FIVE ALUMS TAKE ON HARVARD:
IS THE COLLEGE BROKEN?

HOW TO SHOP LIKE GHEF KEN ORINGER

WAS CHEERS A RIP-0FF?


GREATDEALS

GOING, GOING ...ALMOST ALL GONE. WHERE TO FIND A STEAL IN BOSTON'S RED-HOT REAL ESTATE MARKET.



## THE



For years now, Boston's insane housing market has been the talk of the town at every cocktail party, corporate soirée, and grocery store line from Sudbury to Scituate. And experts project it's only going to get hotter. With surging demand for homes and an ever-dwindling inventory, it may seem like the good deals are all but extinct. Look hard enough, though, and you'll find that value still abounds-from surprisingly low prices per square foot in bucolic Boxford, where there's land aplenty and not a neighbor in sight, all the way to Charlestown, where row houses sell for a fraction of the price of those in the South End. If you want to find these hidden gems, now may be your last chance. So whether you're looking for spring's top spots in Boston, or north, south, and west of the city, this is your ultimate guide to outsmarting the region's impossibly red-hot real estate market.

# SOUTII 



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ASKING PRICE: $\$ 679,000$

SALE PRICE: \$645,000

## DAYS ON MARKET: 69

SIZE: 1,693 SQUARE FEET

## BEDROOMS: 2

## BATHROOMS: 2

## QUINCY

$\Leftrightarrow$ It's a great time to be an owner in Quincy, says Amanda Dumont, vice president of marketing and sales at Brooks Brokerage. Easy access to Boston via the Red Line has always been a big perk for Quincy dwellers, but the state's eighthlargest city is becoming a destination in its own right. Meriel Marina Bay, a 352-unit apartment building, will soon bring 20,000 square feet of retail, and Quincy Center is poised to receive more housing, retail, and offices in the next few years. For buyers who'd prefer to have a home away from the hustle and bustle, Squantum still has plenty of single-family houses to choose from-and waterfront views to be enjoyed. "If you're not living on the waterfront, you're walking to it," Dumont says.

## DEDHAM

$\Leftrightarrow$ "I think Dedham for a long time was overlooked," says Jay Donahue, president of Donahue Real Estate Company. "It's definitely had a little renaissance." It started nearly a decade ago with the opening of the massive outdoor shopping destination Legacy Place, but these days the town has much more to offer than a mall. Dedham upped its cultural cred in 2013 with the launch of the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center, which hosts classes, exhibits, and studios for some two dozen artists on the former site of the Avery Elementary School. Meanwhile, Dedham Square has evolved into an appealing downtown where locals convene in cute coffee shops and will soon follow their noses to the pit-smoked delicacies of Blue Ribbon BBQ. "With Dedham Square," Donahue says, "I don't want to say, 'It's happening,' but it's happening."

# "Ibought a beach house in the winter to score a deal." 

## SCITUATE

$\Leftrightarrow$ Two commuter rail stops that debuted just over a decade ago allow for a reasonable train ride into the city, but Scituate still feels a world away. "It's definitely one of the prettiest towns on the South Shore, and all the way down to the Cape, in my opinion," says Kathleen Duffy, an agent with William Raveis Real Estate. "It's sort of a secret." The community's five beautiful beaches fly under the radar because they mostly cater to residents, she explains. Non-resident beach stickers are limited, so locals get stretches of sand all to themselves. And away from the shoreline, there's still plenty to do. "On Front Street you have a bowling alley and a movie theater and many restaurants," Duffy says. "There's a lot going on for such a small town."

## HULL

$\Leftrightarrow$ Starting in the early 19th century, Hull provided a summer playground for Greater Boston, luring everyone from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Calvin Coolidge to the shores of Nantasket Beach. The town has since blossomed into a thriving community that keeps some of that vacation-mode mindset all year long. "You see a lot of people buying what used to be cottages and doing them over and making them year-round single-family homes," says Brian Molisse, owner of the South Shore's Molisse Realty Group. Those homes make Hull the rare place where you can enjoy both sea air and skyline views at a relatively affordable price. Especially scenic vistas wait at Windmill Point, which also happens to be the site of both Hull's high school and the terminal where commuters board the ferry for a quick ride to Boston.

THE BUYER: Greg Kitowicz // THE HOME: A beachy four-bedroom gambrel on the ocean in Scituate // THE ASKING PRICE: \$580,000 // THE SALE PRICE: \$545,000 // THE PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT: \$278



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moved to Boston a year ago. My lease was 90 days from being up, and I was opening a new business, City Winery,
downtown. I'd always wanted to live literally on the ocean, so I started exploring some towns. I went to the North Shore and I looked in Salem. I went to Winthrop and Scituate. As soon as I stepped out of the car in downtown Scituate and explored the area, I knew it was home. It had a combination of New England seaside charm and some fun, more progressive things happening. There are some really good, solid restaurants and there's a movie theater.

I looked at six homes in a matter of weeks. This was the only one where the property line actually abutted the ocean, so being able to sit on the edge of my deck and dangle my feet over the edge of the sea wall was
really important. I bought late, or past being "in season." So, looking for a motivated seller who didn't want to have carrying costs for another winter was important, and I knew I would be able to negotiate a slightly better deal because of it.

As soon as I told some of my coworkers who had been living in New England their whole lives where it was, they all said, "Oh, so we're going to see your house on the news then?" And I was like, "What do you mean?" And they go, "Well, they always film in Scituate [during flooding]." And I am in the flood zone. I do have flood insurance. The old owners had negotiated a policy that was transferrable. It was very affordable. I was quite surprised.

It's my first time buying. I've been an urban guy most of my life. I've always been in high-rises with doormen. So this is a nice change.


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The Deal<br>57 Westlake Rd., Natick

ASKING PRICE: \$899,000

SALE PRICE: \$879,000

DAYS ON MARKET: 85

SIZE: 3,447 SQUARE FEET

BEDROOMS: 6

BATHROOMS: 3

## $\square$

## NATICK

$\Leftrightarrow$ Angling to live in a reasonably large house within walking distance of a pleasant downtown, a weekly farmers' market, and a train station? Perhaps in a town where you can shop for stylish threads at Neiman Marcus in the morning and canoe Lake Cochituate in the afternoon? There's no order too tall in Natick, where proximity to Boston is just the cherry on top. Buyers willing to stray from charming Natick Center should take a closer look at South Natick. "You have larger parcels of land and more of that rural feeling," says Diane Sullivan of Coldwell Banker. South Natick also offers easy access to the Charles River for kayaking in summertime. And during the rest of the year, Natick's students enjoy a shining new high school, which opened in 2012.

ASHLAND
$\Leftrightarrow$ As the second town on the Boston Marathon route, Ashland seizes the spotlight every spring. But its bargains are grabbing attention year-round-and these aren't fixer-uppers. "Ashland has grown tremendously in the past 20 years, so homes are newer and neighborhoods are thoughtfully planned," says agent Pamela Bathen of Oak Realty. There's a diverse inventory, too, Bathen says, including eye-catching single-families asking less than $\$ 600,000$. And Ashland recently reinvigorated its downtown by transforming an underutilized parcel into a home for pop-up businesses called the Corner Spot. Modeled loosely after Boston's Lawn on D, it boasts green space with oversize swings and Adirondack chairs. "Two of our buyers last fall chose this town after driving by the Corner Spot and farmers' market and seeing what a full, rich life they could have," Bathen says.

## HARVARD

$\Rightarrow$ Not to be confused with the prestigious university, Harvard is a small town in the rural reaches of Greater Boston that may well help your kid matriculate in Cambridge someday-it offers a highly rated school system at a much lower price than nearby suburbs like Lincoln and Concord. "You're definitely getting more value than you would a little bit east on the Route 2 corridor," says Jenn Russo, an agent with Coldwell Banker. A mere \$238 per square foot buys you more bedrooms, more living space, and more land. If you care to venture beyond your own spacious yard, the town has blazed dozens of trails for hiking, biking, walking, snowshoeing, and other activities. And 210 acres of meadows and woods are yours to explore at the Fruitlands Museum, which also has artworks and artifacts on view on the site of a former experimental utopian community.
$\Rightarrow$ If you don't mind a drive, there's a deal waiting for you in Sudbury. "When the market crashed just as President Obama took office, buyers took to the inner suburbs like Arlington, Lexington, and even Waltham where public transportation is excellent," says William Raveis agent Anne Hollows, explaining that prices in highly commutable towns have appreciated much faster than those in Sudbury. "So as the pendulum swings back, some of the outer suburbs like Sudbury start looking like great value. And we are." There's no train to hop on, but there are wide-open spaces, the top-notch Lincoln-Sudbury school district, a brandnew Whole Foods, and those hearty New England dinners served up at the historical Wayside Inn-all for a median price per square foot of $\$ 261$. Driving down a few back roads to get to work hardly seems like a tradeoff.

## HOW I DID IT

## "Iflew up from DC the morning of the open house."

THE BUYER: Cameron Caroom // THE HOME: An 1850 four-bedroom barn conversion in Harvard // THE ASKING PRICE: \$610,000 THE SALE PRICE: $\$ 600,000$ // THE PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT: $\$ 185$

e started looking everywhere in the Greater Boston area. My wife, Molly, is from the area and I retired from the Air Force, so we knew that we were coming back to this area from Washington, DC. We started looking principally based on schools, and then as I visited and drove around a couple of times, we narrowed it down to Harvard.

I work for Delta, so I was able to fly up immediately after we saw that there was an open house on Friday night. I hopped on a flight early Saturday morning and came and walked through the open house with probably six or seven other families. I took a bunch of pictures and sent stuff back to Molly and the kids in DC while I was up here.

One of the places we lived at previously in Germany was an old barn house built in the late 1840s. We really liked living with a little more land, and we were looking for a house that had some character. When we saw this one, we didn't know when it was built, but we found out later that it was in 1850. And it's on well over four and a half acres, so it kind of filled both squares for us-we have that land and definitely some character in the house.

We closed on April 1 in a snowstorm, and we camped in the house for about six weeks. Everybody congregated into one room with blow-up beds until the movers could show up from DC. Then we moved in and worked on fixing stuff up.

It's awesome. The transition's been really, really good for everybody. It was certainly a good deal. The CSA for local farms is great. There's a general store. It's just a very quintessential quiet little New England town.

# NORTH <br> <br> rent 

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## The Deal <br> 44 Howard St., Melrose

ASKING PRICE: \$739,000

SALE PRICE: \$835,000

## DAYS ON MARKET: 50

SIZE: 2,440 SQUARE FEET

## BEDROOMS: 4

## BATHROOMS: 2

## MELROSE

$\Leftrightarrow$ On the hunt for a well-preserved Victorian? Look to Melrose, where the Queen Anne gems clustered around Bellevue Avenue-one of the town's most stately thoroughfares-have been known to fly off the market for under $\$ 1$ million. That's a steal compared to what Jamaica Plain's Victorians fetch these days. The 19th-century architecture extends to Melrose's charming downtown, home to a range of restaurants and locally owned shops such as Buckalew's. "I like to call Melrose 'Winchester Lite,'" says Mark Hutchinson, a Realtor at Brad Hutchinson Real Estate."We have a smaller but very similar downtown." And there's proximity to public transportation to boot: The Orange Line's Oak Grove station sits just over the southern border, and Melrose proper has three commuter rail stops.

## $\square$

## BOXFORD

$\Rightarrow$ On your last trip up I-95, you probably zipped through Boxford without a second thought. Unlike neighboring Topsfield, the town doesn't draw crowds with a wholesome agricultural fair each year. This low-profile hamlet doesn't even have a supermarket, just an adorable general store. But peace and quiet is the point. "Boxford is truly a hidden gem on the North Shore," says Erin Hill, an agent with Coldwell Banker. Instead of big-box chains or a downtown shopping area, Boxford has land-in fact, the town is zoned for a 2 -acre minimum lot size. With an average price per square foot of $\$ 228$, it's a steal compared to nearby towns but still within a half-hour of both the city and desirable Crane Beach. "I find that people who value privacy, who feel a sense of calm when they arrive home, love Boxford," Hill says.

## HOW I DID IT

# "I wish I bought here earlier." 

## CHELSEA

$\Leftrightarrow$ Act fast to cash in on Chelsea, says ERA Russell agent Jeff Bowen, because it's about to take off. Silver Line service to South Station is slated to begin this spring, and commuters can already ride the rail to North Station in just 11 minutes. Yet Chelsea's condos average around $\$ 318$ per square foot, while luxury condos in East Boston's Jeffries Point-just a few minutes' drive across the Chelsea Street Bridge-fetch over $\$ 100$ more. Why? "[We're] battling the reputation of the old Chelsea," Bowen says, referring to the early '90s, when fiscal troubles forced the city into state receivership. But much has changed in Chelsea, now home to Market Basket's flagship and the buzzy Mystic Brewery, along with sleek lofts, sparkling condos, and spacious singlefamilies waiting to be snatched up. To those on the fence, Bowen asks: "Don't you want to have a house that's possibly going to double in value?"

LYNNFIELD
$\Rightarrow$ Lynnfield edges out nearby Lexington and Winchester with a median price of $\$ 276$ per square foot. "You get more bang for your buck here than you can in a lot of other communities," says Marjorie Youngren, a broker with Century 21 Commonwealth. She points to the highly rated school system and the stores and restaurants of MarketStreet Lynnfield, the North Shore's largest open-air shopping center, which put the town on the map when it opened in 2013: "Prior to that, people didn't even know we existed." Word may be out, but there's still value to be found-and elbow room, too. "You may not be getting the updates you want, but you're getting the land," Youngren says.

THE BUYER: Shahana Bhaduri // THE HOME: An airy one-bedroom loft in Chelsea // THE ASKING PRICE: \$500,000 // THE SALE PRICE: \$475,000 // THE PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT: \$282

had been looking for loft living in Cambridge, and obviously everything in Cambridge was very, very expensive. I had a 523 -square-foot condo there, which was pretty tiny. It was fine for a while, but my niece had moved in and we were just running out of space. So I started looking for condos. It took a while, but then this one in Chelsea opened up.

At first I was a little hesitant because I wasn't sure how it was going to be to live in Chelsea. I heard it's kind of a so-so area. But I had been following what was happening to the market in East Boston and Chelsea for a few years, and I loved this condo so much that I decided to make the move. Now I wish I had done it earlier-it would have been an even better price a few years back. I don't know why I hesitated!

The neighbors are really nice. That was the one thing that very much stood out and has been standing out. And the food is really great here. I felt like I didn't realize what a hidden gem it was, or how much great South American food there is. It's got this feel of being an international place without leaving Boston, because there's so much diversity. What was important to me, too, is that it's close to the city and the airport, because I'm a software and IT consultant and I am constantly flying for work. I love the proximity to Boston-you can get to everything in less than 10 minutes. The other thing that attracted me was the Silver Line project that will connect a lot of the area, so that I don't have to be cardependent. I'm glad I made the move and l'm telling everybody else now, "Go ahead. Do it. Don't be scared. It's actually really cool."

# CITY 



## 4

## The Deal <br> 9A Monument Square \#4, Charlestown

## ASKING PRICE: \$599,000

SALE PRICE: \$605,000

## DAYS ON MARKET: 55

## SIZE: 719 SQUARE FEET

## BEDROOMS:

BATHROOMS: 1

## CHARLESTOWN

$\leftrightarrows$ It turns out you don't have to give up Boston's soft-glowing gas lamps and brick sidewalks if you're house hunting on a budget. Charlestown brims with old-world charm-and its historical row houses come at a comparative discount. "A lot of these [listings], you could almost double the price if it were South End, Back Bay, or Beacon Hill," says agent Frank Celeste of Gibson Sotheby's International Realty. Case in point? Celeste recently sold an 1875 three-bedroom, single-family townhouse with exposed brick, a private courtyard, and plenty of period details for nearly half a million less than the price of similar properties in the South End. "I think more and more people are realizing that you can get a much bigger bang for your dollar here," he says.
$\square$

## DORCHESTER

$\Leftrightarrow$ Right now eyes are on the South Bay Town Center project, which will add more than 400 apartments, a Wahlburgers, and dozens of new stores when it is finished this year. But there are many more options in Boston's largest neighborhood. Doug Bosse, a partner at Old Towne Real Estate Co., suggests setting your sights on Adams Village. It's undergoing a transformation, too, and a tasty one at that. The Industry, a classic American steakhouse, opened there last summer. "It seems to be jam-packed almost every night," Bosse says. The neighborhood features other new additions, like Lucy's American Tavern, Molinari's, and Landmark Public House. "Everything is right at your fingertips," Bosse says, pointing to the local florist, dry cleaner, grocery store, and butcher shop, all just a 10-minute walk from the Ashmont T stop.

## ROSLINDALE

$\Rightarrow$ No longer is Roslindale where Jamaica Plainers turn when they're priced out of the neighborhood. Refreshingly affordable Rozzie is now a hip enclave where residents sip Trillium IPAs and buy veggies at the farmers' market in Roslindale Village. "People are attracted to its small-town feel, cosmopolitan restaurants, and funky independent businesses," says Josh Muncey of RE/MAX Destiny. Despite its growing popularity, Roslindale has plenty of low-cost housing options-for now. A total of 135 single-family homes sold for under $\$ 500,000$ here last year. And while the median price per square foot for single-families rose 6 percent from 2016 to 2017, the median for condos jumped only one percent. "If you're looking for a good deal, be open to condos," Muncey says. Overall, there are lower prices per square foot to be had in Prospect Hill, still within walking distance to Roslindale Village and its commuter rail stop.

## EAST BOSTON

$\Rightarrow$ Hear us out on this one. We know Eastie's waterfront is hot right now. With the soon-to-come ICA satellite and water taxi services, property values are surely spiking in Jeffries Point-but it's the inland neighborhoods where value abounds. Coldwell Banker agent Ryan Persac points to two spots: First, check out Eagle Hill, where there's a solid inventory of homes, including single-families, multifamilies, and condos. With a plethora of options, it's tough not to score a deal. Then there's Orient Heights. "That neighborhood right now is not on the radar of most buyers," Persac says. It's chock-full of single-family homes, complete with driveways and front and back yards. "It almost feels suburban," says Persac, adding that values will skyrocket once Suffolk Downs is developed.

## HOW I DID IT

# "I found the perfect place to raise a family in the city." 

THE BUYER: Nani Calvillo // THE HOME: A charming three-bed, one-bath Cape in Roslindale // THE ASKING PRICE: \$429,000 // THE SALE PRICE: \$440,000 // THE PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT: $\$ 409$


Iy husband and I were looking in Dorchester, Hyde Park, and Roslindale. We wanted to be in the city but have a suburban place where you can raise your family. We looked at more than 10 houses, plus many online, and then everything happened at the right time. There were probably four houses that went up for sale on our street at the same time, and our house was on the market a little longer than the others. I think the fact that we have only one bathroom was hard for many buyers.

We ended up offering over asking price. We knew people would be seeing the house that next week, but at the time there weren't any offers on the table. We were actually thinking about putting in an offer for a home in Mattapan near Lower Mills. It was a much bigger home and we were going to offer roughly the same amount, but we knew if we purchased that house we would have to fix it up. So we decided to buy a smaller house that was move-in ready.

We were in the South End last year, which was not conducive to our family. I was pregnant with one child for the first half of our stay, and with my two girls, it was rough with space. We are originally from California, so we're used to a lot of space. We were able to get that with this house. We have a sunroom, a deck, and a yard. And there are plenty of parks for my kids to go to.

We actually have a bus stop right in front of our house that takes us straight to Roslindale Square. That's the biggest selling point for my husband and me-we can live a suburban life and be so close to the city.

| $\begin{array}{l}\text { YEAR } \\ \text { CHANGE }\end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c}\text { FIVE-YEAR } \\ \text { CHANGE }\end{array}$ |
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| TOWN | 2017 | 2016 | PERCENT CHANGE IN PRICE |  |  | DAYS ONMARKET |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | ONEYEAR | FIVEYEAR | TENYEAR | 2017 | 2016 | ONE-YEAR CHANGE |
| MEDFORD | \$597,000 | \$515,500 | 16\% | 66\% | 55\% | 25 | 37 | -32\% |
| MEDWAY | \$408,000 | \$381,250 | 7\% | 21\% | 6\% | 46 | 60 | -23\% |
| MELROSE | \$617,000 | \$552,000 | 12\% | 54\% | 52\% | 29 | 36 | -19\% |
| MERRIMAC | \$432,450 | \$420,000 | 3\% | 36\% | 20\% | 82 | 85 | -4\% |
| METHUEN | \$342,000 | \$308,500 | 11\% | 40\% | 18\% | 44 | 63 | -30\% |
| MIDDLEBORO | \$299,000 | \$285,000 | 5\% | 30\% | -4\% | 67 | 91 | -26\% |
| MIDDLETON | \$645,000 | \$567,550 | 14\% | 29\% | 31\% | 62 | 109 | -43\% |
| MILFORD | \$331,000 | \$318,000 | 4\% | 34\% | 1\% | 46 | 69 | -33\% |
| MILLIS | \$450,000 | \$401,900 | 12\% | 46\% | 25\% | 63 | 78 | -19\% |
| MILTON | \$646,500 | \$625,000 | 3\% | 39\% | 47\% | 46 | 73 | -37\% |
| NAHANT | \$674,500 | \$535,000 | 26\% | 301\% | 23\% | 103 | 142 | -27\% |
| NATICK | \$600,000 | \$553,500 | 8\% | 37\% | 37\% | 46 | 58 | -21\% |
| NEEDHAM | \$989,018 | \$912,000 | 8\% | 42\% | 58\% | 56 | 65 | -14\% |
| NEWBURY | \$495,000 | \$472,500 | 5\% | 18\% | 8\% | 65 | 108 | -40\% |
| NEWBURYPORT | \$627,500 | \$539,900 | 16\% | 41\% | 38\% | 76 | 90 | -16\% |
| NEWTON | \$1,200,000 | \$1,100,000 | 9\% | 49\% | 54\% | 47 | 52 | -10\% |
| NORFOLK | \$555,000 | \$520,000 | 7\% | 39\% | 30\% | 73 | 107 | -32\% |
| NORTH ANDOVER | \$570,000 | \$540,000 | 6\% | 20\% | 16\% | 55 | 77 | -29\% |
| NORTH ATTLEBORO | \$293,500 | \$349,900 | -16\% | -22\% | -18\% | 64 | 88 | -27\% |
| NORTH READING | \$548,000 | \$522,500 | 5\% | 33\% | 37\% | 49 | 63 | -22\% |
| NORTON | \$369,900 | \$344,250 | 7\% | 55\% | 12\% | 54 | 70 | -23\% |










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