Walt Disney World News

Top-Notch Dining Rooms, Talented Chefs at Walt Disney World Resort

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – If a little culinary indulgence is part of your vacation plan, these award-winning Disney kitchens offer everything from a casual dinner to haute cuisine. And if wine is your passion, Walt Disney World Resort has more sommeliers than any other company in the world — more than 300 at last count — to help you navigate the outstanding wine lists.

California Grill. With sweeping views of Walt Disney World Resort from the 15th floor of Disney's Contemporary Resort, California Grill is open after a major makeover that transformed the dining room and the cuisine. The menu includes sophisticated seasonal dishes such as baked local prawns and wild Columbia River salmon with baked Zellwood corn pudding, as well as 80 wines by the glass and signature cocktails.

Artist Point. At Disney's Wilderness Lodge in a setting inspired by historic national park lodges from the early 1900s, Artist Point focuses on the cuisine of the Pacific Northwest with creations like cedar plank roasted salmon, steamed mussels and buffalo striploin steak. The wine list, exclusively from the Pacific Northwest, includes smaller producers and unusual grapes, and complements the beautifully presented dishes. Finish with the fresh berry cobbler with housemade ice cream — flavor depends on what berries are in season.

Cítricos. New American cuisine includes bold starters like shrimp with lemon, white wine, feta and tomatoes, and specialties like grilled swordfish or tender braised veal shank. Chef Phillip Ponticelli's menu makes wine pairings easy, suggesting a perfect match with each dish. And diners get to watch the chefs at work in the restaurant's stylish on-stage kitchen.

Flying Fish Cafe. The on-stage kitchen is a high-energy dinner show for guests, with a handsome gold-tiled countertop for casual dining right in front of the oak-fired grill where Chef Tim Keating and his team turn out nightly specials. An extensive wine list offers more than 50 selections by the glass, with suggested pairings.

The Hollywood Brown Derby. At Disney's Hollywood Studios, tuxedoed waiters add to the ambience of Hollywood's heyday in a dining room inspired by the original restaurant. And while you'll find original recipes like the addictive Cobb salad and the dense grapefruit cake, the kitchen puts an all-American spin on the menu with creations like seafood cioppino or a char-glazed filet of beef. Superb wine pairings are recommended on the menu.

Jiko-The Cooking Place. African-inspired dishes like curry-rubbed lamb loin, maize-crusted corvina and tagine chicken are on the eclectic menu in this AAA Four-Diamond restaurant at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge. The restaurant's fare is creative and satisfying, paired with an impressive list of wines exclusively from Africa — the largest collection in any restaurant in the United States. After dinner, take a stroll alongside the resort's own savanna with wildebeests, zebras, giraffes and more African animals.

Kouzzina by Cat Cora. At Disney's BoardWalk, this restaurant features a menu of Mediterranean-style cuisine that pays tribute to Chef Cat Cora's Greek roots. Cora said that the new restaurant offers "time-honored recipes passed down from my ancestors, as well as my favorite Greek and Mediterranean dishes that my family loves."

Shula's Steak House. The theme for this popular restaurant at the Walt Disney World Dolphin is the '72 Miami Dolphins' 17-0 perfect season, the NFL's only unbeaten team, with menus hand-painted on NFL footballs. But no one's there for the décor, but for the generous portions of Certified Angus Beef, including a signature 48-ounce porterhouse. Start with the classic Caesar salad with a generous sprinkle of fresh Parmesan, or a sweet lobster cocktail. Steak is the star of the show, with classic sides like hash browns and creamed spinach. Fresh seafood

options round out the menu, with wines for every taste.

Todd English's bluezoo. Chef Todd English opened his first Florida restaurant at the Walt Disney World Dolphin, where the signature "dancing fish" grill features seafood roasted over an open rotisserie. Chef English takes a global approach in the kitchen, with everything from miso glazed Chilean sea bass to grilled beef tenderloin. Try a side of shake & bake fries with grated Parmesan and crushed garlic. Stellar wines pair nicely.

Victoria & Albert's. Chef Scott Hunnel at Victoria & Albert's at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa is at the top of his game with Central Florida's only AAA Five-Diamond Restaurant and one of only two with Mobil's Four Stars. The intimate restaurant also won the *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence, with 700 selections on the menu and 4,200 bottles in its cellar. And the 50-seat restaurant is one of just 800 restaurants in North America to receive the DiR?NA Award of Excellence. The menu changes almost daily, with specialties from around the globe. The best seat in the house is at Hunnel's Chef's Table in the kitchen.

Yachtsman Steakhouse. Diners get to see the steaks aging in a refrigerated display, then peek in the open kitchen to see them sizzling on the oak-fired grill. The classic menu includes starters like escargot and lobster bisque, and you can ask for just about any cut of expertly cooked meat, from a first-rate filet mignon to porterhouse and tender beef short ribs. There are plenty of bold reds on the wine list, but food-friendly whites are there, too.

For reservations at any Walt Disney World table-service restaurant, visit www.disneyworld.com/dine or call 407/WDW-DINE (939-3463).

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