

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2010



Perfect Weekend: 6 Ideas You'll Love for Food, Hotels & More

WASHINGTON FLYER

TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT

AREA MAPS INSIDE

**GREAT
ESCAPES**

COPENHAGEN
SAN DIEGO
AUSTIN

**DANA
DELANY**
DC'S NEW
LEADING
LADY

**Favorite (new)
RESTAURANTS**
near Museums,
Theaters





Boston Confidential

A trio of new hotels proves that the city on the Charles is flaunting a brave new style.

Boston has always exuded its own brand of cool, a sort of understated geek-chic unconcerned with its slave-to-fashion neighbor 200 miles south (except, that is, when the Red Sox play the Yankees). After all, this is the Hub of the Universe, or so Oliver Wendell Holmes claimed. Now that vibe has been embodied in three new hotels—each wicked hip in its own way.

Common to Bunker Hill Monument.

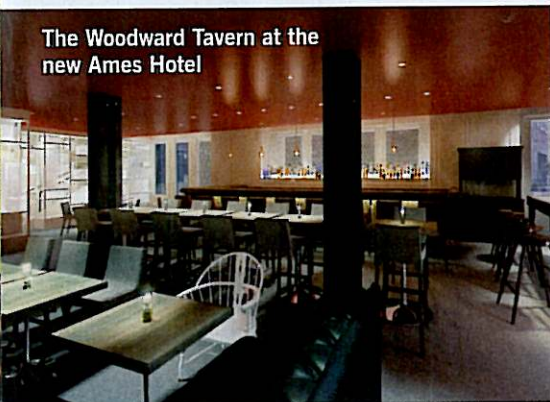
After getting your history fix, sink into one of the leather banquettes at the hotel's lively Woodward Tavern for an Ames Addiction, a house concoction of Ron Zacapa 23 rum, vermouth and ginger liqueur, and a steaming bowl of chef Mark Goldberg's bouillabaisse, teeming with clams, mussels, shrimp and local market fish. The best room amenity? A growler of Woodward's own ale, brewed by Portsmouth, N.H., craft brewer Smuttynose.

Across the Charles River in Cambridge, the Hotel Veritas (1 Remington St., 617/520-5000; thehotelveritas.com), named after Harvard University's motto, is perfectly positioned to cater to Crimson parents and visitors. But even if your kid didn't make the cut, staying on Boston's Left Bank, as Cantabrigians call it, still offers a parade of diversions. Besides the world's largest concentration of bookstores, live music clubs abound, and some of the area's most coveted dining reservations are at local faves Craigie on Main, Oleana, Salts Restaurant and Ten Tables.

Back at the eastern end of Harvard Square, unwind from all that bookstore browsing with a glass of wine and a light snack around the fire at the inn's very civilized Simple Truth Lounge. The 30-room

original mosaic barrel-vaulted ceiling—just one of the modern flourishes playfully juxtaposed with the historical details of this Romanesque Revival landmark. A display of contemporary "cabinets of curiosities," a play on the Victorian concept, is strung from a restored marble staircase. Upstairs, sleek suites with 21st-century amenities, such as iPod docking stations and rain showerheads, are accented by original fireplaces and dramatic floor-to-ceiling arched windows that offer exceptional city views (yes, that gold dome is the State House).

Opened last fall by the Morgans Hotel Group—of Royalton New York and Mondrian L.A. fame—the 114-room Ames is strategically situated a stone's throw from the Freedom Trail, a 2.5-mile path that links the city's most historic sites from Boston



The Woodward Tavern at the new Ames Hotel

At the Ames Hotel (1 Court St.; 617/979-8100; ameshotel.com; rates from \$195), I'm greeted by a "mirror chandelier" installation fashioned from thousands of reflective disks suspended from the lobby's

A sumptuous bed, complete with Anichini linens, at Hotel Veritas



independent hotel is a reconstruction of a private residence (circa 1880s) and stables that stood on the site. The feel is old-school New England elegance—brocade fabrics, detailed molding and woodwork, 13-foot windows and a limestone lobby floor reclaimed from a French chateau—meets cool Cantabrigian vibe. There's free wireless, of course, and flat-screen high-def TVs in guest rooms, along with fresh flowers, custom Anichini bed linens and robes, and Etro bath amenities.

Back in the Hub (Holmes' moniker really caught on with Bostonians), the theater district now holds the boutique chain W's first foray into New England—a 235-room all-glass affair with sweeping vistas of the skyline and the Charles River. Taking a cue from nearby Boston Common and Public Garden, the designers of **W Boston** (100 Stuart St.; 617/261-8700; starwoodhotels.

com/whotels; rates from \$229) have integrated elements of nature throughout, from the falling water in the Living Room (W-speak for lobby) to a modern "fireplace" meant to provide a welcoming beacon of light across the city's skyline.

The hotel's debut late last year marked the return of chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten, who first came to the U.S. to open Boston's Lafayette (and recently opened J&G Steakhouse at the W Hotel in D.C.). A sleek space done in muted grays and browns, Market features a menu that draws inspiration from Asia, France and Italy but is sourced largely from New England farms and fishermen. Top off miso-yuzu broth and soy-glazed short ribs with apple-jalapeño puree and rosemary crumbs with a nightcap at hotel bar Descent, where superstar mixologist Sasha Petraske's cocktails borrow from Jazz Age classics.

Of course, W brings its signature "Whatever/Whenever" service to its Boston outpost, boasting that its 24-hour concierge will procure anything a guest craves as long as it's legal, from fetching those boots you were eyeing on Newbury Street to arranging for a private jet. Hello, Fenway!

—MARGARET LOFTUS

BOSTON THIS WINTER

Peer into the world of wizards at **Harry Potter: The Exhibition**, featuring more than 200 authentic props and costumes from the *Harry Potter* films. At the Museum of Science through Feb. 21. (mos.org; 671/723-2500; adults, \$26, kids, \$23)

Unlock the **Secrets of Tomb 10A: Egypt 2000 BC** discovered by Museum of Fine Arts archaeologists in 1915. At the MFA through May 16. (mfa.org; 617/267-9300; adults, \$20; \$7.50 for kids ages 7–17)

Toast the 21st anniversary of the **Boston Wine Festival**, the nation's oldest wine and food series, at the Boston Harbor Hotel at Rowes Wharf, Jan. 8 through April 2. (bostonwinefestival.net; \$145)



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

GETTING THERE

Daily nonstop flights to Boston are available on United and JetBlue from Washington Dulles Airport, and on American, Delta and US Airways from Reagan National Airport.