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Guess who's coming to Boston?

An exclusive preview of Boston's most highly anticipated openings, events and arrivals of the new year.

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS: Change is coming to Boston. With a number of luxury hotels, restaurants, and businesses opening or completing renovations in the coming months, the city will offer even more destinations for travelers, revelers, and gourmands. The Hub's standing as a cultural center will also be bolstered, with both a groundbreaking art exhibit and a world-renowned ocean race making their only East Coast stops here. And you'll literally need to fasten your seat belt while driving the new Porsche Panamera, making its New England debut this year. So mark your calendars and start your engines.

HOTELS

The **W Boston Hotel and Residences** is scheduled to open on Stuart Street in the Theater District this fall. The hotel's soaring glass tower was designed by Boston's William Rawn Associates, which previously designed the new Cambridge Public Library. Boston's first W will house 235 guest rooms, 123 private residences (priced from \$400,000 to more than \$4 million), event spaces, a restaurant, a lounge, and a spa. *W Welcome Center, 200 Newbury Street, 617-267- 2228; 100stuartstreet.com.*



The **Fairmont Battery Wharf**, a brand-new luxury hotel located on the waterfront adjacent to the North End, is one of the most talked-about openings of the year. The property will feature 150 elegantly appointed guestrooms with top-of-the-line technology, and four signature suites will offer terraces overlooking the harbor. Guests can splurge for Fairmont Gold, the brand's exclusive lifestyle offering featuring personalized service, a private reception area, and a VIP lounge. General hotel amenities include a restaurant with an open kitchen designed and inspired by award-winning French chef Guy Martin, a spa and health club, water-taxi service, and 300 linear feet of dock space. *Fairmont Battery Wharf, 3 Battery Wharf, 617-994-9000; batterywharf.com.*

Boston's second-oldest hotel will become the city's newest hot spot when the **Copley Square Hotel** reopens this month after a yearlong, \$17 million renovation. All 143 rooms have been redesigned and equipped with Wi-Fi, and improvements to the property include the reinvented Xhale restaurant, Saint lounge, and Minibar, an upscale martini spot. The Copley was the Back Bay's first hotel when it opened in 1891. *Copley Square Hotel, 47 Huntington Avenue, 617-536-9000; copleysquarehotel.com.*



The Hub will have yet another luxury destination later this year when the Morgans Hotel Group— owners of the Delano in Miami and the Hudson in New York—and Normandy Real Estate Partners complete a \$75 million renovation of the historic Ames Building, adjacent to Faneuil Hall. The Ames is considered Boston's first skyscraper and is still one of the largest stone masonry buildings on the East Coast. The developers are gutting the interior to create the **Ames** hotel, featuring 114 luxury rooms along with a restaurant, bar, and workout center. *Ames Building, 1 Court Street, ameshotel.com.*

RESTAURANTS

In the most turbulent times, bonds become especially attractive to investors, and in Boston's financial district, regardless of whether the markets are up or down, the new **Bond** lounge in the Langham Hotel will be an appealing posttrading dining option. Bond's dramatic, vaulted venue (now with a VIP balcony courtesy of New York designer Jeffrey Beers) formerly housed the Julien restaurant, and the new boîte will serve casual lunches, high tea, and small plates that can be combined to build a meal. "It's not just a place to eat, drink, and dance," says executive chef Mark Sapienza. "It's a place where you can lounge." We love the artwork throughout Bond—banknotes, a nod to the building's history. *Bond, the Langham Hotel, 250 Franklin Street, 617-451-1900; bondboston.com.—LAURIE KAHLE*



Early this year, local chef Dante deMagistris is slated to open his second restaurant in the Boston area, **il Casale** in Belmont Center. DeMagistris's acclaimed flagship restaurant, Dante, in Cambridge, is one of the city's most popular eateries. Il Casale will be located in a historic building—a converted fire station—and will offer rustic Italian cuisine. Designed by Tsoi, Kobus & Associates, the 130-seat space will have an open kitchen, wood-burning grill, large communal tables, and outdoor sidewalk seating. Il Casale will also be the first restaurant in Boston to feature a fire pole. *No contact information available at press time.*

SHOPPING

Style mavens take note: **Gucci** is on the go. The fashion mecca will soon leave its cushy Copley Place location to move to the Mandarin Oriental on Boylston Street. Residents and guests of the Mandarin will enjoy having the iconic Italian shop right in its lobby alongside other upscale merchants like Lululemon Athletica and Frette. The glamorous new boutique will feature accents of rosewood, marble, polished gold, and smoked glass. *Gucci, the Mandarin Oriental, 776 Boylston Street; gucci.com.*

World-class home-furnishings retailer **Mohr & McPherson** is opening a new flagship store this month, having shuttered its Boylston Street location in December. The new store, situated in a refurbished 1880s factory building in the South End's SoWa neighborhood, features two floors of luxury shopping. Offering everything from handcrafted antiques to sleek, modern furniture, *Mohr & McPherson is a decorator's dream. Mohr & McPherson, 460 Harrison Avenue, 617-210-7900; mohr-mcpherson.com.*



COMING SOON

Other arrivals to watch out for...

The online custom atelier **Spreadshirt** will open its North American headquarters in Boston's Ladder District in January. The new space, a former art gallery on South Street, will house the company's offices as well as its only nonvirtual retail location, where personal-branding buffs can view samples of Spreadshirt's new designer clothing lines and accessories,



and order custom apparel at the laptop bar. Visit spreadshirt.com.

Called the “Everest of Sailing,” the **Volvo Ocean Race** is the world’s most prestigious global ocean competition, spanning more than 37,000 nautical miles over nine grueling months. Yachts took off from Alicante, Spain, in October and will sail through 11 international ports, including Cape Town, Singapore, Rio de Janeiro, and Stockholm, before concluding in St. Petersburg, Russia, in June. The race will arrive in Boston—the sole North American stop—on May 9. Visit volvoceanrace.org.



January marks the 20th anniversary of the **Boston Wine Festival**, the country’s longestrunning wine-and-food celebration. The festival, which lasts through early April, begins January 10 at the Boston Harbor Hotel and will include more than 50 exclusive wine-and-food-pairing dinners, which either feature a world-renowned winemaker as host or showcase a fun varietal theme, such as Meritage Madness or Battle of the Cabernets. Tickets for the dinners and events range from \$75 to \$320 per person. *Boston Wine Festival*, 888-660-9463; bostonwinefestival.net.

BodyScapes, with gym locations in Brookline and Southborough as well as One2One Bodyscapes Personal Training Studios in affluent communities throughout Massachusetts, is opening a new location at The Launch in Hingham Shipyard this spring. The full-service gym offers cutting-edge cardio and strength-training equipment, personal training, group fitness classes, babysitting, and specialty training programs, including pre- and postnatal fitness and BridalScapes, a regimen created especially for brides-to-be. Visit bodyscapesfitness.com.

“**The Old, Weird America: Folk Themes in Contemporary Art**,” a groundbreaking contemporary art exhibit, will make its only East Coast stop at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park in Lincoln from June 6 through September 7. The exhibit—whose title is derived from a 1997 book about Bob Dylan—will include works by Kara Walker, Eric Beltz, Deborah Grant, Aaron Morse, Cynthia Norton, David Rathman, and Charlie White. The works are intended to convey an expansive look at American culture and life. *DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park*, 51 Sandy Pond Road, Lincoln, 781-259-8355.

Nantucket’s **Great Harbor Yacht Club** was one of the most highly anticipated openings of 2008, but it’s not over yet—the Clubhouse, a luxurious dining-and-event complex, will open in June. Modeled after the old Nantucket Steamship building, the complex was designed by noted architecture firms Hart/Howerton and Nantucket’s Lyman Perry. When completed, the Clubhouse promises to provide some of the most stunning views on Nantucket, looking out over the harbor, creeks, and Brant Point Light. Offering both casual and formal waterside dining, a bar, a library, and other member rooms, the Clubhouse is sure to become the hub of Nantucket’s social scene this summer. Visit ghyc.com.



The Boston area’s educational institutions draw some of the world’s top students in the arts and sciences. This year the city also will become a destination for beauty buffs. Elan Sassoon, son of hair guru Vidal Sassoon and owner of Mizu salon, plans to open the **Academy of Hair and Skin by Elan Sassoon** on Commonwealth Avenue, near Boston University, in late summer. Sassoon’s school will be the country’s first beauty academy with dormitories, enabling it to welcome students from across the globe. *Academy of Hair and Skin*, 1047 Commonwealth Avenue; hairandskinacademy.com.

The **Porsche Panamera**, the German carmaker’s first sedan, will arrive in Boston late this summer. Like the Cayenne, the 2010 Panamera will be available with a standard 3.6-liter engine, or with a turbo-enhanced power plant that produces 520 hp—enough muscle to make this one of the fastest sedans on the planet. At Herb Chambers Porsche, expect the Panamera to start at around \$85,000 (a turbo version with a bevy of options could cost upwards of \$120,000). *Herb Chambers Porsche*, 1168 Commonwealth Avenue, 877-575-4635.

By Michelle Hunter and Tamar Salter Frieze

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