



Travel Savvy Mom
Where to Stay When You Go

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG? YES, IF WE HAVE OUR OWN BEDS



For my husband and me, staying in a hotel with our two daughters has become a little tricky. At 11 and 13, they can barely breathe the same air without arguing, so getting them to share a bed in a traditional room with two double or queen beds is next to impossible. Suites are always ideal since they will often come with a sofa-bed that one of them can sleep on, but it's hard to justify the extra cost when traveling on a budget, especially since on family vacations we spend so little time in the room and most of the time sightseeing. Well, that and arguing. Did I mention sisters like to argue?

We were recently invited to stay at the Beverly Garland Holiday Inn at Universal Studios Hollywood and became fans of the KidSuites that are being offered at many Holiday Inns - a room with a partitioned area that's furnished with bunk beds, a set of drawers, a flat screen TV and a game system. Our two girls loved having their own area and most of all their own beds. And while it doesn't offer total privacy since there's no door and the top of the partitioned area is open, we found that it provided just the right amount of separation to keep peace in a family of four. Not having to share a TV? Awesome. Not having to listen to your kids accuse each other of hogging the covers? Priceless.

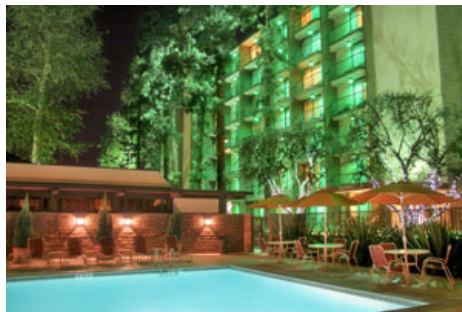


What It Looks Like

One of the things I appreciate is the aesthetics of the room - no tacky velour wallpaper or garishly mismatched patterns here. The rooms are tastefully done in a modern style, with pieces and fabrics I'd actually like in my own house (when was the last time you said that about a hotel?)

Also, hanging on our wall were photos of a vintage Holiday Inn sign which would look great hanging in my living room. (Note to owners: Not to worry - I feel guilty even taking the shampoo.)

What I Loved



Bunk beds for the kids, in their own partitioned area. Heated outdoor pool and jacuzzi next to a huge, beautiful fireplace (was not lit during our stay.) Microwave and refrigerator in room. Free WiFi throughout the hotel.

Restaurant, Tula's, on premises that has an excellent, reasonably priced breakfast buffet; for dinner I had an amazing pot roast. There is a small playground, and also tennis courts - during our stay my husband and daughter spotted American Idol's Randy Jackson getting private tennis lessons!

But Nothing's Perfect

The hotel is located right next to the 101 Freeway which our room was facing, but there were double sliding doors to the balcony that blocked out virtually all of the traffic sounds. If you're extra sensitive to noise, however, you might want to request a room away from the freeway. Maybe a room looking down on the tennis courts in case any American Idol judges just happen to be having a tennis lesson.