

# hospitalitydesign

**bean town boom**  
*city spotlight*

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-- For a fairly small city, Boston, over the past few years, has ushered in an amazing number of new hotels and restaurants, flaunting bold designs. Five new hotels opened in 2004—in fact, 14 new properties have opened since 2002—and with a lineup of new projects ready to break ground (such as the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel and Mandarin Oriental Boston), the modernization of historic architectural trends continues.

"Boston has become much more of a design market," says designer Tim Button of New York City firm Stedila Design. "It's really coming into its own."

Here's a sampling of the current hotel and restaurant design direction:

At the 112-room Onyx Hotel, local architect Harry Wheeler's biggest challenge was getting the look and feel of a Kimpton property within the space constraints. The result: A two-tone red brick and aluminum exterior and a serpentine patterned terrazzo floor in the lobby. Its restaurant, Ruby Room, appropriately features red-and-black seating and carpet, a black granite bar, and a curved burl-wood wall. The bold palette continues in guestrooms in the form of red chairs, tan-and-black checkered carpeting, black headboards, and cherry accent pieces.

"Boston is becoming more progressive in design. The new boutique hotels show an edginess that was not there before," says New York City designer Campion Platt, known for his design of Manhattan's MercBar. Keeping that in mind, he brought elegant simplicity to the 80-room Bulfinch Hotel. Guestrooms (each a different size thanks to the building's Flatiron-style triangular shape inspired by townhouses of Commonwealth Avenue) are bedecked in walnut furniture, silk curtains, gunmetal light fixtures, and brown leather headboards.

Celebrating Irish heritage in a contemporary setting, the 225-room Jurys Boston Hotel, housed in the city's former police headquarters, was inspired by stone walled Irish country sides. The Long Beach, California, firm of Concepts 4, Inc. preserved barrel-vault ceilings and high-arched windows, but updated the hotel with rich woods, a split-face limestone fireplace, and earth tones. Water flows beneath glass treads of a steel, concrete, and limestone staircase and collects in a pool at the ground level extension of the hotel's Irish bar Cuffs. And to hammer home the Irish theme, artwork by Irish and Irish-American artists showcases throughout the hotel. "The recent installations in Boston are sophisticated with a very current design direction. It is getting much more ambitious," says Linda Snyder, Concepts 4's design director.

It has yet to break ground, but the existing Charles Street jail is slated to become the Charles Street Jail Hotel. Led by local architects Cambridge Seven and New York City interior designer Alexandra Champalimaud, highlights of the 300-room property include a gray granite exterior and a five-story atrium capped by a central rotunda.

Renowned chefs and brothers Bob and David Kinkead have combined their talents to open their first restaurant together—a 165-seat space appropriately named Sibling Rivalry in Boston's South End. The rivalry concept is played up with a "paired" menu (diners can order a dish prepared by David, or choose one from the opposite menu page prepared by Bob) and is mirrored in the design. Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Prellwitz Chillinski Associates created three separate dining areas, a display kitchen, and a bar within the 5,400-square-foot restaurant housed in

Atelier 505, a new landmark mixed use complex.

Peter Niemitz of his local namesake firm gave Italian restaurant Sorriso a rustic feel with walnut flooring, brick walls, and an open dining room with exposed beams and handwoven twig basket chandeliers. A terracotta-and-crème striped woven burlap curtain separates the private dining room, while antique bottles on ledges and murals of the Italian countryside accent the main dining room.

The latest addition to chef Barbara Lynch's local restaurant collection (No. 9 Park and B&G Oysters) is the Butcher Shop. Taking cues from its name (the wine bar and restaurant doubles as a full-service butcher shop), dark slate and weathered wood balances a wine bar and butcher-block table, side-by-side. "A red ceiling above both binds the two together, as do the patrons who slide between these two elements with ease and panache," says designer Peter Bentel of Bentel & Bentel Associates in Locust Valley, New York.

Located in fashion retailer Louis Boston, Restaurant L is a dramatic space with "very strong graphics and very strong colors," says Button, the restaurant's designer. Button warmed up the former cold and minimalist space by using copper-colored block-end flooring, a palette of red, charcoal, and yellow, and graphics of interlocking L's. And floor-to-ceiling windows give the space an airy feel. "Boston's small, but now the design quality is just great," Button says.