

RECESSION! WHAT RECESSION?

At a time when most businesses are feeling the pinch and a record number of companies are going to the wall, it might seem the utmost folly to open a five star hotel, even in London. The new Lanesborough is not just a five star hotel, it is a five star hotel fit for a king. At a mere £2,500 per night, its aptly named "royal suite" is not only fit for a king, it is surely only a king who could afford to book it? Not so: an American gentleman has already booked it for a ten day stay in the spring,

while another American is considering a four month stay over the summer, at a total cost of £300,000 plus VAT!

The "royal suite" comes complete with a personal butler and a chauffeur-driven Bentley, but for a mere £190 per night (£220 for a double), you can book into one of the Lanesborough's other 94 bedrooms, shave in front of a heated bathroom mirror and send a fax without getting out of bed. The Lanesborough, situated on Hyde

Park Corner and overlooking Buckingham Palace, expects to cater mainly for American executives; it was formerly St. George's Hospital.

General Manager Geoffrey Gelardi, described London as "one of the best hotel cities in the world", and he is not alone in holding that opinion; a recent readers' poll by Business Traveller magazine came to the same conclusion.