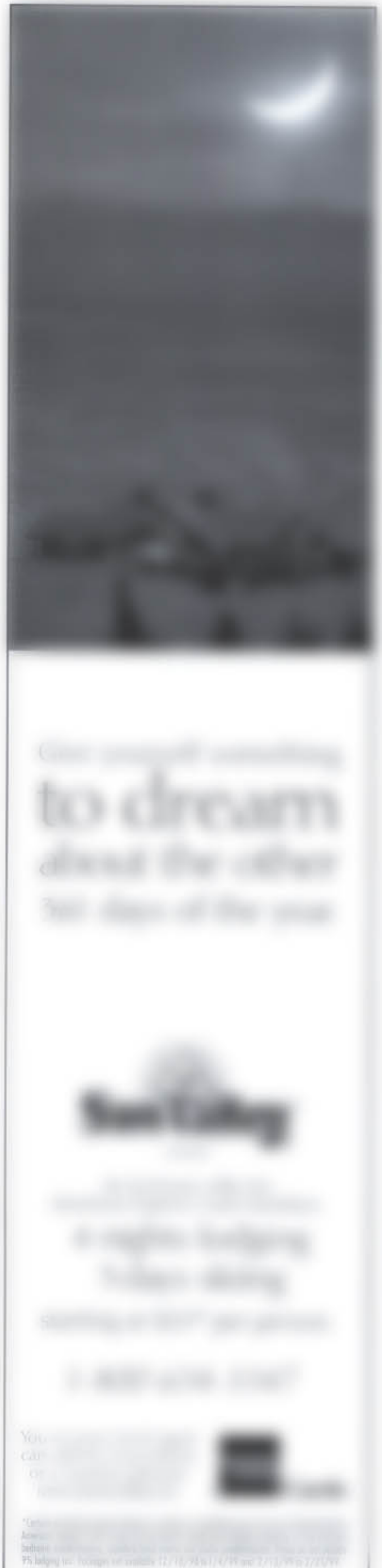
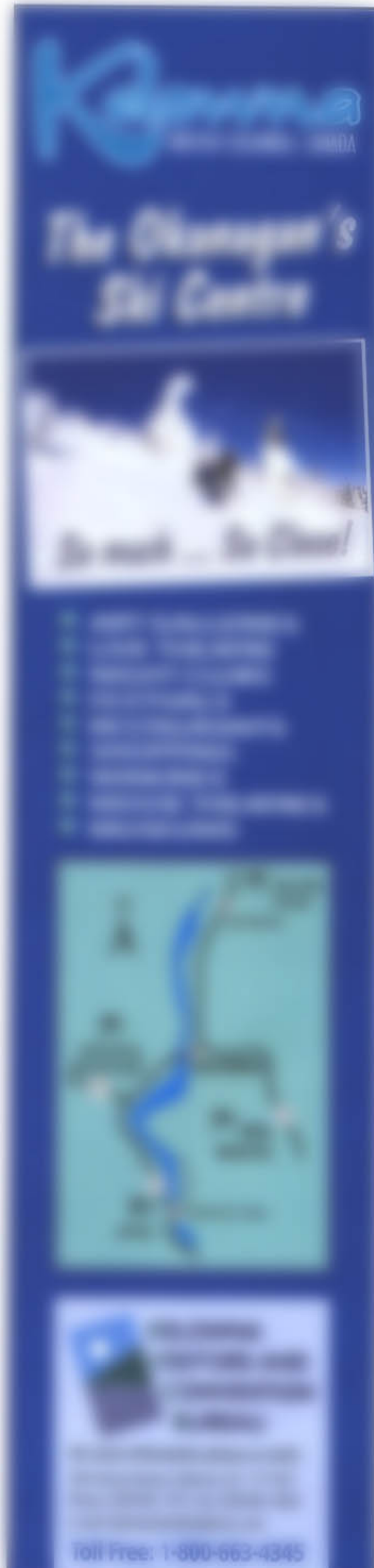
now redefining hotel decor. The psychological import and luxuriant, somewhat decadent feeling of dimming the lights on thousands of dollars of fine art as you head for the bed are huge. Frequent travelers know what the usual hotel guest-room art is like even at the best hotels: generally fine but quite undistinguished and definitely not memorable. By contrast, the artwork in the Listel stays vivid in the mind, to be recalled with pleasure long after checkout.

"I'm not sure we can explain exactly where the idea [for fine art] came from," says Lise Magee, Listel's director of public relations. "We were brainstorming ways to upgrade the appearance of the hotel, and it was one of those notions that just sort of drops out of the sky. It was obviously a good one."

Obviously. Rates start at C$120 October-May for a standard room and at C$150 for a Gallery Floor package that includes perks ranging from breakfast and a sherry reception to discount coupons for attractions. Rates start at C$220 for a standard room and at C$300 for a Gallery Floor room May-September. For more information on Listel Vancouver, located at 1300 Robson Street and a member of the Sterling Hotels & Resorts group, call 800-663-5491.

WHEN THEY SAY no expense was [illegible]

[illegible] 197-room hotel, and has a full aerobics and weight room, racquetball courts,