

Serenity in a Midcentury Motor Lodge

CALISTOGA MOTOR LODGE AND SPA
CALIFORNIA, USA

A former roadside motel in northern California reinvents beloved 1970s-era hippie wellness rituals, with mud baths, mineral spring soaks, and cannabis massages.

In the 1970s, American vacations often involved packing up the car, camper van, or motor home and traveling through the country, stopping at national parks and highway attractions along the way. When revamping the Calistoga Motor Lodge, a 1940s-era motel on the Silverado Trail in Napa Valley, the New-York-based Avroko design firm dug deep into that nostalgic bit of American history.

The midcentury aesthetic takes its cues from the bold and bright lettering found on gas stations and truck stops while the rooms are modeled after classic campers and RVs. A large chalkboard in the reception area lists a roster of daily activities, summer-camp style, and board games, puzzles, hula-hoops, and jump ropes can be found throughout the property, encouraging guests to have fun and interact—like people did in the days before social media took over everything.

The spa, meanwhile, pays homage to Calistoga’s famed mud baths, formed by volcanic ash and heated water from the region’s geothermal springs. With a “mix your own mud bar,” guests can relive the hippie tradition of slathering the earthy sediment over limbs to rid dry skin and let it soak in while reclining in a sun chair. Afterward, rinse it all off under the rainfall showers and relax, or combine the ritual with a massage—the latest of which kneads muscles with a calming, hemp-derived, CBD-spiked cream. Other treatments in the spa—which channels a municipal pool meets quirky apothecary vibe with claw-foot bathtubs and aqua tiled walls—feature medicinal mineral soaks and body scrubs with crushed Napa Valley grape seeds and local lavender-and-rosemary oils.

Or simply float in the hotel’s three geothermal outdoor pools, which range in temperature from 27-82°C (81-180°F) and are shaded by a greenery-covered trellis. There, you can sit and take in panoramic views of the Mayacamas mountains in the distance, no firing up the RV required.

