

Victoria and Albert's: A Disney Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

One thing Disney is very good at is persuading you to spend money whenever you visit any of their theme parks around the world. Something else Disney is very good at is providing first class customer service and breathtaking food. Put all of that together at the one of the most exclusive Disney restaurants in the world and you've got the basis of Victoria and Albert's.

Fittingly, Victoria and Albert's is located at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort and Spa, the most expensive hotel on property at Walt Disney World, where everything just screams opulence from the moment you arrive. Located on the second floor at the back of the main lobby, Victoria and Albert's is a place that's very much hidden away and there's good reason for that. It's an exclusive place and, for men to enter, a jacket is a must. It's a policy that Disney takes seriously, as we've seen men turned away only to return red-faced a few moments later complete with the required jacket. For women, cocktail dresses or fine tops and pants are the norm and it's one of the few places where you can give an outing to the finest dress in your wardrobe without feeling out of place. On the occasions we've dined at Victoria and Albert's I've felt almost like a real princess, dressed in my finery, with people looking at me.

As soon as you enter Victoria and Albert's, you realize this is a very different environment from any other Disney restaurant. For starters, you won't see any children under the age of 10, thanks to a policy introduced in 2008. The lighting is intentionally dark to add the ambiance, although I must admit on occasions I have found it a little too dark for my liking and it certainly makes taking photos in there an interesting challenge. Using a flash is a must, but to do so almost feels disrespectful to the other diners there, as Disney has worked so hard to create a romantic atmosphere. That's added to by the harpist who plays at times during your meal.

So to the important part -- the food. The first thing to say is that this is not a cheap meal. In fact, it's anything but. The prix fixe menu is now \$125 and if you want to sample the Chef's Table, that will set you back \$165. They also offer a wine pairing, which I sampled on our most recent visit there, which is \$60. That may sound steep, but having tried it, I can recommend it. I expected to literally sample a small amount of wine to go with each course, but not all! A full glass was presented each time. It

is very easy to roll out of the restaurant following that, so it's not an option that will work for anyone who's planning on driving afterwards.

Before you arrive for your meal, you'll get a call from the team at Victoria and Albert's, usually a day or so beforehand, to check for any allergies. Don't be afraid to mention even the smallest thing, as they really will work around you. I don't eat meat and was presented with a beautiful selection of either fish or vegetarian dishes, while my husband's allergy to dairy products was handled wonderfully. It was fascinating to compare our menus to see what they had come up with for each of us. It's worth mentioning here that the menus will also be personalized with your name on it and the details of any special event you're celebrating, which is a lovely touch.

It's very hard to say what will be on your menu when you dine at Victoria and Albert's, as it changes every day, as you'd expect from a top class restaurant. Each course usually has two or three choices for you to pick from. Everyone does at least start with the amuse bouche (small bite meant to tempt your palate) and then six more courses await you. At first, that sounds almost daunting and you imagine that, by the third or fourth course, you'll be stuffed full and feeling sick. Not a bit of it. Just as you finish the final mouthful of dessert, you feel satisfied, as if you've had a good meal, but not too much. It's amazing how the chefs do that, and it's a real talent.

To give you an idea of the food you might get -- and do bear in mind that I don't eat meat and my husband has a dairy allergy -- here's what we were lucky enough to experience on our most recent visit to Victoria and Albert's. Our first course choices were Ohio Tomatoes with Costa Rican Hearts of Palm, Niçcedil;oise Olives and Ahi Tuna, and Long Island Duck with Tuscan melon, Grains of Paradise, and Minus Eight Vinegar. The second course choices were Diver Scallop with Asparagus and Cauliflower and Saffron Emulsion, and Colorado Lamb with Wild Mushroom Ragout, Porcini Pasta, and Truffle Foam. The next course saw my husband opting for the Diver Scallops I'd had for the second course, as oddly they were offered to both of us in different courses, while I had the roasted pumpkin cream with squash ragout.

Then you get to the main course and here we went for John Dory with Roasted Delicata and Pumpkin and Styrian Pumpkinseed Oil, and New Zealand Elk with Potato Gnocchi and Veal Sweetbreads. Next is the course that gets your pallet ready for dessert and I had the guava gelato with micro garden mint and my husband had the specially prepared cheese plate. Yes, even with a dairy allergy, the chefs at Victoria and Albert's had thoughtfully put together a cheese plate that he could eat. That's the sort of attention to detail you get here.

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The final course, always the best, is dessert and our choices were the Hawaiian Kona Chocolate Souffle, and Poached Pear with Cassis Mousse and Spiced Cake. Every course was absolutely superb. I will be honest, some of the names are daunting and you do wonder what on earth you'll be presented with, but as soon as you take a mouthful, all the flavors blend together perfectly. We quickly learned to implicitly trust the chefs here, as all the choices are first class.

So how long does the whole dining process take? Unbelievably, it's about three hours long in total, but it doesn't feel like that at all. It feels like a well-paced meal, with just enough time in between each course.

Quite simply, this place does not disappoint. It is Disney's finest dining experience and rightly so. Everything is outstanding and the food is unbelievable. If you can afford to try Victoria and Albert's, you owe it to yourself to do so, as it's a decision you won't regret.

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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