



## Postcard: FLORIDA

Wish you were here?  
Dave Fish explains how a villa he and his family rented out for a holiday in Florida was exactly what they wanted

**W**e had an excellent holiday at the Florida Paradise Villas, six-bedroom house in Kissimmee, near Orlando, for a number of reasons.

The family included my wife, three teenage daughters plus friend, my elderly parents and me.

The villa was very spacious and the eight of us actually had room to spare and all the privacy that we needed, but as we were still in the same house we could enjoy breakfast and dinner together daily. It was a nice sanctuary, and my parents had a quiet retreat in the house. Since our kids are older, we felt we didn't need the whole Disney resort scene with all the characters

and themed blocks. In any case, the villa turned out to be a much, much more affordable option than staying at Disney would have been.

We stayed at the house for five days in November 2006 and it cost us \$1,500; the resorts would have easily been double that. The location was less than two miles from the main road of the Disney theme parks, so still very convenient and excellent value for money. Everyone was happy, including my bank account!

The house itself was less than two years old and located in a gated community, which gives you that added feeling of safety and security. There were about 75-100 similar houses, all fairly close together. There was a main pool and recreation complex with playground and fitness centre, which we didn't end up using that much, but it is always good to have the option. It really was very spacious, clean and new, with everything that we could have needed. We had our own private pool, games room and there were televisions with cable in nearly every room. The master suite was huge, with a fantastic whirlpool tub and shower. The kitchen / living room / dining area was open and a great gathering place to have dinner and watch a movie together after the meal.

Since our visit was in November, it was a little bit cooler and the crowds were a bit smaller,

which was nice. The houses in the complex were probably only 25 per cent occupied at this time of year. There was construction going on directly behind our house, but we were not bothered by early morning noise or anything like that.

The website was a fair representation of what the house was like in reality, it had not been over-exaggerated, hence we had not been duped into booking a holiday there. The owner of the house was also the booking agent: she was very helpful, before the booking and after. The local manager was also very helpful and attentive to our needs – they were just nice people that treated us warmly and it made all the difference. They were also available to reach 24 hours a day. This is what you need on holiday, it makes you feel genuinely looked after, especially if unexpected incidents are to arise. For example, my youngest daughter had an accident and needed to go to the local emergency room. The manager and owner found out where it was, gave us directions, then followed up later to see how she was.

To top it off we left a small suitcase in the house after we left, and she shipped it home to us at no cost. Truly excellent customer service!

● [www.FloridaParadiseVillas.travel](http://www.FloridaParadiseVillas.travel)

1. The communal swimming pool in Kissimmee enjoyed by the Fish family

## Ten things to CONSIDER

Suzanne Morrill of World of Florida suggests ten things to consider when buying a property in Florida for rental purposes

- 1 Price of property is within budget
  - 2 Location of home – including which way the villa and pool faces
  - 3 Distance to attractions or coast/beach
  - 4 Facilities on site: for example, clubhouse, tennis courts, etcetera
  - 5 Facilities nearby: for example, supermarkets and restaurants
  - 6 Zoning – make sure the property is zoned for short-term rentals
  - 7 A recommended management company to look after the home
  - 8 Layout of home. Does it have a pool, bath, or a covered lanai?
  - 9 Correct ratio of bathrooms to bedrooms
  - 10 Pool – Brits will not rent a villa that does not have a private pool. However, they will consider a townhouse with no pool.
- World of Florida  
Web: [www.worldofflorida.co.uk](http://www.worldofflorida.co.uk)  
Email: [homes@worldofflorida.co.uk](mailto:homes@worldofflorida.co.uk)