

big cedar lodge history

Big Cedar Lodge history is a captivating tale that intertwines nature, hospitality, and the vision of one man who transformed a serene landscape into a premier resort destination. Nestled in the Ozark Mountains near Branson, Missouri, Big Cedar Lodge has a rich history that dates back to the early 20th century. This article will explore the origins of Big Cedar Lodge, its development over the decades, and its significance in the world of hospitality and tourism.

Origins of Big Cedar Lodge

The story of Big Cedar Lodge begins in the early 1900s when the area was primarily known for its stunning natural beauty and abundant wildlife. The land was originally inhabited by Native American tribes, including the Osage and Cherokee, who revered the region for its resources and spiritual significance.

In the 1920s, the area began to attract the attention of settlers and tourists drawn to the rugged beauty of the Ozarks. The lush forests, pristine lakes, and rolling hills provided the perfect backdrop for outdoor activities and relaxation. It was during this time that the vision for a lodge began to take shape.

The Founding of Big Cedar Lodge

In 1987, the resort was officially founded by the renowned businessman and philanthropist Johnny Morris, who is the founder of Bass Pro Shops. Morris had a deep love for the outdoors and a strong commitment to conservation, which influenced his vision for Big Cedar Lodge.

- Location: Morris chose a picturesque site on Table Rock Lake, which was ideal for fishing, boating, and other recreational activities.
- Design: The lodge was designed to blend seamlessly with its natural surroundings, utilizing local materials and architectural styles that reflected the rustic charm of the Ozarks.
- Mission: From the outset, the mission of Big Cedar Lodge was clear: to provide guests with an immersive experience in nature while promoting conservation and outdoor recreation.

Growth and Development

As Big Cedar Lodge gained popularity, it underwent several expansions and renovations that enhanced its appeal and offerings.

Initial Expansion

By the mid-1990s, the lodge had already established itself as a popular destination for families and outdoor enthusiasts. To accommodate growing demand, the following developments took place:

1. **Additional Accommodations:** New cabins and lodges were built to provide a variety of lodging options, from cozy cabins to luxurious suites.
2. **Amenities:** The addition of amenities such as a spa, fitness center, and dining options helped to enhance the guest experience. Notably, the Lodge's signature restaurant, "Osage," became a favorite for its locally sourced cuisine.
3. **Recreation:** Outdoor activities such as fishing, hiking, and golfing were expanded, with the establishment of the Top of the Rock golf course, designed by golf legend Jack Nicklaus.

Further Enhancements

The early 2000s saw a continued investment in Big Cedar Lodge, which solidified its reputation as a premier resort:

- **Convention Center:** A state-of-the-art convention center was added, allowing the lodge to host business events, weddings, and conferences.
- **Nature Programs:** The lodge introduced educational programs focused on local wildlife and conservation, further connecting guests with the natural environment.
- **Sustainability Efforts:** Morris's commitment to conservation led to initiatives aimed at minimizing the lodge's environmental footprint, including recycling programs and sustainable building practices.

Big Cedar Lodge Today

Today, Big Cedar Lodge stands as a testament to Morris's vision and dedication to providing a unique outdoor experience. It has evolved into a multifaceted resort that attracts visitors from all over the country.

Accommodations

Guests at Big Cedar Lodge can choose from a variety of accommodation options, including:

- **Cabins:** Rustic yet luxurious cabins equipped with modern amenities and stunning views of the surrounding landscape.
- **Lodges:** The main lodge offers a range of rooms and suites, perfect for families or couples seeking a romantic getaway.
- **Camping:** For those who prefer a more traditional outdoor experience, the lodge also provides camping facilities.

Activities and Attractions

Big Cedar Lodge offers a wealth of activities for guests of all ages, including:

1. Outdoor Adventures: Hiking, fishing, boating, and zip-lining are just a few of the outdoor pursuits available.
2. Golfing: The Top of the Rock golf course features breathtaking views and challenging holes, making it a must-visit for golf enthusiasts.
3. Spa Services: The Cedar Creek Spa offers a range of treatments designed to relax and rejuvenate guests.
4. Dining: Multiple dining options are available, each highlighting the flavors of the Ozarks and providing a warm, inviting atmosphere.

Cultural Impact and Legacy

The impact of Big Cedar Lodge extends beyond its boundaries, contributing to the local economy and promoting conservation efforts in the Ozarks.

Economic Contribution

Big Cedar Lodge has become a significant economic driver for the region, providing jobs and attracting tourists. The resort's success has led to:

- Job Creation: Hundreds of local jobs have been created, benefiting the community and supporting families.
- Tourism Growth: The lodge has played a pivotal role in boosting tourism in Branson and the surrounding areas, encouraging the development of additional attractions and services.

Conservation Initiatives

Johnny Morris's commitment to conservation is evident in the lodge's efforts to protect the natural environment:

- Wildlife Conservation: The lodge collaborates with various organizations to promote wildlife preservation and education.
- Sustainability Practices: Ongoing efforts to implement sustainable practices have made Big Cedar Lodge a model for eco-friendly tourism.

Conclusion

The Big Cedar Lodge history is a remarkable journey that reflects the vision of one man and the beauty of the Ozark Mountains. From its humble beginnings to its current status as a

premier resort destination, Big Cedar Lodge has consistently upheld its mission of connecting people with nature while promoting conservation and outdoor recreation. The lodge stands as a testament to the harmony that can exist between luxury and nature, providing guests with unforgettable experiences in one of the most beautiful regions of the United States. As it continues to grow and evolve, Big Cedar Lodge remains a cherished destination for families, outdoor enthusiasts, and anyone seeking respite in the heart of the Ozarks.

Frequently Asked Questions

What year was Big Cedar Lodge established?

Big Cedar Lodge was established in 1988.

Who founded Big Cedar Lodge?

Big Cedar Lodge was founded by Johnny Morris, the founder of Bass Pro Shops.

What was the original purpose of Big Cedar Lodge?

The original purpose of Big Cedar Lodge was to provide a rustic retreat for families and outdoor enthusiasts visiting the Ozarks.

How has Big Cedar Lodge evolved since its establishment?

Since its establishment, Big Cedar Lodge has evolved from a small lodge into a large resort featuring numerous accommodations, dining options, and recreational activities.

What unique features does Big Cedar Lodge offer?

Big Cedar Lodge offers unique features such as treehouse accommodations, a championship golf course, and a variety of outdoor activities like fishing and hiking.

Has Big Cedar Lodge received any awards or recognitions?

Yes, Big Cedar Lodge has received numerous awards, including recognition from Travel + Leisure and Condé Nast Traveler for its luxury accommodations and services.

What is the significance of the name 'Big Cedar'?

The name 'Big Cedar' refers to the large cedar trees found in the surrounding Ozark Mountains, which are a prominent feature of the area's natural beauty.

What types of accommodations are available at Big Cedar Lodge?

Big Cedar Lodge offers a variety of accommodations, including cabins, lodges, and luxury treehouses, catering to different preferences and group sizes.

What activities are popular among guests at Big Cedar Lodge?

Popular activities at Big Cedar Lodge include fishing, hiking, boating, golfing, and enjoying the spa and wellness facilities.

Is Big Cedar Lodge involved in conservation efforts?

Yes, Big Cedar Lodge is actively involved in conservation efforts, promoting sustainable tourism and protecting the natural environment of the Ozarks.

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