

Returning to the Disney Wonder After Cruising the Other Ships: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

The Disney Wonder may not have been the first Disney Cruise Line ship, but unlike its older sister, the Magic, it's yet to undergo a major refurbishment. That honor is coming up later this year, when the Wonder undergoes a "re-imagining" from early September to early November, and it will certainly be interesting to see how she emerges from that.

□ But in the meantime, for those of you lucky enough to have forthcoming cruises on the Disney Wonder, you may be wondering: What's it like to spend time on the Wonder, after you've been on the rest of the fleet?

I will confess I was worried about that before our Alaskan cruise on the Disney Magic last summer. We'd spent four nights on the Dream a few months earlier, but I knew I'd be busy making comparisons with the Magic. We'd been lucky enough to experience her after her "re-imagining" for 11 nights, when we sailed out of Venice to the eastern Mediterranean, taking in destinations in Greece and Turkey.

□ We'd been blown away by her new look, and had particularly enjoyed the changes that had been made to the adult entertainment area, spending many happy evenings hanging out in the new piano bar Keys. We'd loved the new look to the lobby atrium, even though I hadn't exactly been blown away by the initial artists' renderings I'd seen of it. So when we boarded the Wonder, would we be disappointed by what we found? Well, the simple answer was yes and no.

□ As soon as we stepped into the lobby atrium on the Disney Wonder, I could see why Disney had made such major changes on the Magic. This was the thing I'd loved most on the original fleet of ships, but now, as we boarded, it felt darker than the Magic, and somehow you didn't get the feeling of scale, with the Dale Chihuly chandelier dominating everything. However, it also felt more familiar, and as if we'd come home -- a feeling I didn't get in the Magic.

There were a few very subtle differences in the stateroom we had on the Wonder, compared to the Magic, but honestly you had to look very hard to find them. Even the space under the bed was high enough to accommodate our suitcases, which is always a huge help when you just

want to put them away for the duration of your cruise.

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□The one thing I really wasn't looking forward to on the Wonder was Parrot Cay restaurant. I've just never been a fan of it, and felt Carioca's was much more light and airy, and thankfully a little less noisy. The second we walked in for our first meal in Parrot Cay, my heart sank, as it does look drab now, despite its efforts at a colorful feel, and the noise was still as bad as ever. I really will not be sad to see this restaurant disappear from the Disney fleet.

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□We're huge spa fans, so walking into the Vista Spa was a bit disappointing after the Magic. All the other spas have been renamed Senses, and I'm sure the Wonder will fall in line after its refit, and it does look a little dated at the entrance, but elsewhere again, it's hard to spot the difference. We enjoyed a treatment while on board, and we thought the room was very similar to the ones on the Magic, and gave a nice, relaxing feel. Even in the refit, not much happened to the Magic's Rainforest, which is our favorite spot in the spa, so again there wasn't much difference here, although it did feel a little in need of some renovation and love, which it will presumably get very soon.

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□It is funny though how your memory can play tricks on you. I remembered Beach Blanket Buffet as being a horrible place to come, always packed with people, and nowhere near enough tables. That wasn't our experience at all during this cruise, so unless we were visiting at quiet times, things weren't as bad as I remembered. I also found the decor to be much more light and airy than I recalled, and I wouldn't say it urgently needs a makeover. If I had to choose between this and Parrot Cay being remodelled, Parrot Cay would definitely get my vote.

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□We did find ourselves sighing a lot in the Cadillac Lounge and saying "oh I wish this was Keys", the wonderful new adult bar addition to the Magic. That's probably unfair, as that lounge still enjoys some great theming, but our heart was really captured by Keys. Much as I love the place, I equally don't want to see Disney duplicating things on the different ships. The revamp on the Magic added O'Gills Irish Pub into the mix, but if that's what they're planning for the Wonder, I'd like to see something a bit different. I personally find it frustrating when Disney duplicates things, as it removes some of the attraction of trying new things out.

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□Thrill seekers may be disappointed to find that the Wonder is currently the only ship in the Disney fleet without any form of water flume ride, but that didn't bother us, given we were on the Alaskan itinerary. Although the weather was pleasant, it certainly wasn't warm enough to

indulge in outdoor water activities, but I can see for some, that could be an issue, and it may be worth managing expectations before you step aboard, if you think that could affect anyone in your party.

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□ We didn't experience any of the new children's areas on board the Magic, such as the Oceaneer Club and Lab, the it's a small world nursery and the AquaLab, so I can't compare them to the Wonder. As we don't have children ourselves, we just don't visit those parts of the ship. I know there is the option to do so on the first afternoon on board, but usually we're to be found exploring the rest of the ship, checking out the spa, and perhaps indulging in our first adult beverage of the cruise. Cheers!

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□ If you have been fortunate enough to experience the other Disney Cruise Line ships before boarding the Wonder, it's certainly worth preparing yourself for what you'll find, but like everything Disney does, it's far from being disappointing. It's just different, and I'm looking forward to welcoming the newly re-Imagined Wonder back to the fleet, and someday getting back on board to see what wonderful changes have been made.

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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