

Forbes

DETAIL AND DESIGN AT THE MOXY EAST VILLAGE: NEW YORK CITY'S NEWEST HOTEL

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You can't have New York City without the new. The metropolis is, after all, a hotbed of activity and energy, spinning off new sensations and styles every day. But it is also a place whose history dates back hundreds of years, with chapters of that past just waiting to be discovered...if you know where to look.

Paradoxically yet appropriately enough, one of the city's newest hotels is just such a place. The recently opened [Moxy East Village](#) pays playful homage to New York City's storied past, and is designed to be a palimpsest whose layers unearth the spirit of Manhattan's iconoclastic East Village.



The Moxy East Village became New York City's newest hotel when it opened last month.
MOXY EAST VILLAGE

The 286-room hotel makes its home on E. 11th Street, just across from fabled concert venue Webster Hall and a few blocks south of Union Square. While much of the area has gentrified in recent decades, the neighborhood maintains its counterculture credentials.

At different times in its history, the East Village has welcomed waves of ambitious immigrants, drawn audiences for performances by early rock 'n roll legends and later punk rockers, inspired contemporary art pioneers like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, and sheltered the roots of LGBTQ+ activism.

Design firm Rockwell Group Design made sure to put those rebellious roots on full display in eye-catching elements throughout the property. The overriding concept was of an urban archaeology project, with each of the hotel's 13 floors representing different eras in the East Village's timeline – past, present and future.



The vibe at Alphabet Bar changes throughout the day. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

Like other Moxy properties, this one does not have a formal hotel lobby. Rather, guests check-in at one of three freestanding kiosks constructed by local artist Michael Sanzone from vintage found furniture including desks and tables. Behind them, colorful tapestries run from the wall and onto the floor, emulating graffiti and events posters one might have once spotted walking around the East Village.

Beyond this area is the hotel's all-day Alphabet Bar & Café. According to Mitchell Hochberg, president of Lightstone, which developed the hotel (and clearly an aficionado of the East Village and its colorful past himself), this was envisioned as a dynamic space whose vibe changes throughout the day. The bar is located near the entrance and has a base made up of organ pipes that lend it a roguish, textured look.



The bar's base is decorated with organ pipes. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

Guests will find a few alfresco tables on the outside patio just adjacent. Inside, meanwhile, are various seating areas that can be moved and reconfigured according to how visitors prefer to socialize – whether they want to pull up chairs and huddle together, have a quiet corner to themselves, or co-work at expandable conference tables.

There are even a few swinging chairs and a Skee-Ball game thrown in for fun. The shelves against the back wall hold multitudes of mix tapes, while a library cart holds borrowable books from nearby landmark bookstore The Strand. Guests can also request record players and vinyl LPs compiled by Academy Records to be delivered to their rooms for private listening.



Grab a seat on the swing if you can. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

The menu here consists mainly of small bites and signature cocktails like the Lavender with Belvedere vodka, lemon and a touch of lavender. There is also a small café counter around the corner that serves coffee drinks brewed with Intelligentsia beans, baked goods, paninis, tartines and salads.

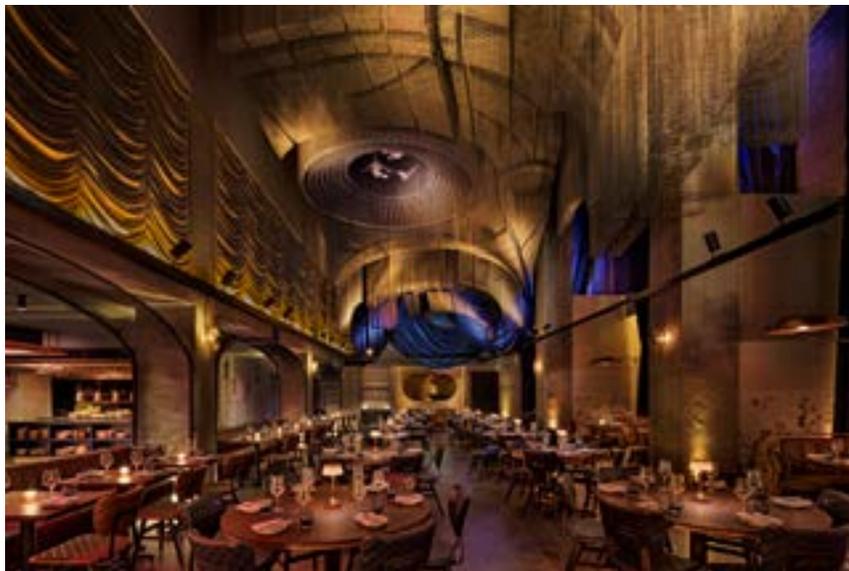
Down a set of stairs resembling an alleyway fire escape between two buildings, with a brick wall on one side and a concrete one on the other, is the hotel's higher-end restaurant, Cathédrale.

Created in partnership with TAO Group and executive chef Jason Hall, the menu here is more French-skewed Mediterranean with a focus on fresh fish and seafood. Dishes include grilled Faroe Island salmon with baby leeks, sun-gold tomatoes, couscous and sauce verte; and diver scallop gratinée with red peppers, capers and lemon oil; as well as grilled lamb chops with mint and pistachio tapenade.



The bar pays homage to the area's famous rock clubs. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

The design concept was inspired by the East Village's rock-'n-roll heyday of the 1960s and 1970s, especially the so-called "Church of Rock and Roll," Fillmore East. It was there that visionary musical promoter Bill Graham mounted shows by rock icons like Jimi Hendrix and The Grateful Dead. Neon signs from other famous local venues, such as Palladium and The Saint, blaze over the bar. In the main dining room hangs an enormous overhead wire-mesh sculpture titled Fillmore that recreates a sort of ethereal, ghostly, yet gritty version of Fillmore East's dome ceiling.



Be sure to look up at Cathédrale's sculptural ceiling. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

Down one floor, at the deepest level of the hotel, Little Sister is the Moxy's exclusive music and cocktail lounge. The vaulted space evokes the East Village's subversive underground bars and bootlegger dens with a massive, copper-clad bar backlit by whiskey-bottle fixtures. But there are also visual references to the area's even more distant past. Murals of the 17th-century Stuyvesant homestead frame banquettes along the walls, and you might even spot members of The Ramones discreetly lurking here and there in the paintings' corners.



Little Sister is meant to feel like a bootlegger's bar. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

After a night out dining and drinking at the hotel's various outlets, it might be time to retire to your room, riding up in a mirrored elevator with emojis etched on the glass. The effect is at once trippy yet fun.

Accommodation categories range from efficiently laid out 155-square-foot Queen rooms up to 214-square-foot doubles. Families traveling together might prefer the Quad Bunk rooms with four twin beds. The expansive Suite Jane, named after a Velvet Underground song, is more of an event space, though you can also book an adjoining room if you want to stay over.



Guestrooms are on the small side but efficiently laid out. MOXY EAST VILLAGE



Families might prefer the quad bunk rooms. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

All have large windows for prime views of Manhattan's skyline and the surrounding streets – an effort to bring more of the neighborhood inside. Otherwise, the look is similar to that of the brand's other hotels in the city. Think metal canopy beds dressed in white linens (and headboards made from woven seatbelt material) with built-in storage drawers. Modular side tables and wall-mounted pegs for hanging clothes replace standard work desks and wardrobes, respectively. The Wi-Fi is fast and free and guests can stream their own content over 43-inch flatscreen HDTVs.



Showers are shielded by graffitied glass walls. MOXY EAST VILLAGE

Glazed, green lava-stone sinks are out in the main room for easy access, while separate WCs hold the toilets and showers shielded by graffited glass, with slightly different designs in every room. In a nod to sustainability, full-size MUK grooming products are mounted on the wall in the place of single-use plastics.

Though a new addition to the neighborhood, the Moxy East Village takes its location seriously, as evidenced by the curated but not esoteric references throughout. Far from being yet another location of a millennial-focused brand, the property feels singular, fresh and fun. Of course, room rates in Manhattan that start at just \$179 per night don't hurt, either.

Disclosure: I arranged all my travel to and from New York as well as meals and other experiences, but was a guest of the Moxy East Village for one night. All opinions expressed are my own.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericrosen/2019/10/02/detail-and-design-at-the-moxy-east-village-new-york-citys-newest-hotel/?sh=23ad11b53541>