

Lego named world's most powerful brand

An annual study looking at the world's most powerful brands has determined that Lego is the world's number one, beating the likes of PricewaterhouseCoopers, Red Bull and Ferrari to the title.

The research, conducted every year by Brand Finance, analysed thousands of the world's top brands, determining which are the most powerful and which are the most valuable.

Brand Finance cited the success of *The Lego Movie* for pushing the brand to top spot for power, after it generated nearly US\$500m (€437.6m, £325.3m) over the last year. Lego overtook Ferrari as the top brand, which dropped to ninth spot in the



The release of *The Lego Movie* played a big part in Lego's ranking

power rankings. The report states that while Ferrari still remains a very strong brand, its power is slowly diminishing.

Lego achieved its number one ranking by scoring highly on Brand Finance's Brand Strength Index, which includes familiarity,

loyalty, promotion, staff satisfaction and corporate reputation.

Lego has proved particularly popular as a visitor attraction, with the brand continuing to expand, the most recent announcement being the Merlin's seventh Legoland Discovery Center in the US. Also in the last year, Lego and Merlin announced plans to open new Legoland theme parks in South Korea, Japan and Dubai, and have had a number of successful launches including the Legends of Chima waterpark at Legoland California and a Lego Star Wars attraction at its Malaysia theme park.

More: http://lei.sr?a=3B7X7_A

Disney's ticket price breaks US\$100 mark

Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World is the first theme park to break the US\$100 (£88, £65) admission fee, after a price hike which came on 22 February.

Jumping from US\$99 to US\$105, the family attraction also raised prices at its other parks in Orlando and California, though those remained slightly below US\$100.

The price hike comes on the back of strong attendance growth at Disney's parks and resorts across the US. In the last quarter, revenue rose 9 per cent to US\$3.9bn (€3.4bn, £2.5bn).

More: http://lei.sr?a=U3K2m_A

SeaWorld loses one million visitors in 2014

SeaWorld continues to flounder as its year-end report showed a net loss of US\$24.5m (€22.6m, £16.5m) for the last quarter of 2014 and visitor numbers down by over one million for the year.

Revenue for SeaWorld in Q4 was US\$264.5m (€235.6m, £171.4m) – a drop of around US\$7.4m (3 per cent) on the previous year's results in the same period. Total revenue for 2014 was down 6 per cent on 2013. To add to the loss of revenue, SeaWorld's stock value has plummeted around 50 per cent over the past year and footfall has dropped from 23.4 million to 22.4 million.

The company has been under immense pressure in recent months with the anti-Sea-



SeaWorld revenue in 2014 is down 6 per cent

World documentary *Blackfish* causing a raft of problems. SeaWorld most recently hit the headlines again after the death of an on-loan beluga whale at SeaWorld Orlando.

Continued on back cover

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Bob Chapek succeeds Thomas Staggs to head up Disney's theme park division

Walt Disney has named industry veteran Bob Chapek as its new chair of Parks and Resorts, succeeding Thomas Staggs, who this month was promoted to chief operating officer of the company.

Chapek, who has been with Disney for 20 years and previously served as president of Disney Consumer Products (DCP), oversaw franchise licensing, commercialisation, Disney Publishing Worldwide and the Disney Store.

For his new role, Chapek will report to Thomas Staggs and Disney chief executive Bob Iger. In a statement, Chapek said he was grateful



Bob Chapek has been with Disney for 22 years in total

for the opportunities he had been given at Disney and was looking forward to "creating magical memories" for park visitors.

Chapek takes over at a good time, with the parks

having recorded a 20 per cent increase in profit over the last year, though there will be concerns over Euro Disney, which is struggling to stay in the black.

More: http://lei.sr?a=a9U5j_A

Merlin Entertainments posts solid end of year results after a successful 2014

Merlin Entertainments has posted strong end of year results, recording a compounded annual growth rate from 2010 to 2014 of 12.6 per cent.

Over the year, Merlin generated £1.25bn (US\$1.9bn, €1.7bn) in revenue, posting a £411m (US\$637m, €561m) pre-tax profit. The attractions giant was able to deliver positive growth from existing attractions along with the continued rollout of its various brands.

In the past year, Merlin welcomed more than 62 million visitors to its 105 attractions. 2014 ended positively for the company,



Merlin Entertainments CEO Nick Varney

with like-for-like revenue growth in resort theme parks increasing thanks to a considerable Halloween offering, an unseasonably warm autumn in the UK and the continued strong performance of the

Legoland parks in California and Florida. After a difficult start, Midway Attractions' performance improved in Q3 and Q4, with solid returns in the UK and China.

More: http://lei.sr?a=y3A5p_A

Work starts on US\$1.8bn Resorts World Jeju

A groundbreaking ceremony has been held for South Korea's US\$1.8bn (€1.6bn, £1.2bn) Resorts World Jeju, which aims to rival its Singapore counterpart Resorts World Sentosa.

Being jointly developed by Chinese property developer Landing International Development and Genting Singapore, the resort will cover 2.5sq km (1sq m) and will offer more than 20 different rides and attractions in seven different zones. Also included will be a waterpark and a themed food and retail complex. The resort's premium hotels will have more than 2,000 rooms and will include Jeju's first six-star hotel and a destination spa. In addition, cultural, leisure and entertainment amenities are planned, as well as 1,500 serviced apartments and residential villas.

Plans for the casino, theme park and resort were first announced last year, with the groundbreaking delayed from June 2014 after newly-elected governor Won Hee-ryong shot down the plans, stating the original proposal from Genting Singapore didn't include a casino.



Resorts World Jeju is scheduled to open in 2017, with the full development ready by 2019

The plans have since regained approval, but still face stiff opposition from local residents who have expressed concerns that the development will become a gambling hub.

The development is slated to open progressively from 2017, with the full development completed by 2019.

More: http://lei.sr?a=Y7U9a_A

Zoos SA outlines 20-year masterplan for its zoos in Adelaide and Monarto

Zoos South Australia (ZSA) has unveiled a 20-year masterplan for the proposed transformation of both its Adelaide and Monarto Zoos.

The plans, drawn up by Adelaide-based Phillips/Pilkington Architects, detail several immersive environments, including a nature playground at Adelaide, and for Monarto, the addition of a Predator Experience, new visitor centre and overnight safari-style accommodation.

Adelaide Zoo's Nature's Playground and Aussie Icons precinct will be the first to be developed. The new area will include climbing structures, aerial walkways with river



Monarto Zoo's predator experience is part of the plans

views, water play features and an interactive children's zoo with native animals.

Monarto's first development – Predator Experience – will take visitors into the centre of a lion's den, giving

them a close up of the action.

The overnight safari-style accommodation is designed to complement the experience and will likely be similar to that seen at Canberra Zoo.

More: http://lei.sr?a=t8Z3y_A



HPI Architects developed the designs

Plans finalised for US\$19m California planetarium

Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, will start work this year on a US\$19m (€16.8m, £12.3m) planetarium development as part of a larger seven-year US\$965m (€854m, £625.2m) renovation to its district campuses.

The 120-seat planetarium will include a 3D immersion theatre with a 50ft (15.2m) dome, a large Foucault pendulum and open space for exhibits. The project is being funded by a bond measure for the larger US\$965m (€861m, £626m) development of the college campus.

More: http://lei.sr?a=P4V2j_A

Jacksonville Aquarium plan takes step forward

Jacksonville Florida's chances of getting a world-class aquarium in a downtown location have taken a step forward with the news that a feasibility study is about to be launched – a significant step forward for a project that has been two years in the making.

Massachusetts-based ConsultEcon will conduct the study on behalf of AquaJax – the group behind the aquarium development. The study will look at cost estimates, funding options, operations and site locations. The US\$50,000 (€44,000, £32,000) study is being funded by unnamed local investors.

The aquarium development, thought to cost around US\$100m (€88.1m, £64.5m) to US\$120m (€105.8m, £77.4m), could go to three potential sites according to AquaJax – all of which are on the Northbank of Jacksonville near a recently proposed large-scale mixed-use redevelopment of the area.

The 150,000sq ft (13,935sq m) facility will include both salt and freshwater marine environments, as well as add to a manatee rehabilitation programme



Preliminary artist's renderings of the US\$120m aquarium have been drawn up by Haskell

currently underway at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. The feasibility study will take around six to eight weeks to complete and will encourage further investment into the

project, according to AquaJax, which is focusing on both corporate investment and public donations to fund the project.

More: http://lei.sr?a=D6T2k_A



The park is boasting several firsts for SA

South Africa's largest ever waterpark to anchor plans

Work on a major development, centred around what will be South Africa's largest waterpark, will start in January 2016 according to the company behind the multi-million dollar project.

To be located in the town of Scottburgh – tipped by some as the next hot tourist destination for South Africa – the park will include 23 family slides, tube slides and wave riders, with some of the slides being “the first in South Africa”, according to a spokesperson for developer Peter Meyer.

More: http://lei.sr?a=a7w9v_u_A

Kris Yao | Artech wins contest for the New Taipei City Museum of Art

Kris Yao | Artech has been selected to design the New Taipei City Museum of Art after winning an architectural contest with its “Contemporary Museum of Art among the Reeds” design.

The NT\$2.17bn (US\$68.9m, €60.6m, £44.4m), 44,000sq m (473,600sq ft) development, located in New Taipei, Taiwan, is being funded by local government. Kris Yao's winning design will incorporate the site's historical, cultural and geographical features to form a sustainable vision for the proposed plan.

The development has been designed with integration into the surroundings in mind. At



The facility is expected to be fully complete by 2019

the base of the building, an art street and outdoor sculpture gallery are themed to imitate the cracks of the nearby Da Han River riverbed. The main building is comprised of vertical structural tubes

designed to imitate reeds on the outside and has been elevated to offer an impressive exhibition space and provide views of the surrounding river and mountains.

More: http://lei.sr?a=C5N3F_A

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Universal Hollywood tour undergoing overhaul

Universal Studios' Hollywood Studio Tour is undergoing a major revamp, with plans to include refurbished tram vehicles, a night time tour and a multi-million dollar 4D finale based around *The Fast and the Furious*.

The refurb is part of a larger US\$1.6bn (€1.4bn, £1bn) investment into the theme park and surrounding property.

As part of the project, the tram vehicles will be refurbished to include more comfortable seats and ultra-high-definition monitors to show clips from films recorded at the studio. The largest part of the investment will go on the ending to the tour, which will now see the trams enter a 50,000sq ft (4,654sq m) structure housing a 360-degree screen. Passengers will then be shown a 4D thrill ride based on the *The Fast and the Furious*, with the attraction putting guests into the "high-stakes underground world of fast cars". While Universal has not commented on the cost of the attraction, it will rely on similar technology to the previous King Kong version, which



The studio tour has been in operation since 1964 and continues to be incredibly popular

cost around US\$100m (€88m, £65m) when it opened to the public in 2010.

"This will be the biggest upgrade we've ever made," said Scott Strobl, senior vice

president and head of operations at the park. "This will put a cap on our tour, something everybody will be excited about."

More: http://lei.sr?a=z3U5b_A



The development will be ready by 2018

Israel plans space park visitor attraction

Israel's Ashdod Municipality has released plans for the development of a space-themed amusement park, to help inspire the next generation of intrepid space travellers.

Working in conjunction with the Israel Space Agency, the 190,000sq m (47 acre) International Space Center in Ashdod will feature a space shuttle simulator, space-related technology, interactive exhibits, movies, simulators, rides and games, with additional academic facilities also included.

More: http://lei.sr?a=p8S6f_A

Over 18s waterpark coming to BH Mallorca as part of €10m development

Following a takeover by the Cursach Hotel Group, the former Mallorca Rocks hotel is undergoing a €10m (US\$11.3m, £7.4m) redevelopment of its facilities, which will now include a new beach club, stage area and an over 18s waterpark under its new name BH Mallorca.

Scheduled to open on 30 April, the Twisted waterpark on the island of Majorca, Spain, will include the only Aqualoop slide in Europe. The slide – designed by WhiteWater West – drops riders through a trap door before sending them at speeds of up to 40mph (60kmph) into a freefall and then loop.



The waterpark will include the only Aqualoop in Europe

Amusement Logic has provided the rest of the park's slides, which include a four-lane race slide.

All located within the BH Mallorca complex, the development also includes

what will be an open-air festival venue to host the world's top DJs in the summer months and Island Beach Club – a pool area with a resident DJ and cabanas.

More: http://lei.sr?a=c4A9W_A

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Aerobatic Challenge is a ride film from Crazybridge Studios

The Juice-distributed 4D film wins US award

A new ride film distributed by The Juice has won a Silver Telly Award in a US ceremony.

'Aerobatic Challenge' produced by Crazybridge Studios, was selected as a winner in the 35th Annual Telly Awards. The awards were founded in 1979 and honour the best local, regional, and cable TV commercials

and programmes, video and film productions, and online commercials, video and films.

Telly Awards winners are selected by judging panel the Silver Telly Council, while the internet community helps decide the People's Telly Awards winners.

Aerobatic Challenge takes riders on a kaleidoscopic journey through the skies.



Exhibitions at the museum feature a range of technologies

Complexity of integration helps tell museum's story

Rapenburg Plaza has developed a fully-integrated lighting design, multimedia, audio and show control system at the recently-opened National Military Museum in the Netherlands.

With a 20,000sq m exhibition area, it is Europe's biggest military museum and opened to the public on 13 December. Bruns

served as main contractor for the museum interior and subcontracted Rapenburg Plaza to work with exhibition architect Kossmann.dejong on the project. The lighting design consisted of more than 3,900 energy efficient LED lighting sources. The company also designed, installed and programmed a network-based show control system.



The ride was selected in a vote held on the resort's website

Australian Waterslides adds thrills and spills at resort

Two curved racing hydrosides are upping the thrill factor at a New Zealand resort.

Designed, manufactured and installed by Australian Waterslides & Leisure, the waterslides were installed in time for the Christmas holiday season at Taupo DeBretts Spa Resort. Construction began on 16 November, with the slide components

arriving in mid-December and in just one week the slides were assembled and sections lifted onto the steel framing, piece by piece.

Australian's ride was selected following a public vote earlier in 2014 hosted on the resort's website.

The ride supports an existing slide and interactive warm water playground.



Projection mapping was a key element of the five-day event

Watching out for a visual treat during Latvian festival

Dataton's 'Watchout' multi-display software recently provided projection mapping on four landmark buildings in Riga, Latvia, as part of an annual festival.

November's Staro Riga 2014 Festival of Light attracted an estimated 500,000 visitors with light processions, art installations and architectural projections, while

also celebrating the Latvian city as the joint European Capital of Culture 2014.

System integrator Solaris, based in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, Russia, supplied Watchout systems and hardware for projection mapping on the facades of the Astor Riga Hotel, Congress Centre, St Peter's Church and the Academy of Arts.

Construction begins on Hong Kong's M+ Museum

Work has started on the M+ Museum West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), Hong Kong, following a ground breaking ceremony.

Designed by Herzog and de Meuron in partnership with TFP Farrells and Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong, the museum's ground breaking was marked by the burial of a commemorative time capsule containing contemporary and local items, ready to be rediscovered in a century's time.

The M+ Museum, with a floor space of 60,000sq m (645,834sq ft), is the second project to be built on the WKCD site, following on from the construction of the Xiqu Centre - designed by Bing Thom Architects - which will act as a venue for Chinese opera performances.

Carrie Lam, WKCD chair, said: "M+ is not just another museum. It is a clear demonstration of a future for contemporary art in Hong Kong and underscores the commitment of the Government to enhance Hong Kong's position as an international art and culture metropolis."

M+ will focus on contemporary 20th and 21st century film, art, design and architecture from

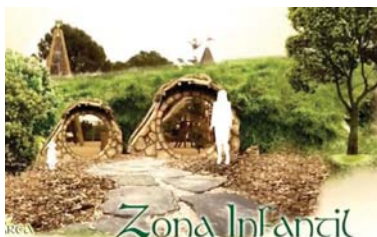


The Herzog and de Meuron building is scheduled for completion in 2018

Asia. Herzog and de Meuron's design lends itself to wide open gallery spaces; constructed in two main sections, the first horizontal and the second, a vertical tower, will allow for inter-

active exhibition spaces as well as a research and curatorial centre. Retail, restaurant and entertainment offerings will also be available.

More: http://lei.sr?a=T8g6W_A



The imagery is similar to that of Tolkien

Tolkien-inspired theme park comes under fire

Plans for a theme park in Torre de Bena-galbón, Spain, have come under fire after comparisons were made of its similarity to JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

Warner Bros - which produced the *Lord of the Rings* movies - has reportedly been looking into the project following a recent reference to Tolkien at its unveiling. Representatives however state that the park would only be based on "the magic of fairy tales, fantasy, elves, which are universally known and do not belong to any author," not the works of Tolkien.

More: http://lei.sr?a=Q7T5R_A

Comcast confirms King Kong returning as visitor attraction to Universal Orlando

Comcast - the parent company of Universal - has confirmed King Kong will be returning to Universal Orlando as a visitor attraction.

In August 2014, AM2 exclusively revealed plans for the Kong attraction, which marks Kong's return to Universal for the first time since 2002, when Kongfrontation was replaced with Revenge of the Mummy.

Speaking during an earnings call, Comcast executives confirmed the plans, though did not reveal details. AM2 understands however that the ride will include immersive storytelling with high resolution projections and 3D simulation.



Kong's last appearance at Universal Orlando was in 2002

Film Production company Legendary Entertainment revealed in July last year that it would be bringing Kong back to the big screen, while in 2014 Universal struck a deal with Legendary

to co-finance, market and distribute films between 2014 and 2019, specifically mentioning the opportunity to expand its IPs into Universal theme parks.

More: http://lei.sr?a=n4c8X_A



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Captive cetacean debate “back on the table” after beluga whale death

Continued from front cover

The captive cetacean debate has reared its head again following the death of a beluga whale – loaned to Orlando SeaWorld from Vancouver Aquarium – after an encounter with other animals in the tank.

The whale had been undergoing treatment for an infection caused by a broken jaw that occurred after its encounter with two other whales in captivity. Cetacean advocates say that the incident is one that would never have occurred in the wild and was a result of direct proximity.

A ruling by the Vancouver Park Board banning the



The whale died while being treated for an infection

breeding of captive cetaceans collapsed in November, when the board tried to push through a last minute ruling.

Following the latest incident, Park Board commissioner, Michael Wibe, said: “The conversa-

tion has obviously been brought back to the table.”

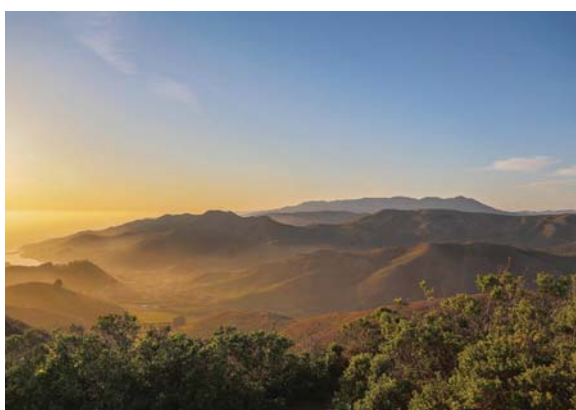
A post-mortem examination is scheduled on the dead beluga, but results are not expected for five to seven weeks.

More: http://lei.sr?a=p6X5d_A

US\$600bn natural heritage sector badly under-funded, says new study

The world’s national parks and nature reserves are thought to be worth US\$600bn (€535bn, £389bn) a year, with around eight billion tourism visits annually. That income, however, is not being supported by adequate investment into heritage protection, according to the team behind the research.

A study published in *PLOS Biology* revealed the statistics and highlighted the need for more investment in protected natural heritage areas. Compared with the US\$600bn spend generated, only around US\$10bn (£8.9bn, £6.5bn) is spent safeguarding those sites.



For the US\$600bn generated, US\$10bn is used for protection

According to the study, natural capital and worth of assets – based on assigning economic value to nature in order to better preserve it in the future – is increasingly an issue in policy making.

Protected areas cover around one eighth of the world’s land and further investment into protection of these areas could yield significant economic returns.

More: http://lei.sr?a=b3k9f_A

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