

June 2009

An Element of surprise

Lots of hotels claim to be environmentally conscious, but we have a sneaking suspicion that those little cards persuading us to reuse our towels are more about saving money than protecting the environment. Not so with **Starwood Hotels'** new **Element** brand, which takes its inspiration from the company's luxe Westin and chic W hotels but raises the eco bar by seeking LEED certification for every new property, essentially setting a new industry standard. The first Texas outpost opened in Houston in March to rave customer reviews, and another opens in Irving (at Interstate 635 and Belt Line Road) next month. And while the chain is meant to appeal to those concerned about the environment, even the most dedicated tree-hugger will delight in the savvy, modern design. Warm, contemporary guest rooms are equipped for brief or extended stays, with fully stocked kitchens, modular furniture, large workspaces and Starwood's signature Heavenly beds. Outside the rooms, the hotels offer grab-and-go pantries stocked with healthful gourmet foods, all-natural saline swimming pools, preferred hybrid parking and complimentary bikes and helmets. Rooms start at \$100. For more information, go to www.starwoodhotels.com/element.



Element's signature lobby is designed for multitasking, with modular, movable furniture and spaces that allow guests to work, relax or interact, depending on their needs.

Photo courtesy of Starwood Hotels