

## Raffles Boston, Massachusetts, USA



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### **Copper and botanicals nurture an elegantly pretty design.**

Boston's botanical heritage is celebrated in full bloom at Raffles' first mixed-use property in North America, which opened in September. From a glass petal chandelier to floral murals, there's no mistaking the floral theme sown by interior design firm Stonehill Taylor, which created all 147 guestrooms and several hotel amenity spaces.

Boston based studio, The Architectural Team, designed the building's exterior and Rockwell designed the fitness centre and spa, as well as Raffles' Residences, which are available for purchase. The 35-storey, \$400 million+ project features elegant public spaces, five food and beverage venues, a three-storey sky lobby, a garden terrace and lounge, and expansive meeting and pre-function spaces.

#### **AT A GLANCE**

**Owner** Cain International, Noannet Group and Saunders Hotel Group

**Operator** Accor

**Architecture** The Architectural Team

**Interior design** Stonehill Taylor

**Keys** 147

[rafflesboston.com](http://rafflesboston.com)



Stonehill Taylor's interior design draws inspiration from Boston's iconic landmarks, including America's first public botanical garden, the Arnold Arboretum Museum, and the historic Revere Copper Company. Photographs by Brandon Barré



Led by Stonehill Taylor president Paul Taylor and principal Sara Duffy, the hotel's interior design captures the qualities that make Boston such an iconic destination, including being home to America's first public botanical garden, the Arnold Arboretum Museum which has 15,000 plants. It also pays homage to North America's first copper rolling mill, the Revere Copper Company, which was founded in Massachusetts by Paul Revere.

Beginning in 2018, the project was five years in the making. "The pandemic certainly had its challenges. Stonehill Taylor was at a pivotal point in the project going into Spring 2020 and limitations on travel for designers meant the firm couldn't be on site as often or review some prototypes in person. Stonehill Taylor navigated it well and the final result was worth it," said Bethany Gale, Interiors Design Director at Stonehill Taylor.

The botanical story starts at the ground-floor lobby where an undulating, hand-blown glass petal chandelier hangs high above a floor of dark stone tiles. "The installation is inspired by the seasons of Boston and resembles flower petals falling from the trees in the springtime and leaves blowing in the autumn wind. The handblown pieces are made using various glass techniques; some have interspersed air bubbles, layers of white glass folded in or adorned using real gold leaf," said Gale.



A patisserie connects to the wood-finished lobby through a discrete passageway and is also accessible from the street. The space features bevelled glass at the entry vestibule, which is evocative of the ironwork prevalent throughout the Back Bay neighbourhood. In the patisserie, botanical design blossoms, with whimsical floral wall panelling complimented by emerald green velvet banquettes and modern blue chairs surrounding café tables. The walls and ceiling are Venetian plaster, and glass and metal chandeliers reference the organic, natural forms found throughout the property. A dramatic curved bar made of black and white marble strengthens the aesthetic.





An express elevator transports guests from the ground-floor lobby to the 17th-floor sky lobby that spans three storeys. Across a copper-accented, herringbone-patterned floor, reminiscent of Boston's cobbled street, is a spiral staircase that ascends the three floors through an atrium of iron and glass windows with unobstructed city views. Framed by fluted columns akin to those in Boston Public Library, hanging greenery spills down from the ironwork, referencing the window boxes found throughout Back Bay neighbourhood.

More than just a check-in area, the sky lobby connects residents and guests with amenity spaces. To the left, the reception area opens into the Writers Bar, named in homage to esteemed literary personalities who frequented Raffles hotels in the past. The room features chic residential furnishings and a large double-backed fireplace, and books that were written at Raffles properties across the world are featured along intricately detailed shelving.

A special occasion restaurant next to the grand spiral staircase serves refined food amid moody dark-lit walls and dazzling metal finishes in a double height space. Overhead, a massive Czech glass chandelier, inspired by the palm styling of the Raffles logo, catches the reflection of a large gold screen. Rich brown banquettes outline the perimeter of the restaurant space surrounded by either windows, an atrium glass wall or gold screens.

Drawing inspiration from Boston's Emerald Necklace – a 1,100-acre chain of parks linked by parkways and waterways in Boston and Brookline – the speakeasy at Raffles Boston radiates

botanical appeal on the 18th floor. Its walls and ceiling are adorned with custom wallcoverings featuring blossoms and risqué figures. Tall oak wood columns stained green create dramatic focal points. A floral-backed staircase with warm inset lighting leads to the upper level of the two-storey space and a private lounge area with a forest green bar inspired by a garden nursery.

There are two full floors of meeting and entertainment spaces, including a ballroom, with views spanning from the Financial District to Cambridge.

The botanical inspirations are manifested in the suite designs through a floral wall mural in the bathroom and soothing leaf illustrations on the headboard. Their Asian influence pay homage to the founding of Raffles in Singapore. A select number of suites evoke greenhouse design language as guests enter through a vestibule with high-gloss lacquer walls to give the sense of walking through a conservatory. The curated art collection of work from local artists draws from the verdant motifs displayed throughout the hotel.



In a typical guestroom, luxury finishes include white marble flooring with mosaic accents and white marble wall tiles with black pencil trim. Freestanding polished nickel vanities with stone counters grace the bathrooms, where hand-painted wall coverings accent the freestanding baths, and crystal lamps pair with a special glass vitrine minibar in each room. Deep soaking tubs are framed by a custom mural by Janet Yonaty, inspired by the intricate Ware Collection of glass flowers at the Harvard Museum of Natural History.

The hotel's Midnight Suite offers guests the experience of staying in a luxury presidential suite fit for a founding father. Inspired by Paul Revere, the room pays homage to the American patriot. Notable design moments such as refined lighting elements, a dark moody palette, and elegant copper finishes create a rich environment.

On overall feeling on completion of the project, Gale said, "Completing the Raffles Boston project is a momentous achievement for Stonehill Taylor, representing the culmination of five years of visionary work that raises the standard of hospitality, as well as being Stonehill Taylor's first project in Boston. The idea was to design a luxury property to welcome the iconic Raffles brand to North America while capturing the qualities that make Boston such an iconic destination, such as being home to America's first public botanical garden. The hotel offers a timeless style within a new property where this botanical appeal radiates to all that walk through the door."