

LATES 'N' BREAKS

EGYPT: Stay for seven nights, on all-inclusive basis, at the five-star Tiran Nabq in Sharm el Sheikh for £684. Fly from Glasgow on June 27. To book visit thomascokstyle.com or call 0844 412 5970.

GRAN CANARIA: A week, all-inclusive, at the four-star Hotel Orquidea in Bahia Feliz, costs £499. Price includes flights from Birmingham on July 4. To book visit thomson.co.uk or call 0871 231 5595.

SPAIN: Enjoy a week on half-board at the four-star Club Dorada Palace in Salou for £395. Price includes flights from East Midlands on July 5. To book visit firstchoice.co.uk or call 0871 200 4455.

GO FOR IT



Edited by VICKY LISSAMAN

LATES 'N' BREAKS

ST LUCIA: Fly on Friday from Gatwick for seven nights' room only at the three-star St Lucia by Rex Resorts on Reduit Beach for £679. See thomsontailormade.com or call 0871 664 0273.

CORNWALL: Pay £450 for a week at Pebledene cottage near Coverack. It has three bedrooms, sleeps six and is available from June 25 and July 2. See cornishcottagesonline.com for details.

Boston has a famous harbour, a trail of smash hit movie locations, great people...and a rather well-known bar

FactFile

GETTING THERE: Virgin Atlantic flies daily from Heathrow to Logan Airport from £495. See virginatlantic.com

HOTEL: Rooms at the Taj Boston start from £199. To book call free from the UK on 00 800 4 588 1 825 or visit tajhotels.com/boston Boston Tourist Board: See bostonusa.com

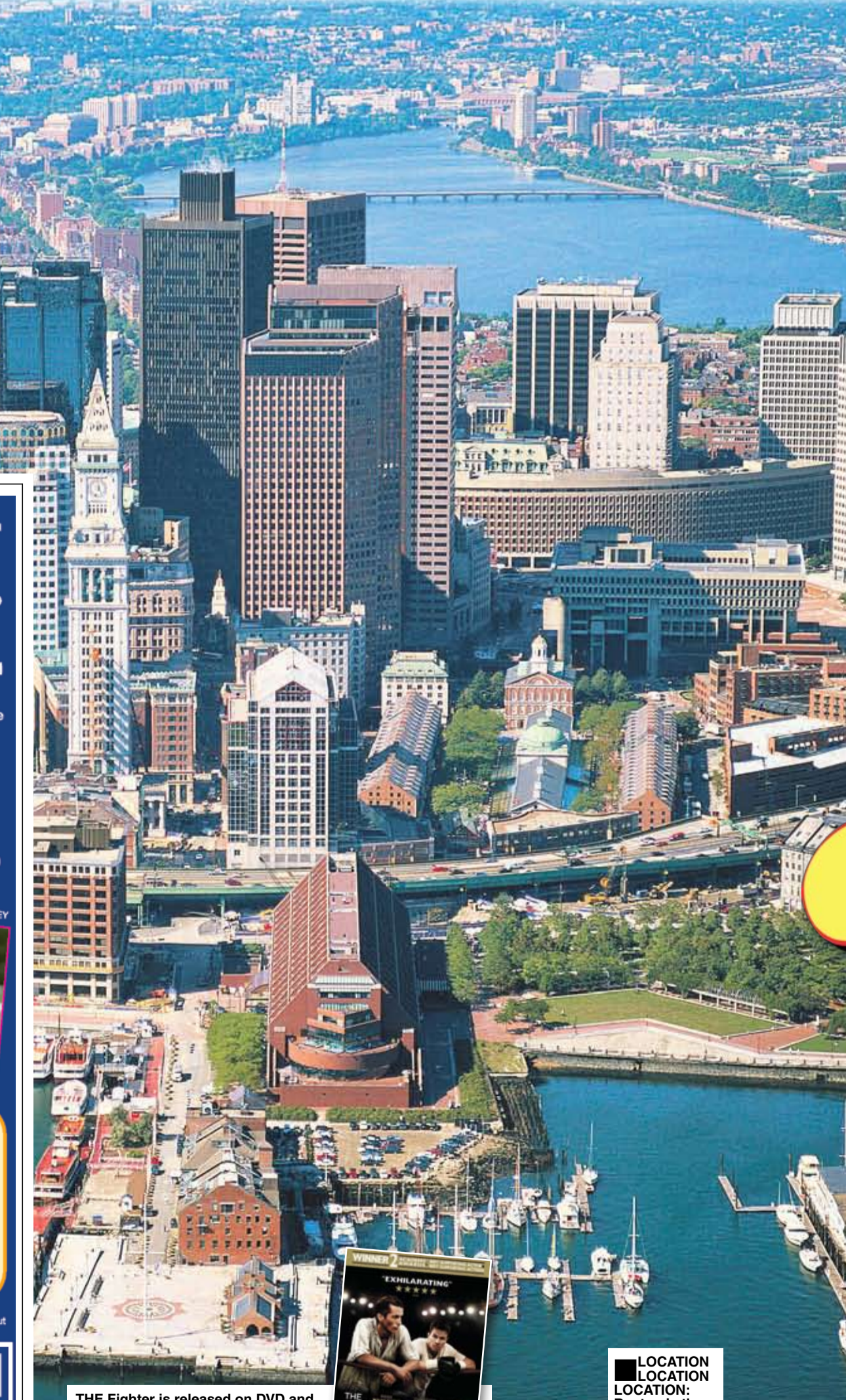
Lowell Tourist Board (known as Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau): See merrimackvalley.org

RESTAURANTS: Scampo at The Liberty Hotel, 215 Charles Street, MA 02114. Visit scampoboston.com

Union Oyster House, 41 Union Street, MA 02108. unionoysterhouse.com

For location details of The Fighter visit richardhowe.com

To book on the Boston TV & Movie Sites Tour see screentours.com



THINK Boston and most people picture the regulars slouched around the bar at Cheers - oh, and a baseball or basketball team.

But these days the city is slugging it out with Hollywood as a prime movie location.

Blockbusters such as The Departed, Ben Affleck's The Town and The Social Network have all put it firmly on the film map.

And the latest smash to give L.A. a bloody nose is The Fighter, the story of real-life boxer "Irish" Micky Ward.

A rags-to-riches tale, it is a gritty and touching portrayal of drug addiction

and how Micky, played by Mark Wahlberg, fought his way out of poverty to world champ boxing glory.

Many of the film's locations are in nearby Lowell, a run-down New England industrial town where Micky grew up.

Producer Wahlberg and co-star Christian Bale wanted the flick to be as true to life as possible. So Lowell's real-life cop Mickey O'Keefe, the champ's mentor, plays himself and West End Gym owner Arthur Ramalho also features.

I spent a day in Lowell touring locations - including Micky's favourite

bar The Highland Tap, now a gift emporium.

Crossing the Charles River into Lowell, the place comes alive with cobbled streets, rows of brightly-coloured houses, corner shops and, as it is still a stronghold for Irish immigrants, Guinness bars.

Wahlberg and Bale fell in love with its people and held a premier of The Fighter in Lowell as a thank you.

Back in central Boston I continued my cinematic trail with a tour of TV and movie sites. Our guide David, a former drama student, was gloriously unscripted and funny.

"Here's the street where Cameron Diaz ran away from Tom Cruise in

Night & Day...one of the most expensive movies in Hollywood history...shame it wasn't also the best," he quipped.

Our tour took in the offices of Ally McBeal plus The Porcellian Club - a Harvard institution that featured in The Social Network about the founding of Facebook. We also rolled up for a drink at LST Tavern, a location from Good Will Hunting.

The three-hour tour finished outside Boston's most famous bar, Cheers, on Beacon Hill.

"Yes," said David, "filmed live before a studio audience...in L.A!"

As a long-time fan I was disappointed to discover the only bits that were in the show were the steps down into the bar and the front door. So I headed for the gift shop inside to buy a Cheers mug as consolation.

Boston is also steeped in a rich and diverse history.

Visitors may like to try The Union Oyster House, America's oldest restaurant. A major landmark for more than 250 years, it is the place where John F Kennedy set up camp at booth 18 at weekends.

The table, with its high wooden surrounds, is now dedicated to his memory and is booked up weeks in advance.

This port city is seafood heaven. Oysters, clams, lobsters, steaks, chops, all traditional New England foods, are served up at The Union. I sampled lobster ravioli, which was fresh, delicious and more-ish.

An alternative dining option is Scampo, a restaurant on the first floor of The Liberty Hotel.

A former jail, still with original features including visiting stalls and prison bars, it serves up lobster pizza and elephant ear walking - a bread starter set alight prior to eating.

The Taj, where I stayed, was formerly the first Ritz in America and a regular stop-over for Winston Churchill and Elizabeth Taylor.

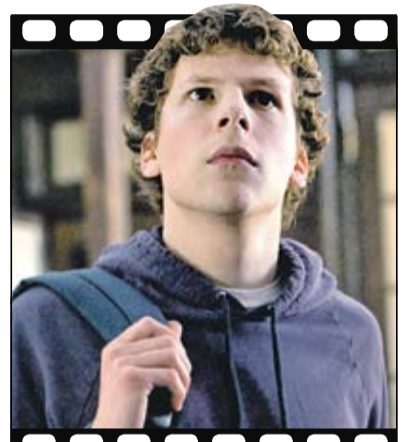
It attracts visiting dignitaries as much as tourists and the Boston Red Sox, at home for a game, took up residence while I was there.

At the end of my break I took a ten-minute water taxi from The Seaport District to Logan airport and thought of the Boston Tea Party, in which Americans protested against British taxation in the colonies.

They may not have wanted us then but now Boston welcomes its visitors with open arms - and it is sure to remain a magnet for Brits.



THE DEPARTED: Nicholson and Damon



THE SOCIAL NETWORK: Eisenberg



THE FIGHTER: Wahlberg and O'Keefe

BLOOD, SWEAT & Cheers



GLOVES OFF: Our girl Sonia with real-life cop Mickey O'Keefe



THE Fighter is released on DVD and Blu-ray tomorrow from Momentum Pictures.

LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION: Boston is the backdrop for a raft of hit films

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