

Grand Lido Negril
Trip Report
May 6-13, 2017

Mobay Club: The service from the Mobay Club is very good. Although our flight arrived 20 minutes early we were greeted by a representative with our names on a sign upon departing the plane. He escorted us to the immigration area and took us to a special VIP check point. There were only two people ahead of us and we breezed through. He then led us to the baggage claim area where he took us to the proper baggage claim carousel and retrieved a baggage cart for us. We walked right through customs without any delay. He led us to our designated transfer agency and to the private Mobay Club waiting area. Upon returning to the airport we received the same good service and the Mobay Club Lounge is very nice.

Sun Holiday Tours: The agent at the Sun Holiday tours checked our names and prepared our return voucher. I did not thoroughly check what he had written on the voucher and later found out he had designated us to be picked up at the Hedonism rather than the Grand Lido. The return flight number and date were correct, I did check that. We thought it was strange when the driver thought we were to be dropped off at the Hedonism rather than the Grand Lido. He had to ask where the Grand Lido was located. We were dropped off at the lobby of the Royalton.

Grand Lido: The Grand Lido is a part of the Royalton even though it is not advertised that way. We were given a receipt for our luggage and led to the Grand Lido building where we were assigned a room and were introduced to one of our two Butlers. The building is located at the very end of the complex, a good walk from the main entrance and the restaurants, most of which are all lined up together. The buildings are attractive with all having a view to the beach or water. The Butler led us to our rooms and our bags were delivered shortly thereafter. The Grand Lido building's view is to the west and has no view to the beach area. The access to the building is very steep, without handrails, and very slick when wet. Our room was very nice and spacious. It has a free-standing Jacuzzi and a walk-in shower large enough for two. The balcony was the same width of the room and was furnished with 2 chairs and a table with a nice view to the west overlooking the clothing optional area.

Clothing Optional Area: Compared to the rest of the Royalton facilities the size of the clothing optional area is about as big as a postage stamp. It is pathetic. The access to the area is awkward, through narrow, steep walkways. There is no sandy beach area or access to the water unless you climb over rocks. The pool is a very small split level lap pool and there is no hot tub. The chaise lounges are all lined up on a composite dark brown deck which is extremely hot to walk on and generates excessive heat. All the other pools have a cool tile decking. There are no shade trees to lounge under and no umbrellas unless you ask for one. The swim up bar is unattractive and does not have a grill. One must order snacks or food if desired. In short, it is not an inviting area at all. We did not use these facilities while we were there. Neither did some of the other couples staying in the same building. Anyone looking for the ambiance of the old Grand Lido Negril will be sadly disappointed. Royalton should redo this area by building a pool similar, but smaller, to the one at the Diamond Club family beach area and planting some shade trees and more native flora.

Butler Service: We had two Butlers who worked different shifts, one male and one female. Both were very nice, helpful and courteous. They made dinner reservations for us each night and walked us the appropriate restaurant. I asked our Butler to check with the transfer agent to clear up where we were to

be picked up. She did and we were picked up by Sun Holiday tours at the proper time and place. I was somewhat concerned about that but it worked out OK. The Butlers also arranged for a couple of off premise tours that we wanted to take. The Butler service is nice but the same service could be provided with a good concierge.

Hideaway at Royalton Negril: Because we were displeased with the au natural facilities at the Grand Lido we spent the bulk of our time at the Adults Only Hideaway. The pool area is very nice with lots of umbrellas and a cool deck. The swim up bar was large and attractive and had some type of activity going on most of the time. There are also several sandy beach areas with Shade trees, umbrellas and access to the warm Caribbean waters for snorkeling, swimming and floating on rafts. The area is basically where the clothing optional area of old Grand Lido was.

The Royalton Negril, Family Area: The family area is very nice. It is developed with lot of native flora and trees. The beach area is sandy with lots of shade trees and umbrellas. The swimming pool is very large and the swim up bar is attractively designed. There was also a lot of activities going on with young adults having a great time. The kids water park is large but was not as well attended as we thought it would be. The Italian Restaurant is in this area as well a couple of bars.

The Family Diamond Club Area: Undoubtedly, this is the best area in the entire complex. The pool is terrific and very well designed with cool decking and a nice swim up bar. Close by is another bar and grill that has snacks and food available until 6:00PM. The sandy beach has lots of shade trees and umbrellas. The only hot tub in the resort is in this area. The pool and beach bar is a great place for lunch and to enjoy a very nice beach. This is the same area of the adult section of the old Grand Lido.

Restaurants: There were nine restaurants open during our stay. The ‘Culinary Experience’ restaurant was not open. The Martini Bar is adjacent to the “restaurant Row” and was very active most of the time. The bar had a four-page martini menu.

Our opinion of the restaurants are as follows:

Gourmet Marche: This is the buffet that is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The variety of food selection is diverse and the food is very good. Items are cooked fresh as you wait. This was our go to place for breakfast and lunch.

Dorado: This restaurant is open only to the “Hideaway” guest or “Diamond Club” members. Breakfast is good but the service was slow. We ate dinner there three times as it is closest restaurant to the Grand Lido building and the seafood was very good. Service was better in the evening. This was our second favorite restaurant.

Hunter Steakhouse: This is a fast food steak house. Service was hurried and impersonal. My steak was served cold. The steaks are only about a quarter of an inch thick. Being from Texas we are used to being served steaks about an inch and a half thick. This was our least favorite restaurant.

GRAZIE: This is the Italian restaurant. The food was good but not outstanding. We had the beef tenderloin and it was much better than the steak at the Hunter steak. The salad and antipasti were pathetic.

Calypso: Very good, this was our favorite restaurant. Service was attentive and personal. The seafood was outstanding. We would have eaten there more than once except it is a good walk from the Grand Lido building.

Zen : This is a typical "Benihana Restaurant. The food was good and the cooks were entertaining. A fun place to meet new friends.

Armadillo Tex Mex: Being from Texas we decided not to eat there.

Score Bar and Lounge: We did not eat there but we met a couple who said the hamburgers were very good.

Ocean Point Bistro. This Bistro is located next to the Grand Lido building. A very convenient location for lunch. It can be a bit breezy from time to time but the lunch selection is very good. The "Jerk Chicken Pena Pasta" was fantastic. Being at the very west end of the complex it has a great view of the sunset. No need to go to Rick's Café.

Caffe Lounge and Scoops Gelato; Just like having your own private Starbucks and ice cream shop serving pastries and mini slider sandwiches. A great place located in the mail lobby area with a good view of the beach and entertainment pavilion.

All restaurants were considerate of food allergies and there was no problem with Jane's gluten free Diet. No Gluten free bread or toast was available; however, they did prepare gluten free pancakes and could offer GF pasta.

Conclusion:

One of the nice features of the entire complex is the pedestrian walkway circling the beach. It provides terrific views of the cove from almost any point. The one complaint we heard, and agree with, is that they used too much concrete and took down too many trees. The same effect could have been achieved by reducing the size and width of the walkways and the large concrete plaza at the family pool, and providing more grass, native flora and trees.

All in all, we had very a good time. In general, the service and food was good and the staff personnel were very friendly. We were however, disappointed in the Grand lido au natural facilities. If we go to this resort again we will stay at the Diamond Club Pool Beach family area, or go to another resort for a more beach oriented clothing optional facility.

Charles and Jane Holcomb