

# DISTINCTLY **NEW** ENGLAND: GILLETTE **STADIUM**

By Sean Stowell

**F**enway Park. The old Boston Garden. Both filled with history and triumph. While the Red Sox haven't won a World Series since 1918, the park saw its share of legends—Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, and of course the Green Monster still stands out in left field. The Garden saw numerous NBA titles and Stanley Cup championships won by the Celtics and Bruins respectively. It wasn't until 2002 that the region's football team, the New England Patriots joined in on all the fun.

Not only did they win the Super Bowl in January of that year, but when this past football season started they actually had a stadium that was worth talking about. For nearly 30 years the Pats played in a glorified high school stadium called Foxboro Stadium. Foxboro was an ugly, pre-fabricated looking structure with poor lighting and accommodations for both fans and players. Now the team plays in ultra-modern Gillette Stadium adjacent to the old playing field.

For decades the team searched for an identity. The first ten years of the Patriots' existence, according to [www.patriots.com](http://www.patriots.com), they played at five different sites that included Boston University Field, Harvard Stadium, Fenway Park, Boston College Alumni Stadium and oddly enough, Legion Field in Birmingham, Alabama.



After passing under a concourse connecting bridge, fans are greeted by a 12-story lighthouse at the stadium's North Entrance.

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**A New England seascape design sits at the bottom of the lighthouse. The boulders were culled from the New England countryside (above). An aerial rendering shows the field lights around the stadium. To the right is the lighthouse in the north endzone (left).**

The team's stars throughout their history, Babe Parilli, Jim Francis, Jim Lee Hunt, and Doug Flutie don't exactly inspire awe like the names of Bourque, Bird and Yastrezemski. Now all that seems to be changing as Drew Bledsoe has passed the torch to Tom Brady and Antwanine Smith lights up the highlight reels. The Patriots have arrived and they are cementing themselves into the New England sports lexicon with a championship and new stadium that is turning heads not only around the National Football League but in the design industry as well.

Gillette Stadium has a large number of features that make it unique to New England, such as a seascape design by the stadium's north entrance. A bridge connects the fans to the entrance where they are greeted by a 12 story high lighthouse. Plus the stadium lighting makes night games that much more enjoyable and accommodating for TV.

As spectators enter the open corner of the north end zone they pass under a concourse connecting bridge and the lighthouse tower. The surrounding oceanic landscaping is reminiscent of the New England ocean side. The landscape around the lighthouse has large boulders culled from the New England countryside.

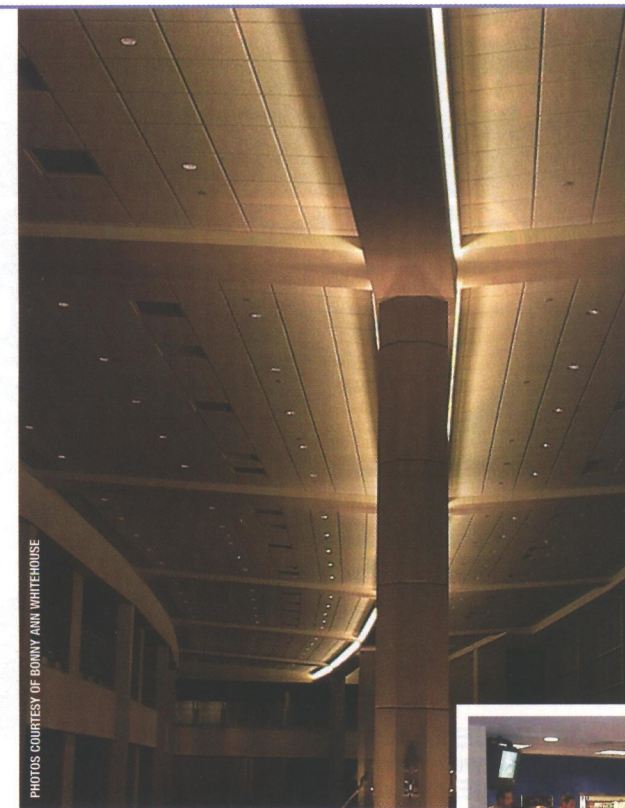
## THE LIGHTHOUSE

Lighthouses have been a fixture of the New England coastal landscape since Europeans began exploring the New World. Because they were unfamiliar with the rugged coastline, and at night the shore lights that were visible were no help, large signal lights were a must. According to "Lamps Unto my Feet" by John Lockwood, these signals were often large fires tended on the beach or a "Pharos-like" tower on top of which a bright lamp was placed.

The first two lighthouses in America were Boston Light in Boston Harbor, and Brant Point Light near the mouth of Nantucket Harbor. Brant Point was constructed in 1746 and has made it through several storms and is still a visual guide to the boats that are heading into Nantucket after the sun goes down.

So it's no secret that the designers of the football stadium decided to incorporate such an important piece of the region's heritage into the new facility. The Patriots hope the lighthouse will be the signature landmark of the facility that says "This is New England." The football team enters and exits from the corner of the north end zone. Dan Shaughnessy, a columnist for the Boston Globe said of the lighthouse: "The lighthouse reinforces a seafaring theme . . . Now the lighthouse serves as a

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Aside from work on the lighthouse, Bonny Ann Whitehouse also did interior lighting work at the stadium. The Kraft family, owners of the Patriots wanted a warm English pub feeling in the exclusive club areas of the stadium. Lighting was minimized on the club level to enhance the pub feel.



## STADIUM (continued from page 50)

beacon for those who want to find the Patriots' home field."

Four 2,000-watt color-changing lamps produce light from the lighthouse. A 2,000-watt Xenon bulb produces a very tight beam. Three colored Dichroic tubes move up and down to create different colors, and a parabolic reflector moves up to create a wider beam down to make it narrower.

"The exterior of the lighthouse tower is uplighted with four 70 watt metal halide floods," said Bonny Ann Whitehouse, Senior Lighting Designer and Associate at Flack + Kurtz Inc. in New York City. "This also accentuates the underside of the structural framework. The interior is highlighted by four 150 watt floodlights, which backlight the structural work."

Whitehouse added the design team wanted to create a shaft of light, to "reach the stars." The project team used Space Cannon Illumination of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. One fixture Ramses 12,000 watts HID lamp with DMX control achieved this effect. "The beacon is the tower's defining element," Whitehouse said. "We spent several nights tweaking the beam to get the right distance and brightness."

Whitehouse has consulted with numerous architectural firms and architectural lighting designers on Miller Park in Milwaukee; American Airlines Center in Dallas; American Airlines Arena in Miami; Paul Brown Stadium, Cincinnati; Dartmouth College; Rutgers University; Amtrak, NYC; and Columbia University.

Aside from the lighthouse, Whitehouse also worked on some of the interior lighting elements including the Club area of the stadium and the escalator towers. The Kraft family, who owns the Patriots wanted the club areas to have a warm



English 'pub' feel. The club, with its 40' high ceiling which dipped down in the middle slightly it gave the hint of a bird in flight.

"We chose to provide an indirect lighting to the ceiling with metal halide PAR20 narrow floods, which provided a general lighting level on the

club dining area" Whitehouse said. "We provided accent lighting (MR16) in the columns and at the bar. This gave a highlighting to gathering areas." At food service areas in the club the designers wanted to minimize the lighting of the club area, but at the same time provide the visitor with ample lighting levels.

"We choose to highlight the back areas of the food services, which made the patrons area appear dimmer and more intimate," Whitehouse said. "Compact fluorescent downlights were utilized. Custom table labels of brushed aluminum bases with layers of acrylic sandwiching amber toned papers where lighted with linear fluorescent to provide a warm feel to the counters and at the same time maintaining and energy efficient lighting approach."

"We also had the height of the ceiling to change the lamps of the fixtures, and could not fit a lift into the escalator tower," she said. "We opted for track lighting at the wall above an opening, which lets the patrons look into the space below. This lighting effect gave us highlights and shadows, which added to the New England charm of the clubs."

•Architect: HOK + Sport + Venue + Event: Jon Knight; Craig Milde; Richard McPherson

•Stadium Lighting: Musco Lighting

•Lighting design: Bonny Ann Whitehouse, Flack + Kurtz Inc.

•Engineers: Vanderweil Engineers, Inc; Steve Pedretti