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Fall 2004

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Niall Reid is laying on private programs geared to the "Five Graces" theme (the Tibetan concept of the human senses). One night we had a southwestern cooking class with ebullient local chef John Vollertsen at the home of Native American sculptress Estella Loretto. Another day our sight, hearing and emotions were overwhelmed by an intimate opera concert in The Awakening Museum, a hangarlike space completely covered with 400 wooden panels—8,000 square feet worth—carved and painted by French-born artist Jean-Claude Gaugy over parts of 13 years. *The Awakening* is a majestic work, kinetic and ferocious, the record of an expressive soul in turmoil and elation. Our group of about six from the Inn was already awed when our concert began, a magisterial, blind soprano named Jessica Bachicha electrifying the air around us with an a cappella "Ave Maria." At the Inn of the Five Graces, sunny Santa Fe is very much about inner experiences, too.—RICHARD NALLEY

PARIS

Biennale: Art and antique fairs are as European as cafés and cigarettes. Thousands browse the tony halls in Maastricht, in Holland, and Grosvenor House, in London, every year. But the most prestigious of them all, Paris' 22nd **BIENNALE DES ANTIQUAIRES**, sets up this

September 15 to 28 in the Carrousel du Louvre. The event, held every two years, will feature 103 exhibitors from ten countries, culled from the crème de la crème of the world's finest private galleries. Not surprisingly, this is a fair where museums themselves come to shop. For one thing, the fair provides an intimate viewing experience that few museums can equal. The Biennale's rigorously vetted items include furniture, drawings, paintings, tapestries, sculpture and rare books, some dating back to the Renaissance.

At this level, the dealers seem to pride themselves on scholarship as much as salesmanship—and many employ historians, who, like skilled sleuths, search out the pedigree of an item in obsessive detail. "Sometimes it takes us two years to find the background of a piece," says Marella Rossi, of Aveline, an elegant dealer on the rue du



Faubourg St-Honoré.

This Biennale, Aveline will exhibit an Empire chair of mother-of-pearl and mahogany. "It belonged to a very important collector in Vienna, Count Pálffy," Rossi explains.

Hervé Aaron, of the renowned Didier Aaron & Cie, is a mainstay of the event. "We have done the Biennale for more than 25 years," he says. "The Biennale this year will be glorious as always, with a strong 18th-century market, but there is also a lot of excitement for the 1930s to the 1950s."

Decorator Jacques Grange will design Aaron's booth, where a 1765 neoclassical-style desk by Pierre Garnier, made of amaranth and kingwood accented with ormolu, will be on view. It is a woman's desk that Aaron describes as "very powerful and very elegant."

Bruce Bierman, a prominent New York and Palm Beach interior designer whose decorating style favors 20th-century

classics, wouldn't miss the Biennale. "It is steeped in history," says Bierman, and "you will see the finest—unique pieces that can't be found anywhere else." The designer routinely takes clients to shop for items that won't make it to the States. During the last Biennale he purchased a pair of Dunand 1930s tables from 20th-century dealer Vallois.

"I don't know what I enjoy more, the incredible furniture and art, or the people-watching," Bierman admits, adding, "People get dressed up for this—it's all about style. This is Paris you know!"—DONNA PAUL

EYES ONLY

The 22nd Biennale des Antiquaires runs from September 15 to 28 at the Carrousel du Louvre. Daily admission is about \$15; www.biennaledes-antiquaires.com



Interior exotica
at The Inn
of the Five Graces

EYES ONLY

THE INN OF THE FIVE GRACES, \$295-\$470.

150 East DeVargas Street, Santa Fe, NM;
(505) 992-0957,
www.fivegraces.com.

SOUTHWEST

Santa Fe: **THE INN OF THE FIVE GRACES** is tucked away on a side street near the state capitol complex so obscure that even nearby locals seem confused as to its whereabouts. It is a fitting introduction to the Inn, which is itself a hidden treasure. In Santa Fe, a place geared toward bright light and the outdoors, The Five Graces is inward, cool and mysterious, an ongoing makeover of a '50s-ish apartment complex into a kind of sweetly dreamy caravansary, with Tibetan carvings, kilims, Thai silks and weathered Indian ceiling beams. (On one in our room you could make out the scratched graffiti RASHID.) The place began as the brainstorm of Ira Seret, a local purveyor of high-end Southeast Asian furnishings. Purchased at the end of 2002 by the Garrett Hotel Group (The Point, The Willcox), the 20-suite (soon to be 24) Inn has added luxe touches like refrigerators filled from your personal wish list (ours included foie gras, Goldfish and Dr Pepper). Irish general manager >>>