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Short Stops in Boston

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS CLASSIC AMERICAN CITY

By JANELLE NANOS

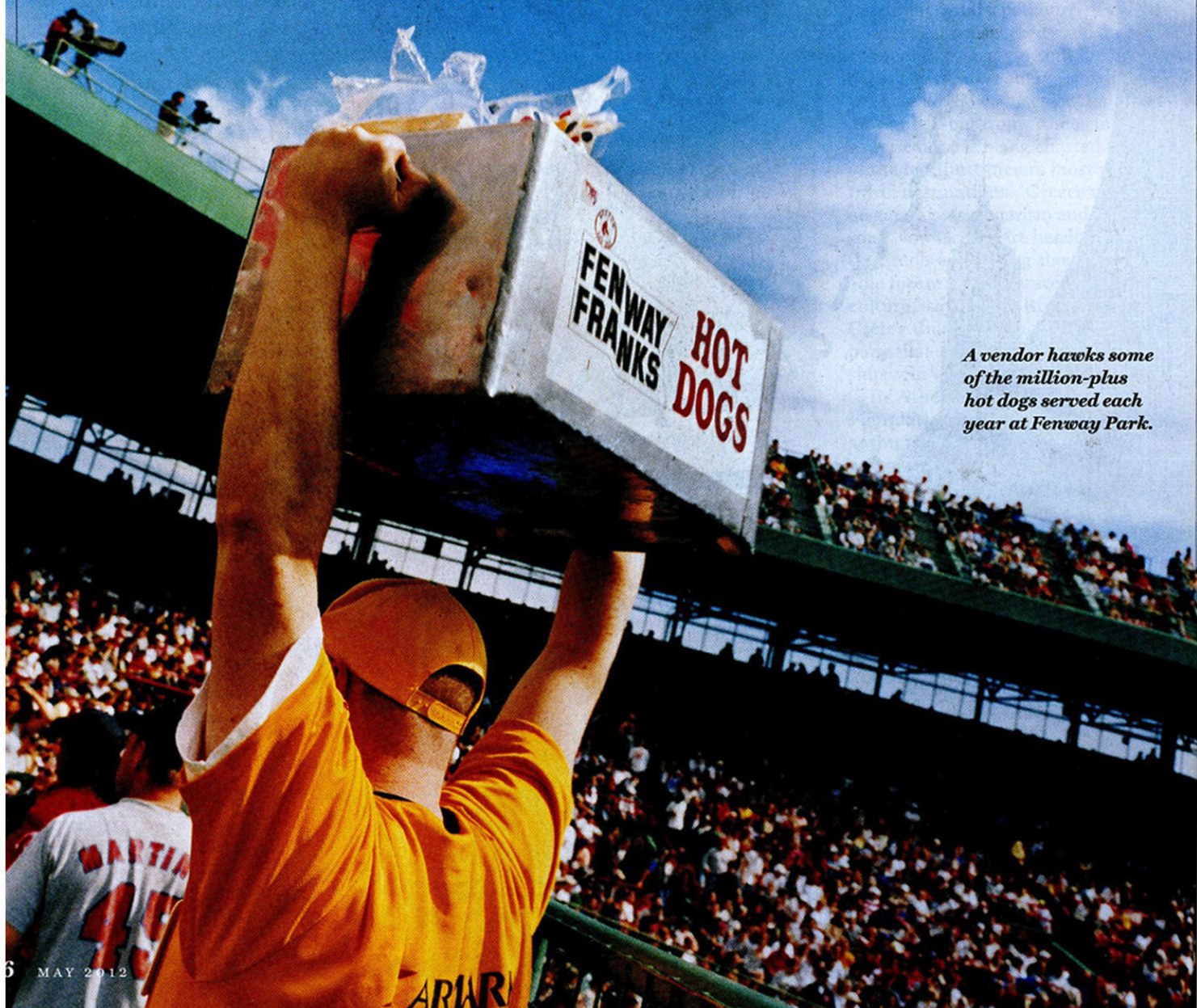
AT NEARLY FOUR centuries old, Boston hits home runs in the history department. But don't let that fool you into thinking that a visit will be nothing more than a grade school textbook recap. In the past few years, some of the most storied institutions in the Hub (as the city is often nicknamed) have been busy reinventing themselves. City historian Thomas O'Connor says he's always loved how he can stand in one place along the **Freedom Trail** and feel surrounded by the

past. But now, he says, "Boston is spreading out." New waterfront developments and an expansion of public space are allowing visitors to explore more of the city.

WHAT TO DO The nation's oldest major league ballpark turns 100 this year, and the Red Sox are throwing a yearlong birthday party. Fanatics can pore over some 4,000 artifacts, from ticket stubs to bases, that will be displayed throughout **Fenway Park**, and a series of games will take place with players sporting period uniforms.

The **Big Dig**, the city's notoriously delayed construction project, is finally complete, and in its wake Boston is far greener and more navigable than before. Stroll along the **Rose Kennedy Greenway**, a mile-and-a-half-long ribbon of a park connecting the North End with downtown's historic sites and Faneuil Hall that is dotted with fountains, gardens, and lawns perfect for lounging. The new **Hubway** bike-share system offers one- or three-day rentals to explore the city's 50 miles of bike paths. Download the **Spotcycle** app to locate nearby bikes.

A vendor hawks some of the million-plus hot dogs served each year at Fenway Park.





The Rose Kennedy Greenway makes a splash with fountains and lawns for lounging. Nearby, Trade serves flatbreads (opposite) like this one with ricotta and rosemary.

Some \$760 million has been spent overhauling Boston museums in the past decade. The **Museum of Fine Arts** unveiled not only a major renovation but also a spectacular addition in the past two years, with a total of 60 new galleries that celebrate American and contemporary art. And this January marked the opening of the new Renzo Piano–designed wing of the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**. The airy glass structure, which houses classrooms and a three-story jewel box of a concert hall, provides a dramatic counterpoint to the original Venetian-style palace filled with Gardner's eclectic, globe-spanning collection of Whistlers, Rembrandts, and religious icons. "Gardner loved working with artists, musicians, and scholars," says Anne Hawley, the museum's director. "This allows us to continue that legacy."

Though the concept has been co-opted by contemporary politics, the original Tea Party will be revisited this June with the opening of the **Boston Tea Ships and Museum**. Built on a pier in Fort Point Channel, near the site of the historic altercation, the museum features a reimagining of the taverns where the Sons of Liberty strategized and will be flanked by replicas of two colonial vessels. Visitors can express their own taxation frustration by hurling (retrievable) tea crates off their sides.

WHERE TO SHOP Though steeped in history, Fort Point is the go-to answer to anyone who claims that Boston is as edgy as a butter knife. Its rows of industrial warehouses, which once stored wool, sugar, and molasses, now host tech start-ups, nonprofits, and studio space.

The **Made in Fort Point** store has prints and paintings from area artists on offer, as well as nestlike sconces and pendant lamps from local design studio Birch and Willow.

Wander along the HarborWalk to visit the new home of **Louis**, the revered 87-year-old clothier, which shrugged off its stodgy Back Bay quarters in 2010 for a sleek space overlooking the harbor. Louis has big-name labels like Marni, Jason Wu, and Proenza Schouler, but it's also one of the few places you'll find the nubby knits and asymmetrical dresses of local designer Jackie Fraser-Swan, whose line, Emerson, is both her middle name and a tribute to her distant relative, Ralph Waldo.

Plan to stop at the nearby **Institute of Contemporary Art's** gift shop for more idiomatic souvenirs, such as cuff links crafted from the original parquet floors of the former Boston Garden arena or from Bruins hockey pucks.

Newbury Street, Boston's major retail thoroughfare, boasts the stores—and crowds—of Madison Avenue or Rodeo

Drive. For an antidote to that, head instead to the South End, where you'll find GQ-worthy duds at menswear shops **Sault**, **Uniform**, and **Bobby From Boston**, and flirty dresses and denim at women's boutiques such as **Flock**.

On Sundays, locals weave through the booths at the nearby **SoWa Open Market** for its triumvirate of art, antiques, and artisanal foodstuffs on sale. It's also the place to come for everything from adorable stuffed narwhals to old subway token earrings to tangy Grillo's Pickles.

WHERE TO EAT Take the opportunity to graze when Boston's flourishing community of food trucks converges on weekends—on Sundays they're found at the SoWa market, where you can sample Green Muenster Melts from **Roxy's Grilled Cheese**, chickpea fritters from **Clover**, or mini lobster sliders from the **Go Fish!** truck.

For a more upscale meal, head across the Charles River to Cambridge, which is home not only to Harvard and MIT but also to some of the smartest, most inventive food

in the area. (The *Boston Globe* made waves last year when it said the best food in Boston ... was in Cambridge.) Chef Tony Maws won a James Beard Award in 2011 for his creative nose-to-tail offerings at **Craigie on Main**—all the more reason to cast decisions aside and let him choose the six or eight

courses for your tasting menu, which may offer dishes such as beet and pig's ear salad, and celery and green apple sorbet.

Other Cambridge standouts include **East by Northeast's** modern Chinese menu, with its hand-rolled noodles with pork ragout and duck confit dumplings. **Area Four's** wood-fired pizzas are topped with surprising combinations such as pancetta, potato, and mascarpone. "I covet their oven," says Joanne Chang,

the owner of the always packed **Flour Bakery**, whose roasted lamb sandwiches and homemade toaster pastries fuel Cambridge's agile minds.

Chang adds: "Go to **Toscanini's** for the best ice cream in the world." Try its more unusual flavors such as burnt caramel or goat cheese brownie. ■

