

Disney Vacation Club Beyond Disney: Non-Disney Vacation Options Using DVC Points

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

You've probably all heard or seen the advertising for the Disney Vacation Club.

□ With kiosks throughout the Disney parks and resorts, no doubt you already know that this is your chance to buy into a piece of magic, and that's what thousands of us have already done. What you may not realise is that your piece of magic isn't just about staying at the Disney Vacation Club resorts.

Of the resorts, just seven are located at Walt Disney World, with the first two DVC resorts located at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, and Vero Beach on the east coast of Florida. In recent years, the DVC expansion has headed out to the West Coast, with the addition of the Villas at the Grand Californian at Disneyland, and now Aulani on Oahu. But that's just the start of the options open to you.

□ Points can also be used at any Walt Disney World resort that doesn't have a DVC annex, including the Grand Floridian, Polynesian, Yacht Club, and all the moderate resorts. It's the same story at Disneyland, with the Disneyland Hotel and Paradise Pier options there. Even outside the States, points are good at the hotels of Disneyland Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland, and Tokyo Disney.

□ And out on the water, you can pay for one person, or your whole party, to take a cruise on the Disney Magic, Wonder, Dream, or Fantasy. Sure, it's not a cheap option, but this does include everything you'd expect with a cruise, if you paid cash. Another pricey option for using points is the collection of Adventures by Disney, small group tours to a range of destinations around the world.

□ But as well as all this Disney enjoyment, there's so much more that you can do with your points. One of the options we've used before is the Concierge Collection. As the name suggests, it's a collection of exclusive hotels, in fact some of the world's finest. Although the selection of hotels has decreased in recent years, it's still got some superb names on it. The 12 are all in the States, with the exception of the Royal Garden Hotel, in London, England. We spent a couple of nights there, and I will admit that I was sceptical. It isn't one of the most famous names, like the Ritz or the Savoy, but when we arrived, I was pleasantly surprised.

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Located in a plush part of London, right next door to Kensington Gardens and a brief walk to Kensington Palace, from the moment we walked into the lobby, we realised this was going to be a special stay. With a sumptuous lobby and huge rooms, it certainly attracted a very exclusive clientele. The weekend we stayed was also the weekend for national TV awards in the UK, and we were amazed to see the paparazzi camped outside, photographing the celebrities as they left the hotel!

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□ There was no such glamour in the other Concierge Collection hotels we've stayed in, but then again, there didn't need to be, as they're glamorous enough without celebrities! The most gorgeous has to be the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, or as I prefer to call it, "the original Grand Floridian!" As you pull up to the del Coronado, you can see how closely the Imagineers based the design on this beautiful hotel. We hadn't booked an ocean view, and we're certainly not used to upgrades when we stay on our points, as it's virtually unheard of at a DVC resort, but not here. We were delighted to be told that now we had a partial ocean view -- and lovely it was, too. The grounds were magnificent, as was their own section of beach. This really felt like a slice of paradise, and my only regret was not being able to spend more time here, but sadly we had far too much to see and do during our all too short time in San Diego. Maybe one day we'll go back and have more resort time.

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□ Our third stay at one of the Concierge Collection hotels took us to the Fairmont in San Francisco. Again, a bit like the Royal Garden Hotel in London, I couldn't see the attraction at the time we booked, but boy, when we got there, I certainly could! Again, the lobby set the scene and we knew we were in for a treat! It's in perhaps one of the best locations in the city, with cable car routes meeting literally right in front of the hotel, making getting around quick and easy. But the most cherished memory I have from this stay was deciding to have room service one evening, and enjoying it with the view of the city from our bedroom window. Here, just as much magic could be made as at any Disney theme park!

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□ We've yet to try any of the World Passport Collection, which gives you the option to trade out your DVC points for either RCI, Club Cordial, or Club Intrawest timeshares. Here, there are literally hundreds of options between the three, although it's worth knowing that many are only exchanges by the week, rather than per night.

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□ Without wishing to sound like an advertising billboard, the Disney Vacation Club really does open up a lifetime of vacation opportunities, and they don't all have to be spent at Disney, either! Of course, let's be honest, the chances are, if you're buying into the DVC you're a Disney fan and probably do want to spend lots of time in the Disney bubble.

However, it's always nice to know that there are other options in the wider world to explore.

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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