

My Favorite Disney Resort: Disney's Hilton Head Island Resort

by Michelle Kosloff, PassPorter Guest Contributor

I almost didn't write this article as it is so tempting to keep this wonderful resort a secret but ... I think my favorite Disney resort so far is Disney's Hilton Head Island Resort.

It isn't close to any theme park. It isn't "in your face" Disney. It isn't right on the beach. But it is right on the marsh, relaxing, cozy, and fun. It had something for everyone in our party -- and boy, we did have a party!

There were 17 of us in all, ranging from 1 to 66 years young. We stayed in three, two-bedroom units, generously paid for through points by my sister who is a Disney Vacation Club (DVC) member. The units were very nice. They aren't quite as big as those of Old Key West, but bigger than Saratoga Springs or the Beach Club Villas. She had tried to get a Grand Villa and a two bedroom but there was no availability of Grand Villas during the time we were there. However, the three units were all in one building and worked out wonderfully.

Each two-bedroom unit had a bedroom with a king bed and second bedroom with two queen beds. There was a full kitchen, complete with stove, microwave, full size fridge, dishwasher, and dishes and pots enough for six people. There was also an apartment-size washer and dryer in an alcove. The dryer left a little to be desired but it did dry the clothes in a second run. In our unit we had four adults, a "tween," and a teenager and we never felt on top of each other. We all fit around the table for a meal and we could all sit and watch TV together comfortably.

Our unit was in a fabulous location. We had a wonderful view of the marsh. We were close to the community hall and the pool. We were not close to the main building but the only one who spent a lot of time there was my teenage son, who played a lot of pool. Because the resort is small, it is not a long walk.

There are tons of activities at the resort. In the main lodge, there is Ben Murggie's Den where my son played pool. In the den, there is also checkers and a TV with some very comfy couches. There is a nice playground for the younger set. There is a shuffleboard court, horseshoe pits, a basketball court, foosball table and Ping-Pong. There is a very nice pier with a fishing area at the end. And of course there is the Big Dipper pool and water slide. (I went up and down several times!) There is also a kiddie pool and a large hot tub.

Aside from all this, there are also many scheduled, guided activities. Some had a charge but nothing was outrageous. The most expensive were the kayaking trips, which were \$25 for adults and \$15 per child, which is a reasonable rate for activities of this type at a resort. One thing to remember is that for almost all activities, you had to register in advance. You can do this at check-in. The more popular activities do fill up.

Since we were there with such an age range, we were able to experience a number of the activities offered. Some of the activities we attended: Toddler Time Crafts (ages 1-5), Lady Bugs (ages 3-5), Dinosaurs (ages 7-10), Capture the Flag (Teens), Geo-caching (families), Mickey Tie Dye (8+ - \$15 DVC, \$18 guests), Shark Teeth Necklaces (\$10 DVC, \$12 Guests), and Secrets of the Marsh (families). On the last activity we even had a surprise visit from a dolphin!

There is a campfire every other night (one activity that did not require registration). Unfortunately, the rain didn't seem to want to cooperate on the night we attended and it was cut short, but the kids still got S'mores. On alternate nights there is Sweet Goodnights. In this, children listen to a bedtime story and have cookies and milk.

Because we were there over the New Year holidays, there were additional parties. My son participated in the Teen party (\$25 DVC, \$30 Guests) and had a blast. He played Dance, Dance, Revolution, and pool and had pizza, pop and candy. He met many friends which made his time on a family vacation much more fun.

If you aren't the type for group activities, there are still many other options. Disney does have a private Beach House located right on the beach across the main drag from the resort. It is a short drive over there or you can take a shuttle. We rented bikes for the week so we rode over and it was a beautiful ride. Once there you use your room key to access the Beach House. Inside there is a warm pool and a seasonal snack bar (which unfortunately was closed while we were there due to the fact that it was winter). There is an arcade and a nice warm area where we sat, watched TV, and warmed up while the younger ones played a bit longer on the beach.

For the golfers in our party, Hilton Head is a golfing mecca. If you are there off-season like us, the prices are reasonable and you can always use [Last Minute Tee Times](#) to try and book a tee time for the next day if you aren't picky about where you play. Our guys tried two courses and they enjoyed both immensely. We also tried our hand at mini-putt golf. We visited [Pirate Island Golf](#) that was very well themed and that would not have been out of place at Walt Disney World.

Finally for the ladies in our group, there was shopping! Just off the island there is a good-sized outlet mall ([Tanger Outlets](#)). We all found many bargains there.

One complaint I have heard about this resort is that there is no full-service restaurant on site. There is a snack bar, but nothing sit-down. We didn't find this an issue. Since we had the full kitchen, we purchased enough groceries at the Piggly-Wiggly (love the name!) for breakfast and another meal and then ate out for the third. This plan worked out well for us. I don't like eating breakfast out and we like to experience a variety of restaurants so we didn't miss having an on-site restaurant. But you do need a car or at least bikes to get around as the Island isn't tiny.

We had to go for seafood once and ended up at the [Crazy Crab](#). It had decent prices and the seafood was well done. We also visited the [British Open Pub](#) with relatives who live in the area and the food there was very, very good.

Unfortunately for us, it was rather cold when we were there. We were told that there are maybe two cold snaps a year and unfortunately we hit one of them. The day we got there it was very nice and had it been that temperature for the whole of the vacation, it would have been fabulous. We could have hung out on our deck enjoying the marsh view and spent more time around the pool but unfortunately it was freezing. I guess that is the chance you take when visiting in winter.

We rented bikes for our stay and again, we didn't use them as much as we would have liked either because of the cold. But for the first couple of days it was tons of fun to zoom around and see the sights at a slower pace. There are designated bike paths all over the island so there is much less concern about accidents. I would definitely recommend them. You can rent right from Disney but they have limited availability and are more expensive. We stopped by one of the many rental places on the island and they dropped them off at the resort for us. My sister booked hers beforehand and got a discount for using the internet and for booking two weeks in advance. Hers were there ready for her when she checked in.

So if you decide to visit, be sure to get your activity guide when you check in and don't be afraid to join in. Like any Disney resort, the Cast Members were super friendly and made everyone feel welcome and part of the group. You can relax and do nothing or have a vacation as busy as at any resort in Walt Disney World.

[Official Web Site for Disney's Hilton Head Island](#)

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About The Author: Michelle has previously contributed articles on [Prince Edward Island](#) and [Niagara Falls](#) to PassPorter News. She is a Computer Programmer from Woodstock, Ontario, Canada and is married with two children.

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