

New life for a Memphis landmark



Bass Pro Shops opened this week in the Memphis Pyramid. The retailer has converted the 535,000-square-foot arena into a megastore with an on-site hotel.

By Jody Schmal

Memphis, Tenn., has an intriguing new lodging option and playground for outdoor enthusiasts — and it's located inside a city landmark.

After sitting vacant for more than 10 years, the 32-story Memphis Pyramid, formerly an arena, reopened on Wednesday as Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid.

The 535,000-square-foot shopping and lifestyle venue near the Mississippi River includes wilderness-themed Big Cypress Lodge, the first hotel built within a Bass Pro Shops megastore. The company's founder Johnny Morris also owns Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri.

The 105 guest rooms, treehouses, cabins and suites — inspired by vintage duck hunting camps — are surrounded by a massive, swamplike environment featuring 100-foot-tall cypress trees, ponds, live alligator pools and duck aviaries. Big Cypress Lodge also has a spa, fitness center and event space.

Other attractions within the Pyramid include fire pistol and archery ranges; 10 aquariums containing 600,000 gallons of water and more than 1,800 fish; an observation deck and restaurant/bar that offers views of the Memphis skyline and the Mississippi; an underwater-themed bowling alley and restaurant; a general store selling fudge and dry goods; and the Ducks Unlimited National Waterfowling Heritage Center, an interactive wetlands and waterfowl education museum.



Karen Pulfer Focht photos / Associated Press

A bowling alley is among the attractions at the new Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid in Memphis.

Though the company would not quote a specific dollar amount for the cost of the four-year project, a rep said Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid "represents the largest investment Bass Pro Shops has ever made, not only financially, but in terms of time, energy and effort in a retail store anywhere outside of our national headquarters in Missouri."

Room rates at Big Cypress Lodge start at \$259 per night, and reservations can be made by calling 1-800-BC-LODGE (1-800-225-6343).

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