

## Ice! at the Gaylord Palms Resort: A Show Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

There aren't many things that take us away from Disney property when we're in Florida. Usually it has to be the attraction of one of the other theme parks or perhaps the lure of those nearby shopping malls, but apart from that, we're usually Disney through and through. And as far as holiday activities go, the further we'd ventured was to Celebration to see snow fall on their main shopping street - and even there, you're still in the Disney bubble.

I say this because what we did last Christmas was a big deal to us. After finding out about Ice! at the Gaylord Palms Resort and seeing some amazing photos of the ice sculptures there, I decided that we should give it a go and duly booked two tickets to visit it.

So what is Ice!?! Essentially it's an exhibition of the wonders of ice sculpting, but to describe it as that doesn't really give it full credit. It's much more than that. You walk through a series of hand-carved ice scenes, which in total were created from almost two million pounds of ice.

And if you thought ice was a nice clear color, then think again. While some of the scenes do use this type of ice, there are also bright and colorful scenes. And it works beautifully. Let's be honest, a holly wreath just wouldn't look right unless it was green and that's exactly the color it is. The same thing with the poinsettias right at the entrance. You'd expect them to be a bright red color and they are.

That's not to say that the whole thing is gaudy and filled with color, far from it. Some of the scenes are literally just crystal clear and that makes them even more breathtaking. The very first scene you walk through is a set of crystal clear animals laid out before you, including polar bears, deer, swans, and rabbits and the detail on each and every one of them is breathtaking. But this is only the beginning and, at this point, perhaps you're thinking, "I've seen ice sculptures like this before," and maybe you have. But as we walked into the next scene, that thought was immediately dispelled from our minds.

That's when everything became a riot of color with life size trains you can walk through, a railway junction, and huge ice cream cones. There's even a gingerbread house to head inside.

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Perhaps the pinnacle of the displays is the next scene of the nativity, complete with everything you'd expect to see, including the three wise men, the shepherds and their sheep, and angels. It's all laid out in front of you and it is all life size. Even better, when we visited, we were lucky enough to see one of the ice sculptors who brought all of this to life at work in there, ensuring that the monuments before us were in perfect shape. The sculptors, as we learned in the pre-show movie that's shown as you go into Ice!, come from China and are obviously experts in their field, judging by the wonders they produce.

The next stop took us back into the fun and frolics we'd enjoyed earlier, with penguins playing and sliding down the ice in another colorful scene. Then it was out, past Santa and his sleigh at the North Pole.

I think it's fair to say that perhaps we rushed through that last scene a little, but by then, we were starting to lose feeling in our fingers and toes, as it was so cold. Naively I thought that when they talked about keeping the temperature in there at a steady nine degrees, they were talking Celsius - well, that is what us Brits work in, but I should've known better. No, they were talking about nine degrees Fahrenheit!

Don't worry, they do give you parkas to keep you warm at the start of your tour, but had we thought about it, jeans, instead of Capri pants, would have been much more appropriate and perhaps we might have kitted ourselves out in an extra pair of socks, some gloves, and probably a nice warm hat as well! That's something I'd certainly do if we went again, as the cold did become more and more biting as we went round and, much as we'd have loved to have lingered more, it just wasn't possible in the cold.

Ice! is open daily this year at the Gaylord Palms Resort from 17 November 2008 until 4 January 2009 and tickets are now on sale at the Gaylord Palms web site. If you do plan on going, tickets purchased online in advance are cheaper and it's also less expensive to visit between a Monday and a Thursday, rather than Fridays or weekends. Adult tickets range from \$16.99 - \$24.99, while tickets for seniors over the age of 55 are between \$16.99 and \$21.99. For children aged three to nine, the price is \$9.99, while children under three are free of charge.

One final word of warning - the parking at the Gaylord Palms Resort is pretty pricey. It wasn't a pleasant surprise on the way and, if we went again, I'd seriously consider taking a cab instead to avoid that fee.

Ice! is certainly a unique attraction and one that I'm very glad we ventured off Disney property to visit. I certainly never realized how beautiful and spell-binding ice could be and just what amazing creations

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can be made from it.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

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