

HOSPITALITY GETS A REFRESH AT BRIARCLIFF MOTEL

Sep 25, 2018 | By: [Stephanie Gravalese](#)



Sarah Eustis didn't initially plan to get in the business of purchasing hotels. [Main Street Hospitality Group](#), the management group that owns The Red Lion Inn and manages The Porches Inn at MASS MoCA, Hotel on North and other properties, had plenty on its plate. She did feel, though, that something was missing from the family of properties.

"Our plan was never to purchase hotels. I had gone to look at Briarcliff two years ago and met with Richard and Claire Proctor and had a great meeting. It was cool, it just wasn't the priority, and I didn't quite have the how in my mind." Fast forward two years later, and Eustis was driving past the property. "I looked at it again, knowing it was back on the market and a light bulb went off. We were looking for a property that was cheeky, more affordable and attractive to a young outdoorsy crowd, and there it was, sitting right there!"

Main Street Hospitality will soon celebrate a year of owning the 16-room property — the group's first acquisition — located at the base of Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, Mass. Described as hip and homey, the [Briarcliff Motel](#) is a “1960s motel that has been transformed into a contemporary, stylish motor lodge for the 21st-century traveler.” The property had been purchased by the Proctors, went through a significant renovation and reopened in 2011 with praise.

Eustis's goal is to build on that. The team at MSH made foundational updates to the building, as well as some updates in décor. The branding was refreshed, with that cheeky and irreverent tone still present. As Eustis best puts it, “places like Briarcliff hark back to the ‘Great American Road Trip’ and we are looking to surprise and delight those travelers in meaningful ways.”

During my stay at Briarcliff, I felt elements of the classic motel experience with an added retro lodge vibe. The lobby/reception area felt like a communal space where you could gather after a long day of exploring. The pet-friendly rooms feature bright, punchy bedspreads by Marimekko, framed hand-drawn road maps and comfortable retro-inspired sitting chairs, in the spirit of the Proctors' vision. A small stack of travel guides from all around the US and the world are on the nearby dresser, curated by traveler and owner of The Red Lion Inn Nancy Fitzpatrick. In addition to the branding and décor updates, small benches have been placed outside of each room, small touches of thoughtfulness for the weary traveler.

One of my favorite amenities of Briarcliff was the communal fire pit that is lit every evening. On a cool fall evening it is a perfect gathering spot in which to have a drink or roast some s'mores. The night I was there, the sky was sublime for stargazing. Even though the hotel sits on a busy road, I was far enough away from it to take in the massive sky, and listen to the peepers and the sounds of nature.

Guests of Briarcliff get full access to amenities at [The Red Lion Inn](#), including use of its pool and hot tub, discounts on dining, and use of the property's concierge services. Any need of guests is handled by Cassidy, the friendly manager or by a member of the team at The Red Lion.

The next morning, I walked the 10 or so feet to a simple complimentary continental breakfast, which includes coffee, tea, breads, scones and yogurt, all sourced from local farms and vendors. I had the option to join other guests at the long wooden family table or to bring my breakfast back to my room. I opted to eat family style.

The Briarcliff is an excellent landing spot for any Berkshire experience. Looking for a hip downtown? Great Barrington is a five-minute drive. Is fine dining on your mind? You can find it, 10 minutes away at the sister property Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge. For art lovers, the [Norman Rockwell Museum](#) is just a few minutes from there. Are you looking to commune with nature? While Monument Mountain is steps from your door, you can also sit right outside your room to take in the mountains.

Low season rates start at \$90 mid-week up to \$140 on the weekend. Rates are based on availability; make sure to check out the [website](#) for seasonal specials.