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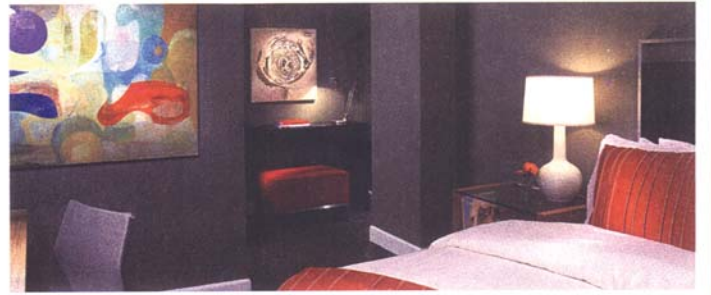
around the world

SEATTLE the art of hospitality

The Seattle Art Museum has some new competition from an unlikely source – the new **Hotel Max**. Opening this month, the Max features minimalist design that keeps the focus on the unique artwork hanging on the walls. With more than 150 commissioned pieces in and around its 163 rooms, the hotel showcases the work of both emerging and established artists.

The designers left no surface untouched. The elevators, designed by artist Denise Corso, are a vibrant red leather; the hotel affectionately calls them the "red cabooses." Each guest-room door is covered with a large black-and-white image, with each floor dedicated to a different photographer. For example, the hallways of the fifth floor are adorned with photos by Charles Peterson of musicians like Kurt Cobain and Eddie Vedder. Naturally, each room comes with a flat-screen TV and sleek, ergonomic furniture, because, after all, art appreciation can be exhausting.

hotelmaxseattle.com – *Gwyn Driskill*



SAN FRANCISCO hybrid heaven

In hopes of finding company for her Toyota Prius in the parking lot of the **Little River Inn**, owner Susan McKinney decided to offer midweek guests who arrive in their hybrid car a second night free. Think of it: there's no better way to embrace the crunchy California lifestyle than to cruise along the Pacific Ocean in an ozone-saving hybrid car. In addition to this clean-air special, the inn, a three-hour drive from San Francisco, on the Mendocino coast, offers rooms with ocean views, Jacuzzis, and cozy fireplaces. Just provide proof of your hybrid car ownership at check-in for two nights, Sunday through Thursday, and you'll be billed only for the first night of your stay. Just be sure to make a reservation first – the ocean-view rooms get filled up quickly. littleriverinn.com

– *Heather Bouzan*

PALAU royal treatment

A new hotel opening is usually a special occasion, but the **Palau Royal Resort** is not just any hotel. Boasting the island country's first full-service spa, the six-floor, 158-room facility provides the kind of luxurious accommodations you'd expect in such a beautiful spot. The hotel also features a gym, a private beach, a tennis court, an outdoor pool, and, of course, access to some of the best diving the world has to offer.

nikkohotels.com – *Martin Lieberman*