

The Waldorf Astoria Orlando: A Walt Disney World Resort Review

by Amanda Nash, PassPorter Guest Contributor

When my husband told me he had to go to Orlando for a business meeting at the Waldorf Astoria, I promptly told him that I would be joining him!

This would be our third trip to Walt Disney World in less than a year, but our first time to stay at a non-Disney resort. The Waldorf Astoria is designated as a Good Neighbor Hotel and is located in the Bonnet Creek Resort area, near Epcot and Hollywood Studios. The location is great because you are so close to the parks; from our hotel room window we could see the Tower of Terror and the bowling pins at the top of the '50s building at Pop Century.

The moment you pull up to the Waldorf Astoria's entrance you can tell it is going to be luxurious. Everything from the fountain out front to the designs in the concrete makes it feel special. The entire lobby is done in marble, with a gigantic window overlooking the pool and golf course. There is a clock tower in the center of the lobby that made me think of Peter Pan's Flight in Magic Kingdom. The hotel is beautifully decorated and the hallways smell like lemons!

□ I noticed right away that our door was very heavy, which probably contributed to our room being so quiet. We never heard any noise from the hallway or from any neighbors. Everything at the Waldorf was very fancy, even more so than the Grand Floridian. Our room had a marble tile entry hall and a very spacious bathroom. The bathroom had a separate shower and Jacuzzi tub. Robes are provided in the rooms as well. We were in a deluxe room with two queen-size beds. The room also had a desk and an additional chair with table near the window. There was a flat screen HD television with a Blu-ray player. There was a coffee maker and a small refrigerator in the room as well. We noticed several electrical outlets in the room, so you could charge multiple electronic devices at the same time. Housekeeping is done twice daily and there is nightly turndown service that includes a pair of slippers! The slippers were my favorite thing about our stay at the Waldorf…;slippers after a day of walking around the parks definitely feels luxurious!

□ There is scheduled transportation to each of the theme parks. The same bus visits all of the parks, so it can take a while to get where you want to go. They drop you off at the Transportation & Ticket Center as

the Magic Kingdom stop. Depending on the time of day, the bus may be scheduled for only one trip per hour. We ended up taking cabs back to the Waldorf many times, because we didn't want to wait for the bus. The bus picks up at the Hilton first, so sometimes there aren't a lot of seats left by the time it got to the Waldorf. We had to show our room key to the bus driver in order to board the bus. The bus was similar to the Magical Express buses, with very nice comfortable seating. The transportation was very disappointing after staying in Disney resorts, where you get spoiled by the continuous transportation.

There were not very many food options at the Waldorf and there were none that were reasonably priced. You can walk to the Hilton next door via an interior hallway though, for additional food options. There is also a Disney gift shop in the lobby of the Hilton.

□ There are children's programs and activities at the pool each day, but there is a fee to participate.

□ The pool is quite beautiful. Towels are available at the pool, and there are cabanas for rent. The Hilton has a much larger pool that is also available for Waldorf Astoria guests.

□ There were plenty of families staying at the Waldorf Astoria, but it seemed that most of the guests were there for the conference, so the atmosphere felt business-like. You can use Hilton Honors points to stay at the Waldorf Astoria, and it is exceptionally beautiful, but I prefer staying at a Disney resort. I did not feel like I was at Disney World when I was at the Waldorf Astoria. As beautiful as it was it just didn't have the magic that a Disney hotel has.

□ I am very glad I had the opportunity to experience a stay at the Waldorf Astoria Orlando but I will be in a Disney hotel the next time I visit.

About The Author: Amanda lives in Indianapolis with her husband and their 3 children. She is a teacher and loves to travel on school breaks. She is a Disney Vacation Club member, so is fortunate to have traveled to Walt Disney World more than 20 times, as well as to Disneyland, Aulani, and a cruise on the Disney Dream. She and her family are looking forward to their 2015 vacation to Disneyland Paris.

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