

Disney's Contemporary Resort: Promise of the Future

by *Jacque Boyle, PassPorter Guest Contributor*

With few exceptions, Disney's Contemporary Resort is described as being the least "themed" of the Walt Disney World resorts. But I love the Contemporary because as a "Jetsons" fan I've always been fascinated by the idea of space travel and the promise of the future. So in November 1971 when I saw a monorail disappear into the Contemporary Tower like a space ship docking in a magnificent, gleaming white space station, I was hooked. I could hardly wait to take my first monorail trip into that tower, and when I finally did, it was everything I had imagined and more.

When I step off the monorail onto the platform in the Grand Canyon Concourse, it's like stepping into a vibrant city of the future, with the sweeping expanse of the atrium windows, soaring tiers of walkways and the swoosh of the monorails. I love feeling the energy of Chef Mickey's, walking the wide Concourse with its gleaming shops, the view of Bay Lake and the sight of that incredible mosaic mural. It may sound like a contradiction, but it makes me feel simultaneously relaxed and energized.

Although taking the monorail into the Tower is what I like best, driving up to the Contemporary is fun too, with the whimsical designs of the trees lined up in front of the portico and the colorful stones paving the drive. The varied lines and colors of the convention center buildings fit the theme and the curving roof lines make it seem as though the building is in motion, again adding to that aura of a futuristic city. And on every trip, my first sight of the lobby with the clean lines, teak wood and open spaces, combined with quiet, comfortable seating areas, makes me feel like I'm in the Art Deco lobby of an elegant cruise ship, perhaps a space cruise ship.

I'm partial to the Tower rooms, not just for the location, but more importantly for the views. For peaceful, natural surroundings, the Bay Lake side of the Tower has wonderful views. During the day it can get a little noisy from the pools area and marina, but mornings and evenings are quiet. But my favorite rooms have a view of the Magic Kingdom and Seven Seas Lagoon. These rooms can have a little more noise coming from the parking lot but seeing those sleek monorails gliding around the lagoon only adds to the feeling that I'm at the center of a city of the future. I can immerse myself in the magic and fantasy by taking my coffee out on the balcony early in the morning. The futuristic landscape in front of the resort is gleaming with dew and to my right the spires of

Cinderella Castle are tinted a soft golden pink by the rising sun. At night I'll take a glass of wine out there to relax while the Magic Kingdom fireworks appear to be bursting right over my head. And I love the Tomorrowland lights, shining like the midway at a futuristic fair. There's not a better way to start and end my days at the Walt Disney World.

The Contemporary rooms are some of the largest on Disney property and can comfortably accommodate five people, with two queens or one king along with a daybed. The bathrooms are family friendly with a separate room for the toilet, allowing for personal hygiene multi-tasking. I wasn't crazy about the previous redecoration with the abstract designs in bright, primary colors on the bedding and drapes, although I did like the funky shapes of the wall lamps and tables (it's probably that "Jetsons" thing) and I love the ceiling fan. I'm looking forward to my next stay when I can experience the new furnishings. I've seen the pictures and they look incredible, more in keeping with the elegant, clean lines and futuristic theme of the resort.

I always feel so connected to all of Walt Disney World when I'm at the Contemporary, as though I'm at the center of that vibrant future city. The Tower rooms are the most convenient to Walt Disney World transportation, with the monorail offering transportation to the Magic Kingdom/Ticket & Transportation Center and connecting service to Epcot or the bus for service to the other parks and Downtown Disney. The short walk to and from the Magic Kingdom comes in handy at closing time when the monorails are running full.

The Contemporary has some of the best dining options in the "World", from fast food to fine dining. The selection of breakfast items, salads, sandwiches and beverages at the Contempo Cafe are perfect for quick snacks or meals on the run. For me, the best character dining in the "World" is at Chef Mickey's. It's reasonably priced, I get to interact with Mickey, Minnie, and pals, and choose from an amazing selection of delicious foods, like scrumptious Mickey waffles at breakfast to carved-to-order roast beef at dinner. For quieter meals, I enjoy The Wave for its upscale atmosphere, locally-grown food, and attentive service. There's also a coffee shop on the lobby level for a quick cup of joe.

But I really love the California Grill with its incredible view from the 15th floor, amazing food and adventurous wine selection. The sushi bar has fresh, inventive sushi and the open kitchen turns out California-inspired dishes from flat bread pizza to unbelievable desserts. The menu changes weekly, in order to use the freshest ingredients available, so there's something different to try every time I'm there. I usually time my meal so I can watch the Magic Kingdom fireworks from my table or the outside observation deck. And for a

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dining change of pace, the Wilderness Lodge, Polynesian and Grand Floridian are a short ride on a boat or the monorail.

For a break from the parks, the marina has boat rentals, fishing expeditions and parasailing with unbelievable views of the "World"! The pools at the Contemporary are much improved since the last rehab and especially like the quiet pool area closer to Bay Lake for relaxing.

Shopping on the Grand Canyon Concourse on the 4th floor is an experience in itself. The BVG shop, with its wide variety of house wares, candy and upscale Disney clothing and jewelry for men and women, has a great selection of merchandise. And the Fantasia shop is the place to pick up a Disney plush animal, models of the Contemporary and monorail, scrap-booking supplies, a bottle of wine for watching the fireworks, or a new book.

Although I've stayed at other deluxe Disney resorts, the Contemporary will always be my first love and first choice. So, the next time your monorail glides into the Tower, get off at the Grand Canyon Concourse and step into the promise of the future at my pick for the most magically themed resort at Walt Disney World -- Disney's Contemporary Resort.

Latest Update: A new tower known as 'Bay Lake Tower' will open at the Contemporary Resort in fall 2009. The new tower will offer Disney Vacation Club villas, a fireworks viewing deck, rooftop lounge, lakeside pool, and a skybridge linking the tower to the original resort's monorail station. [Read more about Bay Lake Tower here.](#)

Disney's Contemporary Resort Quick Facts

Address: 4600 N. World Drive, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830

Phone: 407-824-1000 / Fax: 407-824-3539

Room Rates: 2009 rates begin at \$280 for a standard-view room in the value season

Guest Rooms: 688 (in the Tower and Garden Wing)

About The Author: Jacque is "54 years-young" and fell in love with Walt Disney World on her first trip in November 1971. She has been back 16 times, 12 of those as a solo traveler. She describes herself as a "major planner" and says, "Since I made my first trip with PassPorter in 2001, I couldn't go without it.

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