

Harvard²

Cambridge, Boston, and beyond



16j **Going Downtown**
A day of car-free fun in Providence, Rhode Island



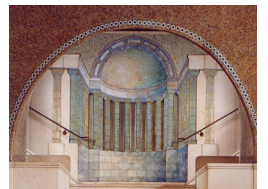
16B **Extracurriculars**
*Events on and off campus
in January and February*



16D **Night Song**
*Music to meditate by at the
First Church in Cambridge*



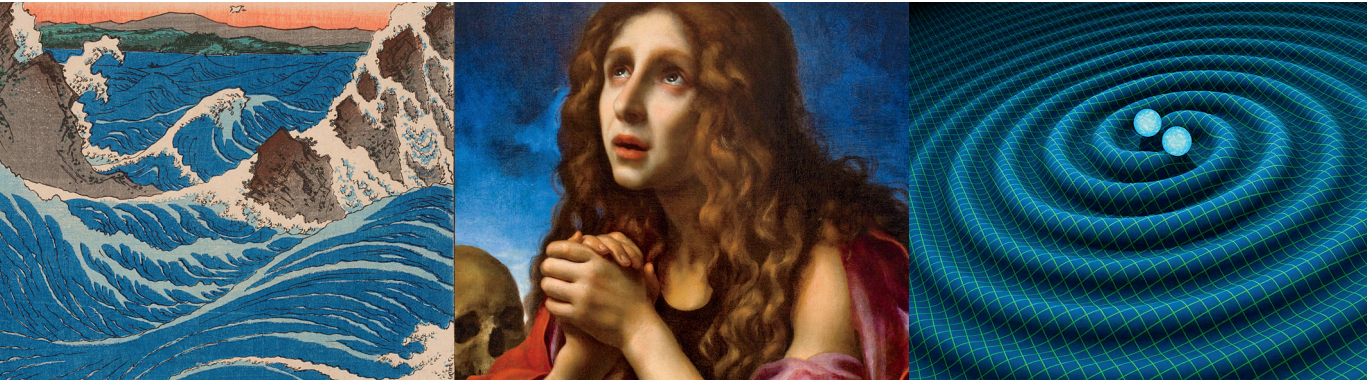
16F **Film Fête**
*Harvard's cinémathèque
offers rare works of art*



16L **Back Bay's
"Scandalous" Mansion**
Preserving a Tiffany gem



16M **Dining Out**
*A taste of Cambridge's newest
restaurants*



FROM LEFT: THE CLARK ART INSTITUTE; THE DAVIS MUSEUM; HARVARD-SMITHSONIAN CENTER FOR ASTROPHYSICS/NASA

Extracurriculars

Events on and off campus during January and February

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

www.radcliffe.harvard.edu

After the River, a video installation by

multimedia artist Lamia Joreige, RI '17, captures the transformation of the Beirut waterway, and its effect on those who live and work along it. Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery. (February 1-March 4)

From left to right: Awa Province: *Naruto Whirlpools* (1855), at the Clark Art Institute; from *The Penitent Magdalene* (ca. 1670), at the Davis Museum; and an artist's rendering of "gravitational waves," a lecture topic at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

Davis Museum

www.thedavis.org

The newly renovated Wellesley College art museum, reopened last fall, highlights **The Medici's Painter: Carlo Dolci and 17th-Century Florence**. (Opens February 10)

Clark Art Institute

www.clarkart.edu

Waterfalls, mountains, and tumultuous ocean waves abound in **Japanese Impressions: Color Woodblock Prints from the Rodbell Family Collection**.



HENRIETTA'S TABLE



BENEDETTO RESTAURANT

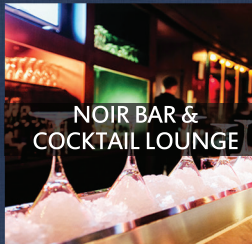


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CAMBRIDGE—Gorgeous 2-bedroom 2-bath corner unit at Riverview. This fabulous duplex offers a 20-foot balcony with floor to ceiling windows. Rare find! **\$1,350,000**



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CAMBRIDGE—Amazing Boston/Charles River views. Totally renovated 1-bed/1-bath with private balcony. Full-service building with concierge, gym, pool, parking, and roof deck. **SOLD**



BELMONT—Payson Estates. Grand 1920's multi-family. 4,378 sq. ft. Period details. 7 bedrooms. 4 baths. 2 driveways. Close to transportation, shops and schools. **SOLD**

STAFF PICK: Music and Meditation

On Sunday nights, a sign taped up outside the First Church in Cambridge invites passersby to Night Song: “Let music transport you...to a place of serenity, calm, and renewal.” Inside, lighting is dim. Candles burn. People are scattered among the pews, in silence. At 7 P.M., a black-clad choral ensemble files into the sanctuary and performs “a unique fusion of contemplative modal instrumental improvisation by jazz musicians blended with ancient and modern chant and punctuated by glorious polyphonic choral music from the Renaissance,” according to organizers of the weekly refuge.

First Church in Cambridge
www.nightsong.org
November-April, 7 P.M., vocalists
with jazz musicians
(May-October, 8:30 P.M., vocalists only)

Ethereal sounds resonate. People close their eyes, and meditate. Others revere the chant, motet, or hymn, Christian in content, as integral to religious journeys. For those supine on thickly cushioned pews (it’s encouraged!), the singing, especially of Canticum Vespertinum’s soprano soloists, may swim in and out of their dozy dream states.

The music lasts an hour. There are no sermons, no socializing. Time is granted purely to private reflection, safe from nagging concerns or the complexity of worldly matters. “I find the experience just very soothing,” one visitor says. “It sets the tone for my whole week.” ~N.P.B.



The Harvard Museum of Natural History
www.hmnh.harvard.edu
Commune with frogs, talk with scientists, and learn about bones, fossils, and gemstones at the **I ♥ Science 2017 Annual Family Festival**. (February 11)

“Next of Kin: Seeing Extinction through the Artist’s Lens” calls attention to the biodiversity extinction crisis through an exhibition of works by artist and photographer Christina Seely, in collaboration with Edward Morris, A.M. ’01, and Susan Saylor (co-founders of the Canary Project). A February 22 panel discussion features the trio and professor of visual and environmental studies Carrie Lambert-Beatty, among others.

THEATER
Gore Place
www.goreplace.org
Rob Vellella’s one-man, “living history” show, **Edgar Allan Poe: Master of the Macabre**, offers readings, biographical notes, and suitably dark humor. (January 21)

American Repertory Theater
www.americanrepertorytheater.org
Trans Scripts, Part 1: The Women. Using phrases gleaned from interviews with people around the world, the play’s seven characters explore diversity within the transgender community. Loeb Drama Center. (January 23-28)

NATURE AND SCIENCE
The Arnold Arboretum
www.arboretum.harvard.edu
Trees: Intimate Portraits. Photographer Jennifer Weigel delights in burls, cracks, scars, fungi, and other natural imperfections. (Through February 5)

The Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics
www.cfa.harvard.edu/events/mon.html
Skyviewing (weather permitting) and a lecture on the discovery of gravitational waves, by MIT professor of physics emeritus Rainer Weiss. (February 16)

Events listings are also found at www.harvardmagazine.com.

Spotlight

Of the 27 ingeniously painted jugs, jars, bowls, and plates in “Nasca Ceramics: Ancient Art from Peru’s South Coast” at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, some “had as much importance as a statue of a saint in a church,” museum director Jeffrey Quilter notes, “and some as much as Aunt Millie’s plate of Niagara Falls.”

The jar at right was likely a household object symbolizing “warriorship and prowess in battle,” says Quilter. The Nasca, who flourished 2,000 years ago, were “fairly violent,” he adds, as well as sophisticated artists. All the objects on display were hand-constructed by coiling and shaping clay around a base, then fired and decorated with images of pelicans, cats, foxes, falcons, and mythological beings. The colors came from 15 different mineral pigments—among the most diverse palettes known in the Americas. Co-curated by Quilter and Donald A. Proulx, professor of anthropology emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the exhibit represents about one-

sixth of the museum’s Nasca collection. “The Maya and the Moche get a lot of press here,” Quilter explains, “but here is another culture that is radically different and created this brilliant, polychrome ceramic tradition—isn’t that interesting?”


Quilter himself favors a small bowl depicting black mice with squiggly tails. “I can’t see how people looking at this would not find it cute and endearing, because small creatures have a certain kind of appeal no matter the time or place,” he adds. “But we could be wrong. It could’ve been made because they’d had plagues of mice—and hated them.”

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology
www.peabody.harvard.edu



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WHY I JOINED THE HARVARD CLUB OF BOSTON

There are many different reasons to join the Harvard Club of Boston. Karen Van Winkle is a Harvard alum and has been a member for nearly 35 years. She was recently named the first female president of the Harvard Club of Boston. Here's why she joined.

"I joined the Harvard Club immediately upon graduation, and from the first moment I walked in the door, other members encouraged me to get involved in leadership positions. I've served on several committees, including the House Committee and Program Committee and have had two tours on the Board of Governors. The incredible diversity of people here is one of the main reasons I value my membership. It's a supportive environment for women to develop and hone their leadership skills, and a great place to network and connect with some of Boston's most influential people." - **Karen Van Winkle '80**

For more information visit harvardclub.com



Celebrating Cinema

“Not just entertainment” at the Harvard Film Archive
by NELL PORTER BROWN



The screening of Kent Garrett's *Black GI* (top left); Busby Berkeley's *Footlight Parade*; Jonas Mekas in triptych; HFA director Haden Guest and programmer David Pendleton; and Ha Gil-Jong's *March of Fools*

Jonas Mekas (January 20-February 18). The prolific nonagenarian, considered the godfather of American avant-garde cinema, is still producing books and films and is scheduled to discuss his *oeuvre* in person, in conjunction with showings of *Walden* (*Diaries, Notes,*

Hollywood director and choreographer's musicals, including Depression-era dazzlers like the archives' own, hard-to-find, 35-millimeter print of *Footlight Parade* (1933), starring dancer-turned-actor James Cagney. Even now, the film's "By a Waterfall" song-and-dance number featuring nearly naked "nymphs" and armies of synchronized swimmers forming elaborate geometric and floral patterns—filmed from above *and* underwater—is a delightful technical feat. "People may be surprised by the strange eroticism of some of these films," particularly those from pre-Hays Code Hollywood, says HFA programmer David Pendleton. "These dance numbers really push the envelope: you have lines of chorus girls who are bent over at the waist and the camera travels down the line, between their legs."

No less stimulating are the experimental, diaristic films of Lithuanian-American artist

FOUR NIGHTS A WEEK, anyone can saunter down to the lowest level of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, buy a ticket, and slide into a cushy seat at the Harvard Film Archive's (HFA) *cinémathèque* to view "rare and scholarly works of art, films that would otherwise be impossible to see," says archive director Haden Guest—or at least see *properly*, in their original formats, and on a big screen. On tap this winter are typically disparate films. "Busby Berkeley Babylon" (December 9 through January 23) explores the



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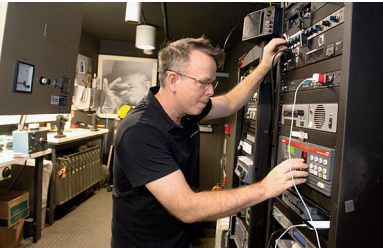


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Pendleton shows off the cinephiles' lair (a.k.a. the HFA's offices); film technician John Quackenbush aims to project films in their original formats.

a growing store of filmmakers' personal papers, and miscellaneous artifacts, animation models, technical manuals, and film equipment.

Alumni in the industry—including Terence Malick '65, Michael Fitzgerald '73, Edward Zwick '74, Mira Nair '79, Darren Aronofsky '91, Andrew Bujalski '98, and Damien Chazelle '07—have contributed to the collection, and appeared over the years for HFA events. In November, during the series “Say It Loud! The Black Cinema Revolution,” the HFA hosted documentarian Kent Garrett '63 for screenings of his *Black GI* (1971), a chronicle of combat soldiers' experiences on and off the killing fields in Vietnam, and *Black Cop* (1969). The latter, he told the audience, explored “whether blacks should be cops,” and the complex roles they can play, through candid interviews with officers in New York City and Los Angeles during the height of the Black Power movement.

Still sobering and relevant, both films were made for *Black Journal*, the groundbreaking, public-television program co-developed

and *Sketches* (1969) and *Out-takes from the Life of a Happy Man* (2012), on February 10 and 11. The last time Mekas was on campus was in 1975, to visit his friend, the film scholar and curator Vlada Petric. At that time Petric was collaborating with anthropologist and documentarian Robert Gardner and with Cabot professor of aesthetics and the general theory of value Stanley Cavell to establish the HFA, which officially opened in 1979.

it among the largest and most important university-based motion-picture archives in the United States, according to Guest. It encompasses “prints from across film history and from around the world, from Soviet silent films to contemporary American indie classics,” he reports, as well as home movies, shorts, animation, and experimental, avant-garde, and documentary films. In addition, there are more than 4,000 vintage posters,

by Garrett. On a national level, it represented the “first time blacks had a say in what was going on” in current events and how the media represented them, Garrett told the audience during the post-screening question-and-answer session.

“History comes around,” he said, when asked about *Black Cop*'s relevance to current debates over the role of police and their relationships with minority communities—although, he added, “the level of brutality then was not at the level, in terms of shooting black men, that it is today.”

Also shown was a stirring clip from Garrett's work-in-progress, *The Last Negroes at Harvard*, about his 1963 class of 18 men and one woman who, in 1959, were the largest single group of blacks ever admitted to the College. “They came into Harvard as negroes,” Garrett said of the era, “and left as blacks.” Throughout his career, the news journalist and filmmaker has “always believed” in the power of “the media, video, and news to really change peoples' consciousness,” he said, “and that's what I've always wanted to do.”

The point of the archive is, after all, to educate. Its film holdings alone have grown three-fold since Guest arrived a decade ago, and the general archives have expanded through gifts like the Lothar and Eva Just Film Stills Collection, containing about 800,000 items, pledged in 2009.

Meanwhile, Guest recently announced another windfall: the complete papers and films of experimental American director Godfrey Reggio. The documents will become part of the Harvard Theatre Collection at Houghton Library, Guest says, “and people can step next door here to study his films.” Reggio is best known for his profoundly prescient 1980s *Qatsi* trilogy (*Koyaanisqatsi*, *Powaqqatsi*, and *Naqoyqatsi*), which depicted, solely through poetic images and music, the modern destruction of the environment.

The materials also cover Reggio's early years as a monk working with youth gangs during the 1960s Chicano nationalist movement, says Guest, and his subsequent “media saturation campaign to raise consciousness about the kind of government

surveillance taking place in the name of ‘social security.’ Reggio was, and still is, way ahead of his time.”

A MOVIE THEATER, classroom, and library, the HFA's structure is uncommon among universities. The year-round *cinémathèque*'s public programs, funded by admission fees and tiered-membership dues, are often paired with visits by guest artists—directors Ang Lee and William Friedkin, actress Angela Lansbury, and Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin, among them.

Yet its core mission is to support study and teaching at Harvard, and to maintain its resources for scholars everywhere. (As such, it was moved administratively from the department of visual and environmental studies to the Harvard College Library; see “Cinema Veritas,” November-December 2005, page 35.)


This winter, Guest researched and curated “Ha Gil-Jong and the Revitalization of Korean Cinema” (February 3-27)—the first retrospective of the 1970s South Korean art-



HFA assistant curator Jeremy Rossen and filmmaker Kent Garrett during the “Say It Loud! The Black Cinema Revolution” series

ist outside his own country. Ha's films are wrenchingly “emblematic of the struggles of an artist working under the totalitarian regime of [then-president] Park Chung Hee,” Guest explains, “at a time when cinema was expected to toe the party line.”


An orphan, Ha traveled to America as a young man and wound up in California, where he was the first Korean to earn an M.F.A. and a master's degree in film studies at UCLA before returning to South Korea. There he rejoined a circle of artists and political critics, and produced his feature films. In his salient and affectionate *March of Fools* (1975), which was a surprise commercial hit, disaffected university students search for love and meaning. Ha “used



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richly ambiguous narrative and imagery to show that things are not as they might appear, revealing deeply planted seeds of discontent,” Guest notes. Unfortunately, the success also drew attention from censors and made it harder for Ha to produce more such innovative work. He died of an “alcohol-induced” brain aneurysm at age 38, according to Guest.

Ha is not widely known in the West; the HFA had to borrow prints from the Korean Film Archive. Yet his work, Guest suggests, like that of Busby Berkeley, can teach viewers about how to learn from history and engage in the world. Berkeley reveals aspects of

how life was lived during the Depression, responses to the onslaught of automation, and the rise of media-driven sexual currency. Ha offers the perspective “of Koreans living under a military dictator at a time when there is political oppression here and around the world,” Guest says. “These films can help us find and forge the freedom we so urgently need.”

As Harvard strives to elevate the arts on campus, Guest is among those coordinating resources among the libraries, museums, and arts departments, and promoting more interdisciplinary events.

In October, the HFA and the Hutchins

Center for African and African American Research presented “Pam Grier, Superstar!” It looked at Blaxploitation and other films reflective of African-American experiences and the cultural upheavals of the 1970s; Grier’s protagonists, the HFA stated, are “defiant, authoritative, resourceful vigilantes whose intellectual, physical, and sexual adeptness American movie screens had never experienced the likes of before.” The actress was at Harvard to receive the Hutchins Center’s 2016 W.E.B. Du Bois Medal, and spoke about her life and work following the HFA screenings of *Foxy Brown* (1974) and *Jackie Brown* (1997), Quentin Tar-

ALL IN A DAY: Providence, R.I.

Ditch the car and take the train to Providence. Numerous attractions clustered around the city’s vibrant downtown district are within easy walking distance of the station.

There’s outdoor ice-skating at the huge (and typically uncrowded) rink on **Kennedy Plaza**—within sight of the historic **Providence Biltmore** hotel, which was saved from the wrecking ball in the 1970s. Dip into the nearby **Ellie’s Bakery** for hot chocolate and a chunk of babka, or meander east, across the Providence River, to the **RISD Museum**.

The ancient Greek and Roman art galleries are open this winter, as is the exhibit “Inventing Impressionism,” which explores the radical nature of paintings and drawings by the likes of Édouard Manet, Georges Lemmen, and Camille Pissarro. (The fifth-floor European art galleries, however, are closed for renovation.) The museum’s Café Pearl opened last year; it serves baked treats

and the locally coveted Bolt Coffee, and is a quiet place to regroup. Or head back outside and walk two minutes to the **Providence Athenaeum**, to learn about the library’s role in the ill-fated romance between Edgar Allen Poe and Providence poet Sarah Helen Whitman, and about author H.P. Lovecraft’s love of the place. Take a self-guided tour, or just be inspired by three floors crammed with books and assorted prints, paintings, and sculptures.

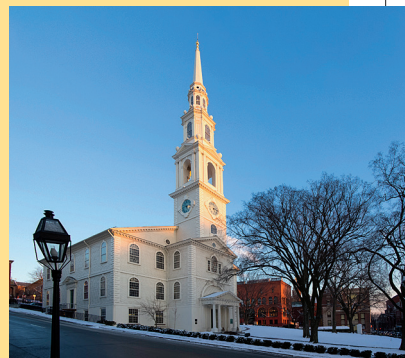
From there, walk back down Benefit Street, past the museum, to the **first First Baptist Church in America**. Join the **Independence Trail**, a lively and free self-guided tour, accessible by smartphone, to hear about the impressive white structure, with the strongest steeple around, and a bit of Provi-

dence’s history: it was founded in 1636 by Roger Williams after he was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for promoting the separation of church and state. The trail, marked by a green line on the sidewalk, is a 2.5-mile circular route that highlights more than 100 culturally significant sites, including the old and new State Houses and the spot from which colonists rowed out to attack the HMS *Gaspee* in 1772.

It also stops at the Providence Place Mall. Don’t linger there. Instead, for food and shopping, head behind the Providence Biltmore to the locus of the downtown arts and entertainment scene anchored by Washington and Westminster Streets. Check out **AS220**, an artist-run organization that coordinates rotating galleries, shops, performances, and classes, while managing a restaurant and bar, too. Also worthwhile is **Craftland**, a gallery of handmade objects, and the excellent **Symposium Books** and **Cellar Stories Bookstore**.

Providence is full of innovative restaurants. Downtown, try the **Figidini Wood Fired Eatery** or **The Dean Hotel’s** restaurant **Faust**. On a Saturday night, there’s probably also time to attend a show or concert at the **Trinity Repertory Company** or the **Providence Performing Arts Center**; the last MBTA Commuter Rail train to Boston leaves at 10 p.m.—or take the more expensive (but faster) Amtrak train at 10:35 p.m. Either way, a day in this dynamic small city is well spent.

—N.P.B.



Clockwise from top: open-air ice-skating downtown; the first First Baptist Church in the United States; a bibliophile’s dream at the Providence Athenaeum; and the RISD Museum’s modern appeal

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ©WICKEDGOOD/DREAMSTIME.COM; ISTOCK PHOTOS; ©SCOT LANE/PROVIDENCE ATHENAEUM; COURTESY OF RISD MUSEUM

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Annual Calendar Chronograph
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antino's homage to her and the tumultuous era.

Guest and Pendleton were also instrumental in organizing "Houghton at 75," inspired by holdings at that Harvard library. The March series includes Jane Campion's *Bright Star* (2009), a fictional account of John Keats's last years; Peter Ustinov's *Billy Budd* (1962), adapted from Herman

Melville's novel; and Warren Beatty's *Reds* (1981), based on the life of journalist John Reed, A.B. 1910.

British filmmaker Terence Davies, a past HFA guest, will also be on hand for a screening of his film about Emily Dickinson, *A Quiet Passion* (2017), for which he made previous trips to Harvard to pore over the poet's hand-sewn manuscript books and letters

at Houghton. The series reveals how "the spirit of the original literature lives in the films," Guest says. "Cinema is not just entertainment, not just a complement" or a mode of elucidating other disciplines, he asserts. "We are dedicated to presenting, exploring, and breaking new ground, and to showing cinema to be at the same level as great literature."

CURIOSITIES: The "Scandalous Mansion"

Built between 1899 and 1902, the Ayer Mansion on Commonwealth Avenue is a rare surviving residence designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany. It was an outlier, commissioned by outliers. The textile magnate and marketing savant Frederick Ayer was a self-made man with a sixth-grade education, and his second wife, Ellen Barrows Banning (30 years his junior), an amateur actress from Minnesota. Before buying up mills throughout New England and establishing the largest factory in Lawrence, Ayer also helped develop the charming marketing campaign, featuring heartfelt testimonials and visions of cherubic children and tropical locales, that sold Ayer-brand patented remedies. The Cathartic Pills, Hair Vigor, and Sarsaparilla (it "cured" jaundice, ringworm, carbuncles, dropsy, and syphilis) were concocted by his medical doctor-brother James Cook Ayer, who amassed a fortune.

The Ayers did not fit into Boston society, and probably realized that they never would, notes Jeanne M. Pelletier, preservation adviser for the Campaign for the Ayer Mansion (led by Scott C. Steward '86), which has been restoring the house since 1998.

Thumbing their noses at neighboring Brahmins, the Ayers hired A.J. Manning of New York City as architect of record, and Tiffany, who by then had developed materials and techniques that had revolutionized the glass industry. Although not a trained architect, Pelletier notes, Tiffany was nevertheless the driving visionary behind some of the era's most opulent homes. And with the Ayers's approval, he "plopped down this modern, stark, mosaic-covered façade," she adds, amid the staid red-brick and brownstone town homes proliferating in the fashionable Back Bay. "It was really scandalous."

The front hall holds a pint-sized proscenium arch made of glass mosaics; the bold façade (top right) was designed to set the home apart.



Ayer Mansion
395 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston
www.ayermansion.org

COURTESY OF AYER MANSION

The tallest home on the block, the five-story mansion (part of which has been used as a university women's residence for decades) is faced with an almost white variety of granite and features glass-embedded stone columns flanking massive, copper-clad front doors with eight-pound knockers, along with bulging bow-front windows topped with elaborate stained-glass panels. Inside, the entrance hall combines Tiffany's beloved "exotic" architectural elements—here primarily "Oriental" and Moorish—in curving plastered walls painted a buttery tone and covered with shellac, and a marble semi-circular staircase with glass-mosaic risers. They lead to an apse-like "stage" on which Ellen Barrows Banning gave dramatic readings.

Perhaps most remarkable is the wall behind the stage. It features a glass-mosaic *tromp l'oeil* depicting an ancient Greek temple; the columns are composed of semi-transparent glass backed by gold foil, so when they reflect light, the temple appears to glow from a rising sun. Tiffany started his career as a decorator and interior designer, Pelletier says, although all the houses he designed—including the magnificent Havemeyer House in Manhattan (its suspended staircase was adorned with gold filigree and a fringe of crystals that tinkled underfoot) and his own Long Island estate, Laurelton Hall—are gone. "He would create or specify everything: the architecture, lamps and lighting fixtures, the wall coverings, the floors, even the furniture," Pelletier says, pointing out the Ayer Mansion's Favrile green-glass vases and hefty cream-colored dining table with matching chairs. "He was a micro-manager who thought of houses as architectural masterpieces."

A National Historic Landmark since 2005, the house is open year-round for concerts and lectures; tours (typically on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of each month) highlight continuing preservation projects.

—N.P.B.



New in Town?

Latest additions to Cambridge's restaurant scene

by NELL PORTER BROWN



COURTESY OF LITTLE DONKEY (3)

DIVERSE new city restaurants are attracting both tonier grown-ups and the young professionals and students who dominate bars and nightlife—and who simply eat out, *a lot*. With their long hours, popular themed menus, and intimate ambience, or targeting of connoisseurs, these places are nothing if not accommodating.

The food at Little Donkey (www.little-donkeybos.com) is all over the map—in a good way. There's red lentil and kale dhal

(\$9): jolts of curry, chilies, and lime juice and pert legumes. Wok-fried chow fun (wide, chewy noodles) swim in a bowl of rich broth with salty black beans and hunks of soft-shell crab (\$16). BLT lettuce wraps (\$12) come DIY, with *lamb* bacon and zesty accompaniments—pimento cheese, ripe tomatoes, picked red onion, and sliced plums. Also rich, but thankfully leaner, is the dry-aged beef burger (\$15), topped with oniony mayonnaise and a handful of jalapeño chips. These "global tapas" are comfort food at its best. There's also a cocktail bar, raw bar, pastry bar—and a separate breakfast menu. Little Donkey, named for the dependable creature, takes up a huge and hospitable space in Central Square, and is open from 8 A.M. to 2 A.M. Chef-owners Ken Oringer and Jamie Bissonnette envisioned creating a neighborhood haunt serving diverse inhabitants, the hours they keep, and food that grabs



COURTESY OF MAMALEH'S (3)



"Global tapas" and fresh seafood at Little Donkey (left); Mamaleh's specializes in Jewish deli fare, like matzo-ball soup or toasted bagels with smoked whitefish salad, capers, and onions (above).

their wide-ranging attention spans.

Mamaleh's (www.mamalehs.com), the new "modern-era Jewish delicatessen" in Kendall Square, is one of the few places around to offer a legitimate chocolate egg cream (\$4.50). The traditional New York City beverage (which might have originated among Eastern European immigrants) is a refreshing mélange of whole milk, seltzer, and chocolate-flavored syrup. If that sounds unappetizing, Mamaleh's soda fountain also serves celery-, lemon-cardamom-, and pickle-flavored sodas—along with milkshakes and ice-cream floats: try a scoop of chocolate with Dr. Brown's black cherry cola (\$6). On to the food. The rich matzo-ball soup (\$6/\$8) will cure anyone's lack-of-light win-

COURTESY OF THE SMOKE SHOP (2)



Barbecue, with Southern-style fixin's, at The Smoke Shop, in Kendall Square



ter blues. The knishes—plain potato or packed with pastrami (\$4/\$6)—are delicate *and* bold, especially with mustard. And the dreamy roast-beef sandwich, as hefty as its \$12 price, came on soft rye bread slathered with horseradish mayonnaise. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the restaurant has a full bar, with peppy cocktails: “The 866” (\$11) combines aquavit, Cam-

pari, and grapefruit juice seasoned with salt and dill. The concept and menu occasionally cross into *shnick*, and some will argue about the spelling of “Mamaleh,” and whether it truly is a Yiddish “term of endearment for a young child,” as the restaurant’s website claims, but the food, and the passion behind it, beckon diners to return.

Across the courtyard, barbecue dominates The Smoke Shop (www.thesmoke-shopbbq.com). Champion pitmaster Andy Husbands fulfills messy-meat cravings with a Southern-styled menu featuring dishes like brisket (\$19.50) and ribs (\$22-\$31, depending on the size of the slab). There’s also Thai-flavored fried chicken (\$22) and, for vegetarians who dare show up, glazed tofu and mushroom slaw (\$11). If indulging in salty-sweet-spicy hunks of meat anyway, it’s hard to resist getting side orders of grits fries (\$7), bacon and collard greens (\$6), and Texas toast (\$3)—extra-thick sliced white bread good for sopping up sauce. The décor is handsome, with a 1970s feel: lots of brown wood, rust-colored walls, and exposed brick. The front bar zone is popular, but can be noisy.

Far less buzzy is Forage (www.forage-cambridge.com), which opened last year in the subterranean space that had long housed Ten Tables (and Craigie Street Bistrrot before that). The speakeasy ambience is gone, unfortunately, but new owner Stan Hilbert is appreciably devoted to a “hyper-local, ingredient-driven menu.” Evidence: a salad of chrysanthemum greens (\$10)—which taste like the flowers smell, and are used in Asian soups and stews—and a dish of lobster mushrooms (\$13). During a visit, the latter came with ripe, fat blackberries, but was otherwise bland. There were two tagines, lamb (\$29) and eggplant with yellow-eyed beans (\$24). Spiced with preserved lemons, prunes, and mint, the slow-cooked North African stews, paired with crunchy couscous fritters, are an ideal cold-weather meal. A juicy filet of bluefish came with roasted potatoes (\$27), but fermented chilies put on such a fiery show, the dish had to be doused (by request) with a dollop of homemade labneh.

As for drinks, other restaurants could learn from Forage’s care with its \$8 mocktails. Vinn’s Cup #2 featured rhubarb syrup



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and a neroli blossom. The excellent wine list emphasizes organic whites and reds, and therefore matches Forage's grounded feel. The dining room even offered "natural" noise: human conversation, in lieu of loud, piped-in music.

A small, enthusiastic crowd dines at The Table at Season to Taste (www.cam-bridgetable.com). The 20-seat restaurant, with plate glass windows that overlook



The Table (below) has a modern, country-cottage feel; Waypoint's gray tones, stainless steel, marble, and neon (right) make it handsomely sleek.



COURTESY OF THE TABLE AT SEASON TO TASTE (2)

Massachusetts Avenue north of Porter Square, is simply decorated with wooden tables, colorful artwork, and tin lighting fixtures. It grew out of the adjacent catering business and serves a frequently changing, four-course, prix-fixe menu for \$65 per person. Wait staff know their food and wine, and are happy to suggest excellent pairings. A sampling of recent fare found rigatoni in a puttanesca sauce with chunks of swordfish; pork belly in a yellow curry sauce; seared hake lathered in cream; and sautéed shrimp with corn and heirloom tomatoes. Chef Carl Dooley, a Cambridge native, abandoned the stoves in the open kitchen to present the evening's *amuse-bouche*: handmade corn tortillas with cheese (quesadillas) and a trio of accompaniments, like *huilacoche* (a fungus that forms galls on ears of corn, and is a delicacy in Mexico).

For a stepped-up attitude and accompanying haute couture cuisine, Shepard (www.shepardcooks.com), which replaced neighborhood mainstay Chez Henri, might do. It looks spare and neat, like its food,



COURTESY OF WAYPOINT

which constantly changes. The *moins petit* fare might include rabbit terrine, blistered tomatoes paired with a quail egg, or spelt cavatelli with caramelized crab. (Prices range from \$14 to \$28.) Waypoint (www.waypointharvard.com), the new restaurant opened last summer by chef Michael Scelfo (of Alden & Harlow), is also relatively refined, but feels less precious. Its roominess, open kitchens, and raw bar lend a sense of abundance, and "coastally inspired" food is served with enthusiasm. Pizza with chopped clams (\$16), fried smelts (\$13), and king crab with black rice and brown-butter aioli (\$22) just *satisfy*.

What could be better on a cold night out in Cambridge?

—N.P.B.

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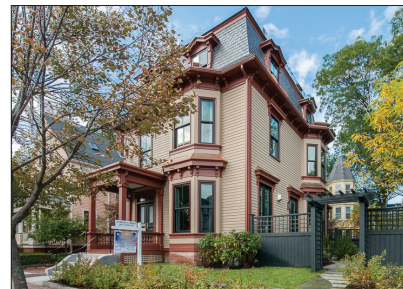
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