

# Museum Hotel goes the art way

BY EMMA BEER

The Museum Hotel's impressive art collection has moved outside to the front entrance and car park.

The recently opened Long Gallery is a long narrow room located outside reception, and houses a few large pieces of art.

Hotel owner Chris Parkin said the concept for the Long Gallery came from the desire to provide a more interesting front entrance. "The idea is to arrest your attention," he said.

The name Long Gallery has a simple explanation. "It's long and thin," Mr Parkin said.

For Prime Minister John Key to declare the display open, it had to have a name. So with limited time, the concise and descriptive name was conceived.

The artwork featured in the Long Room and at the hotel is from Mr Parkin's personal collection.

He said he thought his taste in art must be "average", because most people who came in liked it.

"I don't think it's the type of collection that would appeal to connoisseurs, but I think they miss the point."

Mr Parkin said the point of art was "to surround your life with things that are beautiful and add value to your life".

The fact that it could add value to others' lives was a bonus.

Mr Parkin hopes eventually to be approached by artists wishing to use the space for personal art exhibitions. He would also love it to be a



**Attention-**  
**Grabbing:** Chris Parkin beside one of the Long Gallery exhibits.  
Photo: EMMA BEER

breakout space for Wellington galleries with limited space for large pieces.

"The only criteria would be that it is large, vibrant and attracts attention," he said.

Since the gallery opened last month, Mr Parkin said it had received very positive feedback.

People walking or driving past were stopping to take a closer look and guests enjoyed the interesting and welcoming entrance.

"I've even had feedback from taxi drivers who have had passengers commenting on it," he said.

There are other ideas for the

hotel, too, such as guided tours of the artworks.

Mr Parkin does not like plaques underneath paintings, so a coloured art guide with information on the piece and the artist has been provided.

The guide was put together by local artist Lynne Sandri, whose

work is on display around the hotel.

Some people may have noted the work in progress on the wall of the Cable St entrance.

Local artist Justin Smith has been commissioned to complete a piece based on three paintings by French artist Henri Rousseau.