

# SCOTTSDALE REPUBLIC

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### Painted Ponies trail leads to Four Seasons

The Trail of Painted Ponies, a national art project inspired by the Native American tradition of horse painting, is helping Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North craft its identity. The arrangement also helps Scottsdale efforts to be marketed to tourists as a cultural destination.

**Business. D3**

# Art is resort's selling point

## Four Seasons gallery offers ponies, dolls

By Stephanie Paterik  
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

The Trail of Painted Ponies, a national art project inspired by the Native American tradition of horse painting, is helping Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North craft its identity.

Four Seasons opened a gallery this month featuring two ponies, hand-carved kachina dolls and an array of modern paintings by Native American artists.

The artwork is dressing up hotel walls near the restaurant and will gradually spread to the lobby and other areas of the property.

Guests can buy the art right off the walls. Paintings by a Cave Creek artist cost about \$1,000, while a mural-size work by a Montana artist goes for \$125,000.

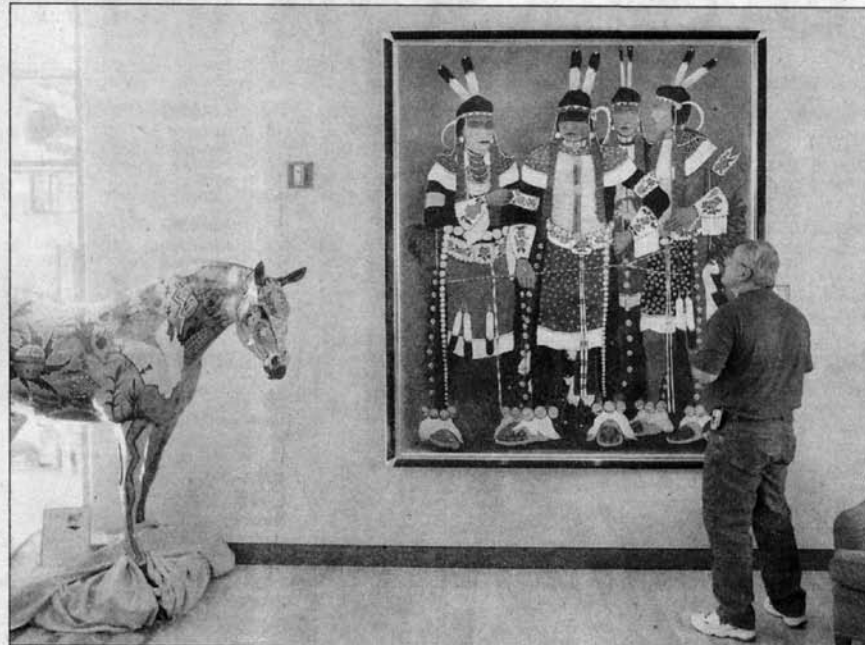
Folks who want to take home an original, painted sculpture of a life-size pony will pay about \$40,000.

The resort will get 25 percent of every sale, while 50 percent goes to the artist and 25 percent to the curator, the Trail of Painted Ponies.

There have been no takers since Four Seasons displayed the artwork earlier this month. But that's not really the point, General Manager Tom Kelly said.

"We were looking for something to give the hotel identity and tie in the culture of the area," he said.

With increased competition, high-priced Valley res-



PHOTOS BY DAVID WALLACE/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Bill O'Connell of Spartanburg, S.C., looks at a painting titled *Dancers* by Kevin Red Star on Wednesday at the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale. A painted horse sculpture by artist Buddy Tubinaghtewa is at left.



A painting titled *Notch* (above, center) by Kevin Red Star. A painted horse sculpture (left) by CJ Wells is seen in front of a painting by Red Star.

orts are under pressure to stake out a niche and offer guests something unavailable at the resort down the street. Four Seasons has been trolling

for that distinguishing factor. Rachel Sacco, president and chief executive officer of the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, said she was

wowed by the evocative artwork. Every time a hotel adds such amenities, it bolsters her ability to market the city as a cultural destination.

"We were looking for something to give the hotel identity and tie in the culture of the area."

**Tom Kelly**

General manager of Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale

Rod Barker founded the Trail of Painted Ponies in New Mexico as a way of inspiring artists to do something "outside the box." He drew inspiration from a public art display of cow sculptures painted by various artists.

He thought horses were more regal, and artists could relive the days when Native Americans painted live horses.

"I wanted to give artists a new way to express themselves," he said. "I wanted to give back to artists and tap them as cultural resources."

Barker moved to Arizona and started selling miniature and tabletop horses at the Four Seasons gift shop and at conferences.

The idea of a gallery flowed naturally, he said.

Barker pointed out that Four Seasons must persuade guests to drive farther to the north Scottsdale desert, as compared with more centrally located resorts, such as the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in Phoenix.

"People have to jump in their car to get here," he said. "You need to give them some experience they've never had."

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