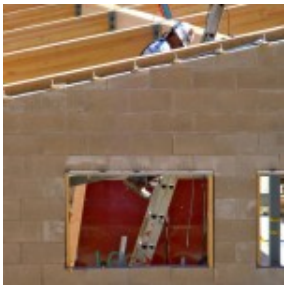
Tamarack – Heavenly's first lodge in 30 years

By Kathryn Reed

Skiers might not like to admit it, but sometimes a resort is more than the mountain. Heavenly knows this and is doing what it can to add to the overall experience for its guests.

The Tamarack Lodge near the top of the gondola won't just be a winter escape. The multi-million dollar year-round lodge will open in February. For non-skiers and in the offseason it will provide a place to relax – perhaps after hiking in the area.



Crews work on the Tamarack Lodge at Heavenly. Photos/Kathryn Reed

With the weather being agreeable this fall, SMC Contractors (the same firm doing the work at South Tahoe High School) is ahead of schedule. But that doesn't mean Mother Nature won't lash out and slow the process down.

Heavenly is striving for gold LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

"It will look totally different (than the other lodges). It

has a retro feel with a lot of exposed lumber," Russ Pecoraro, spokesman for Heavenly Mountain Resort, said. "People will want to hang out there."

Exposed lumber right now is a fitting description. Framing began in September after the August groundbreaking, with the roof following shortly there after. Plenty of floor-to-ceiling windows and outdoor seating will allow for expansive views of runs off Tamarack chair.

Entrances are on either side of the building.

Five themed food stations will be available, though the themes haven't been revealed. Expect burgers to be one because that remains the No. 1 seller.

A bar, TVs – all part of the lodge. The goal is to make it comfortable, not have a cafeteria feel.

The Umbrella Bar that has been in a tent-like structure for a few years will remain through the winter. Then the plan is to take it to Snow Beach.

The terrain park with its 100 percent recycled features is going to be put back on Cascade run. This could provide quite a show for people at the lodge. Sam's Dream and 49er are the runs to the left if one were sitting at the lodge.

With 500 indoor seats and 250 outdoor, officials expect this to be the place to congregate. Added to this is the ski school works out of here and the tubing hill is walking distance from the lodge.

The magic carpet had to be moved to the skiers' left side of the Big Easy Chair. The yurts will stay.

After the lodge is open and a traffic pattern develops, resort officials will figure out if changing the flow of skiers will be necessary. How that might be achieved would need to be worked out.

The primary reason for the lodge is Heavenly, which straddles California and Nevada, lacks on-mountain facilities. The master plan calls for two more lodges – Powder Bowl and Sand Dunes. No construction date has been set for either one.

East Peak, which was erected in 1970, is the last lodge Heavenly built.

Since Vail Resorts bought Heavenly in 2000, nearly $60 million has been pumped into the South Shore resort. With the recent change in chief executive officers, dollar figures are harder to come by from folks in Colorado, so there is no public price tag for Tamarack Lodge.

By the time the resort opens Nov. 19 the area will look much less like a construction zone. Adventure Peak Grill will serve food until Tamarack has its kitchen open.

Follow the progression of Tamarack Lodge on Heavenly's website. Do a search on Tamarack.

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Publisher's note: ***On Oct. 8, read what Pete Sonntag, Heavenly's general manager, has to say.***