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To Customer Service/Complaints

We have recently returned from our Florida holiday that we had booked with Ocean Florida. We had used Ocean Florida on our previous trip to Florida, and had found the company to be very helpful and informative with all the questions that we had about our first visit to Florida, from what visa /documents we needed, to park tickets and the accommodation choice we had made, so when it can time for us to look again we had no hesitation in using Ocean Florida.

As we were travelling with another family, we had looked at various other Travel Companies to make our booking, and although some had come in at a cheaper price, they could not provide the same accommodation/experience that we had on our previous trip to Florida, so we had no hesitation in recommending you to our friends, As this was their first trip to Florida our friends agreed so we proceeded to book our holiday with Ocean Florida in January 2014 confirming the accommodation we wanted and had stayed at on previous visit and also recommended to our friends.

When our booking confirmation email came through in August I checked it all and made sure everything was as requested, which it was. All flight times were as quoted and the all-important accommodation choice was confirmed. This again was confirmed with a telephone call where I was told that our actual flight/accommodation and transfer documents would arrive about a week before our scheduled departure.

When they arrived I checked the documents for the obvious, names being correct, flight times and also a fleeting glance at accommodation. Which at a glance seemed correct.

We arrived as scheduled in Florida where we checked in for our transfer to our accommodation.

It was only as we arrived that I realised that we were not at the accommodation that we had booked, we were at the Sheraton Vistana Resorts and not the Sheraton Vistana Villages accommodation (we had stressed we wanted when we booked).

We went straight to the reception to sort out the mix up but were told that we had indeed been booked in to stay for our 18 day holiday at the RESORTS and not the VILLAGES.

The lady on reception was very nice and rang the VILLAGES to see if there was a booking error and that they had one for us, she was told there was not, nor was there any room for us even if we were

to get the situation resolved. She had also tried to ring an Ocean Florida representative on two occasions in which half way through explaining our predicament was told it was not an emergency and the phone went dead. On the third occasion that I tried the same also happened.

After a long journey with young children and the time approaching 10pm we decided to take the booking and proceed to our rooms.

The next morning we met as a group to go through our options, which after much thought decided, that as we had been told that there was no room at the accommodation we had chosen and booked, and the treatment that we received from the Ocean representative the night we arrived! .The only option left would be to stay as to not impact on our holiday any further and resolve the issues that we were faced with when we returned.

The accommodation at the **SHERATON VISTANA RESORT** was similar to the **VILLAGES**, but that is where the similarity stopped.

We were not in the ideal location of (International drive) for the travel that we had expected and wanted to do i.e;

Use the public transport (I-ride trolley) for our visits to Universal & SeaWorld and restaurants up and down International Drive.

A short walk to the Premium Outlets shopping and supermarket. (Less than 10 min)

We had already decided when we booked that we didn't want nor need to hire a car, so no one in our party took their licence, and as the **SHERATON VISTANA VILLAGES** was is the ideal location for all our travel needs and was a manageable sized complex for getting around again there would be no need.

THE SHERATON VISTANA RESORT was none of these, it was extremely large and during our entire stay there were several renovations taking place. These were not only very noisy in the mornings they also caused us issues when trying to navigate our way around the complex to reach the pools and food facilities, as sections at a time were cornered off .

Where the hotel is located is not an easy place to reach without a car as it has no access to public transport (I-ride trolley) within reach for us to use.

This resulted in a large amount of our spending money being spent on "taxis". The issue that arouse from that is that the hotel has an apparent "special deal" with the taxi firm (BLUE HORIZON) and security, which was a good 10 min walk away would not let any other taxi firm through the security gates, so the costs for our taxis rose considerably as we were limited to the use of one firm i.e.;

A short taxi ride to the outlets for shopping as our expected 10 min walk would have been was more like 40 min , and an actual taxi cost us \$40,

A short I-ride trolley trip down International Dr for eating out would have cost virtually nothing with a pass (\$7 a week) but was actually costing \$70 one way.

Then there was the obvious parks Magic Kingdom \$75 or \$130 round trip, Universal \$85 or \$140 round trip, SeaWorld \$60 and so on.

We know that these prices were extremely high compared to other firms because on the last few remaining days that we had left we had split up to enjoy different things, we proceeded to get a taxi from BLUE HORIZON to the outlets for shopping and they turned up in the same vehicle that they had done many many times before, but only charged us \$25, his reply to our outrage was that it was because there was only 6 travelling at not the usual 11.

We returned from our shopping trip in another taxi traveling the same distance and same amount of people and were charged just \$12!

The same thing had happened to the other party; they called a taxi (BLUE HORIZON) and went to Magic Kingdom at the cost of \$75 but didn't book the return as they were unsure of the time they wanted to leave, instead jumped in a taxi from the park back at the cost of \$40!

Again this extra expense added a huge cost and impact to our budgeted spending money, leaving us not only disappointed but very upset with what we were unable to do and see with our time in Florida, we was also left feeling extremely angry that we had been basically ripped off with taxis for the last 18 days all because the hotel had a "DEAL" with the taxi firm.

I have spoken to an operator at Ocean Florida since my return, who advised me to put my complaint in to writing.

She also listened to my complaint and had a quick look at the booking, her reply was;

" I'm really sorry it's just a genuine mistake that someone has made the wrong hotel booking for you it's because the hotel names are so similar".

I would just like to add that although I understand that mistakes can and do happen from time to time, this mistake had a huge impact on both families not just in time and costs but in the experience of Florida, all of which I'm sure that you would agree, would and could have been avoided if the correct accommodation we had requested, planned, budgeted for and had confirmed had been booked correctly.

Awaiting your response to our complaint.

Yours Sincerely

Sharon Gray