT T+L'S LAST COUNT.

executive director of the Master's of Hospitality Management program at Georgetown University, says, "Up-and-coming neighborhoods give lifestyle brands an insider's look at a location—a strategy Airbnb has leveraged." Other perks? Potential for character-

packed buildings. Construction costs can be higher in these, but guests are often willing to pay more for unique design touches.