

Travel

Hotel of the future

Innovative thinkers conjure up hotel rooms fit for the Jetsons.

BY KIMBERLY LISAGOR

IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE, the bed in your hotel room could have pillowcases that glow for nighttime reading, a high-tech mattress that monitors your vital signs as you sleep, and bedding that balances your nutritional needs by delivering vitamins and minerals through your sheets.

These are just a few of the ideas some forward-thinking lodging, health care and retail professionals introduced during a series of brainstorming sessions called Hotel of Tomorrow. The objective, says creator

Rooms will give guests amenities they didn't know they wanted.

technological innovations to deliver comfort, cleanliness and convenience. You'll also want more personalized services, like menus and TV guides that factor in

Ron Swidler, senior vice president of design firm Gettys, is "to give guests what they want before they even know to ask for it."

What you'll want, the experts say, is a hotel room that uses

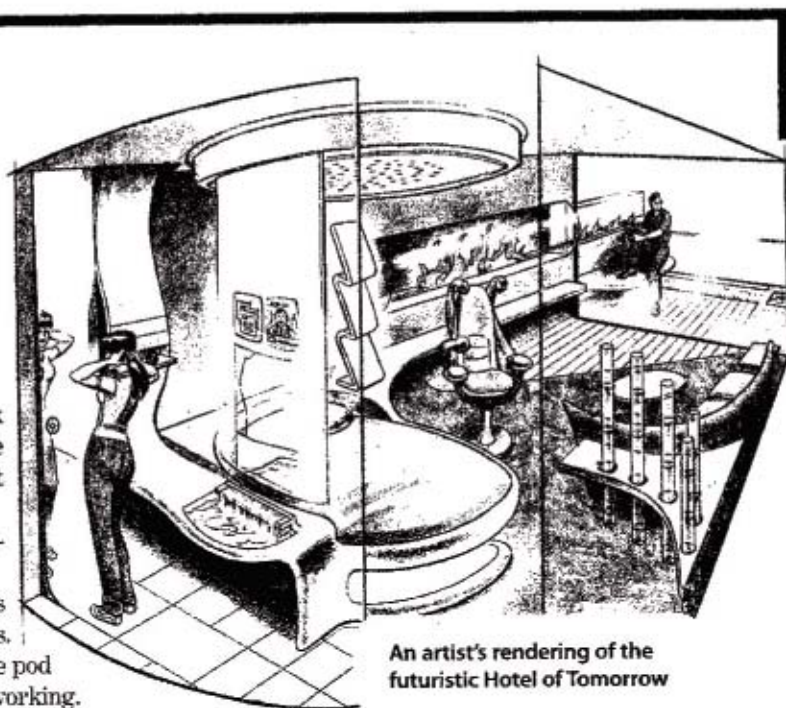
your preferences; the ability to work and relax in the same space; and the comfort of knowing your stay won't harm the environment.

You may find the following amenities in the hotel room of 2026:

- Bathroom floors and bedsheets made with bacteria-repelling materials.
- A wireless, self-contained office pod that folds up when you're finished working.
- Flexible, movable illumination panels that can turn any surface into a source of light.
- Robots that clean your room, transport your baggage and deliver your room service.

"It will be less about what the color of the wallpaper is," says Steve Tipton, a vice president of the Simmons Bedding Company, "and more about functional design, wonderful aesthetics — and making access to all of that a very simple process."

At a trade show in Miami next month, Simmons and



An artist's rendering of the futuristic Hotel of Tomorrow

other Hotel of Tomorrow innovators will debut a futuristic hotel room featuring prototypes from more than 40 companies. Some of the more costly design concepts likely will remain in the realm of science fiction for quite some time — like the ability to project images from the Internet or TV in midair. But other ideas will appear soon. "We used ingenuity and imagination and created a product that will be very successful," Tipton says. "It's pretty neat stuff." 