



# A CURATED STAY

## Six Art Hotels in New England

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HE PAINTINGS DON'T JUST HANG ON CORRIDOR WALLS, WAITING TO BE ADMIRER. And the sculpture doesn't sit passively on its pedestal, decorating the lobby. A range of hotels across New England conceptually entwine art, architecture, and design to actively express unique ambiance, engage guests' imaginations as well as their eyes, create a contextualized "what" and "where," and tell a story.

For the grand scale, look to a soaring 61-story glass-clad skyscraper on Boston's skyline. The name, **Four Seasons Hotel One Dalton Street, Boston**, invokes timeless intercontinental elegance. But One Dalton's art collection, curated by Kate Chertavian (owner of Kate Chertavian Fine Art) and her colleague Lucy Rosenburgh, builds on work by internationally known artists to convey Boston's own rich cultural resources. Starting at the reception desk, a sense of place is playfully presented in the mosaic by Boston-born artist Duke Riley. The large-scale work depicts an intriguing and little-known piece of local history, the Great Molasses Flood of 1919, when a storage tank burst and molasses flowed into the streets of Boston's North End. In the rotunda, an installation by British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare CBE (RA) references Boston's role as a magnet for education and research and emphasizes the international flow of talent and ideas. Shonibare's *Great American Library: Dancers, Musicians and Actors* consists of three shelves of books bound in his signature Dutch wax print cotton and stamped—in gold foil on the spine—with the name of a famous dancer, musician, or actor who was a first- or second-generation immigrant. The hotel displays works by Alex Katz, Julian Lethbridge, Louise Nevelson, and Terry Winters—yet British artist Tacita Dean warrants special mention for her hand-drawn lithographs of clouds trailing across blue skies.

In Boston's Back Bay, Chertavian and Rosenburgh curated art to tell a different story for the luxury guest house **No. 284**. Owned and renovated by Hexagon Properties, this stately brownstone on Commonwealth Avenue offers an intimate vibe and the elegant comfort of home (if your home just happens to house an etching by Pablo Picasso) in its 23 guest rooms. In curating the art collection, Chertavian and Rosenburgh took their lead from the architecture and owner Sandra Edgerley's love of American art to tell a story of American art through printmaking. This story starts with the oldest work on the ground floor, and the art becomes progressively modern, rising floor by floor. "The first thing you see is a beautiful Picasso print," says Chertavian. "It greets you at the front door, scaled for intimacy at three and a half by two inches." But without issuing a posthumous green card, how is Picasso part of printmaking in America? "With Picasso, we're not playing hard and fast by our rules of American art,"



says Rosenburgh. “But this reminds us that for early American modernists, Picasso was God, and the Picasso cubist etching...serves as a nod to the European lineage of modern art in the U.S.” Riffing off the linchpin of Picasso’s cubism, art on the floor above focuses on successive decades, with works by Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Richard Diebenkorn. An Andy Warhol lithograph of Marilyn Monroe leads towards the penthouse suite, and Nicholas Nixon’s black-and-white photographs of Boston spiral up the blue-walled grand stairwell. For those who are curious about what hangs on the walls of rooms around the corner, Chertavian and Rosenburgh worked with Boston-based Artists for Humanity to create a full catalogue of the collection.

Identifying itself as “The Counterpoint to Colonial Boston,” **Studio Allston Hotel** invites guests to “stay outside the frame” in its location straddling Brighton and Allston. General manager Arnaldo Almonte explains that the name honors the romantic landscape painter Washington Allston (1779–1843), known for

his bold light and atmospheric color. Despite a knowing wink to art history, this boutique hotel is consciously contemporary. Rather than feeling outside the frame, hotel guests may feel that they’ve fallen inside an oversized immersive artwork. Along with an on-site gallery, rotating artists every six weeks, works by over 22 national and international artists spill across the public spaces and fill the private rooms and suites in an art-all-around approach assembled by Isenberg Projects. Dramatic work by Jason Woodside encompasses the lobby with exuberant colors, lines, and patterns that flow across the floor, up the walls, and along the ceiling. On the hotel’s elevator panels, see work by Kenji Nakayama, who left his native Japan and training as a mechanical engineer to study traditional sign painting in Boston, and he twists those techniques into art. And outdoors, David Teng-Olsen transformed a van into a brilliant-hued automotive sculpture. “Our vision is for a hotel experience that transforms the everyday into a blank canvas of possibility,” says Almonte.

Like No. 284 in Boston, **The Dean** turns to its original architecture and historical background,

but a funkier narrative emerges in this five-story hotel in Providence, RI. The building that is now The Dean was constructed in 1912 by the Episcopal church as a clerical boarding house. God was in the details, like the ceramic crosses embedded in the brick façade. But the devil’s influence also lurked. The boarding house sank from initial spirituality to become a hotel for vaudeville actors, then a flophouse, and finally a strip club and brothel, until it was converted into a hotel with 44 rooms and eight suites in 2014. These different eras and iterations feed into a consciously fashioned atmosphere. Owned, operated, and designed by Brooklyn-based real estate development and design firm ASH NYC, The Dean’s décor combines American and European antiques with vintage pieces, local handcrafted furniture, such as nightstands carved by Will Reeves (an instructor at the Rhode Island School of Design), and custom designed fixtures, like steel bed frames from The Steel Yard, an industrial arts center in Providence. Antiques such as a 17th-century velvet chair from the Netherlands sit comfortably with contemporary art, such as Oliver Clegg’s neon sculpture spelling out



“FINE.” There’s a nod to the site’s shady-lady past with red-light corridors. Guest-room art combines vintage portraits with black-and-white photographs by local or locally connected photographers. It’s a stylish immersion in a series of possible past lives, animated by art and design. “To create a hotel in an existing building is to mine its past and try to be truthful but playful with history,” notes Ari Heckman, founding partner and CEO of ASH NYC.

While The Dean is designed to transport guests to a different time and place, art at the **Grand Hotel** in Kennebunk, ME, emphasizes contemporary, collectible, and all things Maine. Accommodations in the Artists Room category feature specially selected prints from prominent Maine artists. Public spaces and an on-site gallery showcase some of the region’s best-known painters and sculptors. With its art program, The Grand—one of several KRC (Kennebunkport Resort Collection) boutique hotels—has partnered with its neighbor, Maine Art Hill, a premier art gallery in Southern Maine, for well over two decades. As gallery owner John Spain explains, The Grand wanted to bring great art into the hotel and Maine Art Hill welcomed an additional venue to display works by the 50-plus artists it represents. All artists connect to Maine—by birth, choice, subject matter, or spirit—and the emphasis is representational. Margaret Gerding, for example, recently moved to Kennebunkport, and her paintings aim to capture a single passing moment in a specific local place. In an ever-changing, year-round, three-week cycle of exhibits, the gallery on-site at the Grand Hotel previews artworks and promotes upcoming shows at Maine Art Hill’s major venue, its gallery on Chase Hill. “They get what we’ve curated as ‘the best of the best,’” says Spain. During summer

months, hotel guests access special art events and maybe meet with a featured artist over coffee or cocktails. Spain emphasizes that Maine Art Hill is actually “a village of galleries” clustered on Chase Hill. In addition to the main gallery, shows run from June to September, offering an intimate setting for featured artists as well as an outdoor Wind Sculpture Garden. And six new galleries in Studios include Pop-Up, with its weekly display of a local artist. A variety of venues and a high volume of art offer ample opportunities to purchase work.

At **The Study at Yale**, in New Haven, CT, “study” is both noun and verb: a place to relax and a process of reflection. The hotel was born when Paul McGowan, founder and principal of Hospitality 3, was taking his daughter on college visits and realized the need for places to stay, on or near college campuses. When the opportunity arose to purchase property in the center of the Yale campus, he conceived of creating a hotel that reflects the nature of the university. Read, Rest, Reflect is its central motto and its logo is of a pair of upturned glasses. On campus, there’s art all around at the Yale University Art Gallery, Yale Center for British Art, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, and Peabody Museum of Natural History. But right in the hotel is the Aisling Gallery, exhibiting work by Yale University students. Yale has a truly outstanding MFA program, but the gallery accepts applications from any Yale student, undergraduate or graduate, majoring in anything from astrophysics to zoology. Each show lasts four weeks and opens with a formal reception for its student artists. Inquiries about purchasing work—all handled by the artists themselves—are one unintended, but felicitous consequence. Equally unexpected is the number of works that McGowan

Previous spread: Oliver Clegg’s neon sculpture spelling out “FINE,” in Lobby 3 at The Dean with 17th-century velvet chair from the Netherlands. Photo: Christian Harder.

Left: The Lobby at Studio Allston is brought to life by Jason Woodside’s colorful art, splashed across the floor, elevators, ceiling and several roaming art pieces. Courtesy of Studio Allston Hotel.

Below: Sam Messer’s painting of a typewriter at The Study at Yale. *Maker of Things*, 2012, oil on canvas, 47 x 38". Photo: Study Hotels.

Opposite: The Four Seasons Hotel One Dalton Street, Boston’s reception desk showcases a mosaic by Boston-born artist Duke Riley. *They Say, On a Really Hot Day*, 2018–2019, glass & composite tile mosaic, 201 x 84". Courtesy of Duke Riley Studio. Photo: Christian Horan/Four Seasons Hotel One Dalton Street, Boston.



has purchased and installed throughout the hotel. Here, student work joins faculty, such as Professor Emeritus (and former associate dean of the Yale Art School) Sam Messer’s magnificent painting of a typewriter—demonstrating the power of art to tell a story of place. ■

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**Four Seasons Hotel**  
One Dalton Street, Boston  
Boston, MA; [fourseasons.com/onedalton](https://fourseasons.com/onedalton)

**No. 284**  
Boston, MA; [no284.com](https://no284.com)

**Studio Allston Hotel**  
Boston, MA; [hotelstudioallston.com](https://hotelstudioallston.com)

**The Dean**  
Providence RI; [thedeanhotel.com](https://thedeanhotel.com)

**Grand Hotel**  
Kennebunk, ME; [thegrandhotelmaine.com](https://thegrandhotelmaine.com)

**The Study at Yale**  
New Haven, CT; [thestudyatyale.com](https://thestudyatyale.com)

