

London Trend Report August 2007

Smart Urban Sleeping Solutions

As in many of Europe's capital cities, London rents are so high and getting on the property ladder so hard, that many people struggle with finding a place to live near their work that they can afford. As a result Londoners have become inventive, and several smart sleeping solutions have appeared on the market that are proving very popular.

A growing number of people are purchasing so-called buy-to-let hotel rooms. This is a new scheme from a company called GuestInvest that allows you to buy a room in one of their hotels which you are allowed to occupy yourself (or your friends or family) for free for up to 52 nights in the year. This has proved popular for people who have a long commute and need a place to stay when work runs late. The company slogan is "earn money while others sleep", hence, on the other nights, the rooms are let out normally to paying guests, and the investor receives 50% of this room revenue every quarter. At GuestInvest a room could cost anything from around 400,000 € for a double room, and the company which started with a small hotel in Notting Hill is about to open two new ones shortly.

Other schemes to help relive the housing problem include becoming a part-time lodger. One innovative new website called www.mondaytofriday.com brings people who need a base they can call home during the week together with others who would like to earn some extra cash from a spare bedroom. As one happy customer says "As a Monday to Friday lodger, I've got the best of both worlds. No frustrating and tiring daily commute; just a 15 minute tube ride from home to work. Then, at the weekends I go home for real." Furthermore the scheme means that the homeowners have their privacy at weekends (hence the site is just for people looking for accommodation ONLY from Monday to Friday).••And the website cleverly earns money from both the lodgers and the homeowners.

In the 21st Century luxury will be available to everybody at the right cost and here is a taste of that future. We've used the language of business class airlines because they know how to use a small space and some of the technology of luxury yachts to create our three tier cabin system. Premium cabins for those who want a bit more cabins with a bigger double bed. Standard cabins with everything you'd expect from a comfortable hotel in a small space and cabin for two, both with en suite bathrooms, cabin entertainment and room service and soon to come Economy cabins with a difference.

For those whose commuting path runs through or near to Gatwick airport, an enterprising new hotel has just opened. From Simon Woodroffe, the owner of fast-food chain Yo Sushi, comes Yotel, which he claims is a solution to "boring and expensive hotels". The design of these small-cabins cleverly mimics first class airplane and yacht accommodation – and there are even premium, standard and accessible (for wheelchairs or limited mobility) cabins for rent for just a few hours or for the night. As the website promises, "In the 21st Century luxury will be available to everybody at the right cost and here is a taste of that future. We've used the language of business class airlines because they know how to use a small space and some of the technology of luxury yachts to create our three tier cabin system". Indeed the idea came to Woodroffe while flying first class overnight. The rooms have been described as a cabin or a cocoon, and all have an en-suite bathroom, a "techno-wall" incorporating radio, music (you can even create your own playlist for future stays), free wi-fi, and naturally a TV. Booking can be done on-line, prices are from around 40 € for a standard room for a minimum of 4 hours. As one satisfied customer said, "it's so much fun playing around with the remote controls that I could miss a flight."

www.guestinvest.com

www.mondaytofriday.com

www.yotel.com