

# Hotel Project Marks a Multimillion-Dollar Transformation And New Wellness Direction For Big Bear, CA

*Big Bear Is Having a Quiet Luxury Comeback Led by Hospitality Group, Arkouda Stays*

BIG BEAR LAKE, CA, UNITED STATES, April 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There's a [quiet shift happening](#) in Big Bear Lake, California, and it's starting to mirror the kind of evolution we've seen in Palm Springs a decade ago, but with a more intentional, wellness-driven lens.

A new hospitality group, [Arkouda Stays](#), is leading that shift with the upcoming launch of Arkouda House, a 20-room design-forward luxurywellness hotel opening May 2026. It's a multimillion-dollar transformation of a historic 1960s lodge into a modern alpine retreat centered around contrast therapy (sauna, cold plunge), social design, and year-round travel.

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This feels like an early signal of Big Bear repositioning itself, not just as a ski town, but as a year-round, design-forward wellness destination.”

*Co-Founder Joe Lontos*



Arkouda House, Opening June 2026

Arkouda Stays is creating a new standard of hospitality in Big Bear, positioning the destination as a year-round retreat for wellness, design and outdoor lifestyle. “Arkouda House was designed to feel intentional and restorative from the moment guests arrive,” said founding partner Joe Lontos.

What makes this more than just a hotel opening is the broader trend forming around it:

- Big Bear is emerging as a wellness and performance destination, drawing elite athletes for high-altitude training
- Travelers are shifting away from oversaturated desert destinations toward cooler, nature-based environments

- A new summer travel behavior is taking shape what Arkouda is calling “coolcations”. Travelers from cities like Austin, Phoenix and Los Angeles are escaping extreme heat for elevated mountain climates

At the same time, Arkouda is restoring legacy properties (including the former Honey Bear Lodge) in a way that preserves Big Bear’s history while introducing a more design-conscious, lifestyle-driven hospitality model. Originally built in 1960 as the Honey Bear Lodge, the property has long been valued for its location near Big Bear Village.

Arkouda Stays has reimagined the site into a modern alpine hotel that preserves its history focusing on simplicity, natural materials and wellness-driven experiences that connect people to the environment around them. Arkouda House is the company’s second property in Big Bear, following the launch of Arkouda Cabins in 2025. The restored cabins are rumored to be the secret hideaway of [Marilyn Monroe](#), Roy Rogers and Elizabeth Taylor.

The new Arkouda properties offer a walkable, social environment designed for couples, groups and small families.

A central lobby provides space for gathering, remote work and relaxation, reflecting the shift toward more flexible, lifestyle-oriented hospitality. Guest rooms include integrated technology that allows visitors to easily access local activities, from skiing and hiking to lake experiences, creating a seamless connection to the destination

“From the beginning, the vision was to create more than a hotel,” said founding partner Donna Mulchand. “Arkouda House was designed to accommodate the way people gather today,



A central lobby provides space for gathering, remote work and relaxation, reflecting the shift toward more flexible, lifestyle-oriented hospitality



whether for weddings, corporate retreats, family holidays or time away with friends, all within a setting that feels both elevated and approachable.”

Arkouda Stays brings together two distinct yet complementary properties, Arkouda Cabins and Arkouda House, under a single vision to offer stylish, accessible stays that connect travelers to nature, comfort and adventure. Located just two hours from Los Angeles and three hours from San Diego, Big Bear Lake offers a sense of escape from Southern California’s urban pace. Arkouda Stays pairs thoughtful design with a welcoming, guest-first approach. Whether guests choose the modern lodge experience of Arkouda House or the more intimate, nature-immersed setting of Arkouda Cabins, each property balances character, comfort and reliability.

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