

THE PENINSULA

H O T E L S

25 February 2008

IN-ROOM TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESS OR LEISURE - INVENTIVE, UNOBTRUSIVE, STATE-OF-THE-ART AND CUSTOM DESIGNED

The Peninsula Hotels not only has eight of the world's finest luxury hotels throughout the U.S. and Asia, but is also a veritable pioneer and industry leader in the research and development of innovative guestroom technology.

The Peninsula is the only hotel company in the world with its own Research and Development facilities to design, build and customise equipment to serve the group's guests, versus installing standard technology used by other hotel groups. All in-room technology is developed and then tested to perfection by the Electronic Services Department, comprising a team of 20 electronic and software engineers who are able to respond to guests' every need through a combination of observation, innovation and technological know-how.

The group's philosophy is to provide user-friendly, intuitive technology for today's increasingly demanding and sophisticated hotel guests to enhance comfort and the overall hotel experience - whether on business or vacation, the technology is there to assist guests with work or simply to relax and "repair" with the room as their sanctuary.

As technology and guests' expectations continue to develop at breakneck speed, The Electric Services Department is tasked to keep abreast of – and indeed ahead of – these requirements. The opening of The Peninsula Tokyo on 1 September 2007 has taken these initiatives to a new level of creativity and invention.

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“We recognized that in order to remain at the forefront of the hospitality industry, we have to be innovative,” comments Mr Ingvar Herland, Assistant General Manager, Research and Technology, who heads up the Electronic Services Department. “It’s all about recognising guests’ needs and answering those needs, and our greatest success lies in the fact that guests see our ‘gift’ of electronics not as technology, but an added benefit that they cannot find in other hotels.”

Guestrooms are designed so that every control and switch is located precisely where it’s required and thus used by guests without having to think or search. The compact Bedside Control Panel provides centralised and effortless control of temperature, lighting, telephones, alarm clock, curtains and audio-visual systems at the touch of a fingertip.

Additional features include dual-voltage multi-pin sockets throughout (thus negating the need for adaptors), and in-room humidifiers in Japan installed through the standard heating and air conditioning system to combat Tokyo’s distinct season climates, and a nail-dryer located in the spacious dressing area.

“Most of our innovations stem from guest comments or our own observations - especially of our guests’ busy schedules and lifestyles - and how we can address these to make their stay with us as smooth and seamless as possible,” notes Herland. “For example, a member of our team was at our hotel in Chicago, and noticed a lady exiting the elevator waving her hands in the air. We talked to her later, and she told us that she had painted her nails, but did not have enough time to allow the polish to dry before her next appointment. Thus we developed and incorporated a nail-dryer into each room at The Peninsula Tokyo so that busy female guests would not suffer any inconvenience or delay caused by wet nail polish”.

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All Peninsula Hotels offer complimentary broadband Internet access in their guestrooms, together with a fax machine. At The Peninsula Tokyo, the fax machine has been adapted by the ESD team to also be used as a printer and copier - the guest simply plugs the laptop into the fax machine.

Internet radio is another innovation at The Peninsula Tokyo, enabling guests to select over 3,000 radio stations of their choice, in addition to a selection of pre-set international channels. On check-in, the radio is automatically programmed to the guest's country of residence.

“This also stems from an actual guest experience,” continues Herland. “One of our guests - a Japanese guest, as it happens - had just spent the entire day meeting with lawyers in the USA, and on returning to the hotel, told us that he was exhausted and just wanted to re-adjust by immersing himself in his own language and culture by listening to the radio. We realized the importance of being able to relax in your own language, so we then devised ways to make it as effortless and relaxing as possible for our guests to re-focus themselves after a busy day - and we feel that this is especially important in a frenetic city like Tokyo”

This concept of relaxation and choice continues with The Peninsula Tokyo's television system, which offers a triple serving of viewing options. Firstly, an extensive selection of cable, satellite and an on-demand information system, secondly a video-on-demand function (some of which is complimentary) featuring approximately 80 movies and US TV programming, and lastly a “Peninsula Lifestyle” option, offering a variety of lifestyle viewing options comprising travel, music, fashion, fitness and wellness programming in a selection of languages.

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One of the more recent developments is the addition of wireless Internet access throughout all Peninsula properties. In addition to the guest rooms, the wireless coverage also includes public areas like The Lobby, pool, meeting and function rooms. All Peninsula Hotels offer broadband Internet access in their guest rooms on a complimentary basis.

The Peninsula Tokyo is completely WI-FI enabled, and communication with the outside world reaches new heights with the Peninsula-developed phone system. Each room features two types of telephone - a wired phone, which can also be synchronised with guests' personal mobile phones to enable the automatic transfer of an incoming call via Bluetooth synchronisation to any handset in the room, and to make Skype calls in addition to regular calls. As an additional small touch to make guests' lives easier, each phone features a Peninsula-developed non-slip friction pad on the handset to stop the phone slipping in the hand or when balanced on the shoulder.

The second phone is a portable phone developed in conjunction with NEC, which functions anywhere within the hotel as the in-room phone, yet converts to a mobile phone that can place outgoing calls within the Tokyo metropolitan area on going out of the hotel.

Another guest-friendly touch is that if a phone call comes through at night when the room is in darkness, the wall sconce lights up, bathing the telephone in gentle light for the duration of the call and then extinguishing on hanging up.

Forgot to hang the Do Not Disturb sign on the door of any Peninsula hotel? Much easier than a sign, The Peninsula Do Not Disturb button on the Bedside Control Panel will light a display outside the door, as well as silence the doorbell and notify housekeepers not to enter the room. At bedtime, when a guest turns off the lights, the bedside lights fade gently to black to avoid an abrupt plunge into darkness. Press the Night Light button and a softly lit path to the bathroom will appear to help navigation in the early hours of the morning.

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However, The Peninsula Tokyo's luxuriously appointed bathrooms also incorporate signature Peninsula technology to great advantage. Mood lighting with a choice of three distinct ambient settings allows guests to create an atmosphere tailored to their needs - whether getting ready to go out or relaxing in a hot bath.

Recognising the need for relaxation in Tokyo, one of the world's busiest cities, a "spa button" located to the side of the soaking tub enables the guest to create their own in-room spa ambience. A touch of the button automatically dims the bathroom lights, plays soothing spa music and sets the "Do Not Disturb" command for the phone and doorbell, thus ensuring relaxing and interruption-free time. In addition, a television with a steam-free screen and remote-control function is installed above the bathtub. "Do Not Disturb" buttons are also incorporated beside the tub and in the toilet for added privacy should someone unexpectedly wish to enter the room.

Further recognising the need to relax, the digital clock set into the mirror disappears when the lighting is set to the lowest setting, and of course the bathroom air-conditioning has been designed to ensure steam-free mirrors at all times.

The technology also guarantees that guests are never out of touch (unless they want to be) by placing a hands-free telephone with controls near the tub, and telephones at the vanity counter and near the toilet. All are equipped with functions that automatically mute sound on the TV or radio for the duration of the call, and digitally filter the sound of running water and bathroom echo.

When guests are ready to leave the room, they can check the outdoor temperature and humidity level on the convenient display located in the dressing room and at the desk - much easier than craning their necks out the window to see how people outside are dressed. The wind speed and direction is also displayed in a separate weather display located in the living room.

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“Our ideas come from listening to our guests and our own hotel experiences,” explains Herland, who along with senior Peninsula Hotels executives, is constantly traveling. “The hotel room is our guests’ temporary space. Not just their workspace, it is their home away from home to which they retire at the end of the day. As expectations grow, it is important that we provide facilities for our guests to unwind, and facilities that do not entail a technical education just to learn how to switch on the lights.”

As the only hotel group in the world with its own Research and Development facilities, conducting its own proprietary research and development allows the group to design and produce technology tailor-made to meet the specific needs of its guests, ensuring that The Peninsula Hotels continues to stay ahead of the latest technology available.

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Incorporated in 1866 and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited is a holding company whose subsidiaries are engaged in the ownership and management of prestigious hotels, and commercial and residential properties in key destinations in Asia and the USA. The hotel portfolio of the Group, The Peninsula Hotels, comprises The Peninsula Hong Kong, The Peninsula New York, The Peninsula Chicago, The Peninsula Beverly Hills, The Peninsula Tokyo, The Peninsula Bangkok, The Peninsula Beijing, The Peninsula Manila, The Peninsula Shanghai (opening 2009), and Quail Lodge Resort and Golf Club in Carmel, California. The property portfolio of the Group includes The Repulse Bay complex, The Peak Tower and The Peak Tramways, St. John's Building and The Landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

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