

Nickelodeon Family Suites by Holiday Inn, Orlando, Fla.

by *Danny Brown*

Welcome to a world where pies and slime fall from the sky, cartoon landscapes decorate the 770 guest rooms, and characters such as Sponge Bob Square Pants wander the halls. Welcome to the world of Nickelodeon.

Set in the epicenter of Orlando's, theme-park zone, the exclusive, 24-acre Nickelodeon Family Suites by Holiday Inn is an attraction in and of itself, drawing 764,000 people annually. Since its opening in 2004, it has become the No. 2 highest-grossing, most-attended waterpark resort in the nation.

"Sometimes guests will get tickets to Disney World and wind up not going because their kids just want to stay here," says Tom Schwinden, sales and marketing manager.

One look at the highly themed resort and it's easy to see why. Outside, rising four stories above neon green floors is an



intricate multilevel playing area with rope bridges, twirling towers and water guns. Snaking out of this adventurous obstacle course are seven bright-orange water slides spilling into the main zero-depth entry pool geared toward kids ages 6 to pre-teen. For those aged 2 to 5, there's a zero-depth wading pool, making for a total of 3 acres of wet fun. Seven to eight lifeguards are on duty at all times to keep everyone safe.

But more than water slides, this resort distinguishes itself from others with its expanse of extra "poolricular" activities, all run the Nickelodeon way: In addition to poolside snack bars, whirlpools and spas, there are daily performances, "Dive In" movies, Slime Time, miniature golf, arts and crafts, and show casting calls. For adults wanting to get some alone time, there's Nick After Dark, a child-sitting program with interactive games, activities and shows, costing \$60 per a child.

"The thing about our hotel is that it's the first of its kind — the only Nickelodeon hotel in the world," Schwinden says.

But not for long. By 2020, Nick plans to partner with Marriott International for 20 new branded resorts. Now that's gonna be a lot of slime.



Year opened: 2004
No. of waterparks: 1
Square footage: 30,427
Amenities: Basketball courts, minigolf course, wet 'n dry play area, Studio Nick (theater with live entertainment), mall, kids' spa, cocktail lounge, arcade, free shuttles to Orlando attractions, arts 'n crafts, party room, sand play area, Nick After Dark