

# Hollywood Hurricane!

**HER FAMILY / HIS**  
Reviewing Family Entertainment



## HERS

In other places around this northern hemisphere, September marks the beginning of leaves changing color and winds changing direction. The sky is usually filled with birds migrating south to avoid the first frost and the autumn chill. It is exactly at this time of year that we western dwellers brace for what is customarily the hottest month of the year. Our sky is filled with those migrating birds that seem to know a fall paradise when they find it.

In our western states, this ninth month of the year does not mark the end of summer. Sure, September means the return of school, the last fling at water parks, weekend beach camping and backyard pool parties, but it really gives us all an excuse to continue to play. After all, it is just too hot to get serious.

Now that I am a grandmother with two grandsons under the age of five, I have rediscovered the simple joys of water as a cure from the September heat. Never having been much of a thrill seeker, water play to me meant a hose and sprinkler in the yard. Water parks were much too challenging with loops, spins, cascades and death-defying drops.

Recently, I had a chance to spend the entire day with both grandsons and my youngest son who is now 16. Challenged by the idea of entertaining this broad range of taste and age, my husband suggested Hurricane Harbor. I knew that I would enjoy the "Lazy River" float, and there is plenty of opportunity to refresh the tan, so, despite my low expectations, we packed up the whole tribe and took off for the local water park.

I had forgotten how much fun the children's water play pools are in a water park. They are perfectly designed for two active boys and a grandmother who has never enjoyed the "thrill of the fall". There are water cannons, slides, cascades, water bucket drops, squirting nozzles and swirling sprinklers. The cost of admission is reasonable and the teens and Dads can fill their entire day with water drops, spins, turns and splashes while the gentler folk take an inner tube ride down a meandering stream or enjoy a calm cruise down the children's slide into the shallow pool.

Most importantly of all, I rediscovered the joys of wearing a swimsuit. For most of my adulthood, swimsuit season meant the time of year for diets and self-consciousness. Not at Hurricane Harbor. Every size and shape parades the well-supervised pool areas with no care at all about fashion. They are there to have a good time. How refreshing.

To use the language of my teenager, "Water parks are the Bomb!" What a great way to enjoy the heat of September. Forget that the kids are back in school and that the summer heat now seems endless. When the weekend comes this month, pack everyone up and take off for Six Flags Magic Mountain's Hurricane Harbor (open through October 1) or any other water park within driving range. You can sun bathe, float, challenge or thrill to your heart's content or take along some toddlers and rediscover the true pleasure of water play.

## HIS

As a utensil, the bowl is a wondrous, useful and accepting tool, whether one fills it with food, water or music. Within Hollywood's mountainous and craggy folds lies the Hollywood Bowl, a vast earthen amphitheater that often pours forth various musical delights that only sweeten when served up under the stars. Its stature is regal, its atmosphere casual and its artistic programs a likely cure if your family suffers from summer evening ennui or those long vacation fidgets.

Inaugurated in 1922 and now celebrating its 84th season, the Hollywood Bowl is a unique Los Angeles County cultural icon with no peer. If you've never attended an event there, make it a point to stop this year to discover how easily accessible and pleasing its facilities are.

We recently attended an evening of Beethoven Symphonies performed by the world-renowned Los Angeles Philharmonic. Much to our loss, my family hadn't attended the bowl in several years. From the bowl's first resounding note, we were instantaneously reminded of the magic we'd missed.

Both symphonies were glorious, subtle, playful and powerful; especially the rousing and heart pounding finale of Symphony No. 9's 4th movement, the choral climax of cacophonous harmony known as "The Ode To Joy". It was joyous, visual, visceral and more. Not only did Beethoven create a masterpiece, but also the work was masterfully played. This is but one of many delights in store for those who attend the bowl.

If you drive to the Hollywood Bowl, its best to go early and pack a fun picnic dinner with all the kid's favorite treats – a special evening demands special eats. At \$15 per car, the parking fee is a bit steep, but the convenience is worth it. Off-site parking is virtually non-existent. Don't play that game. I saw lots of parking violations being written.

Lots of families throw in a bottle of wine, some cheese, sandwiches, desserts and a blanket, then stake out a place to enjoy themselves in one of several grassy spots outside the bowl. If you don't have time to prepare, there are nice concession stands to get a variety of well-prepared meals, a cup of designer coffee, or a demitasse of wine.

Wherever your seat, don't worry about missing any of the close up action on stage – modern jumbotrons have been installed on either side of the outside aisles. It brings the smallest of gestures within arm's reach. Regarding expense, the LA metro drops off near the bowl, and if you are on a strict budget, the cheap seats at the top of the bowl still cost about a buck each – not a bad deal considering the venue boasts an excellent sound system and sightlines including the jumbotrons.

For an up-to-date calendar of events, it's best to visit the Hollywood Bowl's website at [www.hollywoodbowl.com](http://www.hollywoodbowl.com). September at the Bowl features "John Williams and the Music of the Movies," "An Evening with Willie Nelson" and four nights of "Fireworks Finale" that's sure to grab the kids, to name a few of the programs. As your summer wears thinner, don't miss discovering the Hollywood Bowl – more than just a bowl of fun; it's a cultural bowl of adventure!