

The IMPROPER BOSTONIAN

METRO BOSTON'S ROVING GUIDE to ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURE and PACKING A TOOTHBRUSH

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IMPERATIVES

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Concierge Artist INSIDE MAN

RECENTLY, Clark Showalter was manning the front desk at the Copley Square Hotel while a reality TV show was filming in the building's lounge. The premise revolved around a couple who were finally getting married after years of dating. "They couldn't tie the knot, basically," he recalls. "The show was trying to bring them together and just get it done." Suddenly a woman burst into the hotel lobby. "The bride ran through, threw off her microphone on the ground and screamed 'I'm not getting

married!' and ran down the street. The camera crew came running through and chased her." Showalter doesn't encounter screaming singles everyday. But the episode is representative of the drama that crosses his path as an "intuition expert," the job title the Copley uses for its concierges. For the past six months, Showalter, 29, has steered tourists around Boston. In that time, he's observed that a visitor's origin often determines his or her agenda. Americans, for example, almost always visit the same place

first. "They want to see Harvard, especially somebody from the Midwest." Europeans make a beeline for Newbury Street. "With the exchange rate with the euro and pound, it's probably the No. 1 request." The trick to Showalter's job, of course, is serving hundreds of guests while giving each one personal treatment. He balances those responsibilities by sending visitors to neighborhoods he frequents, like the South End. "That's one of the spots in the city I really like," he reflects. "It doesn't quite get the touristy crowd."

JOHN DYER

Adam Amengual