

Disney's Polynesian Villas and Bungalows: A Walt Disney World Resort Review

by Steve Cantafio, PassPorter Guest Contributor

This past January my wife and I traveled down to Walt Disney World to take part in Marathon Weekend.

This would be her first marathon and I was signed up for the Dopey Challenge for the first time. Since we were registered for the races so far in advance, we figured we would try and use our Disney Vacation Club points at a resort other than our home resort of Saratoga Springs. Even with numerous trips between us, neither my wife nor I had ever stayed at the Polynesian Village Resort and with this being a trip with no kids in tow, we figured this would be the perfect stage for a little getaway.

So there we were, seven months to the day in advance of our trip, up bright and early on a Saturday to log into dvcmember.com and make our reservation for a Deluxe Studio as soon as the booking window opened. Things were looking promising until we noticed all but the first night of our five night stay had availability. Instead of booking another resort for our entire trip, we decided to roll the dice by booking a Deluxe Studio at Beach Club Villas and then wait-listing either a Standard View or Water View Deluxe Studio at the Polynesian Villas. The next day we woke up to the same ritual and thankfully these same four nights were still available! At this point we decided to keep both reservations and experience a dual resort trip for the first time.

□ Planning for our trip at two different resorts didn't differ much at all. We ended up with two sets of MagicBands along with two sets of Magical Express documents, one for each resort as our inbound and outbound flights were tied to different reservations. In hindsight, just doing one night at Beach Club Villas was ideal. Any more than one night at a resort and you would have a tendency to unpack more of your luggage.

□ Thursday morning, the first of four consecutive 3:15 AM wakeup calls startled me as I was off to the 5K start line. The bus ride from the Beach Club to Epcot was very short, but the ride back took almost an hour. With so many runners crossing the finish line around the same time, the shuttle buses were backed up. I wish Epcot had been open as it would have been quicker to walk back through the International Gateway!

Once back at the resort, we walked our luggage to the Beach Club lobby and left our bags with bell services. We explained that we were moving to the Polynesian Villas and with little more interaction we were handed a baggage claim ticket and were told our bags should be ready at our new resort by 3:00 PM.

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□ My wife and I spent the better part of our day meandering through Epcot before catching the monorail to our new resort mid-afternoon. Upon arriving at the Ticket and Transportation Center, we decided to walk from there through the east end of the Polynesian Village as neither of us was very familiar with the grounds. One issue we did run into almost immediately was the construction which will soon be the quiet pool near the Disney Vacation Club longhouses. Detours were clearly marked but forced you to walk almost all the way to the street or Seven Seas Lagoon. Before entering the Great Ceremonial House we were greeted by a Cast Member who walked us directly to an open registration spot. I do have to say I love how Disney is now adding this extra touch so you do not feel the need to walk around the main lobby aimlessly. Unlike our arrival at Beach Club, our online check-in to Polynesian Villas didn't earn us "direct to room" check in, to let us know our room was ready. We received our welcome leis and proceeded to bell services to claim our luggage. Unlike a Magical Express drop-off, luggage for a resort switch cannot automatically be left in your room. Before leaving the Great Ceremonial House my wife stopped by the Disney Vacation Club welcome desk and was informed that guided Bungalow tours for DVC Members were led every thirty minutes most afternoons. Not knowing if we would have the opportunity for the remainder of our trip, we quickly ran to our room to await our luggage, hoping to join the final tour of the day.

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□ The Deluxe Studios at the Polynesian Villas are located in the Moorea, Tokelau, and Pago Pago longhouses. All of these buildings are near the Ticket and Transportation Center which we thought would work out well for race mornings as it would be quicker to walk there from our room instead of going to the Great Ceremonial House and then transferring monorails. What we were not aware of until we arrived was that early morning monorail service to Epcot was only available for the half marathon and marathon, thus, I still needed to take a bus for the 10K.

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□ Our Studio was ground level in Tokelau towards the lagoon end of the building. We were able to walk off our patio and see the water within seconds. Another unique feature was the appearance of room numbers on the patios which allowed you to easily figure out which set of sliding glass doors you needed to get back to! Upon entry to our room we were greeted with a short hardwood hallway which led to a very "Pacific

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Island" looking carpet for the bedroom/common area. The kitchenette in the hallway was similar to others we have experienced, but across the hall we were delighted to see a split bathroom a la Disney Cruise Line! One bathroom had your toilet along with a shower/tub combo and vanity. The other bathroom featured a shower with a large over-sized head and additional vanity. His and hers bathrooms, as I was told!

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□The main living area offered a sleeper sofa, table and chairs (along with an adorable Tiki lamp), and a Queen bed. Under the wall-mounted television was additional shelving space with a Murphy bed that folded out which uncovered an adorable Lilo and Stitch mural. The Queen bed was elevated which allowed you to easily slide your unpacked suitcase underneath. With no additional dressers, we each used a single drawer that slid out almost underneath each nightstand. Be forewarned, the corners on these beds are sharp as my knees can attest to. The first day I hit a corner so hard it brought tears to my eyes.

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□We did not have much more time to settle in before our luggage arrived and subsequently off for our Bora Bora Bungalow tour. One additional note, when we left our room we tried to use our MagicBand from the Beach Club and sure enough they also worked to open our door.

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□Overall, we loved our time at the renovated Polynesian Villas and would love to stay there again. Unlike other Disney Vacation Club resorts, there are no true "Villa" accommodations with a sitting area, full kitchen, and laundry facilities. So if these are important to you, you may want to consider another resort as, at most, two Deluxe Studios can be combined here. Then again, you can't get Dole Whips outside of the Magic Kingdom anywhere else but here!

About The Author:

□*Steve Cantafio is a Travel Planner for MEI-Travel & Mouse Fan Travel. He is a member of the Mickey Miles and WDW Radio running teams and recently completed Dopey Challenge during the 2016 Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend. - See more at:*

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