

FYI Travel: For some resorts, just any art won't do

by Tom_Roebuck

Luxury hotels and resorts are masquerading as art galleries, displaying original pieces in guest rooms, lobbies, hotel bars and garden expanses. Where can you find hotels and resorts with art collections - and art connections - of distinction?

ARTFUL EXPERIENCE - If you want an interactive art experience in French Polynesia, L'Atelier, the new onsite artists space at Le Meridien Tahiti, features contemporary artists from across the islands and around the world. CNS Photo. - Contemporary Chinese and Hong Kong artists have a hotel to call their own: the Langham Place Hotel in Hong Kong. The 42-story hotel's collection includes more than 1,500 pieces of contemporary Chinese art; from sculpture to paintings to drawings, each floor gets its own theme at Langham Place, with a wide variety of themes such as nature, childhood and capitalism. Tours of the collection are available for guests and each guest room is outfitted with an illustrated art book describing the collection. FYI: Visit www.langhamplacehotels.com.

- Since purchasing the stylish Cotswold House in Chipping Campden, England, in 1999, owners Ian and Christa Taylor have commissioned works from local and international artists for display throughout the hotel's individually designed guest rooms and public areas. The spiky glass balls and sculptures throughout the hotel's private garden were created by Neil Wilkins, a "glass master" who has exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Stunning "rainfall" chandeliers dangle over the spiral staircase as well as in some guest bathrooms. Dreamed up by Bruce Munro, one of the U.K.'s leading lighting designers, the chandeliers combine translucent fiber optic threads and cylindrical supports to give the appearance of a sudden spring rainfall and light gleaming against light. FYI: Visit www.cotswoldhouse.com.

- Where is the most interactive art experience in French Polynesia? At L'Atelier, the new onsite artists space at Le Meridien Tahiti, featuring contemporary artists from across the islands and around the world. Along with fresh opportunities to peruse contemporary works - including paintings, pottery, photography, sculpture and jewelry - guests can participate in art workshops to learn the techniques straight from the artists themselves and even create their own original artwork to take home. The space features enough room for exhibiting the works of three artists simultaneously. FYI: Visit www.starwood.com/lemeridien.

- Since opening its doors at the turn of the millennium, XV Beacon has proven itself one of Boston's keenest destinations for original art. The chic boutique on historic Beacon Hill displays numerous works by contemporary artists including "Green Dot," an oil-on-canvas by Russian-born Jules Olitski, Larry Brown's "Magnetic Field," three pieces from Theodoros Stamos' famed "Sunbox Series" and many more. It also

recognizes the past with historic works including two Gilbert Stuart portraits and a glorious Roman mosaic dating from the fourth to fifth centuries A.D. FYI: Visit www.xvbeacon.com.

PAINT WITH A PRO

There's nothing like checking out sun worshippers in the Caribbean, except maybe capturing them on canvas. Travelers with an artistic bent can put their brush strokes through the paces during special workshop getaways featuring renowned artist Michelle Torrez at Caneel Bay on St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. A talented painter whose works have been featured in numerous publications, Torrez will work closely with serious artists and earnest aspirants in the intimate setting of the Turtle Bay Estate House. The four-night, three-day getaways are available at Caneel Bay Oct. 15-19 or Oct. 20-24.

At Caneel Bay, Torrez will focus on the human form, making extensive use of a female model over three days of instruction while inspiring students to take a fresh approach to expressing themselves. Caneel Bay is a superb destination for Torrez's workshops, as the beauty of St. John has been drawing artists for decades.

Participants can look forward to:

- Four nights accommodation in an Ocean View Room at Caneel Bay.

- A welcome reception.

- Working breakfast, lunch and breaks daily.

- All the art materials for the workshop, as well as three full days of personal instruction from Torrez.

FYI: Price: \$2,800 per person including all taxes and service, subject to availability. For more details call 888-ROSEWOOD or visit www.rosewoodhotels.com.

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