

## 7 Things to Know: State Street Provisions

By Scott Kearnan | December 8, 2015



Photo by: Joel Benjamin

Grafton Group has crossed the river — and wound up on the ocean.

Late last week, the restaurant group with four venues in Cambridge ([Grafton Street](#), [Russell House Tavern](#), [Temple Bar](#) and [PARK Restaurant & Bar](#)) opened its first location in Boston: [State Street Provisions](#) at 255 State Street (surprise!), at Long Wharf on the harbor. It's the same space that formerly housed City Landing, and even before that the waterfront location of the venerable Sel de la Terre trio. What can you expect from this latest inhabitant? Check out the interior and some drool-worthy dishes below.



**The vibe is on-brand.** Grafton Group interiors tend to be characterized by handsome furnishings and color palettes reminiscent of a gentleman's parlor. State Street Provisions is no exception. Architect Peter Niemitz (who previously designed Russell House Tavern and PARK in the portfolio) goes for tan leather, vintage lighting elements, rustic plank

floors and a few heavy ornate draperies. The space seats about 160, and that number will grow significantly once patio seating is added in the future.



**A familiar face is in the kitchen.** Chef Tom Borgia, most recently of Russell House, has moved over to helm the "historically inspired but forward thinking" menu at State Street Provisions, which he says may be "a little more intricate" than his work at that Harvard Square gastropub. "We're really concentrating on the details," says Borgia, whose

menu includes this rib-eye (\$35) cut from California's Brandt Farms. Brandt crossbreeds its beef cattle with Holsteins, dairy cows, says Borgia, which results in a particularly tender cut. It's served with celery root purée, braised black kale and marrow toast.



**There's a spotlight on seafood.** How can there not be, when you're steps from the water? The menu features a raw-bar section of oysters, clams, crudo and tiered shellfish towers — and if you're hungry late at night, you'll even find \$1 oysters after 11 PM. But there are also plenty of composed plates like this prosciutto-wrapped monkfish (\$25), served

with a Jonah crab and cauliflower risotto and topped with Romanesco.



**New England is on draft.** The big bar's 15-strong draft-beer lineup features exclusively New England craft brews, from Maine's Baxter Tarnation Lager to Connecticut's Two Roads Ol' Factory Pils. (There are also bottle, can and large-format selections that are mostly, if not exclusively, regional picks.)



**Cocktails get creative.** And they also pay homage to some of the area's history. For instance, Long Wharf received the very first shipment of bananas to North America back in 1871 — so the Baker's Daquiri highlights banana cordial in a mix of rums. The restaurant is a stone's throw from the site of the Great Molasses Flood that swept through the

North End in 1919, so the Ward 7 (the dark spirit pictured) invokes smoked molasses alongside Angostura 5-Year, Knob Creek Rye and Benedictine. For something tied to the *current* season, sip the Christmas Collins (also pictured) of Juniper-infused Campari with simple syrup and a splash of bubbly.





**The pasta is housemade.** And Borgia has plenty of practice, having spent two years living in Siena, Italy. Behold this appetizer of rigatoni (\$13) with braised beef cheek, oyster mushrooms and Brussels sprout leaves spiced with cayenne and sumac. It's topped with a poached egg.



**Borgia loves to brine.** "I love that whole process, and the element of preserving speaks to the history of the area," says the chef. Among his small plates you'll find the beef cheek pastrami (\$7), sourced from Maine Family Farms and served with crispy Brussels sprout leaves and a spicy brown mustard.