

Modern retro newly renovated Disneyland Hotel



Like most Orange County natives, I feel a special connection to Disneyland. Some of my most vivid and precious childhood memories are linked to visits to the park with my family. As a kid, even driving by Disneyland and spying the tippy-top of the Matterhorn from the station wagon window could make my young heart leap.

That well of warm memories and strong sentimental emotions are exactly what Disneyland Resort is hoping to tap into when guests visit the newly remodeled Disneyland Hotel. The two-year renovation not only has brought modern luxuries and more efficient design elements to the 55-year-old property, but it also delivers something unexpected—nostalgia.

“There’s a lot of history here for families and bringing the history and memories together in one place is something only Disney can do,” said Tony Bruno, Vice President, Hotels and Downtown Disney, for the Disneyland Resort. “Those elements were important to us in the redesign.”

My family and I live only minutes from the Disneyland Resort and visit the park often. But I was downright excited to stay at the Disneyland Hotel (something I hadn’t done since I was 8 years old) and share some of my memories with my kids—the koi pond, the Dancing Waters Show—and create some new ones with them. It was a “staycation” for us, Disney style!



The first wallop of nostalgia came when we walked through the totally revamped pool and courtyard area between the three

towers. The dramatic centerpiece of the hotel is a replica of the original Disneyland sign that now sits atop the water slides. You remember it: flags waving high above boxed letters spelling out “Disneyland.” The 10 year old inside me squealed in delight when I saw it and so did the 10 year old standing next to me, my daughter. The entire water slide structure is reminiscent of the original Monorail Station at Disneyland, with the actual slides made to look like the Mark I, the very first Monorail that debuted in the park in 1959.

“We wanted to relate to the nostalgic Disneyland wherever we could,” John Mauro, Development Manager, Walt Disney Imagineering, told me on a tour through the property.



Even in the smallest details, the resort has clever dashes of Disney spattered everywhere. In a nod to the old ticketing system at Disneyland, the pools are named the “D” Ticket and “E” Ticket pools. The tiles of each pool are colored to match the color of that pool’s ticket—yellow for “D” Ticket and green for “E” Ticket. Even the lounge chairs are covered in fabric that looks like the zigzag embossing of the old Disneyland ticket books.



“Fans of Disney look for that kind of detail,” said Mauro. “We really raised the bar in this hotel renovation...everything has a Disney touch.” Nowhere at the resort is the Disney touch more cleverly employed than with the “Good Night Kiss,” a technological wonder built into the headboard of every standard room bed in the hotel. My kids were thrilled to see Sleeping Beauty Castle light up with twinkling stars and fireworks on the beautifully carved wooden headboard, but when the song “A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes” began to play in music-box style—they shrieked with laughter. They must have

made that magic happen 50 times during our one-night stay. We all fell asleep with the words dancing around in our heads: “A dream is a which your heart makes, when you’re fast asleep...”



All standard rooms—with either two queen beds or one king—have been completely renovated with modern touches like flat screen TVs, cell phone and computer plug-ins and Wi-Fi. Although the headboard is the centerpiece and the real “magic” of the décor, look for nostalgic dabs of Disney in the rooms, like black and white photos of Walt Disney.

The Disneyland Hotel sits at the far end of Downtown Disney and beyond all the downtown excitement await both Disneyland and Disney California Adventure. I was surprised that even though all the action was near us—we viewed the fireworks show from our room (if you are lucky enough this, make sure to tune in to the soundtrack of the show on the room's tv)—it felt like we were staying at an exclusive resort, away from the fray and pull of the crowds.

I don't know if it was the nostalgic charm of the newly remodeled Disneyland Hotel coupled with its abounding modern luxuries, but our staycation there felt at once homey—friendly and warm—and like a true getaway. “We knew we wanted to make The Disneyland Hotel special for that mom, that dad, their kids...something that would get them excited,” Mauro said. They have succeeded. Disney has created a hotel that will delight every member of the family as together they create memories to treasure for years to come.