

The Berkshire Eagle

TOP STORY

SEASONAL POP-UP

Briarcliff Motel gets a name that reflects its 'groovy, modern boutique motel feel' — The Little Lion

Summer rebrand is meant to deepen connection with Red Lion Inn, other Main Street Hospitality holdings



STOCKBRIDGE — The historic [Red Lion Inn](#) has spawned a cub.

[Main Street Hospitality](#), which operates the inn for the third-generation Fitzpatrick family, has rebooted and refreshed the [Briarcliff Motel](#), its Great Barrington property.

The 16-room motel is now branded as [The Little Lion](#), offering a more affordable experience by making available the amenities of the iconic Stockbridge hotel 3 miles to the north such as the swimming pool and dining credits.

SUMMER EXPERIMENT

The "summer season pop-up" has "nods to the vibe of The Red Lion but with a modern, fun twist" — modern motel rooms decorated with beloved pieces from the Red Lion's archives. Its website positions it as a hub for activities, with links for fly fishing, hiking and biking adventures.



The Little Lion has nods to the vibe of The Red Lion but with a fun twist — modern rooms decorated with beloved pieces from the Red Lion's archives.

MAIN STREET HOSPITALITY

It's an experiment of sorts, said Sarah Eustis, founder and CEO of Main Street Hospitality and third-generation managing owner of the Red Lion Inn. The Little Lion, with a refreshed look interior and outside, is branded as a "pop-up, almost a way of testing the market," she noted.

Reaction from guests on whether it's the right thing for the property will determine whether it will remain beyond October, or revert to the traditional Briarcliff moniker.

"It may well be a permanent approach, but we don't want to alienate loyal Briarcliff guests," said Eustis. "We're going to try something, and we'd love feedback. It's just a name, and the changes in the property are relatively subtle."

"We're not throwing away the Briarcliff motel sign," Eustis told The Eagle in a phone conversation on Thursday. New signage heralding the arrival of the Little Lion is on the way.

She asserted that the Briarcliff, purchased by Main Street Hospitality in 2017, had been "lovingly restored" by Clare and Richard Proctor, [the previous owners](#).

It has been a profitable investment, but the property needed a "light refresh, not a full renovation," Eustis said. "It has maintained a great position as a kind of groovy, modern boutique motel. We have nurtured that identity through COVID, which made it even more popular because it was a more independent feeling of hospitality if you didn't want to interact with other people."

A DIRECT CONNECTION



Sarah Eustis, founder/CEO of Main Street Hospitality and third-generation family owner of the Red Lion Inn, pictured at the Lion's Den night spot. She described the rebranding of the company's Briarcliff Motel in Great Barrington as the Little Lion as a summer and fall "pop-up" that could become permanent if guest reaction is favorable.

BEN GARVER -- THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Eustis credited her team for the creative idea of reinvesting and renaming the Great Barrington site at 505 Stockbridge Road (Route 7). It's set back from the highway in a bucolic hideaway near Monument Mountain and just above of the town's bustling [Barrington Plaza](#), the town's northern shopping district anchored by Price Chopper, Marshalls and Tractor Supply Co.

INFUSED WITH CHARACTER

"The reason for doing this is not just repackaging something in a way that's not authentic, she said. "Let's try to take these very simple, clean motel rooms, let's not sugarcoat it, but infuse them with a bit more character and with a few iconic things that people associate with the Red Lion — the idea of historic charm in a groovy motel, an affordable base camp in the Berkshires, a kind of summer-camp feeling."

For efficiency, the motel's booking system was connected to the Red Lion Inn for a seamless customer experience, along with a continuing commitment to [competitive rates](#) — currently \$125 on weekdays and \$205 on weekends through the first three weeks of June.

One of the new touches at the motel is the restoration of ball fringe curtains that once adorned the Red Lion from the Fitzpatrick's County Curtains business. "It's in honor of Country Curtains, and now we're able to use these with a new fire-retardant application," Eustis said.

But since 2020, she said, the thought has been to give it a closer, more direct connection to the Red Lion Inn and "more meaning in our portfolio family of properties — a mother lioness and little cub form of relationship."

“The idea is not to disorient Briarcliff guests but to invest in the property for aesthetics and functionality, refreshing the experience, less of a random property but more of a satellite of the Red Lion Inn,” she stressed. “It’s been a great addition to the portfolio.”



The lobby of the Red Lion Inn, the dining room, swimming pool and other amenities will be available to guests of the rebranded Little Lion, a pop-up refresh of the Briarcliff Motel in Great Barrington. The goal is to test guest reaction before making the cub permanent, said Sarah Eustis, president/CEO of Main Street Hospitality, which owns and manages both properties.

BEN GARVER — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

The Red Lion Inn and its Maple Glen and other adjacent buildings include 125 rooms. Main Street Hospitality operates [Hotel Downstreet](#) and [The Porches](#) in North Adams. [Race Brook Lodge](#) in Sheffield is a family property managed by Casey Rothstein-Fitzpatrick, Eustis’s brother.

Founded in 2014, the Main Street Hospitality Group includes hotels in [Newport](#) and [Providence, R.I.](#), as well as in [Hampton Bays](#) on Long Island, N.Y., the [Chebeague Island Inn](#) overlooking Casco Bay in Maine, and [Port Cunnington Lodge](#) in Dwight, Ontario.