

Attractions

MANAGEMENT NEWS

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on page 29

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www.attractionsmanagement.com

'No plans' to open SeaWorld park in China

SeaWorld has quashed rumours of a planned expansion into China, with the operator saying it has "no plans" to open a SeaWorld park in the country.

There has been talk of SeaWorld moving into the Chinese market for some time, with Chinese investors Zhonghong Zhuoye Group (ZZG) taking up a majority stake in the operator in March last year.

The deal, which was worth CN¥3bn (US\$448.5m, €386m, £342m), included an agreement that SeaWorld would advise ZZG on the design and development of future themed entertainment destinations in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

In February this year, SeaWorld's interim executive chair, Yoshikazu Maruyama, said that ZZG sees "the huge potential of the opportunity with the SeaWorld brand in China in the future".

Speaking to *Attractions Management* however, a representative for SeaWorld said that the operator was not planning



■ SeaWorld says it has no plans to bring one of its parks to China

to open a park in China any time in the near future. "We have no plans to open a SeaWorld park in China and, accordingly, have not made any announcements to that effect," said the statement.

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=r2n6b_T

“

We have no plans to open a SeaWorld park in China and, accordingly, have not made any announcements to that effect

SeaWorld



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Universal says it's considering rumoured fourth Orlando theme park

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Merlin chief **Nick Varney** reiterates cetacean stance as operator closes in on world first whale sanctuary

Merlin chief executive Nick Varney has reiterated the company's stance on cetacean captivity, as it embarks on its first steps to create an ocean sanctuary for a pair of captive beluga whales.

In 2012, Merlin acquired Living and Leisure Australia (LLA), which in its portfolio included Shanghai Chang Feng Ocean World in China – home to the two whales. Since Merlin's foundation in 1979, company policy has dictated that marine mammals such as whales and dolphins should not be held in captivity. Raised in captivity however, the belugas are unable to be released back into the ocean.



■ Nick Varney has been Merlin CEO since taking the position in 1999

We hope the project will help to encourage the rehabilitation of more captive whales into natural environments in the future

Earlier this year, Merlin announced plans to open a first of its kind whale sanctuary

in Iceland, with its belugas to be transported there in the first or second quarter 2019.

"Since the acquisition of LLA, Merlin has been committed to finding a sustainable solution to the long term care of the beluga whales at Changfeng Ocean World in Shanghai," said Varney.

"This reflects our long held view that cetaceans should not be kept in captivity. To this end, working with the Sea Life Trust and Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), Merlin has found a suitable location in a small bay on Heimaey Island on the south coast of Iceland."

"We hope the project will help to encourage the rehabilitation of more captive whales into natural environments in the future."

'No restriction' on ability to add new parks, says Six Flags president **Jim Reid-Anderson**



■ Jim-Reid Anderson said there was unlimited potential for expansion of Six Flags

Jim Reid-Anderson, chair, president and CEO of Six Flags, has said there is "no restriction" on the operator's ability to develop and acquire new theme parks worldwide, as it goes through one of the largest periods of growth in company history.

Speaking during an earnings call after reporting record revenues for the first half of the year, Anderson said there was unlimited potential for expansion.

"We have a process that we go through to make sure

Our team is ready in the event that we add more. There is no restriction on our ability to add parks

that we've got the right sites and the right partners," he said. "We won't add parks or announce parks until we feel comfortable that we are adding in the right places and with the right people. But our team is ready in the event that we add more. There is no restriction on our ability to add parks."

In the last quarter, Six Flags entered into new

international licensing agreements to build a Six Flags-branded park in Saudi Arabia and four new parks in Nanchang, China.

"Our international licensing program is growing exponentially and providing additional diversification to our portfolio," said Reid-Anderson. "The opportunity for future growth remains very compelling."



■ Chapek will offer insight into 25 years of leadership at Disney

We are honored to have Bob Chapek deliver the keynote address for this year's GM and Owners' Breakfast

Disney parks chair **Bob Chapek** to deliver IAAPA 2018 keynote

Disney's parks and resorts chair Bob Chapek will deliver the keynote speech at this year's IAAPA Attractions Expo in Orlando, Florida.

Taking place during the GM and Owners' Breakfast on 14 November, Chapek will offer insight into his more than 25 years of leadership at Disney.

Considered by many to be the heir to the Disney throne when Bob Iger eventually leaves his position in 2021, Chapek became company COO in 2015, replacing Iger's then-successor Thomas Staggs.

During his Disney tenure, Chapek has served as

president of Disney Consumer Products, overseeing franchise licensing, commercialisation, Disney Publishing Worldwide and the Disney Store.

Prior to that, he served as president of distribution for Walt Disney Studios and as president of Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment. He has also worked in brand management for Heinz and in advertising at J Walter Thompson.

"We are honored to have industry leader Bob Chapek deliver the keynote address for this year's GM and Owners' Breakfast," said Hal McEvoy, interim president and CEO of IAAPA.

Attractions

MANAGEMENT **NEWS**

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Famed artist **Damien Hirst** brings unique works to British stately home in Norfolk



■ **Colour Space** is an evolution of the Britart pioneer's iconic Spot Paintings, the first of which he painted in 1986

Famous for a tiger shark preserved in formaldehyde and a diamond-encrusted skull sculpture, Turner Prize-winning British artist Damien Hirst has partnered with a stately home in Norfolk, UK, to exhibit his works.

A rather unusual backdrop for the contemporary artworks, Houghton Hall was built in the early 1700s for Britain's first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. Visitors to the attraction through the summer will find the portraits that adorned the walls of the home

It felt right to show them somewhere historic rather than in a conventional gallery space and Houghton is perfect

have been replaced by 46 new and previously unseen paintings from Hirst's *Colour Space* series, while nine of his bronze sculptures fill the gardens.

"The Spot Paintings always look happy, although there's an unease there too because the colours don't repeat when you expect them to," said Hirst. "I originally wanted the Spots to look like they were painted by a human trying to paint like a

machine. *Colour Space* is going back to the human element, so instead you have the fallibility of the human hand in the drips and inconsistencies. There are still no two exact colours that repeat in each painting, which is really important to me.

"It felt right to show them somewhere historic rather than in a conventional gallery space and Houghton is perfect. It feels totally right."

Composer **Penka Kouneva** brings her orchestral masterpieces to the world of visitor attractions

Penka Kouneva has worked as a composer on blockbuster movies and video games that have grossed US\$15bn (€12.9bn, £11.5bn) worldwide. Millions will have heard her music without ever likely realising it.

Kouneva, who was one of the first female lead orchestrators in Hollywood, has recently been branching out into the world of attractions. She wrote the score for the US\$30m (€25.9m, £23m) *Heroes and Legends*, which opened in late 2016 at the Kennedy Space Center, near Orlando, Florida, composing music for the 3D films, installations and multimedia.

"The NASA exhibit, *Heroes and Legends*, was the most



■ **Kouneva** has composed for films, exhibitions and VR experiences

Heroes and Legends was the most unique composing job I've had. It tells the stories of these space missions

unique composing job I've had," said Kouneva. "I wrote music that

celebrates the American heroes and heartswelling orchestral themes with

arrangements to express our fascination with space."

Among many others, Kouneva has composed for the *Prince of Persia: Forgotten Sands*, *Transformers* and *World of Warcraft: Legion* video games and worked on movies including *Elysium*, *Matrix Reloaded*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows* and *Devil's Whisper*.

These projects are reflective of her music, "orchestral mixed with electronics – dramatic and haunting" and suits genres like action, horror, fantasy and sci-fi.

She has also penned three solo award-winning concept albums, including *The Rebirth of Id* and *The Woman Astronaut*.



■ Alejandro González Iñárritu is an Oscar-winning director

{ **My intention was to experiment with VR in an attempt to break the dictatorship of the frame** }

Mexican film director **Alejandro González Iñárritu** wins VR Oscar

At the 90th Academy Awards held earlier this year, Alejandro González Iñárritu – winner of best director Oscar for *The Revenant* in 2015 and for *Birdman* in 2014 – collected a special award for a virtual reality installation.

The Academy said Iñárritu was being honoured for *Carne y Arena* because the six-minute experience was “a visionary and powerful experience in storytelling”. It marks the first Oscar awarded to the medium of VR.

The director, writer and producer created the VR film to look at the plight of migrants crossing

the Sonoran desert of Arizona and California.

“I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing many Mexican and Central American refugees. Their life stories haunted me, so I invited some of them to collaborate with me in the project,” said Iñárritu.

“My intention was to experiment with VR technology to explore the human condition in an attempt to break the dictatorship of the frame, within which things are just observed, and claim the space to allow the visitor to go through a direct experience walking in the immigrants’ feet, under their skin, and into their hearts.”

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THEME PARKS

Paddington comes to Japan's Pleasure Forest

A Paddington-themed visitor attraction has come to Japan, marking the Peruvian bear's first foray into the country's theme park market.

Covering 4,420sq m (47,500sq ft), Paddington Town is an addition to Sagamiko Resort's Pleasure Forest, offering five rides and attractions, including a railway line, miniature fire engine, mini-coaster, science attraction and a maze.

Operated by Fujikyuko Co – which also operates two other amusement parks among a number of businesses in operation around Mount Fuji – Paddington Town opened its doors on 21 July following a ¥230m (US\$2m, €1.8m, £1.6m) investment into the

park's expansion. Close to Tokyo, Pleasure Forest is themed around nature. The park consist of different zones, with its signature Ferris wheel an icon of the park. An outdoor zone has camping spaces for both daytime and overnight uses, while the hobby zone has mountain bike courses and one of the largest radio-control car courses in the Kanto region. The park's operators hope that the Paddington-themed addition will up total visitor numbers to one million people annually.

Currently entering its 60th year, the first Paddington book by Michael Bond was published in Britain in 1958.

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=w2S8B_T



■ Paddington is expected to up attendance to one million people



Paddington Town is an addition to Sagamiko Resort's Pleasure Forest, offering five new rides and attractions

GALLERIES

Denizen envisions vertical gallery for Scottish Highlands



Our response to this open brief from the National Trust for Scotland saw us explore the history of Inverewe and take inspiration from the natural world

Denizen Works

Plans have been lodged by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) to build a vertical gallery and bird hide in a 19th-century botanical garden in the country's Highlands.

London-based architects Denizen Works are behind the proposal for Inverewe Garden, which was first opened in 1862 and features more than 2,500 exotic plants and flowers.

The 20m-tall (65.6ft) tower is designed as a "landmark and orientation point to encourage more people to visit the far reaches of the garden". Based in the idea of a "sliced tree trunk", the



■ The structure features a bird hide at its peak

building will be clad in dark, stained larch conifers, which will be sourced on site.

"Our response to this open brief from the National Trust for Scotland saw us explore the history of Inverewe and take inspiration from the natural world," said the architects.

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=n7Z5F_T

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RESTRUCTURING

AECOM Economics transfers EU operation

AECOM – the multinational consulting and engineering firm that provides design, feasibility, masterplanning and construction services to clients all over the world – has dissolved the London-based European division of its entertainment economics arm.

Helping clients evaluate and make decisions around projects and policies regarding feasibility, financial requirements, social impact, risk and prospects for success, Economics projects include the likes of Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi and the AT&T Stadium in Texas, US.

Following the closure, AECOM will run its European entertainment economics operation out of its office

in the US, the Middle East and Asia. The division also produces the annual *TEA/AECOM Theme Index and Museum Index* report.

"Due to a decline in attractions- and resorts-related economics volume in Europe, AECOM has decided to lead its entertainment economics services to clients in the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East, rather than through London," said John Robinett, senior vice president of Economics at AECOM

"Our urban planning and real estate economics practice out of London, and our other economics offices throughout the world will be unaffected."

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=f6y4P_T



■ AECOM's main headquarters are located in Los Angeles



Our other economics offices throughout the world will be unaffected

John Robinett

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Work starts on London's Borough Yards development



Borough Yards will become a new cultural destination

Trevor Morris

Construction work has now begun on the £300m (US\$393m, €336m) renovation of Borough Yards in London – a series of Victorian-era railway arches that sit near to the River Thames, Tate Modern art gallery and world-famous foodie haunt Borough Market.

Due for completion in 2020, Borough Yards will feature five mixed-use buildings that will house a workspace, retail units, gallery, restaurants, cinema and creative spaces.

"Borough Yards will become a new cultural destination that reflects the work/play balance of modern London,"



■ Borough Yards is undergoing a US\$300m renovation

said Trevor Morris, principal at SPPARC.

"Located next to the historic Borough Market, the development of new streets, cultural galleries and flexible workspace will be a lively addition to the area, which currently lacks any fashion-led retail space."

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=C2k8V_T

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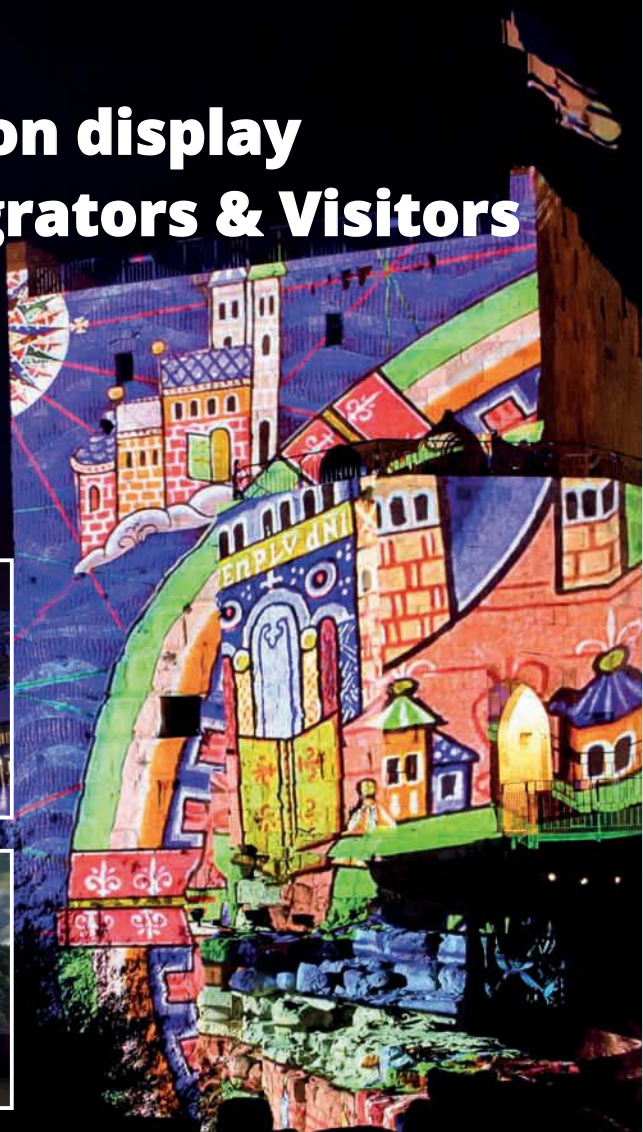
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GALLERIES

Plans revealed for extension to Buffalo gallery

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York State, has announced the next stage of its expansion ambitions by unveiling the design for a bold, freestanding new building.

International architects OMA have created the plans for the 29,000sq ft (2,700sq m) North Building extension, which will house parts of the museum's world-renowned art collection and important visitor amenities.

The building is envisioned to have a wrap around promenade that visually and aesthetically connects the interior of the building with the existing campus and landscape.

"The north building comprises three levels offering diverse gallery experiences,"

explained OMA partner Shohei Shigematsu, who will lead the project. "Encircling the second level gallery is a double-height promenade, a flexible space with 360-degree views to the surrounding buildings and landscape.

"The building is enveloped by a translucent façade that achieves an open and ephemeral quality and engages the external environment. Layers of visual and spatial connections throughout the north building foster dialogue with the architectural legacy of the Albright-Knox while inviting contemporary audiences to discover the diverse activities within."

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=4A8S5_T



■ The North Building will have a wrap around promenade



“

The north building comprises three levels offering diverse gallery experiences

Shohei Shigematsu

MUSEUMS

Car museum planned along famous Route 66 in Kansas

“

Decades of Wheels has more than 300 motor exhibits, including Model Ts, Hellcat Chargers, Corvettes and a 1971 Husqvarna owned by Steve McQueen

Located beside the famous Route 66 in Kansas, Texas, a new car museum will showcase some of the US's most loved cars and motorbikes.

Decades of Wheels has more than 300 motor exhibits, including Model Ts, Hellcat Chargers, Corvettes and a 1971 Husqvarna owned by Steve McQueen. Vehicles from the privately owned collection will be shown on a rotating basis, with 30 on display at a time, so returning visitors will always have a different experience.

Cars from the movies are also part of the museum's collection, such as



■ The DeLorean from Back to the Future is included

Herbie from *The Love Bug*, the Black Beauty from *Green Hornet*, DRAG-U-LA from *The Munsters*, the DeLorean from the *Back to the Future* franchise and an array of *Batman*'s Batmobiles.

Decades of Wheels has a scheduled opening date of 12 October.

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=d2A6J_T

THEME PARKS

Revenue increases but profit drops for Merlin

The first half of the year has been a mixed bag for Merlin, with the operator reporting revenue increases of £24m (US\$31.4m, €27m) for the first half of the year, but a decline in operating profits, which are down £10m (US\$13m, €11.3m).

For the 26 weeks ended 30 June, revenue was £709m (US\$927m, €798m), up from £685m (US\$895.7m, €771m) for the same period in 2017, representing a 3.5 per cent rise.

Operating profits took a significant hit, down to £63m (US\$82.4m, €71m) – a 14.3 per cent decline. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) also dropped

slightly, down 1.3 per cent to £143m (US\$187m, €161m), compared to £144m (US\$188.3m, €162m) for the same period last year.

According to Merlin, the decline in profit was due primarily to adverse foreign exchange movements and a higher depreciation charge due to new business development.

"In the existing estate we have been pleased with trading in the resort theme parks operating group," said Merlin CEO Nick Varney.

"With many exciting new initiatives and launches to come in the future, we remain confident in our long term prospects."

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=W6Y5U_T



■ Merlin says it's too early to tell if its London properties are recovering



We remain confident in our long term prospects

Nick Varney

THEME PARKS

Six Flags breaks more records as operator reports earnings



I am very pleased with our continued strong momentum

Jim Reid-Anderson

Six Flags continues to top itself, after recording record revenues for the first half of the year, as the operator closes in on a ninth consecutive year of record financial performance.

For the first half of the year, revenues totalled US\$574m (€490.5m, £436m) – up 10 per cent on the previous year. This was driven, says Six Flags, by a 7 per cent rise in visitor numbers, as well as a 3 per cent increase in guest spend and a 12 per cent increase in sponsorship, international licensing and accommodations revenue. EBITDA was up 16 per cent for the half year, totalling US\$151m (€129m, £114.7m).



■ Revenues were US\$574m in the first half of the year

"I am very pleased with our continued strong momentum and execution as we expanded our global footprint and rolled-out our new, premium-tiered membership programme," said Six Flags chair, president and CEO, Jim Reid-Anderson.

MORE: http://lei.sr?a=h7q3v_T

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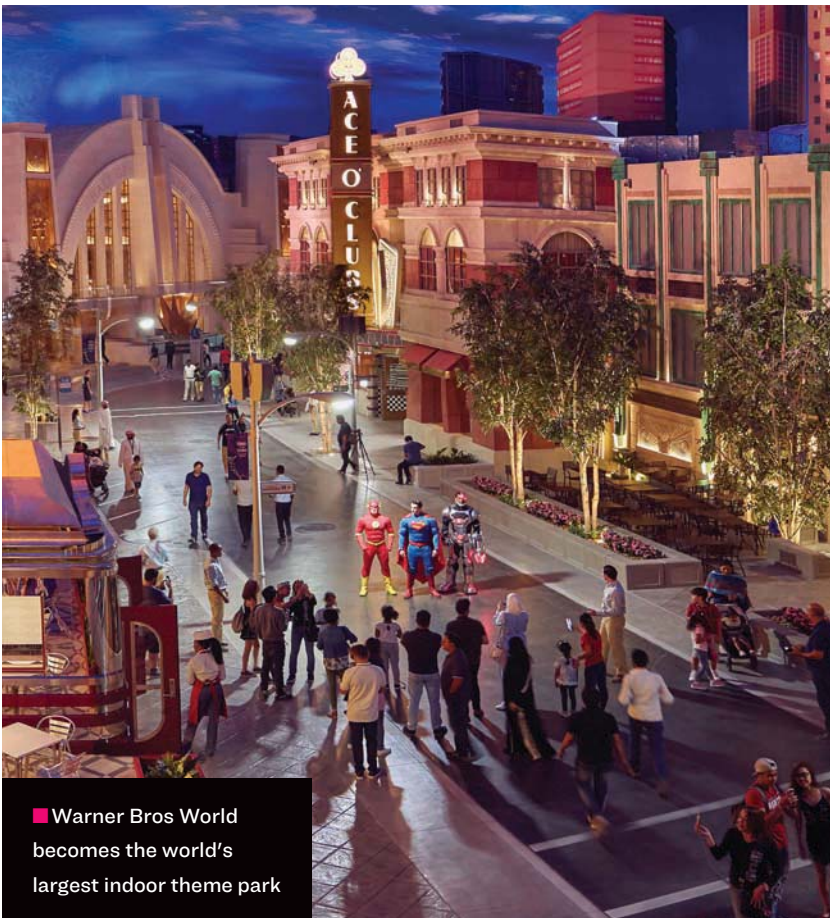
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Bugs and Batman come to Abu Dhabi

US\$1bn Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi opens to public



■ Warner Bros World becomes the world's largest indoor theme park

One of the largest theme park developments in the history of the Middle East is celebrating its grand opening, with the launch of Yas Island's latest addition – Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi.

Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, inaugurated the indoor theme park, which opened on 25 July.

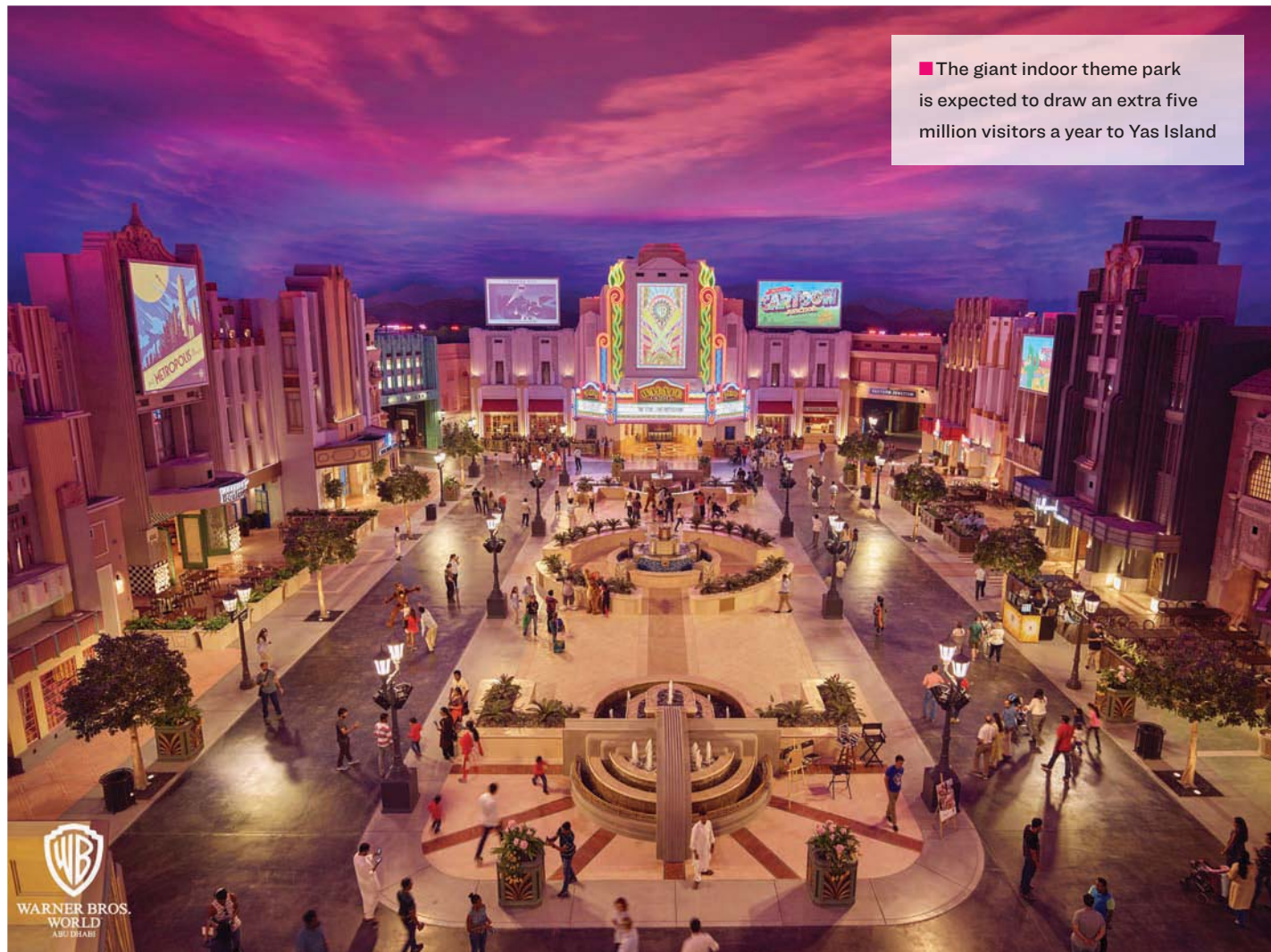
Featuring six immersive lands and covering 1.65 million sq ft (153,000sq m), the US\$1bn (€808m, £703m) indoor attraction has been developed by Miral, with AECOM and the Thinkwell Group working on the landmark project.

A wide range of Warner Bros brands feature at the park, including DC Comics characters like Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman, as well as cartoon favourites such as Bugs Bunny and Scooby Doo.

Inside, visitors can experience a selection of 29 rides, shows and attractions, including thrill rides, family attractions and live entertainment spectacles.

The DC universe makes up two of the six worlds, with Metropolis and Gotham City – the homes of Superman and Batman respectively

This is a new destination for our families and a key hub to boost the tourism sector for our national economy



■ The giant indoor theme park is expected to draw an extra five million visitors a year to Yas Island

“ With my brother Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, we have launching the Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi – a new milestone for our capital ”

– designed to draw fans of the comic book franchises to the attraction.

The next world, Cartoon Junction, brings together popular Warner Bros characters, placing them in a stylised cartoon world.

For fans of Hannah-Barbera's The Flintstones, a recreation of Bedrock makes up the fourth world, while Dynamite Gulch features both Looney Tunes and Hanna-Barbera characters.

The final part of the park is the Warner Bros Plaza – an area celebrating Hollywood and telling the rich history of the Warner Bros brand.

"With my brother Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, we have launched the Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi – a new milestone for our capital," said Rashid.

"We are developing the tourism sector to position the UAE among

top global destinations for family entertainment and leisure.

"This is a new destination for our families and a key hub to boost the tourism sector for our national economy."

Warner Bros Abu Dhabi is the third theme park to come to Yas Island, joining Ferrari World Abu Dhabi and Yas Waterworld at the entertainment destination. A fourth theme park is scheduled for 2022, with SeaWorld's first orca-free attraction.

Also owned by Miral, Yas Island has quickly become one of the Middle East's major leisure and entertainment destinations since first opening Ferrari World in 2007. Now attracting 25 million visitors a year, Miral predicts that those numbers will rise to 30 million, with the now open Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi.



■ The park features Warner Bros biggest IPs

■ The museum will move to a new space on Wells Street, close to the British capital's famous Oxford Street



Cartoon Architecture

Sam Jacob Studio appointed to design London Cartoon Museum's new home



■ Sam Jacob, principal of Sam Jacob Studio

Architecture and design practice Sam Jacob Studio will give London's Cartoon Museum "greater flexibility" in displaying its collection, having been appointed to design its new home.

The museum, which showcases a collection of cartoon and comic art dating back as far as the 18th century, was founded in 2006 and is "dedicated to preserving the best of British cartoons, caricatures, comics and animation".

Following a 25-year lease deal agreed with developer Great Portland Estates, the museum will move to a new space on Wells Street, close to the UK capital's famous Oxford Street shopping district, leaving its original home in the nearby Bloomsbury area of the British capital.

Sam Jacob Studio's renderings point to a sense of fun and vibrancy for the project, with washes of bold colour adorning the walls and floors.

"The Cartoon Museum is a fantastic institution with an incredible collection and



■ The new home of the Cartoon Museum is set to open in early 2019

programme," said practice principal Sam Jacob. "Our approach will turn the graphic world of cartoons into a three dimensional space full of humour and delight."

As well as its main exhibition spaces, the museum's visitor facilities will include a shop and an "inspiring new learning centre", along with archive space and back of house facilities.

"The Cartoon Museum is a museum of laughter, but with a serious mission to promote the very finest of Britain's heritage of cartoons, comics and caricature," said



Our approach will
turn the graphic
world of cartoons into
a three dimensional
space full of humour
and delight

Cartoon Museum chair, Oliver Preston.

"Sam Jacob Studio's design brings a real sense of fun and vibrancy to the visitor experience. It has always been our aim to send people out of the museum happier than when they came in. Sam Jacob is really helping us to achieve this aim."

"The new museum will build on the success of the past 12 years, enabling us to bring our amazing collection to life and share it with wider audiences. There will be something for everyone to enjoy – young and old."



Another gate for Universal in Florida would turn Florida from a two or three-day destination to potentially a weeklong destination

Stephen Burke, executive vice president, Comcast



Fantastic Worlds

Universal says it's considering rumoured fourth Orlando theme park



■ The park would join existing Universal properties including Islands of Adventure, Universal Studios Orlando and Volcano Bay

Comcast executive vice president Stephen Burke has confirmed that Universal is looking at building a fourth gate in Orlando, with

the theme park set to be the latest to join Florida's lucrative theme park sector.

Universal filed a patent in June for the name "Fantastic Worlds", leading many to speculate the filing to be the name of the operator's long-rumoured third theme park.

Joining Universal Studios Orlando, Islands of Adventure and Volcano Bay, a fourth Universal property would offer increased competition to Disney, which operates four theme parks, two waterparks and the Disney Springs retail complex in the Orlando area.

"In terms of a new gate in Florida, we are looking at it," said Burke, speaking during an earnings call. "We've filed a

■ Universal is the second-largest theme park operator in Orlando behind Disney



To support longer stays, Universal has significantly grown the hotel side of its business in Orlando

name registration, we have a lot of great intellectual properties and we love the theme park business, which is one of our best, most consistent businesses.

"Another gate for Universal in Florida would turn Florida from a two or three-day destination to potentially a weeklong destination. We think that would be attractive."

To support longer stays, Universal has significantly grown the hotel side of its business in Orlando, with the launch of its Aventura hotel on 16 August bringing its total rooms in Orlando up to 6,000 – two-and-a-half times more than just five years ago. Another hotel development from Universal is also scheduled to be completed by 2019.

Universal acquired land for the park development in April. Although the amount of money the land purchase cost was not been revealed, former

land owner Stan Thomas' affiliate companies related to property wiped out US\$144.7m (€117.3m, £101.5m) of debt from those ventures. In addition to a new theme park, the purchase would also open up the possibility for further new restaurants, retail and hotels from Universal.

The news comes alongside news of an earnings increase at Universal's theme parks, with a significant rise through the first half of the year, benefitted by new openings including the Night Parade in Japan, Kung Fu Panda in Hollywood and Fast & Furious: Supercharged in Orlando.

For the year to date, revenues were US\$2.64bn (€2.25bn, £2bn) – an 8.6 per cent increase – while earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) rose 12.3 per cent to US\$1.06bn (€905m, £807m).



■ The plot of land is sited a few miles away from Universal's existing parks

PRODUCT INNOVATION

Suppliers tell Attractions Management News about their latest product, design and technology launches

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● Escape Hunt will use the Doctor Who brand under license from BBC Studios



Escape Hunt to launch Doctor Who - themed escape rooms across the UK



● Escape Hunt is one of Britain's biggest escape room companies

Immersive experience design firm Escape Hunt will launch several *Doctor Who*-themed escape rooms across Britain, after securing a five-year licensing deal with the BBC.

'Doctor Who - The Live Escape Game' is expected to open at the Bristol Escape Room venue in December this year, following the launch of the new series, with the rest opening in Birmingham, Leeds, Oxford and Reading in 2019.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with BBC Studios to create Doctor Who - The Live Escape Game," said Escape Hunt CEO Richard Halpham.

"Going on an Escape Hunt is all about stepping into and experiencing new worlds so strength in different genres is absolutely key to our content strategy. *Doctor Who* represents the very best in British action adventure and has a loyal and dedicated fan base that spans all generations.

"We look forward to bringing the show to life for all fans in its first ever live escape game experience at Escape Hunt venues across the UK."

Mat Way, global director of Live Entertainment at BBC Studios, added: "It has been

a long-term ambition of the team to be able to bring about *Doctor Who*-themed escape rooms. Our main role is to continually extend the fans' enjoyment of our brands, and so to be announcing six new live entertainment entertainment games across the country to fans is something really exciting."

Established in 2013 Escape Hunt creates immersive experiences, where guests have to solve 'mind-twisting' mysteries in order to escape.

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

ESCAPE HUNT

Immotion creates VR pods for Lego experience in Manchester



● Martin Higginson is executive chair of Immotion

The Great Lego Race, Lego's first VR experience, is set to make its UK debut at the Legoland Discovery Centre in Manchester.

Opened on 1 August, The Great Lego Race is the second attraction of its kind in the world, and the first to launch in the UK.

A 360-degree immersive experience the ride takes guests on a magical journey through a brick-built Lego world, where they take part in a thrilling race across rocky mountains, rolling rivers and hot lava.



● The Great Lego Race is the first attraction of its kind to open in the UK

Lasting approximately two and a half minutes, the ride is designed for guests aged six and up and features innovative multi-sensory VR pods developed by UK-based VR firm Immotion. The VR pods can seat up to four people, and combines sight, sound and motion to create a completely immersive, sensory experience.

"We are excited about delivering this specially created VR experience in the UK," said Immotion's executive chair Martin Higginson. "It demonstrates the kind of VR experiences we can develop on behalf of our partners."

.....
ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD
IMMOTION

MERCHANDISE

Merlin partners with Jutexpo to create eco-friendly tote bags

Merlin Entertainments has partnered with Jutexpo, a creator of ethically-produced bags, to develop a line of exclusive environmentally friendly shopping bags made from recycled plastic bottles and responsibly sourced/sustainably produced cotton.

Available across a number of Merlin attractions throughout the UK, including Alton Towers, Madame Tussauds, Blackpool Tower and Sea Life centres nationwide.

Featuring two different styles the bags each feature a different design themed around the venue where they're sold.



● The bags are made of recycled single-use plastic bottles

James Burleigh, Merlin's chief ambassador of Conservation and Welfare, said: "Preserving and protecting the environment and reducing plastic use are very important to us.

"We are delighted to be working with the market leader in reusable bag production to ensure that our visitors have the change to purchase eye-catching bags which are both ethically produced and provide a sustainable alternative to plastic."

Sam Turner, compliance director of Jutexpo, added: "Merlin



● Sam Tuner, Jutexpo

Entertainments offers memorable days out and experiences to millions of visitors across the globe. We are ecstatic to announce that we are part of this success story, with Merlin now selling our exclusive bags at their attractions. Visitors to these attractions

love to take home souvenirs, extending their memories even further and our range of bags allows them to do this in an environmentally friendly and ethically sound way."

.....
ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD
JUTEXPO

Diary dates

29-30 AUGUST 2018

Music Tourism Convention Cologne, Germany

Music Tourism Convention is the world's most extensive conference bringing together the music and tourism sectors to explore how music impacts, benefits and improves tourism offers, from festivals to heritage, music trails to food and music partnerships.

Email: info@sounddiplomacy.com

www.musictourismconvention.com

18-22 SEPTEMBER 2018

EAZA Annual Conference 2018 Athens, Greece

Hosted by the Attica Zoological Park team, the EAZA Annual Conference 2018 is the largest zoo conference in Europe and will take place in Athens, at the Megaron Athens International Conference Centre.

Tel: +31 20 520 0750

Email: info@eaza.net

www.eaza.net

23-27 JUNE 2018

AZA Annual Conference Seattle, US

The largest professional zoo event in the US, the AZA Annual Conference offers attendees the chance for networking and learning opportunities, and the opportunity to get a closer look at cutting edge products and zoo service providers. More than 2,500 delegates are expected to attend this year's event.

Tel: +1 301 562 0777

Email: cwallen@aza.org

www.annual.aza.org

25-27 SEPTEMBER 2018

Euro Attractions Show Amsterdam, Netherlands

EAS 2018 is an all-encompassing destination for leisure and attractions industry professionals, including



■ SIGGRAPH offers a platform to showcase different emerging technologies

12-16 AUGUST 2018

SIGGRAPH 2018 Vancouver, Canada

SIGGRAPH 2018 is a five-day exploration of the latest innovations in CG, animation, VR, games, digital art, mixed reality and emerging technologies.

It offers a broad array of educational and hands-on opportunities, and open the door to breakthrough technologies that will keep you on your game.

Tel: +1 312 673 4818

Contact: www.s2018.siggraph.org/contact-us
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operators, suppliers, manufacturers, investors, developers, and anyone wishing to engage with the global amusement community. More than 12,000 leisure and tourism industry professionals from more than 100 countries, including 500 manufacturer and supplier companies, will gather at EAS 2018 to network, discover the latest trends, and explore innovative technologies.

Tel: +1 703/836-4800

Email: iaapa@iaapa.org

www.IAAPA.org

4-5 OCTOBER 2018

TEA SATE Orlando - SeaWorld Orlando, US

TEA's signature international conference brings together the brightest minds and top decision makers exploring what's next in Storytelling, Architecture, Technology and Experience in themed entertainment. This year's event takes place at SeaWorld's Ports of Call – its special events complex.

Tel: +1 703/836-4800

Email: iaapa@iaapa.org

www.IAAPA.org

4 OCTOBER 2018

Visitor Attractions Conference Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, UK

The Annual Conference is run by the industry, for the industry and is firmly established as the key place to meet and network with contemporaries and to participate in an innovative and stimulating programme. The pre-eminent event for all types of visitor attractions in the UK.

Tel: +44 (0)207 0456921

www.vacevents.com

5 OCTOBER 2018

MuseumNext Tech Amsterdam, Netherlands

An event which focuses on the digital side of museums, MuseumNext Tech returns for its second edition, with speakers from MoMA, Science Museum London and Adidas among those set to appear. The event aims to provide an opportunity to learn about the latest digital developments for museums.

Tel: +44 (0) 191 2573439

Contact: jim@museumnext.com
www.museumnext.com



VAC2018



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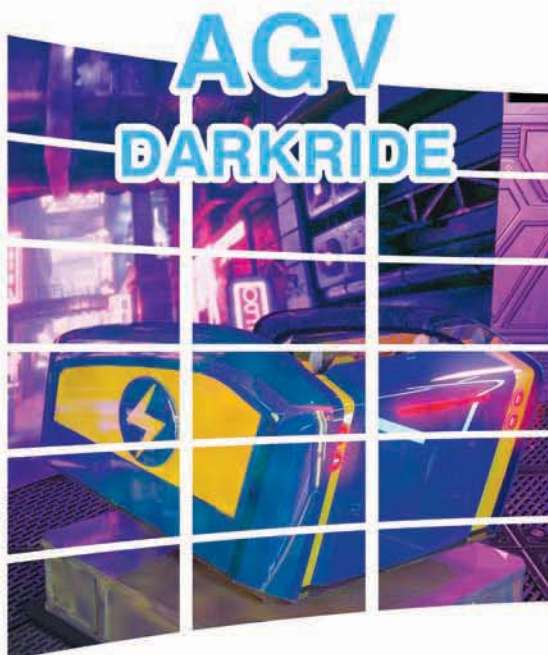
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LOCATION: MONMOUTHSHIRE, UK

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RESPONSIBLE TO:

Business Manager for Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth Service.

WELSH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT:

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Hours may include daytime, evenings and weekends.

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Should you require any further information regarding this post, please contact: Richard Simpkins Business Manager Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth Service on 07884061183.

Please Note that we are not able to accept CVs Application forms can be completed online.

Applications may be submitted in Welsh, and that an application submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than an application submitted in English.

Monmouthshire County Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

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