

# CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PREVIEW CENTER



Preview Center sign

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

You might have noticed a huge construction project outside of the park today—especially if you were expecting to find a parking lot in front of Main Street Station. You might have heard that they're building a second theme park here.

Do you want a sneak preview? Look for the "Special Preview" sign on the left side of the Main Street Opera House.



Preview Center interior

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

You'll find artist renderings, descriptions, and even merchandise. Buy a California Adventure logo shirt and impress your friends.

Admire the artwork on the wall. There's a long tradition in Imagineering of creating paintings that go well beyond simple architectural renderings.



Main Entrance

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

From the official website of Disney's California Adventure in early 2001: "Come celebrate the fun and adventures of California — Disney style! You'll be immersed in the California spirit through the magic of Hollywood, the thrills of a beachfront boardwalk and the adventures of the great outdoors. So head on over!"



Golden State

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

"Golden State,' a land celebrating the richness and diversity of California; its natural resources; and pioneering spirit of its people — past and present. The six unique areas of the land: Condor Flats, Bountiful Valley Farm, Pacific Wharf, Bay Area, Grizzly Peak Recreation Area, Golden Vine Winery serve as a backdrop for a look at the unique blend of commerce, industry, and agriculture that have helped California develop over the years."

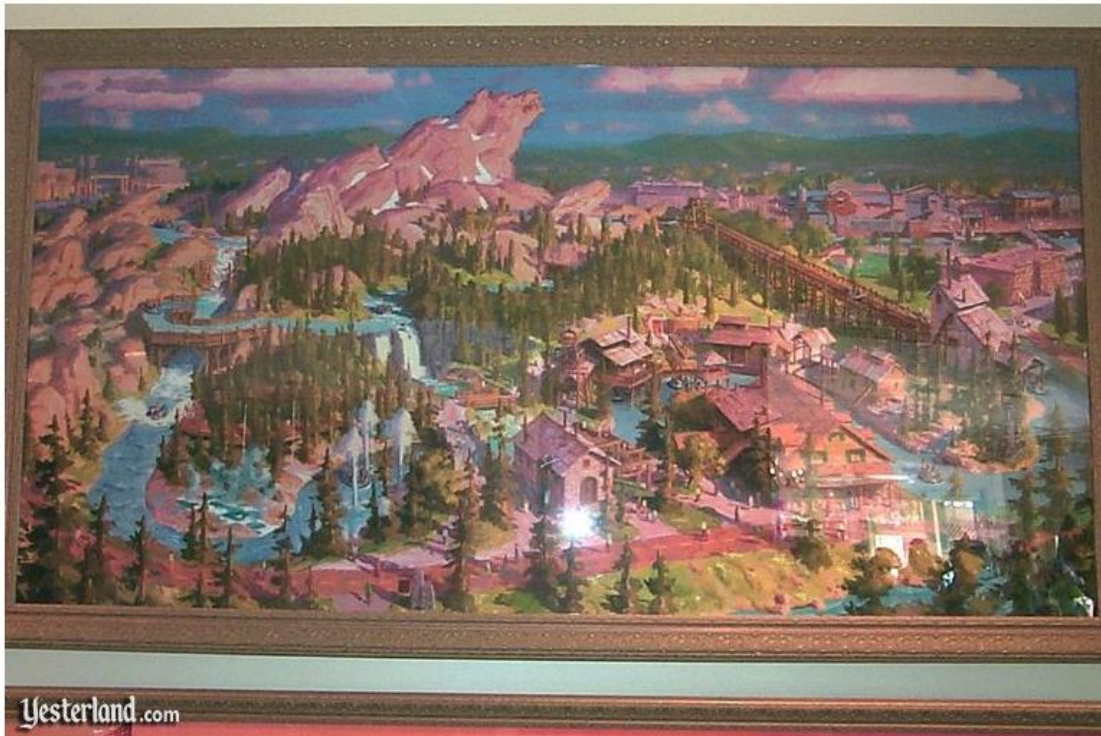


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

*Grizzly River Run*

"'The Wetter the Better' is the motto of this adventure that sends you roaring down a California river through whitewater rapids, mountain caverns, roaring waterfalls and heart-thudding drops into river gorges!"



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

*Golden Vine Winery*

"Nestled against Grizzly Mountain is the Golden Vine Winery, hosted by Robert Mondavi, where we celebrate California's Wine Country. You can stroll through our vineyards, experience new vintages at the daily wine-tastings while you sit under the trees partaking of gourmet 'take out' items from the Wine Country Market or retire upstairs to the Vineyard Room for a more elegant meal. Either way you will be intrigued by the possibilities of blending food and wine in the overall dining experience."

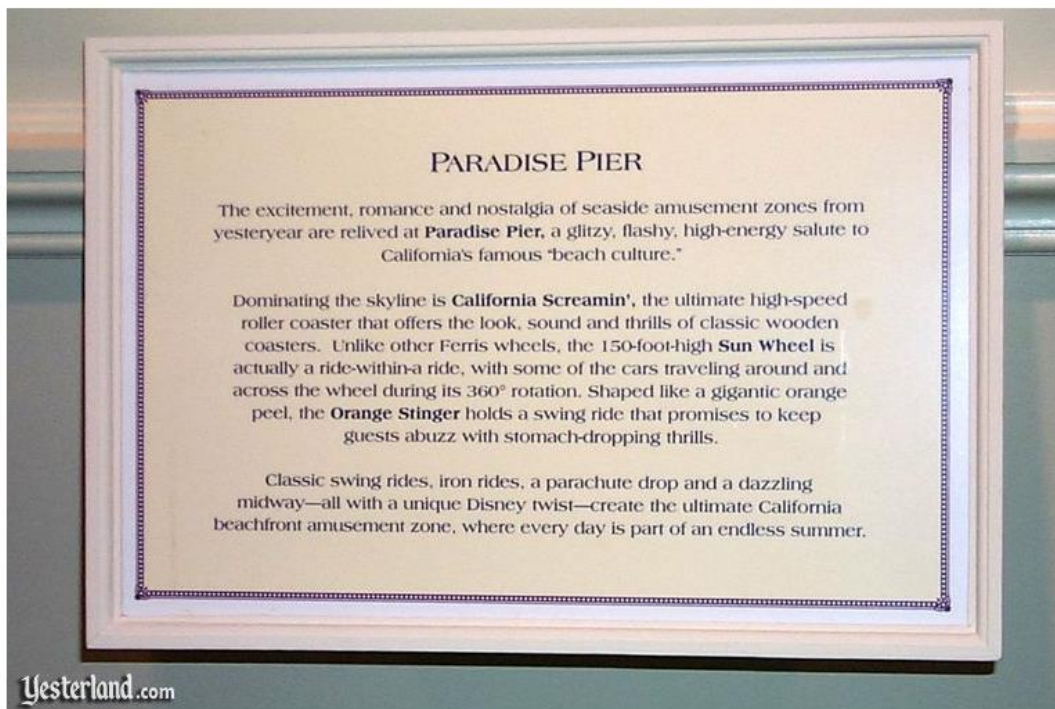


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Paradise Pier

"Add a dash of the bygone days of California's legendary surfside boardwalks to the excitement of a seaside resort and top it off with a heaping helping of Disney magic, and you've got Paradise Pier — a land at Disney's California Adventure™ park dedicated to the fantastic 'Golden Age' of amusement parks, jam-packed with wild attractions, delectable diners and unique shops. It's 'Fun in the Sun for Everyone!'"



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

California Screamin', Sun Wheel, and Orange Stinger

"Imagine a roller coaster modeled after the traditional wooden coasters of the 1920's. Now add a launch that takes you from 0 to 55 miles per hour in under five seconds, a loop-de-loop around a glimmering silhouette of Mickey Mouse's head, over a mile of track reaching heights of 120 feet, and a 108-foot drop at 50 degrees — and you've got California Screamin', the adrenaline rush of the century!"

“Modeled after Coney Island’s 1927 ‘Wonder Wheel,’ Paradise Pier’s Sun Wheel takes Guests on a Ferris wheel-ride high above Disney’s California Adventure™ park. You can play it a bit safer by riding one of the cool stationary gondolas; or for a real thrill, climb into one of the purple-and-orange gondolas, which ride on interior rails so they slide inward and outward with the centrifugal force of the wheel’s rotational movement!”

“Climb into one of the friendly bumblebee cars and buzz off on your swing-ride journey inside this huge, four-story-high California Orange. It even smells like oranges!”

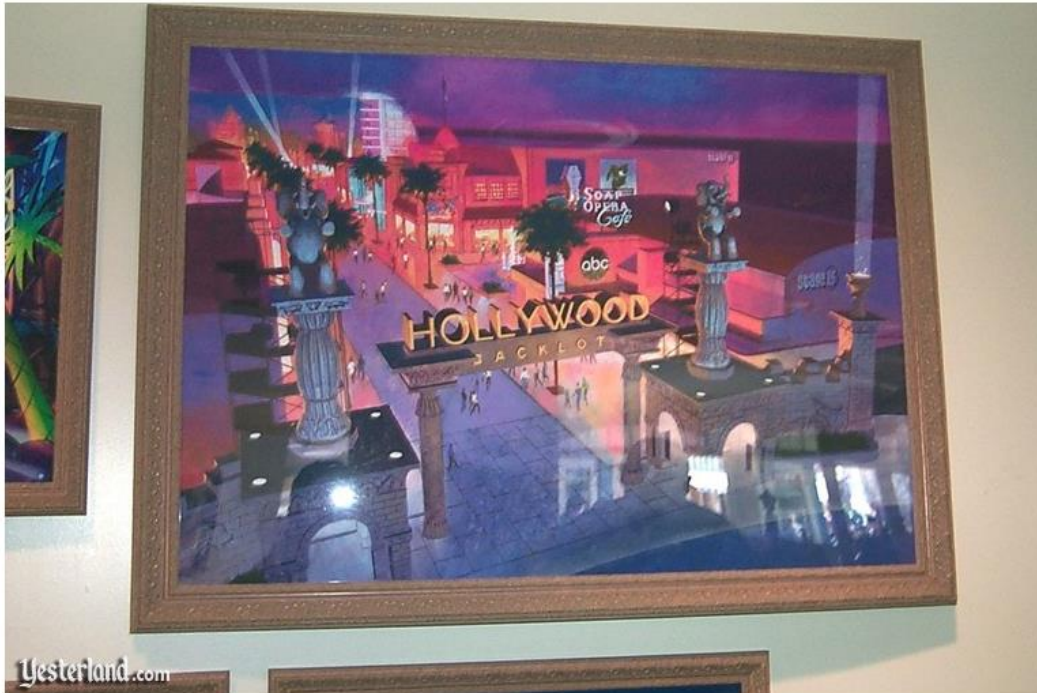


Photo by Tony “WisebearAZ” Moore, 2000

Hollywood Pictures Backlot

“Through the enormous gates, that pay tribute to legendary filmmaker D.W. Griffith, await shimmering Hollywood Boulevard, glitzy cafés and shops, famous theaters and a real studio backlot. It’s all a bustling recreation of the Golden Age of Hollywood, and this time, you’re the star!”



Photo by Tony “WisebearAZ” Moore, 2000

Superstar Limo

“Get ready to be ‘taken for a ride’ through a wacky, whimsical version of Hollywood, where you’re Tinseltown’s biggest new star. You’re late for your movie premiere, but don’t worry — your limo driver knows all the short cuts — or does he?”

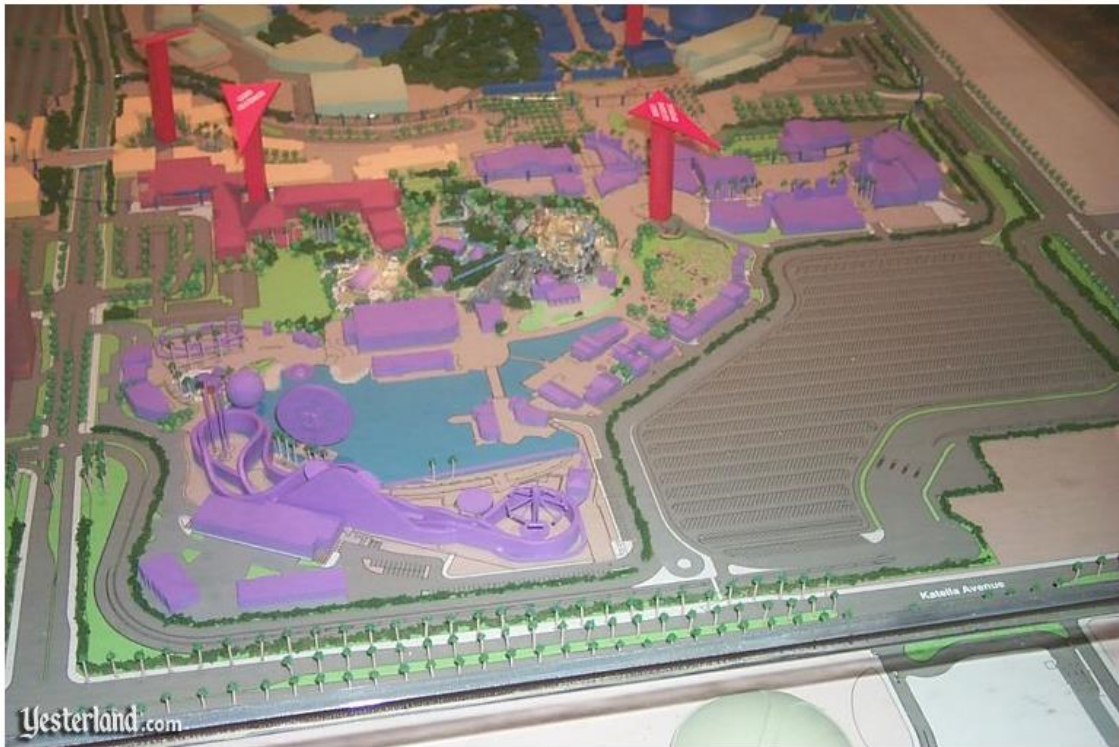


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

California Adventure model

Take a look at the model of the new park. The new buildings and attractions are in purple. The new Grand Californian Resort & Spa is in dark red.

Only one corner of the old parking lot is still left; it's now called the Timon lot. In the future, it will provide space to expand California Adventure. The new park is expected to be wildly popular, so expansion is inevitable. The big question is whether the old park next door will still be able to pull in guests; after all, it's more than 45 years old. How can it compete against the hip and edgy new park?



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

New logo

With two theme parks and three hotels, the old name—Disneyland Park and Hotel—and old logo just won't do. It's now the Disneyland Resort. The old Disneyland logo, with its simple, old-fashioned calligraphy, will still be used for the old park.

The resort has a new logo for a new millennium, featuring the standardized Disney brand logo, just like Disneyland Paris, The Disney Store, Walt Disney World, and The Walt Disney Company itself. Grizzly Mountain shares the spotlight with Sleeping Beauty Castle. In fact, Grizzly Mountain is set against a giant sun that looks like a halo. There's a new park in town!

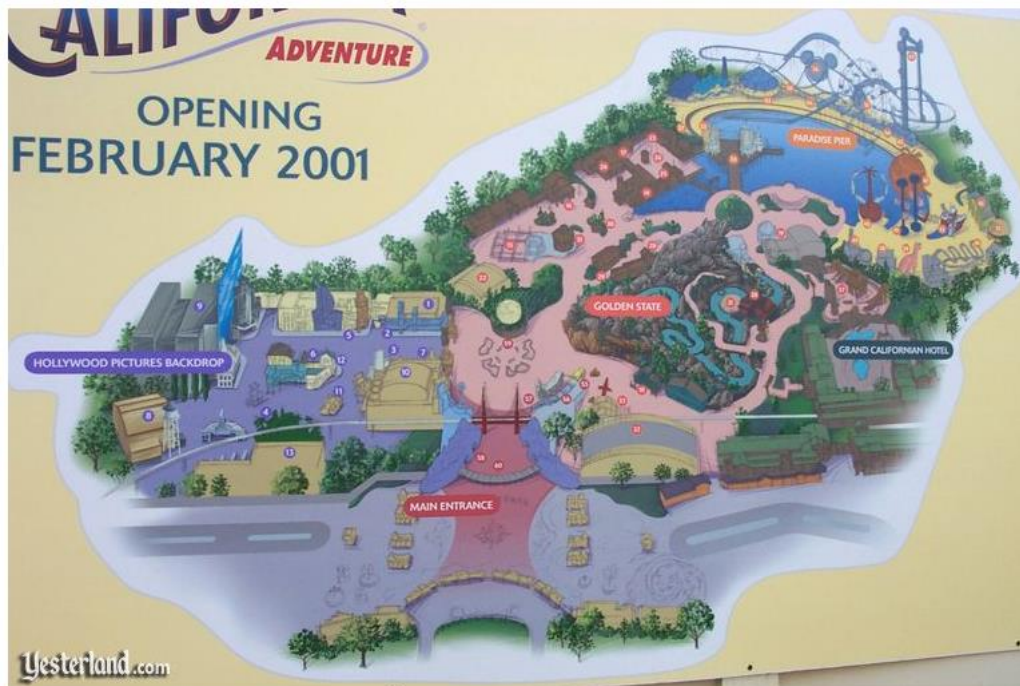


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Map showing the lands of the new park

Take a look at the map of the new park. There are three lands: Golden State, Paradise Pier, and Hollywood Pictures Backdrop.

Backdrop?

That's what the map says, but other displays call it the Hollywood Pictures Backlot.

Now, if you really want to see some cool Imagineering concept art, head over to the Disneyland Pacific Hotel. By the way, it's being renamed the Paradise Pier Hotel and is getting new exterior decorations to make it match the timeless amusement park look of Paradise Pier.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Surf City Wipeout roller coaster?

Do you remember seeing California Screamin' in the Preview Center? Well, here in what appears to be earlier concept art, it's called Surf City Wipeout.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Left half of Route 66 artwork

There's one piece of art that's so wide that you can look at the two halves separately. Take a look at Gerdie's Glasses, in a "California Crazy" building that's no doubt named after animation pioneer Winsor McKay's Gertie the Dinosaur.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Right half of Route 66 artwork

Sue Veneer's Souvenirs shop is next to a Route 66 sign. When the new park opens, we'll have to see how well this part of Paradise Pier captures the feeling of being on the road that ran from Chicago to Santa Monica, before the age of the Interstate Highway System and ubiquitous McDonald's restaurants.



Just keep in mind that the new park is expected to draw huge crowds.

The “Special Preview” display about Disney’s California Adventure opened around the beginning of July 2000 in the exit area from the Main Street Opera House (Mr. Lincoln theater) on Town Square at Disneyland.

There had been three earlier preview centers for the new park. The first two—a display at the Anaheim Museum and then a facility near the Team Disney Anaheim building—were aimed primarily at the population of Anaheim, in hopes of generating community support. The third preview location, a tent by the construction site, even had a platform so that guests could glimpse the work in progress.

It’s interesting how many of the attractions in the Preview Center are now part of Yesterland.

# CALIFORNIA



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

If your child's name begins with the letter C, A, L, I, F, O, R, or N, this park has a perfect photo location for you. Chloe, Aiden, Lily, Isabella, Flynn, Olivia, Ryan, and Noah can pose in front of the glittering gold mirror surface of a giant letter corresponding to his or her name. Sophia, Jackson, Emma, and Mason are out of luck here. Sorry.



Disney publicity photo © 2009 Disney

Entrance inspired by a California postcard

In truth, the giant letters aren't meant to correspond to popular names of children. (Otherwise the letters "J" and "K" would surely be here.)

The letters are the first layer of the California postcard entrance to the park. The second layer is the world's largest ceramic mural, which forms the mountainous backdrop. Next is the Golden Gate Bridge, connecting the two sets of mountains. If you're standing in the right place, the final layer is the golden sun of Sunshine Plaza, shining behind the bridge.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Approaching the park entrance from the west



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Approaching the park entrance from the east



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

From the Monorail

For most guests, however, this isn't a gigantic postcard. It's just the front of a park that looks very different than the nearby older park.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

The back side of letters

The letters aren't as fancy from the back, but you're not supposed to read them backwards. Instead, take a look at the pavement.



Yesterland

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2008

Blue sky pattern overlay for second year of The Year of a Million Dreams, 2008



Yesterland

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2008

Blue "A" photo opportunity

The letters have the magical ability to accept promotional and seasonal overlays. They were gold with a crackle pattern when the park opened, but could be any color and pattern when you visit.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Put a stamp on it...



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Candy cane overlay for the Holiday Season

When it's Christmas at Yester California Adventure, be sure to admire the candy cane stripes.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Reflective surface with candy cane stripes



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Mickey Mouse posing on the letter "C"

For a colorful way to begin your California Adventure visit, admire the rainbow hues of the World of Color overlay.



World of Color overlay

Photo by Chris Bales, 2010



Late at night, when the crowds are gone and you're standing in the right place, it does look like a postcard after all.

The giant CALIFORNIA letters were an original design feature of Disney California Adventure when the park opened in February 2001. They served the park for almost—but not quite—ten years.

The letters were removed in January 2011 to make way for a new entrance to Disney California Adventure.

What would happen to the letters? Although they were not appropriate for the 1920s-era Buena Vista Street entrance Disney California Adventure, they were impressive pieces.



Artist's rendering from press release, May 30, 2012  
Cal Expo: new home for the giant letters

On May 30, 2012, the Disneyland Resort announced the letters' fate:

Anaheim, Calif., May 30, 2012 – The Disneyland Resort donated the iconic “CALIFORNIA” letters previously located in the esplanade at the Disney California Adventure park entrance to the Friends of the California State Fair, a nonprofit organization that benefits California Exposition & State Fair (Cal Expo) in Sacramento, Calif. Cal Expo is the site of the California State Fair and hundreds of other events annually.

“As we near the completion of the Disney California Adventure expansion, it was important to us to find an appropriate home for the ‘CALIFORNIA’ letters,” said Disneyland Resort President George A. Kalogridis. “The letters were very popular with millions of Guests over the past decade, and Cal Expo is a fitting destination to continue their legacy.”

Plans are underway to make the letters an integral part of a new Cal Expo entrance. The “CALIFORNIA” letters will make their way to their new home sometime in late September and will be placed high enough at the entrance to be seen from Exposition Boulevard.

“The Friends of the California State Fair serving Cal Expo is honored to have been selected the recipient of this gift from Disney Resorts. We see this donation, and the relocation of these letters, [as] a continued and fitting tribute to the celebration of this magnificent state,” said Norb J. Bartosik, Cal Expo CEO/General Manager.

Cal Expo is now the fairground for the 18-day California State Fair, the 5-day Sacramento County Fair, and other annual events. But the State of California once had a grand vision for the 1,063-acre former sheep pasture.

As described by the Los Angeles Times on March 10, 1968, Cal Expo was supposed to be “the Disneyland of the North,” with an unprecedented scope for a state fair:

A \$34 million year-round exposition is rising on the banks of the American River four miles from the [Sacramento] Capitol.

No other state has ever embarked on a project quite like it.

Planned to have the size and magnitude of a world's fair, Cal Expo will deal solely with the exciting, widely diversified kaleidoscope of but one state.

Plans called for a wide range of attractions, including a 26-acre themed amusement park ("planned as a sugar-coated lesson in geography"), a 5-acre Teen Island ("where boys and girls will be able to thump their guitars as loud as they wish"), Fiesta Island ("where a gourmet restaurant will be surrounded by tasting booths spotlighting California wines, cheeses and fruits"), a 34-acre lake, and "several miles of inland waterways." Expo Center would offer "a simulated flight by helicopter... from Crescent City to Calexico."

Reading the descriptions now, Cal Expo comes across as a 1968 version of Disney California Adventure—complete with an early take on Soarin' Over California.



Photo by Scott Boccia, 2013

Cal Expo, the new home for the letters (2013)

The California Legislature had approved Cal Expo in 1963 based on a feasibility study by Disney Legend Harrison "Buzz" Price's Economic Research Associates. Price is best known for guiding Walt Disney in the site selection for Disneyland and Walt Disney World, and analyzing whether they would be economically viable. But Price had a long list of other clients.

Cal Expo even boasted two executives with Disneyland credentials.

Eugene R. "Doc" Lemmon, Cal Expo's first general manager, had been Director of Operations at Disneyland from 1956 until 1961, when he left to become the general manager of Cedar Point in Ohio.

Louis H. Roth, Cal Expo's first director of design and construction, worked for Disney Legend Joe Fowler as project engineer for construction at Disneyland and was in charge of the Disney exhibits at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. You can see his name on a window above the Market House on Disneyland's Main Street: "Carpenters & Joiners, Surveying & Engineering, L.H. Roth."

The first phase of Cal Expo opened on July 1, 1968, hosting the 58-day maiden run of the California State Fair at its new location. The more ambitious elements of Cal Expo were supposed to open in 1969. Plans called for a year-round exposition by 1970.

That's not what happened.

By the end of September 1968, "Doc" Lemmon had resigned—before the Cal Expo board could fire him. What had been promised as a "pay as you go" project had instead run up a \$1.5 million deficit from just the 58-day State Fair run, because the actual revenue and attendance were much lower than projected.

Once again, Cal Expo was compared to Disneyland, only now it was a politician calling it "a second-rate Disneyland."

Cal Expo never became a year-round attraction.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, August 4, 2000

Beginning construction of the California Adventure entrance letters in 2000



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, November 10, 2000

Three months before the grand opening

The two construction photos bring us back to the other major California-themed attraction—the one that opened in Anaheim in 2001. It also started on the wrong foot. It was also characterized as a “a second-rate Disneyland.”

Fortunately, that one has now turned into something rather wonderful.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2017

Disney California Adventure entrance in 2017

# LARGEST CERAMIC MURAL



Approaching the park entrance

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Yester California Adventure is the only theme park that you enter by walking into a postcard—a huge postcard. And that doesn't mean a big, flat mega-billboard that looks like a postcard. It means a three-dimensional space that looks like a giant postcard from a distance.

Well, not really.

When you're actually there, it doesn't look much like a postcard. It looks like a large, three-dimensional space with big letters spelling California. Chances are you're approaching it from one side or the other, because that's where the parking lot trams are. So the postcard elements don't line up. And you're focused on getting to the turnstiles so that you can enter the park.



A California postcard!

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

But if you know it's supposed to look like a postcard, and you stand in the right place, and you frame a shot with your camera just right, you can wind up with a photo that looks somewhat like a classic California picture postcard!

Cool, eh?



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Main Gate

Don't be in too much of a hurry to get through a turnstile so you can rush off to Superstar Limo or the Orange Stinger.

The colorful art "mountains" on either side of the main gate aren't painted. They are magnificent ceramic murals. In fact, you're between the two halves of the largest ceramic mural in the world.

Ceramic is a very durable material, and the colors don't fade the way paint does. This mural should last for generations!

Take some time to admire the details. It's quite a nice work of art.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

### Wawona Tree, Yosemite

There really was a tree you could drive through at Yosemite National Park. It was the Wawona Tree at Mariposa Grove. The mighty sequoia was over 2,000 years old in 1881 when a 7-foot-wide tunnel was built through it as a tourist attraction. That was nine years before Yosemite became a National Park. Somehow, the Wawona Tree lived for another 88 years before it toppled over in 1969. One reason for its demise was a severe winter. The other reason was that a normal, healthy sequoia doesn't have an automobile tunnel through its trunk.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

### Catalina Casino in Avalon, Catalina Island

Now sing along...

Twenty-six miles across the sea  
Santa Catalina is a-waitin' for me  
Santa Catalina, the island of romance, romance, romance

The landmark Catalina Casino opened in 1929 at Avalon Harbor on Catalina Island. In this case, casino does not mean a gambling hall. It's a word that Italians use for a social gathering place. In fact, casino comes from the diminutive form of casa (house). But the Catalina Casino is anything but diminutive. It's 140 feet tall—just 7 feet shorter than Disneyland's Matterhorn Mountain—and contains a magnificent single-screen movie theater with 1,184 seats, a huge circular ballroom above it, and a museum.



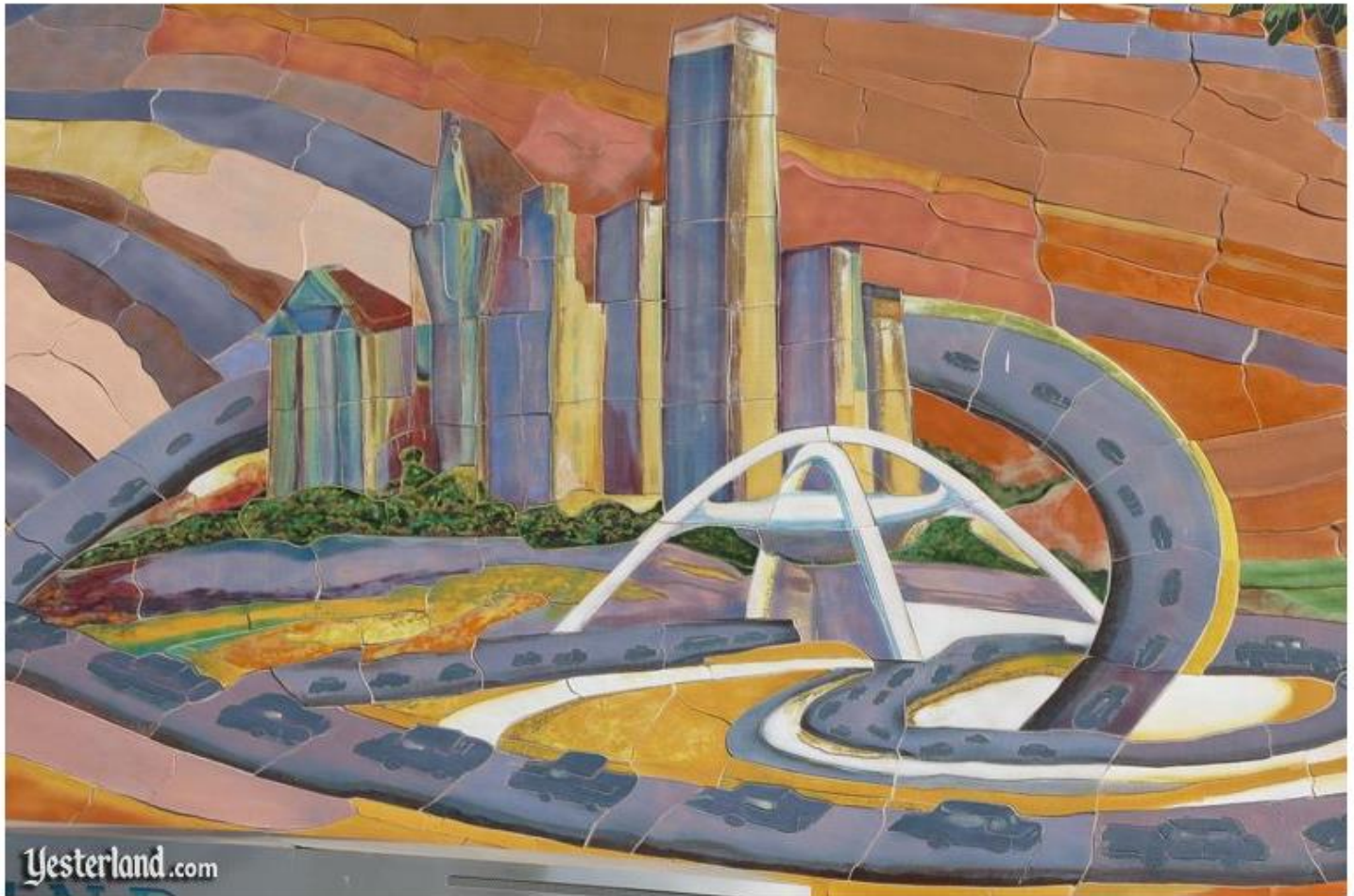


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

## Los Angeles

Los Angeles is represented by its soaring downtown skyline, the iconic Theme Building at Los Angeles International Airport, and the ubiquitous freeways. The futuristic Theme Building, designed by the architectural firm of Pereira & Luckman, opened in 1961 as the centerpiece of the airport's new terminal complex.

There's even a Disney connection. In 1997, after a \$4 million interior update designed by Walt Disney Imagineering, the retro-futuristic Encounter Restaurant replaced the tired Theme Restaurant in the "space age" landmark. Sadly, Encounter closed permanently at the end of 2013.

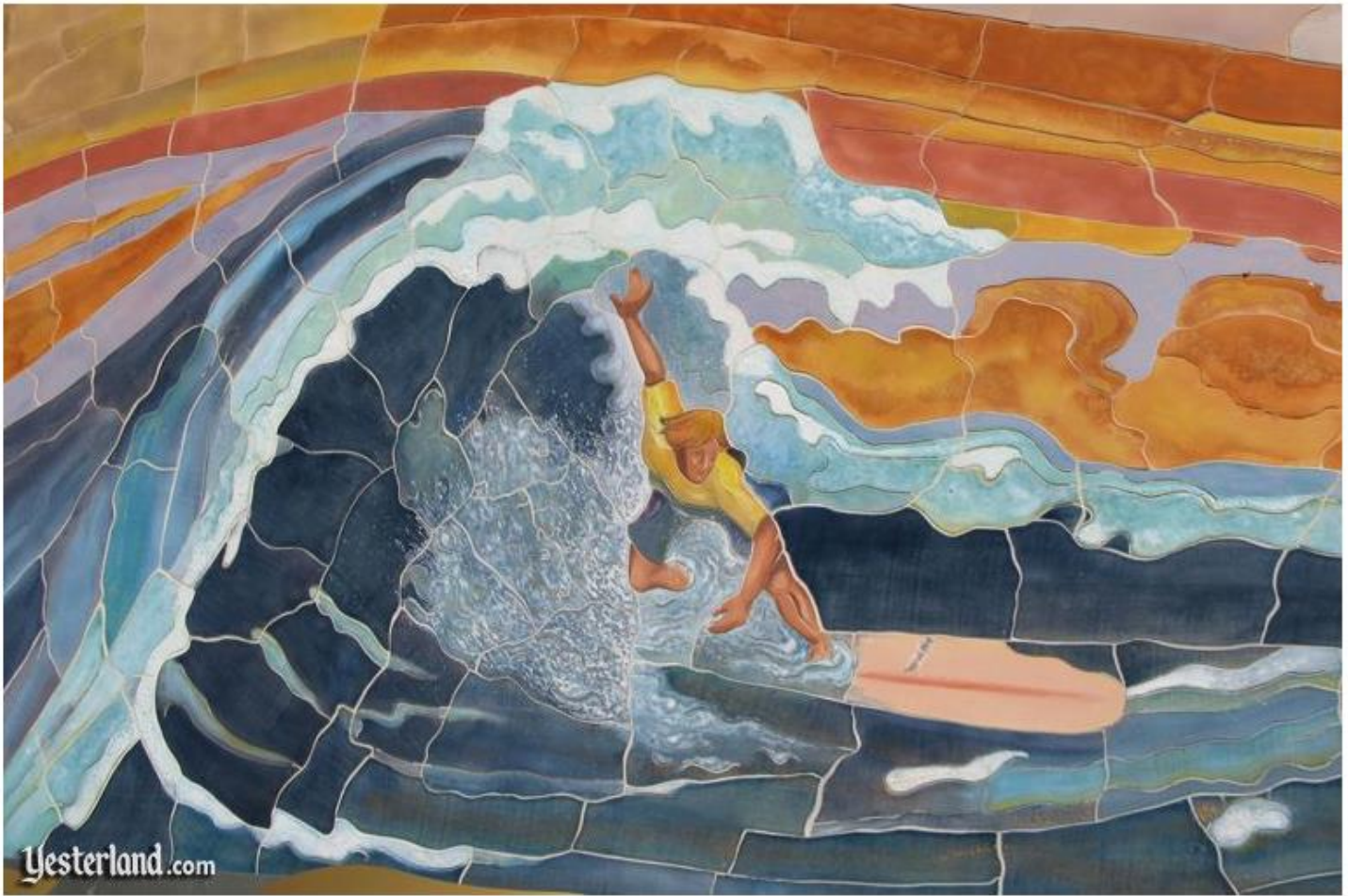


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

### Surfer

Surfing may have started as the sport of Hawaiian kings, but historians of surfing (yes, there are such historians) report that the history of surfing in California goes back to 1885. That's when three Hawaiian princes brought the sport to Santa Cruz, California, during their summer break from their school, St. Matthew's Hall in San Mateo. Legendary Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku surfed San Diego's Ocean Beach in 1916. But surfing in California really caught on in the 1950s—around the time that Disneyland opened—and its popularity has been increasing ever since then. California even has four museums devoted to surfing.

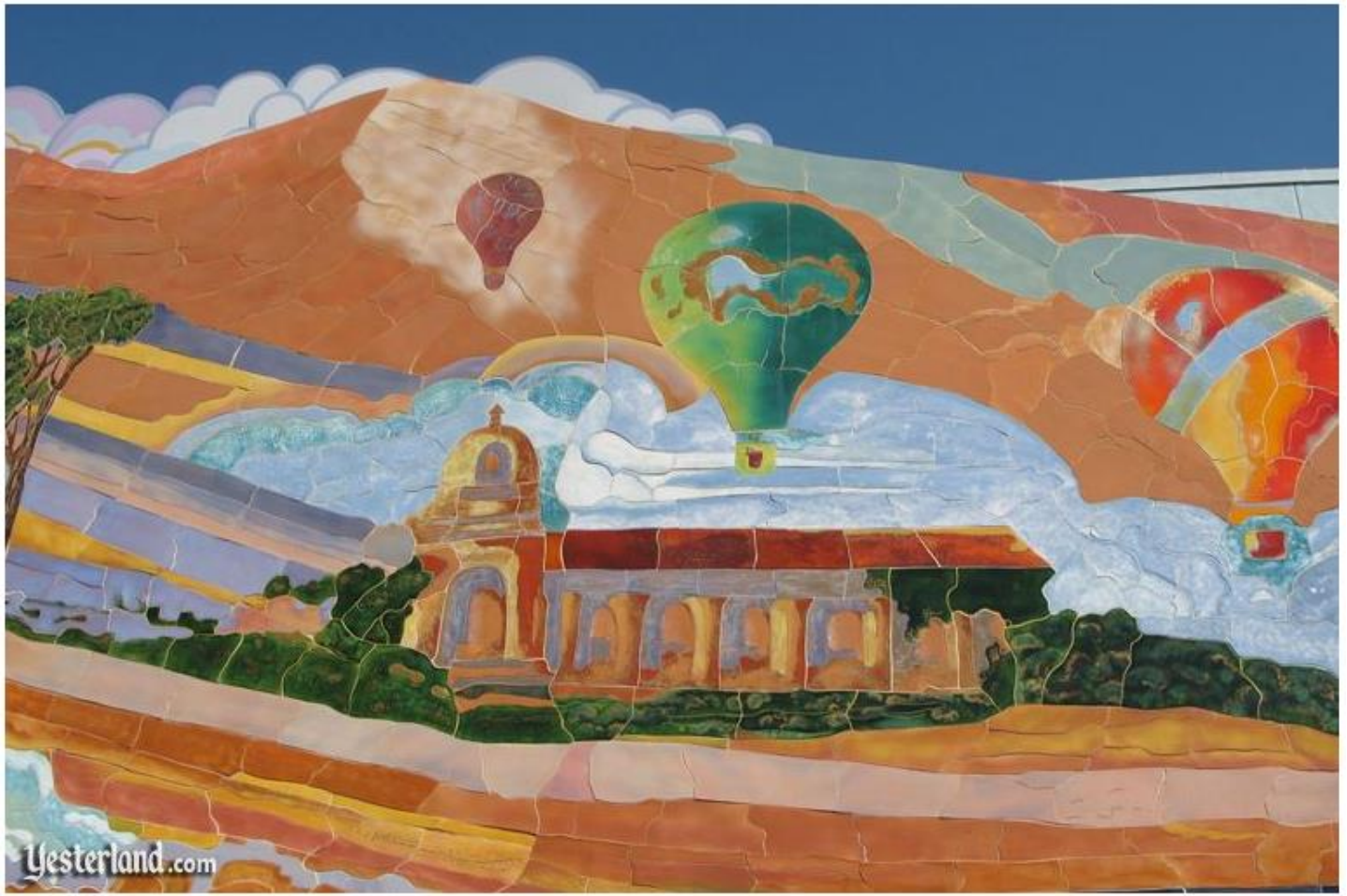


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

### California Mission and a Balloon Festival

Every California schoolchild learns about Father Junipero Serra (1713-1784), who founded California's first nine Spanish missions beginning in 1769. By 1823, there were 21 missions, stretching from San Diego to Sonoma.

California has several hot air balloon festivals each year, such as the Temecula Valley Balloon and Wine Festival.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

### The Lone Cypress Tree and a Sea Otter

The Lone Cypress Tree is not just the logo of the Pebble Beach Golf Links. It's an actual tree, dramatically perched on a rocky cliff jutting into the Pacific Ocean. You can see this landmark tree along the scenic 17 Mile Drive between Carmel and Pacific Grove. Sea otters really do live in the waters below the tree, although it's hard to see them from the shore. To see them, head to the nearby Monterey Bay Aquarium instead.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

## San Francisco

San Francisco is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, even if this isn't the most beautiful part of the ceramic mural. The landmarks represented here include the skyline, Victorian homes, Chinatown, Lombard Street, the Palace of Fine Arts, and something else. The "something else" might be a dragon. Or it might be a pile of food. Or perhaps—although this makes no sense—it could be animal innards.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

### California State Route 1

One of the most dramatic parts of California State Route 1, the road along California's coastline, is the Bixby Creek Bridge in Big Sur. Completed in 1932, the reinforced concrete arch bridge offers great views of the rugged coast. The real Bixby Creek Bridge does not cross a deep blue bay, and is not flanked by massive waterfalls.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Deer jumping across the entrance barrier

Stop those deer! They're jumping across the barrier into the park without a ticket. California has a lot of people, but it also has a lot of wildlife.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Sea Lions

Speaking of wildlife, it's only fitting to include a species that has the state as part of its name. It's the California Sea Lion (*Zalophus californianus*).



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

### Pelicans and Whales

Now sing along...

California, here I come  
Right back where I started from  
Where bowers of flowers bloom in the spring  
Each morning at dawning, birdies sing at everything  
A sun-kissed miss said, "Don't be late!"  
That's why I can hardly wait  
Open up that Golden Gate  
California, here I come!

The picture postcard entrance, with the "the Largest Ceramic Mural in the World," was part of Disney's California Adventure when the park opened in February 2001.

The Imagineers who designed the entrance wanted to do something dramatic and different. At the time that Disney's California Adventure was being designed, Tim Delaney had the role of Creative Director, Producer & Field Art Director of the Entrance Complex & Paradise Pier. Tim Delaney now has his own design firm. His firm's website proudly describes the entrance design:

Tim created the design and led the team of the main entrance complex for Disney's California Adventure to read like a picture postcard from "Sunny California." Welcoming you are giant letters lined in glittering gold mirrors spelling out CALIFORNIA. He included rich icons from the Golden State such as the Golden Gate Bridge—with a monorail gliding across it, the Sun Icon and Wave Fountain, and twin ceramic tile murals representing imagery from Northern and Southern California.



Artists Theodora Kurkchiev and Dimitri Lazaroff of TND Studio, Inc. in San Pedro created the spectacular ceramic mural. They're the same artists who created the fountain at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach and the largest 3D mosaic in the world at Tokyo Disney Sea.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Blank concrete walls during park construction



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Partial installation of the ceramic mural



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2000

Completing a section of the mural

It must have seemed like a good idea to do something original and artistic to welcome guests into the California-themed park. Unfortunately, the result came across as rather cold. Even though the mural was probably very costly, it came across as cheap-looking—mere decorations on walls.

The ceramic mural was a great work of monumental art by talented artists—but it was in the wrong place. If it had decorated a prominent spot at an airport or convention center, it might have become a beloved and respected landmark.

Not far away from the entrance to Disney's California Adventure, the entrance to Disneyland Park provides a warm, welcoming experience. Tunnels on either side of an old-fashioned railroad station take guests back in time to a town square at the turn of the 20th century.

Some of the original designers of Disneyland, such as Harper Goff and Marvin Davis, came from the world of motion picture art direction. Their studio jobs had been to create believable, detailed exteriors and interiors for movies that would transport viewers to other places and times. Others, such as Ken Anderson and Herb Ryman, came from animation, where, beginning with blank sheets of paper, entire worlds are brought to life. These designers used their skills to create immersive environments for Disneyland guests. Somehow, they and their boss, Walt Disney, knew instinctively that it wouldn't be enough just to apply decorations to walls.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Excerpt from a map of Disney's California Adventure (© Disney)

When plans for the \$1.1 billion redo of Disney's California Adventure were announced in late 2007, artwork and a model showed that the entrance complex, including the ceramic murals, would be replaced by a streetscape representing Los Angeles when a young Walt Disney arrived from Kansas City with dreams and little else.

A montage on the exterior of Blue Sky Cellar, the park's preview gallery, described Buena Vista Street:

The new entrance to the Park, this is 1920s Los Angeles as Walt Disney experienced it... the charming and enterprising merchants, the tantalizing restaurants, the grand Carthay Circle Theatre, and the jaunty Red Car Trolley to take you where you want to go. Buena Vista Street is a reflection of the energy, optimism, personality and stories of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from across the country and around the world who came to California with just pennies in their pocket, but a wealth of dreams.

After the end of the busy summer 2010 season, serious work began on the entrance complex. On Internet message boards, fans hoped that giant mural would be relocated. But that really wasn't an option. The mural, with large pieces of fragile ceramic cemented permanently to concrete walls, was designed to last for a long time—but not to be dismantled and moved.

In October 2010, demolition of the ceramic murals began. It must have been painful for Kurkchiev and Lazaroff to see their art destroyed.



Oswald's on Buena Vista Street



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

### Buena Vista Street façade for the restrooms

When Buena Vista Street opened June 15, 2012, park guests were delighted. Where the ceramic mural had once covered both sides of the entrance lane, charming façades evoked Los Angeles in 1923. Behind those façades, the shop interiors continued the theme.

But one piece of DCA 1.0 survived—and it also involved ceramic tiles. The men's and women's rooms in the Sepulveda building are the original bathrooms from 2001—with their original decorative tiles.

# GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

The world's best known bridges include Tower Bridge in London, Brooklyn Bridge in New York, and Sydney Harbour Bridge in Sydney. But perhaps the most famous and iconic of all is the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

But you don't have to go to San Francisco to see it. Here at Yester California Adventure, the Golden Gate Bridge is just beyond the park entrance.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

California Adventure's Golden Gate Bridge at night

Just like the real Golden Gate Bridge, the theme park version's towers, cables, and deck are a bright color called international orange. Whether bathed in sunlight, shrouded in fog, or glowing from nighttime illumination, the distinctive color assures that mighty spans will capture your attention. The two towers look simple and functional at first, but a closer look shows beautiful Art Deco details.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

The view from the front of the Monorail

Instead of carrying six lanes of traffic with a sidewalk on each side, this replica of the Golden Gate Bridge carries one Monorail beam—or, more accurately, it hides one Monorail beam. In fact, it's not really a suspension bridge.

It's a decoration.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

The San Francisco mural next to San Francisco's most famous bridge

The bridge is one of the elements designed to make the entrance to this park look like a giant postcard.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Sign about the Golden Gate Bridge near the San Francisco part of the mural

To be honest, nobody will mistake this Golden Gate Bridge for the one that opened in 1937. It doesn't look much like the real thing. Sure, it has two towers, international orange paint, and details that resemble the real thing.

Not surprisingly, the size is different; that's to be expected at a theme park.

But the proportions are completely different too. The towers here are much taller than the length of the span, giving the bridge a squished look. The biggest difference is that instead of connecting two peninsulas across a body of water, this span goes over a walkway between two gift shops.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Rivets

Even so, some of details are impressive—such as the pattern of rivets.



Yesterland.com

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Under the bridge



Yesterland.com

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Looking up from under the bridge

If it rains when you visit the park, you won't be able to stay dry by standing under the bridge.





Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Bridge as a place to display banners

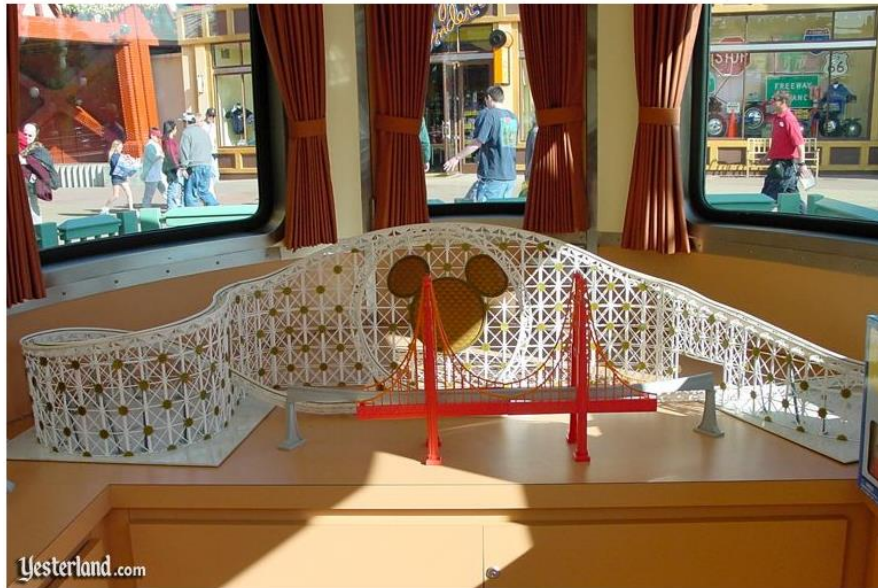
This Golden Gate Bridge serves another function in addition to hiding the Monorail beam. It's also a place to hang advertising banners. Almost all guests entering or leaving the park will see the banner. (The only guests who can avoid it are those using the private entrance from the hotel.)



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Golden wreath on the Golden Gate Bridge

Over the holidays, festive golden decorations dress up this Golden Gate Bridge. You won't see that on the San Francisco version.



For your toy Monorail set

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Don't forget to buy a Golden Gate Bridge for your toy Monorail set. Then your toy Monorail will resemble the real one at the park—just as the toy California Screamin' set resembles the real thing, with its giant Mickey Mouse decoration within the loop.

The Golden Gate Bridge at Disney's California Adventure (now Disney California Adventure) opened with the park in 2001.

At Disneyland Park, guests entering the park pass under a charming, old-fashioned railroad station. The station introduces Main Street, U.S.A.

In comparison, at California Adventure, guests entered by passing a series of decorations—the giant twin tile murals, the Golden Gate Bridge, the cartoony storefronts of Engine-ear Toys and Greetings from California, and the Sun Icon and Wave Fountain. These decorations didn't create a sense of being immersed in a different time or place.

The real Golden Gate Bridge is not only a California landmark; it's also a stunningly beautiful, world-famous engineering marvel. The bridge, a part of U.S. Highway 101 and California Route 1, links San Francisco to Marin County across the Golden Gate Strait, entrance to San Francisco Bay, one of the great natural harbors of the world.



Real Golden Gate Bridge from the San Francisco side

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



# SUNSHINE PLAZA



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

Please don't call it the Hubcap. Sure, it's at the hub of this theme park, and it's a bulging, round, decorative object, much like the bowl-like disks that hide the lug nuts on old automobile wheels.

But it has a real name. It's the Sun Icon.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Sun Icon

And please don't confuse it with the other big sun at this park. The other one is the Sun Wheel, which is bigger, has a face, and is part of the ride.



Yesterland.com

photo © Disney

PR image © Disney

“A California Postcard”

The Sun Icon is part of something bigger too—the California Postcard entrance to Yester California Adventure. Huge letters spell the name of the state in front of the largest ceramic mural in the world and the Golden Gate Bridge. The California Sun shines at the center of the “postcard.”

More accurately, the Sun Icon is supposed to shine. However, the Sun Icon faces north, so it’s backlit by the real sun.



Yesterland

Photo by Tony “WisebearAZ” Moore, 2002

The California sun at the center of the “postcard”

The Sun Icon in its own shadow would not look good, so there’s a solution. Giant reflectors follow the real sun and reflect sunlight onto the Sun Icon. Pretty cool idea, eh?



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Reflectors on the north side of Sunshine Plaza



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Reflectors on the south side of Sunshine Plaza

Too bad the reflector system usually doesn't work.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Wave Fountain between waves

There's a fountain at the base of the Sun Icon, and it's really a terrific fountain. Throw a coin in the fountain and make a wish. Your money will be put to good use.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Supporting good causes



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Wave crashing at the Wave Fountain



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

X for the X Games Xperience

You never know what you'll see in Sunshine Plaza.

Perhaps you'll see a big letter X advertising the X Games Xperience, an extreme sports demonstration.





Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Chef Showcase Stage for the California Food and Wine Festival

Or maybe you can catch a culinary demonstration in the Chef Showcase Stage tent during the California Food & Wine Festival.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

High School Musical 3 Pep Rally

Would you like to see a live show based on High School Musical 3: Senior Year? Just follow the incredibly loud music.



Glow Fest

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

If it's around dusk during Glow Fest, catch a colorful, high-energy show.



Side photo of the Sun Icon

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

The photo above is a rare side view of the Sun Icon. But the next photo will make you say "ooh!" and "ahh!"

And now, the moment you've all been waiting for... the amazing... the colossal... the stupendous... the eighth wonder of the world... the backside of the sun!



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

The backside of the sun!

Yes, just head around the corner to Bountiful Valley Farm. From here, you can see the other side of the Sun Icon, or at least the top of it. And because this side of the Sun Icon faces south, you might even see it bathed in sunlight.

The Sun Icon and Wave Fountain at Sunshine Plaza lasted from the February 2001 opening of Disney's California Adventure until their removal in September 2010 to make way for construction of the Carthay Circle Theatre.

Here's how the official website for Disney's California Adventure described Sunshine Plaza when the park opened:

The portal to all the major areas of Disney's California Adventure park, the Sunshine Plaza is also a prime location for guests to rest or catch a parade. The plaza's centerpiece is a 50-foot-tall sun (sitting atop a perpetual wave fountain), which glistens during the day and is lit by a dazzling spectacle of red, orange and yellow lights at night.



Concept art © Disney

Concept art for the "California Postcard" entrance to Disney's California Adventure

The “California Postcard” was an interesting concept, but it’s questionable how many guests realized they were walking into a giant postcard. Regardless of whether they understood the Imagineers’ intent, Sunshine Plaza failed to resonate with guests on either an emotional or aesthetic level. The unremarkable Sun Icon was “nice,” but hardly an iconic centerpiece for a Disney theme park. The more remarkable Wave Fountain might have worked well in another setting, but was lost in the hodgepodge of Sunshine Plaza.



Concept art for the Sun icon

The Sun Icon lacked the charm of Sleeping Beauty Castle, the splendor of Cinderella Castle, the grandeur of Spaceship Earth, the authenticity of Grauman’s Chinese Theatre, or the creativity and artistry of the Tree of Life.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Sunshine Plaza, the original “hub” of the park

After website editor Al Lutz previewed the new park in January 2001, he wrote, “The icon for the park, their Castle I guess, is a giant metal sun that looks like either a rather glitzy hubcap—or as one older couple I overheard say—like a jumbo-sized old radio microphone.”

From that point on, “the Hubcap” became a common nickname for the Sun Icon. It was short, catchy, and descriptive. Many of the people who called it that probably had no idea of its real name.

In the same article, Lutz also offered his opinion of the Wave Fountain: “The one really outstanding feature of the Sun Icon area is the fountain under it—it creates waves that are shot up behind it in patterns. I liked this a lot.”



Trademarks of The Walt Disney Company, circa 2001

Original logos for California Adventure and the whole Disneyland Resort

Although the Sun Icon had Icon as part of its name, it was not used as the icon of the park. That honor went to Grizzly Peak—the mountain that looks like the head of the extinct state animal of California, the California grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos californicus*). The original logos for Disney's California Adventure and the two-park Disneyland Resort both featured Grizzly Peak. Although both logos included a sun, there was no attempt to make it look like the Sun Icon.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Sun Icon and Grizzly Peak

Grizzly Peak survived the \$1.1 billion makeover of the park and should remain part of Disney California Adventure well into the future. But Grizzly Peak is not part of the current park or resort logo.



Photo by RW, 2010

Dismantling the Sun Icon

Sunshine Plaza and all that surrounded it—including the Sun Icon, the Wave Fountain, the California Zephyr, and the Greetings from California souvenir store —did not survive the \$1.1 billion makeover.



Carthay Circle Theater at Disney California Adventure

The 89-foot-tall Carthay Circle Theater at Disney California Adventure is a perfect complement to the 77-foot-tall Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland Park.

# CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Trains and theme parks are a perfect match. At Disneyland, real steam locomotives pull open-air passenger coaches around the perimeter of the park—complete with a trip into the world of dinosaurs. At Knott's Berry Farm, guests enjoy rides in historical coaches, often pulled by the restored "Old 41" locomotive built in 1881.

California Adventure has a train too. It's the California Zephyr. This sleek, streamlined beauty represents a different era than those steam trains.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Cab of the park's California Zephyr





Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

With the Golden Gate Bridge



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

With Condor Flats and the Taste Pilots' Grill

Although Amtrak has a train called the California Zephyr traveling between the San Francisco Bay Area and Chicago, the train here at the park looks like the fabled California Zephyr of the 1950s and 1960s. The mighty diesel locomotive is painted in the colors of the Western Pacific Railroad, one of the three railroads that operated the California Zephyr back then.

The number on the cab—804-A—was the number on the final westbound California Zephyr from Chicago when it arrived in Oakland on March 20, 1970.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Neon on the observation car at the rear of the train

The two stainless steel coaches of this California Zephyr are in the tradition of those manufactured by The Budd Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The rear car is a vista dome observation car. Just think of the great view.

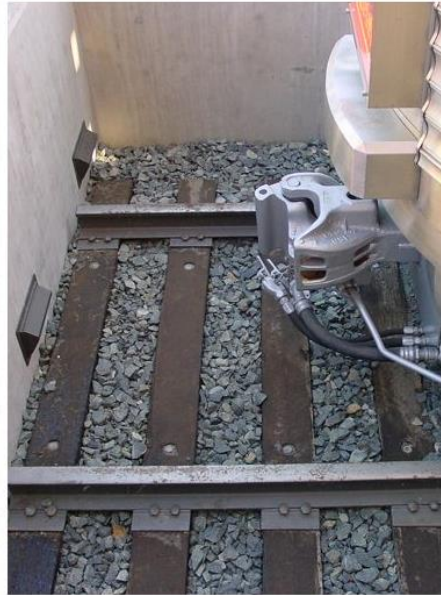


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

Information kiosk at the railroad station

You're in luck. The California Zephyr is waiting for you at the station. The station's Spanish Mission style tower is inspired by the Santa Fe Depot in downtown San Diego. Are you ready to board?

Actually, there's no hurry. The train won't leave without you.



Track in front of the train (left) and track behind the train (right)

There's a big difference between the California Zephyr and the trains at Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. The California Zephyr doesn't move. For one thing, it doesn't have an operational locomotive. But, even if it did, there's essentially no track.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Two eateries and a store

It's not a real train.

The California Zephyr is a faux train that serves as a clever building façade, forming entrances to three shops. The locomotive is the entrance to Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream, Behind it, the “Silver Platter” dining car is the entrance to Baker’s Field Bakery. At the rear of the train, the “Silver Crescent” vista dome observation car is the side entrance to Engine-Ears Toys.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Train platform directional signage

If you're looking for ice cream, coffee, baked good, toys, and other souvenirs, you've come to the right place. But if you're looking for a train ride, you can't get one here.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Inside Baker's Field Bakery

A mural behind the counter at Baker's Field Bakery suggests how wonderful the view must have been as the California Zephyr crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The train in the mural is longer than the train outside, but the locomotive should look familiar.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Historical memorabilia from the real California Zephyr

Don't miss the display of artifacts from the real California Zephyr. When you're at a theme park running from ride to ride, it's easy to miss such details. But these pieces are worthy of being displayed in a museum.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Wide entrance to Engine-Ears Toy through the vista dome observation car

Step inside Engine-Ears Toys. It's the second largest shop in the whole park.

It may seem odd that the train is facing the way it is. Wouldn't the engine make a better entrance to Engine-Ears Toys? And wouldn't it be great if there were seating in the observation car so that you could savor your ice cream while enjoying the fantasy of traveling aboard a legendary train?



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Toys for sale inside the vista dome observation car

There would only be one problem with having the engine facing the park's biggest store, Greetings from California. Because there can be no track heading into the busy walkway, it would weaken the illusion that this is a train ready to depart for Chicago, and not just a building façade. Of course, there's no track in front of the engine facing the other way either, but it's not quite as obvious.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

*Chugga Chugga Chugga*

The engine of the California Zephyr serves as the setting for Chugga Chugga Chugga. A conductor and an engineer share railroad stories and songs.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

### California Zephyr at night

Okay, so it's not a real train. But it's one of the best designed and executed elements of Yester California Adventure.

The California Zephyr and its railroad station were part of Disney's California Adventure when the park opened in February 2001.

Chugga Chugga Chugga, the little show that used the California Zephyr as its backdrop, had a short run in 2002.

Only the locomotive cab was an actual historical artifact. Although Disney's Imagineers numbered the train as 804-A, it's not the actual 804-A that rolled into Oakland on the final run of the old California Zephyr in 1970. (That locomotive was wrecked in 1972.)

The origin of the locomotive cab has been a subject of discussion among rail enthusiasts, with conflicting explanations. Steve DeGaetano, author of *Welcome Aboard the Disneyland Railroad!* and *From Plantation to Theme Park: The Story of Disneyland Railroad Locomotive No. 5, the Ward Kimball*, tracked down the real story. The F7Au class GFA-17a locomotive was originally built in 1952 by General Motors Diesel, the Canadian subsidiary of the Electro Motive Division of General Motors, as locomotive 9104. It operated for the Canadian National Railroad. In 1973, it was rebuilt as number 9165 and continued to be used by Canadian National until finally being retired in 1989. Disney's Imagineers found it at National Railway Equipment in Dixmoor, Illinois, where it had been since 1990.

When it arrived in California from Illinois, the locomotive cab was a sad, battered remnant of a once great locomotive. The cab was lovingly restored to look like a Western Pacific EMD F7 locomotive. The rear of the locomotive and the stainless steel coaches were skillfully designed and built for the park to form a complete train—although a rather short one.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

### The odd use of two entirely different styles for Engine-Ears Toys

While the rest of the park's entrance complex made no effort to recreate a historical time period and California location, the faux train and the information kiosk "tower" at least made an effort.

Unfortunately, despite the excellent work that went into the train, the overall effort came across as half-hearted. The information kiosk, train platform, and the boxy retail building behind the train failed to look like a real railroad station. It didn't help that the other façade of Engine-Ears Toys, just around the corner from the observation car, consisted of gaudy graphics attached to a large yellow wall. The "tower" failed to look like a real railroad station tower because it was too short and not attached to a station building.





Photo by Chris Bales, 2011

The California Zephyr in its final months, after the removal of the “tower” and shade structures

In 2007, Disney announced that over a billion dollars would be invested to improve Disney’s California Adventure. Part of the plan called for transforming the entrance complex into Buena Vista Street, a commercial street in a Los Angeles neighborhood of the 1920s, when young, ambitious Walt Disney first arrived from Kansas City.

Even though Walt Disney arrived in Los Angeles by train, there was no way to pass off the California Zephyr that ran from 1949 to 1970 as the old Super Chief of the 1920s. Also, if the faux train looked lost in the hodge-podge of the original Sunshine Plaza entrance area, it would look even more out-of-place had it remained as part of the carefully designed Buena Vista Street. (A commercial street in Los Feliz or Atwater of the 1920s would not have had a long-distance train parked on it.)

After the 2007 announcement, the California Zephyr, Baker’s Field Bakery, Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream, and Engine-Ears Toys lasted almost four more years. Their final day was July 31, 2011 (although the information kiosk and train shed already disappeared back in May 2011). Construction walls went up. The train left the station.



Photo © Disney 2011

### Removing the historical part of the train

The Disneyland Resort donated the authentic cab and memorabilia to the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, California. Disney's California Zephyr, which had not moved for over a decade, made one more trip—at least the locomotive cab did. It arrived at the museum by truck on August 6, to become part of the museum's Zephyr Project collection.

A Disneyland press release on August 9, 2011, quoted Disneyland Resort President George A. Kalogridis about the donation:

“Walt Disney’s love of trains made this donation perfectly fitting. The expansion of Disney California Adventure Park provided the opportunity for us to make this meaningful donation and we are thrilled the train will offer museum visitors and train enthusiasts an immersive experience, much like it did here.”

The press release went on to explain how the Western Pacific Railroad Museum would use the donated elements:

Visitors to the museum will learn about the history of the famous 1950s passenger train through the donated artifacts, while the recreated locomotive will offer the chance to experience what it was like for engineers to guide the stainless steel Zephyr trains through California’s Feather River Canyon.

If locomotive cabs had feelings, this cab should be happier in its new home telling the story of a legendary train—instead of functioning as the entrance to an ice cream shop.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Starbucks where the California Zephyr used to be



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Sign for Fiddler, Fifer & Practical Café

The former location of the California Zephyr is now the Fiddler, Fifer & Practical Café and Bakery, an elaborately themed Starbucks "owned" by the Silver Lake Sisters and decorated with memorabilia from their entertainment career.

## BUR-R-R BANK ICE CREAM



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

On a hot summer day at Yester California Adventure, what would be the perfect treat?

If you answered “a delicious ice cream sundae,” look for the Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream sign at Sunshine Plaza, right around the corner from the park’s Golden Gate Bridge.

If you answered “an ice-cold beer,” you’ll have to go someplace else.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Railroad platform?

The sign reads, “ice cream,” but there’s nothing around here that looks like an ice cream parlor.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

The mighty diesel locomotive of the California Zephyr

There's only a streamlined passenger train here—the famous California Zephyr.

A closer look reveals a large opening in the locomotive with a menu sign on one side. You've found the entrance to Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Not your typical ice cream parlor



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Welcome!

The name of Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream is a play on the name of the California city of Burbank, which calls itself the Media Capital of the World because it's the home of Disney, ABC, NBC, Warner Bros., Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, and dozens of other entertainment and media services companies.

Dr. David Burbank moved his dental practice from Maine to California in 1853. When he bought 9,203 acres of Southern California ranch land ten years later, he could not have known that, some day, there would not only be a city named in his honor, but also an ice cream parlor at a major tourist attraction.

That's right. The city of Burbank was not named after horticulturist Luther Burbank.

That's enough about Burbank. Let's get back to Bur-r-r Bank.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

The queue



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2006

Artistic queue railing



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Left side of menu board



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Right side of menu board

As you approach the counter, take a look at the menu board.

Perhaps you'll want one of the four Bur-r-r Bank Sundaes on the menu. Or choose from five different kinds of cones—regular, waffle, and three kinds of dipped waffle cones—with one or two scoops chosen from nine flavors of ice cream.

Or be creative and design your own ice cream treat. Start with one or two scoops and then go wild with toppings. Ask for a cup. A cone with several toppings is too messy.

The tilework in Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream is inspired by Los Angeles Union Station.

While you wait for your ice cream, admire the snowy, railroad-themed artwork on the back wall.

Then take your ice cream treat outside and have a seat on the “train platform.”



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

The counter



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Chilly artwork and crunchy cones



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2006

Ice cream served!





Photo by Allen Huffman, 2006

Perfect time for ice cream in all four time zones of the continental United States



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Outdoor seating



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Ice cream at Christmas

On a cool winter day at Yester California Adventure, what would be the perfect treat?

Ice cream from Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream, of course. After all, this is Southern California, where ice cream is appropriate all year.

Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream was part of Disney's California Adventure when the park opened on February 8, 2001.

Its final day of operation was July 31, 2011, when the parlor and its neighbors closed so that the transformation of this part of Sunshine Plaza into Buena Vista Street could begin.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Advertisement for Clarabelle's Hand Scooped Ice Cream inside a Red Car Trolley



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

Order windows at Clarabelle's Hand Scooped Ice Cream

When Buena Vista Street opened in June 2012, it had a new ice cream parlor, Clarabelle's Hand-Scooped Ice Cream.

## BAKER'S FIELD BAKERY



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Where's that acrid smoke smell coming from?

It's coming from Baker's Field Bakery, where coffee beans are being roasted—transforming green coffee beans into freshly roasted brown beans, ready for grinding and brewing.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

“Roasting Today”

Most people like the aroma of freshly roasted beans and freshly brewed coffee. However, the smell of the actual roasting process is another story. It's rather stinky and unpleasant.

Oh, well. It probably seemed like a good idea.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

It's a coffee shop, not a train ride.

Baker's Field Bakery looks like a railroad coach on the outside and somewhat like a railroad station on the inside. It's part of the California Zephyr train, parked here at Sunshine Plaza. The entrance is right between Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream and Engine-Ears Toys.



Photo by Karen Weiss, 2010

Queue to place your order

If you like to start your day with a baked treat and freshly brewed coffee, you've come to the right place. The long queue was designed for when things get busy, but it's seldom needed at this park.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Mural behind the counter

A mural of the California Zephyr splashing across a flooded track in front of Yosemite Falls dominates the wall behind the counter. It's a montage of California images. The California Zephyr crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains through Feather River Canyon, not through the Yosemite Valley.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Order at the counter.

Are you ready to order? Check the suspended menu boards and the glass cases.



Coffee menu

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Tea menu

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Whether you're looking for a simple cup of freshly brewed House Blend coffee, an icy cold Malibu Mocha Frappé, an exotic tea, or something else, you should find something you like on the beverage menu.



Souvenir mugs

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

How about a beverage served in a "Happy Holidays" or High School Musical 3 plastic mug?

Enough about beverages! After all, this is a bakery.



Tempting baked goods

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Desserts, salads, and sandwiches

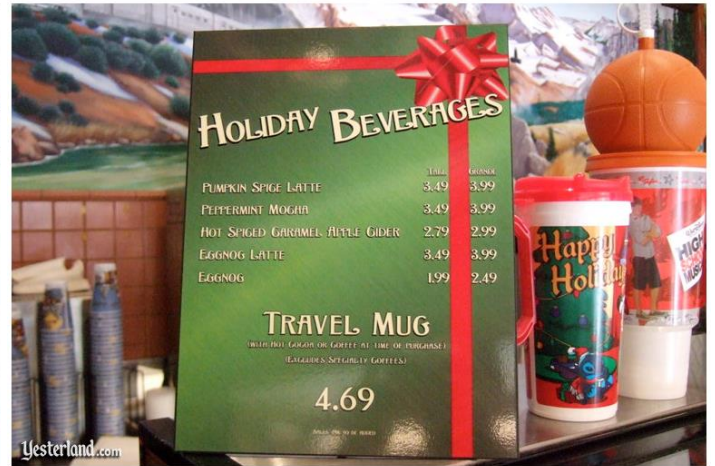
Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

This isn't just a place to get cookies, muffins, and pastries; it's also a place to get meals. How about a grab-and-go salad or sandwich?



Holiday treats

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008



Holiday beverages

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

If you visit during the Holiday Season, you'll find special treats.



Suspended Spanish-style light fixture

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008



Decorative ceramic tiles at Baker's Field Bakery

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Be sure to check out the light fixtures, decorative tiles, and other interior design features. They might look strangely familiar to you if you've been to Los Angeles Union Station.

Baker's Field Bakery at Disney's California Adventure debuted as part of the new park on February 8, 2001. The bakery's final day of operation was July 31, 2011, when it closed for the construction of Buena Vista Street.

The name of Baker's Field Bakery was a play on Bakersfield. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the San Joaquin Valley city of Bakersfield, with a population of 347,483, is California's ninth largest city—just ahead of the state's tenth largest city, Anaheim, with a population of 336,265.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Waiting room at Los Angeles Union Station

The interior of Baker's Field Bakery was inspired by Los Angeles Union Station, the magnificent ground transportation hub of Los Angeles. Opened in May 1939, it was "the last of the great railway stations" of the United States. After World War II, travelers turned to airplanes and automobiles. That meant a severe reduction in rail service. Union Station was a little-used relic of the past in the 1970s and 1980s, served only by a few Amtrak trains each day.

With the launch of Metro Rail rapid transit in 1990, the introduction of Metrolink commuter train service and a thorough restoration of the station in 1992, as well as numerous new bus routes from various transportation agencies, Union Station is once again a very busy place.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Decorative ceramic tiles at Los Angeles Union Station



In the two photos of Los Angeles Union Station, notice the suspended light fixtures, wood-beamed ceiling, ornamental ceramic tiles, and art deco touches. Now take another look at the interior photos of Baker's Field Bakery.

The new spot for coffee and baked goods at Disney California Adventure is the Fiddler, Fifer and Practical Cafe on Buena Vista Street.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Fiddler, Fifer and Practical Cafe



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Interior



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Vintage Starbucks logo on exterior

The coffee is from Starbucks' roasting plants, such as those in Kent, Washington or Minden, Nevada. Along with the Baker's Field Bakery itself, the acrid smoke smell has gone to Yesterland.

## ENGINE-EARS TOYS



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

The yellow box façade

It's a toy store. It's a candy store. It's two... two... two stores in one!

And there are two sides to Engine-Ears Toys at Yester California Adventure.

One façade is a yellow box. An "international orange" arch echoes the park's nearby Golden Gate Bridge. A railroad train that looks like an illustration from a children's book sits on top of the arch. In the center, a giant Mickey Mouse cap—with its ears serving as the oversized wheels of one of the train cars—holds a sign telling you this is Engine-Ears Toys.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

The vista dome observation car façade

Around the corner, Engine-Ears Toys has an entirely different façade—the vista dome observation car of the California Zephyr passenger train. A wide entrance in the center of the stainless steel “Silver Crescent” car provides a second entrance into the shop.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Engine-Ears Toys sign at the train platform

A sign that looks out-of-place in front of the elegant rail car provides a visual connection to the yellow box side of the store.



Photo by Tony "WiseBear" Moore, 2002

Railroad track on the floor



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Interior

Step inside the toy-like interior. A giant toy locomotive in the center is surrounded by giant toy buildings representing California landmarks. Why, look! There's the clock tower of Los Angeles Union Station, similar to the one on the façade of Superstar Limo.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

California Candy Express

The central retail fixture is not some sort of boring shelving unit. It's a locomotive, the California Candy Express. And it sits on a floor that looks like a railroad track.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Plush train

On an earlier visit to Engine-Ears Toys, you might have seen the same train as a fixture for Winnie the Pooh plush toys.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Where's *The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man* ride around here?

Behind the locomotive and tender, there's a caboose. That's where you'll find the Spider-Man section. You may wonder how Spider-Man relates to railroads or California. Just remember that this is a toy store, and these are Spider-Man toys.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Tunnel to nowhere

Another locomotive appears to be emerging from a tunnel. Don't worry about standing in front of it. The locomotive hasn't moved in years.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Clock and schedule

What time is it? It's after El Noonyo, but not yet Time Out. If you really want to know the time, you're better off checking your watch.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Fun with puns

A map on the wall shows toy train service to Toyhatchapea (Tehachapi), a bear-shaped Really Big Bear Lake (Big Bear Lake), Rancho-Choochoomonga (Rancho Cucamonga), and Palm Swings (Palm Springs).





Blue ceiling

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

California Adventure is a theme park. It's supposed to present themes that let you experience different locations in California and periods in the state's rich history.

Based on the ceiling, California must have had a Blue Period.



Engine-Ear Toys welcomes Mr. Potato Head

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Normally, everyone at this park is on a first name basis. (Over at that other park, they have Mr. Toad and Mr. Lincoln.) Here we have Mr. Potato Head.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Potato Head parts

Create your own one-of-kind Mr. Potato Head. Many of the potato parts are exclusive to this store. Well, not completely exclusive. They can also be found at Once Upon A Toy in Florida.

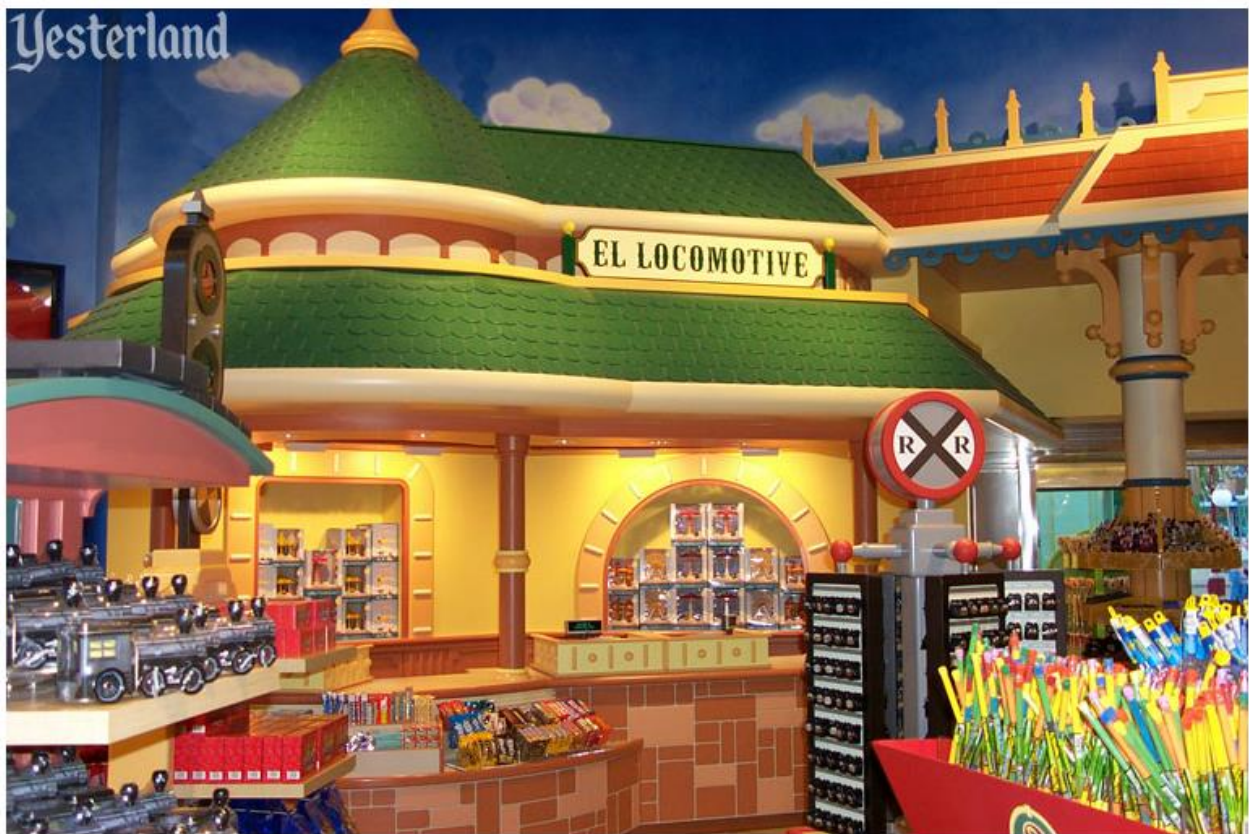


Photo by Tony "WiseBear" Moore, 2001

El Locomotive



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

### El Locomotive

Head over to El Locomotive, which is Spanish for The Locomotive. A clever nod to California's Hispanic heritage, eh? (They probably paid a lot of money to a consultant to come up with that name.)



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

### See you again!

Time to go. Head back into Sunshine Plaza, home of the park's famous Sun Icon.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Good night!

At night, the lights come on throughout the park. It's the most magical time of the day.

This location might be an exception to that.

Engine-Ears Toys operated from February 8, 2001 through July 31, 2011 at Disney (originally Disney's) California Adventure park.

Here's what the website of Disney's California Adventure promised in 2001:

Engine-Ears Toys is a unique, oversized model train "fantasy world" of innovative, interactive toys and tempting, tasty goodies. Consisting mainly of toys, candy, and souvenirs—with a focus on toy train sets and related products—Engine-Ears Toys will also offer the best of the toy and souvenir assortment found throughout Disney's California Adventure™ park.

The merchandise emphasis quickly shifted, with Disney character plush, dolls, and toys crowding out the toy train goods. The display windows and merchandise mix changed as Disney released new movies. Marvel merchandise joined the mix after Disney acquired Marvel.

The store's exterior and interior decor remained constant over the course of more than ten years. It was meant to be playful and humorous—although how successful that was is up for debate.

The decor—especially the blue sky ceiling and the exposed blue ductwork—seemed out-of-place in the context of the shop's immediate neighbors. The California Zephyr, Baker's Field Bakery, and Bur-r-r Bank Ice Cream all had interiors that emphasized period authenticity.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

The corner where Engine-Ears Toys used to be



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Julius Katz & Sons—replacement for the former yellow façade

As part of the transformation of the former California Adventure entrance area into Buena Vista Street, the former Engine-Ears Toys location became home to Trolley Treats, Clarabelle's Hand-Scooped Ice Cream, Atwater Ink & Paint, and Julius Katz & Sons.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

The former interior of Engine-Ears Toys

Even the ceiling looks better now.

# GREETINGS FROM CALIFORNIA



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Welcome to the biggest store in Yester California Adventure. Here's how the official park website describes this store:

## Greetings from California

Greetings from California, where you can find everything under the sun, is the quintessential Disney's California Adventure™ park shopping experience where Guests can discover souvenirs, mementos, and take home lots of Disney memories.

Ready to do some shopping?



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Front entrance

This store is so big that it has to have multiple entrances, each with its own personality. The front entrance is built into the largest ceramic mural in the World. The entrance on the other side of the park's Golden Gate Bridge is flanked by large display windows. A huge sign carries forward the California postcard theme of the park entrance. There's even a giant fountain pen on the sign.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Side entrance



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Display window

The display windows use tires and highway signs to convey the fun and excitement of traveling through the Golden State.





Photo by Werner Weiss, 2006

Corner entrance

Around the corner from the side entrance, the corner entrance suggests the streamline modern architecture of Los Angeles in the 1930s. Four double doors beckon you. There's another entrance to the right. There's still another into the Candy Shoppe, which you can think of as a separate store or as the candy section of Greetings from California.

Atop the corner entrance, a tower with a sphere held by three pylons is reminiscent of the globe tower at Crossroads of the World on Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood. As homage to the past, the corner entrance is a bit clumsy, but that doesn't matter. After all, Greetings from California is hip and contemporary. Guests who want an old-fashioned store should try a different theme park.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Dragon fly ceiling art

You'll see just how contemporary when you step inside the front entrance. Look up at the ceiling. Above the giant hanging bugs, there's exposed ductwork. This isn't one of those theme park stores that's supposed to make you feel as if you've traveled to another place and time.

The place is here—the hip and edgy California Adventure park. And the time is now—the dawn of the new millennium.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Lots of Disney stuff

A lot of the merchandise here is similar to what you would find at the Disneyland Emporium—but the atmosphere is completely different. There are also some park-specific items.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

A pen that writes in pink neon

Continuing with the postcard theme of the park entrance and store signs, there's a giant postcard to Goofy from Mickey and Minnie. It reminds their friend that the park even has the Golden Gate Bridge.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

“Memories Galore”

A sign on the soffit promises “Memories Galore,” including memories of when cell phones had antennas and little, tiny displays.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

California Adventure landmarks

Park landmarks adorn a “ribbon” wrapped around a column. Look for the Sun Wheel, Orange Stinger, and Mickey Head on California Screamin’.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Interior with palms



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAz" Moore, 2003

Signs as decor

Not only does this store sell "everything under the sun," that could also describe the decor. Among other things, there are stylized palm trees, realistic palm trees, pirate skeletons, road signs, and billboards.

A billboard for The Talc of Tinseltown Premier Face Powder has Minnie Mouse proclaiming, "I don't do close-ups without it!"



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Sunglasses—a recurring theme in this store

As is often the case with neon signs, Greetings from California looks best at night. Colorful neon tubes glow brightly in the darkness.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Corner at night



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Side at night



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Parade t-shirts

Speaking of colorful lights at night, Disney's Electrical Parade—not the Main Street Electrical Parade—passes outside Greetings from California every night. Don't miss it. Then come back in and buy the t-shirt.

When Disney's California Adventure opened in February 2001, Greetings from California was the park's version of the Emporium at Disneyland—a large store on the right as guests headed for the exit after a day at the park.

It continued to play that role until August 2011, when it closed for the transformation of the old park entrance corridor to Buena Vista Street.

The store's decor did not change much over the course of a decade. Even in its final years, some of the store's decor was based on attractions that were gone—even Superstar Limo. Of course, the store offered the latest "Disney Parks" merchandise and items that reflected Disney classics, current Disney movies, and Disney Channel programs.

Somehow, the same items looked better in the Emporium across the Esplanade at Disneyland.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

Same building, but an entirely new look



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Elias & Co. corner entrance



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

Former front entrance (tile mural entrance)

The space that had been Greetings from California and the Candy Shoppe reopened in June 2012 as Los Feliz Five & Dime, Big Top Toys, and Elias & Co.—with a lavish new interior.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Elias & Co. interior

What a difference!



## CANDY SHOPPE



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Here at Sunshine Plaza, the shop names tend to involve puns. There's Baker's Field Bakery, Engine-Ears Toys, and Bur-r Bank Ice Cream.

You might think a candy shop here would have a name like La Candyada Candies, or maybe Topanga Candyon Confections, or even Candyoga Park Sweets. But the candy shop has a rather straightforward name. It's simply called Candy Shoppe.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

With the park's Golden Gate Bridge



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Open doors to welcome you

In addition to having an entrance from Sunshine Plaza, there's also access from inside Greetings from California, the big store next door.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Looking in from Greetings from California



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Poppy theme

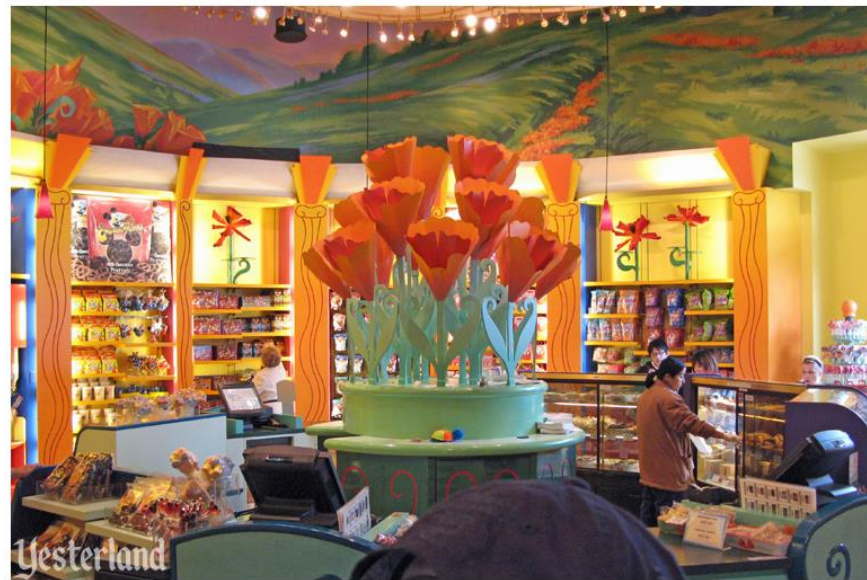


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Poppies and candy



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Centerpiece of the Candy Shoppe

The interior of the Candy Shoppe features artwork representing the official state flower of California—the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*).

It's fun and festive. A sculpture of stylized California poppies dominates the center of the space. Murals show fields of poppies in bloom. Other poppy art sits on high shelves. The contemporary style of the interior is out of sync with the vintage exterior architecture. But does that really matter to anyone?



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

One of the cases of treats

Chances are, however, that you came here for the candy, not to admire the art. There are plenty of prepackaged candy items. Almost all of them have beloved Disney characters on the packaging. There are also cases with freshly made treats.



Goofy's Mostly Sour Powder Candy

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Main Street Popcorn

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Candy Shoppe at night

Even if you don't buy a treat in the Candy Shoppe, you can now say you've seen the world-famous California poppies.

The Candy Shoppe at Disney's California Adventure opened in February 2001 as one of the original stores in the park. It lasted more than ten years. In August 2011, the Candy Shoppe closed permanently as part of the transformation from Sunshine Plaza to Buena Vista Street.



Yesterland

Photo by Kaldari, 2009, [public domain](#), from Wikimedia Commons  
California poppies



Yesterland

Photo by Boris D, 2003, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license, from Wikimedia Commons  
A field of California Poppies in the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve

The original concept for Disney's California Adventure was to honor notable regions and landmarks of California, including Wine Country, Hollywood, and even the Golden Gate Bridge. With the California poppy design motif of the Candy Shoppe, California Adventure showcased another California icon.

One of the most amazing features of California is the annual wildflower boom in the state's high deserts. The cup-shaped, bright orange California poppy was named California's official state flower in 1903.

The California poppy blooms in many parts of California. The flower is especially dramatic if you visit the western Antelope Valley at just the right time to see vast stretches blanketed with California poppies and bathed in sunshine.

Before the Buena Vista Street transformation, the front of the park had been a disjointed mishmash. The Candy Shoppe was no exception. Its exterior had more in common with the nearby Hollywood Studios Backlot (now Hollywood Land) than with the tile murals, 50-foot Sun Icon, stainless steel train cars, and stores with gaudy signs such as the one for Engine-Ears Toys.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

One of the entrances of Elias & Co.

The former Candy Shoppe is now part of Elias & Co., Disney California Adventure's largest merchandise location.

The re-do Imagineers and contractors had to perform dramatic surgery on the front of the park to create Buena Vista Street—with the notable exception of the Candy Shoppe façade. It's largely unchanged; only the sign and paint are different. The circa-1930 architecture provides an appropriate transition from the 1920s at the front of Buena Street to the 1930s of Hollywood Land.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Inside Elias & Co.

When Buena Vista Street opened, the California poppies inside the store were gone—replaced by an elegant interior that harmonized with the circa-1930 exterior of the new apparel shop.

A new candy shop, Trolley Treats, opened nearby on Buena Vista Street.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Reused neon "Candy" sign on Trolley Treats



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Trolley Treats interior

There's just one mystery now... what happened to all the poppies?

# HOLLYWOOD ELEPHANTS



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

A pair of pachyderms is precariously perched atop pillars on polychromatic pedestals. Passages for pedestrians perforate those pedestals. The portal promises picture production.

It's a spectacular way to mark the entrance to the Hollywood Pictures Backlot, the land of Superstar Limo, the ABC Soap Opera Bistro, and The Power of Blast! In fact, it's a Hollywood Spectacular.



Bronzed body

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



These aren't ordinary elephants with gray, wrinkled hides. Their bronze bodies are covered with ornamental patterns. It looks a bit as if the elephants have been skinned, exposing their muscles and innards—but a closer look reveals that's not the case.

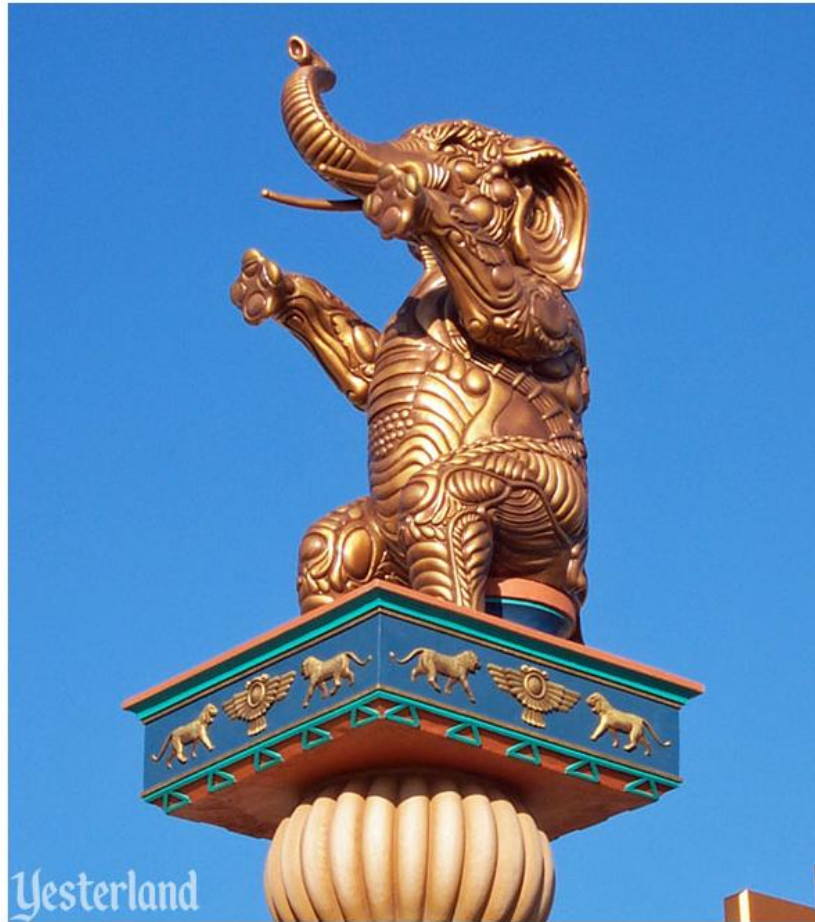


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

"All right, Mr. DeMille; I'm ready for my close-up."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Painted sky at the other end of the street

You might think that the other side of the portal would feel like a real, working movie studio. Alas, it feels like you're on a street in Hollywood—until you realize that some of the façades are false fronts because this is supposed to be a movie backlot. Clever, eh?

When the clouds and the color of the sky are just right, the building with the painted sky at the other end of the street from the portal almost blends into the real sky.



Proboscine wreath holder

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

During the Holiday Season, the elephants perform a useful service. They hold golden Christmas wreaths.



Portal with stars

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Portal without stars

### Hurray for Elephants!

The Hollywood Pictures Backlot portal, flanked by elaborately perched elephants, was part of Disney's California Adventure when the park opened in February 2001. The portal marked the transition from Sunshine Plaza to the Hollywood Pictures Backlot.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

Hollywood & Highland Center

Just seven months later, Hollywood & Highland Center opened in Hollywood at the intersection of—where else?—Hollywood Blvd. and Highland Ave. The shopping complex, which was also home to the Kodak Theatre (now Dolby Theatre) and a hotel, had its own mighty elephants atop columns shaped like those at Disney's California Adventure, but much larger. The Hollywood version used black and white and shades of gray, while the Disney version was in color.

So what's the connection between giant sitting elephants and Hollywood?



Still from *Intolerance* by D. W. Griffith, 1916. Public domain.

### Babylon, as depicted in D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*

The answer lies with *Intolerance*, the 1916 silent Hollywood spectacular by D. W. Griffith. One of the four parallel stories in the three-and-one-half-hour epic dealt with the fall of Babylon to Persia in 539 B.C. For the scenes of ancient Babylon, Griffith built one of the largest exterior sets for a single movie in the history of motion pictures. The enormous set was at the corner of Hollywood and Sunset, around five miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. More than 3,000 extras populated the Babylon scenes.

The high-budget movie bankrupted Griffith's company. For several years, the *Intolerance* set, clearly visible from the street, deteriorated until it was demolished in 1919.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

During the construction of *The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror* in 2003



Photo by Chris Bales, 2010

During *Glow Fest* in 2010

The conceit behind the Hollywood Pictures Backlot was that it would first appear to be a city street in the Golden Age of Hollywood, but would turn out to be a Hollywood stage set as guests proceeded down the street. Thus, the portal—complete with mighty elephant statues—was legitimately the entrance to a studio backlot.

The design wasn't convincing as a movie backlot.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2011

After the removal of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot portal, but before the removal of the elephants

On April 12, 2011, the Hollywood Pictures Backlot sign and its supporting columns were removed permanently. Almost exactly a year later, on April 11, 2012, the elephants and their pillars were removed too.

But the pedestals remained. And they're still there today, just with a new paint scheme.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Former elephant pedestals

The Hollywood Pictures Backlot became Hollywood Land. The pedestals look a bit forlorn now, and it's odd to have such structures sitting in the middle of the sidewalk. But the pedestals provide a transition between Buena Vista Street and Hollywood Land.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

Pedestal with the Carthay Circle Theatre

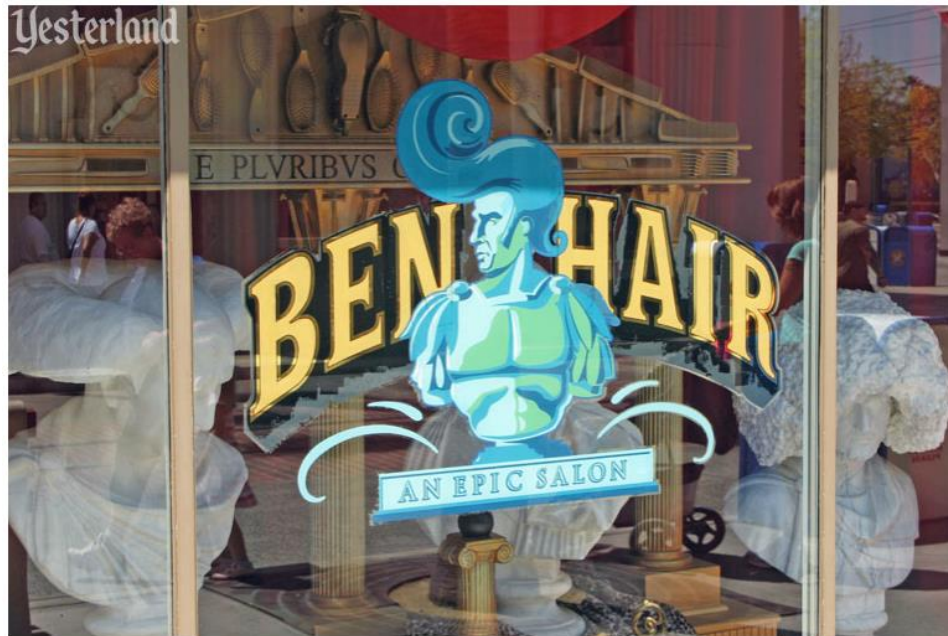
If you miss the elephants at Disney California Adventure, there's another place nearby to visit elephants. Head over to Disneyland's Jungle Cruise and its Indian Elephant Bathing Pool.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2017

Elephants at Disneyland

## BEN HAIR & DIAL M



Ben Hair, an Epic Salon

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Walk up to the window at Ben Hair, an Epic Salon. The artwork on the glass shows a Roman soldier with the most amazing pompadour. Admire what's on display behind the window—classical busts with other wild hairdos.

Behind the busts, a display suggesting the pediment of a Roman temple reads “E PLURIBVS CUTUM.” The Us look like Vs in the tradition of Latin phrases chiseled onto ancient Roman buildings. The pediment is decorated with combs, brushes, shears, and other tools of the hair styling trade.



Salon with a barber pole

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Does the name Ben Hair make you laugh? Or at least smile? It's supposed to. After all, it's one of the many puns here at Yester California Adventure. The name Ben Hair is a play on Ben-Hur, a movie title synonymous with grand Hollywood epics. Based on the 1880 novel Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ by Lew Wallace, Ben-Hur was made as a silent movie in 1925. But the best-known version is the 1959 widescreen spectacular, which starred Charlton Heston and won 11 Academy Awards.





Dial M for Muscle, Workout! Upstairs!

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Nearby, there's an old-fashioned sign for Dial M for Muscle. A dial telephone has a dumbbell in place of a handset. It's another pun. This one is based on Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 crime thriller, Dial M for Murder. Enjoy the clever puns.



La Brea Carpets, You'll Dig our Rugs

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2004

Ready for another pun? Between the salon and the gym, there's a carpet store, La Brea Carpets. It sounds like the La Brea Tar Pits, the Los Angeles archaeological site where scientists dug up the fossilized skulls and bones of long-extinct prehistoric creatures.

Are you ready to get your hair styled? Work out upstairs? And buy a rug as a souvenir of your day at the park? Sorry. You can't.

The "businesses" are just decorations on the building façade. The paint scheme and signage makes the façade appear to be two separate buildings. The brown part is the Argyle Building while the yellow part is the Whitley Building. Actually, the two parts together represent an actual building in Hollywood, the Baine Building at 6601 Hollywood Blvd.

What about the four semicircular window awnings with the giraffe, zebra, jaguar, and tiger pelt patterns? They were never part of the real Baine Building. But, hey, they help make this park hip and edgy.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Just a façade



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, Feb. 12, 2001—four days after the official grand opening of Disney's California Adventure

Not crowded

Just remember that this “punny” building façade is part of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot. You’re supposed to feel as if you’re in a place where movies are made, not on a real street. Apparently there’s a Hollywood director making a movie about an alternate universe where businesses on Hollywood Blvd. have puns as names and where window awnings look like animal pelts.

Hollywood Pictures Backlot, which was one of the lands of Disney’s California Adventure when the park opened February 8, 2001, had two parts. One part, with Superstar Limo and Hollywood & Dine, was meant to look like a working movie studio. The other part was a boulevard, which tried to represent the Hollywood of the past, the Hollywood of today, and the false-front streets of a studio backlot—all simultaneously.

Hollywood Pictures Backlot failed as a compelling, immersive theme park environment because there were too many contradictions and disjointed elements. It was not convincing as a movie studio or as anything else.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Mostly unchanged after almost a decade, but no giraffe awning

Sometime around 2006 (give or take a year), a dark gray awning replaced the giraffe awning. Other than that, this part of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot essentially didn’t change for the park’s first ten years.

As the 2012 openings of Buena Vista Street and Cars Land approached, the Hollywood Pictures Backlot became Hollywood Land.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Ben Hair window in 2002



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Hollywood Land window in 2013

In spring 2012, the Ben Hair art came off the window. By midsummer 2012, the entire window had been redressed with a Hollywood Land theme.

Hollywood Boulevard made progress toward a cohesive theme. Most of the signs and decorations that egregiously contradicted the early Hollywood theme were removed or replaced. With the elimination of the elephant-flanked Hollywood Pictures Backlot portal, Hollywood Boulevard became an extension of Buena Vista Street.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Red Car Trolley adding liveliness and kinetic energy to Hollywood Land



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

More like a street, less like a studio backlot

Disney removed the Dial M for Muscle sign. On the same building, brown awnings replaced the ones that had animal pelt patterns, and the gray awning was swapped to the other end of the building. Traditional window treatments replaced the red rug designs behind the glass. The window art for La Brea Carpets was gone; only its sign remained.

That brings us to 2018.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2018

Former Ben Hair window now as a view into a messy Hollywood office



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2018

La Brea Carpets sign still on the building



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2018

Not convincing as a real street

Unfortunately, with the “it’s just a movie set” theme eliminated, the incomplete buildings on the boulevard now just look unfinished and cheap. Hollywood Land still has a long way to go. The Walt Disney Company began the rebirth of Disney California Adventure by investing in the parts of the park that needed it most.

Now let’s hope that all of Hollywood Land is brought up to the high standards of Buena Vista Street and Cars Land.

## THE POWER OF BLAST!



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Now appearing at the Hyperion Theater

Welcome to the fake front doors of the 2,000-seat Hyperion Theater. The real entrances are around the side.

Take a seat for The Power of Blast!—an abbreviated version of the high-energy Broadway show Blast!



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Amazing percussion



Instead of the Broadway version's repertoire of 16 musical numbers in two acts, *The Power of Blast!* has five musical numbers in a single, half-hour act:

- Boléro by Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)
- Battery Battle by Thom Hannum, Jeff Lee, and Paul Rennick
- Lemontech by Jonathan Vanderkolff
- Land of Make Believe by Chuck Mangione
- Malagueña by Ernesto Lecuona (1896 - 1963)



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Two drummers pausing for much-deserved applause

Don't expect an ordinary concert. These aren't musicians who sit in chairs staring at their music stands. This is a highly choreographed extravaganza, with 40 highly skilled performers. Trumpets and trombones blare. Sabers fly above the stage. Banners swirl in the air. Drumbeats radiate energy throughout the theater.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Dramatic lighting and costuming in the dark theater

The Power of Blast! is based on the tradition of drum and bugle corps pageantry—but this is not a traditional drum and bugle corps pageant.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2002

Crash! Bang! Thump!



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2002

Lots of brass

The deceptively simple stage takes on different looks and colors throughout the show.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

*Land of Make Believe*

The staging of Land of Make Believe is colorful and eye-catching.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

*Banners swirling*

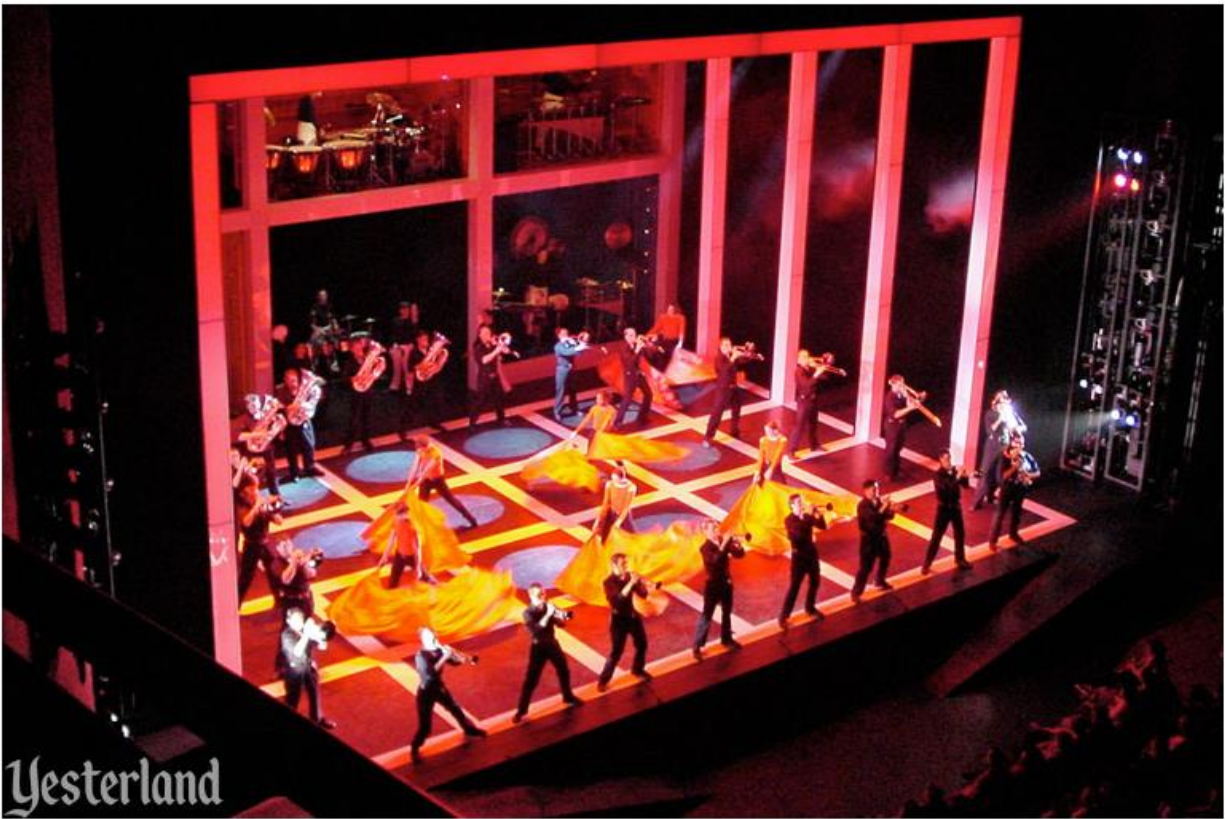


Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The finale

The rousing finale, with swirling and flying flags, is Lecuona's Malagueña.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The end

At the end, the performers spill into the audience.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Blast merchandise

Don't forget to buy some Blast merchandise so you can remember the show in the future. After all, theme park shows don't run forever.

The Power of Blast! was presented at the Hyperion Theater at Disney's California Adventure from November 22, 2001, through September 2, 2002.

When Disney's California Adventure opened on February 8, 2001, the official opening show at the Hyperion Theater was a song-and-dance musical, *Steps in Time*. Even before the park's grand opening, the reaction from preview audiences was so negative that Disney executives quickly approved funds to rework the show. Unfortunately, the reworked show still failed to impress audiences, despite (or perhaps because of) the addition of a storyline involving a weird, mini-skirted Fairy Godmother and two little boys. *Steps in Time* limped along until October 14, 2001. At least the talented cast worked hard, and the theater was air-conditioned.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Better reviews than for *Steps in Time*

Meanwhile, on the other side of the continent, Epcot audiences were applauding wildly for The Power of Blast! which ran at the outdoor America Gardens Theater from June 16 through August 23, 2001.

California Adventure desperately needed a new show for the Hyperion Theater. With some tweaking for the indoor theater, The Power of Blast! moved west. Because The Power of Blast! would be in a fully enclosed theater, the dramatic lighting effects and creative staging could be even better than at Epcot.

California Adventure audiences applauded wildly. The Hyperion Theater had a hit.

Sure, it was a costly show purchased from an outside company. And, at a Disney park that was lacking enough “Disney” as far as many guests were concerned, the show had nothing to do with the creative legacy of Disney or Pixar. But it was a terrific show, and it gave Disneyland Entertainment enough time to develop a new musical that would not suffer the same reaction as Steps in Time.

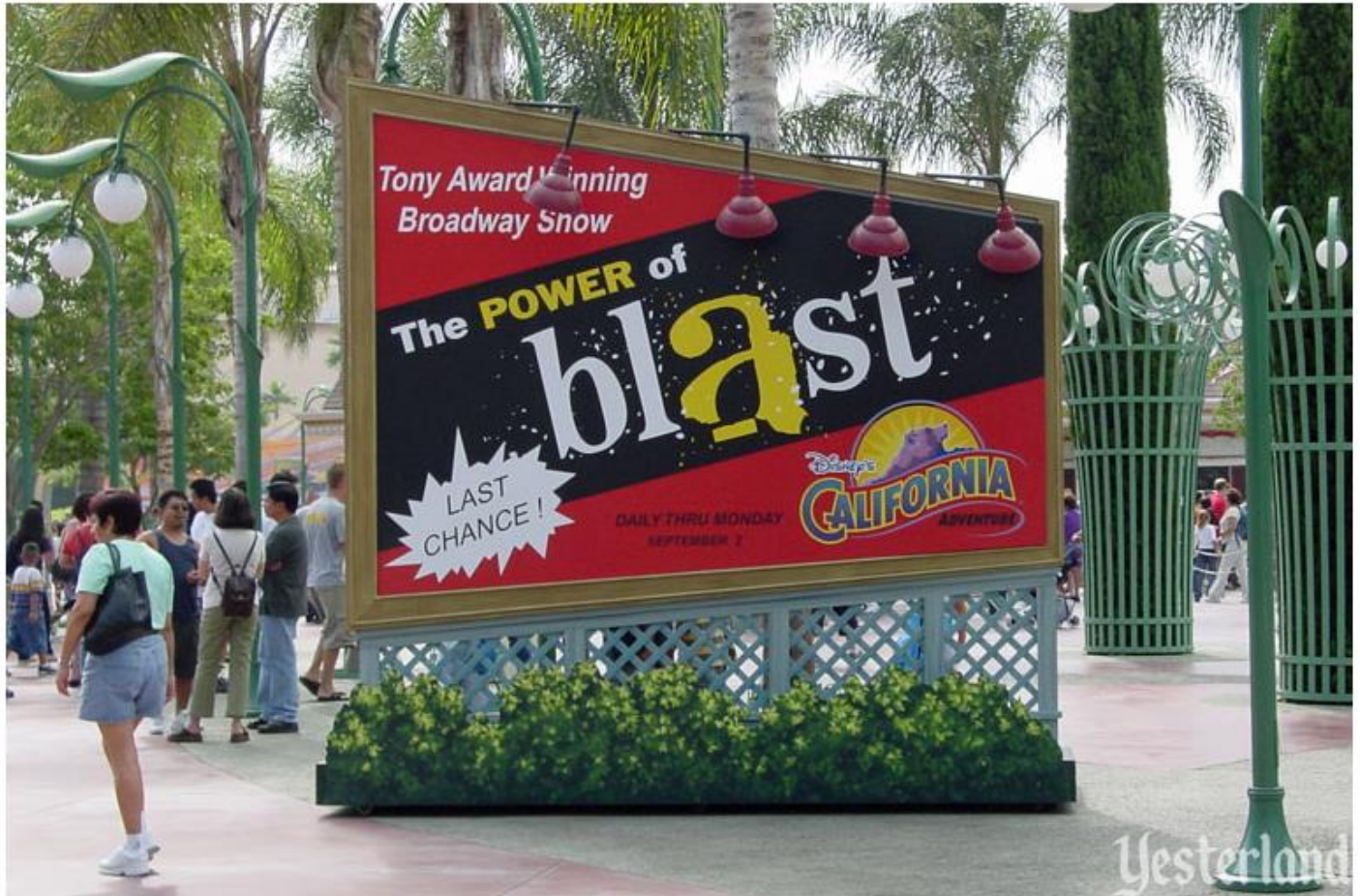


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2002

Last Chance! Daily through Monday, September 2, 2002

After running more than nine months, The Power of Blast! closed to make room for Disney's Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2002

The elephant in the room during *Disney's Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular*



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

*Disney's Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular*

The stage musical based on the successful 1992 Disney animated feature *Aladdin* opened at the Hyperion Theater on January 16, 2003, and closed January 10, 2016—a run of almost 13 years.

The next show at the Hyperion Theater would be based on Disney's 2013 megahit Frozen.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

*Frozen – Live at the Hyperion on the marquee of the Hyperion*



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

*Puppets and people*

Frozen — Live at the Hyperion opened May 27, 2016, for what is expected to be a very long run. After all, in the world of Disney theme parks, there's no such thing as too much Frozen.



## CHANCE TO SHINE



Three unusually dressed women are walking through the Hollywood Pictures Backlot.

Who are they? And what are they doing here? They don't look like park guests.

Oh wait! This is supposed to be a movie studio, so they must be actresses, making movies in the nearby soundstages. That's it. Let's figure out what kind of movies they're in.



She must be in a Carmen Miranda musical.



She must be in the saloon scene of a Hollywood Western.



Not all space aliens look like Spielberg's *E.T.*

The three women have stopped in the middle of the street near Disney Animation.



More than just "streetmosphere"—it's a show.

The space alien begins to belt out a song—and can she sing! Soon all three entertainers are singing about what it's like to go from one small role to another. They dream of getting speaking parts someday.



They can sing! They can dance! They can ad lib!



Playing to small audience (in more ways than one)

The saloon girl sings:

“The director needed someone who could lasso;  
I claimed the quickest lasso in El Paso.”

An audience member is roped into joining the show. Soon, other audience members are asked to tap-dance. This show is interactive.



Singing about a “chance to shine!”



The perfect time to snap a photo.

They may only be extras in the movies, but they're stars here at Yester California Adventure.

Chance to Shine premiered at Disney's California Adventure in summer 2001.

The park had only opened in February of that year. Attendance was disappointing, and park management needed to do something fast. It takes a long time (and a lot of money) to build new attractions, but entertainment can be updated more quickly.

Goofy's Beach Party Bash replaced Lights, Camera, Chaos! at the Hollywood Backlot Stage. Mickey Mouse and other characters presented a new show at the park's Bountiful Valley Farm.

Somehow, despite the focus on adding Disney characters to the park that wasn't "Disney" enough, the clever Chance to Shine show quietly debuted—with no Disney characters and no Disney movie tie-in. The show just had talented performers, catchy music, clever lyrics, and fun interaction with the audience.

Here's how Disney observer Sue Kruse described Chance to Shine in 2001, comparing the show to the other new shows at the time:

"The last of the shows in the Hollywood Pictures Backlot is easily the best. In fact, that understates it. Allow me to rephrase. It's truly terrific. It's well written, well acted, well sung, well...it's just good, really good. Go see this show and forget the rest. See it two or three times, go get yourself half a tortilla, and then come back and see it again."

At first, the Chance to Shine trio performed on the concrete in front of the Hollywood & Dine food court "sound stage" building. When that eatery was locked up in an early cost-cutting move, this corner of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot became even more of a ghost town than before. The Chance to Shine shows moved to the main Hollywood street.

Chance to Shine lasted until spring 2004.



You begin by entering Los Angeles Union Station on the billboard-like facade. For some reason, this puts you into something that looks like it could be the airport in Toontown. You wind through the queue rather quickly, because there aren't many other guests in line.

It turns out you're at baggage claim at Los Angeles International Airport.



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Joan Rivers is on a TV monitor. "Hollywood's newest sensation is going to be a big star," exclaims Rivers. "I'm talking big, big, big. Bigger than Madonna. Bigger than Leonardo. Do you know what I'm saying? Yes, of course you do."

Yes, Joan Rivers is talking about you!

Now climb into your "limo" which is equipped with a video screen for each row of seats. Pretend the video screen is a picture phone. Enjoy the ride...



Photo by Kevin Yee, 2001

Chauffeur: "Hey, aren't you Hollywood's newest superstar? Please be sure to keep your arms, legs, and egos inside the limo at all times."

Your picturephone rings.



Photo by Kevin Yee, 2001

Chauffeur: "There's a collect call for you. It's your new agent."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Swifty La Rue: "Swifty here, babe. Welcome to Hollywood. Lookin' sensational as always."

Swifty blows a kiss to you.

Swifty La Rue: "Listen, I'll have your contract for you at the premiere. Okay? Just get to the Chinese Theater pronto, y'hear me? Everybody's waitin', capiche? Now don't be late, babe!"

Swifty blows another kiss to you.



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "Don't worry. We'll get you there in time. Our first stop is glamorous Rodeo Drive. There's Regis Philbin, and that's my final answer."



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "If it isn't vivacious Melanie Griffith and dashing Antonio Banderas."





Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "And there's Hollywood beauty Cindy Crawford."

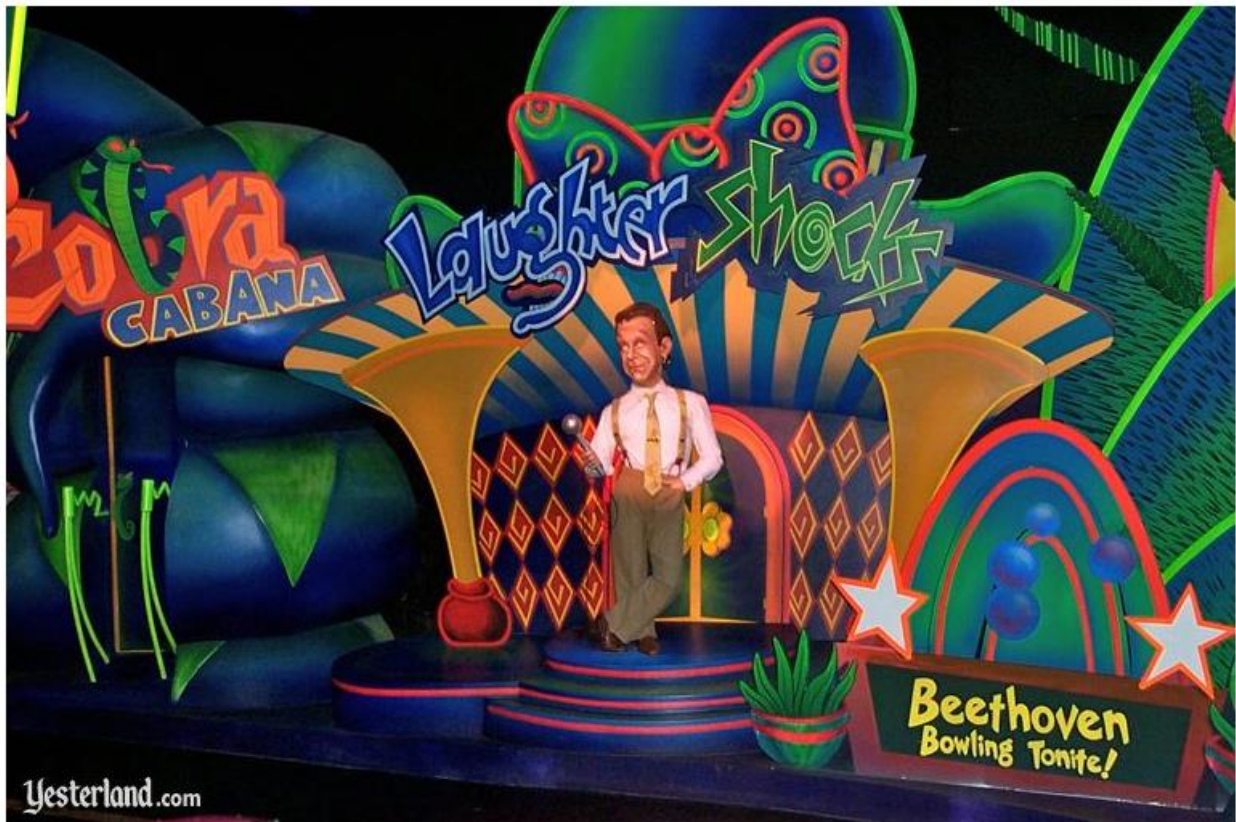


Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "The world famous Sunset Strip. Hold your sides, everyone. It's funnyman Tim Allen."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Chauffeur: "Jackie Chan! Care to rumble?"

Your picturephone rings.

Swift La Rue: "Hey, where are ya? I repeat, don't be late. Kiss, kiss."

Swift blows two more kisses to you.



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "Welcome to Bel Air, where the streets are paved with royalties and hype. How about a map to your house, Drew Carey?"



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Sponsors seeking endorsements: "Endorse our soda! Sell our sneakers! Just sign here!"



Photo by Kevin Yee, 2001

Chauffeur: "Pool party! Hold your breath now!"

Your picturephone rings.

Swifty La Rue: "C'mon. Be Swifty's favorite star and get here now!"



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "Malibu, where the beautiful people become even more beautiful."

Voice from a crystal ball: "Angels, execs, producers beyond... Give us a sign the green light is on."



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "Why, the always entertaining Cher! Tattoos are all the rage. Shall I 'ink' you in for one?"

Paparazzo 1: "Look up and say cheese."

Paparazzo 2: "Show us your pearly whites!"

Paparazzo 3: "Smile for the camera!"

Paparazzo 4: "One, two, Yeeowww!!!!" (as he falls off his ladder)

Chauffeur: "Everywhere you turn, there are Hollywood studios."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

First voice: "Read my script!"

Second voice: "You'll laugh, you'll cry!"

Third voice: "Every word says you!"



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Chauffeur: "Well, this is it... the premiere of your very own movie!"



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Chauffeur: "Hollywood favorite, Whoopi Goldberg!"

Whoopi: "Look! It's Hollywood's newest sensation. And you know what that means, don't you, baby? You've arrived!"



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Chauffeur: "As they say in this town, 'looks like you are big boffo.' And don't let it go to your head."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Chauffeur: "Now there's a familiar face, smiling down from that billboard."



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Your picturephone rings.

Swiftly La Rue: "Congratulations, kid! They love your movie. Wow, you are a superstar. It's bigtime boffo... I see your name in lights."

Swiftly blows another kiss to you.

Swiftly La Rue: "I love ya!"

Announcer: "Ladies and gentlemen, Hollywood's newest sensation!"

Chauffeur: "Don't you look good on camera. Now that's what I call a superstar! Let me grab some popcorn, because I know I'll be seeing a lot of you in the movies!"

Your ride is over. Do you feel like a superstar now?

Superstar Limo was one of the original attractions when Disney's California Adventure had its grand opening on February 8, 2001. It was the only dark ride in the park. Expectations were high. After all, nearby Disneyland had spectacular dark rides such as Pirates of the Caribbean and Haunted Mansion, as well as simpler dark rides that put guests into classic Disney movies.

Some guests loved Superstar Limo. They enjoyed the entertainment industry inside jokes and the cartoon-like scenes satirizing celebrity hangouts.

However, the majority of guests were disappointed and puzzled by the ride. Where's the Disney magic? Is this the best Disney can do? Why is Disney recommending tattoos?

Here's how Orange County Register writer Lisa Liddane described the brand new ride in an article on February 4, 2001:

Superstar Limo is about as cheesy as the National Enquirer. You know you're in for a letdown when you're greeted at LAX by Joan Rivers' animated talking head, which, by the way, actually looks better than the real person. Joan, honey, you and Disney need to have a talk about your animated makeover.

Regis Philbin holds a wad of bills, Cindy Crawford spritzes perfume and Jackie Chan grins from above as you cruise along in your burgundy limo. I don't get it. I'm ready for my close-up, but this isn't it.



The Sunday travel section of the Rocky Mountain News (Denver, Colorado) had this description of Superstar Limo on February 11, 2001:

This attraction in Hollywood Pictures Backlot stands out because it's so "whelming"—that's worse than underwhelming. Billed as "a wild ride through L.A.'s star-studded streets," it's inane. But maybe it will play well in La La Land. Besides, Disney honcho Michael Eisner supposedly loves it, and that's all that counts.

The idea is that you're a star who's just arrived at LAX to sign a big movie deal. A limo picks you up at the airport, where the PA system broadcasts, "Keep arms, legs and egos inside the car at all times," and "no parking, no whining, no schmoozing, no white after Labor Day." You ride past familiar audio-animatronic faces, including Drew Carey, who's hawking maps of stars' homes in Beverly Hills, and Regis Philbin holding a wad of bills. Then there's Joan Rivers' animated talking head, which the Orange County Register said looks better than the real person.

Margo Kutner of Mission Viejo, Calif., aptly called it "a one-time, cutesy ride." Superstar Limo proves that even the talented Disney imagineers can make errors on occasion. Don't bother standing in long lines, even if you're a Hollywood groupie.

Disney management closed the ride after less than one year. Reportedly, the typical guest reaction to the ride had been so negative that the park was actually stronger when the only dark ride in the park was closed.



Repurposed ride vehicles and animatronics

Just before Christmas 2005, a new ride opened in the former Superstar Limo building—Monsters, Inc. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue! The official grand opening was January 23, 2006, more than four years after Superstar Limo had quietly closed. The former "limo" ride vehicles were repainted as Monstropolis taxi cabs. The track layout was left unchanged. The Monsters, Inc. ride brings scenes from the successful Disney/Pixar movie to life, although the tight spaces in the show building do not do justice to the grand spaces that the wizards at Pixar created in the movie. Still, it's a fun ride which most park visitors enjoy far more than Superstar Limo.

## SUPERSTAR LIMO EXTERIOR



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

*Superstar Limo, open for business*

Before you ride Superstar Limo, take a look at the façade. It's a cartoonish collection of Los Angeles landmarks.



Beverly Hills Hotel, "The Pink Palace"

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

Yes, there's a real Beverly Hills Hotel, and it really is pink with a sign on a green section. The luxury hotel, located within tropical gardens on Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills, opened in 1912. It's only been pink since 1948. The part of the hotel on the Superstar Limo façade is based on the 1949 addition by architect Paul Revere Williams.

The Beverly Hills Hotel caters to celebrities—and to affluent tourists hoping to see famous faces in the hotel's legendary Polo Lounge.



Towers of Union Station, City Hall, and the Westin Bonaventure

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Three downtown Los Angeles landmarks rise in the center of the façade.

Combining the Mission Revival and Streamline Moderne styles, Los Angeles Union Station and its clock tower opened in 1939. It was the last of America's great railroad stations. As passenger rail travel declined in the latter half of the 20th

century, activity at the massive station dwindled to only a handful of Amtrak trains each day. Today, with the addition of Metrolink commuter rail service, Red Line and Purple Line subways, Gold Line light rail, and all sorts of inter-city and local bus service, Union Station is once again a bustling travel hub.

The distinctive 32-story Los Angeles City Hall opened in 1928 as the tallest building in Los Angeles, a distinction it would keep until 1964. Baby boomers might remember City Hall from the *Dragnet* television series as the building on Sgt. Joe Friday's "714" police badge under the credits. Or they might remember it referred to as "the pointy building" on Lohman and Barkley's radio show. Having undergone a seismic retrofit in 2001, Los Angeles City Hall continues to hold the mayor's office, council chambers, and many government offices of the city of Los Angeles.

Consisting of five reflective glass cylinders, the 35-story Westin Bonaventure Hotel opened in 1976. Architect John Portman's design features a disorienting six-level atrium at the base, pie-slice-shaped rooms in cylinders, and the revolving BonaVista Lounge at the top.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002.

Angels Flight, "The World's Shortest Railway"

Angels Flight, a short funicular railroad, opened in 1901 to connect the Los Angeles downtown commercial district along Third Street with the Victorian mansions and the "Angel's View" observation tower atop Bunker Hill. Two funicular cars were connected by a cable that went around a wheel at the top of the hill; the cars counterbalanced each other, and maintained proper spacing on the track.

By the 1960s, the once fashionable Bunker Hill neighborhood had deteriorated into slums. As was then the custom, the solution was not to restore the grandeur but to flatten the entire neighborhood for urban renewal. Plans called for Angels Flight to be demolished. Protests ensued. Revised plans called for Angels Flight to be removed temporarily, and to return to the redeveloped Bunker Hill. In 1969, after 68 years of safe operation, Angels Flight was dismantled and put into storage.

It took 27 years. On February 24, 1996, the two original funicular cars returned to service on a new track a half block away from the original Angels Flight. High-rise office and residential buildings now stood atop Bunker Hill.

Lacking necessary safety features and suffering from inadequate maintenance, the new Angels Flight had a deadly accident on February 1, 2001—after less than five years of operation. As it approached the top of the hill, one of the cars broke loose and sped to the bottom, slamming into the other car. An 83-year-old man died. Seven other passengers were injured.

It took until March 10, 2010—more than nine years after the 2001 accident—before passenger service was restarted on Angels Flight, with new safety features.

Angels Flight closed September 5, 2013, because of a derailment. It finally reopened on August 31, 2017, after engineering changes.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Care for a swim in the planter?



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

The Pasadena Freeway tunnel, under the Los Angeles Coliseum

In Los Angeles, the city known for its freeways, the Pasadena Freeway (originally called the Arroyo Seco Parkway) was the first one. Just north of downtown Los Angeles, the freeway's northbound lanes pass below Elysian Park through a series of four tunnels with stylish entrances. The tunnels, built between 1931 and 1935, originally carried two-way traffic for Figueroa Street. A few years later, they were connected to the new freeway. Although the Pasadena Freeway is primitive, narrow, and not straight enough by today's freeway standards, it's an iconic part of the Los Angeles road system.

Yes, the Pasadena Freeway has an exit at Stadium Way, just like on the façade. The real exit leads to Dodger Stadium. The stadium pictured on the ride façade is the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. (That's not a complaint; it's actually rather clever how the mural brings together Los Angeles' most historic freeway and most historic stadium.) The Coliseum was the site of the Summer Olympic Games in 1932 and 1984—and will again be used for the 2028 Summer Olympics.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

Hollywood Freeway



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Superstar Limo façade at night

Come back at night when the landmarks of the “City of Angels” are lit up—and the whole park looks better than by day.

Superstar Limo opened as part of the original roster of rides at Disney's California Adventure on February 8, 2001.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

One Cast Member, zero guests

The ride had such a short life—less than a year—that many guests never had a chance to ride it. Far more guests had a chance to see the exterior façade which lasted until a construction wall appeared in front of it in March 2005.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

Superstar Limo with barriers at the entrance and exit in 2002

By the end of 2005, the former Superstar Limo had become Monsters, Inc. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue!



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

*Monsters Inc. Mike & Sulley to the Rescue!*



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Painted characters





Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

Entrance

Neither the Superstar Limo façade nor the Monsters, Inc. façade fit into the theme of the Hollywood Backlot. A real studio backlot has exterior sets for movies. What kind of movies would be filmed in front of the painted panels of the Superstar Limo or Monsters, Inc. exteriors?

The real-life landmarks that were on the outside of Superstar Limo are all still around. Take a trip to Los Angeles County to visit them...



Photo by Alan Light, 2007 [CC BY-SA 2.0](#) (modified)

Beverly Hills Hotel

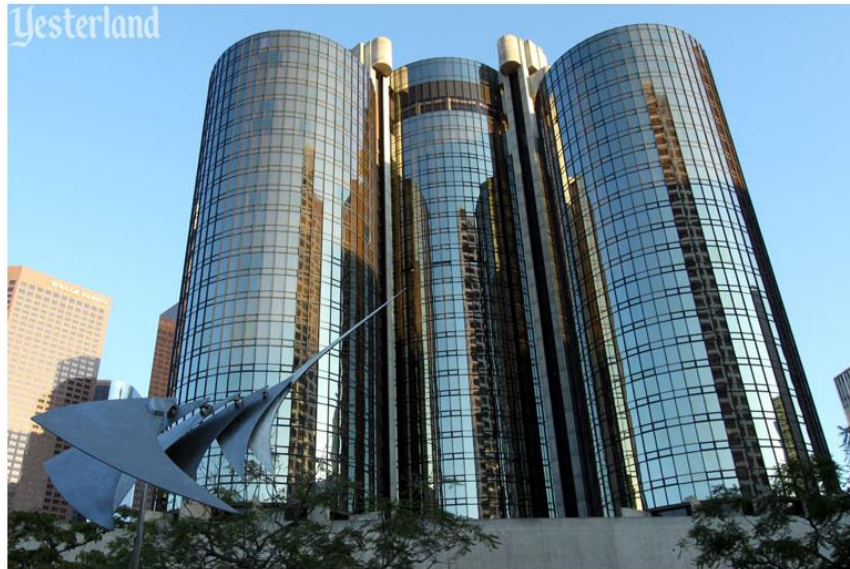


Photo by Prayitno, 2011 [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) (modified)

Westin Bonaventure Hotel



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Los Angeles Union Station

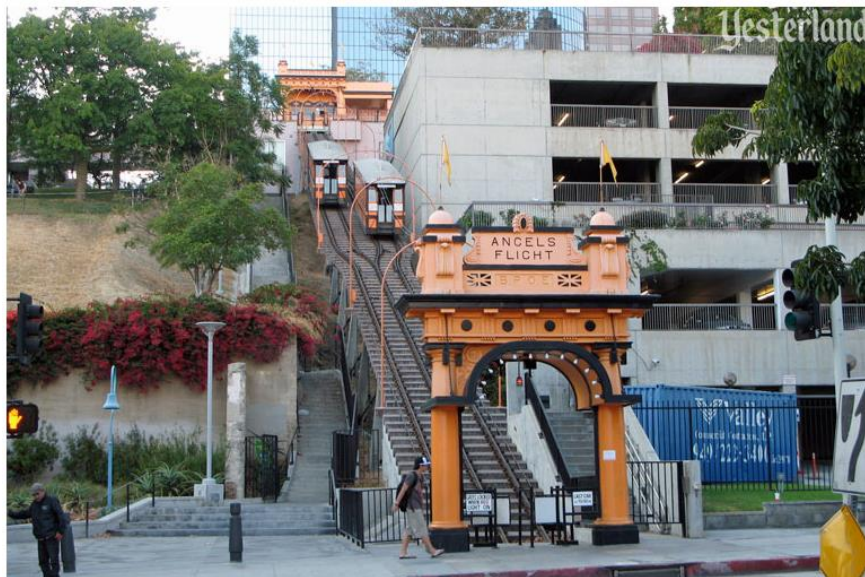


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Angels Flight



Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Walt Disney Concert Hall, one of the most prominent landmarks of Los Angeles, was never part of the Superstar Limo façade.

The Frank Gehry-designed home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestra and the Los Angeles Master Chorale opened October 24, 2003—more than two and a half years after California Adventure opened and more than a year and a half after Superstar Limo closed.

# SUN WHEEL



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002

The big attractions of Paradise Pier

It's not a Ferris Wheel. It's the Sun Wheel. The California Sun smiles at you from the center of the 160-foot diameter amusement wheel.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

Smiling face

The sun face looks like ornamental art from the 1970s, influenced by Mexican folk art—just really big. The California Sun remains stationary as the ride rotates behind it.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

Gondolas slide toward and away from the center as the wheel turns

Before you board the Sun Wheel, you'll have to decide if you want a tame, conventional Ferris Wheel ride or a thrilling ride in a gondola that moves and swings.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Portal to the queue

You've arrived at the entrance to the Sun Wheel. Don't worry about the wait time sign. It probably will take much less than 15 minutes.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

Wait time and caution

The wait time may not be real, but the caution notice is. There are even motion sickness bags in the swinging gondolas.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Sun Wheel queue

The queue is below sea level—actually below Paradise Pier Lagoon level.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Board at the bottom



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Enjoy the ride

The official park website describes the ride this way:

Paradise Pier's Sun Wheel takes Guests on a Ferris wheel-ride high above Disney's California Adventure™ park. You can play it a bit safer by riding one of the cool stationary gondolas; or for a real thrill, climb into one of the purple-and-orange gondolas, which ride on interior rails so they slide inward and outward with the centrifugal force of the wheel's rotational movement!

Well, the gondolas actual slide in and out (and swing back and forth) because of gravity, not centrifugal force.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Spectacular view

Enjoy a view as your gondola makes the full circle. Maybe you can spot your car in the Timon parking lot.





Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

No face on the back of the *Sun Wheel*



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Looks great at dusk



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

### Looks even better at night

Although the Sun Wheel is now in Yester California Adventure, for all practical purposes it's really not gone from Disney California Adventure.

When Disney's California Adventure (as the park was named until mid-2010) opened on February 8, 2001, the Sun Wheel was one of the original attractions. The giant wheel with its California Sun face was the focal point of the park's Paradise Pier section—described in Disney's 2000 annual report as "the ultimate beachfront amusement zone, filled with thrilling attractions and vibrant graphics associated with the heyday of the great seaside amusement park piers."

California really did have amusement parks up and down the coast in the early 20th century. A few are still around, such as the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Belmont Park in San Diego. Most are gone, including Playland at the Beach in San Francisco, Venice Amusement Pier in Venice, Ocean Park Pier in Santa Monica, the Pike in Long Beach (not to be confused with today's Pike at Rainbow Harbor in Long Beach), the Joy Zone in Seal Beach, and many others.

Based on the overall theme of Disney California Adventure, it would be easy to think that the Sun Wheel was based on an actual ride at a California seaside amusement park.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

The Sun Wheel, rising from Paradise Pier Lagoon in 2001



Photo by DangApricot, 2008, from [WikiMedia Commons](#)

Wonder Wheel, Coney Island, New York

It's the Wonder Wheel, not the Sun Wheel.

It turns out that the Sun Wheel was actually a rather faithful copy of the historic Wonder Wheel ride at Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park at Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York. The Wonder Wheel is still operating. It was named an Official New York City Landmark in 1989.

According to the Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park website in 2009:

Built in 1920 by the Eccentric Ferris Wheel Company using 100% Bethlehem Steel forged right on the premises. The 18 co-owners worked as construction men to insure quality throughout the building process. The Wonder Wheel has maintained a perfect safety record for its entire history.

Each year, the entire 400,000 lb. ride is overhauled and painted to protect it from the elements of weather, wear and tear.

Just like the Disney version, the original has sixteen swinging gondolas that slide around tracks as the wheel rotates and eight stationary gondolas. The Wonder Wheel has a diameter of 135 feet, while the slightly larger Sun Wheel has a diameter of 160 feet.

There is no sun face on the Wonder Wheel.

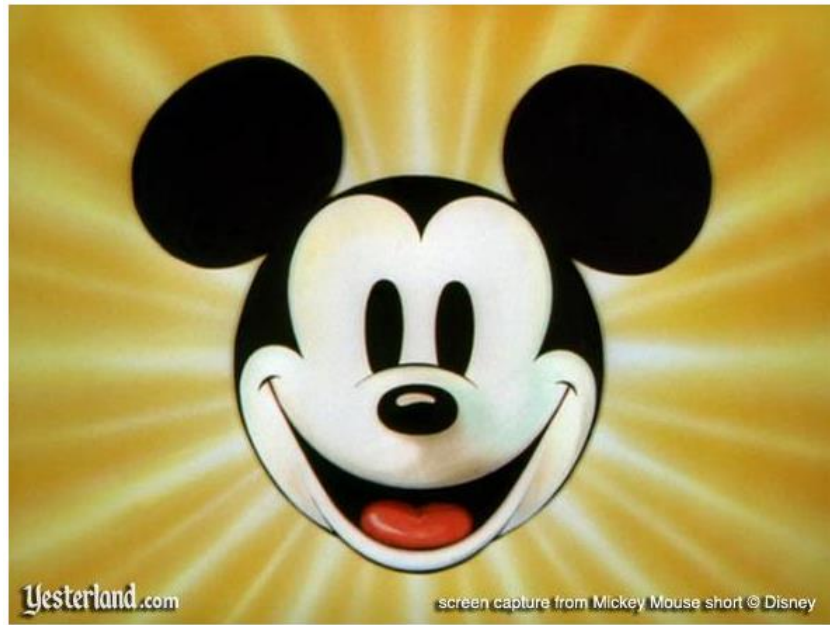


Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

*Mickey's Fun Wheel at Blue Sky Cellar*

And there's no sun face on the Sun Wheel either. The Sun Wheel closed in mid-October 2008 for a half-year makeover to become Mickey's Fun Wheel in May 2009.

During the transition, guests visiting the Blue Sky Cellar in the former Seasons of the Vine building could see artwork and models of Mickey's Fun Wheel. The new colors would be red, yellow, black, and white—the classic Mickey Mouse colors. In the center, a friendly, pie-eyed Mickey Mouse face would replace the California Sun.



It's a Mickey Mouse cartoon!

The Mickey Mouse face is instantly recognizable from the opening frames of Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse color cartoon short subjects. Okay, that version of Mickey wasn't pie-eyed—but today we associate those pie eyes with the vintage Mickey Mouse.

While Mickey Mouse isn't really turn-of-the-century, the nostalgic character from 1928 is a good fit for a nostalgic seaside amusement park of the early 20th century.



No more ears (model at Blue Sky Cellar in 2008)

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

When Paradise Pier originally opened, there was a Mickey Mouse head on the California Screamin' roller coaster. It was a modern, almost industrial-looking Mickey Mouse symbol, not a friendly face. Presumably, the Mickey head symbol was supposed to draw attention to the loop. The stark, modern symbol looked turn-of-the-millennium (2000), not turn-of-the-century (1900).

The Imagineers took care of that. The loop is no longer a Mickey Mouse symbol. There's now a Paradise Pier sign in lettering appropriate to the early 20th century at the crest of the highest roller coaster hill.



Photo by Alanna Kruger, 2009

*Former Sun Wheel as Mickey's Fun Wheel in 2009*

As far as the ride experiences go, Mickey's Fun Wheel and California Screamin' are about the same as the original 2001 versions of those rides. The changes are cosmetic. However, the overall atmosphere of Paradise Pier is much better after these changes. More enhancements are still needed so that Paradise Pier will deliver what it promised.

# MALIBOOMER



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000, Ding!

Have you seen the high-striker game at a carnival midway? It's also known as the strongman game or the strength tester. The customer swings a big mallet onto a wooden block, launching a puck toward a bell at the top of a strength gauge. If the bell sounds, the customer wins a prize, perhaps a brightly colored plush toy. It can be legitimate. But sometimes it's rigged, allowing the operator to goad the customer into trying (and paying) again and again: "Are you a man or a boy?"

Yester California Adventure is no ordinary carnival, and Maliboomer is no ordinary high-striker game. Here, there are three towers; they're ten times the height of a typical high-striker game; and you get to be the puck!



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Maliboomer, as in Malibu

Actually, Maliboomer is not really a high-striker game—but it's themed to look like one. And not just any high-striker game, but a space-themed one.

Okay, it really doesn't look much like a high-striker game. It looks like an S&S Space Shot attraction purchased from ride manufacturer S&S Worldwide, Inc. Because that's exactly what it is.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

WARNING!

There are a bunch of warnings. Here's one more: Don't eat a Malibu-Rito right before riding Maliboomer.





Any children must be tall children.

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Remember that question, “Are you a man or a boy?” (Or “Are you a woman or a girl?”) Here’s where it matters. If you’re not at least 52 inches—4 feet, 4 inches—tall, you can’t ride. That’s unusually restrictive. (You only have to be 40 inches tall to ride Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, Space Mountain, or Splash Mountain at Disneyland.)



Scream alone.

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

If everyone you’re with is too small (or too chicken), you can save time with the single rider line. The seating is in groups of four, so there’s often an empty seat when another party consists of an odd number of guests.



The anticipation is mounting.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

It’s almost your turn.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Almost...



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Do they look comfortable?

Here's something that you normally don't see on Space Shot rides: each seat has a plexiglass shield for each rider's head. The shield is not for the protection of the riders. It's to protect people outside the park from having to hear loud screams.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Sixteen seats surround each tower.

Try to get a seat that faces into the park. You might get a great view if the ride doesn't drain you of the ability to do anything but scream.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

No footrests

Ready? A high-powered, compressed-air system launches you straight up with a force of 4 Gs. The trip to the top is short, but intense.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2002.

Near the top

Ding!!!

You reached the top. Remember, this is supposed to be a high-striker game—thus the ring of the bell.

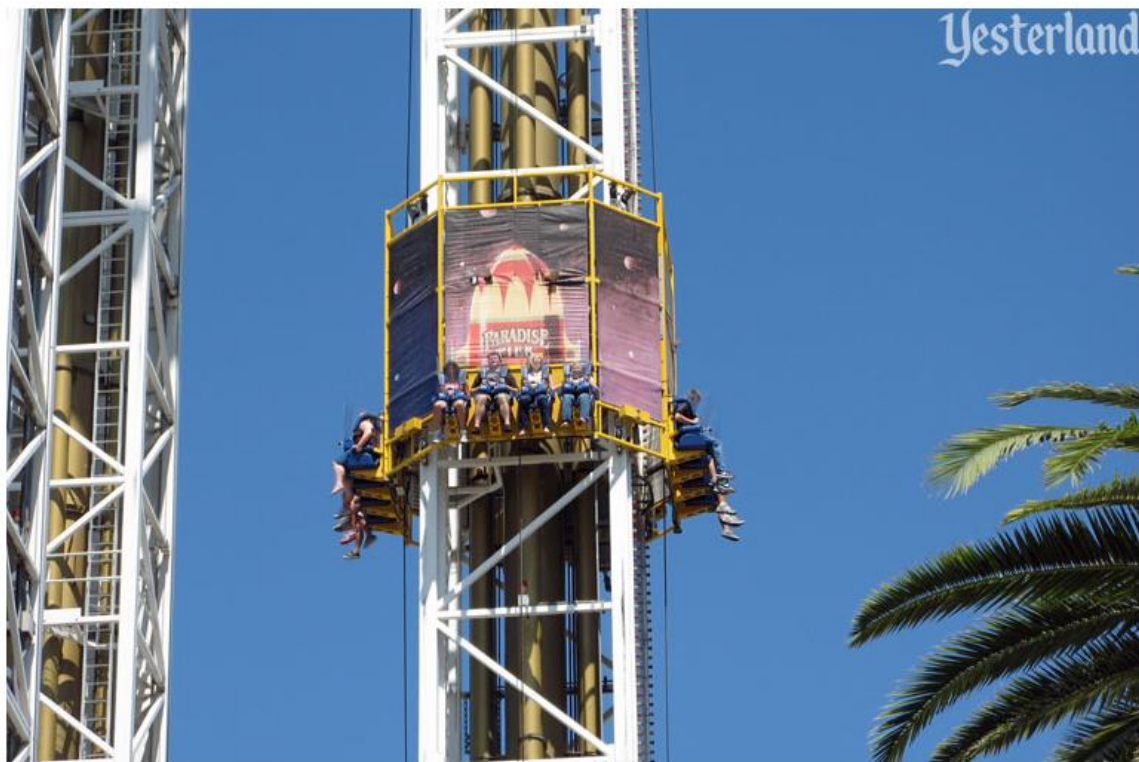


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

This ride has its ups and downs.

You now head downward at freefall speed. You feel weightless in your seat. Before you get to the bottom, you find yourself heading upward again, but not as far. Then it's down again. Up again. Down again. It's sort of like bouncing.

Less than a minute after your launch, you're already back on the ground exiting from your seat.



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Almost ready for a seat



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Park after dark

Even though you made it to the top and the bell rang, you don't get a brightly colored plush toy. Sorry.

Maliboomer was one of the original attractions when Disney's California Adventure opened in February 2001—and, at 180 feet, the tallest attraction in the new park.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2016

Supreme Scream and Timber Mountain Log Ride at Knott's Berry Farm

It was surprising that the decision-makers for Disney's California Adventure chose to include an attraction that looked so similar to Supreme Scream (an S&S Turbo Drop), which opened in 1998 at nearby Knott's Berry Farm. At 312 feet, with guests ascending and dropping a whopping 252 feet, Supreme Scream has bragging rights as the tallest Turbo Drop ride in the world and the tallest structure in Orange County, California. The big difference, other than the lesser height of Maliboomer, was that the biggest thrill at the Disney attraction was the high-speed ascent, while at the Knott's attraction it's the "beyond freefall" high-speed descent.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Paradise Pier before its Extreme Makeover (2007 photo)

Maliboomer was a perfect example of why many Disney fans were disappointed by Disney's California Adventure in 2001. It was easy to compare two attractions that both offered thrills from fast ascents and descents: the detailed, immersive Twilight Zone Tower of Terror in Florida, and the slightly-decorated, "off the shelf" Maliboomer at the new park.

Paradise Pier was supposed to take guests back to the "heyday of the great seaside amusement park piers," but there was nothing nostalgic, authentic or charming about Maliboomer. An S&S Space Shot is a decent regional park thrill ride for people who like that sort of thing—but that's all it is.

In May 2004, the California park got its own Twilight Zone Tower of Terror. Although not as detailed as the Florida original, the difference between Maliboomer and the new thrill tower was night and day.

In late 2007, Disney announced a \$1.1-billion makeover for California Adventure. Maliboomer was conspicuously absent from any drawings, models, or maps showing plans for the revamped park.

Its neighbors, Sun Wheel and Orange Stinger, were given a strong infusion of charm and Disney theming, with great results. And Maliboomer could be dismantled and sold to another park somewhere in the world (although its new location seems to be a secret).

Maliboomer closed permanently on September 7, 2010.



Photo by Paul Hiffmeyer, Disneyland Resort, 2011, © 2011 Disney

Paradise Pier with its updated theme—without *Maliboomer*

With Maliboomer and its 1990s technology gone, Paradise Pier arguably looked much better, especially from across Paradise Bay. Above the graceful curves of California Screamin', the monumental yet friendly Mickey's Fun Wheel dominates the Paradise Pier skyline.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Former site of *Maliboomer*



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Smoking area on the edge of the former *Maliboomer* site

Although the towers were dismantled in October 2010, nothing has replaced them yet. Remnants of Maliboomer remain at ground level, including the concrete pad and railings. The path around Paradise Bay goes by them. The area is not entirely dead. One part has been used for character greetings and photo opportunities. Another part has served as a designated smoking area. And there's still the dynamic energy of the California Screamin' coaster trains.

It's valuable real estate. Something new is overdue.





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### Pixar Pier concept art first shown at D23 Expo

On July 15, 2017, at D23 Expo in Anaheim, Bob Chapek, Chairman of Walt Disney Parks & Resorts, announced that Paradise Pier would become Pixar Pier.

Concept art showed a continuation of the design aesthetic from Toy Story Midway Mania and Boardwalk Pizza and Pasta. Everything is Pixar character-themed. Pixar Fun Wheel is at the far right (if you read the sign carefully), signaling another change to Mickey's Fun Wheel. The center of the art, behind Bing Bong's Confectionery, is where Maliboomer had been.

It seems the former site of Maliboomer has a bright future.

## ORANGE STINGER



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Welcome to a ride that's a tribute to the orange groves and citrus honey production of California. After all, California Adventure is all about California. Keep in mind that the 160 acres that Walt Disney acquired in 1954 for Disneyland and its parking lot were once covered mostly by orange trees—with honey bees buzzing around the orange blossoms.

The four-story orange peel is hiding a 48-seat Zierer Wave Swinger. But this one's not a Swinger; it's a Stinger—the Orange Stinger.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

A citrus fruit with a ride inside



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Entrance



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Elevator disguised as a stack of bee hive boxes

Look for the honey bees with aviator goggles.

Head up the stairs to the ride level and wait for your turn. There's no pre-show, but the view is pretty good. As you watch the riders to your left, you can anticipate what the ride will be like. Or, to your right, you can enjoy a panoramic view of Paradise Pier from a vantage point one story above water level.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2006

Queue

The queue is on a platform along the edge of the orange.

Pick a swing chair, any swing chair. Your seat is suspended from a canopy high above you by chains. Get into a seat. Then put the metal bar across the seat above your lap.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2006

Every rider gets his or her own seat

A hydraulic system raises the central column like an old-fashioned telescope, lifting the canopy. The central column rotates in one direction, while the canopy rotates in the opposite direction. To make it more interesting, the canopy tilts in various directions to create a wave-like motion for the riders. It's really a mechanical marvel.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2006

Flying with your feet dangling high above the ground

There's something here for four of your five senses. See glimpses of Paradise Pier from the open areas in the orange peel. Hear the sound of bees buzzing (or the sound of screams drowning out the buzzing). Smell the scent of oranges. Feel the wave action of the tilting canopy and the centrifugal force that makes your seat swing out to the side. (The fifth sense is taste, but food and beverages are not allowed on the ride.)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2006

Don't lose your shoes!

Before you know it, you hear a recorded announcement:

"It looks like our flight time is up. Please stay seated until your Orange Stinger stops. Then, lift the bar; check for your belongings; leave through the nearest exit. Thank you for flying with us. We hope to see you again soon."

Head back down the stairs. Come back tonight to admire how the orange peel is lit with neon along its edges.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Follow the sign



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Dusk for the *Orange Stinger*



Orange Stinger souvenir toy

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

If you want to remember your ride on the Orange Stinger, stop by a park gift shop for the souvenir toy.

Orange Stinger was one of the original attractions at Disney's California Adventure when the park opened in February 2001. It was in the part of Paradise Pier that is now Paradise Gardens Park.

At its core, the attraction was a Zierer Wave Swinger, an "off the shelf" product from German amusement park ride manufacturer Zierer Karussell und Spezialmaschinenbau GmbH.



Wave Swinger in Fiesta Village at Knott's Berry Farm

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Surprisingly, the designers of California Adventure included the ride in the new park even though there was already a Zierer Wave Swinger at nearby Knott's Berry Farm. (Knott's originally called their ride Slingshot in 1987, but changed the name to Wave Swinger in 1998.)

By enclosing the ride in a structure that looked like an orange and providing one-of-a-kind seating, the Orange Stinger would provide a unique experience, while still delivering the thrills that Wave Swingers are known for.

When the Orange Stinger first opened, each guest sat in a whimsical seat that looked like a yellow and black bee abdomen with bee wings and legs on each side.



Photos by Allen Huffman, 2001

Orange Stinger guests as buzzing bees



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Another rare early photo



Guests were not simply riders on a ride; they became a swarm of buzzing bees, and they smelled the scent of oranges, pumped into the attraction. Sure, there were Zierer Wave Swinger rides all over the world, but no other one was like the Orange Stinger.

The “bee behind” seats immediately became a problem. The decorative elements could not withstand the damage from banging into each other. Disney’s California Adventure had opened February 8, 2001. By February 21, 2001, the decorative covers were gone.

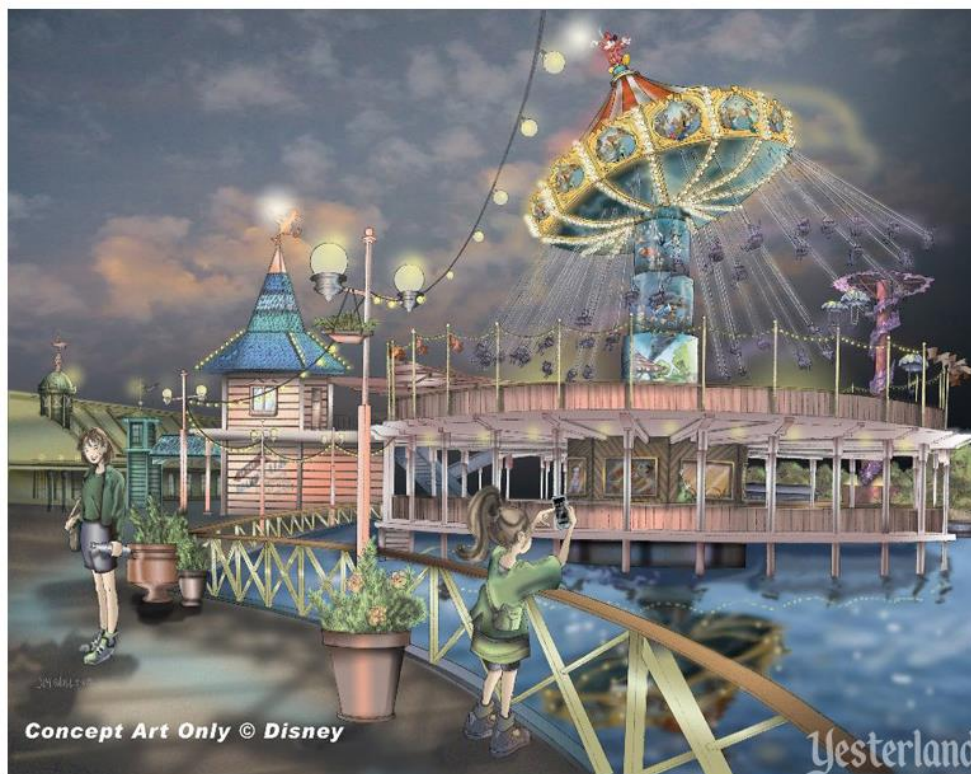


Conventional seats on the Orange Stinger

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Orange Stinger had a California theme, but it didn’t successfully take guests back in time to “the heyday of the great seaside amusement park piers,” as Disney’s 2000 annual report described the theme of Paradise Pier. The giant orange peel looked more like something from the early 21st century than the early 20th century. For riders, the peel largely blocked what would have been a good view.

When a different team of Disney Imagineers redesigned Disney’s California Adventure, they decided to keep the ride—but to remove the peel and change the theme. Those Imagineers probably would not have chosen to put a Wave Swinger in the park if they were starting with a fresh piece of paper (or an untouched asphalt parking lot), but Disney already owned the ride.



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Disney concept art for Silly Symphony Swings

Concept art showed that the Orange Stinger would become Silly Symphony Swings. The last day of operation for the Orange Stinger was July 13, 2009. It closed so that the ride's transformation into Silly Symphony Swings could begin.

Purists pointed out that the 1935 Mickey Mouse cartoon *The Band Concert*, which inspired the new version of the ride, was not part of Walt Disney's Silly Symphony series. But Silly Symphony Swings sounds better than *The Band Concert* Swings.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

*Orange Stinger being "peeled"*

After more than ten months of work, Silly Symphony Swings had its soft opening on May 28, 2010 and its grand opening on June 11, 2010.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Great-looking construction wall

With scenes from Walt Disney's brilliant animated short *The Band Concert* painted on an intricately decorated canopy and conductor Mickey Mouse high atop it, the ride emerged with "Disney magic" that it lacked in its original incarnation.

The Silly Symphony Swings attraction is a more conventional Wave Swinger than the Orange Stinger. That's not necessarily a bad thing. There's a good reason why Wave Swinger rides are not normally enclosed. It's more fun for riders.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Former Orange Stinger



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Your conductor, Mickey Mouse

With the new decorations and the ride's movements no longer hidden from guests walking around Paradise Bay, the Silly Symphony Swings attraction contributes old-time charm and kinetic energy to Paradise Gardens Park.

## PIZZA OOM MOW MOW



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

“At this wacky, beachcomber restaurant next to Reboundo Beach, they serve up great pizza—like the Big Kahuna Hawaiian, Awesome Pepperoni and Wipe Out Cheese—pasta, salad, beverages, and more...and good vibrations at no extra charge. Dude, it's the ultimate!” That's what the official website says about this surfer-themed eatery.

Not only can you eat surfer cuisine here, you can also practice speaking in surfer lingo—or at least in surfer clichés, Cowabunga, dude!



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Pizza Oom Mow Mow

As you approach the restaurant, a sign on a blue boogie board invites you in: “Surf into Pizza Oom Mow Mow for an endless summer of party-wave pastas, sunny salads, and perfecto pizzas. In Crust We Trust.”



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Left side of Pizza Oom Mow Mow

Before you enter the restaurant, take a look at the building. The sides don't look at all like the middle. The left side looks like a beach cottage, complete with dormer windows. It appears that surfers have left their boards on the shake roof.



Photo by Kevin Yee, 2002

Right side of Pizza Oom Mow Mow

The right side looks like another cottage, only the roof of this one has a bicycle, a single water ski, several life preservers, and even a lifeguard tower, complete with an access ladder. A "modern" (in a 1960s sort of way) addition with a tall metal roof connects the two cottages.

Remember, you're not really at the beach. You're at a theme park. This restaurant was obviously designed with a clever backstory to provide a logical explanation for why the blue-roofed main structure is book-ended by two beach cottages.

There's only one problem. Nobody knows the backstory. (Well, somebody must know it, but they haven't shared it with guests.)

Actually, good backstories shouldn't need to be explained explicitly. They should just make sense to any guest who keeps his or her eyes open. So, as you spend more time here, try to figure out the backstory.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Order stations and pick-up counter

You're inside now. It's a quick service restaurant where you place your order at an order station and then pick up your food at the counter.

Look all around. There's a lot of beach culture stuff in here. This place is clearly some sort of surfer hangout.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Menu

Choose from five kinds of pizza, two pasta dishes, and three entrée salads. Add a side and a beverage, if you like. If you have kids, there are choices for them too. If you like beer (not for the kids), your only options are Bud and Bud Light. (Sorry about that.) Don't forget to ask about their "totally tubular assortment of desserts."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Pizza eater tiki head

The islands of Hawai'i were the birthplace of surfing, so it's fitting for Pizza Oom Mow Mow to pay homage to the Aloha State. A tiki wearing an aloha shirt and eating pizza watches you as you study the menu boards.

There is a similar tiki head at the peak of the roof above the main entrance outside. Also, two large standing tikis (one a kane and the other a wahine) guard the exterior. Perhaps they should have called this place Walt Disney's Enchanted Pizza Room. On second thought, that's a bad idea. Walt Disney was not a surfer.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Surfboard wall

Take your food to a table. Look at all those surfboards. What's the story here? Is this wall a place for surfers to safely stow their boards while they polish off a pizza? Or is this a surfboard shop that now also sells pizza and other foods?



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Poster wall



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Woody on a garage door



There's an airbrushed Woodie mural in this dining room. Not Woody and Buzz. Just Woodie.

A Woodie is a vintage station wagon with wood panel sides. Woodies were popular with surfers in the 1960s because they could put their surfboards in them. The old vehicles were easier on the surfers' wallets than new station wagons. And they looked much cooler.

The Woodie mural is on a garage door. Hey, the whole wall is an exterior garage wall. This supports the story that the cottages were built as residences and the blue-roofed central part was added later.



More airbrush art

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

The airbrush artist didn't stop with the garage door. A muscular surfer wearing green baggies is shooting the curl. His flowing red hair mimics the flaming red sun. Okay, it's not a Rembrandt, but it goes with the story here.



Shark

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Presumably the shark hanging from the ceiling is part of the backstory. Let's hope that the story doesn't involve a shark eating a surfer.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Outdoor seating

You may want to eat outside under the blue sky with two large tikis watching you. Catch some rays. This patio is most excellent.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Day



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Night

With no official, published backstory, it's time to make one up based on what we've seen.

There were two cottages at the edge of a beach in Southern California. They had been built in the 1920s by families from Pasadena as summer weekend homes. By the 1960s, the cottages were owned by a surfer who operated a surf shop in one cottage and lived in the other. His friends and their friends liked to hang out at the surf shop, and it developed into an informal club. Because they liked to keep an eye on the waves, they made a deal with the local lifeguards. They would relocate a surplus lifeguard tower to the roof of one of the cottages. In return, they would also keep an eye out for anyone in trouble in the water when the lifeguards weren't around.

One day, the owner of the surf shop made some pizza for his friends. They loved it and wanted to be able to buy it whenever they were hungry (which was all the time). So he started selling it. He recruited his friends to work there. As the word got out, it became a thriving business. Motorists would pull off Pacific Coast Highway to enjoy the surfer chow and memorabilia. The cottages were way too small for all the diners, so the owner and his friends connected the two cottages into one large restaurant. Their favorite song at the time was the Beach Boys' 1965 version of "Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow," so they named the restaurant Pizza Oom Mow Mow.

Until an official backstory is published, that will have to do.

Pizza Oom Mow Mow was one of the original restaurants of Disney's California Adventure when the park opened in February 2001.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 1999

Construction of Pizza Oom Mow Mow

Pizza Oom Mow Mow was located near the Orange Stinger and Burger Invasions in a corner of Paradise Pier that was supposed to represent Route 66 in California. With an assortment of mismatched rides, shops, and restaurants that failed to evoke a real place and time, and with a walkway that didn't look like a road, this Route 66 didn't feel at all like a stretch of the famous highway that once ran from Chicago to Santa Monica. It didn't look like a classic amusement pier either. Rather, it looked like a hodgepodge—because that's what it was.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Drawings of the new façade for former Pizza Oom Mow Mow, displayed in *Blue Sky Cellar*

Pizza Oom Mow Mow closed permanently on September 6, 2010. The closure of the surfer-themed eatery was part of the larger project to transform Paradise Pier from a hodgepodge into a charming seaside amusement park of the early 20th century, with a cohesive style and plenty of Disney details.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Boardwalk Pizza & Pasta exterior



Yesterland

Photo by Chris Bales, 2016

Boardwalk Pizza & Pasta interior

Boardwalk Pizza & Pasta opened at the beginning of July 2011. Looking at the old-fashioned exterior and interior of the quick-service restaurant, it's hard to tell that this structure used to be Pizza Oom Mow Mow.