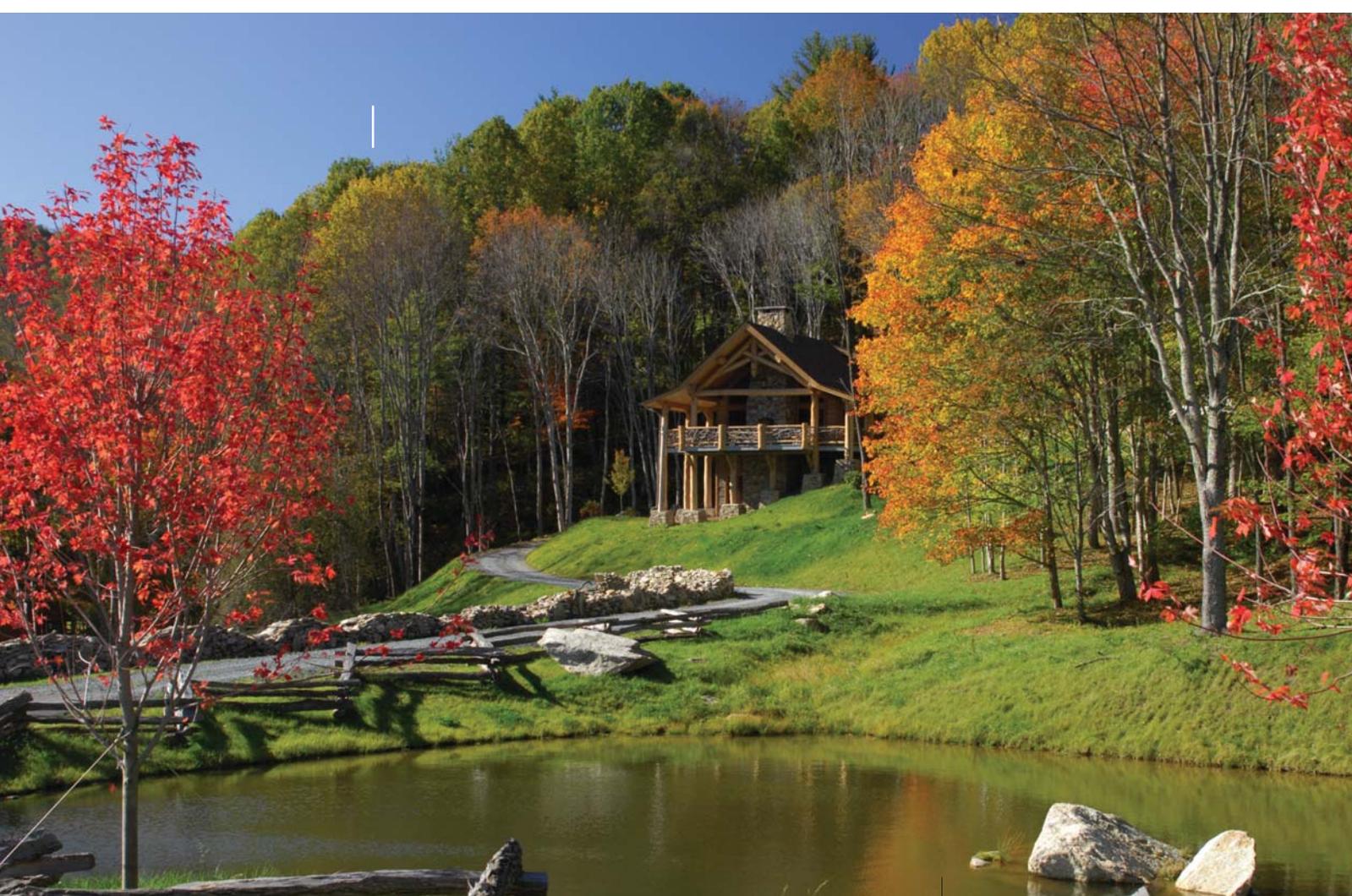


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Miami developer
John Turchin's
The Lodges at
Eagles Nest is a
luxury camp in the
North Carolina
mountains.

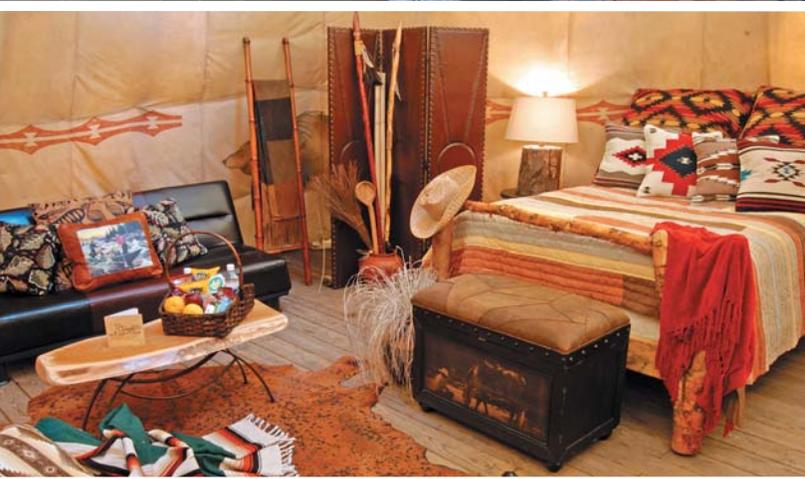
By Linda Marx

MIAMI BEACH DEVELOPER-ARTIST JOHN TURCHIN was looking for something different when he decided to create The Lodges at Eagles Nest, a luxury camp for adults and their families in one of the most gorgeous mountain areas of the United States.

As the youngest of five children in the third generation of a wealthy family that developed more than 200 buildings in South Florida totaling \$1 billion in completed projects, Turchin, 54, had had enough Miami partying, enough flying to Aspen for holidays, and enough of everything his father, Robert, and grandfather, Ben, had been doing both socially and in real estate. "My parents' and grandparents' generations had a no-denim rule," Turchin says. "I wanted to develop something different that would make my kids want to come home, not encourage them to leave. I'm an artist, and I needed a balance in life. I wanted to craft unique homes and sell total lifestyles, which would become a camp for adults with nice accommodations. I saw myself as the anti golf course-community developer."



John Turchin, in the saddle.
TOP: The painting-like setting of
The Lodges at Eagles Nest.



TOP, CENTER: The Tee Pee Village at Eagles Nest is full of modern amenities, including a full-service spa.
BOTTOM: A cozy lodge living room.

Because Turchin and his siblings had been vacationing in the North Carolina mountains since the early 1970s, the visionary developer, who created South Beach's legendary Club Nu with his brother Tommy in the late 1980s, wanted to live by a mountain and invite everybody cool to come join him.

A 12-hour drive from Miami, his new utopia is located on the north and south sides of Beech Mountain. In fact, Eagles Nest sits 5000 feet in the middle of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Surrounded by amazing views of the Pisgah National Forest, the arts, music and creative driven community of families, is located five minutes from Banner Elk, which has one traffic light and 900 registered voters. The mountain village is a short drive to Boone, Blowing Rock and Grandfather Mountain, popular South Florida vacation spots.

Ten years ago, while recovering from broken legs, Turchin, with wife Susan, and children Ashley, now 26, and Jordan, 24, bought 35 acres in this mountain range. "I was high on morphine when I bought the first parcel, then I paid \$375,000 cash for 250 acres," Turchin recalls. "Today I own 1,500 acres. I met the Black Eyed Peas at the Super Bowl and told them about Eagle's Nest. They're planning to visit. Because of these kinds of people, including Opium Group owner Eric Milon, who already bought a house, I'm adding art, music and recording studios to our community."

Eagles Nest homes range from \$200,000 for a site to \$1 million+. Made of timber, steel, stone and glass, the plan calls for 100 homes but will likely end up comprising 300. Since Turchin owns Mountain Sotheby's, he can stay on top of the market, offering buyers anything and everything they need, including a turnkey residence.

"People can buy the land and design their own home or use one of my top architects or builders," he says. "We do everything for the owner and offer diversity here. We have a quality of life that is second to none. No mosquitoes, lower taxes, perfect weather and water that comes out of the ground." For the current economic times, Turchin also offers fractional units in choices from cabins and lodges to townhomes and luxury teepees with hot tubs and fire pits. Prices start at \$225,000 and go up to \$1,500 a night with weekly rates available for different accommodations.

Turchin is working with several exotic international hotel groups to find a perfect match to build one special 38-acre hotel on the property for transient guests who want to enjoy nature at its highest level. For owners and guests who utilize Eagles Nest year round, Turchin has invented an enchanted eden of art and sculpture with glass, metalwork and pottery studios, an animal habitat to rehab injured animals, community gardens where classes are held to teach kids where food comes from, and how to live by wind and solar power. "We have a 700-acre farm with 500 acres acting as an equestrian center," says Turchin. "We are working with North Carolina State University to make our area self sufficient. We are keenly sensitive to the environment and wildlife."

There is a communal BBQ pavilion overlooking the Heart Rock Amphitheater for concerts and shows, a library built into the forest like Frank Lloyd Wright would have loved, a summer spa, Toy Barn of sports and outdoor equipment, and 1,350 acres for hiking, biking, boat trails, rope bridges, motocross, archery and other "summer camp" special sports and games.

In short, Turchin has created a family nirvana where different generations can enjoy different things at the same time. The age of the average buyer is 40 with children, but Turchin is targeting Generation X—the 30 to 60 age group who are looking for something different. As he says, "Our residents are successful and share my vision of total family involvement within a camp atmosphere where the old grow young." ■