

Traveling with Tots

By LIBBY CARTY MCNAMEE

Make a splash at Massanutten WaterPark

Water, water—everywhere! Open year-round, Massanutten's indoor WaterPark is a guaranteed good time at a constant 84 degrees Fahrenheit. You'll find something fun for every age group – from wee ones to tweens looking for a challenge to adults looking for some rejuvenation.

Young ones love hanging out in the Frog Pond Kiddie Area. With the water only 12 inches deep, the kids have a blast on the frog slide and swings, as well as being sprayed by noodles. They also enjoy floating on tubes along the Blue Ridge Rapids, an adventure river with zero-depth entry, waterfalls, tipping buckets and sprays. Another attraction for tots is the Massanutten Meltdown, a central feature of the park with water cannons, waterfalls, and three slides for bigger kids. In addition, there is a huge family hot tub set at a comfortable temperature for kids as well as a true "hot" tub for adults only.

For those who are at least 42 inches tall and looking for adventure, a myriad of possibilities awaits. At the top of a long and steep set of stairs, the Peak Splash, Country Cooler, and Melting Mogul are "tube slides" with people riding down the falls on various sized tubes. The adjacent Skyline Falls and Avalanche are "body slides" which are tube-free. These fast-paced rides start at a height of 39 feet and have plenty of sudden drops and quick turns to keep you guessing for the entire 250 foot ride. Regardless of your preference, we found it best to start with a ride that is lighted before embarking on the pitch-dark thrill ride.

For a serious challenge, try some indoor surfing. Set on a sloped surface, the Pipeline is quite a tour de force, generating its own smooth waves simulating the ocean. This is Virginia's first and largest "FlowRider," which crosses snowboarding, skateboarding and wakeboarding into one exhilarating surfing ride. A child must be at least 42 inches tall to ride. In order to stand upright on the FlowBoard, the rider must be 52 inches tall and take a lesson.



The Blue Ridge Rapids at Massanutten WaterPark. Photo by Loretta Sherwood.

During the summer there is extra entertainment. The outdoor water park with its slew of additional rides will open from Saturday, May 26 of Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

There are three dining options within the park – the Blue Ridge Buffet with salad and pasta bars, the Hideaway Lounge with a full-service bar and spectacular view, as well as the poolside Snackers with counter-service. We were fans of Snackers because we could stay in our suits while having a quick meal before jumping back into the fray.

Not to be forgotten, Sweetz Can-

dy & Coffee Shoppe offers exactly that – sweets of all kinds, including ice cream. Diamond Jim's Arcade provides a great distraction for waterlogged kids and their exhausted parents. This large gaming area has the latest in videos and awards prizes for points earned. Also, complimentary Wi-Fi is available throughout the building.

Admission is good for the entire day, and an overnight stay is not required. If you're on a budget as most of us are, this makes for an easy day trip. The two-hour drive from Richmond is a peaceful one, meandering through Virginia's pastoral wine

country to the scenic Shenandoah Valley.

Be sure to bring your own towels, goggles, and sunscreen because the park allows in some natural sunlight and UVB rays. Have no worries about forgotten items because you can buy it all at the MerchDice Shop. Keep in mind that outside food and drink are not permitted. Lockers are on the small side and primarily for valuables. However, there are plenty of chairs within the park for bulkier belongings. If you have any concerns, the staff is knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful.

You could easily combine the trip with some of the resort's many other activities. Choose from rock climbing, hiking, fishing, golf, mini-golf, the petting farm, and go-karts. Skiing, tubing, and skating at the new rink will continue through mid-March. From April 30 until October, the Peaked Mountain Tube Park will be open for summer tubing, a "waterless" ride with special mats creating the sensation of snow. **RPM**

Libby Carty McNamee, a local freelance writer and mother, would love to be coasting down the Peak Splash right now.

Want to go?

Massanutten Indoor/
Outdoor WaterPark

Address: 1822 Resort Drive,
McGaheysville, VA 22840

Phone: (540) 437-3340

Website: www.massresort.com

Distance: 100 miles from Richmond

Admission: \$38 for those over 42
inches; \$26 for those under 42 inches.

Kids aged two and under are free.
Lockers are \$5 with a \$10 refundable
deposit.

Overnight accommodations: The resort offers a wide assortment of condos to rent. There are also many budget hotels and fast food options directly down Route 33 in Harrisonburg.