



hd expo preview



AUDRA TUSKES

Vice President of Design and Creative Director
Lightstone

Project: Moxy

You are currently developing four Moxy hotels in New York, correct?

We are—that's approximately 1,500 keys. Isn't the market amazing to support this demand? The two farthest locations are only three miles apart, yet all locations are underserved pockets of the city with distinct neighborhood qualities. Additionally, we have active projects in Miami and Los Angeles, also in locations experiencing revitalization.

How are you translating this new Marriott brand for New York?

Moxy is a brand with some definition, albeit new to the scene. New York is anything but lackluster, and its texture changes block by block. We're striking a balance between preserving elements of the brand for consistency and nuancing aspects of the design and programming to embed the hotel within the neighborhood. The lifestyle category made hotels attractive to locals: the Moxys should be a draw for visitors and locals alike. Additionally, with the TAO Group as our F&B partner in New York, you can expect a robust food and beverage offering at each spot. There's typically a unique restaurant, a rooftop bar, or nightclub (or both) and a fast casual outlet—the ideal trifecta—at each location.

What do you find intriguing about the brand?

I love developing brands; that alone is a welcome challenge. How many



more brands does the lifestyle category need? Well, there's an endless appetite, apparently. What's unique to me about Moxy is that it represents the consumer entry point to the travel and hospitality landscape. Our main audience is the youngest generation beginning to travel. We know they value experiences over material possessions: economy over opulence. I like Moxy's efficient rooms and amplified public spaces, that's a nice difference of scale to play with. It's also attractive to work with a brand that has an attitude.



Can you give us a sneak peek at one of the projects?

Moxy Times Square opens this summer. At 600-plus keys, it's like a cruise ship docked in the middle of Manhattan. There's something for everyone. One of my favorite rooms in the hotel is the quadbunk. It represents the purest format of the small room concept because it's so well designed. It reminds me of an old European sleeper car; a respite. Conversely, the building's large rooftop is virtually a bacchanalian playground. Given the building's position, it's also privileged with those ever-stunning Empire State Building views.

Who are you collaborating with for the design? What is the secret to a successful working relationship?

The secret is that you can't be an a-hole. Can we print that? You have to conduct yourself with professional integrity and respect others. We had a stellar design team: Stonehill & Taylor with its architectural expertise and hospitality prowess; Yabu Pushelberg, which brought a unique point of view for the hotel concept and its spaces; and Rockwell Group with its fantastical approach to food and beverage venues.

Panel: NEWH Annual Expo Breakfast: The Young Entrepreneurs, May 4th, 9-10 a.m.; HD/ISHP Town Hall: Owners' Roundtable, May 4th, 10:30 a.m.-noon