

Why Is Everyone Wild About Disney's Art of Animation Resort?: A Walt Disney World Resort Review

by Amy Wear, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Prior to our recent trip, I'd never managed to pull off any Disney surprises for our girls, so I thought it'd be fun to surprise them with three nights at Disney's Art of Animation. They knew we were staying at Old Key West and weren't especially excited about the theming of the resort. Each time they saw pictures of Art of Animation, they'd ask if we could stay there some day, remembering what fun they'd had at Pop Century on our first family Disney trip.

I figured the surprise would be revealed when we checked into Disney's Magical Express at Orlando International Airport. Thankfully, the girls were distracted and each Cast Member happily played along, agreeing that the Old Key West bus stopped at Art of Animation first. When we rolled up to Art of Animation and I told the girls it was time to get off, they stayed in their seats saying, "No, Mommy. This isn't our stop!" I actually had to coax them off the bus!

□ We were wowed from the moment we got off the bus, even in the pitch darkness. The girls' stunned faces were priceless. They were clearly delighted with this surprise. (My smug eleven year old even admitted, "Mommy, I'm impressed!")

□ At this resort, everything in Animation Courtyard, - from the check-in area to the artwork on display in the lobby - screams DISNEY! No subtle touches here, where you search for a Mickey connection like you do at many of the deluxe resorts.

After checking in, we made our way to the Little Mermaid Courtyard. As luck would have it, we were in building 10, the furthest building away. I'd been warned by others that it was a good seven-minute hike from Animation Courtyard. I can appreciate how it would get challenging for parents of young kids who don't have strollers with them, especially after a long day at the parks.

□ The up side to a long walk to our room, however, was getting to check out all the character icons along the way. Each time we passed the Lion King buildings, we saw Simba, Scar, Rafiki, and Pumba -- to name a few. Approaching the mermaid buildings, we came across King Triton, Ursula, and Ariel at an impressive three stories high. Other highlights

include Sebastian inside a clamshell, a treasure chest, and Flounder. The Little Mermaid Courtyard also has its own Flippin' Fins quiet pool.

Our room was a jaw-dropping sight! Though the standard Mermaid rooms are small with two double beds (when this princess prefers queens), the theming is possibly the most impressive we've ever experienced at a Disney resort. While not as elegant, I would place it in the running with the Royal rooms at Port Orleans Riverside and the Sleeping Beauty rooms at the Disneyland Hotel.

Special touches like the clamshells for headboards and Little Mermaid artwork are sure to delight young children. Even the shower is inviting with the walls made to look like Ariel's Grotto and Hidden Mickeys to find while you shower. As an added bonus, we walked out of our room and discovered that we had a great view of the Illuminations fireworks!

We were thoroughly enthralled with the Ink and Paint gift shop, sandwiched between the lobby and food court. Having stayed at all levels of Disney resorts, I must give props to the selection available at the value resort gift shops. It's fair to say the selection here is greater than your average Disney store. Most of the coveted park merchandise can be found here (which I can't say for the gift shop at Old Key West, but I'll save that for another article).

We were equally impressed with the food court, Landscape of Flavors. As a self-proclaimed health-nut, I was thoroughly impressed with the variety of options, especially the made to order salad. The only other location I've found with such an impressive array of options for salad is at the Grand Floridian's Gasparilla Grill. For your sweet tooth, choose from a wide selection of gelato flavors instead of your typical ice cream options.

It's crucial to set aside extra time during your stay to thoroughly explore this resort. As we stepped into Radiator Springs and headed down Route 66, it felt as though we were transported back to Cars Land in Disney California Adventure. Full-size cars with each of the beloved movie characters are spread throughout this "land." Naturally, we took photos with each.

A bonafide Cozy Cone Motel leads you into the Cozy Cone Pool shaped like half a tire. Each building of Cars suites has a different them, including Luigi's Case Della Tires, Wheel Well Motel, and Tow Mater Towing & Salvage.

It's easy to see why the Nemo section of this resort has become the unofficial "preferred" section. Nemo suite guests enjoy close proximity

to Animation Courtyard, so you can just keep swimming to the food court, gift shop, and bus stop. Larger than life icons of your favourite Finding Nemo characters surround the area, including Mr. Ray, Crush, Squirt, Nemo, and Marlin.

□

□ The Nemo section is also centred around the Big Blue Pool, the main attraction at Art of Animation. This state of the art pool has zero depth entry on one end, just off from the splash pad and the very inviting Nemo playground. It's also the only pool on Disney property that is equipped with speakers under the water. We had to try it for ourselves to confirm you do indeed hear music while you are swimming underwater.

□

□ I freely admit that prior to this trip, I viewed our plans to stay at Art of Animation as "taking one for the team". Boy, was I wrong! Now our girls are constantly asking when we can stay there again and how will we choose among the Nemo, Cars, and Lion King suites?! I foresee us breaking our "new resort every trip" rule very soon!

About The Author: Amy Wear is a work at home Mom, travel agent, writer, and former occupational therapist. She lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and specializes in planning magical vacations for people of all abilities at [Click the Mouse](#)

Article last updated: 04-28-2017

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/disney-art-of-animation-resort-review.html>

Copyright by Amy Wear. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>