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WESTERN LANDMARK

Art, culture and high tea are *de rigueur* at Portland's Heathman Hotel

WRITTEN BY Rosemary Carstens

An elegantly restored 150-room luxury boutique property, the Heathman Hotel in downtown Portland's financial and cultural district, was built in 1927. It has received top awards from *Travel + Leisure* magazine, made the *Condé Nast* Gold List and won AAA's Four Diamonds award for 30 consecutive years. Its reputation is derived in part from its commitment to the city's cultural communities and sustainability.

The Heathman is one of few remaining hotels in Portland, Oregon, dating back to the early 20th century. Originally designed with decorative details evocative of Italian Renaissance style by the architectural firm of DeYoung and Roald, a \$16-million renovation in the mid-1980s restored its historic luster and added distinctive contemporary touches.

Blending Old World charm and comfort with New World trends in art, the hotel's public rooms have a lush, engaging ambiance and highlight artworks from its eclectic collection. The collection includes 250 original paint-





Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Among the treasures in the Symphony Suite is this exquisite sculpture, *Ginkgo Cello*, by Bluevine Studio. | The Heathman, viewed from the street, is centrally located in downtown Portland. | The Heathman's Portland Center Stage Suite features authentic handmade stage costumes, playbills and tickets. **This page, clockwise from top:** The Literary Arts Suite is ready for turnaround. | Rejuvenation is a signature cocktail from the Heathman Hotel Bar. | The illuminated front desk is backed by an elegant mural reproduction of a traditional Japanese kimono design. Photos: John Valls

ings, photographs and works on paper, with a key focus on leading Northwest and American artists along with significant international accents. A delicate mural floating above the reception desk reproduces an 18th-century Japanese Buddhist silk robe design, and two 17th-century canvases by French landscape artist Claude Gellée grace the historic tea court.

With its soaring arched ceilings, stained glass windows, restored Eucalyptus-paneled walls and stunning

Blending Old World charm and comfort with New World

Austrian hand-cut crystal chandelier, the tea court is renowned for its refined European sensibility. It provides an intimate, relaxing atmosphere for high tea and conversation and is especially popular during the holidays when the space is decked out in yuletide splendor.

In the Marble Bar and the Heathman Restaurant, the stylish cultural theme continues. Art Deco mirrors originally from the Waldorf Astoria, along with a 200-year-old bas-relief and Kenyan drum figure, add visual excitement, as do perhaps the most famous works in the hotel's collection — Andy Warhol's 10-part *Endangered Species* silkscreens. A light-infused mezzanine library boasts a 30-year collection of signed editions by the many acclaimed authors who have visited the hotel.

General manager Steve Hurst intends to continue the hotel's emphasis on community culture. "Back in 2012, we had a famous Andy Warhol suite and we decided it was time for Andy to share the spotlight with four of Portland's premier organizations: the Oregon Symphony,

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the Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland Center Stage, and Literary Arts of Oregon. We wanted to share with guests the great things going on here in Portland," he says.

Design contractor Kat James, of Bluevine Studio, created four signature suites, each embodying a theme tied to one of the organizations. From beautifully handmade costumes, ticket stubs and edited scripts in the theater arts suite, to the melodic-themed symphony suite's exquisite sculpted cello enveloped in ginkgo-leaved branches and notated sheets of music, and on through the distinctive accoutrements of the literary and fine arts suites, each luxuriously appointed option envelops guests in a special world.

The Heathman exemplifies the trend toward smaller hotels offering a well-choreographed, holistic sensory experience. It's a welcome oasis in the City of Roses. ■

Rosemary Carstens (www.wordsandpaint.com) is a freelance writer and art consultant who writes for numerous publications about books, art, food, film and travel.

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