

Ghirardelli Factory Store: Disney California Adventure Dining Review

by Dorothy Compton, PassPorter Guest Contributor

I love chocolate. No, I LOVE chocolate.

And what better place to indulge the senses than the new Ghirardelli Factory Store located across from the bakery in the Pacific Pier area in Disney California Adventure.

Before Cars Land opened in June, 2012, the Ghirardelli (ger-a-del-ee) Factory Shop had a soft opening on May 31st. The sign hanging from the store front invites guests to come and follow where your nose wants to lead you. Before you enter you can see the menu posted on a pillar in front of the store so you can be ready to order.

□ Upon entering the store you are greeted by a cast member and offered a Ghirardelli chocolate square. At first these were pre-opened for your convenience but now the package is sealed so you can indulge immediately or later. They change the flavor each day and if they are offering one with nuts and you can't have nuts due to allergies or choice, you can request a substitute. The order desk is close to the door where you will make your selection and then be told what window (1-4) to pick up your indulgence. Disney annual pass discounts apply so don't forget to show your pass if you have one.

□ As you wait, you are welcome to check out the goodies for sale around the store. There are several chocolate selections some of which are themed for the time of year but unless you are staying at one of the Disney hotels and can have your purchases delivered you might want to wait until late in the day to buy. It was way too hot to be carrying chocolate around the park in July during the day. It might be ok in the winter though.

Rather than shopping for chocolate, you can watch the chocolate makers. There are several waffle cone irons and pots of melting chocolate. They make the waffle cones and bowls right in the shop so you know they're fresh.

□ The decor of the shop is exquisite. The tile floor, wood-paneled wainscoting, pictures and posters of the early days (Ghirardelli opened in San Francisco in 1852) bring you back to an old-fashioned ice cream shop of days gone by. If you can, though, stop and watch the wall behind the counter. Each of the signature desserts are featured in both lights and moving pictures! I won't give away how each

highlighted dessert is displayed; I'll leave that to you to discover!

☐ The highlighted desserts include: The Gold Rush (aka Peanut Butter Hot Fudge Sundae; Vanilla ice cream with hot fudge and melted peanut butter topped with whipped cream, chopped almonds, a cherry and a milk chocolate square, \$8.95), The Earthquake (eight scoops of ice cream, eight toppings, with bananas, whipped cream, chopped almonds, chocolate chips and cherries, \$34.98), The Golden Gate (aka Banana Split: a trio of vanilla, strawberry and chocolate ice cream paired with three toppings of crushed pineapple, sliced strawberries and chocolate syrup; it is finished with bananas, whipped cream, chopped almonds and a cherry, \$9.50), The Cable Car (aka Rocky Road Sundae; Rocky road, chocolate chip and chocolate ice cream smothered with marshmallow topping and hot fudge all surrounded by whipped cream topped with chopped almonds, a cherry and a milk chocolate square, \$9.50), The Strike It Rich (aka Butterscotch Hot Fudge Sundae; Butter pecan ice cream smothered with butterscotch and golden almond nuggets under a layer of vanilla ice cream, hot fudge, whipped cream, chopped almonds and a cherry, \$8.95), and The Haight AshBerry (aka Very Berry Sundae; strawberry cheesecake ice cream topped with sliced strawberries under a layer of vanilla ice cream with blueberry topping, whipped cream, chocolate-covered blueberries and finished with a chocolate-dipped waffle roll, \$8.95).

☐ In addition to the fancy desserts, you can buy single scoops in a plain sugar cone, cup, or waffle cone or waffle bowl; shakes; floats; chocolate drinks, chocolate treats (brownie, cookie, chocolate-filled croissant), espresso drinks; and classic drinks (coffee, tea, or soft drinks).

☐ The prices are reasonable especially since most of the highlighted desserts will serve two! The Earthquake would easily serve 6 or more.

☐ We enjoyed the Hot Fudge Sundae in a waffle cone, an Espresso Sundae and the cookie bottom sundae as well as a single scoop cone in cup (so it wouldn't drip all over my son). Each was very good but a bit rich for one so you might want to think about sharing. We bought ours on our way to World of Color making the end to our day a truly wonderful world at Disney and a must destination for my family every time we visit.

About The Author: Dorothy Compton lives in Northern California with her husband and four children. Having been born and raised in southern California, she visited Disneyland many times in her youth but became reacquainted in the last ten years and only recently became an annual passholder.

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