



Serge Trigano (center) has inspired his children, Jérémie (left) and Benjamin (right), to lead the development of the next-generation, urban version of Club Med.



Guestroom at Mama Shelter Bordeaux

# FAMILY LEGACY CARRIES ON

BENJAMIN, JÉRÉMIE AND SERGE TRIGANO, FOUNDERS, MAMA SHELTER

Mama Shelter's story reads like a feel-good hipster fable. A vegan ex-philosophy professor turned entrepreneur named Cyril Aouizerate taps an ambitious executive from an iconic brand to help him move into the value-driven lifestyle hotel space. With the help of a design superstar, he transforms a run-down Paris parking garage into a quirky boutique property. Fast-forward a few years. The hotel blossoms into one of the darlings of the industry and spawns four stylish sisters. French hotel giant Accor takes note and comes courting with enough cash to buy a 35% stake in the young, Paris-based company and help ensure that its 20-hotel pipeline will be up and running by 2020.

But, it just takes one glance at the

cast of characters to see this is more of a *Fast Company* feature than a Cinderella story. For starters, the man Aouizerate chose to oversee his hotel debut bears one of the most famous names in the hotel industry. He's Serge Trigano, son of Club Méditerranée founder Gilbert Trigano and, himself, former CEO of the iconoclastic resort chain. Then, there are the benefits of Trigano's friends, such as world-famous designer Philippe Starck. Then, there's the family connection. Trigano's sons, Benjamin and Jérémie, are tapped into a target market of next-generation travelers and well versed in the family's hotel-centric DNA. The family legacy also didn't hurt the confidence that the Triganos brought

to their "urban Club Med" offshoot. Their aim is take Gilbert Trigano's game-changing concept from escapist retreats to real-world city centers. "We believe that with passion, love and work there is no limit to what we can change," says Jérémie. "Once we saw people taking shorter, more urban vacations, we imagined that, between the super palaces everybody dreams about but few can afford and the big hotels chains that can tend to be dull, we could create a place where our guests could come to have a drink, a diner or spend a night in an eclectic atmosphere at a reasonable price," Serge adds. Tempting as it might be to label the flag as a vanity project—albeit it an ultra-successful one, Mama Shelter is clearly a

business proposition. Sure, Serge learned his trade at his father's knee, but Jérémie and Benjamin brought in lessons from far outside the hotel industry. "I worked in finance and marketing," says Jérémie. "In both jobs, I had great bosses who pushed me to be thorough and give as much attention to macro as to micro elements." Benjamin's other day job is as a gallery owner in Los Angeles. "We came into the urban hotel industry with fresh eyes," he says. From the beginning, those eyes were firmly trained not just on creating a cool concept, but giving the business legs in a crowded market. "One of my biggest mentors is my godfather, Alexandre Chemla," Jérémie says. "He taught me to be pragmatic, ROI-centric and able

to make decisions quickly. These are my guidelines for running the company. That pragmatism got the attention of Accor, whose 35% stake in Mama Shelter gave the family the tools to dream bigger." He points out that Mama Shelter will make its premiere in Los Angeles in May 2015. Also in the works are a hotel in Lille and a second location in Paris. Projects are also set to open in Mexico City, London, Amsterdam, Barcelona, New York and Hamburg. "With the new Accor partnership, there is a potential to transform around 20 existing addresses in major capital cities into Mama Shelter. We are not only focusing on Europe and America. We have projects in Asia and South America," Serge says.