

**Client:** Hotel Lungarno  
**Source:** The Gloss  
**Date:** November 2022



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## TRAVEL

# Glossy Stays

*Hotels with gallery-worthy collections are on Penny McCormick's radar this month*



**L**uxury hotels using fine art to impress guests is nothing new. American hoteliers Steve Wynn (former owner of the Bellagio, Las Vegas) and Ian Schrager (Morgans, Royalton, Delano and countless others) were early adopters. Another is British interior designer Kit Kemp whose Firdale group displays high value artworks (such as Sir Howard Hodgkin's *As Time Goes By* at Haymarket, London) alongside tribal crafts, curios and works by emerging artists.

Art has become a crucial aspect of hotel design and for some the incentive when planning a trip. The art at **THE FIFE ARMS**, near Balmoral Castle in Scotland, is worth the circuitous journey. Co-owned by the founders of the Hauser & Wirth gallery, its museum-worthy collection includes a photo from the Elsa collection by Man Ray, a Lucian Freud, a large spider sculpture by Louise Bourgeois and a Picasso. [www.thefifearms.com](http://www.thefifearms.com). A private collector donated 800 works of postal art to **HOTEL MADAME RÊVE**, Paris, located in the 19th-century Louvre post office building. Graffitied quotes ("We have nights more beautiful than your days") are another design feature, part of founder and art director Laurent Taieb's masterplan for the hotel. [www.madamereve.com](http://www.madamereve.com). In Deia, Mallorca, **LA RESIDENCIA** pays homage to Spanish painter Joan Miró, who settled in Palma in 1956. With over 30 works by Miró decorating its walls and a restaurant named in his honour, the hotel also has both a resident artist and sculptor, who offer guests tutorials. [www.belmond.com](http://www.belmond.com). The Ferragamo-owned **HOTEL LUNGARNO** in Florence, overlooking the Arno, is a showcase for the family's 450-strong trove of 20th-century art which includes Picassos and Cocteau's, along with Italian greats Marino Marini, Ottone Rosai and Antonio Bueno. [www.lungarnocollection.com](http://www.lungarnocollection.com).

In Ireland, courting a younger demographic (millennials = art, the theory goes) is a priority for many new hotels. Contemporary art is an integral component of the Press Up Hospitality Group's seven hotels (which includes **THE CLARENCE** and **THE MAYSON**). Not only has it invested over €1m in works by Irish artists, the group recently launched **THE DEAN ART STUDIO** in Dublin, which provides free studio space for 30 artists. [www.pressup.ie](http://www.pressup.ie). In Cork, **THE MONTENOTTE HOTEL**'s artist-in-residence programme with The Gallery Kinsale is thriving. This supports Irish artists by offering a six-month tenure; Nathan Neven's "Wild Life Invited" collection is currently exhibiting until January 2023. [www.themontenottehotel.com](http://www.themontenottehotel.com). **MOUNT JULIET ESTATE** has partnered with the renowned Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, offering guests the chance to enjoy paintings by Grace Henry, Patrick Collins and Mildred Anne Butler from the gallery's permanent collection. [www.mountjuliet.ie](http://www.mountjuliet.ie). A fast-track art appreciation course is undoubtedly another benefit when booking an autumn break at the hotel.

## ART FANS WILL LOVE ...

Over its 25-year history, **THE MERRION**, Dublin 2 has been a magnet for art enthusiasts, such is the brilliance of its collection. Susan Mannion's *Liminal Space* is the latest artwork on display – the winner of the Merrion Plinth Award 2022, established to support contemporary artists, offering a prize fund of €5,000. Enjoy an Art Tea (€57) in the Drawing Rooms inspired by hotel's collection including the work of JB Yeats, William Scott and Louis le Brocq. [www.merrionhotel.com](http://www.merrionhotel.com). \* Gorgeous flora and fauna are the signatures of Kenmare-based artist Christine Bowen, commissioned by **SHEEN FALLS LODGE**, Co Kerry (€215 for a midweek stay) and its sister hotel **TRINITY TOWNHOUSE**, Dublin 2, to decorate suites and communal spaces. A stay at Trinity Townhouse, from €229, provides easy access to "Turner: The Sun is God" at the National Gallery. Featuring 89 works from the Tate Collection, it's a must-see exhibition. [www.trinitytownhousehotel.com](http://www.trinitytownhousehotel.com). \* Nostalgic photographs by Jesuit priest Father Browne hang in his namesake bar at **LOUGH ESKE CASTLE**, Co Donegal. Browne's work has been likened to that of iconic French photographer Cartier Bresson. The hotel also boasts two Lucian Freuds – one of the Queen Consort's former husband Andrew Parker Bowles – the other of owner Pat Doherty, who sat for a portrait. An overnight stay with dinner is from €295. [www.lougheskecastlehotel.com](http://www.lougheskecastlehotel.com). \* Sir John Lavery's portrait of Miss Haslam in the reception of **THE WESTBURY HOTEL**, Dublin 2, is one of 35 significant works collected by the Doyle family and displayed in the hotel. Plan a meeting in The Gallery, a great vantage point to view artworks by Norah McGuinness, Anne Butler Yeats, Mick O'Dea and Elizabeth Cope. On leaving, check out the John Behan RHA exhibition at Solomon Fine Art, the hotel's gallery partner. [www.doylecollection.com](http://www.doylecollection.com). \* "His work is not about light, or a record of light; it is light – the physical presence of light made manifest in sensory form," so said art critic Calvin Tompkin of landscape artist James Turrell, whose Sky Garden at **LISS ARD ESTATE**, Co Cork, is designed as a dramatic observatory. It can be privately accessed during a "Believe in Light" stay which also includes dinner and an evening kayak on Lough Hyne, €489. Local photographer Rohan Reilly's evocative lake photos are also on view at the estate. [www.lissardestate.ie](http://www.lissardestate.ie). \* Directly and indirectly inspired by the Bauhaus movement, **ARTHAUS HOTEL**, Dublin 2, has a collection of 100 artworks. These include commissions by Irish artists Fran Halpin and Deirdre McClorey paying tribute to two of Ireland's most influential female artists, Mainie Jellett and Mary Swanzy, who were contemporaneous with the Bauhaus in the early 20th century. From €199. [www.arthausdublin.ie](http://www.arthausdublin.ie). \* Valerie Keogh, head concierge at **INTERCONTINENTAL DUBLIN**, Dublin 4, joined the team from the National Gallery of Ireland and is delighted to show visitors the hotel's collection, including works by Percy French, Orla de Bri, Rowan Gillespie and Blaise Drummond. From €245 for an overnight stay. [www.intercontinentaldublin.ie](http://www.intercontinentaldublin.ie). \* Visitors to **CLONTARF CASTLE**, Co Dublin, will realise many of the hotel's artworks have an element of humour or a hidden layer of detail, chosen specifically "to make the viewer smile, linger and remember". Pick up an art map to explore during the "Fall for Clontarf" two-night offer, from €249. [www.clontarfcastle.ie](http://www.clontarfcastle.ie). \* At **THE WILDER**, Dublin 2, I've stayed in the Miss Wade suite. Miss Wade is one of Charles Dickens' most enigmatic characters in *Little Dorrit*. There's nothing enigmatic about my endorsement of this chic boutique hotel which juxtaposes work by Irish artists Roisin O'Farrell and Holly Somerville and others, with lush velvet furnishings and original Victorian fittings. [www.thewilder.ie](http://www.thewilder.ie). ► page 68