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Hotel Murano
Glittering Glass

NOT EVERY REMODEL of a 1980s Sheraton convention center hotel lures photographers before its completion. But as pieces from master glass artists were being installed in Tacoma, Washington's Hotel Murano, the flashbulbs started popping. Thanks to Portland hotelier Gordon Sondland and interior design firm CorsoStaicoff, the city that's home to the Museum of Glass and Dale Chihuly's Bridge of Glass now boasts high-glass accommodations.

Out front, artist Costas Varotsos's sweeping sea-green glass form, *Orizon*, grandly foreshadows what's inside. Named for the Venetian island that has been home to glass artists since the 13th century, the Hotel Murano features 21 floors that each display the work of a different artisan, from Seattle-based Dante Marioni to Australia's Cobi Cockburn. And the hotel's flowing public spaces feature custom commissions by an equally illustrious roster.

The latest in a series of aesthetically ambitious boutique hotels by Sondland's

Provenance Hotels, the Murano is the second project for this design team. Tessa Papas, Provenance's art curator, conducted an exhaustive search for artists, narrowing a field of 200 to about 40. "I wanted to have a mix of international artists, young and well known," she says, "and as many different ways of dealing with glass as I could have."

CorsoStaicoff made sure that the design didn't compete with the art. "The glass art is the hero," designer Denise Corso says. "We kept things clean and minimal and used more of a muted palette with punches of color." The furniture is generally Modernist, with lobby seating from Bensen and Zanotta accented with Brent Comber's "Shattered" tables.

The old hotel's massive shell was, as Corso bluntly puts it, "brutal." So the design strategy became about reinventing the space by bringing the furniture and art down low "so you're

This mirrored glass chandelier from Italian artist Massimo Micheluzzi is the centerpiece of the Hotel Murano's colorful lobby.



On each floor, **the elevator opens to a display case** filled with the work of a featured glass artist.

STYLING

not overwhelmed," says designer Jim Staicoff.

Given the city, glass was the obvious choice—and a profound challenge. "The Murano was the most we've bitten off," Corso says. "The training wheels came off with this one."