

## Disney's Port Orleans French Quarter: A Disney Resort Review

by Jennifer Shorey Arnold, PassPorter Guest Contributor

□ The last time I visited Port Orleans French Quarter I fell in love with the cobblestone streets, decorative black iron railings, and beautifully colored buildings.

□ This resort is the smallest of Walt Disney World's Moderate resorts, with only 1,008 rooms. Perfect for couples or families, I have found this resort to be a cozy and peaceful retreat. So, when my family decided to meet at Disney for fall vacation, I thought this would be the perfect resort for everyone.

For this trip, my husband and I decided to drive down to Florida. However, other members of our party flew, and took advantage of Disney's Magical Express transportation from the airport. I had booked our reservation package online and indicated that we were traveling with another party. Since our parties were arriving and departing on different days, we were hoping that perhaps we would get rooms in the same building or in buildings on the same side of the resort. At check-in, it was such a great surprise to discover that we were staying right next door to each other in adjoining rooms.

□ Since our last visit, the resort has gone through some positive changes. As of mid-April 2011, all the rooms have been refurbished. Queen beds have replaced the double beds and a flat panel TV has been added. I was disappointed to see that the pedestal sinks that I've always liked had been removed, but the new sinks do offer lots more precious counter space. The rooms also have a small table with two chairs, a dresser complete with TV, mini fridge, and coffee maker, a ceiling fan, and a bench that is perfect for holding your luggage. Everything feels fresh and new, with a beautiful new royal blue and vibrant gold color scheme on the bedspreads.

□ Although the resort feels like its own little world of peace and tranquility, fun can be found around every corner. The resort offers a nice-size pool complete with serpent waterslide and festive statues of alligators playing musical instruments to keep you in the mood. When checking into the resort for this visit, I was told by a cast member that the pool is open 24 hours, which I thought was a neat treat. In addition to the pool, there is a small children's wading pool, playground, and even an arcade close by. Since our last visit, I discovered that they installed a fire ring out in an open area overlooking the Sassagoula River, which is

lit nightly for everyone to enjoy. Also, some nights you can catch live music at Scat Cats Club lounge. If you'd prefer something quieter, it is always great to take a stroll by the river or relax with a drink at the pool.

□ While you're staying at the Resort, make a point to walk over to French Quarter's sister resort, Port Orleans Riverside. You can follow the paved path that winds its way along the river for a short walk of approximately 10 minutes. At this larger resort, you can find even more to do. Take the time to explore the resort and see the guest room buildings in the Magnolia Bend and Alligator Bayou areas. While there you can also stroll through the larger gift shop or go out to the dock area to rent bikes, boats, and even take a carriage ride. Carriage rides are offered in the evenings, normally from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm (the last ride departs at 9:30 pm). They offer a relaxing 25-minute journey that winds its way through both resorts. Make sure to check with the Riverside Marina for questions or to make a reservation.

□ A great perk of staying at Port Orleans French Quarter is that it offers easy access to Downtown Disney, which is a short and relaxing boat ride away. The boat dock is located behind the pool area at the back of the resort. The boat normally runs from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm, but it's always good to check with the concierge desk to inquire about the exact times of operation during your trip. There is only a limited number of seats on each boat, so it can get crowded at times. One day on our trip, we decided to walk to Riverside to catch the boat from there, since it starts at Riverside and then heads to French Quarter on its way to Downtown Disney. Bus transportation is available to the parks and even to Downtown Disney, if you'd rather not take the boat.

□ The resort has a spacious food court named Sassagoula Floatworks & Food Factory which is decorated in a Mardi Gras theme. Large instruments, party favors, and masks hang from the ceiling in the dining area. Although this food court only has a few serving stations, the selection of items is still great. If you're looking for a larger selection or perhaps want a table-service restaurant, Port Orleans Riverside has not only a larger food court but also Boatwright's Dining Hall, a lovely sit-down restaurant. As with other Moderate resorts, Port Orleans French Quarter does offer pizza delivery until midnight. We thought this would be a great idea for a late night dinner after a day in the parks and a bit of shopping at Downtown Disney. Sure enough, it worked out perfectly, allowing everyone some food and time to relax. If you're on the Disney Dining Plan, you use two table service meal credits for the pizza delivery combo deal, but you get so much food. We received a large pizza with anything we wanted on it, a 2-liter bottle of soda, a side salad, an order of breadsticks, and two desserts. There was so much food that we were able to save our desserts for breakfast the next

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morning.

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□ It had been a few years since our last trip to Port Orleans French Quarter, and with all the changes and updates I found that I loved this resort even more than I did the last time we stayed there. We will definitely be back for another visit! If you're looking for a fun place or a quiet retreat, look into this great resort for your next Disney trip.

*About The Author: Jennifer is a Disney enthusiast and loves to visit Walt Disney World and Disneyland with her husband as often as possible. When not at the parks, she enjoys sharing her knowledge of Disney with family and friends to help them plan their own Disney trips.*

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