

Hotel Andaluca's Ro Snell Gallery

Santa Barbara's hip vacation spot takes a fresh approach to the art of escape

by Victoria Charters

"My idea was to show the work of contemporary Santa Barbara artists, because I think when people come to a place they like to see what's going on there," says Ro Snell, operator of The Ro Snell Gallery in Santa Barbara's Hotel Andaluca. The gallery is part of the Mediterranean-influenced getaway's effort to "make art more accessible."

The Ro Snell Gallery exhibits four feature shows a year. Ro collaborates with the artists, going to the studios to select compatible pieces for their show. Currently on display is the work of Laurence Gipe, the hand behind the swirling motions of the featured *Carrillo Dancer*.

Lawrence Gipe (www.lawrencegipe.com) lives in Santa Barbara and exhibits his paintings nationally and internationally. In addition to working in his Santa Barbara studio, Gipe currently teaches studio art and History of Twentieth Century Art at both UC Santa Barbara and the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. Gipe comments, "the January exhibition represents a number of ongoing series, the series inspired by German Cabaret photos and the *Arrivals & Departures* series." The poignant, tonal *Arrivals & Departures* series features lines of people entering or leaving infamous settings. Not only are the people an impermanent presence, but their surroundings are, too. Settings chosen include the now-destroyed Penn Station, a temple in Cairo later inundated, and Lenin's Tomb.

Art flows from the Ro Snell Gallery to the rest of the hotel. "I really wanted to create a residential feel, as if you are staying with a friend in a very elegant guestroom," states Ro. In keeping with this approach, each guestroom showcases five carefully selected pieces of original art (limited edition prints) by local talents. There is a solar etching of clover by Ky Easton, a photo by Paul Olsen, sunny watercolors by Leo Duff and an exquisite collage by Mary Heebner.

Ro Snell Gallery, downstairs at The Hotel Andaluca.
31 West Carrillo, Santa Barbara, California.
805.884.0300. www.andaluciasb.com.



Above: The Ro Snell Gallery adds an artistic element to the traditional hotel lobby. Photo by Pat Stanbro.
Below: *Andalucian Dancer*, Lawrence Gipe. 2004. Oil on panel. Image courtesy Ro Snell Gallery.

