



*Media Contacts:*

**Quinn & Co.**

Nicole Ruggiero / 212-868-1900 x248 / [nruggiero@quinnandco.com](mailto:nruggiero@quinnandco.com)

Leslie Dewees / 212-868-1900 x357 / [ldewees@quinnandco.com](mailto:ldewees@quinnandco.com)

**Chicago Kimpton Hotels**

Jennifer Navarro / 866.331.3945 / [jennifer.navarro@kimptonhotels.com](mailto:jennifer.navarro@kimptonhotels.com)

## **ORLANDO DIAZ-AZCUY BLENDS URBAN AESTHETIC & CITY'S HISTORIC INFLUENCES AT PALOMAR CHICAGO**

**CHICAGO, IL** – With Chicago's vibrant River North neighborhood as a backdrop, San-Francisco-based designer Orlando Diaz-Azcuy aimed to capture, in a contemporary manner, the rumble and buzz of the city's live-wire essence in the new Palomar Chicago, a Kimpton Hotel. From his long list of residential projects to his well-known commercial commissions, including the spa and pool of Hong Kong's celebrated Peninsula Hotel, Diaz-Azcuy is known for his clean lines, urban sensibility, smart flashes of unexpected elements and bold color, combined for a balanced, well-curated look.

The 261-room hotel, which debuted March 24, 2010, marks an evolution in the city's boutique scene with its location in a new mixed-use high-rise building with a dramatic curb-side aesthetic and show-stopping design and décor. "The architecture of the building very much represents today, in a city where smart and chic art have contributed greatly to the destination," says Diaz-Azcuy.

Art plays a significant part of the visual experience at the Palomar, drawing from the hotel's "Art in Motion" theme, and the art-centric River North neighborhood, home to the highest concentration of art galleries in the U.S. outside of Manhattan. Throughout the design process Diaz-Azcuy looked to source pieces that spoke to the rich history of Chicago and its artistic evolution. In particular, he focused on those that depict Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition and Fair, an historic period that helped shaped the city's art and architecture. "We blended elements of the past in order to achieve a feeling of déjà vu that will allow a traveler to savor the history of Chicago," he said.

As visitors step into the Palomar from North State Street, they are carried away from the busy city and into the inviting and seductive entrance gallery space. Bold accents provide a wow-factor, including a stunning black marble wall. Adorning the wall are plaster friezes representative of the “White City” from the World’s Fair. The lobby conveys Diaz-Azcuy’s interpretation of the seasons in Chicago, with a sharp contrast between the winter and summer months. The white walls were designed to give a cool impression in the heat of summer, while the gold reception area was intended to be reflective of warm sunshine welcoming guests in the chilly winter. Under foot is a dramatic, over-scaled flowered rug in rich reds and gold, providing a counterbalance to the white walls and illuminated fringe cord drapery.

To the left of the entrance gallery is a living-room style sitting area with sofas, banquettes and lounge chairs in warm colors, envisioned as a social gathering place for friends and travelers, a nod to the old tradition of grand hotel parlors. A small bar is incorporated for leisurely coffee sipping or enjoying a glass of wine in the afternoon. Informal, flexible seating using white avant-garde furniture creates a casual, friendly setting, according to Diaz-Azcuy. Hanging above the fireplace is a modern photo interpretation of Greek busts titled “Columbus, Penelope, Delilah,” that plays on the classical design theme. In front of the windows are two enormous urns in the Neoclassical tradition that recall the World’s Fair.

Upon exiting the commanding lobby, guests rise into the comfort of home-like accommodations on floors 5 through 17 of the hotel. The elevator banks are enlivened with vintage posters of Chicago jazz and blues festivals, leading into hallways with muted bronze wall coverings, red and yellow carpeting, and photographs of baseball greats, evoking another element of Chicago tradition. Each room number and entrance is illuminated by linen-covered light fixtures above the doorways, positioned to be visible from the elevator lobby and lead the way to the guest rooms.

The welcoming guest rooms are washed in brown tones highlighted by rich, cerused red oak and thoughtfully placed splashes of warm crimson red and cool blue. Canvas images of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair enrich the décor, and floor-to-ceiling windows invite the vibrant neighborhood to be part of the experience. Several guest rooms feature windows on two sides for a sense of openness seems to extend the space into the surrounding city.

Beyond the sliding cerused red oak entrance door of each bathroom is a vanity cabinet in a matching finish with a Caesarstone top, like a freestanding piece of furniture. The rooms are not traditional, nor trendy; they were designed for a user seeking comfort and warmth, as guests would find in their own home.

In the meeting and event spaces, totaling 5,800 square feet, design standouts include the striking Gallery Ballroom, highlighted by gold tones, dramatic custom-designed chandeliers and floor-to-ceiling windows with a west-facing city view. A separate, luxurious pre-function area, where one wants to linger, sets the stage for a grand entrance with an ornamental staircase, juxtaposed with a backdrop of prints illustrating the famous Greek Pergamon Frieze.

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#### **ABOUT PALOMAR CHICAGO, A KIMPTON HOTEL**

Located in Chicago's vibrant River North neighborhood, Palomar is Kimpton's newest addition to its Windy City collection. Designed by Orlando Diaz-Azcuy, the hotel celebrates "Art in Motion," and features pieces that pay homage to Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition and Fair. The evolved boutique concept features 261 guest rooms and suites, all with floor-to-ceiling windows, a rooftop indoor pool, 5,800 square feet of stunning meeting and event space, and an adjacent dining experience, Sable Kitchen & Bar. In addition to an eco-friendly green roof, the hotel operates with more than 80 sustainable practices as part of Kimpton's brand-wide EarthCare program. Palomar is convenient to many of Chicago's most popular attractions, including The Magnificent Mile, McCormick Place, Navy Pier and Merchandise Mart, as well as family favorites such as the Chicago Children's Museum and the Willis Tower Skydeck.

The hotel is located at 505 North State Street, Chicago, IL, 60654. For more information or reservations, please call (312) 755-9703 or (877) 731-0505 toll free or visit [www.hotelpalomar-chicago.com](http://www.hotelpalomar-chicago.com).

#### **ABOUT KIMPTON**

San Francisco-based Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, a collection of boutique hotels and chef-driven restaurants in the US, is an acknowledged industry pioneer and was the first to bring the boutique hotel concept to America. Founded in 1981 by Bill Kimpton, the company is well-known for making travelers feel welcomed and comfortable while away from home through intuitive and unscripted customer care, stylish ambience and having a certain playfulness in its approach to programs and amenities. Each hotel provides a range of exciting culinary experiences through locally-loved, top-rated, destination, chef-driven restaurants. Kimpton leads the hospitality industry in ecological practices through its innovative EarthCare program that spans all hotels and restaurants. Privately held Kimpton has consistently earned high customer satisfaction scores by the Market Metrix Hospitality Index, exceeding other hotel companies including those in luxury and upscale segments. Among the company's newest properties are the LEED registered Hotel Palomar and LEED registered Square 1682 restaurant by Chef Guillermo Tellez in Philadelphia, PA, which opened in October 2009. Currently, projects are underway in New York City and Chicago. For more information, please visit [www.KimptonHotels.com](http://www.KimptonHotels.com) or call 1-800-KIMPTON.

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