

NHShorty and BuffaloBill's April 21 – 25, 2013 Trip Report

Day 2, April 22nd

Today's is the day that NHShorty's nephew is going to be marching in the MK. So we have planned a sort of minimal, slow-paced day so we can be sure to be in the MK at the agreed location at the appointed time.

So for that reason and as a result of a rather long and jam packed first day, we slept in a bit. For breakfast I picked up some pastries and a small carton of milk at the Roaring Fork inside WL and we enjoyed our tea and pastries on the little porch of our studio villa. There will be more pictures of the view from here in the day four's report when we stage a "Hard Day's Night" style breakout from the WL villas.



After our little nosh, we fired up the White Streak and headed over to the Animal Kingdom. Our objectives at the AK were limited to doing Expedition Everest, the safari, and lunch. It was a cloudy day, but we were ready for anything.



We were in the park by 11:30 and we set our sights on the big mountain. As we took the short cut near Dino-Land, by the Finding Nemo theater, and over the bridge to Asia, we observed two interesting species of wild life. The first was the foam covered bronto.



Then along the path where the strollers are parked next to the Nemo Theater, NHShorty pretty near knocked me over when she saw the rare and extremely dangerous giant furry gecko.



Have you ever seen anything more frightening? Look at the size of this hideous thing.

Here's the view from the bridge.



The standby wait time for Expedition Everest was short, so we grabbed fast passes and jumped into the standby line. Here are a few shots from the wait area. The one on the right struck me as fairly gory and violent.



After riding Everest, we wandered towards Africa and the village of Harambe. Before getting on the safari I took advantage of the village men's room. As I have said before, the transition from third world village to first world restroom is jarring and this time was no exception.

The safari was the best we'd ever experienced. Both from the standpoint of the number and types of animals we saw and style and knowledge of our driver. Neither of us snapped a picture during the whole thing. We were so engrossed with the driver's descriptions and with the animals; we didn't want to miss anything fumbling with our cameras.

As an aside, I work with a woman who was a safari driver during the first few years the AK was open. All I have to say to her is "Jumbo" and she starts the "Jumbo and welcome" speech. She says that all the CM's hated the story about Wilson in the plane, Big Red, and the poachers. Each CM had to know 25 items of information about each of the animal types they might encounter, but it was all wasted because of the stupid story got in the way.

Following the safari, we stopped at Tusker House to see if we could be seated without an ADR. The wait was well over an hour, so we went next door to the Dawa Bar to spend some time till the Everest fast pass return time. NHShorty had her customary sangria and I had a Safari Amber.

While we were enjoying our beverages, we engaged a CM who was keeping the area clean in some conversation. Our retirement plans include working at WDW, so we try to learn something about the work-life of CM's that are retired. I don't recall this woman's name, but she was from the Philly area and she'd been working for Disney for a couple of years. She said there was a 7 person janitorial crew working in the village area. They all took turns cleaning up litter, emptying garbage cans, cleaning the restrooms, and whatever else needed attention.

We talked for quite a while, so I asked her if chatting with us was going to get her into trouble with her supervisor. She said no, on the contrary they were encouraged to interact with the guests. In fact, if for some reason we needed help finding something in the park, she could leave her work area and take us to whatever we were asking about. It was nice to learn that Disney's desire to offer a high level of customer service extends to all levels of the organization.

After our chat with the CM, we headed back to EE to use our fast passes. Along the way I snapped this picture of the "temple". Notice how the temple structure matches up with the peaks of EE.



Again in the EE queue, I captured some of the posters that were displayed for later analysis to see if there were puns, jokes, hidden mickeys, or other hidden magic. Alas, there was none that I could see. I only saw one elastic at the top where the EE track is torn up. A CM told me that no one knows why people are leaving elastics as offerings to the Yeti.



After our second EE ride we were feeling pretty hungry, so we stopped at the Rain Forest Café at the entrance to the AK. No pictures of the food, but it was very good and the place was fairly empty. We had a leisurely lunch and wandered back to the WL. All told, we were inside the AK for only a couple of hours.

Our plan was to be in MK at 5 to meet up with NHShorty's sister and her friend Joe (aka NHSS&FJ) and with NHShorty's nephew, who would be marching in the parade. All of the above mentioned people were at Tony's having dinner, so it was easy to find them. We said hello and not wishing to intrude on their family moment, we headed off on our own to Fantasy Land to see if there had been any new additions since our visit in February. It also was raining on and off during this time. From a ride standpoint we did Pirates again, the Haunted House again, Space Mountain, the People Mover (we love that ride), and the Laugh Floor. By the time we had done all of that it was time to meet up with the family at the end of Main Street near the hub. Here's a picture of NHShorty's nephew marching.



You can go to the band's website, <http://lancermusic.org/?p=4178>, for a brief report of their activities in the Orlando.

The whole experience was sort of like Christmas, months of planning and buying things and it was all over in the blink of an eye. NHShorty's nephew really appreciated all of us being there, and he really is a good kid.

We stayed for a while longer, but eventually we hit the trail to the Poly to retrieve the white streak and returned to the WL. Later NHSS&FJ took the boat from the MK to the WL to join us for drinks in the Territory Lounge. Eventually we took them on a tour of the WL and WL Villas and drove them back to Saratoga Springs. Once again, we fell back into our villa exhausted.

Stay tuned for day three when we will attempt to answer the age-old question: Is it faster to walk or take the boat between EPCOT and HS?