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What to Expect Next Travelers are raising the bar for vacation amenities By Harvey Chipkin



It started with the so-called "bed revolution." Hotel chains began offering plush new mattresses and down duvets. As better beds won over visitors, the battlefront expanded. Bathrooms got elaborate showerheads; flat-screen TVs appeared. Hotel rooms started looking like home - if not nicer. Needless to say, timeshare resorts have kept pace with the trend. In fact, many hotels take their cues from timeshares, says Trisha Poole, head of Design Poole. "I think the hotel companies are now looking to [us] for ways to make guests feel comfortable and at home."

In fact, the little extras at timeshare units are often as nice as those at luxury hotels, says Slifer Designs' Donna Figg. "It's not just having a five-piece bathroom," she says, "but having a steam shower and using colors and colored lights to create a feeling." Kitchens - one of timeshares' biggest distinguishing factors- are getting upgraded as well. "Many developers believe it's something people want," designer Cole Martinez Curtis says.

And it looks as if standards will continue to rise, according to Scott Berman, an industry specialist at PricewaterhouseCoopers. "The fact that approximately a third of units now sell for more than \$20,000 per interval week speaks to a higher-quality product."



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