

The Best of the Best of Walt Disney World Resorts

Best Resort Pools

Disney's Yacht and Beach Resort's Club's Storm-along Bay, a three-acre miniature water park; the Nanea Volcano Pool at *Disney's Polynesian Resort* with its luxuriant waterfall, smoking peak, and perfect views of Cinderella Castle; and the boulder-strewn Silver Creek Springs Pool at *Disney's Wilderness Lodge* with its own erupting geyser.

Best Deluxe Resort

On Disney property it's *Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa's* public areas with its upscale Victorian ambience and lagoon side setting facing the *Magic Kingdom*® (guest rooms here need a redo, something that is scheduled to early 2014). Off-property it is the Waldorf Astoria Orlando where you may be tempted never to leave the resort. And stay tuned for the new Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Walt Disney World Resort, sure to be tops on this list!

Best Disney Deluxe Villa Resort

The Villas at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, the newest Disney Deluxe Villa Resort in its repertoire. Second runner up is *Bay Lake Tower at Disney's Contemporary Resort* with its hip, modern look, monorail access, and spectacular views of the *Magic Kingdom*.

Best Atmosphere

Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, where hundreds of animals roam the savanna and the air is pulsating to the beat of African drums.

Best Lobby

How to choose? Three make the cut: *Disney's Wilderness Lodge*, *Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa*, and *Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge*, all eye-popping in their grandeur.

Best Access to the Parks

Disney's Contemporary Resort with not only monorail access to the *Magic Kingdom* but a walking path as well. *Disney's Polynesian Resort* where there is direct monorail access with no transfer required to reach both *Epcot*® and the *Magic Kingdom* (a short stroll is required to reach the Transportation & Ticket Center and the direct *Epcot Monorail*). And any of the *Epcot Resorts* within walking distance to Epcot and a boat ride or long stroll to *Disney's Hollywood Studios*®

Best for Romance

Disney's Polynesian Resort whose lush tiki torch-lit grounds and white-sand beaches with views of Cinderella Castle are simply dreamy.

Best for Nature Lovers

Disney's Wilderness Lodge for its rushing waterfalls, spouting geysers, and bubbly creeks, all surrounded by stately pine trees and sparkling Bay Lake.

Best Resort Lounges

California Grill Lounge at *Disney's Contemporary* Resort with its splendid location on the 15th floor and unrivaled views of the *Magic Kingdom*, the Seven Seas Lagoon, and the *Wishes* fireworks show (you'll need to check in first at the second-floor podium). Bluezoo Lounge at the Walt Disney World Dolphin, the snazziest place around. And Il Mulino Lounge at the Walt Disney World Swan's where a lively bar scene is to be had with live music on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Best Suite Views

Walt Disney World Dolphin's Two-Story Presidential Suites whose all-encompassing views just can't be beat; *Disney's Contemporary* Resort's 14th floor suites overlooking either Bay Lake or, better yet, the *Magic Kingdom*, views that will flat-out blow your mind; the Royal Assante Presidential and Royal Kuba V.P. Suites at *Disney's Animal Kingdom* Lodge with sweeping views of the resort's exotic savanna; *Disney's Grand Floridian* Resort & Spa's Grand Suite where fireworks can be viewed from four of five balconies; the Steeplechase Presidential Suite and Sonora V.P. Suite at *Disney's BoardWalk* Inn whose deep balconies overlook Crescent Lake and *Epcot*; and *Disney's Wilderness* Lodge's Yellowstone Presidential and Yosemite V.P. Suites overlooking the resort's lovely courtyard pool and sparkling Bay Lake.

Best Guest Room Views

Theme Park View rooms at *Disney's Contemporary* Resort, the higher up the better (reserve an Atrium Club concierge room on the 12th floor), with up-close views of the Seven Seas Lagoon, the Magic Kingdom, the Castle, and the *Wishes* fireworks show; Savanna View rooms at *Disney's Animal Kingdom* Lodge where exotic animals roam right below your balcony; Theme Park View rooms at *Disney's Polynesian* Resort overlooking the Seven Seas Lagoon, a lovely white sand beach, and the Castle and fireworks in the distance; and Deluxe Club Rooms at *Disney's BoardWalk* Inn with divine Crescent Lake and *Epcot* views.

Best Concierge Lounge

Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa's Royal Palm Club where there's a great spread of appetizers and pleasant music wafting up from the Grand Lobby below.

Best Suites

The Royal Assante Presidential Suite at *Disney's Animal Kingdom* Lodge with its thatch roof ceiling, hand-carved furnishings, African textiles, and sweeping views of the resort's savanna; the Walt Disney World Dolphin's Two-Story Presidential Suites decorated in a divine contemporary style with views stretching for miles; and *Disney's Polynesian* Resort's two-story King Kamehameha Suite decked out in a contemporary Asian style with South Seas paddle fans cooling the open loft living area.

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Cara Goldsbury is the author of *The Luxury Guide to Disney Vacations* and *The Luxury Guide to Walt Disney World Resort*. She is Chief Executive Concierge at [Glass Slipper Concierge®](#) and has appeared as a leading Disney expert on two Travel Channel specials, *Disney Splurge!* and *Disney Royalty*. She has also been cited numerous times in national news articles, in such notable publications as *Forbes Traveler*, as an expert on the *Walt Disney World®* Resort. Visit Cara at wdwLuxuryGuide.com.