

## Cedar Fair acquires Great America park

In what it calls a "once in a generation opportunity", theme park operator Cedar Fair Entertainment has entered into an agreement to buy the rights to the land beneath its California's Great America park in Santa Clara, California.

Since opening the park in 1976, Cedar Fair has leased the land from the City of Santa Clara. The new agreement will see the company acquire the land for around US\$150m (€133m, £113m), financed through additional long-term borrowing, with the transaction due to complete in Q2 2019.

Richard A Zimmerman, president and CEO of Cedar Fair, said: "This is a once in a generation opportunity to solidify our control of 112 acres in the heart of Santa Clara. The transaction underscores our long-term commitment to enhancing and expanding California's Great America, ensuring a high quality, family-friendly entertainment destination for those who



■ The land beneath Great America park in Santa Clara has been leased by Cedar Fair since 1976



live and work in Northern California."

In commenting on the company's 2018 financial results, reported in *Attractions Management* last month, Zimmerman said that Cedar Fair would be pursuing a strategy of broadening the guest experience through "immersive new entertainment offerings".

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/p9Y2x\\_A](http://lei.sr/p9Y2x_A)



**This is a once in a generation opportunity**

Richard A Zimmerman



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## Six Flags on the hunt for new CEO as Reid-Anderson steps down

Six Flags Entertainment chair, president and CEO James Reid-Anderson has informed the group's board of his decision to step down and retire by the end of February 2020.

The operator has started its search for Reid-Anderson's successor – plans which were revealed in a US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing, which was posted on 7 March.

The search process is being led by the company's board of directors, which will evaluate candidates for the CEO position. The board will also evaluate candidates for the chairship of the board.

The SEC filing by the company stated: "In



■ Six Flags said it has begun its search for a successor

**"The search process is being led by the company's board of directors, which will evaluate candidates"**

connection with the succession planning process, on 7 March 2019,

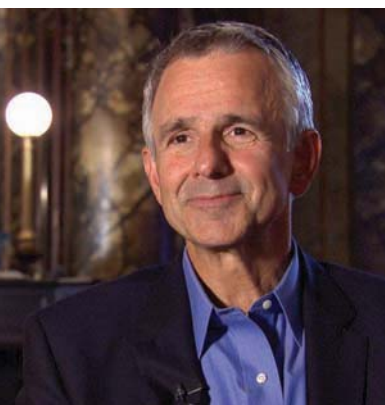
the company and Mr Reid-Anderson entered into a retirement agreement that

becomes effective upon the earlier of: (i) notice from Mr Reid-Anderson of a retirement date on or after February 28, 2020 and (ii) notice from the company of the commencement date of an individual to become the next CEO of the company.

"The retirement agreement provides for the continuation of Mr Reid-Anderson's compensation arrangement under his current employment agreement through his retirement date.

"Under the retirement agreement, if the company identifies a new chief executive before 28 February 2020, Mr Reid-Anderson will continue to receive his salary through 28 February 2020."

## Universal executive Mark Woodbury to deliver keynote speech at this year's TEA Summit



■ Mark Woodbury joined Universal in 1988, taking a leading role in planning and design

Universal Parks and Resorts executive Mark Woodbury is to deliver the keynote address at April's Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) Summit in Anaheim, California, US – an event at which he will also receive the TEA Buzz Price Thea Award for a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements.

Woodbury has been vice chair of Universal Parks and Resorts since 2017, president of Universal Creative since 2006, and is responsible for overseeing all

**"Woodbury will also receive the TEA Buzz Price Thea Award for a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements"**

aspects of Universal Parks and Resorts' planning and design worldwide. A licensed architect, he joined Universal in 1988 and is known for a visionary approach to developing innovative theme parks and resorts.

As president of Universal Creative, he and his team have expanded Universal's Orlando Resort into a world-class destination with the

addition of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, three new hotel properties and the Volcano Bay waterpark. The team is now looking to bring Universal to China, through the proposed Universal Beijing Resort.

The three-day TEA summit begins on 11 April 2019 and closes with the 25th Annual TEA Thea Awards Gala on 13 April.



■ Varney said Merlin is geared for further expansion

**"2018 saw improved momentum across most of our businesses, reflecting the strength of our portfolio"**

## Nick Varney: Upbeat results provide impetus for growth

European attractions operator Merlin Entertainments has reported growth across a number of areas of the business in 2018, including record visitor numbers.

Some 67 million people visited Merlin's attractions during the year, up from 66 million in 2017.

The boost in visitors resulted the operator reporting a profit before tax of £285m (US\$377m, €332m), an increase of 4.9 per cent on 2017, with its operating free cash flow increasing by 9.7 per cent to £345m (US\$457m, €402m).

Nick Varney, chief executive officer of Merlin Entertainments, commented: "2018 saw improved momentum across most of our businesses, reflecting the strength of our diversified portfolio and geographic spread.

Resort theme parks benefited from investment, such as the Wicker Man coaster at Alton Towers; Legoland Parks' growth was driven by record levels of accommodation openings; and, in addition to seven new attractions, the midway attractions saw improving trends in London.

# Attractions

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## SeaWorld COO **John Reilly** leaving company after 34 years at the company



■ Under Reilly's brief leadership, attendance at SeaWorld surged

Following the conclusion of SeaWorld's search for a CEO, its chief operating officer, John Reilly, has announced he will be leaving the company at the end of this month following a 34-year tenure.

Reilly, who joined SeaWorld in August 1985, acted as chief parks officer until February last year when he was named interim CEO following Joel Manby's departure. With the permanent appointment of Gus Antorcha as CEO in February, Reilly took on the role of COO.

**"We're encouraged by the new energy at the company and the results we're delivering"**

"We thank John for his contributions during his 34-year tenure at SeaWorld and wish him the best going forward," said Antorcha.

"We're encouraged by the new energy at the company and the results we're delivering by executing on our strategy of optimising pricing, improving marketing, introducing new guest experiences and driving capital and cost efficiencies."

Under Reilly's leadership, attendance at SeaWorld surged following a restructuring both behind the scenes and in its parks. This included introducing a five-point plan focused on "Experiences That Matter" – an extensive rebranding effort that included the elimination of theatrical orca shows and the promise that the operator's current generation of orcas would be its last.

## Compagnie des Alpes chief **Dominique Marcel** says acquisition of Austrian Park will reinforce the geographical coverage

French theme park and ski resort operator Compagnie des Alpes (CDA) has acquired Austria's Familypark in a deal worth €72.5m (US\$82m, £62.3m).

The deal sees CDA assume 100 per cent of the shares in the theme park, which is located in the tourist region of Neusiedl Lake, near Vienna.

Familypark welcomed more than 716,000 visitors during 2018, of which around 30 per cent arrived from neighbouring countries Hungary and Slovakia.

The park made revenues of €19.1m (US\$21.6m, £16.4m) with pre-tax profits of €6.8m (US\$7.7m, £5.8m) in 2018.



■ Dominique Marcel said the company will continue to grow

**"This acquisition is perfectly in line with the strategy that the group has deployed over several years"**

CDA noted the 13 hectares of land reserves adjacent to the park in a statement

on the deal, possibly pointing towards potential expansion and development.

"This acquisition is perfectly in line with the strategy that the group has deployed over several years in our parks," said Dominique Marcel, CDA chairman and CEO.

"It will reinforce the geographical coverage of our very coherent park portfolio. We are, therefore, very pleased to welcome Familypark among our sites.

"In this context, the group will continue its efforts to seize value-creating acquisition opportunities."

Founded in 1989, Compagnie des Alpes operates 22 leisure sites across Europe, attracting nearly 23 million visitors each year.



■ Celebrated architect Kengo Kuma has designed the museum

{ **"OMM will stand as a new landmark that reconnects the town with its history"** }

## Kengo Kuma's wood market-inspired museum to open this year

The Kengo Kuma-designed Odunpazarı Modern Museum (OMM) is slated to launch in Eskisehir, Turkey – the former "Turkic World" capital of culture – in June.

The 4,500 sq m museum, which takes its cantilevered, stacked appearance from the town's Ottoman-era houses and traditional wood market, will unfold over three floors and comprise exhibition galleries, workshop areas, event spaces, a cafe, and a shop.

Founded by Turkish billionaire and art aficionado Erol Tabanca, the attraction – the region's first modern art museum – will house his

personal collection of post-1950s art, which he acquired over the course of 15 years.

"OMM will stand as a new landmark that reconnects the town with its history, and as a progressive cultural development for Eskisehir and the Central Anatolian region," Tabanca commented.

Speaking on the project, Kengo Kuma and Yuki Ikeguchi – the lead architect – said: "We wanted the building to carry the history and of the town, to resonate both on a human scale and with the unique streetscape of Odunpazarı, which passing through is a special experience in itself."

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## NEW OPENING

# Interactive pavilion for Disney's Epcot

Disney has announced details of its plan to transform the Epcot theme park at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, US, which it says will be open in time for the 50th anniversary of the resort in 2021.

Plans revealed by Thomas Smith, editorial content director at Disney Parks, include a unique "play pavilion" that will be devoted to "playful fun" and feature an "innovative city" that will come to life under the former Wonders of Life dome. This city will be bursting with interactive experiences, favourite Disney characters, hands-on activities and entertainment, the article said.

Zach Riddley, portfolio executive for Walt Disney Imagineering, is quoted as

saying that the play pavilion will be "beyond anything we've ever created".

He added: "Built on the power of play, it introduces an immersive and interactive 'city' where you can explore, create, and interact with some of your favourite Disney characters. This is an experience worthy of our bold vision for Epcot – and another signature element of our transformation."

Further changes at Epcot (which opened in 1971 and was named after Walt Disney's idea for a utopian city; Epcot stands for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow) include new pathways, green spaces and a fountain at the entrance plaza.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/3M7P2\\_A](http://lei.sr/3M7P2_A)



■ Epcot is gearing up to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2021



**The play pavilion will be devoted to playful fun**

Thomas Smith

## MAJOR PROJECT

# Six Flags' first Chinese park to open in 2020



**The park will include a number of 'record-breaking coasters', alongside thrill experiences and live shows**

Installation of newly-constructed facilities at Six Flags' first Chinese waterpark is moving ahead and is expected to be finished in Q2 this year, ahead of the park's anticipated opening in June 2020.

The waterpark is being built on the shore of Hangzhou Bay in Zhejiang Province, Eastern China, 45 miles (72km) from downtown Shanghai. The waterpark and theme park will include a number of "record-breaking coasters, unique thrill experiences and incredible live shows", according to Six Flags, which is developing the attraction with its Chinese partner, Riverside Investment Group.



■ The park will be located in Zhejiang province

Six Flags has announced the construction of several theme parks for China, with those at Zhejiang, Nanjing and Chongqing all having Six Flags Kids World parks, designed especially for families with younger children with junior-sized versions of coasters and rides, being built adjacent to them.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/f2g2Y\\_A](http://lei.sr/f2g2Y_A)





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## ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

# Canadian cetacean ban order upheld

A legal dispute between Vancouver Aquarium in Canada and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation regarding the keeping of cetaceans is set to rumble on, after an appeal court decision this week.

Following the deaths of two beluga whales in captivity at Vancouver Aquarium, the board passed a bylaw amendment in May 2017 banning cetaceans from being brought to or kept in city parks.

The aquarium's response was to ask for a judicial review seeking to set aside the bylaw amendment on four grounds, including that the park board's licence agreement with the aquarium prevented it from applying the change. A British Columbia (BC) Supreme Court

judge agreed with this and declared the bylaw amendment void. However, a panel of three Appeal Court judges has now overturned that decision, and has sent the matter back to the BC Supreme Court to consider the other grounds in the aquarium's challenge.

Whichever way the legal wrangle eventually turns, Vancouver Aquarium has already decided not to keep dolphins or whales any longer – a decision announced in January 2018.

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation chair Stuart Mackinnon said: "The amendment to our bylaw is thoughtful and reflective of public opinion."

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/P3f3b\\_O](http://lei.sr/P3f3b_O)



■ Chester, a false killer whale at Vancouver Aquarium



**The amendment to our bylaw is reflective of public opinion**

Stuart Mackinnon

## REOPENING

# Turkey's Ankapark rebrands as Wonderland Eurasia



**The park received 980,000 visitors – a serious issue**

Mehmet Özhasseki

The huge new theme park in Ankara, Turkey, that had been known as Ankapark has now officially opened under the new moniker Wonderland Eurasia.

Covering an area of 1.4m sq m (15.1m sq ft), Wonderland Eurasia boasts 26 large rides among its 2,117 total, with 13 huge tents and a large outdoor area.

It also houses a fountain that can push water up to 120 metres high and a 5km-long rail network. Solar panels generate power for some sections of the park, marking its sustainability credentials. Since opening 20 March, the park has welcomed almost one



■ The city park covers an area of 1.4m sq m

million visitors through its doors, according to AK Party mayoral candidate for the province, Mehmet Özhasseki.

"Despite it being on weekdays, 230,000 people from Ankara visited the park. Now, the number has reached 980,000 – a serious number," Özhasseki said.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/c4N6t\\_A](http://lei.sr/c4N6t_A)





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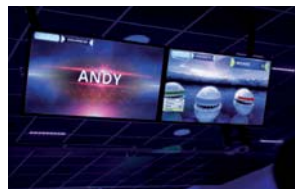


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## HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS

## Notorious Portuguese prison to reopen as museum

Portugal's new National Museum of Resistance and Freedom is set to open on 27 April 2019 – the 45th anniversary of the closure of the building where it is situated: the notorious Peniche political prison.

The 16th Century fortress at Peniche in Leiria, nestled among the rocks overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, about an hour to the north-west of Lisbon, was used to hold dissidents and opponents of Portugal's Fascist regime between 1934 and 1974.

Now it will become the country's first national centre dedicated to this turbulent past, with an important role in teaching younger generations that their freedom did not come

without cost. The inaugural exhibition at the museum will take place alongside the unveiling of a "memory wall" inscribed with the names of the 2,500 people who entered the prison during the Estado Novo regime of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar.

The regeneration of the bleak structures has cost €3.4m (US\$3.8m, £2.9m), with architect João Barros Matos of AR4 studio being given the task of designing the museum as a tribute to the political prisoners who inhabited the site. In 1960, Peniche was the setting for a remarkable escape, when ten inmates drugged a jailer and abseiled down the walls to waiting getaway cars.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/y5h4D\\_A](http://lei.sr/y5h4D_A)



■ The fortress at Peniche overlooks the Atlantic Ocean



**The museum will become the country's first national centre dedicated to its turbulent past**

## MAJOR PROJECT

## 'World's largest' planetarium for Wales



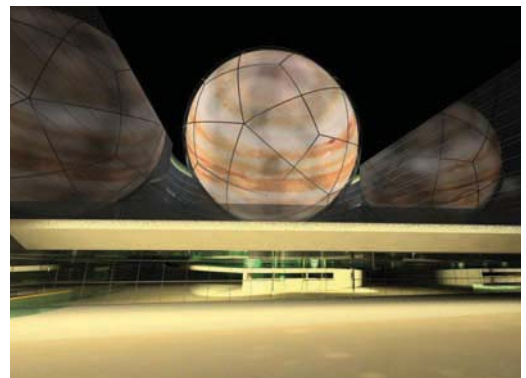
**This will be a driver for economic regeneration for the region**

Tim Smit

A new £40m (US\$52.8m, €46.8m) planetarium at the site of a former coal mine in Wales will be one of the world's largest when it is built, according to plans.

Based at the Tower Colliery, which was the oldest continuously working deep coal mine in the UK until its closure in 2008, Planetarium Wales is an ambitious project that will feature a planetarium theatre, an experiential discovery centre and an education and research centre.

The initial planning and feasibility studies for it have been completed and Dark Sky Wales, the company behind Planetarium Wales, is now



■ The project is driven by Dark Sky Wales

in the process of finalising those plans and taking consultations.

Sir Tim Smit, the man behind Cornwall's Eden Project, has publicly backed the idea, which he hopes will be a driving force behind economic regeneration in the Valleys and the Glamorgan area of South Wales.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/y4a4f\\_A](http://lei.sr/y4a4f_A)



## NEW RIDE

# Busch Gardens to replace defunct Gwazi

Busch Gardens has announced it will replace its former wooden rollercoaster Gwazi, which closed in 2015, with a new record-breaking thrill ride.

The US theme park, which is celebrating its 60th birthday, is to build a wood and steel hybrid coaster with a maximum height of over 200ft (61m), where Gwazi was located.

Manufactured by Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC), the new coaster will be a Gwazi reincarnation of sorts and will feature elements of the former coaster.

The new coaster, as-yet-unnamed, will open in 2020 and will be the world's fastest and steepest hybrid coaster and North America's tallest. The theme park also

released further details of its forthcoming Tigris coaster, which it announced in September 2018. The park said Tigris is due to open in Q2 of this year and that its track is complete and testing will begin soon.

"This cadence of back-to-back new attractions is unprecedented for our park, and continues our legacy as Florida's thrill ride leader," said Stewart Clark, president of Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and Adventure Island.

The original Gwazi opened in 1999. RMC's update is likely to use steel I-Box tracks – a technology the company has used on many other hybrids it has built before.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/4Z7F4\\_A](http://lei.sr/4Z7F4_A)



■ A rendering of the new hybrid coaster at Busch Gardens



“

**This cadence of back-to-back new attractions is unprecedented**

Stewart Clark

## NEW OPENING

# Hagrid's motorbike attraction to open at at Wizzarding World

“

**The ride will replace the park's Dragon Challenge dual coasters, which closed in 2017**

Universal has confirmed rumours for its new Harry Potter-themed rollercoaster, unveiling Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure, which opens later this year.

A new poster for the ride shows a plunging coaster that will shuttle visitors on motorbikes through the Wizzarding World area on a looping rail.

The ride, which is currently under construction, will replace the park's Dragon Challenge dual coasters, which closed in 2017.

Universal Creative has worked in collaboration with Warner Bros and the production design team from the Harry



■ Universal has worked with Warner Bros on the ride

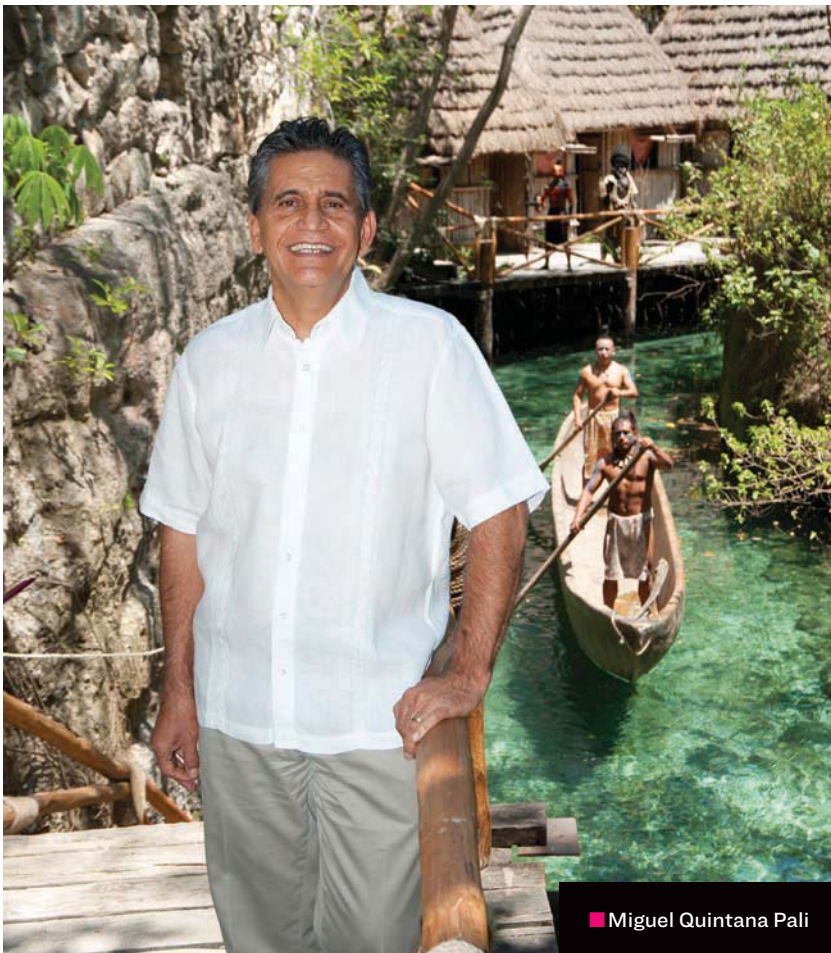
Potter films on the coaster project.

The ride has been described as one of the most highly-themed coaster experiences ever created by Universal and will be located at the Hogsmeade area of Islands of Adventure in the Wizzarding World's Orlando site.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/k8e3c\\_A](http://lei.sr/k8e3c_A)

# Xcaret to invest \$2bn on diversification

The Mexican attractions operator has revealed plans for its largest ever investment, which will see it diversify its offer beyond adventure parks



■ Miguel Quintana Pali

**M**exican attraction Xcaret has revealed plans to expand into new territories within Central and South America and is working on a number of new offerings that will diversify its existing attractions portfolio.

The company's 8-year, US\$2bn plan envisages 12 new hotels, a convention centre, shopping plaza and a 12,000-seat stadium.

Speaking in the latest edition of *Attractions Management*, the company's founder, Miguel Quintana Pali, outlined how he intends to augment the eight different experiences already set up under the Xcaret Experiencias Group umbrella.

The original Xcaret park, built on the site of an old Mayan port, features a river that flows through a Mayan village, a subterranean sluice, a beach offering activities such as Sea Trek and Snuba in the reefs, a museum, equestrian show, Mesoamerican ball game and an open theatre.

Among the existing additional attractions is Xel-Há, a natural aquarium and turtle reserve, and Xplor, an adventure park in the jungle with zip-lining, cave explorations and amphibious vehicle excursions. The most recently developed attraction is Xavage, which is opening in April 2019, offering thrills such as speedboat rides, zip-lining, white-water rafting and off-road driving.

**“** We have a number of new offerings also in the works, including fishing experiences and tours **”**





■ Xcaret is looking to invest in marine experiences

**We're also looking to expanding into Yucatan, which has a rich history, with colonial towns, churches and haciendas**

However, Pali told AM that he would like to replicate the Xcaret experience in countries such as Columbia and Venezuela: "It could be done, but you can't do it on just any piece of land. It has to be special, meaning it has to have a rich landscape with rivers, caves and lagoons and it has to be a very natural, beautiful place," he said.

"For Xcaret, 500 years ago it was a Mayan port. Back then, people from across Central America came to visit. This is a historic place with a natural backdrop. To make something similar for a new culture would be the main challenge."

Pali also revealed plans to expand into the neighbouring state of Yucatan, as well as to create a new boat service from the neighbouring island of Cozumel, 18km away.

"Right now, we're planning to develop new parks at our home site," he said. "We're also looking at expanding into Yucatan, which has a rich history, with

colonial towns, churches, monasteries, cenotes and haciendas. Xcaret doesn't have a lot of these things, so it's something different we could offer.

"We have a number of new offerings also in the works, including fishing experiences and tours to the island of Isla Mujeres. We're also buying a couple of 600-passenger boats, to bring passengers from Cozumel, which welcomes cruise ships on a daily basis, so could be a big draw for us."

Xcaret has a development philosophy that respects the environment and makes use of natural features rather than destroying them to make way for its plans. This was most vividly demonstrated at its new five-star 900-suite hotel, which sits on the Mexican coastline, surrounded by a wild jungle.

Xcaret's success was rewarded at this year's IAAPA show in Orlando, where it picked up a prestigious Applause Award.



■ The company has drawn up an eight-year plan for expansion





■ In total, the NBA Experience will feature 13 separate activities, combining basketball with "Disney magic"

## Disney teams up with NBA

Disney's new 'ground-breaking' sports attraction – the NBA Experience – is set to open in August



■ Salvatore LaRocca

Disney's NBA Experience at its Disney Springs leisure district in Orlando, Florida, will open on 12 August 2019, the basketball league has confirmed.

Replacing DisneyQuest, the experience has been inspired by the modern architecture of NBA arenas across the US and will include interactive games and competitions, immersive NBA video productions and interactive experiences, a

retail store and a restaurant sitting adjacent to the main building.

Stretching across 44,000sq ft (4,000sq m) and two floors, the NBA Experience will also offer photo ops, trivia challenges and skills exercises, and will give visitors a hands-on taste of life as a professional player.

In a statement, Disney said the attraction has been designed for everyone who's "dreamed of getting scouted, throwing down a monster jam or hitting a game-winning





■ NBA Experience is being built on the site of the old DisneyQuest (above) and will feature a number of interactive attractions

jumper". In total, there will be 13 separate activities combining NBA action with Disney theme park magic – so that the "whole family can get their game on like the pros".

### AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

The attraction has been developed by Walt Disney Imagineering in collaboration with the NBA and is inspired by the league's 29 arenas, such as the Staples Centre in Los Angeles, New York's Barclays Centre and Boston's TD Garden.



The NBA Experience will be a destination dedicated to basketball fans from all over the world

"The Walt Disney Imagineering team has unparalleled expertise in creating best-in-class attractions for the millions of guests who visit their parks each year," said Salvatore LaRocca, president of Global Partnerships at the NBA, speaking at the end of last year.

"The NBA Experience will be a destination dedicated to basketball fans from all over the world and we are excited to partner with Disney to bring new and lifelong fans closer to the game."



Attractions that have invested in their buildings and presented globally significant exhibitions have been successful

Bernard Donoghue, ALVA



# Visitor boom for UK attractions

Official figures show that visitor attractions in the UK saw visitor numbers rise by almost 9 per cent during 2018



■ The British Museum in London is still among the most visited cultural attractions in the UK

Visitor numbers to UK attractions grew by 8.7 per cent in 2018, according to the latest figures from the Association of Leading

Visitor Attractions (ALVA). The body, which represents the UK's most iconic attractions, surveyed its 57 members – who manage more than 2,200 sites – finding that London's Tate Modern gallery was the most visited attraction, Scotland was the best performing region outside London and Chester Zoo was the most visited site outside of the capital.

## INCREASING ATTENDANCES

The Tate Modern welcomed 5.9 million visitors in 2018, an increase of 3.7 per cent on 2017, which ALVA put down to its new extension and two exhibits in particular – The EY Exhibition: Picasso 1932 - Love, Fame, Tragedy and Modigliani. 67.6 million





■ The iconic terracotta warriors exhibition helped Liverpool's World Museum increasing visitor numbers by 111 per cent

## Tourism is our fifth biggest industry and visitor attractions are a principal reason for overseas visits to the UK

people – almost the same number as the UK population – visited some form of attraction in London alone – a 3.4 per cent increase on 2017 – and all of the top 10 most visited were in the capital.

Other big performers in the capital's top 10 clean sweep were the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Natural History Museum, the Southbank Centre and the Royal Academy.

Meanwhile, the next best performers were in Scotland – the National Museum of Scotland was 11th with 2.2 million visitors, an increase of 3 per cent, while Edinburgh Castle had a 2 per cent increase with 2.1 million visitors.

Liverpool's World Museum saw a huge increase in 2018, moving up 30 places to 23rd overall with a 111 per cent increase to 1.4 million visitors. ALVA pointed to the China's First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors exhibition, which accounted for

more than 610,000 of those visits.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery also made huge gains with 831,548 visits, a 38 per cent improvement on 2017. The iconic replica diplodocus skeleton that used to stand in London's Natural History Museum came to the city between May and September, which ALVA pointed to as a driving factor behind the increase.

### GROWING SECTOR

"Attractions across the UK have shown that by investing in their buildings and staff, presenting globally significant exhibitions, and bringing iconic artefacts to more people they have become hugely successful," said Bernard Donoghue, director of ALVA.

"Tourism is our fifth biggest industry and third largest employer and ALVA members are proud to be the principal reason that overseas visitors cite when choosing to visit the UK."



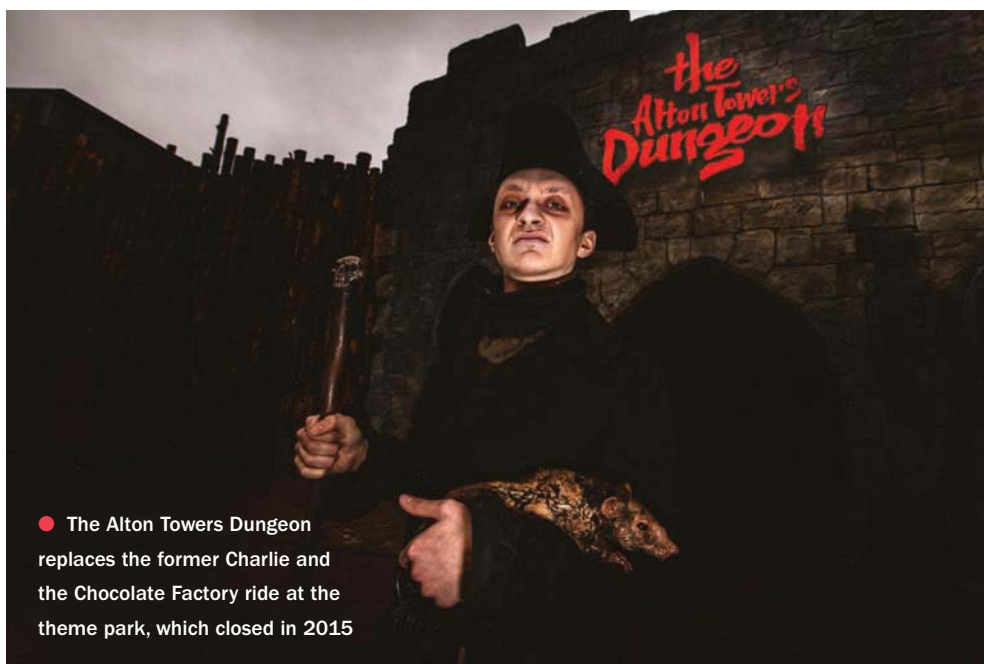
■ The Tate Modern attracted 5.9 million visitors in 2018 – a 3.7 per cent increase on 2017

# PRODUCT INNOVATION

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● The Alton Towers Dungeon replaces the former Charlie and the Chocolate Factory ride at the theme park, which closed in 2015



## Alton Towers Dungeon opens in place of Charlie and Chocolate Factory ride



● The attraction includes 23 actors wearing 309 garments

The Dungeon attraction at Merlin's Alton Towers theme park in Staffordshire has now officially opened – the sixth to open in the UK.

The attraction replaces the former Charlie and the Chocolate Factory ride at the theme park, with that ride permanently closing in 2015.

23 actors, wearing 309 garments and using a raft of props, will entertain and scare visitors, transporting them back in time to history's more gruesome periods throughout the 45-minute long experience.

Visitors board a boat and are transported down the

Black River before entering an array of rooms, including a court and a torture chamber where characters choose a participant to frighten.

"The team have worked really hard to deliver the right balance of scariness and laughter and guests on opening weekend certainly enjoyed the range of creepy characters in the Dungeon – particularly those who had spent time in the Torturer's chair," said Chris Carter, head of entertainments for Alton Towers Resort.

"Many guests hadn't visited a Dungeon before so were

intrigued and delighted by what they found. The Dungeon is a fantastic addition to Alton Towers and we hope guests will continue to enjoy this journey through Staffordshire's horrible history."

The other five Dungeons in the UK are located in London, Blackpool, Edinburgh, Warwick and York. There are others worldwide in destinations as far-flung as Hamburg, Germany; Amsterdam, the Netherlands; San Francisco, US and Shanghai, China.

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

**ALTON TOWERS**



## RES creates world's largest video installation



● Dave Green and Mark Calvert, RES

Visual tech firm Realtime Environment Systems (RES) has completed the world's largest ever permanent video installation at the National Museum of Qatar.

The museum, which opened at the end of last month, features a number of cinematic display zones showcasing specially-created film content.

It features custom film content commissioned by the Doha Film Institute as part of its Art Films project and is powered by 112 Panasonic 4K projectors and 172 media



● RES installed 112 Panasonic 4K projectors at the museum

servers that process more than 21bn pixels per second.

To ensure the AV equipment worked in synchronicity, HIVE Media Control – a company formed by RES and Harrison Digital Media – created HIVE, a bespoke software package capable of controlling and monitoring the systems across the site.

"This is the biggest project RES has ever undertaken," said RES co-founder Mark Calvert.

"When we first learned about the ambitions for video playback, projection mapping and technical planning, the sheer size of it became apparent."

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD  
REALTIME ENVIRONMENT

## IP attractions

## KCC to design China's first Smurf-themed theme park

KCC Entertainment Design (KCC) is set to design China's first Smurf-themed theme park.

The park's opening, alongside KCC's appointment, was announced at a press conference in Pudong, Shanghai.

Expected to open later this year, the park, which is located

in Dream City, Shanghai, is being built by Shanghai developer Shimao Property Holdings in collaboration with IMPS, owner of The Smurfs brand.

Spread across 20,000 sq m, the park will be both indoors and outdoors and will feature four zones: The Forest, the Smurf's Village, Gargamel's



● KCC CEO Yannick Maes (centre)

in the lives of the Smurfs and get the feeling they are part of the Smurfs family."

In addition, the park will meet the 17 sustainable goals set by the UN and Unicef.

"We have integrated these 17 sustainable goals throughout the park in a non-intrusive and playful way on interactive screens and in parkwide quests. This way, both children and their parents learn about these goals and are invited to become a member of Team Smurfs! We are especially proud to have contributed, although in a small way, to putting this magnificent cause in the picture," Maes added.

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD  
KSS



● The attraction is China's first Smurfs-themed theme park

House and The Outdoors. It will play host to more than 20 different Smurf-themed attractions such as the Smurfs Berry Coaster, Smurf Golf, The AR Gargamel Experience and the Smurfs climbing courses.

Yannick Maes, CEO of KCC, said: "We want the visitor to be completely immersed

2-3 MAY 2018

### **SATE Europe**

**Europa Park, Rust, Germany**

The Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) brings its SATE (Storytelling + Architecture + Technology = Experience) event back to Europe for a second year. A two-day event, SATE Europe will explore the elements changing and influencing award winning visitor attractions across the sector.

**Tel: +91 22 6523 1643**

**Email: [info@teaconnect.org](mailto:info@teaconnect.org)**

**[www.teaconnect.org](http://www.teaconnect.org)**

11-14 JUNE 2019

### **IAAPA Expo Asia**

**Shanghai New International Expo Centre**

IAAPA Expo Asia (formerly Asian Attractions Expo) is IAAPA's exclusive Expo in the Asia Pacific region. It attracts industry professionals from around the world, offering them the opportunity to learn and experience what's new, innovative, and next. As well as educational sessions, more than 300 global companies will showcase new products and services.

**Tel: +1 321/319-7600**

**Contact: [convention@IAAPA.org](mailto:convention@IAAPA.org)**

**[www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia](http://www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia)**

30 JUN - 10 JUL 2019

### **UNESCO World Heritage Committee session**

**Baku, Azerbaijan**

The 43rd session of Unesco's World Heritage Committee will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan between 30 June and 10 July. The annual meeting aims to regularly examine the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, adding or removing properties from the prestigious list as appropriate.

**Tel: +33 (0)1 45 68 11 04**

**[whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)**



■ The event is set to attract more than 3,000 booths and 500 exhibitors this year

9-11 MAY 2019

### **Asia Amusement & Attractions Expo (AAA) 2019**

**China Import & Export Fair Complex (Area A)**

This years event is set to cover an exhibition area of 100,000sq m, with

3,000 booths and more than 500 exhibitors. AAA – which has integrated with the CIAE & TPAE shows – has become the largest event in Asia.

**Tel: +86-20-22106418**

**Contact: [grand.ti@grahw.com](mailto:grand.ti@grahw.com)**

**[www.aaaexpos.com](http://www.aaaexpos.com)**

21-24 SEPTEMBER 2019

### **ASTC 2019 Annual Conference Ontario Science Centre Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference provides an opportunity to display products and services to the largest gathering of science museum professionals from across the globe. Nearly 2,000 attendees from science centres, museums, nature centres, aquariums, planetariums, and natural history museums will take part. They come to network, attend more than 100 sessions, and learn about products or services.

**Tel: +1 202 783 7200**

**Contact: [kellies@astc.org](mailto:kellies@astc.org)**

**[www.astc.org/conference](http://www.astc.org/conference)**

4 OCTOBER 2019

### **VAC 2019**

**QEII Conference Centre, London, UK**

The Annual National Conference of Visitor Attractions (VAC) is the pre-eminent event for all types of Visitor Attractions in the

UK. Run by the industry for the industry, VAC is firmly established as the key place to meet and network with contemporaries and to participate in a stimulating programme – whatever your interest in the sector.

**[www.vacevents.com](http://www.vacevents.com)**

16-19 SEPTEMBER 2019

### **IAAPA Expo Europe Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, France**

IAAPA Expo Europe is the largest international conference and trade show for the leisure and attractions industry in the Europe, Middle East, Africa (EMEA) region. More than 15,000 leisure and attractions industry professionals from more than 100 countries, including 9,000 influential buyers and over 550 manufacturer and supplier companies will gather to learn about and demonstrate the latest technology and innovative products and services.

**Tel: +43 (0) 22 162 915 1**

**Contact: [akolar@IAAPA.org](mailto:akolar@IAAPA.org)**

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# Attractions

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## MANAGEMENT NEWS



Recruitment headaches?  
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### Tell me about Attractions Management News

Whatever leisure facilities you're responsible for, the AM News service can raise your recruitment to another level and help you find great people.

### How does it work?

We work in partnership with you to get your job vacancies in front of qualified, experienced industry people via specially customised recruitment campaigns.

### There are loads of recruitment services, how is AM News special?

AM News is the only recruitment service in the industry offering job marketing in print, on digital, social, email, via an online job board and on video, so you get the best of all worlds for one competitive price.

### What are the most powerful features?

We position your job vacancy listings right next to our popular industry news feeds, so your career opportunities catch the eye of those hard-to-reach candidates who aren't currently job hunting.

In addition, to celebrate the 100th issue of AM News, we've also relaunched the website with fantastic enhanced search functionality which enables you to target the best candidates with a laser focus.

### I hear you're part of Leisure Media

Yes, we give you access to Leisure Media's entire network of print, digital, online and social brands, enabling you to build your profile as an Employer of Choice™ via **Leisure Opportunities, Health Club Management, Sports Management, Leisure Management, Attractions Management, and Spa Business/Spa Opportunities.**

### What packages are available?

We offer everything you need, from rolling Powerpack campaigns which earn you extra job marketing goodies and discounts, to targeted ad hoc campaigns, reputation management promotions, executive job marketing and open day and schools and apprenticeship marketing.

### Is there more?

Yes, we also offer a range of HR services through our sister company, HR Support, such as cv screening, shortlisting and interviewing to final shortlist.

### What now?

We have packages to suit all budgets and requirements and we'd love to talk to you about how we can partner to bring inspirational people into your organisation to give you that competitive advantage you know will make a difference.

## Meet the Attractions Management News recruitment team



Liz Terry



Julie Badrick



Paul Thorman



Sarah Gibbs



Chris Barnard



Gurpreet Lidder

Hope to hear from you soon on +44 (0)1462 431385 or email [theteam@leisuremedia.com](mailto:theteam@leisuremedia.com)



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**LEGOLAND Discovery Center Arizona is looking for an experienced Attraction Operations Manager to join the team!**

About The Role Manage a team of fun driven and enthusiastic magic and memorable experience makers. The Operations Manager is responsible for the day-to-day smooth and profitable operation of our dynamic attraction and has the ability to work at a quick pace and exhibit situational flexibility.

We are looking for a highly self-motivated strong leader with proven success managing operational teams. Passion for providing excellent experiences to our guests is critical.

In return you will find a competitive salary and benefits package (including a medical, vision, dental, life insurance and 401(k) matching plan offering), share program opportunities, and benefit from free entry to all of our Merlin attractions.

Merlin Entertainments, plc Merlin Entertainments is a business built on fun. We are the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator. The objective is to provide a truly memorable experience and a great day out for all members of the family.

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## A BRAND NEW VISITOR ATTRACTION



Silverstone has been synonymous with motor racing since the mid-20th century. It is now one of the most famous sporting venues in the world. The Silverstone Experience will tell the 'whole' Silverstone story.

Through the creation of The Silverstone Experience as a centre of focus and understanding, the heritage of Silverstone can reach a far wider audience than before and ultimately cement its position as the centre for British motor sport heritage.

The project will open in the spring of 2019 and the vision is to bring the extensive heritage of Silverstone and British motor racing to life through the creation of a dynamic, interactive and educational visitor experience.



## Commercial Manager - Retail Operations

A new and exciting opportunity has arisen to lead the Retail shop operation at The Silverstone Experience.

Salary: c £30,000 per annum

You will lead The Silverstone Experience Retail shop operation as well as being part of our Duty Management Team. You will ensure that our shop is commercially successful and exceeds our visitors' expectations by managing a small team of retail staff.

**For full job description, person specification and to apply: <http://lei.sr/Q9B5T>**

This is a fantastic time to join us and be part of the exciting journey through the past, present and future of Silverstone and British motor racing.

You must have a minimum of two years relevant experience in a high profile, high quality retail or attractions operation and it is essential that you have a GCSE English and Maths – Grade C or above. A degree level qualification in a related discipline is desirable but not vital.



## Visitor Services Manager

### Competitive salary

Since its opening in 2009, Yorkshire Wildlife Park has evolved to become the UK's number 1 on-foot safari. We feature walkthrough exhibits that take the guest directly into the world of the animals. A dynamic centre for conservation and welfare, the park currently has around 550 animals across 58 different species. We aim to provide a quality, value for money experience that excites and inspires our guests. Unique, innovative and undergoing a period of continued rapid growth and development, Yorkshire Wildlife Park attracted 750,000 visitors in 2018.

We're looking for an experienced Visitor Services Manager to lead our innovative and dynamic visitor services team to deliver a world-class guest experience. The successful candidate will have relevant experience within the visitor services industry and demonstrate strong commercial acumen.

This is an exciting opportunity for someone who wishes to join Yorkshire Wildlife Park as it embarks upon its stunning expansion project, which will include new animal reserves, restaurants, destination hotel and a new visitor support hub.

#### Main Duties & Responsibilities:

- Oversee the daily operational management of the Visitor Services Department.
- Work with the marketing team to implement CRM strategy.
- Work with the marketing/ events team to implement new visitor products and offerings.

#### Candidate:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills with a results-driven team ethos.
- Ambitious and enthusiastic with a strong drive for self-motivation.
- Financially astute with a good understanding and keen interest in managing within a fast-paced commercial enterprise.
- Innovative in approach to work with excellent attention to detail.
- Flexible and able to work during our peak periods which include weekends, bank holidays and school holidays.

To download the vacancy information pack and the required application form, please click here: <http://lei.sr/m0P3T>

**CLOSING DATE:**  
**15 APR 2019**



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### Castle Development Manager

Salary: Scale SO1, £26,999 to £28,785  
Company: Rutland County Council  
Location: Oakham, UK

### Commercial Manager - Retail Operations

Salary: Up to £30,000 pa  
Company: The Silverstone Experience  
Location: Silverstone, Towcester, UK

### Visitor Services Manager

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Yorkshire Wildlife Park  
Location: Branton, Doncaster, UK

### Regional HSS Manager (Asia)

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Merlin Entertainments Group  
Location: Shanghai, China

### Operations Manager

Salary: Competitive  
Company: The Eye Brand  
Location: Sydney NSW, Australia

### Attraction Operations Manager

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Legoland Discovery Centre  
Location: Tempe, Arizona, USA

### General Manager

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Madame Tussauds  
Location: San Francisco, California, USA

### Group Sales Assistant

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Legoland Discovery Centre  
Location: Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

### Head of Trade Sales & Strategic Partners

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Merlin Entertainments Group  
Location: Goshen, New York, USA

### Human Resource Manager

Salary: Circa £32,000 per annum  
Company: Eureka  
Location: Halifax, UK

### Assistant Director Visitor and Site Operations

Salary: Circa £42,000 per annum  
Company: Eureka  
Location: Halifax, UK

### Seasonal opportunities at Gulliver's

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Gulliver's Theme Park  
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom

### HR Generalist (m / w)

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Heide Park Resort  
Location: Soltau, Germany

### Shift Manager

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Legoland Discovery Centre  
Location: Atlanta, Georgia, USA

### Seasonal opportunities at Gulliver's

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Gulliver's Theme Park  
Location: Matlock Bath

### Seasonal opportunities at Gulliver's

Salary: Competitive  
Company: Gulliver's Theme Park  
Location: Milton Keynes, UK

### Seasonal opportunities at Gulliver's

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