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# Attractions

## MANAGEMENT

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VOL20 Q3 2015

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ECSITE's new president on influencing global issues

### Inside the Whitney

Starchitecture in New York's Meatpacking District

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Attendance figures continue to rise

PHOTO: LONGGATE

Jennifer Lawrence stars in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, out in November



ON THE COVER

### The Hunger Games: The Exhibition

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...ion  
...d that  
won't stop growing

### Savage Beauty

Smashes V&A records

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Our ride makers series continues

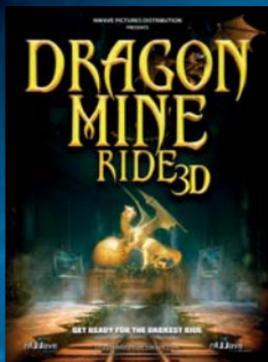
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# A race to reveal ancient mysteries...

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## SNAKES & LADDERS

The TEA/AECOM Theme and Museum Index shows healthy trading in all parts of the attractions industry worldwide, and the global top ten is looking increasingly like a game of snakes and ladders, as operators' performances are impacted by everything from IP launches to currency devaluations

**T**here's a bouncy feel to the latest TEA/AECOM Theme and Museum Index (page 42) which reports healthy growth in attendances across attractions sectors from museums to theme and water parks.

AECOM, which did the research, says the top 25 amusement/theme parks grew attendances by 4.1 per cent in 2014, the top 20 waterparks by 2.8 per cent and the top 20 museums by 1.6 per cent. Increases were recorded on all continents.

Hidden within the numbers are factors which will turn the Top Ten Operator tables into a game of Snakes & Ladders over the next few decades.

For example – as Universal is demonstrating with its roll-out of Harry Potter attractions – embracing the right IP can revitalise a mature business.

Universal saw a 10.4 per cent increase in year-on-year attendances as a result of the launch of its first Potter attraction in Orlando. More are following across its global estate, giving an impetus that could eventually see it overtake Merlin to take the number two slot.

On the other side of the equation, Merlin's accident at its Alton Towers theme park in the UK (page 32), hit attendances and the profitability of the group by £50m (US\$77m, €71m).

Although Merlin will be buoyed by trading across its estate and the strength of its Legoland brand, the accident has been a setback and it will be interesting to see the positions of the two businesses when the numbers come in next year.

The growth of Asia – particularly China – is a major factor driving change. In spite of the recent currency devaluation, the scale of development is likely to dwarf what has gone before.

Perhaps even Disney's seemingly unassailable lead in the market could be challenged over the next few decades.

Speaking at the China International Tourism Investment Conference, Wang Jianlin, chair of Wanda, said the company – China's biggest property developer – is aiming to overtake Disney as the world's largest tourism-based business by 2020.

This isn't an unfounded remark – Wanda has deep pockets and has been building a diverse global portfolio for years, with interests in areas from sport and broadcast to theme park

development, hospitality, resorts and urban regeneration.

Wang said the company will develop Wanda Cities – vast indoor culture, entertainment and attractions hubs which will trade all year round. Fifteen are planned in China alone, each with projected visitor numbers of between 10 and 30 million a year. A global rollout is likely.

Attractions development requires that investors take a very long-term view and play the demographics and economic cycles tactically. With the market globalising at breakneck speed, the TEA/AECOM top ten table will see big changes over the next few decades as the bigger operators jostle for the top spots.

Developments in Asia are being driven by consultants, designers and suppliers from the US and Europe and this will also evolve, as operators like Disney educate local sub-contractors. We expect Chinese companies to develop products and services which are marketable on the world stage, adding another new element of competition within the sector.

**Liz Terry, editor. Twitter: @elizterry**

**With the market globalising at breakneck speed, the TEA/AECOM top ten table will see big changes as the bigger operators jostle for position**



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A source of attractions services



On the cover: Jennifer Lawrence stars in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, out in November

Photo: Lionsgate

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**Web gallery:**

For suppliers of products and services in the worldwide attractions industry, turn to page 100

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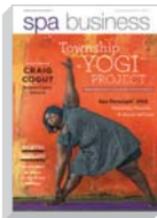
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### AM2

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- Alton Towers incident costs Merlin £50m
- Harry Potter attractions drive huge earnings for Universal

## Canada to debut hi-tech Star Trek tour

Canada's Aviation and Space Museum is boldly going where no man has gone before to bring its visitors a first-of-its-kind interactive educational exhibit based on the *Star Trek* franchise.

Set to make its debut in May 2016, the Starfleet Academy Experience will offer visitors the chance to become a Starfleet cadet, beat the Kobayashi Maru test and pilot a starship from an active bridge.

Produced by EMS Entertainment, the immersive "Trek Tech" experience will take guests from an orientation process through a training programme involving simulated science, engineering, medical and command courses, through to graduation, and finally

PHOTO: PARAMOUNT PICTURES



■ The Starfleet Academy Experience will debut in Canada

to the deck of an active starship. Visitors will learn about emerging technologies such as a functional tricorder (a data scanner used in the show), NASA's warp drive theory and the latest experiments with phasers and teleporters, as the experience combines the

science fiction of *Star Trek* with real-world science.

The Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa, Ontario, is the first stop on a multi-city North American tour, with the temporary exhibition moving to a new location in September 2016.

■ More: [http://lei.sr?a=W8UH\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=W8UH_A)

## INDUSTRY OPINION

### Let Ecsite conference inspire us to fight against food waste

Mikko Myllykoski

I'm writing this a few days after the biggest professional science engagement event in Europe: the Ecsite Annual Conference.



Attendance records were broken when 1,101 professionals gathered on 9-11 June in Trento, Italy. The Renzo Piano architecture of MUSE provided a perfect setting to discuss the theme, Food for Curious Minds.

The conference was a celebration of diversity and the 85 sessions sparked many discussions and debates. Much time was spent negotiating meanings and understanding where our field is and where it wants to be. One leading thread was opening up to deeper engagement: we want to connect, we want to be connected – even hacked.

A personal highlight was the keynote address by food waste activist Tristram Stuart. He painted a grim picture of irresponsible global consumption habits (30 percent of all food produced in the world is thrown away) – yet this was a speech full of hope as he challenged us to stop being part of the problem and start being part of the solution.

The food waste topic allows us to invent new ways of communicating the seemingly abstract concept of biodiversity loss and empower our audiences to change their habits.

We can also examine our own cafés and restaurants. Stuart recommended three simple steps: reducing plate size by 30 per cent, halving our meat offer and getting rid of trays. You can also redistribute untouched food to local charities, as was the case during the conference.

I invite attractions managers to join together in this – let's do better for our pockets and for the environment.

*Mikko Myllykoski, experience director at Heureka, and Ecsite ACP chair*

## US science centre to focus on interactivity

After announcing plans in January to develop a new \$40m (£26m, €34m) facility overlooking the Missouri River, the Gateway to Science Center in Bismarck, North Dakota, has revealed new details for its ambitious project as it aims to expand its appeal to a wider audience.

Scheduled to open in Q1 of 2017, a team made up of US-based HGA architects and North Dakota-based JLG architects are behind the designs for the new facility, which is centred around interactivity.

Designed to incorporate different types of learning for multiple audiences, the proposal includes a number of interactive exhibits, including a maze navigated by simple

PHOTO: JLG ARCHITECTS



■ Exhibits planned include a maze and kinetic sculptures

machinery, an exhibit for preschool children, classroom labs with a public viewing area and kinetic sculptures serving as movable artworks.

There's also an exhibit where children can design their own aircrafts and a model of a reservoir system that allows visitors

to generate energy, send water to a city, storage water in towers or implement flood protection.

In addition, displays on transportation, energy, health, space, nanotechnology, agriculture and weather will be included in the plans.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=T8p7s\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=T8p7s_A)

## Spaceport America launches multi-million dollar experience

New Mexico's Spaceport America – the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world – has launched a new experience tour and exhibition for its visitors as it looks to offset operational costs for the \$219m (£139m, €195m) facility.

A \$7m (£4m, €6m) visitor centre, in the city of Truth or Consequences, is located inside a 1930s adobe building. The visitor centre offers educational and interactive experiences, with the option of purchasing a ticket for the official tour for the full experience. Spaceport America was designed by URS and Foster & Partners.

For the tour, visitors board multimedia shuttles to make a 25 mile (40km) journey to the remote location.

After arriving at the Spaceport, visitors enter the brand new Gateway Gallery by Orlando-based experience design firm IDEAS, where they can see life-size replicas of offerings from Virgin Galactic, get a view of the 45,000sq ft (4,180sqm) terminal hangar and the chance to try out a G-Shock simulator. Following this, visitors are taken to the Spaceport Operations Center (SOC) and can interact with Spaceport's staff and



Spaceport America's visitor centre has been developed to help offset running costs

look around the state-of-the-art fire station before being driven down the 12,000-foot-long (3,657 metre) main runway.

The new visitor centre and accompanying experience have been developed as a way of offsetting running costs for the Spaceport,

where flights are currently grounded after a Virgin Galactic test flight broke apart during a rocket-powered test flight over California's Mojave Desert last year, killing one pilot and seriously injuring another.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr7a-m2q2t\\_A](http://lei.sr7a-m2q2t_A)



The US Bank Tower first opened in 1989

## LA skyscraper set to become attraction

The tallest building on the west coast of the US, the US Bank Tower, will soon open an observation deck and sky-high restaurant in an attempt to turn the Los Angeles tower into a tourist attraction capable of drawing 500,000 visitors a year.

The new features, designed by Gensler, will be the first of their kind in Southern California and will offer visitors expansive views of the city.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr7a-G7s8J\\_A](http://lei.sr7a-G7s8J_A)

## Theatre and gastronomy collide in Heart Ibiza

A new multi-sensory restaurant, theatre and dance venue, created by Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberté and renowned culinary masters Ferran and Albert Adrià, has opened in Ibiza, Spain, with a gastronomic concept designed to merge food, music and art.

Heart Ibiza, located inside the Ibiza Gran Hotel, is divided into three spaces – the Terrace, Supper and Club. The restaurant and entertainment complex has a capacity of up to 1,000 people and offers what its owners call a "musical, artistic and gastronomic theme park for adults".

The decade-long collaboration between Laliberté and the Adrià brothers includes the likes



Cirque du Soleil dancers and global DJs play at Club Heart

of body-painters, dancers, international electro DJs, interactive 3D art, virtual reality installations, and a palette of experimental world flavours, set to choreography that changes on a daily basis.

A Cirque du Soleil element comes in at Club Heart, which features

international DJs, light shows, video projections and live performances from Cirque du Soleil artists.

A pair of international galleries – Ventana Contemporary Ibiza and Art Projects Ibiza – curate the ever-changing artwork present around the venue.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr7a-m9ASy\\_A](http://lei.sr7a-m9ASy_A)

## Seven die at Taipei waterpark party

Hundreds of people have been seriously injured and seven people have died after an explosion on a music stage at a waterpark in Taiwan caught a crowd of spectators up in a freak inferno, when a coloured theatrical powder ignited, creating a sudden firestorm.

Reports said 375 people were injured, 242 seriously, at the Formosa waterpark in New Taipei City after the starch-based powder ignited on-stage and sprayed onto a crowd of about 1,000 people, engulfing a large portion of the dance area in flames almost instantaneously.

Since the incident, the waterpark has been closed and the park and its organisers have had their assets seized. Charges of neglect and public



■ Party-goers were unexpectedly engulfed in a ball of fire

endangerment have been brought against four people including the organiser.

Many of those injured suffered severe burns caused by the powder, which was intended for festive lighting at a Color Play Asia event. A ban in Taiwan has been

placed by the country's government on the use of coloured theatrical powder at private events.

New Taipei City mayor Eric Chu described the waterpark accident as the worst human disaster in the city's history.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=N2J6x\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=N2J6x_A)

### INDUSTRY OPINION

## TripAdvisor's tips for online reviewers can have positive effects

Aleatha Ezra

Any waterpark manager, or manager of any kind of leisure attraction, can attest to the power of guest reviews. Today, guests can tell you exactly what they think about



your food, your rides, the state of your bathrooms – via websites that enable them to reach millions of people with only a few seconds of effort.

Guest reviews are now an indispensable resource for many consumers, which is probably why TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel site, recently released an online travel review guide to help site users write better, more effective reviews. It's also noteworthy that TripAdvisor cares enough about the quality of the review process to help make consumers better at doing it.

"Reviews have become a powerful tool, as travellers around the world use them to plan their trips," says Barbara Messing, TripAdvisor chief marketing officer. "More than half will not make a booking decision without reading reviews."

According to Messing, 70 per cent of businesses surveyed have taken steps to improve their service thanks to reviews left by travellers.

"We wanted to provide new and seasoned reviewers with insights from our passionate community – from what motivates them to contribute, to the top tips for writing helpful reviews," she says.

Making reviewers better is good for operators. Detailed reviews, even negative ones, can help you make improvements in your services and amenities. This will make future reviews better, convincing more travellers to visit in the future.

Search online for the TripAdvisor Guide to Writing Helpful Reviews.

Aleatha Ezra, director of park member development, WWA

## Universal to re-imagine waterpark concept

After months of speculation over its future, Universal has confirmed that Wet n' Wild Orlando will be turning off the taps and pulling the plug for good at the end of 2016.

The waterpark is closing on 31 December 2016, at which point it will have been in operation for nearly 40 years, after first opening in 1977. Founded by SeaWorld creator George Millay, Wet n' Wild Orlando is considered to be the US's first waterpark. In 1998 Millay sold his interests in the Wet n' Wild franchise, at which point Universal snapped up the Orlando location.

Universal confirmed plans for a new multi-million dollar waterpark at the end of May. Called Volcano



■ Wet n' Wild first opened its doors in Orlando in 1977

Bay, the theme park operator filed plans for the development back in February. The waterpark will sit alongside Universal's Islands of Adventure to become the resort's third stand-alone attraction.

Universal says it is closing the park to focus on its new "next generation"

waterpark, which the company says will "re-imagine what it means to be a waterpark."

According to a statement released by Universal, the attraction will be highly themed, with a completely immersive environment inspired by tropical islands.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=18ZB\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=18ZB_A)

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## Star Wars, Marvel planned for Shanghai Disney, Iger says

Disney CEO Robert Iger has revealed details about the company's sixth theme park resort, with Shanghai Disneyland set to include *Star Wars* and *Marvel* experiences when it opens in China in Q1 of 2016.

The new *Star Wars* Launch Bay and *Marvel* Universe experiences will both feature sets, props, memorabilia and other experiences to immerse visitors in those worlds. Unique to Shanghai Disneyland will be the Garden of the Twelve Friends, in which animals of the Chinese Zodiac are re-interpreted as *Disney* and *Pixar* animated characters.

"We are building something truly special here in Shanghai that not only showcases the best of *Disney's* storytelling but also celebrates and incorporates China's incredibly rich heritage to create a one-of-a-kind destination that will delight and entertain the people of China for generations to come," said Iger.

"We're taking everything we've learned from our six decades of exceeding expectations – along with our relentless innovation and famous creativity to create a truly magical place that is both authentically *Disney* and distinctly Chinese."



■ *Star Wars* Launch Bay will feature sets, props and memorabilia from the franchise

Split into six areas, the remainder of the \$5.5bn (£3.5bn, €5bn) theme park will be comprised of; Mickey Avenue – the park's main entrance; Gardens of Imagination – featuring a *Dumbo* ride and *Fantasia*-inspired carousel; Fantasyland with its own *Seven*

*Dwarfs* Mine Train; Adventure Isle – the fast-paced area of the park; Treasure Cove, which is based on the *Pirates of the Caribbean*; and Tomorrowland, which will include a new *Buzz Lightyear* attraction and a *Tron* coaster.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=12d30\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=12d30_A)



■ The park's development stalled in 2007

## Work starts on UAE Warner Bros park

Plans are progressing for a new Warner Bros theme park in Abu Dhabi, UAE, as the number of attractions in the Middle East continues to climb.

The project, which in 2007 was touted as a multi-billion dollar deal, covers a 19-ride theme park and a hotel, along with multiplex cinemas, jointly owned by Warner Bros, developer Aldar Properties PJSC and the Abu Dhabi Media Company.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=b4X8G\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=b4X8G_A)

## De Villier's Eleven Arches takes shape in UK

Puy du Fou president Nicolas de Villiers, has shed more light on the *Eleven Arches* development coming to England in 2016, revealing exclusive details about the upcoming project to *Attractions Management*.

With the £27m (\$41m, €37m) development set to open in northeast England in June 2016, *Eleven Arches* will follow the same not-for-profit volunteer model as Puy du Fou. De Villiers and the team behind the project view the multi-million pound attraction as playing a key role in the wider regeneration of Bishop Auckland and the surrounding area.

"It will be a great night show based upon the same artistic model we have in France, with hundreds of



■ *Eleven Arches* comes to the UK in June 2016

actors taking to the stage," said De Villiers. "*Eleven Arches* is about the history of England, but it's written as a novel, not as a history lesson. Not everything is fact. It's a story where we bring people and the historical world to life."

De Villiers said the plot for *Eleven Arches*

will start in Roman times and continue up to modern-day England over the course of 90 minutes.

Puy du Fou is also creating two Russian versions of the historical attraction, one near Moscow and one in the disputed Crimea region.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=QZV9N\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=QZV9N_A)

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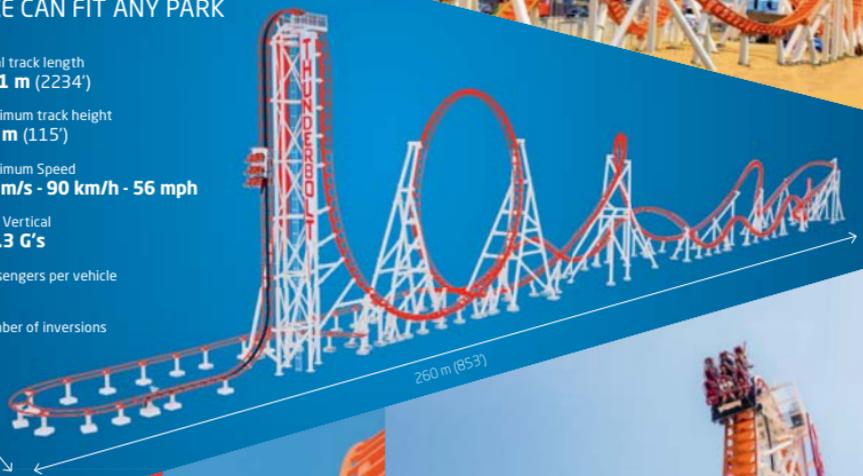
Max Vertical  
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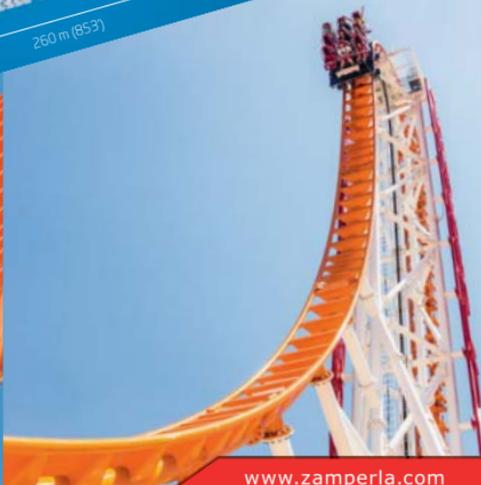
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## Rolling Stones touring exhibition starting in UK in 2016

The Rolling Stones have announced plans for a touring exhibition displaying rare and unique treasures from the band's 50-year history.

Promoted and presented by Australian company International Entertainment Consulting, Exhibitionism will make its debut in April 2016 at London's Saatchi Gallery. On show will be more than 500 artefacts from the band's personal archives, which a statement said would embrace "all aspects of art and design, film, video, fashion, performance, rare sound archives and, of course, at the heart of it, the Stones' musical heritage."

The immersive exhibit will fill nine rooms, spanning 1,750sqm (18,800sq ft), with each room looking at a different period of Rolling Stones history. The tour will be the largest of its kind to ever be staged by a band or musician and has had its collection curated over a period of three years.

"We've been thinking about it for quite a long time but wanted it to be just right and on a large scale just like planning our touring concert productions," said the band's vocalist, Mick Jagger. "I think right now it's an interesting time to do it."



PHOTO: THE ROLLING STONES

■ On show will be more than 500 artefacts from the Rolling Stones' personal archives

"While this is about the Rolling Stones, it's not necessarily just about the band members," added Stones guitarist Keith Richards. "It's also about the paraphernalia and technology associated with a band, such as the instruments that have passed

through our hands over the years, that will make the exhibition really interesting."

The Exhibitionism tour is scheduled to stop in 11 cities worldwide, with tickets for the London leg having gone on sale 10 July.

■ Details: [http://lel.sr?a=s6W6\\_A](http://lel.sr?a=s6W6_A)



PHOTO: LOWE/ARUPAHI

■ Art procurement is taking a long time

## Louvre Abu Dhabi opening delayed

The long-awaited Louvre Abu Dhabi in the UAE will now open its doors at the end of 2016, according to the president of its sister site in Paris.

Speaking at Paris' Louvre, Jean-Luc Martinez said that the \$653m (£405m, €513m) development on Saadiyat Island would be delayed until the end of next year. The delay has been put down to the procurement and installation of the artwork.

■ Details: [http://lel.sr?a=V3Q5h\\_A](http://lel.sr?a=V3Q5h_A)

## Guangzhou cultural hub architects named

German firm GMP Architekten and Spanish architecture firm Nieto Sobejano have been selected to design Guangzhou Museum and Guangzhou Science Museum respectively as part of the Chinese city's new cultural hub.

GMP's Guangzhou Museum will be located near the distinctive Canton Tower. The design includes references to the Chigang Pagoda, which lies to the north of the museum near the Pearl River. Limited to 18 metres (59 feet) in height at its northern end because of the historic buildings around it, the museum will gradually rise to 40 metres (131 feet) tall, with the architects using the height differential to create



PHOTO: NIETO SOBEJANO

■ Nieto Sobejano's plans for Guangzhou Science Museum

a roof terrace facing the pagoda. The museum will have a central great hall with a number of terraced levels.

Nieto Sobejano's plans for the Guangzhou Science Museum are based on a grouping of nine individual shapes, conceived as a "flexible sequence of large-scale ceramic vases",

according to the architect. Covering 80,000sqm (861,000sq ft), the museum will include exhibition halls, temporary exhibition space, science and technology theatres, auditoriums, an indoor garden and a rooftop garden overlooking the city.

■ Details: [http://lel.sr?a=PY3U\\_A](http://lel.sr?a=PY3U_A)

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## UNESCO makes 24 new additions to World Heritage list

UNESCO has announced the annual update to its register of sites worthy of world heritage status, adding 24 new locations to its global list of more than 1,000.

Well-known visitor attractions, including France's Champagne wine region, the Alamo and Scotland's Forth Road Bridge are all new additions to the list, with lesser-known sites added to the list now hoping for a boost in tourism numbers.

Denmark, France, Iran and Turkey had two allocations apiece, leading the way in new additions to the World Heritage list.

In France, the famous Champagne-region vineyards, wine cellars and sale houses – where champagne is produced and sold – were handed World Heritage Status, while the vineyards of Burgundy south of Dijon were also given an allocation by UNESCO.

In the US, the only addition was the San Antonio Missions, a series of 18th century Spanish Roman Catholic sites which include the Alamo – the scene of a famous battle between outnumbered Texas settlers and Mexican forces.

Ancient Greek and Roman settlements in Turkey have been added to the list, while a



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / JIHOON SEU HWANG

■ The famous Champagne-region vineyards, wine cellars and sale houses are new additions

controversial Japanese bid was unanimously approved for a collection of more than 20 sites illustrating the country's industrial revolution during the 19th century. The bid was approved only after Japan and South Korea reached an agreement over whether

to acknowledge the sites' history of wartime forced labour, particularly that of Gunkanjima.

The Forth Bridge is the sixth Scottish landmark to join the list, with the structure used to carry trains over the Forth since 1890.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr/?a=Z4D4Z\\_A](http://lei.sr/?a=Z4D4Z_A)



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / NIKOLAI MITCHELL

■ Works will continue for over a decade

## Buckingham Palace work to cost £150m

Buckingham Palace is in line for renovations costing up to £150m (\$236m, €211m) after a preliminary report on the state of the residence, which is home to Queen Elizabeth II.

According to a palace spokesperson, the £150m figure has been identified by heritage experts as a realistic estimate for work required on the palace as part of a 10-year restoration.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr/?a=s2x7v\\_A](http://lei.sr/?a=s2x7v_A)

## Machu Picchu ponders sustainable strategy

Peruvian authorities continue to look for new ways to capitalise on Machu Picchu's popularity as a visitor attraction, having revealed the remote ancient site is welcoming an average of 1 million visitors every year, breaching conservation guidelines.

Speaking to Peru's state-run Andina news agency, Ricardo Ruiz Caro, head of the Decentralized Department of Culture (DDC) in Cuzco, said the famous ruins draw around 3,300 visitors a day, adding that authorities are planning a series of efforts to better "balance" the visits and relieve congestion at the citadel.

Calls to extend the opening hours of the country's most famous



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / RIF ST

■ Machu Picchu draws around 3,300 visitors a day

landmark to meet demand were met with concern last year over increased visitor footfall damaging the ancient ruins. A 2012 conservation report suggested adding the site to the World Heritage in danger list, stating that the imposed 2,500 visitor daily limit has been "exceeded

on numerous occasions", something backed up by the figures touted by the DDC.

Peruvian officials trying to draw traffic away from the site have suggested creating a historical site to rival Machu Picchu in the form of the largely unexplored Chachapoya ruins.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr/?a=N5Q6v\\_A](http://lei.sr/?a=N5Q6v_A)

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## Ambitious Chester Zoo launches Islands

Following the launch of Chester Zoo's Islands development, managing director Jamie Christon has said the £40m (\$62m, €56m) project is only the start of the UK visitor attraction's ambitious masterplan, as it aims to become a world leader in the sector.

Speaking exclusively to *Attractions Management*, Christon said that the Islands development, the first phase of which opened in July, is the beginning of a multi-year plan currently in development.

"Heart of Africa was the original name for part of Islands," said Christon.

"What we want to do if this works, which clearly it's going to, is geographically theme the rest of the zoo based on our field programmes worldwide."

PHOTO: CHESTER ZOO



■ Chester Zoo hopes to create a cageless feel

The zoo currently runs 10 major field programmes globally in an attempt to save species threatened with extinction. Each programme has a species or regional biodiversity focus and looks at the conservation of Asian elephants, black rhinos

jaguars and red apes conservation among others. Christon said that the zoo wants to reflect the conservation work being done across these programmes at the zoo.

● See The New Zoo, this issue, page 64  
■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=q8f6h\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=q8f6h_A)

### INDUSTRY OPINION

## Zoos and aquariums attract more visitors with creative offerings

Hope Rezendes

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited facilities are exploring ways to increase attendance by connecting with visitors on new levels.

In addition to animal exhibits, it's now common to see train rides, carousels, waterparks, 4D theatres and ropes courses at zoos and aquariums. These experiences encourage guests to visit and stay longer.

Milwaukee County Zoo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Centre in Virginia Beach, Virginia, have both recently opened ropes courses with zip lines, giving visitors a chance to experience the sights from above.

Zoos and aquariums are also hosting a variety of events designed to reach audiences with special interests. Quite often these events involve collaborations with other local organisations and businesses.

The Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison, Wisconsin, hosts Strings and Wild Things, inviting families to enjoy a summer evening with a performance by a local orchestra. The zoo put last year's event proceeds from ticket sales and concessions towards the newly-opened Arctic Passage exhibit.

ABQ BioPark in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has hosted beer tastings at its zoo. Visitors can try local craft beers and microbrews while observing and learning more about the animals during evening hours.

Henry Vilas Zoo and Albuquerque BioPark have both said these events were some of their top revenue-generating activities last year.

With these additional funds, AZA-accredited facilities are able to continue and expand research efforts, improve animal care and support ongoing conservation work.

Hope Rezendes, communications intern, Association of Zoos and Aquariums



## Thousands of fish die as Brazil aquarium stalls

Prosecutors are investigating who is to blame after more than 10,000 fish died while waiting to be moved to a brand new Brazilian aquarium development.

Billed as the largest freshwater aquarium in Brazil, the \$53m, (£48m, £34m) Aquário do Pantanal in the western city of Campo Grande was originally scheduled for completion at the end of 2014. However, construction work was significantly delayed and the aquarium is yet to be finished.

Imported from Africa, Asia and Oceania, the fish had been in quarantine with a company called Anambi since November. According to *Folha de Sao Paulo* newspaper, 80 per cent of the population of

PHOTO: RUY OHTAKE



■ Aquário do Pantanal was scheduled to open in late 2014

more than 12,000 fish died from a temperature drop as winter approached in the southern hemisphere country.

However, government officials have said technical failures in the temporary tanks were to blame, including poor oxygenation, the presence of bacteria

and inadequate cleaning. If everything had gone according to plan, the fish would have been transferred to their new home more than six months earlier.

Designed by Brazilian architect Ruy Ohtake, the expected completion date is still unknown.

■ Details: [http://lei.sr?a=s2e6t\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=s2e6t_A)

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Ecsite president Michiel Buchel has been at NEMO since 2003

# Michiel Buchel

The head of NEMO, the Netherlands' biggest science centre and newly appointed Ecsite president, looks at how the sector can work with others to wield greater influence in global matters

Alice Davis, managing editor, Attractions Management

**N**ewly elected president of Ecsite, Michiel Buchel, says science centres are growing up. "The field is becoming more mature," he claims.

The Dutchman, who is CEO of NEMO, the largest science centre in the Netherlands, is extremely optimistic about the sector.

"Although we're maturing, we're still a relatively young industry," he says. (NEMO has existed since 1997, compared to the Artis Royal Zoo – also in Amsterdam – and founded in 1838.) "But I think the impact and the role of science centres will grow enormously in the coming decades."

Science centres are entering a new era, armed to battle many contemporary challenges, and now the young industry has found its feet, it's demonstrating it has the will to do battle, too.

In the past, science centres have often been overlooked for public sector funding. They've had to innovate constantly to be ahead of the game – and although that demands investment, it's been hard for them to monetise their offers.

But many countries are dealing with the socioeconomic consequences of having neglected STEM subjects, and science centres are beginning to capitalise on this. Too few people have been choosing to study

NEMO, shaped like a ship and designed by architect Renzo Piano





PHOTOS: NEMO

Children learn about electricity with the plasma globe at NEMO

**I THINK THE IMPACT AND THE ROLE OF SCIENCE CENTRES WILL GROW ENORMOUSLY IN THE COMING DECADES**

and work in core STEM areas of science, technology, engineering and maths, and too many have underestimated the value of public engagement in science.

Today, government and societal priorities have fallen in line with science centres' aims to increase STEM literacy and inspire children to take up these subjects and aspire to careers in related fields.

**BIG ISSUES**

The role that science centres play is inextricably linked to many of the big issues that are affecting the planet today, such as climate change, food security and migration. However, Buchel believes the sector would be able to tackle these problems more effectively if it joined forces with other groups in the attractions industry – museums, zoos and aquariums, in particular. Building a better connected network would make the whole industry a stronger authority, he suggests.



Popular with locals and tourists, NEMO is one of most-visited museums in the Netherlands

"I strongly believe in collaboration with other networks. They deal with the same things as science centres. As Ecsite president, I want to invest time in building better connections with zoos, aquariums and natural history museums," says Buchel, who takes the reins of Ecsite from outgoing president Rosalia Vargas.

Through greater co-operation within the attractions sectors, Buchel also notes that far larger audiences can be reached. "People who work in science centres are passionate about science, nature and the health of the planet. We, therefore, have many missions in common with the other sectors, and we tackle similar issues."

**WE ALL WORK VERY HARD  
TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE  
THE EXPERIENCE MORE  
IMPACTFUL FOR THE VISITOR**



Buchel believes science and technology are key to keeping the world healthy and liveable

► “If you connected all the zoos, aquariums, natural history and science museums in Europe, you’d be looking at about 290 million visitors per year,” he says. “We can potentially reach an enormous number of people.”

### CHALLENGES

As the science centre industry develops, gains recognition and reaches larger audiences, fresh challenges emerge. One of those is keeping an educated and bright pool of staff challenged and motivated.

“Science centres are having to deal with the fact that the smartest people in our organisations are not able to develop and grow. There aren’t enough opportunities and the jobs they want are already filled. So how do you keep them motivated and inspired? These are grown-up problems for our industry.”

Furthermore, science centres must manage the effects of the still struggling European economies. The sector relies heavily on private funding and commercial

sponsors, so wider financial instability is a constant challenge. “If there’s less money around, it hurts us, too,” says Buchel.

Yet science centres are making progress in overcoming problems they have faced. They’re learning how to communicate better with their audiences. They’re working closely with the science communities to develop better ways of explaining complex information and building better exhibits. Maker Spaces have been advanced and advocated by science centres and

museums and are now incredibly popular. Interactive and hands-on activities like this are part of a wider drive to get children – especially girls – enthusiastic about STEM topics, and it seems to be working.

Buchel says: “Traditional schools aren’t always the most inspirational environments, but science centres are good at connecting formal and informal learning. It’s hard to say precisely what our role is in getting more children, or girls, interested in STEM, for example, but we are part of that ecosystem. If you make the ecosystem as rich as possible, children have more opportunities to discover their talents and find inspiration.”

“There’s a trend now for lifelong learning, too. People continue to learn with us.”

### NEMO

Since joining NEMO in 2003, Buchel has doubled the annual visitor figures from about 300,000 to 600,000 today. NEMO was the fifth-most visited museum in the Netherlands in 2013 – pretty impressive in a country with celebrated attractions.

Buchel says there are four main factors behind this success. The first was securing support from the Dutch government, allowing NEMO to invest in new and improved programmes and exhibitions. The government also subsidises the reduced entry fees for schoolchildren, who account for 80,000 of NEMO’s visitors per year.

The second move was in 2010 when NEMO joined the national museum card (Museumkaart) network. The card costs €55 (£39, \$62) and lasts a year, allowing the cardholder entry to about 400 museums. ►



Guests make giant bubbles with NEMO’s “super suds”

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Photo Courtesy of: Universum AB, Gothenburg, Sweden

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Workshops, lectures and networking at Ecsite's conference in Trento, Italy, in June

## I SAW MANY NEW AND YOUNG FACES AND THAT'S A HEALTHY SIGN

► "By joining the network, we reached new groups of people, as well as museum lovers and families who only visit attractions accessible with the Museumkaart," says Buchel. "Attendance grew by 100,000 card-holding visitors and has stayed at this level."

Thirdly, a boom in tourism in Amsterdam helped boost visitor numbers. And lastly, the popularity of science and technology in Holland is growing enormously.

"Besides this, hard work, creativity, partnerships with companies, universities and NGOs, great staff, improved hospitality and a passion for science are also factors," Buchel adds. "We all work very hard to find ways to make the experience more impactful for the visitor, to make them better understand not just that science is interesting and fun, but that it's really important for the future our planet."

Investments are being made as NEMO undergoes gradual renovations. Each floor is being redesigned and given a theme, such as "the manmade world" or "technology". There's also a new roof terrace and café, set to open this summer atop the Renzo Piano-designed building.

Investments don't have to be huge to make big improvements. Buchel is a great believer in learning from others, from other types of business and industry.

"Science centres can learn from commercial industry in terms of hospitality, as well as from outfits like Disney," Buchel says. "Visitor ratings are almost 50 per cent based on hospitality, so we need to look after the details: toilets, signage, customer service. There needs to be professionalism at every level."

### ECSITE

Ecsite was founded with just 23 member organisations in 1989. The first Annual Ecsite Conference in The Hague, the Netherlands, in 1990 hosted 100 delegates and the most recent, in Trento, Italy, in 2015 hosted 1,101 attendees from across Europe and beyond. As Buchel embarks on his two-year presidency of Ecsite is there anything he'd like to change?

"The organisation is thriving, with over 350 members. However, we'd like to have more full members. Full members have voting rights and a greater impact and influence on what we do."

Full membership can be expensive for small organisations, so Buchel suggests "those with broader shoulders" pay more under a revised structure. There are about 60 full members currently. He says that with more full members people feel more responsible for the network. The more responsible they feel, the more influence they have. Plus, the members' relationship with Ecsite shouldn't be "a one-way thing".

With Ecsite in its 16th year, Buchel is also noticing more outside interest than ever before. Alongside Ecsite's 239 science centre/museum members, there are 36 private companies and 85 other organisations. (At the same time, distinctions between science centres and science museums are beginning to melt away.)

"At the Ecsite Conference 2015, I saw how many more different organisations and industries are here, and people from different backgrounds. It's interesting meeting people from outside our industry. We need to collaborate and work with other organisations and other parts of society."

"I also saw many new and young faces and that's a healthy sign," Buchel says.

● See Future Visions, this issue, page 30

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# FUTURE VISIONS

ECSITE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015



The science centre and science museum community met this year at MUSE in Trento, Italy, and asked what the future might hold



Science centres are all about the future – imagining, innovating, inspiring the next generation. But what will science centres themselves be like? What should their missions be? Who will they be talking to, and what about? It was a hot topic at this year's Ecsite Annual Conference, where industry leaders shared their views of tomorrow's science centre at a pecha kucha forum at MUSE

## Ann Follin

Tekniska museet  
Stockholm, Sweden



“Future visitors will be well travelled, communicative and constantly connected.

They'll expect interaction and interactivity. They'll want to influence and make a difference. We must use that energy and we must listen to the audience – they'll expect to be part of the institution.

The future science centre will be innovative, sensory and inclusive. It will be more democratic, involving

more people from different backgrounds. Science centres need to be accessible for everyone and need to reach out to more people. The next generation of science centres will work closely and cooperate with the audience. This democratic approach takes time, planning and resources. It requires a willingness to let go of control and the courage to actually do so.



## Walter Staveloz

Association of Science –  
Technology Centres (ASTC)  
Washington, DC



“ I'm fighting the idea that science centres should be safe places for difficult conversations. We need to become places where we introduce the risk of decision-making based on science. We'll still inspire kids to be rocket scientists or stem cell researchers, but science centres will also have to teach them how to self-assess what they learn and the skills they need to access the workforce and become science-literate citizens able to make evidence-based decisions.

Science centres will need to prioritise topics, such as climate change and food security. We'll increasingly recognise that science centres aren't separate from politics – that we can play a role in shaping the world. We need to equip people with the skills to use science in their decision-making so they can influence the world around them. To do that we must preserve and develop the researcher that's in every child, and allow them to use their acquired knowledge for the better good.

We must introduce philosophy to science centres because the scientific method and philosophy have this in common: they build the critical thinking kids and adults need in this world.





PHOTOS: ESCITE/ANISE



More than 1,100 delegates attended the 26th Annual Escite Conference, with roundtables, workshops and talks featuring 350 speakers

**“We can ensure our relevance by bringing in individuals from outside our field, embracing new perspectives and utilising new types of interpretation”**

### Claire Pillsbury

Exploratorium  
San Francisco, California

“ I have conflicted feelings about futurising museums. I am wary of diluting our mission to “flavour of the month” by chasing trends and changing just for the sake of change. Human nature doesn’t fundamentally change and storytelling and social interaction don’t go out of style. Social media, for example, is a new and vital vehicle of communication, a new kind of word of mouth, and yet museum visitors still crave human interaction and face-to-face experiences. However, science centres can and should respond to the real world changes our visitors

confront, such as the shift in population demographics and the science of climate change. Furthermore, we don’t need to disrupt or completely discard traditional museum practice. We can ensure our relevance by bringing in individuals from outside our field, embracing new perspectives and utilising new types of interpretation. We should accept the inevitable need to evolve and the equal need to carry forward the best of established practice so that we will incorporate new ideas as a natural response to changing contexts and resources. ”



### Michele Lanzinger

MUSE  
Trento, Italy



“ Literacy is changing. It’s not just about learning, but about understanding. Science centres need to teach 21st-century competencies: critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovative spirit. In this sense, literacy means global awareness, ie civic literacy, environmental literacy, technology and media literacy, financial and economic literacy. Therefore, we need to stop being primarily skilled observers, commentators and documenters, and become active participants in our communities, working with them to understand and solve the world’s problems. ”

Also, we need to support physical and mental activity for older people and policies of social mobility and integration to deal with the impact of an ageing population and ensure a fair society. ”



### Ken Arnold

Wellcome Collection  
London, UK



“ We think our institutions are instruments for doing things in the world, but what if we abandoned the sense we are using instruments? Instead of trying to do things with them, be proud to have places where people can come for charged or social experiences (with science as the backdrop). Rather than seeing science centres as ways to change our audience, what if we were just confident that something fascinating happens when they visit? Let’s think about quality and value rather than effectiveness. Ask: “Is it any good?” rather than “does it work?” ”



### Maarten Okkersen

Museon  
The Hague, the Netherlands



“ Museums, science centres, zoos and other attractions are converging. The virtual and the real will also continue to converge. Science museums will become more commercial, as cultural entrepreneurs. They should be open, relevant and meaningful, and should not underestimate popular culture. Science museums should help us make sense of all the information that’s available and hold experimental workshops as a starting place for imagination and creativity. They need to link local identity to global trends, connect past, present and future and reconnect culture and science with a focus on social innovation. ”



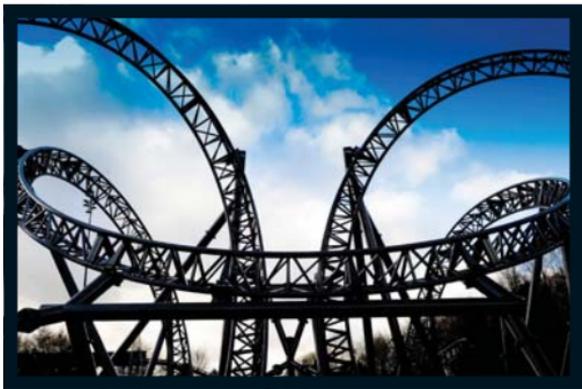
# What can be learned from the Alton Towers accident?

The recent accident on the Smiler ride at Alton Towers theme park put the industry under scrutiny – but we can all learn from the way Merlin handled the situation

Accidents at theme parks don't happen very often. Where the attractions industry is well established, safety standards are incredibly high on both the manufacturing and operational sides of the business. Operators put the safety of their guests above and beyond anything else – we know this because accidents are so rare.

According to IAAPA, the likelihood of being seriously injured on a theme park ride in the US is 1 in 24 million. In the UK, only one person has died on a modern-style steel rollercoaster, and that was in 2004.

Almost all accidents, injuries and fatalities at theme parks are related to falls or pre-existing or unknown health conditions in the rider, not to the rides or ride safety.



## The way the media portrays the event and the aftermath can potentially have a marked effect on the business

Therefore, when an incident occurs – as it did at the UK's Alton Towers theme park on 2 June, when a train with 16 passengers crashed into a stationary car on the Smiler rollercoaster, causing serious injuries – both the public and the industry suffer a terrible shock.

Sympathy for the victims was immediate and widespread, and Merlin Entertainment's CEO Nick Varney did not hesitate to express deep regret, to apologise and to accept full responsibility.

The repercussions couldn't have been predicted, but are clearly being felt by Merlin, both financially and in spirit at the park and within the company.

In a trading statement, the company said it had revised its earning expectations for the theme parks division. It forecasted pre-tax earnings for 2015 to be in the range of £40m to £50m (\$62m to \$78m, €57m to €71m), as little as half the amount the division reported in 2014, which was £87m (\$136m, €123m).

"The serious accident at Alton Towers on 2 June has had an adverse impact on trading at the start of the critical summer period," said a company statement. "The accident resulted in the temporary closure of the park, the suspension of UK theme park marketing and temporary ride closures at two of our other UK theme parks.

The combination of these factors has significantly reduced [visitor] volumes at Alton Towers Resort and, to a lesser extent, the UK Resort Theme Parks estate ... Action is being taken to rebuild momentum and re-engage with our customers."

The Merlin statement indicated that the theme park division's profitability could also be affected into 2016.

Though it's widely perceived that Varney and the management of Alton Towers responded efficiently and with honesty, and genuine compassion and regret, some elements of the media fanned the flames of the story – misrepresenting the facts, losing perspective and acting without sensitivity.

This might be a typical of some British media, and the coverage may have been less sensationalised had the incident occurred in another country. However, it's clear the way the media portrayed the event and the aftermath has had a marked effect on the business.

Varney said that the accident should not have happened – and it shouldn't have. However, we have to accept that accidents do occasionally happen, in all industries, not theme parks alone.

The constructive response for all must be to learn what we can from incidents such as this, and to work together to rebuild confidence in the industry.

We asked our experts what lessons there are to be learned and shared.

We have been encouraged by those customers who have continued to come to the resort and by the many others who have written to us expressing their support

## Spokesperson for Merlin

Merlin Entertainments

The accident in June was a devastating event for Alton Towers and for Merlin, for which we accepted responsibility and are deeply sorry.

In the immediate aftermath, our priority was those who were injured and their families. Since then we have been humbled by their grace and fortitude, and we will continue to do whatever we can to support them.

The decision was taken to close the park immediately. We firmly believe that this was the right course of action, reflecting the seriousness of the incident and the impact on our staff, and to allow the team to focus both on those affected and on the development and implementation of new safety protocols where necessary.

Equally important was to establish exactly what happened, through our own and the Health and Safety Executive investigations, in order to ensure that such an event

cannot occur again. These investigations are ongoing.

In addition, we felt it appropriate to significantly reduce our marketing activity in light of what happened.

We reopened Alton Towers six days after the incident, and the park is now fully operational. However, the number of people visiting has understandably been adversely impacted as a result.

Alton Towers has a proud track record as the number one theme park in the UK, a position endorsed by our

consistently high customer satisfaction scores and the recent recognition as Trip Advisor's best UK theme park. We have been encouraged by those customers who have continued to come to the resort and by the many others who have written to us expressing their support.

We are confident that we will rebuild our position as the UK's favourite theme park. We are proud of our fantastic team and thank them for their dedication and commitment through this period.

The first priority always must be public safety. The response must emphasise concern for the victims and efforts to prevent a repeat of the crisis situation

## W. Timothy Coombs

Texas A&M University, author and crisis communication researcher

Some crises go largely unnoticed, while others can draw a crowd. When media and other stakeholders are drawn to the crisis, it can create tremendous pressure on an organisation. We can call these public interest crises. An accident at an theme park would be a public interest crisis.

These accidents have victims, a sense of drama and make potential customers wonder if that could happen to them. Organisations need to manage these various pressures when providing their response: a response that stakeholders will examine closely.

The first priority always must be public safety. The



response must emphasise concern for the victims and efforts to prevent a repeat of the crisis situation.

An organisation must explain what it's doing to help the victims and how it will protect public safety now and in the future.

The *now* means closing the attraction that was involved in the accident and investigating the cause. Once known, the organisation can discuss how it will seek to prevent a repeat of the accident in the future. This involves explaining new safety procedures if they are required.

Sometimes an accident can be a result of the actions of the victim. In those cases, management needs to explain how the guest caused the accident. The key is to be descriptive but not to overtly place blame on the victim. A clear explanation of events will allow others to realise who was really at fault. The narrative can include, for example, if a guest might have violated stated safety rules or that the incident resulted from an unknown medical condition.

Even when self-inflicted, the crisis communication needs to reflect sympathy for the victim.

The second priority is returning to normal operations. Potential customers will want to know when they can enjoy that attraction again. This concern needs to be placed in the background of the crisis messaging. Many people will want this information but featuring the return to normal operations too prominently can create a backlash effect. Some stakeholders might feel the organisation is only concerned about its profits and lacks empathy for the victim or victims.

Any discussion of operations should be short and at the end of the crisis message. When public safety is a concern, crisis communication must feature the victim and how the organisation is working to ensure a safe future for customers.

wtcoombs@hotmail.com

The reputation of a company can be won or lost on the action taken in the first hours after a serious incident. It can be quite hard to recover if you have the wrong response

**Brigid Simmonds OBE**

British Beer and Pub Association, chief executive

Customer-facing organisations will, or should have, crisis management plans. If your business involves serving people, you need to know how you will react to a crisis and who will take the lead.

The reputation of a company can be won or lost on the action taken in the first hours after a serious incident. In some cases it can be hard to recover if you have the

wrong response. Look at BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which led to CEO Tony Hayward stepping down over his reaction to the fatal event.

As with any incident where the press is involved, you cannot shirk from your responsibilities and you have to be clear on your message and be open to speaking to all, even if it's difficult and at inconvenient times of the day and night. "No comment" is simply not acceptable.

When a crisis occurs you need to be quite clear on your



plan of action. What happened at Alton Towers was a terrible incident and heart-breaking for everyone involved: first and foremost, for those injured and their families; but also for Nick Varney and the staff at Merlin. I think Merlin's handling of the incident has been commendable. They've been open and Varney has taken full charge of the situation and been the spokesman in the media and through the press. I am certain this was the right course of action.

[bsimmonds@beerandpub.com](mailto:bsimmonds@beerandpub.com)

The key to improving safety is the constant exchange of information that takes place between and among park personnel and manufacturers following an incident

**Gerardo Arteaga**

IAAPA, chairman of the board

As industry professionals, safety is our top priority and we are constantly working to improve the safety of our parks and attractions for our guests and employees. IAAPA focuses on safety above and beyond all else and is concerned with any incident that occurs.

The association works tirelessly to help develop, promote and maintain the highest industry standards possible throughout the world. Of equal importance is the proactive engagement of members in the



association, not only to support the standards development process

but also to reinforce best practices and reduce risks.

We, as members of the association and committed partners in the industry, must work together to ensure the safety of our guests and staff on a daily basis. The key to improving safety is the constant exchange of information that takes place between and among park personnel and manufacturers following an incident. If there is new learning that comes from an incident, I'm confident it's shared within the industry and appropriate changes to safety standards specified by ASTM or EN are made.

Also, it's important when discussing incidents to

keep in perspective how rarely they happen in the attractions industry. Here are a few facts to better explain how rarely injuries occur on fixed-site rides each year:

- There are approximately 300 fixed-site amusement parks in Europe that entertain approximately 183 million guests annually.
- Those same 183 million guests safely enjoy 1.1 billion rides taken annually.
- The likelihood of being seriously injured (require overnight hospitalisation for treatment) on a permanently located amusement park ride in the US is 1 in 24 million. ●

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Tom Anstey, Journalist, Attractions Management



As KidZania mania grips London with the opening of its latest franchise, team members explain the history and development of the miniature city concept and brand

**K**idZania is an edutainment concept that has exploded in popularity in recent times, with a surge of new openings worldwide under a franchise model, most recently its "flagship" location in London.

Targeted at children aged four to 14, KidZania offers the ultimate roleplay experience within a pint-sized city where children recreate real-world jobs, such as pilots, TV anchors, firefighters, chefs, doctors, police officers, journalists and more.

Using real-world brands from local, national and international companies, the attraction is crafted to teach kids essential life skills, including financial literacy, teamwork and independence.





**Xavier López Ancona**  
 Founder and president  
 KidZania

**How did you come up with the KidZania concept?**

KidZania came about from looking at the way children play and realising that they role-play. They imitate the lives of adults. There are 8 million children in Mexico – that’s where I’m from – and I saw this need for safe, fun, educational entertainment. No one was really doing a good job of delivering this. Creating role-play-based activities for children seemed obvious, and then we had the idea of building cities to take that role-play element to the next level.

**How do you operate within the KidZania team?**

We have a big team and I get fairly involved. We have two operations managing the two sides of the business. Our non-franchised theme parks have a staff of about 2,000 and we have separate offices and a separate team of 120 people to support the franchisees and our partners worldwide. They handle design, business intelligence, supervision, training – that kind of thing.

Personally, I touch on all the areas. My personal favourite is content. My passion is



Entrepreneur Xavier López Ancona opened the first KidZania in 1999

for designing the facilities, the architecture, the details. My focus is directed more on operations and the experience than the administrative side of things.

**Why did you choose the franchise model for KidZania?**

When we opened the first KidZania in the Santa Fe Mall, Mexico City, in 1999, it was a much bigger success than we’d expected. We doubled our initial attendance projections; we tripled the amount of interested partners; we doubled the price of entry in less than a year because it was

**We doubled our initial attendance projections;**  
**we tripled the amount of interested partners;**  
**we doubled the price of entry in less than a year**

so successful. We wanted to bring KidZania to more children as rapidly as possible. A franchise model was the best way to make this happen, allowing us to look for local partners in new markets.

**How do you select franchisees?**

First, there has to be chemistry. Second, it has to be a business that does good in the community. We’re committed to making money, but we’re also committed to being educational. Our partners have to share these values. They have to have the right resources, management and team. We like people from the hospitality industry who have great customer experience records. With Joel Cadbury, CEO at our newest franchise, KidZania London, it was check, check, check. He’s a great partner for us. ▶

**London will  
certainly be  
the flagship for  
western Europe,  
and maybe even  
for the world**



Children attend the opening of KidZania London in July. One million visitors are forecast annually

**Andrew Darrow**  
EVP of global business  
KidZania

**What do you do at KidZania?**

I oversee all the extensions of our business around the world, handling the franchise side of things.

**How do you decide where you want to put your next KidZania and how do you handle growth?**

We've been somewhat strategic about the way we've grown the business. I was brought in to develop the growth plan for the company, drafting the plan and then going out and selling it. We've grown on a regionalised basis, where we establish a flagship in a certain region of the world

**KidZania: a history**

- The first location opening at the Santa Fe Shopping Mall in Mexico City in September 1999
- Originally named La Ciudad de los Niños (The City of the Children)
- Corporate sponsors contributed 55 per cent of the initial investment into KidZania
- The second KidZania didn't open until 2006, in Monterrey, Mexico
- Since 2007, 17 new locations have opened worldwide, 16 under a franchise model
- KidZania has welcomed more than 42 million guests since opening



and used that as a centrepiece to grow additional facilities in those areas.

Tokyo was a great location for our Asia-Pacific growth. That facility has sold out for eight years and continues to be sold out today. Dubai has been a flagship for us in the Middle East, and Sao Paulo in Brazil. London will certainly be the flagship for western Europe and maybe even for the world. This may be the most important facility we've opened so far.

**What is your relationship with partners and brands?**

Each partner participates in a different way and they each perform some important roles. They make KidZania a much more realistic environment. We always want to create an authentic replica of a city environment. When you walk down a city street, you don't see signs for "bank" and "airline", you see signs for "HSBC" and "British Airways". Partners and brands also help

bring realistic activities to our environment. We don't necessarily know how to run a repair shop, a diner, a factory or a bank, and so they bring their expertise to help us to create very realistic play activities for kids. Each partner participates in a different way in our business depending on the nature of theirs.

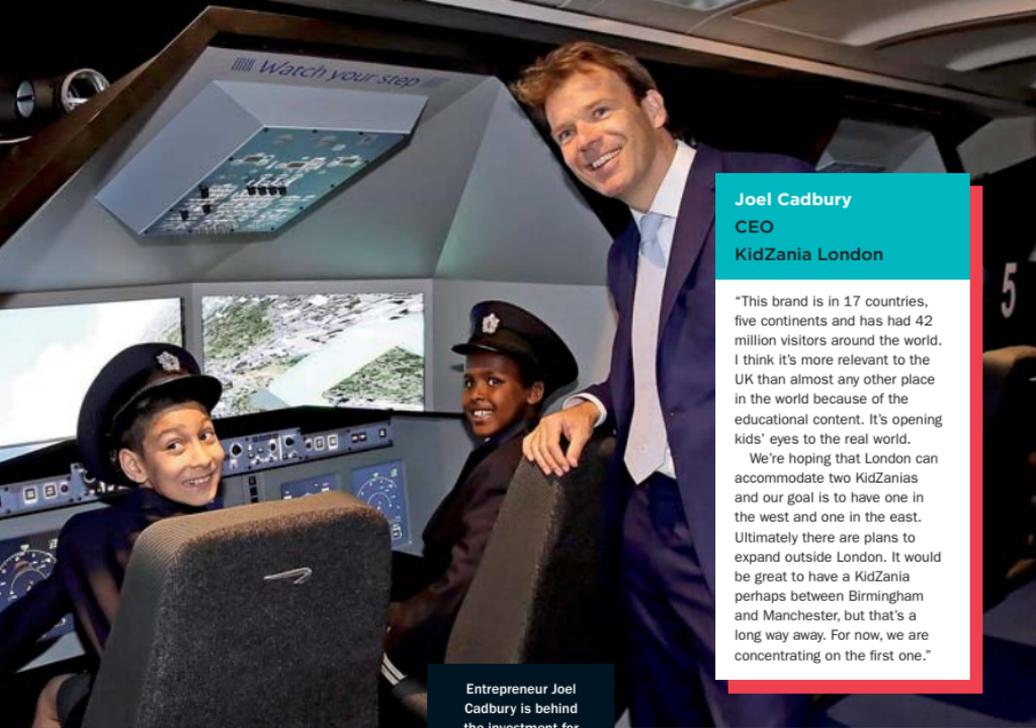
The brands are looking for a way to communicate with families. We're extremely sensitive and never let KidZania turn into an opportunity to market to children. What we want to do is create an environment that simply reflects the real world. Brands have the ability to talk as much to parents as to children about the integrity of their products.

**What are the criteria when it comes to opening a KidZania?**

We look for markets that have 4 to 5 million people within a one-hour travel catchment and 600,000 to 700,000 children in the 0-14 age group. We also look for markets which have high per capita GDP and discretionary spending. The essence of our business isn't tourism; we drive our business from the local resident population and we want to drive repeat business from that population two to five times a year.

**Are there size and cost requirements for a new KidZania?**

Our traditional facilities – including the newly opened KidZania London – are about 75,000sq ft (6,968sqm). The cost to build is generally similar, per square foot, to the cost of building a five-star hotel, but it will vary from market to market. That should give you a sense of what it would cost to establish a KidZania business.



**Joel Cadbury**  
**CEO**  
**KidZania London**

"This brand is in 17 countries, five continents and has had 42 million visitors around the world. I think it's more relevant to the UK than almost any other place in the world because of the educational content. It's opening kids' eyes to the real world.

We're hoping that London can accommodate two KidZanias and our goal is to have one in the west and one in the east. Ultimately there are plans to expand outside London. It would be great to have a KidZania perhaps between Birmingham and Manchester, but that's a long way away. For now, we are concentrating on the first one."

Entrepreneur Joel Cadbury is behind the investment for KidZania London and owns the franchise rights for the UK

### **Working on KidZania London**

**Architects:** Ray Hole Architects  
**Theming:** Paragon Creative  
**Ticketing:** Gateway  
**Audio:** Bose



**Maged Al Naggar**  
Governor  
KidZania Jeddah

**What's your experience and current role?**

I've worked in the industry for 17 years, owning and operating amusement parks, FECs and edutainment centres in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. I joined this company in December 2014 and we've been operating KidZania Jeddah for six months.

**How have initial visitor numbers been?**

So far we've had 150,000 visitors, averaging 30,000 visitors a month.

**What is the educational value of KidZania?**

KidZania is a great concept, which works especially well in Saudi Arabia, which is a very special market. KidZania educates children and equips them with some of the necessary tools to help them make plans for their future. It's an interactive experience and it's something different.

At KidZania in Saudi Arabia, the educational benefits aren't only felt by the



children, but also by the staff. Our KidZania is 100 per cent run by women, 90 per cent of whom are Saudi. It's a unique platform for Saudi women to join the workforce.

In this country, women typically stay at home and don't have jobs available to them. At KidZania we're giving women the opportunity to work. The value of KidZania Jeddah may be more than in other markets because the opportunities for women are slim. It's also the only place in Saudi Arabia where women are legally allowed to drive.

**What's the typical visitor experience?**

Saudi families used to drop off their kids and go off somewhere, but at KidZania

**KidZania Jeddah is a unique platform for Saudi women to join the workforce. We're giving women the opportunity to work**

they really like to stay. Families enjoy the experience together. A typical experience lasts between six and seven hours.

**Does KidZania reflect Jeddah?**

Yes. We changed the city to match local traditions and we changed the uniforms to match what you're used to in Jeddah. We co-operated with the government to match local regulations and customs.

**Who is your target audience?**

We target both local and international visitors and provide everything in both Arabic and English. About 800 children visit from schools on a daily basis.

**Carlos Cárdenas**  
Experience director  
KidZania

**What's your role at KidZania?**

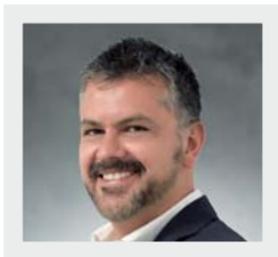
KidZania is like a nation and we're the central government, which is divided into different ministries. I'm the Minister of Culture, so I'm the experience director in charge of all the creative areas of KidZania. The five areas are architecture, theming, content, graphic design and multimedia.

**What's your background?**

I've worked here since the beginning. I started with the company 16 years ago. I have moved up the ladder, from graphic designer to theming and then now to creative director of these arts.

**Does the design change for each country?**

It's a big challenge. Every time we start a new KidZania we need to address cultural stylings and learn different ways of working. We try to localise the content so we want to



reference local elements and reflect those in the project. On the other hand, KidZania has its own personality so we need to keep that intact. When we reference the local culture, like a building or cityscape, we stay under the KidZania banner.

**Do you work with local architects or designers?**

We receive feedback from our local partners about the cultural elements they feel it's important to include. We work in parallel with local builders and the local design team. In terms of the architect, we have

worked with different theming companies, but it changes according to the location.

**What challenges do you face working with brands?**

There certainly can be challenges. Some brands know what they want to reflect to visitors. With a brand like British Airways, for example, it's easy because it's a worldwide brand that's very well known. Domestic brands can be much less known, so we need to do a lot of research.

**Where is everything made and who makes it?**

KidZania is 60 per cent smaller than the real world. Everything from the buildings to the vehicles to the materials is scaled down. It's sometimes difficult to find the right elements so some pieces are customised – and you'd be surprised what you can find on the open market for small props. Our "key materials" come from Mexico. It's a requirement that the franchisees take the key materials from us as this ensures we're able to maintain our concept across all KidZanias and maintain the brand's high standards globally. ●

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*A word from Nathalie Depetro, MAPIC Director*

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ANALYSIS

# TEA /AECOM

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# 2014 Theme &

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# Museum Index

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The TEA/AECOM 2014 Theme and Museum Index indicates healthy attendance growth across all regions, powered by the economic climate, good weather and investment in new attractions

Jodie Lock and Margreet Papamichael, AECOM Economics





Aquaventure in Dubai attracted 1.4 million visitors in 2014

# T

he TEA/AECOM Theme and Museum Index is a collaboration of the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) and the economics practice at AECOM, a global provider of technical-professional

and management-support services.

The annual calendar-year study of global attractions attendance is a free resource for park operators, land developers and the travel industry. Top worldwide theme parks, amusement parks, waterparks, museums and theme park group operators are named and ranked by attendance, and industry trends are identified. The global market is studied as a whole, and each main region is also studied separately: the Americas, Europe and Asia. There's also a table of the top waterparks in the world and in the US, and of the top global chain operators.

Here, AECOM looks at the numbers and makes comparisons with the 2009 listings.

The top 25 theme parks globally have seen a **20% increase in visitor numbers since 2009**

#### GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Last year was one of global growth for the attractions industry. With aggregate attendance across the top 10 leading operator groups increasing by more than 5 per cent during 2014 to around 392 million visits, it's clear there's been a continuation of the sector's post-recession recovery. The top 25 global theme parks list has reshuffled over the past five years, with the larger Asian parks moving up. Having said

that, the list is comparable with the list of five years ago, with only three of the 2009 parks dropping out and being replaced. The list of the top 25 parks in 2009 accounted for a total of 185,568,000 visitors whereas the top 25 this year accounts for a total of 223,450,000, an overall increase of an impressive 20 per cent, or the equivalent of 3.8 per cent growth every year – evidence of a global growing industry.

#### EMEA

The European theme park market witnessed a return to growth in 2014, with attendance levels rebounding 3 per cent following a recession-driven lull. While in 2013 we observed a clear north-south divide in terms of attendance performance, this year no such divergence was apparent. In fact, attendance hikes were seen at all parks aside from those operated by Disney.

Operators cite the improved economic climate, better weather conditions and reinvestment in attractions as the three



PHOTO: UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

Power of the IP:  
Universal attendance  
leapt by 10 per cent



▲ Merlin's Shrek's Adventure, is a new attraction for 2015

main reasons underpinning attendance increases. An impressive 13.7 per cent increase in attendance at Futuroscope in France has been attributed to an award-winning new ride, Raving Rabbits: The Time Machine, which is a testament to the importance of renewed investment.

With governmental backing and private sector support highly visible in the Middle East, and a young, increasingly affluent local population supplemented with an increasing tourist base, we anticipate this region to feature more heavily in the Index over the next few years as hotly anticipated mega-projects enter the market.

While five years ago European operators claimed four of the top 10 operators spots, as of 2014 only Merlin Entertainments and Parques Reunidos remain. Europe represents a mature and relatively stable marketplace; therefore, growth prospects are likely to be stronger in Asia and the Middle East than in Europe, with both upcoming regions benefitting from booming populations and rising disposable incomes.

When we compare the aggregate attendance at EMEA's 10 most visited theme parks in 2009 to the recent figures released for EMEA in 2014, we see overall attendance has increased by just 2.5 per cent from 41.2 million to 42.2 million. This is a clear illustration of the impact of the financial downturn in Europe.

The majority of the top 10 EMEA theme parks in 2014 remain the same as five years ago, with only one new entry to the chart: Legoland Windsor, the winning concept that's rolling out worldwide. ▶

#### Top 25 Amusement/Theme Parks Worldwide

Rank	Park and Location	% change	2014	2013
1	Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, Fl	4.0%	19,332,000	18,588,000
2	Tokyo Disneyland, Tokyo, Japan	0.5%	17,300,000	17,214,000
3	Disneyland, Anaheim, Ca	3.5%	16,769,000	16,202,000
4	Tokyo Disney Sea, Tokyo, Japan	0.1%	14,100,000	14,084,000
5	Universal Studios Japan, Osaka, Japan	16.8%	11,800,000	10,100,000
6	Epcot at Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, Fl	2.0%	11,454,000	11,229,000
7	Disney's Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, Fl	2.0%	10,402,000	10,198,000
8	Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, Fl	2.0%	10,312,000	10,110,000
9	Disneyland Park at Disneyland Paris, Marne-La-Vallée, France	-4.7%	9,940,000	10,430,000
10	Disney's Ca Adventure, Anaheim, Ca	3.0%	8,769,000	8,514,000
11	Universal Studios at Universal Orlando, Fl	17.0%	8,263,000	7,062,000
12	Islands Of Adventure at Universal Orlando, Fl	0.0%	8,141,000	8,141,000
13	Ocean Park, Hong Kong	4.2%	7,792,000	7,475,000
14	Lotte World, Seoul, South Korea	2.8%	7,606,000	7,400,000
15	Hong Kong Disneyland, Hong Kong	1.4%	7,500,000	7,400,000
16	Everland, Gyeonggi-Do, South Korea	1.1%	7,381,000	7,303,000
17	Universal Studios Hollywood, Universal City, Ca	11.0%	6,824,000	6,148,000
18	Songcheng Park, Hangzhou, China	38.3%	5,810,000	4,200,000
19	Nagashima Spa Land, Kuwana, Japan	-3.6%	5,630,000	5,840,000
20	Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, Hengqin, China (New)	NA	5,504,000	NA
21	Europa Park, Rust, Germany	2.0%	5,000,000	4,900,000
22	Seaworld Fl, Orlando, Fl	-8.0%	4,683,000	5,090,000
23	Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen, Denmark	6.6%	4,478,000	4,200,000
24	De Efteling, Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands	6.0%	4,400,000	4,150,000
25	Walt Disney Studios Park at Disneyland Paris, Marne-La-Vallée, France	-4.7%	4,260,000	4,470,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4.1%</b>	<b>223,450,000</b>	<b>214,708,000</b>

Merlin  
Entertainments  
achieved an  
aggregate  
attendance level of  
**62.8**  
million visitors  
in 2014, 5% more  
than in 2013

#### OPERATOR NEWS

The top 10 operator groups have reshuffled over the past five years, reflecting a shift in energy to the East. Asian operators, such as OCT Parks China and Chimelong Group, are now snapping at the heels of industry giants, Disney, Merlin and Universal. Disney still sits head and shoulders above the rest, boasting more than double the attendance achieved by second-place Merlin, and a stronghold on the top 10 global theme parks chart, with nine parks featured.

Merlin continued its upwards trajectory throughout the course of the year, buoyed by its strongly performing Legoland parks, to achieve an aggregate attendance level of 62.8 million and maintain its position as the world's second-largest theme park group.

This position may change, however, when the 2015 numbers come in as a result of the accident on Merlin's Smiler ride at the Alton Towers, UK, theme park in June, which hit attendances and inflicted a \$50m (\$77m, €71m) hit on profits.

Other leading European operators Parques Reunidos and Compagnies des

#### Top 20 Amusement/Theme Parks Europe, Middle East & Africa

Rank	Park And Location	% Change	2014	2013
1	Disneyland Park At Disneyland Paris, Marne-La-Vallee, France	-4.7%	9,940,000	10,430,000
2	Europa Park, Rust, Germany	2.0%	5,000,000	4,900,000
3	Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen, Denmark	6.6%	4,478,000	4,200,000
4	De Efteling, Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands	6.0%	4,400,000	4,150,000
5	Walt Disney Studios Park At Disneyland Paris, Marne-La-Vallee, France	-4.7%	4,260,000	4,470,000
6	Port Aventura, Salou, Spain	2.9%	3,500,000	3,400,000
7	Liseberg, Gothenburg, Sweden	8.4%	3,100,000	2,860,000
8	Gardaland, Castelnovo Del Garda, Italy	1.9%	2,750,000	2,700,000
9	Alton Towers, Staffordshire, UK	3.0%	2,575,000	2,500,000
10	Legoland Windsor, Windsor, UK	7.3%	2,200,000	2,050,000
11	Thorpe Park, Chertsey, UK	5.0%	2,100,000	2,000,000
12	Legoland Billund, Billund, Denmark	6.9%	1,925,000	1,800,000
13	Puy Du Fou, Les Epesses, France	9.9%	1,912,000	1,740,000
14	Phantasialand, Bruhl, Germany	5.4%	1,845,000	1,750,000
15	Parc Asterix, Plailly, France	11.1%	1,800,000	1,620,000
16	Futuroscope, Jaunay-Clan, France	13.7%	1,665,000	1,464,000
17	Chessington World Of Adventures, Chessington, UK	6.7%	1,600,000	1,500,000
18	Gronalund, Stockholm, Sweden	3.3%	1,550,000	1,500,000
19	Heide Park, Soltau, Germany	5.4%	1,475,000	1,400,000
20	Parque Warner, Madrid, Spain	25.9%	1,460,000	1,160,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3.0%</b>	<b>59,535,000</b>	<b>57,809,000</b>

Alpes took the opportunity to streamline their portfolios in light of the improving economic climate, with the former having disposed of 14 FECs and one waterpark, and the latter Walibi Sud-Ouest and Dolfinarium. These groups are focusing on their core assets and anticipate rolling out new leisure parks in emerging destinations benefiting from a growing middle class.

#### EMEA WATERPARKS

The 2014 Theme Index includes EMEA waterparks for the first time, a sector expected to see strong growth in coming years. We anticipate uncovering more waterparks performing well in the European market as a result of this year's publication.

Indoor facilities capture a significant market share in Northern Europe, which is not surprising given uncertainties surrounding weather. Germany reigns supreme, dominating the top 10 chart with six parks and claiming the home of Europe's biggest waterslide, located at Therme Erding near Munich.

Germany has a long history of creating water-based attractions traditionally focused on the healing qualities of water. Over time these have increasingly turned to incorporate active play and fun waterparks. The parks listed in the EMEA top 10 waterparks are all fun parks that have a minimum of three water slides or flumes, a wave pool, retail and F&B areas, and at least two other fun elements such as tube rides, lazy river or a kids' water play area.

The UAE features three times on the EMEA top 10 waterparks list, with

#### Top 10 Waterparks Europe, Middle East & Africa

Rank	Park and Location	2014
1	Aquaventure Waterpark, Dubai, UAE	1,400,000
2	Therme Erding, Erding, Germany	1,000,000
3	Tropical Islands, Krausnick, Germany	910,000
4	Siam Park, Santa Cruz De Tenerife, Spain	850,000
5	Wild Wadi, Dubai, UAE	725,000
6	Miramar, Heidelberg, Germany	720,000
7	Aqualand, Kohn, Germany	700,000
8	Palm Beach, Nurnberg, Germany	680,000
9	Yas Waterworld, Abu Dhabi, UAE	675,000
10	Nettebad, Osnabrück, Germany	660,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8,320,000</b>



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Futuroscope's new 3D Raving Rabbids ride takes guests on a journey through history

► Aquaventure, visited by 1.4 million people in 2014, named as the most visited waterpark in EMEA. The latest of these parks is Yas Waterworld, an example of a successful, highly themed and culturally relevant attraction, whose home-grown IP has been well-received by the local market. In contrast to many European waterparks, those in the Middle East tend to be outdoor parks with year-round operations, which has clear positive implications on attendance.

A number of waterparks operate with associated lodging, for example Splash Landings at Alton Towers, UK, and Aquaventure in Dubai. On-site accommodation can prolong length of stay (particularly for clustered attractions), allow

## There was an impressive **13.7%** attendance increase at Futuroscope, attributed to the award-winning new ride, **Raving Rabbids: The Time Machine**

for land use synergies (ticketing packages, increased footfall sitewide) and broaden the appeal of the destination. Lodging packages can have a detrimental impact on admission yields for individual attractions, nevertheless, the composite benefit for the destination as a whole is important and is generally overwhelmingly positive.

### TO IP OR NOT TO IP

The role IPs play in success is hotly debated and an important question for new parks or significant extensions to existing parks.

The European market, for the most part, has grown organically over time. Although group operators feature to a greater extent these days, parks across Europe remain culturally relevant to the markets in which they operate. As a result, there are strong examples of home-grown IPs. Indeed, three of the top five European parks – Europa Park, Tivoli and De Efteling – have succeeded without international branding, creating their own storylines and IP rights.

Conversely, theme parks planned for the Middle East are large developments with a combination of resort uses. These are not only aimed at the domestic market: the expectation is that they'll attract large swathes of tourists. Many planned parks are teaming up with globally recognised IPs that have proven records. This minimises risk and projects a clear message to the market. So, to IP or not to IP remains a question that can only be answered by looking at the target market of the planned attraction. ●

### Top 10 Theme Park Groups Worldwide

Rank	Group Name	% change	2014	2013
1	Walt Disney Attractions	1.3%	134,330,000	132,549,000
2	Merlin Entertainments Group	5.0%	62,800,000	59,800,000
3	Universal Parks And Resorts	10.4%	40,152,000	36,360,000
4	OCT Parks China	6.3%	27,990,000	26,320,000
5	Six Flags Inc	-1.8%	25,638,000	26,100,000
6	Cedar Fair Entertainment Company	-0.9%	23,305,000	23,519,000
7	Seaworld Parks & Entertainment	-4.3%	22,399,000	23,400,000
8	Parques Reunidos	-14.6%	22,206,000	26,017,000
9	Chimelong Group (New)	59.9%	18,659,000	11,672,000
10	Songcheng Worldwide (New)	103.6%	14,560,000	7,150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5.1%</b>	<b>392,039,000</b>	<b>372,887,000</b>



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# PACK IT UP, PACK IT IN

The Whitney Museum of American Art has moved into a new \$422m building sandwiched between the Hudson and the High Line in Manhattan's fashionable Meatpacking District. Museum director Adam D Weinberg tells the story

Alice Davis, managing editor, Attractions Management



A view of the new Whitney from the Hudson River, New York (left) and the upper levels of the building



### Why did you move from Madison Avenue to the Meatpacking District?

In 2007, with the help of the City of New York and the Mayor Michael Bloomberg administration, the Whitney Museum identified a site on a largely abandoned lot in the Meatpacking District. This site offered extraordinary advantages: a large, horizontal space ideal for creating column-free museum galleries; proximity to Chelsea's gallery district; open views of the Hudson River; adjacency to the High Line Park that would ensure considerable foot traffic; and the opportunity for the building to be viewed from 360 degrees.

We were also excited to return to the same neighbourhood where Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney founded the museum 85 years ago.

This site, in particular, is connected to the history of American art. In the area, for example, Ad Reinhardt had a studio on Gansevoort Street, Willem de Kooning painted very nearby, Gordon Matta-Clark did his famous pier cut across the



Adam D Weinberg has been the Alice Pratt Brown director of New York's Whitney Museum since October 2003

PHOTO: SCOTT RUDOL

street. Edward Hopper painted in the neighbourhood. Jasper Johns, Lawrence Weiner and Julian Schnabel all have studios in the neighbourhood, among others."

### What can you bring to the area?

There are several wonderful arts organisations nearby including the Kitchen and White Columns and the Whitney looks forward to being another cultural resource for the community.

### Why did you want a brand new building?

Initially we wanted to expand on site, adjacent to the Marcel Breuer-designed building we'd occupied on Madison Avenue since 1966. We undertook a couple of design schemes, but we ultimately decided there wasn't enough space to build what we needed. The site necessitated a design that would have been too vertical and the Breuer building was too hard to complement

Building a museum from the ground up is a rare opportunity and it allowed us to design a building that responds to

We needed somebody who was experienced in building in New York - who was really an urbanist

our specific program needs. The idea to expand was primarily to be able to present more of the collection, but also to gain dedicated education space, a theatre and the back-of-house facilities that were lacking in our previous building.

### Why did you choose to work with Renzo Piano?

While interviewing other architects, we asked what their favourite museum building was. Almost every one named the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop. We decided that if all these architects – young and old, American and non-American – are citing Renzo Piano as the great museum architect, then we should talk to him.

Hiring Piano was the right decision because we needed somebody who was experienced in building in New York, who knew how to build in a dense urban environment – who was really an urbanist.

At their best, his buildings put the art first and are not primarily concerned with what the building looks like on the exterior. His buildings are about creating a space for art.

Outdoor gallery spaces are a feature of the Renzo Piano-designed museum



PHOTO: INC/LEKROU

### Can you describe the building?

The new building includes approximately 50,000 square feet [4,650sqm] of indoor galleries and 13,000 square feet [1,200sqm] of outdoor exhibition space and terraces facing the High Line. An expansive gallery for special exhibitions is approximately 18,000 square feet [1,670sqm], making it the largest column-free museum gallery in New York City.

Additional exhibition space includes a lobby gallery (accessible free of charge), two floors for the permanent collection and a special exhibitions gallery on the top floor.

The building also includes an education centre offering state-of-the-art classrooms; a multi-use black box theatre for film, video, and performance with an adjacent outdoor gallery; a 170-seat theatre with stunning views of the Hudson River; and a Works on Paper Study Centre, Conservation Lab, and Library Reading Room. The classrooms, theatre and study centre are all firsts for the Whitney.

A shop and restaurant on the completely transparent ground-floor level contribute to the busy street life of the area.

Piano's design takes a strong and strikingly asymmetrical form – one that responds to the industrial character of the neighbouring loft buildings and overhead railway while asserting a contemporary, sculptural presence. The upper storeys of the building overlook the Hudson River on its west and step back gracefully from the elevated High Line park to its east.

Piano wanted pedestrians to identify the Whitney from the exterior as a museum. From the east and west, the windows of the major exhibition gallery are visible and the astonishing horizontal form of the gallery itself is evident. Walking down the High Line from the north, people will see art on

## ABOUT THE WHITNEY.

The Whitney Museum of American Art was founded in 1930 by artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, who wanted to support contemporary American artists. Since 1966, the museum has been situated in a Marcel Breuer-designed building on Madison Avenue, New York. When the Whitney, which has a collection 22,000 works, outgrew the space, Renzo Piano was commissioned to design a new museum for a site in the city's Meatpacking District. The \$422m (£276m, €386m) asymmetrical nine-storey building boasts expansive gallery space and is New York City's first LEED-Gold certified art museum. The Breuer building is being occupied by the Metropolitan Museum of Art until 2023.



Portrait of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1931) by Edward Steichen

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The new building has more space to display the Whitney's 22,000 works

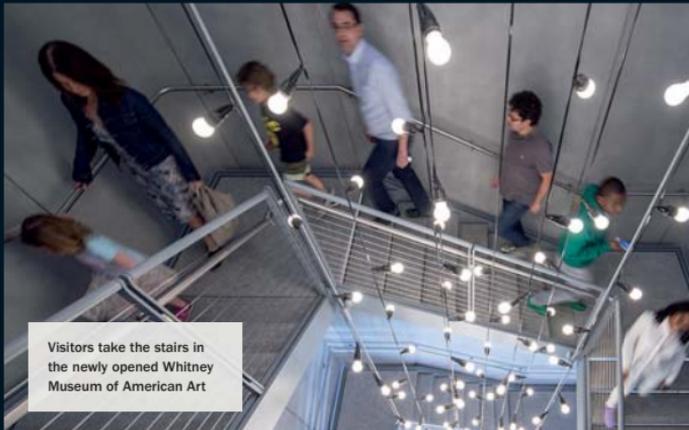


## A SPACE FOR ART

Weinberg discovered that many peers and colleagues labelled Renzo Piano as the greatest museum architect. The reason, as Weinberg explains, is because Piano prioritises art and the needs of the museum: "His buildings are about creating a space for art," Weinberg says. Piano is less concerned with the exterior – and the exterior of the new Whitney has been met with mixed reviews.

To create a space for art, Piano was attentive to the functionality and flexibility of the gallery interior. He used reclaimed pine floors that can be nailed into and later replaced with new boards if necessary, and fitted a grid system ceiling with track lights that can be reconfigured to suit the curator's requirements. Each floor and exhibit space is designed with optimum illumination (so as to preserve the art) and optimum viewing conditions (for the visitors) in mind.

The fifth floor is home to an 18,000sq ft (1,672sqm) gallery space, the biggest column-free gallery in New York.



Visitors take the stairs in the newly opened Whitney Museum of American Art



These artwork-elevators, by Richard Artshwager, create the experience of standing next to everyday objects



US First Lady Michelle Obama inaugurates the museum on 30 April, 2015



### ABOUT RENZO PIANO.

Pritzker prize-winner Renzo Piano was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1937. His father was a builder, which sparked Piano's interest in the industry. He graduated in 1964. In 1971, he and architect Richard Rogers set up Piano & Rogers in London; the practice won acclaim for the Centre Pompidou in Paris, France. Piano then worked at Atelier Piano & Rice until he set up his current studio, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, in 1981. The architect's works include the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, Maison Hermès in Tokyo, Japan, the *New York Times*' headquarters in New York, the MUSE science centre in Trento, Italy, and the Shard in London. The Whitney Museum of American Art opened on 1 May, 2015.

- ▶ the multiple exterior galleries as well as glimpse art works in the windows of the Conservation Lab and art receiving area.

### How does his design represent the Whitney?

The new building embodies the spirit and aspirations of the museum today and reaffirms the Whitney's core identity as the "artists' museum". The building was designed to present art in the best possible conditions and to provide artists with the greatest flexibility to realise their work.

It provides far more room to display the collection, which has grown to nearly 22,000 works. It represents a further opening up to the public with its transparency, multiple indoor/outdoor spaces and, for the first time, dedicated spaces devoted to the performing arts and education.

It's our fervent hope that the scale, flexibility and character of the gallery spaces – interior and exterior – will be an inspiration to artists for generations to come and provide welcoming spaces for visitors to experience art.

### Can you tell us about the Artschwager elevators?

Underscoring the importance of the art experience beginning immediately, the elevators were designed by artist Richard Artschwager and are the only commissioned work of art in the new building.



The Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, was designed by Renzo Piano. It opened in 1987



*Rückenfigur* by Glenn Ligon,  
*'61 Pontiac* by Robert Bechtle  
 (top right) and Edward Hopper's  
*Early Sunday Morning* (right)



*Six in Four*, the title Artschwager gave the Whitney elevators, is the last major artwork he created before his death. The four elevators are the culmination of a body of work based on six themes: Door, Window, Table, Basket, Mirror, and Rug that were the subject of hundreds of drawings and sculptures Artschwager made throughout his career. Each elevator is an immersive installation featuring these themes. Visitors enter the elevators and have the experience of standing under a table; on a rug and in front of a mirror; opposite a door and next to a window; or in a giant woven basket.

Throughout the day, the four elevators will be used by the museum's many visitors (and the largest will also be used to transport art). We hope they'll become a beloved touchstone for our visitors – a visual memory that fosters a lasting connection with the museum.

#### What will be on display?

Until the end of September, the entire museum is dedicated to the exhibition *America is Hard to See*, a presentation of more than 600 works from the permanent collection. The exhibition reexamines the history of art in the US from the beginning of the 20th century to the present.

The exhibition elaborates the themes, ideas, beliefs and passions that have galvanised American artists in their struggle to work within and against established

### The new building reaffirms Whitney's core identity as the "artists' museum"

conventions, often directly engaging their political and social contexts. Numerous pieces that have rarely, if ever, been shown appear alongside beloved icons in a conscious effort to unsettle assumptions about the American art canon.

Works of art across all mediums are displayed together, acknowledging the ways in which artists have engaged various modes of production and broken the boundaries between them.

Also on view is *Mary Heilmann: Sunset*, a site-specific installation that inaugurates the largest outdoor gallery and the building itself. It includes a group of colourful sculptural chairs on the terrace, two large pink wall panels adhered to the building's north façade and her video *Swan Song* – made with Kembra Pfahler in 1982 – which depicts Manhattan's west side waterfront. The installation knits the museum's architecture and visitors into their setting.

#### What is the content of the museum?

The Whitney has the foremost collection of 20th and 21st-century American art. It presents a rigorous and varied schedule of important exhibitions both from our holdings and from the collections of individuals and institutions worldwide.

Exhibitions range from historical surveys and in-depth retrospectives of major 20th-century and contemporary artists to group shows introducing young or relatively unknown artists to a larger public. The Biennial, an invitational show of work produced in the preceding two years, was introduced by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1932. It's the only continuous series of exhibitions in the country to survey recent developments in American art.

The Whitney also presents acclaimed exhibitions of film and video, architecture, photography and new media.

#### How will you be using technology in the museum?

All indoor and outdoor spaces are wired for data and electricity and the whole building is wireless so that the public will have access to educational downloads. We have two "black boxes" that can be used for either performance or gallery space that are fully equipped with state-of-the-art sound, film, video, and lighting. The large box is completely sound insulated so it can be used as a recording or broadcast studio. ●

# Streets Ahead

As Cooper Hewitt reinvents interactive capabilities for visitors, the head of engineering talks us through the different parts of the digital experience

**C**ooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York has emerged from a \$81m (£52m, €73m) three-year renovation.

Then-head of engineering Aaron Cope told *Attractions Management* about the interactive elements, which use cutting-edge technologies and custom-made hardware to create a pioneering visitor experience.

The experience hinges on the idea of a visitor account. Using an NFC-enabled "pen" users can scan object codes and save artefacts of interest to their personal museum Web page.

Cooper Hewitt developed in-house its own digital infrastructure and systems architecture, including the



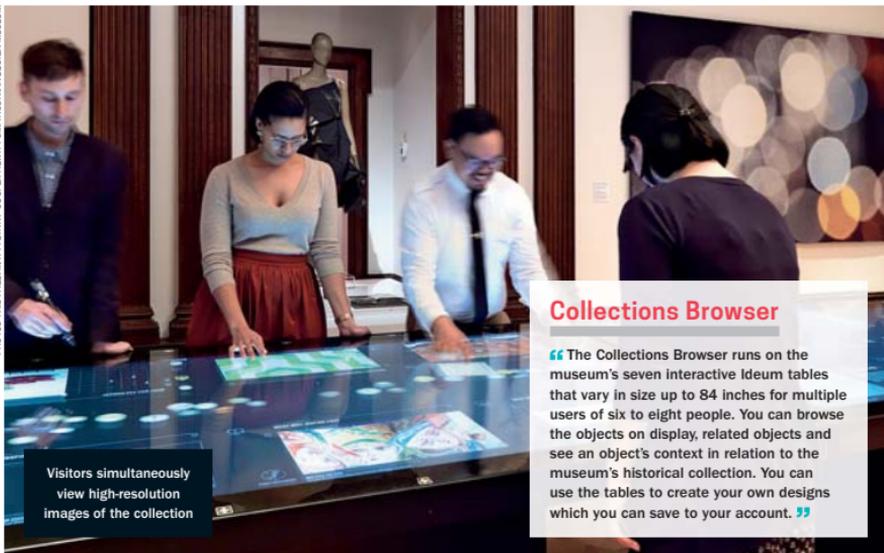
Collections Browser. Mass digitisation of the collection is almost complete.

"The Collections Browser became the scaffolding for everything that followed," Cope says, including the Pen, Process Lab and Immersion Room.

Cope explained the new experience.

Pentagram designed a new graphic identity and signage for the museum

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: MATTHEW FINN / COOPER HEWITT SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM



Visitors simultaneously view high-resolution images of the collection

## Collections Browser

“The Collections Browser runs on the museum’s seven interactive Ideum tables that vary in size up to 84 inches for multiple users of six to eight people. You can browse the objects on display, related objects and see an object’s context in relation to the museum’s historical collection. You can use the tables to create your own designs which you can save to your account.”

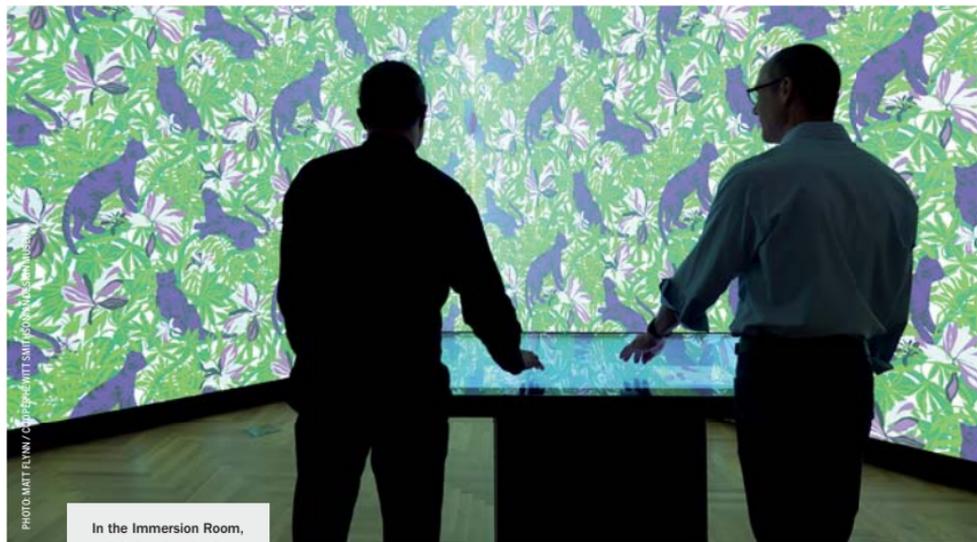


PHOTO: MATT FELDMAN / COOPERHERWITT SOUTHWESTERN DESIGN MUSEUM

In the Immersion Room, digital and projection technologies bring the wallpaper collection to life



## Immersion Room

“The ‘wallpaper room’ is controlled by an interactive Ideum table which accesses the museum’s wallpaper collection – the largest collection of wall coverings in North America. Visitors project designs onto the walls of the Immersion Room, so instead of viewing a swatch, you can see the design floor-to-ceiling. You can design and project your own wallpaper, which can be saved to your account and retrieved later.”

## The Pen

“A museum today is part of the Internet, and vice versa, and visitors arrive with what is essentially a super-computer in their pockets. The Pen is a response to that. It was a remarkably complicated piece of work. The device allows you to interact with the museum, create things on the tables or in the Immersion Room, but also save information from the collection itself to your account.

The idea of the Pen and the idea of the post-visit happened simultaneously. It’s the idea of bookmarking, of being able to return to and share something. All these objects have thousands and thousands of words written about them, and now there’s a way to access this after your visit via your visitor account. The museum starts to exist beyond the 90 minutes that you spend inside its four walls.”

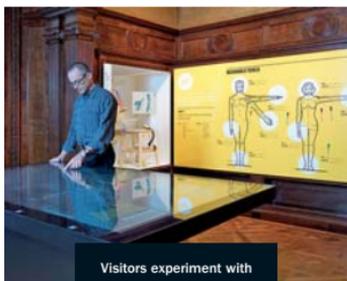


PHOTO: KATIE SHELLY / COOPERHERWITT SOUTHWESTERN DESIGN MUSEUM

Everything collected on the Pen is accessible via a unique Web address provided by the museum

## Process Lab

“The Process Lab is a dedicated section of the museum where people can create their own design objects. There are tools, activities and devices to spark people’s imagination, such as a making station and 3D printer. On an interactive table, there’s an application that asks users to think about how they’d improve an object or use it differently. It’s an opportunity to work through the different constraints that any design object must overcome if it’s to get out into the real world.”



Visitors experiment with design through physical and digital activities in the Process Lab



A visitor uses the Kinect-powered Gesture Match

## Gesture Match

“Gesture Match uses a Microsoft Kinect to scan visitors’ poses and match the shapes to objects in the collection. It was made by Local Projects for the Beautiful Users exhibition. They wanted to create interesting and active ways for visitors to interact with the collection. That’s important because we’re not an art museum, we’re a design museum – and design objects exist to be used. Gesture Match and the Pen are an explicit invitation to visitors, which says: ‘You’re invited to do something; your participation is fundamental to design itself.’”

### WORKING ON COOPER HEWITT

- Interior: Gluckman Mayner, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects
- Garden: Hood Design
- Retail space, visitor services desk: Diller Scofidio + Renfro
- Casework: Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Goppion
- Interactive media: Local Projects
- Multi-user interactive tables: Ideum
- Graphics and signage: Pentagram
- Pen: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Local Projects, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, GE Design, Siste/networks, Tellart, Undercurrent, MakeSimply



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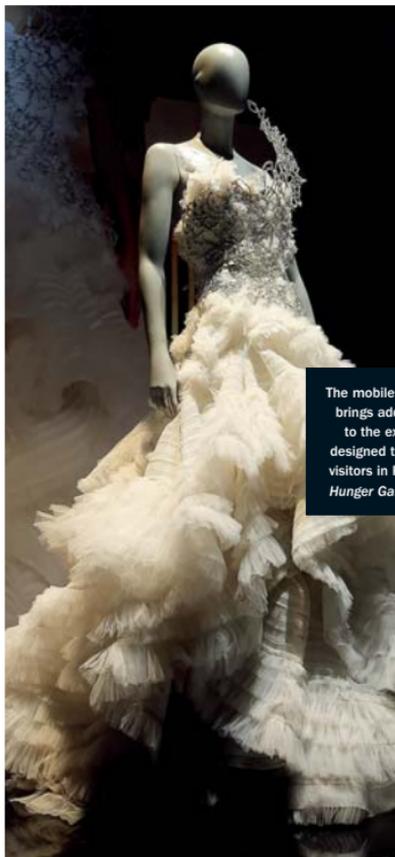
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Shanghai



# Tour de Force

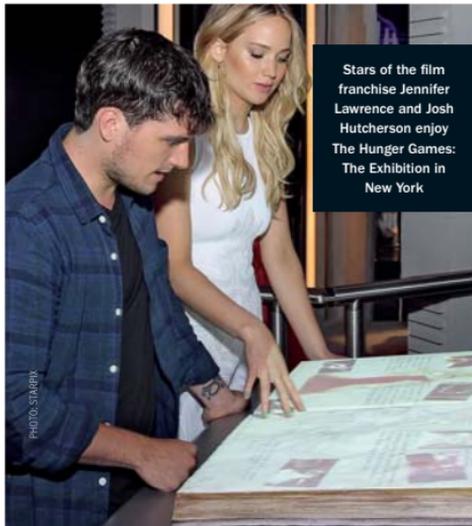
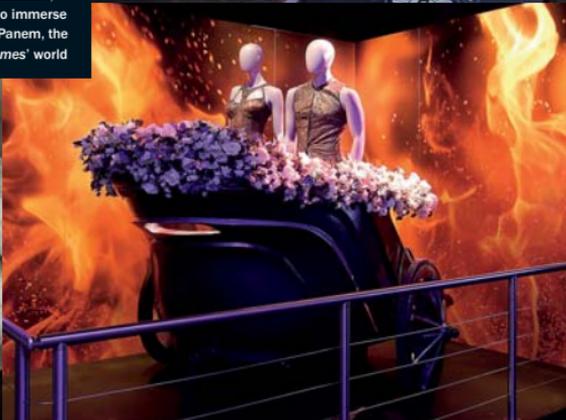
In our latest apps and audioguides round-up, an inventive mobile experience scores points at the Hunger Games exhibition and Google Glass brings a Velázquez retrospective into focus



The mobile experience brings added layers to the exhibition, designed to immerse visitors in Panem, the *Hunger Games*' world



PHOTO: STARBUCK



Stars of the film franchise Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson enjoy The Hunger Games: The Exhibition in New York

## Mobile Experience

### The Hunger Games:

### The Exhibition

**Location:** Discovery Times Square, New York  
**Design:** Acoustiguide

The Hunger Games: The Exhibition opened in July in New York's Discovery Times Square, and Acoustiguide helped bring the attraction to life with an integrated mobile experience.

Acoustiguide worked with Lionsgate and partners Imagine Exhibitions and Thinkwell Group.

The mobile experience is designed to immerse visitors in

Panem, the world of the *Hunger Games* movies. (The fourth and final instalment, *Mockingjay Part 2*, opens on 20 November.)

Acoustiguide wrote and produced the audio content and designed and developed the mobile experience for the exhibition. When users access the app, they follow heroine Katniss Everdeen on a journey packed with multimedia features designed to enhance the experience. Users can customise and share their journey, photos and "achievement badges" on social media. Features and hidden content include deleted movie scenes, interactives, AR and location-aware beacon technology. ▶

PHOTO: STARBUCK

## Audioguides

### Panorama Mesdag

**Location:** Panorama Mesdag, The Hague  
**Design:** Guide ID

Panorama Mesdag is a cylindrical painting housed in a purpose-built museum of the same name. The museum, in The Hague, the Netherlands, in June started using Guide ID's Podcatcher platform and new audio tour, which teaches visitors about Hendrik Willem Mesdag's unique work. The tour is available in 20 languages.



### Koninck Experience

**Location:** Koninck City Brewery, Antwerp  
**Design:** Guide ID

The Koninck Brewery in Antwerp, Belgium, is set to launch its interactive tour experience in September. Billed as informative, exciting and fun, the tour features multimedia and audiovisual effects to tell the story of the brewery and Belgian beer. It's available on Guide ID's Podcatcher platform in four languages.



### Bus and Boat Tours

**Location:** Tours & Tickets, Amsterdam  
**Design:** Imagineear

Imagineear has created audio content for Dutch company Tours & Tickets, who offer bus tours and canal cruises in Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands and Belgium. Imagineear was asked to create audioguides for bus and boat tours in Amsterdam, meaning it had to consider different routes and tourists' different viewing perspectives of attractions and points of interest. The digital agency built right and left versions to cater for both directions of travel. The audio content was produced on a small budget in 14 weeks. Imagineear scripted and produced over 70 hours of audio in 18 languages.

“ Visitors discover the works through a range of AV and multimedia add-ons available via Google Glass ”

## Google Glass

### Velázquez

**Location:** Grand Palais, Paris  
**Design:** Acoustiguide

A recent Diego Velázquez exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris, France, has been exploring the use of Google Glass as a museum guide.

Visitors were able to discover the works of the Spanish painter through a range of audiovisual and multimedia add-ons available via Google Glass. Those included video, music, images and special commentaries.

Acoustiguide especially worked on creating a fluid and uninterrupted viewing experience for the visitor, ensuring looking from the



Acoustiguide created a fluid viewing journey from Glass screen to artwork

Google Glass screen to the artwork was as seamless as possible. The software developer was GuidiGo.

“A major advantage of the glasses is that you can look at the painting and simultaneously view or listen to audiovisual content, without this hindering viewing

the picture,” says Agnès Alfandari, Acoustiguide's vice president of digital strategy. “The glasses are simple to use and so light you forget you're wearing them, which enables you to concentrate on the artwork while you are shown its most interesting details.”

## Audioguide

### Tchaikovsky and Peace

**Location:** Museum of P Tchaikovsky and Moscow, Moscow  
**Design:** Dataton

In the year of composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's 175th birthday, Dataton PICKUP audioguides created a musical soundtrack to complement a Moscow exhibition, Tchaikovsky and Peace – at the Museum of P Tchaikovsky and Moscow in Moscow, Russia – presents over 500 artefacts put together thanks to loans from other institutions. Each room features a themed soundtrack with personalised



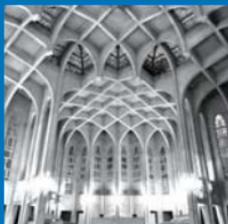
Dataton's Tchaikovsky audio tour combines music and narration

sound from Dataton PICKUP, supplied by Russian AV solutions partner INTmedia.

The audio tour brings together a selection of material from the museum's rich biographical and musiological libraries, combining music and narration to create a unique

immersive atmosphere for visitors. Visitors can move freely around the exhibition, triggering soundtracks by pointing and clicking at discreet microtags, or transponders, mounted in each room. The audio tour is available in both English and Russian.

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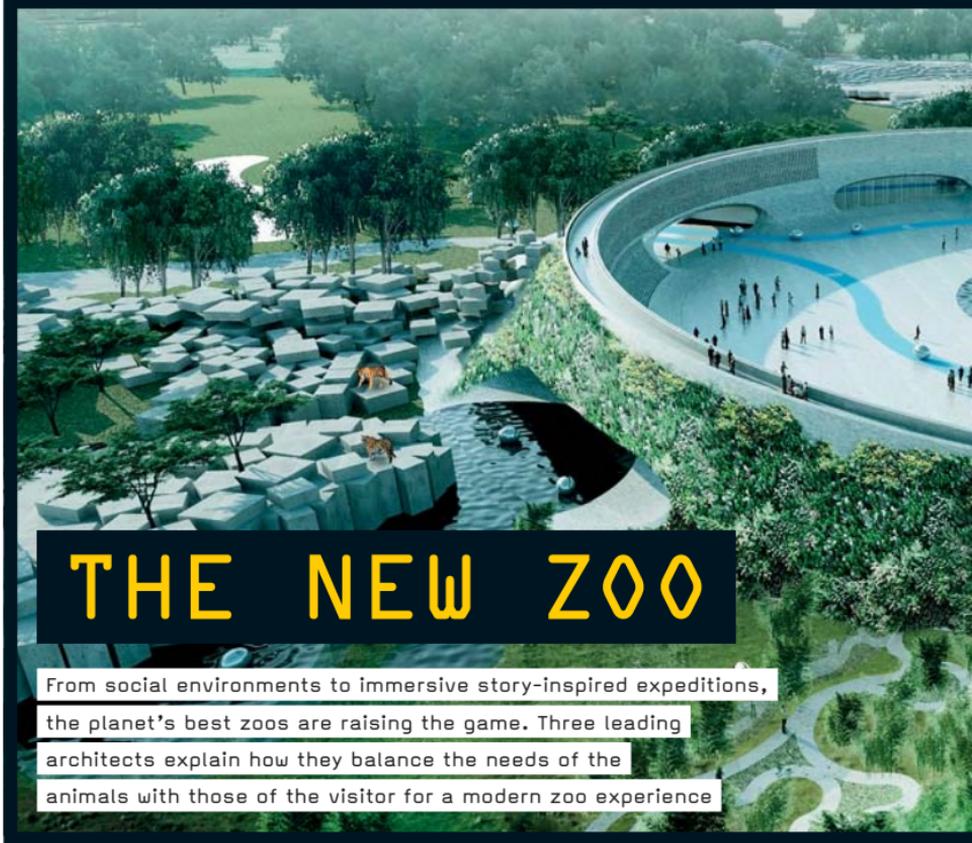
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# THE NEW ZOO

From social environments to immersive story-inspired expeditions, the planet's best zoos are raising the game. Three leading architects explain how they balance the needs of the animals with those of the visitor for a modern zoo experience



**BJARKE INGELS**  
FOUNDER  
BJARKE INGELS GROUP

**Your architecture firm Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) caused a stir with its concept for the new Givskud Zoo Zootopia in Denmark. How will the design help the zoo perform better?**

We've organised Zootopia so that you start by arriving at something that looks like a giant tilted crater. Visitors are able to walk along the rim of the crater and get amazing views out over the entire landscape.

From this crater there'll be three giant gates that you can move through that will bring you into one of three zones: America, Asia or Africa. We've organised Asia so you travel by "water bicycle" (like a pedalo). You

can cycle through the Africa area and then you can take a cable car through America.

Essentially the idea is to interface with the animals in completely new ways. There will be a 4km [2.5 mile] hike through all three continents, so there are lots of ways to move around and experience the zoo.

Both the human experience and the animal experience are going to get much more exciting, and symbiotic.

**Were the animals' needs the starting point for the design?**

Zootopia will only have social animals. A lot of people associate zoos with lonesome animals in small cages, going crazy from boredom and claustrophobia.

However, when you have a social zoo you can have a big group of animals together in a habitat that resembles the way they'd live



Mirrors and shelters prevent animals seeing the visitors at Givskud Zoo, Denmark

in the wild. In this case, the brief created a natural starting point for our design; the continuous and diverse landscape seamlessly serves animal and human needs.

#### Did you aim to build a futuristic zoo? What architectural qualities make it a zoo of the future?

The zoo's aim was really to try to be a place where visitors don't notice the barriers between them and the animals, turning the traditional zoo inside-out. It was also a question of trying to find ways of creating a successful cohabitation between humans and different species of animals.

What we've tried to do is to eliminate all traces of human architecture, so there are no buildings. This means no Chinese pagodas or African huts. Instead, you'll see rolling hills growing over the areas where

the lions retreat when the winter gets cold in Denmark; combinations of level changes; and trenches with water where the depth prevents certain animals from crossing. With the bears, your cable car might come close but it won't bring you within range.

#### How is the visitor experience incorporated into the architecture?

One main innovation in visitor experience has been the car safari, where you take a personal vehicle and drive amongst lions. It's a surreal clash of something incredibly familiar and something highly exotic.

We're organising our own car safari as a loop that frames the park, so from the car you have an overview and experience of animals from across the globe. We also have mirrored capsules strung on a cable car system, so the visitor safely

hovers just above the environments while blending in with the surroundings.

#### Did you have concerns about modern zoos when you began this project? Do you believe Givskud is a realistic proposition in terms of animals and visitors interacting this way?

Despite the anachronistic nature of zoos – especially in a time when inexpensive air travel and live images make wildlife more present in our everyday lives – they are still important as forms of education, research and preservation.

If you can design a zoo that uses the natural landscape as inspiration and where humans and other species exist in close proximity in harmony, then the result will be successful. If you can design a great zoo, you can design a great city. ▶

**KIERAN STANLEY**

CEO, EXPERIENCE ARCHITECTURE  
DAN PEARLMAN



Kieran Stanley has created Hannover Adventure Zoo's Yukon Bay, Germany and Chester Zoo's Islands, UK

**What's the philosophy at Dan Pearlman on zoo design?**

Our overriding philosophy is that we build stories. Storybuilding is our signature. The philosophy is to create an emotional tie between the visitor and the animal – to create the fascination, the goose-bumps. If we create an emotional connection between a child and a polar bear, for example, there's a very good chance that child will want to look after these animals and realise his own actions have an effect.

**What makes good zoo design?**

Good design means creating the ideal environment for an animal's needs. This includes behavioural enrichment elements, which should be built in at the start. For example, we designed the polar bear exhibit at Hannover Adventure Zoo in Hanover, Germany, as part of the immersive environments of the Yukon Bay project. At the beginning we planned a wave machine to enable the bears to "hunt" fish in a more natural way. That's different from throwing

toys in an exhibit as an afterthought, which kills the holistic approach to the design.

From a design aspect, you need strong themes. Chester Zoo in Chester, UK, is very focused on conservation and has one of the strongest conservation teams in the world, so the design for its Islands project was driven by that core theme. Visitors go on their own conservation expeditions, learning about the conservation work the teams are doing. Good design makes the zoos' work relevant to the visitors.

**When designing a zoo exhibit, what's your starting point?**

We always start with the brief from the client's point of view. Is it a traditional zoo, a conservative zoo? What aims has it set itself over the next 20 years? How does it want to develop? What image does it have? What species does it have? That defines the approach to the design.

Then we work with our landscape architects, architects, designers, scenographers and storytellers to develop concepts. We include the stakeholders in the design process from a very early stage.

**What are the most important considerations concerning the animal and visitor?**

For the visitors, it's important that they are as close to the content as possible. We want visitors to make an emotional





connection and give them memories they'll never forget. We want to wow them.

As for the animals, they need as much space and as much behavioural enrichment as possible. In China, I recently saw a new polar bear enclosure which was purely artificial rock. Polar bears need to dig and they need earth to do that. We need to provide properly for the animal otherwise the work we do is not sustainable. We need to provide above and beyond what they would need in their natural environment.

For example, when we did a wolf enclosure for the Yukon Bay project, it was made to look like windswept, wild Alaska.

**How important are materials and plant life? How accurately do you try to create a specific ecosystem?**

At Chester, the visitor moves from one island group to the next, always across water, and every area has its own plant life, animals, decoration and architecture to create that authentic background. We chose plants that imitate the effect of Indonesian plants to create the right atmosphere.

With materials, we're sticklers for research. When we worked on the Zambezi attraction at Hannover Adventure Zoo, an artificial river recreating the African



**“You have to tell the story intuitively. Scenes are set up more like dramaturgy than a story”**



savannah, I'd travelled in Africa looking for authentic materials and decoration elements, but also observing how locals deal with detailing. In that project, for example, you'll see signposts held up by bicycle chains. Visitors learn from the habitat we create. It's telling stories through building layers.

**How important is the “experience” - creating a story, or journey - to you?**

A story sets up a framework which makes it easy to explain why things are the way they are. In Islands at Chester Zoo, the story is simple: we take the visitor on a conservation expedition.

You have to tell the story intuitively. We set up scenes so it's more like dramaturgy

than it is a story. We set up a dramaturgical walk – a line through the space which we can make get bright, get narrow, get dark. It can be loud, it can be quiet. This gives us variants and means of expression. I can choose a point where it becomes emotional or dark or isolated. I can choose the moment where the story starts to develop or becomes more poignant.

We have an iceberg principle, which means we want everybody to at least understand the tip of the iceberg. Visitors can then dive deeper if they want to.

**What do you imagine will be happening in 20 years?**

Old-fashioned zoos will become more immersive. Zoos that can't keep up with regulations will close. Other zoos will become more attractive. When a smaller and bigger zoo are nearby, they might combine to become less competitive. Some will reduce their collection to create more space. Some zoos will maintain the idea of building big dome architecture, but I think things will be driven by the future of the climate crisis. If climate, costs and the energy crisis continue to increase, it will have an effect on the type of architecture that future zoos can afford.

## MARIO CAMPOS CAMPOS

PARTNER

JONES & JONES

**Jones & Jones has been designing zoos for many years. Is there a pivotal time in zoo design you can tell us about?**

In 1976, Jones & Jones designed the master plan for the reconstruction of Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington. This was the beginning of the era of realistic habitat simulation, and we introduced the concept of designing the zoo according to bioclimatic zones.

The gorilla exhibit became a new paradigm in zoo design – immersing animals in their natural environment. That didn't mean adding rocks, grass and logs, but designing an exhibit that closely simulates or duplicates the natural habitat.

**How did you simulate the gorillas' natural home?**

The gorillas were given a natural landscape, with tall grasses, shrubs, herbs and climbing trees – everything that a gorilla family would have in the wild. Back then, gorillas were held in sterile concrete low-level cages, so this idea of creating a



natural habitat was very significant. The gorilla exhibit was designed to present the animals with dignity so it was positioned on higher ground than the visitor area.

**Can you compare the gorilla exhibit from the 1970s to the recent one at Dublin Zoo?**

The gorilla exhibit at Dublin is four times the size of the one at Woodland Park Zoo. It has a whole troop of gorillas, with offspring and younger males. It has a very large night house and day shelter, lots of climbing

trees. We learned it's possible for gorillas to live in a social environment as long as it's big enough. It's a very extensive and beautiful landscape. Some zoos have gone through a similar change with their exhibits and it's a very significant revolution.

**What do you think about when designing the visitor experience of an animal exhibit?**

We use the concept of landscape immersion, which means the public has to also be immersed in the animal's habitat. It's the animal's place and you're the visitor. By extending the habitat into the visitor realm, the visitor feels like he's exploring.

It's a comprehensive, holistic learning experience for the visitors, who not only learn respect for the animal but also for the habitat. Animal preservation is entirely linked to conserving the habitat – we want the visitor to gain an appreciation for habitat conservation.

**What other considerations are involved?**

Animal wellbeing is very relevant to today's zoo exhibit and that means providing what the animal wants and needs in the wild. You can never duplicate a big enough habitat for them, so you have to provide what they





The gorilla exhibit features forested areas at Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington

need for them to perform their natural behaviours as well as stimulate them.

At the elephant exhibit at Dublin Zoo, the zookeepers manipulate the environment, moving huge mounds of sand and dirt to vary the environment for the animals. Zookeepers have to be ahead of the game, anticipating how they can challenge these animals and create interactions so they don't get bored.

Husbandry is moving beyond just providing for the animals' basic needs and veterinary care to making sure the animals have constant stimulation for the behaviour they normally would have and the way they would be discovering new things in the wild. That's still evolving.

#### What other design elements are important?

We use cultural references to show positive interactions between traditional cultures and habitats and animals. Take Asian elephants as an example of animals who have had relationships with humans for thousands of years. If you show evidence of the people who live alongside the animals in their natural environment, it shows visitors that it's possible to coexist with wildlife with respect and understanding.

“Visitors learn that animal preservation is entirely linked to conserving the habitat”

#### Can you give an example?

The use of cultural reference in an exhibit can be as simple as a piece of art, or a sculpture, or a sign or architectural detail. At Detroit Zoo in Detroit, Michigan, we did a polar bear exhibit and placed *inuksuit* – markers that the Inuit leave in the Arctic to guide their routes – on the exhibit's tundra to remind visitors that people live there alongside polar bears.

#### What will a future zoo be like?

In the future, zoo design will be increasingly defined by the wellbeing of the animal and modern husbandry. Animals are intelligent beings and they need to be challenged.

Our exhibits also need to get much bigger, but it's becoming very demanding

in terms of land. Zoos need to be more generous with the land that they allocate to the animals and to focus more on the types of animals that suit the climatic conditions where that zoo might be. Many zoos could think about having fewer species and doing more with them.

Finally, zoos could become more like incubators for animals, whereafter they would be transferred to a sanctuary.

#### Can you tell us about your latest project, the penguin conservation centre at Detroit Zoo?

We broke ground on the penguin conservation centre last year, a very large habitat, with different galleries and the deepest penguin pool in the world, with a huge viewing window so visitors can observe their behaviour underwater.

The cultural references and the visitor experience are inspired by the notion of exploration in Antarctica.

The visitor goes on a journey, which begins with a 4D theatre experience telling the story of crossing the Drake Passage by boat, with wave, wind and frost effects. It's about understanding the challenges of surviving there. The penguin centre is expected to open in spring 2016.

# ZÜBER COOL

A round-up of recent zoo exhibit design with a contemporary feel



Smells and sounds from the gorilla exhibit can be experienced by visitors

## Enclosure for African Apes, Wilhelma

STUTTART, GERMANY

Hascher Jehle Architects

The new ape enclosure at the Wilhelma in Stuttgart uses the themes of ridge, valley and forest. An S-shaped path winds between two areas: one for gorillas and one for bonobos. The winding path allows views of the animals on either side and the enclosure is lit by large skylights. Outside, there's a close-contact zone where people and apes can stand face-to-face separated only by armoured glazing.



The ape enclosure is at the highest point of the zoological gardens



Giant pandas Funi and Wang Wang arrived at Adelaide Zoo in 2009

## Giant Panda Forest, Adelaide Zoo

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Hassell Architects

Hassell designed a panda exhibit for Adelaide Zoo, alongside a new entrance plaza to cope with the expected increase in visitor numbers. The Giant Panda Forest is an immersive landscape resembling the Chinese Highlands. According to Hassell, the exhibit is designed to exceed best practices in animal management, with a state-of-the-art holding facility, water features, rocks and mature trees.

As well as simulating the pandas' natural habitat, the exhibit explains research and conservation work.



Architects Beckmann N'Thépe and landscape designers TN Plus won a competition to design the zoo

## St Petersburg Zoo

ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

TN Plus and Beckmann-N'Thépe

The new zoo for St Petersburg – the project is currently on hold – is inspired by the lost supercontinent of Pangaea. Different areas of the planet will be represented in different zones, with a winter circuit that links greenhouses and covered areas designed to attract visitors in the cold season from November to April. The site's water body will be central to the design and visitor experience, and the zoo will be connected to the city by a network of boats.

PHOTO: DOMINIQUE MARC WERBLI



The elephant facility opened in 2014 and cost \$60m (£39m, €54m)

## Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park, Zurich Zoo

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

Markus Schietsch

This contemporary structure, located among natural vegetation and housing 10 elephants, will allow visitors to be immersed in the habitat of the animal. They'll walk on dense pathways and watch elephants dive into the water from a viewing point. The patterns in the shell-shaped wooden roof filter light into the interior. The architectural elements and landscaping of the elephant house interact with one another to create a nature-inspired experience.



The architects describe Giraffe House as a "functional oversized shed"



## Giraffe House, Auckland Zoo

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Monk Mackenzie

A giraffe breeding shelter was completed for Auckland Zoo in 2013 to cater for the attraction's growing giraffe population. The shelter had to be functional and comfortable for the animals, with an area for the keepers and a viewing platform for visitors. The sliding doors and walls are moveable, and the yards can be configured into different layouts, making the giraffe house highly flexible. To fit to a small budget, a limited range of locally sourced materials was used.



PHOTO: JIMMY DAVIS

# the magic of McQueen

More than a fashion exhibition,  
the record-breaking  
Savage Beauty is a journey into  
the mind of Alexander McQueen.  
Senior research assistant of  
the V&A's retrospective, Kate  
Bethune, talks to Kath Hudson

Kath Hudson, Journalist, Attractions Management



PHOTO: MARCH HOW / THINK ARCHIVE



Kate Bethune helped curate Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty at the V&A in London

**A**ntler headdresses, armadillo shoes, bumster trousers. Dresses made out feathers, mussels, razor clams, horse hair and pony skin. These are the creations of the late fashion designer, Alexander McQueen, and they are surprising, charismatic, feminine and intimidating.

Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty closed on 2 August, becoming the V&A's most visited exhibition, with 493,043 visitors during its 21-week run. To cope with demand, the exhibit was open through the night during its final two weekends.

According to Martin Roth, director of the V&A, Savage Beauty was "one of the most unpredictable, dramatic and spectacular exhibitions we have ever staged".

"The response has been phenomenal and has exceeded our expectations. It's been a remarkable experience to stay open around the clock for the first time," he says.

## JOURNEY INTO THE MIND

When creating Savage Beauty, the curatorial team chose to go beyond producing an exhibition of fancy frocks, and take visitors on a journey into his mind, as well as giving the sense of visiting one of his fashion shows.

Having collaborated with McQueen's former team of catwalk show producers, lighting designer, DJ and hairdresser (who did the masks and head treatments of the mannequins), the result was intoxicating.

"We wanted visitors to feel drawn into his creative mind. We wanted to create a sensory, theatrical, dramatic and immersive experience," says Kate Bethune, senior research assistant for the V&A's retrospective. "Each gallery was a contrast to the preceding one and each had a complementary soundtrack to work with it. Switches in tone and tempo drew out the spectacle and drama. It was light on text, so as not to break the sense of immersion."



Photos (right) on display at the V&A. Savage Beauty's 10 themed galleries include Romantic Naturalism (above) and Romantic Nationalism (below)



PHOTO: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

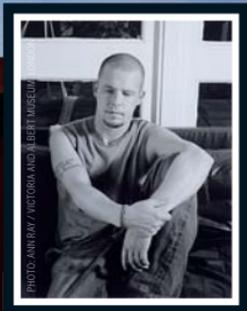


PHOTO: ANNA RAY, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

PHOTO: LAUREN GREENFIELD, INSTITUTE



PHOTO: FIRST VIEW



PHOTO: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

## SUCCESS IN NEW YORK

Savage Beauty was first staged at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2011. Attracting almost 700,000 visitors in its four-month run, it was the most visited special exhibition organised by the Costume Institute since it became part of the museum in 1946 and one of the museum's top 10 most visited exhibitions.

Andrew Bolton was the curator of the Metropolitan exhibition. It featured 100 ensembles and 70 accessories from McQueen's 19-year career, drawn primarily from the Alexander McQueen Archive in London, with pieces from the Givenchy Archive in Paris and private collections.

Bolton says he wanted the exhibition to show McQueen's artistry as well as illustrate how his fashion designs reflected his imagination: "McQueen was best known for his astonishing and extravagant runway presentations, which were given dramatic scenarios and narrative structures that

suggested avant-garde installation and performance art," he says. "His fashions were an outlet for his emotions, an expression of the deepest, often darkest, aspects of his imagination."

Bethune says the V&A inherited a brilliant collection in London. The London gallery, an addition to the beginning of the show, was one of the big changes from New York.

"We wanted to include designs from the early collections to tell the story before he was famous, when he didn't have any money to invest in shows and materials," she says. "We emphasised the edginess, rawness and grittiness of the early years."

## EARLY WORK

To showcase work from his early career, the curatorial team had to track down

some of McQueen's early collaborators. "In the early days he couldn't pay his staff salaries, so he paid them in garments."

"Those pieces were quite widely dispersed and lots of work went into tracking down his PRs and stylists from that time. We were lucky that his close friend and stylist Katy England let us borrow from her private collection," Bethune says.

Another development was the expansion of the show highlight, the Cabinet of Curiosities. "We had one-third more space, so we increased the curation by 25 per cent, which equated to 66 more exhibits and almost all of them went into that gallery," she says. "His limitless imagination really came through in that space. I love the Cabinet because of its intensity and impact. We'd never achieved that in an exhibition before. Not only was this the largest retrospective of McQueen, but the largest and most ambitious fashion exhibition that the V&A's ever staged."

IT'S AN EXTREMELY POWERFUL SHOW AND A PRIVILEGE TO OBSERVE MCQUEEN'S WORK AT SUCH CLOSE QUARTERS

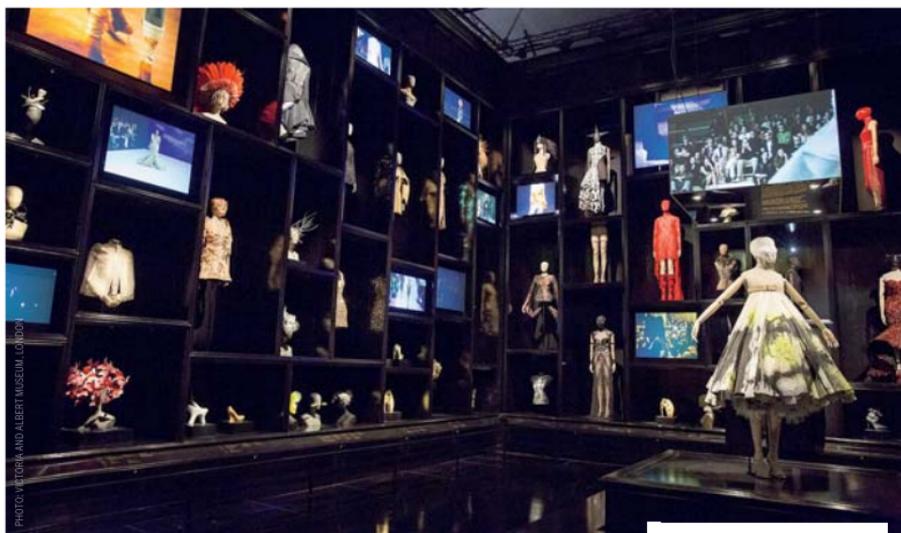


PHOTO: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

FIRST PERSON

Kath Hudson, Journalist



**V**isceral and captivating, *Savage Beauty* is an assault on the senses.

There's something appropriately discomfoting about the show – and it feels like a show, not an exhibition. I'm assuming Alexander McQueen would have approved: he said he wanted people to be scared of the women who wore his clothes.

The clothes are beautiful, and occasionally frightening: religious motifs become sinister, crocodile skulls are a surprising addition to the shoulders. The black swan dress, which Naomi Campbell famously wore, is aggressive, but with an admirable beauty.

The further through the exhibition you progress, the more you have the sense of looking at works of art as opposed



PHOTO: OUTWALKING

A dress in the Cabinet of Curiosities gallery at the V&A (above) was famously spray-painted by robots as part of Alexander McQueen's S/S collection in 2013 (left)

to garments. Light and sound enhance the experience.

The high point – certainly the most overwhelming part of a consistently overwhelming exhibition – is the Cabinet of Curiosities. This double-height gallery has three tiers of exhibits: clothes, shoes, headwear. Some exhibits are revolving, and interspersed with 27 video screens showing footage of McQueen's shows.

Each wall reflects a different theme: gothic, other cultures, arts and crafts, and nature and

the natural world. In the middle is the paint-splattered dress from the Number 13 collection, when a model stood on a rotating disk and the dress was spray-painted by two robots.

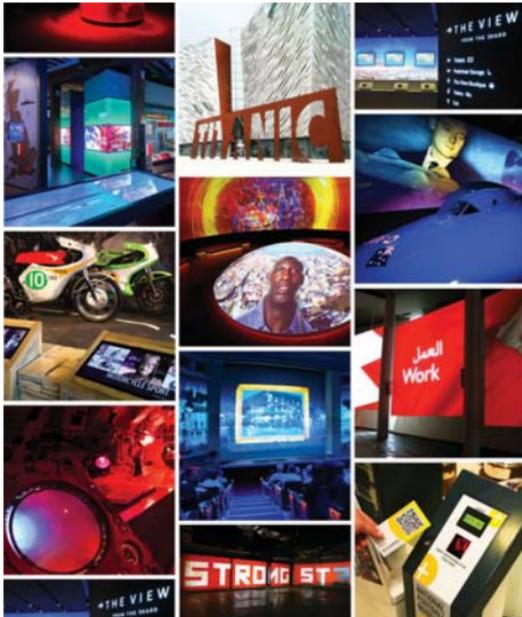
Visually, it's a busy gallery, and the soundtrack, put together by Matt Gosling, creates an eerie sense of unease. There's a typewriter from A/W 1999/2000 collection the Overlook, which was inspired by Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining*; a child singing from A/W 2001/2002 collection What a Merry-Go-Round and

an orchestra playing *Adagio for Strings*, from a collection exploring war and religion.

I could have stayed there for hours, admiring creations like the outlandish armadillo shoes, but after a while I started to feel how a baby must when it gets overstimulated. The child singing also had a horror movie quality which crept me out.

More powerful exhibits follow: a recreation of the padded cell fashion show, where the audience could see in, but the models only saw mirrors; and the Pepper's Ghost of supermodel Kate Moss.

*Savage Beauty* ends with the final collection, when McQueen's craftsmanship was at its finest. It's an extremely powerful show and a privilege to observe his work at such close quarters. ●



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# Seasons of the Wolf

As Great Wolf Resorts – recently acquired by Centerbridge Partners in a reported \$1.35bn deal – appoints a new CEO, former executive vice president and managing director **Nikki Nolan** looks back on the company's history, growth and development and offers perspectives on the future

**T**his August, Great Wolf Resorts (GWR) announced that Ruben Rodriguez, formerly of Carnival Cruise Line, will take the reins as CEO in September. The news came hot on the heels of the buyout by Centerbridge Partners, who in May this year finalised its reported \$1.35bn (£867m, €1.23bn) acquisition of the company – one of North America's leading brands and operator of indoor waterpark resorts.

The transaction represents the fourth iteration in Great Wolf's rapid evolution from a privately-held, locally-focused company to its place of scale and dominance today.

## GREAT WOLF 2000

My relationship with GWR really started in the summer of 2000, when I was director of global strategy and business development with the Tussauds Group.

I visited the Wisconsin Dells – a popular family tourism area in the upper Midwest, within driving distance of Chicago and Minneapolis – where I toured several properties with Chuck Neuman, founder of waterpark design firm WTI.

A standout property was Black Wolf Lodge, which had recently been acquired by GWR's predecessor, Great Lakes Companies (GLC). Our hosts were Jack Waterman – who, with his brother Turk, had developed the property and other leisure facilities, including the nearby Noah's Ark waterpark – and Bruce Neviaser, who co-founded GLC with Marc Vacarro.

At that time, Black Wolf Lodge had been expanded to comprise 309 rooms and a 40,000sq ft (3,716sqm) indoor waterpark, on-site dining and other facilities. When it opened in 1997, it had just 117 rooms and a 20,000sq ft (1,858sqm) waterpark.

As we walked through the impressive craftsman-style North Woods-themed resort – which may be modest by today's standards – I knew these guys were onto something special. So much so, we at the Tussauds Group were inspired to invest in an integrated indoor waterpark resort of our own, opening Splash Landings and Cariba Creek at Alton Towers, UK, in 2003.

## BRAND DEVELOPMENT & PHASE I EXPANSION

When Neviaser and Vacarro acquired the Black Wolf Lodge property and brand, they'd recognised the inherent scalability of the "staycation" model. Great Wolf set about refining its concept, operating systems and development model to enable rollout super-regionally – and, ultimately, to markets across the US and perhaps internationally.

During this initial phase of expansion, GWR grew its in-house team and solidified supplier relationships. New site

Michigan and Kansas City, Kansas (2003), and Sheboygan, Wisconsin (2004).

These initial properties, with the Dells flagship, came to be referred to as the Generation I resorts, characterised on the basis of scale (300 rooms or less) and market strength (located in smaller markets, primarily in the upper Midwest).

Although the Generation I properties went a long way towards both defining the brand and its operating model, and providing a runway for further expansion, the average project scale – at 270-300 rooms, and with indoor waterparks of 40,000sq ft to 60,000sq ft (3,716sqm to 5,574sqm) – seems modest when compared with the company's current standards.

## IPO & PHASE II EXPANSION

Great Wolf began to weigh strategic options and position itself for an IPO in 2004. Though it had just a handful of existing properties, several others were in the



As we walked through the impressive craftsman-style North Woods-themed resort I knew these guys were onto something special

development was supported by single site fundraising – including, in some cases, pre-sales of ownership units. Development was further supported by a rather buoyant financing market environment and incentives from local and regional authorities. Despite the heavy lifting required to realise the development of a \$50m (£32m, €45m) resort property, GWR was successful in rolling out to new markets, including Sandusky, Ohio (2001), Traverse City,

pipeline, including Niagara Falls, Ontario, in partnership with Ripley Entertainment / the Jim Pattison Group. Plans for resorts in the Poconos, Pennsylvania, and Williamsburg, Virginia, were perhaps most important from a strategic perspective, each representing drive-to destination tourism regions with feeder markets including greater New York and Washington DC, respectively.

John Emery, formerly of Interstate, was brought in as CEO by Neviaser and



Every Great Wolf Resort boasts a Fort Mackenzie interactive treehouse with tipping bucket

PHOTOS: GREAT WOLF RESORTS

## INDOOR WATERPARK RESORTS: THE FACTS BEHIND THE FIGURES

“It’s fascinating to see the way the scale and growth of the ‘indoor waterpark resort’ (IWR) market is often reported. Sources claim the US waterpark resort market comprises about 360 properties in 2015. At first glance, that would lead one to believe the market is saturated and potentially overbuilt. While this may to some extent be true in selected micro-markets in the US, this ‘total industry’ figure can include all sorts of offers, such as properties with outdoor waterplay features or adjacent outdoor waterparks, and even cruise ships. When one dives deeper into the numbers, it’s clear that of the 130 or so US properties that can accurately be categorised as indoor waterpark resorts, only a fraction – roughly 50 – are of sufficient scale and quality to be characterised as destination IWRs. Even on the basis of a generous definition



The indoor waterpark resort market is not as crowded as some figures imply

of the destination IWR sector, Great Wolf Resorts – with its portfolio of 13 properties (including the upcoming Garden Grove resort in California) – is far and away the market leader.”

Vacarro. Together they lined up potential non-executive board members – myself included – from the hospitality, leisure and property industries.

### THE NEXT STAGE

By late 2004, GWR was trading on the NASDAQ under the ticker symbol WOLF. Buoyed by the fervent property and tourism markets of the time, the IPO valued the company’s shares aggressively. Proceeds were used to consolidate the property portfolio, complete projects in development and fund improvements and new projects.

Fuelled by its successful IPO and a fertile development environment and project pipeline, GWR continued to expand its footprint and foster its internal systems, competencies and management team. This included a development and construction management team; in-house business development and legal resources.

On the operating side, CEO Kimberly Schaefer – who steps down from the position in September this year to transition to the board in 2016 – became the primary caretaker of the brand. Tim Black, formerly of Six Flags and now GWR’s COO, was also appointed at the property management level.



The indoor waterpark at Great Wolf Lodge, Niagara Falls, Ontario

PHOTOS: GREAT WOLF RESORTS

► There were key challenges and areas of uncertainty during the post-IPO phase in Great Wolf's evolution, involving questions around customer segmentation, geography – would the concept resonate in areas outside the upper Midwest? – and, from a market / valuation standpoint, around costs and (lack of) direct comparables.

But, with its team in place and mission clear, challenges were addressed head on. The period from 2004 to 2008 represented a real step-change in company scale, market reach and the product offer, including a number of new openings (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 GWR Openings 2005-2008

<b>2005</b>
Williamsburg, Virginia
Poconos, Pennsylvania
<b>2006</b>
Niagara Falls, Ontario
Mason, Ohio
<b>2007</b>
Grapevine, Texas
<b>2008</b>
Grand Mound, Washington
Concord, North Carolina (opened early 2009)

#### 2004 - 2008 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- **Scale:** Introduction of the 400-600 room resort prototype, a vastly expanded indoor waterpark footprint and – in selected locations – significant conference facilities.
- **Product offer:** Significant expansion of resort amenities and secondary revenue



Outgoing CEO, Kimberly Schaefer, joins the Great Wolf board in 2016, as Ruben Rodriguez takes the helm

centres, including both self-branded and third-party branded F&B; and multiple non-waterpark attractions and activities including the Cub Club, Scoops children's spa and the Northern Lights arcade.

- **Operations:** Increased operation efficiencies through improvements to the development model, coupled with investments in new standards and systems, including early adoption of RFID technology, green technology and more.

These radical improvements at company and resort level significantly boosted not only operating margins, but also key customer metrics including revenue per occupied room (RevPOR), guest satisfaction and repeat visitation. However, by 2008, Great Wolf – like many fast-growing companies involved in ground-up real-estate development – was caught out.

In addition to macroeconomic challenges, the company's property portfolio was exposed to many of the hardest-hit markets

in the industrial heartland of the US. That included the upper Midwest and Ohio Valley, and core markets which had been over-developed with competitive offers during the market and sector boom: by 2009 the Dells had no fewer than 16 other resorts and hotels with some type of indoor water-related activity or amenity.

Facing strong market and investor headwinds, GWR shifted away from expansion and development, hunkering down to focus on its balance sheet. Cost savings were made from central office overheads, operating efficiencies were made at the resort level and non-core assets – such as the Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan, Wisconsin – were sold.

Many properties and brands wilted during the economic downturn, but GWR soldiered through, further solidifying its position as market leader and by 2011 – with brighter skies on the horizon – it was exploring a reverse-privatisation to better enable its continued growth and development.

#### THE APOLLO ERA

In April 2012, following a well-publicised bidding war with KSL Capital, Apollo Global Management agreed to acquire GWR for \$798m (£511m, €734m). At \$7.85 a share, the deal valued the company's equity units at a significant discount to the 2004 IPO price, but it came as a relief to many who had seen shares trade in the low single-digits during the economic crisis. ►



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Scoops, with an ice cream theme, is GWR's children's spa offer

PHOTO: GREAT WOLF RESORTS

**Many properties and brands wilted during the economic downturn, but Great Wolf soldiered through, further solidifying its position as market leader**

▶ The transaction was a reset for Great Wolf. The company stood to benefit not only from escaping the burdensome glare, costs and requirements of a public company, but also from having a supportive ownership capable of assisting with key strategies. Those included capital improvement projects at existing properties and re-engagement of high-priority (and long-dormant) new developments and opportunities.

**STRATEGIC MILESTONES**

Noteworthy strategic milestones under Apollo's ownership include:

- **The company's first acquisition and conversion project.** In early 2013, GWR acquired Coco Key Water Resort and Convention Centre in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. A year later, and following significant expansion, rebranding and investment, Great Wolf New England opened – a market GWR had long considered to be underserved and thus a strategic priority.
- **Re-engagement in Southern California.** After several years in pre-development – a result of both financial markets and the State of California's budget crisis – GWR, together with local joint venture partner McWhinney and the City of Garden Grove, revived plans to build its largest resort – down the road from Disneyland. Set to open

early in 2016, it will feature a 120,000sq ft (11,148sqm) indoor waterpark and 603-room hotel and conference centre.

**CENTERBRIDGE & THE FUTURE**

In early 2015, after just three years of Apollo ownership, Centerbridge Partners – a New York-based private equity firm – acquired GWR in a transaction representing a significant premium to its 2012 valuation.

I recently met with executives from both Centerbridge and Great Wolf, and gained some insight into possible pathways for future growth, which will almost certainly involve continued new development projects to strategic markets, supported – for now, at least – by relatively favourable credit markets, increasing consumer confidence and leisure behaviour, moderating energy prices and other industry-positive trends.

The appointment of Rodriguez, who joins GWR from cruise operator Carnival, underlines this new chapter for the indoor waterpark brand. William Rahm, a senior managing director with Centerbridge Partners, recently praised the brand and business model created under the leadership of outgoing CEO Schaefer. In the same statement, Rahm said Rodriguez's "varied experiences, including most recently at Carnival Cruise Line, will be tremendously valuable as GWR enters

the next phase of its growth strategy and expands its footprint to new markets."

Despite its overwhelming lead in the sector, GWR needs to be mindful of the impact of a beneficial development environment on emerging competition in key markets. Most notable is the Poconos, where two new destination indoor waterpark resorts – Camelback Lodge and Aquatopia, which opened in May 2015, and Poconos Kalahari Resort, which opened in July 2015 – will add significant tension to one of Great Wolf's most profitable markets.

However, GWR is occupied with a host of conversion and pipeline projects (including the recently announced Great Wolf Lodge Colorado Springs, opening 2016). With its growing pack of a dozen resorts and two decades of operations under its belt – from the outset of the industry, through a number of micro- and macro-market challenges, including four iterations of ownership – it'd sure be hard to bet against the Wolf. ●

***Nikki Nolan** has over 25 years' experience in business development, planning and analysis. She is founder and principal of Nolan Consulting Services. Nolan served as non-executive board member following Great Wolf's 2004 IPO, and subsequently as executive vice president and managing director of Great Wolf Resorts.*



Zehnder's Splash Village  
Frankenmuth, MI  
Opened Oct. 31, 2014

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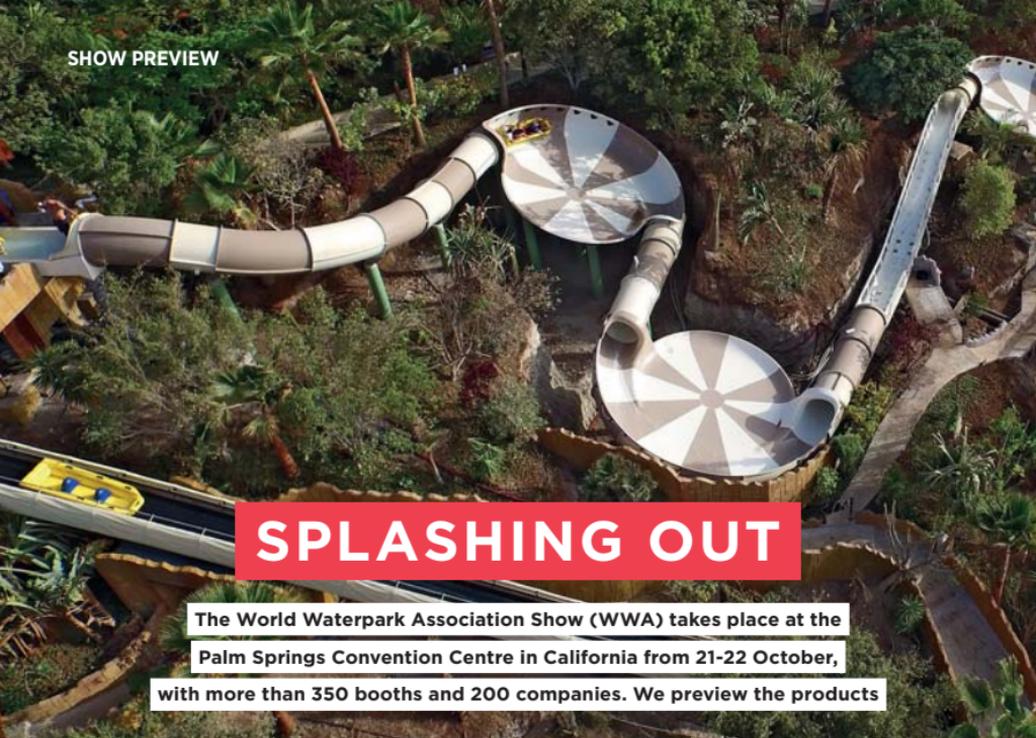
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## SPLASHING OUT

The World Waterpark Association Show (WWA) takes place at the

Palm Springs Convention Centre in California from 21-22 October,

with more than 350 booths and 200 companies. We preview the products



### EMPEX

The **Leisure Plex** boasts the largest leisure pool in Northern Ireland. The local council embarked on a major renovation to update the facility and **Empex Water toys** was awarded the design competition to supply an exciting new water play area. Dominating the family fun pool, a colorful **Aquadek** adds interactivity and a new kids waterslide to the facility. Surrounding the structure **Empex** has added exciting interactive water features for children up to age 12. Both fun and educational, kids can play and learn about water. The new design brings vibrant visuals to the facility.

attractions-kit.net keyword: Empex



### OPEN AIRE

**OpenAire** – designer, manufacturer and installer of custom retractable roof structures and operable skylights – has completed **Zehnder's Splash Village Hotel and Waterpark** in **Frankenmuth, Michigan, US**. The resort had become so popular, since opening nine years ago

that there was increased demand for a larger facility that could entertain older audiences. Covering 29,000sq ft (2,694sqm) of aquatic attractions, the waterpark includes a 70-foot (21-metre) high slide tower. The owners also added an outdoor pool and new hotel rooms.

attractions-kit.net keyword: Open Aire



ProSlide's new Singha slide at Siam Park in Tenerife, Spain

## EXTREME ENGINEERING

**Rapid Gravity Ride** is a brand new ride from Extreme Engineering, which "dares thrill seekers to challenge the laws of gravitational force". Based around a giant look-out tower, the extreme ride combines a variety of elements as guests twist and turn on a zip line rollercoaster, take a free fall leap of faith, encounter rock walls and take-off on a rocket launcher. Extreme Engineering products can

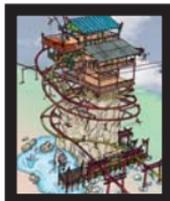


PHOTO: ©EXTREME ENGINEERING

be customised to a park's needs. See **Rapid Gravity Ride** at **WWA** and this year's **IAAPA trade show**.

attractions-kit.net keyword: Extreme Engineering

## PROSLIDE

**ProSlide** has recently completed a new installation at **Siam Park** in **Tenerife, Spain**, which combines two world-first rides into a single high-thrill experience.

The ride, which officially opened in July and has been named **Singha**, incorporates ProSlide's **FlyingSAUCER** features

into its **RocketBLAST** water coaster, with patented water jet and boat design.

Singha uses ProSlide's water coaster and **turbine technology** to propel rafts up the coaster hills higher and faster. Rows of **water jets** line every hill to power steeper climbs making it 60

per cent more efficient than traditional water propulsion coasters.

Four massive saucer-shaped bowls punctuate the ride. The **FlyingSAUCERS** are steeply angled for a **drop-and-div sensation**, featuring high-banked curves and maximum centrifugal force.

attractions-kit.net keyword: ProSlide



## ADG

From **Aquatic Development Group's (ADG)** newest line of **Oasis water ride** attractions, the **Surf Lagoon** is designed to build on the fun, social environment of the popular **FlowRider**. **Surf Lagoon** brings both the excitement of flowboarding and the enjoyment of a wave pool into one aquatic attraction that extends well beyond the water's edge. **Surf Lagoon** creates an experience for both participants and spectators, keeping them engaged and on-property all day. Clients can add retail, F&B and cabana areas in the design for increased revenue-generating opportunities.

attractions-kit.net keyword: ADG

## POLIN

**Polin** has recently worked on a new installation for **Splash World** at the **Hotel Globales Playa Estepona** in **Malaga, Spain**.

The 20,000sqm (215,300sq ft) waterpark uses RTM manufacturing throughout, offering a smooth finish to the slides, while **Polin's** patented **Natural Light Effect (NLE) technology** uses sunlight to create colourful interior designs as riders slide through the tubes. The waterpark's attractions include a **Kamikaze**, **Black Hole** and an **Aqua Tube** from Polin's range of rides.



Polin has also installed a new slide at **Cowabunga Bay** in **Las Vegas, US**. The giant beach-themed **Surf Safari** slide is the company's first turnkey waterpark project in the US.

attractions-kit.net keyword: Polin

**EAS**

**Euro  
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# Swedish Sensations

The Euro Attractions Show, which kicks off on 6 October in Gothenburg, is set to wow attendees with its perfect location and a dose of Swedish star power



**T**he Euro Attractions Show (EAS) will be sprinkled with stardust this October as one of Sweden's most famous musicians is scheduled to give the keynote speech.

Furthermore, it will be the very first integrated show, taking place in a unique location surrounded by world-class attractions. The event will centre around the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre, right next to Liseberg theme park and a stone's throw from Universeum Science Centre in the heart of Gothenburg. Many of the educational sessions and networking events will be held at Liseberg, offering industry professionals a special experience within an operating amusement park.



ABBA frontman Björn Ulvåus will be speaking at the Leadership Breakfast, a popular networking event. The former pop star is expected to reveal the secrets of the success of the ABBA brand and how it became an IP in its own right.

As always, EAS is offering a smörgåsar of seminars and educational opportunities. There'll be more on the schedule than ever before as well as two new formats. The first is the conference tracks, covering government relations and safety on 6 October and theming, storytelling and design on 7 October. The second new format is Lunch and Learn, hands-on sessions at Liseberg, over a hot lunch.

EAS will offer a holistic, varied programme of seminars, including topics like HR, marketing, leadership and profit generation.

**The first Euro Attractions Show fully integrated with a major theme park**

## EAS 2015

**Location:** Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre, Liseberg, Gothenburg, Sweden

**Dates:** 6-8 October 2015

**Who's there:** 425 exhibitors and more than 10,000 attendees

**What's on:** 20 hours of educational sessions and tours

**Tickets:** \$65 for members

and \$85 for non-members

## Register now

Registration is open for EAS 2015 from 6-8 October 2015 at the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre next to Liseberg theme park. Attendees receive evening access to Liseberg when they register. Use the code **PROMO** when you register before 31 August to save €20.

■ [www.iaapa.org/EAS](http://www.iaapa.org/EAS)

# What's on at EAS 2015

**EAS**

Euro  
Attractions  
Show

Here's a round-up of  
seminars and events  
at this year's show...

## LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

7 October, Rondo Theatre

IAAPA Member: €95

Non-member: €120

ABBA star Björn Ulvaeus, who was born in Gothenburg, is delivering the keynote speech on the morning of 7 October at the Rondo Theatre in Liseberg Park. Ulvaeus is discussing the ABBA brand and its development, and what it's like to own and work with intellectual property in relation to the attractions industry. The ABBA brand appears in various forms of entertainment, including theatre, film and music and in ABBA The Museum which opened in Stockholm in May 2013. He'll also share his experiences as a performer, entertainer and storyteller.

The event includes a hot breakfast and ample opportunities for networking with attractions industry leaders prior to the exciting and entertaining presentation.

## IAAPA INSTITUTE FOR ATTRactions MANAGEMENT

4-6 October

IAAPA Member: €700

Non-member: €1,250

The IAAPA Institute for Attractions Management is a two-day course for industry professionals with at least three years management experience. Subjects covered include operations and safety, marketing and communications, revenue operations, human resources and leadership, and finance, plus some hands-on learning at Liseberg Park.

## IAAPA SAFETY INSTITUTE

5 October, Liseberg Theatre

IAAPA Member: €70

Non-member: €90

The IAAPA Safety Institute is held annually at EAS and presents the latest information on safety standards, ride protocols, accessibility issues, employee safety concerns, and information on additional safety and compliance related matters.

Singer-songwriter  
Björn Ulvaeus, who  
backed ABBA The  
Museum (inset),  
will be delivering  
the keynote  
speech at EAS



## LUNCH AND LEARN

6-7 October, Liseberg Park

IAAPA Member: €45

Non-member: €60

Enjoy lunching and learning in a choice of two sessions. On 6 October, find out how operators successfully meet the specific challenges of running an attraction in the Nordic Market. On 7 October, join the Lunch and Learn leadership workshop with top executives from London's View From the Shard.

## BACKSTAGE TOUR OF LISEBERG

5 October, Liseberg Park

IAAPA Member: €70

Non-member: €100

Liseberg will host a behind the scenes tour of the park including a variety of different areas of interest, including food and beverage, operations, events and rides.

## FEC / SMALL PARK INDOOR PLAYGROUND DAY

8 October

IAAPA Member: €75

Non-member: €100

This day is educational for anyone in the indoor leisure facilities businesses, including indoor playgrounds, mini-golf, laser games and bowling - whether run as stand-alone operations or part of a larger business.

## WATERPARK FORUM

7 October

IAAPA Member: €65

Non-member: €75

The waterpark forum focuses on the development of the waterpark industry in Europe. The seminar will include trends, best practices and insights into future projects. The day includes coffee breaks and a light lunch.

## More information

Visit [www.IAAPA.org/EAS](http://www.IAAPA.org/EAS)

Contact the IAAPA EMEA  
offices [Europe@IAAPA.org](mailto:Europe@IAAPA.org)



SINGHA at Siam Park, Spain

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EAS

Euro  
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Show

# Euro Attractions Show

More than 425 exhibitors will be at EAS at the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre in Gothenburg from 6-8 October. Here's a sneak preview



Van Egdom worked on the Warner Bros Park Madrid in Spain

## Van Egdom

Van Egdom is presenting new products for 2015, including raft waterslides, high-capacity rides for attraction parks and interactive games inside the waterslides. The Dutch company has worked on Plopsaland in Belgium, Waterpark Aqua

Mexicana at Slagharen in the Netherlands, and Warner Bros Park Madrid in Spain.

Van Egdom specialises in the turnkey project development of water attractions and water playgrounds, designs and builds new water attractions and renovates existing waterparks. ■ **Booth #B534** attractions-kit.net keyword: Van Egdom



IdeAttack's culture park near Beijing, China

## IdeAttack

Designer of mixed-use tourism and leisure projects IdeAttack is presenting "Eternity Passage", a major new theme park that it has designed near Beijing, China. The cultural park, which is set to open this summer, is inspired by traditional Chinese culture and high technology, with attractions inspired by both Chinese history and the future. The park is going to be part of Beijing Outlets Park in ChangPing County. ■ **Booth #B417** attractions-kit.net keyword: IdeAttack



Intamin's Orlando Eye opened in May

## Intamin

Intamin is celebrating a successful year, with almost 20 rides opening in 2015. At the ride maker's booth at EAS, find out about a number of rollercoaster openings (models include Looping, LSM Launch, Family, Wing, 10-Inversion, Mega Coaster) along with water rides (Rapids Ride, Hyper Splash and Water Coaster), Observation Towers, Free Fall Towers and Wheels such as the 120-metre (394-foot) Orlando Eye which opened in May. ■ **Booth #B707** attractions-kit.net keyword: Intamin



Neverland specialises in parade floats

## Neverland

Neverland Themepark Projects specialises in parade floats for all occasions. At EAS, the company is presenting two current projects for Europa-Park in Germany: Island Wodan Bluefire and Märchenwald Auto Eule. The parade is part of the park's 40th anniversary celebrations. The Neverland-designed floats are inspired by existing attractions, the Märchenwald and the Island wooden coaster. ■ **Booth #B648** attractions-kit.net keyword: Neverland



Mitsubishi's W5000 printer

## Mitsubishi Electric

Mitsubishi Electric is showcasing its new double-sided photo printer, the high-speed CP-W5000DW, as well as its other printers and PS events software. The new printer produces high-quality, double-sided prints in 75 seconds, which can instantly be made up into a range of personalised photo products. The CP-W5000DW is a compact, budget-friendly printer that delivers prints in multiple photo finish specifications. ■ **Booth #G711** attractions-kit.net keyword: Mitsubishi

## SHOW PREVIEW: EURO ATTRACTIONS SHOW

# EAS

## Euro Attractions Show

Location: Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre, Liseberg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Dates: 6-8 October 2015

Who's there: 425 exhibitors and more than 10,000 attendees

What's on: 20 hours of educational sessions and tours

Tickets: \$65 for members and \$85 for non-members



For full company and contact details please visit [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net)



Highway 66 comes in a variety of themes

### QuibicaAMF

QuibicaAMF is showcasing two new products at EAS, Highway 66 and the Suite Spot. Highway 66 brings a whole new level to mini bowling attractions, available in eight standard themes and with state-of-the-art on-lane entertainment. Suite Spot is designed to maximise group and party business, delivering more fun, more ways to socialise and a comfortable, easy and relaxing experience for people of all ages. ■ Booth #C601  
attractions-kit.net keyword: Quibica



Waterplay's Cirque line of products

### Waterplay

Aquatic play specialists Waterplay Solutions is presenting the Cirque collection at EAS in Sweden. It's a new line of products that brings the circus tent to the aquatic play pad. This troupe of whimsical, looping play features will delight kids with a spectacular water show, including the Boingo spray, the Cannonball dumping bucket and the towering Aqua-knot. Cirque provides fun for children all ages. ■ Booth #A214  
attractions-kit.net keyword: Waterplay



Rainbow Productions: mascot maker

### Rainbow Productions

Mascot manufacturer and licensed character events company Rainbow Productions returns to EAS in 2015. The company works with attractions, IP owners and retailers across the UK, Europe and Middle East. The firm also works on high-profile sports projects and created the UEFA EURO 2016 mascot. Visitors to the booth can find out more about the benefits associated with investing in mascot costumes. ■ Booth #B1329  
attractions-kit.net keyword: Rainbow



Niceberg's library includes Steam Speed

### Niceberg

The Niceberg Distribution 3D/4D ride movie library is growing rapidly, with eight new titles added since EAS 2014, including *Sunny Bunnies Adventures*, *Sunny Bunnies on the Moon*, *S.W.A.T.*, *S.W.A.T. 2* and *Steam Speed*. The rides bring stunning SFX and storytelling together for the enjoyment of a large audience. Niceberg Studio's latest 3D attraction film production, *Little Dolphin*, will also be on show. ■ Booth #B239  
attractions-kit.net keyword: Niceberg



Skidata provides secure intuitive access

### Skidata

Skidata Group, an international leader in the field of access solutions and management, has almost 10,000 installations worldwide in ski resorts, major airports, sports stadiums and amusement parks. Skidata is presenting its latest solutions at EAS this year, designed to provide secure and reliable access and entry control for people and vehicles – solutions that are intuitive and easy to use. ■ Booth #C004  
attractions-kit.net keyword: Skidata



Huss's single seat Enterprise 2G

### Huss

Huss is highlighting Enterprise, a classic ride that's been brought back into the ride portfolio. As with the Condor, which was recently re-launched as Condor 2G (2nd Generation), the Enterprise ride is being given a complete makeover. Enterprise will be available as Enterprise 2G, Enterprise 2GH (2nd Generation Hybrid – with suspended seats and gondolas) and Enterprise 2GH-Plus (2nd Generation Hybrid with a tilt action). ■ Booth #B1014  
attractions-kit.net keyword: Huss



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For full company and contact details please visit [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net)



Sally Corporation recently launched two Justice League dark rides in the US

**Sally**

Dark ride and animatronic manufacturing company Sally Corporation is presenting its newly opened Justice League attractions, located at Six Flags Over Texas and Six Flags St. Louis. Justice League allows guests to team up with

the likes of Superman and Batman for an adventure in Metropolis. Sally is also displaying its new line of interactive mixed-media dark rides. Of course, one of the company's lifelike animatronic characters is going to be greeting attendees as well. ■ **Booth #B1132** [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword: Sally



Interlink's log flume at Djurs Sommerland

**Interlink**

Interlink is announcing details of two new products: a dark ride attraction and a themed water coaster. Founded in 1982, Interlink designs, manufactures and supplies a wide range of water rides, including log flumes, super flumes, mini flumes, rapid rivers, water battles, spin boats, big chutes and enchanted rivers. The company also offers panoramic towers, transport systems and rollercoasters. These can be custom designed to suit the requirements of the client and location. Interlink also sells used rides, including coasters, airplane rides and family rides. ■ **Booth #B238** [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword: Interlink



Batman: The Ride, by S&S Worldwide

**S&S Worldwide**

S&S Worldwide has opened its newest ride at Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio. Batman: The Ride, a 4D Free Spin coaster, utilises magnetic technology to induce spins throughout the track. With a track that is stacked vertically there are no turns on the ride. The three layers of track feature speed bumps and two beyond-vertical raven drops. Each vehicle holds eight passengers, four on each side of the track. ■ **Booth #B914** [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword: S&S



nWave's new film is set in Egypt

**nWave**

nWave is launching its newest attraction film, *Tomb Racers 3D/4D*, a Red Star production distributed exclusively worldwide by nWave Pictures Distribution. Racing through the blistering heat of windswept deserts, three treasure-hunters risk their lives to locate the legendary Lost Tomb of Egypt. Battered by dust storms and threatened by marauding crocodiles, danger lurks at every turn. Will the treasure be revealed? ■ **Booth #B727** [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword: nWave



Premier Rides are thrill coaster specialists

**Premier Rides**

Premier Rides, known for its high-tech magnetic-launch rollercoasters, is highlighting Zombie Coaster which opens this summer at Bosque Magico. The Mexican park will then boast the first high-tech, magnetically-launched rollercoaster in the country. It features 90-degree vertical twists and the highest inversion in Latin America. Multiple trains are capable of multi-directional movement and speeds of up to 100kph (62mph). ■ **Booth #B918** [attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword: Premier



For full company and contact details please visit attractions-kit.net



Mondial's Wind Seeker tower ride

### Mondial

Mondial was founded in 1987 in the Netherlands. Success accelerated with the Mondial Giant Wheel, and continued with the in-house designed Flat, Family and High Thrill Rides. All Mondial products are designed and built to the highest quality standards and latest specifications. Mondial has developed a wide range of rides that can be seen in many prestigious theme parks throughout the world. ■ **Booth #B413** attractions-kit.net keyword: Mondial



Holovis reveals its latest immersive dark ride and its newest technology

### Holovis

Holovis will be presenting its latest interactive immersive dark ride and FEC gaming technology at EAS in Gothenburg. Taking place in a 9-metre (30-foot) dome setup, visitors will be drawn into the

action of the story with highly accurate interaction and complete multi-sensory immersion. Riders will be immersed into the virtual world, enjoying perfectly synced motion through Holovis's latest motion seats. ■ **Booth #C104** attractions-kit.net keyword: Holovis



The Constrictor and Rattler fusion slide

### Whitewater West

Discover Europe's first fusion waterslide, a unique Constrictor and Rattler combination at Aquaparc in Le Bouveret, Switzerland. The Houla Hoop combines two distinctive ride experiences: the Constrictor's high banking turns and the Rattler's fast near-vertical oscillations. Squeezed tightly amongst the existing waterslides, the massive Houla Hoop had to be carefully positioned by WhiteWater's slidepath designers. ■ **Booth #B607** attractions-kit.net keyword: Whitewater



Wattman reveals an updated Maxi Express

### Wattman

Wattman Europe is debuting its Wattman Maxi Express XT train in Gothenburg. The new edition train is being developed in response to customer requests for a Maxi Express that was stronger and able to adapt to different weather conditions. The original Maxi Express is suited to most outdoor operations, but with the addition of the more muscly XT to the range, customers in more extreme climates are catered for too. ■ **Booth #C329** attractions-kit.net keyword: Wattman



The rotating flying theatre by Simworx

### Simworx

Simworx partnered with Mondial to launch an innovative flying theatre attraction. The 360° Rotating Flying Theatre uses technologies from the two companies, and is intended to give riders the sensation of flying as they watch a film on a large dome screen. Also visit the booth to find out about a Simworx experience at Merlin's new Shrek's Adventure attraction – riders voyage on a Flying Bus, with 3D animation and special effects. ■ **Booth #B1018** attractions-kit.net keyword: Simworx

# SWEET DREAMS

The newly restored Dreamland attempts to strike a balance between retro hipster style and wholesome family fun. Does it succeed?

Alice Davis, managing editor, Attractions Management

**D**reamland is finally back in business. The iconic seaside attraction, located in Margate in Kent, UK, was left derelict for a decade, but after a hard-fought campaign to save it, the doors are open once more.

The attraction has been re-designed, restored and re-branded by Hemingway Design and it's being operated by Sands Heritage. Founded in the 1920s, the park draws on its history, with vintage rides, old-school activities and a retro vibe.

We paid a visit to find out if the historic park can hold its own in today's industry.

## THE OFFER

A visit to Dreamland Margate takes a couple of hours or more, though the day we were there it was very quiet so we didn't need to queue for any rides. The Pleasure Park has 20 rides from different periods in amusement park history and a "comfort food"-inspired F&B area. "Fun Fairers" perform around the park and a range of side shows add to the carnival atmosphere.

Indoors is a roller disco, the Dreamland Arcade (with vintage pinball and games

## LOCATION

Dreamland Margate's entrance is on Marine Terrace, Margate, Kent, on the seafront. There's a public car park behind the attraction and Margate can be reached via the M2 and M20 motorways. The high-speed train service from St Pancras International Station, London, takes 80 minutes

## OPENING HOURS

Dreamland is open from 10am to 8pm during the summer

## ADMISSION PRICES

Adult tickets cost £14.95 (\$23, €21) booked online and £17.95 (\$28, €25) on the day. Kids cost £12.95 (\$20, €18) in advance or £14.95 on the day

machines) and an event space to host film screenings, concerts and dances, rekindling the venue's tradition of live entertainment.

## TICKETING

Tickets can be brought online in advance, with savings of over 15 per cent. Visitors

are stamped so they can leave and return. This gives the option to go to the nearby beach, or do other activities if it rains.

## ATTRACTIONS

The main attraction is the Scenic Railway, the UK's oldest rollercoaster, but when we visited – just before going to press – it still wasn't operational, because the cars weren't ready. It was disappointing, but when the ride opens it will boost the level of excitement in and around the park. Several other rides were closed, giving the impression Dreamland may have opened a little prematurely. Lots of the machines in the arcade were also not working.

The rides are child-friendly, making this a great destination for families. Each ride has a sign explaining its history and restoration. A 1922 carousel, helter skelter and ferris wheel define the identity of the park.

## DESIGN

The Pleasure Park has a funfair feel and a beach-inspired motif, with plenty of nice details and quirky signs and ride theming. There are upcycled elements (swan boats used as seating), beach references (deck chairs) and a laid-back nostalgic vibe.



The 35-metre (115-foot) ferris wheel is a signature ride at Dreamland (left), while the park's rebrand is inspired by its 1950s heyday

PHOTOS: (LEFT & MIDDLE) OLIVER DIXON // IMAGEWISE; (RIGHT) MARC SETHA



PHOTO: PAUL WEBB

The Wall of Death is part of Dreamland's schedule of pop-up entertainment

“ THE PLEASURE PARK HAS A FUNFAIR FEEL AND A BEACH-INSPIRED MOTIF, WITH PLENTY OF NICE DETAILS AND QUIRKY SIGNS AND RIDE THEMING ”

The new branding is very strong, communicated through the website, social media, the park's map and leaflets, the uniforms, billboard posters and signage.

However, some of the punch is lost in Dreamland itself. Something was lacking in the overall effect, which failed to connect the different aspects of the experience. There were also areas where construction was ongoing. It's a work in progress, and needs more time to establish itself. However, Dreamland is almost 100 years old – a little more time isn't too much to ask and many early visitors will be happy to be supporting its future success.

**STAFF**

The staff – young and old – were friendly, outgoing and willing to chat about the park.

**WHAT'S THE SCORE?**

Toilets	6/10
Staff	8/10
Cleanliness	8/10
Experience	6/10
Value for money	7/10
<b>Overall experience</b>	<b>7/10</b>

**RETAIL**

Dreamland Emporium boasts an array of interesting merchandise. Souvenirs are inspired by the British seaside and Hemingway Studio's Dreamland branding.

One creative range of products has been upcycled from salvaged wood from the Scenic Railway. The line includes brooches, keyrings, clocks, signs and purses, at prices from £5 to £100 (\$8 to \$156, €7 to €141). Profits from sales go back into community projects at Dreamland.

**FOOD AND BEVERAGE**

Shack-style outlets serve a variety of meals in a food court with shaded tables. Choose from fish and chips, Thai noodles, burgers and fresh seafood the traditional way: cockles, mussels, whelks, jellied eels and crab claws (£2.50 (\$4, €3.50)). We ate cod and chips and vegetarian noodles (about £6 (\$9, €8)), which were a good standard.

**SUMMARY**

In a world of big brands and global IPs, Dreamland offers something different. It has its own story and characters and the seeds of its modernised identity should quickly mature into a unique and memorable attraction offering.

If the next phases of the development of the complex – which include a cinema and ballroom – continue unhindered, Dreamland should recapture the glory of its past years.

Dreamland should also contribute to the regeneration of Margate, a town that's struggled in recent times, but is re-establishing itself as a destination. Dreamland hires people locally and runs community initiatives. Success would be further proof that good attractions can bring huge benefits to their communities. ●

**RIGHT TO REPLY**

**Eddie Kemsley,**  
CEO Dreamland



"I'm pleased to say that all rides at Dreamland other than the Scenic Railway are now running. Plus, we have a packed summer programme of events and activities. For families we have the Octopus's Garden FEC, our roller disco, Big Fish Little Fish family raves and Chaplin's Circus. For adults, there's Private Widdle's cabaret, Club Fromage and more. There are many reasons to visit us this summer."

# THE RIDE MAKERS

Four companies at the leading edge of technology shine a light on the demand for ever more convincing and compelling dark rides

Jason Holland, Journalist, Attractions Management



Interactivity enables riders to play a different game every time, Holovis says

## HOLOVIS

### STUART HETHERINGTON

#### CEO

#### What's your most recent dark ride?

We have just delivered a dark ride called the Forbidden Caves for Bobbejaanland. It's Belgium's first immersive tunnel attraction and the latest version of the original U-shaped immersive tunnel that we designed for Cinecittà World in Italy. A key element of our brief was ensuring that the operational aspects of the ride were suitable for a family attraction, accommodating riders from ages eight to 80. The experience features highly organic motion which when synchronised with the visuals creates the illusion of travelling further and faster than people actually are.



#### Have you made any engineering, design or manufacturing breakthroughs or advancements?

The Forbidden Caves is the world's first all-electric immersive tunnel, transitioning away from conventional hydraulic systems to improve the safety and longevity of the ride by removing potentially hazardous challenges, increasing operational efficiency, reducing maintenance and delivering a much more sustainable attraction.

#### What are the current trends in creating a dark ride?

Dark rides need to be truly immersive to engage audiences and put them at the heart of the story. This is achieved by media that completely engulfs the peripheral vision with 180° or 360° screens, spatial audio and a full suite of SFX effects.

Once these elements have been achieved, the solution must be scalable for attractions of all sizes and budgets, from flagship experiences at theme parks through to adrenaline-filled games within FECs.

Interactivity allows real-time engagement via the latest gaming technology ensuring

guest control and decision-making, as the game can be different each time, increasing repeatability and the operator's ROI.

#### How does Holovis work?

In some cases we've seen a disconnect between ride development teams and creative story teams, with technology and effects being applied as a separate part of the contract rather than being embedded in the narrative. This is due to different third-party suppliers taking responsibility for their element of the attraction rather than looking at the project as a whole and story being the driving factor.

But we offer a turnkey solution: our in-house team works with clients from the initial design phases through to delivery, covering all aspects from motion vehicles and ride systems to CGI media development, show production and game development, offering clients one point of contact to project manage the solution.

We understand the whole process, and our approach is to put the story at the heart of the attraction and use the right scalable technology to facilitate, not overpower, this.



Animatronics and interactive gaming feature in the new Justice League rides

## SALLY CORPORATION

### JOHN WOOD CHAIRMAN AND CEO

#### What is your most recent dark ride?

Justice League: Battle for Metropolis 4D, which opened in both Six Flags Over Texas and Six Flags St Louis in May.

It features a well-known IP – Justice League – with Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman and others, pitted against villains like the Joker and Lex Luthor in an battle to save Metropolis.

A team of specialists worked on the installation which features an Oceaneering



DOF vehicle (motion-based) and incredible animatronics, show action equipment, real fire and 3D video by Pure Imagination.

The gun and targeting system were created by Alterface and the scenery by Lexington Scenery. Our senior designer, Rich Hill, devised the concept, script, storyline and all video, in conjunction with the design group at Six Flags. It's the first mixed-media interactive dark ride on a motion-based platform in North America.

#### Have you made any engineering, design or manufacturing breakthroughs or advancements?

The transition from all physical sets and scenery to a mixture of 3D media and physical sets and show elements is one of our important new breakthroughs. The other is the addition of the Unreal 4 game engine in our video which enhances the interactivity and game portion of the show.

#### Can you describe the current market?

The market for dark rides has never been hotter. Partly this has been stimulated by the success of other dark rides in the industry but it's also a natural evolution. For the past couple of decades large regional theme

Sally Corporation, based in Florida, has been creating dark rides since 1977

### The market for dark rides has never been hotter

parks have focused on thrill rides and rollercoasters. However, there's much more a park can be than a place for thrill rides and they're increasingly appreciating the benefits of our family-oriented rides.

#### What are you doing that other dark ride makers aren't?

Our company's been in the dark ride business for three decades. As a result, we offer a wide spectrum of successful dark ride products. We're a full-service company providing everything from initial concept design through project management, manufacturing and installation.

No one in the industry has installed as many dark rides for as many satisfied customers as Sally Corporation.

#### What have been the biggest changes for ride makers in recent times?

The first trend-setting element was ETF's trackless ride systems that can go anywhere, point in any direction and get there at almost any speed. The next was the Oceaneering multiple degree of freedom vehicles that allow riders to move along with the movies or show action elements.

When it comes to the show elements of rides, new ideas are almost always born out of the hard work and success of the Disney or Universal creative teams. They set the high water mark for us to aim to float on.



## CAVU DESIGNWERKS

DARYL WHITE  
PRESIDENT

## What makes CAVU stand out?

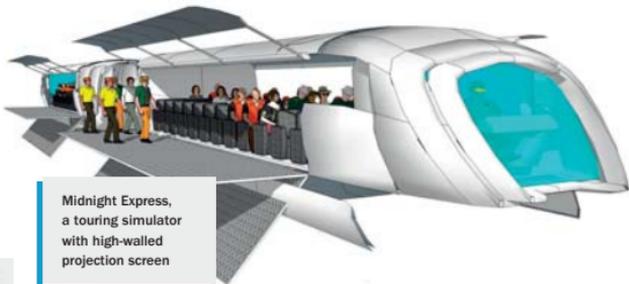
A number of manufacturers supply a four-, eight- or 12-passenger dark ride vehicle, but until the recent Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) in Hong Kong, no company had been able to provide an attraction to compete with the incredibly successful Harry Potter ride at Universal.

At AAE, CAVU Designwerks unveiled a 10-passenger multi-axis dark ride vehicle system called the Storm Chaser that has all the exciting movement used in Harry Potter, but isn't limited to four passengers. It's also less expensive. We've received a strong response, especially after clients learned we have a running prototype.

## Have you made engineering, design or manufacturing breakthroughs?

We've been following the trends in engineering and manufacturing over the last few years and seen a maturing in the Chinese ride manufacturing sector.

China is poised to take the next step from reverse engineering and duplicating



Midnight Express, a touring simulator with high-walled projection screen

existing rides to generating new products which are competitive in the global market.

Heavy hitters such as Disney and Universal have begun expanding into China and are actively sourcing products from local and regional fabricators. As a result, these fabricators are receiving technical advice that will assist them in stepping up their overall level of quality, beyond just supplying to the major parks.

## What are the current trends in creating a dark ride?

The biggest trend in theme park design is towards the inclusion of trackless dark rides. This includes the use of autonomous guided vehicles (AGVs).

Disney has created its own trackless dark ride systems, such as the one used in the Ratatouille attraction at Disneyland Paris, but on the open market, few suppliers are offering them.

For many design concepts a track- or fin-guided vehicle delivers the desired ride experience just as well as trackless vehicles. The key to making an AGV

system worth the expense is to approach the ride layout and concept with a free mind and let the vehicles take different paths or wander more freely.

## What's on the horizon for the ride-making industry?

I believe the industry will follow in our footsteps and start manufacturing in China. The key is to success in this is to set high-quality standards and enforce them.

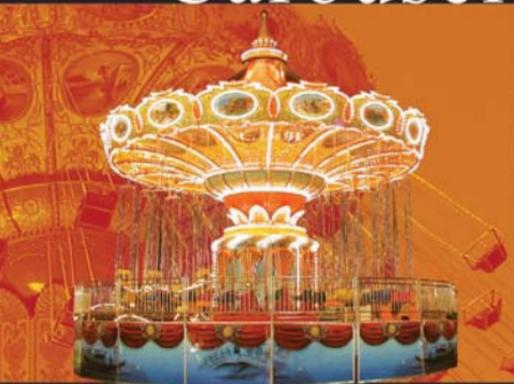
The current boom in the industry means some suppliers are booked up for two or three years. That's great for short-term work, but there are so many parks slated for construction that want to buy rides now, those suppliers are having to say no, or delay opening. This has opened the door for new companies and in five years, you'll see a number of new faces in the industry.

I predict many of the existing Chinese manufacturers that were "me-too" makers, will have come up with novel ideas after learning from the likes of Universal and Disney about how to develop rides and work to world class quality standards.



The Storm Chaser dark ride blurs the boundary between virtual and reality

# The Carousel Company



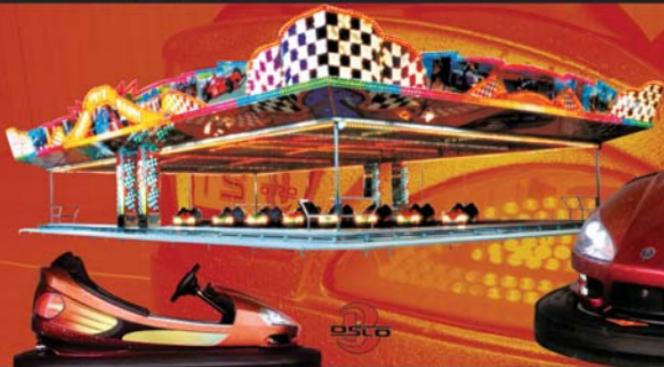
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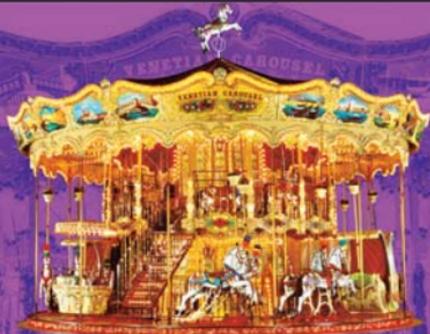
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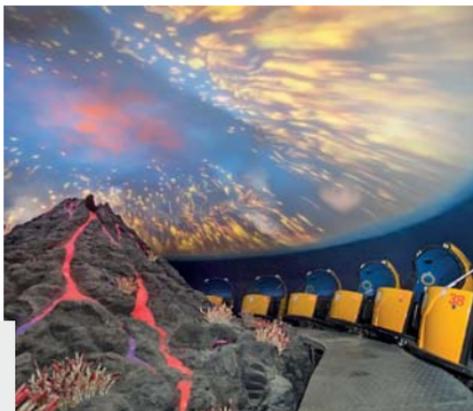
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## RIDES



MET Studio worked on Deep Sea Odyssey at Chimelong Ocean Kingdom theme park



## MET

PETER KARN

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

### What is your most recent dark ride?

The most recent dark ride MET completed was the Deep Sea Odyssey at Chimelong Ocean Kingdom in Hengqin, China. The ride sets itself apart from others because of its unique blend of different mediums, including set works, live aquariums and media. All these mediums are used to tell the captivating story starting from the queuing area all the way through the ride.

### Have you made any engineering, design or manufacturing breakthroughs or advancements?

As well as the obvious technological advancements in ride creation, such as 3D software that allows the modelling of unique designs, we've also found that communication technology and collaboration enhance ride design quality.

Creating rides involves different parties working on various parts of the process. Communication technologies such as the GoToMeeting video conferencing and screen sharing software really help us achieve the effects and conceptual designs we're working towards together. This is especially helpful when working with set builders and sculptors who are aiming to create organic forms as close to our drawings as possible.

We've also started to utilise virtual reality technology in the design of our experiences. Using this technique we can now see our proposals through visitors' eyes and craft them from this perspective, allowing a far more intricate control over our creative and development processes.

Technology is currently at an astounding level

of sophistication; so much so that with the

right budget virtually anything is possible

### What are the current trends in creating dark rides?

Mobile technology is becoming far more integrated into these kinds of experiences. Visitors can now begin their journey before they get on the ride and continue it long after they've got off and headed home.

The rides themselves are becoming more detailed and the effects are improving in quality every year. However, the level of interactivity through mobile devices is transforming the experiences.

### What have been the biggest changes for ride makers in recent times?

"Change" is the key word here; the worry is that rides don't change and as a result, they stagnate and this has a negative impact on repeat visits.

This is becoming a very competitive industry and visitors get used to the same types of experiences. In a world where choice is seemingly infinite and everything is an "experience", rides must compete. To do this they must innovate to stand out – simply having the largest or loudest ride no longer guarantees success.

### What's on the horizon for you as a company?

We're focusing far more on the experience economy and want to use our expertise as experiential designers in more sectors of business and design.

With the tools now at our disposal we can turn most projects into true experiences that become

something powerful, entertaining and memorable for visitors. In essence, we want to make the world a more entertaining place to be.

### And for the wider ride industry?

Technology is currently at an astounding level of sophistication; so much so that with the right budget virtually anything is possible. With all these toys at our disposal, we must not forget that telling stories is at the core of what we do and that for visitors to feel, they first need to care and be really engaged with the experience. ●



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