

PARTY PLANNER

SHAWN FORD keeps the spirit of 1773 alive at the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum



SETTING THE STAGE TO REENACT

one of the most important events in American history on a daily basis is no easy feat, as museum director Shawn Ford can tell you. “There were no rules in the playbook,” Ford recalls of seeing to the gritty details and careful planning of bringing the Boston Tea Party rebellion to life in the 21st century. “This project sits in the middle of a bridge, in the middle of the water, in the middle of a harbor on a malleable channel. Something like this didn’t exist.”

After a fire destroyed the original museum in 2001, the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum went through a major upgrade, reopening two years ago as a state-of-the-art, high-tech facility. It stands (or, rather, floats) as an all-hands-on-deck experience where visitors can yell “Huzzah!” with defiant verve at the Meeting House and toss tea overboard near the very spot where the original Boston Tea Party happened 241 years ago.

The museum floats up and down secured to a barge on the Fort Port Channel, and every system, from the plumbing to the heating, had to be specifically designed for this. Then each system required permitting through city agencies and municipalities while Ford battled

with funding. After 12 years of trials and tribulations, the painstaking process finally paid off. And the most rewarding part? “Being able to tell the story of the single most important event that led to the American Revolution to people all over the world, and to see the people from this country leave with a sense of pride and better understanding of what it took to get us where we are today.”

Ford is very passionate about the truly unique experience he helped become a reality, and is most passionate about the Robinson Half Chest, one of two existing tea crates from the original event. “It signifies all the things we hold dearly today in the United States of

REVELRY ON GRIFFIN’S WHARF

July 1, 2, 3 and 5 at the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, 306 Congress St., 617-338-1773, bostonteatartyship.com

America, started from the biggest defiance against the most powerful army nation in the world. And it’s that tea crate—that hard-won object—that represents it all.” The effect of the Boston Tea Party resonates across the globe, and is integral to the fabric of the city. “There’s only one of these in the world,” he says. “There’s only one Boston Tea Party. And it’s here.” —*Samantha DiMauro*