

The Boston Globe

April 10, 2016



By Linda Clarke
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

There's a green scoreboard, there's a white home plate, there's a yellow foul pole, there's a brown leather mitt, there are some white balls, and there is a big sign saying "Fenway Park: Home of the Boston Red Sox." But we're not at Fenway Park, we're around the corner in Hotel Commonwealth's room 589, in the new Fenway Park Suite, which has its own Opening Day this season.

"This suite is an homage to Fenway Park," says Adam Sperling, Hotel Commonwealth's general manager. "You don't really need to be a baseball fan to love the park. It's just a special place and is part of the historic fabric of this neighborhood. People can learn about the park right here in this suite."

One wall is painted Green Monster green and marked out as a scoreboard. Guess who the visiting team is? Yep: NYY. It was painted by Reading-based Greg O'Leary Custom Painting and is actually a chalkboard, so "kids" can scrawl in their own dream scores. Another wall bears an impressive lacquered collage of photographs of

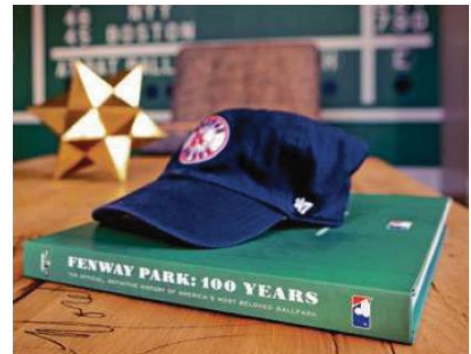
Opening day for the Fenway Park Suite

Room is everything Red Sox

The new Fenway Park Suite, a.k.a room 589 in the Hotel Commonwealth, is filled with Red Sox paraphernalia and a view of the park itself.



PHOTOS BY HOTEL COMMONWEALTH



Carlton Fisk created by Massachusetts artist Stephen Sheffield to celebrate Fenway Park's 2012 centennial.

There are vintage baseball cards and baseballs signed by Ted Williams, Bobby Doerr, Dom DiMaggio, and Johnny Pesky. A plate simply says 6 and though a mystery to the non-Sox fan, it's from the Green Monster scoreboard, and was originally given to the late Pesky when his number was retired in 2008. The hotel bought it from the family at auction. The certificate of authenticity is framed below.

Sperling sourced some items himself, including a framed program from a 1963 Patriots game, marking the period in the 1960s when that team called Fenway home. There's a collection of CDs; one from every band that has played the park. More will be added this summer. But he had help from the Red Sox organization, too. "Because we're the official hotel partner, they worked with us to create this," says Sperling.

The Red Sox gave a pitching rubber signed by Pedro Martinez, a
FENWAY, Page M7

Fenway suite ready for start of season

► FENWAY

Continued from Page M6

home plate signed by Jason Veritec, and a base signed by Dave Roberts, who stole second base in the comeback win against the Yankees in 2004. “That win saved the season and the Red Sox eventually won the World Series, breaking the Curse,” enthuses Sperling. “It’s not the base from that game, but is an actual base from the park that Dave Roberts signed.”

The glass topped wood coffee table with several signatures etched into the wood made an enviable journey to spring training in Fort Lauderdale last year, on the truck with the gear: “The players signed it there,” Sperling reveals.

The suite is part of a new wing overlooking Fenway Park, which adds 96 guest rooms and suites, and 6,000 square feet of additional meeting and event space, including a 1,500-square-foot outdoor terrace. The \$50 million expansion and renovation started in 2014 and brings the original building, which opened in 2003, up to scratch, too.

The inspiration for the Fenway Park Suite struck during the new wing’s construction. “When we were doing the extension I thought it would

be great to have a balcony here,” says Sperling, standing on the suite’s glass-walled perch over Interstate 90. “Then I looked over and thought . . . we need to make this room about that,” he says, pointing to Fenway Park.

On the balcony are seats that were taken out of the park during its own tweaking. A mitt signed by Fred Lynn sits on one. “You can sit here having a glass of wine and hear the roar of the crowd and feel the energy, but you can’t watch the game,” Sperling admits.

Inside the bedroom, two baggies of Fenway dirt are left for guests to take home. Isn’t Sperling worried residents might walk out with more than the dirt? “The Reading Suite has a letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Nothing has ever walked out. I think guests staying in the suites appreciate the experience,” he says, and then shrugs. “Besides, I have their credit cards on file.”

Linda Clarke can be reached at soundz@me.com.

A new wing of the Hotel Commonwealth overlooks Fenway Park.



HOTEL COMMONWEALTH