

Disney's Beach Club Resort: The Best Resort at Disney

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Two things are clear to everyone who's visited a number of Disney resorts over the years. They all benefit from exceptional theming and are all very different from one another. But which one is your favorite? PassPorter message board guide and regular newsletter contributor Cheryl Pendry believes there can be no argument -- the Beach Club and their Villas are best!

Our love affair with the Beach Club began appropriately enough on our honeymoon in 1999. We had debated long and hard over where we should stay for our first visit to a Disney resort, but felt that we couldn't justify the cost of a deluxe hotel. We'd never visited one, but surely nothing could be good enough to warrant spending that much money? We narrowed our choice down to a moderate and we went for Dixie Landings, or Port Orleans Riverside as it's known today. Our first couple of days there were magical, the grounds were green and lush and it was a wonderfully romantic place to stay. We knew we had made the right decision -- that was, until we walked into the lobby of the Beach Club.

We thought we'd take the opportunity to find out what was so special about the deluxe resorts and whether it was worth saving all our money to stay in one eventually. I was skeptical, but from the second we were met by Art the Greeter at the front door, I knew that this place was something special. The spacious lobby with its high ceilings and white balconies looking down from the second floor gave a relaxed feel, something clearly being enjoyed by those seated on the series of comfortable chairs, who were just watching the world go by.

And that's something you can do plenty of at the Beach Club. Head out through the other side of the lobby and you're greeted by white wooden rocking chairs, with a view over the resort's beautifully manicured gardens, looking towards Crescent Lake and the BoardWalk opposite. Walk a few more steps and talk a look back towards the resort. From the first time I saw that view, it bowled me over. The pale blue shade of the buildings were exactly what I'd always imagined a beachside villa to look like and the shade was far more appealing than the dull cream of the neighboring Yacht Club.

Captivated by the theming of the resort on our first visit, it was time to explore further, and no visit is complete without seeing the resort's main pool, Stormalong Bay. Calling it a pool may be unfair though, it's more like a mini water park, sprawling over a couple of acres with

something for all ages and all abilities of swimmers. Boasting a children's pool, water slide, whirlpools in the main swimming area and a deep swimming area providing more of a challenge to regular swimmers, it even offers a poolside bar in the shape of Hurricane Hanna's, if you need a snack or want to sip a cocktail in the sunshine. But be warned, there's no way that you'll be able to experience the delights of Stormalong Bay unless you're a guest at the Yacht Club, Beach Club or the neighboring Villas. You are expected to bring your resort ID for a swim and are given wristbands showing that you are resort guests before you can enjoy the facilities. No resort ID, no access to Stormalong Bay -- it's that simple.

Having a lot of good places to eat at a resort is another important thing for us. Let's face it, we all have mornings and evenings when we don't want to stray far from our room for a meal -- and we don't have to at the Beach Club. Enjoy character breakfasts with Goofy, Minnie and those mischievous chipmunks Chip and Dale at the Cape May Cafe, just off the main lobby, which by night serves up a New England-style clambake.

Carry on past the Cape May Cafe and you'll come across a lovely lounge, Martha's Vineyard, which never seems to be crowded. Wine, beer, cocktails (even that famous Kungaloosh from the Adventurer's Club) can all be bought here, along with a series of snack items. Out through the doors, past some of Stormalong Bay and on your right is the home of arguably the best burgers on Disney property -- and surely the biggest dessert? Both can be found at Beaches and Cream, a 1950's style diner, with its Kitchen Sink, packed full of bananas, ice cream, cookies, chocolate fudge cake, cream, cherries, nuts and chocolate sauce. Perhaps it's easier to describe what's not contained in it. Eat every bit of it on your own and you'll get it for free -- on all our visits to Beaches and Cream, it's not a feat we've ever seen accomplished.

A quick walk past the rest of Stormalong Bay into the adjoining Yacht Club opens up more dining possibilities at the upscale Yachtsman Steakhouse or the more informal Yacht Club Galley. There's another lounge to indulge in just off the Yacht Club lobby called the Crew's Cup. And that's before exploring the restaurants at the Swan, Dolphin or the BoardWalk, all nearby.

On your way there, you'll also spot Lafferty Place Arcade, somewhere you can easily lose the kids and those "kids at heart" in your family for a couple of hours, as they enjoy the many games in there. The Ship Shape Health Club allows you to work out during your vacation or if that doesn't sound like much fun, you can book yourself a massage. There's even a salon called Periwig's Beauty and Barber Shop, offering hair, skin

and nail care for more pampering.

But it's no longer just about the Beach Club. Recognizing the appeal of the resort, the Disney Vacation Club started construction work on the Villas in 2000 and it was fascinating to see them rise from the ground on our stay at the Beach Club in that year. Obviously, we're not the only ones who love the Beach Club, as the Villas sold out in record time. Similarly themed to the main Beach Club complex, but with the accent on sea green, the Villas enjoy their own quiet pool, called Dunes Cove, and public rooms to sit back and relax in, with one boasting its own TV with cartoons for the kids to enjoy. With the arrival of the Villas, another communal room was added to the original Beach Club complex, the Solarium, a delightfully airy conservatory-type room. Again, it never seems to be busy, but it's a lovely place to sit and unwind.

Beautiful theming, the best pool on Disney property, a great range of restaurants and lots of places to relax and watch the world go by -- what more could you want from a hotel? How about a location that's so central that you can walk to two theme parks if you choose to. Epcot is no more than a ten minute walk from the Beach Club lobby, but if you're staying in the Villas or at the eastern edge of the Beach Club, it's more like five minutes. At this end of the resort, you're closer to the park than the resort's marina.

The Marina allows you to catch a boat to either Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, or the BoardWalk, but in reality it's nearly always quicker to walk to Epcot. Disney's Hollywood Studios is another matter. If you're a quick walker and there's no boat in sight, you can walk faster, but the boat is a charming, albeit slow way of getting to Disney's Hollywood Studios. It is a picturesque routes though, with water views of the Swan and Dolphin along the way, which eventually gives way to the Tower of Terror and finally the Sorcerer's Hat as you approach the Studios.

You really couldn't wish for a more centrally located hotel at Disney. Even the monorail resorts can't boast excellent transport links to two parks -- and there's no other hotel where you can walk into a park in just a few minutes.

What's not to love about the Beach Club? It's got it all and there's surely no other resort on Disney property that can compete with its central location, amazing pool, wonderful theming and range of places to eat. What do you think?

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

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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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