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SeaWorld Orlando now autism-friendly

By Tribune News Service
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ORLANDO, Fla. >> Joining its sister parks, SeaWorld Orlando is now a certified autism center, a move that's meant to make the theme park more accessible to people with disabilities, the company said April 2.

SeaWorld's new certification follows behind Aquatica Orlando and Discovery Cove, the company's other two parks in Orlando that also recently said they were more autism-friendly.

"We are incredibly proud to be the first family of Orlando theme parks to achieve these certifications," said Mark Pauls, SeaWorld Orlando park president, in a news release.

Now, the park will share information on its website and in a special guide that breaks down the rides, rating them by the five senses, to give parents a heads-up.

SeaWorld Orlando will offer two quiet rooms for families who need a break from what can be a loud and chaotic park.

Employees will also be undergoing training to help connect better with visitors who have autism.

'80s-themed cruise returns to South Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. >> "The 80s Cruise," which recently sailed out of Fort Lauderdale on the Celebrity Infinity, returns next year on Royal Caribbean's Explorer of the Seas.

Passengers will be able to meet their favorite musicians and watch them perform throughout the ship. Bands include The B-52s, Berlin, Patty Smyth and Scandal and The Motels. In all there are 50 concerts planned, according to Entertainment Cruise Productions, the event organizer. Original MTV veejays Nina Blackwood, Mark Goodman and Alan Hunter will also be on board to host day panels and trivia games.

The seven-day cruise departs PortMiami March 8 with stops in San Juan, Puerto Rico; St. Thomas; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; and Labadee, Haiti.

Rates start at $1,400 per person and the price includes all concerts, activities, casual meals and gratuities. For more information, visit the80scruise.com or call 844-384-8080.

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