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MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 2017

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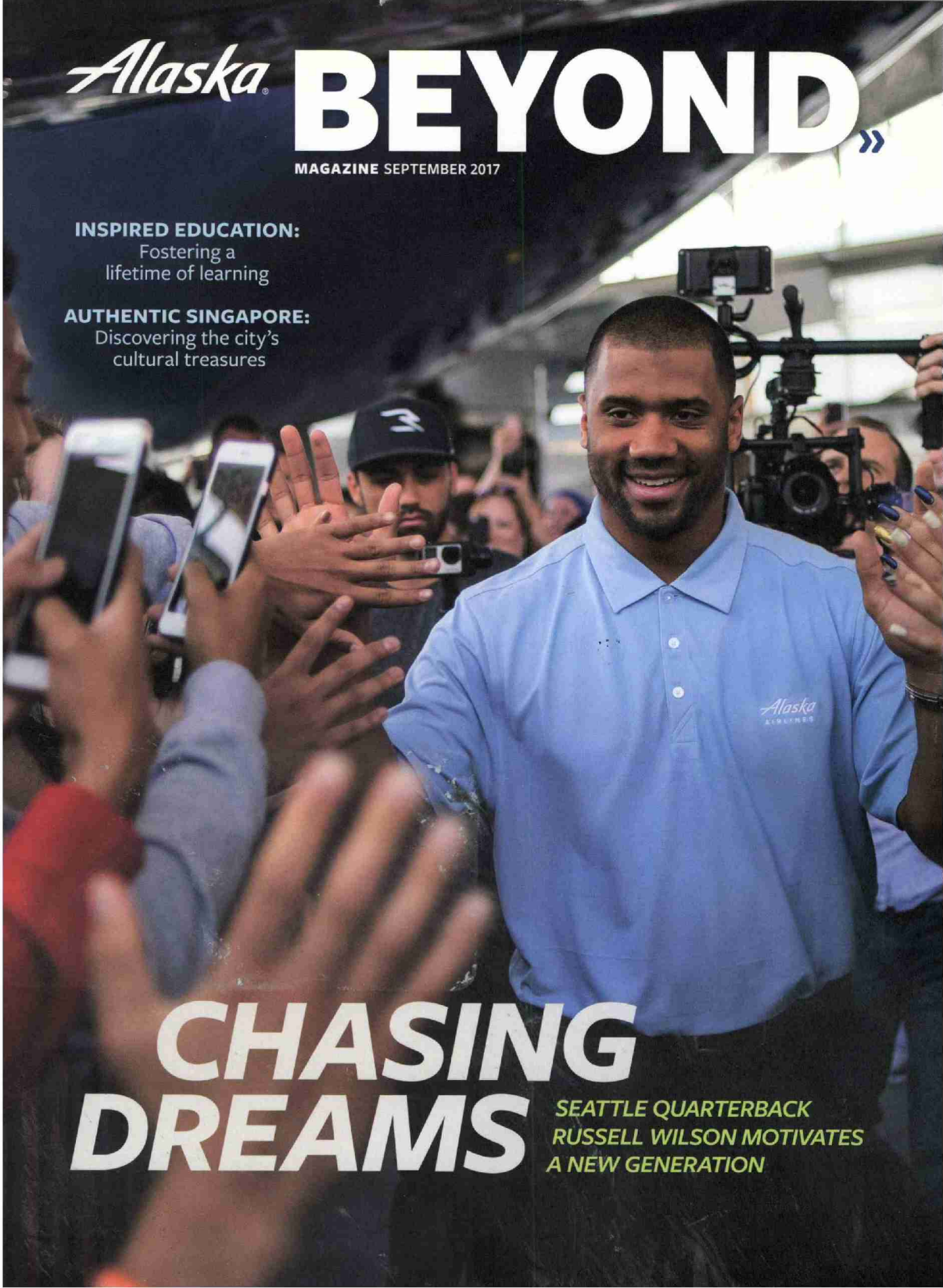
Discovering the city's cultural treasures



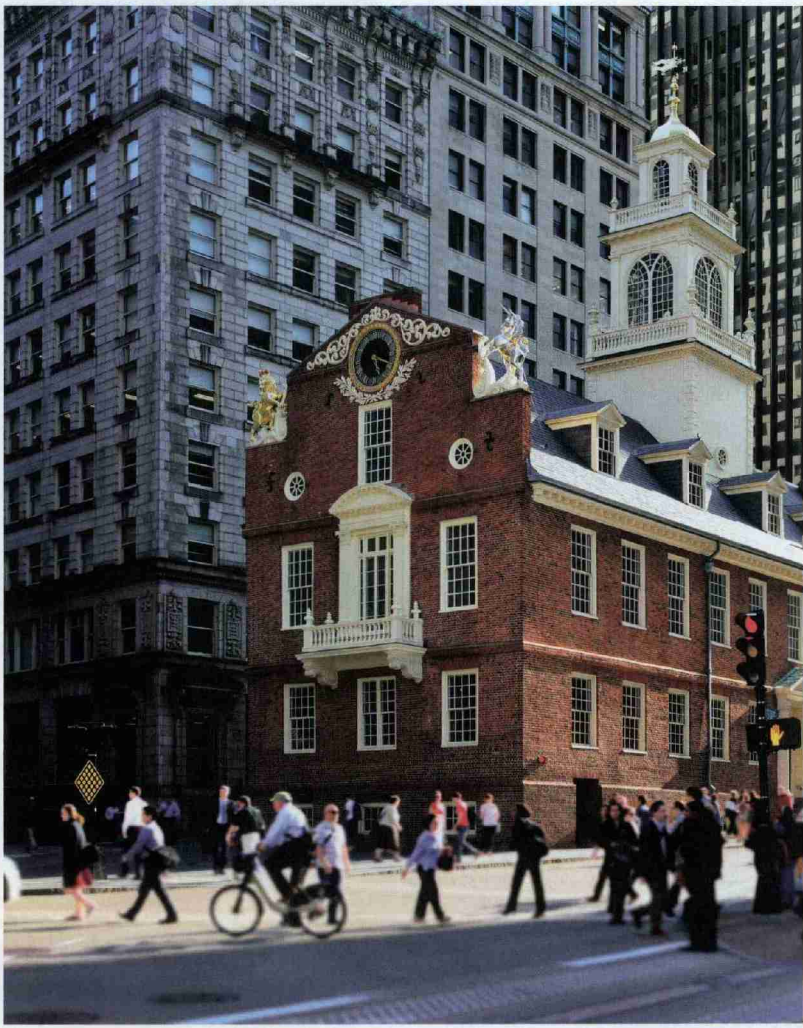
CHASING DREAMS

SEATTLE QUARTERBACK RUSSELL WILSON MOTIVATES A NEW GENERATION

HISTORIC BEANTOWN

Enjoying the sights of Boston

By Stephen Jermanok



When relatives come to visit me in Boston, I like to pick a favorite spot or neighborhood along the 2.5-mile Freedom Trail, a red-brick line embedded in the sidewalks of Boston that meanders its way to 16 historic sites around the city.

The sites, which played pivotal roles in American history, range from Boston Common in the south to the community of Charlestown's Bunker Hill, the scene of a famous battle in the Revolutionary War, in the north. More than likely, I'll choose one of the oldest standing structures in Boston, a small house on cobblestoned North Square that was once home to Paul Revere. Remarkably, the two-story dwelling Revere bought when it was already 90 years old is still intact and, from the square, incredibly picturesque. You can walk up the spiral staircase to see the bedroom where Revere would have slept.

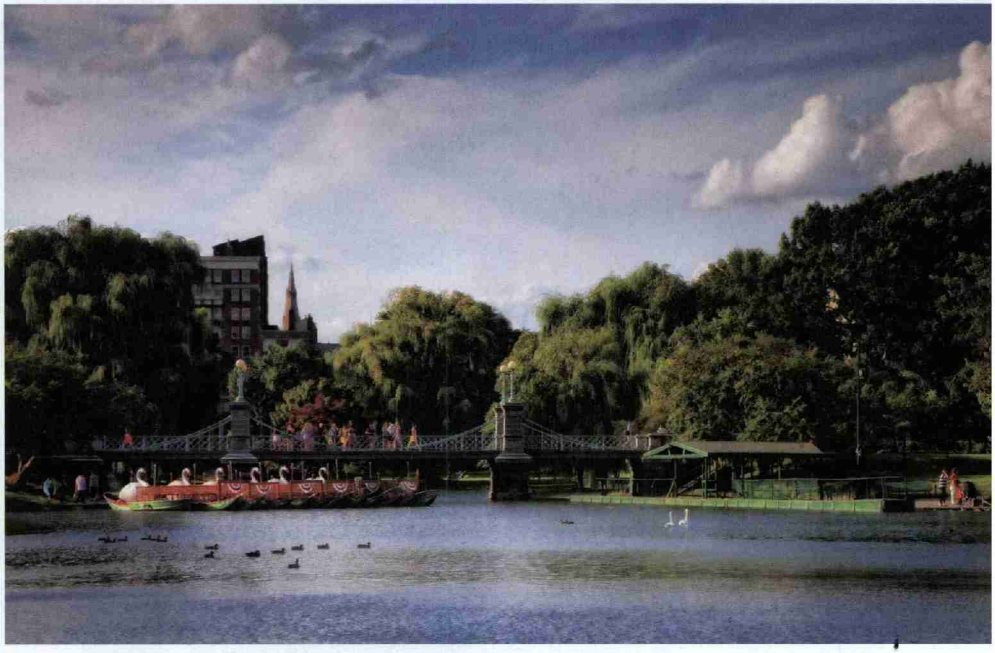
Revere's house is located in the North End, the lively Italian community that dates back to Boston's founding in 1630. Nearby is my favorite Italian restaurant in town, Artú, where the eggplant parmesan is thinly sliced, lightly fried, and topped with melted mozzarella and a sublime homemade tomato sauce. One bite and you'll understand why I tend to take visitors to this section of the Freedom Trail.

The true genius of the trail, which dates back to 1951, is that it's not cut off from the rest of the city. On the contrary, it is the city.

You can follow the distinctive line to reach some of Boston's most cherished neighborhoods—Beacon Hill's century-old brownstones and village squares, North End's winding streets, and Charlestown, which is home to one of America's most celebrated ships, the USS *Constitution*. Built mainly with pine and oak, the heavy frigate earned the nickname "Old Ironsides" during the War of 1812, when it defeated five British warships and captured many other enemy vessels.

History abounds

The history of America's independence is woven into the fabric of present-day Boston. This is a city where the John Hancock Tower stands about a mile from the grave of John Hancock himself, who lies alongside Paul Revere and Samuel Adams in the Granary Burying Ground. Two of the most important sites of the American Revolution are nearby: the Old South Meeting House and the Old State House. On December 16, 1773, some 7,000 citizens came to the meeting house, spilling out into the streets to protest the Tea Act. When the governor refused for the



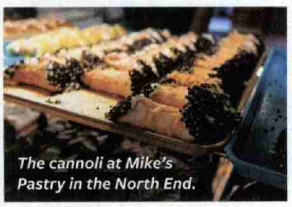
» *Clockwise from left, The Old State House of Massachusetts; the famous Swan Boats of Boston Public Garden; it's popular to touch the foot of the statue of John Harvard for luck; the painted brick line of the Freedom Trail.*

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JORGE SALCEDO / SHUTTERSTOCK; BETTY WILEY / GETTY IMAGES; JORGE SALCEDO / SHUTTERSTOCK; GIORGIO FOCHESATO / STOCKSY.COM

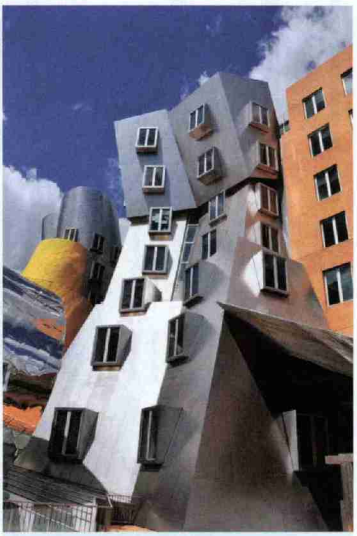
final time to send the tea back to England, Samuel Adams rose and said, "Gentlemen, this meeting can do nothing more to save the country." Adams went on to help plan the Boston Tea Party, in which his colleague Paul Revere took part.

A tragic moment that helped set the stage for revolution took place just outside the Old State House on March 5, 1770. Known as the Boston Massacre, five colonists were killed when a group of British officers mistakenly fired into a group of protesters.

We like to think of Boston as America's best walking town, and one reason for that is that parts of downtown's infrastructure of rotaries and one-way streets were designed with the horse and buggy in mind. The result is that it can be best to see Boston on foot. Walk from Paul Revere's former home to the Old North Church, where Revere's good friend Rob-



The cannoli at Mike's Pastry in the North End.



» *Boston's Museum of Fine Arts is home to many famous works, including John Singer Sargent's portrait* The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit, *right. Architect Frank Gehry designed the fascinating Ray and Maria Stata Center, far right, located on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus.*

ert Newman was instructed to hang lanterns from the steeple windows to tip off how the British redcoats were arriving: "One, if by land, and two, if by sea." Today's parishioners still use the same tall box pews colonists used to help ward off the cold in the years before there was central heating.

If you're feeling in need of a break, walk over to a Boston institution, Mike's Pastry on Hanover Street, for chocolate-chip cannoli and rich pistachio macaroons. We won't tell anyone if you don't quite finish the Freedom Trail.

Other noteworthy attractions

Next to Boston Common is Boston Public Garden, a beautiful park known for its statue of George Washington on horseback and for a picturesque pond. Pause atop the small bridge to gaze at the willow trees that grow near the pond's edge. Then take the kids on the famous Swan Boats for a tour of the pond and a close-up view of actual swans.

Northwest of the heart of downtown is the Museum of Science, a great family museum that spans the Charles River. Children can experience the lightning show in the Thomson Theater of Electricity, explore the galaxy at the Charles Hayden Planetarium and watch IMAX films at the Mugar Omni Theater.

The museum includes permanent exhibits on dinosaurs, energy, human life, nanotechnology and natural mysteries, to name just a few.

About 3 miles southwest of the Museum of Science is the stately Museum of Fine Arts, which in 2012 completed its

» **Did you know?** Boston's nickname "Beantown" was coined during colonial times when sailors spending the night were served a Yankee dish of baked beans, cooked in molasses. Try the dish at Durgin-Park restaurant in the Faneuil Hall Marketplace. First opened in 1827, Durgin-Park is known for its seafood and large prime-rib entrees.

HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER

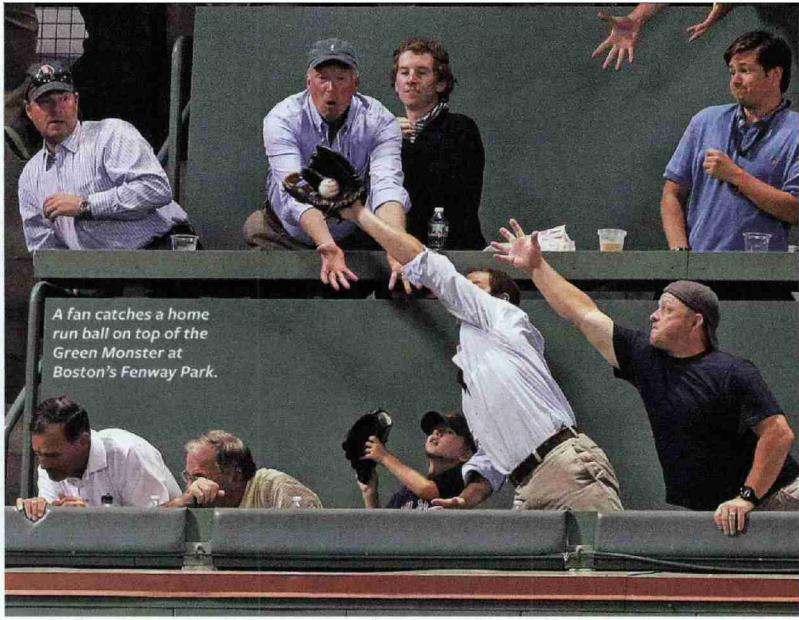
■ **Home to 35 colleges** and about 150,000 college students, the Boston area is one of the nation's top centers of higher learning. Among the schools in the city is Boston University, located in the Fenway-Kenmore and Allston neighborhoods, along the Charles River. With 33,000 students, the university is one of the city's largest employers.

Across the Charles River in the city of Cambridge is the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Be sure to visit the school's intriguing Frank Gehry–designed Ray and Maria Stata Center. An amalgamation of brick, stainless steel and painted aluminum, the Stata Center houses about 800 scientists and is built in a variety of bending and whimsical shapes.

About 1 mile north of MIT, along Massachusetts Avenue, is renowned Harvard University. Enter Harvard Yard and stop at the statue of the university's namesake, John Harvard, where visitors touch his shiny shoe for luck.

Harvard has three art museums housed in the same building. They include the Busch-Reisinger, the Arthur M. Sackler and the Fogg, which has an excellent collection of pre-Raphaelite works. The Harvard Museum of Natural History houses a variety of world-class specimens. —*S.J.*

TOP LEFT, GIFT OF MARY LOUISA BOIT, JULIA OVERING BOIT, JANE HUBBARD BOIT, AND FLORENCE D. BOIT IN MEMORY OF THEIR FATHER, EDWARD DARLEY BOIT, © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON. TOP RIGHT, JIAWANGKUN / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



A fan catches a home run ball on top of the Green Monster at Boston's Fenway Park.

$345 million Art of the Americas Wing, a four-story building with adjoining pavilions on either side to house the 53 new galleries.

Walk into the glass-enclosed courtyard, and then journey through three millennia of art from North America, Central America and South America, with works ranging from pre-Columbian gold pieces on the ground level to the paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe on the top floor. Highlights include galleries devoted to the works of John Singer Sargent and John Singleton Copley.

There is also the unique Roswell Gleason parlor and dining room, two mid-19th century period rooms taken intact from a house in nearby Dorchester.

The galleries on early American works include Gilbert Stuart's famous portrait of a debonair George Washington. Also on display is John Singleton Copley's painting of fellow revolutionary and famous silversmith Paul Revere. Next to Revere's portrait is a large collection of his own silver creations.

Another of my personal favorites is John Singer Sargent's *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit* (1882), a wonderful portrayal of childhood, in which the four girls are scattered around the canvas exhibiting their own unique responses to the artist.

A 10-minute walk across the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park called "The Fens" (named for the Fenway neighborhood and part of the designer's famous "Emerald Necklace," a collection of parks and green spaces around Boston) will bring you to the home of the Boston Red Sox and one of country's most storied stadiums, Fenway Park. Fans of the national pastime can tour the 1912 park year-round to see where Babe Ruth played, along with other Red Sox greats Ted Williams, Carl Yastrzemski, and "Big Papi" David Ortiz.

You can walk through the dugouts and sit on the seats atop the 37-foot-tall left field wall, better known as the "Green Monster." If you're lucky, you might even be able to sit in one of the seats on the Green Monster for a baseball game.

Where to Sleep

- **Hotel Commonwealth:** Within easy walking distance of Fenway Park and a favorite for alums of nearby Boston University, Hotel Commonwealth offers nearly 245 rooms, which include themed suites, such as the Fenway Park Suite, which overlooks the Green Monster, and The Loft, where the tall walls showcase works from local artists and from Boston University students.

- **The Charles Hotel, Cambridge:** The premier property in Harvard Square, the hotel is within an easy walk of the Charles River, the Harvard campus, and all the restaurants and shops in the neighborhood. It is home to the cherished Italian restaurant Benedetto, as well as Henrietta's Table, which is known for its use of local produce, cheese and fish.

Where to Dine

- **Liquid Art House:** It's not just the ambiance in this art gallery turned restaurant that wows diners. A pan-seared halibut or a New York strip steak cooked to perfection by talented chef Johnny Sheehan helps create a memorable evening.

- **Eastern Standard:** With its long marble bar, vaulted ceiling and large storefront windows, Eastern Standard offers one of the best dining experiences in the Kenmore Square neighborhood. Enjoy bowls of fresh mussels in a savory broth, seared Maine salmon or a serving of rib-eye steak that is big enough to satisfy even a New England Patriots offensive lineman.

Shōjō's pig bao.

- **Shōjō:** Tucked away in a small space in Boston's Chinatown, the restaurant, with wildly colorful murals, serves tantalizing plates such as tender ribs covered in Thai peanut sauce, and salt-and-pepper calamari. The cocktails are as good as the food. Make a reservation to secure one of the coveted tables. —*S.J.*

TOP, JIM DAVIS / THE BOSTON GLOBE / GETTY IMAGES

Waterfront renaissance

In recent years, Boston has dramatically transformed its waterfront area, known as the Seaport District. While once neglected, the waterfront began to change when the Institute of Contemporary Art opened in a gem of a building on the edge of the harbor in December 2006.

Today, the waterfront has become a prominent location for visitors, and everywhere you look, there are new condominiums, office buildings, hotels and restaurants.

Enjoy a drink on the rooftop bar at the Yotel Boston hotel, which boasts one of the city's best views of the Boston Harbor. Then stroll along the Harbor Way and visit the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a 1.5-mile-long area of parks recently created on the former site of Interstate 93. The freeway has been moved underground in this area following the decadelong tunnel construction project known as the "Big Dig."

Opening this past June was the Trillium Garden on the Greenway, a beer garden featuring acclaimed craft beers by Boston's Trillium Brewing Company.

Step up to the counter and order one of their eight beers on tap. Walk over to one of the communal tables and have a swig of the brand that some have ranked among the best in the world.

As I sip my beer and look out at the greenway, I have a feeling that the founding fathers would be proud of how the city has progressed. ✈

Stephen Jermanok is a Boston-based travel writer.

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