

A NEW LODGE REPLETE WITH LUXURY
 INTRODUCES VISITORS TO ALL THE WONDERS
 OF LAKE MURRAY STATE PARK.

Down to the Water

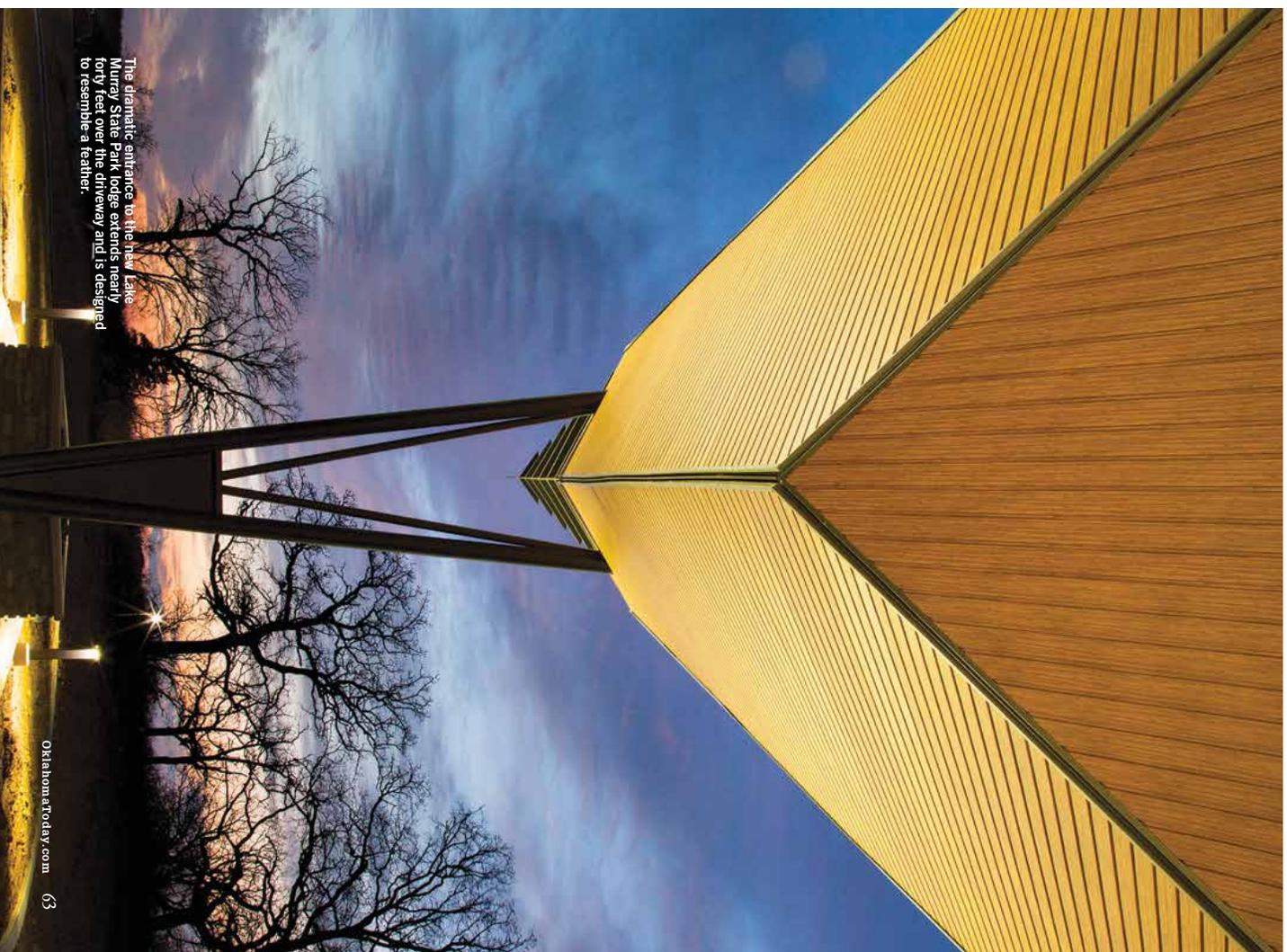
By NATHAN GUNTER

THE WATER IS the thing: From the moment visitors step inside the new lodge at Lake Murray State Park, water is evident everywhere. In the lobby, in each of the thirty-two guest rooms, in the Blue Heron Café—even in the hotel gym—tall windows look out over the aquamarine hue of one of Oklahoma’s most storied lakes. Here, at the largest and oldest property in the state park system, everything is engineered to turn heads toward the water: This was part of the goal when the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department broke ground in 2014, and the theme carries through the design: From accent pillows to linens to wallpaper, every item of decor undulates in shades of turquoise, blue, gray, and green. And while visitors may have decades-old memories of the park’s classic lodge, built in 1949 and set to come down this year, the new buildings are designed to bring the park into the twenty-first century.

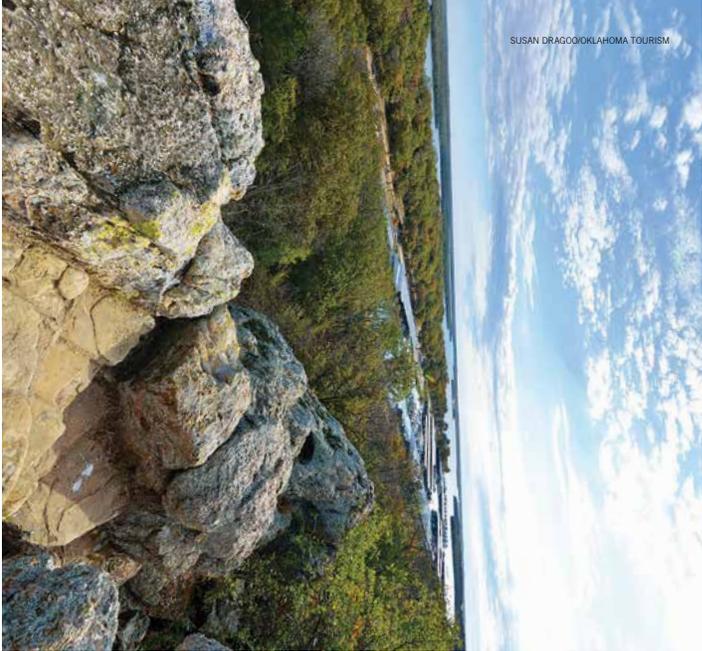
“We needed to improve the experience a hundredfold,” says lodge manager Michael Cooley. “And we did that. The old lodge, God bless her, she served her years.”

Buzz was growing even before construction was completed. Week-end reservations filled up long before opening. Several brides booked the lodge as a wedding venue when it was little more than a slab. And since the doors opened in February 2017, a steady stream of travelers has come through to get a glimpse of the new spot from which to enjoy Oklahoma’s flagship state park. *3323 Lodge Road in Ardmore, (580) 223-6600 or TravelOK.com/parks.* ■

LORI DUCKWORTH



The dramatic entrance to the new Lake Murray State Park lodge extends nearly forty feet over the driveway and is designed to resemble a feather.

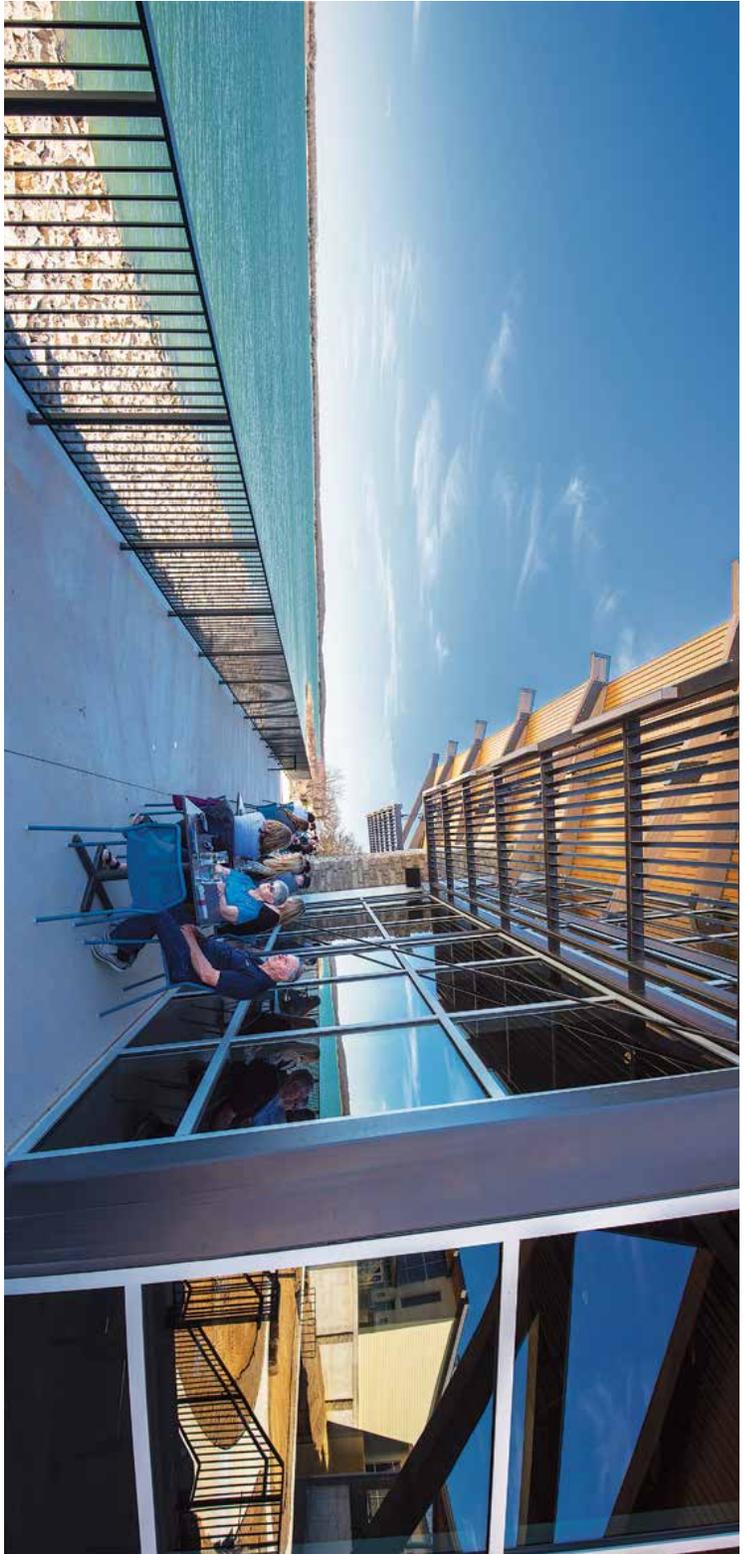


Opposite page, clockwise from top left: From the new Lake Murray State Park lodge, visitors have easy access to the park's 12,000 acres of wilderness, including views like the one overlooking the marina at Buzzards Roost; hanging over the fireplace in the Blue Heron Cate is an acrylic on birch by Choctaw artist D.G. Smalling of Oklahoma City; chef Milindy Boone at the Blue Heron Cate created a menu that includes fried catfish, bone-in pork chops, burgers, and more.

Above: Guests who venture from the comfort of the lodge have easy access to Lake Murray's 6,500 acres of water for activities like fishing, boating, paddleboarding, or just taking in the views.

Right, diners at the Blue Heron Café enjoy 180-degree views of the lake indoors and out. Below, every guest room features a balcony overlooking the water, comfortable linens and furniture, luxurious bathrooms, refrigerators, microwaves, high-speed internet, and framed shots of the park's landscapes.

JOE OWNBEO/KLAHOMA TOURISM



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