

# Tokyo DisneySea: The Most Amazing Disney Park Ever?

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In an earlier article, we took a look at [Tokyo Disneyland](#), one of the two theme parks at the Tokyo Disney Resort. But, if I'm honest, the reason I was so keen to visit the resort was because of the other theme park there, Tokyo DisneySea, which I was desperate to see.

I had heard nothing but rave reviews about Tokyo DisneySea ever since it opened in 2001, with many people proclaiming Tokyo DisneySea to be the best Disney theme park by far. This was something I found hard to believe, loving Epcot as much as I do. If I'm honest, I was also a little skeptical about all the amazing reports I read. Surely a park couldn't be this perfect?

Our first glimpse of Tokyo DisneySea came from our hotel room at the Hotel MiraCosta. Our room looked out over Mediterranean Harbour, the first of the park's lands you see as you enter the park. Having spent a few vacations in Italy, we were immediately struck by how authentic all the buildings were. They looked as if they'd been there for many years and the architecture was exactly what you'd expect to see in beautiful cities such as Rome, Florence or Venice.

First, let's backtrack for those who aren't lucky enough to stay at the Hotel MiraCosta. Everyone else enters through the main entrance near the monorail station, where you're greeted by a giant revolving globe that immediately reminded us of Universal Studios in Orlando. However, here, as you'd expect, it's peppered with Disney touches, with statues of the main Disney characters around the fountains that play on the globe.

The next thing you notice as you turn away your attention from the globe is the Hotel MiraCosta. It's the only Disney resort in the world that's actually inside a theme park and all the beautiful, ancient buildings you see in front of you are part of that hotel. It's something you'd never necessarily know, as they just appear to be part of the Mediterranean theming.

Mediterranean Harbour at Tokyo DisneySea is a bit like Main Street, in that there aren't many attractions here, but it's a place to savor and enjoy the atmosphere. In front of you is the central lagoon, where the afternoon and evening water-based shows take place; you have a choice of either heading to the left or right. At the start of the morning, most visitors head left for the simple reason that the new major attraction here is the Tower of Terror, located in the American Waterfront section

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of the park, which is most easily reached by heading that way.

On the way, we spotted a sign saying "Venetian Gondolas," and it's not just theming, as you might first think. They actually have gondolas that take you on a short journey along the canal that leads into the central lagoon. The Japanese gondoliers even have a set of Italian phrases to make it that little bit more authentic, although having much of the commentary in Japanese is certainly a surreal experience!

Ironically, the other main attraction in Mediterranean Harbour is on the other side of the central lagoon and doesn't really fit in with the Mediterranean theme. Fortress Exploration would fit in perfectly somewhere like Epcot's Morocco with its Arabian theming and gold domes. It's a Disney attraction that demands your time, as the more you give it, the more you discover. There are trails to follow that lead to various items, including the Chamber of Planets, where you can manipulate the planets to follow their path around the sun, the Camera Obscura that gives you views of the rest of the park and even a replica of Leonardo da Vinci's flying machine. It's essentially an interactive play area, but there's plenty for adults to enjoy and we spent a good half hour exploring the fortress and everything it had to offer.

Heading to the left of the Tokyo DisneySea park, you suddenly find yourself transported across an ocean to northeastern America. It's designed to look like a major city and reminded us of a combination of turn of the century New York (with a full-sized transatlantic steam liner, the S.S. Columbia, on the horizon) and Chicago, with the DisneySea Electric Railway trundling above our heads, just like the El line.

Here you find the Tower of Terror, but it's unlike its namesakes at Orlando, California, or Paris. The building is more ornate and is Gothic in design, with huge arches where the elevator doors open to give riders views of the park, and turrets on the roof. It's a striking and imposing landmark and particularly after dark, when it's illuminated in green, with lightning effects every so often.

The S.S. Columbia is home to restaurants and lounges and it's well worth a visit for some wonderful views of the park, the sea, and the city of Tokyo beyond. What you don't realize until you get up there is that Tokyo Disney is literally located right on the coastline, with the sea just across the road from Tokyo DisneySea. You can't help but think how beautifully located this park is, so close to the actual sea! Beyond it, you can see the skyscrapers of Tokyo and even the half-finished bridge of the entertainment area of Odaiba, reminding you that this resort is within easy access of the capital city.

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As for the DisneySea Electric Railway, it carries passengers one-way between the American Waterfront and Port Discovery, which is designed to be a version of the future. Port Discovery immediately reminded me of the views of the future that turn of the century writers used to have. It's a stunning sight, gleaming in the sun with gold, bronze and bright blue colors. It's not an easy place to describe, as it's perhaps the most off-the-wall part of the park.

But it quickly became one of my favorites, due to one of the rides there. Aquatopia takes you out on the water on little machines that look like miniature hovercrafts from the future. There's no way of knowing which way you'll go while you're out on the water, as it's been cleverly programmed to ensure every single ride is different. This means the attraction has great potential for return visits, which we did again and again while we were there. There's no story to this ride and actually that makes a pleasant change. You just zoom around the lagoon, forwards, backwards and turning round and round and that, on its own, is a lot of fun.

The other ride here is StormRider, a movie simulator, but one that we decided to avoid. The simulators don't usually mix with well with us and we didn't want to miss any of the park through being ill.

We'll continue our tour of Tokyo DisneySea and all the wonders it has to offer in a future newsletter article.

*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!](#)*

Article last updated: 7/16/2009

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