

A hotel with lots of space (just £2m for a three-day stay)

By **David Gardner**

HOUSTON, we have a hotel – the first one in space.

Those weary of weekend breaks in the West Country, Paris or New York will soon be able to broaden their horizons by choosing Galactic Suite for a few days away.

Ensnorced in one of its zero-gravity rooms, they will spin around the world in just 80 minutes, enjoying the spectacular sight of 15 sunrises every day.

Orbiting Earth won't be for the budget traveller, however. A three-day stay is expected to cost £2million.

Galactic Suite is due to open in 2012, initially catering for six guests at a time in its three pod-shaped double rooms. Eventually, the Barcelona-based architects plan to have up to 22 pods clustered around a central nucleus.

Each pod will be 23ft long by 13ft high and will be almost devoid of furniture. When guests tire of floating around,

15

sunrises will be seen every day by the Galactic Suite's guests

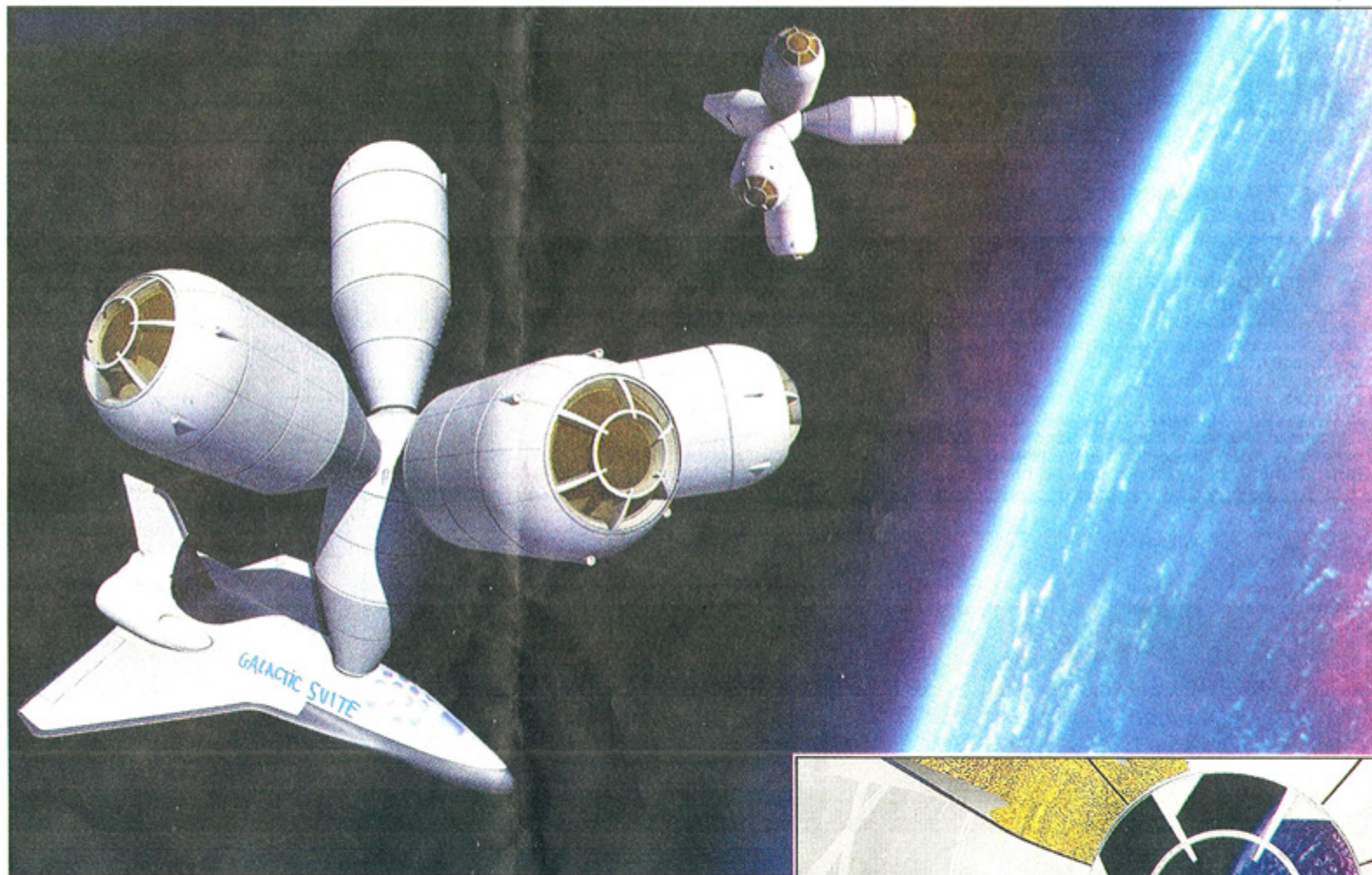
their Velcro suits will allow them to stick to the padded walls 'while they eat, sleep or gaze out into space'.

The hotel's structure, which makes it look like a model of molecules, was dictated by the fact that the pods will have to fit inside the U.S. space shuttle which will ferry them into place three at a time.

Once the hotel is built, the shuttle will also carry the guests to their destination, reassuringly remaining there during their stay.

Xavier Claramunt, a director of the company behind the project, said: 'There is fear associated with going into space. That's why the shuttle rocket will remain fixed to the space hotel, so guests know they can get home again.'

He admitted that designing bathrooms for zero gravity is the biggest



Holiday with the stars: An artist's impression of the planned hotel in space

challenge. 'How to accommodate the more intimate activities of the guests is not easy,' he added.

But the designers may have solved the issue of how to take a shower in weightlessness – guests will enter a spa room in which bubbles of water will float around.

The £1.5billion project to turn science fiction fantasy into a reality is backed

by a U.S. company intent on colonising Mars, which sees Galactic Suite as a first step. Mr Claramunt said: 'We have calculated that there are 40,000 people in the world who could afford to stay at the hotel.'

For their money, guests will also get eight weeks of intensive training at a James Bond-style space camp on a Caribbean island.



Room with a view: A Velcro suit will help defy gravity