

A WORD FROM A WORLD-CHANGER

Joe Hindman
MODAL HOSTEL

1 What was it like to open the first Hostel in the Upstate? Hostels are so boutique, so different. They're such a unique category. There's very little oversight, which really allows the owner to be creative. Renovations lasted nearly 24 months because [our vision] was completely different. Building codes didn't know where to put us. We did a lot of education. Explaining what a hostel was, how we function – and Visit Greenville even ended up adding a new category for us on their website.

The hardest thing about launching this business was changing peoples' perceptions of what a hostel is. Many individuals have never stayed in a hostel before and have only negative reference points. In reality, hostels are beautiful, bright and cultural places that add a lot of uniqueness and character to a city.

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2 How was support from the City? We have had significant support from City Council members, from the mayor, from staff members, and I feel like we are fairly represented. I also feel like we are truly heard and believed in. The blessing and curse of being a trailblazer is knowing that I have set the stage for a similar, possibly more well-funded concept to come to Greenville – and I think the market is strong enough to support us both. Based on my experience with other small business owners here, I truly believe that we are supportive of each other.

**2021
HOSCAR AWARD
WINNER FOR MOST
INCLUSIVE HOSTEL
ACROSS THE GLOBE**

3 How would you describe the ecosystem here? I'm going to say inclusive. With the development of the new LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce and other initiatives for minority-owned businesses, I think inclusivity is something that Greenville is starting to really champion, and I'm hopeful that will only continue to grow.

The Greenville small business community is truly proud of our city, especially those of us who are natives, like my business partner and myself. If and when we left, we didn't leave long-term for a reason. We may have left to scratch the itch to travel or to get inspired, and we still do at times – but Greenville always brings us back.