

FRANCIS' LADYBUG BOOGIE



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

You might remember a scene in the Disney-Pixar movie *A Bug's Life* when two flies in the audience of P.T. Flea's Circus proposition circus performer Francis:

Fly 1: Hey, cutie! Wanna pollinate with a real bug?

Francis: So, bein' a ladybug automatically makes me a girl! Is that it, flyboy? Huh?

Fly 2: Yikes!

Fly 1: She's a guy!

Here's how the official Pixar website describes Francis: "A member of the circus crew, Francis is the misunderstood male ladybug. To compensate for his mistaken gender, he develops a macho attitude that can only be softened by Ant Island's young Blueberries troop."

The feisty ladybug has a ride at a Yester California Adventure. Francis' Ladybug Boogie is one of four rides here at Flik's Fun Fair, along with Heimlich's Chew Chew, Tuck and Roll's Buggies, and Flik's Flyers. They're all geared toward children, but adults can enjoy them too.



Smirking Francis as a ride vehicle

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

At Francis' Ladybug Boogie, each of the six ride vehicles looks like Francis—with a half-smile, raised eyebrows, and eyes looking to the side.

Are you ready to spin with a ladybug to the sounds of Big Band music?

Unlike the teacups of Mad Tea Party at Disneyland Park, the ladybugs don't have center wheels to make them spin. Just lean to one side or the other to make your bug boogie.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Short wait for a short ride



Photo by Chris Bales, 2016

Watch others riding before you ride



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Pick a ladybug (they're all the same)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2017

Six ladybugs on two round platters



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Behind a barrier of twigs



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Out for a spin



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Here's looking at you



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Spots before your eyes

In just one minute, your ride is over. Time to head to the next ride of Flick's Fun Fair. Each of them is modest on its own, but all four together, along with their surroundings and a water play area, form a cohesive mini-land packed with inventive design features.

Francis' Ladybug Boogie opened at Disney's California Adventure (now Disney California Adventure) on October 7, 2002, as part of "a bug's land".

Although the ride was often described as a smaller version of Mad Tea Party at Disneyland Park, its ride system was actually more like that of Mater's Junkyard Jamboree (opened 2012), with the ladybugs moving in a figure-eight pattern as they transferred from one spinning turntable to another.

Francis' Ladybug Boogie, along with the rest of "a bug's land", closed permanently on September 4, 2018, to make way for the Marvel-themed Avengers Campus.

According to Disney, "In 2020, guests of all ages will be invited to team up with some favorite Super Heroes at the Avengers Campus at Disney California Adventure Park at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif. The campus is set up by the Avengers to recruit the next generation of Super Heroes and features Black Panther and his elite guards, the Dora Milaje, Thor and Iron Man."

Avengers Campus will be the third land in the same location. When Disney's California Adventure opened February 8, 2001, the area was Bountiful Valley Farm.



Artist Concept © Disney © 2019 Marvel



Artist Concept © Disney © 2019 Marvel

Concepts for Avengers Campus at Disney California Adventure

PRINCESS DOT PUDDLE PARK



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

It's a warm and sunny afternoon at Flik's Fun Fair at "a bug's land". The year is between 2002 and 2018. You're at the park with kids—and they're complaining, "It's too hot!"

You're all the size of bugs. You could just stand under the shade of giant clover leaves towering overhead. But there's a better option.

When in "a bug's land", do as bugs do. Look for a leaking water spigot or a sprinkler that's not completely turned off. Cool off—like a bug.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Young guests cooling off

Apparently, the ground is leaking too. Jets of water spring up unexpectedly. If you figure out the fountain's pattern, you might be able to outsmart the jets and stay dry. Then again, if you really want to stay dry, it's easier just to avoid this part of Flik's Fun Fair entirely.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Risking water squirting in the eyes



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Standing back to stay dry



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2003

Approaching with caution



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2018

Getting wet and trying to stay dry

Your kids are now sopping wet... and you still have the rest of the day ahead of you at Yester California Adventure. What now?

You could try to spin them dry on Francis' Ladybug Boogie—but that ride doesn't spin fast enough.



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Restrooms in a tissue box



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Two doors for family use

The official website has the answer: "If your little bugs get carried away with the watery fun, the nearby restroom facility features 2 family restrooms. Just steps away from Princess Dot Puddle Park, the family restrooms are perfect for a quick change. Nobody likes a soggy exoskeleton!"

Flik's Fun Fair, including Princess Dot Puddle Park, opened at Disney's California Adventure (now Disney California Adventure) on October 7, 2002. Flik's Fun Fair had five attractions. Four were rides. Princess Dot Puddle Park was the fifth.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Guardians of the Galaxy - Mission: BREAKOUT!, a portent of the fate of Flik's Fun Fair

After a run of almost 16 years, Princess Dot Puddle Park and the rest of Flik's Fun Fair closed permanently September 4, 2018. Flik's Fun Fair and the rest of "a bug's land" began their transformation into the Avengers Campus.

MISSION TORTILLA FACTORY



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

"In a park that showcases the diversity of the California culture and landscape, Mission Foods is proud to demonstrate the history and the making of the traditional food of ancient and modern Mexico—the tortilla." That's how the Mission Foods website describes this attraction.

It's not a ride or a theater. It's an authentic, working tortilla factory. Get ready for a four-part experience!



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Corn flour and wheat flour storage

Before you enter the factory, admire it from the outside. This isn't a storybook theme park building. The exterior, with its corrugated metal sides and rough timbers, looks fittingly industrial. The huge, cylindrical storage container on the left holds 14,000 pounds of corn flour, while the one on the right holds 15,000 pounds of wheat flour—enough to yield 408,000 corn tortillas and 390,000 flour tortillas, respectively (give or take a few).



“Tortillas aren’t just for kings anymore.”

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Now step inside. The first part of your experience—the pre-show—is in a room with a large mural and an ornately framed video monitor. The mural depicts the Mayan god Hun Nal Ye bestowing corn upon the Mayan people—a momentous event in their history and culture.

Three children narrate a two-minute, animated video, “The Story of the Tortilla,” about the origins and importance of corn and tortillas in the Aztec, Olmec, and Mayan cultures of Mexico. Among other things, the children explain, “Some even worshipped corn as a god,” and, “According to Mayan legend, the tortilla was invented as a gift to the king.”

You’ll learn that, thanks to the invention of Maseca corn flour, tortillas are better than ever. (According to Mission Foods, “Maseca is the secret behind the incredible taste, consistency and quality of Mission corn tortillas.”)



Peek-in vignettes

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

The doors open to the next room. There are more murals and four peek-in windows. Take a look.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

3-D tortilla vignette

Ghostly little video people populate vignettes within the windows. Watch them grind the corn with traditional stone tools and form tortillas by hand. Then step to the right to another window to watch a more recent kitchen scene. Yes, tortillas have long been the Hispanic staple of life.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Entrance to the Production Line

Now that you've learned the proud origins of the tortilla, it's time for the third part of your tortilla experience. Step into the Production Line room. You get to watch the entire process on a short walking tour—from fresh dough to tasty tortillas.



Yesterland.com

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

The actual factory

It's not a big factory, but it is a working tortilla facility. The line on your right makes flour tortillas. The one on your left makes corn tortillas. The output is used by restaurants here at the park.



Yesterland.com

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Flour hopper behind glass



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

“3 Pass” Oven (left)

Signs explain what every machine does. For example, In the “3 Pass” Oven, “Each tortilla passes through the oven three times. Heat penetrates the tortilla and seals the outside layer, trapping moisture inside. The moisture causes the ‘puffing,’ which creates a flaky tortilla.”



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Cooling conveyor

After the tortillas have gone through the oven, “the cooling conveyor allows the tortilla to cool down—from 190° to 100°. This process keeps tortillas from sticking together when packaged. Total cooling time for flour tortillas: three minutes.” For corn tortillas, it’s just two minutes.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Fresh sample

You'll probably consider the Production Line to be the best part of this attraction because this is where you get to sample a freshly baked tortilla (or sometimes only part of one) absolutely free. These are warm tortillas, right off the line.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

"What's Your Weight in Tortillas?" scale

Don't forget to weigh yourself. If you accepted a sample, you now weigh one tortilla more than if you didn't.

At the far end of the Production Line room, you reach the fourth and final part of your tortilla experience—a chance to learn more about Mission Foods and to discover new ways to use tortillas at the Demonstration Kitchen. Here's how Mission Foods explains it on their website:

Toward the end of your visit you'll learn even more about the leader of the "tortilla revolution"... Mission Foods. Devoted to technological innovation, Mission uses technology not only to reduce costs, but to increase product quality and consumer satisfaction. These innovations are one of the most interesting aspects of the Mission Tortilla Factory.

Most Interesting? Perhaps to some guests—but, to most guests, probably not as interesting as the idea of getting free food at a theme park.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Wall graphics at the Demonstration Kitchen



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Mission Foods Demonstration Kitchen

Watch Mission Foods chefs preparing traditional Mexican and contemporary California recipes using genuine Mission tortillas.



Yesterland.com

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Yum!

The chefs at Demonstration Kitchen produce tasty looking dishes. Tortillas are the perfect ingredient for any meal (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) and any course (appetizer, main course, or dessert).



Yesterland.com

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Samples for looking, not for tasting

Here at the park that celebrates California, what company could better represent California than Mission Foods?

By the way, Mission Foods is headquartered in Irving, Texas. It's a division of Gruma Corporation, which is part of GRUMA S.A.B. de C.V., based in Monterrey, Mexico. (In fairness, Mission Foods started in Los Angeles in 1977.)

Mission Tortilla Factory was one of the original attractions at Disney's California Adventure when the park opened on February 8, 2001.

In its early years, Mission Tortilla Factory was the subject of jokes and a symbol of how the new park had redefined the word attraction. Disneyland had Pirates of the Caribbean and Haunted Mansion. California Adventure had a bread bakery and a tortilla factory. Even a decade later, the official Disney California Adventure website listed Duffy the Disney Bear as one of the Paradise Pier section's 11 attractions. (In fairness, the new park also had Soarin' Over California and a short list of other well-received attractions.)

However, over time, Mission Tortilla Factory developed a loyal following. It wasn't a case of Annual Passholders returning again and again to watch the little family in the peek-in windows. But many stopped in for a fresh, warm tortilla sample from a friendly tortilla baker. The tortillas were genuinely good—much better than tortillas packed in plastic sitting on grocery store shelves.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2011

"Tortilla Factory is Closed" (May 31, 2011 photo)

For more than ten years, Mission Tortilla Factory operated in a quiet corner of the park. With Cars Land coming in 2012, the location was slated to become a prime, high-traffic spot next to Fillmore's Taste-In at the main entrance to Cars Land. But Mission Tortilla Factory didn't wait for that to happen.

Mission Tortilla Factory closed permanently on May 31, 2011.

On June 8th, 2011, an Orange County Register article by Eugene Fields quoted a prepared statement from Disney spokeswoman Betsy Sanchez: "It was a mutual decision not to renew the agreement. We look forward to providing our guests with a new experience in this location."

On the day before Mission Tortilla Factory closed, MiceAge editor Al Lutz scooped every conventional and online media outlet with the news of what would replace the tour. Al wrote, "Disney is wrapping up the details on a new sponsorship deal with an iconic California company they had been chasing back in the late 1990s for DCA, but which wisely took a pass after deciding they were unimpressed with the original park. But now the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company of San Francisco is planned to become DCA's newest sponsor, and if the current timeline holds Ghirardelli will debut in 2012 in an expanded and remade building at the old Mission Tortilla Factory location."

For a while it seemed as if Al's scoop might have been wrong, or at least that Ghirardelli and Disney failed to reach an agreement.



Concept art for Ghirardelli at Disney California Adventure

Concept art © Disney

Finally, on December 1, 2011, a Disney press release made the news official: “Disneyland Resort today announced that Ghirardelli will open a new location inside Disney California Adventure park in late spring 2012. The soda fountain and chocolate shop will add yet another layer of traditional San Francisco flair to the Pacific Wharf area of the park.”

The press release included a line that was sure to bring a smile to anyone who enjoys good chocolate: “Each guest will be able to enjoy a complimentary sample of the signature Ghirardelli Squares® chocolate.”

The concept art that accompanied the press release showed a building that would reuse the Mission Tortilla Factory structure. Instead of being clad in industrial corrugated metal, the building would now be clad in attractive



Ghirardelli in the former Mission Tortilla Factory

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Ghirardelli Soda Fountain and Chocolate Shop opened in June 2012. Park guests can enjoy signature sundaes, shakes, and floats. There's also a great selection of Ghirardelli chocolate in various form factors.



Ghirardelli samples

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Sure, the tortilla samples are gone. But now guests get chocolate. A free chocolate taste is even better than a free tortilla taste.

SEASONS OF THE VINE



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Wow! Yester California Adventure has truly unique theme park attractions—like this seven-minute film providing a “behind-the-scenes introduction” to winegrowing. Head over to the Barrel Room at the Golden Vine Winery for Seasons of the Vine.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Theater in the stone winery building

The Barrel Room is inside a rustic stone building on the edge of the Yester California Adventure parade route, where you might see Eureka! - The California Adventure Parade. There are a couple ways to get to the entrance of the Barrel Room. The most fun is to take the pathway behind the building, which is planted with Johannisberg Riesling grapes.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

A Wine Ambassador at the entrance is ready to greet you.

The Barrel Room is staffed by Robert Mondavi-trained Wine Ambassadors. Other Robert Mondavi-trained Wine Ambassadors at this winery-within-a-park can answer your questions and provide further information about the winegrowing process. The Wine Ambassadors may also guide you through wine tastings. They offer insight into the character of the wines and provide tips on serving and food pairings.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Open doors welcoming you to *Seasons of the Vine*



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

"Wine of California is Bottled Poetry" —Robert Louis Stevenson

You found the entrance. You're about to enter the Barrel Room.

As you enter, there's a quotation from Treasure Island author Robert Louis Stevenson (but see how the painter spelled Louis). Yes, he really did write the phrase "bottled poetry" about California wine in *The Silverado Squatters*, his 1883 book about his honeymoon trip to the Napa Valley:

Wine in California is still in the experimental stage; and when you taste a vintage, grave economical questions are involved. The beginning of vine-planting is like the beginning of mining for the precious metals: the wine-grower also "Prospects." One corner of land after another is tried with one kind of grape after another. This is a failure; that is better; a third best. So, bit by bit, they grope about for their Clos Vougeot and Lafite. Those lodes and pockets of earth, more precious than the precious ores, that yield inimitable fragrance and soft fire; those virtuous Bonanzas, where the soil has sublimated under sun and stars to something finer, and the wine is bottled poetry: these still lie undiscovered; chaparral conceals, thicket embowers them; the miner chips the rock and wanders farther, and the grizzly muses undisturbed. But there they bide their hour, awaiting their Columbus; and nature nurses and prepares them. The smack of Californian earth shall linger on the palate of your grandson.

The quotation at the entrance to Seasons of the Vine is more succinct, even though it's not what Stevenson wrote.

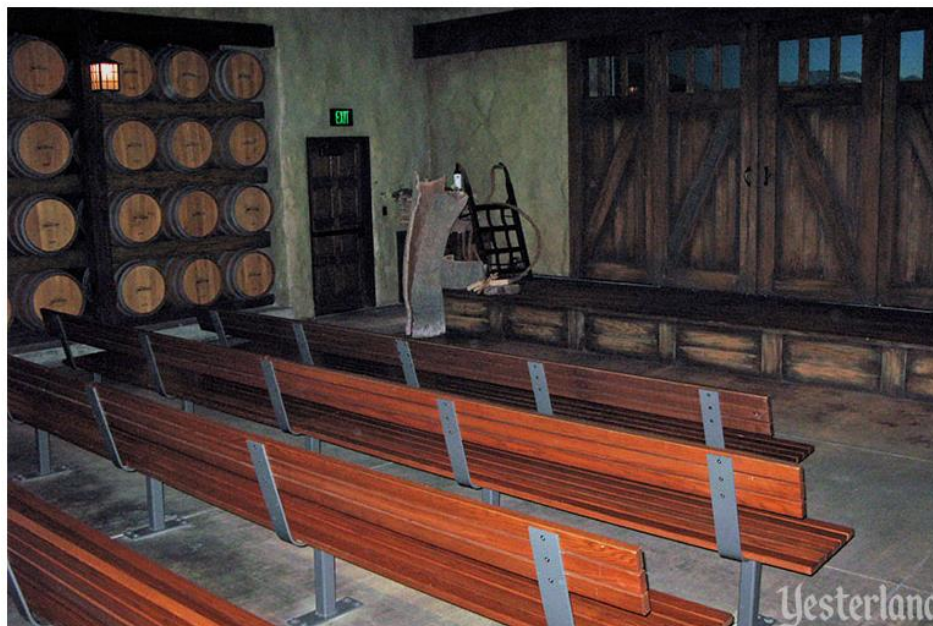


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Plenty of seats.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

The barrels of the Barrel Room

Take a seat in the Barrel Room. The cool, intimate space is designed to look like a wine aging room in the California Wine Country. Real, handcrafted oak wine barrels line the wall of the theater. (They're empty, so don't even think about trying to tap into one.)

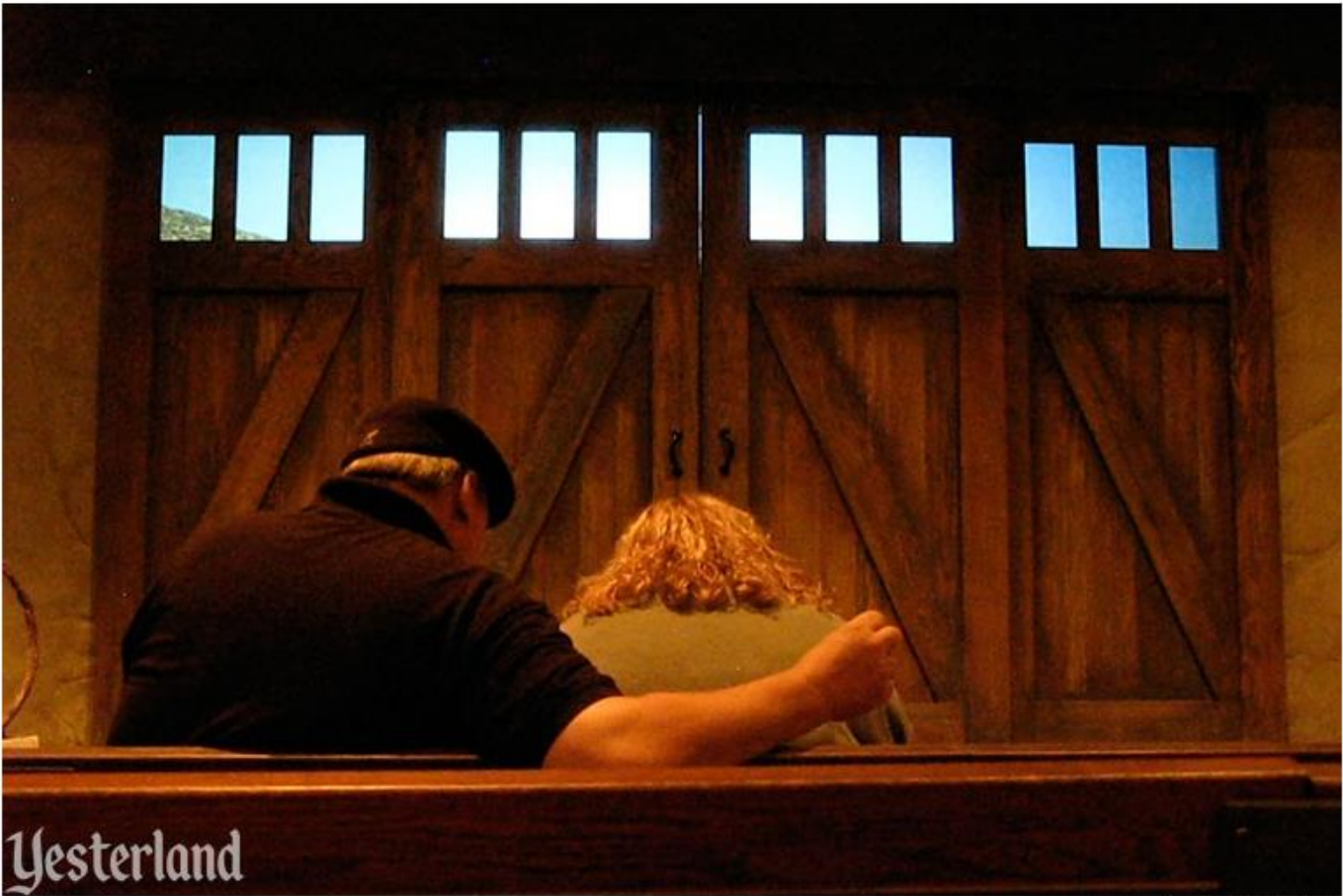


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

What's beyond the doors?

Your Wine Ambassador slides open the massive doors in the front of the Barrel Room to reveal a vineyard with workers tending the grapes. It's a movie, not a real vineyard, but it's a pleasant effect.

When your Wine Ambassador stops talking, the film's narrator takes over. The narrator speaks with an aristocratic accent. As you watch scenes of beautiful vineyards through the seasons, the narrator tells you about the history of wine in California; what happens in the vineyards in winter, spring, summer, and fall; how "the winemakers work their magic," and how the wine is carefully aged in oak and finally bottled. You'll even learn about the "villains of spring"—insects, heavy rains, and frost.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Narrator: "Here in the Wine Country, life is on a timeless journey through the Seasons of the Vine, a journey that began in the 1700s, when missions planted vines brought to the New World by Spanish Conquistadors. During the Gold Rush of 1849, European Immigrants arrived bringing wine grape varieties from France, Germany, and Italy. Their vineyards took root and thrived. After a hundred years of planting and harvesting, California was finally recognized as a World Class winegrowing region."



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Narrator: "Today, visitors from all over the world come to explore the vineyards and taste the wines of a new generation of California winemakers. But while years pass, and generations change, the vineyard continues its timeless journey."



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Narrator: "Summer dawns, filled with hope. The days begin cool and foggy, then turn warm and sunny. The grapes thrive in this climate of contrasts. They begin to develop the character, color, and taste unique to each wine grape variety."

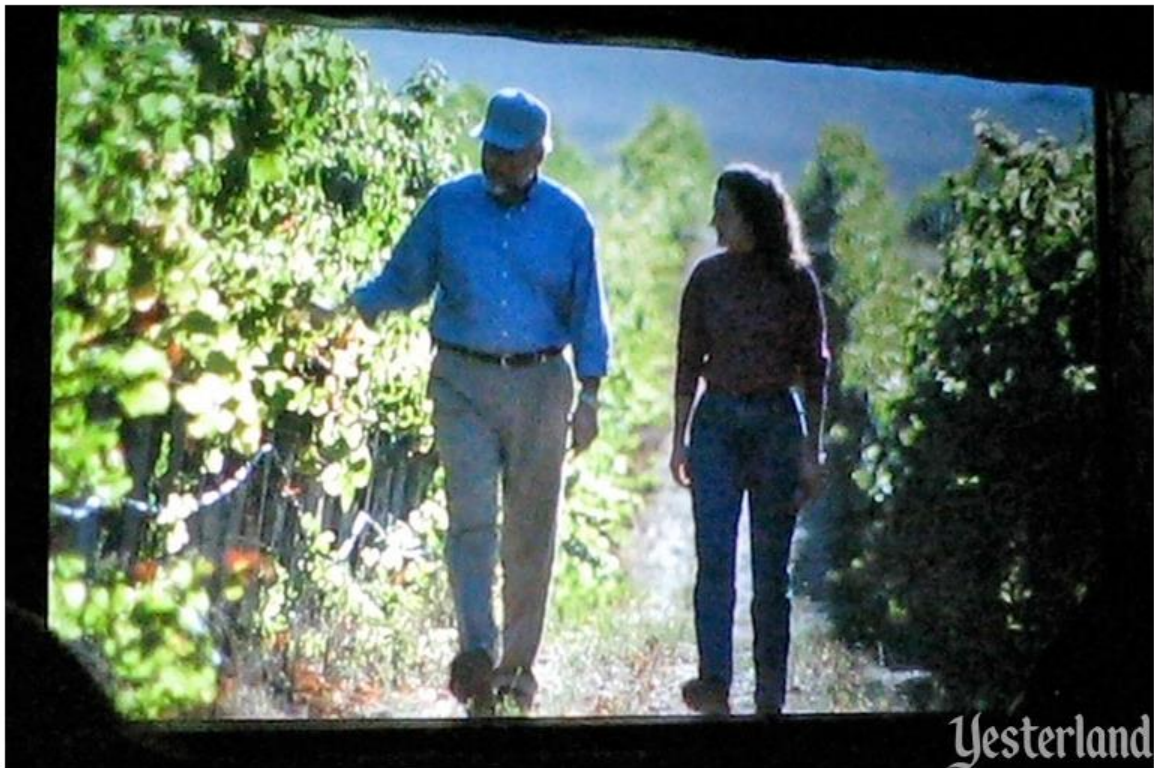


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Narrator: "Finally, autumn arrives. Every day the grapes are tasted and tested. And when the winemaker decides that the flavor is perfect, the grapes must be picked immediately."

When the movie is over, your Wine Ambassador closes the doors in front of the movie screen, thanks you, hopes you enjoyed Seasons of the Vine, and directs you to the exit. If you have questions, there are Wine Ambassadors outside the theater to answer them. If the film inspired you to have a glass of wine (and you're at least 21), you won't have far to go.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Wine by the glass at the Golden Vine Winery

Seasons of the Vine was one of the original attractions when Disney's California Adventure opened in February 2001.

The musical score for Seasons of the Vine was by Emmy Award-winning TV and film composer Bruce Broughton. The narrator was Academy Award-winning actor Jeremy Irons. But Seasons of the Vine was just a film. It lacked any "gimmick" that might have made it into a real theme park attraction. (And, no, the barn doors in front of the screen don't count.) It was a nice, well-made educational film. And nothing more.

Seasons of the Vine was part of the Golden Vine Winery, presented by Robert Mondavi. The winery also included an actual vineyard, the Vineyard Room fine dining restaurant, several wine tasting bars, the gourmet Wine Country Market delicatessen and wine shop, and the outdoor Golden Vine Terrace where you could enjoy your Wine Country Market purchases.

The idea was that the Robert Mondavi Winery would introduce new or "marginal" wine drinkers to Mondavi's premium wines. At the Disney park, Mondavi would reach ten times as many people as at their actual wineries—a number almost equal to the entire Napa Valley visitor business. Shortly before the grand opening of Disney's California Adventure, the wine trade website WineBusiness.com called Mondavi's presence at the new Disney park "a marketing coup through which it will likely introduce premium California wines to millions of visitors."

It wasn't such a coup after all.

According to Wine Business Monthly in November 2001, "Mondavi announced it is no longer operating the Golden Vine Winery complex at Disney's California Adventure in Anaheim, California. The Golden Vine offered restaurants, a demonstration vineyard, and winetasting bars. Only Mondavi wines were served. Mondavi said its role had shifted from 'partner' to 'sponsor', and was writing off a \$12-\$13 million loss."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Golden Vine Winery



Photo by Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Seasons of the Vine theater, with Grizzly Peak looming above

Seasons of the Vine survived Mondavi's exit. Although operating hours were limited, guests could still enter the Barrel Room theater and see the film about wine.

On March 30, 2008, Seasons of the Vine closed forever. The rest of the Golden Vine Winery continues to operate for now, as it has since Disney took over operations and modified the offerings.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

The former *Seasons of the Vine* theater became *Blue Sky Cellar*

The former theater reopened on October 20, 2008, as Walt Disney Imagineering Blue Sky Cellar, a preview center. Guests could see models, artwork, and videos of the changes being made to Disney's California Adventure and Disneyland Park. The interior kept its barrel room look and winery vibe. For almost six years, Disney did a good job updating the exhibits as most of the concepts became realities. But at the end of September 2013, the doors were locked, although the sign remained.

During Disney's California Food & Wine Festival of 2016 and 2017, the building, still with its Blue Sky Cellar sign, served as the Disneyland Annual Passholder lounge—complete with *Seasons of the Vine* playing on the video screen. It appears this will be an annual tradition—at least until Blue Sky Cellar returns to being a preview center or the building takes on a new use.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2016

Seasons of the Vine at Epcot

Speaking of annual traditions, *Seasons of the Vine* has been an annual tradition at the Epcot International Food & Wine Festival since 2009. It's shown in the theater that was home to *The Making of Me* when the Festival Center was the Wonders of Life pavilion.

In a way, *Seasons of the Vine* hasn't really gone to Yesterland, even though it's no longer a year-round attraction at Disney California Adventure.

WINE COUNTRY MARKET



When it's time to eat at a theme park, your choices normally fall into four categories: table service, counter service, buffeteria, and vending carts.

But here at Yester California Adventure, there's something else: a "grab-and-go" gourmet delicatessen market, with delicious sandwiches, creative side dishes, fine California wines, and even gifts for the gourmet and wine connoisseur.



Although it looks like a fancy store in the Napa Valley, it's in a theme park.

Step into the Wine Country Market on the first floor of Robert Mondavi's Golden Vine Winery. Pretty fancy, eh? The store makes you feel as if you're living the good life in the California wine country.

Let's look around the store...



There are no corn dogs or churros here. This is upscale food.



Check the many self-service choices in the wicker baskets.



Fresh fruit and salads provide healthy choices.



Have some Kettle Chips with your sandwich.



Wine from the Robert Mondavi family of brands is available by the bottle.



If you're not up for wine, choose from a large selection of other bottled beverages.



How about a Golden Vine Winery shirt or cap?



It's time to pay.

Do you want to buy a bottle of wine? They're all from the Robert Mondavi portfolio of brands.

Don't worry about having to tote heavy glass bottles around the park all day. All you need to carry around is a pink package claim slip. Your purchase will be attractively wrapped up and waiting for you at the park exit. When you get to your home or hotel room, uncork a bottle and unwind after a hectic day at the park. Or give someone the wine as a gift; after all, the way it's packed is a beautiful presentation—and a fairly inexpensive souvenir from California Adventure.



There's seating for 265 on the outdoor patio adjacent to the Wine Country Market.

Perhaps you'd prefer to consume a bottle of wine as you walk around the rest of the park. Hey, it might even make Superstar Limo more fun. Sorry. That's not an option. After you pay for your bottle, you won't see it again until you exit from the park—even if you want to.

The Wine Country Market seemed like a good idea, but it didn't last long. It opened in February 2001 as one of many dining options at Disney's California Adventure. There were table-service restaurants, including Wolfgang Puck's Avalon Cove and the Soap Opera Bistro. And there were counter-service options, such as Hollywood & Dine. But there was nothing else quite like the Wine Country Market.

On the Internet, the Wine Country Market was one of the bright spots in early reviews of Disney's California Adventure—with high marks for quality, taste, convenience, and presentation.

For example, describing a roasted turkey sandwich with Sonoma jack cheese and mayonnaise on sourdough bread, online columnist Sue Kruse wrote, "I have to tell you that the turkey sandwich is right up there amongst the best I have ever tasted. The flavors of the roasted turkey (not the pressed variety, but real, thinly sliced turkey with great flavor), the cheese, and the sourdough bread blended perfectly to produce a fine and tasty sandwich."

There was some disagreement whether the Wine Country Market provided a good value. One view was that the prices were reasonable for the high-quality ingredients, especially compared to other theme park options. The other view was that the prices were still theme park prices, higher than comparable food elsewhere.



The Wine Country Trattoria replaced the Wine Country Market.

In November 2001, the Robert Mondavi Corporation announced it had ended its 10-year agreement with Disney and was taking a \$12-\$13 million loss. Disney's California Adventure had failed to meet predicted attendance levels. There were too few guests and too many eateries at the second Anaheim gate.

Disney would now be responsible for day-to-day operations of all aspects of the Golden Vine Winery. By the end of 2001, Disney had closed the Wine Country Market.

In 2002, Disney opened a table-service restaurant, the Wine Country Trattoria, at the former Wine Country Market terrace.



There's still a wine bar at the Golden Vine Winery.

You can still purchase wine by the glass at the Golden Vine Winery, even if you're not dining at one of the table-service restaurants. There was originally a wine bar on either side of the Wine Country Market. Now only the wine bar near the former Seasons of the Vine theater remains.

The good news is that your choices aren't limited to brands from Robert Mondavi.

CONDOR FLATS AIR TOURS



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

You're at the place where Condor Flats and Grizzly Peak meet. A billboard advertises "Condor Flats Air Tours." An airplane features the same brand on its tail.

Is this air tour a park attraction?

No. The airplane is just here to let guests know that Condor Flats is an airfield. The billboard is another opportunity for a pun. After all, Yester California Adventure is the Punniest Place on Earth.

There's a backstory. Here's the modified Yesterland version of it.

Condor Flats, an airfield in California's high desert, is one of the birthplaces of the state's aerospace industry. From its narrow runway, pilots risked their lives to test new aviation designs—from the earliest propeller-driven flying machines to experimental supersonic jets. Eventually, even rocket engines were tested here.

Then, Condor Flats was a victim of the aerospace layoffs of the 1960s.

A pilot—who called himself retired but had actually lost his job in the layoffs—returned to Condor Flats to start Condor Flats Air Tours.



Photo by Allen Huffman 2007

Condor Flats Air Tours airplane



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Restrooms in an old airfield hangar



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Condor Flats Air Tours branding

Running his business out of the old hangars that dated back to the earliest times of Condor Flats, he offered scenic flights to tourists. One hangar became the restrooms. An even older hangar became a gift shop, complete with a fancy lighted sign.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Fly 'n' Buy Souvenirs and Scenic Aero Tours

The pilot dreamed of some day buying Howard Hughes' H-4 "Spruce Goose," the largest airplane ever built, and using it for sightseeing flights along the California Coast. He had shirts printed for his souvenir shop, but that's as far as that dream ever got.

He had a small, single-engine propeller plane for his business. He needed passengers more than he needed a larger plane.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Flying over Paradise Pier



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Condor Flats Air Tours billboard.

To draw tourists, the pilot erected a billboard. For some inexplicable reason, Condor Flats Airfield is right at the base of a mountain, despite the vastness of California's high desert. That mountain, Grizzly Peak, looks like the head of the extinct California Grizzly Bear, so it made a striking sign.

After a few years, the pilot figured out that he could make more money from the billboard by occasionally selling the space to a movie company—even if it meant that nobody would see his logo in the lower left corner. He always insisted on retaining Grizzly Peak as part of the billboard image, a familiar landmark near his hangars.

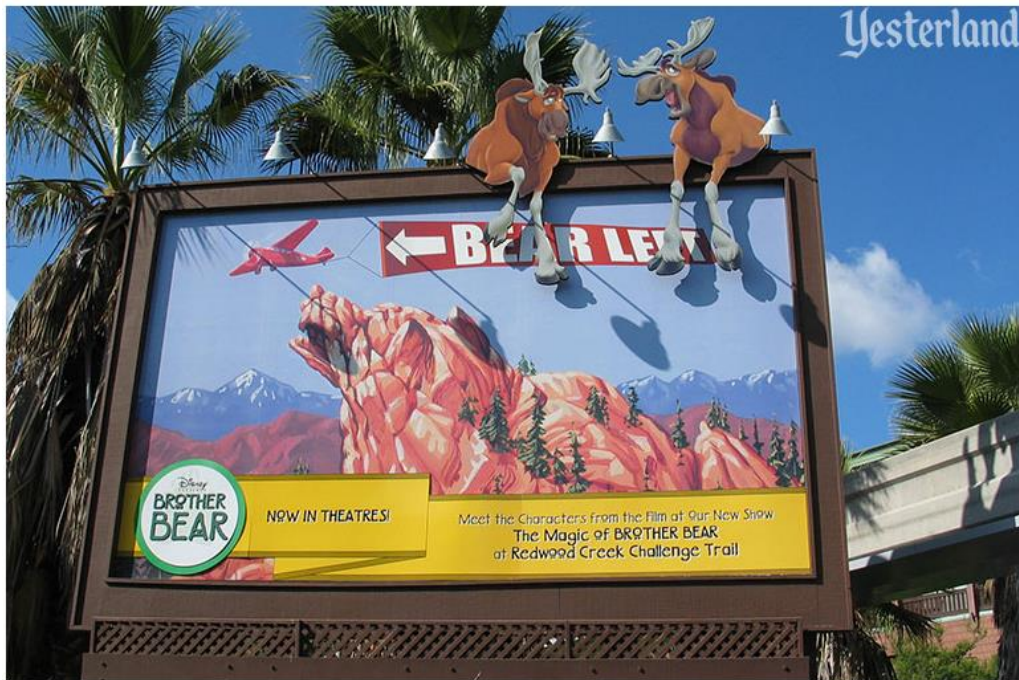


Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Brother Bear billboard

The first movie advertised was Brother Bear. The 2003 release from Walt Disney Feature Animation was “the story of a boy who became a man by becoming a bear.” Rutt and Tuke, the two comic-relief Canadian moose from the movie, were perched at the top of the billboard. Nearby, bears Kenai and Koda apparently mistook California’s Redwood Creek Challenge trail for the Canadian Rockies.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2014

Planes billboard

The pilot was eager to earn more movie advertising revenue. Sadly for him, Disney movies such as Meet the Robinsons, The Princess and the Frog, Tangled, and Wreck-It Ralph didn’t lend themselves to a Grizzly Peak billboard treatment. For almost ten years, he just advertised Condor Flats Air Tours.

Then the perfect movie came along, Disney’s 2013 Planes. Some people mistook it for a Pixar movie because of its roots in Pixar’s Cars franchise. Dusty Crophopper, a cropdusting plane with a fear of heights and a dream of racing, looked good with Grizzly Peak.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Planes: Fire & Rescue billboard

The pilot didn't have to wait as long the next time. In 2014, Disney released *Planes: Fire & Rescue*, the second movie in what is expected to be the *Planes* trilogy. Although the movie's aerial firefighters protected Piston Peak, not Grizzly Peak, it was another good fit.

But will the final movie in the *Planes* trilogy make it onto the billboard?

After all, Condor Flats is now in Yesterland.

The "Bear Left" billboard was a fixture of Condor Flats since the opening of Disney's California Adventure on February 8, 2001.

The backstory above begins with the actual premise of Condor Flats, but then continues as a fabrication for this article.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Desert airfield with a Monorail

Condor Flats was supposed to look like a high desert airfield. Despite landscaping that included boulders, cacti, and palm trees, the space was too constrained and built-up. It did not make a convincing desert. The elevation and tall trees of Grizzly Peak did not help. It felt more like a mountain valley than the wide open spaces of Edwards Air Force Base or other desert airfields.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Construction wall with signs in the classic National Parks style

Condor Flats closed January 7, 2015 to begin an extensive renovation. When the area reopened in stages through mid-May 2015, it had become Grizzly Peak Airfield. Although keeping its airfield theme, the Condor Flats name and high desert setting were gone.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

View from the Monorail, February 2015

With new landscaping, the valley-like setting became more convincing as a mountain airfield than as a desert airfield. Existing structures were re-skinned to fit into the new setting. The airfield ties together seamlessly with Grizzly Peak as parts of the same land. The most industrial-looking features, such as those related to rocket engine testing, disappeared.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

Now a Park Service airplane



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

The proud bird with the golden tail

The airplane and hangars survived, but without the Condor Flats Air Tours branding. Fly 'n' Buy became Humphrey's Service & Supplies—with Condor gas pumps, a nod to the original theme. The billboard survived with a new image—a fisherman at a mountain lake below Grizzly Peak, with the text "Grizzly Peak, Land of Scenic Wonders, Yours to Enjoy."

A billboard really doesn't belong in a setting that takes its inspiration from National Parks—but Grizzly Peak never claims to be a National Park.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

New billboard art

THEN & NOW: CONDOR FLATS – GRIZZLY PEAK AIRFIELD

Located within the Golden State land, Condor Flats is themed as a high-desert airfield dedicated to the wonder and ingenuity that helped spawn California's legendary aviation industry—from [the] age of the first hand-made flying contraptions to the space age.

— Disneyland Resort website, early 2001

A high-desert airfield, such as Edwards Air Force Base, is a wide-open expanse of flat ground with isolated structures. Condor Flats, despite having aircraft hangars and rocket engines, felt more like a narrow mountain valley than a desert airfield.

In 2015, Condor Flats became Grizzly Peak Airfield.



Entrance to Condor Flats from Sunshine Plaza (2001)

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001



Entrance to Condor Flats from Buena Vista Street (2013)

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Entrance to Grizzly Peak Airport from Buena Vista Street (2015)

Comparing the first two photos above, the immediate difference is that the entrance to Condor Flats lost its main sign but gained a planter and a churro stand. On the sign in the first photo, notice that a Bell X-1 rocket plane casts a shadow of a California condor. We'll see another Bell X-1 later. A closer look reveals that the lettering on the debris barrier was originally "Condor Flats Flight Test Center" but then became just "Condor Flats."

The third photo shows the entrance after the transformation to Grizzly Peak Airfield. The desert sandstone has become granite. The palms have been replaced by pines. And a new sign evokes the look of National Parks and other Federal lands.

(Can't they find a better place for the churro stand?)



Photo by Ian Parkinson, 2001

"Airfield runway" through Condor Flats (2001)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

“Airfield runway” through Condor Flats (2013)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

No visible “airfield runway” at Grizzly Peak Airfield (2015)

The stripes on the ground in the 2001 and 2013 photos may look like pedestrian crosswalks, but that’s not what they were supposed to be. The stripes marked the beginning and end of the airfield’s runway. But real runways don’t have structures right up against them.

In the 2015 photo the stripes are gone. The pavement is no longer meant to be a runway. It’s now an apron that connects to a runway somewhere else.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

“Airfield runway” toward Sunshine Plaza (2002)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

“Airfield runway” toward Carthay Circle Theatre (2013)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

No longer a runway (2015)

Originally, the Condor Flats runway pointed toward Sunshine Plaza in one direction and Disney's Grand Californian Hotel in the other.

When the The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror was built, the runway pointed directly at the damaged hotel tower. To some, it suggested airplanes flying into the tower—a terrible thought in the aftermath of 9-11. Then the Carthay Circle Theatre was built between Condor Flats and the Tower of Terror.

As already noted, the pavement is no longer supposed to be a runway.



Photo by Ian Parkinson, 2001

Taste Pilots' Grill with Bell X-1 (2001)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Taste Pilots' Grill without Bell X-1 (2013)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Smokejumpers' Grill (2015)

From when the park opened until the beginning of 2015, Taste Pilots' Grill served burgers, fries, and other popular American fast food—presumably just like what test pilots ate. The eatery's name was part of the dwindling list of puns that were once pervasive in the park.

Air Force Captain Charles "Chuck" Yeager broke the sound barrier with a Bell X-1 on October 14, 1947. The exterior originally had a Bell X-1 breaking through a cartoon-like explosion (representing the sound barrier). The Taste Pilots' Grill hangar looked more authentic without it.

In early 2015, the restaurant was transformed into Smokejumpers' Grill.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Soarin' over California "hangar" (2002)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Soarin' over California "hangar" (2013)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Soarin' over California "hangar" (2015)



On June 15, 2016, Soarin' Over California closed, and was replaced with Soarin' Around the World. Disney California Adventure brought back Soarin' Over California for a limited engagement in June 2019, and it proved so popular that it was extended until August. Disney brought it back again in February, 2020 as part of the park's Food and Wine Festival, but it was cut short due to the park closing because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Soarin' Over California



Soarin' Around the World

On opening day in 2001, California's California Adventure officially had four lands:

- Sunshine Plaza
- Golden State
- Paradise Pier
- Hollywood Pictures Backlot

But one of these lands, Golden State, officially had six districts:

- Grizzly Peak Recreation Area
- Bountiful Valley Farm
- Pacific Wharf
- Condor Flats
- The Bay Area
- Golden Vine Winery

Golden State never made much sense as a land. Considering that Golden State means California, and the whole park was supposed to be about California, it meant there was a land featuring multiple parts of California in a park featuring multiple parts of California—one super-land and three other lands that somehow did not qualify to be part of the Golden State, despite also representing California.



Photo by Ian Parkinson, 2001

Fly'n'Buy (2001)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Fly'n'Buy (2013)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Humphrey's (2015)

When Disney California Adventure emerged from its \$1.1 billion enhancement project, it had eight lands—and no districts:

- Buena Vista Street
- Hollywood Land
- “a bug’s land”
- Pacific Wharf
- Cars Land
- Paradise Pier
- Grizzly Peak
- Condor Flats

The former Bountiful Valley Farm had been split up between “a bug’s land” and Cars Land. The former Bay Area had been split up between Paradise Pier and Grizzly Peak. Golden Vine Winery had become a part of Pacific Wharf.

In early 2015, Condor Flats disappeared from the list. Grizzly Peak Airfield is part of Grizzly Peak, not its own land or district. Disney California Adventure now has seven lands.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Rocket engine test structure (2002)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Rocket engine test structure (2013)



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Mt. Muir Lookout (2015)

For its first 15 years, Condor Flats changed little. It lacked charm and authenticity. There was too much concrete pavement. The structures were coldly industrial. Despite the test center airfield theming, it's unlikely that many guests thought, "wow, this feels just like a high desert airfield."

Condor Flats had the good fortune of being home to the biggest "hit" attraction of the new park—Soarin' Over California. But it was the attraction experience that wowed guests, not the environment that housed it.

Absorbing Condor Flats into Grizzly Peak was the obvious answer. The peak already formed one side of Condor Flats. The hang glider attraction (Soarin' Over California) has a stronger connection to mountain recreation than to desert aviation, and its massive show building already felt like the other side of a canyon.

Instead of "moving" the airfield from the desert into the mountains, Disney could have eliminated the airfield theme entirely. The big Soarin' hangar could have been covered with granite rockwork for a Yosemite Valley look. Taste Pilots' Grill could have been redone as a National Park lodge dining room, no longer looking like a hangar. Other structures could have been turned into mountain cabins and "historic" mining structures. The Monorail beam could have been dressed as a railroad trestle. The ground could have been redone as a continuation of Grizzly Peak's Highway 49 with gentle elevation changes across a contoured valley floor. It could have been a landscape of side roads, bridges, streams, and waterfalls—without any airfield features remaining.

But all that would have cost far more.

The changes to the airfield were cosmetic—green paint, mountain landscaping, new naming, appropriate signage, wood instead of steel, and charming touches throughout. These changes were effective. They do a good job tying in with Grizzly Peak and making it a single, larger, more immersive land.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

The bear at Grizzly River Run (2002)



Werner Weiss, 2013

The bear at Grizzly River Run (2013)

Grizzly Peak isn't the only grizzly bear in the area. Grizzly River Run, a white water raft ride, has a bear as its mascot and signpost.

When the theme of Grizzly River Run—including its queue and its scenery—changed from extreme sports to traditional 20th century State Parks, the bear got a bit of a makeover. He lost the logo from his life vest and his oar now looks like an old-fashioned wooden oar, not a contemporary aluminum oar.

By the way, the wooden fence and the covered sign in the 2013 photo were temporary. The photo was taken when Grizzly River Run was down for refurbishment.

TASTE PILOTS' GRILL



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2004

There's a comic book-style explosion on the front of an aircraft hangar here at Condor Flats. An eye-catching aircraft is frozen at an upward angle. This scene represents test pilot Chuck Yeager breaking the sound barrier on October 14, 1947.

The orange aircraft is Yeager's experimental U.S. Air Force rocket plane—the Bell X-1, "Glamorous Glennis" (named as a tribute to his wife). This Bell X-1 is a replica. The real one is on display at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Frozen Bell X-1

Did the Bell X-1 grab your attention? It's supposed to draw you into Taste Pilots' Grill.

Haha. Test pilots, taste pilots. There's no end to the puns around here.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Menu on the exterior

Before you go in, check the menu to the right of the entrance. The bleu cheese burger is called the Wild Bleu Yonder Burger. Tom Wolfe's 1979 best-selling book about post-war test pilots and the early astronauts was called The Right Stuff, so this menu has The Flight Stuff and The Side Stuff.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Giant neon graphic

Once inside, look up at the inside wall above the entrance for the other side of the explosion.



Counter service

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002



Menu above

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

As you wait to order, look at the full menu above the counter. Figure out the difference between Full Throttle Fries and Flyby Fries.

Service is usually pretty fast. Before you take your tray to a table, there's another stop you'll want to make.



Industrial-looking toppings bar

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

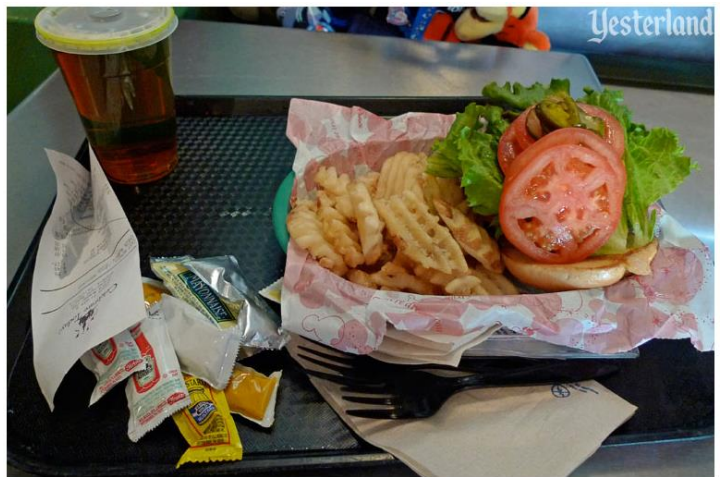
Head to the well-stocked toppings bar and pile on traditional burger toppings such as lettuce, tomatoes, and onions—or create a more interesting taste profile with green chilies, pico de gallo, and various sauces. Turn your burger or sandwich into a feast. You can also top your criss-cross Flyby Fries with barbecue sauce, hot sauce, salsa, jalapeños, or anything else from the toppings bar.

The toppings bar has beautiful large lettuce leaves and substantial tomato slices—not shredded lettuce or chopped up tomatoes. Yum!



Fresh and perfect

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Topped and ready to eat

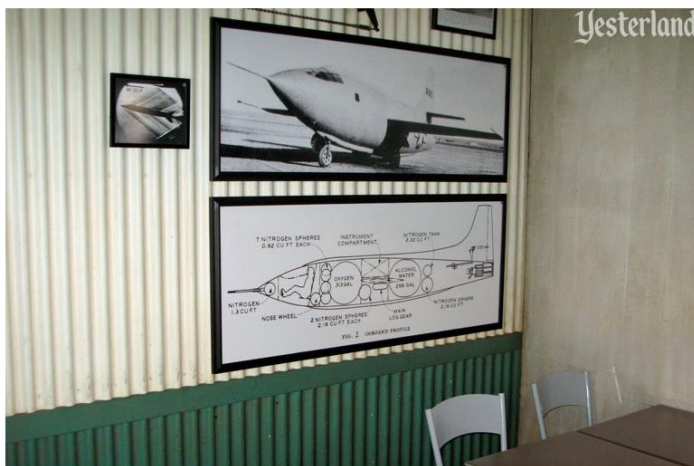
Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009



Inside seating

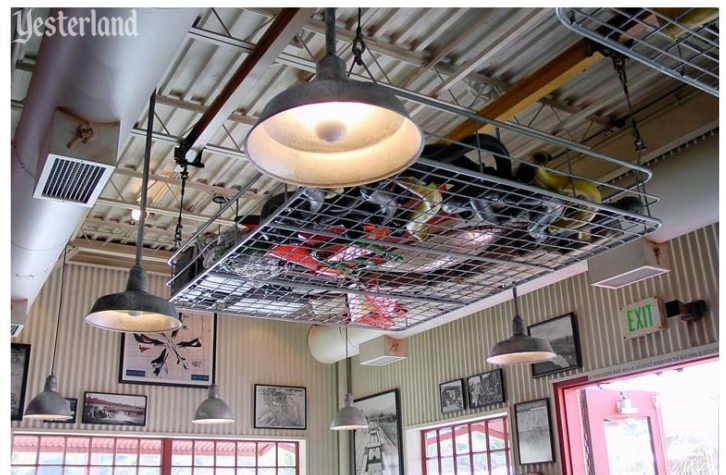
Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Grab a table inside this airfield hangar repurposed as an eatery. Pretend you're at a hangout for test pilots, with mementos of their accomplishments decorating this utilitarian space.



Homage to the Bell X-1

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007



Test pilot junk on the ceiling

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002



Jukebox

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002

Sorry. The jukebox is not operational; the coin slots are sealed. That's intentional. There's a music loop with over an hour of aviation-oriented songs, such as "Come Fly With Me" by Frank Sinatra, "Space Oddity" by David Bowie, and "Straighten Up and Fly Right" by the Andrews Sisters.

If it's a nice day, you might prefer to sit outside.



Outside seating

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2002



More outside seating

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2002



Space Shuttle nozzle

Photo by Chris Bates, 2015

There aren't as many artifacts out here as inside, but there's one that's quite impressive—a main engine nozzle for the Space Shuttle. A sign provides information:

“This nozzle provides the propulsion needed to boost Shuttles into orbit. Each Space Shuttle has three of these engines. Together the engines deliver the equivalent of 37 million horsepower (a typical automobile engine provides less than 200 horsepower). Space Shuttle Main Engine Nozzle Manufactured by Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne Inc.”

Who says theme parks are not museums?

If eating burgers and other fast foods in an industrial setting makes you feel like a test pilot, then this is the restaurant for you.

Taste Pilots' Grill at Condor Flats was an opening day restaurant at Disney's California Adventure in February 2001.

Condor Flats had trouble conveying the theme of a “a high-desert airfield dedicated to the wonder and ingenuity that helped spawn California's legendary aviation industry.” Originally a sub-land of the park's Golden State land, the “runway” was squeezed between Grizzly Peak, Disney's Grand California Hotel, and the tall show building of Soarin' Over California (a part of Condor Flats). It felt more like a narrow mountain valley than an open desert.

As the trees grew, the desert theme became even less convincing. The opening of Cars Land in June 2012 gave the park a spectacular desert land.

The Bell X-1 on the restaurant's exterior was an odd feature. As a decoration “bolted” onto the façade, it did nothing to add authenticity to Condor Flats. It was not something you would see at a real airfield.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

Façade update in progress



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Façade without Bell X-1

Taste Pilots' Grill remained relatively unchanged until the fall of 2012. That's when the Bell X-1 and the comic book explosion disappeared. More substantial changes to Condor Flats would have to wait for a budget.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

Smokejumper's Grill

Finally, in 2015, Condor Flats would be merged into Grizzly Peak. Smart! But instead of erasing the airfield theme entirely, it would be a hybrid, becoming the Grizzly Peak Airfield section of Grizzly Peak. That way, the existing structures could be reused with only cosmetic changes—paint colors, siding, signage, architectural details, exterior and interior decor, and place names. Tall evergreen trees and other mountain landscaping complete the new look.

Taste Pilots' Grill closed January 7, 2015 and reopened March 20, 2015 as Smokejumper's Grill. The rest of Grizzly Peak Airfield opened less than two months later. Thanks to talented Imagineers, the theming is a dramatic improvement.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

Distinct resemblance to Taste Pilots' Grill



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

New decorations, but similar ambiance

The restaurant's new theme replaces one group of daring individuals (test pilots) with another: smokejumpers—airborne firefighters who parachute into remote areas threatened by wildfires!

RACERS FASTPASS



Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

Lube-O-Rama

When an attraction is as popular as Radiator Springs Racers, it's good to grab a FASTPASS to cut your wait time substantially. Usually FASTPASS machines are somewhere near an attraction's entrance.

On the same block as Ramone's House of Body Art, just before the entrance to Radiator Springs Racers, there's a building that looks like an old repair garage. A tower sign says Lube-O-Rama. Could this be the place?



Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

Right by the entrance to Radiator Springs Racers

As you walk around the corner of the building, you see the building's second tower sign.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

FASTPASS Distribution sign

A masterfully designed “vintage” neon sign reads “FASTPASS” horizontally across the top and “Distribution” vertically.

Perfect! This must be the right place.

And this must be the most elaborately themed FASTPASS distribution location anywhere.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

FASTPASS machine bays

But nobody is getting FASTPASS tickets here. It's just being used for indoor stroller parking.

Oh! There's a sign telling you that the FASTPASS machines for this ride are elsewhere in the park—not even in Cars Land. But don't bother going there now. Another sign tells you that today's FASTPASS distribution has ended.

Since the introduction of Disney's FASTPASS system in 1999, FASTPASS machine locations have been themed to some extent. Usually this just meant a row of dressed-up machines under some sort of appropriate canopy. In most cases, they were added to existing attractions as afterthoughts.

The Imagineers who designed the FASTPASS distribution facility for Radiator Springs Racers did a brilliant job. It was perfectly integrated into the "show." The Lube-O-Rama building looked great.

On April 24, 2012, before Cars Land opened, Al Lutz published a MiceAge column with this news:

The DCA executive team has all visited The Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Universal Studios Orlando, and they desperately want to avoid the overcrowding and general mayhem that Potterland generates. TDA's industrial engineering department weighed in and decided that the best way to alleviate crowds was to move the Fastpass distribution machines for the Racers ride outside of the land nearer the park's main entry path, and the location in "a bug's land" was perfectly placed for that purpose.

Visitors to Cars Land this summer will still see the original Racers Fastpass location near the attraction entrance, but the doors will be shut and there are no plans to use it for Fastpass until after this summer or perhaps even after the Christmas season ends in early 2013.

It was a good idea and it worked well. Instead of contributing to congestion at the entrance to Radiator Springs Racers, guests could stop just beyond the Carthay Circle building in "a bug's land"—at what had once been the FASTPASS distribution spot for It's Tough to be a Bug!—on their way to Cars Land.

Al Lutz followed up on September 18, 2012, in another MiceAge article:

The poorly planned but nicely themed Fastpass distribution area for Radiator Springs Racers has finally been removed, with DCA managers now acknowledging they will have to offer Fastpasses for the ride at the "temporary" area near A Bugs Land for several more years. With that space now empty, the DCA Stores team has their eye on that garage as expansion space for Ramone's House of Body Art next door.

Before the end of 2012, the "FASTPASS Distribution" neon letters came down—the first significant Cars Land landmark to qualify for Yesterland.



Lube-O-Rama Parts 'n' Stuff

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

"Lube-O-Rama Parts 'n' Stuff" neon letters went up in its place. Cars Land gained high-traffic retail space—connected by an interior doorway to Ramone's House of Body Art.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Garage doors closed in May 2013

Two of the three garage doors can be opened and closed. The third one appears to be a functional garage door from the outside, but is actually retail space on the inside.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Garage doors open in September 2013

The garage-themed space for Radiator Springs Racers FASTPASS is unlikely ever to serve that purpose. The ride is likely to retain its popularity for a long time, so the concern about congestion will remain valid. Even if that were not the case, FastPass+, the high-tech ride reservation system at Walt Disney World, is expected to replace traditional FASTPASS at the Disneyland Resort too. When that happens, FASTPASS machines at attraction entrances will go away.



Still a garage theme

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

The items on the shelves and hangers throughout Cars Land actually seem to belong there, instead of being the same generic Disney character merchandise found in too many other Disney theme park stops.



Parts at night

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Having never been used for its original purpose, and with all traces of it removed from inside and outside the building, it's unlikely many guests remember that there was ever a neon FASTPASS Distribution sign at the entrance to Radiator Springs Racers.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Line for the real distribution

Meanwhile, Disney California Adventure guests have become very aware of how FASTPASS works for the highest demand attraction in the park. They get in a long line, far away from Radiator Springs Racers.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

All gone

And they had better not sleep in. This FASTPASS goes fast.

DJ'S DANCE 'N' DRIVE



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

"They don't call me DJ for nothing!" boasts a blue subcompact as he pulls into the intersection of Radiator Springs' Main Street, also known as Route 66, and Cross Street. DJ has a plethora of speakers, a custom paint job, and an impressive spoiler with winglets.

Waitresses and mechanics from Flo's V8 Cafe nearby are impressed. They surround DJ, and soon DJ has them dancing. And then they have kids in the audience dancing—and perhaps a few adults too.

DJ's music is perfect for the setting—songs such as "Dancing in the Street," "Car Wash," "Life is a Highway," and "Route 66."



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018



Quite a crowd by the end of the show

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018



Heading to a gig further down the road

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

DJ got the town dancing, but who is DJ anyway? The book *Meet the Cars* (Disney Book Group, 2017) provides a brief biography:

From an early age, DJ, whose full name is Devon Montgomery Johnston III, was interested in all kinds of music. He had a voracious appetite for collecting records and was a gifted student at the nationally renowned East Coast Music Conservatory. One evening at a friend's party, Devon met a gentleman by the name of Wingo. An expert in paint and body modification, Wingo designed a custom paint job for Devon and a wicked sound system to match. Now going by the name DJ, Devon revels in his treble but never loses touch with his bass!

Yes, DJ produces plenty of treble, plenty of bass—and plenty of volume.

DJ's Dance 'n' Drive premiered as one of the opening day features of Cars Land at Disney California Adventure. The spectacular new land, based on Radiator Springs in the Disney-Pixar movie *Cars* (2006), had its official grand opening on June 15, 2012.



Yesterland

frame capture from Cars © 2006 Disney-Pixar

Frame capture from Cars © 2006 Disney-Pixar

DJ as one of the Delinquent Road Hazards in the first Cars movie

At the beginning of the movie Cars, very sleepy Mack the truck is hauling Lightning McQueen to California through the night. DJ plays Kenny G's "Songbird" to make Mack nod off. The other three Delinquent Road Hazards cause Mack to drive on the bumpy shoulder. One thing leads to another. The back of the truck opens and Lightning McQueen rolls out somewhere near the forgotten town of Radiator Springs.

DJ was a minor character in Cars, but, for his role in the park, he was the perfect character—essentially a flashy sound system on four wheels. But it was the dancers who really made the show with their talent and their ability to get kids to join in.

DJ's final performance at Cars Land was January 6, 2019. It was a run of six and a half years—an impressive length of time of a street show. DJ did not drive off to the CarMax Quality Certified lot after his last trip backstage.

"Hey DJ! What are you going to do next?"

"I'm going to Walt Disney World!"



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2019

Transplanted to Florida

Disney's Hollywood Studios, to be more precise.

On March 31, 2019, DJ began a new gig called "DJ's Ready! Set! Party Time!" Dance Party at the courtyard outside Sunset Showcase, near Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring Aerosmith, while Lightning McQueen's Racing Academy debuted inside.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2019

DJ showing his profile in Florida



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2019

"DJ's Ready! Set! Party Time!" Dance Party

The idea is similar in Florida. It's again a dance party for children, but the songs are different. The dancers are presented as Lightning McQueen's pit crew. The setting is a concrete courtyard. DJ, instead of driving up and being in the center of things, is parked in the background under a canopy—as is Cruz Ramirez from Cars 3 under a separate canopy.

Somehow, DJ seemed happier at Cars Land at Disney California Adventure.

LUIGI'S FLYING TIRES



Yesterland

Photo by Chris Bales, 2014



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Festival!

Luigi and Guido—a 1959 Fiat 500 and his Italian forklift assistant, respectively—run Luigi's Casa Della Tires in the Disney-Pixar feature, *Cars* (2006).

Here at Yester California Adventure, these characters invite you to their "Festival of Flying Tires." You can "fly" around on a tire behind the tire shop, controlling your flight by shifting your body weight. It's like no other ride anywhere.

The queue begins in the tire shop. You can admire the merchandise, including genuine Lightyear tires.



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Instructions



Summary of instructions

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

This ride comes with operating instructions. To make your tire go, your whole party—carefully positioned on your bench—has to lean together in the same direction. But don't lean too far, because then you won't move properly either.

This is a good attraction for Annual Passholders, who can return many times. Practice makes perfect.

Before you board your vehicle, there's something you need to know. Even though the bottom of your vehicle looks like a big, tough tire from a distance, that's not what it is. It's actually a rather delicate skirt to catch the air from the "air hockey table" ride floor. So you must be careful where you step! Is that clear?



"Step over soft part of the tire."

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014



In case you missed it the first time, be sure to "Step over soft part of tire."

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

In case you've already forgotten, "Step over tire."



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

The moment of truth

Thank you for stepping over the soft part of the tire.

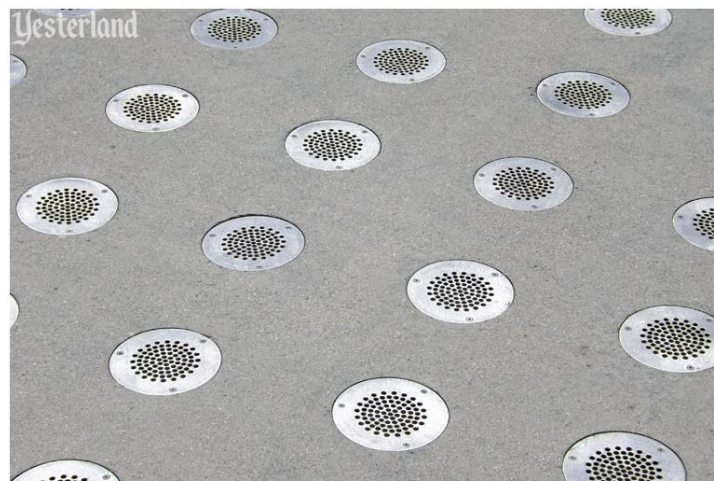


Photo by Chris Bales, 2012

Air vents to make the tires "fly"



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Leaning together

Do you remember the instructions? Balance. Lean together. Fly. Have fun! Try not to get stuck in a traffic jam.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Traffic jam



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Best at dusk



Photo by Chris Bales, 2014

Nighttime



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Ride over

That was somewhat fun, right?

Luigi's Flying Tires opened at Disney California Adventure on June 15, 2012. It was part of the park's new Cars Land.

Sure, the mega-attraction of Cars Land would be Radiator Springs Racers, which would combine the ride system from Epcot's Test Track with storytelling from the animated feature Cars.

However, among Disney theme park fans, Luigi's Flying Tires might have been the most anticipated attraction of the new land.



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, 1962, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Flying Saucers at Disneyland

Although different in name and theme, Luigi's Flying Tires was anticipated to be the return of the Flying Saucers, a Tomorrowland attraction at Disneyland from August 6, 1961, to September 5, 1966.

Disney fans born during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations still remembered the zippy little saucers fondly from a half century earlier. Most of those born later were deprived of scooting around on a personal hovercraft—literally floating on air—and bouncing off others. It was much more fun than traditional bumper cars, which collide with a thud.

Unfortunately, Luigi's Flying Tires utterly failed to bring back the Flying Saucers experience. The lumbering multi-rider tires lacked the intuitive ease-of-use and responsiveness of the sporty little saucers.

When Luigi's Flying Tires first opened, guests could throw beach balls at each other. That turned out to be a problem. After just two months, the beach balls disappeared.

Mater's Junkyard Jamboree, the third attraction of Cars Land, became a surprise hit—much better than expected and very repeatable. The same could not be said for Luigi's Flying Tires. After long waits, some guests were just trapped in clumps of tires, barely able to move. Even those who managed to break free and figure out the perfect way to lean were not rewarded with the promised exhilaration.

Soon, Internet rumors suggested that WDI was looking for ways to fix the ride. Then those rumors changed to how the ride might be replaced entirely by a trackless ride with dancing cars.

On February 5, 2015, the Los Angeles Times confirmed the rumors ("How will Disney fix the problematic Luigi's Flying Tires ride?" by Brady MacDonald):

After a little more than two years in service, the beleaguered Luigi's Flying Tires at Disney California Adventure will be replaced by an entirely new ride.

The unnamed attraction will feature a completely new ride system and vehicles. Concept art of the new attraction released by Disney shows riders in classic cars zooming around an enclosed course free of a track or turntable.

Kris Theiler, vice president of Disney California Adventure Park, said the "new chapter in Luigi's story" will be full of four-wheeled fun.

Luigi's Flying Tires closed permanently February 15, 2015.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Construction wall around the permanently closed *Luigi's Flying Tires* ride

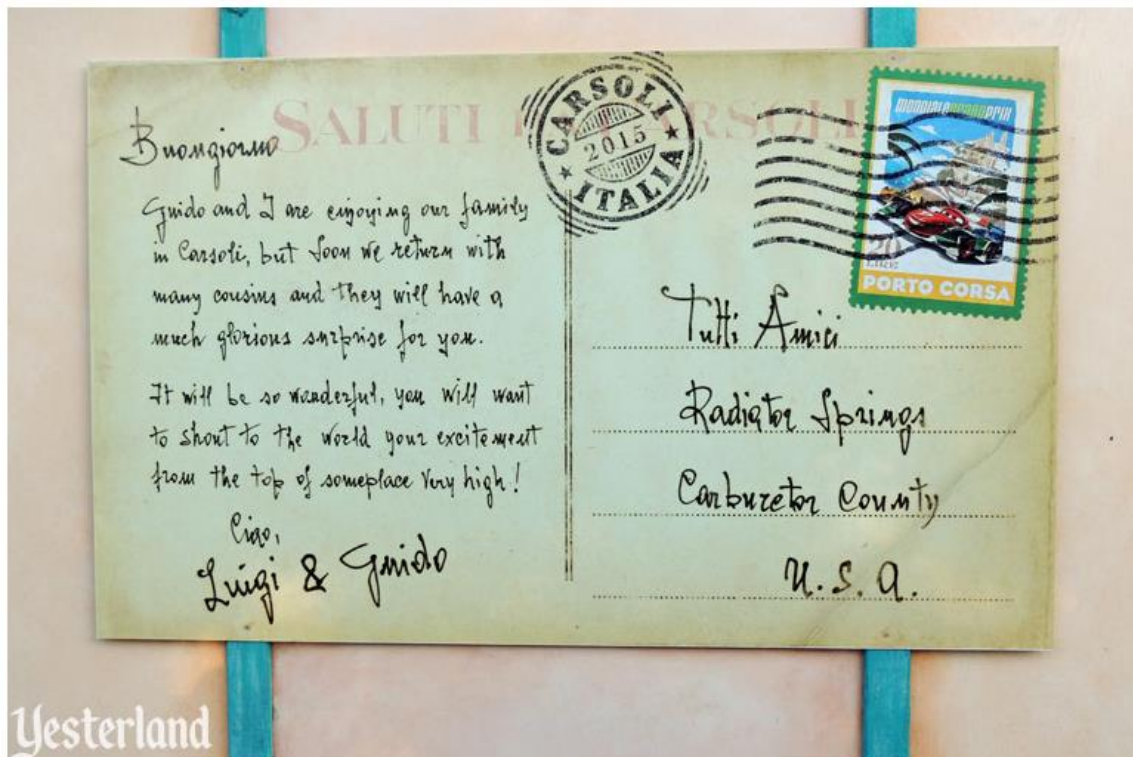


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Postcard on the construction wall

A giant postcard on the construction wall promised that Luigi and Guido would return from Carsoli with “many cousins and they will have a much glorious surprise for you.”

By the way, Carsoli really exists in central Italy. Around 5,000 people live there—although in the Cars universe, there are probably no people there, but around 5,000 cars.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2016

Replacement for Luigi's Flying Tires

Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters officially opened March 7, 2016. Luigi's shop, with its clever artwork and Pixar-inspired tire brands—possibly the best part of the old ride—still serves as the queue. The former “air hockey table,” ride area is now a flat, trackless surface. The ride vehicles are now Luigi's cousins from Carsoli, Frizzante cars (a brand invented by WDI), with no two alike in appearance or movement. They perform intricately choreographed dances.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2016

Fleet of Italian-styled roadsters



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2016

Windshields with eyes—but you see through them



Yesterland

Photo by Chris Bales, 2016

Shiny little roadsters

Guests have no control over their vehicles, but that's okay. Luigi's new ride is a big improvement over his previous one.

LILO & STITCH'S LUAU



Young Hawaiian girl Lilo and her “dog” Stitch—actually a dangerous extra-terrestrial fugitive—invite you to hang around the Pizza Oom Mow Mow patio area for Lilo & Stitch’s Ohana Luau.



Aloha! Welcome to Lilo & Stitch’s Ohana Luau.

What are Hawai’i residents Lilo and Stitch doing in a park whose theme is California? The official story is that they’re taking a California vacation. They brought their Ohana Luau along, complete with the hula and the limbo. Of course, Lilo brought her favorite Elvis Presley songs.



Hawai'i comes to California.

Pizza Oom Mow Mow, a California surf culture-themed counter-service restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating, is the most Hawaiian part of California Adventure. After all, the state's surf culture was imported from Hawai'i.



Gather around for live music and dance.



Learn how to hula.

On a specially built stage, The stars of the animated feature, along with Hawaiian drummers and tropically-attired hosts and hostesses, take turns entertaining guests. "Ohana" means family, so there are plenty of family activities. Enjoy games, such as Lilo's "Hang Loose, Man!," a Hawaiian-themed "hangman" game. Take hula lessons. Do the limbo. Try to win a hula-hoop contest.



Kids can come right up to the edge of the stage.

There's more for kids than just watching the performers and interacting with them. Kids can create Hawaiian-themed souvenirs at the "ArtsVenture" activity area. Hawaiian-garbed Cast Members show kids how to make and decorate miniature surfboards, paper orchids, and ti leaf bracelets and anklets.



Does Lilo see a parade approaching?



Meet Stitch at Lilo's Photo Hut.

The Ohana Luau goes on almost continuously for seven and one half hours every day. The only pause is when Eureka! The California Adventure Parade passes by each afternoon.

If you've seen the film Lilo & Stitch, you know that Lilo was an avid photographer. So visit Lilo's Photo Hut adjacent to the Lilo & Stitch's Ohana Luau for a photo with Stitch. Perhaps Lilo will come over too.



Step inside for some pineapple and ham-topped pizza.

What's a luau without food? Don't worry. There are some special island-style menu items at Pizza Oom Mow Mow. How about pineapple and ham-topped pizza? Maybe you'd prefer pineapple-banana shortcakes. Quench your thirst with Hawaiian specialty drinks.

If you sit outdoors, you'll enjoy the music from Lilo & Stitch's Ohana Luau. If you prefer to sit indoors, Pizza Oom Mow has new background music in honor of the luau. Listen to Elvis tunes, such as Elvis' original recordings of "Blue Hawaii" and "Rock-A-Hula Baby." How about "Burnin' Love" performed by Wynonna Judd and "Can't Help Falling In Love" performed by the A*Teens from the Lilo & Stitch soundtrack? Annette Funicello fans will enjoy "Pineapple Princess" and other Hawaiian-themed classics by Annette.



Lilo wears boots that look like bare feet in sandals.

There's Lilo & Stitch merchandise available nearby. Alas, you can't buy boots like the ones that Lilo wears. Wouldn't you like boots that have molded plastic toes? If you live in a northern climate, just think of the looks you'd get trudging through the snow.

Lilo & Stitch, the traditionally animated feature from Walt Disney Feature Animation Florida, opened in U.S. movie theaters on June 21, 2002. The same day, Lilo & Stitch's Ohana Luau opened adjacent to the Pizza Oom Mow Mow outdoor patio at Disney's California Adventure park. The Ohana Luau ran daily through September 30, 2002.

Guests who expected something resembling an actual Hawaiian luau or a big movie tie-in show, along the lines of The Spirit of Pocahontas, were disappointed. The Ohana Luau was small-scale entertainment.

But other guests—especially those with young children—who came upon the festivities while walking around the Paradise Pier Lagoon enjoyed the energetic performers, the activities for children, and the opportunity for a picture with Stitch.

In summer 2002, the Ohana Luau was the only location at the Disneyland Resort at which the Lilo and Stitch characters appeared. Any guests looking for a "meet and greet" with the popular stars of the successful 2002 animated feature had to visit Disneyland Park's less popular neighbor.

Pizza Oom Mow Mow opened in February 2001 as one of the original eateries of Disney's California Adventure. It closed permanently in September 2010, as part of California Adventure's billion dollar makeover.

ROCKIN' THE BAY

catch Summer's Hottest Sounds!

Hear some of music's most memorable tunes at Disney's California Adventure™ Park this summer!

July	August
13, 14 The Beach Boys featuring Mike Love & Bruce Johnston	1 Chubby Checker & The Wildcats
15, 16, 17 The Temptations Review featuring Dennis Edwards	2 Bangles
18, 19 David Clayton Thomas with Blood, Sweat & Tears	3 Three Dog Night
20 The Commodores	4, 5, 6 The Turtles featuring Flo & Eddie
21, 22 Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone	7, 8 The Buckingham
23, 24, 25 Starship featuring Mickey Thomas	9, 10, 11 Village People
26, 27, 28 The 5th Dimension	12, 13, 14 Kool & the Gang
29, 30, 31 Paul Revere & The Raiders	15, 16, 17 The Four Tops
	18, 19, 20 America
	21, 22, 23 The Monkees starring Davy Jones & Micky Dolenz

Performed live every afternoon at the Paradise Bay Stage

Yesterland.com

Music every night from July 13 through August 23

Do you want to “Catch Summer’s Hottest Sounds” at the Paradise Bay Stage (or the “Golden State Park Stage on Paradise Bay,” as the press release calls it)?

Just be aware that the superlative adjective “hottest” applies to the temperature of the seating area more than it does to music you’ll hear. In truth, most of these acts were hot around the 1960s or 1970s. The acts may no longer be as hot as they once were, but the summer sun can be very hot as it shines directly on the audiences of the two performances each afternoon.



The temporary stage is on Paradise Bay at Golden State Park.

Do you want good seats? Here's how to get a voucher for the preferred seating section for either performance today. Make dinner reservations for The Vineyard Room or buy the Electrical Parade Premium Viewing Package. Pick up your voucher at the Golden Vine Winery between 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Then, a half hour before showtime, go to the preferred seating entrance over by the Golden Zephyr.



The performers are protected from the sun by a temporary stage structure.



Caps and visors provide some relief from the sun—but not much.

Don't think of making a dinner reservation for The Vineyard Room, getting your voucher, but then not showing up for dinner. If you try that, they'll charge the \$25 minimum to the credit card that you used to guarantee your reservation.

Actually, you don't need a voucher to get a good seat. Many shows have empty seats.



The Beach Boys are the quintessential California beach sound band.

Perhaps you'll attend the first night of the music series, with the Beach Boys on stage. Don't expect founding members Brian Wilson, Carl Wilson, Dennis Wilson, and Al Jardine. But you can expect founding member Mike Love (born March 15, 1941), a cousin of the Wilson brothers. Also, Bruce Johnston (born June 27, 1942), who joined The Beach Boys in 1965 and sang on the hit "California Girls," qualifies as a member from the band's heyday.



The Beach Boys on stage

In case you're wondering what happened to the others, Dennis Wilson and Carl Wilson are dead. The surviving original Beach Boys have split into three bands. There's original leader and primary songwriter Brian Wilson and his band. There's Al Jardine's Endless Summer Band. And there are the Beach Boys who are here at California Adventure; they're the only ones who can call themselves "The Beach Boys" because Mike Love wound up with the rights after a legal battle.



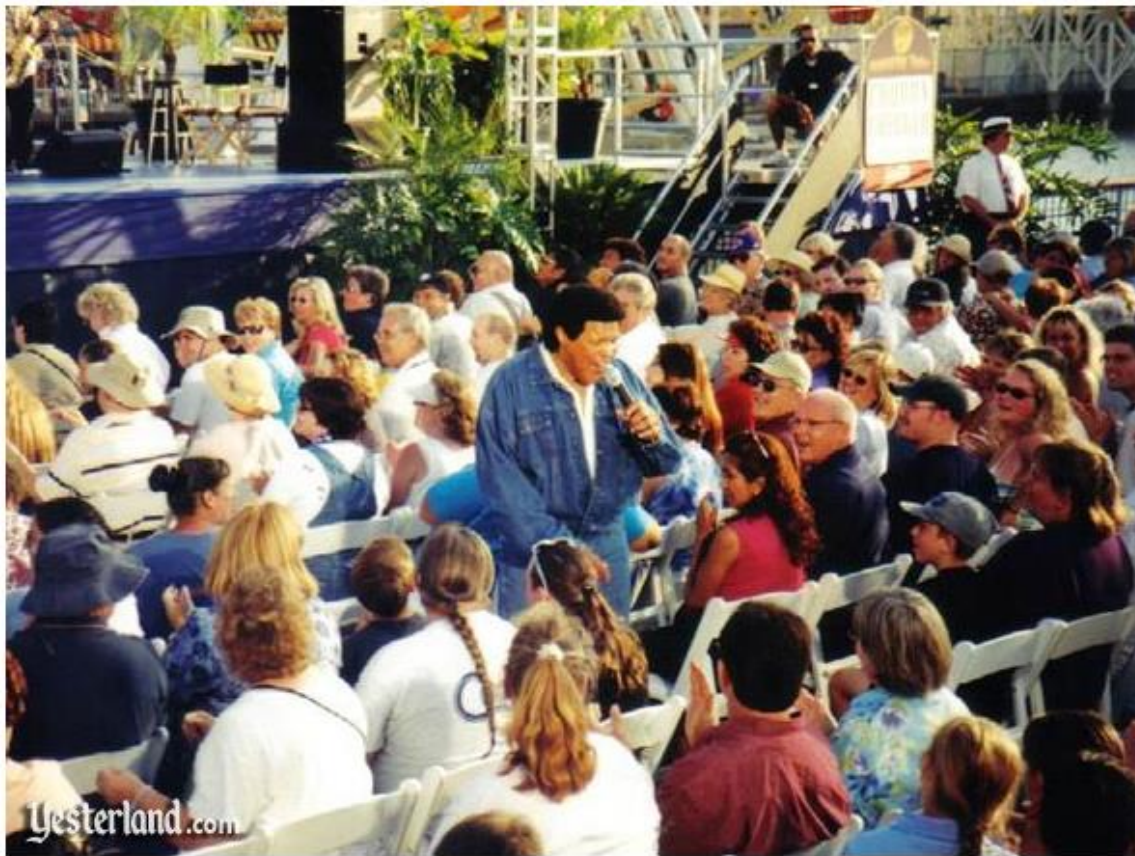
Chubby Checker & The Wildcats

It's not surprising that band rosters change over time. Most "oldies" bands have at least one original member. It's amazing that some have more than one.

It's different for a "name" performer like Chubby Checker. It wouldn't be Chubby Checker & The Wildcats without Mr. Checker.



"King of the Twist" Chubby Checker teaches audience members to dance the Twist.



Chubby Checker isn't afraid to navigate through the folding chairs in the audience.

Chubby Checker (born October 3, 1941) is best known for "The Twist" (1960), although he had a bunch of other Top 40 hits in the early 1960s. He still puts on a good show, although, in general, his audiences have aged along with him.



Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits giving a Richard Nixon-style victory sign

The group is called Herman's Hermits, but there was never anyone in the band named Herman. "Herman" is really Peter Noone (born November 5, 1947). In the United States, this "British Invasion" group is best known for "I'm Into Something Good" (1964), "Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter" (1965) and "I'm Henry the Eighth, I Am" (1965).



There's a new ride at the park—but only for performers.

Perhaps you would have preferred a new ride for the summer instead a nostalgic music series. Well, there is a new ride... sort of. The temporary stage over Paradise Bay doesn't have a backstage area or dressing rooms. Instead, the dressing rooms are behind California Screamin'. The performers travel by boat to and from the stage. Sorry, no boat rides for park guests.



K-EARTH 101 broadcasting live

Be sure to catch all the other summer 2002 entertainment at California Adventure, including Lilo & Stitch's Ohana Luau on Paradise Pier, Eureka! - The California Adventure Parade on the Performance Corridor, and The Power of BLAST! in the Hyperion Theater.

The first summer season for Disney's California Adventure was in 2001. Attendance was far below projections. With the downturn in travel after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, summer 2002 threatened to be even worse.

Disneyland Resort management had to come up with a compelling reason for guests to visit the new park in summer 2002. In the tradition of the well-received "Eat to the Beat" concert series during Epcot's annual Food & Wine Festivals, guests were offered "Rockin' the Bay" from July 13 through August 23, 2002. Disney chose acts that were once big names with Top 10 hits.

So what if most of the headliners were around an age to begin drawing Social Security benefits? So what if most hadn't had a hit in decades? They still had talent. They still had name recognition (at least to people who had personal memories of the Beatles appearing on the Ed Sullivan Show). And they often had great back-up bands.

But they didn't draw new crowds to Disney's California Adventure. "Rockin' the Bay" was not back in 2003.



"Kind of a Drag" by the Buckingham's was a big hit in 1967.

When the music series began, the performances were at 3:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. To address the problem of audiences baking in the hot summer sun, the performance times were changed to 5:45 pm. and 7:45 p.m.



Construction for *Walt Disney's World of Color* in August 2009

On June 11, 2010, *World of Color*, arguably the most spectacular water show in the world, premiered at Paradise Bay. The prime viewing for it is where *Rockin' the Bay* had been in 2002.

X GAMES XPERIENCE



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

X marks the spot. It's the X Games Xperience at Yester California Adventure. Be immersed in a fast-paced array of activities inspired by ESPN's X Games. The park promises "41 days of related events, activities, merchandise and promotions capturing the adrenaline and enthusiasm of the fast-growing sports."

Each guest entering Yester California Adventure receives a game piece for the Ultimate Scratch & Win Game. It's a free chance to win one of 10,000 action sports prizes.

You could win a pin, watch, or ESPN Zone game card. That would be cool, right? There are big prizes too—Mongoose bikes, Yamaha motorcycles and ATVs, and even Saturn ION automobiles! If you win the car, you'd really feel good about the \$47 you spent to get into the park.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Banner on the Golden Gate Bridge

The park also promises, "The celebration will be aptly accompanied by upbeat music and extreme embellishments throughout the park." One of those "extreme embellishments" is a banner on the park's iconic Golden Gate Bridge.



Sunshine Plaza

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003



Suburban Legends concert

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

You've arrived at the "upbeat music." In Sunshine Plaza, the band Suburban Legends performs as a stunt rider performs bicycle tricks, spins, and balancing acts as part of the Flatland Bike Exhibitions.



Xcade

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Are you someone who likes to participate in action sports, but prefers electronic versions to the real thing? Then bring your wallet to the park's San Francisco section for extreme sports-themed arcade machines.

It's not a mere arcade. It's the Xcade.



Inside the Xcade

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

The unfinished interior of the Xcade arcade is decorated with a huge Yamaha banner and white silhouettes of X Games athletes on dark blue walls. Arcade machines sit on the polished concrete floor. How's that for Disney magic?

Top Skater, the skateboarding simulator from Sega, challenges you to use your entire body to race through its realistic courses. There's much less chance of breaking bones than with a real skateboard.

You don't need snow to ski. Put your feet on the ski-like foot stands of Alpine Racer 3, the skiing simulator from Namco. Does the sight of snow on the video screen make you cold? Then try Sega Water Ski instead.

Get in the driver seat with Cruis'n Exotica, a driving simulator from Midway Games. Choose from several tracks, including one with dinosaurs. You don't even need a driver's license. If you prefer a motorbike to a car, race through the Amazon with ATV Track, the arcade racing game from Gaelco.



Yamaha Raptor ATV

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Speaking of Yamaha and ATVs, take a few minutes to admire the Yamaha Raptor ATV on display. Too bad they're not offering rides.



Radical Merchandise

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Want some radical merchandise? Then head to Radical Merchandise. That's the name of the shop—really. Be sure to admire the theming which perfectly captures the casual culture of action sports.

A gray sign shows “Available Product”—t-shirts, caps, and outerwear, all related to the X Games Xperience here at the park.

But you’re not just here to listen to a band, play on arcade machines, and shop. You’re here to be amazed by the pros.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Stage at Paradise Bay

X Games experts have added a stage over Paradise Bay with a large vertical ramp.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Vert ramp for Halfpipe Bay Show

The Halfpipe Bay Show has Vert ramp demonstrations highlighting the action of bike tricks, skateboarding, and aggressive in-line skating.



Bike demo at Halfpipe Bay Show

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003



Skateboard demo at Halfpipe Bay Show

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

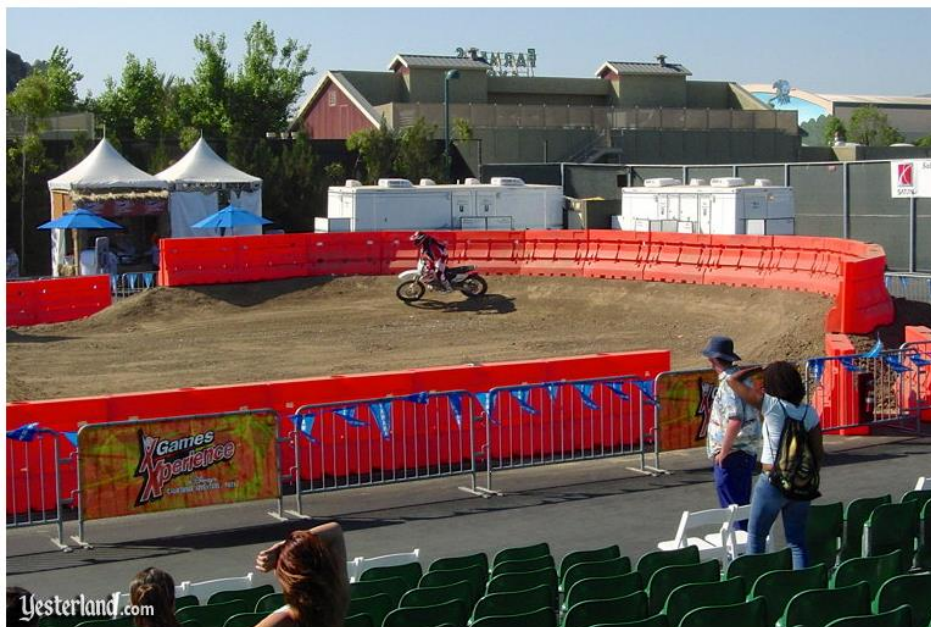
Do you want to see another show? Head to the X Arena, built especially for the X Games Xperience.



Boudin Bakery

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

In addition to holding flour for sourdough bread, the Boudin Bakery silo points you to the X Arena.



X Arena

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Grab a seat in the 2,500-seat X Arena. There are plenty of empty seats, even if you arrive just as the show is starting.



"Big Air"

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

At the MX "Big Air" Show, watch a spectacular display of freestyle Moto X jumps, backflips and "big air" stunts. And see dirt... lots of dirt.



More "Big Air"

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003



Lying down on the job?

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003



"Big Air" times two

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Nearby, at the Interactive Skate Park you can learn techniques from the pros and try them out for yourself. Bring your wallet. Skateboards and in-line skates are available for rental.



Xhibitions by X Games stars

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

The show's performers are actual X Games athletes. Perhaps you've seen them on ESPN's X Games.

You can meet the Star of the Day, a selected X Games athlete who will provide a Q&A session and an autograph opportunity.

Now let's take a closer look at one of the athletes...



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2003

Airborne athlete (with some photo editing)

Look at that Freestyle Moto X athlete airborne against a dark blue sky! And look at the crowd cheering him on!

Okay, so the photo doesn't look quite real. But the photo editing makes it better than if you could see where the "athlete" is standing.



Photo opportunity

Do you want to be the athlete in the photo? Look for the photo opportunity near the Boudin Bakery. Please heed the sign: "Keep both feet on the ground. Please DO NOT hang, climb, or attempt to sit on the bike."

California Adventure is hip and in touch with what today's park guests care about, not old and stodgy like the nearby park that opened in 1955. At least that's the intention with the X Games Xperience.

The X Games Xperience at Disney's California Adventure park ran from July 1, 2003 through August 10, 2003.

Disneyland Resort management hoped that the temporary event would boost summer attendance at Anaheim's second gate. ESPN management saw it as an opportunity to draw attention to the upcoming ninth annual X Games in Los Angeles. And it would be a great example of Disney synergy (most of ESPN is owned by The Walt Disney Company). A May 14, 2003 press release quoted two executives:

"X Games Xperience at Disney's California Adventure is an up-close and personal encounter with the top action sports athletes competing in the X Games," said Cynthia Harriss, president of the Disneyland Resort. "We've really captured the excitement and thrills of the X Games right here at Disney's California Adventure."

"This is a great new forum for these world-class athletes to showcase their tremendous abilities and to allow guests to sample a flavor of the excitement and energy of the X Games," said George Bodenheimer, President, ESPN, Inc. and ABC Sports. "Visitors to Disney's theme parks have come to expect the very best in family entertainment. The X Games Xperience at Disney's California Adventure will provide the perfect lead-in to X Games IX in Los Angeles."

Whether the X Games Xperience really represented the "very best in family entertainment" in the Disneyland tradition is open for discussion.

It was the second consecutive summer with a summer promotion. The Rockin' the Bay concert series of 2002 did not return in 2003. And the X Games Xperience of 2003 did not return in 2004.

The Timon parking lot where the X Arena was located is now Cars Land. There probably won't be much debate about which is better.

75 INSPEARATIONS



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

Sometimes it's challenging to pose with Mickey Mouse at a Disney theme park. He's a popular mouse, so the lines to pose with him can be long.

Here at Yester California Adventure, it's early 2005, and it's easy to pose with Mickey because there are 75 of him. But don't expect a hug. Each Mickey is made of polyurethane with an internal steel frame, weighs approximately 700 pounds, and stands 6 feet 5 inches tall, including the base.



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

"Saxophonic Mickey" – saxophonist and composer Dave Koz

The Mickeys are all over the place. Some are on Paradise Bay at Golden State Park, where you might have seen Rockin' the Bay in 2002 or the Halfpipe Bay Show during the X Games Xperience in 2003. Others are in Sunshine Plaza, Bountiful Valley Farm, and elsewhere here at the young park.

Before or after you pose with each Mickey statue, take a look at the triangular identification sign on the base. Mickey has a lot of friends—musicians, painters, actors, athletes, broadcasters, animators, comedians, producers, and even Disney Legends—and each statue represents the creative talent of at least one of them.



Photo by John Delmont, 2005
"Music Royalty" – top selling musical artist Sir Elton John



Photo by John Delmont, 2005
"All The World's His Stage" – actress Susan Lucci (*All My Children*)

The statue program, called "Celebrate Mickey: 75 InspEARations," was announced on November 18, 2003—exactly 75 years after an event that would change the life of a struggling 26-year-old filmmaker named Walt Disney. On November 18, 1928, Mickey Mouse debuted in the first synchronized sound cartoon, "Steamboat Willie," at Universal's Colony Theater in New York City.

"It's a true testament to Walt that he was able to create Mickey Mouse with such depth and personality that, on his 75th Anniversary, Mickey continues to take us on adventures, make us laugh and inspire us," said Michael D. Eisner, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, at the 2003 announcement. "Mickey's relevance can even be seen in the diverse array of people who are participating in this statue program—some have been working with Mickey for years and others are just true fans."

Photographer John Delmont and daughter Lauren in photos with Mickey.
(*"Secret Tour of Disneyland"* DVD)



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“UndercovEAR Mickey” – actress Jennifer Garner (*Alias*)

The statues reflect the artists in different ways. Some are quite literal. For example, Jennifer Garner’s statue reflects the secret agent genre of her ABC television series *Alias* (2001 to 2006).



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“Ellenland” – Ellen DeGeneres, stand-up comedian, television host, actor

“Ellenland” Mickey holds a fish bowl with Dory from *Finding Nemo* because Ellen DeGeneres provided the voice for the character.



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“Fruits of the Mouse” – Disney animator Andreas Deja



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“Undersea Mickey” – artist Wyland, best known for his outdoor murals of whales

Others statues reflect the creativity and whimsy of the artist. Animator Andreas Deja—whose brilliant work includes animating Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992), and Scar in *The Lion King* (1992)—cleverly reimagined Mickey as a product of the produce department.

Some artists—notably Raven, Wyland, David Willardson, Peter and Harrison Ellenshaw, Rosie O’Donnell and MEAR ONE—personally painted their own Mickey statue. Others shared their designs and ideas with TivoliToo, the Minnesota-based studio that molded, sculpted, and transformed each statue into a finished work of art.



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“Funny Pages” – Lori Tyminski, Senior Storybook Artist for Disney Publishing



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“Mickey and the Nightingale” – actress Ming-Na



Photo by Lauren Delmont, 2005

“Home Run Hero” – actor, director, producer, and screenwriter Ben Affleck



Photo by Lauren Delmont, 2005

“Jet Setter” – actor and pilot John Travolta



Photo by Lauren Delmont, 2005

“Monday Night Mickey” – Al Michaels & John Madden



Photo by Lauren Delmont, 2005

“Back to School” – Disney Legend Al Konetzni

Remember, it’s early 2005 here, so nobody knows yet that in mid-2005, John Madden will jump from ABC to NBC—and, more significantly for Disney fans, that in early 2006, The Walt Disney Company will trade ABC’s Al Michaels to NBC Universal in exchange for Oswald the Lucky Rabbit.

Al Konetzni created the Disney School Bus lunch box, the best selling lunch box in history.



Photo by John Delmont, 2005

“Peace & Love” – champion figure skater Michelle Kwan

Pssst... Wanna know a secret? There are actually 78, not just 75, Mickey statues. The extras were made as substitutes in

The 75 Mickey statues of “Celebrate Mickey: 75 InspEARations” were on display at Disney’s California’ Adventure from January 10, 2005 through February 22, 2005.

By that time, they had already had a long journey. It began with their unveiling at Walt Disney World’s Magic Kingdom on November 18, 2003.

Making a few extra Mickey statues turned out to be a good decision. After Janet Jackson’s January 2004 Super Bowl wardrobe incident, Disney replaced her “Mickey’s Nation 1928” with “Circle Vision” by Luis Fernandez for the rest of the tour.

Although the statues were scheduled to be at the Magic Kingdom for six months, they were removed February 24, 2004 to go to the annual stockholders’ meeting of The Walt Disney Company in Philadelphia on March 3, 2004.

Next, the 75 Mickey statues were divided into five groups of 15 so they could visit five cities simultaneously. Their schedule called for Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Portland, and Chicago from May 18 to July 20, 2004, followed by Minneapolis, Dallas, Denver, Kansas City, and Houston from August 17 to October 21, 2004.

After being reunited at Disney’s California’ Adventure, the statues headed to Washington D.C., where 75 were displayed at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center’s Woodrow Wilson Plaza from March 19 to April 30, 2005. The next tour stop was New York City. Some pieces were displayed at the World of Disney store in New York. Then 77 of them went to Sotheby’s New York to be auctioned off for charity. The exhibition began on September 20, 2005. The pieces were sold one week later.

Disney Consumer Products sold pins and 6-inch figurines based on the InspEARations statues.

Here’s how the Mickey statues shown in this article did in the auction:

- Saxophonic Mickey (Dave Koz) sold for \$18,000, benefitting Starlight Children’s Foundation.
- Music Royalty (Sir Elton John) sold for \$52,000, benefitting Elton John AIDS Foundation.
- All The World’s His Stage (Susan Lucci,) sold for \$2,500, benefitting Little Flower Children’s Services of New York.
- UndercovEAR Mickey (Jennifer Garner) sold for \$3,000, benefitting Elizabeth Glazer Pediatric AIDS Foundation.
- Ellenland (Ellen DeGeneres) sold for \$7,500, benefitting Children’s Action Network.

- Fruits of the Mouse (Andreas Deja) sold for \$4,500, benefitting Make-a-Wish Foundation of America.
- Undersea Mickey (Wyland) sold for \$11,000, benefitting Wyland Foundation.
- Funny Pages (Lori Tyminski) sold for \$29,000, benefitting Make-A-Wish Foundation of America.
- Mickey and the Nightingale (Ming-Na) sold for \$2,500, benefitting Starlight Children’s Foundation.
- Home Run Hero (Ben Affleck) sold for \$9,500, benefitting The Jimmy Fund at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.
- Jet Setter (John Travolta) sold for \$3,250, benefitting Hollywood Education and Literacy Project.
- Monday Night Mickey (Al Michaels & John Madden) sold for \$3,500, benefitting Make-a-Wish Foundation of America.
- Back to School (Al Konetzni) sold for \$45,000, benefitting Make-a-Wish Foundation of America.
- Peace & Love (Michelle Kwan) sold for \$20,000, benefitting Children’s Miracle Network.

Buyers also paid a 20% buyer’s premium to Sotheby’s, so the buyer of Sir Elton John’s Mickey actually paid \$62,400 while the buyer of Susan Lucci’s Mickey actually paid \$3,000. These are not only the highest and lowest amounts in the list above, but also for the entire auction.

The auction raised a total of \$614,500 for the charities. With the buyer’s premium, buyers paid a total of \$737,400.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

“All Aboard!” Mickey – animator Ollie Johnston

The statues are now in the hands of private collectors. One of them is on public display at the Walt Disney Hometown Museum in Marceline, Missouri. It’s “All Aboard!” Mickey by legendary animator Ollie Johnston, one of Walt Disney’s “Nine Old Men.” The subject of Mickey in railroad garb is very fitting for the museum, which is housed in the beautifully restored Santa Fe Depot in a town founded by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in 1887.

GLOW FEST



Photo by Karen Weiss, 2010

It's 2010 at Yester California Adventure. Sunshine Plaza and Hollywood Pictures Backlot have been transformed into Glow Fest.

During the day, colorful banners and columns leave no doubt that something is going on. The area really comes to life at dusk. And, at night, it becomes an outdoor nightclub.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2010

Walk through a portal



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Hollywood Pictures Backlot with a colorful overlay

The overlay decor doesn't fit in with the era of most of the architecture of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot. Then again, there are so many contradictions in this part of the park that it really doesn't matter.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

"Glow Face Paint and Glitter Tattoos"

Although the main Glow Fest activities begin at dusk, there are a few extras during the day—including a temporary face painting booth and a temporary merchandise spot selling light-up souvenirs.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Sunshine Plaza Stage

As the sun goes down, dancers and world music performers draw you to the stage in front of Sunshine Plaza's giant sun icon.



Photo by Karen Weiss, 2010

Emcee



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Off the stage, into the audience

Glow Fest doesn't seem like typical Disney fare. Perhaps that's because Disney hired an outside creative firm—Kreate, Inc. of Marina del Rey—to produce it.

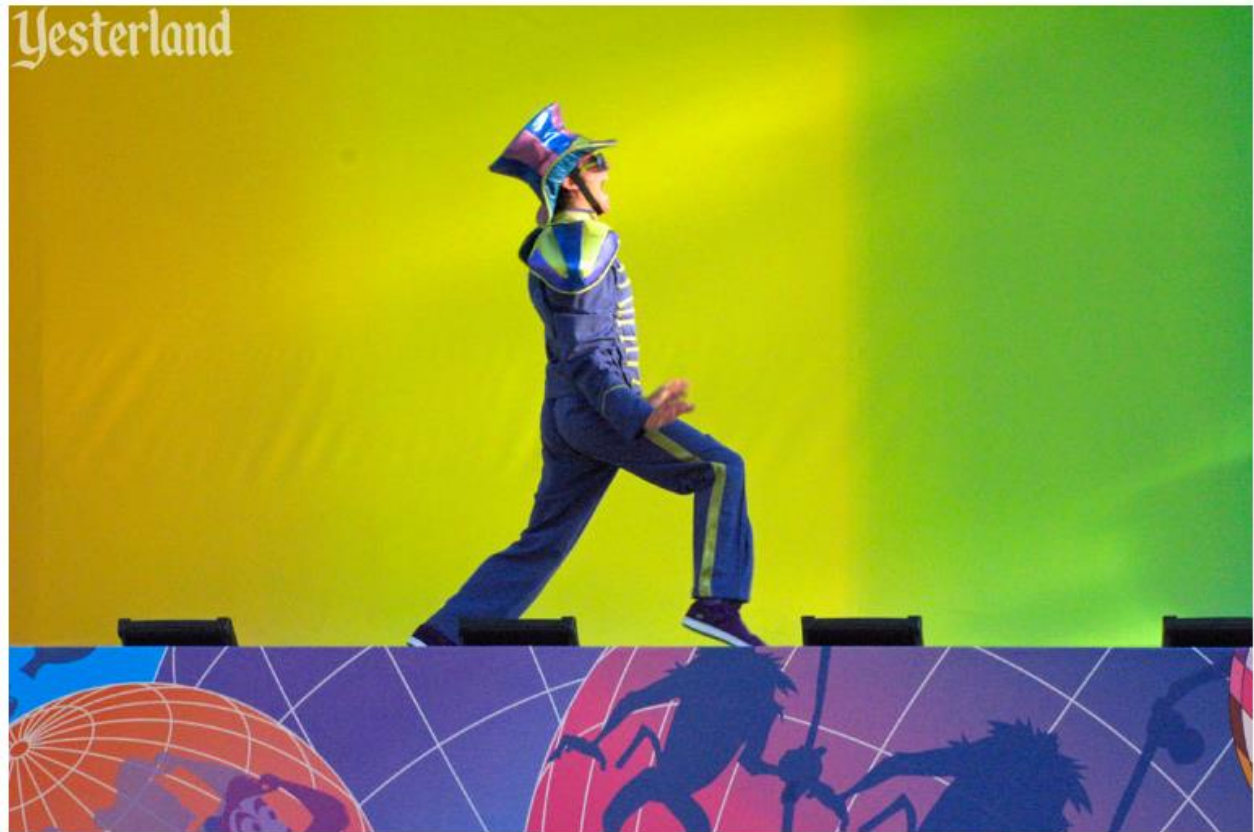


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Fun to Watch



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Stand back!



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Colorful Glow Fest Dancers



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Bollywood Step Dance

The highlight of the stage show is the Los Angeles-based Bollywood Step Dance troupe. Yogen Bhagat, the troupe's director is a dancer and choreographer trained in India. He works as a fulltime civil engineer for Los Angeles County, but somehow also manages to find time to present authentic Bollywood dance performances at the park seven nights a week.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

India at California Adventure



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Dance Troupe

According to Yogen, "It is an honor to be able to bring Indian culture and Bollywood to Disney parks, especially as Disney embraces cultural diversity. Since visitors from all over the world will attend, I want to present various Indian styles and also add fusion elements to the performance."

The Bollywood music is infectious and the precisely choreographed, expertly performed dances are a joy to watch.



Photo by Karen Weiss, 2010

After dark

When the sun goes down, the activity shifts from Sunshine Plaza to the boulevard at the Hollywood Pictures Backlot. The painted sky at the end of the boulevard becomes a screen for projections of street activity in an ever-shifting array of neon colors.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Interactive projections of the sky wall



Glow swords for sale

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Of course, there's merch for kids. This is, after all, a family theme park.



Hungry?

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Grab a gyro

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Who would expect outside food truck vendors inside California Adventure? Well, they're here!

Head over to Louks Greek Gourmet truck for a Gyro. If you've seen Orange County-based Louks elsewhere, you might not recognize the truck here. It's been wrapped in bright colors to fit in with the look of Glow Fest. You also might not recognize the prices. The Gyro that's \$5 when Louks is parked away from the park goes for \$8 here. Add Fries—your choice of Original, Tzatziki, Feta, or Honey Feta—for \$5.



Thirsty?

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Colorful drinks in colorful cups

Photo by Karen Weiss, 2010

Unlike the older park across the Esplanade, this park has never been shy about selling alcohol.

So order a Martini and a Mojito. Or should that be a Glowtini and a Glowjito?



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

VW van themed to the event

Dance until park closing—or just watch the performers and guests dance in the street. In either case, it's a fun way to finish your evening at Yester California Adventure.

You didn't even need a FASTPASS.

LUMINARIA



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

A luminaria is usually a kraft paper bag weighted down by sand and containing a lit candle. Rows of warmly glowing luminarias line streets, walkways, walls, and even rooftops on Christmas Eve. This Hispanic tradition began as a way to guide the spirit of the Christ child.

It's the Holiday Season here at Yester California Adventure. We don't have luminarias, we have Disney's LuminAria—a Holiday Spectacular with an upper-case L and an upper-case A.

LuminAria has nothing to do with luminarias. The official press release calls LuminAria "a spectacular celebration of dazzling lights, low level pyrotechnics and favorite holiday music performed on the waters of Paradise Pier Lagoon."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Gold is the theme for the holiday decor in the Golden State section.

LuminAria is a nighttime show, but the fun begins in the daytime. Go to the festively decorated Bay Area district of the park's Golden State section. Look for the giant LuminAria banners opposite the Golden Dreams rotunda.



"Come on in and be a star in our holiday show."

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Well, you won't personally be a star, but your artwork can be.

Bring your kids, but that's not a requirement.



Santa Claus welcomes guests.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001



You're in the Holiday Art Card Center.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Displays of toys serve as holiday displays and inspiration.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The reception desk



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The tables and chairs are a perfect size for young kids.

What do the holidays mean to you? What images come to your mind? What are your religious or secular holiday traditions? Be creative. Perhaps you or your kids will be inspired by the giant Christmas cards in the room.



A giant perforated luminaria bag is part of the room's decor.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Be sure to finish your artwork at least two hours before showtime.



Giant "gift packages" are actually show elements.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

As nighttime approaches, show elements are moved to their positions in Paradise Bay.



The neatly positioned packages wait for nightfall.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001



You've been warned.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Before it's too late, take in all the rides in this part of the park, including the Sun Wheel, Maliboomer, and Orange Stinger. They're closing early tonight.



Show time!

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Now it's night. The time has arrived. The lights dim around Paradise Bay.

The voice of LuminAria offers a message of peace for the holidays. "Dream of a wintery world where imagination swirls like falling snow," she tells us. "Share in the warmth of the holidays and let your heart shine with joy. This is the season of light."

Low-level fireworks leap from the lagoon.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Park guest artwork makes *LuminAria* an interactive show.

Do you remember those large gift packages? Large screens rise from those packages. The artwork that you, your children, and other guests produced during the day are part of the show.

Keep your eyes open for your artwork.

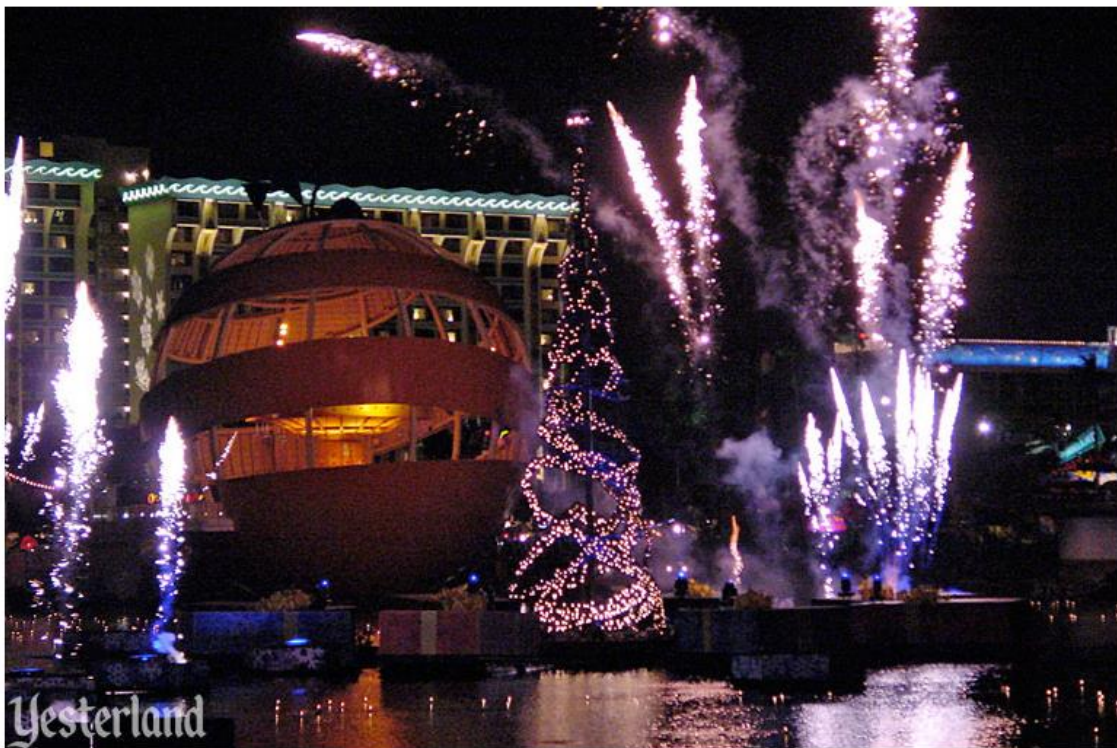


Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

A 60-foot "tree" appears to rise from within the lagoon.

A variety of low-level fireworks, choreographed to a soundtrack of familiar and not-so-familiar holiday music, dance above the lagoon.



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

Bask in the glow of the fireworks.

The music consists of "Shine," "Snow Transition," "Snowfall," "White Christmas," "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies," "My Favorite Things," "Toyland," "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," "Holiday Wonder," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "Holiday Fanfare," "Live the Light Inside," "Winter's Light," and "Disney's LuminAria Finale."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Pyrotechnic effects galore.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Almost 17 minutes of fireworks

Just when you think it's all over, "Disney's LuminAria Finale" begins.



Photo by Tony "WiseBearAZ" Moore, 2001

LuminAria Finale

As the show reaches its end, the narrator intones, "Share your light. Share it with the world." And one more blast of fireworks erupts above the waters of Paradise Bay.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The pyrotechnics are over.

You paid attention to which way the wind was blowing, didn't you? You picked a good spot upwind from the low-level fireworks, right? Otherwise, you were watching the show from within a cloud of thick, acrid smoke.

Disney's LuminAria premiered at Disney's California Adventure on November 9, 2001. It was the new park's first Christmas.

Reaction to the show online tended to be lukewarm—not as negative as for Light Magic, but not as positive as for Fantasmic! or Disneyland’s various fireworks spectaculars over the years. The virtues of the colorful pyrotechnics were outweighed by the smoke. The holiday music lacked the energy to match the fountains of fire. The video screens that showed the “cards” were too small and provided a lackluster show.

Columnist Sue Kruse wrote, “LuminAria, it contains neither luminarias nor an aria, so why is it called LuminAria?”

Walt Disney Creative Entertainment had to deal with a lack of permanent show infrastructure in the lagoon, a short development cycle, and a budget only appropriate for an eight-week holiday show.

The guest reaction to LuminAria also wasn’t helped by closing the Paradise Pier rides early—at a park that already had a reputation for too few attractions.

LuminAria ran nightly until January 6, 2002, as scheduled. Then it never returned.

The idea of having a nighttime spectacular on Paradise Bay was a good one, but LuminAria was not the right show. More than eight years after the final performance of LuminAria, and after a huge construction project lasting through most of 2009 and halfway into 2010, Disney California Adventure now has the most spectacular water show in the world—World of Color.

World of Color premiered June 11, 2010. Guests viewing World of Color are treated to music, 1,200 fountain nozzles (each with an individually controlled underwater LED), state-of-the-art digital projection on water-spray backdrop screens, lasers, and fire—but not the continuous low-level pyrotechnics that made the acrid smoke of LuminAria. If the wind is blowing, guests get a bit wet. But they don’t get coughs and burning eyes from smoke.

Unlike LuminAria, World of Color is a year-round show—but it can also be a holiday show.

Designing an infrastructure that could easily switch to a holiday version was a smart move, given the success of Disneyland’s holiday shows and attraction overlays. In an interview published at the D23 website (July 21, 2009), Steven Davison, vice president, Parades & Spectaculars, Walt Disney Imagineering Creative Entertainment, explained, “We will do a holiday show and probably a Halloween show. World of Color is as endless as your imagination. We have some great ideas for Christmas that will surprise everybody, that will totally do new things.”



Photo by Paul Hiffmeyer/Disneyland Resort © Disney

Olaf from *Frozen* in *World of Color - Winter Dreams*

For the first two holiday seasons of World of Color, 2010 and 2011, there was just the regular show. For the 2012 holiday season, World of Color added a segment based on Disney's Prep & Landing television special.

Finally, in 2013, a holiday spectacular temporarily replaced the regular show. World of Color - Winter Dreams premiered November 15, 2013. And borrowing a page from the LuminAria playbook, one segment featured reproductions of greeting cards created by guests. Versions of World of Color - Winter Dreams also ran in 2014 and 2015.



Photo by Scott Brinegar/Disneyland Resort © Disney

Elsa and Anna from *Frozen* in *World of Color - Season of Light*

For 2016 and 2017, a new holiday version, World of Color - Season of Light, featured well-known holiday tunes recorded by popular artists, such as "Let it Snow" by Dean Martin and "Baby, It's Cold Outside" by Michael Bublé and Idina Menzel, and "Feliz Navidad" by José Feliciano.

LuminAria is just a distant memory now—from the long-ago time before Frozen.

FIRST CHRISTMAS AT DCA



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Santa hat on the water tower

Welcome to the holiday season at Yester California Adventure. It's now 2001 here. It's the new park's very first Christmas.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Golden wreath and golden garland on the Golden Gate

The big show for 2001 is LuminAria, the nighttime show that invites you to "see the holidays in a whole new light," featuring "innovative pyrotechnic effects set to a stirring soundtrack."

But that's not all. There are also festive decorations and a chance to visit Santa Claus.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Hollywood stars

The grand entrance to the Hollywood Pictures Backlot is even more grand with golden Christmas decorations—including elephants holding golden wreaths—befitting the Golden State and the Golden Age of Hollywood.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

A wreath around the ABC logo

The outside of the ABC Soap Opera Bistro is not decorated except for a wreath with red ornaments around the ABC logo on the tall sign. Inside, there are plenty of Christmas decorations at the Chandler Mansion “set” from All My Children—because that’s how it’s decorated year round.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Christmas on the Hollywood Pictures Backlot

The section of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot behind the Hollywood facades is rather industrial, with telephone poles, overhead fires, barricades, lighting towers, acres of pavement, and bleak soundstage buildings. The idea is that it looks like a real Hollywood studio lot. This time of year, a festive Christmas tree makes it look more cheerful.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Kermit and his decorated arms

Kermit's outstretched arms serve a useful purpose during the season—to hold an evergreen garland with lights and gift packages. A Santa Claus cap completes his ensemble.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The Drive-in where there are no cars

There's a much larger Santa Claus cap nearby on the Hollywood Pictures water tower next to Stage 12, home of the Hollywood & Dine food court.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Christmas at the Mission Tortilla Factory

There's a rustic cornhusk garland with tiny orange lightbulbs on the Mission Tortilla Factory.



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Holiday scarecrows at Bountiful Valley Farm

Nearby, at Bountiful Valley Farm, the scarecrows in the agricultural gardens are dressed up for the holidays. There's Santa and Mrs. Claus, an angel, a snowman, a nutcracker in the traditional red jacket uniform, and even Rudolph the Red-Nosed Scarecrow.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Santa Rosa Seed and Supply



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Farmers Market

Santa Rosa Seed and Supply and the Farmers Market are also festooned with cornhusk garland.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Banner at Bountiful Valley Farm

Banners throughout the park advertise LuminAria. In some parts of the park, the banners seem to be the main holiday decorations.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

LuminAria Holiday Art Card Center

The San Francisco block has gone unused for the park's first nine months, but now it's the LuminAria Holiday Art Card Center. Take your kids inside to make Art Cards. Over one hundred cards are selected to be in each LuminAria show. Maybe you'll see your kids' artwork projected tonight.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Golden garland on *Golden Dreams*

The Golden Dreams rotunda, modeled after the Palace of Fine Arts from the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition, is decorated with golden garlands and golden wreaths—just like the park's Golden Gate Bridge and Hollywood Pictures Backlot entrance.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Colorful garland on the “train platform” shade canopy

If you’re looking for Yesterland souvenirs, you might want to pop into the streamlined California Zephyr rail car. Just look at what you can get as gifts for your family or friends—or maybe for yourself.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Souvenir toys on display inside the California Zephyr

You can buy toy versions of your favorite California Adventure attractions, such as the Orange Stinger, complete with yellow-and-black bee abdomen seats, and the Sun Wheel, with the smiling California sun face in the center of the wheel. Then there’s the Mark V Monorail, just like the one that goes through the park (except that this one is missing three of the five cars).

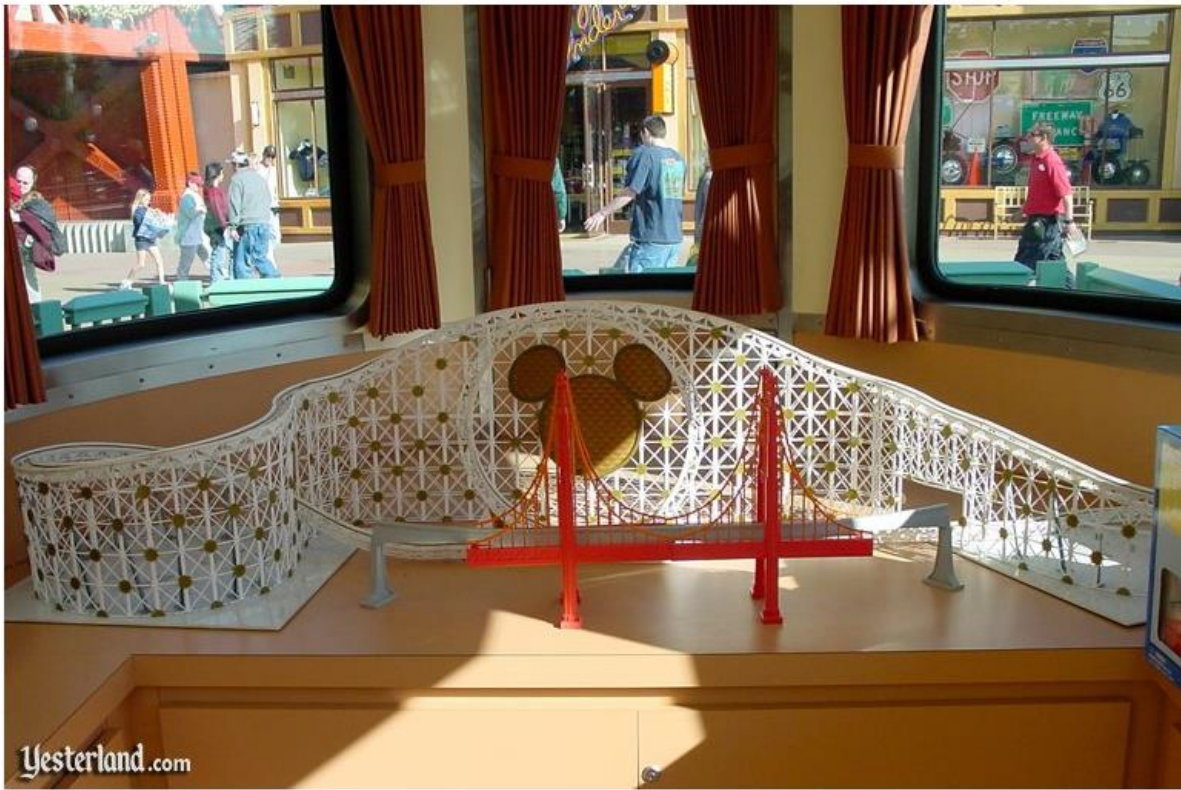


Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

More toys on display inside the California Zephyr

There's an accessory that you should get if you buy the toy Monorail: a genuine, oddly proportioned Golden Gate Bridge, just like the one at the entrance to the park (except without a golden garland or golden wreath).



Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

Santa by the waterfalls

Don't forget to visit the outdoorsy Santa Claus who greets guests near the waterfall below Grizzly Peak.



Santa at night

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The park looks better—and more Christmasy—at night.



Christmas Tree at night

Photo by Tony "WisebearAZ" Moore, 2001

At the scruffy Hollywood Pictures Backlot, the Superstar Limo facade serves as the background for the colorfully lit Christmas tree.

Did you enjoy your holiday 2001 visit to the park? At least it wasn't crowded!

Disney's California Adventure opened February 8, 2001. Nine months later, it was time for the new park's first holiday season.

The park was not off to a good start. In a Christmas Day 2001 article ("Reflecting on a very long year") for the Orange County Register, Jonathan Lansner wrote, "Disney thought spending a billion in Anaheim or so would gain it an instant smash with California Adventure. Oops, they basically built a ghost town."

The big holiday offering at Disney's California Adventure for 2001 was Disney's LuminAria. The reaction to the show was mixed, and it never returned. Beyond that, the park offered holiday decorations and Santa Claus. There were fewer decorations than at Disneyland Park.

Most of what is shown in this article is now gone. All of it has changed considerably... for the better!

SANTA'S BEACH BLAST



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Santa's vacation spot

California is a great place to take a vacation, and Santa Claus knows it.

So this holiday season—when Santa Claus really should be working—he's taking a vacation at Yester California Adventure park. He's taken over part of Sunshine Plaza to bask in the glow of the golden California sun.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Lifeguard tower 2

Santa's reindeer Dancer keeps an eye on things from her lifeguard tower. (Who knew that Dancer looked so good in a red swimsuit?) Her view is somewhat obstructed by a sign proclaiming, "It's so hot, it's cool."



Minnie's and Mickey's surfboards

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



Lilo's surfboard

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

You know how some celebrities like to hang out together? Mickey, Minnie, Pluto, Goofy, Goofy's son Max, and other Disney characters have joined Santa's vacation.



Santa's sand castle

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Santa's Surf Shack is next to his sand castle. So now Yester California Adventure has its own castle—just like Disneyland (but not quite as big).

You may have encountered Santa at a department store plopped in a big chair, just waiting for kids to sit on his lap. That's not what Santa does here. You'll find Surfin' Santa partying.



Dance with Santa.

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



Making music with Santa

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

The Santa cap is always part of Santa's look, even here at the "beach." But Surfin' Santa left his heavy red coat and trousers in the closet in favor of a colorful aloha shirt and baggy surf shorts. On colder days, Santa might be seen with long red sleeves under his aloha shirt, along with heavier pants.



Surfin' Santa signs autographs

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Bring your autograph book. Not only can you get Santa's signature, you can also collect autographs from numerous Disney characters.



Goofy posing for pictures with guests

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



Snowflake aloha shirt?

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



Goofy's son Max, too

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



Pluto joining the fun

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



It's a photo op party

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003



It's a photo op party

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

The Disney characters may be on vacation, but they never forget their fans.



The Wave Riders

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

It wouldn't be a party without music. Listen to the Wave Riders beach band playing Beach Boys music.



Even Mickey Mouse!

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Borrow a Hula Hoop from a Cast Member, and keep it going in time with the Wave Riders' music. Or just dance. Or just listen.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Groove 66

Groove 66, an a cappella group, sometimes performs on the steps of Santa's Surf Shack.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

After dark

Say good night to Surfin' Santa as you leave the park. Santa's Beach Blast goes until 8:00 p.m. (if the park is open that long).

Santa's Beach Blast was an entertainment offering at Disney's California Adventure during the holiday seasons of 2003 through 2007. It was essentially a meet-and-greet and an effort to decorate Sunshine Plaza for the holidays in a nontraditional way. Five seasons was a long run, especially at a park that relies so heavily on repeat visits by Annual Passholders.