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# Broad Appeal for New York's Pod Hotels

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*PHOTO: Keeping it basic at the Pod 39 Hotel in Manhattan. (Courtesy of BD Hotels)*

New York City hotel rates are almost as famous for their soaring heights as the city's skyline. Lodging and housing has been a problem in the Big Apple since the original John Jacob Astor got out of the beaver business and got into real estate in the 1830s. Recently, New York City sponsored a competition to encourage development of reduced-cost "micro apartments." The winner, My Micro NY, will be unveiled this spring with 55 units ranging from 260- to 360-square feet and plenty of public amenities as an antidote to the small size of the apartments, including a public meeting space, café, rooftop garden, storage space, bike room, gym, and more.

Begun in Tokyo in the 1970s, the pod concept is now popping up all over. Last fall, the [Antwerp Student Hostel](#) opened Western Europe's [first capsule hotel](#) with prices from about \$31 per night. Just recently [Helsinki Airport](#) installed [GOSleep sleeping pods](#). The Finnish pods are basically easy chairs that convert to bed cocoons with space for luggage storage and a hard case cover can to banish the light and the cacophonous song of the airport.


In New York City, the hotels got there first when BD Hotels opened its original [Pod Hotel](#) the 345-room Pod 51 back in 2007 on East 51st Street. In creating the rooms that range between 60 and 120 square feet, designer Vanessa Guilford took many of her ideas from the way mass transit in the city exploited micro-space with intuitive design features. Guilford's rooms use the kind of space-saving solutions used aboard trains, planes and boats. Decked with high-tech amenities and built-in-storage, rooms offer guests everything they need and not a single thing that they don't.

***TIP:** This concept might work best when the weather's fine and you don't mind spending quality time outdoors. Also these kinds of lodging really encourage opportunities to meet other guests.*

What Pod 51 and the subsequent 366-room Pod 39, which opened in 2012 on East 39th Street, do offer is efficient, clean accommodations that are complemented by what they call "vibrant communal spaces and high-tech amenities." Pod 51 offers an outdoor garden while Pod 39 added a rooftop lounge, a communal "Play Room," Salvation Taco restaurant and wall-mounted iPads and projection screens. And the price is right as Pod 51 rates start at \$89 per night, and Pod 39 rates start at \$119 per night. The difference in price reflects the difference between en-suite bathrooms at Pod 39 versus communal bathrooms at Pod 51.

It's not one size fits all. Pod 51 has six different configurations: single, full, queen, bunk, full x2 and studio. Pod 39 offers all of those plus a configuration called mini-bunk. Both hotels offer such creative amenities as walking tours of such New York City attractions as street art or the Highline.

According to a spokesman, the hotels, though designed for youth, have nonetheless seen a broad demographic range in the guests that come. The hotel has drawn older people, families and of course, the Millennials, that the properties target. Both properties enjoy high occupancy rates averaging out across the year in the 80s.

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