

Christmas at Hollywood Studios: Without the Osborne Family Lights!

by Ginger Jabour, PassPorter Guidebooks Author

A visit to Disney's Hollywood Studios to see The Osborne Family Spectacle of Dancing Lights was a Christmas tradition for many Disney lovers, beginning in 1995. But with Disney no longer displaying those millions of individual bulbs, should you skip this park at Christmas?

□ Not at all! The Studios has introduced dazzling new, high-tech holiday spectacles that any Disney-phile will love, including Jingle Bell, Jingle Bam! (in its second year) and the all-new Sunset Seasons Greetings.

□ Jingle Bell, Jingle Bam! is a multi-media spectacular, featuring Christmas elves Wayne and Lanny from Disney's Prep & Landing, as they try to find Santa in time for Christmas Eve deliveries. Fireworks bloom, amazing light projections from iconic Disney movies appear, searchlights swing, holiday music plays -- and it snows! This show had its first appearance this year on November 9, and will run through New Year's Eve.

It's hard to know where to look during this show, with three separate "screens" showing different scenes, fireworks bursting in the air, colorful laser lights streaming through the air, and snow falling. All in all, it's a fun experience and a neat way to celebrate the season.

□ Dessert parties with a reserved viewing area are available (\$79/adults, \$45/children through December 16th, then \$89/adults, \$49/children), but you can see this fabulous show from anywhere that has a good view of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Facing the theatre, a roped-off area for wheelchairs is on the left; look for an area to the right, marked with tape on the pavement, for one of the better places to view Jingle Bell, Jingle Bam!

□ (If you arrive early, you can watch Cast Members move the Center Stage, which features Star Wars: A Galaxy Far, Far Away live show during the day. After clearing the area, they unhook the various stage parts and drive them away! Not part of the holiday show, but it's an amazing sight nevertheless.)

□ You'll also want to stroll down Sunset Boulevard, toward the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror to see the all-new Sunset Seasons Greetings, another incredible multi-media seasonal treat, running from November 9 -- December 31. Electronic billboards along the street come to life at dusk with music and animated treats. Wayne and Lanny are back, as are Mickey and pals, the Muppets' Swedish Chef, Olaf, and Toy Story friends. But the star of the show is the Tower of Terror, as it undergoes

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Watch Olaf on the video signs as he sings "That Time of Year," from the new short Olaf's Frozen Adventure, then see the tower transformed into a Frozen masterpiece. The Swedish Chef "decorates" a gingerbread house, then the tower becomes an enormous gingerbread sculpture; but the most amazing is its transformation into a huge stack of presents, and then toys, after a short visit from Buzz, Woody, and their friends. Sunset Boulevard gets a snowfall, too, and the palm trees lining the thoroughfare are part of the light show. The Tower ride is still operating during the show, and it's fun to see doors open on the riders in the midst of the lights.

The only drawback to these two spectacular shows is the difficulty in seeing both, but the Sunset Seasons Greetings starts at dusk and continues until the park closes.

Of course, the whole park is decorated for Christmas, from the iconic giant Christmas tree to wreaths and lights everywhere. Even Gertie, the dinosaur in Echo Lake, is decorated, and giant Christmas balls float nearby.

In addition, the Frozen Sing-Along is transformed into "For the First Time in Forever: A Frozen Sing-Along Celebration," with Christmas songs from Olaf's Frozen Adventure.

For another helping of holiday fun, make a reservation at Hollywood & Vine for Minnie's Holiday Dine, available through January 7th. Along with a yummy buffet, you'll meet Mickey, Minnie, Donald, and Daisy dressed in their holiday finest. Guests also get a PhotoPass picture with Santa Goofy at the entry.

Holiday favorites, like hand-carved turkey and stuffing, are abundant at the buffet, along with a splendid assortment of mini desserts. Yummy iced gingerbread stars, cupcakes with tiny gingerbread men, and other creations topped with white chocolate bearing pictures of Mickey in a Santa suit carry on the holiday theme.

Be sure to let your server know of any celebrations going on with your group. I was celebrating my birthday and also earning my private pilot license, and our server went all out for the two of us; first he presented us with two glasses of champagne garnished with fresh

strawberries (yum!), and then brought out two different, beautifully decorated dessert plates, including a cupcake with a lit candle for me to blow out. All celebrations may not get the same treatment, but you never know.

□ If you haven't made time yet to give Santa Claus your gift list and get a picture, you can do that at Disney's Hollywood Studios, too. He'll be available until Christmas Eve, when he leaves to make his deliveries. But never fear -- Santa Goofy will take over from Christmas Day until New Year's Eve.

□ The Osborne Family Spectacle of Dancing Lights was a fabulous sight, but it has two worthy successors to carry on the Christmas torch. If you missed them this year, you may want to make plans to see them next November or December.

About The Author: Ginger Jabour is a PassPorter guide and co-author of the new [PassPorter's Disneyland Resort and Southern California Attractions Guidebook](#). She's also a retired Air Force colonel, a tutor, and assistant Scoutmaster. She has two sons: Matt, a recent graduate of Purdue University, and Mark, who is a freshman at Ohio State.

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