

Extended-Stay Westin Planned

By PETER SANDERS

Hoping to shake up the extended-stay hotel market, **Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.** will take elements from its upscale Westin hotel chain and plug them into a new brand designed to mimic the urban residential developments taking root across the country.

The new brand, to be unveiled today under the temporary name "Project ESW" for Extended Stay Westin, comes at a time when the hotel sector for lengthy stays is booming. These properties are used primarily by business travelers who spend weeks, and sometimes months, in the same place.

The extended-stay market, with about 260,700 rooms nationwide, is growing at roughly 5% to 6% a year, com-

pared with growth of 1% to 2% across the entire industry, said Mark Skinner, partner at the Highland Group, a hotel consulting and research firm in Atlanta.

The ESW brand will offer studios and one-bedroom suites. All of the smoke-free hotels will include fitness centers, healthy snacks and fancier dining options.

Starwood Chief Executive Steve Heyer said the White Plains, N.Y., company considered buying the Summerfield Suites brand, but chose instead to build from scratch. Rival **Global Hyatt Corp.** in January purchased the Summerfield brand and is now competing in the upscale extended-stay market. The first two ESWs will open late next year in Lexington, Mass., and in suburban San Francisco. Starwood said it plans 125 of the extended-stay properties nationwide by 2011.

Dr. Gilchrist, a pediatrician, said involvement of some breeds in mc tacks may reflect the sheer prevalence of those breeds. Other factors, such as

Cranky Consumer

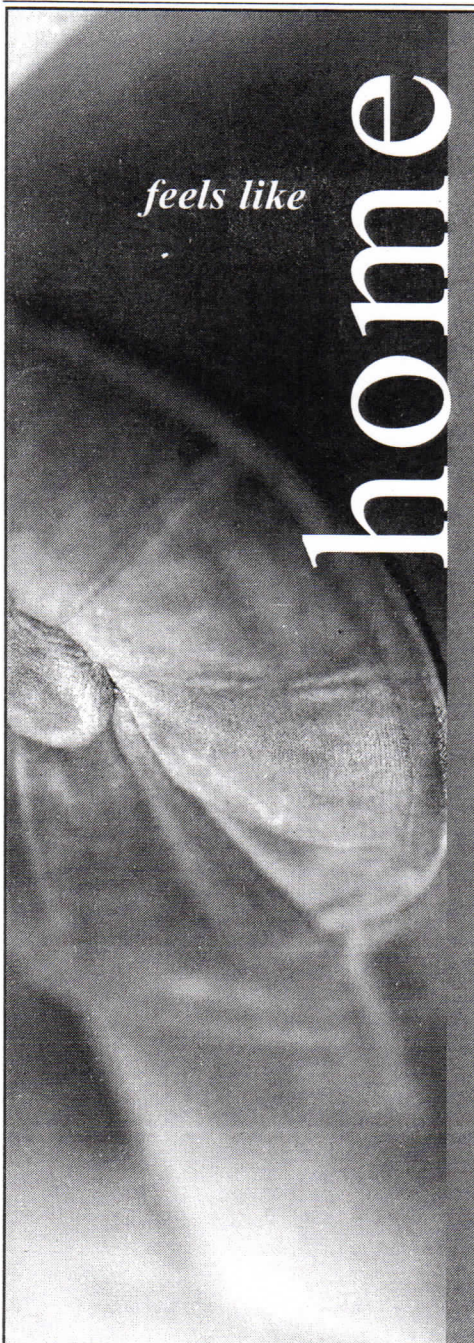
A Snapshot of

SENDING PHOTOS to family friends has never been easier, whether via email or through a photo-sharing Web site.

In the U.S., about 59 million people used a photo-sharing Web site last year, according to Infotrends, a market research and consulting company. Increasingly, photo sites are tailoring their services to create a sense of community while trying to sell prints and products.


Of the hundreds of photo-sharing sites out there, we tested five similar ones that were easy enough for novices to use after installing a photo-uploading program. All of the sites we tried also allowed viewers to post comments with each photo. The sites differed in price, like unlimited photo storage, permanent archiving, and unlimited album making, as well as costs. Overall, we found that the sites were good for keeping the grandparents up-to-date on baby pictures as well as minimizing the photographic clutter at home. However, we found it's wise to check the contract; some sites remove photos from accounts that are considered inactive.

Signing up for a free account at Flickr.com was a bit bothersome. The site's partnership with Yahoo meant we had to sign up with Yahoo first. After setting up our profile, we simply chose File, selected the photo we wanted to upload from our computer, chose whether we wanted access limited to family or to make it available to all Flickr users, and hit Upload. We then gave each photo a title and description. But the prewritten invitation we sent out to share our photos was never



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