Walt Disney World News

Disney's Yacht Club Resort and Disney's Beach Club Resort Bring Turn-of-the-Century New England to Vacation Kingdom

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The grand, turn-of-the-century summer homes of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are recalled in Disney's Yacht Club Resort and Disney's Beach Club Resort, two deluxe-category hotels at Walt Disney World Resort.

Guests can walk or go by tram from the resorts to Epcot, or travel by water taxi to Disney's Hollywood Studios. Convenient bus service transports guests throughout Walt Disney World Resort.

The luxury club hotels on the shores of 25-acre Crescent Lake are designed by noted architect Robert A.M. Stern, best known for his East Coast seaside homes. The resorts take guests back to the 1890s with fancy-cut shingles, French doors and other post-modern embellishments that are the trademark of Stern's work.

The imagery follows through in Stormalong Bay, a 2 ½-acre water recreation area reminiscent of a Nantucket beach with a life-size shipwreck with water slides, snorkeling in a sandy lagoon and a meandering swimming area that seemingly flows into the surrounding lake.

There is also a 73,000-square-foot convention center adjacent to the resorts that includes a 36,000-square-foot ballroom capable of seating up to 2,800 for dinner.

Complementing each other, the three-, four- and five-story club hotels nonetheless have distinctive architectural styles. Each hotel has its own entrance motif, main lobby, restaurants and retail shops.

New England Echoes in Disney's Yacht Club Resort

Oak floors, antique chandeliers and rich millwork and brass evoke memories of New England summer days in Disney's Yacht Club Resort. Cast members in navy blue blazers greet guests as they check into the silvery-gray clapboard hotel.

The nautical theme carries through in the hotel's restaurants. With porthole windows and a picturesque wall of moving sailboats, **Captain's Grille** features regional New England foods like chowder, fresh fish and home-baked breads along with sandwiches, steaks and chicken specialties.

Yachtsman Steakhouse is inspired by Northeastern eateries with a glassed beef-aging room, open-air kitchen and hardwood-fired grills for meats and vegetables. The dining area features a spacious rotunda room as well as a private room with seating for 12.

For hors d'oeuvres and drinks, rustic **Crew's Cup Lounge** offers beers from around the world in frosted mugs. The room is designed in reclaimed Southern pine with copper accents, and the walls are lined with art and memorabilia of Ivy League rowing teams.

The 621-room hotel offers luxurious suites, including presidential and vice-presidential suites. Spacious rooms decorated in blues and whites carry through the nautical theme. All have French doors that open onto porches or balconies.

An expansive croquet lawn at Disney's Yacht Club Resort goes with the relaxed, leisure spirit of the 1870s, and the resort's marina lighthouse welcomes guests home after a day in the Walt Disney World theme parks.

Disney's Beach Club Resort More Whimsical

The pale-blue-and-white "stick-style" Beach Club is "a little bit of this, a little bit of that," said Stern with a smile. Stick style, he explained, was the prevalent architecture for seaside wooden cottages in the 1860s and 1870s, "like grandmother's fabulous beach house — ceiling fans, chintz, gingham."

The crisp colors open up the hotel's lobby with white wicker furniture, 24-foot-high ceilings, natural French limestone floors and a seashell motif. Cast members are dressed in more casual pastel knickers or dresses.

Restaurants range from an authentic clambake with a rockweed steamer in the 218-seat

Cape May Cafe to **Martha's Vineyard,** a cozy 59-seat lounge featuring a wide variety of wines.

All of the 576 rooms continue the "summer cottage" ambiance with cool colors, a scattering of seashells and French doors to outdoor porches and a white-sand beach. Disney's Beach Club Villas sit adjacent to Disney's Beach Club Resort offering Disney Vacation Club accommodations ranging from studios to three bedroom villas. The Dunes Club quiet pool is just steps away from the villas.

Both hotels offer child-care facilities and are accessible to handicapped guests.

Stormalong Bay

Guests can splash through three lagoon areas — including one specifically designed for younger water-lovers, with a depth of 2 to 3 feet.

A spiral stair on board the life-sized shipwreck ascends to a 150-foot mast, broken and askew to serve as a flume plummeting toward a rocky outcropping where another 150 feet of spins complete a fast-moving thrill slide.

Each hotel also features a "quiet pool" in alcoves far removed from Stormalong Bay. There also are motorized watercraft at the resort marina.

A tile-lined, 12-person Jacuzzi, reminiscent of the famous old health spas, is the centerpiece of the newly renovated Ship Shape Salon and Fitness Center. A steam bath, sauna, relaxation room and five treatment rooms are available. A weight room and aerobics room both have staff trained to assist guests.

The centrally located **Beaches & Cream** old-fashioned ice cream parlour is the place to head after a swim or workout, where guests can order burgers and decadent desserts like banana splits, frozen hot cocoa, floats, shakes and malts.

Meeting Space Themed to Disney's Yacht Club Resort

A 73,000-square-foot convention center carries through the oyster-gray color and architecture of Disney's Yacht Club Resort, with elegant, "patriotic" red, white and blue interiors. Largest space is the 36,000-square-foot Grand Harbor Ballroom. The remaining space may be divided into more than a dozen meeting rooms.

The convention center is joined to Disney's Yacht Club Resort by a covered walkway.

Reservations can be made by calling 407/W-DISNEY, a travel agent, or www.disneyworld.com.

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