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**TVTrip: Watch a Video of Your Vacation Before You Book It**

**Categories:** Cool Web Sites, Crazy Start-Ups (VC Time!), Maps & GPS, Web Video

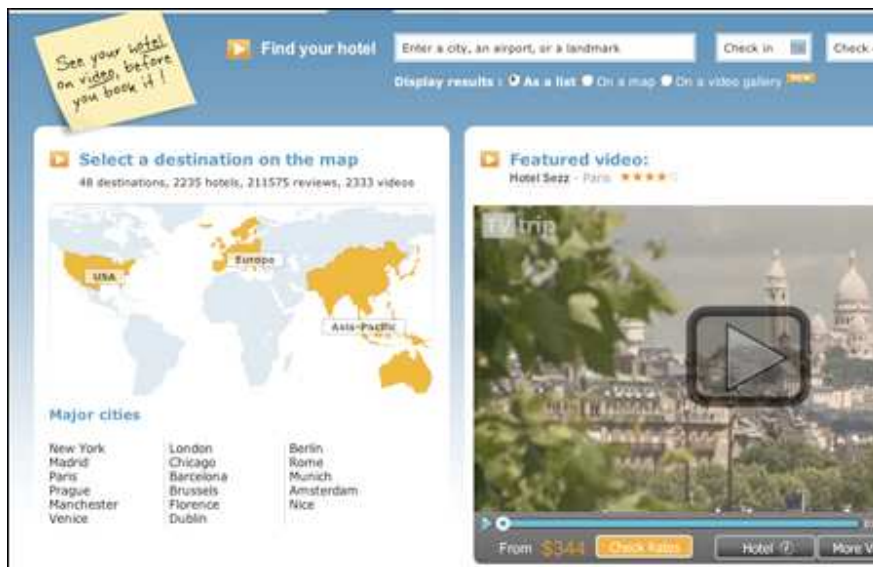
**Tags:** travel, web 2.0, web services, web video



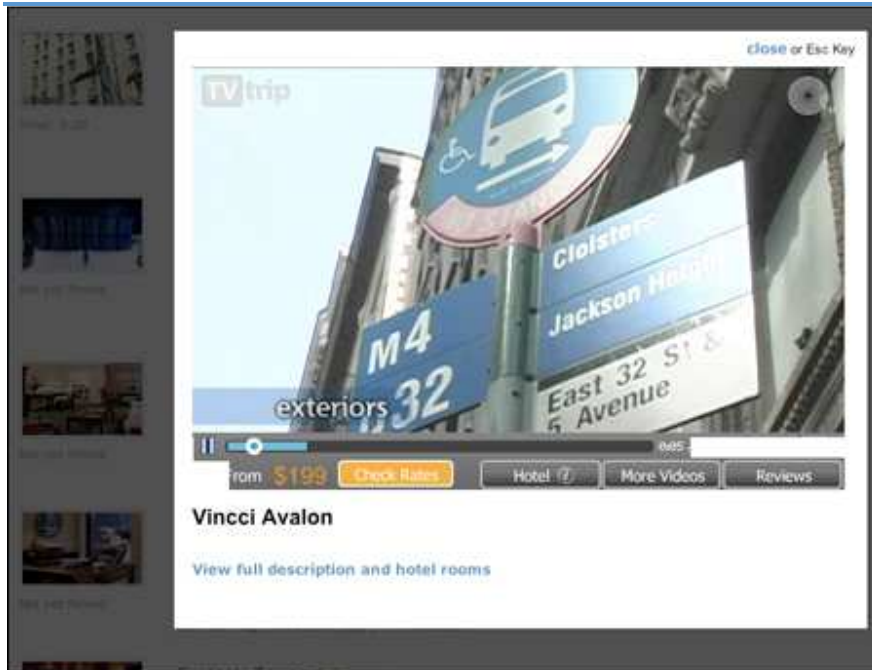
Lots of sites let you check out hotels and vacation spots through photos, first-hand reviews, and testimonials before you book your trip. Some sites even feature ratings, detailed location information, and trip booking assistance. Unfortunately, they seldom have all of those features on the same site. [TVTrip.com](http://TVTrip.com) does, providing detailed photo and video tours of hotel destinations around the world, from New

York City to Portugal.

TVTrip doesn't look like a traditional travel guide site or hotel booking site. Type in the city, airport, or landmark that you're planning to visit in the search bar at the top of the page, and you'll find hotel search results that match your location. Better yet, click on the area of the world you're traveling to on the map just underneath the search bar, and you'll see results for cities and countries in that region.



TVTrip is still new, so they only have entries for three cities in the United States and several countries in Europe. The site plans to add locations in the Asia-Pacific region in the near future. Even so, TVTrip sports over 2000 hotels, 2300 videos, and 200,000 reviews for 48 destinations around the globe.



The site's greatest strength is its library of video and photo tours of hotels around the world. At worst, you'll find a gallery of photographs that give you a real feel for what visiting the hotel or the area around it is like. You can check out the designer rooms in the Hotel Sezz in Paris, or check out the surroundings near the Vincci Avalon in New York City. The videos are all good quality, stream in Flash, and give you a feel for what it feels like to stay in the location or at the hotel of your choice. The video and photo galleries are rich and easy to navigate, and are a huge improvement over the tiny, grainy photos that you get with most hotel Websites.

Once you're ready to book the room, you can check out reviews and opinions from people who have been to the area and stayed in the hotel, read more about the hotel and its amenities, and even see monuments, museums, and other landmarks within visiting distance. TVTrip will also suggest similar hotels in the vicinity, and allows you to check rates and book your room online if you're ready to seal the deal.

The screenshot shows the AppScout website interface. On the left, there are filter sections for Price (From \$0 to \$500), Stars (2 Stars (3), 3 Stars (13), 4 Stars (6)), Style (Luxury (3)), and Amenities (Airport Connection (2), Bar (14), Business Center (8), Fully Non-Smoking (4), Gym (7), High-speed Internet (2), Newspaper (2), Non-Smoking Rooms (12), Private parking (4), Pets Welcome (3), Restaurant (1), Room Service (1), Spa & Health Center (1), Near Subway (1), Wheelchair Accessible (1), Jacuzzi (1)).

The main content area displays a list of hotels with the following details:

- Vincel Avallon** (Hotel Rank 3 - Overall Traveler rating 3.8/5): 16 East 32nd Street - 10016 New York. From \$ 199\*. Check rates.
- The Night** (Hotel Rank 1 - Overall Traveler rating 4.1/5): 132 West 45th Street - 10036 New York. From \$ 199\*. Check rates.
- Surrey Hotel** (Hotel Rank 2 - Overall Traveler rating 4.3/5): 20 East 76th Street - 10021-2688 New York. From \$ 299\*. Check rates.
- The Benjamin** (Hotel Rank 4 - Overall Traveler rating 4.3/5): 125 East 50th Street - NY 10022 New York. From \$ 369\*. Check rates.
- Eastgate Tower** (Hotel Rank 5 - Overall Traveler rating 4.1/5): 222 East 39th Street - 10016 New York. From \$ 179\*. Check rates.

Video tours of hotels and footage of local attractions are long overdue on travel sites; I think these features should have been around on Hotels.com and Expedia.com ages ago. Sadly, TVTrip doesn't provide embed code for its videos, so you can't share them with friends or link to a place you stayed if you're blogging about your vacation. Even so, if you're looking to get a feel for a hotel before you walk up with your luggage, TVTrip is worth a look, especially as the service expands.