

light to another bank of mirrors, then onto the heart in the pillar.

Hillen's wish is that residents will draw hope from the light when it reflects onto the heart, even if Omagh is known for receiving the least sunlight of all of Ireland. It adds to the poetic truth, Hillen says.

"The sun isn't going to shine all the time, and that's one of the sad truths of life, but we hope it will shine again."—CLAIRE PATTERSON

Hot Venue, Hotter Sculpture

Are you ready to escape your wintry den for warm weather? Sculpture Key West is the perfect remedy. The annual juried outdoor exhibition of 32 sculptures by 35 local, national and international contemporary artists graces the tropical island this winter.

The 2009 participating ▶



release intense flavors, and range in price from \$5-\$7.

Deseo features an exhibition kitchen, allowing patrons to watch staff prepare dishes from "the Rail." It specializes in ceviche, a combination of citrus-marinated seafood, which ranges from \$13-\$22, and nuevo Latino cuisine.

Deseo welcomes visitors with a candle-lit foyer.

Entrees include everything from lomo-wrapped diver scallops in plantain sauce to beef tenderloin "churrasco style" with crab mojo, roasted tomato and horseradish chimichurri on grilled Peruvian potato. Prices range from \$25-\$32.

For more information, visit www.kierlandresort.com.

—C.P.



SLOW DOWN ... ART AHEAD Anyone who has been trapped on the freeway knows that drivers tap on the brakes to see an accident. But will they slow down for a work of art? The City of St. Paul Public Works Department wants to find out. Its "Art of Traffic Calming" project will see the installation of a number of art-based street signs in designated areas throughout the city, to determine if unexpected images slow traffic. The brainchild of Steven Woodward, the city's former artist in residence, the signs are intended to change the visual conditions on the street, causing drivers to pay more attention to their surroundings. To that end, the signs will be installed for no more than 10 weeks in any area, followed by an evaluation to determine their effectiveness. Images on the signs are varied, but all are basically simple and serene, including flowers, children and geometric patterns. The project, funded by the nonprofit Public Art Saint Paul, is currently scheduled to continue through 2009. —CHRISTINE KLOOSTRA

B&B ARTFULLY

Kim and Sharon Shailer have an open-door policy at the Balsam Mountain Inn in Balsam, N.C.—literally. They leave the unoccupied room doors open for guests and visitors to peek into (or “pre-view”), “because this is our home, and it just felt more like home to walk down the halls and have the bedroom doors open,” Sharon explains.

The Shailers bought the inn in 2004 after the previous owner retired. Although it originally featured 107 guest rooms when it opened more than 100 years ago, it was reduced to 50 spacious rooms and suites during a 1990 renovation.

Nothing is off limits, according to Sharon. Everything is useable, including the books in the library, which features antique and handcrafted pieces as well as original art.

The inn also sells art on the premises in the “Art in the



Mountains” gallery, which includes pottery, handcarved bowls, original photographs and watercolors.

One word of warning—come for the art, but don’t come for electronic entertainment. The inn offers “no televisions, no telephones and no apologies.” It truly embodies a quiet, restful retreat, and has a great sense of community. “The art of conversation is not dead,” according to Sharon, who says guests tend to mingle in common rooms or on the long porches.

If you don’t already have a long list of reasons to visit, go during the “Songwriters in the Round” monthly series, when award-winning songwriters from Nashville perform. Room rates range from \$145-\$229 per night. To make a reservation, call 800-224-9498 or visit www.balsaminn.com. —C.P.

LAST CALL

SCALING THE WALLS Louise Bourgeois doesn’t limit herself. The materials in her work range from the traditional, like plaster, bronze and marble, to the unexpected, including electric lights, glass, rubber and found objects. The Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., adds a few new pieces to the traveling retrospective “Louise Bourgeois,” which includes sculptures hanging from the ceiling and the walls. Don’t miss work like “The Blind Leading the Blind” on its last stop Feb. 26-May 17. —C.P.



[KEY WEST] ▶ artists faced a jury of five, led by Shamim Momin, co-curator of the 2008 Whitney Biennial, who were asked to consider cohesion when making final choices. Environmental, temporal, ethereal and site-specific works are the focus of the 2009 show. A few are so fragile they may break apart or “cease to exist” before the show ends.

Highlights include a tower of Cuban bread, a giant glowing halo and a hot pink trailer filled with snarling dogs.

The majority of the works will be shown at Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park March 1-April 18, with an opening reception March 1 and an artist



Anja Marais’ “The Woman Who Was Turned into a Tree” sculptures were shown at the 2008 Sculpture Key West.

lecture preceding it Feb. 27. The other main venue, West Martello Tower, will display nine works Jan. 18-April 18, with an artist lecture Jan. 16.

All work on display is for sale, and the artists may also be contacted for commission work through Sculpture Key West. Visit www.sculpturekeywest.com for more information. —C.P.