

meetings

PEOPLE + PLACES TODAY[®] 11.17

Flying High

Airport properties raise the bar for design, amenities and venues

EMILY GILBERT

DEPARTURES		
763 TAMPA	07:59 DEPART	22
196 KANSAS CITY	08:00 TO GATE	22
654 ANAHEIM	08:02	22
		7:59



Spotlight: Tucson

Alternative finds in a wellspring of wellness

Big on Small

CVBs realize little can pack a huge punch

Desert Delights

Culture and adventure on the agenda

TWA LOUNGE AT 1WTC, NEW YORK



HOTEL



ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM, BOSTON

In his 1869 published letter, “A First Visit to Boston,” Mark Twain, who named Boston as one of only four unique cities in the U.S. (along with New Orleans, San Antonio and San Francisco), noted that “One of the most engaging peculiarities of Boston is her reverence for her tradition, her relics her antiquities.”

Boston is also unusually serious about progress. With some \$23 billion in new construction since 2012, including the skyline-busting 61-story Four Seasons tower rising in the Back Bay, groups have more options than ever.

“The extraordinary pace of development on the waterfront and in the Seaport District has helped shape a new image of Boston,” said Greater Boston CVB President & CEO Patrick Moscaritolo. “Moving beyond culture, history and education as sole brand drivers, Boston’s brand essence is a city of innovation, discovery and global commerce. Teeming with opportunities, our broad appeal includes international business leaders, students, Millennials and meeting planners bringing a corporate or association meeting here to experience Boston’s unique blend of ‘old’ and ‘new.’”

Like those Revolutionary days, Boston is a call to action.

Boston

Connections are strong in Boston, such as the four Marriott Convention & Resort Network hotels (see “3.2.1...,” page 37) supporting the Hynes Convention Center and Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC). Treasures like Faneuil Hall, meanwhile, are links to Boston as a place of historic meetings.

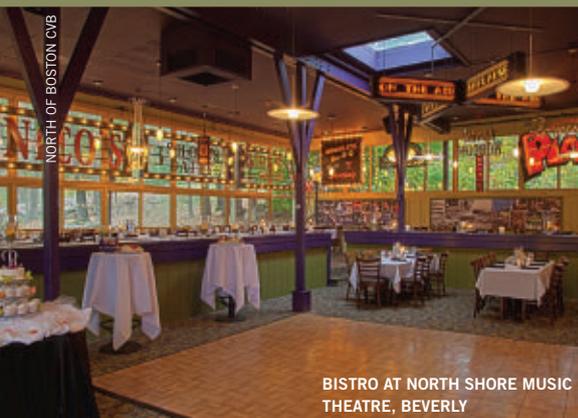
Wealthy merchant Peter Faneuil’s gift to Boston in 1742, this hallowed hall is where colonists established “no taxation without representation,” Samuel Adams rallied Bostonians to the cause of independence and George Washington toasted America’s first birthday. Incorporating the Quincy, North and South markets, the “Hub of the Hub” offers event spaces such as the Hall’s storied Rotunda and entire Quincy Market.

Another legendary Bostonian, Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924), bequeathed her remarkable Fenway home as a museum “for the education and enjoyment of the public forever.” Opened in 1903, her re-created 15th century Venetian palazzo and its many treasures enchant like a dream. In 1990, the museum suffered the theft of 13 works, including pieces by Rembrandt and Degas. At \$500 million, the heist, still unsolved, is the largest ever from a museum.

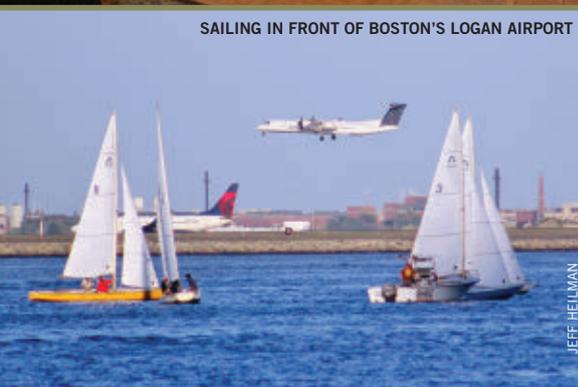
PAST

Present

Greater Boston embraces its history, while keeping an eye on the future



BISTRO AT NORTH SHORE MUSIC THEATRE, BEVERLY



SAILING IN FRONT OF BOSTON'S LOGAN AIRPORT



HOOD MILK BOTTLE, BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM, BOSTON



SEAN DUNGAN

NORTH OF BOSTON CVB

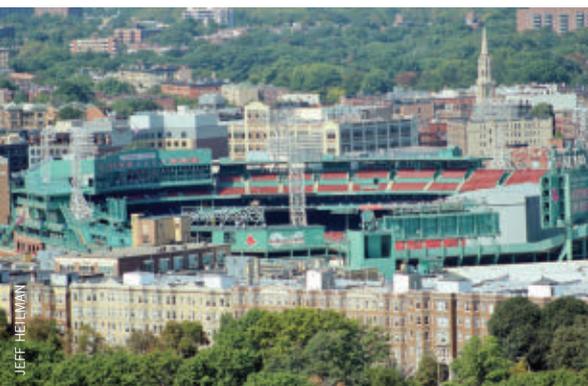
JEFF HEILMAN

Rentals include the New Wing, from famed museum architect Renzo Piano; the Cloisters; and buyouts for 450 guests.

Fenway Park (1912) is America's oldest ballpark. Enshrined by locals, the Red Sox's home offers tours and venues such as the 200-capacity outdoor deck atop the iconic 37-foot Green Monster wall.

America's first library, the Boston Public Library (1848) offers the 15,000-square-foot Boylston Hall for events.

In the Fort Point Channel Landmark District, the event-capable Boston Tea



FENWAY PARK FROM BOSTON MARRIOTT COPLEY PLACE

Party Ships & Museum features guest experiences such as tossing East India tea into Boston Harbor. Steps away, the Boston Children's Museum features the 40-foot Hood Milk Bottle, a 1930 landmark serving ice cream and snacks. Nearby, event-capable Barking Crab is an old-school seafood shack with waterside seating.

Fort Point borders the South Boston Waterfront and Seaport District, long epicenters of adaptive development. Milestones include the 2004-built BCEC—at 2.1 million square feet, the Northeast's largest convention facility—and in 2006, the visionary new Institute of Contemporary Art building and \$15 billion "Big Dig" transit project.

Today, this "Innovation District" keeps soaring behind mixed-use projects such as the restaurant-rich Fan Pier, and two truly transformative projects for groups.

Announced this May, Omni Resorts and Hotels will develop a two-tower, 1,054-room hotel across from the BCEC. Reportedly offering 120,000 square feet of space, including the city's largest ballroom at 25,000 square feet, the project is slated to open in 2021.

And construction is underway on Las Vegas titan Steve Wynn's \$2.4 billion Wynn Boston Harbor. Billed as "America's first five-star urban gaming resort," the 671-

3-2-1... MARRIOTT'S CONVENTION & RESORT Network in Boston

Created over 25 years ago to establish greater consistency with Marriott's convention services, **Marriott's Convention & Resort Network** (www.marriott.com/convention-resort-network/home.mi), with four premium properties in Boston, is surging forward, as Marriott's Convention & Resort Network Vice President of Sales Mike Wainwright explained.

"In March 2017, the collection expanded to more than 100 properties throughout the U.S., Mexico, Caribbean and into Canada," Wainwright said. "This growth allows The Network to expand its ability to provide the ultimate meeting facilities and experience for planners and groups in the most sought-after meeting destinations, such as Boston."

Boston's CRN quartet (the most in any major city) more than delivers on the promise, as I discovered while visiting for this story.

First was the 793-room Westin Boston Waterfront. Connected by skywalk to the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC), this AAA Four Diamond Seaport District anchor, just three miles from Logan Airport, offers 89,000 square feet of flexible space in 32 meeting rooms, including four ballrooms, a 19,000-square-foot exhibit hall and the 350-capacity Waterfront Pavilion.

"Financial and pharmaceutical groups especially value the privacy and exclusivity of our meeting areas," said Marketing Manager Greg Clark, adding that CRN's marketing strength has opened up many new opportuni-



WESTIN BOSTON WATERFRONT

ties for the hotel.

Other unique features include the spacious park-like lobby; Laugh Boston comedy club; Enterprise car rental office; and dining options, including a traditional Irish pub with seasonal outdoor seating.

With Silver Line subway service close by, the Westin Boston Waterfront affords easy access to the restaurants and attractions of Boston's fast-evolving waterfront and Seaport areas.

Meanwhile, its CRN siblings, the 803-room Westin Copley Place, Boston; 1,146-room Boston Marriott Copley Place; and 1,220-room Sheraton Boston Hotel, form part of a signature Boston program known as **3-2-1 Connect** (www.3-2-1connect.com). The trio connects with two shopping centers, Copley Place Shopping Galleries and Shops at Pru-

dential Center, and one convention center, the Hynes, to form a powerful hospitality, meetings and retail compact in Boston's attraction-rich Back Bay.

Collectively, the hotels offer more than 3,100 rooms and nearly 200,000 square feet of space, with the latter two able to serve as co-headquarters. Additionally, the Hynes has 91,000 square feet of meeting space, plus 176,480 square feet of exhibit space in five halls and the 4,000-seat Veterans Memorial Auditorium.

Overnighting at the Westin Copley Place, my 36th-floor room offered breathtaking Back Bay views. Touring the property with Samantha Mahoney, director of sales and marketing, and later, visiting with her counterparts Erin Gilroy, director of sales and marketing at the Marriott, and at the Sheraton, Greg Novek, 3-2-1 Connect's director of national accounts, I discovered that each hotel maintains unique identity and appeal.

Offering 54,000 square feet of recently renovated flexible space in 32 rooms conveniently stacked on contiguous floors, the Westin Copley Place wows with spaces like the 15,000-square-foot America Ballroom and in-demand Staffordshire Room, scenically overlooking Copley Square and the Boston Public Library. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2017 on a \$45 million guest room renovation, incorporating Boston signatures such as the Citgo sign in the design.

Boston Marriott Copley Place is for meetings first and foremost. Credentials include 70,000 square feet of flexible space and 45 meeting rooms, including the 22,231-square-foot Grand Ballroom, boasting a million-dollar digital lighting system, and 22,500-square-foot Back Bay Conference and Exhibition Center, accommodating 124 booths. Stand-out amenities include Champions restaurant, which features Boston's largest indoor bar video wall, and the Connexion Lounge.

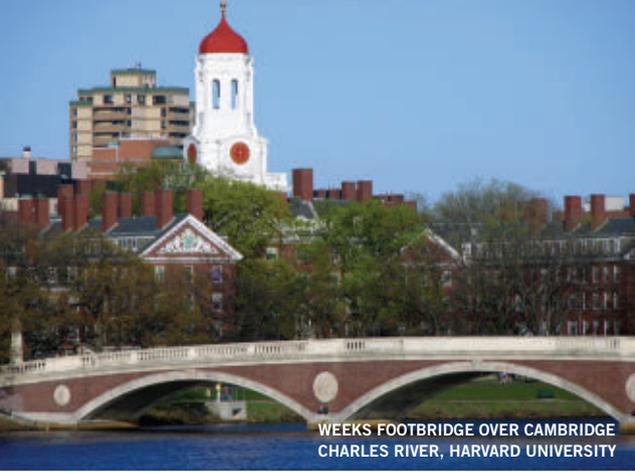
Opened in 1965, the two-tower Sheraton was the darling of jet-set Boston. The Pan Am ticket counter and Tiki Room are gone, but with seamless access to the Hynes, her glory continues with 70,000 square feet of flexible space, comprising 50 meeting rooms, seven ballrooms and an outdoor seasonal patio. Plus, there is an indoor-outdoor pool and Green Tangerine Salon & Spa.

Like The Network promises, 3-2-1 Connect, all under one climate-controlled, all-weather roof and offering one-stop planning services, is not just bigger—it's better.

—Jeff Heilman



WESTIN COPLEY PLACE, BOSTON



WEEKS FOOTBRIDGE OVER CAMBRIDGE CHARLES RIVER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GABRIEL LOUGHLIN

room tower, scheduled for 2019, will reportedly feature 50,000 square feet of lavish meeting space, an event lawn and harbor walk, and water shuttle service to Logan Airport and around Boston Harbor.

Regional Riches

In neighboring Cambridge, dating to 1603, the past anchors an entrepreneurial future.

“Whether discovering our country’s beginnings or the technology that will create our future, Cambridge’s exciting blend of Old-World charm and New Age innovation offers something for everyone,” said Robyn Culbertson, executive director of the Cambridge Office for Tourism.

Amid the youthful vibe of some 36,000 Harvard, M.I.T. and other students, Cambridge is a study in heritage sites, including the Harvard Art Museums and 350-capacity Norton’s Woods Conference Center at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The tour-capable Cooper-Frost-Austin House (1681), Cambridge’s oldest structure, is among many Massachusetts properties preserved by Boston-based organization Historic New England.

The new 121-room Freepoint Hotel features a secret garden behind the back lobby, programmable together for 90-per-

son receptions.

Thirty minutes from Boston, the 34 cities and towns of Essex County, marketed as the North of Boston, offer luxurious accommodations, museums, shopping and dining in its mix of heritage and modern draws.

“Groups of all kinds, including conferences, small conventions and reunions, enjoy our blend of old and new,” said North of Boston CVB Executive Director Ann Marie Casey.

Mentioned above, Historic New England preserves 36-plus historic properties in five states. All offering private tours, several area properties include Beauport—the Sleeper-McCann House (1907) in historic Gloucester, which hosts outdoor tented gatherings for 50 people. Also in Gloucester, home to the popular Cape Ann’s Marina Resort overlooking Cape Ann Marina, the new 94-room Beauport Hotel hosts events for up to 333 people. Approaching its 350th anniversary, Salem’s seaside House of the Seven Gables (1668) hosts 300-capacity events, buyouts included.

Castle Hill on the Crane Estate in coastal Ipswich is a meetings destination for the ages. The circa-1637 estate features the 59-room Great House (1928), hosting outdoor lawn events, and the historic 10-room Inn at Castle Hill for lodging and meetings.

Also 30 minutes north and west of Boston, the Greater Merrimack Valley mixes nation-building legacies with futuristic entertainment.

“Birthplace of both the American Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, the Merrimack Valley’s blend of historic sites with state-of-the-art venues provides un-

forgettable experiences for attendees,” said Thomas Fitzmaurice, new executive director of the Greater Merrimack Valley CVB.

Meanwhile, Beverly is home to the group-friendly North Shore Music Theatre.

On April 19, 1775, “the shot heard round the world” was fired as American patriots confronted British soldiers in Lexington and Concord. Guided tours and other programs revive this catalyst of the American Revolution.

Lowell’s water-driven textile mills helped power the Industrial Age. At the Lowell National Historical Park, groups can visit the Boott Cotton Mills Museum, take canal boat tours and more. Other heritage venues include the multipurpose, 2,800-seat



CASTLE HILL GREAT HOUSE, IPSWICH

TOM KATES PHOTOGRAPHY

Lowell Memorial Auditorium (1922) and 800-seat Cary Memorial Building (1928).

In August 2017, the Boston Marriott Burlington completed a multiphase transformation, including all 418 guest rooms and suites and 14,000-plus square feet of space.

Newly opened in Woburn, MindTrek VR is the nation’s largest free-roam VR gaming facility. Featuring two 2,000-square-foot arenas, the venue has meeting space for up to 40, plus a 90-capacity function area. 



CAPE ANN MARINA, GLOUCESTER

NORTH OF BOSTON CVB



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