

# DEPARTURES

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## Boston believes in

honoring its history (sometimes, in fact, slavishly so). Given that, it comes as no surprise that two "new" hotels in the city both have captivating backstories. The just-opened Liberty and the recently christened Taj offer guests distinct—but equally chic—experiences, each celebrating a cherished past in present-day style.

—SARAH SMITH

### Checking In

<i>Taj Boston</i>		<i>Liberty Hotel</i>
<p>The <b>Ritz-Carlton, Boston</b>, a 1927 Beaux-Arts jewel with views of the Public Garden. It was completely restored in 2002 to celebrate its 75th anniversary.</p> 	<p><i>Past Life</i></p>	 <p>The <b>Charles Street Jail</b>, built in 1851 and closed in 1990 after being declared unfit for prisoners. Many of the architectural details, including four ocular windows in the atrium, have been salvaged.</p>
<p>Prestigious <b>Back Bay</b>, known for the high-end shopping at Copley Place and along Newbury Street.</p>	<p><i>Neighborhood</i></p>	<p>Historic <b>Beacon Hill</b>, near the State House, the Freedom Trail, and a cluster of antiques shops.</p>
<p>Boston <b>Brahmins</b> and their out-of-town guests.</p>	<p><i>Who's There</i></p>	<p>Boston <b>beaux mondes</b> and their jet-set friends.</p>
<p>The <b>Winston Churchill Suite</b>, on a corner overlooking the Public Garden. It's one of 45 suites with a working fireplace and there's a Yousuf Karsh photo of Churchill over the mantel.</p> 	<p><i>Rooms to Book</i></p>	 <p>One of 18 in the original jail building, each with floor-to-ceiling windows, exposed brick, and small holes where the bars used to be. Best are those in the <b>corners of the fourth floor</b>.</p>
<p>Ask The Café's chef for the <b>lobster roll</b>, even though it's only officially on the menu during spring and summer. Rock shrimp hash for Sunday brunch is also good.</p>	<p><i>Best Dish</i></p>	<p>The <b>Jail Bar brownie</b> at CLINK, the hotel's restaurant, makes for a sinful dessert. (And it's the perfect ending to a meal of the excellent Colorado lamb shank entrée.)</p>
<p>A doorman at the building for 60 years, <b>Norman Pashoian</b> is a storehouse of hotel and Boston history. He'll recount how in 1949 he watched Churchill come down the lobby staircase giving his famed "V"—for victory—sign.</p>	<p><i>Resident Expert</i></p>	<p><b>David Sargent</b>, chief concierge and a Four Seasons transplant, is an ace problem solver. He recently arranged to have a famous pop singer's baseball jacket tailored and bejeweled in less than 12 hours before she sang the national anthem at Fenway Park.</p>
<p>The <b>bath butler</b> can draw one of four warm baths. We love the rose-petal option.</p> 	<p><i>Best Amenity</i></p>	 <p><b>High-tech rooms</b> with LCD HDTVs, VoIP phones, and hubs for MP3-, CD-, and DVD-playing.</p>
<p>The <b>fireplace butler</b> will build a fire with a choice of woods. For a quick-burning one before dinner, try birch.</p>	<p><i>Stay In for...</i></p>	<p><b>Alibi</b>, the hotel's prison-themed bar, has Boston's fashionable lined up outside. Tell the bouncer you're a hotel guest and walk right in.</p>
 <p>Outerwear shopping at <b>Loro Piana</b>. Or the apothecary at <b>Louis Boston</b> for luxurious candles and bath products.</p>	<p><i>Head Out for...</i></p>	<p>A wintry walk on the <b>Charles River Esplanade</b>. Browse the old prints and maps at the antiques shop <b>Eugene Galleries</b>, on Charles Street.</p> 
<p>\$550-\$4,500. At 15 Arlington St.; 877-482-5267; tajhotels.com.</p>	<p><i>The Basics</i></p>	<p>\$319-\$5,500. At 215 Charles St.; 866-507-5245; libertyhotel.com.</p>

**CLINK.**