



The luxury Kartrite Resort is not your typical water park. There's wet and dry fun for everyone – even aquaphobic dads.

By Valentine J. Brkich

I don't like being wet. Never have. When I was a kid, I'd sit inside my beach-towel tent and watch from the deck while the rest of my family splashed around in the pool. At the beach I'd sit in the sand and build castles as the others were jumping waves out in the surf. Heck, even to this day, if I could avoid taking a shower I would. (But then again I probably wouldn't be married.)

So when The Kartrite Resort invited me and my family to come experience their indoor waterpark for a couple days, I have to admit, I was a little tentative. I'd been to indoor waterparks with my kids before and wasn't impressed. But like a good dad, I thought — the kids'll love it!



Located just outside the town of Monticello, N.Y. about two hours north of New York City, The Kartrite sits within the state's scenic Catskill Mountains region. As we pulled into the parking lot on a Wednesday afternoon in August, I was pleasantly surprised by the resort's architecture, which blended in nicely with its forested surroundings.



We had kept our kids totally in the dark about our destination so when they noticed the words “indoor waterpark” on the facade of the building, they fell into a complete frenzy. You see, unlike yours truly, my kids absolutely love water-based activities. (Honestly, I may not even be their biological father. The verdict is still out on that one...)



Inside the resort is even more impressive. Unlike other indoor waterparks we’ve been to, The Kartrite’s lobby is stylish, modern, and — dare I say for a family resort — classy. Warm, contemporary seating surrounds a glass-enclosed gas fireplace, perfect for cozying up to on chilly winter days. Up above a stunning work of modern art creates a skyscape of paper birds and clouds passing overhead.



I have to admit what caught my eye was the inviting bar/lounge area off to the left—again, not what I was expecting. And, as we'd find out later that evening, this welcoming space is also where they host a nightly family movie on a massive projector screen. Plus, so far there was no sign of water, which for me was a good thing.



After checking in we made our way to our deluxe, two-bedroom suite, complete with a living room/dining room area, spacious outdoor deck. My son was just excited that he and his sister had their own large, flatscreen TV in their room. It was certainly one of the nicest hotel rooms I've ever stayed in, and personally I would've been happy just sitting there all nice and warm — and dry — whilst sipping on a glass or two of red wine. Alas, my kids were in no mood for relaxing, and they were ready to get wet. So, reluctantly, I changed into my swim trunks, and my wife and I took them off to the indoor waterpark.



Along the way we passed through the Playopolis Arcade, which is pretty much Nirvana for an avid gamer like my 9-year-old son, and the Carabiners ropes and ziplines course, which is more up my adventuresome 11-year-old daughter's alley.



Of course, those are just a couple of the many adventures The Kartrite has to offer. And that's just on the inside. Out back there's a spacious area with two large fire pits, giant checkers and chess games, and even a badminton net, if you're so inclined. There's also more than six miles of hiking trails to explore. But my kids were focused on one thing: getting wet. So we pressed onward to the waterpark.



As I mentioned before, I've been to other indoor waterparks and wasn't impressed. For the most part, I find them to be cramped and dark. Plus, the temperature's always way-too-chilly to entice someone like me to get anywhere near the water. But stepping into The Kartrite's domed, two-acre waterpark, I knew this wasn't a typical waterpark.



Where the other ones I've visited seem cramped, dark and way-too-chilly, I was immediately struck by the Kartrite's bright, roomy feel. And — thank goodness — it was comfortably warm inside. It's all due to the structure's impressive overhead Texlon transparent roof — the largest of its kind in the world! — which allows for ample sunlight and a year-round inside temperature of 84 degrees. It's actually a reclaimed conservatory, which makes it the perfect setting for the over 30,000 live tropical plants pleasantly spread throughout the space.



And it's impossible to ignore the main attraction—the water slides! Currently there are four larger slides for the adventurous types (with more on the way) including the massive, four-person-raft Nor'Easter, which catches your attention immediately.



There's also a couple smaller-but-still-fun-for-all-ages slides over in Kartrite Island, which is where I decided to just dive in, so to speak, and let the massive dump bucket drench me from the start.



From here, it was everything I could do to keep up with the kiddos as they took off running from slide to slide. We actually had to bribe my son to dare the intimidating Nor'Easter, which he admitted he "loved" but "never wanted to go on again." Empire Bay, aka "the King of lazy rivers," was more his speed and, personally, mine too. We did a few lazy laps before heading over to the Flowrider to try our hand at boogie boarding. I did OK, I guess. At my age I'm just happy if I can escape any activity without suffering a serious injury.



After a couple more hours of watery fun, we inhaled a delicious pizza from the Surfside Grille and just chilled out in our private poolside cabana for a bit before heading back to the room for the day. It was the longest I'd been wet in quite some time and, surprisingly, I was actually enjoying myself. Go figure.



The next morning we got up early and enjoyed a hearty buffet breakfast at Eat. Eat. Eat. before heading off to the arcade to see how many prize tickets we could win (not many). Then, after my daughter conquered the ropes-and-ziplines course, we headed back into the waterpark for another afternoon of wet-and-wild fun. (I can't believe I actually just typed those words.)



That evening we got all spiffed up and headed down to Bixby's Derby for a little family-friendly fine dining. Sure, there were kids jumping around in the booth across from us, and in the one next to us some pre-schooler was watching some way-too-loud cartoon on her tablet, but I was busy enjoying a nice glass of bourbon and a delicious, 14-ounce New York strip, so I didn't really care. After dinner the kiddos took in another movie in the comfy lobby as Mom and Dad sat close by — just not too close — enjoying another drink and some much-appreciated together time.



By the time Friday morning arrived, we were all pretty much infatuated with The Kartrite Resort and not yet ready to leave. But we had family waiting for us up in New Hampshire, so it was time to hit the road. Just not before my son beat me twice at the large Connect Four game in the lobby, which, by the way, did not go unnoticed by the old man in the corner who was looking on and laughing at my ineptitude.



The bottom line? If you're looking for a nice, relaxing getaway with your significant other, don't have kids. But if you're looking for some good, old-fashioned family fun, The Kartrite should definitely be on your to-visit list. Heck, it got this middle-aged, aquaphobic dad having a great time splashing around in the water for two whole days.

And, believe me, that's saying something.

