

1995

Max party opens Astor Place

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Astounding Astor: Just when it seems the restaurant scene on the Beach has been served up one too many times, along comes **Dennis Max**, the man with the Midas touch, to up the ante. His grand opening last week of **Astor Place** in the Astor Hotel was one of the biggest and most beautiful parties I have ever been to, with a crowd that seemed cast for a movie and a setting that Hollywood could never rival.

Max and Co. closed off the street at Ninth and Washington to set up a stage for **Sister Sledge**. The invite mailed to several hundred a week earlier featured a CD with the group singing *We Are Family* while a sultry voice gave details of the party.

The party flowed from the street into the sleek lobby and down into the terrazzo-floored restaurant on the lower level. The space had been opened up with skylights, artful spotlighting and amusing murals that seemed straight out of *Mother Goose*. Food stations were everywhere with grilled meats, vegetable concoctions and sinful desserts.



AP photo

SETTLING IN: Kenny Scharf in his North Miami studio.

The terrace area has a cascading waterfall and tiled fish darting on the bottom of the brightly lit pool. Very tropical bistro in feel, Astor Place restaurant seats 144 in curvilinear banquettes and poolside tables. For all its haute grandeur, prices are moderate, with everything under \$20. The

Place is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week until 1 a.m. A gospel brunch is planned for Jan. 1 with seatings at noon and 2 p.m. It will star big-voiced diva **Maryel Epps**, who will continue the brunch series every Sunday in January. Call 672-7217.

Scharf art: Pop surrealist artist **Kenny Scharf** opens a show of new work at the **Center For the Fine Arts** tonight. Scharf had a successful show earlier this year in Fort Lauderdale with his brightly painted cartoonesque paintings, sculptures, objects and cars. A conversation with the artist is planned for Jan. 13. The CFA is at 101 W. Flagler St., Miami. Call 375-3000.

Star alert: With much of the country snowbound with frigid temperatures, the rich and famous have moved their lifestyles to Miami. Seen last week were director **Oliver Stone** at a party for his new film *Nixon* at **Bar None**, the hot club across from the **China Grill** on Washington Avenue.

Unfortunately, no one else from the movie was there, but **Jack Nicholson**, **Michael Caine**,