

Escapes: The lady is lucky at Rocky Gap Casino Resort

Written by Administrator
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[Details: Rocky Gap Casino Resort](#)

To accommodate the new attraction, Rocky Gap converted its old event space into a casino floor with about 550 slot machines and 10 table games, including blackjack, roulette and craps. It installed black mirrors to create the illusion of space (and block out any natural light, so you won't be tempted to go outdoors) and decorative glass panels appropriate for a Frank Lloyd Wright prairie house. The room glows an eerie brothel-red.

From the check-in counter, I could hear the come-hither call of the slots and see bright pops of lights. Security officials guarded the portal to this other world, but they're more poodle than pit bull. Present a photo ID, and they step aside.

Unlike Vegas and Atlantic City, which ensnare guests in their vast web of games, the western Maryland casino isn't pushy or pervasive. It hangs back in its designated corner of the resort, waiting for you to come to it. There's no pressure to play, but you know that you will.

"We want it to have small-town casino feel," one dealer said, "and we hope to keep it this way."

Rocky Gap quickly put me at ease. First, I could breathe through my nose — no cigarette stench, thanks to a ban on smoking. I also had no need to carry flares; the straightforward layout, a rec-tangle with a few side rooms, allows for easy navigation. A Little Munch eatery (start the day right with a scone, Starbucks and video poker), for example, leads to the oval of game tables, which segues into the U-shaped bar. I discovered a happy zone toward the back, at the free beverage station. *Hello, Mello Yello.* (Warning to gamblers expecting free drinks: By law, the casino must charge for alcohol, but you can load up on pop and coffee gratis.)

Maryland legislators passed the law expanding gambling in August, and Rocky Gap high-jumped at the opportunity. It built the 24-hour casino in five months and trained the dealers, hired locally, in three. Because of the rush job, Baby Rocky Gap is still in its first-steps-and-stumbling phase.

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"I'll give it a few weeks before I make my prognosis," said an employee at Lakeside Restaurant, which was remarkably busy on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. "There are still some quirks."

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