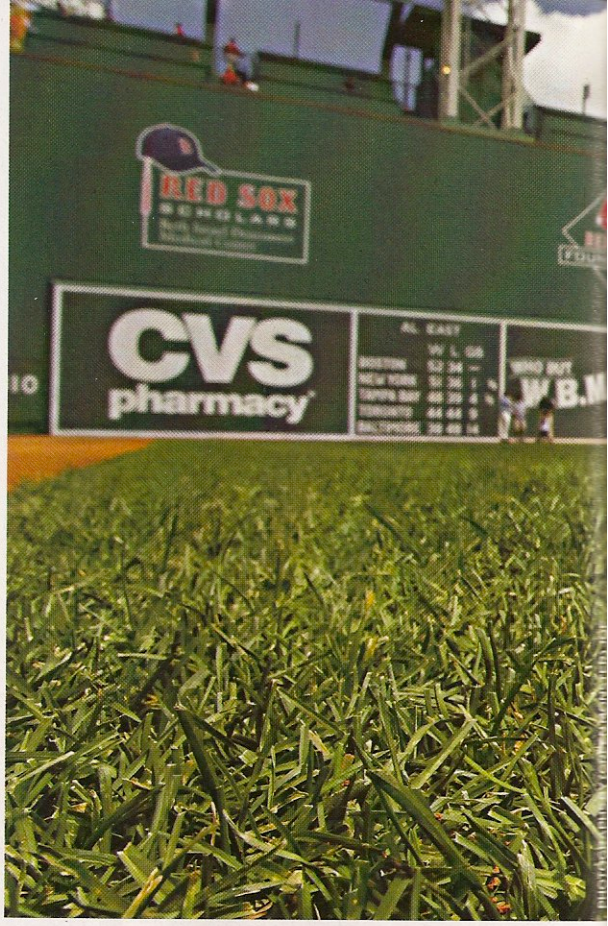
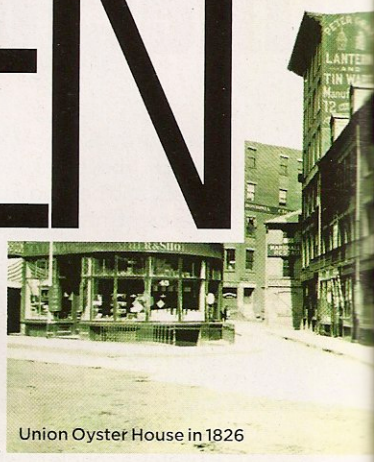


Drinking, screaming, fistfights—we're not just talking rowdy bachelor parties, we're talking baseball.

By Liane Yvkoff

TAMING THE GREEN MONSTER


Union Oyster House in 1826

FEW TOWNS TAKE AMERICA'S NATIONAL PASTIME MORE SERIOUSLY THAN BOSTON, home to one of the biggest rivalries in sports history. Loyalty to the Red Sox is practically state law, and saying you're a Yankees fan will get you kicked out of any bar. Winning two World Series championships within the past seven years has only deepened the fanatical fealty in Red Sox nation, making Beantown a compulsory destination for soon-to-be-hitched bachelors whose first love will always be baseball.

Boston has a lot more to offer than baseball legends and history lessons, though. It's one of the oldest cities (founded in 1630 by Puritan settlers), with existing landmarks predating the Revolutionary War. But it's one of those places where time doesn't stand still. Boston keeps getting younger and edgier each year and is slowly shedding its straitlaced reputation to emerge as a trendy playground.

Driving the change are more than 40 colleges and universities in the Boston area whose students hit the Irish pubs around Faneuil Hall every weekend to paint this blue-collar town red. However, the city still clings to a few of its puritanical roots—all the bars stop serving alcohol at either 1 or 2 A.M., and the town rolls up the sidewalks shortly thereafter. While the hordes of college students make Boston a great place to visit, graduation season runs from May through June, making it difficult to book a cheap room on prime Red Sox game weekends.

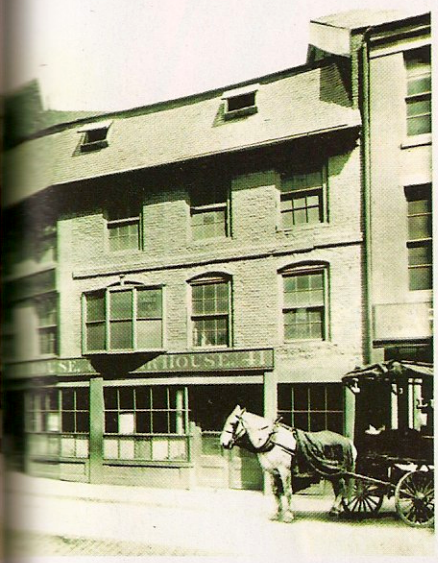
CHECK IN, CHILL OUT

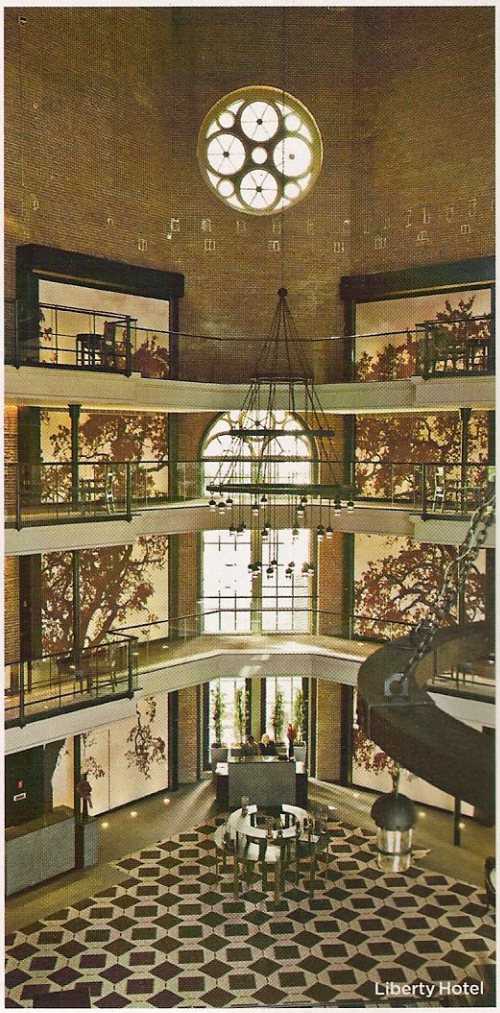
W Hotel Boston

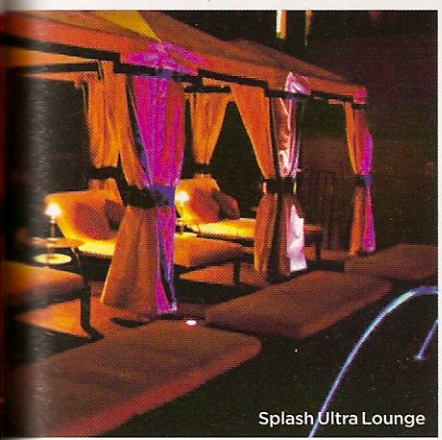
The hotel's "Whatever/Whenever" mantra bodes well for parties looking to live large for a weekend.



Green Monster




Liberty Hotel


Splash Ultra Lounge

Theoretically, the W's concierge can help you make anything happen in Boston, including tickets, reservations, and experiences—as long as it's legal—making this Back Bay hotel the obvious destination for bachelor parties. Feel free to test the limits of this policy via text messages to the concierge with personal requests. But you'll have to get pretty creative. The rooms are already appointed with many of the things you'll need for a boys' weekend, and the hotel will set up a Nintendo Wii in any of its 235 rooms upon request (bring your own games). But the main draw will be the club that the hotel is negotiating to open in its basement. Until then, the lobby is a decent place to start off or end up on a Saturday night. WHotels.com/Boston

Liberty Hotel
The prison theme runs throughout this hotel, which was formerly known as the Charles Street Jail. Stay in one of the 40 rooms that used to be jail cells, order from "the Yard" menu at Clink, and laugh at the celebrity mug shots at the Alibi Lounge. However, the rooms retain zero semblance of their former incarnation and now offer floor-to-ceiling windows and flat-screen TVs. And if staying where 150 years' worth of felons laid their heads freaks you out, there are 280 rooms in the new tower. The Liberty has been known to house visiting sports teams, and its four-floor rotunda is perfect for celebrity spotting. But chances of rubbing elbows with the stars are limited, since the balcony areas tend to be roped off for their entourage. LibertyHotel.com

Colonnade Hotel
It's not the newest, hippest, or cheapest hotel in Boston, but it has one big thing going for it: an 11th-floor rooftop pool that's open to the public for $40 during the week (guests only on weekends). During the summer you'll want to get your tan on before hitting the bars, and then spend the next morning drying out by the pool. The rooms at this old-school hotel are small with business-chic decor. Try to book the suite with two double beds and a pull-out sofa—the other five suites have a king-size bed. The suites offer a fully stocked wet bar complete with mixers, but as usual for a hotel, each mini-bottle costs around $8, so it's better to bring your own. ColonnadeHotel.com

ROUND THE BASES

Fenway Park

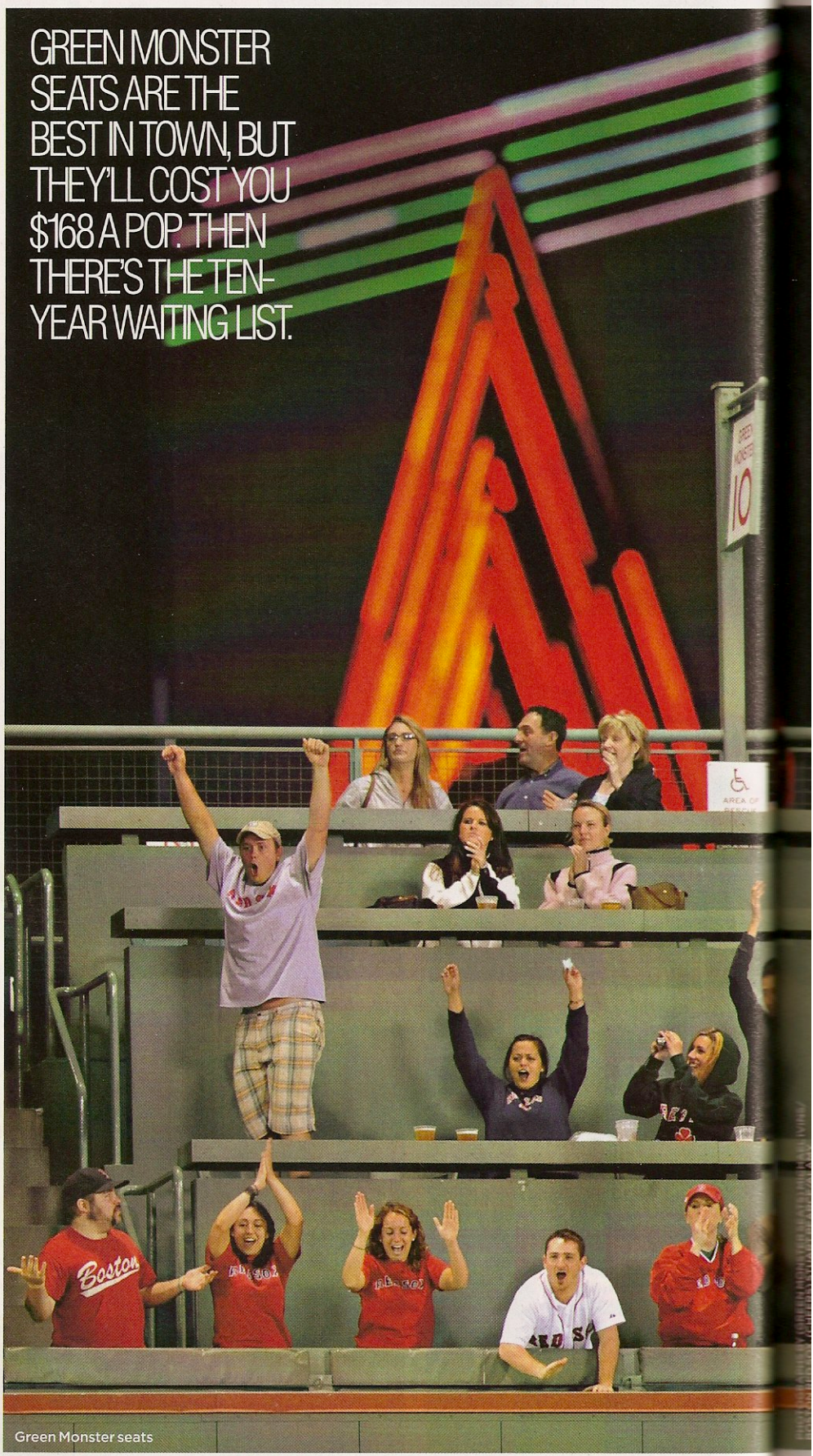
The mecca for any Red Sox fan, Fenway Park hosts daily tours of the soon-to-be-landmark baseball stadium. It's an hour-long look around the 37,402-seat (39,900 standing) ballpark—the third oldest in the country—with a heavy dose of Red Sox history, baseball trivia, and grandpa humor by tour guides who've been following the Sox since before you were born. You won't get on the field, but you can check out the view from a seat on top of the Green Monster—which may be your only chance, since there's a ten-year waiting list for these $168 primo seats. On game days, the last tour of the day goes behind the batting cage and includes a peek at batting practice. Of course, the tour is no substitute for catching a game, but buy your tickets well in advance—especially if you're trying to see a Yankees game—or throw down some serious cash and try booking the Green Monster Corner suite to host your party, which ranges from $400 to $700 per person. Whatever you do, avoid sections 32 and 33, the alcohol-free family sections. And brush up on the words for "Sweet Caroline" for the traditional drunken sing-along during the eighth inning.

The food is standard ballpark fare with a few local tributes, like D'Angelo's subs, Legal Sea Food's clam chowder, and Harpoon and Sam Adams beer. Fenway has a "no outside food" rule, so bring plenty of cash—a beer is $7.25 (premium is $7.75). And skip the foot-long Monster Dog ($7)—you can get better for less money at the vendors on Lansdowne Street or at Best Sausage Company on Yawkey Way. Boston.RedSox.MLB.com

Ticket office: 877-REDSOX-9

Sam Adams Tour

You'd be hard-pressed to say that people come here for an educational experience, but it's a fun way get a taste of the local flavor and pay tribute to Boston's biggest little microbrew. The tour is available seven days a week, and the 50-person groups are first-come-first-served. The Boston brewery isn't the label's main bottling plant, which goes a long way toward preserving the microbrew mentality and feel of the company, but it's where Sam Adams masterbrewers and researchers perfect the extreme beers like Utopias and Triple Bock, dream up new flavor profiles, and brew custom drafts for local



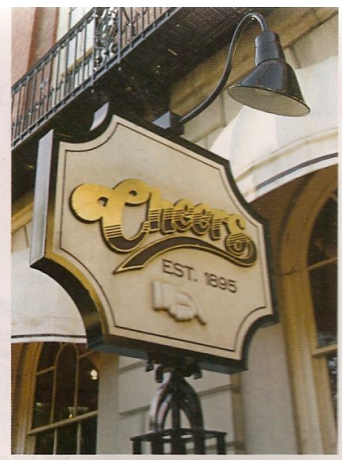
Green Monster seats



BOSTON RED SOX (CHEERS) VIJAY PEARCE/ (EASTERN STANDARD KITCHEN DRINKS) MIMI RITZEN CRAWFORD



Eastern Standard Kitchen





Eastern Standard Kitchen

restaurants. The tour is mercifully short and leads groups quickly to the Bavarian-style tasting room, where you get a generous sample of three ales and lagers in a souvenir tasting glass. Education should always be this fun. You can keep the party going by hopping on the complimentary trolley that takes you to Doyle's Cafe down the street. Order a Sam Adams lager, show your tour ticket, and for the price of a pint you get to keep the specially designed glass it's served in. SamuelAdams.com

WET YOUR WHISTLE

Bleacher Bar
Most bars around Fenway serve up inept cocktails, mediocre food, and beer in plastic cups. Bleacher Bar is no exception, but it distinguishes itself by being the only sports bar on Lansdowne Street with a direct view of the ball game from behind left field. The lower section of the bar contains three tables and a counter with a view into Fenway from behind a glass garage door. On game days, ticketless baseball fans rotate through these choice house seats. For 45 minutes, you can sit back, enjoy a bucket of beer, and see the pop flies like Gold Glove outfielder Carl Crawford does. It's the closest you'll get to being on the field, and the best part is that it's yours for the price of a bottle of Bud Light. And if you show up too late to battle for a table, the view from the men's bathroom isn't bad—the semipublic urinals overlook the restaurant and peek onto the field. BleacherBarBoston.com

Cheers (aka Bull & Finch Pub)
Go ahead—you know you want to. Sharpen your elbows and belly up to the bar at the Bull & Finch, the neighborhood bar that inspired the eighties sitcom *Cheers.* Although the entrance to this subterranean haunt is the only real part of the bar to make it onto the show, it still draws coach-loads of nostalgic tourists expecting to see Sam and Norm. Regardless, Bull & Finch manages to serve up a tasty Norm Burger, cold pints, and a generously bacon-spiked mug of Boston baked beans. You can try to fool yourself into thinking it's the real Cheers, which was a set in Hollywood, by navigating your way to the back of the bar, up the stairs, past the life-size photos of the cast, and through a door into the Hampshire House, which built a close replica of the Cheers bar to appease disappointed TV fans. Your bartender is more likely to be a frazzled college student who won't remember your drink order, much less your name, but at least you can say you've been there. CheersBoston.com

Eastern Standard Kitchen
You'll get the best cocktails in Boston here, hands down. Taking the classic cocktail movement to the next level, the skilled bartenders at this upscale French-American restaurant know how to tweak and refine the classics that you've choked down at other watering holes, and a seasonal drink menu introduces new creations that you should embrace, even if they're served up with blueberry garnishes. French food may not be your thing, but the raw bar offers some of the freshest local shellfish at a reasonable price. Red Sox players are known to stop by for classics like hanger steak and fries, but don't expect to see them—the maître d' quickly ushers them into a private booth in the back, away from the alcohol-lubed bar crowd. EasternStandardBoston.com



Union Oyster House



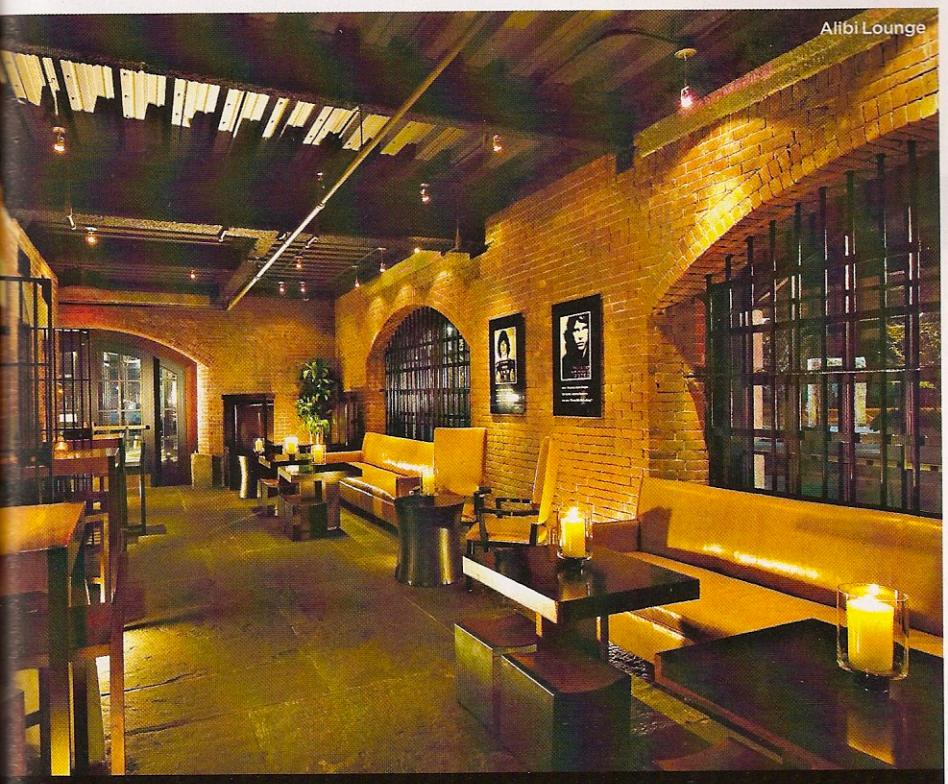
Citizen Public House & Oyster Bar

THE BIG DIG

Union Oyster House
Get straightforward Boston seafood on the Freedom Trail, steps away from Faneuil Hall. The Union Oyster House has been shucking local oysters and clams to the nation's greatest statesmen since 1826. There probably are better lobster rolls in the area, and the best chowdah in Boston is a matter of personal preference, but the homemade corn bread is astonishingly moist and tasty, and is as much of a draw as the littleneck clams. And there are few places where you can sit in the same seat Daniel Webster did while enjoying half a dozen bluepoints or cherrystones caught fresh that morning. It's worth the wait to secure a seat at the original slanted wooden bar, and when you get the nod, secure your drink, slurp your oysters, and trade news with the locals. But respect the unwritten Boston law of no politics and no religion at the bar—even a raw bar. UnionOysterHouse.com

Citizen Public House & Oyster Bar
Trade your Red Sox hat for a scally cap and brush up on your whiskey trivia before you visit this new kid on the block. The gastropub's menu is a delicious marriage of the slow-food movement and bacon trend, serving heritage meat, local produce and shellfish, and everything pork. The tavern's crown jewel is the whole roasted suckling pig with fixings, which serves up to ten people ($38 per person) and requires a three-day advance notice. In addition to 75 types of whiskey and an impressive lineup of microbrews on tap, the bartenders (don't call them mixologists) know how to brew up potent cocktails served in giant crystal punch bowls. This neighborhood restaurant may be a stone's throw from Fenway, but don't expect flat-screen TVs or Red Sox memorabilia on the wall—Citizen Public calls itself the neighborhood pub that just happens to be near the ballpark. CitizenPub.com

The Capital Grille
Boston isn't really known for its steak, but it's easy to satisfy carnivores at the Capital Grille. The ambience at this Back Bay steak house is clubby but not fussy or stuffy, making it an ideal place to tuck into the 16-ounce Bone-In Kona Crusted Dry Aged Sirloin ($43) or the 22-ounce Porcini Rubbed Delmonico ($44). Skip the muddled lobster mac 'n' cheese in favor of the broiled lobster, or, if you're lucky enough to find it on the specials menu, the lobster bisque. The cocktail menu is predictable and proper but uninspired, and you can probably trust your server to navigate you through the extensive and expensive wine list. Sure, it's a national chain and doesn't reflect much of the local culture, but sometimes that can be a good thing. TheCapitalGrille.com



Alibi Lounge

BOSTON NIGHTLIFE OFFERS EVERYTHING FROM BACK BAY SEAFOOD AND BEER TO BURGERS AND BABES.

NO REST FOR THE WICKED

Woodward at Ames Hotel
Many clubs in Boston are seedy and expensive places to get into a fistfight with amped-up bouncy locals and drunken baseball fans. Woodward may be a hotel bar and restaurant marketing itself as an upscale saloon, but after dark the lights dim and the whitewashed walls and sculptures become the background of a trendy club. Upstairs, a fireplace illuminates the terrace, a deejay spins for bachelorette parties on the dance floor, and hipsters kick back on the black upholstered sofas. The music is a matter of taste, but it's one of the most civilized ways in Boston to let loose. WoodwardAtAmes.com

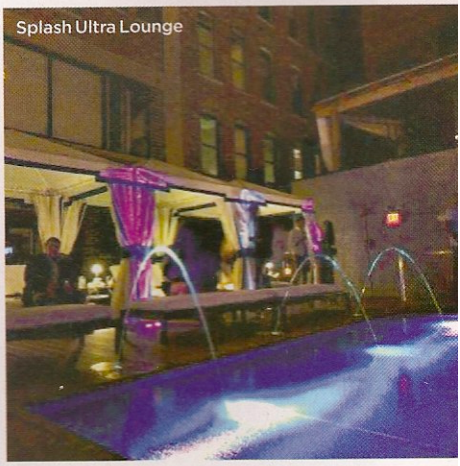
Alibi Lounge
"Packed" is the best way to describe the Alibi Lounge. It's a small, dark, loungey bar inside the Liberty Hotel that draws a solid tangle of twenty-something hotties in skimpy dresses and six-inch Louboutins. Predictably, all the guys are going to go where the girls are, but bachelor parties can cut the line by calling ahead and reserving a table with bottle service. Consider the $300 minimum an investment in drawing the girls to you as space becomes scarce and bartenders become swamped. AlibiBoston.com

Splash Ultra Lounge
This club that tries hard to be all things to all people is tucked away in the Leather District. Downstairs features pool tables and loungey rooms, and the reservations-only rooftop boasts Miami-inspired cabanas and fountains. The burger menu rivals the drink menu, and it's probably the only club in North America where you can order fried clam strips. The drinks, food, and service are what you'd expect at a club (underwhelming and overpriced), but it's the best place to chill out on a hot summer night. Splash-Boston.com

WHERE THE GIRLS ARE

Centerfolds
One of two all-nude gentlemen's clubs in the remnant of the Combat Zone, this higher-end club features two levels, one stage, and a dozen or so gorgeous women who know how to work the pole. You won't be disappointed by the girls—they're in their prime, have few tattoos or piercings, and many sport natural breasts. But don't waste your dollars at the stage unless you're really appreciative or trying to catch the girl's attention for later—state law keeps the girls a couple of feet away from the guests. The $20 (plus tip) lap dances in the (hardly) private room are more like proximity dances—dancers can't make any physical contact with men. And don't believe their promises for more action in the Champagne Room. You'll spend $600 for a cheap bottle of champagne and an hour of trying to figure out how to talk the girl into playtime, and end up with nothing more than a hangover. CenterfoldsBoston.com

Glass Slipper
Keep your expectations low as you enter the Glass Slipper. It's not your typical big-city strip club, more of a dive-bar-meets-titty-bar at this cozy, one-stage joint. Red booths line one side of the narrow floor, and the girls dance on a makeshift stage over the beer refrigerators. The ladies range from ghetto fabulous to porn-star granny, and judging by their moves, dance skills are not a prerequisite. Since the bar separates the dancers from the crowd, guests tip the dancer by wadding up dollar bills and throwing them onstage. It's not the best show in town, but it has all the macabre appeal of a train wreck. The cover charge varies depending on the night, and ranges from free (most nights) to $10 after 8 P.M. on weekends. But it's definitely worth the money to satisfy your morbid curiosity and see what you're *not* missing. GlassSlipperBoston.com



Splash Ultra Lounge