

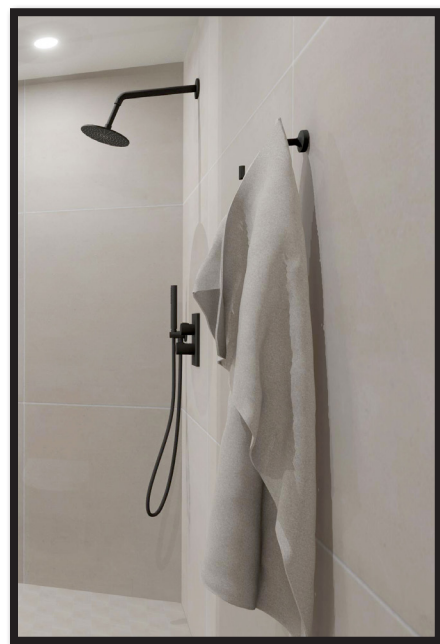
Coming Full Circle

An innovative hotel suite concept launching
in the once-resort town of Lakewood






 MALON



“Should we head back?” a newly married Chana asked her *chosson*, Yitzchok, following the wonderful *sheva brachos* her grandparents had hosted in a simple yet nice hall in Boro Park. Checking the Michelle watch she’d been gifted during her engagement, she saw it was already 11:20 and they still had to drive back to Lakewood. Most of the guests had left, and only Bobby and Zeidy, their parents, and Tante Mindy still lingered.

“Yes,” Yitzchok said, the smile of a new *chosson* lighting up his face. Waving to their family, they tightened their coats and walked out into the brisk air of a New York evening.

“Where are we staying in Lakewood for Shabbos?” he asked as they headed toward their car.

“Mommy set us up at the Frieds’, who live two houses over from my parents. I stayed there once in 11th grade when I had a friends’ Shabbos and there wasn’t enough room to host everyone in our house. They have a bunch of guestrooms, and they’re always happy to host. It’s a cute place, but definitely nothing like a hotel,” she trailed off.

That last line sparked an idea in Yitzchok’s head.

“Why doesn’t someone open a hotel in Lakewood?” he said as they arrived where their rental car was parked.

“Sorry for eavesdropping.”

Turning around in surprise, they saw a *chassidish* fellow who seemed to be in his 40s standing behind them.

“Have you heard about Malon, the new hotel suite that opened in Lakewood?”

At mid-morning, LAX was a hive of activity. Menachem and Faiga Scheinerman* navigated their way through the crowd as they headed toward their terminal.

Faiga checked the boarding pass she clutched in her left hand. “B26,” she announced for the fourth time in three minutes as Menachem dutifully nodded.

Finally, after a stressful hour of waiting in lines, going through security, and walking through the endless corridors of the airport, they arrived at their gate, hoping to catch their breath for a few minutes before boarding their flight to Lakewood, where they would be celebrating their granddaughters’ wedding. At their advanced age, traveling was not as easy as it had once been.

Finding two seats next to each other proved to be another ordeal. In the end, they only found one, and Menachem motioned to his wife to take it. Accepting the offer, she settled down, breathing a sigh of relief.

“So about where we’re going to be staying in Lakewood...” Faiga began.

“Yes, you started telling me about a hotel suite. What was that about?”

“Well, with all the guests coming in for the *simchah*, I didn’t want to burden Esti to host us again, and besides, even though they love hosting us, the beds in their guestroom aren’t really too comfortable, and since we’re staying for a week and a half, I thought it would be nice to arrange something a bit more...er...”

“Comfortable,” Menachem concluded.

His wife nodded.

“Aha, so they opened a new hotel in Lakewood?”

“Not exactly,” answered Faiga. “But there’s this new hotel-style suite called Malon...”

Six months of tedious design planning and construction later, this dream is close to coming to fruition

“Where should we go for a little vacation?” Suri* asked her husband, Avigdor*, as they ate supper Wednesday night after their three little ones had been put to sleep and so far weren’t making any noise. It was a month after Chanukah, and they felt they could use a little break. It had become somewhat of an annual tradition: They’d drop off the kids at one of their parents’ and go away for the night to rejuvenate.

“It would be nice to go to an upscale hotel, but I don’t want to drive for two hours like we did last year.”

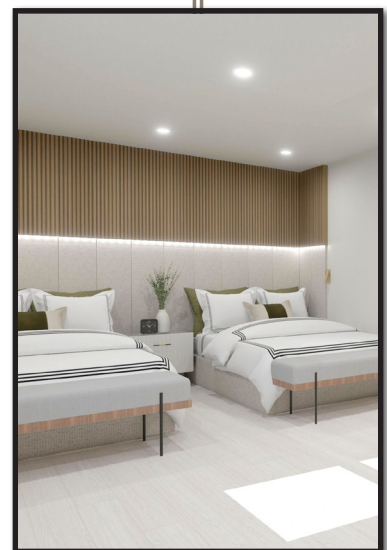
“So, any ideas?” Suri responded.

“I heard about a really nice hotel suite that you could rent right here in Lakewood. The *oilem* is *tayning* it’s *gantz geshmak*.”

“Really? What? Where? How?”

This may sound like the stuff of fiction, but very soon, it will be reality with the exciting opening of a hotel-style suite in the heart of the Miller Road/New Central area of Lakewood, a popular area that’s near many wonderful shuls and *simchah* halls and just a short 10-minute walk from the lake.

“It began as an idea to make a rental apartment out of our garage and attached kitchenette,” R’ Yisrael Tzvi Kahn, the brainchild behind this project, explains. “The space was a bit too small to become what has



become known in Lakewood as a *chosson-kallah* apartment, and besides, we loved the idea of having a nightly rental.”

Six months of tedious design planning and construction later, this dream is close to coming to fruition.

In an intriguing twist of irony, the once quaint idyllic resort town of Lakewood, which reportedly had more hotels than houses at one point but gradually metamorphosed into the bustling city and center of Jewish life that it proudly is today, finds the need for a hotel now more than ever. Obviously, one hotel suite won't be the full solution, but it lays the foundation for more such suites to open in the coming months and years.

The reaction to this novel concept has by and large been one of enthusiasm, yet there are some who have expressed skepticism at the idea and wonder how successful it will be.

“Many people want to know how it differs from the classic Airbnb concept or *chosson-kallah* apartment. The answer, in short, is that this suite was designed from top to bottom with an emphasis on luxury and comfort, mimicking an upscale hotel room. Its rental structure of nightly versus a minimum of two nights or a week is another example of how it's more like a hotel than a short-term rental,” R' Yisrael Tzvi explains. Lastly, but perhaps most significantly, the price of a stay in Malon is comparable to a stay in a hotel suite.

In a certain sense, the various upgrades and features of this suite take the experience of staying at a hotel to the next level. Examples of these upgrades include the deluxe touch-screen coffee machine and the spa-like shower featuring a rain-head, handheld spray, and jets. For those staying over Shabbos, stylish sconces designed for Shabbos use are located adjacent to either bed. And with plans underway to construct a private patio replete with a sitting area, firepit, and mini waterfall, Malon may be better described as a miniature resort.

Featuring a full kitchenette with state-of-the-art appliances, luxurious furniture, and an upgraded design throughout, Malon's guests are guaranteed to have a stay that combines comfort and extravagance. The “Malon Elite” package for those

looking to take their stay to the next level offers a deluxe brunch package delivered in the morning and an *oneg Shabbos* package with a meat board and chocolate platter for those staying for Shabbos.

A significant percentage of Malon's clientele will likely be those coming for a *simchah*. As many have attested, finding space at the neighbors' for the whole family can be difficult, and having the option of renting such a hotel suite could be a preferred option to some. Even with the phenomenal *hachnasas orchim* exhibited by so many, time after time, as they graciously open their homes for friends and neighbors' *simchos*, the sheer number of events that happen in this city and the number of family members attending them has made it impossible to host everyone this way.

No less important are the countless people who come to Lakewood simply to see family or take care of shopping or business, in which case asking a friend or neighbor to host can be even more cumbersome. A third category of potential clients may be those simply looking to get away for a night who like the idea of staying near shuls and amenities.

Whoever it may be, the acute need for such a concept in Lakewood is becoming more apparent by the day, giving R' Yisrael Tzvi the confidence that this initiative will be successful.

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While Malon is starting with only one suite, it lays the groundwork to potentially open similar suites throughout Lakewood and its surrounding area in the future. This can serve as an exciting prospect for homeowners who have existing *chosson-kallah* rentals and may decide to turn it into a Malon-style rental down the line, which could potentially be more lucrative.

Of the many new and innovative projects that take place in our city, this one carries with it a unique element of excitement. As the saying goes, all great things start off small, and Malon may just be one of them.

Addressing the skeptics, R' Yisrael Tzvi simply concludes: “Time will tell.” ●

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