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VOL 15 Q1 2010

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# Attractions management

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VOL 15 Q1 2010



## MORE DASH, LESS CASH

How theme parks can refresh their offer on a budget

## CHRISTIAN PERDRIER

Alnwick Castle and Garden's new CEO on making the attraction a global destination

## MADAME TUSSAUDS HOLLYWOOD

Is the new attraction a worthy addition to the Walk of Fame?

IS NOW THE  
RIGHT TIME FOR  
PLANETARIUMS  
TO UPGRADE?

THEME PARKS  
SCIENCE CENTRES  
ZOOS & AQUARIUMS  
MUSEUMS & HERITAGE  
TECHNOLOGY  
DESTINATIONS  
EXPOS  
WATERPARKS  
VISITOR ATTRACTIONS  
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ON THE COVER:  
Madame Tussauds Hollywood, p22

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# EDITOR'S LETTER

## REFRESH AND REJUVENATE

**A** attractions need to be regularly refreshed to ensure visitors keep coming back and also pass on recommendations to friends to ensure a flow of new business. Those which are allowed to fossilise and stagnate eventually need radical and extensive overhauls, which are far more costly and disruptive.

The recession has left many operators unable or unwilling to risk large-scale investments, but with guests hungry for improvements and something new, we asked our panel of designers how upgrades can be done on a tight budget (see page 32).

In addition to larger capital investment programmes, operators are advised to identify the weakest area of the attraction every three to six months and formulate a plan to improve it using available resources. This approach keeps a healthy, sustainable level of energy focused on product development – evolution rather than revolution.

Changes may involve nothing more than a really thorough spring clean and a lick of paint, a useful software upgrade or just a simple change in the way staff deal with specific issues or situations. However, even the most simple adjustments and improvements can significantly increase guests' satisfaction and intention to return.

Operators are also advised to take time to really dig into any complaints received – they're invaluable and must be taken seriously. You may think some grumbles are

**The best advice is to re-energise your people. Staff with a great attitude can transform a visitor's experience and after a year of recession, some may be finding it harder to raise a smile**

petty, but it's amazing how little niggles can really bother people and undermine the success of a visit. If you can remove the problem easily, it makes sense to do so.

We can learn a thing or two from top retailers who use touch points with customers to ensure things are going well, with questions like 'have you found everything you needed today?' 'Is there anything more we can do to help?' and, most usefully, 'do you have any feedback which can help us improve our service?'. Responses they get are logged, analysed and fed back into the business and action is taken.

In all my decades of visiting attractions, I don't think I've ever been asked questions of this type, yet I clearly recall how defensive staff can be when given, with the best possible intentions, even the mildest of suggestions.

The best advice though is to re-energise your people – with a great attitude can totally transform a visitor's experience. At this time of the season, with a year of recession behind us, some may be finding it harder to raise a smile. One of my favourite visits ever still has to be one made to the Blue Planet aquarium near Chester. The success of it was all down to the fantastic interaction with the staff who were – without exception – welcoming, interesting, fun and engaging. It will stick in my mind forever.

Liz Terry, editor, attractions@leisuremedia.com



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Grooming Hoover's wax figure is just one of the unusual jobs at Newseum

# MUSEUM NEWS



Beatlesmania is housed in the former Erotic Art Museum

## Beatles museum opens in Hamburg

A museum dedicated to The Beatles has opened in Hamburg, Germany.

The former Erotic Art Museum now houses 1,300sq m (14,000sq ft) of exhibition space split into eleven rooms documenting the story of the band's rise to stardom, beginning with the signing of their first record deal in Hamburg in the 1960s.

Visitors begin their trip down memory lane at the Port of Entry, where a photo can be taken using the 1960s passport photo machine for insertion into an entrance ticket resembling a passport.

The next area features a reproduced street from the St Pauli nightclub district, where original photographs, contracts, drinks menus, flyers and receipts are displayed. Visitors are then led to a replica

Backstage Area where they are shown a filmed interview with the artist of the Revolver album, Klaus Voormann.

The Bravo Blitz Tour celebrates the outbreak of Beatlemania, with videobeamers transporting visitors into the centre of a 1,000-strong crowd of screaming fans. The next room, the Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, houses an oversized cover of the LP and replicas of the four costumes worn by The Beatles for the album cover.

The tour ends at the White Album, where a first pressing of the actual record can be viewed in a replica of a teenage fan's bedroom. The museum, which took 10 months to construct, cost owner FKP Ausstellungs- und Betriebsgesellschaft mbH around €2.5m (£2.2m, US\$3.5m).

## £22m Polish WWII museum planned

A 100m zlotych (£22m, €25m, US\$36m) museum commemorating World War II is being planned to open in Gdansk, Poland.

The Museum of the Second World War will depict the tragic fate of Poland between 1939 and 1945, set against the experiences of other nations – conquered and occupied, putting up resistance, fighting on military fronts, underground and by means of civilian revolt.

Along with Polish experts, the museum's programming board will feature war historians from all over Europe.

## IMA art park to open in June

The Indianapolis Museum of Art's (IMA) art and nature park is due to open to the public in June 2010.

100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park – adjacent to IMA's 52-acre campus – used to be a quarry, but now features woodlands, wetlands, meadows and a 35-acre lake.

When it opens, the park will present art projects, exhibitions and discussions, which – according to the IMA – are designed to "strengthen the public's understanding of the unique, reciprocal relationships between contemporary art and the natural world".

## British Museum expansion approved

The London Borough of Camden Council in London, UK, has awarded planning permission to the £135m (US\$210m, €154m) expansion of the British Museum.

The plans were given the green light at the second time of trying, after the council had turned down an initial application for the redevelopment work in June 2009.

The previous plans, which were rejected, had angered a local conservation group, Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC).

In its complaint, BCAAC claimed the development would block daylight from the

existing buildings and "diminish the museum's existing architectural delights".

The rejigged plans, drawn up by architects Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, include sinking part of the extension below ground. This will be done in an attempt to solve criticism that the extension will block views of the Grade I-listed Reading Room.

RSH's original plans include a 1,000 sq m (10,760sq ft) building at the rear of the museum, replacing the former offices of the British Library on Montague Place, as well as a conservation centre to train museum conservators.



The museum will be expanded



# HERITAGE NEWS



The centre is located at the National Stadium in Grenada

## Cricket heritage centre for Grenada

A new cricket heritage centre – a private venture developed by West Indies cricket fanatic and entrepreneur Philip Daniels – has opened its doors to the public at the National Stadium in Grenada.

Located on the ground floor of the venue's South Stand, the attraction will operate under the High Five brand after Daniels secured a strategic alliance with the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA). The heritage centre boasts a range of rare West Indies cricket artefacts dating back to the late 19th century, including

bats, caps and letters, as well as medals, photos and tour brochures to explore the social history of the sport in the Caribbean.

Tillman Thomas, the prime minister of Grenada, opened the attraction in October 2009 at a special event attended by the governor general, Sir Carlyle Glean, the island's sports minister, Patrick Simmons, and tourism minister Glynis Roberts.

Daniels said: "We are now embarking on our regional and international marketing plans as part of a strategy to place High Five firmly on the cricket map."

## New gallery for Texas war museum

The new US\$15.5m (£1m, €11.3m) George HW Bush Gallery at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas has been opened by the former US President.

The 32,500sq ft expansion boasts multimedia presentations and artefacts including a Japanese mini-submarine, fighter planes, various tanks and a dive bomber.

Exhibits focus on the Pearl Harbour attack and famous battles such as Midway, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, as well as the atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

George Bush Snr, who was a naval aviator during the Pacific war, said: "It's right and important that we honour the genuine valour of men and women who, throughout our history, made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, for the cause of freedom."

"It's in the act of telling the full story of war, the heroism, the moral justice of a cause, as well as the great suffering that makes this remarkable museum such a special place and a vital contribution to our country."

## Protection scheme launched by UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has teamed up with online travel company TripAdvisor in a move designed to mobilise travellers' support in preserving the natural and cultural sites on its World Heritage List.

At the partnership's launch, TripAdvisor founder and chief executive officer, Stephen Kaufer, pledged to donate up to US\$1.5m (£920,400, €1.02m) of support over the next two years to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre.

The donation will help the Centre handle the task of monitoring the conservation of the 890 natural and cultural sites which are inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The Centre provides both technical and administrative support for states which have ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention, therefore enabling them to translate its provisions into action.

The two-year agreement envisages TripAdvisor helping to raise awareness of World Heritage sites and their safeguarding among the more than 25 million online visitors who use its websites every month to find and share travel information.



Machu Picchu, Peru, one of the sites that Unesco is keen to preserve



The castle was used as a backdrop in the Harry Potter movies

## Wizard makeover for Alnwick Castle

Former Disneyland Paris VP Christian Perdrier is the new chief executive at Alnwick Castle and Alnwick Garden in Northumberland, UK.

His appointment is part of a move by the attraction's owners, the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, to increase visitor numbers and revenue at one of the UK's largest inhabited castles. (See interview on p18)

# SCIENCE CENTRE NEWS



The opening of Powerhouse has been put back to 2013

## Sacramento science museum still on

Officials at the Discovery Museum of Sacramento (DMS) are still looking for investors to get the Powerhouse Science Center project off the ground.

Due to the lack of progress, the opening of the new centre has been pushed back until at least 2013. A site has yet to be officially chosen, although DMS has identified the historic P&E Power Station on the banks of the Sacramento River as the ideal location for the new science centre.

Plans for Powerhouse Science Center include large exhibition galleries, a plan-

etarium and a new Challenger Learning Center – an educational facility exploring the NASA space shuttle programme, which is named in honour of the seven astronauts in the 1986 Challenger shuttle tragedy.

A spokesperson for the project said: "The Powerhouse Science Center will feature generous exhibit space for current and travelling exhibits as well as a newly expanded and updated Planetarium & Challenger Learning Center. Movies and astronomy programs and a café with outdoor seating will also be part of the centre."

## New science centre for Calgary

A new CAN\$160m (£95m, US\$155m, €107m) science is to open in Calgary, Alberta, Canada later this year.

Work began on the TELUS World of Science in July 2008 and the project is being funded by the City of Calgary, the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada and various community donations. The attraction will feature a large open

atrium, a Learning & Leadership Centre, four themed galleries (Energy & Innovation; Earth, Space & Our Environment, Human Body and Technology, Style & Art), a Creative Kids Museum, a travelling exhibition gallery, a dome theatre and an observatory.

The 153,000sq ft (14,210sq m) science centre was designed by lead architects Cohos Evamy. Exhibit and program

development is being led by an in-house team of science centre professionals. Kasian Architecture Interior Design & Planning is the lead firm designing the dome theatre as well as the interior spaces. Landscape architecture is being led by O2 Planning + Design. CANA is leading the construction of the new facility. The centre is expected to open in the autumn.



TELUS World of Science opens in the autumn



Dr Gerhard Kilger

## The challenges of exhibit communication

**D**ASA science centre is hosting the Ecsite Annual Conference 2010 from June 3rd to 5th 2010 in Dortmund, Germany. Based on an innovative exhibition design, all senses are challenged at DASA while experiencing yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's world of work.

The focus is man, his health, his physical, mental and spiritual well-being. DASA provides a wide range of activities aiming to incorporate the concept of safety and health at work in an all-embracing sense. DASA does this by sharpening public awareness of the need for an improved world of work.

The specific link between traditional museum design and modern educational didactics distinguishes DASA from other museums. Using communication methods which address the intellect, feelings and all the senses, DASA presents topics and issues in scenic situations, in settings depicting activity in various branches of industry.

DASA, as a centre, will never be completed. The rapid pace of change in the world of work will always call for new presentations for professionals, schools and the general public.

Therefore, it's even more important that we, together with our Ecsite colleagues, work on the challenges of contemporary exhibition communication. We're looking forward to hosting the conference which promises fruitful sessions and lively discussions.

**Dr. Gerhard Kilger is the director of the DASA science centre in Dortmund, Germany**

EUROPEAN NETWORK OF SCIENCE CENTRES AND MUSEUMS

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We will take this opportunity to look at the world of our own work, with three days of challenging sessions and heated discussion, social events and business opportunities, preceded by two days of in-depth pre-conference meetings and workshops.

Whether you come from a science centre or museum, a natural history museum, a university, an aquarium, a zoo, a research institute or a private company, the network's 21st Annual Conference is the date for your calendar.

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# THEME PARK NEWS



Cedar Fair currently operates 11 theme parks and 15 waterparks

## Cedar Fair to be acquired by Apollo

Theme park operator Cedar Fair, in Ohio, US, is to be acquired by an affiliate of Apollo Global Management, a leading global alternative asset manager.

The transaction, unanimously approved by Cedar Fair's board, is valued at around US\$2.4bn (£1.5bn, €1.7m), which includes the refinancing of the company's outstanding indebtedness.

Cedar Fair chair, president and chief executive officer Dick Kinzel said: "We have considered a wide range of strategic alternatives over the past several

years. After considering these strategic alternatives, we have concluded that the transaction with Apollo is in the best interest of our unitholders.

"Apollo has a strong track record of growing businesses, and its desire to add Cedar Fair to its portfolio serves as a testament to our solid business model and the talent of our people."

The merger is conditional upon, among other things, the approval of holders of two-thirds of Cedar Fair's outstanding units and the receipt of regulatory approvals.

## Malaysian group plans theme park

Themed Attractions & Resorts Sdn Bhd (TAR) – a wholly owned subsidiary of state investment agency Khazanah Nasional Bhd – is building six theme parks in Malaysia.

TAR will develop and operate each RM200-300m (£35-53m, US\$59-89m, €39-59m) attraction. The first is scheduled to open in 2012 and is the 60,000sq ft (5,575sq m) KidZania theme park in Kuala Lumpur.

## Bible theme park planned for China

A US\$569m (£365.5m, €416.6m) theme park based on the Bible is being planned for China's north-eastern Liaoning province.

According to the AFP news agency, Mr Leung Moon-lam – a devout Christian and founder of logistics firm China South City – is behind the plans and has said that the Harmony World park will aim to tell the stories of Chinese and Western civilisation.

## Abu Dhabi Ferrari park back on track

Aldar Properties has announced the completion of the external structure of Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.

Located on Abu Dhabi's Yas Island, the new retail, leisure and entertainment destination and host venue for the inaugural Formula One Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi will be the world's largest indoor theme park and the first ever Ferrari theme park when it opens later in 2010.

A joint venture management construction company owned by Aldar and Besix, a Belgian construction group, is responsible for the management of the project, while UK firm Benoy is the architect and lead consultant. The park will host more than 20 rides, including a super-fast rollercoaster.

## Busch Entertainment to change its name

US theme park operator Busch Entertainment has changed its name to SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment.

The move follows Blackstone Capital's US\$2.7bn (£1.62bn, €1.8bn) purchase of the company. The sale was announced

jointly in December 2009 by Anheuser-Busch InBev and The Blackstone Group.

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment operates 10 parks across the US, including SeaWorlds in Orlando, Florida; San Diego, California; and San Antonio, Texas; Busch Gardens parks in Tampa, Florida and Williamsburg, Virginia; Discovery Cove and Aquatica in Orlando; Sesame Place near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and water parks Adventure Island in Tampa and Water Country USA in Williamsburg.

The new name is designed to reflect the prominence of the SeaWorld brand in both the family travel industry and among the company's portfolio of parks.

Meanwhile, the Busch Gardens Tampa Bay park has unveiled four new behind-the-scenes tours for 2010 in a bid to allow visitors to learn more about a range of attractions at the park.



SeaWorld was acquired by Blackstone





Disney's Shanghai theme park will be the fourth in East Asia

## Green light for Shanghai Disney park

The Walt Disney Company has received central government approval for its application to build a Disney theme park in the Pudong district of Shanghai, China.

The move enables Disney and its partners to move on towards a final agreement to build and operate the park and begin preliminary development work.

Upon completion of the final agreement, the project's initial phase would include a Magic Kingdom-style theme park containing a number of elements tailored specifically to the Shanghai region.

Commenting, Robert A Iger, president and CEO of The Walt Disney Company said: "China is one of the most dynamic, exciting and important countries in the world, and this approval marks a very significant milestone for The Walt Disney Company in mainland China."

The new Shanghai theme park – costing US\$3.5bn (£2.1bn, €2.3bn, CNY 23.9bn) and with a 2014 projected opening date – will increase Disney's vacation destinations in the region to four, joining Tokyo and Chiba in Japan and Hong Kong.

## Merlin to rebrand Cypress Gardens as Legoland

UK-based visitor attractions operator Merlin Entertainments will rebrand the Cypress Gardens theme park in Florida, US, which it acquired in January 2010, as a Legoland.

The theme park in Winter Haven, Florida, US, will undergo a complete redevelopment and will reopen as Legoland Florida in

2011. The park will become Merlin's second Legoland site in North America and, according to chief executive Nick Varney, will play an important role in the group's continued growth in the US. "This acquisition proves how serious we are," he said.

Although exact details will be revealed at a later date, Varney revealed that the 145-acre Florida site will be the biggest Legoland park ever opened, offering more than 50 rides, shows and attractions.

Merlin has also announced that it will open its 11th Madame Tussauds wax attraction, and the fourth in Europe, at the Prater Park in Vienna, Austria.

Scheduled to open early in 2011, the £10m (US\$15.6m, £11.4m) attraction will be designed to reflect the culture of Vienna. Prater Park is one of the most popular attractions in Austria and currently receives around three million visitors a year.



The new Legoland will open in 2011



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# BALPPA NEWS



The wooden coaster is one of the oldest in the UK

## £3.7m grant for historic Margate ride

The future of one of Britain's oldest surviving rollercoasters, a scenic railway ride in Margate, Kent, has been safeguarded after the Dreamland Trust was given a £3.7m (US\$5.8m, €4.2m) grant by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The grant, facilitated by the DCMS's Sea Change scheme, will be used to restore the rollercoaster, as well as helping to fund the creation of the world's first amusement park exclusively comprising historic rides.

Plans for the £12m (US\$20., €13.7m) attraction have been drawn up by the Dreamland Trust, which will include the restoration of the Grade II\*-listed Dreamland Cinema and the installation of an exhibition space to outline the project.

Nick Laister, chair of the Dreamland Trust, said: "This proposal has the ability to create an outstanding, 21st-century attraction at Margate, capitalising on the resort's unique heritage."

## NVQ training for ride operators

Staff at Crealy Great Adventure Park, near Exeter, are among the first in the country to complete an NVQ in Mechanical Rides.

PRP Training of Pembrokeshire, South Wales, designed the NVQ to roll out across visitor attractions and theme parks in the UK.

Currently, three of Crealy's Rangers have completed the NVQ and more have registered to take it in 2010.

The course covers all aspects of mechanical ride responsibility, from opening and closing procedures to operational best practice.

The park also announced that it has appointed contractors Michael Thorne to undertake a £150,000 (US\$234,000, €170,500) project to rebrand its run-away mine train as Maximus, a Roman themed rollercoaster.



The theatre will show the Skull Rock film

## 4D theatre for Land's End attraction

Attractions operator Heritage Great Britain will open a 4D theatre at its Land's End visitor attraction in Cornwall.

Supplied by Simworx, the theatre, which will be housed in an existing building at the town, offers 3D imagery alongside special effects lighting and Simworx's Dimensions 4D effects seats. The theatre will show the *Curse of Skull Rock* film and visitors will sit in moving seats. Further effects include water spray, air blast, leg ticklers, aroma, low smoke and bubbles.



Colin Dawson

## Another one bites the dust

Just returned from what I believe was my 19th IAAPA Expo, albeit my fifth visit to Las Vegas.

What is there left to say about Vegas? Personally, it doesn't work for me. It's brash, loud, false in every sense – and yet you can't help being impressed by some of the things they do to entertain you. From the magical fountains outside the Bellagio Hotel, a show every 30 minutes and the sinking of a full-size Galleon – all free to view.

So what of the IAAPA Expo? Held for the first time in Vegas, and in an expo centre that leaves something to be desired in terms of facilities and ease of use. However, when it comes to a show, IAAPA knows how it's done.

The show appeared to be smaller than usual, but there was no shortage of exhibitors or visitors. There was a great range of exhibitors and visitors can't help but notice that just about everything you might need in the attractions industry will be found somewhere on the show floor.

BALPPA members were there in strength and we were able to hold our own get together one evening. With the drinks costing £8 (US\$12.45, €9) each, however, we were all quite restrained in our consumption.

That was my last show and, yes, I'll miss it enormously – not just the show but the many friends I meet up with every year. If you've never been and operate an attraction, try to make it to sometime. You won't be disappointed.

Colin Dawson chief executive, BALPPA

# ZOO & AQUARIUM NEWS



Creatures at the new exhibit will include seahorses

## US\$25m exhibit for Virginia Aquarium

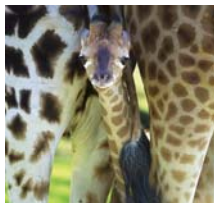
Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Centre has recently opened its new US\$25m (£14.9m, €18.3m) exhibit.

Restless Planet, which took three years to build, boasts four immersive habitats, dozens of new exhibitions and 110,000 gallons of new aquariums.

The four new habitats are: Malaysian Peat Swamp (featuring snakehead fish, Southeast Asian turtles, Malaysian Leaf frog and the rare Tomistoma crocodile), Coastal

Desert & Mediterranean Sea (featuring seahorses, cuttlefish, cobras, scorpions and hedgehogs), Red Sea (featuring an 8,000 gallon aquarium with live coral and a 100,000 gallon Red Sea Aquarium featuring eagle rays, which have 6ft wingspans) and Indonesian Volcanic Island (featuring Komodo dragons and Indonesian finches).

A special viewing area allows guests to crawl under the exhibit and up into an acrylic dome to see the animals up close.



## Monarto Zoo plans safari resort

Monarto Zoo in South Australia is currently seeking investors to develop a safari experience in the Australian bush boasting both African and Australian wildlife, 4x4 tours, fine dining and overnight stays.

The 1,000-hectare zoo, which is located 70km from Adelaide, has acquired an additional 500 hectares of land and, working with Zoos SA and the South Australian Tourism Commission, plans to develop a signature resort development.

"This presents a huge and exciting opportunity to do something totally new and authentic," said Professor Chris West, CEO of Zoos SA.

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# WATERPARK NEWS



The AUD\$35m development will open in April 2011

## Adventure Waters park approved

Plans for a AUD\$35m (£19.2m, US\$31.4m, €21.4m) water park have approved by councillors in Cairns, northern Queensland, Australia. The park will be built at Smithfield, 12km north of the city.

Work on the Adventure Waters park is planned to start in May this year with a completion date of April 2011. The plans include 16 water slides, a surf simulator, pools and lagoons as well as restaurants, shops and function rooms.

Councillor Margaret Cochrane of Cairns Regional Council said: "The developer has done all the work in the planning stages with respect to creating an environmentally sound recreational facility with sensitivity to the surrounding agricultural land.

"It's currently a derelict site and this plan will give it new life as a functioning, economically viable and sustainable facility. The plans have been long in the making and it's time to get on with creating the reality."

## City council buys Castaway Cove

Castaway Cove waterpark in Wichita Falls, Texas, US is to be acquired by the city council to erase the park owner's US\$4m (£2.6m, €3m) of debt.

The park, which opened in 2004 at a cost of US\$5.8m (£3.7m, €4.2m), is owned by Castaway Cove Limited Partnership and operated by AMG, a California-based water park management and consulting firm. The 21.4-acre waterpark boasts 40,000sq ft (3,700sq m) of water areas and features two slide towers, a lazy river, a tidal wave pool, a sport pool, an interactive multi-level children's play system and a sand volleyball court.

The council said in a report: "The operating data and pro forma shows that the waterpark revenues can support its annual operating expenses and future capital replacement costs."



Proslide specialises in water rides

## Chance Morgan and Proslide team up

Chance Morgan, manufacturer of amusement rides and people movers, and ProSlide Technology, which specialises in the custom design and manufacturing of fibreglass water rides, have formed an alliance with the CDS Group of Detroit.

The move follows CDS having been commissioned by various clients in Africa to design and develop amusement and water park master plans. CDS is a consortium of international designers, planners, engineers and equipment manufacturers.



Aleatha Ezra

## Green is key for park operators

Even before the rise in popularity of "green" building and operational practices, water leisure facilities in Europe have led the way in becoming green.

For an example of this, look no further than Center Parcs – one of the leading family leisure brands with 17 locations throughout Europe. Center Parcs' energy and environmental conservation focuses on several key areas, including energy use, waste production and water use. And they are certainly not alone in their efforts to go green in Europe.

Yet, there are still advances to be made and challenges to face both in Europe and the rest of the world. As the industry continues to progress, here are several steps to keep in mind:

- Review your operational practices and identify any areas that are lacking when it comes to your overall environmental plan. Make adjustments when and where they make sense.
  - Publicise your efforts regularly. If you achieve a special certification or accreditation, make sure your local media and your customer knows about it – in print and online.
  - Keep your ear to the ground for the latest industry innovations made by suppliers and vendors.
- Being greener in daily operations is more than just a buzzword. It's the means to financial and environmental longevity in a growing global market.

Aleatha Ezra is the membership manager of the World Waterpark Association



# GALLERY NEWS

## MoMA's new tower gets the go-ahead

New York City Council has approved the Museum of Modern Art's (MoMA) proposal for a new 82-storey tower.

The 1,050ft (320m) mixed-use tower, designed by architect Jean Nouvel, will be located on West 53rd Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues, the same Manhattan block on which the museum already has its main exhibition area. A spokesperson for MoMA said the museum will gain around 40,000sq ft (3,716sq m) of new gallery space, a 30 percent increase.

The building plan also calls for 150 residential apartments and 100 hotel rooms.

A spokesman for the tower's developer has said that no decision had been taken so far on when the project would get under way, or how long it would take to build.

The plan is not without its critics, who point out that the structure – the height of which has been cut from the 1,250ft (381m) originally proposed – would dwarf those buildings around it.

MoMA opened in November 2004, with architect Yoshio Taniguchi creating a series of galleries and public spaces designed to allow the museum to tell the story of modern and contemporary art in an entirely new context. Details: [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)



The structure will dwarf buildings around it

## Green light for £18m Belfast arts venue

A major £18m (US\$28, €20.5m) arts complex is set to open in Belfast in 2011 after Northern Irish arts minister Nelson McCausland announced the start of construction work.

The Metropolitan Arts Centre (MAC), which will form part of St Anne's Square in the city's Cathedral Quarter, will replace the existing Old Museum Arts Centre (OMAC) and provide a new space for theatre, dance and art. Facilities at the new complex will include two black box performance spaces with seating capacity for 120 and 350 spectators respectively, a 1,000sq m (10,764sq ft) art gallery, a box office, two rehearsal areas, two workshops as well as two white box exhibition spaces.

Resident company offices, a retail unit, full back and front-of-house facilities and a coffee shop will also be included in the complex, as part of the MAC, which will be delivered and managed by OMAC trustees.

The Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure has awarded £10.76m (\$16.78, €12.2m) towards the project.

## Expansion for St. Louis museum

The Saint Louis Art Museum in Missouri, US is to undergo its first major expansion in more than 20 years. Designed by London-based architect David Chipperfield, the expansion – in excess of 200,000sq ft (18,580sq m) – will provide new galleries, public space, a 300-space underground car park, as well as an entrance on Fine Arts Drive.

The project will result in a 30 percent increase in the museum's gallery and public space, and will more than double its current parking capacity.

As part of the project, the historic Cass Gilbert building will be improved, with 13,000sq ft (1,200sq m) of space renovated for permanent collection galleries, education, and public use.

## Opening date set for Tokyo's art museum

An opening date of 6 April 2010 has been announced for the new Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum located at the centre of the Japanese capital city Tokyo.

The new museum will occupy the site of a three-storey, red brick, Queen Anne style building on Babasaki-dori Avenue, designed by British architect, Josiah Conder. Originally completed in 1894 and subsequently demolished in 1968, the building was the first office building in the city's Marunouchi area, which is now part of Tokyo's financial district.

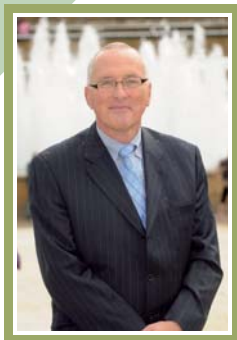
The project has aimed to replicate the original building of the Meiji (October 1868 – July 1912) and Taisho (July 1912 – December 1926) periods by using parts of the original plans and materials.

Focusing on modern and contemporary Western art from the mid-18th to 20th centuries, the museum – under the

directorship of Akiya Takahashi – will boast a total floor area of around 6,000sq m (65,000sq ft) and exhibition space amounting to about 800sq m (8,600sq ft). It will also feature a shop and a cafe. Details: [www.mimt.jp](http://www.mimt.jp)



The museum will open in April



Actors dressed as characters from the Harry Potter films regularly perform at the castle

# Christian Perdrier

Harry Potter must have lent his wand to Christian Perdrier, for the new CEO of Alnwick Castle and Alnwick Garden is transforming the film's setting into a destination. Kathleen Whyman hears how he plans to attract tourists from around the world and even turn Alnwick into the UK's version of Cannes

**B**reathtakingly beautiful gardens where visitors are actively encouraged to walk on the grass and a lovingly preserved 700-year-old castle, which is home to a certain Harry Potter, are the key attractions that Christian Perdrier fell in love with when he visited Alnwick. He admits he hadn't heard of it initially though.

"Where's Alnwick?" was his reaction when first approached for the role of CEO of Alnwick Castle and The Alnwick Garden. And then, "'Where's Northumberland?'" the Frenchman recalls. "When they told me it was near Newcastle, I said 'OK'. Newcastle United was a nightmare for French football teams 10 to 15 years ago, so I know about the city."

Once Perdrier had established that the location was in the North East of England,

his interest was quickly heightened by the proposition. The castle and garden were, for the first time, being amalgamated into one destination and a single CEO was being given sole responsibility for the two sites instead of the traditional format of separate management teams. Making the attraction a bigger site puts the CEO in a better position to talk to the tourism industry and fulfil the aim of becoming more than a local and regional attraction.

"What appealed to me was the dual responsibility of a commercial affair with the castle and a charity trust with the garden," Perdrier says. "It's very rare, as 99 per cent of jobs are commercial. I'm covering everything from finances to marketing to fundraising. We're also creating a dynamic around that to include the town and county and really put Alnwick on the map, so there are three components to the role, which is even more unusual. And I always try and find something unusual in the jobs I take."

## ABOUT ALNICK CASTLE AND GARDEN

Built in 1096, Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England, after Windsor Castle. Home of the Percy family for nearly 700 years and now the home of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle is open to the public and has been used as the location for many films, including the famous *Harry Potter* films. The castle has magnificent spacious grounds designed by Capability Brown, magnificent mediaeval towers, a 14th century dungeon, beautiful State Rooms with Italian renaissance design, paintings by Canaletto, Van Dyck and Titian and there are various museums covering the region's military and archaeological history.

The present Duchess of Northumberland initiated the establishment of The Alnwick Garden adjacent to the castle in 2001. The 42-acre (17-hectare) garden belongs to a charitable trust and includes weirs and fountains, The Ornamental Garden with 15,000 plants, a 6,000 sq ft (560sq m) tree house complex, including a café, a poison garden, growing plants such as cannabis and opium poppy, a pavilion and a visitor centre, which can hold up to 1,000 people and has a barrel-vaulted gridshell roof.

## Mediaeval magic

It wasn't just the role that attracted Perdrier, whose previous jobs have been senior vice-president parks and security for both Disneyland Resort Paris and Tatweer – a member of Dubai Holding, but the place itself. "The castle and garden are a beautiful product, they're unspoiled," he says. "Alnwick Castle is a place where you leave the world of today behind and enter the mediaeval world of yesterday, while the garden enables you to experience and appreciate nature through the seasons and your five senses. When I came here I found



As well as enjoying the grounds and the castle itself, visitors can take part in activities such as archery, falconry and Magical History Tours

a great mediaeval market town – the area’s a sleeping beauty,” he continues. “It has to wake up. I need to attract tourists to the north east of England, which isn’t visited a lot – most people go directly to Scotland – and develop it from a place people visit for a few hours to somewhere they’re going to spend a few days.”

Perdrier believes the greenery, landscape and history make Alnwick and Northumberland the perfect place to escape to from the city. “There’s huge potential to attract tourists from London – this is the castle where Harry Potter was filmed! And we have the gardens.” London to Alnwick is only three and a half hours; the one drawback is the lack of hotels in the area, but Perdrier has started discussions with different stakeholders to work

on hotel development of the site and construction will start soon with a completion date of two to three years. “Alnwick, as a destination, could be on the national map in three years and the European map in five years,” he says confidently.

Perdrier’s priority in achieving this is to understand the region and the residents. “I’m French and coming to a remote area in the UK,” he points out. “I need to learn about the people and the Percy family [who have owned the castle for 700 years]. I can’t do this alone, I need everyone who lives here to get involved.” Perdrier is the first to admit this is very different to anything he’s done before. “Although it’s still people management, I’ve never had to involve a town within a certain strategy,” he says. “It’s one thing to bring a team of

employees and directors into a strategy – you’re the boss and they have to follow because they’re paid to. When you talk to a community, it’s different. You can’t tell them they have to do something, they need to believe in it and want to do it. That’s the most difficult part – convincing them they can do it. If there’s one thing I can bring them, it’s the belief that it can be done.”

Perdrier’s been impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the locals. “Before I came here, many people said that the locals wouldn’t want to change what they’ve been doing for 50 years, but I haven’t seen these people. Everyone I’ve met has been warm, open-minded and welcoming. They basically said, ‘tell me what you want and we’ll go for it.’” Their enthusiasm is being embraced and Perdrier’s

training and developing the already excellent staff to ensure they're on par with the international standard of tourism and service. Communication is a key factor in this and in getting the town stakeholders and private stakeholders to "be around the same table and pull in the same way".

## Charity work

Part of the role is to work for the garden's charity trust, which has community programmes for families, elderly people, young people and teenagers to experience nature. This is an extremely important element of the role for Perdrier. "We're born on the good side of the road and not everyone has that luck," he says. "It's important to think about those people and think 'why them, why me?' It could be the reverse."

The Duchess of Northumberland, who resides in the castle, initially had the idea of creating a garden that would bring people pleasure and lift their aspirations in 2001. Her dream was to develop a beautiful setting that people could enjoy. Rather than being told to keep off the grass, they're actively encouraged to walk on it and to touch the flowers.

The garden's being developed in three phases. The first opened in 2001 and included one of the world's largest tree house restaurants covering 2,000sq ft (185sq m) and the second phase was completed in 2006. Fund raising is in process for the final stage, which will include a tree house play area and more gardens.

The Duchess is involved with all creativity, quality, service and delivery and Perdrier meets up with her twice a week to discuss developments. A new theme and storyline each month is among Perdrier's plans to encourage repeat visits. "I consider



Alnwick Garden's tree house restaurant is the size of two Olympic swimming pools

Alnwick to be like a movie theatre," he says. "The movie has to be changed regularly to make sure people keep coming back, but here people will be centre stage of the theme – it will surround them." Themes will include a blossom festival in April, music in August, food in September and Christmas.

To ensure Alnwick appeals to all ages as a destination, focus groups have been set up to understand what different people want and how much they're willing to pay. Perdrier's 12 years at Disney has proved invaluable in this area. "Thirty years ago there were three generations, now there are four or five. When delivering a service or product, be it to children, teenagers, adults or elderly people, ask them what they want," he explains. "When we know what interests them, we can provide it."

Something that's of interest to most, regardless of age, is Alnwick's film history.

The castle has been the setting for many films. Perdrier has plans to take advantage of this link by making Alnwick the Cannes of the UK and hosting the first worldwide festival of special effects films each year.

"Cannes is a very small town, no one knows where it is, but everyone's heard of it because of the film festival. Alnwick could become like Cannes, but be the festival for films with special effects, such as *Harry Potter*. It's the perfect location, as this is where those films were made." Perdrier is again drawing on his previous experience and is liaising with contacts at film maker George Lucas's company, which does a large percentage of the special effects used in films worldwide, about the festival. "I can't snap my fingers and make it happen, but hopefully in three to four years we'll have something," he says.

## Changing roles

Perdrier's roles at Disneyland Resort Paris, at Tatweer and now Alnwick have all been very different and he embraces that change. "I like to take on new challenges in every job I do," he says. "None of these roles have been more or less important. It's like when you have several children, you can't say you prefer one to the other, they're all great. I had a fantastic time in Paris and Dubai and I'm sure I'm going to have a fantastic time in Alnwick."

He's also enthusiastic about each location. "I really enjoyed myself in Paris. I was working with the number one in the world in theme parks on storytelling and quality of service. Spending my nights with Minnie and doing the Goofy all day was great," he laughs. And Dubai? "Ah Dubai, Dubai, Dubai – the craziness of Dubai," he smiles.

## ABOUT CHRISTIAN PERDRIER

### Hobbies

Sports, wine and meeting people.

### Favourite food

Chinese, Indian, French. Not British for sure – I didn't come here for that!

### Favourite film

*Out of Africa*. Every time I watch it, I cry. It's a fantastic love story and to make people cry when it's just a movie, that's something quite amazing.

### What drives you?

The thrill of seeing the sparkle in someone's eyes when they suddenly understand what I'm saying and realise that they can actually do it.

### How would you describe yourself?

People, people, people-centric.

### How would others describe you?

Motivating and charismatic.

### What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Be yourself and not what you think you should be.

### What's been your high point?

Joining Disney, the number one in the world in terms of creating a story and delivering it to the public, was fantastic.

### And the low point?

When Minnie told me she'd only be with Mickey. That was very hard for me.





(Above) Fountains and weirs add to the beauty of The Alnwick Garden; (right) Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England

"It didn't last long, but the belief that nothing's impossible, and it's never big enough or too expensive is so interesting."

Having originally agreed to work for Tatweer for 10 years, Perdrier was disappointed when the contract came to an end after two years because of the financial crisis. "When you're part of something and suddenly, poof, they turn off the lights, it's difficult," he says, although there was one saving grace. "Coming from Burgundy, it was a challenge living in a region that doesn't have wine!" Perdrier believes that the current situation in Dubai isn't that different to the rest of the world and, like other countries, they're naturally putting things on hold. "What they're doing is normal," he says. "It's more visible because its been built on an image of a successful, charismatic place with a great vision. Many places are in the same situation as Dubai, but no one talks about it. Many things in Dubai have stopped, but will start again. Maybe at a slower pace, but after a storm there's always a blue sky. Problem is that after a blue sky there's always a storm so you have to be prepared for it."

## People person

As with Alnwick, working with people was the original appeal of the attractions industry for Perdrier. After 20 years with hotel company Accor, he joined Disney in 1994 to be their vice-president for the hospitality



division in Paris. He stayed there for three years before being asked to work at the park. "You cannot resist Minnie [Mouse], it's impossible," he laughs. "It was good to work on the other side of the equation. The hotel is a place for people to stay, but the real heart of a destination is the attraction."

His hospitality principles are still strong and he believes staff quality and service is the main issue in the attractions industry. "The job's becoming complicated," he says. "It's seven days a week and people have to work weekends and late at night and in all weathers outside. It's hard to attract people because they don't want those types of jobs any more, they all want to be managers in the office. Training people to become autonomous and motivated, deliver a fantastic service and interact with customers is going to be very important in the future. People don't just want to visit a place, they want an experience."

Perdrier believes bringing tourists in will be easy. "In the 1970s there were 250 mil-

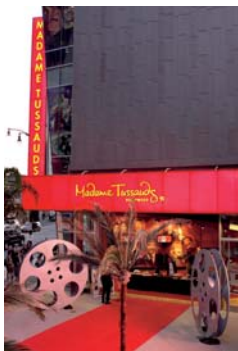
lion tourists all over the world, in the 1990s it was 600 million. The World Tourism Organisation is predicting that there will be more than one billion in three years and in 2020 there will be 1.6 billion tourists all over the world. So there'll be a lot of people who will want to come, the problem will be delivering the service."

This shouldn't be a problem at Alnwick, as training's an important part of Perdrier's remit to make the area a must-go destination. At present he doesn't know exactly how long he'll be with Alnwick, but is committed to completing the mission, however long it takes. "Although the mission will never end," he adds. "When you're developing a destination and creating jobs for generations, you can't ever say 'that's it, I've finished'. This job doesn't belong to me, it's a relay. I'm just carrying the baton for however long and will then pass it on."

One thing's for sure, with Perdrier holding the baton, there's no doubt it'll be carried safely to the finishing line. ●

# BREAKING THE MOULD?

MADAME TUSSAUD'S OPENED ITS NINTH SITE IN HOLLYWOOD LAST SUMMER AND CLAIMS TO BE "THE HOLLYWOOD EXPERIENCE". MARK HAYWARD OF BRC IMAGINATION ARTS TELLS US IF THE ATTRACTION'S WORTH WAXING LYRICAL ABOUT OR IF THE MODEL'S BELOW PAR



Madame Tussaud's red carpet entrance

**H**ollywood! The word itself conjures up a universe of magic, drama and celebrity. But, like most Los Angelenos, I live in fear of out-of-town guests who want to "see Hollywood." How do you explain that most of what they think they know of Hollywood is created in dressing rooms, back lots, sound stages and secured location shoots? These ephemeral places and characters exist for exquisite moments that are gone before the lights fade to black. Star sightings in LA are not uncommon, but there are no guarantees. Or are there?

## BACKGROUND

Few attraction brands are more successful or established than Madame Tussaud's. Tussaud's infamous exhibitions of wax figures predated the founding of most public museums. Today, there are nine Madame Tussaud's locations on three continents.

The agreement for the Hollywood location was made in 2005. Merlin

Entertainments purchased The Tussauds Group in 2007 and subsequently oversaw the development in conjunction with JR Miller & Associates and ROTO Architects. The total square footage of the attraction is 30,000 sq ft (3000 sq m). The total project cost is published at \$55M (£32.2m, €36.4).

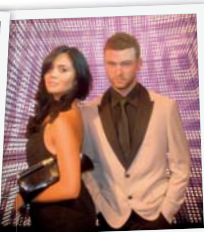
## LOCATION AND BUILDING

Unlike cities such as West Hollywood, Santa Monica and Beverly Hills, Hollywood remains a part of the City of Los Angeles. This has been one of the largest barriers to realising Hollywood's potential as a holistic visitor destination. Madame Tussaud's is located on Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame. Developed in the 1920s and including landmarks such as Grauman's Chinese Theatre, Grauman's Egyptian Theatre, and the El Capitan Theatre (now operated by The Walt Disney Company), the area has, after being very run down, experienced a public and private funded renaissance in the past decade, offering a newly sanitised

"Hollywood" experience. Other attractions include Ripley's Believe It or Not! museum, Kodak Theater, Hollywood Wax Museum and Hollywood History Museum.

The building was designed as a spec project a decade ago by LA architect John Ash. Later, architect Michael Rotondi, former Morphosis Architects founder, signed on and helped rework the building into a series of colliding and fractured forms incorporating rough industrial finishes. The plan of the three-storey building is U-shaped, wrapping around a plaza that opens onto Hollywood Boulevard. The flow of the overall experience is generally good despite a few awkward dead-end galleries and floor-grade transitions.

The exterior plaza echoes the famous foot and handprint-laden court of the adjacent Grauman's Chinese Theatre that receives an estimated seven million visitors a year. The contemporary character of the building could have seemed out of place in the context of Old Hollywood's revival



Interacting with the wax figures, including Jamie Foxx, Justin Timberlake and Uma Thurman is a big part of the guest's experience



Visitors can sit next to Steven Spielberg in Making Movies and meet the legends in Spirit of Hollywood, including Ingrid Bergman

architecture. But the architects have created an inviting pedestrian-friendly building for Hollywood's newest attraction.

## THE OFFER

An audio track promotes the experience as, "The world's most exciting and immersive celebrity experience." The promise of this claim is delivered through 18 themed zones spread over three floors. Staff members are positioned throughout to engage guests and photograph them posing with many of the more iconic figures.

What they chose not to show seems just as important as what they do show. The focus is pure celebrity – pop icons, actors, filmmakers and sports superstars. You'll find one politician, President Barack Obama, but you won't find any historical figures or Tussaud's classics like the Chamber of Horrors. The phrase wax museum is de-emphasised in favour of messages that reinforce interactivity, emotion and open access to the figures.

## ACCESS AND SIGNAGE

Hollywood Boulevard is a cacophony of advertising signage, tour promoters, celebrity look-alikes and costumed street performers ranging from Imperial

Storm Troopers to Captain Jack Sparrow to Sponge Bob. The austere design of the Tussaud's façade focuses attention on the bold and simple exterior graphics. A large-scale exterior LED screen activates the plaza with motion and colour. Marilyn Monroe, mounted on a rolling platform, can be moved into the plaza to lure potential guests with a preview and window shoppers with a free photo opportunity. Two glazed showcase galleries protrude from the second and third stories of the façade and draw the eye upward. These galleries feature limited engagement specialty figures, currently the Jonas Brothers and Ironman.

## DESIGN AND LAYOUT

In typical Tussaud's fashion, the production value of the figures and environments is very high quality, utilising stylised environmental graphics, theatrical lighting, projected media, set pieces, props,





touch-screen interactives, music and sound effects to vignette each figure. Staff members capture digital images of guests with key iconic figures at strategic points along the way. These images are available for purchase at the exit or can be accessed online using a code on your ticket stub.

## THE EXPERIENCE

The journey begins with an official photo-op with President Barack Obama. From there guests ascend a ramp to the Red Carpet zone where, under a strobe of camera flashes, Joan Rivers asks: "Who are you wearing?", then an elevator takes guests to the third floor.

Emerging from the lift you enter the largest of the thematic zones, the A-List Party. The environment is a Hollywood nightclub complete with flashing lights, disco balls and dance music. Celebrities like Beyoncé, Elton John and Michael Jackson are posed performing. Guests are invited to join the action and strike a pose as if they're in a duet. Other super-stars, such as George Clooney and Jennifer Aniston are casually seated or standing, so guests can pose with them like old friends.

Guests can take an elevator or stairs down to the second floor. The stairwells throughout the building are treated with bold super graphics. At several points, guests in wheelchairs are required to use lifts between floor-grade changes.

In the Spirit of Hollywood zone guests can pose with classic stars such as Charlie Chaplin and Marlene Dietrich. They are then led through a sequence of immersive thematic zones including Westerns, Crime, Action Heroes and Sports.

One highlight occurs in Modern Classics when Charlton Heston parts a video Red Sea projected on the floor. A somewhat jarring sequence involves posing with a shovel next to Steve McQueen, tempting the young Dustin Hoffman with "your" stockinged leg and then donning a nun's

**Johnny Depp, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Britney Spears and Beyoncé wait to meet visitors in the A-list party room**

habit to pose with Whoopi Goldberg. In Making Movies, you can help Quentin Tarantino compose his next shot or have a seat in the director's chair to consult with Steven Spielberg. In the American Idol zone, guests can sing karaoke while their friends sit next to Simon Cowell and judge the performance. One of my favourite moments was in the Awards Ceremony zone when you can take a seat in the audience next to Jack Nicholson.

In the Behind the Scenes zone, Beyoncé Knowles takes you through the step-by-step process of creating one of Tussaud's amazingly life-like figures. Here you also meet the youthful figure of Marie Tussaud and learn about her life in the court of Louis XVI. There's a facilitated activity area where staff help guests make a simple wax mould of their hand as a souvenir.

## RETAIL AND AMENITIES

The exit retail space features a station where photos taken can be viewed and ordered. These images can be purchased as prints or incorporated into a variety of souvenirs such as magnets and key chains. There's an ample selection of Tussaud's Hollywood-branded merchandise in the shop as well as general Hollywood souvenirs. Tussaud's features only a small snack bar on the second floor. This comes as no surprise given the number and variety of restaurants in the immediate vicinity.

The restrooms were clean and well maintained. They featured graphics that showed life-sized silhouettes of selected stars and toilet stalls themed like dressing rooms. The restrooms were equipped with changing tables and other family-friendly features.

Parking in the neighbourhood is legendarily bad. There's a subterranean parking structure underneath the museum with

charges comparable to the many other parking structures in the area. The Metro Red Line subway station is one block away.

## THE VERDICT


The draw for tourists is clear. Guests are guaranteed an up-close and personal encounter with some of the biggest stars ever. Even the most jaded Hollywood insider couldn't resist sharing breakfast with Audrey Hepburn or receiving an offer you can't refuse from Marlon Brando.


I made the mistake of going through the experience by myself. The eerily lifelike quality of the figures coupled with the "up close and personal" access makes for a fun experience that's best enjoyed with others. I probably had more fun watching other guests than I did just on my own. The figures inspire playful social interactions and all the galleries benefit from the activity of lots of guests interacting with them.

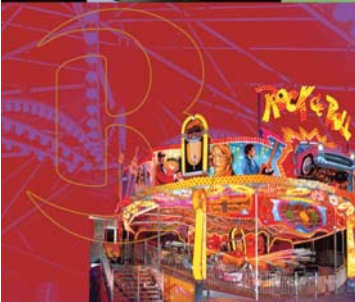
Timing is everything. The economics of the last year have put a great deal of pressure on even the most established Hollywood attractions – and everywhere else for that matter. It's a tough time to be launching any new leisure business. The Tussaud's brand needs to establish itself and justify the added value of its ticket, which is roughly twice the price of most area attractions. In the long run, the quality of the attraction, coupled with Tussaud's operational expertise should prove a winning formula for the newest attraction on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. ●


### WHAT'S THE SCORE


| SCORES OUT OF 10          |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Toilets                   | 8        |
| Staff                     | 8        |
| Cleanliness               | 10       |
| Experience                | 8        |
| Value for Money           | 7        |
| <b>Overall Experience</b> | <b>8</b> |



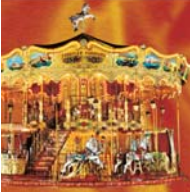
 Kiddle

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# IAAPA 2009

An air of optimism dominated the IAAPA – International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions – Expo 2009. Held in Las Vegas last November, Kathleen Whyman asks some of the attendees about their experience at the show



**LESLEY MORISETT**  
Director, economics,  
AECOM

“I arrived in Vegas eager to see how the city had changed in the 15 years since I was last there and vowing that this would be the year I’d make time to walk around the IAAPA show floor and catch up with what’s new. I also arrived armed with a stinking English cold which I generously sent on a global journey – apologies everyone!

I quickly realised that Las Vegas’ brief flirtation with being family friendly (which had coincided with my previous visit) was well and truly over. My plans to pop out to have a look at the new hotel developments and the Las Vegas theming also proved challenging. Sightseeing in Las Vegas requires expedition planning and hiking boots (and that’s just to leave your hotel). The concept of ‘popping’ anywhere is doomed to failure and exhaustion. Fortunately I did make it to see O [Cirque du Soleil’s resident show at Bellagio], which was superb.

Generally the mood at IAAPA 2009 was more buoyant than in 2008. Somewhat of a sense of doom in 2008 was to be expected, given that at the time the global economy was hit hard, much of DubaiLand was being put

on hold and the attractions industry was facing very uncertain times. While the global economy’s still suffering and the uncertainty remains, 2009 turned out to be better than anticipated for much of the attractions industry, partly because there had been a lot of belt tightening in anticipation of a tough year and partly due to the staycation phenomenon, which helped many attractions achieve strong attendance levels, particularly in Europe.

Another major factor boosting confidence at the 2009 IAAPA show was the pace of development of new attractions in Asia. Over the past year there’s been a visible shift in enquires away from the Middle East and Russia/CIS towards Asia, led by China and the Malaysian/Singapore developments. We also saw a shift towards more realistic and serious buyers attending the show, away from some of the more speculative projects.

For the economics practice at AECOM, the show provided an excellent opportunity to launch our new brand and tell our clients, friends and project partners about the broader integrated services

which we can now offer across AECOM, while reassuring them that we’re still the same team they previously knew as ERA.

Once again, IAAPA passed in a whirl of meetings (it’s the ultimate opportunity to get together with clients, discuss opportunities with partner companies and generally catch up with the rest of the attractions industry).

Sadly, once again, I totally failed to make time to walk the show floor and see what’s new.



Visitors are invited to try out the rides for themselves on the show floor



Visitors to the 2009 show experienced a feeling of optimism about the industry and saw a lot of smiling faces



**BOB ROGERS**  
Founder & chief creative officer,  
BRC Imagination Arts

“ IAAPA 2009 was a Rite of Spring. Everywhere there were signs that the industry's picking up. This was especially true among master planners, concept designers, economic feasibility consultants and others who generally work the front end of the pipeline. As usual,

the experience depends on your point of view. For those experiencing less work than they'd like, it may seem as though the difficult period's still with us. But for those lucky enough to have a decent amount of work, things seem brighter. Wherever you happen to land on this continuum, IAAPA 2009 promised good things ahead.

I'd predicted that Las Vegas would be a difficult city for IAAPA and I've never been prouder and happier to be wrong. Concerns about attendees spending more time at the tables than on the trade floor or go to the shows instead of the parties in the evening didn't come true. It was an extremely successful IAAPA and validated the rising optimism we've been feeling for some time. ”



**CHIP CLEARY**  
Senior vice president, Palace  
Entertainment and IAAPA chair 2010

“ The change in location to Las Vegas for 2009 had a number of goals attached to it. Two of those goals were to reinvigorate our constituents and attract new attendees. From early reports the event certainly seemed to accomplish that, which is great in light of the economic and weather challenges some of our members faced.

The educational sessions were packed, some with overflow crowds, the trade show floor was vibrant and the level of interest by buyers was noticeable. There were also some great speakers at the seminars and the energy Las Vegas generates was apparent.

Comparing the two-floor Las Vegas Hall to the one floor Orlando Hall, obviously the Orlando Hall has its advantages. But this was more than offset by the excitement of the whole event in Las Vegas.

One of the hot issues in the industry right now is how to communicate with guests who are leaving the traditional advertising of newspapers, tv and radio for internet-based platforms. There were

a number of sessions that touched on this rapidly growing and complex issue, which were heavily attended. Online registration continues to grow exponentially for IAAPA, which I believe is reflective of what's going on in the attractions industry.

Projects and developments in Asia continue to be the big growth area and the announcement of Disney's Shanghai project certainly supports that. Technological advancements were evident in a lot of new products from rides to novelties.

The mood of the show was energetic and more optimistic than last year. In the US, operators had tough weather in a lot of regions and the economic issues while operators in Europe seemed to have a much better year in terms of both weather and business in general, so I think that instilled some confidence going forward.

In 2008 there was a real sense of foreboding to the unknown. In 2009 operators learned what they need to do to survive and prosper in this economy. It may not be any easier, but it's definitely a little less nebulous out there. Also, I saw a number of truly new and different products on the floor. There was an upbeat tone where most people felt a bottom had been found and perhaps the light at the end of the tunnel was not a train coming at them. I'd sum it up as cautious optimism. I wish everyone great weather and good economics to work within until we meet again in November in Orlando. ”

### ABOUT IAAPA 2009

Preliminary estimates indicate 24,000 people, including approximately 14,700 buyers, from 108 nations, participated in the IAAPA Attractions Expo 2009. It was the first time the 91-year-old Expo had been held in Las Vegas.

IAAPA Attractions Expo is the world's largest conference and trade show for the attractions industry. It's owned and produced by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) and serves as the marketplace for amusement parks and attractions industry leaders, decision-makers and visionaries who gather to network, view the latest innovations and plan for the future.



IAAPA president Charlie Bray and 2009 IAAPA chair Darrell Metzger open the show in Vegas

**"IN 2009 OPERATORS LEARNED WHAT THEY NEED TO DO TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER IN THIS ECONOMY. THERE WAS AN UPBEAT TONE AT IAAPA WHERE MOST PEOPLE FELT THAT PERHAPS THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL WAS NOT A TRAIN COMING AT THEM" CHIP CLEARY**



#### DARRELL METZGER

Advisor to Ruwaad Holdings and immediate past IAAPA chair 2010



#### KEITH JAMES

Owner and CEO, Jack Rouse Associates

"We took IAAPA to Las Vegas this year so our participants could experience the world-class entertainment offered by the city and to make the Expo more accessible to industry professionals on the West Coast and in Asia. I think the strategy paid off. We were very pleased with the number of attendees, especially given the concerns over the economy. Plus, we saw marked increases in attendance from first-time attendees, the West Coast, and from people outside the United States. I think those statistics illustrate taking the show to Las Vegas was a good decision.

The issue for our operators is figuring out the best way to adjust their business models in these tough economic times. The exhibit floor featured some innovative new products to help drive revenue and save expenses. Manufacturers and suppliers are faced with the challenge of penetrating new markets, such as museums and casinos. This is where they'll find much of their future business.

In 2008, the mood at IAAPA was quite reserved. People were concerned about the economy and its impact on business. That uncertainty made people generally hesitant – hesitant to invest in new products and hesitant about how to adjust their business plans. In 2009 there was a noticeable sense of optimism throughout all aspects of the show, from the social events, to the education sessions, to the show floor itself. People are starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel of economic concerns and that influenced the overall mood at the show. I saw a lot of smiling faces!"

"As with each IAAPA expo we attend, our goals for 2009 were to connect with both potential and current clients, learn about new technologies and techniques, meet with current or potential suppliers and learn about trends in the industry through formal sessions and informal conversations with our peers.

The expo and its location attracted a strong number of potential and existing clients. The sessions we attended were very informative and the events provided plenty of networking opportunities. We were pleased with the floor traffic in the exhibit hall and the number of new contacts that we met. It was a good change of pace to have the conference in Las Vegas. In addition to the multitude of themed environments and attractions to see, the city provides a nice atmosphere with plenty of energy and excitement. Given that we're all in the leisure industry, it was great to experience this firsthand!"

### IAAPA 2010

**Venue:** Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida, USA

**Conference:** Monday - Friday, November 15-19, 2010

**Trade Show:** Tuesday - Friday, November 16-19, 2010

**Information about exhibiting or attending is available at [www.IAAPA.org/IAAPAAAttractionsExpo](http://www.IAAPA.org/IAAPAAAttractionsExpo)**

# Planetariums: all grown up.



Sangam Observatory Definiti theater, South Korea  
Screen image: fulldome show Astronaut, produced by National Space Centre



Large-screen Definiti projection system, graphics by Sky-Skan and the National Space Centre, Challenger Learning Center, South Korea

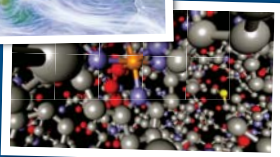


Definiti GaiaSphere rear-projection dome installation, Kifissia, Greece



Sky Touch interactive weather simulation: for exhibits, Definiti GaiaSpheres, and Definiti fulldome theaters

Protein Data Bank  
real-time 3D data set



## You'll be surprised at what we're doing with planetarium technology.

Sky-Skan's current lineup of Definiti® projection systems is providing spectacular imagery in some surprising places, such as the first fulldome theater on a cruise ship (our stunning retractable dome on the Queen Mary 2, pictured below). Sky-Skan's Definiti GaiaSphere product, pictured above, is a new type of exhibit that brings planets almost close enough to touch. And we've been developing and distributing some amazing new 3D data sets and playback shows. We've even launched a 3D stereo projection option (Definiti 3D) for the ultimate in immersion!

The visuals in a Definiti theater may surprise you. From live fly-throughs of molecules to immersive shows from the top producers in the world, Definiti theaters and projection systems are doing some amazing things with the latest technology and top-notch creative talent. Contact us for a closer look.



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definiti3

GAIA SPHERE

### What's different about Definiti theaters and projection?

- Extremely high resolution (beyond HD quality) with rich color and high brightness on both curved and flat screens.
- High-energy graphics and video cover the entire dome screen along with multi-channel surround sound.
- Wide range of easy-to-run playback videos are available from Sky-Skan's distribution department, including aquatic, earth and space, children's, and seasonal shows.
- Real-time and scripted multimedia shows can be developed to take advantage of DigitalSky 2's advanced visualization system. Multimedia capabilities include 3D data, images, video, graphics, and sound.
- Definiti 3D theaters bring the best 3D stereo experience to fulldome. Audiences, wearing advanced lightweight 3D glasses, feel even more engaged in the visuals with the added depth perception of 3D stereo.
- Innovative theater designs open exciting new possibilities.
- Definiti GaiaSphere uses Definiti projection technology to show a bright and clear picture on a vertically oriented rear-projection dome. Typical installations use a touch panel so visitors can interact with the simulation.



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Challenger Center photo courtesy Challenger Center for Space Science Education and Sangam Observatory, South Korea. © Sky-Skan, Inc.

everybody's talking about

## IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME FOR PLANETARIUMS INVESTMENT?

Advances in technology, such as the development into large format film, enable planetariums to compete with large format film distributors. So, is this the right time for them to upgrade? Should operators invest now or will there be newer, even more cutting-edge technology coming out soon which will quickly date their investment? Kathleen Whyman asks the experts



### E & S DIGITAL THEATER

Michael Daut,  
director of show  
production/marketing

There's never been a better time to consider a digital fulldome theatre/digital planetarium for your facility. Advances in video projection technology, in terms of resolution and contrast, have allowed fulldome image quality that now rivals giant screen film theatres.

New technology introduced by Evans & Sutherland (E&S) opens the door for giant screen films to play in digital fulldome theatres and the availability of original fulldome programming is at an all-time high, dramatically expanding the choice of shows to play on the dome.

Giant screen films and original programming for fulldome theatres are abundant. Digital planetarium systems, such as Digistar 4, allow audiences to travel through space in a 3D universe filled with galaxies, stars, planets and moons, letting them explore the universe with a flexibility and immediacy never before possible.

Of course, the big question is when to implement this exciting technology in your theatre. Given the number of advancements in the last few years, doesn't it

make sense to see what might be coming just over the horizon? The truth is we can never be sure what's coming next, but computers can be upgraded and future software updates can be easily installed. Sometimes the cost of waiting is greater than the cost of

having this amazing medium in your hands right now. With so much content and such a dynamic and powerfully immersive canvas using state-of-the-art video projection, digital fulldome theatres represent the ultimate medium for surrounding audiences with images and sounds. Viewers are effectively transported directly into the experiences on the screen.



### GLOBAL IMMERSION

Alan Caskey,  
sales director,  
Americas

Digital cinema technology is now proven and digital capability is in every cineplex. Over time, the film-based theatres will almost certainly change to a digital solution.

The future advancements in projection technology will revolve around higher resolution and brightness, lower cost illumination and technological capa-

bilities that improve visual performance. Strangely enough, the planetarium market has migrated to digital capability sooner than the IMAX/giant screen industry has. Many of the giant screen folks are still a film-based 15/70 or 8/70 market and while newer movies will have digital versions available, the installed base is film.

Digital planetariums have the capability to show digital movies. Advancements in technology aren't needed. Today's dome requires 4K x 4K resolution, which is available in multi-channel solutions. Attaining 4K x 4K with only one device isn't expected to happen for the foreseeable future and when it does, 4K x 4K will no longer be good enough. The digital infrastructure for playback of uncompressed video already exists.

Technology life will always have limitations. While display technology may be serviceable for up to 10 years, practically speaking, an operator should plan on a four- to six-year horizon for technology upgrades, driven by visitor expectations.

Technology is an evolution, not a revolution. We advise our clients not to wait for the latest cutting-edge technology for two main reasons. Firstly, cutting-edge technology imposes inherent risk and secondly, the typical visitor to institutional theatres wants a cutting-edge experience, which is already possible with today's technology.





Is now the right time for planetarium operators to upgrade? Email [kathleenwhyman@leisuremedia.com](mailto:kathleenwhyman@leisuremedia.com)



#### SKY SCAN

Marcus Weedle,  
marketing director

It's a great time to upgrade in our opinion and many customers seem to agree.

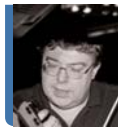
Providing giant-screen quality in digital is no longer a "when?" question. The technology is improving constantly, but we're getting tens of thousands of lumens on the screen at 4K and 8K resolution. We just demonstrated Sony's latest projector, the T420, which puts out 21,000 lumens. Do that with two or six projectors and you're looking at a very bright, high-resolution picture. 3D stereos also taking hold - we've installed a Definiti 3D 8K in Macao that has higher resolution and is brighter than giant-screen film, with 3D. Sites with older 70mm systems have gone to digital-only, such as Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre.

For 2010, we expect the Sony T420 to be one of the brightest projectors at 21,000 lumens. While projectors are in the works at higher resolution, we expect them to be in the 5,000-20,000 lumen range. If you need more today, say 30,000-plus lumens, you can get it from multiple projectors.

The real issues are getting the price down for customers who are showing less

mainstream content. Planetariums want to keep their unique nature and not merely become giant-screen theatres. Planetariums with great real-time content offer something that no video produced months or years prior can do, which is to stay up-to-date

and offer an interaction with the audience. There's a real value there that customers are now forced to balance against showing linear videos. So we're seeing the technology fade as the biggest factor and content becoming the most important. So the question then becomes, what are you going to show on the screen?



#### NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE, UK

Graham Law,  
head of  
technical services

We upgraded our system in 2009 as our circa 2000 Electrohome CRT Full-dome projection system needed replacing, primarily due to ageing tubes, high maintenance and a lack of performance by today's standards. The backend system was, and is, an E&S D3, which we considered to be still serviceable and capable of feeding a higher resolution to a new projection array.

Our problem was, which to choose? In 2008 we visited other planetariums, took note of the latest trends and tested several manufacturer's projectors. We had a limited budget, so the cost of the installation and ownership was a driving force. But, with an in-house production team, performance couldn't be seriously compromised, as it's their home demonstration system.

Ultimately we agreed with our preliminary research that the PD performance was superior for our application and selected the PD F32 as our projectors.

This is a single chip DLP projector, but its main strength is that it can be specified with different colour wheels. In our case,

one optimised for producing good contrast and black levels albeit at lower ultimate brightness. This is the PD VisSIM option typically used for night time flight simulators and proved very capable.

We teamed up with Global Immersion (GI) to colour match the units. They supplied the

mechanical blending masks to blend DLPs, but in all other respects we installed ourselves with our own design and manufacture of the projector mounts and blend mask frames. GI also confirmed by CAD some of our home grown calculations when it came to lens selection and projector positioning. We'd never previously attempted such an upgrade on our own. ●

# MORE DASH LESS CASH

In the current climate, theme park operators need to be careful with their cash while still providing something new to ensure visitors keep coming back. Kathleen Whyman asks designers, architects and operators how this can be achieved within budget

## ROUSE YOUR SLEEPING ASSETS

### BRC Imagination Arts BV

**Bart Dohmen**, managing director, The Netherlands



It's interesting to look at recommendations of how operators can refresh their offer on a budget at a time when many claim to have record attendance numbers. This implies everything's going well, but there's something behind these high attendance numbers – most have been achieved by lowering entrance prices or other forms of discounting. This begs the question, what does 25 per cent more people paying 25 per cent less do for your profit margin or the costs of maintenance and operation?

Some attractions, however, achieved improved numbers without special promotions, so what did they do differently? The answer is in the basics of business – distinguish yourself from the rest with a

clear vision of who you are and what you do, then deliver on that promise. Great examples of these include Efteling, The Netherlands, Plopsaland, Belgium, and Puy de Fou, France. Attractions like these offer psychological comfort during a crisis, as visitors feel comfortable and looked after in these environments.

Also at work here is the staycation trend. A perfect example is Europapark, Germany, which offers a short stay in a hotel or bungalow with unlimited access to the theme park. According to news articles, during a crisis people take a short vacation and stay in their own area. My first budget recommendation takes advantage of this trend – if you don't have a hotel, partner

with local hotels and offer guests a package. But do something special with it.

My second recommendation is to focus on your identity and market that. Parks with a clear identity can do this more easily. Think of Efteling – the fairy tale forest is the soul of Efteling. The only attractions they've added in recent years have been small additions supporting the core theme, while marketing has reinforced the connection the Dutch have with the fairy tale forest.

My third piece of advice is to think outside the box when it comes to existing assets. How can you leverage them, put them to work and make them better or more available? Can you extend your opening times by doing something extra? Where are your sleeping assets that can be roused and put to work? Thinking this way led to the development of the successful Winter Efteling celebrations.

These three recommendations may require more thinking and work than the usual off-the-shelf quick fix, but they build long-term value and a stronger brand. Also, never forget that off-the-shelf solutions are easily copied, which hurts, rather than helps, your competitive advantage. Be yourself, be original and do it with courage."



Attractions that deliver on their promise, such as Efteling, offer visitors comfort as they feel looked after

**"HOW CAN YOU LEVERAGE YOUR EXISTING ASSETS, PUT THEM TO WORK AND MAKE THEM BETTER? CAN YOU EXTEND YOUR OPENING TIMES? WHERE ARE YOUR SLEEPING ASSETS THAT CAN BE ROUSED AND PUT TO WORK?"**

## HARNESS THE POWER OF THE MOVIES

### DreamWorks Animations SKG

**Joel Ward,**  
head of theme park &  
location based entertainment



As most parks have learned, one of the most effective ways to create low cost entertainment value and drive incremental attendance is through seasonal events. A way to one-up this strategy is to tie that event to a popular entertainment brand, particularly upcoming film releases.

DreamWorks Animation has used seasonal promotional campaigns at theme parks since our company started in 1994. Programmes with parks have helped to launch our most successful franchises: *Shrek*, *Madagascar* and *Kung Fu Panda*.

Ocean Park in Hong Kong has used our films to create fantastic entertainment. The characters, stories and settings from the films provide a wealth of material that have been brought to life through games, activities, character interactions and even live re-enactments of entire scenes.

The environments in a film are perfectly suited to walk-through attractions, parades, character programmes, street shows or even themed overlays on existing playlands and rides. By using some of the same infrastructure that a park builds for special events, such as Halloween, then creating content to reach the family demographic, it's possible to put together a fantastic experience with minimal capital investment.

Using a film for seasonal programmes provides tremendous marketing value for a park. Movies released at key holiday periods have advertising campaigns that hit extremely hard, creating maximum awareness for a film's opening. By connecting park entertainment to that brand, awareness comes at the same peak periods when parks are looking for attendees.

For the guest, the added entertainment



Entertainment tied in with films, such as *Madagascar* benefit from visitor recognition and the film's marketing

delivers characters and stories they already know and like. For the park, it's at a relatively low cost with high marketing value. The marketing for the film at a location dedicated to fun encourages more people to see the movie. It's a win all around.

Seasonal entertainment becomes a great test environment to discover if the film and characters could find a permanent home in the park. When the original *Shrek* film opened, Universal Studios theme parks created a street show based on the movie, which ultimately led to the highly successful *Shrek* 4D attraction.

The power of a strong brand is a proven way to bring in additional revenue, whether it's for toothpaste, a Broadway musical or a theme park attraction. Using a film brand to create strong guest entertainment provides an exciting, fresh experience without the costs involved in creating and marketing something from scratch.



Ocean Park in Hong Kong has created entertainment from films including *Kung Fu Panda*

## BRAND IMAGE

## Kraftwerk

Markus Beyr,  
managing director



There are many opportunities to refresh existing attractions in a theme park. Media based attractions are the easiest genre to keep current by just updating the content. Changing film content is easy for screens where the format is 16:9 and many films are available for 3D and 4D theatres.

For attractions that don't have a fixed theme and need refreshing, I recommend branding. Is there a local IP (intellectual property) which is famous in your country, but perhaps isn't big globally? It could be a tv series, a movie, a children's character or even a music band or song – anything that's timeless and fits in with the style of your attraction could work. Licensing the rights shouldn't be too expensive.

For long established brands, you don't need to obtain licensing rights, as they can be freely used 70 years after the death of the IP owner. Famous brand uses are tales such as 1001 nights, the Brothers Grimm's fairy stories and *Dracula*. For example, a theme park operator could link an existing famous brand to a roller coaster and obtain the rights or take a discontinued IP. They then create a themed pre-show plus a customised sound track relating to



Kraftwerk's 4D seats enable visitors to get completely involved with the show

the branded characters, which is played to guests during the ride through small speakers inserted into each coaster seat. If done well, with a story that fits and is dramatically and artistically presented, it can enhance the experience tremendously.

Technical add ons are often a clever solution to refresh existing attractions. The implementation of video or sound can improve your visitors' experience. I've worked a lot in this area to create innovative technical solutions in the last 10 years. There's also an upcoming demand for implementation of new technologies, such as interactivity or human RFID tracking into existing attractions.

The latest refurbishment I've worked on is for Futuroscope in France. It's an existing Imax dome theatre with four 25-seater motion platforms. Luc Besson created a specialised ride version of his *Arthur 2* movie and we designed 4D seats and created some exciting new 4D effects, such as Spiderweb, which gets people very involved during the show – at one point we simulate a spider striking the face of the guests. It was great to develop this attraction with the creative people from Futuroscope. Arthur 4D is a completely new themed attraction, but almost everything that was in the main show before, besides the media, could be reused.

## PIMP YOUR RIDES

## Jora Vision

Jan Maarten de Raad,  
CEO and  
company founder



We have three specialist products for creating new and innovating attractions with limited budgets.

Usually an obsolete ride means you have to invest a considerable amount of money to remove that ride and build a new one. We've developed a method of upgrading an existing ride with our Pimp my Ride product, which uses an existing ride system to create a completely new experience for your guests and immerse them in a story complete with sound and special effects. One example of this is the Monorail at Drievliet park in Holland, which we transformed, while retaining the original, basic structure.

People visit parks to explore new places. This should be a thrilling journey, in which they leave everyday life behind. To fully immerse visitors in this new world, the

attraction should be consistent, colourful and, most of all, true to its theme.

Achieving this doesn't necessarily require a large investment. Jora Vision's Park Check-up® is available for leisure destinations such as theme parks. This service includes a check-up of facades, park signage, street furniture and fencing to attract visitors. We'll examine the operator's existing elements then give advice on how to enhance them and create an extraordinary world to dazzle visitors. At Cinemagic Drievliet, we took a fairly basic

building and embellished it to create a fun place people want to visit.

Attractions searching for family orientated entertainment could consider our Magical Minigolf®. We've transformed this traditional game into a sensory experience where everything the guest sees, does, hears and even smells contributes to a story. At Molenheide in Belgium's Forgotten Mine, we used a themed environment, interactives, startling surprises, sound-effects, scents and animatronics to create the Minigolf of the future!



Cinemagic Drievliet was transformed into a more interesting place to visit by Jora Vision





Artists impressions of 'an ecological adventure' which will be a refit of an existing area at Gold Reef City, Johannesburg, South Africa by Ray Hole

## FOCUS ON QUALITY

### Ray Hole Architects Ray Hole, managing director



At the beginning of 2009 we had an unprecedented set of circumstances which were very different to those that had confronted any of us before. Indeed, the end quarter of 2008 presented such an opposite context to the previous nine months of the year that it appeared (almost) confusing and hence unnerving for us all – not least by the rapid onset of the economic difficulties that now affect most of the global and home economic markets.

Our projects in 2009 obviously developed within the extraordinary economic context unfolding throughout the year. We believe this has had an important influence on our thinking, perhaps more than at any other time in our professional lives.

So, how do you make sense of an economic picture that still remains unclear. Where business commentators give only generic predictions and 'end 2008' data and the normal rules no longer exist?

With the very limited liquidity currently available, presenting a coherent business case is critical. Therefore, the cyclic relationship between optimal capital required for a project and the assured revenue streams that service it must be close.

Reassuringly, during this recession, attraction loyalists and potential new visitors still want to have quality leisure experiences. Therefore, those attractions that maintain or indeed expand their offer during this period will attract more attention and capture a large part of the visitor market. Any new product that can be implemented immediately or at least be shown to be 'coming soon!' will promote a heightened sense of optimism, ambition and commercial robustness.

Attention can also be given during this period to overdue maintenance and base level investment in the core assets of the attraction. Often these are overlooked when times are good when the focus is on maintaining growth and increasing profits.

A new term has also been coined to reflect one positive domestic tourism market symptom of the recession – staycations. Operators that can bring to market and deliver a quality and enhanced visitor experience will benefit from this (albeit probably temporary) reaction to the cost of overseas travel and the poor exchange rates currently available in many destinations.

For those, like us, who work both in the UK and internationally, particularly in the emerging economies, the global issues



that faced us in 2008 will continue. In particular, the volatile international currency exchange market will make the importing and exporting of goods and services a mixed bag of winners and losers. Pegging exchange rates through appropriate insurance policies may be a necessary on-cost, but may protect the contract value.

In conclusion, 2010 will be a year of strategy and tenacity. Our mixture of UK and overseas activities will continue to be diverse enough to navigate a sustainable path through the recession. Our mixture of projects will be as enjoyable as ever and we aim to introduce our unusual brand of design and process to a much broader market. Good luck to everyone in 2010. ●





PHOTO CREDIT: UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

# DOUBLE BILL

Costumes from *The Mummy*,  
*Elizabeth*, *Seabiscuit* and  
*The Blues Brothers*,

"I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship," said Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*. He may have been talking to his co-star, but he could well have been predicting the relationship between film and attractions. In the first of a new series looking at movies within attractions, Kathleen Whyman talks to the creators of two museums dedicated to the film industry

## The NBC Universal Experience, Hollywood

JOHN MURDY, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Learning about the history of film in a studio that dates back to the birth of movies is the premise for The NBC Universal Experience. Part of Universal Studios Hollywood, the two-year-old museum showcases artefacts from the studio's first Oscar-winning film in 1930, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, right through to 2009 films *Public Enemies*, *Milk* and *Frost Nixon*.

"Universal has such a rich movie history in LA," says creative director John Murdy. "There's an incredible wealth of movie history and props, costumes and artefacts the public's never seen before."

## Costume drama

The first half of the exhibit, Onscreen, displays costumes and props used in films. Behind The Scenes reveals the designs and technologies that go into making a movie. This includes an extensive collection of early movie cameras and pre-cinema devices, which pre-date projectors, some going back to the mid-1800s.

The exhibition has approximately 100 pieces on display, which change every few months to make the most of the extensive archive. Costumes come from films including *Mamma Mia*, *Elizabeth - the Golden Age* and *The Blues Brothers* plus Johnny Depp's John Dillinger wardrobe from *Public Enemies*. Among the props are Gregory Peck's briefcase and glasses from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the communicator ET phoned home with and Norman Bates' taxidermy owl from *Psycho*. In Behind the Scenes, visitors can see the original concept drawings for Bruce - the great white shark from *Jaws*, dinosaur maquettes from *Jurassic Park*, Jim Carrey's prosthetics from *The Grinch* and a miniature DeLorean [the car modified into a time machine] from *Back to the Future*.



PHOTO CREDIT: UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

Exhibit of Universal's long history as a working movie studio

Murdy would like to display more but doesn't have the space. "You think miniatures would be small, but they're getting bigger all the time," he laughs. "Peter Jackson, the director of *King Kong*, renamed them bigatures. The castle from *Van Helsing* is 20ft (6m) tall. The Saturn rocket in the launch sequence from *Apollo 13* is also 20ft tall. I'd love to showcase them but they're too large."

## Oscar winner

The key attraction is Universal's best picture Oscar that was won for *The Sting*. "We've all seen Oscars on tv, but never up close," says Murdy. "For a lot of people that's a big thrill."

For Murdy, the big thrill was discovering the artefacts, many of them decades old. "It's gratifying that all these items survived," says Murdy. "Movie studios never used to think props or costumes would mean anything to the public, so they were recycled or



Superman's iconic costume was donated to the London Film Museum by The Prop Store of London

destroyed. We worked with the archives and collections department to retrieve what we could. It was like detective work. We found some old crates in a warehouse at Universal that weren't part of the archive," he recalls. "We opened them up and saw the props from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Errol Flynn's sword and Shirley Temple's teddy bear. It was a treasure trove of our movie history."

## Shark attack

As part of Universal Studios, the museum is open to all visitors to the park, but Murdy is still very pleased with the number of visitors, "safe to say millions", and the length of time they spend there.

"Each display area has an interactive video kiosk providing details about the display and behind the scenes stills," explains Murdy. "We went through 20,000 images and researched all the movies to come up with the most thorough information for visitors.

A classic example of this is *Jaws*," he continues. "It was the movie that launched the summer blockbusters and one of the biggest movies of all times. In researching the film we unearthed stories about how problematic the shark was and have all the mechanical drawings and designs. In the exhibits you can see what they were trying to do with these special effects that the whole picture was riding on. The shark had been tested in LA in fresh water. But where they were filming – on the East Coast of America – is salt water. When they put the shark in the salt water, it sank to the bottom of the ocean on the very first day. As a result of the shark malfunctioning, Steven [Spielberg] got creative. He was three times over schedule and wildly over budget so he used his camera to be the shark. You don't see the shark until 45 minutes into the film because it wasn't working, but building up the suspense made it the classic film it is today, even though it was an accident.



The Oscar® awarded to Universal Pictures in 1973 for *The Sting*

## London Film Museum

JONATHAN SANDS, CEO, ECM INTERNATIONAL



The iconic Rank gong is the first thing visitors see as they walk down the red carpet at the London Film Museum.

Nostalgic and instantly recognisable, it's part of movie history. But history isn't the attraction's main aim, as Jonathan Sands, CEO of operator ECM (London) Limited, is quick to point out. "The collection celebrates the people behind the camera as well as the films themselves," he explains. "It's dedicated to all aspects of the film industry in the UK and illustrates that there's so much more to film making than directors, producers and camera technicians."

Sands' view is shared by many in the industry including Rick Senat, the former vice president of Warner Bros Europe, who is chair for the museum and Lesley Hardcastle, who created MOMI,



and has recently joined the museum's advisory panel. Changing the name from The Movie Museum of London to The London Film Museum was one of the first decisions the new panel made last November, as it was felt this better suited the museum. The museum is privately funded and Sands feels this status has recently earned them respect. "When we first opened in 2008 we were seen as a fun attraction, rather than a high end arts and culture site," he says. "Due to the credit crunch, the government has put a squeeze on everything and now people appreciate that, as a private organisation, we don't take or expect anything. We're self supporting and people admire that."

### Best of British

Based at County Hall on the South Bank in London and covering 30,000sq ft (2,800sq m), the museum covers film genres from period drama through to horror. As well as finding out how films are made – and being taught to make their own in regular workshops – visitors can see film stills, storyboards, props and costumes from a vast array of British films including the *Harry Potter* series (courtesy of Warner Bros), *Star Wars*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the *Carry On* collection and many of Peter Sellers' films.

The museum also has a *Star Wars* film set where visitors can pose for photos with C-3PO and R2-D2, a Sherlock Holmes room and a section dedicated to Charlie Chaplin. This display is curated by David Robinson, who wrote Charlie Chaplin's biography, and showcases his rise from the slum in Lamberth to his success in



(Above) A Charlie Chaplin exhibit has just opened; (left) guests are greeted by Rexy, an animatronic T-Rex from *Night at the Museum*

Hollywood and his influence on musicals. Another display has been created by Terry English, one of the world's most renowned armourers, who donated original pieces from the *Excalibur* film.

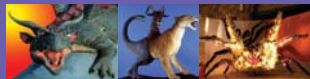
Sands has many contacts in the industry who have given pieces to the museum. Film 24 contributed hundreds of hours of film, which guests can watch in a 50-seat cinema on site, Pinewood Studios

donated the Rank gong, The Prop Store of London, the BFI (British Film Industry) and Lucasfilm are important partners. Education is also an essential component, which is reflected in the museum's school programme, while exciting future projects include hosting and sponsoring the Evening Standard London Film Awards.

### Learning process

Sands sees the museum as a work in progress. "We're two years in and have had 150,000 visitors," he says, "and we're only just getting started." With a partner in Cinequa in Paris, a touring exhibition planned and a thriving corporate events arm, Sands can see no end to the museum's limits and believes it has an important role. "Film is one of the highest entertainment platforms of the world," he explains. "In the corporate world it's easy to jump from one project to the next without stopping to celebrate what's been done and to award the people that have been part of that process. This is the perfect opportunity to reward these unsung artists." ●

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Sharon Ament

# CLOSER TO DARWIN

**Seeing scientists at work and finding out more about the Natural History Museum's collections and research are the aims of the new Darwin Centre. The director of public engagement, Sharon Ament, tells Kathleen Whyman how it's helping people really understand science**

## What is the Darwin Centre?

The £78m (US\$127m, €87.5m) Darwin Centre opened in September 2009 after the initial idea in 1998. Located in a new seven-storey wing of London's Natural History Museum, the centre is a working scientific space, as well as being a fantastic storage facility for the museum's collections. It has state-of-the-art labs and a research base for our scientists, plus integrated public

displays throughout the whole building. Visitors can go through the Darwin Centre and see scientists working in their labs and walk through a giant cocoon, which is actually a sealed collections store. What they encounter is perhaps the world's best example of science in action. There's nothing quite like the Darwin Centre – it's revolutionary in that it's rare for people to be able to go into a science lab and see scientists at work.

The centre also houses the Attenborough Studio – a large, theatre space where we have activities running every hour – and the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Biodiversity, which is a hub for amateur naturalists, enthusiasts and other societies to study wildlife.

Other offers include tours of our Spirit Collection, which are zoological collections stored in alcohol – these are small tours but very in-depth and you really go behind the scenes, and a Climate Change wall, which is an interactive, hugely evocative way of looking at Earth's changing climate.

Inside the cocoon, there are interactive stations. Some offer a hands-on experience with the kinds of tools, nets and objects we use to collect specimens, such as great big butterfly nets and pooters, which are used to suck up insects. We've also got a station that helps people get a better understanding of DNA by giving examples that visitors look at through microscopes. Anyone aged from 10-years-old through to adulthood will love it.

**WE MODELLED OUR VISITOR NUMBERS BY ASSUMING WE WOULD OPEN ON A PEAK AND THEN DECLINE SLIGHTLY TO A BASE LEVEL. SO FAR, SIX MONTHS AFTER OPENING, WE HAVEN'T SEEN VISITOR NUMBERS TAIL OFF AT ALL**





### What was the inspiration?

We wanted to show the public our work and get across what scientists do. We wanted to tell the story of why collections are important, how scientists go into the field to get their collections and build them up, what it's like to be a scientist and what the scientific process actually is.

Many people think of us as a museum with exhibits, but we're a lot more than that. The Natural History Museum is like an iceberg, in that behind the scenes we've got 350 scientists working on some of the biggest issues to do with nature which are currently facing mankind.

### What's the design of the new centre?

The design had to be inspirational and accommodate three main functions – housing the collections and scientific research and delivering the public experience. We held an international architectural competition and Danish company CF Møller Architects were appointed. They came up with what some might view

**Clockwise from top left: visitors can see scientists at work; the cocoon acts both as a visitor attraction and a storehouse for millions of species; displays and graphic panels by design company At large explain the web of life and display rare specimens.**

as quite radical for the museum. Some people see us as a conservative organisation, but we're not, we're at the cutting edge of many things. What was so inspirational about CF Møller's design was the idea for the large cocoon element of the building to keep the specimens in and which visitors journey through. It's the main feature of the architectural design – it's beautiful and evocative and really attracted us to the scheme.

### And the exhibition design?

Museum and exhibition designers At large created the main exhibition. It's very clean,

with beautiful use of images and graphics. There are two elements. One is the use of evocative imagery drawn from the natural world, such as plants and insects. The other is the use of first person stories: we've chosen four scientists to act as virtual tour guides around the site. We recorded them telling their stories, so they talk directly to the visitor. They're wonderful and bring the personalities of our scientists to life.

### What have the challenges been?

It's the largest building to be added to the museum since it opened in 1881, making it a



massive project. Firstly we had to embark on the biggest fundraising campaign we'd ever undertaken: we didn't generate all the £78m needed, but were successful in raising more than £44m (\$71.7m, €50.5m) from external funds. We're also very grateful to have had fantastic donations from The Wellcome Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The second challenge was moving the 70 million natural history specimens in the museum's care. There was a building on the site that the Darwin Centre now occupies, and we had to relocate the specimens that were in that old, decrepit building so we could knock it down and work could begin on the new building. To achieve this, we refurbished our off-site storage centre in Wandsworth to accommodate all the specimens temporarily. Logistically it was a big job to get them out and then put them all back in again.

**SINCE THE NEW DARWIN CENTRE OPENED IN SEPTEMBER 2009, OVERALL VISITOR NUMBERS FOR THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM HAVE GONE UP BY 45 PER CENT AND SCHOOL BOOKINGS ARE AT 80 PER CENT CAPACITY**

#### How many visitors?

Since the Darwin Centre opened in September 2010, overall visitor numbers for the Natural History Museum have gone up by 45 per cent. We had 216,000 visitors to the Darwin Centre in the first six weeks of opening. The tours of The Spirit Collections are booked out, attendance in The Attenborough Studio is high and our school bookings are at 80 per cent capacity. Evenings are popular too.

Like all visitor attractions, we modelled our visitor numbers by assuming we would open on a peak and then decline slightly to a steady base line level, but so far we haven't seen numbers tail off at all. The new Darwin Centre has really captured the public's imagination. Feedback has been hugely positive and there are lots of positive blogs out there about the Darwin Centre, which is great.



#### Will you display other stored items?

With the Darwin Centre we had the luxury of creating a whole new building. We take people on behind-the-scenes tours but haven't got any immediate plans to do another revelation of our back of house storage areas, because the points of access to the main public galleries in the old building are quite restricted, but we're looking at that in our masterplan.

#### What's the future for the centre?

There are all sorts of things we'll be doing to bring our scientists to the fore and we'll be using the centre to promote stories of the natural world. Later this year we'll be launching an interactive film based on evolution in The Attenborough Studio and opening the grounds up to visitors. We've just opened, but it doesn't stop there!

### MYSTERY SHOPPER - DARWIN 2 AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON. LIZ TERRY



Darwin 2 features a giant white cocoon, housed within a soaring glass atrium

The first phase of the Darwin Centre at London's Natural History Museum, designed by HOK, opened in 2002 and was initially an awkward addition to the original Victorian building, accessed as it was by a hodgepodge of winding and normally crowded linking corridors which shared access with other galleries.

The second phase, which opened last November, resolves this temporary awkwardness by linking the two phases and creating a new and dramatic entrance off the main hall of the museum.

However, on the day I visited, I was directed back through the original, temporary entrance and it took me a while to work out the new layout. I wondered if I'd asked for directions from a crusty old curator who'd been lost in the bowels of the building and had missed the opening, or whether it was just a matter of old habits die hard.

Now both parts of the development are open, it's possible to see the vision fully realised. The Darwin Centre was built to showcase the museum's collection of 17 million insect and three million plant specimens and to highlight the work of the many

scientists who care for and analyse the collections, by making them and their work part of the exhibition.

To achieve this, architects CF Møller have opened up some of the working areas of the Darwin Centre with huge windows, so visitors can see scientists at work and get a clearer idea about the equipment they use and the environments in which they work.

Darwin 2 features a vast, white seven-storey cocoon-shaped structure which sits within a soaring glass atrium (which doesn't seem to be used for anything in particular.)

The cocoon houses the exhibits and is accessed by an adjacent access tower with automatic glass lifts which take visitors to the top storey where they enter by crossing a floating glass walkway. From there, the exhibition space is arranged around a series of gently sloping ramps and horizontal floors so visitors wind their way down through the structure to emerge at the bottom, enjoying the exhibition as they go.





Visitors meet scientists at the new Darwin Centre and learn more about the challenges of their work

## GATHERING DONATIONS AT DARWIN

The Darwin Centre features new electronic 'giving points' – terminals which take debit or credit cards and enable visitors to make instant donations. The giving points are a great addition and help visitors who are short of cash to drop to contribute easily.

Making a contribution through one of the branded terminals takes only a couple of minutes and they are strategically placed around the museum at points where visitors tend to pause for orientation or to queue, making giving easy.



Millions of specimens have been taken out of storage and are now on display in the Darwin Centre's Cocoon

Timed tickets control the flow, but on the day I visited everyone was going straight in.

The glass lift opens into an orientation room containing one large display. I have to say that this case is one of the best designed, most delightful museum exhibits I've ever seen, managing to be both beautiful, fascinating and elegant all at once. It sets the scene for the level of the displays in Darwin 2, which are absolutely world class.

Once inside the cocoon, the essential interpretive devices are introduced. We learn that we'll be accompanied on our journey by video projections of real members of the museum's team and they introduce themselves via life-sized projections, telling us about their work and how this relates to what we're about to experience.

From this area, we move off down the ramps – our guides appear regularly on the AVs that follow and as an interpretive method, it works extremely well and gives dramatic context. The only slight difficulty is that as they're scientists rather than broadcasters, they don't have broadcast voices – challenging, given how the sound recordings overlap and echo around the

hard surfaces of the cocoon. Some buffers or sound management controls would help flatter the voices and control the clashes.

Various touch-screen AV devices give visitors the chance to customise their experience and content, as well as gathering their own portfolio of memories via a web-linked smart card which allows them to send content to personal email addresses.

### CHILDREN'S REACTIONS

It will be interesting to see what young children make of the displays, and whether they nag their parents for a return visit.

Although the content has been pitched to suit all ages, very young children may struggle to engage with some of the AVs and to absorb the detail: they may find running up and down the ramps a bit more fun.

One of the core concepts of the cocoon is to allow visitors to see scientists working through large plate glass windows. However, delivering this may turn out to be a bit of an issue, given that the scientists don't appear to work at the weekends. On the Saturday I visited, there wasn't a scientist in sight and all we could see were empty rooms and

desks. I can at least report that scientists are spookily tidy – or they are when they know their workspace is being scrutinised!

Overall, I really enjoyed the cocoon – the graphic design and the displays of specimens are among the most compelling and exquisite I've ever seen. They combine seamlessly, so modern graphic panels sit comfortably next to specimens which are hundreds of years old and it's a joy to be able to see so many amazing things.

If I had one criticism of Darwin 2, it would be give me more, more, more content and a bit less architecture – I could have enjoyed double the number of displays and although it's impressive, you can't help feeling that an awful lot of money was spent on the building and questioning whether it was the best use of the cash. For me, it looks bulky and one dimensional alongside the fine detailing of the original building. But maybe this is churlish, and the sheer audacity of the concept will make it a well-loved London landmark.

**Liz Terry** is editor of *Attractions Management*. [lizterry@leisuremedia.com](mailto:lizterry@leisuremedia.com)



# BETTER CITY, BETTER LIFE

**Almost 200 countries are exhibiting at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai between 1 May and 31 October, making it the biggest expo to date. Kath Hudson looks at how some of the pavilions are interpreting the theme of Better City, Better Life**

**S**witzerland's pavilion will have a ski lift, Saudi Arabia has an unlimited budget and the UK is going for one of the biggest pavilions at the Expo. It's the ultimate neighbourly competition, which is why design teams around the world have been charged with the task of creating the most awe-inspiring pavilions to tell their country's story and, most importantly, attract trade and investment.

Programme director at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Simon Featherstone, says potential economic and commercial benefits of the Expo are enormous, and it's particularly important for the relationship between the UK and China, especially as it marks the mid-way point between the Beijing and London Olympics.

"In these difficult economic times, we can't afford not to be involved in the Shanghai Expo," says Featherstone, who is in charge of the UK's involvement. "Our ability to compete for business overseas and to attract the best investment to the UK is crucial to our economic success."

Better City, Better Life is the theme for the Expo, representing the worldwide wish for a better future for those living in urban environments. Each of the 192 countries, and 50 international organisations, participating have their own take on this theme, designing a pavilion which they feel best represents what their country is about.

Taking place in a country that's going to be one of the two most important global powers of this century, with one of the largest and fastest growing economies in the world, the site spans 5.28sq km on both sides of the Huangpu River in Shanghai. It's expected to attract a whopping 70 million visitors in the six month period, between May and October, with 600,000 guests on the busiest days.

**A WORLD LEADING PAVILION**  
In February 2007, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office launched a competition to find a team of architects, designers and curators to create the UK pavilion. The Prime Minister at the time, Tony Blair, said





"The UK pavilion encourages visitors to look again at the role of nature and wonder whether it could be used to solve the current social, economic and environmental challenges of our cities." Thomas Heatherwick, UK pavilion designer



he wanted the UK presence to "highlight British creativity, diversity and innovation, underpinned by the values of a dynamic, knowledge-based economy based on the principles of sustainable development."

London-based Heatherwick Studio won. Thomas Heatherwick's design is six-storeys high and formed from 60,000 slender transparent rods, which extend from the structure and quiver in the breeze. By day the rods will act like fibre optic filaments, drawing on the sunlight to illuminate the interior and create a contemplative space. At night, light sources at the end of each rod will allow the whole structure to glow.

The pavilion will sit on a landscape looking like paper which once wrapped the building and which now lies unfolded on the site. This landscape will provide an open space for public events and shelter for visitors making their way into the pavilion structure. Visitors will access the Seed Cathedral by a series of walkways, the content of which will depict the role of nature in UK cities in the past, present and future.

The UK's role in conservation is played upon inside, with Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partnership, the largest collection of wild plant seeds in the world on display. By encasing tens of thousands of seeds to the ends of the transparent rods, visitors will be able to view examples of seeds of plant species, which contribute to national and global conservation programmes.

According to Featherstone, it was important that the UK pavilion positioned the UK as an innovative nation and a leading provider of expertise and knowledge in the creative industries. "From our recent focus group work in China, we know that many Chinese people have more traditional, even old-fashioned and out-dated views of the UK," he says. "This design will challenge traditional perceptions of the UK among the Chinese people." The design will not use traditional British icons, although there will be a number of Union Jacks to ensure there is no confusion about the location.

The events programme will be a live showcase reflecting the UK's excellence

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

The world's first theme park dedicated to Danish children's writer, Hans Christian Andersen, will be launched in Shanghai at the same time as the Expo.

Details of the rides and attractions have yet to be revealed, but the 20-acre site will feature experiences based on some of the writer's most famous stories, including *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Mermaid* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

Denmark will donate a replica of the Andersen statue which stands outside Copenhagen city hall and the Little Mermaid statue will be shipped over to Shanghai to be on show at the Danish pavilion throughout the Expo.

The project has been funded mainly by the Shanghai Gujing Investment and Development Co Ltd and marks 60 years of diplomatic relations between Denmark and China.





and diversity in the arts, business, culture, science and education, ranging from major business forums, to performances by foremost art companies, exhibitions, workshops and receptions. "Our events programme will offer an opportunity to celebrate the many partnerships between the UK and China while creating new and sustainable links," says Featherstone.

## US PAVILION

The US will showcase sustainability, teamwork, health, struggle and achievements, and will highlight US innovation, particularly in environmental initiatives and share ideas on creating better cities and communities.

"China's throwing a party and the US wanted to show up and bring a favour!" says Bob Rogers, founder and chief creative officer of BRC Imagination Arts, which

**The US Pavilion will present a story that radiates powerful core values shared by the Chinese and American**

is responsible for the US pavilion. "The US doesn't have any big political agenda here, it's to put across a positive message and the mutually helpful hand of trade."

Rogers describes the pavilion as an overture, with three acts: "There's a gathering area to welcome guests with the occasional appearance from Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

Act one is about innovation – as we face challenges of the 21st century, we need new innovations, technologies and ways of working together. This is about innovation in sport, art and human and international

relationships. It's about new ways to step up to challenges. Act two is an urban fairy tale – a metaphor for collaboration, showing Americans from different ethnic backgrounds working together and it shows what we could achieve on an international scale if we all work together. Act three will give the sponsors the opportunity to speak directly to visitors and share the things they're excited about."

The building also reflects the story and is a model of working sustainability, with solar panels, rough garden, water capture and a heat absorbing membrane.

## OTHER PAVILIONS

Saudi Arabia could end up with the most expensive pavilion, with the biggest cinema screen on earth – 1,600sq m (17,200 sq ft) and 150 date palms planted on the roof.

## PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

### AFRICA

- Malawi
- Botswana
- Chad
- Mozambique
- Ethiopia
- Madagascar
- Rwanda
- Morocco
- Namibia
- Senegal
- Angola
- Seychelles
- Lesotho
- Guinea
- Benin
- Burundi
- Algeria
- Libya
- Ghana
- Liberia
- Niger
- Uganda
- Sierra Leone
- Cameroon
- Kenya
- Zambia
- Tanzania
- Cote d'Ivoire
- The State of Eritrea
- Mauritania
- Nigeria
- Equatorial Guinea
- The Central African Republic
- Burkina Faso
- South Africa
- Somalia
- Guinea-Bissau
- Mauritius
- The Democratic Republic of Congo
- Tunisia
- Gabon
- Sudan
- Zimbabwe
- Egypt
- The Republic of Congo
- Comoros
- Mali
- Cape Verde

### AMERICAS

- Djibouti
- Togo
- Gambia
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua
- Venezuela
- Jamaica
- Peru
- Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
- Argentina
- Costa Rica
- Brazil
- Commonwealth of Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Panama
- Belize
- Antigua & Barbuda
- Mexico
- Ecuador
- Haiti
- Chile
- Trinidad & Tobago
- US
- Cuba
- Barbados
- Paraguay
- Saint Lucia
- Colombia
- Grenada
- Suriname
- Guyana

### EUROPE

- Uruguay
- Guatemala
- Bolivia
- Canada
- Bahamas
- Honduras
- The Federation of St Kitts and Nevis
- Malta
- Estonia
- San Marino
- Austria
- Romania
- Greece
- Portugal
- Moldova



Hong Kong's three-storey metallic structure will symbolise the imagination and creativity of Hong Kong people and the third floor will have an indoor wetland park, based on the Hong Kong Wetland Park.

Singapore's pavilion, Urban Symphony, will look like a huge music box, with the façade featuring replicas of the country's famous buildings. Water and gardens will be the main element, with a roof garden and precious tropical plants.

Thailand's theme will be Thainess: Sustainable Ways of Life. The three Thai-style pavilions will be divided into three sections, with a daily cultural performance.

Nepal's pavilion will take the form of an ancient Buddhist temple in Kathmandu, surrounded by traditional Nepalese houses, reflecting the architectural, artistic and cultural centre the city has become.

**Sustainability, team work, health and diversity will be represented in dynamic, emotional story by the US**

Mexico's Kite Forest with 130 different kites will represent people's aspirations for a better life. As kites originated in China, this symbolically unites the two countries.

Brazil's pavilion will be like a Bird's Nest with green, intersecting wooden lace. Its social problems, due to the large population and its search for solutions for sustainable development, will be explored.

Russia will decorate its pavilion like a fairy-tale world featuring 12 white towers, inspired by Russian women's costume.

Belgium's two-storey pavilion will incorporate the EU exhibition. Centrepiece is a

huge brain cell and visitors will enter via a vein! It will highlight the concept of green economy and each week a diamond will be given to a visitor, drawn by lottery.

Romania's Greenopolis is a green apple, reflecting the importance of health, sustainable development and knowledge-based solutions for a modern society.

Switzerland will have a chair lift, taking visitors on an eight-minute journey to the green meadow on the roof. Swiss success stories will be told via 3D screens and the IMAX film *The Alps* will be shown.

Israel's pavilion will look like two clasped hands, with the theme Innovation for Better Life. It will have a green orchard with trees which whisper in English and Chinese and show films about the country's innovations and technological achievements, as well as Israel's stories and hopes for the future. ●

- Belgium
- Luxembourg
- United Kingdom
- Ukraine
- Spain
- Hungary
- Azerbaijan
- European Union
- Iceland
- Slovakia
- Sweden
- Cyprus
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Finland
- Russia
- Montenegro
- Turkey
- Poland
- Croatia
- Italy
- Monaco
- France
- Latvia
- Armenia
- Norway
- Denmark
- Ireland
- The Czech Republic
- Serbia
- Belarus
- Lithuania

- Albania
  - Bulgaria
  - Germany
  - The Netherlands
  - Switzerland
  - Slovenia
  - Liechtenstein
- ASIA**
- The State of Qatar
  - North Korea
  - Bangladesh
  - Iran
  - Thailand
  - Lebanon
  - Korea
  - Palestine
  - Japan

- Malaysia
- Balivam
- Vietnam
- Pakistan
- Timor-Leste
- Philippines
- Israel
- Syria
- Afghanistan
- Oman
- Bhutan
- Brunei
- Indonesia
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- Kyrgyzstan
- Myanmar
- Mongolia
- Sri Lanka
- Tajikistan
- China
- Jordan
- United Arab Emirates
- Maldives
- Iraq
- Georgia
- Kuwait
- India
- Saudi Arabia
- Laos
- Cambodia
- Kazakhstan
- Nepal
- Singapore
- Turkmenistan

#### OCEANIA

- Marshall Island
- Kiribati
- Niue
- Fiji
- Micronesia
- Papua New Guinea
- Vanuatu
- New Zealand
- Solomon Islands
- Tuvalu
- Cook Islands
- Samoa
- Palau
- Australia
- Nauru

# SHARJAH MARITIME MUSEUM

**Preserving and interpreting the stories of rich maritime heritage is the aim of Sharjah Maritime Museum. Keith Gray explains how the importance of the region's fishing and pearling trades have been conveyed**

**F**or more than 20 years, His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasbi, the ruler of the Emirate in Sharjah in the UAE, has been investing in the educational and heritage facilities of the Emirate, building schools, universities, science centres, museums and wildlife centres and restoring the historic heart of the old city.

For the last 15 years, Haley Sharpe Design (HSD) has worked with His Highness on many of these projects and, more recently, with the newly-created Sharjah Museums Department headed by Manal Ataya, which has professional responsibility for all museum and heritage activities in the Emirate. "From the outset there's always been an objective to create

as local a focus as possible, stressing local stories," says Alisdair Hinselwood, HSD Director. "We've been fortunate to have worked on many of Sharjah's museums, and have been able to ensure that these local stories are consistent and complementary across each project."

The Emirate of Sharjah, as with most Gulf states, has a long maritime heritage, but with its presence on both the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean coasts, Sharjah's heritage is richer than most, a heritage which began 3,000 years ago and still continues today.

The original maritime museum was in one of the restored buildings in the heart of the old city, but space was limited and care of the collections was extremely difficult. His Highness made the decision to relocate the museum both to protect the collection and to allow the story of the country's maritime heritage to be told in more depth and more visually.

## HERITAGE DESTINATION

The Maritime Museum is located in the Al Khan area of Sharjah, a historic fishing village where the old coral stone houses are currently being restored. His Highness chose this location for the Sharjah Aquarium too, (also conceptualised, designed and project managed by Haley Sharpe) to create a maritime herit-

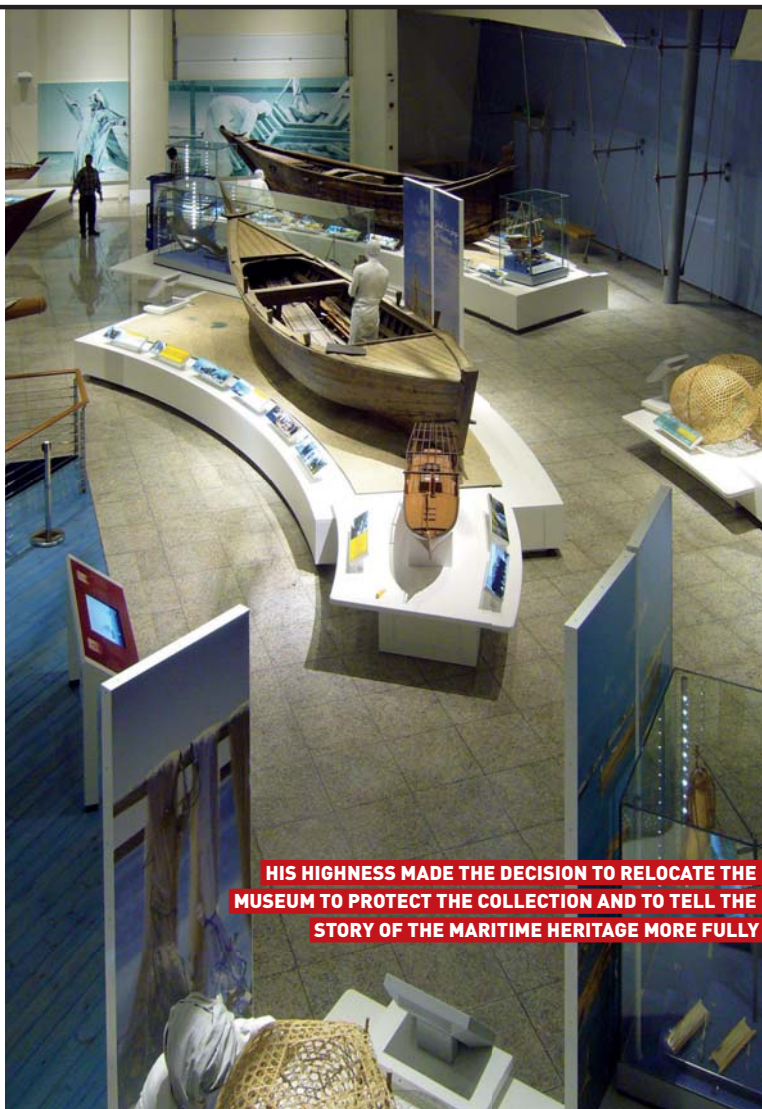
age destination. The Maritime Museum is housed in a contemporary building overlooking the creek. It was designed by the local office of the architects Consult who HSD worked closely with both in terms of integrated design and in the coordination and programming of the installation of the large boats and ships.

The project was initiated before the creation of Sharjah Museums Department, but when they took ownership of the project it greatly strengthened the delivery of a primary focus to engage the local audience whose maritime heritage is rapidly disappearing, and give international visitors a unique perspective on the importance of fishing, trade and pearling to Sharjah and all the Gulf states. The sea, as much as the desert and the mountains, has shaped the culture and history of Sharjah both on the Gulf and Indian Ocean coasts.

The Maritime Museum's interpretative scheme has an energetic flowing design reflecting the movement, weather and currents of the Sharjah marine environment. These fluid forms are used to open-display the local craft and associated objects, with each display cluster focused around the stories of individual Sharjans who have spent their lives associated with the sea, from fishermen, pearlers, and boat builders to the director of the Ports Authority. Exploring the lives of individuals, and work-



The museum has an energetic flowing design (right) and exhibits include scaled models and interpretative displays (left) as well as historical objects depicting the Gulf state's maritime history (above)



**HIS HIGHNESS MADE THE DECISION TO RELOCATE THE MUSEUM TO PROTECT THE COLLECTION AND TO TELL THE STORY OF THE MARITIME HERITAGE MORE FULLY**

Stories unique to Sharjah were researched to ensure the objects were presented as connections to lives, and not merely as working tools and technologies

ing with Sharjah Museums Department on an oral archiving programme, has allowed us to make a much stronger connection between the exhibition and the community.

The collection, which had been housed in non-conditioned spaces, had to undergo a complete programme of conservation by the Sharjah Museums Department so that it could be safely re-housed in the new building. Both the craft and the supporting collections are everyday objects but they are imbued with the history of generations of lives of those who have lived on the coasts of Sharjah. The value of these objects as connections to lives and not merely as working tools and technologies led the design to a solution that was very simple and direct, to give the objects primacy. To achieve this, stories unique to Sharjah were researched and local individuals found who could represent the key themes of the museum. This initiated an oral history project focused on the maritime heritage of Sharjah, which is now an ongoing component of the museums cultural development.

The collection is supported by historic images and rare film footage of pearling and fishing, as well as video and photography, which form the basis of a growing archive and collection. HSD was responsible for researching and finding all the required images.

## MARINE RESOURCES

Although the museum isn't trying to tell the definitive story of maritime history in Sharjah and the Gulf, it opens with an introductory AV explaining Sharjah's maritime heritage from 3,000 years ago to the present day. Sharjah has been shaped by fishing, trade and, on occasions, maritime conflict. The visitor is introduced to very early exhibits loaned from Sharjah Archaeological Museum which express how coastal dwelling and the use of marine resources have been key to life. Although rooted in the ancient past, contemporary



Sharjah still has a thriving fishing industry – traditional wooden seafaring dhows used for fishing and pearling still ply their trade up and down the Gulf and far out into the Indian Ocean. This is not a story of the past, but how the sea still plays a vital part in the shape and character of the Emirate.

## SAM'AA

At the core of the exhibit there was always going to be a major craft that would have to be either purchased or built specially and eventually a sam'aa (a small inshore vessel) was chosen to bring scale and drama to the exhibition, which visitors can explore as well as visit the 'boom' boat moored on the quayside outside the museum. An exhibition of model boats is included in the design of the first floor education space as a reference collection.

On entering the main area of the exhibition, the visitor can choose to explore each of the different themes that are clustered on islands around the key craft from the collection. Each theme has a variety of media and levels of interactivity to relate the personal stories and the objects and to meet the needs of a multigenerational and multicultural audience.

HSD has sought to find design expressions that are contemporary and which resonate with traditional Islamic principles and values that reflect His Highness's desire to balance the evolution of a modern Emirate with one that values its heritage, history and environment.

For centuries pearling had been the driving economic force in the Gulf and until its demise in the mid-twentieth century shaped the culture and life of many coastal towns and cities and although this story is common to other Emirates, the project managed to unearth material from a pearling captain that had never been seen before. First person evidence and historic film footage are vital to telling of the immensely hard life led by the pearlars and divers but also the profit and wealth gained by the boat owners and traders. At the museum, visitors can view genuine Arabian pearls and find out how they were collected, measured and weighed.

Interactives in the museum allow the visitor to explore why the lateen sail was so important to Arab ships and why Gulf ships have such large sails to deal with relatively light winds. An interactive table allows the visitor to become a merchant looking to make a profit trading goods around the Gulf and the visitor can challenge themselves to navigate without a compass but by the observation of a star chart.

The personal stories that elucidate the themes include a pearl captain, a hauler, the director of the port operations, a dhow builder, a reed boat builder, a business entrepreneur and a fisherman to bring the entire spectrum of maritime activity to life.

HSD acknowledges the commitment from Sharjah Museums Department which, as a newly founded group, invested such energy and effort in developing collections, undertaking research and creating an oral and video history project to ensure that the project met everyone's aspirations for a truly Sharjah Maritime Museum that could deliver a uniquely local history story within the overall Gulf context. ●

**AN AV EXPLAINS SHARJAH'S MARITIME HERITAGE.  
SHARJAH HAS BEEN SHAPED BY FISHING, TRADE  
AND, ON OCCASIONS, MARITIME CONFLICT**





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# ADVENTURES IN AUDIO

From interactive games to virtual note-taking, the latest guides sport all kinds of advanced features that go way beyond audio. Andrea Jezovit investigates



The Wallace Collection's multimedia guide includes interactive games to help children understand art

**T**oday's audioguides are often much more than just audioguides. Some, with their screens and photo and video display capabilities, are better called multimedia guides; some use GPS to help visitors find their way around a site, and others are downloadable, letting guests learn about collections from their iPhones. Some, while sticking to audio only, have advanced just as much as those on the multimedia side, offering attractions new ways of engaging with the public. From energy efficient listening posts to virtual notepads, the guide scene is bursting with new technologies that have the potential to affect the visitor experience like never before.

## GAMES GALORE

Interactivity has become an important feature of the latest multimedia guides, whether it's a scrollable map of a site or photos of objects from a collection that visitors can zoom in on. Some guides are taking interactivity even further with interactive games. The Wallace Collection's new multimedia guide, developed by Acoustiguide using the Opus series of equipment and launched in November 2009, includes interactive games as part of its children's tour. Games were created by the Wallace Collection for the organisation's eLearning website and then repurposed for the guides, with Acoustiguide adapting software and graphics in-house.

The games give children the opportunity to interact with some of the collections' famous paintings in a fun and educational way – they can change the facial expressions of *The Laughing Cavalier* to think about how he's really feeling, play around with the background of Queen Victoria to put the monarch in different settings and relate to her more as an actual person, and match the dogs of several Old Masters paintings with their owners.

"One of our international offices has produced interactive content for children before, but it's our first time doing it in the UK. It's something you'll be seeing more of, especially as technology develops," says Acoustiguide's Dominic Thurgood. "Kids today are very familiar with this kind of content, having experienced it on the web, and it's a great way for them to understand and learn about art."

BarZ Adventures has created Ranger Quest, an augmented reality adventure gaming system in a guide that allows venues to create

**CHILDREN CAN CHANGE THE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS OF THE LAUGHING CAVALIER, PUT QUEEN VICTORIA IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS AND MATCH THE DOGS OF SEVERAL OLD MASTERS PAINTINGS WITH THEIR OWNERS**

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(Above and left) BarZ's Ranger Quest turns venues into themed adventures; (right) OOKL allows students to view photos and text about objects



custom-themed adventures. First launched at the International Spy Museum in Washington DC, US, in June 2009, Ranger Quest, which runs on BarZ's GPS Ranger multimedia guide, turns the venue into a game board. Visitors become the game pieces in a choose-your-own-adventure-style scenario with puzzles, quizzes, and clues leading to scavenger hunt items. "We developed Ranger Quest after observing several new trends in the market," says BarZ founder and CEO Lee Little. "It's clear we're continuing to see increased use of technology in all our daily activities. We're also seeing game play increasingly becoming a family activity. At the suggestion of one of our customers, we developed Ranger Quest to address these two trends," he continues. "It's a natural extension for theme parks and attractions - it links a venue with technology to create an immersive, entertaining experience for all visitors."

The game uses GPS technology, and the software framework and Adobe Flash-based graphics allow themes and storylines to be easily adapted to different venues. The International Spy Museum in Washington has a version, called Spy in the City, which has been adapted into a self-guided outdoor city tour for ages 12 and above,

where guests look for clues and crack codes to complete a mission, using the city of Washington as the game board. As users approach landmarks around the city, clues and information in a wide range of media can be downloaded, including messages by filmed characters, documents, codes and photos.

In conjunction with themed entertainment consulting firm Smithink, BarZ has since developed a Ranger Quest game concept for zoos called Safari Quest, challenging younger players to explore the zoo while locating animals, solving riddles and collecting information, earning as many points as possible in a timed race.

## ENGAGING ONLINE

OOKL, a handheld multimedia guide developed by Science Ecology Art Limited (the SEA), is also taking interactivity in an interesting new direction. The guide, currently in use at UK-based venues including Whipsnade Zoo, the National Maritime Museum and Kew Gardens, acts as a virtual note-taking device aimed at school groups. Using a Nokia smartphone, students can view photos and text about a venue's objects, as well as listen to audio.



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Specialising in developing themed products, Jora Vision has recently extended its remit to include developing the content for GPS Rangers for attractions operators. Using BarZ software, Jora Vision can incorporate educational videos, sound, text, animation and pictures into the handheld device, which can then be rented to visitors. Jora Vision will help develop the concept, script and story, install the system and train staff on how to use it.

They can also take photos of objects and make their own notes and audio recordings, all of which are saved onto a website that students can access back in the classroom, where they can edit their collection into a presentation and view their classmates' work.

Because venue staff can upload text, photo and audio content to the guide themselves via a website, OOKL can also work as a substitute for a traditional multimedia or audioguide, the SEA's Dan Mediocoff says. "However, it's aimed at venues that can't afford to buy audioguides, which need expensive content and are expensive to adapt when the collections change, or venues that don't like the idea of audioguides because they tend to put visitors into a slightly passive state, similar to happens when you watch TV."

The SEA has just completed an OOKL iPhone application aimed at the public with a more adult look and feel. "You're learning, but not so obviously," Mediocoff says. In the future, he hopes to add a number of new features, including a map view, a cross-venue objects search, and 'crowdsourcing' - visitors, academics, volunteers and friends of venues can create content about objects and 'push' it to the venue, which edits the content and publishes it. "It's like Wikipedia, but exclusively about objects in spaces," he says.

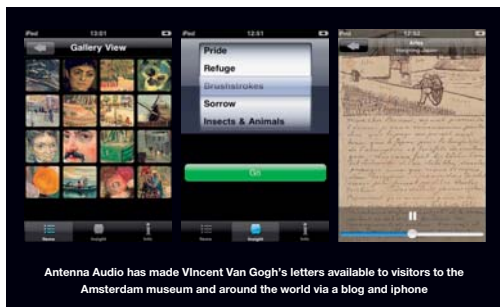
Antenna Audio has used the web in a different way with a new multimedia guide for the *Van Gogh's Letters: The Artist Speaks* exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. The aim was to bring letters written by Van Gogh to thousands of visitors as well as a global audience through multi-platform delivery. The letters can be accessed at the museum using Antenna's XP-vision handheld

multimedia guide, allowing visitors to view the fragile documents up close, but they're also available to fans around the world through a blog and an iPhone application.

The *Yours, Vincent* blog saw a new letter from the artist released daily, allowing visitors to follow the artist's thought processes. The iPhone application, using Antenna's Pentimento iTouch technology, lets users download a multimedia experience recreating the exhibition, allowing the visitor to interact with works. "With Pentimento and the *Yours, Vincent* blog, we've created a powerful means for the Van Gogh Museum to reach out and interact with audiences all over the world and a strong marketing and promotional tool," says Antenna's Christopher Bazley, vice president, account management, for Europe, the Middle East and Asia. "The buzz around these features has been added to by embracing the power of social networking sites: both Twitter and Facebook have been used to create robust communities of followers."

Antenna is using a similar multi-platform concept in Milan, Italy for the Edward Hopper exhibition at Palazzo Reale. Following a model Antenna premier in London and York for the National Gallery's Grand Tour, reproductions of Hopper works have been hung around Milan, with conventional museum labels and a number to dial to access an audio track. This time, the image of the painting, along with the track, can be texted to friends. "We're not only engaging local people, but encouraging them to take part in the dialogue about Hopper's work and its meaning all across the city, as well as augmenting exciting viral marketing in promoting the exhibition," Bazley says.

**"WE'VE CREATED A POWERFUL MEANS FOR THE VAN GOGH MUSEUM TO INTERACT WITH AUDIENCES ALL OVER THE WORLD AND A STRONG MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL TOOL. TWITTER AND FACEBOOK HAVE CREATED ROBUST COMMUNITIES OF FOLLOWERS"**



Antenna Audio has made Vincent Van Gogh's letters available to visitors to the Amsterdam museum and around the world via a blog and iPhone

## AUDIO ADVANCES

Not to be outdone by multimedia guides, audioguides have seen advances too. Dataton's Pickup audioguide offers both MP3 playing and FM radio capabilities, so tours can be downloaded or broadcast directly to users. Guests can point at objects and listen to information, and sound messages can be triggered automatically when a visitor passes a transponder. Sound can also be synced with shows created using Dataton's Watchout multi-display presentation system.

Watchout has been used in conjunction with Pickup at the Telecommunications Museum at the Oi Futuro Cultural Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to help the venue meet its aim of communicating with its visitors in an innovative way. Pickup guides are handed out to all visitors, who can use the devices to interact with moving images, trigger movies and jump into sound tracks.

Tour-Mate's new Eco-Box audioguides, a series of stationary audio posts designed for the outdoors, might seem low-tech in

**Tour-Mate's Eco-Box audioguides enable visitors to listen to information in an environmentally friendly way without power**

comparison, but they're just as innovative. The Eco-Box is designed to provide audio segments to visitors without requiring batteries or an external source of power. It operates like a battery-free crank radio, with users turning a handle on the front of the box and pushing a button to listen to audio.

The weather-resistant, energy efficient boxes can withstand extreme heat and cold conditions, and have been used in environments from Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada to Red Rock Canyon in Nevada, US. Another version of the box has been introduced, allowing visitors without full appendage use to access audio by sliding a forearm under a dual wheel handle. And new from Tour-Mate is its EB200 model, which stores energy as the user turns the wheel, allowing users to stop and listen for 90 seconds after 30 seconds of cranking. (Energy will be stored on a bank of capacitors to keep the box carbon neutral.)



Tour-Mate CEO Neil Poch says he believes venues are increasingly looking for diverse platforms, from hand-held devices to products like Eco-Box, to deliver interpretation to a broad range of demographics. "The same client that uses Eco-Boxes for outdoor interpretation may also use our SC550 Wand system, or an RF-based group guide system inside their buildings," he says.

With the increasingly diverse set of technologies in the multimedia guide and audioguide realms, venues looking for more platforms to engage with visitors definitely have plenty of choice. ●

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# THE ASHMOLEAN

Oxford's Ashmolean has reopened following a £61m transformation, with 39 new galleries, a new display strategy – 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time' – an education centre and rooftop restaurant. Andrea Jezovit asks the management team what this means for the UK's oldest public museum



## CHRISTOPHER BROWN, DIRECTOR, THE ASHMOLEAN

### Why was the museum redeveloped?

Even before I became director here it had been my opinion that although the European fine and decorative arts were displayed well in the museum, we didn't do justice to the archaeological, the Oriental and the numismatic collection. What we've tried to do is build a substantially new building of 100,000sq ft (9,300sq m) to show those collections much better.

When I came here 11 years ago from the National Gallery in London, I commissioned a masterplan and looked at how the building was working. I felt very strongly that the part of the museum that wasn't working very well was the addition from the 1890s at the back of the 1845 Cockerell Building. After much discussion we resolved to demolish and rebuild that part, which was about 60 per cent of the building and showed the archaeological, Oriental and numismatic collections. This doubled the space on the footprint and provided modern museum facilities.

### Why was some archaeological work completed onsite before building?

The centre of Oxford has been lived in for a long time, and when we knocked down the building at the back, it's a legal right that the city has to commission archaeo-



logical work. We had hoped for a rather lighter touch, but they decided to go for a full excavation, which held us up a bit. It revealed what we knew was there – the remains of some medieval houses, which weren't very interesting, but it did take quite a long time.

### How was the project funded?

The project was funded by the largest single grant we received – £15m (€17.1m, US\$24m) from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The largest private donor was The Linbury Trust, which gave in the region of £10m (€11.4m, \$16m). We raised the rest of the money from private individuals and trusts globally. Because these collections are from around the world, it made good sense that the one of the Japanese galleries, for

example, was supported by a Japanese benefactor, the Cyprus gallery was supported by the Leventis Foundation, which is based in Nicosia, and so on. It was very ambitious for us – it was our first time raising these sums of money.

### What's the reaction been so far?

We've had very good press and lots of media attention. The first weekend we opened to the public in November, we had 23,000 visitors, which is a lot of visitors for any museum in two days. That would seem to suggest people are very enthusiastic. BBC Oxford interviewed people as they walked in the museum and there was an overwhelmingly positive reaction.

We're doing our budgets on the basis of visitor numbers going up from 400,000 a year to 500,000, but I'm really hoping it will be more than that.

### What's next for the museum?

We're going to rearrange and redisplay our Egyptian collections. This will take place this year and we'll reopen them in early 2011. And we've got an ambitious temporary exhibition programme launching in September. The first will be a big pre-Raphaelite exhibition we're doing with the City Art Museum of Ravenna.



## SUSAN WALKER, KEEPER OF ANTIQUITIES, THE ASHMOLEAN

### What was your role in the work?

Until the end of 2007 I led the curatorial work on the design of the new museum, organising the collections under the concept 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time.' Some of the galleries on the lower ground floor are cross-cultural and we've chosen themes such as reading and writing, counting, textiles and the human image.

From the ground floor upwards we've developed a 'Crossing Time' sequence, a bit like an archeological dig. The earliest material is at the bottom and the latest material is at the top.

Each floor has an introductory gallery which highlights a number of themes of different cultures on that particular floor. These themes reoccur as you go around the galleries. We've tried to sequence the galleries in a way that emphasises the connections between the cultures represented in the Ashmolean. This means the Oriental collections are actually integrated on the circuit. I can't think of any other museums which do that way.

My principle contribution was to apply the idea to the building and then negotiate with all the curators how this layout would actually work in terms of space. I think it does work and it connects well with the original Cockerell Building too.



### Did you do visitor research?

We built a sort of third of a size trial gallery two years ago, a Minoan Crete gallery, and investigated what people were interested in. We also tested a lot of practice issues, such as how long it took to build the cases and fill them, label writing, panel writing, panel production, the whole process of building and furnishing galleries.

### What was the biggest challenge?

Moving the entire collection off-site. My department alone has half a million objects. Everything had to go into storage, and the whole lot had to be put onto a computer. We didn't have a collections management system when we started this project, but we have now. We had to develop that at the same time and retrieve the objects from

The Ashmolean's dramatic transformation took a treasure trove of items out of old fashioned galleries and repositioned them in a 21st century setting of inspiration and learning.

storage, which was challenging. Many of us were recent recruits to the Ashmolean and didn't know the collections in great depth before we started this work.

### What's been the reaction to 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time'?

It's been seen as a genuinely fresh approach. Of course the building is a huge help. We have a synergy between the interpretation and the space it's developed in, which works to a great advantage.

What's remarkable is that the idea and the interpretation came from the curators. It's been developed by working with the designers and education staff and advisors on interpretation.

Often when a big museum takes on a project of this scale, they'll develop a curatorial team to do it. We've had a project management team who've seen it through, but the galleries still have strong curatorial voices, which is important. It doesn't look over-managed, it looks fresh and thorough because the people who developed the galleries are experts in each culture.

## JO RICE, HEAD OF EDUCATION, THE ASHMOLEAN

**What was your department's overall role in the redevelopment?**

The education department was instrumental in the gallery development. We looked at the interpretation approach from a learning point of view and thought about who the galleries are for and how we could best communicate the stories the curators wanted to tell. So we had that educational input at the earliest stage. That's absolutely fundamental. What we didn't want was, as happened in the past, to have a gallery completed without educational involvement and then be asked to find some groups to work in it and encourage people to come. If you've thought about who's going to use the gallery, how it's going to work from very early stages, you'll have a much more effective space from an educational point of view for different audiences.

We were also involved in the development of the education centre and worked with the architects on the design.

**Why was the new education centre needed?**

Before the redevelopment, there was no designated education space. We did much of our teaching in the galleries, which is how it should be, but we didn't have anywhere to do messier artwork, quiet work, teacher training sessions or somewhere for a greater range of activities.

**What do you offer now you have your own space?**

We've got a programme for group visits from early years to key stage 2, and a



programme for post-secondary and post-16-year-olds, both of which are completely new sessions. Early years is a different approach for us – the Ashmolean has never traditionally been thought of as a venue for the under fives.

We're also doing completely new programmes for our primary school audience and completely rethinking how we do our sessions. We're moving into a much more investigative approach for seven- to 11-year-olds with learning by handling objects in the gallery, as well as discussions.

We've been able to give the school side a completely dramatic overhaul and we have great hopes for how that will develop.

We're also doing more things for our adult audience, we're being more proactive with young people outside school education, we're doing an expanded What's On programme for individual visitors and we're expanding the family learning programme. We're currently recruiting a family learning officer and will then offer family activities every day of the school holidays.



(Above) the Ashmolean museum's collection of Islamic pottery, mainly from the Barlow Collection, is said to be one of the most important of its type outside of the Islamic world

## RICK MATHER, RICK MATHER ARCHITECTS

**What was your brief for the project?**

To make sense of the old building and get as much new space out of it as possible. Also, the roof had blown off of the old building and there was no environmental control. They knew they had to do a lot of rebuilding, and that's what we did. They wanted an education centre and a new conservation space and they didn't have a service entrance either.

It was a really modern museum brief. They didn't say they needed a new restaurant, but when it looked as though it would be nice to have one on the roof, they thought that would be a good idea too.

**What's your favourite part?**

The staircase that steps up to the roof in a series of interlocking curves. Besides the fact that it looks pretty nice, it actually ties



the whole building together. The big challenge was trying to get six different levels to seem like one big space rather than a series of finite galleries. So we have this big atrium space that the stair steps up through, and then we have similar stairs at another corner. People coming around the corner really feel that they can see into

**"THE BIG CHALLENGE WAS TRYING TO GET SIX DIFFERENT LEVELS TO SEEM LIKE ONE BIG SPACE RATHER THAN A SERIES OF FINITE GALLERIES"**

the different galleries. It makes it seem as though it's one continuous thing rather than a museum that might have lost galleries up in some corner, which no one can get to. Now you have a continuum through every gallery and that links into the old building too, so we have the seamless link between the old and the new.



© RICHARD BRYANT

**STEPHEN GREENBERG,**

**METAPHOR - EXHIBITION DESIGNERS**

#### **What was your brief?**

When I arrived on the scene five years ago, there was already a scheme design for the building, and a concept for 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time.' The building design was an idea about bridges and interconnecting volumes, and we had to reposition a lot of galleries and the sequencing. We did a kind of content masterplan and made the concept of 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time' work. We planned this journey and developed the display strategy for the whole museum, everything from wayfinding to the graphic strategy.



#### **What's your design like?**

Every room has a special display in the middle. We then put windows and cases in different places so they become views to other things. Wherever you are, you see a view to something beyond. In an old-fashioned museum, you start at one end, look down rows of galleries and think, 'oh, I've got to get through all these rooms'. You don't do that here, you're always walking in this sort of free space.

It's the cinematic quality of the whole thing that I'm most pleased with. I didn't start to see it until I walked in a month before opening, but now it's the most impressive thing of all to me

**ROBERT BEWLEY, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS,**

**HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND (HLF)**

#### **What's the background to the HLF's involvement?**

We put in £15m, so that was like a building block. HLF money can help the applicant have more impact and be transformational.

The purpose of our donating money has to be about learning first and foremost, but, if you want to do something really exciting with your building, we can help you do that, as well as conserve it. Christopher Brown's team's 'Crossing Cultures Crossing Time' concept weaves together an exciting world story using the artefacts and the collections that they've had since the 17th century, and it's paid off.



#### **What was your department's hands-on role?**

For every project we have a case officer ensuring the various stages are adhered to because we have to be very careful that our money's spent in the way that's been approved. We also use fund monitors to make sure there's total financial integrity.

The journalists I went around the museum with in November on press day said 'you must be really pleased, because this shows your money's been well spent.' For a critical newspaper writer to say that, that's something for me to remember. It proved it was good value for money. I'm very pleased with the result. ●

# SNEAK PREVIEW

With conferences and trade shows to suit everyone in the industry, we look at some that are taking place in the first six months of the year

## NATIONAL FARM ATTRACTIONS NETWORK

Annual Conference & Trade Exhibition 2010

Date: 10 Feb 2010

Venue: Drayton Manor Park, Staffs, UK

**A**imed at farmers wishing to diversify into leisure and tourism, farm and rural attraction operators and NFAN trade and supplier members, annual National Farm Attraction Network (NFAN) conferences have been held since 2001.

The title of this year's event is Partnering for Success and several of the speakers will be from organisations which are able to advise and assist members in a variety of ways and on a range of different, key areas of operation. Highlights of the conference include the Farm Attraction of the Year Award 2009. The winners are:

- Category A (75,000 plus visitors a year) – Head of Ayr Farm Park, Ayr, Ayrshire;
- Category B (20,000-75,000 visitors a year) – Park Hall - The Countryside Experience; and Category C (20,000 and under visitors a year) – Hall Farm Park, Lincolnshire.

The NFAN is a co-operative group set up to provide professional assistance and support to farm and rural diversification enterprises. As well as promoting rural tourism, the association offers professional advice and guidance. Driven by membership feedback and current issues, it provides for the specific needs of rural businesses throughout the UK, defining the key challenges facing members to ensure they receive the right support to meet their individual requirements.

Members can receive advice on a wide range of subjects, including planning legislation, business rates, health and safety, insurance, grant aid, animal welfare, zoo licensing, accountancy and taxation, among others.

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[www.farmattractions.net](http://www.farmattractions.net)



Ewe's winning? The NFAN encourages members to diversify into leisure with fun offers

## DEAL EXPO

Date: April 25 – 27 2010

Venue: Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai, UAE

**W**ith a theme of Success Breeds Success, the 15th Dubai Entertainment Amusement & Leisure Expo (originally launched as the Theme Park and Fun Centre show) aims to provide attractions, amusement and associated businesses within the MENA region with a platform to showcase their products.

More than 200 exhibitors have already registered, with more than 5,000 visitors expected from family entertainment centres, water, amusement and theme parks, heritage centres, museums and zoos.

The seminar programme will include the second World Water Park Association (WWA) Middle East Symposium and a workshop presented by Trade Shows International Ltd on behalf of UK amusement and leisure equipment suppliers.

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[www.themeparksdubai.com](http://www.themeparksdubai.com)



Fun at the farm for NFAN members



## MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE SHOW

**Date:** 12 – 13 May 2010

**Venue:** Earls Court, London, UK

**A**ttended by representatives from museums, galleries, historic houses, cathedrals, heritage visitor attractions, libraries, zoos, gardens, cultural and government organisations and associations from the UK and overseas, the Museums and Heritage Show is a platform for the latest developments.

Product launches, current policies and thinking, plus the latest in case studies and practical knowledge-based sessions are offered at the exhibition and seminar. Streamed into six areas of specialism, the programme includes talks on marketing and insight, education and audience development, income and funding, design and interpretation, collections management and sustainability.

[www.museumsandheritage.com](http://www.museumsandheritage.com)



BALPPA's summer conference 2009 included a trip to Colchester Zoo

## ECSITE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Date:** 3 – 5 June 2010

**Venue:** DASA, Dortmund, Germany

**E**csite is the European network for science centres and museums linking professionals in more than 400 institutions in 50 countries. Founded 20 years ago, Ecsite connects member institutions through projects and activities and facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practice on current issues.

Members include science centres and museums, natural history museums, zoos, aquariums, universities, research organisations and companies which communicate with and engage the public in science.

Ecsite holds its conference in a different European city every year. Dortmund has been chosen as this year's host because, as part of the Ruhr Area, it's the European capital of culture for 2010.

This year, more than 900 science centres and museums' professionals from Europe and worldwide are expected to take part in a variety of sessions and events.

The focus of the conference will be exploring risks. There will be 200 speakers, who are prominent figures from the European and world field of science communication. The keynote speakers will be Ortwin Renn, professor and chair of environmental sociology at Stuttgart University and Dan Gardner, journalist and writer.

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[www.ecsite-conference.net](http://www.ecsite-conference.net)

Ecsite delegates test the products



Getting involved in the seminars



## BALPPA SUMMER CONFERENCE

**Date:** 14 – 17 June

**Venue:** Gardaland, Italy

**T**his year, BALPPA (British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions) is holding its annual Summer Conference at the Gardaland hotel in Italy. Members will have the opportunity to explore the park over the course of their stay.

The event will include a visit to Minitalia Leolandia, a park owned and run by manufacturers Antonio Zamperla S.p.A, for a park tour and a members meeting. Members will also visit Moser Rides at their factory to see their latest projects and go on a tour of Parco Natura Viva, a zoo and safari park in Bussolengo.

Members will receive booking information for the event in March.

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Visitors to last year's Asian Attractions Expo enjoy the trade show

## ASIAN ATTRACTIONS EXPO

**Date:** 13 – 16 July 2010  
**Venue:** The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia

**F**or the first time, IAAPA (International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions), AALARA (Australian Amusement Leisure and Recreation Association) and MAAFTA (Malaysian Association of Amusement, Theme Parks and Family Attractions) are working together to host the premier expo for the attractions industry in Asia.

More than 3,000 professionals from amusement and theme parks, waterparks, zoos, aquariums, museums, family entertainment centres, casinos, and resorts are expected to attend to develop and purchase new attractions and products for their facilities, see what's new in the industry, learn best practices, network with their colleagues and make new contacts.

During the three-day event, more than 150 exhibitors from 25 countries will come to Kuala Lumpur to showcase products in more than 100 categories, including amusement and theme park rides, architectural and design services, coin-operated games, skill games, theatrical productions and maintenance services and equipment. The event will also feature a number of educational programs for industry professionals including tours of several high-profile attractions in Malaysia.

## AALARA 2010 TRADE EXPO

**Date:** 13 – 16 July 2010  
**Venue:** The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia

**W**orking with IAAPA for the 2010 Asia show is a new experience. AALARA's general manager, Kim Hackwood, explains the reasons.

"It was time for a change and an exciting Asian destination appealed to our delegates when surveyed in 2009. We wanted to develop and build on the global alliance between AALARA and IAAPA. By combining, our delegates will have access to a wealth of international speakers and industry expertise. A joint trade exhibition will provide a larger showcase of rides, attractions, products and services and our members will now have networking opportunities on a scale which wouldn't be achievable if the show was held in

Australia. Kuala Lumpur is a cost effective destination to visit and stay for Australians. This is one of the factors that convinced IAAPA to choose this destination as the 2010 conference venue. There are a number of great theme parks and attractions in Kuala Lumpur, making it attractive for behind the scenes visits and the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is one of the best convention centres in south east Asia.

AALARA's role in the 2010 conference will be to organise all Australian delegates and exhibitors. We hope to have our own reception desk, manned by our reception staff, who have been the friendly faces behind the desk for many years. Because it's a joint venture, all delegates, be they IAAPA or AALARA, will be attending the functions and have access to the same speakers program and trade show."

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[www.iaapa.org/expos/asian](http://www.iaapa.org/expos/asian)

### IAAPA

**"W**e look forward to bringing Asian Attractions Expo to Malaysia in 2010, a location with a rich history and stunning attractions," says Charles Bray, president and CEO of IAAPA. "We're continually impressed by the growth and development of the Asian attractions industry and see this as the perfect place for attractions professionals to

see what's happening in the industry, learn about trends and best practices, meet, collaborate, and experience amazing world-class attractions in Asia. We look forward to working closely with our friends at AALARA and MAAFTA to produce an exceptional and productive event for everyone involved."

[www.iaapa.org/expos/asian](http://www.iaapa.org/expos/asian) ●



## Chance Morgan's first Unicoaster

US-based rides company Chance Morgan has completed construction on its first Unicoaster.

Exhibited at the IAAPA Expo in Las Vegas, US, the ride features eight rotating arms, all of which can accommodate two people at a time.

One main aspect of the Unicoaster is the rider's ability to be able to control the spin they experience, both in a forwards and backwards direction, allowing passengers to provide themselves with a different ride each time.

**fun-kit.net keyword**  
**chance morgan**



## Christie's new digital cinema projector

Digital cinema projection technologies company Christie has debuted the Christie CP2220 projector at the ShowEast convention in Florida, USA.

Part of the Christie Solaria™ range, the projector features Texas Instruments' DLP Cinema technology as well as an optional integrated 2K/4K media block. The technology is designed to work with all external cinema servers, with the 4K projector displaying at 4096 x 2160 pixels.

**fun-kit.net keyword**  
**christie**

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**For more information, or to contact any of these companies, log on to [www.fun-kit.net](http://www.fun-kit.net) and type the company name under 'keyword search'**

## Sysco provides AV system for new Darwin Centre

UK based system integrator Sysco has completed an audio-visual and IT installation at the newly-opened Darwin Centre at London's Natural History Museum (see p40).

Included within the £78m (US\$126.6m, €89.5m) extension is Sysco's 12m-wide Climate Change Wall, a glass wall of high resolution screens displaying films and graphics, which visitors can interact with, thanks to motion sensor technology.

Throughout the centre, audio commentary and sound effects are transmitted from a range of HD sources via a BSS Soundweb net-



**fun-kit.net keyword**  
**sysco**

work, with visuals delivered by a range of NEC LCD displays and Panasonic and Mitsubishi projectors. This is housed on a mixture of Macs, PCs and DVS Blade video servers.



**fun-kit.net keywords**  
**scs interactive**

## SCS introduces the Cannonball

SCS Interactive has unveiled its latest product, the Cannonball, which is able to project the rider up to 23ft (7m) into a swimming pool.

Exhibited at IAAPA, the ride is based on the idea of a water cannon enabling riders to experience a sensation similar to riding a wave.

Once the rider is seated in the correct position, the attendant hits the start button, sending the rider flying into the air on a wave of water. Cannonballs of differing heights can also be installed on a single site.

# THE BIG BLUE



**Blue Reef Aquarium recently opened on the site of failed Millennium project Wildwalk. Julie Cramer meets some of its unusual residents and finds out why expectations are high that the attraction, along with the existing IMAX, will be a success**

**T**he opening of the £4m (€4.4m, \$6.7m) Blue Reef aquarium at the centre of Bristol's regenerated Harbourside is, in many ways, business as usual for a management team that has been developing aquariums for a decade.

The company's first site launched in 1999 in Newquay (a former Sea Life centre), then Portsmouth and Tynemouth (2001) and Hastings (2007). The company now sits within a wider portfolio of attractions spanning numerous European countries, after it was acquired by Spanish leisure company Aspro in 2008 for an undisclosed

sum. Blue Reef's MD, Ian Cunningham, now runs the enlarged Aspro UK operation.

But the opening of the Bristol site in November 2009 still represents a leap into uncharted waters for the brand. It's the first Blue Reef Aquarium to be situated in the heart of a city, and the first in Europe, the company says, to incorporate an Imax 3D cinema as part of the experience. To add to the challenges, Blue Reef has taken over a 6,000sq m (64,500sq ft)-plus site that has had a troubled history as a visitor attraction.

It occupies the former home of Wildwalk, an ecological science attraction built

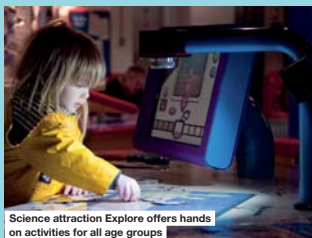
## ABOUT EXPLORE-AT-BRISTOL

**A**fter deciding to close two parts of the original Millennium-funded At-Bristol project, the charity has channelled its energies into making Explore a leading science and discovery centre.

In autumn 2009, the drip-feeding of new exhibits onto the science floor began, which expands on an existing area entitled Your Amazing Brain and focuses on the wonders of the human body. Financed by a £1.5m (\$2.4m, €1.7m) Wellcome Trust grant, the exhibition, All About Us, will be fully operational by February 2011.

The centre's in-house specialist prototype team will, until that time, be user-testing a range of new exhibits, including a VeinViewer. Sourced from

a medical supplier in the US, the machine allows people to "see through" their skin to watch the blood running through their veins.



Science attraction Explore offers hands on activities for all age groups

Another highly popular exhibition, which opened in summer 2009 and is running for three years, is Animate It!, which has been developed in conjunction with locally-based Aardman Animations of Wallace and Gromit and Morph fame. It represents the third collaboration with Aardman, but is much more advanced in terms of visitor interactivity, says Explore's Zoe Fox.

The exhibition has numerous hands-on stations, where visitors can do simple animations sketches, control the lighting on the set of *A Matter of Loaf and Death*, and produce an animation film that can be downloaded, via their entrance ticket, to their computer at home.



The exhibits are designed to enable visitors to get as close as possible to the fish and animals

## **“ONE THING WE KNOW HOW TO DO IS RUN POPULAR, PROFITABLE VISITOR ATTRACTIONS AND WE ARE VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OPENING OF OUR FIRST CITY-BASED AQUARIUM”**

along with the Imax and Explore-At-Bristol science centre with a £44m (€48,500m, \$73.3m) Millennium Commission grant in 2000. The three-part project, operated by registered charity At-Bristol, cost £97m (€107m, \$162m) including regeneration of some public spaces and infrastructure. But Wildwalk only achieved 95,000 visitors, compared with 160,000 at Explore.

At-Bristol made the decision to close Wildwalk and the attached Imax in spring 2007, citing an unsustainable mix of high operating costs and poor attendances.

It then fell to Bristol City Council and the South West Regional Development Agency working alongside At-Bristol to find a new tenant for the site. After a search spanning the rest of the year, Blue Reef was awarded the contract after a closed tender process and work began to redevelop the site in summer 2008.

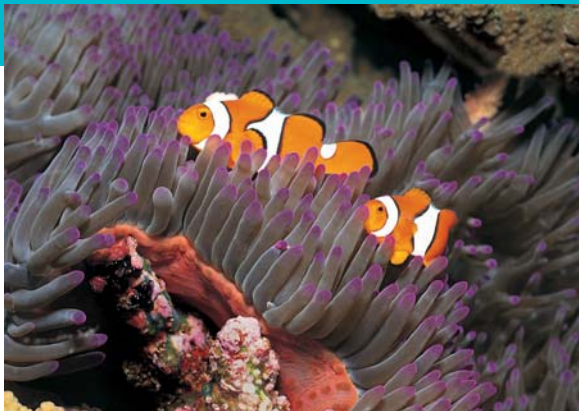
Blue Reef's finance director Sue Eleiho remains unperturbed by the site's history, seeing the arrival of the aquarium as something to breathe new life into a vacant building. “One thing we know how to do

is run popular, profitable visitor attractions and we are very optimistic about the opening of our first city-based aquarium.”

Eleiho says the company is projecting “conservative” visitor numbers of 250,000 in the first year. “I think we’ll achieve more than this”, she says. Average length of stay is predicted to be three to four hours.

The company believes the ease of motorway access and prime location of the new attraction will draw visitors from a wide radius – from Birmingham to the north, London 120 miles to the east and





Sea creatures at the aquarium include nautilus (top left); seahorses (bottom left); and clown fish (above), all of which are housed in exhibits which emulate their natural habitat

the whole of the West Country. Bristol has a population of 420,000 and receives up to 5.5 million day visitors per year.

## THE BIG PICTURE

The 350-seat Imax theatre is, of course, completely new territory for Blue Reef. With the circular theatre intrinsically linked to the fabric of the building, the company was willing to take it on, and now it's a question of watching and learning, Eleiho says. "I believe the Imax used to be on a separate ticket entry to Wildwalk, which probably didn't help drive visits. We've included it in the price of aquarium entry to enhance the visitor experience and give people a chance to gain a unique three-dimensional close-up of sea life in its natural habitat," she says.

There are four film showings each day. Currently showing is *Dolphins and Whales*, produced by Jean-Michel Cousteau and narrated by actress Darryl Hannah. It's the first time the 42-minute film, which took three years to make, has been available in the UK. Two other films, *Sharks* and *Ocean Wonderland*, will be shown later in 2010.

One operator that's very pleased to see the arrival of Blue Reef is At-Bristol, which continues to run Explore-At-Bristol and is

effectively the new landlord for the aquarium, which took over the 75-year lease.

"It is great to see natural history back on the Harbourside," says Explore's director of learning Rachel Murray. Starting out in 2000 as an explainer on the floor at both Explore and Wildwalk, Murray has had a ringside seat in both the successes and failures of the At-Bristol project. "From the outset Wildwalk was an extremely difficult project to market. It was called 'a living rainforest in the heart of the city' and when people visited they absolutely loved it, but the difficulty was attracting them through the doors in the first place."

Wildwalk, which contained two artificial rainforest and live animals exhibits, also proved an expensive attraction to run. Murray said that revenues reached around £4.5m (\$7.3m, €5.2m) – generated not just from ticket sales but also from the charity's operation of the nearby Millennium car park as well as from corporate hire and sponsorship. "But our operating costs were £6m (\$9.6m, €7m) and in the time Wildwalk was open, we never managed to plug the gap," says Murray.

By contrast, the hands-on science attraction Explore, which is housed in a grade II-listed converted railway goods shed, is going from strength to strength. Murray says visitors were up a recession-busting 15,000 last year to 175,000. "Closing

Wildwalk was a difficult decision, but it was something we had to do to ensure the long term success of Explore. We definitely made the right choice," Murray says.

## MUTUAL ATTRACTION

As well as a landlord and tenant relationship, Explore and Blue Reef see themselves very much as mutually beneficial neighbours. The science attraction and the aquarium flank two sides of the cobbled Anchor Square, which is a lively space for public events.

When asked, both operators say they're willing to explore joint marketing opportunities "in the near future". For now, At-Bristol, which has strong working links with large Bristol-based operators such as Airbus, will run the corporate hospitality side of Blue Reef's business. Meanwhile Blue Reef can focus on building visitor numbers and driving repeat visits. "It's important to communicate that the aquarium is a living, breathing thing that's constantly changing and maturing. There's always something new to see," says Eleiho.

Across all Blue Reef sites there's a busy programme of events to help drive business. Among plans for 2010 are a Pirates Weekend Treasure Trail, educational talks about protecting seahorses and saving sharks, and getting people interested in taking part in a beach clean.



(Above) film showings at the IMAX are included in the ticket price to the aquarium

Blue Reef's new parent company Aspro also has some firm links to conservation. It runs the Natura Foundation, a not-for-profit environmental institution which invests in a wide range of conservation, educational and research activities. The foundation is mainly run from Aspro's zoological sites in Spain, but its existence also helps to add some green credentials to the company's portfolio of nature-based attractions – which includes the Blue Planet aquarium in Cheshire, Deep Sea World in Fife and the Barcelona aquarium.

In Bristol, there's no doubt much relief from everyone that the city has filled a highly visible void in an area so successfully regenerated in the past decade with restaurants, galleries, cinema, casino, apartments and vibrant public spaces.

Head of business development for the South West RDA, Ann O'Driscoll, believes the new aquarium will greatly add to the waterfront's cultural mix. "It's a highly prominent site and redeveloping such a specific building was always going to be a challenge for any operator," she says. "We're delighted with the new aquarium and are confident it will bring an even wider mix of people down to Harbourside."

Blue Reef Aquarium's the new kid on the block and the next few seasons should tell how much of a splash it will make with the inhabitants of Bristol and beyond. ●



## ABOUT BLUE REEF BRISTOL

Through the entrance aquarium visitors will find themselves in a bright, open space with a large café area and well-stocked shop.

A long arched tunnel makes for a grand entrance up to the Imax, while before this a smaller, cave-themed entrance directs visitors to the first of the exhibits – a life-size recreation of a sunken ship housing fish from British coastal waters. The walk-through is dark and atmospheric with back-lit information displays at both adult and child-height.

Themed displays throughout the facility have been made by Nautilus Aquariums working alongside architect Richard Williams of Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams. For the first time, Blue Reef has incorporated LED lighting technology in the displays to cut energy consumption by up to 60 per cent.

The centrepiece is the realistic coral reef that sits within a giant tropical ocean display and can be experienced from several viewpoints on different levels. Visitors can look down through the open top tank, wind around a footbridge and walk through an underwater viewing tunnel. "Spaces above the main tanks are normally service areas that the public have no access to. Here, these have been incorporated into the main exhibition spaces," says Williams.

Another area is themed more like a contemporary gallery space, with white walls and big round windows creating beautiful

aquatic 'paintings' of coral fish. Some of these windows are concave, allowing people to lean in and feel closer to the action.

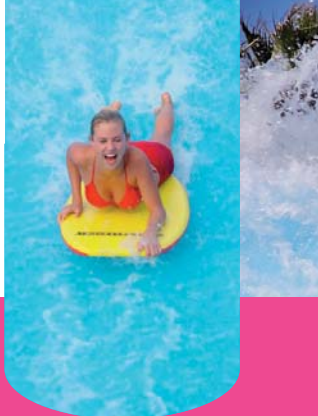
Other exhibits at Blue Reef include a very physical 'crawl-in and pop-up' glass bubble helmet where visitors can view sea horses from a unique perspective, and a 'Wet Lab' educational space.

As visitors continue on their journey they come out into the daylight of the former Wildwalk glass atrium. The original boardwalk remains, snaking round freshly planted tropical plants that will take a little while to bed down and mature. The walkway continues around a waterfall, rock work (created by Rockthemes) and open top aquarium tanks before taking people back into the main building where there are further exhibits.

Zahra D'Aronville is the curator for Blue Reef Aquarium and involved in the finely-timed co-ordination of arrivals. "All our species are sustainably sourced or captivity-bred. They undergo an acclimatisation process to ensure they can immediately start to thrive in their new habitat," she says. She's particularly excited about the arrival of the tiny, delicate Banggai Cardinals which were first successfully bred in captivity at the Newquay site. "These fish only exist on one small island in Indonesia and are highly endangered. It's great that we've been able to breed them here and give visitors the chance to learn about such a rare species."

# SURF'S UP

Surfing is an undeniably cool pastime, so replicating the sport away from the coast sounds like a winning proposition. Kath Hudson looks at some of the companies creating wave products and discovers that there's an offer for all surfers, both beginners and experienced and old and young alike



Having been king of the waves for almost two decades, Wave Loch is facing challengers for a toehold in the surfing rides market. Launched in 1991 by Californian surfer Tom Lochtefeld, Wave Loch's core product is the FlowRider, which uses sheet flow technology: shooting a thin film of water over a stationary surface to create a surfable wave.

Wave Loch's products include the FlowRider Double for two riders, the FlowBarrel, which has larger, curling waves for more experienced riders, and a mobile version. FlowRiders are installed all over the world in waterparks, shopping malls and cruise ships and form the centrepiece of Wave Loch's Californian lifestyle experience, Wave House.

Wave House involves food and beverage, music and surf retail arranged around the water. Five are currently in operation,

in Durban, San Diego, Santiago, Chile and Singapore and more are in development, including Spain, which will open in 2011, and Wembley, UK, which will be the largest to date, and the first one indoors. Still in the planning stages, it's due to open in 2012.

As there are only four inches of water, a bespoke board has to be used. This, and the fact that the water comes from the front, rather than behind, means it's not an exact copy of surfing. The company describes flowboarding as a sport in its own right – "skateboarding without wheels, surfing without a fin, snowboarding without the mountain, wakeboarding without the boat and skimboarding without the sand."

## NEW CONCEPTS

More developments are in the pipeline. Lochtefeld says he wants to build a Flow Park, similar to a skate park, with water half pipes. And a new concept, Flow House, is about to get off the starting blocks. A joint venture between Wave Loch and the UK-based thrills operator, Body Flight, Flow House is a toned down, indoor version of

Wave House, for countries not blessed with year-round sunshine. It will have food and beverage, retail and some entertainment.

The first one opens at Body Flight near Bedford, UK, in May, complementing the other adventure sports on offer at the site – a wind tunnel to simulate sky diving, Vertigo, a bungee jump without the bounce, and the UK's tallest zipwire. Body Flight's MD, Paul Mayer, expects it to be popular: "Without a doubt, the extreme sports market will want to use Flow House," he says. "We're expecting a core of surf and board sport enthusiasts to use it regularly, but also people who view it as a unique experience to have a go at. There will be two elements to the classes – body boarding, which most people will get the hang of during their first session, and stand-up riding, which takes more balance and practice."

Around £1m (€1.1m, US\$1.7m) has been invested in this attraction and Mayer's hoping it will pay back within three or four years. Once this site's up and running, the partners are planning to look for more opportunities to operate Flow House.

Operations development manager for Wave House Europe, Simon Palmer, says this will show the UK market how Flowrider works as a business model. "Flow House will help people understand that it's not just a ride attraction, there's more to it, and brands want to be associated with it."

Two more FlowRiders will open in the UK soon. One in Newquay – despite the fact the town is home to seven surf beaches – and a local authority operation near Gateshead.

## THE CHALLENGER

Another Californian surfer, Bruce McFarland, founder of American Wave



American Wave Machine's SurfStream uses a surfboard to offer an authentic experience



(Left and far left) the FlowRider product is evolving into the FlowHouse attraction; (above) Wave Surfer's travelling wave can go as fast as 70km/hr

Machines (AWM), has come up with a different type of wave, SurfStream, which claims to be the world's first standing wave surf machine and provides an authentic surfing experience, using a real surfboard. Adjustable, gravity-driven waves are produced, from body boarding and learning waves, to tubular and river waves. It's an endless standing wave, made by continuously pumping water in a recirculating pool and channel system, and is great for learning to surf, as beginners can focus on foot placement and balance immediately, and get the feeling of gliding over water.

For the more accomplished, a second product, PerfectSwell, has a larger pool and a wave, which is created at one end and breaks in the pool so riders must learn to paddle in and pop up. They come in different sizes and prices, and with different horsepower to increase the size of the waves. An 8ft (2.4m) tube wave can be created, but 90 per cent of average customers wouldn't be able to cope with this. The rough price of an installation is \$1.2m (£700,000, €800,000), but depends on customer requirements. PerfectSwell also incorporates a wind over water 'horn', which makes the wave more like the wind-generated waves of the ocean, rather than the tidal-based products on the market.

McFarland signed an agreement with watersports and lifestyle retailer Body Glove in July 2009, which marries AWM's technology with Body Glove's branding and marketing experience. Body Glove's CEO, Robbie Meistrell (another Californian surfer), says he's never been so excited about a product: "I've been in the surf industry my whole life and I've ridden many different types of artificial waves. In my

opinion, Body Glove Waves SurfStream is the most fun, the safest, and has the most options to ride different types of waves."

There are a handful of SurfStreams in operation, which were sold prior to the new agreement, but the partners now plan an aggressive roll out. Body Glove licensees in Asia, Europe, South America, Middle East and Canada are preparing to promote, sell and market the product.

"Multiple deals are in the works and some are under contract," says Meistrell. "My goal is to have 100 new Body Glove Waves up and running in the next five years. Based on our negotiations, I believe this is not only possible, but is also very likely to exceed my goal."



One hundred Body Glove Waves SurfStream are planned to open over the next five years

## THE OTHERS

German company, ATV Action Team, diversified from making snow for tv production companies to creating surfing products two years ago. The Wave is a standing wave, which uses endlessly revolving water. Staff at the company studied Munich River's famous wave, The Eisbach, as a basis for the technology, setting out to create an experience which is as close to surfing as possible. The products range in size from 15m (49ft) to 30m (98ft)-wide and



cost \$500,000 (£452,000, \$754,000). ATV's Rainer Klimaschewski believes there's a great deal of potential for standing waves, as they give the opportunity of an authentic surfing experience with less investment than big wave pools. An installation was recently completed at the Alpincenter in Bottrop, Germany, and more are lined up for 2010. The product is also available as a mobile construction.

The Belgian company AFP Technology only started marketing the Wavesurfer within the last few months, although the founders have been in the industry much longer. Wavesurfer is a wave pool, with a travelling wave that has speeds of up to 70 km per hour. According to technical sport and training academy director, Bart Van Kralingen, the best feature of the system is that it's modular and easily relocatable. The smallest size is 4m (13ft)-wide, suitable for one surfer or two body boarders, but more can be added to create double or triple pools. Another selling point is that the strength of the waves and the slipper base mean it's easier to ride. It's made of soft materials so can be installed anywhere and doesn't need to sit in a concrete pit. It costs from €350,000 (£317,000, \$527,000)



The Wave aims to replicate Munich River's wave and can be adjusted to suit all levels



## WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION

Following a tough year for operators, and with association trade shows suffering from dropping attendances, the World Waterpark Association worked especially hard to get new faces and increase first time attendees to its 29th Symposium and Trade Show at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort at the end of October 2009.

As a result, attendance matched last year's show in Las Vegas and reports suggest there was a lot of purchase planning on the floor, showing that projects are still developing and there are active plans for park expansions and new projects.

"This past year was a particularly challenging one for our operators and this year's educational programme was designed to address those challenges by offering new and innovative ideas and solutions," said Aleatha Ezra, director of park member development at WWA.

As well as 50 breakout sessions, including 30 new topics, attendees had the chance to experience workshops facilitated by Disney, which looked at the core principles of Disney's organisational strength and took attendees behind the scenes of some of the company's most innovative areas.

to €2m (£1.8m, \$3m). Two have been installed in Belgium and more are under way in other western European countries.

## MOBILE OPTION

Another newcomer, only having been in the market for a year, is The Wave Booster, from Belgium. The USP is its mobility – it can be ready for use within four hours and can be moved again a few hours after use. It can be used indoors and outdoors and

placed on any surface, with no construction work needed. The permanent product is also easy to install. Any board without a fin can be used, including a wave board and a wakeboard and it's suitable for all levels, including children. It has one pump, which runs between 30 and 50km/hr and prices range from €400,000 (£362,000, \$600,000) to €1m (£900,000, \$1.5m).

Scottish wave supplier, Murphys Waves, has been in the business for 16 years and has around 100 installations, including a Point Break Surf ride at Tenerife's new waterpark, Siam Park, which is a large wave pool with a travelling wave. The company has also just created a new surf system using a static wave, called BoardRider. The price and technology varies according to the product.

Like the sport itself, the artificial surfing market looks set to be very competitive, but Meistrell thinks the market has a huge amount of untapped potential: "The surfing culture has been admired for many years and people all over the world wear surf brand clothing, even though they don't surf. I've seen many people experience surfing for the first time and get the stoke [surf-speak for 'get a buzz from it']. There is truly nothing else like riding a surfboard. I believe we're on the cusp of an explosion of the surfing experience."

If these products can create the thrill of surfing, while making this difficult sport easier to learn, there could well be room in the market for all the players. ●



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# ROOM WITH A VIEW



"To outsiders it might seem we've decided to build a museum in the middle of nowhere," Anne Højer Petersen, director of Fuglsang Kunstmuseum, tells Tom Walker. "But what they don't know is that the area has a rich tradition in arts and culture."

The location may indeed have a cultural heritage, but deciding to set up an art museum, appointing a world-renowned architect and asking him to design it on a farmyard on a remote island on the Baltic Sea, was still a brave move.

Fuglsang, which means "bird song" in old Norse, is located on the Danish island of Lolland, which is famous for its agriculture and only has a population of little more than 65,000. The closest town to the museum is the curiously named Nykøbing F, which sits on the neighbouring island of Falster. Copenhagen, the capital, is more than a two-hour drive away. Despite this remoteness, however, the 2,500sq m

(27,000sq ft) museum, designed by British architect Tony Fretton, is thriving.

It pulled in more than double its target of 20,000 visitors in its first year and in October 2009 was short-listed for the RIBA Stirling Prize. Being nominated for the high-profile architectural prize thrust the museum onto the world stage and it has since attracted attention and acclaim from all parts of the world.

## FUNDING

The museum is run by a board of trustees with representatives from private institutions and local government. It receives funding from both central and local governments, but is heavily reliant on sponsorship and donations from private companies and individuals. The land for the museum, for example, was donated by the charity which owns the adjacent manor house and its country estate and park.

The Fretton-designed building itself, apart from a small grant from the European Regional Development Fund, was funded entirely by private donations.

The museum is located on the Fuglsang estate, which became the home of the

## FUGLSANG KUNSTMUSEUM

The museum exclusively exhibits Danish contemporary art. The collection's emphasis has been placed on artists and motifs of local provenance and a vast majority of the pieces of art originate from the post-1960s.

There are three large temporary exhibitions each year.





Using natural light saves on electricity and is better for visitors' wellbeing

aristocratic Neergaard family in 1819. When the last member of the family died childless, the property was bequeathed to a charity, called Refugiet Fuglsang. The area's rich cultural heritage stems from the Neergaard family's close links to the Danish musical elite – including the two giants of Danish music, composers Carl Nielsen and Edvard Grieg. The manor house is currently the permanent home of the Danish Chamber Players (Storstrøms Kammerensemble), a nationally-recognised chamber orchestra.

After agreeing a deal for an art gallery to be built within the grounds of the Fuglsang estate, the museum trust announced a design competition for the building.

The brief imposed a number of architectural constraints, due to the museum being built on a plot surrounded by the historic manor house and its agricultural and administration buildings. The trust received five submissions from architects and the one that stood out was, ironically, the one that disregarded some of the provisos laid out in the stringent brief. "That's what you need architects for," Petersen says with a hearty laugh. "Tony clearly made us see something that we weren't able to see ourselves."

Fretton adds that the selection process was well organised, which helped to produce a coherent design. "The brief was very well constructed, having been prepared by a year-long process of consul-



The framed view has become the icon of Fuglsang

tation with an advisory architect," he says. "Our scheme was chosen unanimously, and having selected us the board of trustees and the director respected our professionalism and let us get on with the project. The UK has a great deal to learn from this."

## THE BRIEF

The brief dictated that the building should integrate with the surrounding architecture and landscape. It also included a 'very strong suggestion' that access from the museum to the courtyard of the manor house should be closed. This would have obstructed the view from the museum to the coast and Fretton dismissed this as a bad idea, suggesting that rather than shutting the view out, it should become a defining feature of the museum. As a result, the museum's centrepiece is a gal-

lery featuring nothing but three panoramic windows and chairs. The framing of the picturesque view and presenting it as an artwork has become the icon of Fuglsang.

Fretton's submission to the brief, however, wasn't entirely rebellious. "Out of the five bids, Tony's was the one that actually concentrated on solving the issues regarding the day-to-day operations of a museum that we laid out in the competition brief," Petersen says.

"We asked very precise questions. Tony seemed to be the one that paid most attention to answering these questions and that's exactly what we wanted – answers, not fancy new ideas. He did this partly by neglecting the original brief and partly by giving more flexibility to how the different rooms and the whole body of the museum's architecture was laid out.

"The freedom of space provided by Tony's design impressed us and eventually we all agreed that by choosing the layout he suggested, we knew we'd have a building that would not only look stunning, but would also be functional as a working museum."

Fretton's solutions include a walk through floor plan to manage visitor flow, as well as the creation of four 'art pockets' – 7sq m (75sq ft) spaces, each housing a solitary piece of art. "The pockets are very little rooms in which you can only have one person at a time alone with one piece of art," says Petersen. "We wanted to offer an intensive art experience. It really works too – people pass by and say 'what's going on in here?', 'Why is this hanging here by itself?' and they decide to have a look".

## LIGHTING

Construction work on site began in August 2006 and the museum opened to the public in January 2008. From the outset, emphasis was placed on the building being sustainable while the brief also outlined the trust's somewhat unusual intention to use natural light throughout the galleries. Only a single exhibition room in the entire gallery depends entirely on using artificial light.

"First of all, we wanted roof-lit art galleries in order to have the wall space free



**FRETTON SUGGESTED THAT RATHER THAN SHUTTING THE VIEW OUT, IT BECOME A DEFINING FEATURE. THE FRAMING OF THE VIEW HAS BECOME THE ICON OF FUGLSANG**

for hanging art works," Petersen explains. Secondly, you need natural light to render works of art and bring their colours out in a way best suited to the human eye. You also need natural light for the wellbeing of the guests. You need that kind of 'niceness' to make people feel OK being indoors. I believe that if visitors are made to feel that they're entering a confined space where all the light has been blocked out, then they tend to stay for a shorter period and might miss out on the art experiences that take a longer time to take in and reflect on."

The design also takes into account the adverse effects of direct sunlight on artworks. The intensity of the light is controllable in order to protect the artefacts by using flexible shutters and roof lights. Fretton adds: "It was a mutual decision to have a large amount of daylight in the galleries. The amount of daylight can, however, be incrementally reduced to complete darkness by using the shutters and roof panels to create a range of different conditions in each gallery. It is very flexible."

The use of natural light means that the museum is able to make savings in its electricity costs. Petersen, however, is constantly looking for more ways to reduce the museum's carbon footprint. "We aren't

**Natural light is used throughout the museum and brings the art works' colours out in a way best suited to the human eye**

presently as green as we'd like to be," she says. "The museum is heated by oil, but we're working on alternative solutions. We'd very much like to decrease our energy consumption, but there are currently two main obstacles to this. One is that the initial investment in energy saving measures is not cheap. All our funding has been used in setting up the museum so huge investments are not possible at the moment. The second obstacle is one faced by all arts institutions – we need to maintain heat and humidity at levels that avoid damage to the art works. In a climate such as Denmark's, where the temperature changes wildly over the year, this is increasingly hard."

Petersen adds that the museum concentrates on other, more affordable measures. "We use organic, local foods in our café, organic cleaning products in galleries and we use recycled paper in all administration. We've also introduced a best practice policy on saving energy and turn off office machines and lighting in unused and empty spaces.

## FUTURE

It's been a somewhat whirlwind start for the museum, which celebrates its two-year birthday in January 2010. But what will the future hold? Petersen says that despite attracting more than twice as many visitors as expected in the first year, the annual target will be kept at around 25,000. This will, however, be increased if plans to expand Fuglsang's artistic offerings are realised. Although there are no official plans as yet, Petersen sees scope for expanding the site.

"We have room for more, and I believe so does the chamber orchestra," she says. "There are many empty agricultural buildings we'd like to add on and fill with cultural activities. Increasing visitor numbers is dependant on the ability to make progress with the rest of the buildings here. Hopefully the art museum being built here is the first phase of a creation of a large cultural centre at Fuglsang." ●

## LIGHTING

All the lighting solutions were designed in partnership by Tony Fretton Architects and ALECTIA A/S. The equipment and components were supplied by ERCO and Louis Poulsen.

In the reception, café, lecture and learning centre, Fretton has used a combination of ERCO T16 linear fluorescent battens and Tolbold pendant fittings by Louis Poulsen.

In the exhibition galleries, the lighting comprises of adjustable OPTEC wall-washers and spots on ERCO 3 circuit track. There are linear fluorescent battens mounted in edges of skylights to supplement daylight.

# AZA CONFERENCE REPORT

Green operations, wildlife conservation and business strategies were the topics discussed at the 85th Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) conference. Melissa Howerton, director of conferences and membership, reports on the event



**H**eld in Portland, Oregon, and hosted by Oregon Zoo, AZA 2009 in September embraced the eco-friendly environment of Portland with a Green Mission outlining ways the association and conference suppliers cooperated to lower the meeting's carbon footprint. Materials were available in digital versions offering delegates the option to use print or electronic formats in planning agendas.

Attendees were encouraged to take part in this effort by reusing water bottles and coffee mugs they received onsite, purchasing carbon-offsetting, recycling name badges and using public light-rail to get from one destination to another. Incentives were offered to attendees who registered online before the conference, as opposed to mailing in registration forms, with a draw for complimentary hotel stays.

## OPENING MESSAGE

The conference was opened by Dr Jane Goodall, DBE, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace. Goodall addressed the audience with her message of hope for the future and her call to make a difference every day for people, animals and the environment. Keeping her message alive throughout the week, educational sessions and

The finale of the conference (right) was a day at Oregon Zoo where delegates could mix networking with a look at the animals

programming themes featured thought-provoking topics on climate change, animal and guest safety, green operations, doing more with less, population sustainability, revenue generation and technological advances in the zoo and aquarium field. More than 300 speakers in 64 sessions participated, providing enlightening discussions and best practice examples.

More than 120 exhibiting companies and the Conservation Endowment Fund Silent Auction filled the 90,000sq ft (8,360sq m) exhibit hall. To support suppliers, new features at the conference included increased promotional of exhibitors and sponsors, a virtual trade show that attendees could search by company or product category, and enhanced member benefits.



## MEMBER RECOGNITION

AZA announced four newly accredited members — Binghamton Zoo at Ross Park in Binghamton, NY, Children's Zoo at Celebration Square in Saginaw, Michigan, Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco, California, and Tracy Aviary in Salt Lake City, Utah. This brings AZA-Accredited institutions to 221. Many honours and awards were also bestowed on individuals in the zoo and aquarium community, including recognition in outstanding service and committee work.

The conference continued to the finale and closing event, Zoo Day, filled with hands-on experiences at the Oregon Zoo. Attendees had access to behind-the-scenes exhibits and keeper chats. Social events planned throughout the day offered delegates extensive networking opportunities set among the hills of the Zoo. ●

## AZA CONFERENCE 2010

AZA 2010 will run September 11 – 16 and will be hosted by the Houston Zoo, Houston, Texas. The event promises to bring together top-notch speakers, engaging programming and events and vibrant exhibitors featuring the newest products and services to the zoo and aquarium world. For more information and details about attending, visit [www.aza.org/annualconference](http://www.aza.org/annualconference). The Call for Papers opens early February 2010 on the AZA website.



# CLASS ACT

Whether it's bringing a subject to life or animating complicated issues, simulation offers great educational potential. Kath Hudson looks at new projects made for children plus some inventive case studies



**T**wenty children enthralled by a film, wearing 3D glasses, sit inside a simulator capsule, which bucks and rolls on top of an articulated lorry. This science class has been touring the Iberian peninsula since April 2008.

Commissioned by The Champalimaud Foundation and created by Belgium-based, technology company de pinxi, the €1m (£861,000, US\$1.4m) Future of Medicine aims to explain the future challenge of medicine to children in an inspiring way, so they will consider science as a career.

The 3D interactive attraction makes cutting edge science digestible for nine- to 14-year-olds. The central character of the film is Champi, an animated child, who takes them on a tour of the human body, witnessing many contemporary medical science issues, such as stem cell research, nanotechnology, DNA and gene therapy.

de pinxi's co-founder Philippe Chiwy says the main challenges were coming up with characters and a storyline which the children would respond to, and balancing the entertainment and emotion with the

educational message. To this end, there were a lot of test sessions with schools and children, and the experts of the Foundation reviewed the script and the production at various stages, from both a scientific and an educational point of view.

The show's completely interactive – the children have to act together to move the story on. "This creates stronger emotion and memories," says Chiwy. "The kids shout the name of Champi together to avoid obstacles. They'll remember this a lot more than a linear, passive movie."

The attraction has been constantly touring schools and science museums in Portugal and Spain since April 2008 and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. "I don't say that very often, but the reaction here was huge!" says Chiwy. "There's specific local press coverage for nearly every destination and as soon as it reaches a town, the locals are queuing up to experience the show."

Animated character Champi takes children on a tour of the human body in de pinxi's Future of Medicine simulation experience

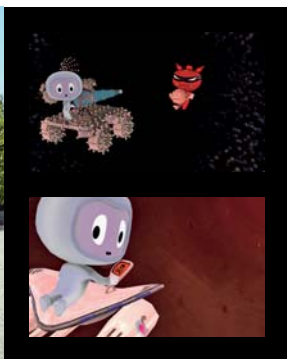
## THE SUM OF ALL THRILLS

The educational theme is continued at Walt Disney's new Innoventions Pavilion in Epcot, Florida. US defence contractor Raytheon has sponsored a new ride, The Sum of all Thrills, which shows children how maths and engineering make things they care about happen and come to life.

The ride is a rollercoaster simulator. Guests programme their own experi-

ence via a touchscreen. They have the choice of riding a virtual rollercoaster, bobsled or a jet and can pick inversions, corkscrews and steep hills. The content chosen determines the ride's speed.

The information is stored on a magnetic strip, which is swiped at the launch station. Once inside the simulator, a 3D video hood is placed over the rider's head and upper torso, allowing them to experience their ride.



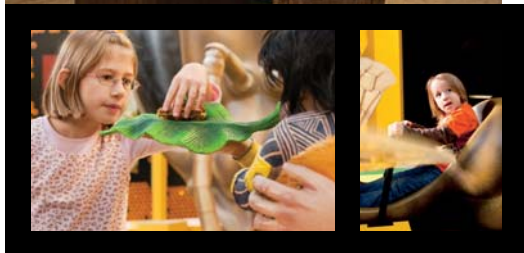


# OTHER NEWS

## New dimensions

The UK-based 4D theatre and simulation attraction specialist, Simworx, installed two new attractions in 2009, which provide fully immersive experiences. At Dutch theme park, Familiepark Drivieliet, Simworx remodelled a Cine 180 dome building into a 4D theatre, showing the *Curse of Skull Rock* on a 3D projection system, complemented with multi-directional seats and a number of special effects, including seat drops, water spray, leg tickers, wind, low smoke, bubbles and aroma.

Simworx is also responsible for London's first 4D theatre at The Science Museum. A combination of multi-directional seats, special effects and Red Star's 3D film, *Legend of Apollo*, take visitors on a space adventure, telling the story of Colonel David Scott, the commander of the Apollo 15 mission to the moon.



## THE BEES KNEES

German company, Clostermann, has also created a mobile exhibition for the purpose of educating and inspiring children. Bees - Nature's Hidden Heroes is part of the company's Hire Reality brand of travelling exhibitions. With a mixture of hands-on activities, riddles and immersive design to stimulate interaction, the show illustrates how important bees are to the environment. It shows their amazing physical capabilities, social impulses and highlights the problem of their falling numbers.

Attractions include a rowing bee, who challenges them to explore its flying abilities and a beekeeper's model, replicating the feeling of standing in a swarm. "True education means fostering the ability to be interested in something," says Matthias Clostermann, CEO of Clostermann. "We

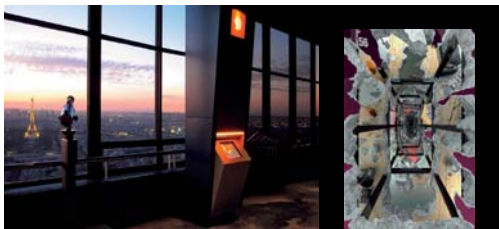
**"TRUE EDUCATION MEANS FOSTERING THE ABILITY TO BE INTERESTED IN SOMETHING. WE HAD TO THINK ON THE SAME LEVEL AS THE CHILDREN. WE'VE BUILT AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH LEARNING COMES AS A WELCOME ADD ON."**

had to think on the same level as the children and the activities had to be self-explanatory, to some extent, so that pre-school kids can enjoy them without necessarily reading through the exhibition. We have built an inspiring environment in which learning comes as a welcome add on."

**Bees - Nature's Hidden Heroes uses simulation to allow children to learn how important bees are to our environment**

The company's very proud of the exhibition, which is the realisation of a long-standing dream to make science tangible and accessible via travelling exhibitions. "One big challenge for us was to convey knowledge and fascinating facts with emotional exhibits," says Clostermann. "We wanted something that was truly hands-on, while avoiding copying anything or anyone. One big reason for us to do Bees was that its meaningful, its not just the next copy of something about dinosaurs, sunken ships or skinned dead people."

Another Hire Reality exhibition due out this year is Alien Friend. About robotic-human interaction, it's not solely aimed at children, but will include exhibits for them.



### GET FLOORED IN PARIS

De pinxi is also in the closing stages of an attraction, at the Monparnasse Tower in Paris, The Big Hole. The brief was to create an entertaining attraction, while also educating visitors about the city.

Screens are integrated into the floor, which start to vibrate, while surround sound, subwoofer and synchronised

flashes simulate the floor collapsing. Once the floor (virtually) collapses, actors playing the people, who supposedly live below, start reacting. With each collapse there's a new scenario.

de pinxi's Philippe Chiwy says that building a show, which includes special effects and live actors, into the existing architecture, with very limited space, was a big challenge.

### DRIVING SCHOOL

Children between the ages of five and 11 can complete exercises in mini VW Beetle cars to gain a driver's licence, at Autostadt in Wolfsburg. The attraction was created by Simtec, with the help of Autostadt and Daywalker-Studio and since its launch in November 2008 has been Autostadt's most popular children's attraction.

The Children's Driving School allows children to negotiate driving situations. Simtec CEO Bernd Kaufmann explains: "We've developed an interactive video control system, which allows kids to influence the driver activities by moving the control wheel or the accelerator pedal. What they do determines the video sequences on the screen, so children feel they're driving the car in the simulation, without having the real task of driving, which is beyond their capabilities and would distract from the idea. The focus is to learn a driver's perspective in traffic."

There are 15 exercises to complete, which test how they'd react in traffic situations.

**"CHILDREN FEEL THEY'RE DRIVING THE CAR. THE REAL TASK OF DRIVING WOULD DISTRACT FROM THE IDEA. THE FOCUS IS TO LEARN A DRIVER'S PERSPECTIVE IN TRAFFIC"**



ations. For example, if they approach a junction and remove their foot from the accelerator, the car will stop. If they don't, there's an explanation about their mistake. When there's no traffic, they can put their foot back on the accelerator, turn the steering wheel and carry on with their trip.

Each run lasts five minutes and the results are stored on a chip card, so they can keep going until they complete all 15 tasks and earn their driver's licence.

"One major concern was to develop an attraction which is suitable for the age of the kids," says Kaufmann. "As the kids aren't able to interactively drive a car in real city traffic we decided to develop this interactive video concept where they can decide on the mainstream of the video by using the steering wheel and pedals."

### Adult only racing

Dutch simulator company, Cruden, unveiled two new models of its interactive racing simulators at IAAPA in November. Its Hexatech system has been redesigned for more accurate simulation of racing cars, easier access and lower purchase and operational costs.

A new three-seater model has also been designed, intended to increase throughput for operators. Two passengers sit either side of the driver, creating what is thought to be the first simulator to combine guest-led interaction and a passive ride experience, as two passengers sit either side of the driver. The seating has been recessed into the new motion system, as opposed to sitting on top of it, which gives the rider a more intense experience.

**Children move the control wheel and accelerator pedal to "drive" the car. Any mistakes made are explained to them**

So, will this focus on children and the use of simulation for education continue? There are compelling reasons to do this: the huge challenge of the environment, as well as the constant need for medical progression means the world needs more bright, creative, scientific minds. Simulation can take science from geeky to exciting and turn more children onto it. "Children are the future. Simple as that," says Clostermann. "To raise their fascination with and interest in science and environmental care is to invest in our future. Impressive experiences can shape their mind set for who they want to become." ●

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## Skidata's Vario.Gate

Access systems company Skidata AG has unveiled a versatile, easy-to-use ticket reader suitable for use within stadiums as well as at amusement parks and trade shows.

Called Vario. Gate, the entry control system features an intelligent scanning device that accepts and checks tickets in RFID, Print@ Home and barcode formats at a single scanning point. The single scan point aids both operators, who can sell tickets in a variety of formats, as well as visitors, who can then enter quickly and easily.

fun-kit.net keyword  
**skidata**



## Gateway secure IAAPA new product award

Gateway Ticketing has won a best new product award at IAAPA, thanks to its eGalaxy Reseller Web store.

A web-based PoS application, the product allows operators to save time and money thanks to a range of automated processes, such as reconciliation and a print-on-demand function. The application also provides up-to-the-minute sales reports to let operators track revenue immediately rather than at the season end.

fun-kit.net keyword  
**gateway**

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## TOR Systems unveils Maxim Solution software

Leading provider of visitor engagement solutions, TOR Systems, has unveiled its latest scheme for use within the museums, heritage and visitor attractions sectors.

Called Maxim Solution and operating on industry standard platforms, the 'best of breed solution' has been designed to combine stability, speed and resilience with cutting-edge technology.

The product includes integrated touchscreen PC-POS units as well as the option to integrate real-time internet sales via MaximWeb, which can then be linked to external retail,



fun-kit.net keywords  
**tor systems**

financial, catering and CRM software as and when required.

TOR Systems' Ticketstor offers further web sales capabilities for clients organising temporary events.



## Time Pursuit books in at BeWILDerwood

Open Frontiers' Time Pursuit ticketing solution has been deployed at the children's tree house adventure park, BeWILDerwood, Norwich, UK.

The web-based booking system not only allows the purchase of admission, but also to buy merchandise and gift vouchers. Meanwhile, full gate admissions technology has also been built into the Time Pursuit program. On site, wireless scanners have been installed, enabling advance bookers to use a fast-track entrance.

fun-kit.net keywords  
**open frontiers**



## Gamma moves into Chatsworth House

Chatsworth House in Derbyshire has chosen to install a number of integrated modules from Gamma Dataware's LeisurePOS platform.

At the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Gamma will be supplying solutions for admissions and ticketing, gift aid, bookings and event management, membership CRM as well as a web booking interface.

In addition to these, Gamma is also providing an Integrated Chip & PIN and back office customer not present credit/debit card software solution.

In further news, the company has also completed a Point of Sale installation at the recently-opened BugWorld Experience in Liverpool.



fun-kit.net keyword  
**gamma**

## Cashless solutions from National Ticket

For places looking to introduce cashless automation solutions, US company National Ticket offers a selection of bar coded wristbands and plastic cards.

The wristbands are available in plastic, vinyl and hi-res versions and can be used to allow entry, access lockers and also enable visitors to add cash on to them to pay for food and activities.

The cards and the wristbands are suitable for a range of climates and weather conditions.



fun-kit.net keyword  
**national ticket**



fun-kit.net keyword  
**omnicket**

## Pick-N-Choose your own itinerary

Omnicket's Connect program has seen its pick-and-choose technology used for the first time by the Pikes Peak Country Attractions Association in Colorado, USA.

With the Pikes Peak Pick-N-Choose Ticket, visitors can select, online, only the attractions they want to visit. When a visitor has selected their venues, an overall price is then calculated.

Once payment has been made, visitors print a confirmation page to retrieve their all-in-one pass.

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Grooming Hoover's wax figure, cleaning a helicopter which is suspended from the ceiling and couriering valuable artifacts are all in a day's work for Newseum's Lindsay Waros Marino



## PRESSING JOB

Lindsay Waros Marino, curatorial specialist of artefacts, Newseum, Washington, DC, US

### What's your job description?

I've worked at the Newseum for two years as the curatorial specialist of artefacts. I acquire artefacts, conduct research for new exhibitions and care for the objects both on exhibit and in storage at our Support Center. I help monitor the environmental conditions and other concerns to ensure the safety of the artefacts and look after them when they need a little TLC. I also work with donors who are interested in giving the museum new pieces.

### What unusual elements does your job involve?

The most unusual task I've had is cleaning the helicopter hanging from our atrium ceiling. We take a lift to the level of the helicopter and clean it with extra long poles with dusters attached.

We've had to learn how to move really large artefacts into place, such as the guard tower used at the Berlin Wall, the steel door that was taped open during the Watergate break-in and a bullet-ridden truck used by reporters in Sarajevo. I'm also a courier for loaned objects, many of which are priceless. My favourite transport was bringing Paul Revere's [a patriot in the American Revolution] glasses from Boston to the Newseum for a temporary exhibition.

### What TLC do you give artefacts?

Touching up the wax model of J Edgar Hoover has been a new, exciting opportunity – it certainly wasn't something I was taught in school! If he looks a little mussed, I remove any lint and straighten his clothes.

Every so often he'll get small dents in his face. By heating up a metal tool I'm able to shape the wax back to its original state.

Because Hoover's hair is made of real human hair it can get frizzy and fall out of place, so I comb and style it to keep him looking his best. When Hoover's hair gets really flaky or dusty, I remove the head from the body and wash his hair in the sink. Madame Tussaud's staff recommended that we only use Paul Mitchell products, so I was careful to pick out extra moisturising conditioner and mega-hold hairspray!

I also make sure his eyes and lips stay glossed with a special artist's conservator gloss. This makes his features seem more life-like.

### What role does Hoover play?

Hoover has been a great ambassador for our exhibit, G-Men and Journalists: Top News Stories of the FBI's First Century, which explains the history of the FBI and its relationship with the media.

The exhibit contains details on J Edgar Hoover's development of the FBI and highlights the organisation's top cases with artefacts like the Unabomber's cabin, Patty Hearst's jacket and gun and the electric chair used on Bruno Hauptmann, who was convicted of murdering the Lindbergh baby.

### What are the highs and lows of the job?

I love being part of a team that protects and cares for artefacts for future generations. The low point is cleaning the finger and forehead prints off the cases when people get too interested in the artefacts! ●

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