



Rooms with a view — of museum-quality art

■ Across the country and abroad, hotels are incorporating fine pieces of art into their design.

BY ALIA AKKAM
Special to the Herald

When guests check into the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, they are not just greeted by front desk staff, but two plasma screens showcasing a video collage of city scenes collected from the camera that sits perched on their roof.

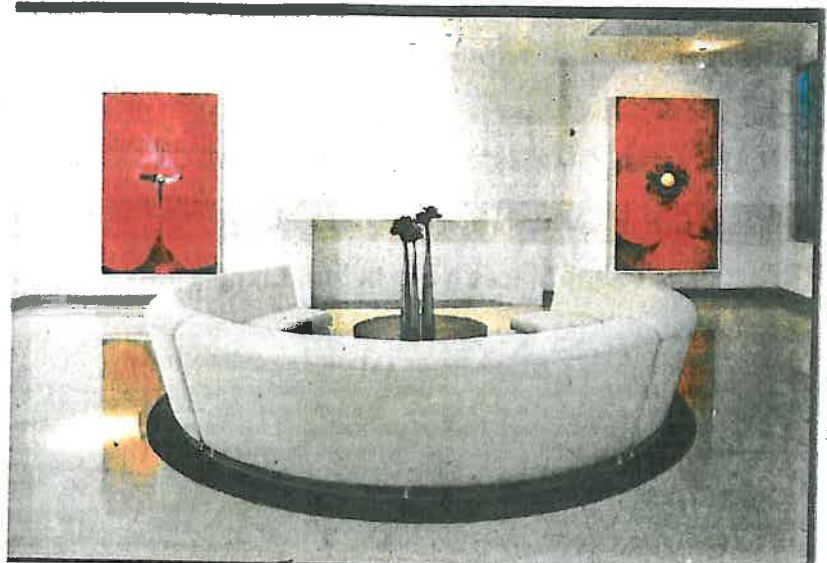
As guests wheel their suitcases to their rooms at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma, Wash., they take notice of a corridor brightened by intricate, hand-blown glass creations.

And, at Portland, Ore.'s newest hotel, The Nines, a 30-foot chandelier made of glass, LEDs and steel hangs over the eighth floor's grand stairwell.

The trend of intertwining striking art in a hotel setting has been a growing trend since the 1990s, says consultant Joan Warren-Grady, who shaped art collections for the Fontainebleau and Regent hotels on Miami Beach and luxury hotels worldwide.

"Original art collections... help set each hotel apart, making it one-of-a-kind," she says. "Guests take away a memory of their hotel experience, and a visual memory is a very powerful one that helps bring the guests back."

That exposure to museum-quality art with the price of a



SAGAMORE HOTEL

CHECK IN AND CHECK IT OUT: The lobby of Miami Beach's Sagamore Hotel presents an artistic image, above. Above right, art in a room at the Hotel Max in Seattle; and at right, a room by the artist BEN is one of dozens created by well-known visual artists at the Hotel Windsor in Nice.

room is especially welcome in today's economy. And it helps create a distinctive sense of place.

"[Hotels] are basing their interior and artworks on local flavors because that's why people travel to their destination: To experience something they don't have in their home place. Artwork can tell a story within a room," says Donna Watson-Rossmoore,

associate vice president and director of interior design at the Orlando office of top hospitality architects, WATG.

TREASURES ABROAD

This isn't just a U.S. trend. At the Hotel Windsor in Nice, artists including Lawrence Weiner and Raymond Hains were given carte blanche to stamp their own personal designs on half of the proper-

ty's 57 rooms, whether whimsical flowers or a Babar-inspired room. Hand-painted frescoes brighten up the other rooms.

In Madrid's Salamanca neighborhood, the Petit Palace Art Gallery hotel incorporates an art gallery in its premises; if contemporary pieces like a shiny cow in the lobby aren't exactly what guests have in mind, the hotel offers discount tickets to the nearby Reina Sofia contemporary art museum.

In Rome, Guido Angelo Terruzzi, art collector and owner of the Rome Cavalieri, has dipped into his private stash to outfit the hotel with more than 1,000 pieces, including a triptych from Giovanni Battista Tiepolo that was snared for the highest price ever paid at an art auction in Italy's history — \$8 million. The collection is so vast that hotel has created an mp3 tour.

Stateside, in art-obsessed Chicago, local museum curators helped the Park Hyatt Chicago's shape its collection of black-and-white photographs from local artists, an aluminum sculpture from Isamu Noguchi, a glass original from Dale Chihuly and Gerhard Richter's *Piazza del Duomo*.

From the video art projects displayed on the inner court-

SOME NOTABLE HOTEL COLLECTIONS

- **The Nines**, the new 331-room hotel that opened this fall in Portland, Ore., commissioned 419 pieces for the hotel. Once the old Meier & Frank department store, some works by local artists hint at its glamorous past, including a color drawing and watercolor of Clark Gable (a nod to his pre-Scarlett days as a tie salesman at the store), and life-size gown sculptures made of mesh and recycled screen doors. 877-229-9995; www.thenines.com. Rates: \$249-\$995.

- **Hotel Murano**, in Tacoma, Wash., a city sometimes overshadowed by adjacent Seattle, is a haven for hand-blown glass—45 artists have made their mark on it — including a 104-foot glass exterior structure, *Orizon*. 866-986-8083; www.hotelmuranotacoma.com. Rates: \$149 to \$379.

- The collection at **21C Hotel**, in Louisville, Ky., fills a 9,000-square-foot hotel museum, said to be only one in the country devoted to contemporary art from the 21st century. On display through January: *All's Fair in Art and War: Envisioning Conflict*. 877-217-6400; www.21cmuseumhotel.com. Rates: \$199 to \$499.

- **The Blackstone Hotel**, Chicago, underscores the hotel's storied past as a political meeting place with stamp art in each of the guest rooms that recalls historic moments. The art hall features rotating, contemporary artwork by students from nearby Columbia College. 312-765-0568, www.marriott.com. Rates: \$199-\$3,500.

- Cutting-edge works from the YBA crew (Young British Artists) are the stars at the **Chambers** in Minneapolis. Local artists are featured at the hotel's onsite Burnet Gallery, along with works by international stars including Damien Hurst, Sam Taylor-Wood and Angus Fairhurst. 877-767-6990, www.chambersminneapolis.com. Rates: \$230 to \$3,500.

- The **Umstead Hotel & Spa**, near Raleigh, N.C., features artworks that pay homage to nature, from the curvy tendrils of Dale Chihuly's sculpture to locally made waterscape murals hanging up at the hotel's restaurant, Herons. Guests are encouraged to take self-guided tours and visit the dedicated gallery for a glimpse of new works. 919-447-4000; www.theumstead-px.trvlclick.com. Rates: \$299-\$609.

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