

Disney Cruise Line: Not Just for Kids!

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Guest Contributor

We were sitting at the diner, enjoying our coffee and French toast, and extolling the virtues of our latest travel adventure to anyone who would listen. We were fresh from a seven-night Western Caribbean cruise on the Disney Magic, and what a wonderful time we had!

While going on and on about the magic that is a Disney cruise, a patron from the table behind started telling us about a Caribbean cruise he had been on. I asked what cruise line, and he named one of the other cruise lines. He then followed that up with "I took an adult cruise, not a Disney cruise."

Hmmm...

To a lot of people, the very word "Disney" conjures up visions of children laughing, characters hugging, and the general joy that comes with childhood. So naturally, this vision would spill over into a Disney cruise. It must be all giggles and diapers and sticky, jelly-covered fingers, right?

Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

Yes, a Disney cruise can be a magical family vacation. But it can be, and it was for us, a wonderful adult experience.

We began our adventure in a stateroom with a navigator's verandah. This little slice of heaven allowed us to sit out and overlook the deep blue sea, various ports of call, and even one tropical depression named Andrea by ourselves, with not a child in sight. I had surprised my husband with a little stateroom gift, which included a cheese and fruit platter and a bottle of Asti Spumante. We were well on our way to enjoying a "grown-up" cruise, and we hadn't even left port yet!

We had chosen the early seating, so we were seated with a lot of families; however, there is the option of the late dining rotation, which will have fewer children and more adults. And the dinner choices make you think you are on a gourmet dining experience. You can also forgo the whole dining room experience for a change, and have in-room dining. We had breakfast delivered to our room on our last full day, and we felt like royalty, dining privately al fresco while the ship docked at Castaway Cay.

And while we are on the subject of dining, did I mention Palo? Palo is the

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adults-only dining experience on both of Disney's cruise ships. You must be 18 to get in, no ifs, ands, butts, or children. A seven-night cruise offers chances to go for dinner, champagne brunch and high tea at Palo. We did dinner and brunch; both meals were outstanding, upscale, delicious and definitely adult!

So what about entertainment? Well, the first thing you will notice is that deck 9 is divided into three distinct and separate areas. There is the kiddie area, complete with Mickey's pool, and then there is the family area, complete with Goofy's pool. But keep going...further down the ship is Quiet Cove, the adults-only pool area. Here you will find plenty of lounge chairs, comfortable seats, two hot tubs, and the pool, all reserved for guests over the age of 18. You can get a drink from Signals bar, or sip a quiet double latte from The Cove Cafe, a coffee bar, also exclusively for the enjoyment of the adult crowd!

Not far from Quiet Cove is one of the Disney Cruise Line's highlights, The Vista Spa and Salon! Here you can get a massage, work out on state of the art equipment, get a manicure, enjoy a spa treatment or relax in the Tropical Rainforest Room. And guess what? Adults only!

And how about night time? Well, Disney is of course known for its great family entertainment, and the shows are geared that way at the main, Walt Disney Theatre. But after the last show, head on down to Beat Street (the Magic) or Route 66 (the Wonder) for some kid-free entertainment. There are comedy shows, illusionists, live music and themed party nights. Do your disco best and you might get to be one of the Village People live and on stage!

You can also end your night with a relaxing drink in the Promenade Lounge. While this is not an exclusive adults-only area, musical entertainment and drinks provide an adult atmosphere. We sat here several nights, and never really noticed any children.

Of course, part of the fun of a cruise is the shore excursions. While there are few "adult only" shore excursions, you can choose carefully. Or, you can do a port-of-call on your own! This is what we opted to do at Key West. We spent a relaxing day wandering the city, with lunch at Margaritaville and several wonderful side trips. On Grand Cayman, we did the Rum Point Beach adventure, which was family oriented, but by the time we found our place in the sand, we might have well been the only ones on the island! And Castaway Cay has its share of adult-only spots as well. Take the tram past the family beach and head out to Serenity Bay, the adults-only beach, complete with its own bar and barbecue. Grab a few chairs or a hammock and enjoy the crystal blue waters. For a real treat, book a couples massage in the open air

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cabanas! (These need to be booked in advance, but they are wonderful!) When you get hungry, you can eat at the open-air adult barbecue, right at Serenity Bay. This dining alternative means you never have to leave the adult area, even to eat! And there are a few things on the adult buffet that aren't on the family buffet, including salmon and steak!

So there you have it! A relaxing adult time provided by one of the world's foremost leaders in family entertainment. Your cruise can be as adult or as family oriented as you want to make it. Either way, you are sure to have the experience of a lifetime!

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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