

Inn with the New

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I've been working Art Basel Miami Beach for a couple days now, hauling my cookies from the beach to the convention center to the downtown Design District to installations and satellite fairs scattered across this fair city.

The fact is, gentle readers, I'm on serious art overload, and it will take me a day or two—alone in a dark room, far from Miami—to begin to process everything I've

seen: the good, the bad and the butt ugly.

For now, let me say that one of the most delicious marriages of art and design can be found at my posh hotel—the freshly opened W in South Beach, which represents a giant step forward for the W brand. This newest incarnation is—in both attitude and aspirations—something much grander than a mere hip hotel. It doesn't simply nod to serious art and design, it makes a convincing presentation of both.

The art program, curated by the estimable Richard Marshall from the collection of New York business czar Aby Rosen, includes signature pieces by the likes of Damien Hirst, Andy Warhol, Tom Sachs, John Chamberlin, Christopher Wool and other Names You Must Know (to borrow a phrase from an old New York discount clothier



The design of the public spaces and guestrooms is credited to Anna Busta of Studio B—once again, anything but predictable. The lobby features gorgeous expanses of highly figured marble and terrazzo floors inlaid with bronze, which serve as a fine backdrop for an eclectic collection of furnishings that show considerably more imagination and flair (for lack of a less queer word) than most boutique hotels can muster.

The guestrooms similarly score. My only concern is maintenance—I hope the luxe materials and fine finishes can withstand the beating they are sure to receive from the hard-partying lotharios and slinky sexpots who flock here in droves. I don't even want to think about stain removal.

The landscape of the outdoor social space called the Grove was conceived by Paula Hayes, a brilliant designer who straddles the worlds of landscape architecture and conceptual art with uncommon finesse. If you can't get enough of Hayes' work at the W, check out her felicitous birdbath at Marianne Boesky's booth at the art fair.

As faithful readers of this blog know, I have a very low tolerance for roiling social scenes filled with hopped-up dudes and dudettes on the make. Naturally, this being Miami Beach, they are out in force every night at the W. But if I have to hack my way through a *meshugenh* mob to get to the elevators, at least here I get such A-list scenesters as musical wunderkind Pharrell Williams and professional glamourpuss Naomi Campbell.

I've been obsessed with Pharrell's, um, talents since he came on my radar some years ago. If only the concierge here could arrange for him to surprise me in my room, this hotel experience would be absolute perfection. Pharrell, I'm waitin' for ya.