

Courtesy Hilton

## Hilton's 'Motto' Is a Micro-Hotel Line for Grownups

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*The first location is set to launch in London next year.*

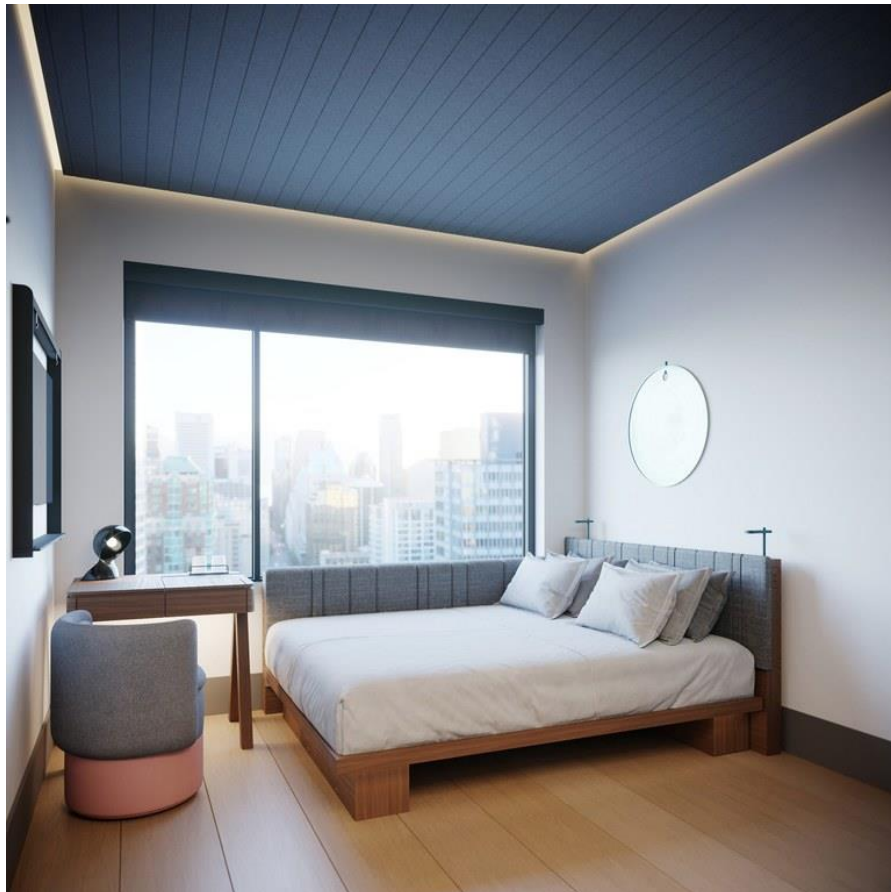
You may be staying at a Hilton, right now, and not even know it. Not that the mega-chain is shying away from its global name, which includes 15 brands and 5,400 hotels, but it's doing a great job of diversifying. Of late there's **Canopy by Hilton**, a boutique hotel line that launched with a very-of-the-moment **Iceland** property in 2016, and the Curio Collection, a smaller set of upscale, locally run hotels like **West Hotel in Sydney**, which has a palm-tree courtyard in its center and a great cocktail program that doesn't feel mass produced. Now comes Motto by Hilton, the company's response to the micro-hotel and "**poshtel**" (i.e. posh or boutique hostel) movement, catering to travelers on a budget who are more interested in dumping their bags in their room and hanging in the lobby than lingering behind a "do not disturb" sign. They also care a whole lot about good design, the restaurant and bar scene—"budget" doesn't mean "basic."

The Motto...motto is to deliver a "micro-hotel with an urban vibe in prime global locations," says Tripp McLaughlin, global head of Motto in charge of brand strategy and development. Let's break that down part by part:

## What's a micro-hotel?

In this case, a "micro-hotel" means rooms are petite. They average 163 square feet—on par with other **pod or capsule hotels** out there—and aim to maximize space like a New Yorker in a studio apartment. There are four room configurations: One is traditional, with a bed in the center, closet and shower on the right, vanity (that doubles as a workspace) and wardrobe on the left; another has a bed in the corner instead (think about how many guest rooms you've stayed in like that—not many, actually); another has a wall bed (aka Murphy bed) that pulls down; yet another has a corner bed with a lofted twin bed that could accommodate a family of three. McLaughlin casually calls it "The Bunkie." Note that bunk beds are not an option here—this is *not* a hostel, and you won't be sharing a room with a stranger. Instead, rooms are connected on either side via two doors, so you could conceivably book several rooms in a row if you're traveling with a group of friends.

Motto also aims to improve the sleep experience, says McLaughlin, by addressing pain points like ambient light—they watch for light leakage around the hallway doors and windows (blackout shades are a must), and got rid of in-room alarm clocks with those white-bright numbers. Motto will also serve up a sleep kit with things like an eye mask and lavender oils; the company is considering 20 different options.



## What's an urban vibe?

An "urban vibe" often translates to the "**Ace Hotel experience.**" Ace was the trendsetter in crafting a hip, buzzy lobby experience—the kind of space both locals and guests can enjoy, where people come to work on their laptops during the day and hang out over cocktails at night. For Motto, a great lobby experience starts with "a premium coffee house with espresso drinks and pastries," says McLaughlin. Add an all-day bar with food and bevies; flexible seating, so you can work by yourself or in a group; and a local experience, from the coffee being locally roasted to the design being locally relevant. "It's not just a hotel lobby—it's a community space," says McLaughlin. And that space may look different in each hotel. "In one market, it may be a single bar/check-in/cafe experience; in another bigger space, there could be a rooftop bar and a restaurant in basement. With Motto, it's less prescriptive."

## What's a prime global location?

We're talking big cities around the world: **London**, to start, where Motto will break ground "shortly" on a property in the Marylebone neighborhood for a late 2019/early 2020 projected opening. The hope is to eventually have 175 hotels globally, in cities like New York (which may have multiple properties), Lima, Dublin, San Diego, Washington, D.C., Austin, Boston, Dallas, and Savannah; the neighborhood where each hotel lands is as important as the city choice, says McLaughlin. Motto is meant to be a jumping-off point for going out and exploring—"for people who plan trips frequently and want spontaneous social moments," he adds. "It might skew a little more toward millennials, but it's not focused exclusively at millennials. It's focused on inclusivity rather than exclusivity." Now that's a motto we can get behind.

*Motto by Hilton officially launches today; find out more at [hilton.com](http://hilton.com).* ◆