

Enjoying the Re-Imagined Disney Magic: A Disney Cruise Line Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

When Disney announced a new itinerary for summer 2014, which would take in Greece and Turkey, I was sold, never having visited either country.

The day that bookings opened, we were there! I was excited enough, but when Disney announced major changes to the Disney Magic a couple of months later, that excitement went up even further. I couldn't wait to explore the new-look ship for myself. I deliberately tried to avoid too many photos of the new ship, as I wanted some surprises when we first boarded.

I'll say here that this article won't be a comprehensive look at all the changes aboard the Disney Magic, simply because a number of them related to children's areas, like the Oceaneer Club and Lab, the It's a Small World nursery, and the AquaLab. As we don't have kids, we didn't experience any of these areas. We saw the AquaDunk many times, as our stateroom was underneath it, and watching people fly down it was fascinating, but having heard various reviews from friends, I knew it would be too much of a thrill for me.

□ The first change you notice as soon as you board is the atrium. One of the staircases has been removed, which for me, gave it a much more airy feel, and the main chandelier has gone. I must admit this was one change I felt very uncomfortable about when the plans were first revealed, as I did love that chandelier. In fairness, I didn't really notice it had gone when we boarded, although there were other times during the cruise when I found myself looking upwards, and feeling quite sad that what's replaced it doesn't have the same impact. Sure, it's beautiful, and very classic in design, but your eye doesn't gravitate to it in the same way. Perhaps that's what Disney was intending.

□ When we boarded, the staterooms were already available, so that was our next port of call. Immediately when you walk in, you feel as if you're on the Dream or the Fantasy, as the decor is now in line with both those ships. That gives it a much more stylish and sophisticated feel, although if you'd cruised on the Magic before its refit or on the yet-to-be-rehabbed Wonder, the rooms will still have a familiar feel to them, as the changes aren't completely radical. It's a nice compromise. For us, the biggest change we noticed, and one that we really enjoyed, was the raised bed. It was such a joy to be able to put the luggage

underneath it, rather than trying to jam it into the wardrobes, which we've had to do on previous cruises.

We toured the spa on the first afternoon we were aboard, and immediately as we entered, we could see the changes. The entrance area gives you an idea of what to expect, with mahogany tones very much in evidence here. Like the staterooms, it gives Senses Spa a much more sophisticated feel, and the spa villas, which I was lucky enough to sample for a treatment, are just beautiful, and incredibly relaxing! Add in a new barbershop, which looks equally sophisticated, and I felt had a slight masculine feel to it, although not enough to put me off coming here.

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□Some of the changes on the Magic related to food, one of my favorite subjects, and I was delighted to see the changes in the quick service buffet on deck 9. I'd heard rave reviews about Cabanas, which replaced Topsiders. While I was intrigued, never really having had an issue with Topsiders in the past, I didn't think I'd be particularly overwhelmed by the changes. Wow, I couldn't have been more wrong! What a fun, light, and airy place this now is. It gives the feeling of space, and it never once felt crowded when we visited it for breakfast or lunch. I can see why people are raving about this change, as it has made a huge difference, and is a lovely place to now head to for a snack or a buffet meal.

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□The other major dining change is to be found in one of the main dining rooms. Parrot Cay is now Carioca's, and while I wasn't sure about the name, the artists' impressions looked impressive. My only disappointment on our cruise was that it was only open for dinner. I had hoped to visit it during the day, knowing that it was supposed to look different in the light. I really liked the appearance of Carioca's, although I was disappointed that it is still such a loud dining room. I was really hoping that the changes would have made it a quieter experience, but sadly not.

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□Although Animator's Palate doesn't look any different when you go into it, it's now home to a very impressive new show, Drawn to the Magic, which is something you miss at your peril. I don't want to give too much away, but part of the show is about seeing the drawings transform into scenes from famous Disney films, and it makes for a wonderful evening. Animation Magic, which we missed on our cruise on the Fantasy, is also now at home here, although we weren't overly impressed with it, something to do with our complete lack of drawing ability!

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□The other major change on the ship, which is very welcome, is in the adult entertainment district, which is now themed as After Hours. As

soon as you enter it, you immediately know you've walked into a very refined area that just oozes style. I felt at home the first time we visited it, and it really feels like an adult area.

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□ Inside all three entertainment venues have been completely revamped. O'Gills Irish Pub and Sports Bar arrives on the Magic, and it's certainly a homely enough place, although it wasn't the one that we were most attracted to. That honor goes to Keys, the piano bar, where the theming is all about the piano. It's classy, and on the majority of occasions we visited, pretty quiet. As a result, we spent many a happy evening there, and were made to feel very welcome by both the bar staff and the pianist. The final venue is the night club, Fathoms, which to me is a huge step up from Rockin' Bar D, and I adored the theming of it. I was just disappointed that most evenings, the action didn't start here until 10:00 pm, and if it started earlier, it was family orientated. I would've enjoyed having a nice quiet early evening drink in there, but sadly it didn't work out.

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□ All in all, I loved the changes on the Disney Magic. It was a beautiful ship before, but it's now definitely a lot more classy following its revamp. Of course, it gives cruise-goers yet another reason to return to the original ship of the Disney Cruise Line. I have no doubt we'll be back on board at some point to enjoy the all-improved Magic again.

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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