

Disney's All Star Movies Resort: Disney Magic For Less

by Sabine Rautenberg, PassPorter Guest Contributor

On April 10, 2007, my husband and I found ourselves on a long-distance flight to Orlando to visit Walt Disney World for the first time. Being the avid planner that I am, I had spent months preparing for those two weeks in Florida. One of the most important decisions was where we'd stay. After booking a hotel off property first to go easy on our budget, we later "upgraded" to one of Disney's value resorts. So here we were, tired and exhausted, driving from the airport to Disney's All Star Movies Resort. I wasn't at all sure what to expect. The second I spotted the huge silver star that greets guests at the entrance, though, I felt a veritable tingle go through my body. The Disney magic spread instantly, like a contagious virus, forcing a huge grin on my face! My smile got even broader when a cheerful female cast member checked us in. I must have been giggly like a little girl when she handed us our Key To The World cards and wished us a, "Magical stay!" The check-in area was large, with lots of waiting space that was deserted now as we arrived late at night. It also had a cute kid's area with a TV to keep little ones happy while Mom or Dad check in.

It took me a minute to realize that we had been upgraded from a standard to a preferred room, as the map I was holding indicated that our room (No. 5903) was in building No. 5 in the Fantasia section. I had sent in a fax a few days before, asking for a quiet room on an upper floor. We got a king bed room on the top (third) floor, facing the main pool. While I was apprehensive at first, the noise from the pool was never a problem. In fact, we usually took a nap in the afternoon. The room itself felt spacious enough for two adults. I missed having a real closet to hang my clothes in, though.

During the two weeks that we stayed at Disney's All Star Movies Resort, we scouted every last inch of this imaginative resort. The larger-than-life icons scattered all over the place ensured that I felt at the heart of the Disney magic whenever I stepped out of our room. Cute Dalmatian puppies, water bucket-carrying broom sticks, an imposing Buzz Lightyear -- Disney really went out of their way to keep the colorful icons in perfect condition as I never saw any paint flaking off anywhere.

My personal favorite area of the resort was the main pool. Sorcerer Mickey spraying cool water down at me as I swam in the pool was very refreshing in the hot Florida sun. I remember floating around, looking

up at the clear blue sky and wishing this perfectly peaceful moment would never end. Peaceful it was, despite the fact that I was surrounded by screaming, happy kids thoroughly enjoying themselves. The lifeguards at the pool were very observant, keeping an eye on things at all times. While the quiet pool in the Mighty Ducks section of the resort seemed appealing as well, I stayed away from that area mainly due to the fact that the larger-than-life hockey masks scared me no end.

Whenever we heard a rumble in our bellies, we headed straight to the large World Premiere Food Court. Even though we did experience a lot of table service meals at Walt Disney World during our stay, we never missed having a table service restaurant at our own resort. The food court offered a good variety of tasty items -- so much so that we often had a hard time choosing. We always started our day here with a hearty breakfast that, on most days, included chocolate chip pancakes with bacon for me and an omelette for my husband. When we were still jetlagged at the beginning of our trip, we'd be at the food court around 6:00 am and have the place practically to ourselves. Now as the vacation went on, we'd go for breakfast later and later, noting that the food court was busiest between 8:00 am and 9:00 am. We got refillable mugs at the beginning of our stay, and for us it was well worth its money as our room was so close to the main building that we could get a refill easily.

We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Disney's All Star Movies Resort. Still, there were aspects we found frustrating. Most importantly, the bus transportation to the theme parks was a hassle. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason as to when buses would show up. We'd see two buses going to Disney's Animal Kingdom pass while we still waited for one to take us to Epcot. Also, the buses always seemed full if not packed. After a few days, we opted to take our rental car to the parks, and this worked out a lot better for us.

The other aspect that could have potentially impaired our stay was the fact that a high school cheerleading competition was being held one weekend while we were there. Disney's All Star Movies Resort got its fair share of teenage girls. We could see and hear them running around at night. Luckily, our room was far away from the action. Therefore, it didn't bother us much, and while the squads basically took over the food court in the morning, there never was any trouble. Even so, I can see how a bigger event that might fill the majority of rooms at the resort would have made me feel oddly out of place.

Despite these minor drawbacks, Disney's All Star Movies Resort grew very dear to me. Last year, we decided to become DVC members, simply because we like the space DVC villas can offer. Still, we'll certainly

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return to this value resort for part of our Walt Disney World stays, as it allows me to submerge in the Disney magic in a way no other Disney resort after it has been able to.

About The Author: Sabine Rautenberg lives in Germany with her husband Manuel. She's been a fan of all things Disney ever since her first visit to Disneyland Paris at the age of 14. Nowadays, she's a PassPorter Message Board Guide (Disneybine). She loves traveling to the States and Florida in particular.

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