

Best Room in the House

Staying In a Mobile Home and Loving It



By Erika Brown

Imagine paying good money to stay in a mobile home and loving every minute of it.

That's The Verb's Backstage Lot off Boylston Street, launched last year as a novel VIP section at The Verb, the 93-room, 35,000-square-foot, retro-inspired hotel created as a chic renovation of a two-story 1959 Howard Johnson motor lodge in the shadow of Fenway Park.

We arrived on a crisp autumn Thursday afternoon and checked into the Backstage Lot, the private access-only area of the hotel featuring ten perfectly designed standalone "mobile home" suites. Backstage is designed as a supercharged luxury extension of the hotel's hip design, with vibrant colors and, yes, the appealing architectural bones of the old "Ho Jo." And it delivers.

But starting at \$600 per night, Backstage Lot suites aren't really trailers or RVs, but rather custom-made, ultra-modern soundproofed high-tech casitas built to look like they're on wheels. It's what would happen if the *Boston Phoenix* channeled a presidential suite.

All trailers feature a wet bar, Bose sound system, turntable, 43" HD TV, WIFI, rainfall shower, not to mention cozy radiant heat and a semi-private patio. Each is inspired by a different music icon, from Tom Petty to Janice Joplin and even Dolly Parton.

It's dripping with nostalgia, and like the rest of the hotel, it's infused with a rock 'n' roll theme celebrating the music and culture of the '60s and '70s, with the kicker that most of what you're seeing is Boston-specific.

About a week before our stay, we were contacted by Joe, our concierge. He told us about The Verb, its amenities, and the neighborhood and asked us about our favorite

music. Pre-stay contact with Backstage Lot guests is standard to customize their stay.

We learned about the hotel's year-round outdoor heated pool, and about Hojoko, the funky Japanese-inspired restaurant and cocktail lounge at the hotel created by the owners of the mythic Leather District sushi restaurant, O Ya.

The entire property is a celebration of the era of vinyl.

The lobby has turntables with stacks of vinyl and playing them is encouraged. The property features an archive of curated music memorabilia from the collection of David Bieber, the longtime director of Special Projects at the Boston Phoenix Media Group. Pieces from the archive are everywhere. Walk down the moody corridors and pass framed keepsakes like backstage passes from U2's first US tour. Or take in the outsized wall mural of Aretha Franklin by local artist

Elissa Surabian, inspired by the collection.

We stayed in the Backstage Lot's Nirvana suite, and our concierge Joe prepared a stack of vinyl records for us to get the party going that included The Killers and, of course, lots of Nirvana.

On the wall is an oversized, framed gel 1990s portrait of Kurt Cobain behind the wheel of the band's van parked near the Prudential Center. We were in the right place.

In the end, the Backstage Lot at The Verb feels like something you just can't get anywhere else because it is something you can't get anywhere else. It's VIP access to the magic of the past, when things were daring and irreverent and creative and free spirited.

Going home, we imagined this must have been what the Hard Rock Hotel said it would do. But it's The Verb that actually gives you a ticket to ride with the iconic, rock-n-roll luxury of a suite at the Backstage Lot.

Backstage at The Verb

1271 Boylston St., Boston
From \$600/night
backstage trailers.com

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