

Disney Vacation Club: Disney's Best Kept Secret?

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

There's perhaps never been a better time to look at Disney's version of timeshare ownership. Disney Vacation Club is opening four new additions in 2009, making it a particularly good time to introduce the newest addition to the PassPorter e-book collection, [PassPorter's Disney Vacation Club Guide](#).

It's certainly been a busy time for the Disney Vacation Club (DVC), with new resorts opening and about to open for business. One thing's clear, the popularity of this program shows no sign of slowing down, despite the tough economic times. Since its launch in 1990, the DVC now counts more than 400,000 members from over 100 countries amongst its family. We joined in 2002, attracted by the lure of the beautiful Beach Club Villas.

Since then, we've watched it go from strength to strength and never more so than over the last few months. A few weeks ago, I was lucky enough to be at the new Kidani Village section of Animal Kingdom Lodge on its opening night. Adding another 324 villas to the DVC offer, it compliments DVC rooms that had already been converted in the resort's original Jambo House. Most of the new villas at Kidani Village overlook a brand new savanna, offering new animals to spot. Add in a superb new restaurant, Sanaa, feature pool Samawati Springs, and the unique Uwanja Camp water play area and this really seems to finish this resort off. It's a pleasant surprise, as the resort felt complete before this latest addition.

The most recent addition to the DVC portfolio opened even more recently, with the Treehouse Villas now available at Saratoga Springs. Even before they were added, this was already by far the biggest DVC resort, sprawling over more than 65 acres, with the Treehouse Villas set in their own secluded area. With their own entrance by car, there's a footpath connecting them to the rest of the resort.

Set 10 feet off the ground, the Treehouse Villas are perfect for large groups, sleeping up to nine people plus a child under the age of three in an octagonal-shaped building. Each villa has three bedrooms, including one master suite, two full bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen and dining area. As there are only 60 of these magnificent additions to the DVC portfolio, getting to sample one may be an issue, as they are bound to be hugely popular, with reports of hundreds of people on wait lists for them at the busiest times of the years.

That could also be an issue with the next Disney Vacation Club property to open, Bay Lake Tower at the Contemporary Resort. Due to open in August, the new tower is situated where the Contemporary's North Garden Wing once stood, and is connected to the main building by a walkway on the fourth floor. The real draw here is bound to be the views of the Magic Kingdom, but only a small percentage of rooms will have that coveted view, with others overlooking Bay Lake, the resort grounds, or the parking lot.

If you don't get one of the rooms with a Magic Kingdom view, then all is not lost, as the top of the tower will boast the Top of the World Lounge, where guests can go to watch the Wishes fireworks show. Guests will be able to enjoy Bay Cove Pool, with a water slide overlooking Bay Lake and an interactive water play area. If you want to do a sneak peek of this area before it officially opens, it's worth taking a boat ride from the Contemporary over to Fort Wilderness or Wilderness Lodge to catch a glimpse of it.

As if that wasn't enough, a fourth DVC property is set to open its doors late in September, but it will be the smallest addition and the first on the west coast of America. Finally, the original Disneyland resort in California will have its own Disney Vacation Club wing at the Grand Californian Hotel, although getting in here is definitely going to be a challenge! There are only 50 villas, of which just two will be grand villas, sleeping up to 12 people, so getting your hands on those will be virtually impossible. Other choices will include studios, sleeping four; one bedroom villas, sleeping up to five; and two bedroom villas, sleeping up to nine people.

Just like Bay Lake Tower at the Contemporary, the new Villas at Disney's Grand Californian won't add many extras to the resort, as it already has so many things to enjoy, including a spa and some fine -- and fun! -- dining. However, you can expect to see a new swimming pool in the villas area, along with an outdoor viewing area that offers views of Disney's California Adventure just in time to provide great views of the new night-time water pageant that's scheduled to open in the park in 2010.

So surely that's it for expansion of the Disney Vacation Club right now? Well, not quite. As well as all these recent and upcoming openings, work is underway on the first DVC resort not on mainland US soil. The Ko Olina Marina and Resort in Oahu, Hawaii will be home to 480 DVC villas as part of a whole new Disney resort that's scheduled to open in 2011. Sales of these villas have not yet started, so information about what you can expect remains sketchy right now. We do know that the resort has been designed to offer the best possible views from the rooms and that

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it will include a pool and water play area, spa, two restaurants, a children's club, convention center, and wedding lawn, so it really will offer something for everyone.

There couldn't be a better time to become a DVC member with so many great opportunities opening up over the next few months and years. No doubt there will be further announcements and further additions, as many more people become members and are welcomed home to what did used to be Disney's best kept secret. Perhaps it's not quite the secret it once was…

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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