



New Jersey's Wildwoods

by Mike Cohen

Home to more than 180 special events and festivals throughout the year, some might consider the Wildwoods (www.WildwoodsNJ.com) the "Events Capital of the East Coast."

The events take place at various locations throughout the island's three distinct municipalities: Wildwood, Wildwood Crest and North Wildwood. Visitors can find an event happening nearly every day of the week throughout the summer at locations including the Wildwoods Convention Center, Fox Park, Olde New Jersey Avenue and on the beach and world-famous Wildwoods Boardwalk.

This marked our family's first trip to the Wildwoods and it exceeded our expectations. We made our bookings about five months in advance. There is an awful lot to do here and it all starts at The Wildwoods

Boardwalk, often called "two miles of smiles." Here you will find spectacular amusement piers, world-class roller coasters, interactive waterparks, family atmosphere, carnival-style games of chance, shops and irresistible food. Imagine, nearly nine million visitors are attracted here each season. We just loved the atmosphere.

We were fortunate to get reservations at The Adventurer Ocean Inn (www.AdventurerInn.com), which I can confidently say is probably the nicest hotel in all of the Wildwoods. This is indeed an oceanfront location, which has everything that your family or group needs to relax and unwind at the beach. You can wake up to the sounds of the ocean, watch the sun rise from an ocean view or oceanfront balcony, enjoy breakfast in their oceanfront restaurant or simply bask in the sun at the

beach or at the pool area. From this location, you can walk to the beach, the Boardwalk and waterparks, and the Wildwoods Convention Center with ease. It comes complete with a cardio room, convention/meeting rooms, Southern exposure outdoor pool and kiddie pool, and free outdoor and garage parking on the premises.

As for dining out, I would like to recommend two restaurants in particular, which are part of the Big Fish Restaurant Group: the Beach Creek Oyster Bar and Grill (www.beachcreek.net) and The Boathouse (www.boathouseonline.com). Both promise outstanding dining experiences.

At the Beach Creek, located at 500 West Hand Avenue, general manager Colleen Guest and her team run a successful operation. You can tell this when you arrive and see the wait for tables. Intimately served indoors amidst copper and wooden decor, or outside on their waterfront deck, this place knows its food. Located directly on the water, the Beech Creek is known for its award winning contemporary international cuisine. This casual surf 'n turf restaurant and bar features an intimate dark lit dining room, a marina-side deck and live bands.

At The Boathouse Restaurant and Marina Deck (www.boathouseonline.net), located virtually next door at 506 West Rio Grande Avenue, there is ample seating indoors and on the dock overlooking the intercoastal waterway. We arrived to a nice atmosphere of live music and young children dancing to the tunes of the musician. General manager Rick Raduns and his team provide a warm welcome to all guests. The Boathouse has been in business since 1989. It was built on the site of old bait and tackle shop and serves lunch and dinner daily in June, July and August. Come September they offer dinner daily, and lunch on the weekends. They open for dinner on weekends in October, until October 15. Happy hour is from 4 pm to 6 pm and take-out is available as well. ■

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