

Back Bay & The South End (cont'd)

1. Achilles Project The most buzzed-about arrival in the up-and-coming industrial Fort Point Channel area, Achilles Project is suitably slick. Forward-thinking apparel—Opening Ceremony jackets, Josh Goot dresses—is arranged in Plexiglas blocks; each night, when the space becomes a restaurant, they're reconfigured into giant glowing cubes. And the owners are launching an in-house label, too. **283 Summer St. FORT POINT CHANNEL 617-423-2257, achilles-project.com**

2. Bobby from Boston In a city known for its classic attire, this vintage resource has achieved icon status: Its contents could outfit the cast of *School Ties* many times over. Bobby Garnett has been traveling the world for 30 years, snapping up striped college scarves and boiled wool ski sweaters, which are perfectly arranged in a charmingly retro-clubhouse setting. He recently started sourcing equally timeless womenswear, like '50s cocktail dresses and ladylike heels, too. Those who ask can visit his 5,000-square-foot warehouse, 12 miles north of Boston in Lynn. **19 Thayer St. SOUTH END 617-423-9299**

3. Bodega A hidden location behind a functioning, totally nondescript bodega (there's a secret door in the back of the deli that leads to the boutique) may seem only like a clever gimmick, but it fits with the owners' general retail philosophy. Much like the random groceries that are sold up front, the boutique's Surface to Air tops and Japanese North Face jackets were chosen because they're useful, desirable, and have a long shelf life. **6 Clearway St. BACK BAY bdgastore.com**

4. Café Society This carefully considered vintage clothing store in Brookline focuses on evening-worthy cocktail dresses. Proprietress Betsey Brooks puts pieces from as early as the 1890s out on the floor—though most of the inventory can be traced to the '40s and '50s—and ensures that every one is impeccably preserved. You won't find a single missing button, stain, or ragged hem in the mix. **131 Cypress St. BROOKLINE 617-738-7186**

5. Dress Martha Hilfinger and Jane Schlueter have reliably flawless taste: There are no risky style choices on their racks. Instead, their three-year-old spot, awash in blond wood, features only the most flattering picks from a smattering of brands like 3.1 Phillip Lim and Lyell. The duo's on-point judgment has established Dress as the best place in town for foolproof party dresses. **221 Newbury St. BACK BAY 617-424-7125, dressboston.com**

6. Envi Callie Smith and Ursula Stahl, the team behind this eco-conscious emporium, were originally planning on opening a straightforward clothing shop. But that was before Smith met her current boyfriend, who has lived in a tepee and gone for as long as six months without wearing shoes, and who motivated them to pursue something low-impact instead. Smith and Stahl have amassed excellent picks from green designers, including girlish dresses from Brooklyn-based Bahar Shahpar and paper-thin Stewart +

Brown tees. **164 Newbury St. BACK BAY 617-267-3684, shopenvi.com**

7. Good While in Boston on a retail consulting job, New Yorker Paul Niski happened upon a FOR RENT sign in a storefront—and he snapped up the lease on the spot. The space, fronted by huge Palladian-style windows, is just that compelling, and Niski has done a good job of ensuring that the gorgeous selection of gifts and jewelry inside measures up. Antique memento mori pendants are set beside old engraved cigarette cases, and beaded Chan Luu necklaces are arranged next to ink drawings from Patch NYC. **88 Charles St. BEACON HILL 617-722-9200, shopatgood.com**

8. Gretta Luxe The Gretta Luxe minichain is our favorite of local TV personality Gretchen Monahan's vast endeavors (she also owns spas and salons); Monahan unerringly presents an irresistible array of high-high-end picks from designers like Stella McCartney alongside more affordable names like Adam and Lauren Moffatt. The Copley Square branch wins points for convenience and a gallery-like presentation, but the Wellesley original is bigger and has better sales. **10 Huntington Ave. BACK BAY 617-536-1959; 94 Central St. WELLESLEY 781-237-7010**

9. Hudson Named after Hudson, New York (a former mill town famed both for its prison and its mass of vintage home goods stores), this two-year-old destination is equal parts modern industrial and old-world farmhouse. Owner and interior decorator Jill Goldberg pulls together a masterful mix of block-printed John Robshaw pillows, handcarved bird statues from Oly, and richly patterned Madeline Weinrib rugs. **312 Shawmut Ave. SOUTH END 617-292-0900, hudsonboston.com**

10. Lab Situated in the student-heavy, slightly gritty neighborhood of Allston, this streetwear shop stocks the requisite collectible vinyl toys (and has a set of turntables in the corner), but you'll also find streamlined tops and jackets that work just as well in a more mainstream wardrobe. Lab is a huge supporter of local artists, so all of the graphic, brightly hued paintings on the walls are for sale. **113 Brighton Ave. ALLSTON 617-395-4330**

11. Lekker Home For more than five years, Lekker Home has offered the sort of clean-lined housewares that never go out of style. The emphasis here is on European designers (*lekker* is Dutch for "tasty" or "enticing"), who turn out everything from gold-plated serving spoons to porcelain salt and pepper shakers modeled after mini tin cans. **1317 Washington St. SOUTH END 617-542-6464, lekkerhome.com**

12. Looc Channeling a French maritime-meets-East Coast prep sensibility (anchors and croquet sets both figure in the decor), this South End retailer manages to be supremely cute and completely elegant at the same time. The neutral-toned goods strike the same refined note: Lerario Beatriz thick cotton tunics and wispy Vanessa Bruno blouses line the racks. **12 Union Park St. SOUTH END 617-357-5333**

13. Louis Boston Arguably Boston's most famously chic store—host to lush lines like Dries van Noten and Balenciaga—Louis Boston occupies the corner mansion on Newbury Street that used to house the Museum of Natural History. Current owner Debi Greenberg's great-grandfather launched the business in 1929, and people still flock from all over the country for the gigantic sales. **234 Berkeley St. BACK BAY 617-262-6100**

14. Lux Couture Sari Brown—who used to work for famed '60s designer Oleg Cassini—launched Luxcouture.com in 2006 as an online-only venture exclusively devoted to handbags. A sleek bricks-and-mortar outpost debuted this September in Newton Highlands, an appropriately airy repository for the selection of pearl-dusted Natalia Brilli clutches and black patent leather Paucic Sweeney totes. **21 Lincoln St. NEWTON HIGHLANDS 617-969-5600**

15. Parlor Though it has a long tradition of stocking indie greats like Nicholas K and Modern Amusement, this source also has fledgling labels, like an area-exclusive on Dustin Trust, a former designer at St. John, who recently moved to Boston to create his own collection of exquisitely constructed pieces. **1248 Washington St. SOUTH END 617-521-9005**

16. Shreve Crump & Low This jeweler—America's oldest—got its start in 1796, in a workshop across from Paul Revere's home. Now in an impressively appointed flagship, it sells a wide range of jewelry, from multcarat diamond earrings to stunning watches, along with home goods like delicately painted china. **440 Boylston St. BACK BAY 617-267-9100**

17. Stel's Tucked away down a flight of stairs in a reworked 1900s horse stable, this unfussy four-year-old shop looks more like a chill basement hangout than a store. Guided by three retail veterans—Tina Burgos and Dave Nauyokas are Louis Boston alums, while Jon Callahan worked for Ermenegildo Zegna—the selection focuses on one-of-a-kind-feeling pieces. Ribbon-festooned Lizzie Fortunato necklaces, woven L.D. Tuttle flats, and smock tops from A.P.C. are all winning options. **334 Newbury St. BACK BAY 617-262-3348, stelsinc.com**

18. Turtle One of the first Boston-based stores to embrace nascent lines, Storey Hauck's below-ground haunt has the city's deepest array of newcomers. There are C. Lin's tailored blouses along with silk dresses from Argentinean-born Daniela Corte, who is perhaps the city's most well-known fashion import. **619 Tremont St. SOUTH END 617-266-2610**

19. Twentieth Century Ltd. Thousands and thousands of costume-jewelry pieces populate the cabinets at this subterranean Charles Street space. Collectible Chanel earrings and Miriam Haskell pins are here, but the real draws are the neatly labeled trays of coral necklaces, engraved lockets, and pearl studs. Don't miss the bins of \$10 steals. **73 Charles St. BEACON HILL 617-742-1031**