

# America's Western Heritage Comes Alive at Disney's Wilderness Lodge

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Tall timber and the grandeur of Rocky Mountain national park geyser country are the inspiration for Disney's Wilderness Lodge.

A sun-drenched atrium dominated by 60-foot lodgepole pine timbers and a massive stone fireplace helps recapture the romance of rustic, century-old architecture with a contemporary flair, bringing the wilderness world of nearly 100 years ago 2,000 miles to Florida lakes and forest lands.

One of Disney's Deluxe category resorts, the lodge is hidden away on the shores of Bay Lake surrounded by towering pine, cypress and oak forests. The 727-room hideaway is accessible by boat across Seven Seas Lagoon to Magic Kingdom and by bus to all Walt Disney World theme parks, hotels and attractions.

Warm tones of brown, green and beige create a cozy, woodland feeling in the guestrooms. Quilts featuring a Native American-inspired design, artwork depicting the mystery of the Old West and bed headboards etched with mountain scenes adorn the rooms. Most rooms include a balcony with views of waterfalls, "geysers," courtyards, Bay Lake or the surrounding woods.

The resort features a volcanic meadow with bubbling color pools, babbling brooks and geysers spewing misty streams up to 100 feet into the air beside the swimming pool and white sand beaches.

Though conditions during the two-year construction project didn't match the harsh, subzero climate when Old Faithful Inn was created by craftsmen more than 90 years ago, forging Wilderness Lodge out of the Florida landscape was no small feat. Tons of granite flagstones and hundreds of giant lodgepole pines from the West were brought in to re-create the authentic atmosphere of America's national park lodges.

A soaring, log-framed main lobby is the centerpiece of the complex. Massive six-story-high bundled log columns help support roof dormers that bathe the multicolored wood and stone floor below in natural light. Four massive chandeliers with torch-cut scenes of Indians and buffalo, topped with glowing teepees, grace the lobby. Two 55-foot-tall handcarved totem poles — the "eagle" and "raven" — were inspired by Northwest Indians.

A majestic, 82-foot-tall, three-sided stone fireplace re-creates a 2-billion-year geological record of the earth with fossilized remains of prehistoric animal and plant life. Colorful rock strata layers are re-created in the proportions they occur in the Grand Canyon.

The culture and beauty of the West is showcased in the artwork at the lodge. The oldest culture to be honored in the hotel is the Native American, with artifacts from tribes such as the Cheyenne, the Crow, the Sioux and the Blackfoot. The era of exploration is represented by maps from the great Western survey teams plus sketches and watercolors from artists such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin.

Guests are invited to explore porches, the Continental Divide lobby bar, the library and other intimate spaces that are tucked away within the lobby and six-story guest wings which surround a themed water recreation area.

A bubbling hot spring in the main lobby expands into a geothermal area outside the building. The water flows under a picturesque window wall to become Silver Creek in the upper courtyard. The quiet, contemplative creek widens and is transformed into a roaring waterfall which plummets 15 feet past Overlook Point, another traditional National Park icon, and widens again in the swimming area.

A kiddie pool and hot and cold spas complete the swimming area which then flows toward Bay Lake. The excitement is capped off by steaming color pools and an Old Faithful-style geyser that erupts at regular intervals.

Recalling the 1860's railroad hotels of the American West, The Wilderness Lodge Villas offer the comforts of home amidst the rustic beauty of Disney's Wilderness Lodge. This Disney Vacation Club resort invites guests to relax on the white-sand beach, explore trails through lush meadows and make a splash in Silver Creek Springs Pool. Accommodations range from studios with kitchenettes to two-bedroom villas with full kitchens.

The serene setting of Disney's Wilderness Lodge is complemented by unequaled epicurean experiences like Artist Point, a fine-dining restaurant featuring traditional Northwestern specialties such as cedar-roasted wild king salmon, and the Pacific Northwest Trio of slow roasted buffalo strip, venison loin and wild game sausage. The eatery is adorned with grandiose murals celebrating landscapes of the great Northwest.

The nearby Territory Lounge pays homage to the trappers, explorers and survey parties who led the country's move westward. Roaring Fork Snacks offers grilled sandwiches in a cafeteria-style setting.

Wood-roasted, smoked, grilled and barbecued cuisine can be found at Whispering Canyon Cafe — a family-style, all-you-can-eat restaurant with an American West motif.

The artistic wilderness theme is also captured at Cub's Den, the lodge's kids recreation and dining club; Wilderness Lodge Mercantile retail shop; Buttons & Bells arcade; and the Trout Pass poolside bar.

For reservations, contact 407/W-DISNEY, a travel agent, or at [www.disneyworld.com](http://www.disneyworld.com).