

Milford Magazine ^{5th Anniversary}

Navigating the Delaware River Highlands

July 2006

HOTEL FAUCHÈRE

Reborn

1852-2006



Volume VI, Number V
milfordmagazine.com

ROUNDTABLE



FLORA AND FAUNA: Left, *Blue Moon*, and Right, *Eye on You*, are two prints from an edition of fifteen created by the Hilton Brothers in 2005.

Collaborative Contrasts in Bar Louis

Upon entering Bar Louis, the sleek modern bar in the ground floor of the Hotel Fauchère, one might wonder what a place like this—as contemporary, sophisticated and urbane as it can be—is doing in a classic 19th century Italianate style building in a small town in rural Pennsylvania. *Milford Magazine's* editor-in-chief and Fauchère co-owner Sean Strub sat down with Billy Reue, the architect who designed the space, and Christopher Makos and Paul Solberg, the photographers whose work adorns its walls, to talk about Bar Louis, Andy Warhol, the Hilton Brothers and kissing.

SS (Sean Strub): I envisioned Bar Louis as an environment totally different from the rest of the hotel. I wanted it to be modern, understated with clean lines and a sort of

timeless glamour. Billy, how would you describe the space and its relationship to Christopher and Paul's photography?

BR (Billy Reue): The bar is understated, but not undefined. The design decisions were influenced by the photography, as well the intent to create an identity separate from the rest of the hotel. The photographs are extraordinary—each image a juxtaposition of two seemingly disparate things. Simple things that would typically go unnoticed, like the curl of a horse's eyelash or the profile of a flower petal. It is as if Chris and Paul mined the earth for things that made them happy and distilled them to the core of their beauty in order to save us the trouble of having to do it ourselves.

SS: How would you characterize your work on Bar Louis, compared to your work on the rest of the hotel?

BR: It was a perfect end to the five-year process with the hotel that I was involved with from the beginning. To have a piece of it, you know, with my twist, is gratifying. With an historic project, the edges of the box are defined for you. The constraints are there. If you're successful, the experience of the place as a whole should feel as seamless today as it did when it was built. If you want something to look as if it is going to last forever, you've got to make it look as if it has been there a while. I think we pulled it off.

CM (Christopher Makos): Billy's design and our pictures create this incredible vibe. There's no simple division like "does this start here by his design" and "does it end here again with our pictures." The two things go hand in hand. They complement each other.

SS: Christopher, you urged me to keep it simple. I remember when you walked in and saw the brick wall we had decided to save. You immediately and emphatically said "Leave it blank. Don't put anything on it." Tell me why.

CM: Paul and I see many restorations of buildings and places in Europe, where they have tremendous respect for their history and architecture. You can go into a new Italian restaurant in Valencia and suddenly

continues on page 43



ART AND ARCHITECTURE:
architect Billy Reue.



HILTON BROTHERS: Artists Christopher Makos and Paul Solberg.

continued from page 41

see it has a glass floor. Below the glass is a little bit of an old Roman ruin. They are not allowed by law to destroy any artifacts from their past; they respect their history so much. That wall in Bar Louis is a part of the old building and I thought you should reference the history of the place with what you can. It looked like art to me.

PS (Paul Solberg): I thought it had a modern historical reference that tied the new space in with the rich history of the hotel.

SS: Billy, what do you hope someone feels when they enter Bar Louis?

BR: It's supposed to be a special place, unlike any other in the area. The bar complements what's happening upstairs in the hotel but doesn't compete with it. In the hotel everything is a painted surface with cornices, traditional molding, traditional hardware. The bar is more about rich, textured surfaces and robust forms. It makes no bones about being in the basement. We keep that one artifact of the brick wall—that is the one thing that tells you where you are in relation to the rest of the building.

SS: The Flower and Horse pictures are so great together, how did they come about?

PS: Chris was working on his last book, *Equipose*, and I was working on my first book, *Bloom*, and we were printing our work separately in the studio and the images of the horses and flowers found themselves.

SS: Christopher, tell us about the large picture on the backbar of Andy Warhol kissing John Lennon on the cheek.

CM: I took that picture in 1978. It was Valentine's Day and I wanted to do a story in *Interview Magazine* on the people who were hanging around at the Factory, Andy Warhol's studio. Salvador Dali, John Lennon, Liza Minnelli, those kind of people and so I just thought let's get any of these people kissing for Valentine's Day.

SS: Did anyone turn you down?

CM: No. Remember that was the late seventies. Everybody was kissing everything and everybody. It wasn't such a big deal. Photographing a kiss is really not as simple as one might think. If you want to show people's lips, you have to fake it a bit. Real kisses don't photograph that well.

SS: Christopher, in your youth you were famously a protégé to Andy Warhol, and earlier to Man Ray. When you and Paul started working together, it was almost as though the protégé became the mentor, and then that evolved even further to something that is the collaboration you two call the Hilton Brothers.

CM: I was curious about where I was going with my photography. Paul stepped into my life at a moment when he was stepping out of a certain life of his own. With him I was able to revisit photography and see it in a way that was new. He allowed me to re-visit my art. I was eagerly and openly able to give all of my gifts of perception and how I saw the world to him. But really, it was a gift I was giving back to myself, because I was able to see things in a different way, through his eyes.

SS: That's similar to your relationship with Warhol. You were a tool that provoked his creativity.

CM: Yeah, I was the tool and we did collaborate on various pictures, but Andy came from a very different mindset. I come from a much more free-wheeling sort of love—I can share who I am with another person and not feel competitive about it. At least in this instance, with Paul, I feel that was OK. We were on holiday in the Canary Islands, off the West Coast of Africa and just after a visit to a volcano, I came up with the idea of creating this third identity, the Hilton Brothers. I could hide behind the identity, and we could both come to the table with artwork that they would know as Christopher Makos and Paul Solberg.

PS: It was the union of a name with two separate people.

CM: It was the union of a very orthodox name. The Hilton Hotels are known as a place that you could go and rest. The notion of the Hilton Brothers' artwork is a place that you could go and look at the artwork and you could rest, for now.

SS: What projects are you guys working on now?

BR: Several residential projects in Pike County; additions to existing homes, historic restoration work and maybe some new construction. The properties in Pike County are so terrific, I am thinking about buying something for myself. In New York City I have a cool townhouse project under construction. And I am doing an apartment interior in the landmark Equitable Trust Building that is being converted into condos by Philippe Starck. It's a great building—the former headquarters of JP Morgan—and it's located right across the street from the New York Stock Exchange.

PS: Chris and I have a project for the Americas Cup, which is going to be in Valencia, Spain in June/July of '07. We also have a project in Castilla y Leon the central region of Spanish medieval history, which is this unbelievable place. You go into these unassuming restaurants and they have this extraordinary food that is some of the best cuisine in Europe.

CM: Then we're working with BMW in Brussels, because Warhol painted the BMW for the 24-hour Le Mans thing in 1981. And we will have an incredible new show this summer at the Tom Young Gallery in Brussels.

SS: Thanks, guys. We'll see you late in July at the opening and book-signing party. ■