

Family vacations are a great time to build lasting memories. They give an opportunity for the kids to forget about school and for the parents to forget about the daily grind. Our family tries to take one big family vacation each year when possible.

We have been to Disneyland several times over the years and we decided to visit there again this year. However, we also decided to spend a little extra time south of LA in Carlsbad. This “vacation within a vacation” was something exciting for us and one of the best choices we’ve made.

When we began to plan our trip we asked the boys where they would like to go in addition to Disneyland. The first thing out of their mouths was “Legoland”. We had visited this great amusement park several years ago and decided to make this a destination. The next task was to find somewhere to stay. This is where we hit the jackpot.

I called Legoland and asked if they had any suggestions on where to stay. Right away they put us in touch with the **Sheraton Carlsbad Resort & Spa**. They described this brand new resort not only as a great place to stay in style, but it also is right next door to Legoland with its own private entrance. This sounded great to us and we booked our stay.

After spending several days in Disneyland, we headed out late one night to start our Carlsbad adventure. After our drive, we arrived at about 10:00 at the **Sheraton Carlsbad**. I have to admit, I did not have much expectation of the hotel when I booked it. Over the years I have stayed at many chain hotels and they tend to blend together. My expectations were more than shattered when we walked into the lobby of the Sheraton.

The elegance and class I immediately observed were only overpowered by the intensely friendly staff who gave us the utmost attention. Although the boys were half asleep from the drive they perked up and simply said “WOW”. Honestly, I couldn’t have put it better myself. We headed to our room and were not disappointed. This was not the same old chain hotel room I had grown accustomed to. Trust me, there is nothing like feeling you are first class while staying in a standard guest room and we definitely felt like first class.

After a delicious breakfast the next morning at **Twenty/20**, which is the restaurant located at the **Sheraton Carlsbad**, we headed out for our Legoland adventure. The fun just does not stop when you are at

Legoland. This great theme park has everything from fast and exhilarating Lego themed roller coasters to fun shows to a massive water playground for the kids. This year we remembered to bring the kids’ swim trunks so they could take advantage of the Pirate Shores water attraction.

Legoland is a great place to enjoy things at a slower pace than other theme parks. We took our time visiting all the rides and attractions. The boys really enjoyed looking over all the scaled down versions of places from all over the world at Mini-Town. Constructed from over 20 million Lego bricks, Mini-Town was one of the highlights of our visit. Another added bonus of Legoland is the food. They don’t have

the expected theme park food, but rather have a wide range of cuisines including healthy choices for Mom and Dad. We had a great time at Legoland and didn’t leave until closing time. Having the private walking entrance to get back to the Sheraton was great and allowed us to enjoy every last minute in the Park.

For dinner, we headed back over to **Twenty/20 Grill and Wine Bar**. The cuisine at **Twenty/20** was exemplary. With unique combinations of traditional locally grown in-

gredients prepared with a modern flair, their menu offered choices to suit not only the most sophisticated tastes but also those who don’t venture much outside of their culinary boxes. With great ambiance, incredibly delicious food and attentive wait staff **Twenty/20** was a great wrap to our fun and exciting day.

The next morning, we checked out early and headed over to one of the many beaches near the Sheraton. The concierge suggested several and we chose one. What a great way to end our week long vacation. I will always cherish the memories of sitting on the beach next to my lovely wife while the boys played out in the surf. What made our beach adventure even more savory was the fact that back home Colorado was in the middle of a snow storm.

Sometimes life can seem to run right over you. Make some time in 2010 and plan a family vacation. I highly recommend visiting Carlsbad California, visiting Legoland, relax on the beach and stay at the **Sheraton Carlsbad Resort & Spa**. You might just find it hard to come back to Colorado!

