

The Disney Dream Christening Event: My Once-In-A-Lifetime Experience

by Bernie Edwards, PassPorter Guest Contributor

I was very lucky to have been invited by Disney, as a member of the Walt Disney World Moms Panel, to be a part of the Disney Dream's Christening Cruise. Officially, I was there to help represent the Moms Panel and participate in interviews with TV stations, radio stations, the Disney online community, and anybody else who wanted to interview a "Mom" about Disney vacation planning! Truth be told, I had a blast and an incredible experience, whether I was "working" or enjoying free time! It truly was dream come true for me to be a part of it!

I flew down early on Tuesday, January 18th and checked into both the Polynesian Resort at Walt Disney World and the Disney Dream! That night, I attended a public relations event at the Magic Kingdom. The park was closed at 6:00 pm for all guests, and a special presentation for the media was held inside Mickey's PhilharMagic. Topics included the Dream, the new nighttime show "The Magic, The Memories, and You," and the on-going Fantasyland expansion. Afterward, we were able to enjoy a special buffet dinner at various places in Frontierland, see unusual characters (as well as a few favorites), and enjoy a couple of attractions. We then watched the new "The Magic, The Memories, and You" show that is projected onto Cinderella Castle while enjoying various desserts. I was concerned about a show on the castle, but I actually really enjoyed it, especially the animation used in conjunction with guests' photographs. My only concern is we watched from the Partners Statue in the castle hub and some of the photos were too small to even see clearly from there. I'm not sure how the show will look from Main Street or elsewhere in the park.

The next morning we were picked up early for our trip to the Disney Dream and the Christening Ceremony. The [ceremony was held behind the Disney Cruise Line Terminal](#) in front of a crowd of nearly 3,000, and it was fantastic! There were a couple of speeches, but mostly a lot of [musical numbers](#), [fireworks](#), and [beloved Disney characters](#). [Disney President and CEO Bob Iger](#), the [ship's Godmother Jennifer Hudson](#), and Mickey Mouse officially christened the ship. Then there was a [reception](#) inside and outside the terminal before we were allowed to board the ship.

In a nutshell, the Disney Dream is a spectacular ship. If you have cruised on the Magic or the Wonder before, the first thing you will notice is how big the ship is. The atrium is larger, the restaurants are

larger, the Walt Disney Theatre is larger, the shops are larger, and there are more options in the adult entertainment area. Of course, being a larger ship, there will also be more guests on the Disney Dream!

As a member of the Moms Panel, I was made available for interviews during the two night cruise, but when I wasn't "working," I was exploring the ship and looking out for celebrities, including Whoopi Goldberg, John Stamos, Marlee Matlin, Samantha Brown, Kyle Massey, and some dancers from ABC's Dancing With the Stars. There were also a lot of Disney executives onboard to give interviews.

For this particular cruise, we were able to watch the Golden Mickeys and Disney's Believe in the Walt Disney World Theatre. The Golden Mickeys has been updated to include scenes, music, and characters from Tangled and the Princess and the Frog. It's still a great show for the whole family. I almost skipped it, thinking I've seen the show before. After all, I needed to see the other new things, but I'm so glad I didn't. The new additions were a real treat. However, if you are only going to do one show then the show to see is Disney's Believe. It's an all new show, featuring a nice story, a lot of dance numbers, and great Disney music. Don't miss it!

One of the highlights on the Disney Dream is the AquaDuck, the first water coaster at sea! It is 765 feet long and I really enjoyed it. In fact, I'm embarrassed to say how much I enjoyed it. I only had a few hours to try it, but managed to squeeze in four rides during the day and four at night. The AquaDuck looks fabulous day or night (and the outside is lit up with colorful lights at night), but I think it is much more enjoyable to ride during the day. The view is spectacular from inside the clear tube during the day; at night, however, it is difficult to see out and the ride itself is dark in a couple of places. If you are worried about the thrill factor, don't be! It's a little thrilling in the beginning, especially when you swing out over the edge of the ship, but it's nothing like Crush 'n Cusher at Disney's Typhoon Lagoon. The starboard side of the ride is very tame and very enjoyable. I especially enjoyed taking a good long look at Castway Cay while riding the AquaDuck!

Since the Christening Cruise was so short, I did not get the chance to try, or even visit, a lot of the restaurants. However, I did enjoy dining in Animator's Palate, the Royal Palace, and at Cabanas, the buffet / food court restaurant on deck 11 which has both indoor and outdoor seating. Animator's Palate was a real treat and had a spectacular setting; the restaurant allows interaction with characters from the film Finding Nemo, similar to Turtle Talk with Crush at Epcot. I think families will enjoy it, but I personally preferred the original show on the Magic and Wonder instead. Royal Palace is a beautiful restaurant with elegant

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crystal chandeliers and marble columns. Princesses wander through the restaurant while dining there!

Due to my particular interview schedule, I was unable to participate in the tours of the staterooms and I missed visiting an inside stateroom with a Magic Porthole. That was one of the things that I really wanted to see for myself, but it just didn't work out. However, I talked to other guests who got a chance to see it and I only heard positive reports! I was given a private tour of the Senses Spa and Salon, and I must point out that it looked wonderful! The spa area is approximately 16,000 square feet and there are 17 private treatment rooms, two private luxury villas, a barber shop for men, rooms reserved for teens and tweens, and a Turkish bath. Through the private tour, I was also able to spend a lot of time in the It's a Small World Nursery, the Oceaneer Club, and Oceaneer Lab. All of these areas for children were fabulous. I especially enjoyed seeing the interactive game floor in the Oceaneer Club; it made me wish I was a young child myself!

Unfortunately, the two-night cruise ended before I could experience everything I wanted. Still, there is no doubt that the Disney Dream is a spectacular ship. However, if you are considering a cruise, don't forget about the Disney Magic and the Disney Wonder. The Magic and Wonder are both fabulous ships and are sailing to new and exciting ports. Everybody is excited about the Dream, but for the near future it is not visiting new ports of call. I immensely enjoyed being on the Dream for her Christening Cruise. However, my next cruise will be a 7-night Eastern Caribbean cruise on the Magic, and I would absolutely love to do an Alaskan cruise on the Wonder in the future. Rest assured, however, that whatever Disney Cruise Line ship you sail with, you will have a fabulous vacation with memories to last a lifetime.

About The Author: Bernie Edwards lives in Maryland with his wife and two children. He is an engineer for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and a member of the Walt Disney World Moms Panel. He enjoys visiting both Walt Disney World and Disneyland, and sailing on the Disney Cruise Line.

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