

# FORTUNE

## SMALL BUSINESS

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Rick Woodbury invented a car that snakes through traffic like a motorcycle.

# Boston

The city is a paradise for small businesses—and food lovers.

■ By Alyssa Giacobbe

FALL IS THE BEST TIME TO VISIT BOSTON, when unpredictable New England weather gives way to sunny, dry days that are ideal for exploring the city on foot. And while must-see attractions include the gleaming new Institute of Contemporary Art (where an exhibition by former political cartoonist and prominent Mexican artist **Damián Ortega** will be on display through January) and the Boston Celtics (who have won more championships than any other NBA team), there's something for everyone here.

Begin your day in the Back Bay, where chef Ken Oringer's fancy-not-fussy breakfast at **Clio** ([cliorestaurant.com](http://cliorestaurant.com)) is one of Boston's best-kept secrets; just try to resist the caviar scrambled eggs and the pancake-like banana galettes. Walk them off with a stroll down nearby Newbury Street, and stop by the iconic **Louis Boston** ([louisboston.com](http://louisboston.com)), where owner Debi Greenberg and her family have been dressing fashionable Bostonians since the 1800s. End up at **Swan's**



**Shoes, Sipping, Sweets:** 1. The footwear selection at Bobby From Boston. 2. Afternoon tea at the Boston Park Plaza. 3. A taste of la dolce vita at Sweet, a Boston cupcake boutique.

**Café** at the **Boston Park Plaza Hotel** ([bostonparkplaza.com](http://bostonparkplaza.com)) for a tea tasting overlooking Boston Common, led by Cynthia Gold, one of only a handful of tea sommeliers in the world. A typical afternoon tea can include tea-infused port, tea-flavored crème brûlée and a variety of signature teas developed by Gold for the hotel.

In Beacon Hill, check into the **Liberty Hotel** ([libertyhotel.com](http://libertyhotel.com)). Housed in the former Charles Street Jail and owned by

local hotelier Dick Friedman, the Liberty pays homage to its past without being gimmicky. The hotel bar, **Alibi** ([alibiboston.com](http://alibiboston.com)), which serves such cheekily named cocktails as the Green Mile and Rogue Behavior, is charmingly decorated with wrought-iron bars throughout, while the hotel's 90-foot-high lobby atrium features the jail's original windows and catwalks.

For dinner it's off to the Leather District's **O Ya** ([oyarestaurantboston.com](http://oyarestaurantboston.com)), named

Photographs by David Cicconi

## Beantown Original

A Boston native grows her own epicurean empire.

IT'S LATE AFTERNOON, AND CHEF BARBARA Lynch has been at her new restaurant and café, Sportello, all day: hand-rolling pasta, refining menus and, now, fueling up on coffee for the long evening ahead. The diner-style trattoria in the Fort Point Channel neighborhood of Boston is part of a three-tiered project that also includes a cocktail lounge, Drink, and an as-yet-unnamed upscale Italian eatery set to open this fall. It's Lynch's biggest undertaking yet, and a poetic one at that: The 45-year-old chef/restaurateur grew up in the projects of South Boston, just blocks away. "I'm sort of the Good Will Hunting of the restaurant world," she says, laughing.

She's not far off. In just 11 years, Lynch has expanded her restaurant debut, No. 9 Park—which has received awards from every

major national food organization, including the James Beard Foundation—into a mini-empire that keeps on growing (revenues exceed \$25 million a year, she says).

Like most creative types, Lynch never imagined herself as a businesswoman. She got her start at age 13, cooking in the rectory at St. Monica's Catholic Church in South Boston, and went on to work for Boston-area celebrity chef Todd English. After training in Tuscany for a few months, she returned to Boston as executive chef of the now-closed Galleria Italiana and was named one of America's Best New Chefs by *Food & Wine* in 1996. Lynch recalls a congratulatory note she received from famed Boston chef Gordon Hammersley. "He said, 'I hope you do something wonderful with this award,'" she



the country's best new restaurant by the *New York Times* in 2007. Tim Cushman and his team of sushi masters work with super-fresh seasonal fish to create flavorful takes on traditional Japanese fare and pair them with a winning sake and wine list.

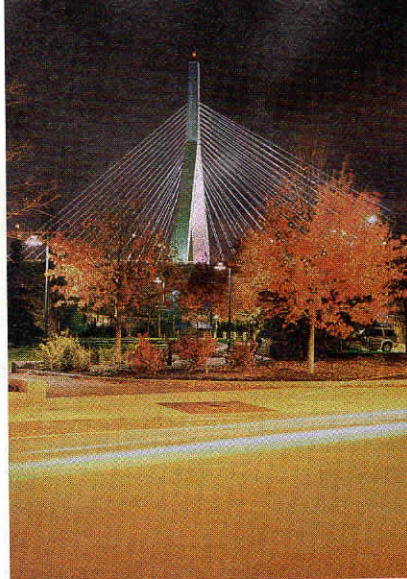
Start your second day with a Bloody Mary and crispy lemon ricotta waffles at the Liberty Hotel's ground-floor restaurant, **Scampo**, run by chef Lydia Shire. Then hop on the Red Line, a branch of the city's subway—known as "the T"—to Harvard Square, in Cambridge, and spend some time trolling the shelves of the iconic **Harvard Book Store** ([harvard.com](http://harvard.com)), an independent shop that regularly hosts literati like Junot Díaz and Alice Hoffman. Match your stimulated mind with stimulated blood sugar by visiting **Sweet** ([sweetcupcakes.com](http://sweetcupcakes.com)), a couture cupcake boutique just around the corner. Since the Harvard Square branch opened in May, former event planner Courtney Forrester's stylish offerings have included red velvet and vegan chocolate (this is Cambridge, after all).

Back in Boston, grab a wrap at **Bella Santé** ([bellasante.com](http://bellasante.com)), the Back Bay's most luxurious spa, run by longtime beauty doyenne Tiffany Amorosino (she also has locations in Lexington and Wellesley). Afterward, treat yourself to a glass or two of sangria on the sidewalk patio at South End tapas hot spot **Toro** ([toro-restaurant.com](http://toro-restaurant.com)),

a low-key restaurant from Clio chef Oringer. Before leaving the neighborhood, check out vintage haven **Bobby From Boston** (19 Thayer St.; 617-423-9299), where owner Bobby Garnett curates pristine clothing and home accessories from around the world and across the decades. Don't be surprised to encounter a Chanel dress from the 1950s alongside a pair of '70s-era roller skates, and be sure to peruse the impressive collection of men's stadium hats.

Finish your trip by sampling chef Jeff Nace's upscale take on classic New England seafood at the warm and friendly **Neptune Oyster** ([neptuneoyster.com](http://neptuneoyster.com)), the best reason to visit the North End. Nace serves more than 22 types of oysters nightly with a wine list to match, providing the perfect starter to such locally sourced dishes as lobster spaghettini and North End cioppino, a traditional Italian fish and shellfish stew. Of course, if you must, such Nace standards as the Ipswich fried clams and the lobster rolls are certainly worth their cholesterol count. Just don't follow them up with cannoli and cappuccino at nearby **Mike's Pastry** ([mikespastry.com](http://mikespastry.com)), where the Mercogliano family has been serving Italian sweets such as marzipan, gelato and pasticcotto since 1943. Or, okay, do. □

**Boston by Night:**  
The city's Zakim Bridge; the Liberty Hotel, a former jail



Chef Barbara Lynch and one of her signature dishes: pasta Bolognese



says. "I realized that the recognition could either work for me or against me. I decided to make it work for me."

In 1998, Lynch opened No. 9 Park, where "slightly fancy but approachable" food included such creations as her now-famous prune-stuffed gnocchi. "At first I thought it would be crazy to do more than one

When planning for her three new Fort Point eateries began in earnest two years ago, Lynch knew it was time to hire a chief operating officer for her growing empire. "I ran the company for years," she says. "But that's not what I do. I love creating food. However, it was important that I grew the business to understand it."

**“I thought it would be crazy to do more than one restaurant. But after five years you need to grow to stay inspired.”**

restaurant," she says. "But after five years you need to grow your business to stay excited and inspired."

In 2003, Lynch opened both seafood hot spot B&G Oysters and wine and charcuterie bar The Butcher Shop, on opposite corners in the burgeoning South End neighborhood. Plum Produce, an organic-vegetable boutique, and Stir, a classroom and a cookbook shop, followed in 2006.

Now she focuses on her real passions: designing inventive menus, mentoring kitchen staff and developing a distinct vision for each of her eight establishments. "At some point you have to let go and give up control—you have to go home—and that's hard," says Lynch, who now has a five-year-old daughter, Marchesa. "But if I'm healthier and happier, my company is healthier and happier."

—A.G.