

AMENITY WATCH

Because Some Perks Don't Fit in the Minibar

Amenity Breakthroughs of Yore

March 2, 2009 by [Norman Vanamee](#)

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Photo courtesy Copley Square Hotel

back at the cutting edge of hospitality in the...

When [Copley Square Hotel](#), Boston's second oldest continuously operating hotel, announced that it had installed new, cool-sounding registration pods (left) as part of a major renovation, we wondered what other innovative guest services it had come up with over the years. Management obligingly sent us a history of the hotel, which contained a treasure trove of amenities of yesteryear. Below, a look

1890s Right out of the gate when it opened in 1891, Copley Square Hotel offered what has proven to be one of the most enduringly popular hotel amenities, **Private Parlors and Baths.**

1920s During Prohibition, the hotel kept ahead of the curve by providing guests with a **Speakeasy in the Basement**, accessed by a metal ladder hidden in the lobby drug store. (Little did they know that this trend would resurface circa 2007.)

1940s Opening a music venue (again, in the basement) may not sound innovative today, but the hotel had the good sense to host a **Jazz Club Run By George Wein**, who went on a decade later to launch the Newport Jazz Festival.

1950s Management leases new-fangled **Black and White Television Sets** for guest rooms.

1960s Copley is one of the first hotels to **Rent Space To An Outside Restaurant Company** when it turns over a downstairs space to Edith Ban and her Café Budapest, which remained open for 35 years and set the stage for generations of future hotelier/restaurateur love-ins.

The hotel was also at the forefront of other amenity-ovations when it installed **In-Room Coffee Makers** and, perhaps less presciently, decided to send **Boston Baked Beans To Every Guest Within 30 Minutes of Arrival.**