

By: The Australian

Managing the environmental – as well as aesthetic – impact of tourism is taken very seriously, and building regulations are strict. The bulk of the Nevada side of the lakeshore is commendably free of development, so you see nothing but nature from the water.

I have the good fortune to be staying at Edgewood Tahoe, the only luxury resort with true lake frontage, situated on the southern shore. Originally a stop on the Pony Express, the property has passed through five generations of the Park family, and there’s a wonderful homage to their history displayed throughout the hotel.

The modern, mountain-style main lodge is less than 10 years old, but the property’s 18-hole golf course (Tahoe’s only lakefront golf course, and by far its finest) has been around since 1968. The border with California cuts through the 9th hole, and beyond that lie the conjoined border towns of Stateline and South Lake Tahoe, comprising of a splatter of cardboard box casinos, gaudy restaurants and tacky tourist shops. Mind you, after laying eyes on Edgewood, anything else seems like an eyesore.

It’s magic from the moment you enter the property’s “great room”, a gorgeous, cathedral-like gathering space, all tactile timber and stone, with a vaulted ceiling,



exposed beams and 11.5m full-length windows framing the lake and the distant mountains. A cosy fireplace flickers in the corner and bronze-toned leather armchairs are warm to the touch.

Thoughtful design touches anchor the property to its environment. A feature wall of aspen trees is hand-carved into silver limestone. A second limestone carving, this time an intricate, topographical relief of

the lake, hangs behind the check-in desk. A rope ceiling installation in the bistro – hand-woven by Australian artist Dani Marti – gives a nautical nod to the water, while in the lobby floats a timber screen fashioned from a picket fence salvaged from the property’s early cattle ranching days.

A heated terrace leads out to a private beach, with caramel sand and deck chairs for lolling. In summer, luxury MasterCraft



CHECKLIST

Getting there: Edgewood Tahoe is a one-hour drive from Reno, or three and a half hours from San Francisco.

Stay: Edgewood Tahoe, 180 Lake Pkwy, Stateline, Nevada. Rooms from \$US344 (\$530). Villas start around \$US2700. edgewoodtahoe.com

Eat: The Bistro at Edgewood is casual yet elegant, with a modern mountain menu and swoony views across the water. The tomahawk steak is the size of a car tyre, sliced perfectly pink and served sizzling on a buttery hot plate. In warmer months tables spill onto the lakeside terrace, and the best book out early, so make a reservation prior to your trip if visiting in peak season. Golfers can tee off with beef short ribs or a seafood poke bowl at Brooks’ Bar and Deck, overlooking the 18th hole. The new fine-dining Edge Restaurant & Lounge doesn’t open until July but is already the talk of the town. If you’re coming through Reno (definitely worth a night or two, probably not more) hit up Arario for some fab Korean fusion in the lively Midtown neighbourhood.



speedboats will pull up to the jetty and whisk you off for water-skiing, wakeboarding or a picnic on the water. I’ve come in early spring, so I opt for the heated outdoor pool and hot tub over the frigid lake, but it’s intoxicating just to stroll along the beach, beside sweet-smelling pine trees, as the lake gently sloshes against the sand. I get chatting to a fellow beachcomber, who tells me spring is the underrated season at Tahoe. “You can do it all. Oftentimes I’ll ski in the morning and play golf in the afternoon.”

Oftentimes it’s nice to do nothing expect sit and stare at the rampant beauty outside your

window. A cosmetic refresh is rolling through the main lodge’s 154 contemporary-styled rooms, with greens replacing blues, steamers replacing irons and fixed cushions replacing the loose cushions I’m told guests like to prop against the gas fireplace, resulting in interesting singed patterns. In any case, the rooms are lovely as they are, each with a private terrace or balcony.

Book one facing the lake if you possibly can.

There are 14 self-contained villas located a short stroll from the main lodge, ranging from two to five bedrooms, all beautifully furnished and ideal for families,

with luxe bathrooms and a heated patio with outdoor hot tubs and a firepit. Service is impeccable, and I’d bank that some guests are generous tippers. A private chef can come knocking if you don’t feel like cooking, and a ski butler will drop by to fit you out for the snow. A fairytale ice rink is wheeled out for all guests in winter, while summer sees a fleet of kayaks and stand-up paddleboards lying in wait on the sand. It’s the ultimate Tahoe pad for all seasons.

The weather seems unsure which way to go when we first arrive, but on our last night the coin falls firmly on the side of

winter. We wake to fat snowflakes floating down and piling up on the fairways. I pour a coffee and sit by the window to watch the greens turn white, then rug up and walk down to the lake, now the colour of brushed steel. The pine trees, the deck chairs, the jetty, the beach, everything is completely covered in snow.

As I walk back towards the fire-lit lodge I’m once again overcome by that nagging, somewhat shameful thought that America might just be the greatest country in the world. At least from certain angles.

Go right ahead and convince me otherwise.