

Disney's Wilderness Lodge Resort & Villas: A Disney World Resort Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Everyone has different favorites when it comes to the resorts at Walt Disney World.

I'll be honest here, the Beach Club will always be my spiritual Disney home, followed closely by the Animal Kingdom Lodge, but that doesn't stop me exploring the other options on offer.

Disney's Wilderness Lodge and its accompanying Disney Vacation Club Villas are many people's first choice when it comes to a Disney stay, especially around Christmas time, as it offers a wonderfully homely feel. However, while I can appreciate it, somehow that just doesn't grab me, with the notable exception of one freezing cold night, when we were only too glad to sit and enjoy the atmosphere in the lobby and soak up the flames from the fire in the corner and admire the Grand Canyon colors on the fireplace.

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□So how would we find our first ever stay at the resort, in the Villas? I think the first thing I have to say here is that the fact that we stayed at the Villas did affect our view of our stay. We were unfortunate enough to be in a studio that was about as far as it was humanly possible to be from the main entrance, which made for a depressing trudge to and from the parking lot. It's not something you need after a long day in the parks and it made us feel very cut off from the rest of the resort.

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□Having said that, I can't fault the room itself, apart from its location. The dark wood and earthy colors went together beautifully, giving you the impression of a stay in a lodge from days gone by. And of course, there were Disney touches everywhere, just as you'd expect. It was welcoming, warm and comforting, and certainly somewhere I was happy to spend time. Sadly, our location also left us with a pretty poor view, with trees ahead and to the left of us, and a turning area for vehicles to the right. It wasn't the most inspiring view we've ever had!

Despite that, the Villas do have some definite plus points. The actual walk over there from the main building really makes you feel as if you are in the middle of the wilderness, and I love the addition of rocking chairs by the entrance. In fact, there are plenty of options if you do just want to kick back, relax, and watch the world go by. It's worth saving some time to explore the ground floor of the Villas, with lots of places to sit down, and perhaps enjoy a game of chess. If you're a true Disney fan, you'll also love looking closely at all the artifacts from Walt

Disney's Carolwood Pacific Railroad Company. My favorite is a picture of Walt riding atop his 1/8th scale model train, which used to run around his estate. Looking at that, you can see instantly how much he loved his trains.

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 □When we returned to the main building for a stroll around, I could immediately see why so many people love this place. The lobby is absolutely stunning. It's one of those places that you need a minute or two to get used to the first time you see it, and even though we've visited it many times since, there is still that moment where you look upwards, and it takes your breath away.

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 □I have to praise the Mercantile shop here, as we're always impressed by the range of merchandise it has, especially relating to the Wilderness Lodge. Oh, to have that sort of resort-specific selection at our beloved Beach Club! Even in here are some wonderful Disney touches. Take a close look at the lights the next time you visit, for example.

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 □We took our time to explore, finding some wonderful nooks and crannies from which to watch the world go by. One of my favorites is the area just outside the lobby, looking towards the swimming pool area, where we found a couple of rocking chairs. Sadly, someone had made the slightly bizarre decision to stop the chairs from rocking, so we didn't spend too long there.

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 □However, perhaps that's just as well, as there's plenty else to explore here. Near the swimming pool, they've got their own geyser, set to go off as regularly as Old Faithful. I was really looking forward to this, having only heard it from afar, but it was not to be, as sadly it was being rehabbed while we were there.

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 □Perhaps something that you don't expect to find at the Wilderness Lodge is a beach, and it's a beautiful white one, like many of Disney's other beaches. On the day we visited, it was pretty deserted. It's a very peaceful place, with some wonderful views across towards the spires of Cinderella Castle, with Bay Lake Tower and the Contemporary also in view. Right next door, if you want to be a bit more active, is Teton Boat and Bike Rental, with plenty of both standing ready for your use.

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 □There really is something here for everyone, and little Disney touches can be found everywhere. One of my favorites can be found outside the main entrance, with the topiaries of a bison and its calf, with hoof prints to be found in the sidewalks nearby.

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 □Disney's Wilderness Lodge and Villas is a place that's taken some time for me to get know properly and love, but perhaps that's the real

attraction of the resort. Maybe it is one that you need to work at a little bit, but when you do, it certainly offers you some great results. I'd love to return here in the future, although I'd definitely prefer to stay in the Lodge, rather than the Villas. Perhaps then I'd truly fall in love with the Wilderness Lodge and everything it has to offer.

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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