

The 2009-2010 *it* Book

Waterpark

RESORTS TODAY

hanley wood



COVER PHOTO BY
CHRISTOPHER
WILSON FOR
HANLEY WOOD



HORIZON
DESIGN • BUILD • MANAGE

The *it* List

profiles by Kendra Kozen

Size matters. Once again, “The it List” ranks the top waterpark resorts by total waterpark space. You’re likely to notice many of the same properties profiled as in the past three editions, but this year some major differences are evident. Despite the recession, several new properties opened in 2008, and some of them are featured in this list. Additionally, given the industry growth over the past few years, we’ve expanded the 2009 list to include the top 25 facilities.

The list of top resorts was compiled for *Waterpark Resorts Today* by Dan Martin of Orca Consulting, LLC, based in Clermont, Fla., and Market Feasibility, LLC, in Chicago. Properties are located across the nation, and amenities offered are just as diverse. How does your resort measure up?

Top 25 Waterpark Resorts (By Waterpark Size)

Ranking	Property	Size (square feet)
1	Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	205,000
2	Kalahari Resorts, Sandusky, Ohio	173,000
3	Kalahari Resorts, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	125,000
4	Great Wolf Lodge, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada	103,000
5	Boyne Mountain Resort, Boyne Falls, Mich.	88,000
★ 6	Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	80,000
7	Great Wolf Lodge, Grapevine, Texas	80,000
8	Great Wolf Lodge, Scotrun, Pa.	80,000
9	Great Wolf Lodge, Mason, Ohio	79,000
10	Water Park of America at Radisson Hotel by Mall of America, Bloomington, Minn.	75,000
11	Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park Resort, Erie, Pa.	70,000
12	Great Wolf Lodge, Williamsburg, Va.	67,000
★ 13	CoCo Key Water Resort at Sheraton Chicago Northwest, Arlington Heights, Ill.	65,000
14	KeyLime Cove Indoor Waterpark Resort, Gurnee, Ill.	65,000
★ 15	CoCo Key Water Resort at Sheraton Ferncroft, Danvers, Mass.	65,000
16	Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, Wash.	60,000
★ 17	CoCo Key Water Resort at Holiday Inn, Omaha Convention Center, Omaha, Neb.	60,000
18	Fort Rapids Indoor Waterpark Resort, Columbus, Ohio	60,000
★ 19	CoCo Key Water Resort at Best Western Clock Tower Resort & Conference Center, Rockford, Ill.	60,000
20	Wilderness at the Smokies, Sevierville, Tenn.	60,000
★ 21	CoCo Key Water Resort at Sheraton Kansas City Sports Complex, Kansas City, Mo.	55,000
22	Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	55,000
★ 23	CoCo Key Water Resort at Mt. Laurel Marriott, Mount Laurel, N.J.	55,000
★ 24	CoCo Key Water Resort at Courtyard by Marriott, Fitchburg, Mass.	55,000
25	Split Rock Resort & Golf Club, Lake Harmony, Pa.	53,904

ONLINE EXTRA



For Top 25 Waterparks by ADR composite and room count, visit waterparkresortstoday.com.

Chula Vista Wisconsin Dells, Wis.



Year opened: 1953

Total indoor waterpark space: 80,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$159

Accommodations: 700 guest rooms; lodgings include standard guest rooms, villas along Chula Vista's golf course, themed suites and condominiums

Staff: N/A

Waterpark description: Themed as an ancient lost Mayan city, Chula Vista's Lost Rios indoor waterpark features more than a dozen water slides, the Flyan Myan water coaster and Mount Montezuma's Myan Temple rain forest play structure.

The "it" factor: The Lost Rios indoor waterpark opened in 2006, but Chula Vista is perhaps the oldest of today's indoor waterpark resorts. It has an impressive mix of amenities catering to business and leisure travelers. Among its other attractions are the 120,000-square-foot Adventure Lagoon outdoor waterpark, the recently redesigned Coldwater Canyon 18-hole golf course, 80,000 square feet of meeting space, an arcade, a day spa and a minigolf course. The signature dining option is Kaminski Bros. Chop House.



Great Wolf Lodge Grapevine, Texas

Year opened: 2007

Total indoor waterpark space: 80,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$294

Accommodations: 602 North Woods-themed suites

Staff: 572 full-time

Waterpark description: The North Woods-themed indoor waterpark at Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine, Texas, is an 80-foot-tall (floor to ceiling) facility, featuring nine indoor water slides, a wave pool, zero-depth-entry children's activity pool, adult whirlpool, family indoor/outdoor whirlpool, and Fort Mackenzie, an interactive treehouse water fort with a nearly 1,000-gallon tipping water bucket.

The "it" factor: There's no question that the epicenter of the indoor waterpark explosion occurred in climates where temperatures regularly fall well below zero. However, the popularity of the concept has spread southward, where the weather often is more hot and dry.

So when Great Wolf Resorts decided to open a property in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex area, it faced some unique aquatic design challenges. Engineers had to find a way to cool the indoor waterpark facility instead of heating it. To that end, the facility's air-handling units were reconfigured to employ a water cooling system, assuring guests comfort while continuing to meet, and exceed, regulated safety standards.

Perhaps the key safety element of the waterpark operation is the staff of nearly 100 certified lifeguards. They help ensure guests enjoy the signature attractions such as the Howlin' Tornado, an enclosed six-story extreme tube ride with 65-foot funnel that drops 30 feet per second. To operate that ride and the entire the park takes 435,000 gallons of heated water.

Though located deep in the heart of Texas, the Grapevine facility retains Great Wolf Resorts' signature North Woods theming. It includes two themed family restaurants (Camp Critter Bar & Grille and The Loose Moose Cottage), the Northern Lights Arcade and Cub Club, a children's activity room developed with a focus on edutainment. Also on site are the Element's Spa; Scoops kid spa; MagiQuest, a live action fantasy adventure game; and an outdoor waterpark with two tube slides, a recreation pool and a family whirlpool.

Through all its amenities and operations, this facility demonstrates the company's commitment to environmental sustainability. Great Wolf Resorts was the first national hotel chain to receive a Green Seal certification earlier this year, and it launched Project Green Wolf, an eco-conscious program that includes operational protocols and educational programming for guests.

CoCo Key Water Resort at Sheraton Chicago Northwest Arlington Heights, Ill.



Year opened: 2006

Total indoor waterpark space: 65,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$189

Accommodations: More than 425 rooms in a variety of styles

Staff: Approximately 260 full-time

Waterpark description: With approximately 65,000 square feet of water resort space, this facility offers a family-oriented, Key West-themed experience. From the thrilling water slides to the activity pool, dip-in theater, indoor adventure river and indoor/outdoor spa, the waterpark was designed with something for everyone to enjoy. It also features in-park concessions, rental cabanas and private party rooms.

The "it" factor: CoCo Key Water Resort at the Sheraton Chicago Northwest is one of Illinois' largest indoor waterpark resorts. Plus, there's an outdoor splashpad, a separate indoor pool, Key Quest arcade (inside the waterpark), TradeWinds Restaurant and Bar, and more than 30,000 square feet of meeting and banquet space.

KeyLime Cove Indoor Waterpark Resort Gurnee, Ill.



Year opened: 2008

Total indoor waterpark space: 65,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$176

Accommodations: 414 guest suites and staterooms in nine room configurations. Each guest room has a large flat-screen TV, refrigerator, coffee maker, i-Pod-compatible alarm clock and in-room safe.

Staff: 400 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: The tropical-themed indoor waterpark features the Lil' Limers' Play Pond, Tsunami Washout Wavepool, five water slides and the Toukie's Big Deluge interactive play structure. It features four body slides and more than 50 water hoses, cannons, valves, rope pulls, fountains, spinning wheels and water dumps, plus a 10-foot tall, 250-gallon pineapple-shaped dump bucket. There's also a whirlpool/spa and a sport pool for water basketball.

The "it" factor: KeyLime Cove is an island-inspired, Florida Keys-style resort experience within an hour's drive from Milwaukee or Chicago. Developed by Dave Anderson of the Famous Dave's of America BBQ franchise, KeyLime Cove includes six dining options; the Paradise Mist day spa; flexible meeting and banquet space; and the 8,000-square-foot RipTide Reef arcade. The signature attraction of the indoor waterpark is Hurricane's Vortex, a one- or two-person whirlpool ride with a 44-foot drop. Also, as the official resort of Six Flags Great America, KeyLime Cove offers special overnight packages that include admission tickets to Six Flags, free parking and free shuttle service with front gate drop-off and pick-up at the amusement park. This provides a way for families to enjoy two Gurnee parks in one vacation getaway.

CoCo Key Water Resort at Sheraton Ferncroft Danvers, Mass.

Year opened: 2007

Total indoor waterpark space: 65,000 square feet

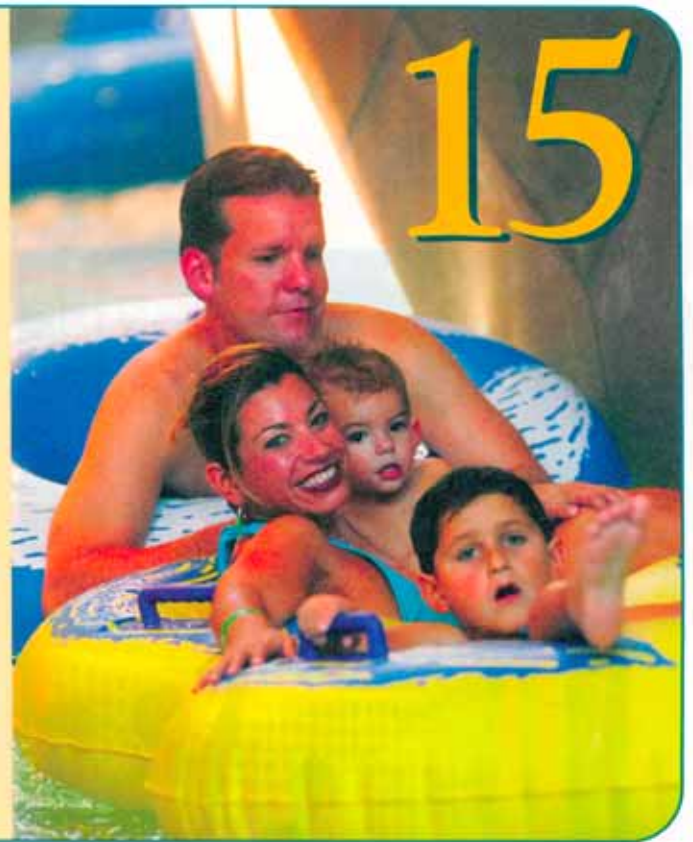
ADR composite: \$189

Accommodations: 366 rooms and guest cabanas

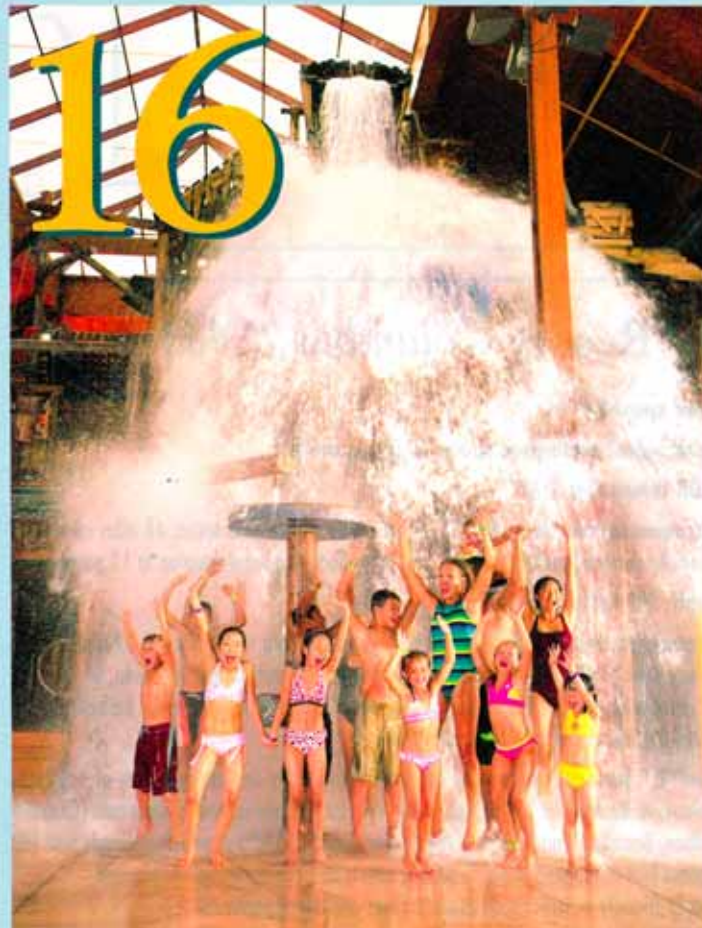
Staff: 220 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: With amenities for all ages, the tropical-themed CoCo Key Water Resort is complete with water slides, a lazy river, water basketball, dip-in theater, outdoor area and whirlpool. Private rental cabanas and party rooms, and several in-park dining options also are available.

The "it" factor: Located 30 minutes north of Boston, this CoCo Key Water Resort combines the relaxed atmosphere of the islands with the excitement of a 65,000-square-foot indoor waterpark. Other signature amenities are the TradeWinds bar and restaurant, which includes a pool table; the Key Quest Arcade (located in the waterpark); the 10,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom — a versatile space that can be used for meetings, weddings and other events; the Atlantis Sports Club full-service fitness center; and the Spa de Mar.



Great Wolf Lodge *Grand Mound, Wash.*



Year opened: 2008

Total indoor waterpark space: 60,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$317

Accommodations: 398 North Woods-themed guest suites configured in eight layouts

Staff: 637 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: Great Wolf Lodge in Washington features the North Woods-themed Bear Track Landing indoor waterpark. The 60,000-square-foot space has two tube slides, two body slides, two kiddie slides, the Howlin' Tornado — an enclosed six-story extreme tube ride with 65-foot funnel that drops 30 feet per second — four pools and the Fort Mackenzie interactive play structure. There's also an in-park bar and concessions.

The "it" factor: When Great Wolf Resorts opened its newest property in Washington last year, it became the first waterpark resort in the Pacific Northwest. Located midway between Seattle and Portland, Ore., this Great Wolf Lodge features two themed restaurants, Elements Spa, Scoops kid spa, the Cub Club (a children's activity room with a focus on edu-tainment), the MagiQuest live-action fantasy adventure game, a teen center, the Northern Lights Arcade and a nearly 30,000-square-foot, full-service conference center.

CoCo Key Water Resort at Holiday Inn Omaha Convention Center *Omaha, Neb.*

Year opened: 2007

Total indoor waterpark space: 60,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$196

Accommodations: 383 guest rooms and 54 suites

Staff: 160 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: With more than 60,000 square feet of space, Omaha's CoCo Key Water Resort offers aquatic attractions in a Florida Keys-inspired atmosphere. There are several water slides, an activity pool, dip-in theater, adventure river, indoor/outdoor spa, interactive play structure, outdoor splashpad, concessions, rental cabanas and several private party rooms.

The "it" factor: Located minutes from downtown Omaha, the Holiday Inn Convention Center offers something for all types of travelers. The property has more than 60,000 square feet of meeting space and there's a business center with complimentary high-speed wireless Internet access. Guests looking for entertainment can experience the signature attractions in the indoor waterpark, which also includes the Key Quest Arcade. The on-site dining options are the Callaloo Grill (inside the waterpark), Scooters Coffee House — a local gourmet coffee company — and Benton's Bar & Restaurant. The hotel also features an indoor pool, whirlpool spa, sauna and two fitness centers.



17

Fort Rapids Indoor Waterpark Resort *Columbus, Ohio*

Year opened: 2006

Total indoor waterpark space: 60,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$181

Accommodations: More than 275 hotel rooms and 60 villa suites. All villas contain specially designed swimsuit dryers, and some floor plans can sleep up to 12 people.

Staff: 300 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: The Wild West-themed indoor waterpark has 12 slides, a lazy river, the Rascal Round Up interactive play structure, a toddlers area, a 30-person hot tub for adults only, a 4-foot-deep activity pool with water basketball, and DB's Sidewinder Café concession stand.

The "it" factor: Operators say Fort Rapids is the only destination facility of its kind in Columbus. Besides the indoor waterpark, the resort features three restaurants (Copper Star Saloon, Branding Iron Grille and the Canyon Café), a 5,000-square-foot arcade and 10,000 square feet of meeting space. Weekend guests also can participate in planned family-friendly activities such as story times and dance parties.





CoCo Key Water Resort at Best Western Clock Tower Resort & Conference Center *Rockford, Ill.*

Year opened: 2007

Total indoor waterpark space: 60,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$159

Accommodations: 245 rooms, including bi-levels, suites and traditional standard sleeping rooms

Staff: 140 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: This CoCo Key Water Resort provides a Key West-style experience for family fun. Signature attractions include the Parrot's Perch interactive play structure, with slides for younger children and a giant dump bucket; the Coconut

Grove Adventure River; the shallow-water dip-in theater pool, with a movie-size projection screen; the Coral Reef Cavern activity pool; several water slides; and the Palm Grotto Spa, indoor/outdoor whirlpools offering more mature guests a relaxing tropical haven.

The "it" factor: The newly renovated Best Western Clock Tower Resort & Conference Center is one of the only full-service resorts in northern Illinois. Besides the indoor waterpark, it has more than 30,000 square feet of banquet and meeting space, and other amenities, such as Key Quest Arcade (inside the waterpark), tennis courts, separate indoor and outdoor pools, and the Sundial Restaurant. The Tilted Kilt restaurant and bar is expected to open by the end of 2009, along with a spa and live theater.

Wilderness at the Smokies *Sevierville, Tenn.*

Year opened: 2008

Total indoor waterpark space: 60,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$159

Accommodations: Two "mountain modern" style lodges. Stone Hill Lodge has 234 standard hotel accommodations and River Lodge has 472 units that can be rented as single rooms or multiroom suites.

Staff: More than 400 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: Wilderness at the Smokies opened the state-of-the-art, 60,000-square-foot Wild WaterDome indoor waterpark at the end of last year. The Western Frontier-themed waterpark's top attractions include the 10,000-square-foot Great Wave Pool, two tube slides; and Washout Mountain, a four-level, play-and-spray structure with a 500-gallon tipping bucket and an indoor/outdoor hot tub. A full-service restaurant and snack bar are accessible from the waterpark.

The "it" factor: This property combines Old West theming with state-of-the-art amenities and design. The Wild WaterDome indoor waterpark features two rides new to the Smoky Mountains region: the Smokies Surfrider (a surfing/boogie boarding simulator) and the Storm Chaser Thrill Ride, a four-person raft ride that plummets 50 feet into a giant funnel with an electric light show and sound effects. The waterpark also includes some of the latest technology, such as the "Foil Tech" glass roof that allows guests to tan indoors.

Also on property are two arcades, two full-service restaurants, and two outdoor waterparks. Additionally, the resort is located adjacent to the Sevierville Events Center, which has more than 200,000 square feet of conference and exhibit space.





CoCo Key Water Resort at Sheraton Kansas City Sports Complex Kansas City, Mo.

Year opened: 2008

Total indoor waterpark space: 55,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$226

Accommodations: More than 370 guest rooms. Amenities include 32-inch flat-screen televisions and high-speed Internet access.

Staff: 110 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: CoCo Key Water Resort at the Sheraton Kansas City Sports Complex was designed to offer guests a Key West-style aquatic adventure. With water slides, an activity pool, dip-in theater, indoor adventure river, indoor/outdoor spa, interactive water-play structure and outdoor splashpad, there's sure to be something to please every type of guest.

The "it" factor: This CoCo Key indoor waterpark is across the street from the Truman Sports Complex, which includes Arrowhead and Kauffman Stadiums, home to the Chiefs football team, Royals baseball team and Wizards soccer team. Signature waterpark attractions include the Parrot's Perch interactive play structure and the Barracuda Blast raft ride. Those who want to stay dry can explore the Key Quest Arcade (inside the waterpark).

Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park Wisconsin Dells, Wis.



Year opened: Operator Big Chief Enterprises was founded in 1970

Total indoor waterpark space: 55,000 square feet

ADR composite: N/A

Accommodations: 292 rooms and 63 condos

Staff: More than 200 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: The 55,000-square-foot South American jungle-themed indoor waterpark at Mt. Olympus includes attractions for the entire family, such as the Mystical Towers tube slide, Warriors activity pool and Jaguar Hot Tub.

The "it" factor: The Greco-Roman themed resort includes the indoor waterpark, directly attached to the Hotel Rome, as well as an indoor theme park and an outdoor waterpark and theme park. The outdoor parks span more than 155 acres.

CoCo Key Water Resort at
Mt. Laurel Marriott
Mt. Laurel, N.J.

23

Year opened: 2008

Total indoor waterpark Space:
55,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$219

Accommodations: 282 rooms. Water Resort Overnight Packages include accommodations in a standard room (two double beds or a king-size bed)

Staff: 90 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: This Key West-inspired indoor waterpark includes three 40-foot body and raft slides, Parrot's Perch interactive play island, a dip-in theater and an adventure river.

The "it" factor: One of the first indoor water resorts in New Jersey, CoCo Key Water Resort at Mt. Laurel Marriott will celebrate its one-year anniversary in November. The resort also includes the Key Quest arcade (in the waterpark) and private party rooms.



CoCo Key Water Resort at
Courtyard Marriott
Fitchburg, Mass.

24

Year opened: 2008

Total indoor waterpark space:
55,000 square feet

ADR composite: \$191

Accommodations: 245 guest rooms with king or double queen options

Staff: 230 full-time, year-round

Waterpark description: With attractions for all ages, the tropical-themed CoCo Key Water Resort at Courtyard Marriott has water slides, a lazy river, water basketball, dip-in theater, whirlpool, private cabanas and an outdoor area.

The "it" factor: Opened at the end of last year, this facility brought a reported 300 jobs to the community of Fitchburg. Dining options in the waterpark include an A&W Snack Shop and a Pizza Hut Express.

