

Pampering Perfected: Staying Club Level at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

We all want to feel pampered when we're on vacation, and often guests look for the best possible place to stay while on that vacation.

□ Recognizing that, many top hotel chains offer something that goes above and beyond, often with your own private lounge, and other amenities. It's got many names, but at Disney, it's generally known as Concierge or Club Level, although each resort gives it its own unique name. As a Disney Vacation Club member, I always figured that concierge would be something that we'd never sample, but you never can tell....

A couple of years ago, I was lucky enough to be able to enjoy Club Level at the BoardWalk Resort, in their Innkeepers' Club, but only for one night. That night was very special though, with a wonderful view of IllumiNations from the balcony of the concierge lounge, and some excellent food and drink offerings, both during the evening and the next morning for breakfast. Now this is something I could seriously get used to!

□ As a result, a couple of times since, I would book rooms at the Hilton chain and request discounted upgrades, if one was available at check-in time. Often, these came through, and sometimes these resulted in their concierge level rooms.

□ Having got a taste for this, I decided that we should try and get ourselves a concierge room with our Disney Vacation Club (DVC) points, as this was now an option at Animal Kingdom Lodge. It wasn't going to be an easy task, as there aren't many DVC rooms that are concierge. However, always ready for a challenge, I made my attempt to book at the seven-month mark, as soon as bookings opened for those of us who don't own points there. I had already been tipped off a couple of days earlier by a cast member that there was still some availability left, and indeed there was. I was lucky enough to get two nights in a concierge studio.

The only problem with booking a concierge stay using your Disney Vacation Club points is that you don't automatically get a savanna view room. You could just as easily have a standard view, overlooking the pool, and there's no way of knowing until you check-in. It's an odd way

of doing things, and there's no way around it, so it's worth being aware if this is how you plan on staying concierge.

☐ Fortunately, we lucked out, and were presented with a studio that had a wonderful view of the savanna, although in all honesty, we saw more animal activity from our ordinary studio (also with a savanna view) that we'd stayed in over the previous few nights. Is there anything that's different between the rooms? Well, we found some lovely little touches. It had a slightly different layout, with the bed closest to the balcony, which made it feel much bigger. We appeared to have additional toiletries, a shaving mirror, and a lovely towel mouse, complete with a note of one of Walt's most famous sayings, "it all started with a mouse."

☐ But evening is when you can see the difference in your concierge room, as you receive nightly turndown service, complete with chocolates, and your dressing gowns are out on the bed, ready for you to use. This was a real treat for us. As DVC members, we're used to housekeeping only every few days, so coming back to this each night was lovely.

☐ The major part of concierge living is the lounge that comes with it. Throughout the day, from 6:30 am to 10:00 pm, the Kilimanjaro Club offers a variety of different foods and drinks. As you'd expect, it starts with coffee and juice, before moving on to continental breakfast. We were very impressed with the breakfast offerings, finding lots to satisfy our hunger. It was during the main part of the day that we were disappointed. Described as refreshments, all that was available were chips, a bit of fruit, cakes, and drinks. It's something that might tide you over for an hour or so, but you certainly wouldn't make a meal of it.

☐ Later in the day, however, the wine and cheese selection is something that you really can fill up on. With a fridge in our room, we were able to stock up on whatever we liked the look of, to enjoy whenever we wanted. The cordials and desserts in the evening were also very impressive, and we were amazed to be almost force-fed desserts on one night of our stay. Sadly, from chatting to the cast members, we quickly discovered the reason, as a lot of the food, if not eaten, is thrown away. We were happy to help out to stop that happening!

☐ The lounge overlooks the main lobby below, and is located on the sixth floor. You get a great feeling of superiority when you head up there in the elevator, as you have to use your gold room key card to get up there. It led to some impressed looks from those sharing the elevator with us!

☐ The Kilimanjaro Club concierge desk is open from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm, with cast members available to help you with any queries you might

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have or make any bookings, such as dining or tour reservations. Beware though, they can't work miracles, as we found out when we tried to get into a couple of popular restaurants on Easter Sunday! In our defense, we had an idea of the response we'd get before we asked the question, but there's no harm in trying, right?

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□ Perhaps the best benefit to staying concierge at Animal Kingdom Lodge is the opportunity to take various tours that you can take part in for an additional charge. But that's something for another article, when we'll explore the Sunrise Safari, available to concierge guests staying at the resort.

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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