

New hotel check-in at touch of a screen

JESSICA HURT
TRAVEL EDITOR

A SELF-SERVE hotel, where guests check themselves in using a vending-like machine, is the latest tool being used to lure the lucrative tourist dollar.

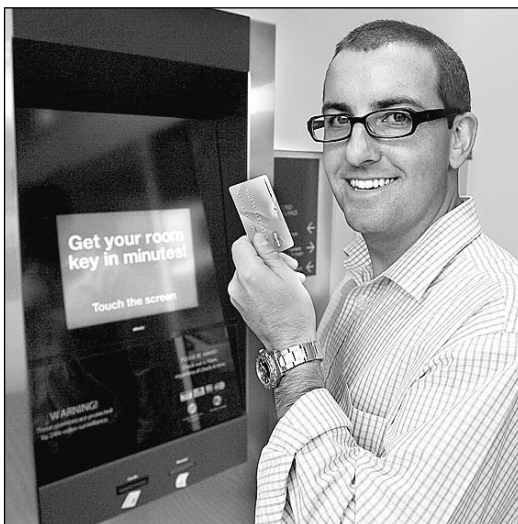
The \$9 million Minima Hotel on Melbourne St, North Adelaide, the first in South Australia to use this technology, is expected to open in about a week.

The Advertiser revealed plans for the concept in May, 2006.

The only on-site staff at the hotel will be cleaners.

The do-it-yourself scheme is part of a trend for affordable accommodation for the technologically savvy, budget-conscious traveller.

Guests at the three-storey boutique hotel use a touch screen machine to pay for their room by credit card. They then are issued with a card



HANDY: Owen Loftus, of Majestic Hotels, checks out the screen.

Picture: MATT TURNER

which gives them access to their rooms.

They also can pre-pay for car parking, and breakfast at a nearby cafe.

The Minima Hotel is the latest addition to the SA hotel group, Majestic Hotels.

Managing director, John Culshaw said he had plans for another

similar hotel in SA. "This is a prototype to develop a type of accommodation we can duplicate," he said. "We are currently looking at another location in SA."

Rooms start from \$99 a night but guests still enjoy many features of a luxury hotel, including 81cm LCD

TVs, Foxtel and broadband access, an ensuite bathroom and a balcony.

Mr Culshaw said "people want the amenities of the city, to be able to stay the night but don't want to have to pay \$200 a night (as with many other hotels)."

"We have had incredible interest from the middle corporate sector," he said.

The Formule 1 concept revolutionised budget hotel accommodation around the world, starting in Europe in the 1980s, before expanding to Africa, South America, Asia and Australia in the 1990s.

Australian Hotels Association SA general manager Ian Horne said: "There's people looking for indulgence and those just looking for a place to sleep that's safe and clean and (then there is) everything in between," he said.