

# The Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek: An Off-Site Resort Review

by PJ Pettigrew, PassPorter Guest Contributor

We are members of Disney Vacation Club (DVC) so always stay on site at Walt Disney World â almost always.

When we recently realized we could add a couple of nights on at the end of our Fall Break trip (which would be the Columbus Day Holiday weekend), there were no DVC rooms available. We thought about booking a couple of nights at the Art of Animation since we hadn't seen this resort yet, but prices were pretty high so we broadened our search figuring two extra days at Walt Disney World were better than no extra days even if we couldn't stay at one of our homes away from home. So why not the Hilton Bonnet Creek Resort?

We have passed the entrance to the Bonnet Creek area many times when driving to Downtown Disney so we knew it was somewhat convenient. We had never explored it but decided to give it a look. I knew there was a timeshare located at Bonnet Creek but was unaware there are also regular resorts as well. We were surprised to find the rates at the Hilton Bonnet Creek resort had not been inflated for the holiday weekend so we decided to give it a try even though it also requires a daily resort and parking fee.

â The Hilton Bonnet Creek is a beautiful resort but made us realize how spoiled we are at Disney from the minute we arrived. We pulled up to the front to check-in and not one of the valets made an effort to help us unload our luggage or offer to bring the luggage to our room. Since we were only staying two nights, we weren't unloading everything but having some help would have been nice especially after having someone ready to help before we could even open our doors at Bay Lake Towers. When I checked in, I was told we were given a room on a high floor so we should have a nice view, but our room was only on the fifth floor with a view of the street so I guess we have different ideas of "high floor with a view." The room was nice and comfortable, but just a typical Hilton room.

â The Hilton Bonnet Creek did offer bus service to the parks and Downtown Disney, but we did not utilize this service since we had our vehicle. The bus service was on a schedule which did not appear to allow guests to be flexible or stay late at the parks. I would not recommend staying here without a personal vehicle unless you did not plan to spend full days in the parks.

The pool area was great! There were several pools encircled by a lazy river which was very Disney like except for the fact that the resort did not provide tubes or floats to ride on the lazy river (something we have come to expect after staying at the Beach Club). The Hilton, instead, sells floats and tubes to guests. We have stayed at other non-Disney resorts with a lazy river and each one of them provided floats to ride the river, but not here. Prices for the floats ranged from \$10-\$20. There were none available to rent for one evening either. There were plenty of towels, lounge chairs, and umbrellas available around the pool areas. In the evening, dive-in movies were offered on a blow-up screen at the pool similar to Disney. The one night we watched they showed "The Muppets."

□ A convention center connects the Hilton Bonnet Creek and the Waldorf Astoria Resorts and a golf course spans the area adjacent to both. I hope this doesn't sound like I'm a Disney snob, but I believe being a convention and golf resort results in a different clientele than a Disney resort. We saw more guests in suits and golf clothes than Disney shirts. We did see some children but not as many as at a Disney resort. The pool was pretty empty even while the sun was still shining in the late afternoon. This may appeal to some travelers, especially those without children, but it definitely lacked the magic of a Disney resort.

□ All in all, the Hilton Bonnet Creek is a nice resort but I wouldn't recommend it for a Disney World vacation due to lack of convenience and lack of Disney magic. If travelers find themselves in the area when visiting theme parks is not a goal, I would definitely recommend checking rates here as they offer typical Hilton discounts such as AAA, AARP, Government, etc. For us, we do not regret making the reservation as the alternative was driving home two days earlier than we did.

*About The Author: PJ Pettigrew is a rocket scientist living her dream at NASA, life-long Disney fan, and now Disney mom who is enjoying experiencing Disney through the eyes of her daughter as if it were all new again.*

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