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# Attractions

## MANAGEMENT

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### SEA CHANGE

Merlin's plans to open a world first cetacean sanctuary

### Miguel Quintana Pali

Founder of Mexico's award-winning cultural heritage attraction Xcaret

# TYRA BANKS

Supermodel and entrepreneur eyes attractions market with new venture

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## Help save the planet

We've got 12 years to save Earth from the effects of climate change or we'll be responsible for the death of our beautiful planet. It's time the attractions industry stepped up and joined the fight to make a difference

**C**ould visitor attractions help save the planet, by educating people of all ages about climate change and – importantly – enlightening them about the actions they can take to prevent it? That's the question Bridget McKenzie asked herself before setting out to create the Climate Museum (see page 80).

We know attractions sit at the heart of the education system, welcoming, teaching and enlightening millions of people around the world each year, so what could we make happen if we harnessed this power to save the world?

McKenzie believes we can make a difference and is crowdfunding an initiative to gather the resources needed to accelerate the development of the new attraction.

It will start as a pop-up – part exhibition, part training process – which can be hired by a museum, school, library or business and the plan is to grow from there.

"I see it as a workshop/campaign/training project where people can explore the subject and talk about their feelings and views," says McKenzie. "Props and games will enable the conversation of how we can engage communities with climate change. Each pop-up will be targeted to the location: for example if it's a low-lying area, a history of flooding can be brought into it."

Importantly, the Climate Museum will harness the power of play to connect with visitors, but it will also be treated as a serious subject. Content will be graded to avoid frightening children and to ensure that the tougher messages reach the right audience.

McKenzie was inspired to start work on the project after meeting fellow industry professional Miranda Massie, who's in the process of setting up a Climate Museum as a destination in New York and says it's all part of a growing movement in the cultural sector take direct action in relation to climate change and make a difference.



Bridget McKenzie – stepping up to make a difference

“If not now, when? Attractions are uniquely positioned to tackle the challenge of climate change”

In addition to educating people about change, attractions can do a huge amount to set an example, by adopting best practice in relation to things like accepting ethical sponsorship, switching to renewables or self-generation, encouraging visitors to arrive by public transport and cutting out plastic.

With the world in an accelerating climate crisis, it's for us time to step up and play our part in finding solutions.

Liz Terry, editor  
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[@elizterry](https://twitter.com/elizterry)



■ p34 Miguel Pali on building an eco-legacy



■ p50 All the biggest and best new rides coming to attractions around the world in 2019



■ p68 Alice Davis pays a visit to China's Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park



■ p42 The big developments opening this year

07 Editor's Letter

12 People

Meet the people in the news, with the TEA president Michael Mercadante, supermodel Tyra Banks and director Anthony Geffen

20 Science Centres news

21 Visitor Attractions news

22 Waterparks news

24 Theme Parks news

27 Museums & Galleries news

28 Heritage news

31 Zoos & Aquariums news

32 Technology news

34 Interview

**Miguel Quintana Pali**

The founder of Mexico's eco-friendly cultural heritage attraction Xcaret speaks to Attractions Management

42 Openings

**The road ahead**

A preview of the biggest developments opening across the world in 2019

50 Rides

**Hot Wheels**

We look at the exciting and innovative rides opening this year

54 Show report

**IAAPA Attractions Expo 2018**

Attractions Management was in attendance in Orlando at the biggest show of the year

56 Show report

**Awards Season**

Revealing the winners of a number of prestigious awards handed out in November

58 Show report

**Women of Disney**

Some of Disney's most talented female leaders share their stories about how they got to be where they are today



■ p74 Merlin is about to move two captive belugas in China to a special sanctuary in Iceland



■ p56 Xcaret picking up the Applause Award



■ p80 Bridget McKenzie's Climate Museum



■ p84 How can you make your waterpark venture a financial success? David Camp explains

**62 Show report**

**Charming the world**

Tom Mehrmann and Roland Mack discuss how to become an ambassador for culture rather than a stereotype

**64 Interview**

**Changing faces**

We speak to the three men charged with leading IAAPA into its next century

**68 Mystery shopper**

**Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park**

A new Ocean Park has opened near Shanghai. Alice Davis paid a visit

**74 Animal care**

**Sea change**

Merlin is preparing to launch the world's first cetacean open water sanctuary

**78 Museums**

**Climate Museum**

Cultural consultant Bridget McKenzie is taking action against climate change

**82 Waterparks**

**Splashing the cash**

David Camp looks at the waterparks sector and how it can benefit the rest of the industry



PHOTO: STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA

On the cover: Tyra Banks

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**Web gallery:**  
For suppliers of products and services in the worldwide attractions industry, turn to page 92

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- Tyra Banks – Supermodel eyes attractions market
- Miguel Quintana Pali - founder of Mexico's Xcaret
- Women of Disney

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- Cedar Fair eyes out-of-park investments
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- Dubai park operator DXB getting back on track

# Attractions People

“We will all work together to help TEA become an ever-richer resource - to help plan and shape its future - its best future - to serve the members and enrich the industry”

**Michael Mercadante** TEA International Board president



The Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) has a new president, with Michael Mercadante, president of US-based experience design firm Main Street Design, taking up the position in November 2018.

Part of the TEA for a nearly a decade and a member of the organisation's board since 2012, Mercadante revealed his plan to take the association to the “next level” during his term as TEA president.

“In broad strokes, it means implementing best practices that position the association to remain viable into the future, building and protecting our brand, and upholding standards of excellence for the industry,” he says.

“The TEA is maturing – in a few years, our organisation will hit the 30-year mark. Today we're in a strong position to embark on a new phase of long-term planning.”

### Strong foundations

Mercadante succeeds David Willrich, who completed his second term as president in November after taking the position in 2016. During his time at the helm of the TEA, Willrich worked to create

Mercadante has served on the TEA's International Board of Directors for the past six years



In his new position Mercadante is working closely alongside TEA COO Jennie Nevin

a "truly global" TEA, introducing new educational events such as SATE Europe.

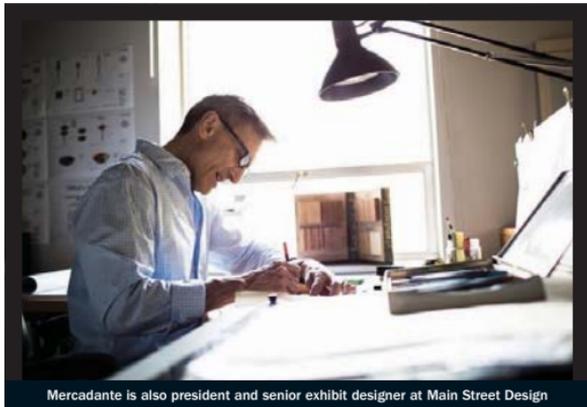
"David worked hard to bolster the visibility and involvement of the TEA Europe and Middle East Division members and region and get more exposure for TEA in the burgeoning Asia Pacific markets," says Mercadante. "I have no doubt he will now be a very supportive immediate past president. TEA past presidents tend to stay involved after their terms are completed, and the TEA Past Presidents Committee is a great resource."

### Global outreach

Over the course of 2019, the TEA has more than 100 events planned across its regional divisions, each supporting professional development, education and networking. With Willrich building a strong foundation for the events taking place in every corner of the globe, Mercadante will be keen to continue and improve upon this.

"A huge benefit of TEA membership is the access to people, places, discussions and venues we provide," he says. "It's just as important for established industry members as for NextGen members, with our offerings reflecting the needs of the community we serve."

Beyond education, Mercadante is planning to increase the TEA's presence in each of its world regions, growing them even further and expanding the association, though according to the new president,



Mercadante is also president and senior exhibit designer at Main Street Design

geography is not the only measure: "The industry is evolving and diversifying in terms of market sectors, types of projects, guest expectations and business culture," says Mercadante. "My own background puts me in an ideal position to help expand the conversation within the museum and zoo communities and to grow the TEA's presence in those communities around the world. There are many business spaces in need of what TEA members can do in terms of storytelling, placemaking and compelling experiences."

In terms of his new position, Mercadante describes this new opportunity as his chance to "give back in a big way".

"We will all work together to help TEA become an ever-richer resource - to help plan and shape its future - its best future - to serve the members and enrich the industry," he explains.

As the sector thrives, what is it for the new TEA president that excites him most about themed entertainment?

"It never stands still," he says. "We're compelled to grow and innovate always."

## Modelland will awaken your childlike glee by entertaining and educating you in unexpected ways

**Tyra Banks** supermodel and entrepreneur

**T**yra Banks has announced plans for what she calls a “first-of-its-kind experiential attraction” – a fantasy version of the world of modeling created using state-of-the-art interactive entertainment, creative collaborations, curated retail, dining and special events.

Banks, who first made her name as one of the most successful models of all time, describes the plans for the new visitor attraction as her “ultimate dream”.

Called ‘Modelland’ (the same name as Banks’ 2010 New York Times Best Seller young adult novel) the concept is something Banks has been working on for more than a decade.

“Modelland will awaken your childlike glee by entertaining and educating in unexpected ways that will make learning about oneself fierce and fun. I want people to feel seen and validated,” she says.

“We’ll build a new world of storytelling and adventure in a grand, fantastical, physical place where all expressions of beauty are celebrated. Visitors will be invited to redefine what a model really is and to be dream versions of themselves.”

Set to open in late 2019, the 21,000sq ft (2,000sq m) attraction is coming to Santa Monica Place – an open-air shopping, dining and entertainment destination near the beach in Santa Monica, California. This will be the first of many Modelland attractions, which are set to open in similar destinations worldwide as part of a major expansion.

“Modelland will provide the tools for visitors to embrace, adorn and celebrate their own unique beauty,” says Banks. “It’s all about celebrating your ‘flawsome’ self. We are fun. We are fierce. We are fantasy. And, we are for real.”

Tyra Banks is known as a television personality, businesswoman, actress, author, model and occasional singer



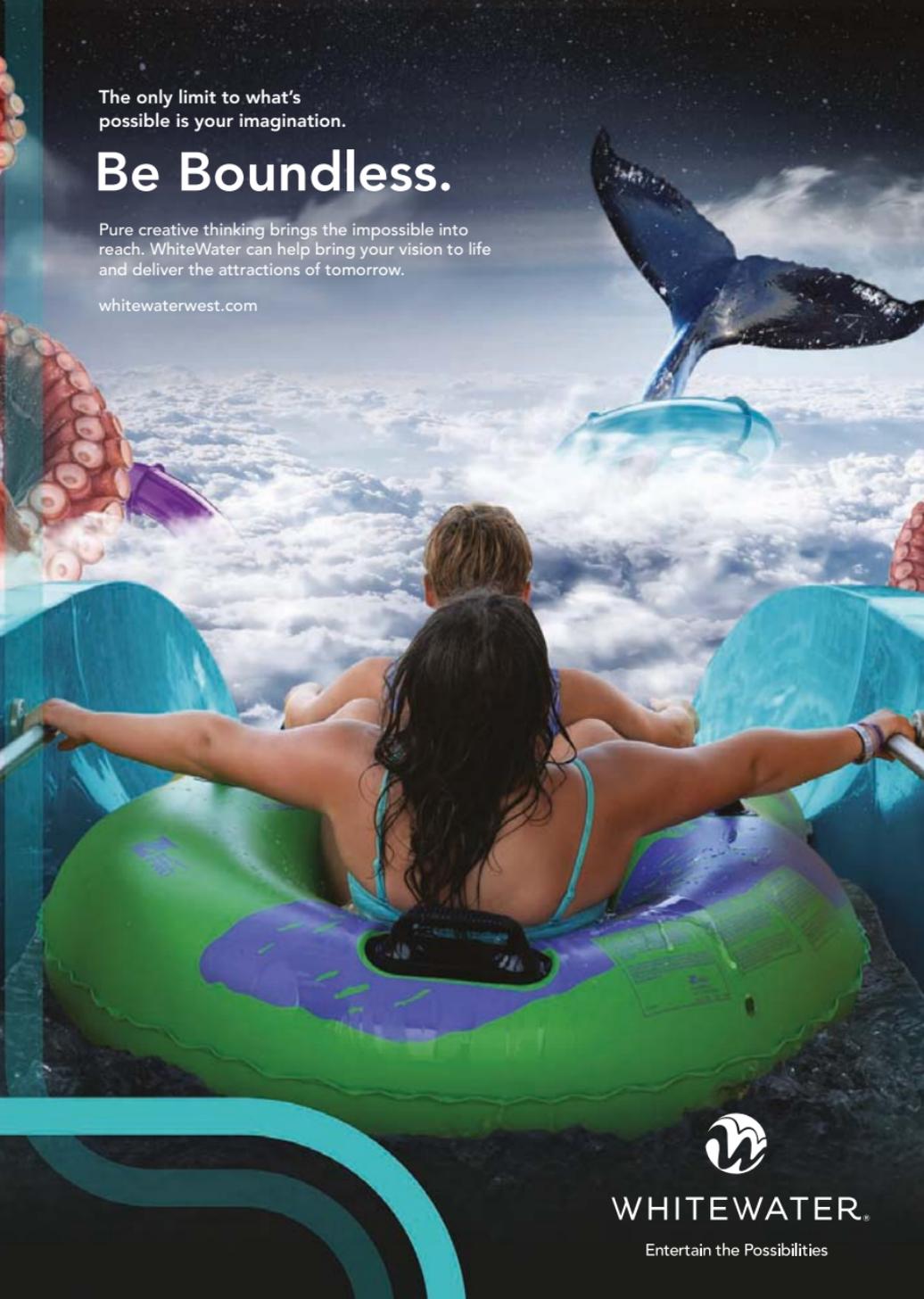
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“If you take these technologies with smells, sounds and everything else added in, you can create extraordinary life-changing experiences”

**Anthony Geffen**  
CEO and creative director,  
Atlantic Productions



Sir David Attenborough, Stephen Hawking, Dame Judy Dench and even Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. These are just a few of the people renowned documentarian and filmmaker Anthony Geffen has worked with over the course of a glittering career, creating stunning works of art for television, the big screen and the museum sector in a multitude of astonishing mediums.

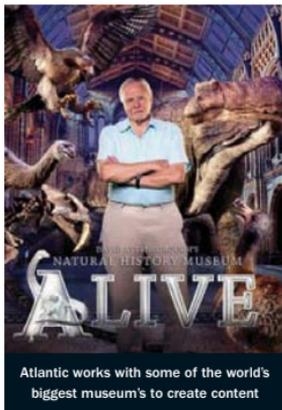
On the cutting edge of storytelling and immersive technologies, Geffen's company, Atlantic Productions, has produced some of the world's most-watched documentary series, including the award-winning Great Barrier Reef, Galapagos and The Wildest Dream. His works have been recognised with more than 50 international accolades, including multiple British Academy Awards (BAFTAs) and Emmy Awards.

"Atlantic Productions grew out of a period where I had been at the BBC for 10 years, making some of their major documentaries and dramas," Geffen tells *Attractions Management*.

"While working in Hollywood, I saw studios like Pixar and the kind of things they were doing in the fictional world.

I was interested in working out how we could use tools such as animation to look at the past and into the future.

"I wanted to put under one roof a multitude of skills to do what I considered to be at that time the next stage of immersive storytelling."



### Free spirit

Geffen founded Atlantic Productions in 1992, quickly establishing a diverse output which included history, science, natural history, current affairs, music and the arts.

Over the next 27 years, Atlantic's creations would go on to be seen by hundreds of millions of people in more than 150 countries worldwide. During that period, Geffen would establish several more companies under the Atlantic umbrella. These included Zoo for CGI, Colossus for 3D, Atlantic Digital for App creation and Alchemy VR, which in 2017 was recognised with the first ever British Academy award for virtual storytelling.

"Big organisations at times lose the essence of storytelling because there's a lot of politics involved in managing an organisation like that. The early days of the BBC had this free spirit and, in a way, I wanted to recreate that," says Geffen.

"We developed a company which offered all sorts of complementary abilities. That's how we grew it and attracted a lot of talent. David Attenborough was fascinated by what we were doing here and worked with us, creating films with entirely new ideas using our technology."



Geffen's latest offering brings the world's largest, best preserved and most complete T-Rex to life at the Field Museum in Chicago



### Marvelous creations

Known for his jaw-dropping documentaries, Geffen has also carved out a significant path in the museum sector. Among its projects, last year Atlantic Production produced a VR experience with astronaut Tim Peake and the London Science Museum. Other projects included an adaptation of *Great Barrier Reef* and *First Life with David Attenborough*. These major projects have been showcased globally, with productions from Geffen in museums in locations worldwide.

"We believe museums are a really important space for us," he says. "We love to work with them, with the challenge being how to take content to a younger audience in a more interactive way."

A prime example of this was a recent project at the Field Museum in Chicago, US. Based on the tyrannosaurus rex housed as part of the museum's collection, a 5,100sq ft (475sq m) experience opened its doors on 21 December, combining the real with the virtual as a side-by-side experience.

"We put these giant screens next to these bones, which we felt was very important," Geffen explains. "The narrative

of the experience is something that immerses you both in the bones and the story at the same time.

"It was a collaboration with the museum's palaeontologists. We made sure what we created was as scientifically accurate as possible."

### Working with an icon

Geffen is currently working on a major VR project, soon to be distributed worldwide and straight from the great mind of the late Stephen Hawking as a 20-minute virtual tour of the universe.

Hawking, who died in March last year, was fascinated by Geffen's work in immersive storytelling. His work with David Attenborough particularly caught his eye, so Hawking struck up a relationship with the director as they worked together to create a legacy project for the iconic physicist.



Atlantic has created a number of documentaries alongside Sir David Attenborough, including his *Great Barrier Reef* series

"Before his death, he recorded the narration of his journey," says Geffen. "In this experience, he's going to take you through space, sharing his thoughts as you explore. To me, that's extraordinary. It's like being able to get into Da Vinci's head."

The experience, which is due to launch in early 2020, will be delivered through a series of pop-ups across Britain in very accessible spaces such as London's South Bank. Following this, it will be distributed to museums all over the world.

"Once you're immersed in the experience, you'll feel like you're flying

## PEOPLE

through space and can actually choose where you want to go," says Geffen. "This whole thing is from Hawking's mind and it's incredibly exciting."

### Looking forward

Working with any new technology can present challenges and through his near 30 years at Atlantic Productions, Geffen has seen both the successes and the failures.

"Some people say VR hasn't worked," he says. "I think that's because they're seeing this very low-resolution production. For me, 90 per cent of all the VR experiences I've ever seen aren't great, but when someone gets it right, it's like nothing else."

"It's vital that these sort of storytelling techniques are driven by storytellers. Until now, a lot of the stuff is dealt with by the technical people. They want to tell stories but they aren't storytellers. What will take this to the next level is having outstanding storytellers, which is what we're trying to encourage and what we're doing. Bringing them to this extraordinary medium and using things like smell and sound on top of this will be incredible."

"In a professional setting for VR, you have things like haptics and an incredible environment. As an experience, that's where the sweet spot is."

"In a few years, we may get to a point where we can take off the headset and be actually in a virtual environment, with the space you're in changing around you."

**Prior to Stephen Hawking's death Geffen met with the famous physicist to build a legacy project currently in production**



In 2017, the London Science Museum introduced Space Descent VR with Tim Peake

## Immersive storytelling is going to be a big part of the future

"We're going to see a breakaway from AR, VR, whatever realities there are. The visitor won't care what it is, they'll just want it to be entertaining."

While this new medium is certainly exciting for the museum and wider attractions sector, a primary challenge, says Geffen, is making these grand experiences economically viable for these institutions: "You need experiences where literally hundreds of people can come through at the same time."

"The only way we can do that is with dedicated spaces. You come in, do it, it's all very magical and then you leave that space."

"For museums, there are lots of ways to work. The Field Museum is great because what's built there is incredibly exciting and

dynamic and yet hundreds of people can go through. We need to find other ways of doing that. To meet expectation, it can't be just a few headsets anymore."

### Artificial advances

Something that could be a potential game-changer when it comes to immersive storytelling is the work Atlantic Productions has been doing with Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts.

Currently in its testing phase, artificial intelligence tracks a user's reactions to a scene, working out from their facial reaction, exactly how the user is experiencing the story, and adapting the story accordingly.

"It allows us to give every single person a different experience," says Geffen. "It's a new kind of storytelling, where you can tell what the audience is thinking – so you can change the plot."

"In a teaching environment, we can tell how a child has reacted to something. We can see if they've understood something or whether it needs to be expressed differently for the child to understand it."

"In the educational storytelling space, it's a way of knowing whether every child in the class has, or hasn't, learnt something. In the medical world, we're working out how things like autism work, and how it can be mitigated."

"Immersive storytelling is going to be a big part of the future. If you take these technologies with smells, sounds and everything else added in, you can create extraordinary life-changing experiences."

**Do you manage a media-based attraction within your theme park or museum?**

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## DEVELOPMENTS

### Turkey breaks ground in Istanbul on Europe's largest science centre

Ground has been broken in Turkey on what is expected to become the largest science centre in Europe, attracting upward of 30 million visitors per year.

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended the groundbreaking ceremony at the historic 15th Century Haliç Tersanesi (Golden Horn shipyard) in Istanbul. The Tersane Istanbul project will feature three museums – including the first museum dedicated to women in Turkey – as well as hotels, retail stores, entertainment facilities, offices and a mosque in an area of 238,000sq m (781,000sq ft).

DP Architects is the appointed design architect for



■ The development will create around 15,000 new jobs

the project, which is expected to open in November 2020.

"The project will not only increase the brand value of Istanbul, it will also make a positive contribution to Turkey's tourism revenue," said the President.

MORE: [http://lei.sr/v4P6r\\_T](http://lei.sr/v4P6r_T)



**This project will make a positive contribution to Turkey's tourism**

Recep Tayyip Erdogan

## INDUSTRY OPINION

### Keep calm, turn 30, and keep pushing boundaries

Mikko Myllykoski, chair of the Ecsite Annual Conference Programme Committee (ACPC)

The European science centre movement took a remarkable step in January 1989



by founding a collaborative organisation, Ecsite.

As our network turns 30 this year, we can look back and celebrate Ecsite's undeniable quantitative and qualitative growth. A handful of science centres started a process that now involves hundreds of very diverse science engagement organisations and thousands of professionals who touch the minds and hearts of millions of people every year in Europe and beyond.

Ecsite is inviting you to Copenhagen this June to celebrate the 30th edition of its annual conference. On this anniversary edition a lot of the programme will be looking ahead, not back. We will explore how to widen and deepen visitor participation, ask what are the new tools and methods we need to invent, who are the new partners we need and how do we make the most of our field's legacy while constantly re-inventing ourselves?

The theme of the conference, 'Pushing Boundaries', has been the leading star of the science engagement movement all along; otherwise we would not be thriving and celebrating.

## EXHIBITIONS

### Frost Science and University of Miami collaborate on new scientific exhibition space



**This exhibition space will have a major impact on our institution**

Frank Steslow

A new gallery and science experience that animates scientific processes through a hands-on mix of objects, digital media and interaction is to be added to the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science in Miami, US, with its opening scheduled to happen by the end of 2019.

The project has been made possible by a US\$10m grant from the University of Miami, which is to be directed towards the development of experiences that will advance the prominence

of both institutions in the field of informal science communication. The 6,000sq ft (1,828sq m) gallery will showcase the university's cutting-edge research science.

"This exhibition space will have a major impact on our institution," said Frost Science president and CEO, Frank Steslow. "It will inspire future STEM leaders and allow our guests direct access to rich scientific research programmes."

MORE: [http://lei.sr/K3W7b\\_T](http://lei.sr/K3W7b_T)

## APPOINTMENTS

### Antorcha to help SeaWorld reach 'full potential'

SeaWorld's new CEO Gus Antorcha has said he plans to help the organisation reach its "full potential", following several years of turmoil.

Under his predecessor Joel Manby, the company had been undergoing a dramatic restructuring both behind the scenes and in its parks. This included introducing a five-point plan focused on "Experiences That Matter" – an extensive rebranding effort that included the elimination of theatrical orca shows and the promise that the operator's current generation of orcas would be SeaWorld's last.

These ongoing efforts are slowly proving to be a success, with the once-floundering organisation's end of year results for 2018 showing

an attendance increase of 1.8 million visitors and earnings at US\$401.3m – a US\$103.9m increase over the previous year.

With SeaWorld seemingly having stemmed the tide of its financial struggles in recent years related to the Blackfish controversy, Antorcha says the company is looking forward: "Together the team and I have a clear focus on continuing to improve execution, enhance the guest experience and grow revenue, profitability and free cash flow.

"I'm truly excited to be working with this talented group of people to enhance and accelerate these efforts and help realise the full potential of this business."

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/F3A8k\\_T](http://lei.sr/F3A8k_T)



■ SeaWorld has increased its focus on 'experiences that matter'



**I'm truly excited to be working with this talented group of people**

Gus Antorcha

## REDEVELOPMENTS

### AU\$150m redevelopment for Sunshine Coast's 'Big Pineapple'



**Work is projected to pump AU\$90m into the Sunshine Coast's economy**

Kate Jones

The Sunshine Coast's 'Big Pineapple' and its 170-hectare surrounds in Queensland, Australia, are to be transformed through a AU\$150m (US\$108.3m) redevelopment.

Built in 1971, the 52ft-high (16m) heritage-listed tourist attraction – shaped like a giant pineapple – was designed by Peddle Thorp and Harvey, Paul Luff, and Gary Smallcombe and Associates.

As part of the new development, features will include a waterpark, an adventure precinct and a major concert event space, as well as the Tree Tops Challenge. A high ropes and zip line course that is nearly complete. The Tree Tops Challenge will include around 120 activities for visitors,



■ The Big Pineapple is a heritage-listed tourist attraction

including a 120m zip line, and will take around a half a day to complete.

"Work is projected to pump AU\$90m (US\$65m) into the Sunshine Coast's economy and 800 construction jobs will be on offer," said Queensland's tourism industry development minister Kate Jones.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/j8t8a\\_T](http://lei.sr/j8t8a_T)

## ACQUISITIONS

### Rebrand, renovation and new attractions planned for US parks acquired by Six Flags

Three US theme parks acquired from EPR Properties last year are undergoing extensive enhancements and rebranding by new owners Six Flags Entertainment.

Darien Lake, near Buffalo, NY; Wet & Wild Splashtown in Houston, and Wet & Wild Phoenix – the largest waterpark in Arizona – will now be rebranded as Six Flags waterparks.

"The Six Flags brand is recognised throughout the world as an industry leader in creating innovative, groundbreaking experiences for guests of all ages," said senior vice president of US Park Operations, Tom Iven.

"We're making major investments in all three



■ Three acquired parks will be rebranded as Six Flags properties

properties with record-breaking attractions and extensive upgrades including new theming, paint treatments and branded signage, along with updates to our restaurant and retail locations."

MORE: [http://lei.sr/q7N8B\\_U](http://lei.sr/q7N8B_U)



“  
We're making major investments in all three properties

Tom Iven

## INDUSTRY OPINION

### A new age of expectation

Aleatha Ezra, WWA

Last October, the World Waterpark Association welcomed customer experience



expert David Avrin as a keynote speaker during its 38th Annual Symposium and Trade Show.

During his address, Avrin said that customers expect immediate answers, 24/7 access to information, expedited delivery and buying with one-click. If you can't give it to them, they will likely find others who will.

He also detailed several reasons that you unintentionally drive customers away and reminded listeners that policies and processes are not created to make life easy for your team, but to make the experience great for your customers. If a leisure venue can master the following three elements that typify this new age of expectation, they can gain a meaningful competitive advantage in the marketplace:

- **Immediacy** – Allow customers to reach a real person, get instant information on product or service offerings and hear quick answers. They don't want to fill out a contact form.
- **Individuality** – Provide customers with the flexibility to create experiences, products or packages the way they want them – not just how we want to sell them.
- **Humanity** – Treat people with human dignity. Understand that one-size does not fit all.

## OPENINGS

### New dinosaur-themed water park to open in Croatia



“  
After more than six months of heavy machinery work, the pool complex is almost complete

Ivan Maricic

A new waterpark is set to open in Istria, Croatia, at the end of Q2 2019.

Themed on dinosaurs, Paleo Park will open near the famous paleontological sites in the Mon Perin campsite in the Bale area of the Croatian region.

Covering 16,000sq m (172,223sq ft), Paleo Park will feature a dinosaur-shaped pool, a relaxation pool, a children's pool, a family pool, a hydromassage pool, hot baths, a spa pool, an indoor restaurant, a covered outdoor

bar area, a sunbathing area and a souvenir shop.

There will also be a number of differently sized dinosaur replicas dotted around the park, showcasing different species of the extinct creatures.

"After more than six months of heavy machinery work, the pool complex is almost complete and now needs to be completely finalised," said Ivan Maricic, board member of the Mon Perin campsite.

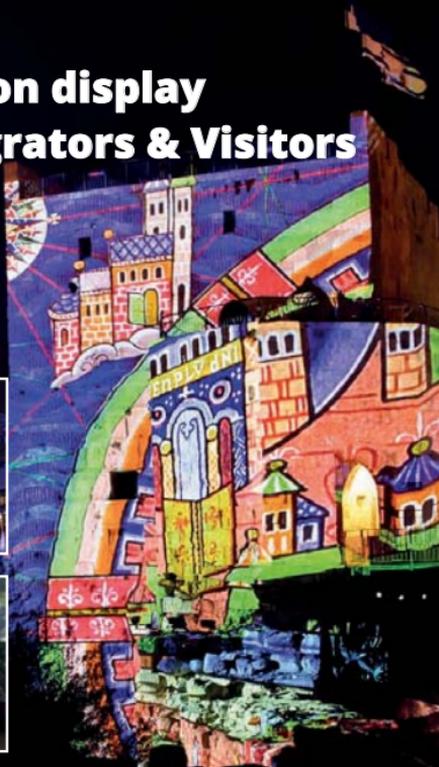
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## DEVELOPMENTS

### K-Pop theme park at heart of US\$4bn plans

A huge new development in Korea is set to go ahead after stalling twice since 2007, with the new attraction boasting a gargantuan K-pop and natural history theme park as its centrepiece.

The Hwaseong International Theme Park in Hwaseong, Gyeonggi Province, will be built by Shinsegae Property Consortium and will also feature a hotel, shopping centre and a golf course.

Ground will be broken on the US\$4bn project in 2021. The theme park is set to open in 2026, with the masterplan to be completed by 2031.

K-pop and natural regional features such as the Shilwa Lake and a dinosaur fossil site will be central to the destination's theme.

60,000 people will be employed through its construction and a further 15,000 jobs will be created at the theme park.

"We're aiming to build Asia's best global tourist destination that will contribute to the growth of Korea and the region," said Shinsegae Property CEO Lim Yeong-rok.

In 2007, Lotte Group failed to agree with landowner K-Water on the price of the land in 2010.

Then, in 2016, K-Water and another consortium could not agree on terms to build a Korean Universal Studios.

This new deal with Shinsegae seems to have finally decided the land's fate after a drawn-out process.

MORE: [http://lei.sr/E754K\\_T](http://lei.sr/E754K_T)



■ The K-Pop theme park will anchor the 1.21 sq mi site



**We're aiming to build Asia's best global tourist destination that will contribute to the growth of Korea and the region**

Lim Yeong-rok

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Queensland gov't introduces new theme parks regulations



**We think there's no need to wait and we can get this started and make this industry safe**

Grace Grace

The government of Queensland, Australia, has announced a number of new regulations for any visitor attractions operating rollercoasters or rides, following the tragedy at Dreamworld in 2016 which took the lives of four people.

All rides in Queensland will be subject to pull-apart inspections every decade under the new regulations, while ride operators will have to undergo more stringent training perform their duties.

Workplace health and safety inspectors will carry out the checks, which could potentially see rides and attractions closed for weeks at a time.

Rides will now also have to have detailed logbooks that display records of



■ The Dreamworld accident in 2016 led to the new rules

annual inspections and any maintenance issues incurred throughout the year.

"We're hoping that these new regulations will go a long way to improving the safety of these rides," said industrial relations minister for Queensland, Grace Grace.

MORE: [http://lei.sr/N6a9N\\_T](http://lei.sr/N6a9N_T)



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## TECHNOLOGY

### Self-constructing robot museum in the works

Turkish design bureau Melike Altinisk Architects (MAA) have been selected to build a museum of robotics with components that "construct themselves".

Located in Seoul, the future Robot Science Museum (RSM), which will have a globular as opposed to orthogonal form to provide a "wide range of possibilities for connection with urban orientation and public spaces", will rise four storeys and comprise three exhibition areas, a museum shop, offices, and a seminar room.

The attraction's inaugural exhibition – devised to support RSM's objective to promote and celebrate scientific innovation – will be both performative and educational, and will see

the building's steel facade and sidewalk assembled by a "team" of robots.

In a description of the project on the Seoul Metropolitan Government's website, MAA said: "Led by a building information modelling (BIM) system, robots will assemble, weld, and polish the hyperbolic metal plates.

"Another team of robots will 3D print concrete for the surrounding landscape."

The firm added: "We believe that the combination of robotic construction and 3D printing is the future of the building industry. It gives the architect more freedom to invent."

Construction on RSM is slated to begin in 2020 and conclude in 2022.

MORE: [http://lei.sr/c8F3y\\_T](http://lei.sr/c8F3y_T)



■ The Robot Science Museum (RSM) is taking shape in Seoul



**We believe that the combination of robotic construction and 3D printing is the future of the building industry**

Melike Altinisk Architects

## REOPENING

### New York's reimagined MoMA to open its doors in October



**The real value of this expansion is not just more space, but space that lets us rethink the experience of art in MoMA**

Glenn D. Lowry

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York has announced that it will close this summer and reopen with expanded exhibition spaces on 21 October 2019.

Designed by New York architecture practice Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R), the museum will feature more than 40,000 sq ft (3,716 sq m) of galleries.

The renovation will see the museum gain street-level display rooms, a second-floor learning platform, and a multimedia studio for performances and presentations.

"Inspired by Alfred Barr's original vision to be an experimental museum in New York, the real value of this expansion is not just more space, but space that lets us rethink the experience of art in



■ The museum will close temporarily in the summer

MoMA," said Glenn D. Lowry director at MoMA. "We have an opportunity to re-energise and expand upon our founding mission – to welcome everyone to experience MoMA as a laboratory for the study and presentation of the art of our time, across all visual arts."

MORE: [http://lei.sr/b2C4y\\_T](http://lei.sr/b2C4y_T)

## DISABILITY

### First ever Machu Picchu wheelchair tours offered

At 8,000ft (2,438m) above sea level, the Inca city of Machu Picchu is a stiff climb even for the able-bodied, and has been completely inaccessible for those in a wheelchair. That has now changed after travel company Wheel the World started offering specialised trips to the Peruvian world wonder.

Wheel the World offers travellers access to expensive specialised wheelchairs that can traverse difficult terrain. The company was started by two Chilean friends, Alvaro Silberstein (who uses a wheelchair) and Camilo Navarro, in 2017. It offers a number of tours in Chile and Mexico, and the new Machu Picchu experience is its first extension into Peru.

The experience reportedly revolves around the lightweight Jolette trekking wheelchair, distinctive with its single wheel and two long handles, which, it is said, makes it look like a wheelbarrow. These wheelchairs are not self-propelled, so a companion may be required, or local assistants or trained guides can be hired.

Wheelchair-bound tourists are not required to bring their own chairs, as Wheel the World arranges for the equipment to be available at the attraction.

"Because of erosion concerns or restrictions about how ancient sites can be modified, it's not always as simple as immediately building a wheelchair ramp," said Navarro, speaking to *CNN Travel*.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/g6T3x\\_T](http://lei.sr/g6T3x_T)



■ Machu Picchu is one of the seven wonders of the world



**Wheel the World offers travellers access to expensive specialised wheelchairs that can traverse difficult terrain**

## CIVIL RIGHTS

### Martin Luther King Jr's family home opening to public



**The home of Dr King is a touchstone to better understand our shared heritage**

Will Shafroth

The family home of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr in Atlanta, US, is to be opened to the public.

The National Park Foundation, the National Park Service and the King family have all agreed to open the house to allow members of the public to see where the 20th-century icon lived.

Bought by the nonprofit National Park Foundation from King's widow Coretta Scott King on 8 January, the house will become part of the Martin Luther King Jr National Historical Park. It was then immediately transferred to the National Park Service. The home King was raised in was also bought in Q4 2018 by the National Park organisations and will be



■ The house will become a national park property

added to tours based on the man's life and work along with the family home.

"African-American history is US history," said Will Shafroth, president of the National Park Foundation.

"The home of Dr King is a touchstone to better understand our shared heritage."

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/B7V9K\\_T](http://lei.sr/B7V9K_T)



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## INVESTMENTS

### Oklahoma City Zoo planning US\$70m renovation and new African area

Oklahoma City Zoo has plans for a new African enclosure that would see a dedicated area for giraffes, penguins and African wild dogs, with other renovations also planned.

The US\$70m masterplan, which runs through to 2028, also includes a three-acre expansion for the Sea Lion Cove, a new farm area and a conservation preserve.

The zoo plans to renovate the current pachyderm building into an educational space as part of the 11-acre US\$27m Africa concept, then move its three giraffes and grow the herd to around 15.

The Africa space would also house penguins and the African painted dogs the zoo has in captivity.



■ The zoo's giraffe habitat will be expanded as part of the works

"We want to keep people invested in our offering," said Oklahoma City Zoo CEO Dwight Lawson.

"New exhibits give us a chance to tell our story and tell what we know about wildlife and how to care for them."

MORE: [http://lei.sr/K7Y9g\\_T](http://lei.sr/K7Y9g_T)



**New exhibits give us a chance to tell our story and tell what we know about wildlife and how to care for them**

Dwight Lawson

## DEVELOPMENTS

### Construction underway on Columbus Zoo's new sea lion and seal habitat



**The animals are going to swim right over you and right under you**

Tom Staff

Construction has begun on a new sea lion and seal habitat at Columbus Zoo in Ohio, US, which will include an underwater viewing tunnel allowing visitors to walk next to the creatures as they swim around them.

The new area, called Adventure Cove, is expected to open to the public in Q2 2020 and will be open year-round.

The US\$40m (£35.3m, £30.3m) project will stretch to around 7 acres, with the main pool using around 370,000 gallons of water.

A new conservation building called the Life Support System building is included, alongside a new visitor area called the Animal Encounters Village.

"One of the things that's going to be super special, is that there's going to be an acrylic glass tube where you can walk through and have a 360-degree experience," said Columbus Zoo president and CEO Tom Staff. "The animals are going to swim right over you and right under you."

MORE: [http://lei.sr/q8Y8x\\_T](http://lei.sr/q8Y8x_T)

## INDUSTRY OPINION

### The importance of accreditation

Sabrina Brando, director of Animal Welfare, WAZA

Seeing animals up close can be a wonderful experience.

Different animals can be found in so many different facilities worldwide. However it's important to know and acknowledge that not all zoos and aquariums, as well as sanctuaries, rescue and wildlife centres are equal.

How do you know whether the zoo, aquarium, sanctuary, rescue or wildlife centre you visit is a good place for animals? How do you know whether the facility engages in other missions of modern professional facilities today, being conservation, education, research and engagement?

You can check whether a facility is accredited by a national or regional zoo and aquarium association, or sanctuary association. Leading zoo and aquarium associations, as well as sanctuary, rescue and wildlife centre associations have developed and implemented comprehensive accreditation programmes.

Accredited facilities are committed to caring for animals and safeguarding species from extinction. They engage millions through accredited conservation and education programmes. We invite you to see if a facility is accredited, and to encourage your friends and family to do the same.



## MUSEUMS

### Google launches human discovery platform

Google Arts and Culture has launched a massive online science museum platform with a number of museums, curators and archivists in 23 countries around the world.

Featuring more than 200,000 artefacts, *Once upon a Try* is an ambitious digital project built in collaboration with teams from institutions including NASA, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the Smithsonian Institute.

Over 100 museums are involved, with other collaborators including London's Science Museum Group, France's Académie des Sciences and Network of European Museum Organisations' (NEMO) Science Museum in Amsterdam.

The project aims to tell the story of scientific discovery via images, videos, and other content and is available online and on the Google Arts and Culture app on Android and iOS. Each exhibition is a celebration of some kind of invention or discovery in science.

NASA's Virtual Universe exhibition allows users to browse through a vast catalogue of hundreds of thousands of photos. Users can enter search terms to pinpoint specific things they may want to discover or organise the library by category to find things.

Once upon a Try is available now via the Google Arts and Culture website. **MORE:** [http://lei.sr/C3c6q\\_T](http://lei.sr/C3c6q_T)



■ The new platform is available via Google Arts and Culture



Over 100 museums are involved, with other collaborators including London's Science Museum Group, France's Académie des Sciences and Network of European Museum Organisations' (NEMO) Science Museum in Amsterdam

## ROBOTICS

### Disney shows off next-generation audio-animatronics



This standardised system for building humanoid robotic figures incorporates new electric functionality, replacing former hydraulic functions, producing extremely realistic, lifelike movement

Walt Disney Imagineering has revealed its A1000 advanced robotics, developed for the operators upcoming *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* attraction at Walt Disney World in Florida.

The 36-second video shows the team working on the robotic figure of Hondo Ohnaka, a pirate from *Star Wars: Rebels*, at the facility in Glendale, California where the developments have taken place.

"A1000 advanced robotics is the next evolution of the A100 Audio-Animatronic figures that were first introduced by Walt Disney Imagineering in the mid-1980s," said an Imagineering statement.

This standardised system for building humanoid robotic figures incorporates



■ The robots are the next evolution of Disney's originals

new electric functionality, replacing former hydraulic functions, producing extremely realistic, lifelike movement. Future figures in humanoid form can all use this system to ensure the same degree of realism and advanced levels of movement.

**MORE:** [http://lei.sr/M4G9v\\_T](http://lei.sr/M4G9v_T)



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MAKING BOWLING **AMAZING**

Xcaret is one of Mexico's most popular destinations. Its founder, Miguel Quintana Pali, speaks to *Attractions Management* managing editor Tom Anstey about its founding, the company's eco-friendly approach and its ambitious plans to expand beyond its existing offering

# MIGUEL QUINTANA PALI



Xcaret  
MEXICO

**X**caret is special for several reasons. Not only is it one of the most visited attractions in all of Mexico, but it's also a place which has become a pioneer for eco-tourism worldwide.

The Yucatan Peninsula was one of the first places where eco-tourism found its roots. In the 1970s, academic Claus-Dieter Hetzer organised eco-tours to the region for overseas visitors, which proved popular.

Two decades later in December 1990, Xcaret opened its doors, demonstrating the potential of a sustainable tourism project for a mass audience.

Conceptualised as an environmental attraction rather than a traditional tourist attraction, Xcaret – which is named after the Mayan word for a small inlet – was originally a Mayan port, with the park's location boasting as much history as it does natural beauty.

### Love at first sight

Surveying the land to build a luxury home several years earlier, furniture salesman and Mexican architect, Miguel Quintana Pali fell in love with the area, so much so, that he decided to develop what would become Xcaret on the 65-hectare plot.



"There are around 2,000 relics of Mayan culture around Xcaret," Pali tells *Attractions Management*. "As we discovered these relics and worked out where we could and couldn't build, I decided that one house was too little for the five hectares I'd purchased.

"With these continual discoveries, I said that this couldn't be a private investment, that it had to be something open to the public because of the site's archaeological significance. This had to be something which would be open to everybody."

Returning to the landowners – Oscar, Marcos and Carlos Constandse – on the hunt for more land, Pali explained his

The natural and cultural surroundings of the region has made Xcaret a unique attraction for visiting tourists

vision for Xcaret. Instead of selling him the land, the brothers were so excited by the concept, that they ended up becoming business partners on the venture.

"We started to build the park in the 1980s," says Pali. "We opened the first part – a small part of the park – in 1990 and it continued to grow from there."

## THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

The inspiration for Xcaret, the Polynesian Cultural Center is a living museum, which is one of the most frequently visited tourist destinations in Hawaii.

Owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the attraction features eight simulated tropical villages, with performers demonstrating various arts and crafts from throughout Polynesian culture.

When it opened in 1963, the centre was created as a way to offer employment to students at Brigham Young University–Hawaii and to preserve Polynesian culture. Since then it has welcomed more than 32 million visitors.

70 per cent of the PCC's approximately 1,300 employees are students at BYU. While the attraction is a for-profit commercial venture, a cut of its earnings are used to fund scholarship programmes at the university. During school terms, students work for 20 hours a week. In break periods, they can work up to 40 hours per week.

The popular attraction sits along the famous North Shore of Oahu

### Hawaiian influence

While offering its own unique experience, the concept for Xcaret takes inspiration from the Polynesian Cultural Centre – one of the most popular attractions in Hawaii.

"My mother is Hawaiian," says Pali. "When I was younger, every couple of years we would be taken to visit there, which is how I got to know the Centre.

"If you go back three decades, they were already receiving maybe 1,000 visitors a day. Mexico is a much larger country with a bigger culture offering. I saw an opportunity and the chance to create a park showcasing Mexico in a location already rich in history, local flora and fauna, and culture. It was the perfect melting pot to create a place to show the whole culture, history and attractions of our country. When I envisioned Xcaret, I saw it as an embassy for Mexico."

### Theme park meets eco-attraction

The concept for Xcaret is simple and works well thanks to its stunning location.

Rather than traditional rides, the nature park instead offers up its underground ▶



VISITOR SWELL

For the first time in its history, Xcaret expects to break the four million visitor mark in 2019 after falling just shy at 3.9 million last year. The majority of Xcaret's visitors come to see the main park, which welcomed 1.6 million visitors total in 2018. International tourists make up a big slice of visitors to the park – about 50 per cent – particularly visitors from North America, with 30 per cent of total visitors made up of people from the US and Canada. The remaining 20 per cent of visitors come primarily from South America and Europe.



**“It’s a real Mexican experience from the ground up. The difference between a regular theme park such as Universal Studios or Disney is that this is real history on a real, natural historical site”**



For almost 30 years, Pali has built one of the most sustainable large-scale tourist ventures in the world

► rivers, jungle trails and the vast Caribbean Sea, with exciting natural experiences built into those elements. Wildlife also plays an important role as well, with a coral reef aquarium, butterfly pavilion and tropical bird aviary among the offerings. Finally, Mexico’s culture is played out with daily shows, while the whole park is wrapped in Mexican tradition, from dress style to the brands of chocolate bar on sale.

“It’s a real Mexican experience from the ground up,” says Pali. “The difference between a regular theme park such as Universal Studios or Disney is that this is real history on a real, natural historical site. Those kind of parks are fantastic. They’re built to create fantasies. Xcaret was created to show you the real thing in its real environment.”

Pali’s architecture background has shaped Xcaret’s very foundations. With a clear vision in mind to put nature first however, it can often prove a challenge.

“We aim for a natural aesthetic,” he explains. “You don’t see our behind-the-scenes installations and any cables. Everything is hidden within the landscape. The land tells us where we can build and we respect that as much as we can.”

**The Xperience**

From Xcaret’s initial foundation in the late 1980s, several more parks would follow, with eight different experiences set up under the Xcaret Experiencias Group umbrella. A new adventure park is also set to open later this year.

“In terms of capacity, Xcaret is our main park and can fit in 12,000 people each day. Xel-Há is our second-largest and has a capacity for 6,000 and Xplore can fit 2,000,” says Pali.

**The natural order**

Finding a balance between nature and guests’ needs across Xcaret’s park portfolio is a constant challenge. Visitors, for example, might ask for a non-natural element to be added to the park. For Pali, it’s about introducing these things without compromising the park’s aesthetic or its eco-friendly philosophy.

“A lot of visitors had been asking us to introduce water slides to our parks. It presented a challenge because they’re very difficult to keep in with our natural look,” Pali explains.

“Our Xel-Há park is centred around a large inlet leading out to the Caribbean Sea. Historically it was a port, so we have a very tall lighthouse, which is more than 40m (131ft) high. We took its traditional spiral design and wrapped the slide all the way around in that style. The main purpose of that lighthouse was to see the panoramic view of the whole park but this solution, we felt, didn’t cross a line for us while satisfying the demand from our guests.”

Conservation is also at the heart of everything Xcaret does. In its history, which now spans nearly three decades, it’s seen more than 100,000 sea turtles raised and released into the ocean, with many now returning to Xcaret to breed. ►

## XCARET'S PARKS AND EXPERIENCES

■ **Xcaret:** The original and main park experience. Attractions at Xcaret include a river that goes through a Mayan village, a subterranean sluice and a beach offering a number of activities including Sea Trek and Snuba in the reefs.

Cultural attractions include a replica of a Mayan village with real artisans at work, a Mexican cemetery, a museum, an equestrian show, Mesoamerican ball game, an open theatre with performances of pre-Hispanic dances, Papantla flying men and the Gran Tlachco - a 6,000-capacity theatre. The Xcaret México Espectacular is the biggest show in the park. It lasts two hours and features more than 300 performers. Other facilities include a Temascal sweat lodge and spa, 11 restaurants and the adjacent all-inclusive resort hotel.

■ **Xel-Há:** The aquatic development is a natural aquarium inhabited by hundreds of different species, including tropical fish and flora. The park also features a turtle reserve, where research is constantly carried out to learn more about marine life and contribute with the ecological maintenance of the area.

■ **Xplor:** The first of Xcaret's adventure parks, Xplor sits in the heart of the jungle with a number of experiences such as zip-lining, amphibious vehicle excursions and cave exploration. At sunset, the experience at Xplor offers a series of high adrenaline, extreme night adventures, known as Xplor Fuego.

■ **Xichen:** Travel in a luxury bus to one of the seven wonders of the modern world: Chichén Itzá. The tour includes a visit to the colonial city of Valladolid as well as a visit to the Unesco World Heritage site, which dates back to 750 AD.

■ **Xenotes:** The Xenotes Tour takes guests into the heart of the jungle, where they encounter a number of experiences, including assisted rappel, zip-lines, kayaks and cenote swims, all in small groups with a personal guide to take them through the wild areas.

■ **Xoximilco:** The 20-person excursion sends visitors on Mexican Gondolas down a series of canals. Entertainment is provided through the evening, with live traditional music, Mexican cuisine and, for adults, tequila.

■ **Xenses:** Xcaret's newest park, Xenses offers 17 different activities that challenge the power of the senses and the mind.

■ **Xavage:** Set to open in April this year, Xavage will offer a high ropes course, kayaking, zip lines, off-road driving, white water rafting and a speedboat experience.



Xcaret offers more than more than 50 different natural and cultural activities across its ever-expanding attractions portfolio





► It's a similar programme for the endangered scarlet macaw, with nearly 1,000 raised in its aviary and many later released into the wild. This is coupled with Xcaret's efforts to maintain the natural environment around it, allowing its millions of visitors each year to witness the area's beauty without causing harm.

"Our rivers have natural water flowing from the underground, so you will never see still water," says Pali. "To protect the plant life, we have rope sidewalks, with everyone circulated around the parks on these, so you're never stepping on nature and you're never actually in the jungle."

### A place to stay

One of Xcaret's more recent developments is its all-new hotel – a five-star 900-suite behemoth sitting right on the Mexican coast line and surrounded by a wild jungle.

"When our new hotel was first conceived, the engineers made a plan from an office, almost never visiting the site. In their plan, they would have taken out all the trees, built the hotel and then planted the trees again," explains Pali.

"Using our development philosophy, we did it the other way around. We inspected the land and made a map with all the areas main trees. We worked out their size

Xcaret offers an 'All-Fun Inclusive' experience to its hotel guests



One of the experiences sees visitors descend to the inside of a cavern with an assisted rappel

and position, then worked around them so as not to hurt the environment in respect of our eco-friendly mission."

Opened in December 2017, the carefully designed, nature-centric destination, is split into five "casas", each with its own unique theme: adults only, luxury adult, family, luxury family and wellness.

Marketed as "All-Fun Inclusive", guests receive a full resort experience alongside complimentary access to Xcaret's eight nature parks and tours. Shuttle buses run from the lobby every half-hour, taking guests to as many parks per day as they wish. Gastronomy is also a key part of the hotel experience, with everything served as part of the all-inclusive menu in its 10 restaurants and eight bars based on traditional Mexican cuisine.

"We will take care of you for your whole stay – from the airport all the way to the parks and back," says Pali. "Every day, hotel guests can use a wrist band to visit any of our parks and take our tours to archaeological sites. We aim to take

charge of your holiday because we want you have the best vacation of your life."

### Forward thinking

In addition to its new Xavage park, recent announcements from the company include the expansion of an additional 12 hotels – the first of which broke ground in January – a convention centre, shopping plaza and a 12,000-seat stadium.

Worth an estimated US\$2bn, the 8-year plan will allow the operator to diversify its visitor portfolio.

There are also considerations to expand Xcaret outside of Mexico: "I'd like to replicate it in countries such as Columbia and Venezuela," says Pali. "It could be done, but you can't do it on just any piece of land. It has to be special, meaning it has to have a rich landscape with rivers, caves and lagoons and has to be a very natural, beautiful place.

"For Xcaret, 500 years ago it was a Mayan port. Back then, people from across Central America came to visit. This is a



## RIVIERA MAYA

A tourist hotspot in Mexico, the Riviera Maya sits south of Cancun along the Caribbean coastline of the state of Quintana Roo.

The area is famous for its large scale all-inclusive resort offerings. The Mexican government sees the region as an important development area and has a long-term plan over 20 years to establish a number of cities with populations of around 200,000 people.

Its geography was ideal for the founding of Xcaret. The area features a series of underground river networks, which have been discovered through sinkhole collapses (which are locally known as cenotes). According to the Quintana Roo Speleological Society, more than 700km (430mi) of flooded cave passages sit within the limits of the Riviera

Maya including the two longest underwater cave systems in the world.

Coastal and reef aquatic activities are the main attractions, with the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef the second longest in the world. Archaeology is also a big draw, with popular sites operated by the Instituto Nacional de Arqueología such as Tulum on the coast, and Chichen Itza and Coba located inland.

2018 saw a tourism surge for Riviera Maya, with 17 million people visiting – a 5.3 per cent increase from the previous year. In the summer months, the Riviera welcomes up to new 40,000 visitors every day. Nearly 50 per cent come from North America, with 40 per cent of those visitors coming from the US and 9 per cent from Canada.



Xcaret's crystal clear underground rivers are natural wonders visitors can enjoy

historic place with a natural backdrop. To make something similar for a new culture would be the main challenge."

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

"Right now, we're planning to develop new parks at our home site," he says. "We're also looking at expanding into Yucatan, which has a rich history, with colonial towns, churches, monasteries, cenotes and haciendas. Xcaret doesn't have a lot of these things, so it's something different we could offer."

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

### A round of applause

At this year's IAAPA show in Orlando, Xcaret was recognised as being among the world's elite attractions, picking up the prestigious Applause Award (see p56).

Joining a list most recently featuring Busch Gardens, Puy du Fou and Ocean Park, the biannual award honours a park whose management, operations and



The Applause Award recognises Xcaret as one of the world's best attractions

creative accomplishments have inspired the industry with foresight, originality and sound business development.

"90 per cent of the world's theme parks are represented by IAAPA, so it was an honour alone to be named one of three finalists," says Pali.

"To get this prize for doing what I love to do every day and to represent my country, made me feel very rewarded. It was something that I never expected."

The award comes at a choice moment, with Xcaret this year set to reach a major milestone, welcoming its 50 millionth guest since launch.

"I've never really thought about it in terms of the number of people," says Pali. "I want to show my whole country to the rest of the world."

"We still have a lot of things to do to grow. I'm 72 years old and my plan is to continue doing what I'm doing until God permits me and I have the health to do it. I plan to never retire and be working hopefully until 80 or 90 years old." ●

# PUSHING BOUNDARIES

## **2019 Ecsite Conference**

The European conference for  
science engagement

**Copenhagen, Denmark**

**6 - 8 June**



## Online registration 13 February - 21 May 2019

Main conference 6 - 8 June 2019

Pre-conference 4 - 5 June 2019

### Open to all professionals who engage audiences with science and technology

The Ecsite Conference offers an intense mix of intellectual stimulation, purposeful and creative sessions and inspiring human encounters.

An annual professional development opportunity: sharpen your critical mind, recharge your batteries, harvest contacts and tools, make business and let off steam on the dance floor.

### The Ecsite Conference celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> edition in 2019

We invite the science engagement community to build on three decades of science communication and look ahead, challenging the boundaries of our field and practices.

It is by pushing our own boundaries for science communication that we ourselves become inspired to walk down new and creative paths.

Experimentarium will host the 2019 Ecsite Conference, which will be held inside Experimentarium in the former Tuborg Brewery. Following a 3-year renovation, Experimentarium re-opened in January 2017 with 16 brand new exhibitions, all exploring new boundaries for science communication.

Discover the mix between old and new, unwind by the beautiful lakes, canals and sea around Copenhagen, glance at the historical architecture and enjoy Danish design. Experience Copenhagen as a smart city with its public transport, bicycle paths and public parks.

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

# THE ROAD AHEAD

**Attractions Management rounds up the biggest developments scheduled to open across the world in 2019**

**THEME PARKS**



## Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

**Opening: 21 June**

Disneyland, Anaheim, California, US and Disney's Hollywood Studios, Orlando, Florida, US

Coming first to Disneyland on 21 June 2019 and then to Disney's Hollywood Studios in the third quarter of the year, Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is an upcoming addition to Disney's US parks that's almost certain to be a game-changer when it comes to immersive theme park design.

Overseen by Disney Imagineering executive Scott Trowbridge, the new lands will "change the lens" on who is the

■ The Star Wars attractions will 'transport guests to a never-before-seen planet, a remote trading port and one of the last stops before Wild Space'



protagonist in the theme park experience, something Disney wants to apply to all of its projects going forward.

A focal point of the new Galaxy's Edge land will be Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run – a full-size version of the iconic spaceship, which will give visitors the opportunity to get behind the controls in one of three flight crew roles.

A second attraction – Rise of the Resistance – will be the largest, most immersive attraction in Disney's history, with visitors placed in a battle between the Resistance and the Imperials.

An immersive Star Wars hotel experience "unlike anything that exists today" is also in the works, though a timeline for its opening is yet to be announced.

## ZOOS



■ The new exhibit will house two giant pandas offered to Denmark by China

### Panda House at Copenhagen Zoo

Opening: April

Copenhagen, Denmark

World-renowned architect Bjarke Ingels is behind the yin-yang design of a new giant panda enclosure set to open at Copenhagen Zoo in the spring.

Located at the heart of the park, the enclosure will house two giant pandas and be have 360 degrees lookouts, making the exhibit a rotation point for the zoo.

A hybrid environment, the €20m (US\$22m) enclosure is split into two halves, one for the female and one for the male panda. Each section will feature a hilly terrain of Nordic plants, bamboo groves, and waterfalls.



## GALLERIES



■ The Pompidou branch will be established inside the new museum

### Centre Pompidou - West Bund Art Museum

Opening: Mid-2019

Shanghai, China

The West Bund Art Museum is a major new art gallery currently under development on the Shanghai Corniche – part of the city's Huangpu River which will eventually form a large culture district over 9sq km (3.5sq mi) of former industrial land.

Included in the development, France's iconic Centre Pompidou – which boasts the largest collection of modern and contemporary art in Europe – will take up a wing of the David Chipperfield-designed building, opening its first satellite site as it plans expansions into China, South Korea and Belgium.

More than 20 exhibitions and events a year will take place at the Centre Pompidou Shanghai, which will showcase contemporary Chinese art.

## VISITOR ATTRACTIONS



■ The attraction will sit at the heart of New York's iconic Times Square

### Lionsgate Entertainment City

Opening: 2019

Times Square, New York, US

Lionsgate is teaming with Parques Reunidos to launch its own branded attraction in the heart of New York City – the first of two such attractions set to open worldwide this year.

Called Lionsgate Entertainment City, the attraction will feature a number of the franchise's IPs, with each offering visitors a number of different experiences.

A themed dining experience based on *Mad Men* will give fans an opportunity to "step back in time and enjoy a night on the town" inspired by the show's 1960s décor. *The Hunger Games* will also be

included, with a flight simulator taking fans on a rescue mission through a number of key locations within the franchise. Based on *John Wick: Chapter Two*, a shooting ride will pit guests against some of John Wick's assailants. A theatre – which will host a variety of live action, 4D and VR experiences – is also planned.

The centre's attractions will be complemented by branded retailing and dining establishments, including Lionsgate Café, Peeta's Bakery and The Capitol Confectionery, along with the first-ever Lionsgate Studio Store. Rooms for private events and special programming are also proposed as part of the development.

Also coming in 2019, will be a Lionsgate-themed immersive experience in China by Thinkwell. Called Lionsgate Entertainment World, it's set to feature 30 attractions. ▶

## MUSEUMS



■ The museum's opening has been delayed multiple times

### Museum of Image and Sound

Opening: late 2019

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Long-delayed and long awaited, Rio's beachfront Museum of Image and Sound (MIS) appears finally to be opening the public in 2019.

Designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro the 50-year-old museum's new home is entering the final stages of its development.

Set over 9,800sq m (106,000sq ft), MIS overlooks the famous Copacabana Beach on Rio's seafront. When open, the museum will offer a "vertical boulevard", which leads up to eight floors of galleries telling the story of image and sound in Brazil.

Within MIS, space for permanent and temporary exhibitions has been allocated, with research facilities, educational spaces, a café, panoramic restaurant and an open-air 280-seat auditorium also planned as part of the development.

In addition to acting as a museum, the new building will also become a cultural centre for Rio, with MIS producing and promoting regular shows and events.

Repeated delays have extended development time on the project. Construction restarted in August last year. Under its new schedule, the building will be completed by March. Following that will be a six month window for implementation of the museum and its opening.

## SCIENCE CENTRES



■ A sculpture by artist Marc Quinn will welcome visitors to the new Medicine Galleries

### Medicine Galleries at the London Science Museum

Opening: Q4 2019

South Kensington, London

London's world-famous Science Museum is about to open the latest part of its multi-year expansion and refurbishment – the £24m (US\$31m) Medicine Galleries.

Based on the collections of Sir Henry Wellcome and the Science Museum,

the new addition will celebrate one of the world's largest and most significant medical collections. Made up of more than 2,500 medical artefacts and spanning more than 500 years of history, the galleries will enable visitors to discover how changes in medical research and practice have changed our lives.

Architects WilkinsonEyre are behind the 3,000sq m (32,300sq ft) space, with the bulk of funding coming from biomedical research charity Wellcome and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

## THEME PARKS, WATERPARKS, VISITOR ATTRACTIONS



■ The US\$5bn development will include among its offerings a Nickelodeon theme park

### American Dream Meadowlands

Opening: April 2019

East Rutherford, New Jersey, US

A waterpark, the first indoor snow park in North America, a giant wheel and the largest indoor theme park in the Western Hemisphere will be among the offerings on tap at the 3 million sq ft (279,000sq m) American Dream Meadowlands mega-development when it opens later this year.

The mall has been in the works more than a decade, with developer Triple Five taking over the US\$5bn project in 2011.

The development will have more space for entertainment than retail, with the 35,000sq m (370,000sq ft) Nickelodeon Universe theme park anchoring it.

Set to feature a number of iconic Nickelodeon brands such as *SpongeBob*

*SquarePants*, *Rugrats* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, the park will offer a selection of rides – including two record-breaking rollercoasters from manufacturer Gerstlauer – as well as live shows, retail, games, entertainment and food venues.

The waterpark, based on Dreamworks IPs, will cover 32,000sq m (350,000sq ft) and will be encased inside a large glass dome so it becomes a year-long prospect.

Outside, the American Dream Observation Wheel will stand 71m (235ft) tall, offering views of Manhattan and the nearby Met Life Stadium.

The snow park will climb 16 stories, offering an 800-foot-long (243m) slope, an ice climbing wall and a skating rink.

KidZania will be a part of the complex, with the city for kids continuing to open new branches worldwide. The mall will also feature two Merlin brands, with the operator bringing its *Sea Life* and *Legoland Discovery Centres* to the mega-complex.

## GALLERIES



### GES-2

Opening: Q4

Moscow, Russia

A historic power station in Moscow will bring a new kind of energy to the city later this year when it reopens as a venue for contemporary Russian arts and culture.

Architect Renzo Piano has been tasked with creating the new space, which is being built into the existing metal structure of the GES-2 power station originally constructed in 1907.

The 39,000sq m (420,000sq ft) plot in the Russian capital's Red October district will be split into three key areas – the



■ Renzo Piano has been commissioned to convert the power station into a culture venue

Welcoming Pole, containing a sculptural garden, a piazza, a restaurant and cafés; the Exhibitions Pole, hosting the indoor art galleries; and the Education Pole, containing classrooms, workshops and an artist residency block.

For the site's surrounding green space, new topography will be created on three sides of the main building, creating a raised natural amphitheatre. This will be used as a seating area for film screenings and events in the summer months.

## MUSEUMS



■ A new home is being developed for the €90m Essl Collection of contemporary art

### Albertina Künstlerhaus

Opening: Q4

Vienna, Austria

The historic Albertina Museum, one of Austria's leading art museums, has acquired a collection of more than 1,000 artworks valued at €90m (US\$103m) which it plans to house inside its new home for contemporary art opening in the Austrian capital of Vienna later this year.

Undergoing a €40m (US\$45.7m) renovation, the 19th-century Künstlerhaus will play host to the Essl Collection.

Assembled by Karlheinz Essl, who now owns 40 per cent of the works, the Essl family's share of the collection has been donated to the institution, while the remaining share – owned by industrialist Hans Peter Haselsteiner – will be loaned to the Albertina for the next 27 years. In addition, Haselsteiner's family foundation is covering the costs of the building's renovation, which will be completed in Q4.

## AQUARIUMS



■ Pacific Visions was designed by San Francisco-based firm EHDD

### Aquarium of the Pacific

Opening: 24 May

Long Beach, California, US

Inspired by the shape of a blue whale, the Aquarium of the Pacific is nearing completion of a US\$53m expansion set to open in May.

Covering 29,000sq ft (2,700sq m), the new wing of the aquarium will feature an immersive 4D theatre with 300 seats and an art gallery, as well as new marine life. Additionally, the expansion will also host a new art gallery and add 6,000sq ft (560sq m) of space for new animal exhibits.

Called Pacific Visions, the extension is made up of 800 glass panels which change colour as the sun and clouds move through the day. The new building is designed by San Francisco-based firm EHDD.

ZOOS



■ A new elephant habitat is among the plans for the expansion

**African Savanna expansion at Zoo Atlanta**

Opening: Q3

Where: Atlanta, Georgia

The US\$50m expansion of Zoo Atlanta will offer significantly expanded habitats for African elephants, giraffes, zebras, ostriches and warthogs when work is completed later this year.

The new elephant habitat will increase the zoo's capacity to house up to seven individual elephants and will also include a large pool, two waterfalls and an indoor elephant care centre. The former elephant habitat will be modified to introduce southern white rhinos to the zoo.

Work on the giraffe habitat will increase usable space and add an unraised walkway, meaning guests can better appreciate animals' height.

**Rulantica at Europa Park**

Opening: Q4

Where: Rust, Germany

Europa Park is adding a second gate, with the introduction of Rulantica – a €100m (US\$114.3m) waterpark development less than a mile from the popular theme park.

Following a Nordic theme, the 32,600sq m (351,000sq ft) indoor part of the waterpark will feature 25 different elements across eight areas, including 17 water slides supplied by ProSlide, a giant wave pool and a wild river attraction. A further 8,000sq m (86,000sq ft) will be dedicated to an outdoor area, while the expansion will also feature a bathhouse-themed family restaurant, a self-service restaurant, a café and multiple pool bars.

Targeting families, the resort will include a shuttle service, which will link Rulantica directly to Europa Park and its other hotels.

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS



■ Kind Heaven boasts to be a new medium for experiencing culture and adventure

**Kind Heaven**

Opening: Q3

Las Vegas, Nevada, US

A truly unique attraction, the US\$100m enigma that is Kind Heaven is set to open to the public during the Summer.

Imagined by Perry Farrell – best known as the frontman for the alternative rock band Jane's Addiction – Kind Heaven will be an "all senses communal experience", where guests will engage in the attraction with its sights, sounds, touch, tastes and smells. Touted as a new medium for experiencing culture and adventure, visitors will be transported "to a new world", where they will encounter the best of Southeast Asian culture, art, music, food and fashion.

The experience will follow the path of a 90-minute walkthrough show, which

is rooted in mythology. Once inside this immersive journey, visitors will be able to do things such as discover hidden alleyways, visit special locations and eat from Hong Kong-style street food vendors.

Kind Heaven will be made up of two different experiences – one for families in the day and one for adults only at night. During the daytime experience, visitors can learn about the traditions and cultures of Southeast Asia, while the night-time experience has "nightclubs and sake bombs" added into the mix.

The project is being developed in conjunction with Caesars Entertainment and Hollywood film producer Cary Granat, whose filmography includes hits such as *Babe*, *Good Will Hunting* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Ed Jones, who has created special effects for a litany of Hollywood blockbusters is also involved in Kind Heaven's development.

WATERPARKS



■ Rulantica will feature 17 water slides and an elaborate Nordic theme

Accompanied by a new 304-bedroom museum-themed hotel opening earlier in the year, Rulantica will be the single largest addition to Europa Park since its original foundation in 1975.

It's hoped the waterpark addition – which will be open all year – will attract 400,000 to 600,000 visitors annually, with four out of every five guests to visit both the theme park and the waterpark.



## THEME PARKS



■ Visitors can explore Sesame Street for the first time in Orlando

### Sesame Street at SeaWorld Orlando

**Opening: Q2**

Orlando, Florida, US

SeaWorld Orlando is set to welcome a new *Sesame Street* attraction in the second quarter of 2019.

Called *Sesame Street Land*, the attraction will feature a host of signature sights, including Mr Hooper's store, Big Bird's nest and the famous 123 stoop, while visitors will be able to interact with characters such as Big Bird, Elmo and Cookie Monster.

A number of rides will also feature, including the former *Shamu Express* family coaster which has been rethemed as *Super Grover's Box Car Derby*. The park will also introduce daily parades with characters from the show and dancers.

■ SeaWorld Orlando will have a daily parade that features Elmo, Big Bird and other characters from the iconic PBS series

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

**Puy du Fou España**

**Opening: 30 August**

Where: Toledo, Spain

Historical theme park Puy du Fou's first Spanish outlet has begun construction of its 3.3 million sq ft (300,000sq m) site in Toledo, ahead of its scheduled opening set to take place later this year.

Puy du Fou en Toledo will host the Great Night Show on its opening night. The show – one of four taking place in three themed areas – will centre on "energy and creativity" and use the knowledge of specialists in art and archaeology in Toledo and elsewhere in Spain.

"A Spanish Puy du Fou means a park with Spanish stories, rooted in heritage, made



from a Spanish point of view," said Puy du Fou chair, Nicolas de Villiers.

At the start of this year, Puy du Fou began its hunt for actors and will and will continue to do so until June.

In total, €242m (US\$276m) will be invested into the new park, with €183m (US\$208.5m) of that investment coming before the end of 2021.



■ Puy du Fou España will feature a bold programme of original show creations

MUSEUMS



■ A whole new cultural district is being created in the heart of the city

**Humboldt Forum**

**Opening: September**

Where: Berlin, Germany

Part of the reconstructed Berlin Palace, the Humboldt Forum is a major new museum and culture complex being developed at a cost of €595m (US\$678m).

Located on Museum Island, the Forum will house the collections of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and the Museum of Asian Art, with a large collection of non-European ethnological and Asian art, as well as permanent displays on the history of the city, spaces for temporary exhibitions and research laboratory run by Humboldt University.

The project, named after the brothers Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, aims to be a world centre for culture and has been likened to London's British Museum.

**National Museum of Qatar**

**Opening: 28 March**

Where: Doha, Qatar

The National Museum of Qatar is set to become a major culture hub not only for Qatar but for the entire Middle East region.

Designed Pritzker award-winning architect Jean Nouvel and constructed by ATAD Project Management, the new 40,000sq m (430,000sq ft) building will be located on Doha Bay and encircle the recently refurbished old palace of Qatar's founding father, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani.

The museum – which has been in development since 2015 and will be shaped like a desert rose – will feature

MUSEUMS



■ The museum broke ground in 2015

a 220-seat auditorium, research centre, food court, café, retail shops, restaurants, and multiple laboratories. The museum's mission will be to celebrate Qatar and its people, embodying the pride and traditions of Qataris while offering international visitors a dialogue about rapid change and modernisation.

SCIENCE CENTRES

**Cook Natural Science Museum**

**Opening: 7 June**

Where: Decatur, Alabama, US

The Cook Museum of Natural Science will move to its new US\$17m home this June, following the construction of a new 62,000sq ft (18,900sq m) facility.

Covering 57,000sq ft (5,295sq m), the interactive museum, designed by Huntsville-based Fuqua & Partners

Architects, will move from its current home to a new location in downtown Decatur.

At the new museum, there will be 11 interactive exhibit galleries, including a 15,000 gallon saltwater aquarium and an immersive cave, as well as three classrooms, a travelling exhibition gallery, a special event space, a retail store, restaurant and children's playing area.

Established in 1960, the museum originally occupied the grounds of Cook Pest Control, where it was strictly a by-appointment warehouse tour only. From its humble beginnings, the museum has grown to include collections of insects, mounted wildlife, rocks, minerals and coral.

## Statue of Liberty Museum

**Opening:** May

**Where:** New York, US

The US\$70m Statue of Liberty Museum, designed to celebrate its iconic namesake, will transform Liberty Island into a full-fledged visitor attraction for the first time.

Designed by architecture practice FXFOWLE, the project is a key part of the island's beautification plan, with a 26,000sq ft (2,400sq m) rooftop garden created as a space to observe and reflect.

Design of the museum's interior galleries is being overseen by ESI Design. A 19-foot (5.8 metre) torch formerly a part of the statue will become the centrepiece of the main space – the Inspiration Gallery.



■ The museum has been designed so as not to compete with the statue itself

## WATERPARKS



■ The circular building's ribbon-like exterior is designed to reflect the city's weaving past

## The Wave

**Opening:** Q2

**Where:** Coventry, UK

One of the UK's largest indoor waterparks is coming to Coventry, with the £37m (US\$47.6m) attraction 'The Wave' to open in the second quarter of 2019.

Architects FaulknerBrowns are behind the design of the former Spire House site in the city centre. The circular building's ribbon-like exterior, designed to reflect the city's weaving past will be dramatically lit at

night and is located in a central location on the site of Spire and Christchurch House.

Water Technology Inc (WTI) is handling the waterpark's design, which will include a wave pool, lazy river, children's splash pad, children's play structure and nine water slides. The Wave will also include a day spa, 25m swimming pool, a gym, squash courts and a dance studio.

The development is part of an initiative to make Coventry a 'top 10 city' in the UK again, revamping the town centre with offerings outside of retail. The waterpark is expected to welcome up to 1.3 million visitors each year.

## MUSEUMS



■ The hall will be home to a T-Rex

## Fossil Hall at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

**Opening:** 8 June

**Where:** Washington DC, US

Closed for a US\$129m renovation in 2014, the Fossil Hall at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History reopens this June.

The project has returned the museum's wing, which first opened in 1910, to its original architectural majesty. About the restoration work, the hall's high ceilings, skylights and ornate mouldings that had all been hidden have been restored.

The hall's main exhibition will feature dinosaurs, plants and insects. Some of the artefacts have never been displayed. Its mission with the exhibition is to tell the story of life on Earth. A number of interactive displays will also provide visual scientific learning.

Tigris will be Florida's tallest launch coaster when it opens later this year

New exciting and innovative rides are coming in 2019.  
We look at a few of the hottest openings set for the year ahead

# HOT WHEELS

## TIGRIS

### Busch Gardens Tampa Premier Rides

Busch Gardens will debut the tallest launch coaster in Florida later this year, with Tigris – a ride designed to mimic the agility of a tiger – set to open in the Spring.

Covering 1,800ft (548m), the triple-launch steel coaster is based on Premier Rides' Sky Rocket II model.

Reaching speeds of up to 60mph (97kmph), the ride will start with a 150ft (45.7m) skyward surge and an inverted heartline roll, before running through a series of looping twists, with the ride featuring forward and backward motions.

Tigris is being constructed in the Stanleyville area of the theme park adjacent to Jungala, which is home to its endangered Bengal tigers.

The ride – similar to parent company SeaWorld Entertainment's Mako coaster, which opened in 2016 – will have a conservation element, with its queue containing educational material about the plight of wild tigers and the action conservationists are taking against it. Additionally, 5 per cent of the sales price of merchandise bought in the Tigris gift shop will be donated to the SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund's actions to protect tigers and their natural habitat.

"This ride is unlike anything we have in our rollercoaster collection," said Stewart Clark, president and general manager of Busch Gardens Tampa Bay. "Tigris is a testament to our continuing investment in the park, and to bringing new and innovative experiences to our guests."

OPENING  
Q2 2019



## HAGRID'S MAGICAL CREATURES MOTORBIKE ADVENTURE

### Islands of Adventure

Intamin

Described as one of the most highly-themed coaster experiences ever created by Universal, Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure – an LSM Launch steel coaster is set to open later in 2019 in the Hogmeade area of Islands of Adventure.

Replacing the Dragon Challenge duelling coasters, few details have been released about the new attraction, except that visitors will “fly with Hagrid on a

thrilling roller coaster ride that plunges into the path of some of the wizarding world's rarest magical creatures”. Universal also promised that the new coaster will “redefine the category and transport you to thrilling places through an immersive journey”. Universal has collaborated with Warner Bros on the project, as well as the production team from the *Harry Potter* films.

OPENING  
2019



## MICKEY & MINNIE'S RUNAWAY RAILWAY

### Disney's Hollywood Studios

Walt Disney Imagineering

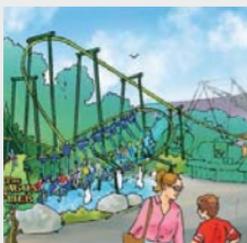
Disney's iconic mascot – Mickey Mouse – will get his first ever Disney ride, when Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway comes to Hollywood Studios, replacing the existing Great Movie Ride, which closed to the public in August last year.



The Mickey ride will create “2.5D” effects

Based on Mickey Shorts seen on the Disney Channel, the ride will feature “surprising twists and turns, dazzling visual effects and mind-boggling transformations that happen before your very eyes. Starting with the premiere of a new Mickey Mouse cartoon, the ride will see Minnie and Mickey prepare for a picnic outing and encounter Goofy conducting a train. Riders will “pass through” a simulated movie screen, where they will enter the cartoon on board Goofy's train. Disney says the ride will “turn the flat world of a colourful cartoon short into a dimensional display of amazingness.”

OPENING  
Q4 2019



Dragonflyer will anchor the new Wildwood Grove development

OPENING  
Q2 2019

## DRAGONFLIER

### Dollywood

Vekoma

The US\$37m expansion for Dollywood's Dollywood theme park in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, has a family-friendly suspended steel coaster at its heart.

Called Dragonflyer, the ride will be part of for Wildwood Grove, which is set for the Spring of 2019.

Replicating the flight of a dragonfly, the new rollercoaster will reach heights of 63.3ft (19.3m) and speeds of up to 75kmph (46.6mph).

Dragonflyer will be joined by seven other attractions, including the Treetop Tower, Black Bear Trail, Mad Mocking Bird flying carousel, Sycamore Swing swinging ship and the Frogs and Fireflies carousel. The development represents the largest expansion in Dollywood's history.

## MEOW WOLF'S KALEIDOSCOPE

### Elitch Gardens

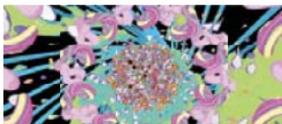
Meow Wolf

A first in theme park design, creative collective Meow Wolf has partnered with theme park Elitch Gardens in Denver, Colorado, to present a dark ride that doubles as a work of art.

Called Kaleidoscope, the “artist-driven” dark ride will take visitors on a “densely immersive and fully interactive experience”.

Using elements including motion, deep sound and wild colours, the ride will be a “multimedia piece of contemporary art,” says Meow Wolf, with the ride acting as a “prequel experience” to the collective's blockbuster Denver exhibit, coming in 2020.

“Meow Wolf artists love amusement park rides,” says Meow Wolf CEO Vince Kadlubek. “They are works of art with architecture, pacing, sensation, colour, theme and more. To create a dark ride has been a true dream of ours.”



Art collective Meow Wolf is creating the ride

OPENING  
APRIL 2019

## JURASSIC WORLD

### Universal Studios Hollywood

Vekoma

Universal Studios Hollywood's iconic *Jurassic Park* attraction is getting a redesign, with the attraction reopening in 2019 with an all-new *Jurassic World* theme.

Closed on 3 September 2018, the park's popular water ride – inspired by the original 1993 *Jurassic Park* movie – is being rethemed to reflect the newer *Jurassic World* set of films.

The ride's basic layout will remain the same. The new version, however, will include all new audio-animatronics and special effects, including a number of new dinosaurs such as the Indominus Rex, which is expected to play into the final scene of the ride before its 85ft (26m), 50mph (80kmph) drop.

"With the introduction of never-before-seen dinosaurs, enhanced storytelling,

OPENING  
2019



The existing Jurassic World ride is getting a modern makeover

lush scenic design, an entirely new colour scheme, and uncompromised state-of-the-art technology, the ride will capture elements never experienced within a theme park," said a Universal statement.

The original ride opened in June 1996 and was manufactured by Vekoma.

Following its success, duplicates of the ride were built at Universal's Islands of Adventure and Universal Studios Japan.

OPENING  
Q3 2019



The ride is played out as a car race

## WEST COAST RACERS

### Six Flags Magic Mountain

Premier Rides

An upcoming duelling steel coaster, Six Flags Magic Mountain is introducing the world's first racing double launch coaster this summer.

Working in collaboration with the West Coast Customs – a popular vehicle repair shop focusing on the customisation of vehicles and made famous with MTV's *Pimp My Ride* – the Premier Rides-manufactured coaster will be part of the new Cyclone Bay.

The ride experience will feature two side-by-side tracks with four high-speed launches. Riders will complete two laps, which will include an immersive real-time pit stop.



The double launch coaster will be the first of its kind at Carowinds

## COPPERHEAD STRIKE

### Carowinds

Mack Rides

Under construction at Carowinds in Charlotte, North Carolina, US, Copperhead Strike is a double launched roller coaster set to debut as part of the theme park's new Blue Ridge Junction area.

Created by Mack, the ride will go from 0 to 68kmph (42mph) in just 2.5 seconds, reaching heights of 82ft (25m) with five

inversions including two vertical loops. The ride will feature three 16-passenger trains modelled after 1930s coupes.

The new area of the park represents Carowinds' largest ever investment. It will also include the new Mountain Gliders spinning attraction, as well as a new restaurant – Blue Ridge Country Kitchen.

OPENING  
23 MARCH  
2019



## YUKON STRIKER

Canada's Wonderland

Bolliger & Mabillard

Opening soon at Canada's Wonderland in Onatrio, Yukon Striker is a record-breaking steel coaster that will hold records for world's tallest, longest and fastest dive coaster. It will also hold the record for most inversions on a dive coaster (with four) and the longest dive coaster drop at 75m (245 ft). With a 90-degree drop, it will also become the steepest rollercoaster in Canada.

Created by B&M, the ride will become the third-tallest coaster in Canada upon its completion. Reaching speeds of up to 130kmph (80mph), Yukon Striker will become the second-fastest rollercoaster in the country. The ride's launch will coincide with the official opening of Frontier Canada – a new gold rush-themed area at Canada's Wonderland.

Originally conceived of for the park's opening in 1981 but never built, Frontier Canada will include two new rides – a pendulum swing and family ride – as well as its existing Mighty Canadian Minebuster, Flying Canoes, Vortex, Timberwolf Falls and White Water Canyon.

OPENING  
APRIL 2019

The launch of Yukon Striker coincides with the official opening of Frontier Canada



## ANT-MAN AND THE WASP: NANO BATTLE!

Hong Kong Disneyland

Walt Disney Imagineering

OPENING  
31 MARCH  
2019

The latest Marvel addition to Disney's parks, Ant-Man and The Wasp: Nano Battle! is an upcoming accelerated shooting dark ride set for the operator's Hong Kong theme park.

Replacing the existing Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters dark ride, which uses an Omnimover system manufactured by Sarsel Technologies, the new attraction will use the same infrastructure and ride system, with a retheming to the IP's latest film *Ant-Man and the Wasp*.

The ride's story starts with a visit to the S.H.I.E.L.D. Science and Technology Pavilion – a newly opened facility at Stark Expo in the park's Tomorrowland area. Set up to show the organisation's new



A number of new Marvel attractions are also set for Disney's parks worldwide

technologies, the visit is soon interrupted by Hydra, who attempt to steal a reactor from the top of Stark Tower in Hong Kong. Ant-Man and the Wasp call for help with the invading forces, with visitors using an "EMP Blaster" to disable a swarm of robots.

The opening is part of a larger expansion of Hong Kong Disneyland, which

is undergoing a major 6-year expansion at a cost of HK\$10.9bn (US\$1.4bn).

Working alongside the Hong Kong government, the proposed expansion includes a *Frozen*-themed area, a Marvel-themed land, a redesigned Sleeping Beauty Castle, multiple attractions, and new live entertainment.



# IAAPA ATTRACTIONS EXPO 100

More than 41,000 buyers, suppliers and representatives of the attractions sector from more than 100 countries came together in Orlando, Florida, for the biggest attractions expo in IAAPA's history. *Attractions Management* was in attendance.



Showing more than 1,100 exhibiting companies, the trade show floor for this year's IAAPA Attractions Expo was the largest in its history, with more than 55,000sq m (592,000sq ft) of exhibition space. For the first time in Expo history, the show floor extended beyond the walls of the convention centre into outdoor structures created just for the event. Dubbed the "Exploration Station", the new area was dedicated to more than 140 companies exhibiting at IAAPA for the first time.

Education sessions played a big part once again at this year's Expo, with presentations by leading operators on topics including industry trends, new technology, marketing and more.

#### Defy definition

Bob Chapek, chair of Parks, Experiences and Products at Disney, delivered this year's keynote speech.



Buyers from more than 100 countries came to the Orlando show

Speaking during the GM and Owners' Breakfast, Chapek offered personal insight into his more than 25 years of leadership at the global entertainment giant: "When Disney opened its first park in 1955, it set a new standard. Since that day we've invented and reinvented nearly every aspect of this industry, setting new standards along the way."

Chapek spoke about Disney's upcoming Star Wars lands, saying the anticipated new additions will "defy definition".



Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2018, IAAPA shattered its own attendance record, with more than 41,000 people converging on the Orlando for the annual Expo



More than 1,800 people attended IAAPA's Kickoff Event

He also revealed for the first time details about the upcoming *Guardians of the Galaxy* rollercoaster ride at Epcot.

"This will be a storytelling coaster," said Chapek. "Each individual cab will be programmed to direct your eye to the story happening around you. You'll be fully immersed from the minute you launch."

### Celebrating a century

IAAPA celebrated its 100th year in style, as Universal Studios Florida hosted a

special event on 15 November. Open only to IAAPA attendees, the week's major networking session featured a special music set performed by Canadian rock band 'The Barenaked Ladies'.

"IAAPA's mission is to connect attractions professionals with each other and with new and innovative ideas," said IAAPA's new president and CEO, Hal McEvoy. "All that and much more happened in Orlando. It was an incredible week for us." ●

## IAAPA Attractions Expo by the Numbers

- 1,151 companies displayed innovative new products and services on 600,375sq ft (55,776sq m) of trade show floor space
- 26,000 qualified buyers attended the show
- 15,128 people participated in 149 education experiences which included multiple-day institutes and symposia, behind-the-scenes EDUTours at area attractions, panel and roundtable discussions, and constituency lunches
- More than 3,600 people attended IAAPA Celebrates at Universal Studios Florida
- Expo participants raised US\$120,000 for Give Kids The World Village through a golf tournament, motorcycle ride, fun run and walk, individual and corporate donations, and a hole-in-one challenge



IAAPA's awards programme recognises individuals and companies from across the globe who stand out as leaders

# AWARDS SEASON

Operators, individuals and attractions across the industry were recognised for excellence, with prestigious awards handed out during the IAAPA Attractions Expo.

## Applause Award

During the event's opening ceremony, Mexican cultural theme park Xcaret picked up the 2018 Applause Award (see p34).

Joining a prestigious list most recently featuring the likes of Busch Gardens, Puy du Fou and Ocean Park, the biannual award honours an attraction whose management, operations and creative accomplishments have inspired the industry with foresight, originality and sound business development.

"With an original and creative vision, Xcaret has created one of the most unique and authentic park destinations in the world," said Andreas Andersen, president and CEO of Liseberg and chair of the Applause Award Board of Governors.

## Service Awards

During the kick off event, four men were honoured with IAAPA's Service Award, which recognises outstanding contributions to the global attractions industry.

Julio Vanegas, founder and general manager of Carruseles in Bogotá, Colombia, was awarded for his 25 years of service to IAAPA and the wider attractions industry.

Jim Futrell, director at the National Amusement Park Historical Association, was presented with a Service Award in recognition of his work to foster the spirit of goodwill, professionalism, and higher levels of performance within the industry.

The Meritorious Service Award went to Robert Williams, general manager of Calaway Park in Calgary, Canada. The award recognises a member individual's service to advancing IAAPA's mission by promoting safe operations, global development, professional growth, and the commercial success of the amusement parks and attractions industry, something Williams has done for more than 25 years.

Finally, Al Weber Jr, who was set to lead IAAPA as its chair in 2019 before his death in 2016, was recognised as a visionary in the global attractions industry, being honoured with the IAAPA Board of Directors Special Service Award.



Michael Mercadante and Jennie Nevine at the Thea Award announcements

## TEA Thea Awards

The Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) announced the winners of its annual Thea awards – to be presented later this year – during the IAAPA show.

Dollywood took home the Thea Classic Award, with the prestigious Buzz Price Thea



IAAPA recognized the 2018 IAAPA Service Award winners during the annual GM and Owners' Breakfast, honouring individuals for their outstanding contributions to the global attractions industry



Hersheypark's winter spectacle 'The Enchanted Journey' picked up a Brass Ring Award for Most Creative Christmas Show

Lifetime Award going to Mark Woodbury, president of Universal Creative and vice chair of Universal Parks and Resorts. The Bjørk Ingels-designed Lego House in Billund, Denmark, picked up the award for best Brand Centre, while Universal's Volcano Bay in Orlando, Florida, was named best Water Theme Park.

At Six Flags Magic Mountain, Justice League: Battle for Metropolis was named best attraction, with Fantawild in Xiamen, China, chosen as the best theme park.

### Brass Ring Awards

The annual Brass Ring Awards were also handed out at the expo, with a number of companies recognised for their achievements in excellence across different parts of the industry.

At Hersheypark, The Enchanted Journey was named the Most Creative Christmas Show, while the best at Halloween went to Hell's Grand Finale at Ocean Park.

SeaWorld San Diego picked up multiple Brass Ring Awards, with the Sesame Street Party Parade winning the Best Atmosphere/Street Show Performance/Act category; its Pet's Rule event named Most Creative Show Featuring Animals, and Cirque Electrique awarded the title of Most Creative Sports/Stunt Show. ●



The Brass Ring awards mark achievements of excellence throughout the attractions industry

## Grabbing the Brass Ring

The IAAPA Brass Ring Awards are among the most prestigious professional honours awarded to companies. Among the winners of the 2018 IAAPA Brass Rings are:

### Food and Beverage Excellence

- **Best New Menu Item:** (Annual Attendance Less than 1 Million)  
"Pooopies and Poopcakes," Skånes Djurpark, Sweden
- **Best New Menu Item:** (Annual Attendance More than 1 Million)  
"Chicken Bacon Ranch Tater Bowl," Palace Entertainment, Newport Beach, California, US

### Excellence in Marketing

- **Best Digital Marketing Campaign:**  
"The Poopie Movie," Skånes Djurpark, Sweden
- **Best Public Relations Campaign:** "Launch of the Haunted Mine Drop," Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, Glenwood Springs, Colorado, US

### Best new product exhibitor awards

- **Major Ride/Attraction – Class A:** (Product cost of US\$3 million or more)  
SlideWheel, wiegand.maelzer GmbH
- **Kiddie Ride/Attraction – Class A:** (Standard Kiddie Ride/Attraction)  
Oscar's Wacky Taxi, The Gravity Group
- **Water Park Ride/Attraction – Class A:** (Product cost of US\$2 million or more):  
FusionFortress 17, WhiteWater West
- **Best New Product Concept Award:** (Major Ride Attraction) Stormforce 20, Ride Engineers Switzerland
- **Best New Product Concept Award:** (Other Products/Services) Diving Theatre, VR Coaster GmbH & Co.KG
- **Best New Product Concept Award:** (Attraction) Dynamic Duel Power Coaster, Dynamic Attractions

### Human Resources Excellence

- **Best Employee Engagement Initiative:** (Annual Attendance Less than 1 Million)  
Great Wolf Lodge - Niagara Falls, Canada
- **Best Employee Engagement Initiative:** (Annual Attendance More than 1 Million)  
"Dolphin Way at Work," Grupo Dolphin Discovery, Mexico

### Live Entertainment Excellence

- **Best Atmosphere/Street Show Performance/Act:**  
"Sesame Street Party Parade," SeaWorld San Diego, San Diego, California, US
- **Most Creative Christmas Show:**  
"The Enchanted Journey," Hersheypark, Hershey, Pennsylvania, US
- **Most Creative Halloween Haunt, Show, or Experience:**  
"Hell's Grand Finale," Ocean Park Corporation, Hong Kong, China
- **Most Creative Show Featuring Animals:**  
"Pets Rule," SeaWorld San Diego, San Diego, California, US
- **Most Creative Sports/Stunt Show:**  
"Cirque Electrique," SeaWorld San Diego, San Diego, California, US



Zoomars' Gillie Guinea Pig Plush picked up a Brass Ring award for merchandise

# WOMEN OF DISNEY

Some of Disney's most talented female leaders share their stories about breaking into the industry, leading and inspiring teams, and creating new and innovative experiences that immerse guests in stories they love

**H**osted by Walt Disney World advisor Marilyn West and moderated by Kathy Mangum, senior vice president, Walt Disney World Portfolio

Executive at Imagineering, a panel made up of the top women of Disney's parks featured:

- **Bettina Buckley**, vice president, Disney Parks Live Entertainment, Walt Disney World Resort
- **Debbie Petersen**, vice president, Creative Design and Development, Walt Disney Imagineering - Florida
- **Melissa Valiquette**, vice president, Epcot, Walt Disney World Resort
- **Tracey Powell**, vice president, Revenue Management, Walt Disney World
- **Nancy Seruto**, vice president, Shanghai Disney Resort Executive Producer, Walt Disney Imagineering
- **Rachel Quinn**, general manager, Magic Kingdom Entertainment, Walt Disney World Resort



Introducing the panel, Mangum, who spent four decades at Disney, revealed her plans to retire at the end of 2018.

"I've seen Orlando and Imagineering change," she said. "With Disney, internally I've seen it change with more and more women in roles of leadership and responsibility.

"We've brought to you a powerful and multi-faceted group of women throughout Disney. They're here to tell their stories, where they get their inspiration from and the challenges they've faced."



Kathy Mangum (left) moderated the panel, while Marilyn West (right) played host



## Climbing the ladder

**Bettina Buckley** was the first member of the panel introduced. She shared her story of how she got into Disney, rising through the ranks to the position she currently holds today: "My father died when I was young and my mother decided to move us to Orlando, where she started a career at Disney Entertainment. That became my path.

"Over the years, I was part of the live performing side of things, then I transitioned to a technician, and then became a senior producer. It's a perfect example of the career path a company like Disney provides."



■ Bettina Buckley



Disney's women have shaped the identity of each and every one of its theme parks and other attractions

## Rolling the dice

**Tracey Powell's** journey differed from many of her colleagues on stage. She built a career outside of Disney, becoming an executive director at Carnival Cruise Lines. Seeking opportunities in Florida, Powell took the brave step of going back down the corporate ladder in order to join Disney – a gamble that would pay off.

"When I decided I wanted to move to Florida, there was no other place for me than Disney," she explained. "I was an executive at Carnival but knew what I wanted. I took a step backwards to come in as a senior manager. Within two years, I was an executive again."

Asked about the most effective leadership skills, Powell said the best way to know how to handle your employees and guests, is to walk a mile in their shoes.



Tracey Powell

"I had the opportunity to lead 10,000 cast members and I had to learn what it meant to be frontline and what that meant for the guest experience," she said. "I became a housekeeper and a greeter so I could learn what it meant to be day-in and day-out with our guests."

## Freethinking

**Debbie Petersen's** grandmother played a big part in her life, encouraging her to become an "independent thinker" and inspiring her love for Disney.

"She would take clippings from the newspaper to show me Magic Kingdom as it was built," Petersen recalled. "I still remember the day I got the clipping that showed the castle. I was so excited and then, in 1972, we made our first visit."

Petersen, who has been a part of Disney for 41 years, joined the company in 1977, taking a position selling ice



Debbie Petersen

cream. From there she would climb the ranks, joining Imagineering in 1987 and soon after becoming vice president of creative design and development.

Speaking on her role in Imagineering, Petersen described the environment as "inspiring", with that inspirational feeling driving Disney's Imagineers to create, with a particular focus on inclusion.

"Inspiration can even be found when you're in the kitchen toasting a bagel," she said. "Our company's dedication to diversity inspires me. With the stories we tell, we want our guests to be able to see themselves in, those stories."





Shanghai Disneyland  
is the first Disney park  
resort in mainland China

## Shanghai delights

For **Nancy Seruto**, in 2011 she was given a choice – continue to run the business she had built from the ground up or take the opportunity to join Bob Weiss on the Disney Shanghai project.

Seruto would pick Disney, joining Imagineering as an executive producer for Treasure Cove at Shanghai Disney – the first pirate-themed land in a Disney park. In partnership with Luc Mayrand, she led a team of more than 100 Imagineers on the land's creative development, along with one of the most complex attraction designs ever attempted: Pirates of the Caribbean – Battle for Sunken Treasure.

"When I was asked to come on board, I asked myself, if I hang on to



■ Nancy Seruto

the thing I'm comfortable with, what am I going to miss out on? I decided to join Disney and I loved every minute. But it was a huge leap."

## World travelled

Hailing from a small mining town in the north of England, **Rachel Quinn** spent 10 years as a dancer performing on cruise ships. From there, Quinn moved into a leadership role, later joining the



■ Rachel Quinn

Disney Cruise Line in 1998 and working her way to the position of cruise director. After nearly three decades of travelling the world, she became general manager at Animal Kingdom and then Magic Kingdom. Reflecting on her career, Quinn believes it was her time at sea that taught her to put happiness at the heart of her work.

"I don't ever want to lose sight of the importance of happiness," she said.

"Somewhere you might not usually find happiness, for example, is with safety training. At Magic Kingdom, we do a biannual safety town hall, which is fully produced with themes and actors. It's all about engagement. If you can engage your cast and connect with them, they take in information better. It's a different way to engage them in safety. Year after year as we've done this, injuries have gone down, so it works."

## Styles clash

**Melissa Vallquette** was the final member of the panel. Now vice president of Epcot, she revealed her inspiration came from another female leader at Disney.

"It's not unusual for me to be the only woman in the room," she said. "The other three parks are run by three men and for many years, it was the case that I was the only woman."

"There's a different dynamic between men and women, and I found myself getting feedback every year, with people telling me things like 'you need to have more command' or 'I'd like to see you have a little more physical presence'. It felt to me like I was being coached to be a little more masculine.

"At the same time I was receiving that feedback, Meg Crofton was promoted to president at Disney World, which was career-changing.

"Her style of leadership was very different. I saw with Meg was that there isn't just one successful style. You didn't have to have command through a loud voice and a large physical presence, you could also be a gentle influencer. Even in her gentle, quieter style, there was no question when you were in the room with her, that she was in charge. Everyone was listening to every word she said and she was making a change and making a difference. Watching her, I changed my approach.

"If you don't see somebody at the top who looks like you or acts like you, that's ok. You can be the first one to do it that way."



■ Melissa Vallquette



WINDSTARZ

# MUST HAVE RIDEZ

With a colorful and attractive design the original WindstarZ interactivity allows riders to be captains of their own experience by controlling the movement of the sail on their own "hang glider"... another Zamperla signature ride ready to be a best seller!

# CHARMING THE WORLD

In a world increasingly divided by rising nationalism, how do you charm someone from culture that's not your own? Tom Mehrmann and Roland Mack discussed this issue for the IAAPA Legends panel

**W**hen opening a new venture overseas in a culture you're not familiar with, or when you have to interpret someone else's culture and invite them to experience it in your park, what works and what doesn't? These were the questions posed by Bob Rogers, founder and chief creative officer of experience design firm BRC Imagination Arts, who once again hosted the Legends panel at the IAAPA Expo in Orlando.

For the latest edition, Rogers was joined by panel members Tom Mehrmann, former Ocean Park CEO and current president and general manager of the under-development Universal Beijing, as well as Europa Park founder Roland Mack.



Roland Mack and Tom Mehrmann took part in the popular panel

## Culture ambassadors

Mack, a member of the IAAPA Hall of Fame, is currently leading his family's business, which was started 240 years ago as a manufacturer of stagecoach wagons. In the early 1900s Mack started to manufacture rides. Roland and his brother Jürgen are the

seventh generation of Macks to work in the industry. In 1977 they formed Europa Park, which outside of Disney is Europe's most visited theme park.

Introducing Mack, Rogers called Europa Park a "vibrant, shiny mosaic of European culture, celebrating unity and diversity". He then asked Mack the secret to Europa Park's success, which he believed was down to the European culture of Europa Park versus the "Americanised" Disney.

"We found with our clientele that European visitors love other European cultures," said Mack. "If our visitors are telling us that Europa Park is more European, then we're getting better feedback. It's something completely different to Disney, which is an Americanised product."

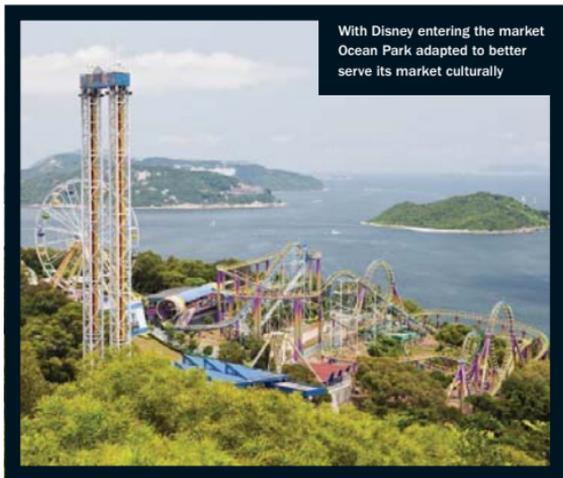
So how do you capture this essence of Europe without falling into the trap of stereotyping a culture – something that could potentially offend visitors?

"For us, we try recreating that country's atmosphere," said Mack. "We use typical elements such as architectural styles and then create our own world around that. We do it with costumes, music and the food of the countries. When we create that atmosphere, our visitors enjoy it."

## Changing perspectives

Tom Mehrmann, who has held senior roles across the attractions industry, is now the president and general manager of the upcoming US\$7.4bn Universal Beijing theme park and resort, which is due to open in 2020 as Universal's third park in Asia.

Prior to joining Universal, Mehrmann spent 13 years as CEO of Hong Kong's Ocean Park and, in a feat that no one thought was possible, he managed to outmanoeuvre Disney's new Hong Kong theme park, with his smaller attraction beating its attendance for more than a





Both Ocean Park and Europa Park offer culturally relevant content, which have helped to boost attendance at both attractions

When Disney came to Hong Kong, I knew the playbook and I knew what we, as a smaller park, were going to do

decade. So how did he achieve this? According to Merhmann, it was his experience when leading Warner Bros World in Madrid that taught him the lessons he needed to keep Ocean Park competitive.

"When we were building Warner Bros, there was a little park down the street – Parque de Atracciones," he explained.

"At the time, we disregarded them as not being that great, that we could come in as a giant with a beautiful product and strong IPs. They did some really unique things. They brought in Real Madrid to be icons of the park. They were culturally relevant and tapped into the collective memory. They took advantage of their generational values and we got beat up.

"When Disney came to Hong Kong, I knew the playbook and I knew what we, as a smaller park, were going to do."

Using culture, Merhmann built on the park's existing ties, creating a connection with visitors that saw attendance soar.

"I wanted to focus on being culturally relevant," he said. "Disney was about to bring in American entertainment and they were going to try and make it local. We had



the upper hand with a park that had been around for several years and was already ingrained in the culture of the local market. Disney at the time was brand new for Asia – they had to start from scratch."

Now in position as the invading giant with Universal Beijing, Merhmann isn't underestimating his local competition.

"We're learning from everything and everyone. Never be too proud to learn. Never be too arrogant to take note of

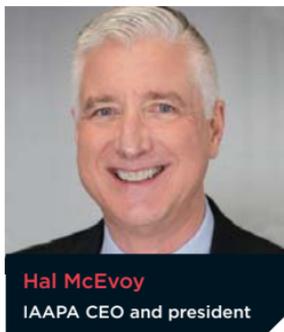
Despite being larger than Ocean Park, Hong Kong Disney Land lagged for a number of years in visitor numbers

who's around you. Even if you don't think it's that good, take a look at what your market responds to. We get so inflated in how good we are, we forget guests enjoy what we dismiss as not so good." ●

Tom Anstey, speaks to IAAPA's new CEO and president, its new chair, and the immediate past chair about the changes going on in the organisation right now, as its leadership team maps out the century ahead for the attractions body



# CHANGING FACES



EVERYTHING IS MORPHING AND IT SHOWS THE CREATIVITY OF PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY BECAUSE THEY FIND A NICHE

**H**al McEvoy was named the new president and CEO of IAAPA in October 2018. Taking up the position following an interim period after Paul Noland's resignation in February last year, McEvoy is aiming to making his mark at the head of the organisation.

#### What's your background?

While studying at the University of South Florida in 1972, I found myself needing a job. My parents lived in Orlando, so I went to Disney World looking for work. That was my first job in the industry.

A few years later, after leaving a banking job, I joined Busch Gardens as an accounting clerk. I worked in different Busch Gardens theme parks in Tampa and Williamsburg before moving to its corporate offices. 42 years later I joined IAAPA, becoming its chief financial officer.

#### One of your main tasks is to establish the new headquarters in Orlando. How important is that for IAAPA?

When you look at the history of IAAPA, it started in Chicago before moving to Alexandria. That was because of advocacy, which was the main focus at the time. It's grown over the years. Now it includes things like safety, education and leadership.

Once the new HQ is up and running, we can hold programmes and events, and

encourage people to come and see us. It's going to help us as an organisation provide the services we need to help the attractions industry succeed.

#### What's currently exciting you most about the industry?

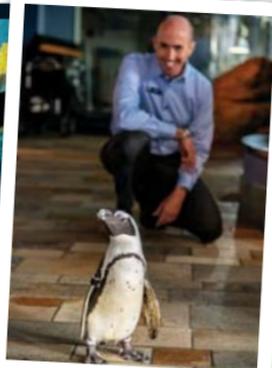
Back when I started, a theme park was just a theme park, a waterpark was a waterpark. Now, everything is morphing and it shows the creativity of people in the industry because they find a niche that serves the population around them and they find a way to deliver.

#### What are the strengths and weaknesses of the industry?

You see things in the industry where for years attraction jobs were looked at as a job you would get starting out of college. In recent times, there's been a real push for sustainable wages. You see companies really starting to take these things to heart.

We could be better and are improving in terms of addressing sustainability and understanding societal trends.

We also have to be more responsible with how the industry delivers, offering products that compliment the environment. Not just in our industry, but companies are now introducing sustainability statements. It's a focus the global industry should be heading toward.



Rosenberg started out in the industry as a lifeguard for Disney, later joining Monterey Bay Aquarium



**David Rosenberg**

IAAPA chair

**D**avid Rosenberg is the first IAAPA member to lead the organisation from the zoos and aquariums sector. An industry veteran, Rosenberg has his sights set on the year ahead as he shapes IAAPA during one of the most important years in its history.

#### What's your background?

I joined Disney while I was in college, starting as a lifeguard at Typhoon Lagoon and then going on to work in several positions. I later joined Hyatt Hotels before going to Monterey Bay Aquarium as vice president of guest experience.

#### What are your plans as chair for the next year?

Sustainability is the key thing for me. We have such an important role to play now with attractions and sustainable practices. Attractions are looking at how to do more and IAAPA can help to drive that.

#### You're the first chair to come from a zoo or aquarium background. How will that benefit that sector and what approaches can you bring to the position?

IAAPA members' attractions are diverse, everything from zoos to amusement parks, and not necessarily just one or the other.

We have an opportunity to learn from each other. The fact our association is so diverse is such a big strength. You learn more from people who aren't like-minded, who operate differently and bring different perspectives. It's going to be something that my chairship will highlight.

#### With zoos, the space has been changing fairly rapidly and has been forced to change in recent years. How do you keep on top of such things?

We've done a good job of making sure our members understand how visitor perceptions are changing. We're stepping up to meet those expectations. We can help the zoos and aquariums sector stay ahead of this issue.

#### Are there any parts of the industry where you're seeing specific growth?

I was at Whistler last summer. If you were to visit at that time of year a decade ago, there was almost nothing in terms of tourism because there wasn't really anything to do.

In July this year, it was thriving. The mountain has become an attraction. It's got things such as the world's highest bridge, mountain biking and hiking activities. Hybridisation might be a buzzword in some ways but it's also become really evident. Taking a six-month operation and turning it into a year-round attraction is a big growth area.

#### What trends are you seeing?

Current and future generations do and will expect us to be responsible operators. When we're not doing that it's something we get called out on, so it's important we understand those changing expectations.

As an example, if I was to have single-use plastic water bottles at our aquarium, there's an expectation that we'd make the effort and phase that out. Disney this year said that it would be eliminating single-use plastic straws and plastic stirrers at all owned and operated locations across the globe and Six Flags has three parks that have installed solar and come off the grid.

The industry on a large scale is stepping up to that and people are recognising it.

SUSTAINABILITY IS THE KEY THING FOR ME. WE HAVE SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY NOW WITH ATTRACTIONS AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES



WE NEED TO BE MORE AGILE, ADAPTING TO CHANGE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR, WHICH IS EVOLVING FASTER AND FASTER



Andreas Andersen acted as IAAPA chair during the organisation's centenary year



Andreas Andersen  
Immediate past IAAPA chair

**F**ollowing a busy year as IAAPA chair, Liseberg CEO Andreas Andersen looks back at his time in the role, looking to the year ahead and the legacy left for new chair David Rosenberg to continue.

#### How have you found your year as IAAPA chair?

A little bit of a perfect storm. It feels like everything happened this year. We're in the middle of our move, we're building a new headquarters and we're launching a new brand. We also had to find a new CEO and we're celebrating the 100th anniversary of the organisation. From a workload perspective, it's been quite challenging but it's been a huge privilege.

#### Did you achieve the goals you set out for the year?

For IAAPA, this has been a year of change. Navigating together with the board and the senior staff of IAAPA that change has been the main objective. I think we've succeeded. We've had three immensely successful shows and we've accomplished a lot on the staffing side with an amazing team now in place in Orlando.

#### Paul Noland left earlier this year. How has the transition to Hal McEvoy been?

Hal had what effectively seemed to be the longest job interview in the world. We really wanted to make sure that we turned over every stone to find the best candidate and it turned out to be him. His leadership throughout this year has been very steady. He's really been a great companion for me. I've enjoyed working with him and I'm really happy he's taking the lead moving forward.

#### What are the strengths and weaknesses you see in the industry?

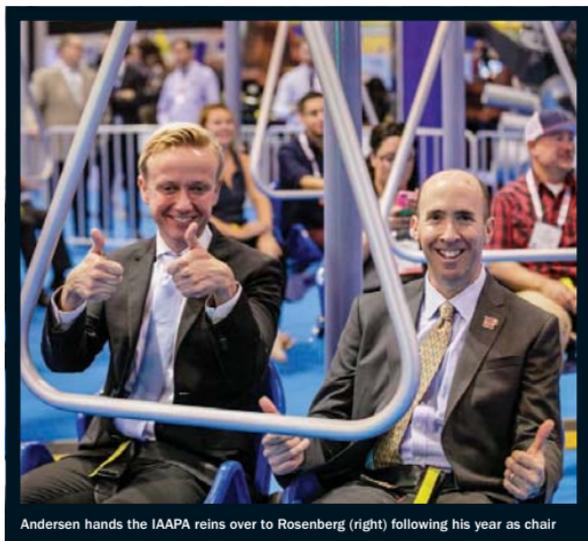
Technological, social and cultural changes affect what we do. It's a huge challenge to keep up with that change.

The fundamentals of our industry are very strong. What we provide guests first and foremost is a social experience. It's something you do with your friends and family and it's something you do in real life.

We also need to be more agile, adapting to change and consumer behaviour, which is evolving faster and faster.

#### What needs to be addressed in the industry?

We can do a lot better when it comes to sustainability. That's the determining agenda for the decade to come. As an industry, we have a huge opportunity to lead the way. We can do things that have an effect outside of our gates. We can do better and I'm sure we will.



Andersen hands the IAAPA reins over to Rosenberg (right) following his year as chair

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■ Ocean Park is the second major theme park development to come to Shanghai after Disney's arrival in the area just two years ago

# SHANGHAI HAICHANG OCEAN PARK

**T**he newly opened Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park is located on the coast of the New Pudong District, perched on eastern China's coastline, about 80 kilometres from the centre of the world's most populated city. Supplemented by other attractions, Haichang Ocean Park Holdings currently owns and operates nine major marine theme parks across China.

The US\$795m Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park is easily accessible from downtown Shanghai by the number 16 Metro Line (CNY10, US\$1.50). From the penultimate station, Lingang Avenue, a



A new Ocean Park operated by China's largest theme park company has opened near Shanghai. Alice Davis paid a visit.

shuttle bus reportedly runs. I expected a dedicated park bus yet saw no sign of one; however, you can take the regular 1135 public bus from the Metro station directly to its terminal stop right outside the park (CNY1, US\$0.15). The total journey is approximately 90 minutes from Shanghai, with the Haichang park farther from the city than the nearby Shanghai Disneyland.

The area has a 'middle of nowhere' feel about it, but seems to be yet another new district that's being rapidly developed; no doubt the zone will look completely different 18 months from now.

For foreigners, it isn't possible to book tickets via the park's website as a Chinese ID card is needed to make an online booking. I had no trouble buying a ticket at the entrance on the morning I arrived (CNY299, US\$45). The park opens at 9.30am, when there were plenty of people milling around but no queues. Chinese citizens who buy online via their WeChat or Alipay app simply scan a QR code to enter the park. I was given a paper ticket and a map of the facility. I was pleased to find it was in English, as were many of the signposts and interactives in the park.

## Five zones

This single-gate attraction is only open until 5pm – though this may be a seasonal schedule – and there is more than enough on offer to fill a day. The Qiulian River runs through the centre of the park, with two wide bridges connecting the two sections.



A giant tank hosts the park's mermaid show

The park is expected to attract between 5 and 6 million visitors a year



ALTHOUGH THE ORCAS DIDN'T DEMONSTRATE PURELY 'NATURAL BEHAVIOURS', THE ACTIVITIES DID NOT CROSS THE LINE INTO 'CIRCUS' PERFORMANCE



Alternatively, visitors can take the colourful cable cars to traverse the site from the volcano-themed Whale Shark Hall at one end of the park to the snow-covered mountain Arctic Hall at the other.

These large structures, alongside some of the more garish themed areas, stand out from a distance, making the theme park exceptionally easy to navigate. Surrounded by water and reasonably well planted with trees, flowers and shrubbery, the landscaping is very pleasant and the park infrastructure is built to a high standard. A monster orange and purple rollercoaster, Steel Dolphin, straddles the river and weaves through a large portion of the site.

The park itself is divided into five different themed zones: Underwater Wonderlands, Ocean Tribes, Polar Town, Mermaid Bay, and Snow Kingdom.

My first stop was the Coral and Jellyfish Aquarium. The ever-popular clownfish are on show here, swimming with other exotic reef-dwelling species, while the next area is a dark mirror-lined room filled with huge cylindrical tanks, each containing a different type of jellyfish.

Inside the volcano, an enormous tank hosts the mermaid show, featuring six mermaids and a further four performers, who were graceful and quite beautiful. But it was their freediving skill in a tank that must be some 30m (100ft) high that was the most impressive feat.

Other tanks in the zone are home to several different species of shark. As with all the ocean life on display, the animals looked healthy and their habitats were clean and well maintained, though I believe that some of the larger species like the belugas and manatees should have had significantly larger aquariums.

#### Live animal shows

There are several live animal shows on offer at Haichang's park. I attended the dolphin show at 11.30am, which featured four dolphins and trainers performing to an audience inside of an indoor theatre.

At the orca show, two orcas and their trainers performed. The trainers did not get in the water but controlled the animals by gesture and reward. The orcas performed several leaps and splashed the

crowds with their tails, and are also trained to jump out of the water onto the pool's shallow platform a few times.

The whole event was bookended by a story about a little boy who dreams of his cuddly killer whale toy coming to life to take him on an underwater adventure, shown on a gigantic screen above the outdoor pool. The premise of the story is that we will learn to love sealife more and become 'caretakers' of our oceans, but entertainment, not education, is certainly the core driver of these live cetacean shows. The orcas and dolphins looked healthy and neither of the shows lasted more than 20 minutes.

Although the orcas didn't demonstrate purely 'natural behaviours' as SeaWorld now pertains to do, the activities did not cross the line into what could be described as a 'circus' performance. Both shows were full to capacity and the thousands-strong audience went wild. However, I can't help but ask when the attractions industry will formally and unilaterally denounce the building of any new parks with captive killer whales. ▶

## Q &amp; A

Taylor Jeffs

President, chief creative officer

Legacy (GGE)

**Have you worked with Haichang before and are you working with them again?**

Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park was our first collaboration with Haichang, and hopefully won't be our last. We have a great deal of respect for Haichang's mission of raising the standard of animal care in China and hope we can help them as they continue on that journey.

**What was their brief and what was your role in the project?**

Our mandate back in 2015 was pretty clear cut: Haichang wanted to create



■ Legacy was behind the US\$795m theme park's development

China's greatest sea life park, both in terms of scope and scale, but also in terms of the latest trends and technologies in habitat design and animal husbandry. The park is located only about half an hour from Shanghai Disneyland, so the bar was very high of course. With around 15 per cent of what was spent there, we needed to create a full-day park that would stand up to the scrutiny of Shanghai's extremely sophisticated audiences.

**What do you like most about the completed park?**

For me personally, the level of integration in the park is a huge win. Most domestic Chinese theme parks fall into the trap of being "cookie-cutter" in their design – walkway here, ride over there, then rinse and repeat. We strove to integrate everything in order to create a park that is more visually interesting and kinetically thrilling. This park represents a huge leap forward in not only China but all of Asia.



ALL IN ALL, ESPECIALLY ONCE THE OTHER RIDES OPEN, THIS IS A WELL-DESIGNED PARK WITH AN EXCITING MIX OF BOTH MAGICAL AND THRILLING EXPERIENCES



#### ► More attractions

Over in the Arctic Hall and Sea Mammal Habitat, visitors can see the rest of the park's animal exhibits, which include sea lions, otters, spotted seals and penguins. Double-to-triple height aquariums allow visitors to view the animals from both above-water and underwater aspects.

For the larger land-based mammals there were concerns. Both the arctic wolves and the two polar bears were pacing repetitively to and fro in small, artificially-lit, indoor glass-front enclosures, often skidding on the concrete floor, with little enrichment or stimulus provided and nothing to help create a naturalistic environment. An animal park that is striving to be world-class should do better for those animals.

At the time of my visit, the WhiteWater-developed Fire Falls spinning river rapids ride was still under construction and the Snow Train that navigates the Arctic Hall

#### WHAT'S THE SCORE?

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

mountain was down for maintenance. Intamin's Steel Dolphin launch coaster, however, was running and offered a fun-filled thrill ride covering more than a kilometre of track around the park, at one point plunging into a shark's open jaws.

#### Food, facilities and staff

Ocean Park has a wide food and beverage offering. Included in the park are an array of concession stands and themed restaurants,

including the Whale Shark Restaurant, Sandcastle Restaurant, Penguin Restaurant and Dream Dessert House.

There are numerous opportunities to purchase Haichang's merchandise, much of it inspired by the brand's "Seven Guardians" – cartoon creatures who appear throughout the park.

The staff were friendly and professional, always on hand to give directions or tell you the next show time.

From the big (like the 309-bedroom on-site resort hotel) to the small (like the gender-neutral toilets and pushchair and wheelchair rental), Ocean Park's facilities are hard to fault. All in all, especially once the other rides open, this is a well-designed park with an exciting mix of both magical and thrilling experiences. There are more than enough ingredients to make this park a success – even without the 'star attraction' of the orcas. ●

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# Why a good parking experience adds to the attraction

**Parking. When it goes right it's a seamless, virtually undetectable experience.**

**When it goes wrong, it can ruin an entire day. In some cases, customers can be won or lost on the strength of the parking**

**T**he number of cars on our roads rises every year and as a result, the case for managing parking gets ever stronger. In tourism – where 65 per cent of day trips are taken by car – ensuring that visitors can easily find and access parking can make a huge difference to their experience.

Parking for tourists is different to the usual parking offering. Tourists will be unfamiliar with the destination and wanting to stay longer than the two-hour average. For a parking provider, there's the question of parking capacity, and supply and demand fluctuating through the year.

How visitors get their information is

varied, but in most cases the internet plays the biggest part. It's where the detail can be provided but simply presented. On arrival at the destination, signage is really important and supplying good information here is vital. If the actual attraction is some way off, the visitor will require further information in order to get there.

The cost of parking is always a very sensitive issue. Many attractions are able to offer free parking, but where parking isn't provided charges may be incurred. Tourists are medium and long stay users so ideally, the fees will need to reflect this. In central areas, however, long stay parking can, and will, attract commuters who take up vital

spaces for tourists, which creates an issue. Medium to long stay parking is discouraged for commuters but encouraged for tourists. As this is the first cost the tourist encounters at their destination, it leaves a very big impression.

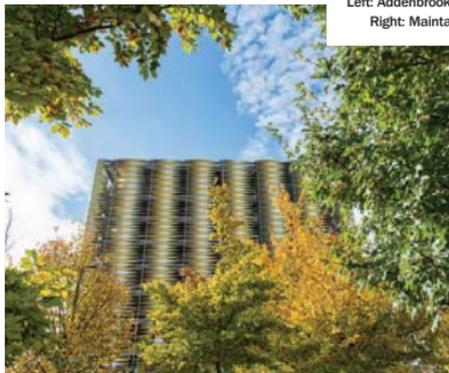
Location of the parking facility should not be an after-thought. Regarding visual intrusion, the issue here is how tourist parking fits into the overall scheme of the site and the general local amenity. This is not simply a question of visual aesthetics such as adequate landscaping. It also includes issues of park and walk, park and ride and park and shuttle, taking full account of the amenity and safety of the area.



Above: The BPA will be available to discuss your needs at Parkex 2019

Left: Addenbrookes carpark, Cambridge

Right: Maintaining your car park



SHUTTERSTOCK/ROBERT HODGSON

In essence, parking provision requires commitment and an understanding that it's an important issue, which has not always been the case; such as instances where the tourists are coming to see a temporary or seasonal event, for example. Frequently parking provision has simply been the nearest field. In these cases, consideration for the wider population whose environment may be disrupted should be given.

Communicating the location of the parking is an integral part of seamless journeys and accessibility. Information can be included on sat navs as well as on road signs. The central aim must be to indicate to the tourist which car parks are meant for them and of course where the attraction is.

Motorists will increasingly be seeking safer parking facilities, which is especially important at tourist sites where vehicles may be left unattended for relatively long periods of time, sometimes in remote locations. The police owned Safer Parking Scheme is a benchmark standard for parking provision. A specially trained police assessor will make an assessment against four criteria known to reduce vehicle-related crime and the fear of crime in parking facilities. These are lighting, surveillance, cleanliness and good management. If the parking facility passes it is given a Park Mark award. With 65 per



**MOTORISTS WILL INCREASINGLY BE SEEKING SAFER PARKING FACILITIES, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT AT TOURIST SITES**

cent of motorists saying they would choose a Park Mark-awarded car park over one that has not been assessed, this scheme is definitely one to consider.

Disabled parking provision is also much overlooked. The biggest barrier for disabled motorists is the abuse of disabled parking bays. However, with the right management, this can be overcome. The Disabled Parking Accreditation is one way of being able to demonstrate the quality of disabled parking on offer and that these spaces are managed specifically for disabled motorists.

The benefits of these awards are an increase in trust between the motorist and the parking provider, leading to high ratings for the parking facility and repeat custom.

Getting the parking right is good for the parking provider and a clear asset for any destination. It can be a value factor which distinguishes one site from another. Making proper provision means obvious increases in extra revenue, attracting high spending visitors and getting maximum usage from car parks which may otherwise be underused.

From 2-4 April, The British Parking Association is hosting Parkex, Europe's largest dedicated parking exhibition at the NEC, in Birmingham, UK. Why not come along and discuss how awards and accreditations can benefit your business, experience new innovations in parking technology and immerse yourself in all things parking.

*The event is free of charge. Register your interest at [www.parkex.co.uk](http://www.parkex.co.uk)*

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# SEA CHANGE

There is much excitement at Merlin Entertainments, as the company prepares to launch the world's first cetacean open water sanctuary in June, to rehome two beluga whales. Kath Hudson finds out more...

**T**his project has taken six years of plotting, negotiating and lobbying, but the outcome of it could be epic," says James Burleigh, global ambassador for Merlin Entertainment's Sea Life brand. "We're hoping it will be game-changing in terms of the attraction industry's attitude and treatment of cetaceans."

Operator of more than 50 Sea Life aquariums, one of Merlin's founding beliefs was that cetaceans should not be held in captivity for entertainment purposes, so the company came up against a problem when it acquired the Living and Leisure Australia Group, in 2012, as the organisation owned Shanghai Chang Feng Ocean World, which ran such a show involving two beluga whales.

"We've had to close down dolphin shows and rehome dolphins before - when we acquired Gardaland in Italy and Heidepark in Germany - but this is the first time that whales had come into our possession and



James Burleigh is chief ambassador of Merlin Entertainments' Sea Life brand

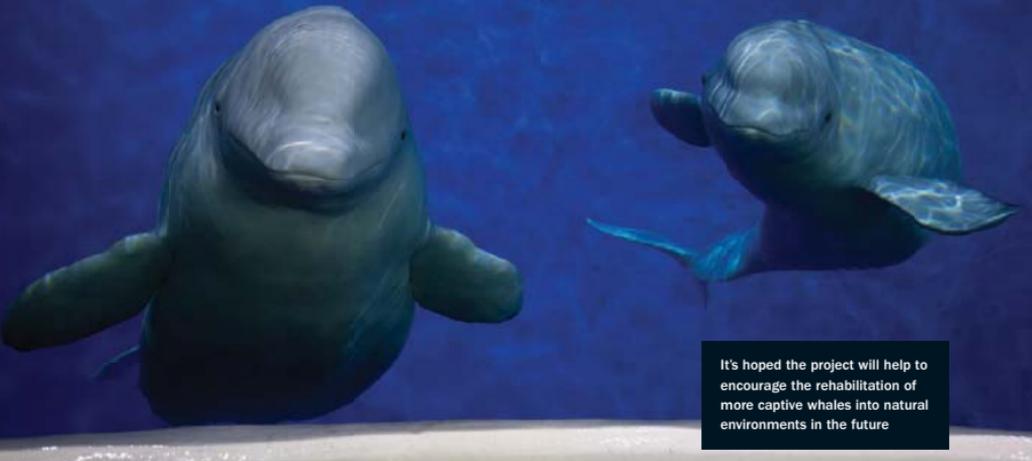
it sparked a long held idea to open a sea sanctuary," explains Burleigh.

It's been a lengthy, challenging and expensive journey for the attractions operator, but one which Burleigh says is hugely rewarding. The cost of the project has not been revealed, and won't ever be recouped, as any future profits will be

ploughed back into the not-for-profit Sea Life Trust, which also includes the Gweek Seal Sanctuary in Cornwall, UK.

"We're doing it purely and simply because it's the morally right thing to do," says Burleigh. "These whales were born in captivity so couldn't survive in the wild, but we want them to have a better life than living in a large swimming pool. The sanctuary will be 35 times bigger, deeper, wider and more natural."

He's also hopeful there will be a spin-off effect, with the wider attractions industry taking note: "There are 3,000 cetaceans in captivity and lots of them are involved in shows. We understand that it takes attractions a while to change their business models, but nonetheless, we hope more will follow our example. The younger generation doesn't want to see whales performing for crowds and, as attitudes start to change, we will be very open to sharing our experience and knowledge with other operators looking to do the same." ▶



It's hoped the project will help to encourage the rehabilitation of more captive whales into natural environments in the future



AS ATTITUDES START TO CHANGE, WE WILL BE VERY OPEN TO SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHER OPERATORS LOOKING TO DO THE SAME



Andy Bool, head of the SeaLife trust, with Gweek Seal Sanctuary curator Tamara Cooper

### ► Location, location, location

Merlin teamed up with the charity, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), to help bring this project to fruition. The two organisations have worked together for some 20 years, having previously been successful in stopping the importation of whale meat through EU ports.

The first and biggest challenge was to find a suitable location. This took years and many locations were investigated. It needed to be as close to the whales' natural habitat as possible, with very cold waters and a bay which could be netted off



## CATCHING CETACEANS

Driven largely by the 2013 film *Blackfish* – about an orca which killed its trainer at SeaWorld – there is growing public distaste for keeping cetaceans in captivity and especially for using them for entertainment. This has contributed to some changes within the industry, including SeaWorld stopping both its breeding programme and entertainment shows and investing in other rides.

The fast-growing Chinese attractions market still has a huge appetite for cetaceans in captivity.

According to Cathy Williamson, about 50 to 100 whales are captured in Russia each year and the spotlight is now on the Russian capture industry.

"There are currently 90 belugas and 11 orcas in what is known as the Russian whale jail, which were captured last year, in what has been deemed an illegal capture," she says. "Public opinion in Russia is turning against whale capture and there has been a ban for 2019, which we hope will be extended forever."

Williamson says wild captures are extremely stressful for the animals caught, as well as those which remain: "Removing animals from their natural groups and families, can mess up the



Cathy Williamson is captivity campaign manager for WDC

group dynamics. They might be parents, or be important to the population for breeding, or have cultural knowledge of feeding grounds. Captures often happen in small populations, which are also vulnerable to other threats."

Captivity is entirely unsuitable for these large predators, which often suffer from stress and stress-related diseases. Often they are kept with species which they wouldn't even meet in the wild. Common health problems include broken and worn teeth and collapsed dorsal fins.

China and Japan are still resistant to cultural pressure against cetacean captivity. Japan also still allows the capture of dolphins and whales in its waters, with eating whale meat part of the Japanese culture.

Last year an orca breeding facility was launched in Chimealong, which claims to raise public awareness, help cultivate breeding and develop studies. Animal rights' groups say cetacean breeding programmes are not needed, as animals bred in captivity cannot be released into the wild, and as captive cetaceans behave differently this is not useful from a research point of view.



Japan is known for cetacean capture

to create a sea pen, as well as the right infrastructure. It was also crucial that they had unequivocal support, both locally and nationally. Russia would have been ideal, as that is where belugas are from, but it was ruled out because the government still allows the capture of cetaceans.

Other sites in Norway, Scotland, Alaska and Greenland were considered and subsequently rejected for not meeting every criterion this time, although some may be suitable for future projects. After many years of searching, Merlin settled on the bay which was used to house Keiko, the orca seen in the *Free Willy* films.

The 32,000sq m (344,000sq ft) inlet at Klettsvik Bay on Heimaya Island, in southern Iceland, has a sub-Arctic environment, and a very supportive community, including people who have previous knowledge and expertise of this type of project. "Lots of the people living in the area were involved with Keiko and know how to build sea nets and pontoons which can survive tempestuous weather," says Burleigh. "The bay had a small existing aquarium which has been moved down to the harbour, next to the holding care pool and this will be the base to manage the sanctuary."

Visitors will be welcomed to the education centre, but it will not be one of Merlin's busiest attractions – the island has a population of just 4,000 and is a 30-minute ferry ride from the mainland. That said, Iceland's tourism industry is growing and tends to appeal to people interested in the natural environment.

### Cause for hope

Now this long-term project is almost at completion. The whales will be moved to Iceland in April and then to their new home in June. A team of trainers will move with them, along with a specialist curator, who will continue to look after the animals and educate them on living in the semi-wild.

Klettsvik Bay on Heimaey Island, located off the coast of southern Iceland, is the home of the sanctuary



The Cornish Seal Sanctuary is a home for injured seal pups



The sanctuary is one of the biggest developments in captive whale and dolphin care and protection in decades



**INITIALLY THEY WILL NEED A LOT OF LOOKING AFTER BY THEIR TRAINERS. THEY WILL NEED TO BE FED AND TRAINED IN WHAT AND WHAT NOT TO EAT**

"Initially they will need a lot of looking after by their trainers. They will need to be fed and trained in what and what not to eat," says Cathy Williamson from Whale and Dolphin Conservation, who has also worked on the project. "Hopefully in time, they will start to catch their own food, although there probably won't be enough fish in the bay to sustain them completely. The two whales are only 13 and will hopefully live several more decades, as their life expectancy in the wild is 40 to 60 years."

The sanctuary could comfortably accommodate around 10 animals, so Merlin is keen to find more and will offer attractions the opportunity to retire their whales. Although optimistic the sanctuary will have a spin-off effect, Burleigh says Merlin will be restrained in their approach:

"We won't be going on a pilgrimage around the industry to talk about what we're doing and trying to get cetaceans. This isn't a sales pitch or placard waving – we still run aquariums, but our backstop is never with cetaceans. We're focused on doing the right thing and trying to lead by example."

To this end, there is some cause for optimism. The National Aquarium in Baltimore is currently working on plans for a sea sanctuary for its dolphins. It will have different spatial considerations and give the dolphins the opportunity to express their natural behaviours and be exposed to natural elements like fish and marine plants. A first for North America, this is likely to further help to change public opinion and the practice of keeping cetaceans in captivity. ●

## SEALIFE TRUST

The Heimaey Island open water sanctuary will be operated by the Sea Life



Trust, along with the Gweek Seal Sanctuary, which transferred into the trust's ownership in March 2018.

Charitable status will allow the attractions to retain more revenue, attract grants and fundraise for conservation projects around the world.

The Seal Sanctuary first started in 1958 when an animal lover, Ken Jones, rescued a seal pup. It moved to Gweek in 1975 and now comprises three large pools, a convalescence pool for rescue animals, an underwater viewing observatory, a penguin pool and paddocks for rescued farm animals, as well as an exhibition centre, café and gift shop.

The latest rescuee is a five-week-old seal pup who had eaten a plastic bag, highlighting what an issue plastic pollution has become. Luckily he is now gaining weight and off treatment.

MARU Swimwear has teamed up with the Sea Life Trust to tackle plastic pollution and will donate 100 per cent of its profits from its new eco-swimwear range. Black Pack is made out of a fibre which is 100 per cent regenerated from consumer waste found in the oceans, including nylon scraps and ghost fishing nets.



by Polin Waterparks

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# BE THE

Director of cultural consultancy, Flow, by day and eco warrior in her spare time, Bridget McKenzie is turning her passion into action with Climate Museum UK, a mobile exhibition to try and effect change. Kath Hudson reports



# CHANGE

**R**eminders of climate change are around us all the time. Sometimes it's dramatic and heart-breaking, like news of forest fires in Greece or California, or the sea ice shrinking in the Arctic. Other times it's smaller but closer to home, like the howling storm that keeps you awake at night. We can't ignore it, but frequently feel helpless, especially when the most powerful man in the world is a denier.

A cultural sector consultant, whose clients include the V&A and Museum of London, Bridget McKenzie is stepping in to provide some leadership, and empowerment, around the subject.

An environmental campaigner at the weekends, McKenzie is currently in the early stages of creating Climate Museum UK – an experimental mobile museum designed to educate, start conversations and inspire action around the topic.

There's a small but growing wave of change which McKenzie is riding in the cultural sector. She was inspired to start working on her idea earlier this year when she met Miranda Massie, who is in the process of setting up a Climate Museum as a destination attraction in New York.

"There's a growing movement in the cultural sector to further discuss climate change," McKenzie explains.



Bridget McKenzie acts primarily as a consultant for the culture sector



**We've gone past the point of asking if museums can effect change. We know they can, so we need to start doing it**

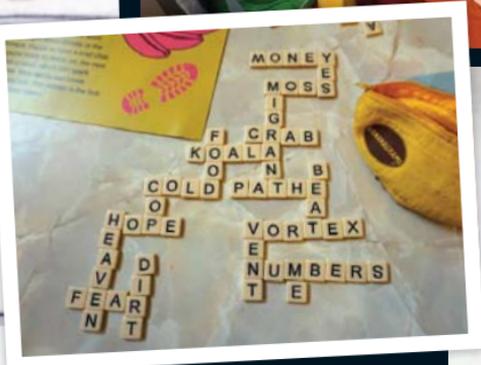
"Many museums are starting to integrate the environment into their work for social action. We've gone past the point of asking if museums can effect change. We know they can, so we need to start doing it."

Unlike its New York counterpart, Climate Museum UK will not be developed around a single destination but will be a pop-up – part exhibition, part training process – which could be hired by a museum, school, library or business.

"I see it as a workshop/campaign/training project where people can explore the subject and talk about their feelings and views," says McKenzie. "Props and games will enable the conversation of how we can engage communities with climate change. Each pop-up will be targeted to the location: for example if it's a low lying area there might be a history of flooding which can be brought into it."

With the help of fellow climate campaigners and organisations such as Julie's Bicycle and Artsadmin, McKenzie has been honing her ideas over the last few months, as well as making props and games for the pop-up. These include things such as collapse kerplunk; climate change dominoes and earth top trumps.

There will be some core infographics, and a conversation machine, where the visitor puts in a thought, turns a handle



and gets someone else's thought in return. The cabinet of curiosities will present objects, like coal and plastic, in jewellery boxes as talking points.

"Although I want there to be playful activities, I'm deliberately not making anything silly," she says. "This isn't a place to come and have fun, it's a serious subject. I'm not trying to determine the visitors' emotional response, but give them space to create and explore."

McKenzie also acknowledges that some content might be disturbing and the museum will need to be flexible enough to be modified according to the audience. Some might require a more hard-hitting message, while children will likely need a softer, more gentle approach.

"We might consider trigger warnings or signpost people to external services or resources," she says.

In order to reach the broadest audience possible, McKenzie is working on two further strands beyond the pop-up concept. The first is to develop a tour script around a current exhibition or site, which can bring a climate change theme into an existing museum.

"For example, The Sheringham Museum, on the coastline of Norfolk, has an observation tower," says McKenzie.

A selection of props, infographics, games, activities and artworks that each host organisation for the series of one day workshops



This vision is to create a series of exhibitions and events, and a growing collection of artworks and activity tools, exploring climate change

HEADING

Climate change involves everyone changing some habits, but the attractions industry could be a big influence for the positive. Operators can start the conversation, educate visitors without being preachy, set an example and use buying power to encourage suppliers to make changes. Here are some ideas. Congratulations to those operators already doing them...

- Don't take sponsorship from unethical sources.
- Switch to a renewable energy supplier, or even generate your own energy.
- Ask organisations you are involved with to stop using fossil fuels.
- Use ethical banking and encourage your suppliers to do the same.
- Go paperless.
- Work with specialist recycling companies to recycle the maximum waste possible.
- Avoid selling landfill fill in retail outlets.
- Ban plastic water bottles and install water fountains. Remind people to bring their own drinks bottles and coffee cups, but sell them for those who forget.
- Stop using plastic cutlery, straws, condiments sachets and styrofoam takeaway packaging and use biodegradable alternatives instead.
- Stop using plastic bags.
- Put pressure on suppliers to cut down on their plastic use and use alternatives.
- Work with catering suppliers to use alternatives to palm oil.
- Do laundry on site.
- Engage in a tree planting scheme to help offset carbon emissions of travelling visitors.
- Encourage visitors to car share, or arrive by public transport, bicycle or on foot.
- Host the Climate Museum UK.
- Get your staff involved: hold meetings to discuss ideas ways in which you can make a difference as an attraction and encourage your visitors to follow suit.



I want people to come away from the museum thinking about ways they can talk about it more and make a change

► "It overlooks the Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm, but it's not used to its best effect. There's definitely the potential to start a conversation about wind farms, as well as the history of energy and its effects on the local environment."

The next part will be its digital museum and McKenzie is currently curating various collections of music, art and resources connected to climate change.

There will be a charge to host the exhibition, but the cost is yet to be decided. The model will be flexible, so that funded institutions and businesses will pay the full rate, but those without funding could pay less for the service.

The main challenge to date has been time. "There's been a lot of interest shown in the project. Without funding, I can't

progress as fast as I would like to, but in order to get funding I need to be more progressed than I am," explains McKenzie.

With this in mind, she is about to launch a Crowdfunding campaign. The money raised will be used to develop a website without advertising and finish the business plan and prototype, with a view to getting some pop-ups going in the summer. The first venue to host a one-day workshop will be St Margaret's House chapel in east London, which aims to promote social change by creating opportunities for people in their community.

Climate change is a big issue to tackle, but McKenzie says the first step is to start a conversation: "I want people to come away thinking about ways they can talk about it more and make a change," she says. ●

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# SPLASHING THE CASH



**Consultant David Camp** looks at the waterparks sector, how it can benefit the rest of the industry and how to make your waterpark venture a financial success.

**T**here's been a lot of interest in waterparks in the past couple of years. Both Six Flags and Parques Reunidos have been busy in the sector and Europa Park is set to open their Rulantica waterpark expansion later this year. So why is there so much interest in this attraction type and how does it fit into the rest of the visitor attractions sector?

## The numbers

To start you need to take a look at the numbers. Waterparks are cheaper to develop than theme parks. Six Flags invested less than US\$20m to refurbish a waterpark in Oaxtepec, Mexico, that had been closed for a few years. Contrast this to the US\$700m budget for the planned Six Flags theme park in Dubai (currently on hold due to financial issues), or the US\$50m that Six Flags invested in Walibi Holland when they rebranded the park in 2000 and the difference is obvious.

Another important factor is that waterparks can generate higher operating profits than theme parks. While a strong performing theme park may deliver a 30-40 per cent operating profit margin on an annual basis, a strong waterpark can generate profits of 50 per cent or more.

Absolute revenues are very different – theme parks can generate far higher total revenues than waterparks – but having a number of profitable waterparks within a portfolio can be very good for business.

Six Flags, for example, has seven waterparks among its 20 operations and Parques Reunidos has 20 within its total group of 60 units. The profits from these operations are important for the overall business returns on these investments.

## Weather warning

The most obvious issue for waterpark operations is the weather. With many of these attractions only opening for 100 or so days a year, and with 40-50 per cent of annual visits coming during their busiest month, just a couple of weeks of bad weather in the peak summer period can wipe out any potential profits.

This has led to waterparks in more northerly climes being developed indoors, however, that hasn't always been a wise move. While an indoor waterpark can open all year round, demand is still stronger in the summer months than in the winter.

Opening all year also requires significantly more staffing, heating and other operational costs than a seasonal business and there are few free-standing

Having multiple waterparks within a single attractions portfolio can prove a very successful prospect



More than 30 million people visited the world's top 20 waterparks in 2017

indoor waterparks that can operate without some form of financial support. In many countries, this support often comes from the public sector.

### Water gains

One way to make an indoor venture successful is to combine it with other activities. Operations such as Center Parcs and Lalandia in Europe, along with Great Wolf and Kalahari Resorts in North America have utilised the appeal of a year-round indoor waterpark and created large scale resort operations with significant accommodation offers.

Center Parcs' resorts can accommodate up to 3,000 guests at one time within the accommodation and the Kalahari Resort in Pocono has a 22,000sq m (237,000sq ft) waterpark, 1,000 bedrooms and a 4,000sq m (43,000sq ft) entertainment centre. In these destinations, the waterpark serves to differentiate the resort and attract guests to stay over, with the hotel able to charge stronger room rates than other



Operations such as Center Parcs have utilised the appeal of a year-round indoor waterpark and created large scale resort operations

Due to its seasonality, the European attractions market offers a mix of indoor and outdoor waterpark facilities



accommodation in the local area due to the presence of the waterpark.

While the Kalahari is large it's dwarfed by Tropical Islands, a waterpark just south of Berlin, Germany, which opened in 2004.

Created within a 70,000sq m (753,000sq ft) former zeppelin hanger, the owners rapidly realised that the only way to make money from the business was to add an accommodation option.

Although the development was slow at first, an ambitious masterplan was developed for the 6.4sq km (2.5sq mi) site. This led to approval being received in 2017 for a resort expansion that would allow for the development of up to 9,000 bedrooms. This expansion potential was a major factor in Parques Reunidos decision to pay €226m (US\$256m) for the waterpark and its associated real estate in 2018.

Another important area of waterpark development is as a second gate. ▶



► The majority of Six Flags' waterparks are located alongside their theme park operations, PortAventura has had a waterpark since 2002, and the Looping Group has been adding waterpark elements to its park operations in recent years.

## Global developments

The opening of Universal's Volcano Bay waterpark in Orlando was the big news of 2017. The immersive waterpark experience attracted 1.5 million guests in its first year to complement the ever-increasing visitor volumes at the company's other two Orlando theme parks.

There have been other new park developments around the world, many of these opening in Asia. China is now home to the world's most visited waterpark, Chimelong Waterpark in Guangzhou, which attracted 2.7 million visits in 2017.

The latest major European waterpark expansion is at Europa Park, which is investing an estimated €150m (US\$170m) in the creation of a 33,000sq m (355,000sq ft) waterpark with hotel accommodation (see p60). Called Rulantica, this, says Europa Park, will complement the existing theme park and help build on the 5.6 million people that already visit the resort each year.

While helping the team at Europa Park to plan this expansion, we examined a number of theme park and waterpark destinations around the world.

More and more often, waterparks are being used to boost the profits of an already existing successful venture, such as a theme park



We discovered that waterparks built near to theme parks are typically able to achieve attendance levels of between 10-20 per cent of the associated theme park visitor numbers, and often the admission prices for the waterpark are not far below those of the theme park. This is a significant additional volume of visitors and revenues that can make a major contribution to the finances of a resort.

## Technological leaps

As with theme parks, there's a need for waterparks to invest regularly in their rides and activities to keep visitors returning, and there have been some exciting advances in waterpark rides in recent years.

The Master Blaster's development in 1996 was a major advance as it allowed riders to be pushed uphill, creating a rollercoaster-style water attraction. This has been further developed with HydroMagnetic and Zip Coasters that create theme park-style thrills within waterparks.

In recent years, waterpark ride manufacturers have increased the size and impact of bowl rides, funnel rides and halfpipe slides. Whitewater West has also developed a looping waterpark ride.

Surfing technology has also rapidly improved through the years, with a range of different rides now available that allow guests to safely experience the thrill of surfing within either a waterpark environment or on a surfing lagoon.

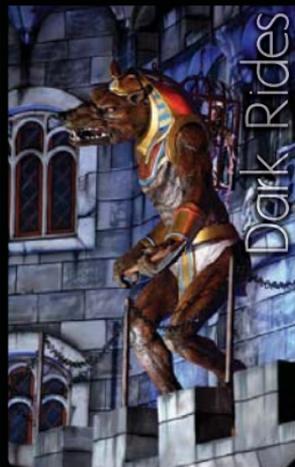
## Final thoughts

While the world is becoming ever more digital and virtual, family water play still has a refreshingly enduring appeal. This, combined with the exciting new rides and attractions that being developed each year, will serve to continue the industry well and drive more developments in the future. ●

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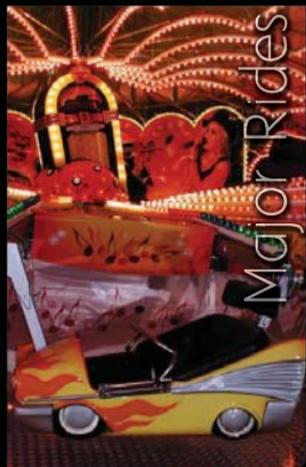
Venetian Carousels



Dark Rides



Bumper Cars



Major Rides

# PRODUCT INNOVATION

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● Guests are invited to join intrepid explorer Carsten Peter as he explores some of the world's most impressive active volcanoes

## Jeff Rudolph invites visitors on an epic journey with *Volcanoes 3D*

The California Science Center IMAX theatre is set to launch a new 3D experience showcasing the power of volcanoes and their impact on the planet.

Opened on 21 January 2019, *Volcanoes 3D: The Fires of Creation* takes guests on an epic journey with intrepid explorer Carsten Peter, as he scales an active volcano in Indonesia, descends to a lava lake in Vanuatu, and visits geysers, acid ponds and mineral deposit fields in Ethiopia. Peter also explores Pompeii, visits hydrothermal vents in the ocean and witnesses the 2018 Kilauea eruption in Hawaii.



● Jeff Rudolph is president of the California Science Center

"*Volcanoes 3D* offers the closest possible approximation to experiencing an eruption, while remaining safe," said Jeff Rudolph, president of the California Science Center.

"We can now show our audiences the incredible power of volcanoes, as they learn about the ways volcanic activity has shaped and affected our world."

SK Films developed the film in partnership with Digital Crossing Films, a company specialising in natural history documentaries for IMAX and giant screens.

"Audiences will see volcanoes up close and personal, like never before on the giant screen," said Wendy MacKeigan, CEO

of SK Films. "*Volcanoes 3D* will take them to places they wouldn't normally be able to go."

Michael Dalton-Smith, director and producer of *Volcanoes 3D*, said: "We often think of volcanoes as being destructive, but they also build and play a beneficial role on the planet.

"Dozens of volcanoes erupt each day. To witness one in action is awe-inspiring. I hope that the audience will come away with a better understanding of the forces that shaped the world we know today."

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

SK FILMS

## Amped Digital's **Matt Steedman** creates immersive AV experiences for Real Madrid World of Football

Australian digital signage company Amped Digital has completed a major tech integration for the Real Madrid World of Football Experience, a touring exhibition set to visit 15 cities over the next five years.

Created by Interp, a company specialising in the development and installation of temporary experiences

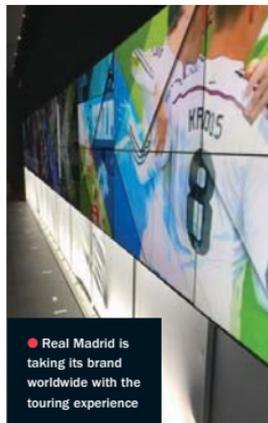
and exhibits, the Real Madrid World of Football Experience blends physical interactive experiences with spectacular AV displays and playable gaming elements to immerse visitors in the club's history.

Housed inside a 2,000sq m (21,500sq ft) touring pavilion, the experience consists of four zones designed to take visitors behind the scenes to discover the culture, passion, players and victories of the football club. Memorabilia – including the club's 13 UEFA Champions League Cups, the FIFA Club of the Century trophy, Golden Boot trophies and the Ballon d'Or trophy – are among the objects on display.

Two 18-screen video walls serve as a focal point at the exhibit's entrance. Powered by 18 49-inch BrightSign HD panels and programmed by Amped Digital, the walls showcase

video content designed by Tania Price from experiential design firm Immersive.

Due to the scale of the project, each screen had to be synchronised to ensure frame accuracy and seamless video playback, as a single discrepancy in the frames would ruin the overall effect. In addition, the company has had to ensure



● Real Madrid is taking its brand worldwide with the touring experience



● The experience blends physical artefacts with AV installations



● Matt Steedman, Amped Digital

that the walls' playback would continue to work faultlessly after being dismantled and reassembled while touring.

"We created an immersive audio video experience that gets visitors excited and sets the expectation for what's to follow," said Matt Steedman, director of Amped Digital.

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD  
AMPED DIGITAL

## Panasonic brings Mickey and Minnie to life in new immersive Disney experience, says **Ron Martin**

Disney has released new details of its first-ever Mickey Mouse dark ride, ahead of its opening in Q3 later this year.

Coming to Hollywood Studios at the Disney World Resort in Florida, Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway dark ride is

billed as a "zany out-of-control adventure" where guests will find themselves transported into a Mickey Mouse cartoon (see p57).

In a collaboration with Panasonic, the ride will introduce a new kind of technology, presenting a 3D experience without the glasses in what is being dubbed "2.5D".

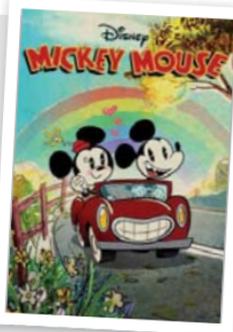
Panasonic, the Japanese electronics giant, is supplying several new technologies, as well as special projectors to bring the Mickey Mouse world to life inside the immersive dark ride experience.

"The specific visual requirements of Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway require imaging systems that meet the highest technical requirements of precision colour rendition and brightness,"

said Tom LaDuke, principal show systems designer for Walt Disney Imagineering.

"Panasonic's laser illuminated projectors do that extremely well and we look forward to working with them to push technological boundaries that bring our guests to places only previously achieved in their imaginations."

Named as the 'Official Projection Technology' for both the Disney World and Disneyland Resorts in 2016, Panasonic has a significant presence in attractions across the operator's resorts, including the Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage at Disneyland; the Radiator Springs Racers at Disney California Adventure Park; the Haunted Mansion and Seven Dwarfs Mine Train at Magic Kingdom; Frozen



● Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway opens later this year

Ever After and Gran Fiesta Tour starring The Three Caballeros at Epcot; and the Na'vi River Journey at Pandora - The World of Avatar at Disney's Animal Kingdom.

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD  
PANASONIC



● Tom LaDuke, Imagineering

## Interspectral CEO Louise Lennersten on museum partnerships

Interspectral, a Swedish visualisation software company has announced two new projects with both the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities and the Universeum Science Centre in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Acting as visualisation partner for the Rijksmuseum since 2016, Interspectral will create exhibits on Ancient Egypt,

featuring 3D scanned mummies, for a travelling exhibition to tour between 2020 and 2022.

"Interspectral has worked with the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities since 2016 and has been providing solutions for both permanent and travelling exhibitions," says Louise Lennersten, CEO of Interspectral.

"This time we will work to co-produce complete interactive exhibits to engage visitors in ancient Egypt."

At Universeum, Interspectral's Inside Explorer software will be used as part of a permanent exhibition on human and animal anatomy. Used in museums, science centres and aquariums across the world, Inside Explorer uses scientific data to create interactive and dynamic learning experiences.

"Inside Explorer is a great tool for understanding and

learning for our guests," says Håkan Sigurdsson, scientific leader at Universeum.

"At Universeum, our guests will be able to explore both animals and humans and we hope that together Interspectral will be able to develop more fun and interesting concepts for Inside Explorer."



● Interspectral will produce exhibits featuring several 3D scanned mummies



● Universeum in Gothenburg has teamed up with Interspectral



● Louise Lennersten, Interspectral

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

INTERSPECTRAL

## Sally Corporation's Drew Hunter unveils details of OWA dark ride

OWA, an entertainment destination in Alabama, US, has announced a new partnership with Sally Corporation that will see the opening of a new dark ride at its theme park.

Billed as a 'frightfully fun attraction', the new ride will be

a reimagining of Sally's Ghost Blasters ride with a number of new surprises and a curated selection of the best scenes and gags from previous versions of the ride. It will feature 13 spooky and whimsical rooms, rendered in UV paint giving the ride a surreal and cartoon-like quality.

"It has a vibrantly distinct cartoonish look that screams fun," says Drew Hunter, VP of Creative Design at Sally.

Seated in four-passenger cars, guests are taken on a thrilling adventure through a haunted mansion where they score points by shooting targets using their 'boo blasters'.

"We knew we wanted an indoor attraction, something engaging and fun for families. When we decided on an interactive dark ride, there was no better choice



● Ghost Blasters takes guests through a haunted mansion

than Sally," says Kristin Hellmich, director of Marketing/PR at OWA.

"Of course we want quality, something that will stand the test of time, but what we're really after is having park guests leave with a memory that they will want to relive, time and time again."

Hunter says: "Ride repeatability is a major goal of any of Sally's interactive dark rides, and a huge

amount of the repeatability is due to the competitive element. No two guest experiences will be quite the same, depending upon the guest's boo-blasting skills and how many points they accumulate."



● Drew Hunter, Sally Corporation

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

SALLY CORPORATION



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