

A Disneyland Top 10 Follow-Up: A Disneyland Park Review

by Amy Wear, PassPorter Guest Contributor

We're back from Disneyland in Southern California, with all those new experiences still fresh in our minds.

As I mentioned [last time](#), we were prepared for the compact size of the Disneyland Resort, so we didn't set out to compare it to Walt Disney World.

We were also prepared for the city feel of Disneyland Resort, rather than the "bubble effect" that we enjoy about the World. The city atmosphere did take some getting used to during the two nights we spent at a Good Neighbour hotel. We discovered, however, that the "Disney bubble" was right there waiting for us when we moved over to the Disneyland Hotel for the rest of our stay!

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□ Let's review the 10 things we were looking forward to at Disneyland and see how our experiences compared with expectations:

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□ 1. Paper FastPasses: I was pretty excited about kickin' it old school and going back to paper FastPasses. Reality? I forgot how difficult it is to get FastPasses with return times that fit with your plans. The large crowds resulted in late afternoon or evening fastpass return times that didn't often work for us.

While we didn't get as much use out of the paper FastPasses as I'd hoped, we did thoroughly enjoy spreading some Pixie dust. I spotted two ladies outside Hyperspace Mountain trying to decide whether they were up for the 60-minute wait time. They were shocked and tickled sleeping beauty pink when I handed them our passes!

2. No 180-day advance dining reservations: With reservations more than 60 days in advance at Disneyland, the focus was taken off what we would eat. We were content with one character brunch at the Plaza Inn and didn't feel we were missing out by not doing other table service meals. The counter service options were endless and I left wishing we'd had more time to try everything.

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□ 3. It "feels like the first time": After several trips to the World, it really was magical to be first-timers again. I must admit, however, that it was challenging not to compare or keep myself from saying, "Well at Disney World they would…".

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04. What's old is new again: We set out to do Small World only to see the differences and to be able to report back to my mom that we did it for her. Turns out, this attraction held far more appeal for us at Disneyland. The landscaping and design of the Small World building are truly breathtaking and set an incredible back-drop for the nighttime fireworks show projections of Disneyland Forever. Getting on the Small World boats outside for a leisurely ride downstream added to the ambiance.

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□ We did Snow White's Scary Adventures for old time's sake (since it left Walt Disney World in 2012) and even my dark-ride shy seven-year-old daughter didn't mind it. We also finally got to experience Toontown, with Minnie's house being the big highlight.

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05. Disney's hotels are "right there": It was a treat to walk back to our hotel room, rather than take a bus. Ironically, I think we did more walking at the Land than we normally do at the World. We had a 15-minute walk to our room at the Disneyland Hotel and enjoyed returning for an afternoon break every day. We didn't get to take advantage of the monorail as much as we would have liked due to extremely long line-ups and a shutdown of operation for more than half of our stay.

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06. The Disneyland Hotel: We loved this hotel so much that I'll save my raving for another article. I've got at least ten reasons that it would be my top recommendation for where to stay at Disneyland!

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07. Park hopping is actually park hopping: Oh what a joy it is to park hop at Disneyland Resort! While we almost never park hop at the World because of the time involved in hopping, we park hopped almost every day at the Land. Bag and security checks are completed outside the gates of both parks, so you only need to do this once and can hop parks without this extra step.

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08. Cars Land: Our expectations for Cars Land were pretty high after watching the movie and reading [Cheryl Pendry's Top 10 Reasons to Love Cars Land](#). I cannot overstate how wonderful this area is! It truly was the delight we hoped for and our favourite "land" of both Anaheim parks.

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09. World of Color: We expected to be blown away by this nighttime spectacular at Disney California Adventure and blown away we were! The special effects were mind-boggling and the music and storyline highly moving. I shed some happy tears as I stood there mesmerised, telling myself, "This is really happening."

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□10. It's "Walt's park": I was excited to experience the nostalgia of "Walt's park" during the 60th anniversary celebration, especially after watching Walt's opening day broadcast on YouTube just prior to our trip. We made sure we paused by the fire hall and took a photo of Walt's lamp, still burning in the window of his upstairs apartment.

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□If I could change one thing, I would have invested in one of the special tours to fully appreciate the history of Disneyland. Even after spending five full days in the parks, there was still so much that we didn't see. Alas, we will just have to go back!

About The Author: Amy Wear is a work at home mom, travel agent, writer, and registered occupational therapist. She lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and specializes in planning magical vacations for people of all abilities at Click The Mouse. You can find her online at <http://www.clickthemouse.ca/amy-w.html>

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