

An aerial photograph of the Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort. The image shows a large, winding lake with several fountains in the upper left. To the right, there are tall, multi-story resort buildings. In the foreground, a large, irregularly shaped swimming pool is surrounded by numerous palm trees, lounge chairs, and white umbrellas. A gazebo with a domed roof is situated near the pool. The overall scene is lush and tropical.

Wyndham

GRAND ORLANDO

RAY COLLINS

Orlando Love

Discovering the Wyndham Grand Orlando

There's a unique development just outside the turnstiles of Disney World called Bonnet Creek. Among the half-dozen condominium buildings is a high-end hotel called the Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek.

What makes this so special? All the buildings are around-- not a creek, but--a 10-acre lake. Hotel guests have access to all the different amenities at the neighboring facilities that includes five pools, two lazy rivers, eight hot tubs, 18-hole mini-golf.

The Wyndham Grand is a beauty of a hotel, four hundred rooms, and staffed with high-end workers who understand customer service at every turn. Ritz-level service at affordable rates. Our room overlooked the big pond--and we could see the aerial rides at Disney World in the distance. (The hotel offers a free shuttle to the theme park for guests.) Other room options range from expansive suites to bunkbeds. Each room has easy access to Wi-Fi and 55-inch flat screen TVs.

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The Wyndham Grand Orlando has SEVEN different dining choices--and for lunch, we chose a fun option out by the pool called Back Bay Bar & Grille. It's a fun, casual, open-air environment with plenty of high-top tables and other stools lined along an elevated counter around the rim, allowing diners the ability chance to eat and keep an eye on the action around the pool.

Since I have a wheat allergy (thanks Mom!), I was ecstatic they had gluten-free buns. So rather than the usual salad, I was able to have a blackened grouper sandwich and fries. Erin enjoyed her Greek salad with chicken. For dessert we had a couple ice cream bars. All very decadent.

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With so much to see, we began exploring this sprawling campus. We walked around the loop and stopped repeatedly to see what each condo had to offer. This well-manicured path allowed us to get out and get exercise without leaving the hotel grounds.

We couldn't resist the fitness room that would make many health clubs envious. They have all the equipment you need in a brightly lit and clean setting. The upbeat atmosphere seemed to cause hotel guests to let their guard down and converse more freely than usually expected.

Just outside the work-out room is an arcade for kids and the Blue Harmony Spa for their parents.

We passed by an extensive series of ballrooms and meeting rooms, making this a good place also for a conference or seminar.



The front desk gave us coupons for two complimentary drinks at Bar 1521 in the lobby. It gave us a chance to chat with other hotel guests and take in the active bar scene before heading into the Deep Blu Seafood Grille for dinner.

What an elegant dining room! We enjoyed the chance to dress up and stay in the hotel for a high-end dinner.

Devin Murphy, the Food & Beverage Manager, came out and made us feel welcomed. Nice touch. He suggested a bottle of Meiomi Pinot Noir followed by a crunchy tuna roll appetizer.

For our entrees, Erin had a 10oz Ribeye and I had an 8oz Filet with a Maine Lobster Tail. They were served over romesco puree and potato mousse with smoked wild mushrooms and garnished with Mustard Frill. We shared a side of Grilled Asparagus. Excellent meal!

For dessert, Erin had a Strawberry Shortcake while I had a Warm Walnut Apple Pie with Cinnamon Ice Cream.

We were pleased with our dining experience and were just as pleased to go up eleven floors to our room and not have to drive anywhere. It was also a nice touch to sit on our balcony in hotel robes and watch the nightly fireworks across the pond coming from the Magic Kingdom.

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Despite the big meal the night before, we were up early and already debating our choices for breakfast. There is The Barista in the lobby, or Tesoro Cove breakfast buffet on the lower level. We decided our diet would start next week and headed downstairs.

We chose the ingredients in our omelet, then added bacon and sausage to our plates—well, I did. Erin had fruit. Orange juice, coffee--and we were ready for our drive back to Sarasota.

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A great staycation just 90 minutes from home that made us feel like we were a world away. Ray Collins has written over a hundred articles for Family Beautiful from Hawaii to Cape Cod. He is a former TV newscaster and currently a Sarasota-based realtor. www.raycollinsmedia.com/articles

UPCOMING OFFER: 30% OFF STANDARD RATES THROUGH MAY 31ST, 2022, IF YOU BOOK BETWEEN NOVEMBER 22 - 30. WyndhamGrandOrlando.com or 407-390-2300.

