



**BREAKING NEWS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 1, 2025**

**BIG CEDAR LODGE IN THE MAJESTIC MISSOURI OZARKS
NAMED THE #1 GOLF RESORT IN THE UNITED STATES**



After 30 years of commitment to golf and conservation, Johnny Morris' Big Cedar Lodge has taken over the top spot as the Best Golf Resort in America.

RIDGEDALE, Mo. - Big Cedar has soared up the rankings, passing many famous big-name golf resorts such as Pinehurst, Kohler, Sea Island, Oregon's Bandon Dunes and legendary Pebble Beach. This is in part because while Big Cedar has a lot of world-class golf, the resort also offers much more beyond its stunning Top 100 ranked courses. And there is a lot more to come, very soon.

How did this happen?

Born out of commitment to conservation and passion to share the beauty of his beloved Ozarks, Bass Pro Shops Founder Johnny Morris has been leading a paradigm shift in golf travel for almost 30 years. While many top resorts have focused on privatizing the game, selling real estate, exclusivity and memberships, Ozarks native Johnny Morris and Big Cedar have focused on the guest experience, quality public golf and especially on natural beauty, everywhere you turn. It's hard not to have a good time when all you see is gorgeous scenery in all directions.



Buffalo Ridge by Tom Fazio

A Who's Who of the greatest golf course designers in modern history were brought in, and the result has been non-stop awards and accolades, with course after course making all the industry's most important Top 100 and Best Public Courses lists. Big Cedar now offers a variety of golf and non-golf experiences for every kind of guest: young, old, families, foursomes, serious golfers and first-timers. There is simply no other place on earth offering the breadth and variety of golf experiences that can now be found at Big Cedar Lodge.

The resort is the dream and passion project of award-winning conservationist Johnny Morris, the founder of America's top outdoor retailer Bass Pro Shops. Morris grew up here in the Ozarks, fishing on Table Rock Lake, where the 4,600-acre Big Cedar Lodge resort sits, and he has never left the area he loves. The resort has been his tribute to the natural setting, and Morris is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the outdoor experience for generations to come. His dream has always been to wow guests and showcase why he loves the area so much, and he has taken the same approach to golf. As *USA Today* readers, critics and golf course raters have all agreed, he has succeeded.

"It's very humbling to be recognized with this honor, especially because the voting was done by golfers and guests who have visited Big Cedar Lodge and golf resorts and destinations across America," Morris said. "It's a testament to our beautiful Ozarks and to the shared passions of many talented people, including our team members, who wake up every morning committed to providing the most genuine, friendly hospitality and creating lifelong happy memories for our guests."



Johnny Morris, son JP and their buddy Roscoe during construction of the signature 19th hole, envisioned by father and son at Payne's Valley.

Unlike almost every other golf resort on the planet, **all of Big Cedar's courses are part of a not-for-profit conservation foundation.** Focused on conservation and education, the golf courses have all been donated as a gift by noted conservationist Johnny Morris into the not-for-profit foundation. The greens fees for every round played go to help support conservation efforts.

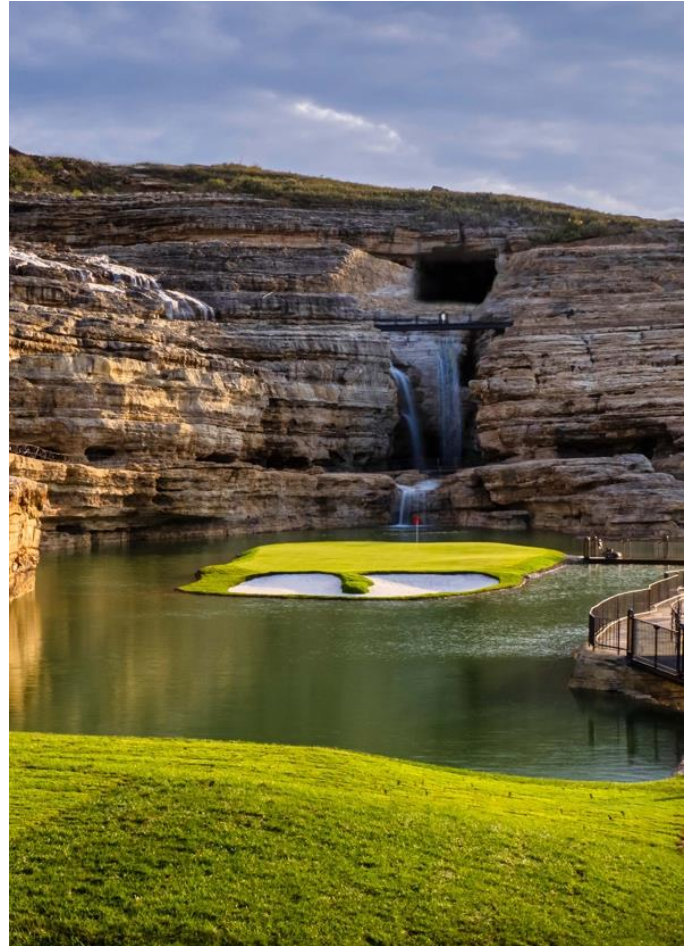
Big Cedar Lodge is the only golf resort in the world to have all its golf courses earn the highest possible certification from Audubon International, "Signature Sanctuary" status. The process involves a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation to ensure sound land management practices based on scientific management, and this designation from global not-for-profit conservation leader Audubon International ensures that Big Cedar golf meets the highest standard of conservation-minded design and sustainable operations. This speaks to the larger conservation mission of Johnny Morris and the resort.



Legendary Top of the Rock

From Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson and Gary Player to Bill Coore, Ben Crenshaw, Tom Fazio and Tiger Woods, one superstar designer after another has been brought to Big Cedar with the dual tasks of helping create world-class golf facilities and showcasing the region's natural beauty. Views from the courses showcase the magnificent Ozark Mountains, the majestic Table Rock Lake and the site's 300-million-year-old limestone formations, underground canyons and caves. For this reason, the entire collection of courses here have earned the name "Big Cedar Nature Golf."

The Tiger Woods-designed Payne's Valley was also a big winner in the 2025 USA Today 10Best voting and was ranked the No. 3 Best Public Course in the entire country. It was the most recent 18-hole course to open here — except that it is 19 holes, thanks to a signature island green grand finale set on a lake in a natural rock amphitheater at the bottom of a towering waterfall — and is routed in and out of the rock formations. Not surprisingly, the dramatic course was named the Best New Public Course in America by Golf Digest when it opened in 2021. *Forbes* wrote simply that "Tiger Woods' first public U.S. golf course is awesome." In its first year of eligibility, it jumped onto *Golf*



Payne's Valley 19th Hole

Magazine's, *Golf Digest's* and *Golfweek's* coveted Top 100 Public Courses lists, joining Ozarks National and Buffalo Ridge, two other Big Cedar courses in the Top 100. This makes Big Cedar one of just a handful of resorts worldwide with multiple Top 100 courses.

While all the golf offerings at Big Cedar Lodge are quite different, its stunning visual drama unifies them. True to its name, the Tom Fazio-

designed Buffalo Ridge — also on *Golf Digest's* Top 100 — has an actual herd of buffalo grazing alongside its fairways, something few visiting golfers have ever seen before on a course.

It is by creating these kinds of unforgettable memories that Big Cedar Lodge was able to rise past so many other notable golf resorts to take over the No. 1 spot in the *USA Today* competition.



*Ozarks National, designed by the renowned firm Coore & Crenshaw
Named #1 Best New Course in America by Golf Digest when it opened in 2019*

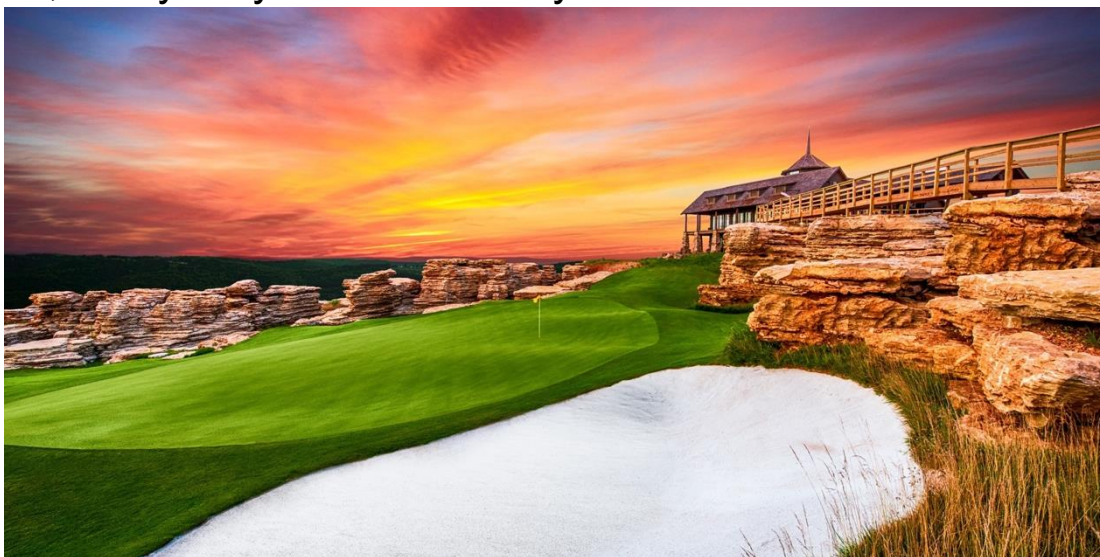
But where Morris and his team have really pushed the envelope in terms of changing the way golf resorts welcome guests is with the shorter courses. Top of the Rock is a 9-hole par-3 course designed by history's greatest golfer and accomplished designer, Jack Nicklaus. These are full-sized, dramatic par-3 holes, stretching to over 200 yards, with lakes, cliffs, exposed rock ledges and views so stunning that the course is the only par-3 layout ever used by the PGA Tour for a championship event.



Top of the Rock by Jack Nicklaus
The only par-3 course to host PGA sanctioned events

Not to be outdone, another legend, Gary Player, built the 13-hole Mountain Top par-3 course, pictured below at sunset and as its name implies, the elevated setting, sweeping views and nature are paramount.

“People in America should really make an effort to come and see what exists here,” Gary Player said. “It’s beyond one’s belief.”



Mountain Top by Gary Player

MORE BREAKING NEWS !!

Coming soon, watch for announcements on two new over-the-top world-class golf courses ! Johnny Morris and his son JP's latest daydream projects



ANNOUNCING - CLIFFHANGERS

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY PAR-3 COURSE ON EARTH

Booking tee times now for 18 fairytale holes...

"It's like playing golf on the moon!"

ANNOUNCING - ON THE ROCKS

THE MOST EXTREME PUTTING COURSE ON THE PLANET!

Another daydream from the guy Kid Rock refers to as "The Redneck Walt Disney" Johnny Morris, and his son JP, slated to open next year adjacent to Jack Nicklaus' Legendary Top of the Rock.





Legendary Salute Discounts

Bass Pro Shops and Big Cedar Lodge are proud to offer **Legendary Salute Discounts**. This special discount provides **10% Savings on green fees** at Big Cedar Golf to veterans, active-duty military personnel, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and fish and wildlife officers.

Plus, as an exclusive benefit, Bass Pro Shops and Big Cedar Lodge Outfitters receive special savings !

The advertisement features a large, circular gold coin with a bison in the center. The text "BIG CEDAR" is arched above the bison, and "Johnny Morris NATURE GOLF" is written below it. The background is a stylized American flag with stars and stripes. A red play button icon is in the top left corner.

**JUST NAMED
AMERICA'S #1 BEST GOLF RESORT**

CLICK HERE FOR A MAJESTIC TOUR

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About Big Cedar Lodge

Founded by Bass Pro Shops' Johnny Morris in 1987, and located in the heart of Missouri's Ozark Mountains, Big Cedar Lodge is America's premier wilderness resort. The 4,600-acre lakeside retreat connects families to the outdoors with a variety of nature-based experiences. Home to five award-winning nature golf courses, Big Cedar Lodge brings Morris' vision to life through an unparalleled golf experience in the Ozarks, attracting visitors from across the world. The resort offers genuine Ozarks hospitality and a convenient location just south of Branson, Missouri. To learn more, or to book tee times or rooms for your next visit, go to bigcedar.com/golf.

About Johnny Morris

Johnny Morris is the founder and Lead Outfitter of Bass Pro Shops and one of the nation's leading conservationists. A lifelong advocate for wildlife conservation, he has dedicated his life to connecting people with nature. Under his leadership, Bass Pro Shops has averaged donating more than 10% of its annual earnings to conservation initiatives, supporting habitat conservation and outdoor education. His impact has earned him the prestigious Audubon Medal, considered by many to be the highest conservation award, and Morris is only the 58th recipient in the organization's 120-plus year history. Morris was named a Master Conservationist by his home state of Missouri, their highest conservation honor, recognizing his lifelong commitment to conservation and education related activities across the state and around the world.

About Bass Pro Shops

Bass Pro Shops, North America's premier outdoor and conservation company, was founded in 1972 when avid young angler Johnny Morris started selling tackle out of his father's liquor store in Springfield, Missouri. That was the company's sole location for the first 13 years, and it has since grown to nearly 200 retail locations throughout North America. Today the company provides customers with unmatched offerings spanning premier destination retail, outdoor equipment manufacturing, world-class resort destinations and more. In 2017 Bass Pro Shops united with Cabela's to create a "best-of-the-best" experience with superior products, dynamic locations and outstanding customer service. Bass Pro Shops also operates White River Marine Group, offering an unsurpassed collection of industry-leading boat brands, and Big Cedar Lodge, America's Premier Wilderness Resort. Under the visionary conservation leadership of Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops is a national leader in protecting habitat and introducing families to the outdoors and has been named by Newsweek as "America's Most Trusted Retailer for Outdoor Gear."

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