



ARTS IN THE CITY



Stephanie McCarthy

Ed Hamilton and Debbie Martin

BOHEMIAN BLOG

Debbie Martin always dreamed of moving to New York. Not just to New York, but to the Hotel Chelsea, the legendary place where artists paid rent with paintings and the lobby was a salon for some of the most influential thinkers and innovators of the last century. When she first got to the city, she went to the hotel, where she found Stanley Bard, the owner, and asked for a room. "There are no rooms and you can't afford it anyway," she remembers him saying. Eventually, she found a sublet in the newspaper. The owner warned that it was in an unusual location, which turned out to be the Chelsea. For Martin, it was "A lifelong dream come true." Now after nearly 12 years at the Chelsea, she is sharing her dream with others on the

"Living with Legends: Hotel Chelsea Blog" (hotelchelseablog.com) which she writes with her partner, writer **Ed Hamilton**. The pair may post about the Chelsea's notorious residents, like **Sid Vicious**, the punk rocker who allegedly stabbed his girlfriend **Nancy Spungen** to death in Room 100 (and is said to still haunt the elevator), but the real stars of the blog are residents like Storme DeLarverie, the gender-bending cabaret star who threw the first punch in the Stonewall riots and a Chelsea resident since the '70s. Martin and Hamilton have shared a room in the hotel for over a decade, but it was only recently that they got the idea to start writing about it. When a fire in 2005 had residents pouring out onto the street and

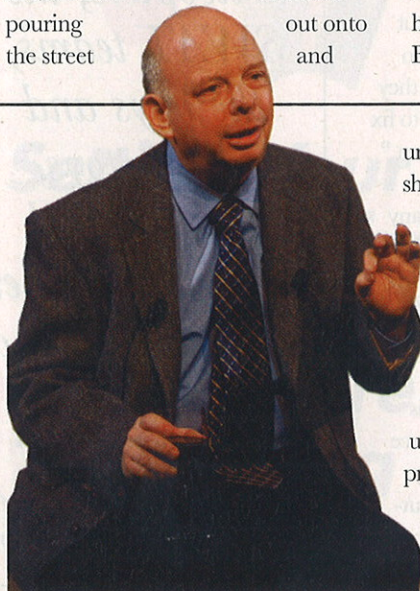
passing around a bottle of wine, they realized that they had to write about their eccentric neighbors. "We want the lesser-known people to be known as well," said Martin. The Chelsea has been having a bit of a renaissance in pop culture recently with the release of the **Edie Sedgwick** biopic "Factory Girl," starring Sienna Miller. One of Warhol's "superstars," the young socialite briefly lived at the Chelsea. Now, with rising rents throughout Manhattan, the future of the Chelsea as a "rest stop for rare individuals" is precarious, but Hamilton is optimistic, "This place is the last outpost of Bohemia itself." — *Heather Corcoran*

CONTEST GIVES NEW ARTISTS A CHANCE

Soho's **Jen Bekman** Gallery is giving new artists a chance to show their work through the "Hey, Hot Shot!" competition. Each season, gallery owner Bekman selects 10 photographers to show in the gallery, which get narrowed to four for the year-end "ne plus ultra" show. Through March 3, this year's ultras will be on display at the gallery. Through its Web site (jenbekman.com) the gallery is accepting submissions for the Winter 2007 competition. "It's a launch pad for an artist," said Bekman. "A lot can happen between point A and point B." — *H.C.*

SPOTLIGHT

Wallace Shawn may be best known for his work as a character actor in films like "Clueless" and the "Princess Bride," but in his latest adaptation of "The Fever" at the Acorn Theater he takes center stage. From the beginning, "The Fever" plays with conventions of theater, starting with a pre-show champagne reception with the star himself before he unceremoniously begins with a casual lamentation of the formality and fussiness of theater. And then, there's the monologue: a well-off



urbanite sick in the bathroom of a shabby hotel in a war-torn country. As Shawn reveals what got him to this point he flip-flops between the narrative and snapshots of his old life. For 90 superbly-acted minutes he reminds theatergoer that they are the same as his character, the spoiled victors in the unfair game of life. While thought-provoking and challenging, without offering a solution, "The Fever" is a little bleak and a bit too long.—*H.C.*

WEEKLY PICKS

music

If you missed her this weekend on "Saturday Night Live," you can still catch British pop star **Lily Allen** when she brings the sounds that earned her four Brit Award nominations to Webster Hall on Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

theater

The third and final installment of **Tom Stoppard's** critically-acclaimed trilogy "The Coast of Utopia" has finally hit theaters. All three parts — "Voyage," "Shipwreck" and "Salvage" — will play at the Lincoln Center Theater through May.

art

Whether staged or simply snapshots, the photos and videos in the Guggenheim's 16-artist exhibition "Family Pictures" are sure to warm your heart. The museum offers various views of youth through the lenses of **Loretta Lux**, **Nan Goldin**, **Robert Mapplethorpe** and others. Through April 16.

dance

Take a trip around the world with "Urban Citizen" festival at Dance New Amsterdam. The program features choreographers from Israel, Malaysia and Belgium. Through Feb. 17.

film

With over 20 candidates gearing up for the next presidential election, check out "An Unreasonable Man," the story of perennial candidate **Ralph Nader**, with five daily show times at the Independent Film Center.