

Exclusive: How Comcast and a celebrity chef are launching this S.F. hotel

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Hotel Via is the first San Francisco hotel to be built from the ground up since 2008, and the folks behind the new 159-room boutique property are taking advantage of a bevy of new technology that's popped up since then.

Technology has played an increasing role in hotels' ability to deliver on service, and through a partnership with [Comcast Business](#), the boutique hotel, which opened its doors yesterday, geared up a mobile concierge, personal tablets in each room to call for room service and access to personal Netflix accounts.



Hotel Via officially opened June 21, 2017, about three years since construction for the property began.



The 159-room boutique hotel is located directly across from the AT&T ballpark at 138 King St. in the South Beach area.



Through a partnership with Comcast Business, the hotel's general manager said the property is looking to be "the most tech-savvy hotel in the Bay Area."



Guests will have access to in-room tablets that will control room temperature, provide access to various newspaper subscriptions, order room service and serve as a personal concierge.



The hotel will also give guests access to an app that will allow remote check-ins and the ability to use their cell phone as a room key.



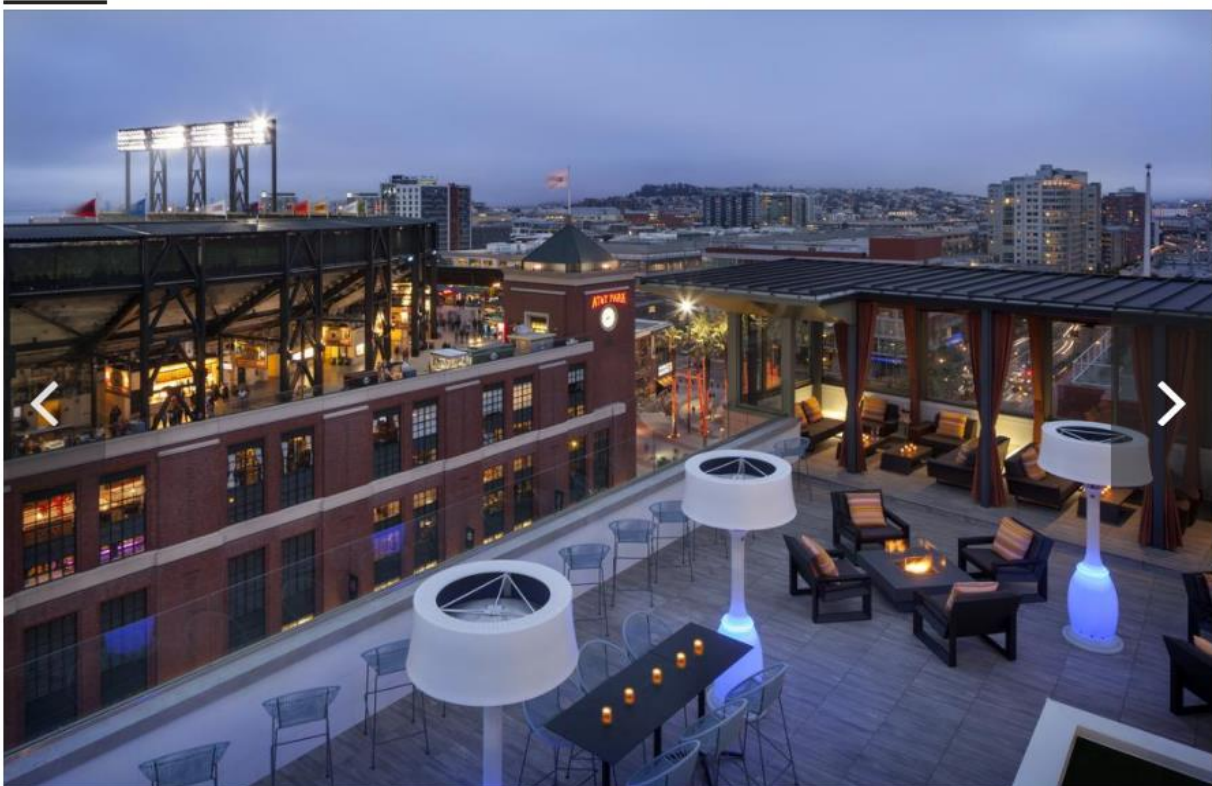
The average rate for a room at Hotel Via is expected to range between \$300 to \$600 a night.



The hotel touts three dining options – The City Room, Bar Via and Rooftop at Via.



The 3,000-square-foot Rooftop at Via is the first rooftop lounge in the South Beach neighborhood that provides views of the ballpark, the bay and the city skyline.



JEFF ZARUBA

Other amenities at the property include a meeting room, event space, a communal workspace and technology hub, as well as a fitness center.

"Hotels used to be about the bed and the shower; now they are about the technology first, and then the bed and shower," [Barbara Perzigian](#), the hotel's general manager said. "If you had a bad shower or bed you can give people a few drinks to forget about it. But if you have an Internet problem, there's not enough booze in the world to keep them at the hotel."

The property, located across from the AT&T Ballpark at 138 King St., has an average rate between \$300 and \$600 a night.

"When you build something from the ground up, you have a great opportunity to start with all of the right technology," Perzigian said of decisions like incorporating fiber-network-ready cable. "We'll never replace the humanness of the hospitality business, but the technology we put in makes it easy for the guest and makes it easy for us to take care of the guest."

At a private event to launch the boutique hotel, Comcast Business partner and celebrity chef [Robert Irvine](#) said the ability to adopt the technology that creates a seamless guest experience will make or break a business — whether it's a restaurant, a hotel or an entertainment venue.

The Comcast Cable offspring — which is in negotiations with other soon-to-be completed San Francisco hotel properties to be their network provider — has found that guest services such as in-room and public Wi-Fi, mobile apps and payments, location-based services, room control devices, in-room video entertainment, and check-in and check-out kiosks have become the new standard.

"Technology for hotels is something that needs to add convenience to a guests' experience," [Comcast Business](#) Vice President [Ted Girdner](#) said. "How can we make it so the hospitality venues can focus on the guests, and have more time to do it because the technology supports the interactions they're going to have?"

Hotel properties across the city are sinking money into technology.

The Stanford Court Hotel in Nob Hill, for example, is knee-deep in a \$16 million renovation geared toward upgrading the property to attract tech-savvy millennials and business travelers. The soon-to-open Yotel San Francisco in Mid-Market will offer smart televisions, automated check in, an app for guests to request a later check-out or get nearby restaurant recommendations, and of course, the obligatory free Wi-Fi.

With hotels scrambling to grab hold of the technology-focused demographic, here are the other amenities Hotel Via is hoping will lend it an edge over other San Francisco properties:

- A keyless lock system that gives guests the ability to check-in with a mobile device that serves as a digital room key
- No limit on the number of devices guests can use to access high speed data, voice and video
- Multiple newspapers accessible through each room's tablet
- An app to access hotel services, set room temperature, order room service, curate city guides or make concierge requests

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