

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



SHUTTERSTOCK

## HERE

### SEAPORT HOTEL DEBUTS

Another new Boston hotel, Element Boston Seaport, debuts on Feb. 1. Located — where else? — in the Seaport District, across from the Boston Convention Center, this extended stay-hotel features 180 oversized rooms that are each equipped with a kitchenette, energy-efficient appliances, and modular furniture for working remotely or relaxing after a day of sightseeing. The hotel's nature-inspired design includes light-filled indoor spaces, lounge, patio, indoor heated pool, and fitness center. Take advantage of the grand opening offer and book a staycation that includes \$20 food credit to Restore (24/7 gourmet pantry); healthy breakfast buffet at Rise; and complimentary Wi-Fi. (Rates from \$149). When the weather cooperates, borrow a free bike and helmet. 877-782-0151, www.element-bostonseaport.com

### FOOD AND MUSIC EXTRAVAGANZA

Calling all foodies and music lovers: Eat Your Heart Out Boston returns for its sixth installment at The Sinclair in Harvard Square (Feb. 28). Enjoy a selection of delectable culinary treats prepared by award-winning local chefs before tapping your toes to the R&B sounds of headlining band Bad Rabbits. Participating chefs include Keenan Languis, The Sinclair; Matt Jennings, Townsman; Michael Scelfo, Alden & Harlow; and more. To tie into the musical theme, each chef's dish is inspired by his or her favorite band or genre (i.e., "A Tribute to KISS: Beef Tongue" and "An ode to Elvis Presley: Ain't Nothin' Butta Hound Dog"). Ticket sales benefit local charities Future Chefs and Girls Rock Band Campaign. VIP ticket holders receive early access to select chefs, a gift bag, and other perks (\$75, 5 p.m.); General admission (\$50, 6 p.m.). www.eatyourheartoutboston.com

## THERE



### NIGHT SKY BIKE AND RAFT TRIPS

Seen the Milky Way lately? Holiday River Expeditions — in cooperation with Salt Lake City's Clark Planetarium — is launching new mountain biking and whitewater rafting programs that set their sights on the stars. Beginning in early May and running through early October, tours in the Dark Sky Stargazing Trip Series feature a day of exploring and adventure, followed by nightly camping with a focus on, among others, Saturn, the Milky Way, Whirlpool and Sombrero galaxies, Hercules Globular Cluster, iridium flares, and Earth-born satellites. An astro-wiz from the Planetarium accompanies every trip, scheduled during the new moon phase for the darkest sky. Destinations include

either Canyonlands National Park, recently certified a "Dark Sky Park," or Dinosaur National Monument, recognized as a "Sanctuary of Natural Darkness." Up to 6-day trips, rates from \$750-\$1,175. 800-624-6323, www.bikeraft.com/dark-sky-stargazing-trip-series

### ROME JUBILEE TOUR

Tour Rome and Vatican City while celebrating Pope Francis I's designation of the year through Nov. 20 as a special "Holy Year of Mercy" on Perillo's Rome Jubilee Tour. Special experiences include a visit to the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls — built over the burial place of St. Paul — lunch in Jewish Ghetto, tour of the Roman catacombs, semi-private tours of St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel and the Papal gardens, and the chance for a Papal Audience, availability permitting. Includes centrally located first-class and deluxe hotels, state-of-the-art motorcoaches, airport transfers and baggage handling, English-speaking tour guides, daily buffet breakfast and select meals. International airfare not included. Rates from \$1,995 per person, double occupancy. Departures run Mar. 18-Oct. 21. 800-431-1515, www.perillotours.com/italy/escorted-tours/8-day-rome-jubilee-tour-2016

## EVERYWHERE

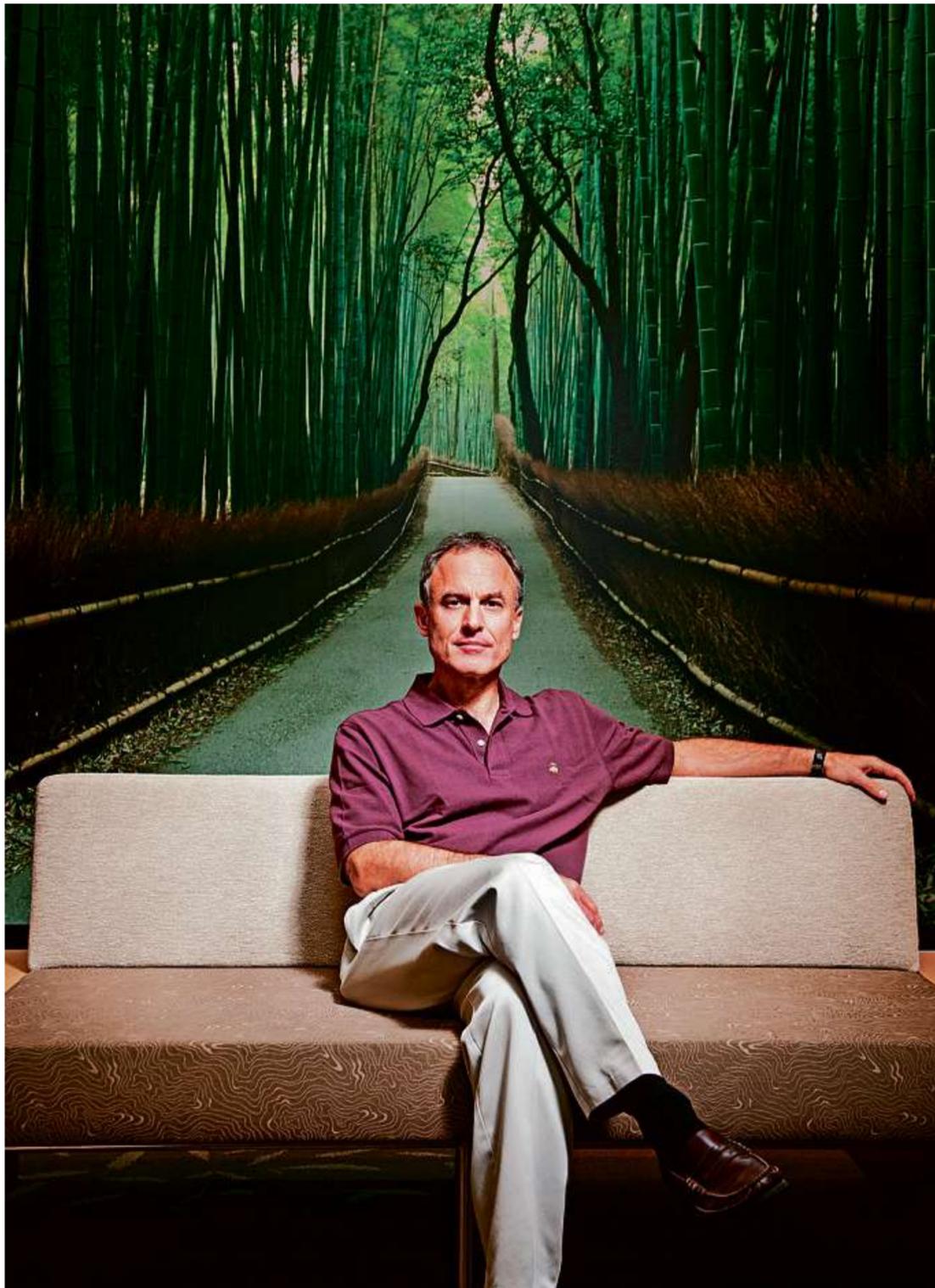
### TRAVEL SIZE FACIAL SERUM

Travel can wreak havoc on your skin. Facial dryness, redness, and inflammation, associated with winter months and outdoor sports, are exacerbated by air quality and altitude issues when flying. BLOOM, an organic, non-GMO skin care brand, has created NOURISH, a series of essential face serums for all skin types. Loaded with Vitamins A, E, and C as well as essential fatty acids and minerals, the serums are designed to regenerate and restore sensitive skin while providing a relaxing dose of aromatherapy. One-ounce drop bottles easily tuck into a carry-on bag and are TSA-friendly. \$48. www.bloomskinessentials.com

### OYSTER DISCOVERY APP

Say you're sitting in Dallas or Seattle and are craving some Wellfleet or Duxbury oysters. What to do? Oyster aficionados will be thrilled to discover Pearl, an innovative app that allows users to discover what varieties of oysters are on the menu each day at nearby restaurants. Simply sign in by location, or search by oyster variety and — voila! — you'll see the phone number and address of where to find your beloved bivalves, as well as what else is available on the raw bar menu. The app also lists flavor profiles and species of each oyster. You can make reservations and check in at restaurants, track oysters you've eaten, and share experiences with other users. Pearl has grown from restaurants in New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago to launches in Seattle, Denver, Dallas, Austin, Kansas City, Charleston, Las Vegas, and more. Pearl is partnered with the Billion Oyster Project, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to restoring the New York Harbor. Free. www.pearlapp.com

NECEE REGIS



## A day in the life of TripAdvisor CEO Steve Kaufer

By Victoria Abbott Riccardi

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**N**EEDHAM — It's 3 on a recent Friday afternoon at the uber-hip headquarters of TripAdvisor and Steve Kaufer, cofounder and CEO, already has clocked eight hours in a typical 10-hour day acting as the self-described, "conductor of the orchestra, direction clarifier, leader" of a team of 3,000-plus global employees. The Harvard College Computer Science graduate, founded TripAdvisor in 2000 at the suggestion of his first wife, Caroline Lipson Kaufer (who died in 2005 of pancreatic neuroendocrine cancer at age 42), who realized that her husband probably was not alone in his frustration over trying to find an unbiased review of a hotel he was considering booking in Mexico in 1998. (He finally found an unflattering review and better hotel.) Kaufer, now 54 and living in Newton, sat down to explain what happens during an average work day, where he likes to travel, and what makes him tick. (This conversation has been condensed.)

**Q.** First of all, what is TripAdvisor?

**A.** TripAdvisor is a great site to plan and book the perfect trip. Our mission is to help you learn the truth about anywhere you want to go, anywhere you want to stay, anything you want to do, any place you might want to eat, to form what could be wonderful lasting memories of that vacation.

**Q.** So how is business?

**A.** The site continues to grow by leaps and bounds. We grew up as a hotel review site with attractions and restaurants and hotels and flights, but what a lot of people fell in love with early on was the awesomeness of the reviews with hundreds of millions of other people saying where you should spend your hotel dollars. Now we've added price comparison abilities and are giving you the convenient option to finish the booking on TripAdvisor.

**Q.** What else is in the pipeline?

**A.** We are dramatically building out our ability to help people plan their tours of attractions. If you are going to Rome, you might want to visit the Vatican and now I can actually help you find a skip-the-line-tour, a private viewing of the Sistine Chapel, a set of experiences that can make your vacation that much better. And, guess what? You usually have to book those things in advance and we offer that.

**Q.** Let's talk about a typical day. What

time do you wake up?

**A.** I get up at 6:15 a.m., shower, get dressed, wake up my son, and leave the house at 7 to take him to the bus stop, where I wait with him until the bus comes. Then I get into work at 7:20 or 7:25. Today, I had a business phone call from 8:30 to 9. From 9:30 to 10, I did a new hire orientation. Then from 10 to noon, I met with a prospective business partner.

**Q.** Do you not eat breakfast?

**A.** Nope. I drink black coffee. And even more since I found out it was good for me! I generally have three or four cups before noon and then I'll have a cup mid-afternoon and at the end of the day. But I don't always finish the cups.

**Q.** Are you an Apple person?

**A.** I have an iPhone, but I use a PC for interoperability with most of my business associates. Most of our travelers use a PC when they browse our site and so I play around on our website every single day looking for things that aren't quite what they should be.

**Q.** What three words would you use to describe yourself?

**A.** "Driven" (long pause). I'll have to get back to you on that one. (Five days later: "Curious" and "focused.")

**Q.** What has been the proudest moment in your life thus far?

**A.** At TripAdvisor, it was when we fig-

ured out how to turn the company profitable. The sale of TripAdvisor (in 2004 to InterActive Corporation), the continued growth (TripAdvisor went public in 2011), that was great. But that moment (in 2002) when, "Oh, my God, we're going to make it, we're not going to go out of business," that was still the best. I am also really proud of how all my kids have turned out. (In 2012 Kaufer, who has four children from his first marriage, wed Lisa Howe, who also had four children.)

**Q.** What is your favorite place in the world?

**A.** I frequently report Jerusalem (where he and his first wife honeymooned). I had an amazing time in Turkey a couple of years ago (where he honeymooned with Howe), and I still love going to the Caribbean in the middle of the winter from Boston because it's a relatively short flight and I love scuba diving.

**Q.** How often do you travel for work?

**A.** If you exclude the day-trip-to-New York sort of travel, I'd say maybe once every other month.

**Q.** For friends who have never been to Boston, what do you suggest they see and do?

**A.** I tell them to take a [Boston] Duck Tour. I also recommend the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and I tell them to walk through Faneuil Hall and over to the water.

**Q.** How about your favorite area restaurants?

**A.** If it's not a fancy meeting, I like to take business colleagues to this place in Needham, Sweet Basil. I just love that place.

**Q.** What would people be surprised to learn about you?

**A.** Hmm. You stumped me. I don't know.

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