

Carioca's on the Disney Magic: A Disney Cruise Line Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

When the changes to the Disney Magic were first announced, I was personally delighted to learn that Parrot Cay, one of the three main, "rotational" dining rooms on board, would be replaced by Carioca's.

Now don't get me wrong, we've had some very fun times in Parrot Cay, most notably at the character breakfast meals there, but somehow the theme of the restaurant has just never appealed to me as much as the other dining rooms on board on the Disney Magic. Sure, it was fun, it was bright, but when the Dream and the Fantasy came into operation, I couldn't help but look at the Enchanted Garden and feel that this was much more appealing to me, and somehow looked more sophisticated.

Carioca's is a Brazilian-themed restaurant, as the word means a native of Rio de Janeiro, although of course all Disney fans will know the name for a different reason. Carioca is also the surname of Jose, one of the Three Caballeros. When the plans for the Disney Magic's "reimagining" were first announced, Carioca's was also described as "similar to the Enchanted Garden," as it would transform from a "vibrant festival theme during the day to an after-hours scene of Rio de Janeiro." Unfortunately, that concept is something that cruisers currently don't get to see, as the restaurant is only open for dinner. From what we could glean from the crew members, originally it was open for lunch, but they quickly realized they needed more hands on deck (excuse the pun!) at Cabanas, so the decision was taken to close it.

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□ Sadly, we missed our first rotational night at Carioca's, as we were booked for dinner at Palo, a meal that really did not go to plan, and was our worst experience there to date. I think it tells you everything when I say that I really would have preferred to be at Carioca's! So our first meal at Carioca's ended up being on night six of our nine-night Eastern Mediterranean cruise, when we were treated to the superb Mediterranean menu.

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□ I have to confess that, when we first arrived at the restaurant, I actually missed some of the theming, such was my eagerness to get inside and see what changes had been made, so don't make my mistake! Even before you get to the first sign for Carioca's, there are photos on the hallway wall to admire. Sadly there was nothing to explain what they were, but they show what I can only describe as plantation houses, and given it's a Brazilian restaurant, I can only assume that's where the

photos were taken.

Do keep looking at the wall, as you'll see a beautiful image of Rio de Janeiro, followed by one of the Three Caballeros, and keep an eye out for the door handles, made to look like palm trees, which I loved. As you enter, you see the first of the brightly colored lanterns in reds, yellows, browns, and greens, which are perhaps the most striking element of the restaurant. They may not sound particularly appealing, but they really do bring an air of sophistication to Carioca's. As I walked in I felt as if I was almost stepping into an outdoor restaurant with lanterns overhead. They help to make the whole place feel much more light and airy that it ever had when it was Parrot Cay.

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□ Helping to add to that light and airy feel is the plentiful use of white, accented by yellow and dark blues, a color combination that follows through with your serving team's costumes. Again, it adds to the new, upmarket feel to the place, and I could barely recognize it from its previous incarnation.

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□ One element I really didn't like was the image of Rio de Janeiro near the entrance. Essentially, it's a huge curtain, which I assume has the former buffet behind it, as that's where the buffet used to be when it was Parrot Cay. Because it was a curtain, you could see where it was ruffled in places, and it just looked tacky, to be honest. I'm sure that was something to do with the length of time they had to this rehab, but I would have liked to have seen something more upscale that matched the feel of the rest of the restaurant.

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□ The other problem with Carioca's is that it's still exceptionally loud in here. I know that was a regular complaint about Parrot Cay, and I really was hoping that Disney would have done something to tackle the problem. To me, it seemed just as noisy as ever, which was a real shame, given that this isn't an issue in the other two main restaurants.

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□ So what about the food? Well, it's a bit hard to judge in our case, as we missed the one menu that is unique to that dining room. The theme-night menus we had there are the same throughout the ship. The Mediterranean menu was a complete winner for us, and we were very impressed with everything we had. It's a shame that this won't be a regular menu on all Disney cruises, for obvious reasons. That's how good it was. The second time we dined there, it was the Pirates in the Caribbean menu, and that's been one of our favorites on every cruise we've done.

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□ Having had a look online at the menu for the first rotational visit to Carioca's, I'm not sure how much I would have enjoyed it, as there wasn't

much that caught my eye. However, it would be unfair to make an assumption like that without actually trying it, as I wasn't sure I'd like the Greek menu we had one night on the cruise, yet I absolutely adored it.

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□All in all, Carioca's is definitely a step up from Parrot Cay, although some measure to dampen the noise in here in the future would be very welcome, to ensure that the sound of it really fits into its new upscale look.

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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