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HOTEL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & ARCHITECTURE

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PARIS PERFECTION

NEW BOUTIQUES IN THE
FRENCH CAPITAL

IAN SIMPSON

AN ARCHITECT CREATING
A TOWERING PRESENCE

THE HOXTON

LONDON'S NEW 'LUXURY-
BUDGET' URBAN LODGE

PORTRAIT SUITES - ROME / SLEEP 06 REVIEW / SARATOGA - HAVANA / HILTON - TOWER BRIDGE / WASHINGTON DC

WORDS BY JULIET KINSMAN PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF KIMPTON HOTELS

HOTEL PALOMAR WASHINGTON DC



THIS PAGE: The interiors of the Hotel Palomar feature modern artworks and installations. The design is more subtle than other hotels within the Kimpton stable, although splashes of colour lift the interiors beyond the beige and the bland

The Kimpton Group's Hotel Palomar, designed by Cheryl Rowley, is perhaps Washington DC's largest and most grown-up boutique property, with a buzzing bar and restaurant to boot.

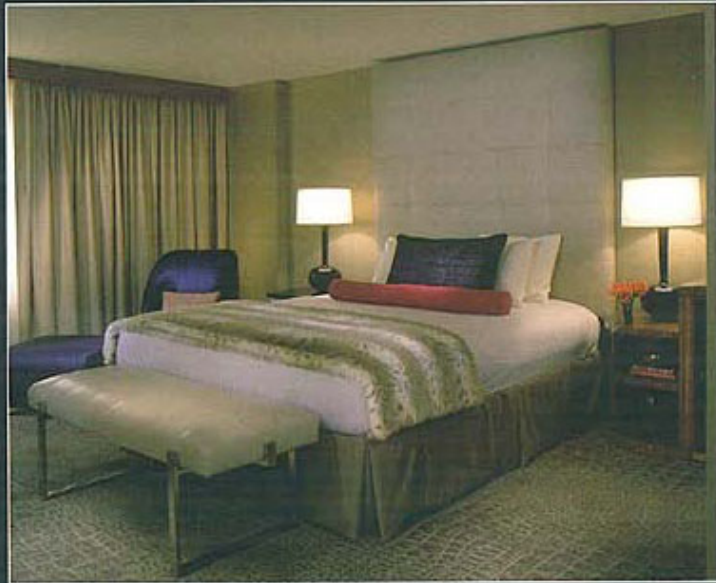
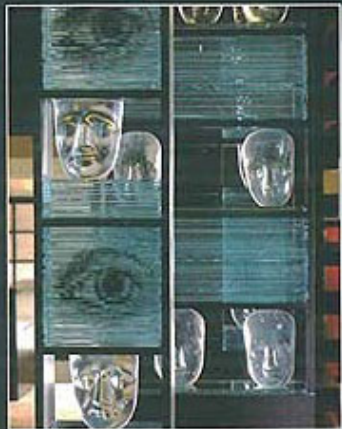
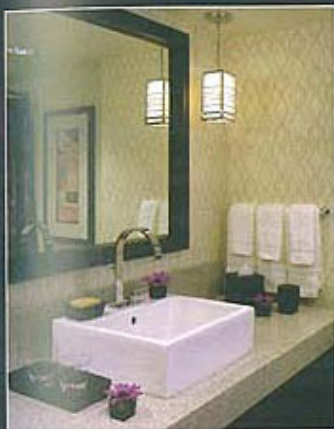
Hotel Palomar's impossible-to-miss albeit unremarkable façade on P Street is little indication that such a chic retreat lies within, let alone somewhere that proudly declares 'Art in Motion' as its strapline. "Palomar is designed for a sophisticated traveller," says Tom La Tour, chairman and CEO, and as soon as you make it through the glass front doors, this is clearly the case. More grown-up than any of Kimpton's other hotels in Washington

DC, its new 335-room hotel, located off the Dupont Circle, is a welcome aspirational-yet-accessible addition to the accommodation offerings in the capital.

The first Hotel Palomar was in San Francisco, and California-based Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants once again injected some West Coast energy into this East Coast destination, on this occasion enlisting the style nous of Beverly Hills designer Cheryl Rowley. Having acquired the former Radisson

Barcelo Hotel in summer 2005, the property re-opened merely a year later after a \$32 million revamp. "The idea was to surprise and intrigue guests while still embracing timeless style down to the last detail," says Rowley. And what is extraordinary about this new star in Kimpton's fast-expanding portfolio, is how the hotel achieves an ambiance of effortless cool from the moment you step foot into the sprawling glass, wood and marble reception area.

The communal spaces are elegant, polished, and the colour palette more subtle than is Kimpton's norm. The Murano chandeliers, ebony-look paneling and white onyx of the lobby are a distinct departure from the clash of colours and patterns seen in its other DC stopovers, such as Hotel Monaco and Hotel George. Undeniably hip, but too big to be accurately classed as boutique, the huge modern artworks and installations are the flourishes that Palomar should be



ABOVE: Bedrooms are spiced up with quirky accents such as animal-print throws and hot pink bolster cushions, whilst bathrooms are enhanced with blached Italianate marble and granite

most proud of, and what makes this burgeoning breed stand out from the crowd. However, according to Paige Dunn, Regional Director of Sales and Marketing, it's not just about having a pretty face. "Kimpton Hotels' service also sets it apart from other area hotels," she says. "Our staff are friendly and welcoming, and we feature Kimpton's InTouch loyalty program, which allows us to track and adhere to guest preferences during each stay". The bedrooms are spacious and refined, with a W feel to them. Spiced up with a few quirky accents such as hot-pink bolster cushions and animal-print throws, and enhanced with impressive blached Italianate

marble and granite ensembles. And just as Starwood successfully straddles the business and leisure camps with its W hotels, Kimpton has struck an excellent balance with its Palomar brand. In-suite desk areas are ergonomically-designed and amply proportioned for any briefcase clutches; and if guests have a sports-and-leisure kit in hand too, added extras include the option to check email from the running machines in the gym. As well as the enticement of luxury lodgings and one of only a few outdoor pools in DC, another boost to its credentials is the buzzing 173-seat Urbana Restaurant and Wine Bar. 2006 not only witnessed Hotel Palomar's launch in the District

of Columbia, but this autumn the Park Cities neighbourhood of Dallas (see www.palomardallas.com for more information) gained its own spa-studded version with adjoining high-rise condominiums, lofts and courtyard villas (priced \$350,000–\$2.5 million), and there's an additional project underway in Arlington Virginia. Still, in a town that outpaces the national average in terms of rate and occupancy, it's likely to be the DC outlet that proves the soundest investment. In the words of chairman, Tom La Tour: "Why do people rob banks? 'Cause that's where the money is. Washington, I think, is the most vibrant hotel market in America."

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

HOTEL PALOMAR
2121 P Street NW
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www.hotelpalomar-dc.com

- 335 bedrooms
- Urbana Restaurant & Wine Bar
- + 11 Meeting Rooms