

Edgewood takes lodging at Tahoe to a new level



The reception area at Edgewood Lodge is contemporary with a Tahoe flavor. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Like most backyards, Edgewood Lodge has been designed to be where people will want to hang out.

It's where the infinity-like pool and hot tub are. Monday the pool furniture was being assembled. On the deck between the pool and lodge are multiple fire pits and an array of seating options. Just beyond the pool is a grassy area that looks like an oversized back lawn. Next comes the beach and the icy waters of Lake Tahoe. These are all terraced, creating a

better visual.

While the pool, hot tub and fitness center will only be available to hotel guests, much of the property will be open to the public. That means this backyard can be a playground of sorts for everyone.



Chef Dave Lofgren preps his staff prior to the June 14 opening. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

And if people are inside, the outside is so close.

With what appears to be a wall of windows across the “back porch,” the outdoors is still right there. Mount Tallac is a constant presence.

The Bistro restaurant will spill out onto the outdoor patio with the ability to seat 80. It will serve three meals a day. The kitchen is designed so diners will be able to see their meal being prepared. A chef’s table is off to the side for special events.

With total seating being about 200, this is the largest of the three restaurants at Edgewood. (The other two are in the clubhouse.) Part of the seating includes a large, ornate wooden table that will be for communal dining.

The bar flows right into the restaurant – and outside.

A small café is near the front of the lodge where to-go items may be purchased.



From the second floor looking into the “living room.” Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Owners and designers of Edgewood Lodge set out to redefine the tourist experience. Even with contractors and landscapers making last-minute finishing touches before the resort opens June 14, it’s obvious there is nothing else like this in the

Lake Tahoe Basin. (Not all of the hotel rooms will be available next week.)

Inside it is intimate, spacious, inviting and warm. The living room, as it's called, is grand. Styled like a western lodge along the lines of a national park, the grandeur is evident from the moment one sets foot inside. It is destined to be a congregating place to enjoy the view, sit by the fire and decompress. The 42-foot vaulted walnut ceilings add to the majesty.



Finishing touches are being made to the front landscaping. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Granite on the walls and elsewhere, along with the stone floor, muted greys and blues, and various uses of wood give the 169,000-square-foot hotel a mountain feel, while still being elegant. The goal was to be relaxed and refined at the same time.

In the living room is a large stone sculpture; each 2-foot by 2-foot section weighing 60 pounds. An artist from the Bay Area

carved the piece on site. Another relief out of limestone is at the reception desk. It looks like a topo map of the southern end of Lake Tahoe with the lines going deeper with the depth of the water.

In the same area is a divider, with the wood coming from the property. The moss on it is authentic.



A long table like this one on the second floor will be in the Bistro restaurant for a shared dining experience. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“A number of local contractors did an amazing job on this project,” Patrick Rhamey, executive vice president of Edgewood Companies, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While SMC out of Reno was the general contractor on the \$100-plus million lodge, Rhamey singled out subs like Jim Eliot who put in the rough timbers made of fir and the exterior wood siding; Bernard Creegan who did the finished carpentry and

helped with furniture installation; and Kemper Masonry which mined the rock from Markleeville.

The goal is to attain LEED silver green building designation.

Little artwork adorns the walls in the hotel rooms. The focus instead is on the views out the window. Each king room has the bed oriented to look out the window. A mix of king, double queen and suites fill the top two floors. There is one presidential suite. A standard room, of which there are 127, is about 500-square-feet. Every room has a balcony from which to see the lake, the mountains, the golf course or Round Hill. Sixty-five percent of the hotel rooms have a view of Lake Tahoe.

While there are more than 170 gas fireplaces throughout the structure – one in every hotel room and then some – air conditioning is also important. Edgewood is **using lake water** to cool the entire building.



The pool and hot tub are exclusively for hotel guests. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Minden-based Edgewood Companies is operating the 154-hotel instead of having an outside entity run it. It means the need to hire about 200 people to operate the entire facility. Several employees have been promoted from within the company.

Like many businesses in the region, Edgewood has had some difficulty finding workers. Housekeeping in particular has been problematic. Most workers, though, have been hired locally.

Benefits to working for Edgewood include having a meal provided and not having to clock out for breaks.

The only third party entity will be supplying equipment like bikes, skis and kayaks. These will all be available through the on-site adventure center. For those who bring their toys, storage in this area will be available.



Two retail outlets are on the first floor. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

On the bottom level of the three-story building are two clothing stores – one more resort wear, the other athletic apparel.

A full service spa with eight treatment rooms is on the second floor. The hair and nail salon is on one side, the massage-facial area on the other. A steam room is in each of the locker rooms. Then there is a shared quiet-relaxation space. A coed outdoor hot tub looks out to the front of the property and beyond to the slopes of Heavenly.

Free valet parking will be available to anyone visiting the lodge. Another 100-space self-parking area is between the clubhouse and north wing of the lodge. Gone is the old parking lot that fronted the lake.

Once parked there will be little need for guests to drive again. Edgewood will have a shuttle to take people various places.

A 3,000-square-foot banquet area can be divided into three sections for events. Doors off the hallway can open to the front of the building to expand the actual usable space. If the need arises, Edgewood can build another 5,000-square-feet on the main level for meetings and the like.

The goal is to be a five-star complex. Rhamey said it's more important to have five-star reviews on Yelp and TripAdvisor than to worry about what Forbes or AAA say. Guest service is a huge piece in the ratings war.

“Edgewood Lodge is not going to be a stuffy place,” Rhamey said. “We want to provide exceptional service, be engaging, but not be stuffy or snooty.”