

MEMBERS ONLY

Boston's private social clubs have thrived on Brahmin privilege for generations. In anticipation of our engraved invitation (maybe it got lost in the mail?), we've shopped all the options.

By Megan Johnson

1. The Harvard Club of Boston

374 Commonwealth Ave.

FOUNDED: 1908

DETAILS: Open to Harvard alums, employees, and their relatives, the club does offer entry to anyone (sans a Harvard degree) willing to drop up to \$6 million on one of its new condos, built to finance a recent renovation.

CLASSIC MOMENT: Dick Cheney had to sneak in through the back door for a speaking engagement in 2006 due to the throngs of protesters.

2. The Algonquin Club

217 Commonwealth Ave.

FOUNDED: 1888

DETAILS: Like *Fight Club*, if you're in Algonquin, you don't talk about Algonquin. Word is the mortgage was burned long ago and its ashes were placed in a tiny box next to the main fire-place in the reading room.

PRESIDENTIAL POWER: Calvin Coolidge.

PRETEND POWER: Clark Rockefeller.

3. St. Botolph Club

199 Commonwealth Ave.

FOUNDED: 1880

DETAILS: Founded for black-sheep blue-bloods (those moody creative types), the club's foundation gives away approximately \$75,000



a year in grants to young New England musicians, painters, poets, and writers.

ARTISTIC BONA FIDES: The roster includes John Quincy Adams, John Singer Sargent, and Robert Frost.

disrupting the ladies and gents lunching in the dining room.

NOTABLE GUESTS: Nathaniel Hawthorne and Theodore Roosevelt have graced the Somerseset's hallowed halls.

4. The College Club of Boston

44 Commonwealth Ave.

FOUNDED: 1890

DETAILS: Once a haven for well-bred Wellesley and Smith grads, this elaborate brownstone now serves as a hub for the *Lean In* crowd.

MALE PRESENCE: Literary visitors have included Mark Twain and Vladimir Nabokov.

6. Club of Odd Volumes

77 Mount Vernon St.

FOUNDED: 1887

DETAILS: Think: bibliophiles, books, and bow ties. "They are the epitome of the stereotypical old-world, elegant, intellectually curious Bostonians," says one club visitor. The interior is like a time machine: An ancient black rotary telephone still adorns the coat room.

MAKING HISTORY: Member FDR brought Winston Churchill by for a visit in 1949.

5. Somerset Club

42 Beacon St.

FOUNDED: 1852

DETAILS: The stone wall with security detail out front underscores this club's rep as the snootiest of the bunch. When a fire broke out in the kitchen in the 1940s, firemen had to enter through the servants' entrance to avoid

7. Union Club of Boston

8 Park St.

FOUNDED: 1863

DETAILS: During the Civil War, members of the Somerset Club split along political lines. In response, Somerset defectors formed the Union Club, which demanded "unqualified loyalty to the constitution and the Union of our United States, and unwavering support of the Federal Government in effort for the suppression of the rebellion."

LINEAGE: Past members include Ralph Waldo Emerson and Josiah Quincy.

City Square
Fencing

Whiskey Priest's patio
Diving

City Hall Plaza
Dressage

Green Line
Fencing (Boston twist: while the train is moving)