

# Endangered green sea turtle provides

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The Sheraton Waikiki has a new face.

The first hint of change is at the porte cochere where there's a large bronze sculpture of five honu, Hawaiian green sea turtles.

Inside, there is a bright-yellow ceramic tile installation, about 10 feet across, over by the main elevators. In stylized, brilliantly colored tiny pieces of tile, it depicts three typical scenes of Hawaii. It is lovely.

Last year, the Sheraton embarked on a \$20 million renovation to bring the 25-year-old hotel a little more up to date in several design aspects. The renovation theme honors the honu, one of Hawaii's endangered species.

"Everybody seems really sincere about this honu project," one outside observer said. "I think it's developed into something more than just a public relations thing."

They're doing things like

renovating suites, corridors, the lobby and the convention area. Most of it appears to be cosmetic, except they've taken out the old Lobby Bar. It's being replaced with retail shops.

The bar, once a favorite hangout for listening to sweet Island songs and watching pale newcomers arrive, is gone — it just wasn't getting the business it used to.

Another favorite of mine was the Sheraton's outrageous, trademark "jungle" green wallpaper, which lined the hotel corridors. It was so tacky, it was cool. Now, they are gradually installing new corridor coverings with a much brighter, '50s plantation motif.

The ceramic mural is part of a planned series of floor murals to be installed around the hotel's public spaces.

As many of these hotel projects often are, the ceramic

mural was sort of a shared piece by a Mainland artist and a Hawaii artist — Kailua ceramics artist Robert James Vogland.

Vogland, who has been in the Islands about eight years, makes a living by creating and executing handmade ceramic tile designs on just about anything you can glue a tile to. At the moment, he says, he's busy with a custom-designed shower stall.

The artist who created the visual design for the murals is Walter Monske of Van Nuys, Calif. Vogland followed his drawings.

Monske's original design hit a few snags. He drew a portrait of King Kamehameha into the floor mural. When the design came up for approval, hotel employees pointed out you can't have people stepping on a portrait of Kamehameha.

"I didn't know," Monske said from his studio in California. "I had to redo it."

Having his designs trod upon is nothing new to Monske.

## theme for Sheraton renovations



Gregory Yamamoto/The Honolulu Advertiser

This mural of ceramic tile lights up the area by the main elevators in the renovated Sheraton Waikiki.

"Probably more people have walked over my work than just about any artist in Hawaii," he says. "I designed the carpets

for the Hilton Hawaiian Village during their big renovation about 10 years ago. They're still walking on them."

As for the porte cochere sculpture, that's the work of sculpture Richard Stiers who, for the past 16 years, has lived up in Olinda on Maui.

Originally, he was an industrial design artist.

But then he started doing his own pieces (which are now displayed throughout the world).

He created the huge mother-and-calf humpback whale piece you can see on the Four Seasons croquet lawn in Wailea.

The piece he did for the Sheraton is called "Reunion." "It's five turtles, adults and juveniles, returned to home shores. I thought it was appropriate since I like to think of a hotel as a place that brings people together."

Japanese tourists are lining up to have their picture taken in front of the sculpture.

"I think that's one of the best compliments I've heard — the fact that people want to be photographed with my work," said the artist.