



IMAGE: [SIMON UPTON](#)

3. Taylor River Lodge

Almont, CO

Drive time: 3 hours 30 minutes from Aspen via Kebler Pass

Take a riverside fishing resort dating from 1949, painstakingly rebuild the log cabins with timeless rusticity, add modern-day amenities and understated luxury, and you've got Taylor River Lodge. This small getaway 11 miles from Almont on the road through Taylor Canyon is one

of the newest properties from Eleven Experience, whose international holdings range from Scarp Ridge Lodge in nearby Crested Butte to Iceland's Deplar Farm to Bahama House on Harbour Island (next up is Chile). Owner Chad Pike, 46, also a top-ranking exec at Blackstone Europe, got into the lodging business to create the sort of environment he wanted to vacation in. With a zeal for providing well-heeled guests with unforgettable adventures in beautiful settings, Eleven has now mastered a particular type of hospitality that provides first-rate accoutrements in an appealingly informal style.

Taylor River Lodge neatly embodies this approach. Behind an unassuming gated entrance (there's not even a sign) are just six studio cabins with queen beds, as well as two three-bedroom cabins; all were tastefully designed by No. 12 Interiors (the firm run by Pike's wife, Blake) in an eclectic Western style and are kitted out with steam showers, mini-bars, Bluetooth-compatible speakers, and an especially generous array of toiletries (from sunscreen to Band-Aids).

A pondside main lodge and cabins housing a spa, a game room, a pro shop, and a pool are spaced around the 8-acre grounds, which are wonderfully thick with the scent of mature lodgepole pine and spruce. Vintage Schwinn cruiser bikes are on hand for guests looking to cut down the trip to breakfast, say, from a five-minute walk to a one-minute ride.

Most visitors to the property liken it to a summer camp for adults. The metaphor is certainly apt, but the property is plenty family friendly, too, with a teepee for wee ones to hide out in; a stocked trout pond perfect for budding anglers; sleeping lofts in a couple of the cabins that are a kid's dream hideaway; and gourmet s'mores fixings delivered after dinner to one of the many fire pits (you may well vie with your child to score the last homemade marshmallow).

Aside from the opportunities to play and explore, Taylor River Lodge offers numerous ways to relax deeply. Whether it's lounging poolside while listening to tunes from the integrated sound system (you'll notice a preponderance of Grateful Dead) or reading a book on the porch of your cabin, perhaps the best luxury is feeling like you have to do ... absolutely nothing.

And, of course, there's the river. I once lived along the Roaring Fork in Aspen, and I loved going to sleep to the sound of the water rushing by, hitting bass notes as it tumbled over rocks in the riverbed. I found that same experience here; my cabin was a mere 10 steps from an embankment that plunged to the Taylor River below. I made sure to sleep with the windows open.

Play

Take a guided fly fishing, hiking, mountain biking, or rafting excursion on nearby trails and rivers, or try your hand at ax throwing, archery, the climbing wall, or casting at the trout pond, all on site. The games cabin includes pool, foosball, darts, and one incredibly comfy couch by the big-screen TV (one of only four on the property). And there are lawn games galore: croquet, slacklining, cornhole, and more.

Indulge

The diminutive spa and fitness center houses two cardio machines, weights, a Pilates reformer, and two massage rooms.

Swim

A massive glass garage-style door opens the pool house to the outdoors. Soak in the hot tub, swim against the wave resistance feature in the saline pool, or sweat it out in the sauna or steam room. Then order up a spicy margarita from the main lodge and sip it on the poolside deck.

Eat

Meals prepared with local ingredients are served in the luxe-rustic main lodge and on its lovely riverside deck. Be sure to try one of Eleven's house-brewed beers. Your in-cabin mini bar contains ample snacks, including house-made whole-food nibbles like coconut-lemon-almond bites, as well as wine, beer, and natural sodas.

Go

The full experience (from \$1,670 per night for two) includes two guided activities each day, all meals, and complimentary mini bar. A catered lodge experience, sans guiding but with meals, is also available. The lodge is open from early June through the end of October. elevenexperience.com —C.H.