

that overlook Animal Kingdom but is very much out on a limb with regard to the other parks. The **Beach Club** and **Yacht Club** are next to each other and Epcot is walkable. Finally, the **BoardWalk Inn** is between Epcot and Hollywood Studios with Epcot being slightly the nearer one but both can be walked along the waterside pathway – or use bus and boat. It also has the attraction of shops and restaurants right outside the resort. Well worth a second look.

### **Universal Hotels**

There are eight Universal hotels and although they have split these into four categories, the only benefits for the sake of this newsletter is the top of the range Premier hotels. All will give the guest early admission of one hour to not just the two theme parks but also to their own water park – Volcano Bay (Disney does not include their two water parks in early admission). Again, staying on-site means saving time. For more information see <http://www.universalorlandovacations.com/hotel-deals/on-site-resort-hotels>

#### **Premier Hotels**

There are three, the **Hard Rock**, **Portofino Bay** and the **Royal Pacific**. If these were in front of you, the positioning is thus; Royal Pacific, Islands of Adventure Park, Universal Studios Park, Hard Rock and Portofino Bay. All are walkable although the latter is a tad further. With the shopping restaurant and entertainment hub in front of the two parks, personally, I would recommend the Royal Pacific or the Hard Rock (we have stayed there). Only these three hotels will give you an Express Pass for the length of your stay (priced currently at \$129 per person per day) and this should be factored in when you look at prices. All three hotels are serviced by buses and boats although you will need a bus to get to Volcano Bay.

#### **Other Categories**

**Sapphire Falls** is a Preferred Hotel, **Cabana Bay Beach** (opened in 2019) and **Aventura** are both Prime Value Hotels and **Endless Summer Dockside** and **Endless Summer Surfside** are Value Hotels. The only thing I can see that differentiates them from each other is price, position and amenities so you pay per money and take your choice.

#### **Other Popular Area**

##### **International Drive**

I-Drive is long (11 miles) and is to the east of both Disney and Universal with SeaWorld, Discovery Cove (swim with the dolphins) and Aquatica (water park) somewhere in the middle of I-Drive and a couple of miles to the east. Far too many to list but there are hotels and motels of all sizes & budgets and this is an excellent way to save money. See <https://www.internationaldriveorlando.com/> for dinner shows, shopping malls and plenty of other things to do on the drive.

##### **Kissimmee**

On Disney's doorstep, the other side of the I-4 freeway. This is the area we stayed in on our very first visit back in 1986. If Disney/Universal are not your priority then this is a feasible option.

##### **Holiday Homes/Villas to Rent**

For the larger party/family this works out quite the cheaper option. A word of warning. For two different families/parties, hire two cars not an 8 seater. There will be times when you will want to do different things, or the speed of 'readiness' of the two parties will not quite match and it will save angry words at some time in the holiday. Tend to be a fair way away from at least one of the main park complexes so may not be ideal for first timers.

As before, any specific questions, you are welcome to email me at [ahspcr@ntlworld.com](mailto:ahspcr@ntlworld.com).