Basecamp TC blends indoors and outdoors



Basecamp has hotels in Tahoe City, South Lake Tahoe and Boulder. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – Rooms are simple, efficient, clean and have what you need. It's a bit minimalist without lacking anything.

Refreshing, unique beers are on tap – perfect after a day exploring Lake Tahoe. Sit inside on a couch or at one of the outside areas, even by a fire pit.

Basecamp Tahoe City, which opened in May, is attracting visitors from near and far and of all ages. It's quieter and smaller than its **sister hotel in South Lake Tahoe**.



Basecamp Hotel Tahoe City is comfortable without frills. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It’s hard to recognize this was once the Aviva Inn. The 24 rooms have been gutted – as well as the lobby and shared spaces. There are five room types, with a couple at the far end having limited views of Lake Tahoe. Rooms range from a spacious king to queen bunk to “great indoors family room”. The latter has a king bed, tent, faux fire pit and stars on the ceiling.

To call the whole hotel glamping with real walls would be selling it short. It feels a bit like camping mostly because of the décor. In the room is a mini Playmate cooler that the front desk will fill with ice. A larger metal cooler acts as a table between two directors chairs that give it a definite campy feel. A lantern on the desk adds to the motif. Other light fixtures are modern and a bit industrial.

It was nice not to have the standard photos of Tahoe in the room. The wall hanging above the bed had key attractions pointed with an outline of the lake in the center. Where Sand Harbor is it says “swim suits galore”, between here and Truckee says “people floating down the river w/beer”, while on the West Shore it says “fancy pants boats”.



The communal space is ideal for relaxing and having a glass of beer or wine that the hotel sells. Photo/Kathryn Reed

There is a television and indoor plumbing – oh, and a ceiling fan, air conditioning and heat – so, it really is far from camping.

The open closet area has ample room for skis and boots.

The bathroom is small, but the point of being here isn’t about spending hours getting pretty. It’s about getting out of the room and playing.

General Manager Robbie Kalinowski was great about suggesting places to go for a dog walk – ones right from the hotel as well as a short drive. Another worker suggested part of the Tahoe Rim Trail in the morning. Hmmm, sleep in or hike? (The super comfy bed won.)

Kalinowski came around the corner to show me a few places on his laptop. I opted for TC Cross Country because I had never been there in any season. He emailed a link to it, which I then texted to myself. Technology is wonderful even for the outdoors.



Plenty of hiking and biking options at Tahoe XC when there isn't snow on the ground. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It was the perfect recommendation for AJ and me. Mostly it was mountain bikers who shared the trails with us. Signage is good for the most part, though we managed to zig when we should have zagged, which had us come out into a neighborhood.

Obviously we figured out how to find the Jeep.

A nice feature for those with dogs were the multiple areas to take her out to do her business.

For people not wanting to spend all their time inside the hotel room, there are places to get away and still be on the property. The Sun Room is at the back of the property. It’s a quiet place to relax. Just outside of there are Adirondack chairs around a fire pit.

There’s another communal outdoor area off the lobby area. And the lobby is much more than that. It’s like a shared family room with big screen televisions and board games.



Basecamp Hotel has several areas to relax beyond one’s room. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Even though Basecamp is on the far east side of Tahoe City, it is still walking distance to so many things – like downtown (dining, shopping) and the lake (ample water sports).

The hotel’s recommendation to eat at Blue Agave was perfect. The food and service were wonderful. AJ would have been welcome outside, but I left her behind, opting to sit at the bar where a band was playing.

Breakfast is included in a night’s stay, consisting mostly of waffles, fruit and beverages. This is served in the lobby-main communal area.

While the old hotel had a swimming pool, Basecamp owners opted to conserve water. In its place will be a hot tub that should be open this winter.