

Forbes

BEHIND THE BLOOMS: INSIDE THE NEW MOXY CHELSEA

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Giving a refreshing take on the micro hotel trend is the recently-opened New York-based [Moxy Chelsea](#), which adds a touch of flamboyance and glamour to a utilitarian approach that is often the norm in this affordable hospitality sector.



Blooming lovely: the exterior of Moxy Chelsea.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)

Moxy is pegged as the ‘experiential’ brand from [Marriott International](#) and the 37-story Chelsea-based hotel builds on this with its millennial appeal. With design as its focus, it has been spearheaded by design supremo [Yabu Pushelberg](#) and architectural/design firm the [Rockwell Group](#) (both design companies are also behind the brand’s other New York property [Moxy Times Square](#)). You first encounter a sense of playfulness and elements of surprise by entering the hotel via a fragrant florist’s – the [Putnam & Putnam Flower Shop](#).

Found in the heart of **Chelsea Flower Market**, this really works as a unique reflection of the destination – the hotel is on a street bursting with florists through which you meander across discarded leaves, on foliage-strewn streets and through towering trees on sale. Offering a curated selection of hand-tied blooms, seasonal flowers, candles and curiosities, the shop is run by **Darroch and Michael Putnam**, floral designers who are known for their starry clientele, and the boutique serves to place hotel guests firmly in the heart of an urban oasis.



The Putnam & Putnam flower shop.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)

From the pastel hues of the florist, you enter into the lobby area, which is a bustling, mini space with a buzzy, industrial feel—one desk is a ‘do-it-all’ for check-in and check-out, concierge and service (although you can do all this and more via the mobile check-in service on the hotel’s app). If you are not distracted by the aromas of warm doughnuts and fresh focaccia, from the hotel’s **Feroce Caffè**—found adjacent to the lobby—then it’s on to the bedrooms, where the hotel’s design ‘savviness’ is further played out.

“Affordability is not a sacrifice of style, nor a loss of comfort,” says Marriott when describing its younger brand. This ethos comes alive in the bedrooms, which may be small but are well considered. Rooms are light and bright with full, floor-to-ceiling windows, making the most of city rooftop views. There’s witty touches with retro-style phones (you can press a button to hear a ‘bedtime story’ told by personalities like celebrity DJ Kitty Cash, Kiersten Rich of travel blog The Blonde Abroad, and yoga teacher Caitlin Turner of Gypset Goddess) and bathroom tiling features amusing slogans such as ‘Grow’, ‘Some Regrets’ and ‘Wild Thing’.



One of the double-double rooms.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)



The Mondo Suite gives a spacious feel.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)

There are also lots of genius space-saving devices – such as under-bed storage (you may have to hunt for the room safe, which is also hidden under the bed), and multi-purpose furniture, including a writing desk and chair/luggage rack, which can be folded up and hung on pegs when not in use. The muted colour scheme of primrose yellow and forest green echoes the ‘garden’ feel of the destination, with dip-dyed cloth headboards, reading lamps that resemble garden lanterns and taps that look like hose reels adding a vintage feel.

Let’s face it, when in New York, not much time is spent in your bedroom, so Moxy’s real focus is on its public spaces. Acting much like a ‘living room’, the second-floor **Conservatory** and **Bar Feroce** offers a range of social areas that change as the day progresses. A living wall and vast industrial windows in the Conservatory give a verdant, outside-in feel, while multicoloured glass screens and a terrazzo floor add a sense of colour and vibrancy – it’s like a modern take on a Victorian orangerie. In the day, Bar Feroce offers working and socialising ‘corners’, with groups of sofas, statement chairs and stools in floral prints, monochrome colours and jewel tones.



The Conservatory at dusk.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)



The Fleur Room with its incredible views.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)

By night, the space takes on a different aura, with DJ sets giving a soundtrack and oven-fired pizzas, Italian snacks, based on traditional spuntini, and inventive Italian cocktails bringing a laid-back, sociable feel. Upstairs on the rooftop, is the **Fleur Room**, which also captures a botanical theme with its feature copper bar and glass chandeliers that resemble giant water droplets. An oversized disco ball, salvaged from the notorious 1980s L.A. nightclub Vertigo, and a life-size toga-clad Roman statue add elements of fun. But, mostly, guests will be more impressed with the retractable wall of glass that opens up the space into an alfresco sky veranda, with showstopping 360-degree views from New York Harbor to the Empire State Building.

Adding to the whimsical touches and the wow-factor, however, is the ground-floor **Feroce Restaurant and Caffè**, which brings a layer of authenticity. A collaboration with Francesco and Lorenzo Panella, who own [Antica Pesa](#), the legendary trattoria in Rome and their Brooklyn outpost, it is based on traditional Italian trattorias but with a contemporary twist. Dishes, based on recipes which have been passed down the generations and menus that change with the seasons, are served in a glamorous dining room with old-school service that is reminiscent of the 1950s.



The Feroce Ristorante is a modern take on a traditional Roman-style trattoria.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)



The Feroce Caffè has a retro feel.
(CREDIT: MICHAEL KLEINBERG)

“We’ve all read about how the modern traveler wants to satisfy their curiosity with unique experiences and personalized, insider access,” says Mitchell Hochberg, president of Lightstone Group, which developed the hotel. “Nobody really expects that at the Moxy price point. At Moxy Chelsea, we’re taking it to the next level: we’ve doubled down on that formula — affordable rates, rooms with character, distinctive public spaces — and made it even more personal, more local, more genuinely New York.”

Rooms are from \$159 per night, [moxychelsea.com](https://www.moxychelsea.com)

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/angelinavillaclarke/2019/06/04/behind-the-blooms-inside-the-new-moxy-chelsea/#152b6660ecae>