

STYLE & FASHION | ON TREND

How About a Hoodie with that Toothpaste? The New Wave of Hotel Shops

By stocking branded merchandise alongside designer trinkets, trendy hotel chains like the Standard, the Ace and the W are reimagining the traditional gift shop



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The interior of the Ace Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Like most of the Ace's locations, this shop features an array of co-branded items that bear the Ace's logo. PHOTO: ACE HOTELS

The Line Hotel in Los Angeles does not have a traditional Tylenol-and-toothpaste hotel store. In the lobby, instead, is an outpost of Poketo, a small west-coast boutique chain [whose website](#) promises a “carefully curated...collection of design-conscious goods meant to cultivate a creative lifestyle.” On a recent visit to the hotel, I wandered into the store and found teepee-shaped incense burners, jute-fiber tote bags and primary-colored stools. The only thing for sale that I could actually have used during my four-day stay at the Line was a toothbrush, a sleek black one that made the Oral-B in my bag seem awfully pedestrian.

When it comes to lobby stores, hotel have been forced to adapt dramatically since the Howard Johnson 1950s, or even the ‘90s. No one sends postcards in the texting age. Snow globes have devolved into chintzy tchotchkes. And a Diet Coke? Why there’s a minibar for that. Today, in an effort to stay relevant, many lobby shops around the world are closer in spirit to upscale boutiques.

Whereas guests once purchased Ritz Carlton sheets to relive the opulence of an overnight stay, some visitors today are buying hotel-branded clothes in lobby stores in a more showy, “I was there” sort of way. A [McKinsey study released last year](#) found that millennials are spending more money on experiences than products, and hotels have found a way to offer both. A T-shirt from Hotel San José in Austin, a ball cap from the El Rey Inn in Santa Fe, or a sweatshirt from Chicago Athletic Hotel show off that you’re a worldly traveler. Or perhaps that you were savvy enough to buy that Chicago Athletic Hotel sweatshirt on the hotel’s website. Cosmopolitan status, without the expense of a plane ticket.