



560
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photos

the
Unofficial
Guide®

The Color Companion to
Walt Disney
World®

Bob Sehlinger & Len Testa

the
Unofficial
Guide[®]
Color Companion
to Walt Disney
World[®]

Bob Sehlinger and Len Testa



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Walt Disney World





DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



The authors and researchers of this guide specifically and categorically declare that they are and always have been **TOTALLY INDEPENDENT** of the Walt Disney Company, Inc.; of Disneyland, Inc.; of Walt Disney World, Inc.; and of any and all other members of the Disney corporate family not listed. The material in this guide has not been reviewed, edited, or approved by the Walt Disney Company, Inc.; Disneyland, Inc.; or Walt Disney World, Inc.

In this guide, we represent and serve you. If a restaurant serves bad food, or a gift item is overpriced, or a ride isn't worth the wait, we say so, and in the process we hope to make your visit more fun and rewarding.





YOUR UNOFFICIAL WALT DISNEY WORLD TOOLBOX



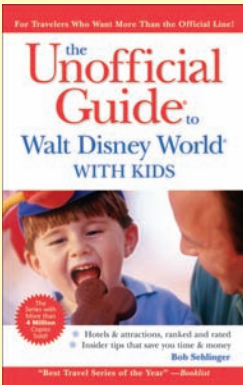
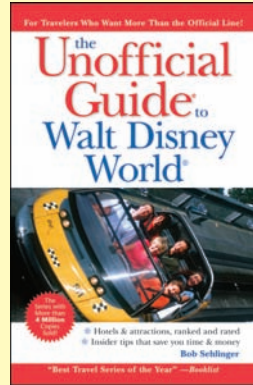
You need different tools to work on your car than you do to fix your VCR or trim the azaleas. It's much the same when it comes to a Walt Disney World vacation. If we think of information as tools, a couple with two toddlers in diapers will need different tools than a party of seniors going to the Epcot Flower and Garden Festival. Likewise, adults touring without children and families with kids of varying ages both require their own special tools.

To meet the various needs of our readers, we have created one very comprehensive (and rather porky) guide, *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World*. At about 850 pages, we call this guide the Big Book. The Big Book contains the detailed information anyone traveling to Walt Disney World needs to have a super vacation. It's our cornerstone guide.

As thorough as we try to make *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World*, there isn't sufficient space for all the tips and valuable information that may be important and useful to certain readers. Thus, we've developed five additional Disney World guides, each designed to work in conjunction with the Big Book. All provide information tailored to specific Disney World visitors. Although some tips from the Big Book (such as arriving early at the theme parks) are echoed in these guides, most of the information is unique. You could think of the **Big Book** as a vacuum cleaner and the other guides as specialized attachments that certain users might need for a particular job (back to tools, you see).

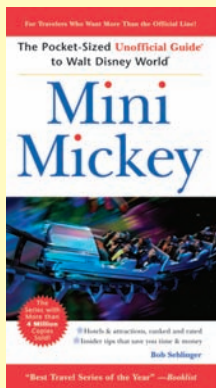
So here's what is in the toolbox:

The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World with Kids by Bob Sehlinger and Liliane J. Opsomer with Len Testa presents planning and touring tips for a family vacation, along with more than 20 special touring plans for families that are not published anywhere else.



The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World for Grown-Ups by Eve Zibart focuses on adult pursuits and helps adults traveling without children make the most of their Disney vacation.

Mini-Mickey: The Pocket-Sized Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World by Bob



Sehlinger is a portable *CliffsNotes*-style version of *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World*. It distills information from the Big Book to help short-stay or last-minute visitors decide quickly how to plan their limited hours at Disney World.

Beyond Disney: The Unofficial Guide to Universal, SeaWorld, and the Best of Central Florida

by Bob Sehlinger and Grant Rafter is a guide to non-

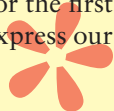
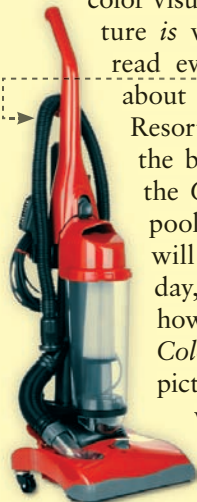
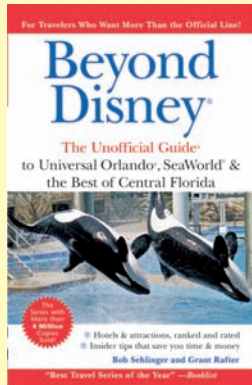
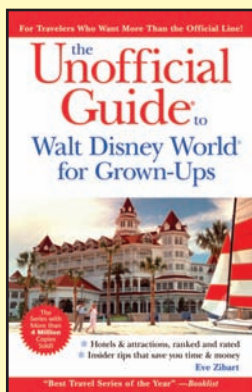
Disney attractions, restaurants, outdoor recreation, and nightlife in Orlando and central Florida.

This guide, *The Unofficial Guide Color Companion to Walt Disney World*, is a full-color visual feast that proves that a picture is worth 1,000 words. You can read everything you need to know about Disney's Wilderness Lodge

Resort in the **Big Book** (even learn the best rooms to request), but in

the *Color Companion* you can see the guest rooms, the pool, and the magnificent lobby. For the first time, photos will illustrate how long the lines are at different times of day, how drenched riders get on Splash Mountain, and how the parks are decked out for various holidays. The *Color Companion* will whet your appetite for Disney fun, picture all the attractions, serve as a keepsake, and as always, help make your vacation more enjoyable. Most

of all, the *Color Companion* is for fun. For the first time we are able to use photography to express our *Unofficial Guide* sense of humor.



THE UNOFFICIAL TEAM

It takes a big team to create an *Unofficial Guide*. Allow me to introduce our crew except for our dining critic, who shall remain totally anonymous, and our onsite researchers who, as you can see, shall remain kinda anonymous:

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MORE KUDOS

The *Unofficial Guides* have always been a team effort. It all begins with our friends at Wiley Publishing, Ensley Eikenburg and Paul Kruger, who provided direction and support and who tolerate our, shall we say, unorthodox sense of humor. Wiley is a conservative publisher, but one that does remarkably well teaming up with what to them must seem like Monty Python.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the dozens of *Unofficial Guide* readers who provided photos for the *Walt Disney World Color Companion*.

Many thanks to Sam Gennawey for providing the interesting “Disney Design” sidebars in our parks chapters. Sam is an urban planner in Pasadena, California. His past projects include designs for Walt Disney World. In his spare time he plans the future of California’s urban landscapes. Visit Sam’s blog at SamLandDisney.blogspot.com.

Thanks to Sara Moore for her logistic support of the research team; to Carol Damsky, Larry Bleiberg, and Lisa Schultz Smith for their good humor and creative contributions; to Jol Silversmith for his keen proofreading skills; to intellectual property counsels Andrew Norwood and Deirdre Silver; and to models Anna and Claire Merkle.

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

The work of the following photographers have come together as a symphony of color and excitement in this first all-color *Unofficial Guide*.

Gail Mooney If our photographers create a visual symphony, Gail Mooney is our first chair violin. Co-partner of Kelly/Mooney Productions in the NYC area, she has over 30 years of experience in still photography. Her work has appeared regularly in *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Islands*, and *Travel & Leisure*, among many other publications. She has published books on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, Provence, and *Down on the Delta* about the Delta blues musicians. She is also a documentary videographer.



Richard Macko *Unofficial Guide* Research Team photographer Richard Macko lives in Orlando. Working at Walt Disney World almost every week on a shoot or research project, Richard is a retired newspaper executive. An avid golfer, he and his wife, Lillian (also an *Unofficial Guide* researcher), have two sons and two grandchildren.

Stefan Zwanzger Born in 1979 in Germany, Stefan became an entrepreneur at age 19, was lucky with affiliate marketing, and then pursued his passion for filmmaking. In 2007 he chose to dedicate all his energy to thethemeparkguy.com. Stefan lives in a different country every other year, with Bratislava, Dubai, and London being his latest residential encounters. His favorite theme park in the world is Tokyo DisneySea.



Matt Pasant Matt's first trip to Walt Disney World was in 1992 and forever sparked a passion in the magic of Disney. For many years he has sought to share the magic memories of Disney through his photography. Matt now enjoys trips to Walt Disney World with his wife, Aubrey, and their daughter, Allison.

Tom Bricker Yearly vacations with his parents, Don and Beth, sparked Tom's interest in Walt Disney World. After a long absence, Tom was drawn back to the World and became engaged to his fiancée, Sarah, on the beach of Disney's Polynesian Resort in 2007. Tom and Sarah now visit bi-yearly, combining Tom's expertise in photography with their passion for the Disney theme parks.





Joe Penniston Although he lives in Iowa, Joe Penniston's heart lies in Walt Disney World. With wife Bridget and daughters Olivia and Anna, the Pennistons are always looking forward to their next Disney trip. When not visiting WDW, Joe enjoys practicing all aspects of photography—from initial capture to final edit. For more of Joe's work, log on to flickr.com/expressmonorail.

Jon Fiedler A lifelong Disney fan, Jon Fiedler took his first trip to WDW at the age of 3. Not surprisingly, Disney parks and characters are his favorite subjects to photograph. He has visited WDW more than 30 times, Disneyland around 10 times, and Disneyland Paris twice (and counting).



Jay B. Parker A Mississippi native and digital photography enthusiast, Jay B. Parker lives in central Arkansas with his wife, Lauren, and their three children. He works as an information technology manager at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. You can view more of his photography at flickr.com/photos/jbparker.



Tim Gerdes Tim Gerdes is an accomplished photographer whose work has appeared in a variety of publications. Recently, Tim has focused his artistic talent on documenting the Walt Disney World theme parks. Working mostly with available light, Tim strives to replicate the Disney World experience in photos. Tim lives in New Jersey with his wife, daughter, and their two bulldogs.



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INTRODUCTION

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR . . .





2 **W**hen the Magic Kingdom opened its door in 1971, it was the only theme park on the vast acreage that Walt Disney cagily acquired near the sleepy central Florida city of Orlando. Every year since then, the park's turnstiles rotate nearly 50 million times. Tourists from all corners of the world travel to Walt Disney World to participate in the most successful amusement concept in history: part playground, part schoolroom, and part sugar plum fairy. Many of them bring their children, of course; many have been coming since they themselves were children.

What these multigenerational, multinational, and multicultural visitors all have in common is a lack of self-consciousness, a sense of playfulness, and perhaps also a sense of relief in escaping what seems to be an increasingly dark and complex real world for the instant gratifications of the Magic Kingdom and its sister parks. Other resorts may bill themselves as "antidotes to civilization," but Disney World offers an antidote to incivility; a respite from violence, squalor, hunger, and environmental depredation; and even a sort of inoculation against aging. Like Peter Pan, the international citizens of Disney World never really grow up. In many ways, it is Walt Disney's greatest gift, as close to eternal youth as we will ever get. Ponce de León may have failed to find his fountain of youth in Florida, but only because he was in the right place at the wrong time.





4 FROM WHENCE IT CAME

The vastness of Walt Disney World was no happy accident. Disney had made one mistake building his first kingdom—not building a big enough “moat” around it—and he wasn’t about to make such a mistake with the second one. “One thing I learned from Disneyland,” Walt Disney once groused, “was to control the environment.” Almost as soon as Disneyland opened in 1955, motel operators, fast-food franchises, and tacky souvenir shops tried to camp as close to the castle door as possible. The entrance to the Anaheim park is on Harbor Boulevard, and that jerry-built, neon-splattered strip became the company’s version of the Alamo: “Never again!”

After watching what happened to the periphery of Disneyland once the get-rich-quick jackals moved in, Walt Disney was determined that the next time he began such an endeavor, he would control the visual horizon in every direction, no matter how much land it took. The illusion, the controlled perspective, would not blur even at the



edges. That has remained one of the most remarkable aspects of Walt Disney World today. Despite its (now) urbanized location, Walt Disney World seems to exist entirely apart from any city. Once inside the perimeter, no concrete skyscrapers, no truck exhaust, no billboards, and no power lines interrupt the perfect sky.

An unblemished vista wasn’t the only consideration, of course: Disney wanted to hold enough territory to exercise total control over development in the practical sense as well. For one thing, in Disneyland’s first decade the merchants in the area just outside the park bled off an incredible amount of the entertainment dollars that would otherwise have been spent inside. By one estimate, the exploiters made twice the money Disney did. Dealing with Anaheim’s local utilities cost him a fortune as well: He had to pay for installing power lines a second time in order to have them buried underground.

So, for Disney, aesthetics and economics went hand in hand. That meant finding a large enough tract of undeveloped, or at least minimally developed, land



that at the same time would be accessible—under Disney’s own terms—to the millions of people he needed to attract. The site needed to be in a fairly warm climate, so it could operate year-round. That eliminated such early suggestions as Niagara Falls, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

It was the beauty of the area itself—the mixture of pasture, orange groves, forest, and marsh—that finally sold Walt Disney on his future kingdom. In 1964, when Disney had his pilots swing the corporate Gulfstream over the pine swamps of central Florida, he pointed out a spot about 15 miles south of Orlando where an unfinished expressway (soon to be the Florida Turnpike) was scraping toward I-4. Then Disney caught a glimpse of a little island in the blue of Bay Lake. “Great,” he pronounced. “Buy it.” (That island is now the abandoned Discovery Island, working its way back to the natural

state it was in when Walt first admired it.)

Disney also quickly dispensed with the Harbor Boulevard problem. When at one meeting early in the planning stages his brother Roy, the financial fall guy, objected to buying yet more land, saying, “We already own about 12,500 acres,” Walt shot back: “Two questions: Is the price right? Do we have the money?”

“Yes to both,” his brother conceded.

“OK,” Walt said, ending the discussion. “How would you like to own 10,000 acres next to Disneyland right now?”

But even that didn’t quite satisfy Walt. “If he could have,” one of his key staffers said later, “he would have bought 50,000 acres.”



YOUNG AT HEART

Walt Disney died on December 15, 1966, which means that the vast majority of park guests don't really remember him, or only know a video ghost. But that doesn't mean he isn't visible: To a great extent, the "character" of Disney World reflects the personality of Walt Disney himself. Even in his 50s, when Walt started work on the original Disneyland, he was building it as much for himself—for if there was ever a man who cherished his inner child, it was he—as for his children.

What a man cherishes, he hopes to preserve and pass to his children. It was the settings and stories, the fairy tales, and young people's adventures that he remembered from his own childhood, such as *Kidnapped*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Peter Pan*, *The Jungle Book and Just-So Stories*, *Tarzan of the Apes*, *The Arabian Nights*, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, and Howard Pyle's rousing versions of *Robin Hood* and *King Arthur*, that Walt re-created in the original Adventureland, Fantasyland, and Tomorrowland and in his first movies.

When Disney was still a toddler, the Wright brothers made the dream of flight a reality, in a clumsy-winged box far less graceful than Dumbo the Flying Elephant. When he was in his mid-20s, Charles Lindbergh made the first nonstop solo Atlantic air crossing and inspired the very first Mickey Mouse cartoon, *Plane Crazy*. (It was the first Mickey cartoon made, though it wasn't released until after the better-known *Steamboat Willie*, in which Mickey's alter ego echoed Mark Twain as much as it played on the contemporary popularity of Edna Ferber's *Show Boat*.) In fact, as Walt himself not only scripted Mickey's adventures but also provided his actual voice until 1946, one can plausibly argue that all of Mickey's roles reenacted Walt's own childhood fantasies.

Walt Disney's first full-length feature was a version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, a fairy tale he'd seen in a silent version in his early teens. Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty* ballets were instantly classics, and he remembered them, too. All these images, all these national obsessions, romances, and heroes, and in particular all the explorers and inventors—everything except the plagues and the wars—reappear in the part of Walt's amusement park that was closest to his own vision: the Magic Kingdom. The symbols of various other countries that appear in It's a Small World—which foreshadow many of the icons at the World Showcase—are straight out of early newsreels that featured the Eiffel Tower, the Sphinx, the Acropolis, the Taj Mahal, and Big Ben.

Because Disney grew up in the age of such inventors as Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell and photographers George Eastman and Eadward Muybridge, and in a time when the medical research of Walter Reed, Louis Pasteur, and their colleagues seemed to promise a future free of disease, he remained fascinated by and absolutely confident of the advances of science and technology. Like Muybridge and Eastman, he pushed camera technology forward; like Karl Benz and Bell, he dreamed of impulsive travel and instantaneous communication. These images and ideas pop up again and again throughout the Disney kingdom.

The three-part *Men in Space* series that began airing as a Disneyland TV show in the mid-1950s, and that featured such eminent scientists as Wernher von Braun, was so forward-looking—and so convincing—that it helped push the Pentagon into backing the space program. Walt's original vision for Epcot, the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, was of the sort of technological utopia Jules Verne would have welcomed. And for many of the original Disney generation—those uncynical post-World War II baby boomers who could remember iceboxes and operator-assisted telephones—the rapid transformation of American culture was just as magical as it seemed to Disney. Even the phrase "Atomic Age" conjured notions of progress rather than debate.

So, though the actual Epcot is not a living city but a sort of permanent world exposition, it nevertheless echoes the unquestioning faith Disney's generation grew up placing in the captains of industry. "Progress equals prosperity" is the credo; dreams, especially the American dream, can come true if you're young at heart.

Walt Disney and Wernher von Braun at the Redstone Arsenal in 1954.



NASA

And the young at heart, like Super Bowl quarterbacks and Olympic heroines, go to Walt Disney World, where they are joined by their children, grandchildren, and thousands of their peers in a mini-nation. For the 20-somethings who throng to Disney World, the continual barrage of music, lights, lasers, and special effects provides a three-dimensional ambience that's as stimulating as a computer game. For the 30- and 40-somethings, the movie references that make up the Disney vocabulary are as familiar as their real-life friends. For older visitors, the international pavilions of Epcot's World Showcase and the safaris of Animal Kingdom are as close to foreign travel as possible without need of a passport. For the self-indulgent, a few days at the resorts can supply the delights of three or four holidays in one: beach time, wilderness hiking, club hopping, chore-free dining, sports, spa services, and shopping.

None of this is purely coincidental. So broad a potential audience doesn't go unnoticed, or unexploited. Neither does the ever-greater proportion of disposable income and increased leisure time of young and old alike. Self-fulfillment is no longer considered selfish; it's spiritual. It may require years to achieve. The Disney Company is notoriously clever at creating both demand and supply, and over the past decade it has deliberately targeted middle-aged professionals (supplying business services in the hotels and offering management and efficiency seminars to companies), sports fans (purchasing ESPN and constructing the huge Wide World of Sports complex), active retirees (offering part- and full-time jobs to seniors as well as emphasizing golfing vacations), young lovers (constructing a fairy-tale wedding pavilion and offering a wide range of fantasy ceremonies), and trend-savvy yuppies (offering expensive restaurants and wine bars). It was ahead of the curve on taking special notice of military personnel, working with the Department of Defense to establish a whole resort (Shades of Green) for armed service members and their families.

Under former CEO Michael Eisner, who, during his 20-year reign, used his own very broad interests as the litmus test for Disney programs, the company went from being amenable to all age groups to specifically targeting each age group. The advertising campaigns proclaim, "It's time to remember the magic," and "It's just not the same without the kids"—which can be read two ways. Golf and tennis facilities abound, along with luxurious spa services and ever-more expensive merchandise, not to mention a cruise line and a rapidly expanding adventure travel service. Seniors are so important to Disney economics that an entire branch of the Guest Services department is geared to silver-age visitors. And teens, always Disney's weakest market, will in the future be lured by characters and attractions drawn from Marvel Comics, which Disney acquired in 2009.

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OK, I'LL BITE. HOW BIG IS IT?

It was almost kismet—Kismet, Florida. But even then, it might not have been big enough for Walt Disney's dream. Walt Disney World comprises more than 25,000 acres, or 43 square miles. That's about the size of Boston, two times larger than Manhattan, and 60 times the size of Monaco; Grace Kelly would have been queen of a larger and wealthier kingdom if she'd married Uncle Walt instead of Prince Rainier. (And, in fact, until the development of the town of Celebration, Walt Disney World actually contained 30,000 acres.) Situated hither and yon in this vast expanse are the Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and the Animal Kingdom theme parks; two swimming theme parks; 34 hotels; a campground; more than 100 restaurants; a shopping complex; seven convention venues; a nature preserve; a series of interconnected lakes, streams, and canals; and a transportation system consisting



of four-lane highways, elevated monorails, and a network of canals.

Walt Disney World has more than 50,000 employees, or cast members, making it the largest single-site employer in the United States. Keeping the costumes of those cast members clean requires the equivalent of 16,000 loads of laundry a day and the dry-cleaning of 30,000 garments daily. Mickey Mouse alone has 175 different sets of duds, ranging from a scuba wet suit to a tux. (Minnie's wardrobe tops Mickey's with more than 200 outfits.) Each year, Disney restaurants serve 10 million burgers, 7 million hot dogs, 50 million Cokes, 9 million pounds of French fries, and 150 tons of popcorn. In the state of Florida, only Miami and Jacksonville have bus systems larger than Disney World's.



A QUICK TRIP AROUND THE MAJOR THEME PARKS



MAGIC KINGDOM

When people think of Walt Disney World, most think of the Magic Kingdom, which opened in 1971. The Magic Kingdom consists of adventures, rides, and shows featuring Disney cartoon characters, and, of course, Cinderella Castle. This park is only one element of Disney World, but it remains the heart.

The Magic Kingdom is subdivided into seven lands, six of which are arranged around a central hub. First encountered is Main Street, U.S.A., which connects the Magic Kingdom entrance with the hub. Clockwise around the hub are Adventureland, Frontierland, Liberty Square, Fantasyland, and Tomorrowland. Mickey's Toontown Fair, the first new land added since the Magic Kingdom opened (and soon to be the first land that goes the way of the passenger pigeon), is situated along the Walt Disney World Railroad on three acres between Fantasyland and Tomorrowland. Access to Toontown Fair is through Fantasyland or Tomorrowland or via the railroad. Main Street and the six lands will be detailed later.

Four hotels (Bay Lake Tower and the Contemporary, Polynesian, and Grand Floridian resorts) are near the Magic Kingdom and directly connected to it by monorail and boat. Two other hotels, Shades of Green and Disney's Wilderness Lodge Resort and Villas, are nearby but not served by the monorail.



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EPCOT

Opened in October 1982, Epcot is twice as big as the Magic Kingdom and comparable in scope. It has two major areas: Future World consists of pavilions that exhibit human creativity and technological advancement; World Showcase, arranged around a 40-acre lagoon, presents the architectural, social, and cultural heritages of almost a dozen nations, including Mexico, Norway, China, Germany, Italy, United States, Japan, Morocco, France, United Kingdom, and Canada. Each country is represented by replicas of its famous landmarks and settings. Epcot is more educational than the Magic Kingdom and has been characterized as a permanent world's fair.

Recognize right up front that Epcot is huge—larger than the Magic Kingdom and Disney's Hollywood Studios combined—and time-consuming. Even good walkers should plan on a return visit. Also remember that Future World opens earlier and (with a few exceptions) closes earlier than the World Showcase, so plan your time accordingly. Look for the Tip Board near the entrances.

The Epcot resort hotels—Disney's Beach Club Resort and Villas, Disney's Yacht Club, Disney's BoardWalk Inn and Villas Resort, the Walt Disney World Swan, and the Walt Disney World Dolphin—are within a 5- to 15-minute walk of the International Gateway (backdoor) entrance to the theme park. The hotels are also linked to Epcot and Disney's Hollywood Studios by canal. Epcot is connected to the Magic Kingdom and its hotels by monorail.