The network was launched in 1994 and has been emulated over the years. The network has been repositioned and professionalised and now has about 200 members.

Who would have bet 1 euro on the Citôtel network 13 years ago? Not many people. Major error: the facts speak for themselves. The brand (created in 1194) had about 200 members with 2/3 star hotels containing 6,000 bedrooms on January 1st 2007 and is one of the top 7 French voluntary chains (source: Coach Omnium). A position that is even more honourable given that the group has been expanding a great speed during the last decade. It had fewer than 100 members on 1998. The icing on the cake: Citôtel is one of the most uniform networks on the French mainland. '*142 of our members have achieved the Qualité Tourisme standard'*, according to Pascal Macé, Director. And he adds '*we are pursuing this quality policy ad vitam eternam.'*

A decision that is fully justified. Firstly, because our guests expect more and more. Secondly, because the chain is receiving more candidatures every year. Nothing unusual given the changes that have occurred at Citôtel recently. Apart from its head office at Paris - 60 rue Claude Bernard, the chain has created a new visual identity with a logo that has been completely revised from top to bottom. The logo is more modern in its shape (choice of small pillow in front of All Seasons) and colours and displays dynamism and community spirit. We should not forget the very nice base line: "*Découvrir un nouveau chez soi*!". A great leap forward in terms of image that must be implemented with the public in the future. Whilst doing this, the chain has also become much more professional.

Internet traffic is becoming significant

The appointment of **Pascal Macé** as network director has made a difference. The same can be said of the election of **Michel Duret** as Chairman. These two men are seeking the same and only objective - know how to provide extra business to every member - and have infected the network with a new spirit. All this is combined with the installation of high performance tools.

Starting with a website - citotel.com - that provides effective on-line reservations (via ReservIT). '*Traffic has grown by 200% since the exercise started. We started very low but even so we are now getting about 30,000 visitors per month* ' indicated Pascal Macé. Another great step forward: Citôtel has made a number of partnerships with major gateways such as Bookings, Active Hotels, Venere, HRS, etc. and has signed a promising deal with Amadeus GDS. '*These alliances give our members the possibility of accessing partners with an international scale . All this whilst making their work easier because they now only have one schedule to keep up to date* ' emphasised the managing director. A new factor that should boost internet sales even faster because the network is going to develop a CRM system using

web-managed client satisfaction sheets. Citôtel hopes that it will exceed the 4 million euro 'milestone' in 2008 for this channel compared to 2.8 million this year.

Strengthening national coverage

The chain has another persuasive weapon. This is the loyalty card which generates about 6.2 million Euros, equivalent to 125,000 nights. '*We should exceed 7 million Euros in 2008*' according to Pascal Macé. This should attract hoteliers as the annual membership fees are very reasonable. Even though it has strengthened its national coverage, the chain wants to consolidate its presence in some French towns: Toulouse, Carcassonne, Arras, Douai... Hotels have already joined Citôtel at Dinard, Nîmes, Bitche, Severac-le-Château... Others will follow.

Article by Claire Cosson - L'Hôtellerie Restauration - November 15th 2007