



Photo credit: Danilo Lewis Photography

*In the landscape of Techno, and arguably the entire underground scene, one woman reigns supreme: **Nicole Moudaber**. Sitting atop her pillar, built by bottom-heavy grooves and re-barred together with distorted hooks and punchy hi-hats, she rules; proof positive in her meteoric rise, going from underground gem very few DJs and producers knew about, to a borderline household name.*

I had the pleasure of catching up with Moudaber, and chatting with her a few months back, brushing over everything from her recent successes to upcoming projects, to simply talking about the state of affairs within the dance music microcosm.

An extraordinarily busy woman, she has headlined dozens of festivals in 2014 alone, being offered her own stage at Burning Man, to playing the Big Apple multiple times with the Hyte Park Festival, Electric Zoo, along with EDC Vegas, and the like. She also has played tons of gigs at small venues, like Output in Brooklyn, whose Funktion One sound system, this writer can attest, does Moudaber's sound justice, slowly thumping chunky basslines with each record she selects. This begged the question, which does she prefer – the festival gig, or the club setting?

"I love both – I love the festivals because of the energy, I mean, it's this whole massive collective that is just vibrating in front of you," Moudaber commented. "That creates an amazing buzz. I do like the intimate ones though, because you have more eye contact and can express yourself in a deeper manner. It's darker, you can express musically and creatively, go a bit more clever and intelligent and try new things. Whereas a festival, you just go in and bang it all out; I love both though."

With this in mind, it was no surprise that we were given her **MoodRAW** warehouse tour, an amalgamation of the big-room festival feel, with a club-esque setting, which has gotten back to the roots of how she started. “My warehouse tour is going to be a ‘real’ experience, nothing shiny about it, just you, me and the music. This is what I grew up with and I want to recreate it and bring it to my fans. Just keeping it raw and real,” reads the press release for the event. Raw and real, even after speaking with her, I can tell you unequivocally, that this is not just a PR term, but in fact, how she is and comes across. Bringing together reverberating bass-heavy jams in a massive space, but being intimate enough for her to hit the dance floor with her minions, this is something she has brought to realization.

From ADE to BPM in early 2015, the irrepressible techno maven has played them all. Among the intimate spaces though, the club settings, she rattled off a few of her favorites: Space Ibiza, Output NY, Stereo Montreal, all staples to the clubhead worldwide, but she also included a gem I personally never heard of in Bulgaria: Yalta Nightclub.

Headlining gigs aside, she has been working steadfastly behind the scenes, putting out banger after banger on MOOD records, which only started in January 2013, but has an impressive collection of artists on it already. From a DJ Times cover story in March 2014, to one of her most recent releases [“I’m Whippin’, I’m Dishin’](#) EP making it to the Billboard CODE pick of the week, she shows no signs of fatigue or slowing down. She even made her way into the New York Times, with a feature entitled “[Women edging their way into the DJ Booth](#).” The New York Times doesn’t usually do stories on underground dance music DJs; that in itself says a lot. So does a cartoon that appeared in the [New Yorker](#), highlighting her involvement in Electric Zoo New York 2014.

Jet setting all over the globe, and all of this success in the back of my mind while I spoke with her, I had to ask, what does she do to unwind?

“When I get on the decks, it’s my unwinding time... anything apart from that is mega stressful – when I’m on the plane, or when I’m on the decks, I’m relaxing. Other than that, there are so many things going on – it’s just craziness in my life. I don’t drink when I DJ so that keeps my energy level up – being able to travel from one continent to another in the span of 3 days. You just have to keep going,” Moudaber explained.

Aside from her ridiculous touring schedule, and even more impressive release schedule – she also has had an obscene amount of success with her In [The MOOD radio show](#) – gaining over 2.8 million listeners since April 2014. This success notwithstanding, my curiosity about what prompted her to take on yet another project was piqued. Wanting to flesh out if this was to give her another platform, or if it was from an influx of fan requests – or rather demands, as many of her fans (myself included) can be quite rabid, Moudaber commented: “Obviously I got approached by the producers of the radio show – who also produce Carl Cox’s, John Digweed’s, Adam Beyer’s, Armin Van Buren’s, and it is a mega platform for me as an artist to showcase the array of music that I love. You know, I don’t get to play too many deep house records or lots of vocal stuff, but on my show is a great medium to do that. Obviously I’m playing live sets from my festival gigs or club gigs, but it allows me to explore and play the other styles of music that I produce but it doesn’t associate too well with me – it’s a great outlet for me creatively.”

Other than her projects which are already publicized, I wanted to know what else lay on the horizon. Since the time we spoke, many of these came to fruition – as if we needed any more proof that Moudaber was about as real as it gets. She commented that a lot of great artists are being released on MOOD in the next couple months, and she’s trying to get more vocal elements into her productions, working with Skin from Skunk Anansie, putting out tracks with Jamie Jones, and of course Carl Cox. We even joked about her collaborating with Slash – whom she shares a hairstyle with. Like I said, she’s about as real as it gets.

Another facet of realness to Moudaber’s persona is the fact that [See You Next Tuesday](#) , on MOOD records, is being pressed on vinyl, bringing wax back to the dance music game, with undoubtedly more pressings of this kind on the way. Carl Cox called it way back in 2009 when he said she was “One of the most talented up-and-comers” in the game, and Yes, Yes, we agree. But, the beauty of this spectacular rise is that it hasn’t gone to her head in the slightest “When I do feel the need to work with someone, I reach out to them. And try to collaborate,” she said, also mentioning a collaboration with Green Velvet that’s in the works.

Born in Nigeria, raised in Lebanon for a little while, and now living in London; I had to ask Ms. Moudaber about the global nature of underground dance music – where people like herself, Richie Hawtin, Chris Liebing, Adam Beyer, Carl Cox, Danny Tenaglia, and the list goes on – could play a city anywhere and be accepted, loved, and doted upon. I asked her, do you find that certain countries or cities are more accepting and loving – or do they basically bug out wherever you show up? “I don’t want to brag about myself, but yea, they go wild,” she said with a slight giggle. “I do believe Europe has a much bigger understanding of certain kinds of Techno – you can go very clever, intelligent, deep, and underground – very obscure, and they would get

it. It's yet to be certified over here [The United States] - I don't tend to be too adventurous, yet, but I think I will be open to it at some point for sure."



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*To that point, she commented **"They get the minimal tracks in Europe; -they're used to it, and more exposed to it. And – I'd hate to use this word – but the whole 'EDM scene' here, is damaging what we're doing."***

Which necessarily brought us to our next point: As one of the pioneers in Beirut – throwing one of the first raves/parties in that area, bringing people together under the umbrella of peace, unity, love, togetherness, and the abolition of hatred; do you still feel that underground dance music still possesses those elements, or do you feel that the commercialization and mainstream success of EDM into festivals – that it's becoming more of a money game and it's getting away from the music?

"The whole thing is – when you go to a commercial show, at a festival – where you have that kind of music going. The kids that are there have no idea as to what is going on, they have no idea about music, they're just there because everyone else is there," Moudaber explained.

"What we do, is more than bring people together – you can say we bring people together but all music does that. But when we bring people together under one roof like in a club – where people understand what is going on – there's a different vibe. There's a more connected vibe than these commercial events."

From continent to continent, the name Nicole Moudaber is becoming synonymous with not only dark, techy grooves, but also with a quality product, raw and real events, and unrivaled energy for the music. Considering she reached number 1 on the Beatport Techno Chart with the "One

Nicole Moudaber

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Day Later” EP on Intec, has a stacked roster on MOOD Records, 2.8 million listeners in 30 different countries for In The MOOD Radio, “the numbers are rising, and the future looks very bright,” Moudaber commented. You’d be a fool not to agree.

By: [Alexander Castiglione](#) for CGNY.

<https://soundcloud.com/nicolemoudaber>

<https://soundcloud.com/moodrecords>

http://www.clubbersguidenewyork.com/reviews/gigs/3-gigs/45-Nicole_moudaber_at_Dekalb_Market