

# The Foundation Lounge

KENMORE SQUARE HAS A NEW HIGH-END HANGOUT

BY CHERYL FENTON

**T**here's no arguing. It's sexy.

Rich leather, smooth mirrored walls, exotic zebra wood, cool metal and marble.

"Everything you touch begs to be touched some more," says George Wright Jr., co-owner/managing director of Kenmore Square's new Foundation Lounge. "It's high end but not as reserved as some other places in Boston. It's warm, masculine and sexy."

But among the sexiness also lies a distinct level of comfort and sophistication that won't lend itself to the typical savage bar scene of singles. The Foundation Lounge doesn't scream "come home with me," but instead whispers, "you are home."

Cozy oranges, creams and sage ... rich colors draw you out of busy Boston and into a sophisticated comfort zone. One with sparkling champagne, creative cocktails and an intriguing menu perfect for sharing.

Anyone who has glanced through the nightlife and restaurant sections of Boston papers recognizes the names. Hospitality entrepreneurs Wright (formerly the opening general manager of Whiskey Park) and George Lewis Jr. (former owner of such establishments as 1369 Jazz Club and Quarterdeck Restaurant, and founding partner of Summer Shack and Locke-Ober) have had a meeting of the minds. It's their more than 25 years of setting some of Boston's best dining and entertainment standards that serves as the foundation, if you will, of The Foundation Lounge.

"Our objective for the lounge was to create a space for a sophisticated audience in a college-dominated market," says Lewis. Within the walls of the Hotel Commonwealth, The Foundation Lounge is just that—a destination for those

looking for a mature and distinctive social experience, combining cutting-edge design with warm lighting and plush comfortable seating.

"Boston has nothing like it. It's a true lounge, and there are very few in Boston," says Wright. "You can't fake quality, and no expense has been spared."

And within a five-minute walk of Fenway Park, even game-goers have noticed this new stop on their path.

"We have captured a segment of the Red Sox population, those with more discerning tastes. It's an upscale Red Sox patron," says Wright. Beyond the beer and ballgames, sports fans have a place to relax before and after the game's tension, with the bar's three flat-screen TVs—perfect for pre- and post-game shows.

And it's also above buffalo wings and nachos. The Foundation Lounge brings the unique dining experience of Japanese Zensai (zen-sigh) to the table, which translates into snacks and appetizers that are communal and easy to share. Acclaimed Chef Kenichi Iwaoka, chef/partner at the renowned Osushi restaurants, created the menu, with favorites including Double Spicy Tuna Maki, Avocado Tuna Salad and Kenny's California Maki, fresh crab wrapped in green soy paper—a break from the typical California roll at which most experienced sushi-goers snub their noses.

And it's music down, lights up. That's their philosophy. But not too down, and not too up. Music at the lounge is spontaneous and flexible, showcasing local, national and international DJs, and live lounge performers. The ambient lighting creates an ease to the lounge, setting the stage for a memorable night of being seen or re-





maintaining hidden (within the darker corners of the comfy low couches). For those who want to hide away with a martini and a few stock quotes or the latest news, the lounge is also outfitted with free wireless internet access.

Still in the works, but being preliminarily received as well as the tiny white music god itself, is iPod Night. A chance for on-air talent, local and national musicians as well as Boston celebs to get into the groove.

"We want to hand well-known people in Boston, like Bronson Arroyo, Theo Epstein or Keith Lockhart, an iPod and have them fill it with four hours of songs. Then we'll play their music during a featured night." And since the entire iPod will be played (no skipping allowed), it's in for a penny, in for a pop song. So Boston personalities would do well to choose wisely if they want to retain their fanbase rather than be the object of impassioned—if tuneful—scorn.

It's this unique way of drawing Boston in that is guaranteed to make the Foundation Lounge a popular haunt of Boston's nightlife crowd.

"There's a common thread of sophistication. As a functioning bar, it's as tough as nails," says Wright. "This is very 'something else.' It's the new Boston." ①

*The Foundation Lounge of the Hotel Commonwealth is located at 500 Commonwealth Ave. in Boston's Kenmore Square. Open seven days a week from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., and will also be open for Red Sox day home games. 617-859-9900 [www.thefoundationlounge.com](http://www.thefoundationlounge.com)*

Along with the unquestionable sexiness of The Foundation Lounge there prevails a distinct level of comfort and sophistication that won't lend itself to the typical savage bar scene of singles or mug-chucking post Fenway antics. The Foundation Lounge doesn't scream "come home with me," but instead whispers, "you are home."

