

Where to Find the Best Views in Walt Disney World - Part 5: The Resorts and Downtown Disney

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In this, the last of my series considering some of the best views at the Walt Disney World Resort, we'll be stepping outside of the theme parks, and exploring what can be seen at the various resorts, as well as Downtown Disney. (Check out [Part 1 - Magic Kingdom](#), [Part 2 - Epcot](#), [Part 3 - Hollywood Studios](#), and [Part 4 - Animal Kingdom](#)!) It's a big job, but I know exactly where to start...

Let's begin at the Contemporary, and more specifically the California Grill, with those stunning vistas not only across Seven Seas Lagoon and the Magic Kingdom, but the other way across Bay Lake towards Wilderness Lodge, with Epcot in the distance. Time your meal right in the evening, and you can catch both IllumiNations and Wishes from here. If you don't eat here, you can get nearly as great a view from the viewing platform on the fourth floor of the main building. And let's not forget that the Outer Rim Lounge on the fourth floor also provides some stunning views. Try grabbing a drink here at sunset, it's a beautiful picture opportunity as evening colors touch the trees surrounding Bay Lake. And who can ever get tired of seeing the monorail pass by in front of you on this floor as well?

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□The next obvious place for me to head on this tour is my all-time favorite resort, my beloved Beach Club. One of the reasons I love this place so much is that you can head just outside the back of the resort, sit on the white sandy beach, and take in the view across to the BoardWalk, with the Friendships passing by. It's a lovely way to completely relax. Somewhere else I love to relax is the breezeway over at the Villas, and the solarium in the main resort. Both offer places to sit, and just watch the world go by. It's also a fun place for people-watching, although it's also worryingly easy to lose track of time.

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□Another place where time just slips by for me is Animal Kingdom Lodge. Honestly, I think I could sit for hours, and watch the various animals out on the savannah, either from the Arusha Rock Kopje overlook behind Jambo House, or if we're staying in a savannah view room, from the comfort of our own balcony. Many is the time that I've sat out on the balcony, tapping away on the laptop, and glancing up every so often to see what's happening beneath me. Sometimes there's nothing, sometimes it's packed down there! I also love the flamingo pool at the back of Jambo House, although I will confess that depending what

time the birds are in, it can be a noisy place to be!

Moving over to the Polynesian, one amazing view is to be found in the Great Ceremonial House, with its lush foliage in the center. I love heading up to the second floor, and just gaze down on it. Another perfect place to just sit and gaze is the beach of the Polynesian, with its wonderful views towards the Magic Kingdom. It really is as if you're a world away from the theme parks here.

□ At both the Wilderness Lodge, and the Grand Floridian, my favorite views are exactly the same -- the lobby, the second you step inside. Both are impressive in completely different ways, and immediately take my breath away. I always have to stand there for a few seconds, just taking it all in.

□ While the deluxe resorts definitely offer the most superb vistas (you really wouldn't expect anything else, now would you?), there are wonderful views to be found at the other resorts. How about the Sassagoula River running past the main building at Port Orleans Riverside, with its waterwheel in front, and the Magnolia Bend buildings behind it? Then there are also the vibrant colors of the Caribbean Beach, most vividly set off when you look at them from across Barefoot Bay.

□ I'm interested to see how one of my favorite views now looks, and that's over at Pop Century. I used to love walking across what was called Generation Gap Bridge (I assume the name remains the same, even if it doesn't have the same meaning as it would have, had Pop Century been on both sides of the lake?) and seeing the "ghost town" on the shores opposite. I guess that now that the ghost town has been transformed into the Art of Animation Resort, it will still be a wonderful sight, just in a very different way.

□ And how about Downtown Disney? Well, the first of my favorites is Le Grand Chapiteau (The Big Top), to borrow the term Cirque du Soleil uses for its traveling show. Built to resemble a circus tent, the permanent home to La Nouba is beautiful, and striking, and dominates the landscape. If you want a truly amazing view, then head for Characters in Flight, the aerial balloon that offers a bird's eye view across much of the Disney estate. If you'd prefer to stay on ground level, renting a boat from the Downtown Disney marina gives you a very different perspective of the shops, restaurants, and Disney's Saratoga Springs Resort.

□ If you head inside some of the shops, you'll also come across some great views, particularly inside World of Disney, with its ever-changing

display. Disney's Days of Christmas is another, although it is slightly surreal to walk in here at other times of the year!

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□The list could go on, and on, and on, but I'll stop here. I'm sure over the course of these articles, I'll have mentioned some of your favorites, but I'm sure I'll also have missed some. I also have no doubt, as it happens every time we go to Walt Disney World, I'll find new favorites, and that you will, too. It's one of the many reasons we keep going back to Walt Disney World.

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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