

Disneyland Hotel: The Original and Still the Best?

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Disney resorts have come -- and some have even gone -- over the last 50 years, but there's one that's been going strong the entire time.

Opened in 1955, the Disneyland Hotel really is the original Disney resort, opened in the same year as the theme park just a short walk away. Since then, the resort as a whole has changed beyond belief, with the addition of a second park, Disney's California Adventure, two more hotels, the Grand Californian and Paradise Pier, and Downtown Disney, an entire area dedicated to the twin pleasures of dining and shopping. And yet the Disneyland Hotel still literally towers over all these additions.

The first thing that strikes you about this resort is the size of the three towers, which house the guest rooms. You enter the resort to check in through the Marina Tower and that's where we spent our first couple of nights of our stay at the Disneyland Hotel. Our room gazed out over the resort's wonderful grounds and at its center, the Never Land Pool, complete with an illuminated image of Tinker Bell on the bottom of the pool. It's a stunning sight and much of our first evening in our room was spent staring outside in amazement at the beautiful view.

But there was also plenty to take in inside the room. Everywhere you look, this hotel just shouts "Disney" at you, from the bedspread with its images of some of the popular rides at Disneyland (see how many you can spot!) to the familiar Mickey Mouse hands in the bathroom. For Disney fans, it's perfect, and we had great fun spotting all of the Disney touches throughout our room.

From the Disneyland Hotel, it's a short walk over to the theme parks - and an even shorter walk over to Downtown Disney, which we could see from our room, if we craned our necks out of the window a bit that is! Literally, in two or three minutes, depending where in the complex you're staying, and you can be shopping or dining in Downtown Disney. Yes, it's a longer walk to the actual theme parks than if you're staying at either of the other two Disney-operated hotels, but it's also a pleasant walk and, if you want to take it easy, the monorail station is at the Disneyland Hotel's end of Downtown Disney.

After two nights in our original room, we moved up to our concierge room in the Sierra Tower. I was disappointed that we didn't manage to

snag a room overlooking Downtown Disney and instead we had the same view as before, just from a different perspective. It was a very different story when we headed to the concierge lounge to enjoy some snacks. It's no surprise to learn that the views from here are breathtaking - after all, people pay good money to stay in concierge and expect to get something in return. We certainly weren't disappointed.

The lounge comes into its own every night just before "Remember... Dreams Come True," the evening fireworks display at Disneyland Park. It's fair to say that if you want a window seat for this stunning display, then you need to be early. An hour before it was due to start, we arrived in the lounge and grabbed a prime viewing spot - and we weren't the first ones there! By the time "Remember" got underway, the lounge was packed with concierge guests all enjoying a unique view of this display that's very different from the perspective you get in the park itself.

The Disneyland Hotel is also home to some great dining options. As a vegetarian, Granville's Steak House held little interest for me, but we tried out the other two table service restaurants during our stay and were impressed with both. Our first night took us to Hook's Pointe, right by the main theme pool. It's a light and airy place with some great views of the resort and the food is also pretty impressive here.

If it's characters you want, you'll find plenty hanging out at Goofy's Kitchen by the convention center. Character meals are dinner and brunch, as breakfast lasts until midday every day. We went for a brunch and were amazed by how many characters we saw while we were seated, although they did take some time to get to us. Don't be afraid to mention something to your server if you think you're missing out on the characters. That's what we did and we got some superb one-to-one interaction as a result. Be sure to allow plenty of time for your meal -- things are certainly more leisurely here than they are at the character meals at Walt Disney World!

If you've got time while you're at Disneyland, it's also worth exploring the grounds of the Disneyland Hotel. We left that until our last afternoon and it's a shame that we did, as there was a lot to see. The real treats are right in front of the Bonita Tower, with Horseshoe Falls and the delightful koi pond and waterfront garden all worth some of your time. The Rose Court Garden, between the Bonita and Sierra Towers, is also a great place to explore, particularly when the roses are in full bloom.

There's a lot to take in at the Disneyland Hotel and it's definitely a place that you'll enjoy more if you allow some time to fully explore it, from the Disney touches in the room to the wonderful restaurants and the

beautiful grounds. It may be the oldest of any of the Disney resorts, but it's still got plenty of magic to capture its guests with.

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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