



2017

a look back on the year



Another year has come and gone, and as we enter what will be our 14th year in business, we've had lots of time to reflect upon how we best bring value to our clients. What we realized in 2017 is that we've legit become the complete solution for many of our clients' marketing needs.

What do we mean by that? Well, think of it this way: It's raining out; you could buy a dozen metal ribs, some fabric, a spring, and a handle. But you probably just want to buy the finished umbrella. Now, translating that analogy into marketing...of course we still sell the "pieces," think: PR, influencer relations, social media, digital marketing, graphic design, videography and advertising...but we're finding that more and more of our clients are looking to us to just be their "umbrella." In this ever-complicated world of marketing, in 2017 we continued to evolve into the one-stop solution that protects our clients from the marketing chaos that would otherwise be raining down on them.

Read on to see this work in action over the past 12 months; we look forward to continuing to help our clients stay dry in 2018!

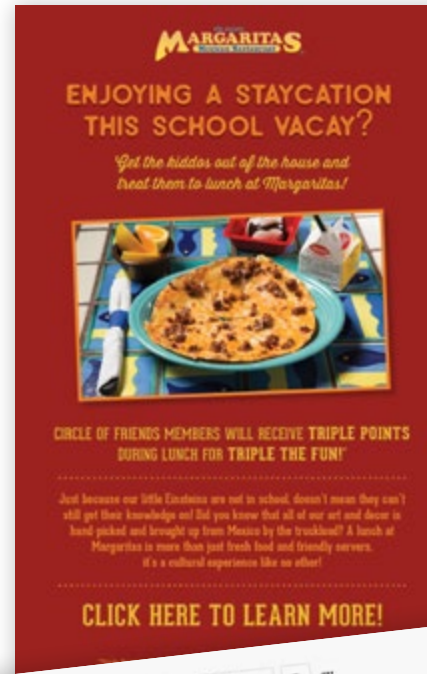
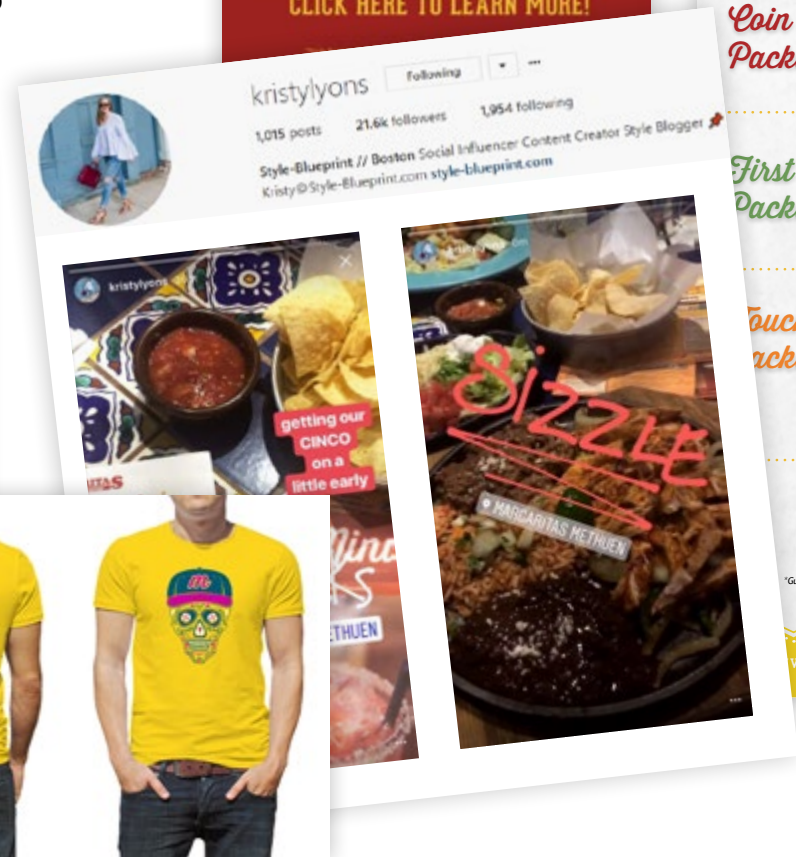
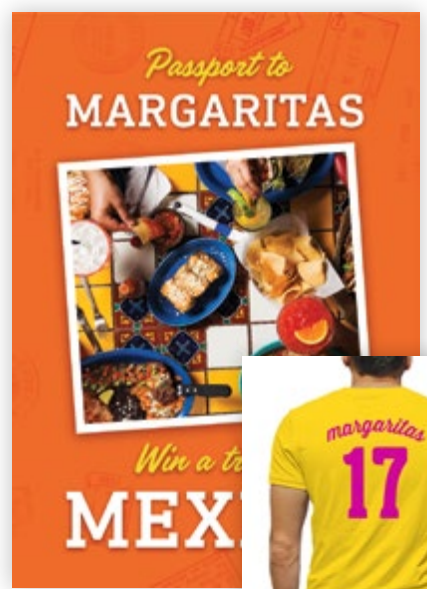
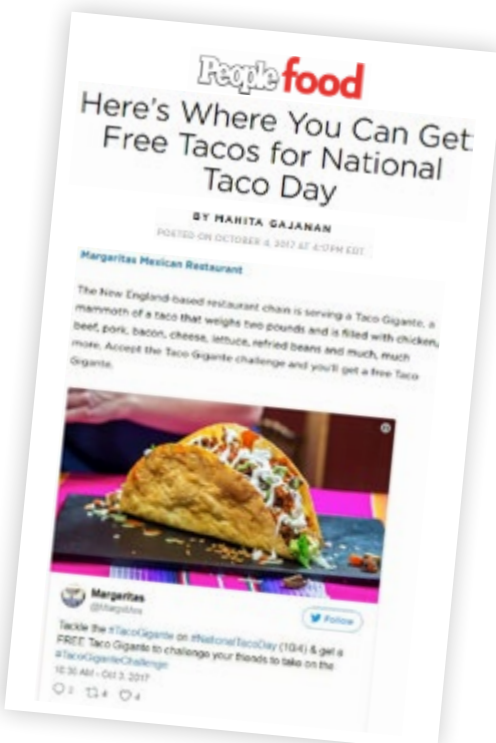
marlo
marketing

Hospitality Marketing

There was no better example of giving clients the full suite of marketing services than the work we did for **Margaritas** in 2017. A team of five worked around the clock handling every single one of the 27-unit Mexican chain's marketing needs. From strategy to execution and analysis, the team led every element of their marketing, bringing success like never before, including:

- 124% increase in year-over-year sales on National Margarita Day
- 31% increase in Taco Gigantes sold in October
- 10% increase in year-over-year sales on Cinco de Mayo (the busiest in the company's 33-year history!)

In our book, that's cause to say olé!



Cause & Community

In 2016, we donated our creative services to designing the invitation package for **Urban Improv's** Banned in Boston annual fundraising event. And because we like to go big or go home, in 2017 we committed the agency's resources to a complete rebrand and marketing strategy for the decades-old organization. It started with a suggested name change to better connect UI with its sister organization, Freelance Players. Then came new logos, a new website, annual report, email marketing template, social pages and more. Finally, we oversaw the entire communications strategy that brought Urban Improv and Freelance Players together under a new, unifying name, Rehearsal for Life, that was announced earlier this month. Our PR team is now working furiously to secure stories on the 25th anniversary of Urban Improv, and, of course, we'll be designing the invitation package for Banned in Boston (May 11 – mark your calendar!) again...stay tuned!



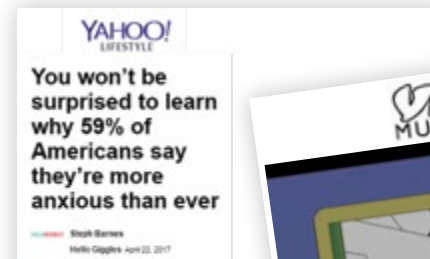
We were honored to finish up a three-year run donating our services to **Party in the Park**, the annual fundraiser for the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, a.k.a. the spring's fabulous "big hat luncheon." During our tenure we helped the committee reposition PIP from a fundraising "event" into a fundraising "season," raising over \$2.7 million for Boston's Emerald Necklace park system.



Corporate & Business

In 2017, we designed and executed a multi-layered, headline-driving program that leveraged the timely news hook of President Trump's first 100 days in office. Our "**Nervous Nation**" campaign included a CareDash-commissioned national survey about public anxiety levels since the election; a spokesperson collaboration with well-known election stress expert, Dr. Steven Stosny (PhD); and a local market "Coping Clinic" public event in CareDash's home city of Boston. The "Nervous Nation" poll generated more than 230 placements and 143MM+ impressions and unique editorial stories in outlets including *Vice's MUNCHIES*, *Self*, *SHAPE*, *Metro*, *Bustle*, and *Forbes*.

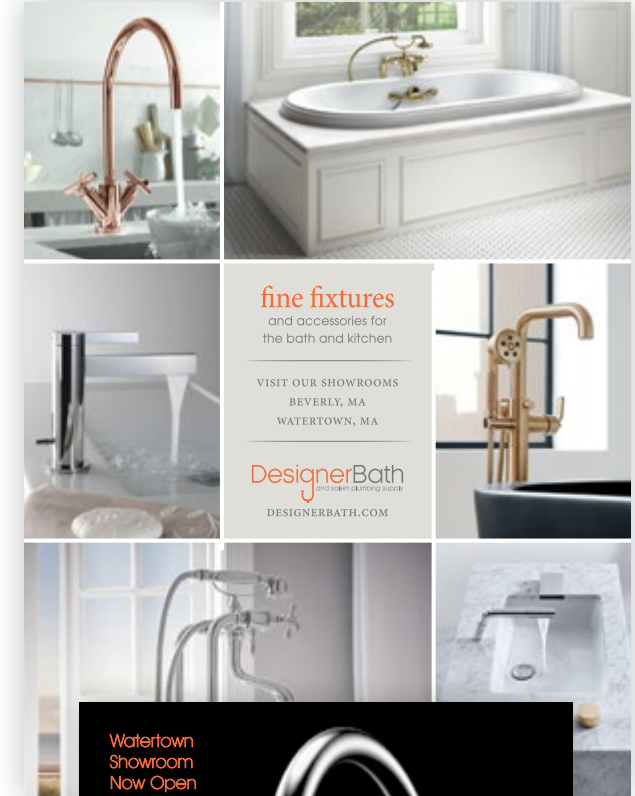
Arsenal Yards, the next great neighborhood where Cambridge meets Boston, started to take shape in 2017. With demolition and construction starting on site, marlo supported Boylston Properties and The Wilder Companies at the ICSC retail real estate conferences in Las Vegas, NYC and Boston to position AY as an ideal location for mixed-use development tenants with **an animated video** and a clever mailer that may or may not have included live lobsters! Locally, we supported the project with an updated social presence, community relations counsel and design of the **Arsenal Yards website**, outdoor construction signage, and B2B and B2C videos.



Corporate & Business

Also in 2017, **Compass Point** Retirement Planning took big steps in a brand transformation that will ultimately result in a new website launch later this year with updated messaging and positioning around its proprietary solution to the perennial retirement savings challenge. In the interim, we updated the Compass Point logo, refreshed the Compass Point experience at tradeshow, and created a new, branded solution for Compass Point's key differentiator in the marketplace. Stay tuned!

Last but definitely not least, we supported **Designer Bath**, the North Shore destination for the finest in bath & kitchen fixtures, on their expansion to Metro Boston with a new showroom in Watertown. From designing a **new website** and new advertisements for both consumer and trade audiences to coordinating local events like a ribbon cutting and community open house, our team started obsessing HARD over bridge faucets and rain showerheads!

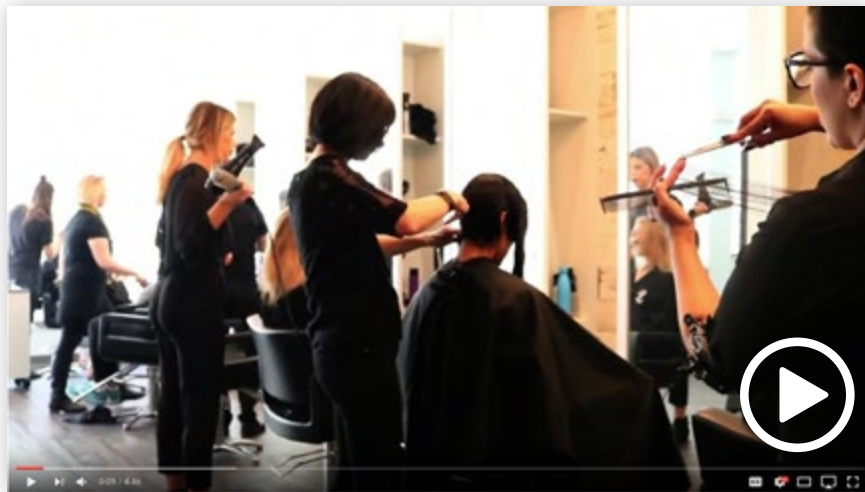
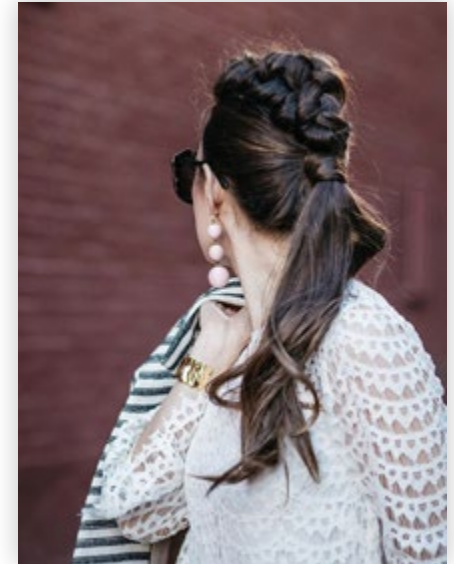




Fashion & Beauty

One of the best compliments we received all year was from 10-year client, **SalonCapri's** Nick Penna, who—after watching the **video** we created for their 50th Anniversary—exclaimed: *"This may very well be the best piece of work you have ever done for us...and that is saying a lot."*

We also launched a YouTube channel and produced an array of mini **hair video tutorials** with the styling team, landed ongoing media coverage, threw a bunch of in-salon customer events and primped the hair of countless local influencers for photo and film shoots.

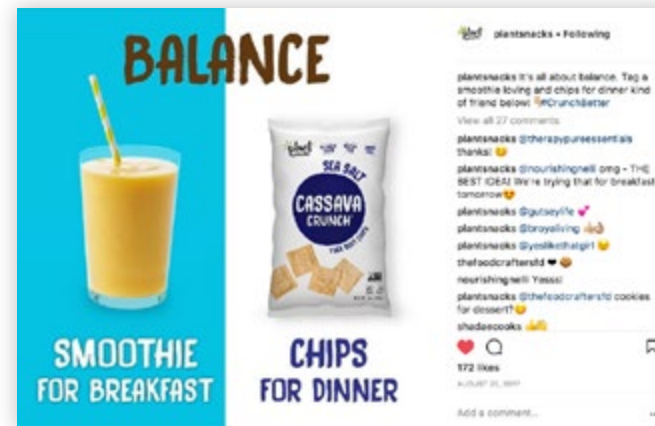


Food & Beverage

Back in 2016, we announced that **Narragansett** would be returning brewing operations home to Rhode Island. In 2017, we launched Narragansett's first Rhody-brewed beer in over 30 years, aptly named It's About Time IPA, at the same time we shared news of the opening of their namesake brewery.



We began working with **Plant Snacks'** Cassava Crunch chips to design and execute an integrated, visually-led Facebook and Instagram campaign to grow their social presence. Launched in June, our #CrunchBetter organic and paid efforts focused on unique social content, advertising and influencer partnerships, helping to grow their Instagram & Facebook channels by 1754% in just four months.

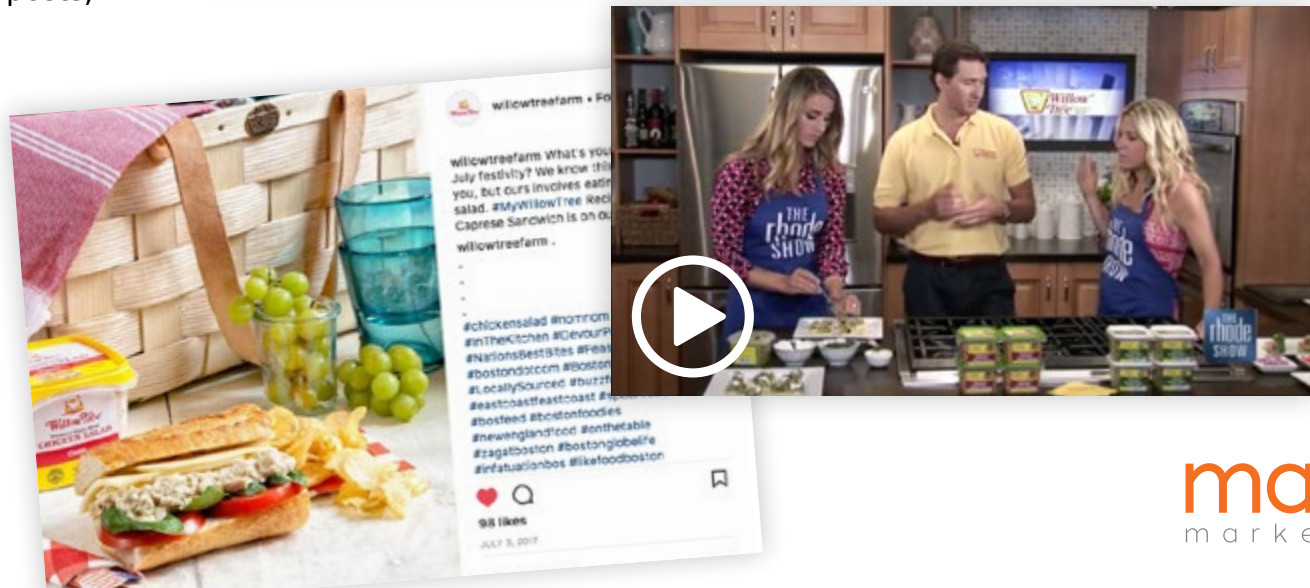


We supported the launch of three new **Snack Factory** products with creative mailers: Fruit and Veggie Sticks gained widespread national attention for their convenient nutritional benefits, while Dessert Thins were buzzed about for their guilt-free sweet tooth indulgence.

Food & Beverage

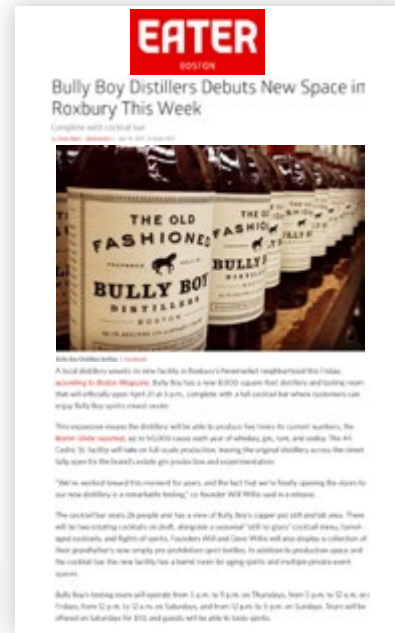
2017 was a BIG year for **Willow Tree**, the beloved 60-year-old family-owned purveyor of chicken dips, salads and pot pies. After beginning our work on a complete rebrand in 2016, we finally launched the new logo, website, and packaging (yea, it takes time to get 29 product packages approved by the FDA!) in June of 2017.

With the new brand in place, our communications team strategized on how to raise the overall brand recognition of Willow Tree's new look among new and existing consumers in key priority markets to drive demand and sales. We executed a multi-layered campaign including a series of sampling events like *Boston* magazine's Best Fest and Best of Rhode Island, reaching approximately 11,000 consumers. We increased their presence and awareness across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by 39% in key markets to drive sales and reach new customers via ongoing monthly social media posts, blogger partnerships and social sampling. And we secured over 60 placements in key outlets such as *Reader's Digest*, *Northshore Magazine* and *Today's Grocer*, driving increased consumer and industry awareness and interest in the brand.



Food & Beverage

Bully Boy Distillers also had a big year with the opening of their new distillery and tasting room in Roxbury. We worked closely with the Bully Boy team to strategize the launch plan, securing pre-opening coverage in nearly every major publication in the city and beyond.



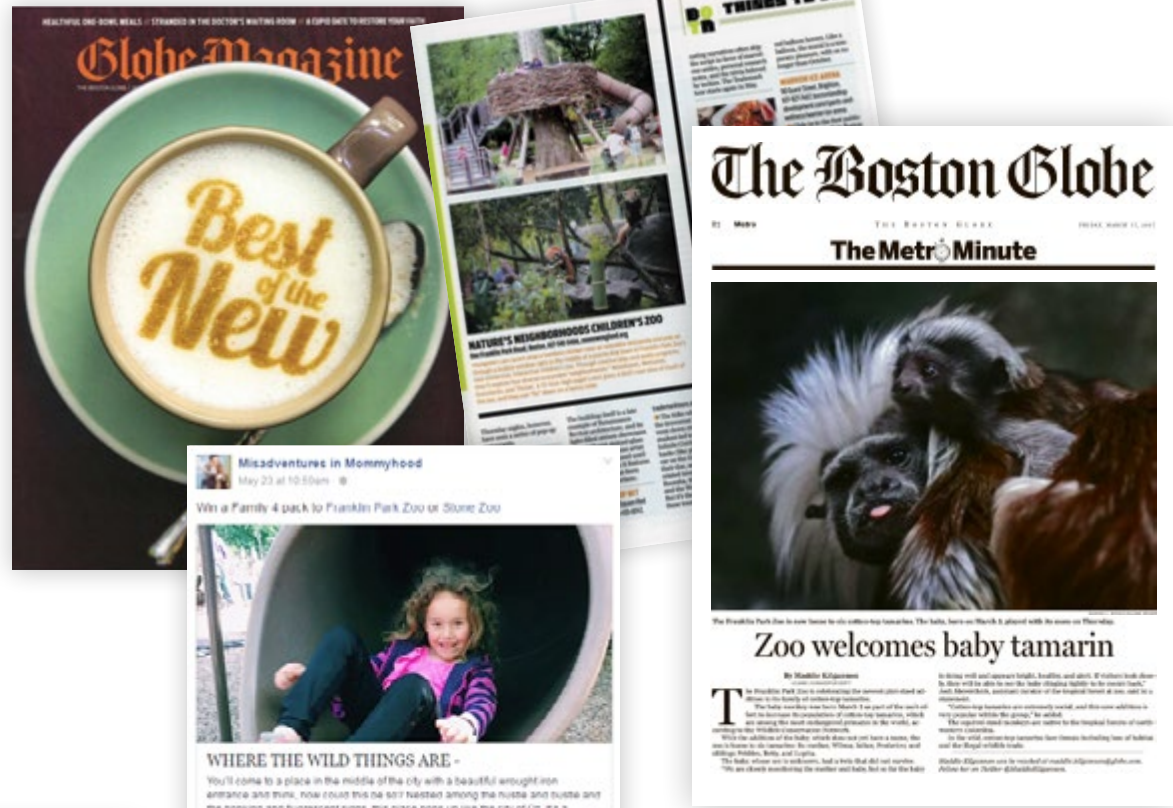
2017 also saw the 10th anniversary of the Robert's family ownership of **Truro Vineyards & South Hollow Spirits**. Throughout the year, we secured top-tier national and regional coverage of the special events, new products and milestones for the brand everywhere from *Edible Cape Cod* and *The Boston Globe Magazine* to *Forbes.com* and *Departures*.

Finally, we welcomed **Brooklyn Brewery's** Beer Mansion back to Boston over Halloween weekend. Working closely with their events team, we engaged local media and influencers throughout metro Boston, securing over 25 million impressions in advance coverage and event listings which helped to sell out the event almost a full week in advance!



Leisure & Attractions

For long-time clients **Franklin Park** and **Stone Zoos**, we continued to promote special events and introduce the world to zoo babies of all kinds! Our ongoing media coverage, social influencer programs and targeted mailers sent to top-tier family travel media helped drive traffic to the Franklin Park Zoo's innovative Children's Zoo exhibit throughout the busy summer months. In the fall, we announced a merger with Grassroots Wildlife Conservation, securing coverage on WBUR, NBC Boston, WHDH, and more. Last year also saw beloved gorilla Okie heading off to his new home in New Orleans. We celebrated his departure in style with coverage in *USA Today*, *The Boston Globe*, CBS Boston, and an *Associated Press* article that landed in dozens of publications throughout the country.



We continued to help **Showcase Cinemas** attract moviegoers by promoting special programming and events and premium upgrades that make Showcase theaters *the* ultimate destination for moviegoers from Cincinnati, Ohio to Queens, New York. We aren't the only ones who think so: Showcase SuperLux was named "Best Movie Theater West of the City" by *Boston* magazine, among other accolades!



Restaurants & Catering

The restaurant team was busy this year with continued momentum from our big 2016 openings – **Area Four Boston, The Hourly Oyster House, RUKA** - as well as some new debuts dotting Boston’s burgeoning ‘hoods (Fenway, Fort Point, Kendall).

We started 2017 with a bang, and a buzz, and a whoosh when the Area Four team and Roxy’s launched **Roxy’s A4Cade**, Boston’s first bar/arcade concept complete with ooey-goey grilled cheese and over-the-top drink vessels that would make even Gene Simmons blush.

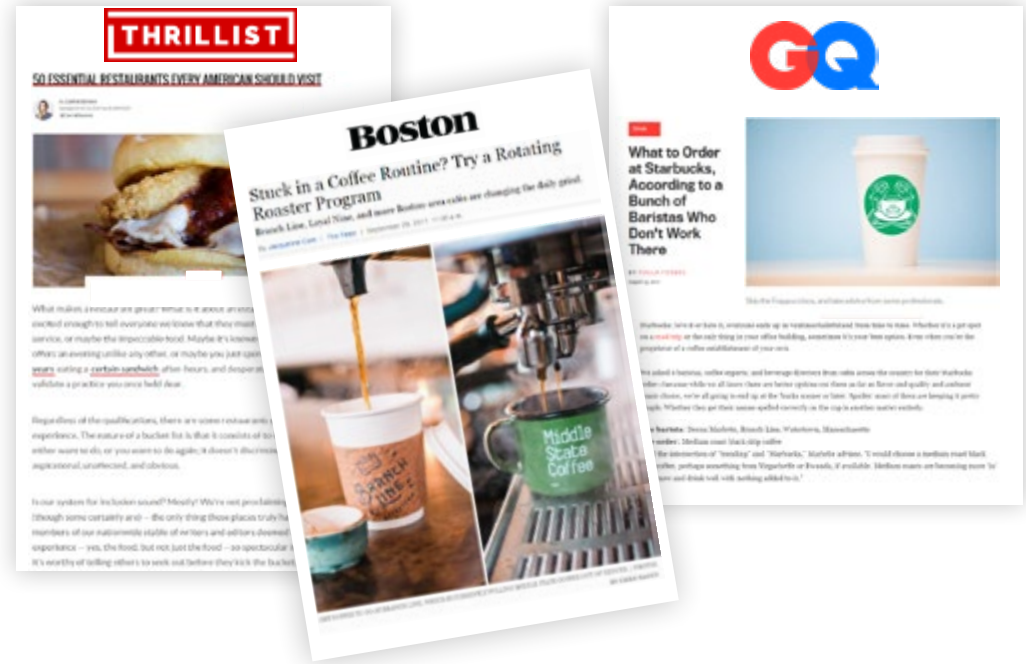


It was a double-whammy for Portland’s Big Tree Hospitality this year. First, Chef/Owners Andrew Taylor and Mike Wiley were recognized by the James Beard Foundation as “Best Chef Northeast,” then the team hit it out of the park with the introduction of their counter-service concept, **Eventide Fenway**.

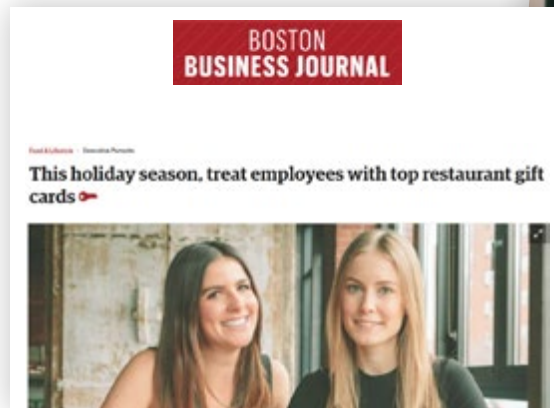
COJE Group (Yvonne’s, RUKA) continued their domination, opening **Lolita Fort Point** donning requisite sexy, edgy interiors + elevated food & drink. A fast favorite, barely a month after opening, Eater named Lolita “Design of the Year” winner.

Restaurants & Catering

It wasn't all about openings this year though, some local tried & true restaurant favorites were still making waves. **Bob's Clam Hut** announced a new Portland location after over 60 years as a Kittery icon. **Branch Line's** beverage programs – beer, wine AND coffee – raised the bar locally and nationally. **The Hawthorne's** Jackson Cannon debuted his "bar saw" to rave reviews. And **Yvonne's** homage to the Locke Ober Lunch became a must-do Boston holiday tradition.



Overwhelmed by all this restaurant news? Not sure how to decide where to eat? Lucky for you, we helped launch **The Food Lens**, a curated website that enables the culinarily curious to discover or rediscover Boston's dining scene. The launch party we planned was the stuff of Instagram dreams, and a strategic partnership with the **BBJ** brought The Food Lens front-and-center to Boston's biz community. Our work was so successful in 2017 that we've been engaged to handle all of their digital marketing needs starting this month, too!



Travel & Destination

2017 was all about the openings for the travel team. Over the winter and spring, we helped **YOTEL** prepare for its June landing in Boston's Seaport. This new 326 cabin hotel marked the affordable luxury brand's second US opening and the first in a rapid global expansion. From tech-driven amenities (go meet their new robot, YO2D2) to sleek cabins (you had me at SmartBed!) and fun, social spaces like an indoor/outdoor rooftop bar, YOTEL Boston delivers on its promise of providing guests with "everything they need and nothing they don't."

We engaged in a comprehensive messaging and media relations campaign designed to introduce the brand to Boston and secured spot-on coverage in *British Airways*, *Boston Common*, *Chronicle* and *Dining Playbook*. We also conceptualized & produced one of the most talked about opening events of 2017 with activations on nearly every floor of the hotel, including live performances, graffiti art, an array of creative food & beverage presentations and much more. For a look at that memorable night in July, take a look at the [video](#) we produced to commemorate the occasion for our client!



Travel & Destination

In June, we launched **Sandy Pines**, the beautiful resort-level campground in Kennebunkport offering something for every level and style of camper. Along with the (gl) or (c)amping, find a pool, kayaks, a killer s'mores selection and more. We developed a robust media relations campaign to introduce this new destination, landing coverage in outlets like *Departures*, *Food & Wine*, *Delta Sky*, *Design New England* & more.

Our final opening of the year was in late October for the revitalized **Hilton Boston/Woburn**, which completed a top-to-bottom, \$16M renovation, including a new, buzzy Spanish tapas restaurant, **Matadora**. A sampling of results thus far include extensive coverage by social influencers, an impressive 700 organic Instagram followers in less than four months, and spot-on media coverage including *USA Today*, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, Fox25 News and a feature in *NorthShore Magazine*, including shout-out & pic in the editor's note!



Our videography team hit the ground running this past August in New York City, completing **nine area tour Vlogs** for **Marriott World Trade Center**. To help hotel-goers navigate the Big Apple and get from point A to point B, these Vlogs mapped out a step-by-step trail guide starting at the hotel and ending at various nearby popular landmarks, locations, shopping centers, churches and more. Step aside, Google Maps!





As for us, 2017 was as busy as ever! Our creative department doubled in size, [our video capabilities increased](#), a beloved VP celebrated 10 years at marlo, another beloved VP became an even more beloved (at least to Marlo!) COO, we went through 30 kombucha kegs and we had lots of fun together during outings at Franklin Park Zoo, The Hawthorne, Lolita Fort Point and even right in the office with the return of marloween and our traditional Thanksgiving potluck, as well as the launch of our Summer Deskside Cocktail Series and Birthday Bagels.

In the spirit of always learning, we kicked off our marlo Speaker's Series, inviting folks from the media, business and non-profit worlds to share their stories with our team. And, as always, 2017 saw 12 issues of [marlo monthly](#) and 260 smart, culturally-relevant and sometimes tear-jerking [m.blog](#) posts. [If you're not getting it in your inbox daily, you're missing out!](#)

Finally, our continued growth brought one engagement, one pregnancy, one furbaby and thousands of hours of killer work that helped our clients continue to grow and build their brands across the USA.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2018 from all of us at **marlo**