

LOCAL
iq

ARTS | MUSIC | FOOD | FILM | CULTURE

albuquerque's intelligent alternative
volume 8 | issue 8 | april 11-24, 2013

THE GREEN ISSUE

The future of solar shines like glitter at Sandia Labs

14

One local company holds up rising demand for solar

20

MARQUEE

Yes, Chef

Chef, author, raconteur Anthony Bourdain takes a left at Albuquerque

6



Pulte
Homes



LOMA COLORADO GRAND OPENING

FREE Food • Music • Fun Jumpers • Free Isotopes Tickets and a meet and greet with ORBIT!

APRIL 20th • 11AM-4PM
BRAND NEW UNVEILING OF HOMES STARTING IN THE 210's
Go to www.pulte.com/lomacolorado for directions

A new gated community



Revisiting a favorite side street

Hidden Santa Fe resort a colorfully-decorated sanctuary now high on global traveler lists

BY STEVEN J. WESTMAN

In our 2011 Issue, *Local IQ's* "Side Street Santa Fe," I listed The Inn of The Five Graces as one of the best places to stay. Fast forward to 2013, and the accolades keep pouring in, with the most recent having the hot-spot touted as the "#1 Hotel in the Southwest," in *Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards*, as well as "Editors Choice for the World's Best Hotels."

It was 1996 when I noticed the coolest river-stone apartments on De Vargas Street being renovated into a hotel — Serets 1001 Nights — and I spent many a lovely night there. Six years later, the name changed to what it is today: "In honor of the five 'graces,' an Eastern belief that we are graced with five ways to enjoy the pleasures of the world — sight, sound, touch, smell, taste. Still, there is so much New Mexican 'aura' in all that hits you, when you are here.

The Seret Family (Ira and Sylvia Seret and their three sons) is behind all of this. Their presence has been felt in Santa Fe since the late 1970s with their store, Seret & Sons, which offers interior design pieces and architectural decor. I recently spent another enchanted evening, finding myself in the Jasmine Suite, and getting the delightful chance to talk to Sharif Seret (one of the three sons who is the general manager).

With just 24 guest rooms, the feeling of intimacy and the special care from the Serets and staff is palpable. My room was set on the second floor of the main courtyard, and when I walked through the door, I beamed with delight. The attention to detail — from the furnishings, to the art, to the housemade salsa that awaited me in the small kitchen area — it's all quite astounding. The grand mosaic bathroom (designed by Sylvia Seret) will wow you in many ways, as will the view of the Sangre de Cristo mountains from the private balcony.

I left the room, to have dinner down the block at 315 Restaurant & Wine Bar, and when I returned, fresh housemade biscochitos were on the bed, with the recipe to make them. I don't recall having a better

TRAVEL

Inn of the Five Graces

150 East De Vargas,
Santa Fe, 505.992.0957

fivegraces.com



The blend of Eastern design and Southwestern aura provides the unique charm at Inn of the Five Graces, the Santa Fe stopover recently named the "No. 1 Hotel in the Southwest" by *Conde Nast Traveler*. Lighting and color are utilized to great effect at this inn, as seen on the patios (above) and reaching an apex in the inn's tiled bathrooms (right).

night's sleep. When morning beckons, breakfast is served up in the dining area of the main building, with emphasis on their red and green chile. My choice was Huevos Estilo Rosa (poached eggs and Canadian bacon served Christmas style on an English muffin). Yummy. Sitting and sipping coffee in the courtyard, under the unlike-no-other New Mexico sky, I thought to myself, "Should I take in a treatment from the spa?" And then realized I was already in a state of bliss, and did not want to check out to head back home. The smiles from the crew at the front desk make you feel like part of the family. As I drove back to Albuquerque, I thought, "You should have gotten that Ayurvedic healing massage." Next time. And there shall be many.

In my conversations with Sharif Seret, he shared some of the history of the inn and his desire to make it a destination for everyone.

Local IQ: Why did your parents choose the original buildings on East De Vargas to transform?

Sharif Seret: For years Ira and Sylvia had always driven down De Vargas Street en route from the store and fell in love with the block. ... It has since become a project of passion for them, allowing Ira to showcase his design and fashion work and Sylvia to create her mosaic masterpieces.

IQ: How do you best describe your family's style, with the mix of the Southwest?

SS: Often times the style is misconceived by the public. ... It is a blend of patterns and styles from a range of over a dozen countries, from the Silk Route to South and Central America, all blended with the local aesthetic. The best way to describe it is the Seret signature style. They have fallen in love with certain pieces and created countless others, based on patterns that inspire them. The hotel itself is very Santa Fe, using traditional building methods from mud plaster to coved ceilings. All we have done is blend that local aesthetic with the Seret style to give the hotel a unique feel, differentiating it from every other hotel in Santa Fe.

IQ: How often do people wander in from off the street, having no idea you were there — nor having ever heard of the inn?

SS: We are slightly hidden off the most famous street in Santa Fe. As you begin to walk down the street, the layers start peeling back and one beautiful detail leads to the next. ... As you know, our location is wonderful and offers our guest a more



private experience for the downtown area, while still being central to the downtown experience.

IQ: And what do you want to do to bring New Mexico Residents to experience the inn?

SS: We hope we can become a destination for locals wanting to experience something different, wanting to celebrate or wanting a night away without having to go very far. ... We have found that many locals are also able to reconnect with the Santa Fe experience, while being pampered and enjoying the comfort of the wonderful rooms.



Create Your Perfect Wedding

OLD SAN YSIDRO CHURCH
CORRALES, NEW MEXICO

CALL DEE TURNER FOR DETAILS: 505-263-0666

