

From the Back Bay to the Berkshires, the North Shore to Nantucket...
The 34th Annual Guide to the *Best of Everything*

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Boston

AUGUST 2007

The **Best of Boston** **2007**



PLUS

Learning to Love Road Rage

BY JOE KEOHANE

Feathers Fly in the Duck Boat Throwdown

BY JASON FEIFER

Dirty Books for Smart People

BY BLYTHE COPELAND

El Guapo's Wild and Crazy Comeback

BY JOHN GONZALEZ

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Kids

Baby Accessories

LESTER HARRY'S

115 Newbury St., Boston, 617-927-5400,
lesterharrys.com

Everybody knows accessories make the outfit, something that holds true whether you're three months old or 30. What good is a playtime pinafore without a Barefoot Dreams stuffed animal and attached blanket? Or a dressy cashmere sweater sans handstitched suede hunter's cap from France? This beyond-cute Newbury Street destination has these and plenty more socks, shoes, scarves, tights, and blankets to help put the "aww" in any ensemble.

Baby Clothing

JANIE AND JACK

Atrium Mall, Chestnut Hill,
617-327-0456, janieandjack.com

Ah, sweet infants: immaculately adorable one minute, covered in spit-up the next. The best baby collections accommodate both extremes, though none with quite as much versatility as Janie and Jack. Made of the softest cottons, velours, and wools, these garments evoke the preciousness and high quality of European layette lines, but have a roll-with-it American attitude that won't wilt at that first spot of drool.

Baby Gear

MAGIC BEANS

313 Harvard St., Brookline,
617-264-2326, mbeans.com

The eye-catching yet practical designs at this Coolidge Corner retailer—pink camouflage diaper bags, cool Scandinavian

highchairs made to blend in with grownup living spaces—could make even the most footloose singles wish they had kids. Husband-and-wife buyers Eli and Sheri Gurock are so devoted to their products that they blog about testing the gear with their own tykes, but customers are also welcome to do their own testing by taking strollers for a spin on the sidewalk outside.

Family Hangout, Fair-Weather

FRANKLIN PARK ZOO

One Franklin Park Rd., Boston,
617-541-5465, franklinparkzoo.org

Sometimes pushing a stroller through the mall feels like navigating a herd of wildebeest; an afternoon at the playground,

like dodging wild chimpanzees. On these days, wise parents escape to more civilized environs—namely, this parklike turn-of-the-century zoo, which offers 72 acres' worth of roaming room. The recently renovated gorilla exhibit and the addition of two magnificent tigers have the zoo looking better than ever. And it has lots of kid-friendly food options and convenient diaper-changing stations to help keep your own little critter happy.

Family Hangout, Rainy-Day

BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

300 Congress St., Boston, 617-426-6500,
bostonkids.org

The Boston Children's Museum has been mobbed since it unveiled its 23,000-square-foot

expansion and accompanying renovation in April, so chances are good you'll arrive to find a long queue snaking from the door. Try to tough it out: Your reward is just inside, in the form of a corkscrew-shaped three-story contraption that the museum calls the New Balance Climb, and grateful parents might regard as the mother of all monkey bars. Even if your kids don't hit another exhibit, a scamper across, up, through, and under its twisting platforms will leave them too exhausted to do anything but go home and watch their *SpongeBob* DVDs until the clouds part.

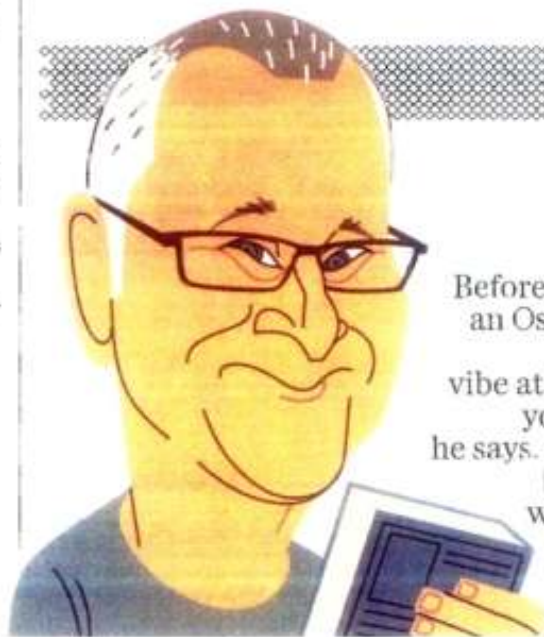
Kid-Friendly Brunch

TORO

1704 Washington St., Boston,
617-536-4300

Though the menu incorporates tot pleasers like a Kobe mini burger and glasses of eminently slurpable banana milk, Toro doesn't exactly break out the crayons and coloring books for its brunch service. For certain parents—specifically, those who secretly miss their carefree nights out at places like Toro—that's part

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Tom Perrotta's Recommended Hangout for Feeding the Brood

Before his novel *Little Children* became an Oscar-nominated film, the Belmont author and his family fell for the vibe at **Full Moon**. "When our kids were younger, we used to go there a lot," he says. "We still find ourselves dropping in every now and again—not that we enjoy the company of toddlers, but that penne alla puttanesca is just too good to pass up."

Full Moon, 344 Heron Ave., Cambridge,
617-354-8699, fullmoonrestaurant.com