



**THE TIMES**

## **Edinburgh is first class for expanding hotel group**

Greig Cameron 26 Jul 2019 23:03:55

The chief executive of Yotel, a hotel group whose rooms are inspired by space-saving designs in first-class airline cabins, is eyeing expansion as it prepares to open its first city centre hotel in Europe.

The Edinburgh property has been converted from offices and will welcome guests as the city's summer festival season gets into full swing.

Hubert Viriot, who runs the hotel management group, said the market in Scotland's capital was buoyant and a Glasgow site would open next year.

Yotel, based in London, was founded in 2007 with a hotel at London Gatwick airport followed by one at Heathrow. The group, which offers automated check-in, has similar operations at airports in cities such as Amsterdam, Paris, Singapore and Istanbul as well as hotels in New York, San Francisco and Boston.

Mr Viriot, 41, said more city centre hotels in London and Amsterdam would open in the next few months, with other locations in the Middle East, US and Europe in the pipeline.

"We could have other hotels in the cities we are already in and also look at places such as Aberdeen. We see many more opportunities in the UK."

Mr Viriot said he was sympathetic to the arguments proposing a tourism bed tax in Edinburgh but suggested it had to be ensured that all providers, such as hoteliers, B&Bs, Airbnb and other schemes were treated similarly.

He said: "This is not just something in Edinburgh. This is something stakeholders around the world are trying to work out."

The Edinburgh hotel is expected to employ more than 60 people at peak periods. Mr Viriot said: "This is an important moment for us. We are a company which is expanding and this is a huge step forward. It is our first urban hotel in our home market and I hope it can be a game changer."