



Talk with Jackie

By Jackie Joseph-Lawrence

Twinkling in Tacoma

I want to talk about hope for the New Year, of which I wish you a "Happy," and some wrapping up of a few of last year's joys. One hope: that 2010 won't race by like the zooming pace of 2009...

Luckily, a few days before Christmas, time slowed down for a first-ever visit to celebrate the 'Golden' wedding anniversary of David's only sister, Lynn, and her husband of 50 years, Gene Geyer. True to their style of happily helping others, they met us at Sea-Tac airport and drove us to the heart of Tacoma's rejuvenated downtown, a short walk from Museum Corridor (with the renowned Museum of Glass "Hot Glass. Cool Art"), to the startling Hotel Murano.

Hotel Murano—Nights in a Museum

Like Ben Stiller's movie (almost), we spent two amazing nights in a museum. Who knew, in Tacoma, Washington, of the world-class abundance of art in the

award-winning Murano Hotel (ranked #6 of the Top 100 U.S. Hotels by *Condé Nast Traveler*)?

How striking to be actually living within the magnificent collection of glass art. It starts at the Murano's sparkling entrance and continues into the huge lobby with great glass Viking ships hanging from the ceiling, a fragile female piano player's dress stands near the front desk. We elevated to the 17th floor where the doors opened to a wide display of glass art by U.S. designer Toots Zynsky. Each floor exhibits the work of a different glass artist from all over the world. Such color and forms... I wanted to press every floor on the elevator! Our own accommodations greeted us with the soft, red glow from hand-blown glass lamps illuminating a sleek, contemporary space with everything one could wish for a restful stay. This is a must-visit to inhale the wonder. Their Web site has gorgeous pictures beyond description (Google 'Hotel Murano'). Gordon Sondland, president of the five artful Provenance Hotels, says, "Prove-



The sheer beauty of Hotel Murano's elegant Piano Player's Dress glass art.

nance is a fitting word to describe our focus on high-design, unique service offerings and story around the arts." I promise you, his vision has more than manifested!

We were treated to a grand tour of the area with my siblings-in-law, viewing the woods, streams and lake territory and their lovely home in the sweet city of Steilacoom. Then, back for dinner at the Murano's mind-bending eatery on the fourth floor...

Bite Restaurant

Overlooking four floors of breathtaking art below, the menu



One of three glass Viking ships hanging high in the lobby of Tacoma's Hotel Murano.

had a lot to live up to. I tell you true, when I exited the elevator and headed toward Bite, my jaw was yawning and the vast space was so dimensional and totally beautiful (as was the meal). We sampled an array of dishes from the extensive and tempting menu, from limoncello-cured salmon to lobster corn dogs to Kobe sliders and truffle mac and cheese—all out of the ordinary, all delicious. The naughty dessert list included homemade milkshakes (!) and warm Krispy Kreme donut bread pudding à la mode with espresso chocolate sauce. Help!

Outside, the night was crisp and cold, perfect for the fast approaching Christmas. Inside, the hotel glowed and shined with merrily lights on the glass art. The brilliant display of artwork in the lobby bar offers no shortage of conversation-starters. The full sized, realistically-sculpted wooden horse with a lampshade on its head kept me talking. Even the drinks are beautiful, and the atmosphere as cozy as a winter lodge. We bid good night to Lynn and Gene and

looked forward to their upcoming 'Golden' night... (This was perfect—full of friends and family and tons of love and laughter.)

Next day, we did return to Bite for an artfully-served, merciless breakfast. I wasn't forced to order the Belgian waffle with bacon woven inside but yum is yum—time to surrender. Fortified, we walked to

Tacoma's Museum of Glass

Children from local dance classes performed to refrains of *The Nutcracker Suite*. We wandered through the collections, ending at our favorite: Kid's Art, a unique concept allowing children to sketch creatures from their imagination. Each month one is selected and actually transformed into a glass figure by the museum's artisans in their theatre/hot shop. The results were sometimes hilarious, sometimes fantastic and always mind-blowing glass blowing. (Example: a favorite is called "Coyote with Rainbow Socks.") See their hot Web site and pick your own... We'll talk...