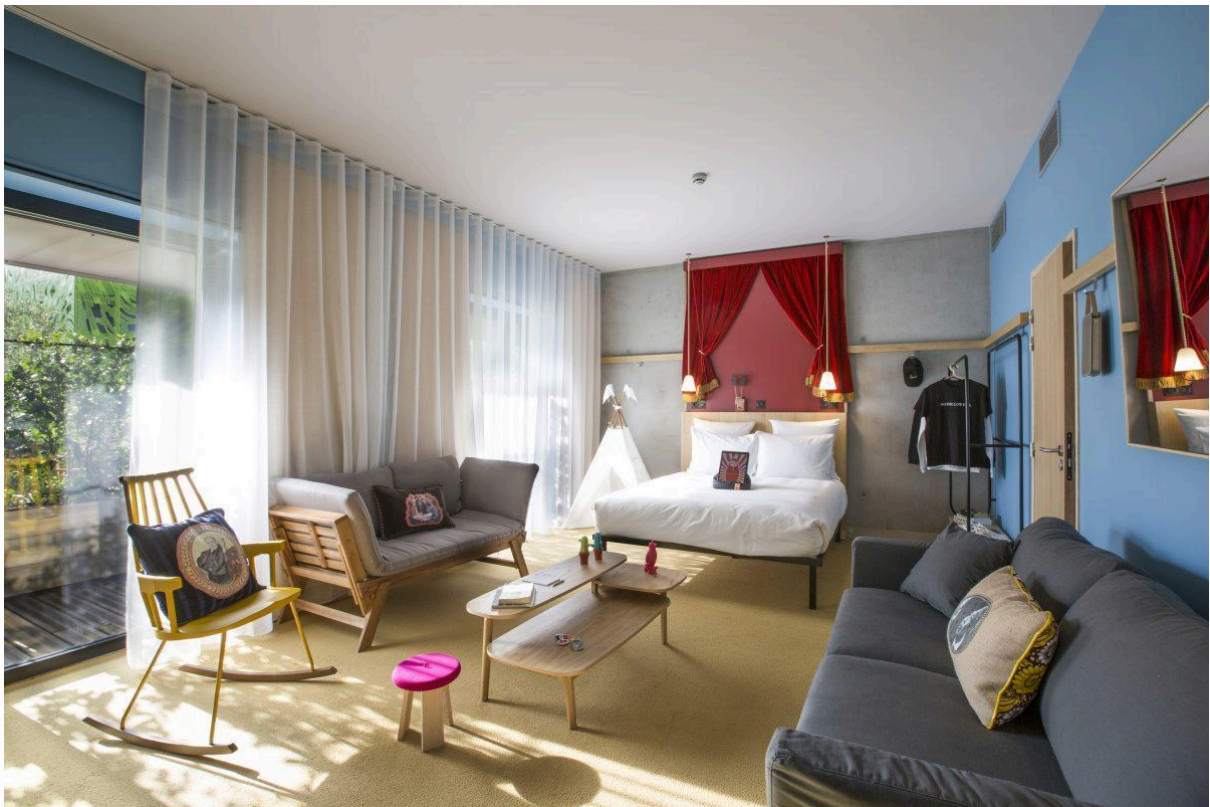


# How Cyril Aouizerate Set Out To Create A Hotel Group With A Conscience

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Feb 08, 2019, 12:32pm EST Feb 09, 2019, 06:28pm EST



The interiors of a Master MOB bedroom in Lyon

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Since launching in November of 2017, MOB Hotels – an acronym for Maimonide of Brooklyn – has added new vibrancy and passion to the mid-market hotel sector. With its Paris Flea Market property and riverside hotel in Lyon, the group proves location isn't everything and a hotel does not need to be crammed into a city centre in order to be a hub for culture and creativity. To build this boutique group and its founder and CEO Cyril Aouizerate has rallied the support of top designers and hotel experts,

including Michel Reybier, partner and successful entrepreneur, close friend Philippe Starck, Steve Case, founder of AOL and Revolution LLC, [Glyn Aepfel, founder of Glencove Capital](#), and former partner at Standard Hotels.

PROMOTED

Looking ahead, Aouizerate intends to launch eight additional properties over the next five years, growing the brand in Europe as well as launching in the United States. MOB will open its very first American establishment in Washington, D.C.'s Union Market neighbourhood in 2020 with a second property to follow in Los Angeles's Chinatown neighbourhood in 2022. Defined by a bohemian spirit appealing to artists and young entrepreneurs, MOB hotels aim to be environmentally conscious, source food and beverage from local producers, and have eradicated single-use plastics from its properties. We spoke with Aouizerate to learn more about this burgeoning brand and concept.

**You have an unusual background for a hotelier - as an author and philosopher - tell me a bit about designing the philosophy behind the brand?**

What is happening behind MOB hotels is, above all, a movement. I have always tried to create new paradigms that help defend an optimistic vision of the future. In the global disorder in which we all live, we need places to breathe, protective places where hatred disappears – to give way to culture, otherness, and love. For years now, I've claimed that to be an entrepreneur you must be a philosopher, poet, sociologist, psychologist, ethnologist and spiritual.



The fun and fresh interiors of MOB Lyon Confluence

©Aldo Parede

**How do the arts influence the design of your properties - I know both are located in quite historically artistic districts/neighbourhoods?**

My approach is to take the travelers to unusual places that are themselves cultural “volcanoes.” Our MOB properties in Paris’s Saint-Ouen neighbourhood and Lyon’s Confluence district are artistic by nature. When, for example, we decided to house and support the CASA 93 fashion school within the hotel itself, the idea was to defend a living, productive, and insolent vision of art. And as part of this, our guests can directly interact with these students.

**The hotel industry is changing rapidly and consumers are more demanding and more spoiled for choice than ever before - how do you keep up?**

This problem is not a problem in my opinion. My daily obsession is to share with my teams this search for perfection. Concretely, we work on the quality of sleep, the quality of our products in the room, the quality of our cultural programming, the quality of our dishes. I often say that our job



must be a mission in the almost spiritual sense of the word. Our mission is to welcome every traveler as if he were the first and last traveler in the world.



The By Romance show hosted by MOB Hotels in Lyon

Courtesy of MOB Hotels

### **How do you ensure you are continuing to innovate and stay creative with your offerings?**

Never fall asleep. My approach with my teams is to meet every week with the people carrying projects. It can be cultural, culinary, social projects... and we always try to see what we could do with them. My favourite phrase is "what can we do together?" In the last few months, we have launched a small cinema, worked on our own radio programme, published newspapers and organised unplugged live sessions with international artists such as Neneh Cherry, the A-WA sisters and Keziah Johns, among others.



Cyril Auizerate, Founder of MOB Hotels

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**What is the greatest compliment a customer can give you about one of your hotels?**

"This is the first time I'm in a hotel that is what it says it is." I think that is the best of all recognitions. I often see hipster hotels that are almost a marketing caricature of our time... I hate that. They think they are cool, but they are scornful and haught. At MOB I believe that we managed to be a real people's movement, by the people for the people.

### **What are your plans for the future? What can we expect to see from the brand in the future**

We are working on many projects including the launch next year of MOB HOUSE in Paris; a mixed-use work/play hub for extended stays – a place where time and space will be the watchwords. We also have new properties underway in Europe and the United States, including upcoming MOB Hotels in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. The first Stateside hotel will debut in Washington, D.C.'s Union Market neighborhood in 2020, with a second property to follow in Los Angeles' Chinatown neighborhood. We are also exploring launching a concept called VILLA MOB both in the mountains and the seaside. Another idea we're looking into is to launch a form of hotel cooperative to create a network of independent people who share our values and our world vision.



Winter cinema in Paris

Courtesy of MOB Hotels



**Food and beverage are so important to the hotel experience these days - tell me about some of the local producers and co-ops you are working with and how you find them?**

The roots of MOB Hotel are related to Brooklyn – and the restaurant we once had there – which had become a mythical place, especially for the vegan community. Paradoxically, it was in New York that I was able to realise that we could defend reasonable farming methods in an urban area . When we decided to create MOB Hotels, we spent more than two years looking for solutions that allowed us to serve exclusively organic products. We support cooperatives and at the same time this know-how is now a strong asset of MOB. Beyond these choices, our cuisine is Mediterranean and also defends values of sharing and generosity.

**Environmental impact, carbon footprint, single-use plastics - these are all large points of conversation at the moment and particularly for hotels - using so much bottled water, bathroom and shower amenities etc. What is MOB doing to combat this problem?**

On this subject I will be very clear. I believe we are the most committed hotel on these themes. Our restaurants are 100% perfect organic. We have no plastic products. We work with agricultural cooperatives. We print only the bare minimum. The list would be too long, but I can say with certainty that environmental issues are at the heart of our approach. I often tell my teams that the goal is for MOB to be the Whole Foods Market of hotels.

**To you, what is unique about the travel market and offering in France compared to the rest of the world?**

France is a world unto itself. It embodies in the spirit that can be summed up through its symbols: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.