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Extended-Stay Hotels Become a Popular Housing Option

By **MARCELLE S. FISCHLER**

PLAINVIEW

TWO years ago when Joan Coffino decided to sell the three-bedroom Plainview home where she had lived for 45 years, her daughter, Roni Ashton, took her shopping for an apartment. She was not impressed by what she saw. Ms. Ashton also took her to see a retiree living complex. "When I went in I turned green," Ms. Coffino said. "It was very depressing."

What struck her fancy instead was an extended-stay hotel, the [Homewood Suites by Hilton](#) in Plainview, where Ms. Ashton and her husband, Billy, had lived briefly while waiting for their new condominium to be completed two and a half years ago.

"The minute I saw it, I loved it," said Ms. Coffino, who is 83 and widowed, citing the mix of families and young children. "I feel very safe here. You can't feel lonely in a place like this."

Her furnished one-bedroom suite has two televisions and a well-equipped kitchen. "It makes a very nice place to live."

Moving was easy: she brought only her cat and her clothing. Her \$3,000 monthly bill includes a daily breakfast of dishes like eggs, Belgian waffles and oatmeal, as well as dinner Monday through Thursday. Housekeepers vacuum, clean the bathroom, change the sheets and supply fresh towels daily. Local phone calls are free. "There is nothing I have to pay except the rent," Ms. Coffino said. "I only worry about my cat food."

Kathleen M. Petrus, the director of sales and marketing for Hilton's Homewood Suites, said a scarcity of apartments and short-term rentals on the Island had made extended-stay hotels a popular option, particularly for people relocating who want to get to know the Island before they choose a community.

Guests at extended-stay hotels pay as they go, unlike those at apartment complexes, who are usually required to sign a minimum six-month lease and pay a security deposit. Homewood's amenities include an indoor pool, a hot tub, a fitness center and a lobby lounge with a commanding stone fireplace.

While rates might be seen as steep, “you pay for the luxury of not having to make a commitment,” Ms. Petrus said. In addition, guests don’t have to pay for furniture, utilities or cable service.

Over the last decade more than 10 new hotels — many with options for longer stays — and extended-stay lodgings have been built on [Long Island](#), including the 116-room [Viana Hotel and Spa](#) in Westbury, which opened in December. The Viana has four long-stay king-size rooms and eight one-bedroom suites, four with kitchenettes. A [Hyatt Place in Garden City](#) and a [SpringHill Suites](#) by Marriott in Bellport also opened last year. Two years ago, a 118-suite extended-stay [TownePlace Suites](#) by Marriott with full kitchens and housekeeping opened in Farmingdale. Recently, an 85-room [Hilton Home2 Suites](#) extended-stay hotel was approved for Farmingdale village.

A fire during the renovation of their Syosset home on Jan. 9 sent Winston Wang and his wife, Mingdi Yang, and their two sons to a one-bedroom suite at the Viana. They plan to be there for at least another month.

“We are looking to ideally rent a house we like,” Mr. Wang said, “and if not, we will have to stay at a hotel.” He chose the Viana, which has an indoor lap pool, a gym, a spa and a game room with a billiards table and an Xbox video game player, because it was “more cozy and friendly.” He expects that the cost will be covered by insurance.

While the \$215-per-night rate doesn’t include breakfast, every morning Mr. Wang calls in “two buffet-type orders and they bring enough for four people.” Alan Mindel, an owner of the hotel, provided him with shirts to replace those lost in the fire.

At the 145-suite [Inn at Fox Hollow](#), built in 2002, Franklin Manchester, the general manager, said that during the summer 40 to 45 suites are occupied by “snowbird guests” who sold their North Shore homes to pursue [Florida](#) living “but return year after year to see their friends and family members.” Other long-term guests are remodeling or building new homes, sometimes staying for several years.

Since moving from Roslyn more than a dozen years ago, Florence Launer, 80, and her partner, Walter Berkower, 82, have spent winters at their home in Boca Raton, Fla. Summers they share a one-bedroom suite at the Inn at Fox Hollow at \$200 a night, relishing the daily breakfast buffets, five weekly dinners and proximity to her children in Muttontown.

“Having another home is another responsibility,” Ms. Launer said. “They cater to your every need. It is our home in New York without the problems.”

The granddaddy of the Island’s extended-stay hotels is the [Marriott Residence Inn](#), a 21-year-old garden-apartment-style complex in Plainview.

The Marriott, which was renovated in 2006, has 112 studios; 48 one-bedroom units; 10 two-bedroom units; indoor and outdoor pools; a movie theater; a lounge; a cafe; a fitness center; a putting green; and a basketball court.

Marjorie Monty, the Residence Inn's general manager, said the business had become increasingly competitive. When the Homewood Suites started offering free dinners four nights a week in addition to breakfast, the Residence Inn followed suit.

Among the long-term guests at the Residence Inn are fire victims, homeowners doing renovations, the newly divorced, executives and corporate trainees, home seekers — and a couple who met at the inn, married and have lived there for six years. Buses pick up schoolchildren. Occupancy was 88 percent last year. Rates for 30 days or more run from \$129 a night, for a studio, to \$319 a night for a two-bedroom two-and-a-half-bath “presidential” suite with a living room and full kitchen — or \$116,435 for a year.

“People don't have to worry about furnishing an apartment,” Ms. Monty said. In addition to the other amenities, a masseuse and a personal trainer are on call. “It makes life easier.”