

Team Behind o ya Gets Hojoko at the Verb Hotel Off to a Rockin' Start

BY DUKE HARTEN

The long-awaited successor to the late Hong Kong Cafe has finally opened. Hojoko, the fourth restaurant by husband-wife team Tim and Nancy

Cushman, officially went live August 6 after a “Friends and Family” weekend of casual dining for industry pals. It’s been a busy summer for the Cushmans. In June they opened the New York edition of o ya, their swanky *omakase* restaurant in Boston’s Leather District. Just two months later they followed that act with Hojoko, a more casual iteration of Japanese dining.

“It’s a party every night,” says Alyssa DiPasquale, public relations and brand liaison for Cushman Concepts. “[Hojoko] opened to four back-to-back concerts at Fenway—James Taylor and Bonnie Raitt the first night, then the Zac Brown Band for the next three.”

It’s hard to believe this space is run by the same folks who offer a pricey 22-course tasting menu just a couple miles down the road. The decor is a combination of wood flooring, graffitied walls, kitschy knick-

Clockwise from immediate right: an artifact of the Hong Kong Cafe decorates a wall near the entrance; the corner that will (we hope) host rock shows; and dining with a pool view.



PHOTOS: DUKE HARTEN

knacks, band posters, and even a functional Pac-Man machine that doubles as a dinner table. Half the restaurant’s walls are glass—some look out onto a patio area by Boylston Street and the rest face the hotel’s pool.

That finally provided a space to fit his vision. “Chef has been dreaming up this concept for years,” says DiPasquale, “and the Verb was the perfect space for it. When [the Cushmans] saw this hotel was happening, they thought,

definitely going to have live music. We’re working on logistics.”

Once they get the proper licensure, she says, they plan to host rock shows in the restaurant. See that corner over there? It’s

already fitted with speakers. Until then, diners can enjoy a large projector at the tavern’s far end that plays anything from *The Brady Bunch* to *Godzilla*.

Hojoko—named in homage to the Howard Johnson “HoJo” Hotel that once occupied the space (with *-ko* being an informal Japanese suffix meaning “child [of]”)—is a welcome addition to the Fenway neighborhood. It’s a spot that remains congruent with the Verb’s party-on philosophy without compromising the Cushmans’ vision.

What remains to be seen, however, is whether the team behind the tavern will bring back Hong Kong Cafe’s much-loved



“This would be a perfect home.”

And now, it seems, that pairing of retro-chic hotel and no-frills Japanese dining has formed a rock ‘n’ roll-themed microclimate within the Fenway. “We’re excited to be in the neighborhood,” says DiPasquale, when asked what she’d like the locals to know. “We’re

jazz nights!

Duke Harten lives in the East Fens. The Cushmans own o ya (and its New York counterpart), *Roof at Park South*, and now *Hojoko*. *Hojoko* doesn’t take reservations, but you can book the restaurant for events through its website www.hojokoboston.com/

Fenway News Annual Meeting Brings By-law Changes—and a Dose of History

BY BARBARA BROOKS SIMONS

The Fenway News Association held its annual meeting on July 9, looking both backward and forward at the paper’s progress. In many ways, we feel we’ve had a good year. We’ve broadened our readership and widened our coverage of local news and institutions. Thanks mainly to our editor, we’ve added a number of excellent new writers, including several local journalism students. The paper has taken on a livelier look, too, with a brighter layout and more photos of people and happenings. And, we’re happy to say, our website is at last coming back to life; you should see steady improvements over the next few months (www.fenwaynews.org). Check us out on Facebook as well.

But as with most print publications, advertising revenue (and income) remains a problem for the paper. We would, in all honesty, appreciate a lot more support from local businesses and institutions, whose news and events we cover thoroughly. Although we held no major fund-raising event this year (as we did in 2013 and 2014), we do plan a year-end campaign to bring in funds to make the paper even better. (Watch for updates!)

We try to feature a special guest speaker at our annual meeting, and this year it was Stan Everett and Jeanie Knox from the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. Stan, a docent at ENC and a West Fens resident, narrated a fascinating historical slide show illustrating how today’s parklands and features along the Muddy River

developed out of the mud of the Back Bay Fens.

A few notes on business: First, we voted to change two provisions of the association by-laws. To simplify elections and add continuity, Board members will now serve three-year (not two-year) terms. The nomination process was also changed to reflect the actual method used: The Board chooses a committee of three to make nominations. Nomination by petition, which has never been used, was eliminated. Finally, current members Helen Cox and Steve Chase were reelected.

Thanks to all our readers and advertisers for their support this year. Keep reading!

Barbara Brooks Simons lives in the East Fens and chairs the Fenway News Assn. Board.

Fenway Health now offers **Obstetrics.**

We provide exceptional care during your pregnancy while supporting you and your partner in a comfortable, safe environment.

Have questions or want to become a Fenway obstetrics patient? Call **617.927.6000**

fenwayhealth.org/obstetrics | fenwayhealth.org/family



FULL-TIME LISC/AMERICORPS POSITION

Looking to make a difference in your life and in the lives of those around you? Apply your skills and ideals toward helping others and meeting critical needs in the community. The Fenway CDC is hiring a fulltime LISC/AmeriCorps member to serve as Community Engagement Coordinator in our Civic Engagement and Walk to Work resident-service program. The successful candidate will use social media to help improve community engagement and to increase Fenway CDC membership. In addition, s/he will help develop and lead financial-education workshops and provide financial counseling that helps lead to self-sufficiency.

The full job description is available on www.fenwaycdc.org. To apply, please submit a resume and thoughtful cover letter to Richard Giordano rgiordano@fenwaycdc.org. Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis.



The Fenway CDC provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or genetics.



Northeastern

As the new academic year begins, we remind our students:

Smart students make great neighbors.

Meet your neighbors | Keep it clean, keep it quiet

Get involved in your community!

For information or to report concerns, email CommunityAffairs@neu.edu or call 617-373-7666.