

# FANTASYLAND



The heart of Fantasyland in 1974

In 1974, the heart of Fantasyland still looked much as it did when Disneyland opened in 1955.

The next eight pictures are all “zoomed in” images from the picture above.



Mad Tea Party

The teacups used to spin where the white horses of King Arthur's Carrousel now gallop, and the Carrousel used to be wedged in between Mad Tea Party and Sleeping Beauty Castle.



**Fashions of 1974**

Bell-bottoms and flare-leg jeans were the fashion in the mid-1970s. Too bad this picture doesn't show the shiny polyester Mickey Mouse body shirts that were available at the Emporium on Main Street.



**Fantasyland Central Ticket Booth**

Each land had at least one Central Ticket Booth, where guests could buy additional A-through-E coupons or special ticket books without a park admission ticket—or could just ask for information.



**Cartoon Festival at the Fantasyland Theater**

In the days before The Disney Channel, VHS tapes, and DVDs, the Fantasyland Theater was almost the only place to see classic Mickey Mouse cartoons such as “Mickey’s Trailer” (1938), “Through the Mirror” (1936), and “The Band Concert” (1935).



**Back facade of the Sleeping Beauty Castle**

Guests probably take a thousand pictures of the front facade of the Sleeping Beauty Castle for every one picture of the equally handsome back. Notice the high-tension power lines that used to march across the parking lot.



**Dumbo**

The elephants used to fly above a plain concrete circle, not the beautiful fountain of water over which they fly today.



**Operator of Dumbo**

The ride operator's booth is a great example of the "tournament tent" style that was pervasive in old Fantasyland. Behind the operator's booth, the Fantasy Gift Fair sold Winnie the Pooh plush toys.



Timothy atop Dumbo

Timothy Mouse, who provided encouragement to Dumbo in the 1941 animated classic, stands atop this Dumbo ride, and on the current version as well. The souvenir stand behind Timothy was the “dead end” of Fantasyland before the opening of the Big Thunder Trail in 1979.

## FANTASYLAND THEATER



Ready to sit down? Catch a movie at the Fantasyland Theater.

Sit down in a comfortable theater seat and enjoy continuous showings of classic Disney cartoons on the big screen. What's showing at the Fantasyland Theater?

- Showing today, it's Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day (1969).
- Next time, you might see Mickey Mouse in three of the best animated shorts ever, Mickey's Trailer (1938), Through the Mirror (1936), and The Band Concert (1935).
- On another visit, you might be lucky enough to see Disney's It's Tough to Be a Bird (1969), an Academy Award-winning featurette by the legendary Ward Kimball.

Feel free to enter and exit whenever you wish. There's never a line.

The Fantasyland Theater at Disneyland opened in 1955 as the Mickey Mouse Club Theater. In 1964, the name changed to the Fantasyland Theater. It closed near the end of 1981 for the New Fantasyland project. In 1983, the space that was previously the theater became Pinocchio's Daring Journey.



The Fantasyland Theater was originally the Mickey Mouse Club Theater.

## ORIGINAL MAD TEA PARTY



Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1957, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Mad Tea Party is still a popular attraction at Disneyland, but the original version is in Yesterland. This opening day 1955 attraction was inspired by the Mad Hatter and the March Hare's unbirthday party scene in Walt Disney's animated feature, *Alice in Wonderland*, released slightly less than four years earlier on July 26, 1951.



Photo by Charles R. Lympany, circa 1955, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Canvas architecture

Yester-Fantasyland is the land of tournament tent facades made of colorful canvas. Wedged in a tight space between the King Arthur Carrousel to the south, the Mickey Mouse Club Theater to the west, the Pirate Ship Restaurant to the north, and Mr. Toad's Wild Ride to the east, Mad Tea Party can be called the centerpoint of the land.



Photo by Charles R. Lympny, circa 1955, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Teacups—plain and fancy

Climb into one of the original Tea Cups. Take it out for a spin. Literally.



Photo by Charles R. Lympny, circa 1955, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Your choice: active or passive



You can make this ride wild or mild, depending on how quickly you turn the wheel in the center of your cup. Technically, the wheel doesn't turn; it's attached to a platter. Your cup spins freely around the wheel.



Photo by Charles R. Lympny, 1960, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Raising her hand to be excused?

You might not want to go on this ride right after you've eaten at the Pirate Ship Restaurant. This also might not be a good ride for you if you suffer from motion sickness. But if those conditions don't apply, have fun spinning around, just like the well-dressed children in these pictures.



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Teamwork



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Or let the others do the work



Photo by Charles R. Lympny, circa 1955, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Spectators

There's another way to enjoy Mad Tea Party. Just watch from outside. You won't get motion sickness—and you can save your "C" coupon for something else.

Mad Tea Party is fun to watch from the Skyway to Tomorrowland too.



Photo by Charles R. Lympny, circa 1957, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Red-and-yellow platter, in need of some cleaning



Photo by Fred Nelson, 1959

Looking good in 1959



Photo by Dennis Caswell, 1975

Fancy railing and arches around the perimeter in the 1970s

Mad Tea Party is essentially a dressed-up carnival ride, but it's a good fit for Fantasyland. It's a fun ride. It allows guests to control how fast they spin and in what direction. And it serves as an eye-pleasing kinetic sculpture.

Mad Tea Party was one of Disneyland's opening day attractions in 1955.



*Mad Tea Party in 1966, still similar to opening day*

Mad Tea Party was located where the King Arthur Carrousel sits today. The carrousel was originally squeezed into the tight space between the Mad Tea Party and Sleeping Beauty Castle.

The big change came in May 1983. As part of the New Fantasyland, Disneyland built a new Mad Tea Party near the Alice in Wonderland ride—an apt location since both are based on the same movie.

Mad Tea Party now looks better than ever. Attractive planters surround the ride, while colorful lanterns hang above it. The tea cups have fancier designs. And they now have doors to keep guests from falling out.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Current *Mad Tea Party* at Disneyland



Photo by Alex Ramirez, 2016

Good night, *Mad Tea Party* at Disneyland

## ORIGINAL DUMBO FLYING ELEPHANTS



Sure, you'll still find a Dumbo the Flying Elephant ride at Disneyland—but the original Dumbo Flying Elephants ride is in Yesterland.

This ride is inspired by the Walt Disney's 1941 animated feature, *Dumbo*. It's located in a dead-end corner of Yester-Fantasyland, right in front of the Fantasyland Theater, near the Pirate Ship Restaurant.

Climb into one of the ten Dumbos. Each elephant holds two guests. Soon you'll be flying around in circles.



Notice the hinged ears (above). The ears are supposed to move up and down. I'm sorry. They're not working today. To be honest, the mechanisms never worked properly, so the ears on each Dumbo are stationary. But that's okay, because these elephants fly anyway.



The wooden loading platform and the ground have a new paint scheme.

As you visit the park in different years, you'll see different color schemes on the loading platform. The elephants themselves are always gray, just like in the movie. What other color could they be? Pink?



Stationary ears

Eventually, you'll notice that the ears are integral parts of the elephant, not inoperative hinged appendages.



Dumbo Flying Elephants—also known as Dumbo the Flying Elephant or simply Dumbo—was supposed to be one of the attractions ready for Disneyland’s invitation-only opening on July 17, 1955 (and the public opening the next day).

The first batch of fiberglass elephants arrived about three weeks before the opening days. They weighed 700 pounds apiece—which is light for an elephant, but heavy for a flying elephant. The ride was a mechanical failure. The attraction was quickly reworked and managed to open August 16, 1955.



Artwork in *The First 50 Magical Years* exhibit shows pink elephants.

Early artwork showed pink elephants, not the familiar gray pachyderms. The finest Disneyland history book, *Disneyland: The Nickel Tour*, by Bruce Gordon and David Mumford (Camphor Tree Publishers, 1995), provides an explanation. Just as there is only one Mickey Mouse, there can be only one Dumbo, right? Because this ride would have ten flying elephants, they would be the “Pink Elephants on Parade” from Dumbo’s intoxicated nightmare in the movie. The book goes on to speculate, “Somewhere along the way, no doubt, Walt decided he’d rather have everyone riding the real Dumbo, not an alcohol-induced hallucination. So the pink elephants became gray and the one and only Dumbo became ten.”



The 1955 model in *The First 50 Magical Years* exhibit shows the original Fantasyland.

When the Dumbo ride first opened, it was located on the west side of Fantasyland.

The official Disneyland website includes this bit of historic trivia about Dumbo the Flying Elephant:

“When former President Harry Truman visited Disneyland® Park in 1957, Dumbo was one of the few attractions he didn’t ride. Truman didn’t want to be associated with a character related to the Republican party.”



*Dumbo* at its original location in Disneyland (circa 1959)



A very similar view of *Dumbo* in Disneyland (1959 photo)

The two previous similar photos were taken by two different photographers from the Skyway ride. Do you see any differences? The big difference is the railing around the ride.

For the May 1983 opening of the New Fantasyland, the Dumbo ride moved to where Skull Rock Lagoon had been. The cosmetically updated version of the original ride still had just 10 elephants, but the mechanism looked more like it does today.



*Dumbo at Disneyland in 2004*

The biggest change to Dumbo came in 1990, after two accidents.

On March 29, 1989, one of the fiberglass elephants partially separated from a support arm, injuring a Garden Grove couple and their 3-year-old daughter. The family suffered “bruises and scrapes.” Dumbo reopened the next day.

A year later, on April 1, 1990, one of the support arms collapsed, injuring a 13-year-old girl from Canada. The teenager suffered “minor bruises.” After being checked at Garden Grove Hospital, she returned to the park for the rest of the day. This time, the old Dumbo was grounded permanently.

In both cases, the injuries were minor. But the accidents should not have happened at all. Disneyland needed a safe, reliable Dumbo attraction.

Disney had a magnificent 16-elephant version of Dumbo ready for Euro Disneyland (now called Disneyland Paris), but that park would not open until 1992. The new Dumbo ride went to Anaheim, where it opened in November 1990. Disneyland now had a Dumbo ride with 60% more capacity. There was still plenty of time to build a duplicate for Paris.



*Dumbo at Disneyland in 2005*

The elephants at Disneyland fly above a doughnut-shaped pool of water with splashing fountains.

Dumbo is one of only a few rides that can be found at all of Disney's Magic Kingdom-style parks around the world. Even though Dumbo is essentially just a simple amusement park ride, there's something very appealing about the friendly elephants—especially for young children.



*Dumbo at Walt Disney World in 2004*

Magic Kingdom Park at Walt Disney World opened with a 10-elephant Dumbo in 1971 and has had the updated 16-elephant version since 1993. There are no fountains.

Disneyland Paris (1992) and Hong Kong Disneyland (2005) have had 16-elephant Dumbo rides since opening. These rides have fountains.



*Dumbo at Tokyo Disneyland in 2000*

If you're nostalgic for the old Dumbo, take a trip to Tokyo Disneyland. There, the Dumbo ride is from 1983, and has just ten elephants.



*Golden Dumbo at Disneyland in 2006*

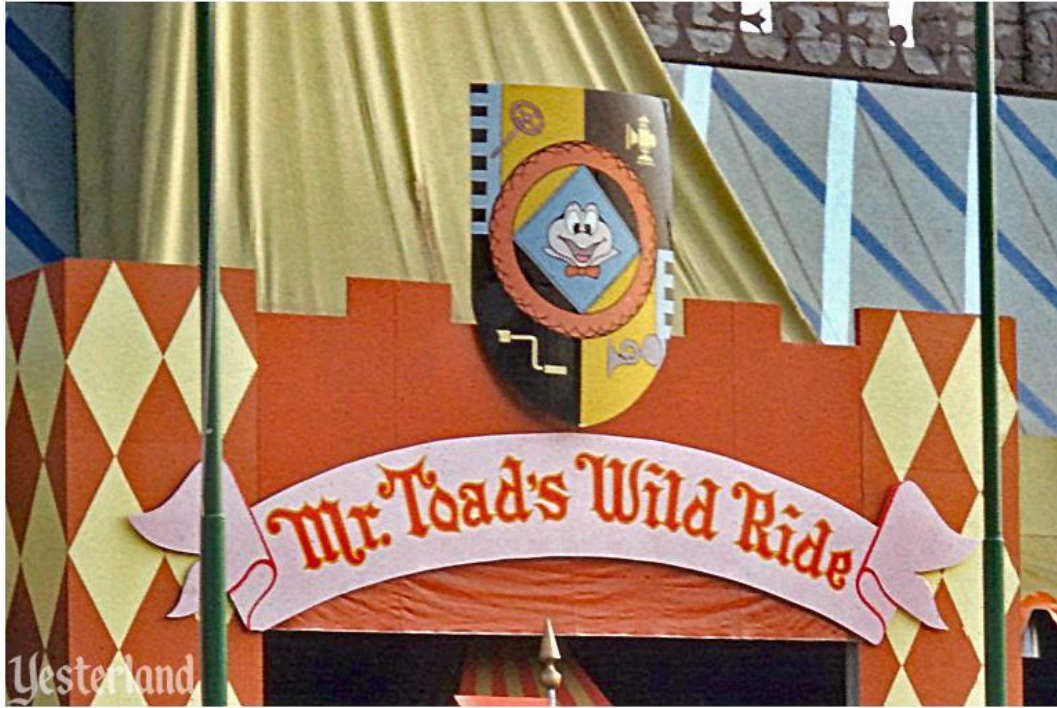
As one of the original attractions from 1955 at Disneyland, one of elephants was painted gold in honor of the park's 50th anniversary in 2005.



*Bulwagi's Flying Adventure* at Lion Country Safari, Loxahatchee, Florida

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Dumbo should feel very flattered by rides such as *Bulwagi's Flying Adventure* at Lion Country Safari in Loxahatchee, Florida; *Amazing Flying Elephants* at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; and *Elephant March* at Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri.

## ORIGINAL MR. TOAD'S RIDE



Detail from photo by Charles R. Lymanpy, 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Welcome to the original Mr. Toad's Wild Ride—not the version that's now at Disneyland. Before you get in line for Mr. Toad's Wild Ride, be sure to admire the genuine canvas tent structure over the entrance and the genuine canvas awning across the loading area. Be prepared to wait, because this is a very popular attraction.



Photo by Charles R. Lymanpy, 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor

The original "tournament tent" canvas façade



Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

### From the Skyway

Present a "C" ticket, board your motorcar, and enjoy 98 seconds of fun—including a drive through Toad Hall, a room with toppling barrels of explosives, a collision with a train, and a trip to Hell. Your guide book calls it "a hilarious auto ride through the streets of Old London Towne."



Photo by Marion Caswell, 1976, courtesy Dennis Caswell

### Barricade that you crash through





Photo by Marion Caswell, 1976, courtesy Dennis Caswell

Butler, with an emphasis on the first syllable



Photo by Marion Caswell, 1976, courtesy Dennis Caswell

Dangerous explosives



Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Escaping from Hell



Photo by Charles R. Lympamy, 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Cars named after characters



Photo by Charles R. Lympamy, 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Looking happy, not scared

Mr. Toad's Wild Ride is based loosely on Walt Disney's animated movie, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*. The movie is a "package film" with two distinct, unrelated parts. Ichabod in the title refers to Ichabod Crane, the schoolmaster in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving. Mr. Toad refers to J. Thaddeus Toad, the impulsive proprietor of Toad Hall in *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame.

Older kids love this ride, but three-year-olds? Not so much.

If you think three-year-olds are scared by this ride, just imagine how terrified they would be by a ride based on the Headless Horseman from the Ichabod Crane portion of the movie. Alas, there has never been such a Disney ride.

Mr. Toad's Wild Ride was one of Disneyland's opening day Fantasyland attractions on July 17, 1955. The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad was still a recent Disney movie, released on October 5, 1949.

Only the original version of the ride has "gone to Yesterland." It lasted until 1982, when the tracks were ripped up, the show building interior was gutted, and the façade was torn off.

Then, it was rebuilt with an ornate new exterior, a larger loading area, a longer track, new scenes, and more gags. The Imagineers made the most of the limited space.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

The New Fantasyland version of Mr. Toad's Wild Ride

When New Fantasyland opened in 1983, Mr. Toad's Wild Ride looked entirely different from the outside. Throughout Fantasyland, the tournament tent look was gone. Fantasyland's three dark rides were rebuilt. They were joined by a fourth dark ride, Pinocchio's Daring Journey. Each had an appropriate storybook exterior.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

"Class of '55" plaque in 2005



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Golden ride vehicle in 2005

Although the post-1983 version of Mr. Toad's Wild Ride was essentially a new ride, it was honored during Disneyland's 50th anniversary as a member of the "Class of '55"—original Disneyland attractions from 1955. The attraction had the same name, same story, same characters, and same location. It had just been improved with rich details, inside and out.



Photo by Karen Weiss, 2006

Highly detailed entrance to Mr. Toad's Wild Ride



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Mr. Toad's crest above the entrance



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2017

Mr. Toad car in the loading area



Yesterland

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2017

Painting at the loading area, providing a preview of what to expect



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Track going through the Toad Hall fireplace in the post-1983 version, instead of past it



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Ride Over. Time to exit.

And it helps to have a catchy theme song... “We’re merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily on our way to nowhere in particular!”

The original Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride and the current version are brilliant in that there’s no attempt to retell the story of the movie. Walt Disney’s Imagineers used the characters and spirit of the movie to give guests an experience unique to the ride—a wild motorcar adventure. The highlight is a collision with a train in a tunnel, followed by a memorable ending in Hell, which is populated by bouncing red demons. There’s no such scene in the Disney movie or the Kenneth Grahame book.

Along the same lines, Peter Pan’s Flight works well because it’s ultimately about the experience of flying over London and Neverland, not about retelling the story of Peter Pan.

Squeezing the plot of a feature length movie into a brief theme park ride tends not to work. Pinocchio’s Daring Journey tries to condense the plot of an epic animated film into a little ride. In spite of some beautifully designed scenes, the ride doesn’t succeed in being a captivating experience for guests. It usually has the shortest wait time of the Fantasyland dark rides.



Photo by Marion Caswell, 1976, courtesy Dennis Caswell

Toad Hall at its original location in Disneyland's *Storybook Land Canal Boats*

Way back in 1956, there was already a stately Toad Hall in Disneyland. Only this one was a miniature. Toad Hall enjoyed a prime setting on an island in the Storybook Land Canal Boats ride until 1994, when the Sultan's Palace from Aladdin took its place. Presumably, the children of the 1990s were more familiar with Aladdin than The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Toad Hall at its new location

A year later, Toad Hall returned to the ride in a less prime location.



Disney has another Toad Hall, but it's not part of a ride.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2017

Toad Hall at Disneyland Paris

When Disneyland Paris opened in 1992, guests found a Toad Hall similar to the full-size Toad Hall at Disneyland. But this wasn't a ride. It was (and still is) a counter-service restaurant. In keeping with Mr. Toad's setting in England, the restaurant features English fish and chips.

You can exit from the restaurant without going through Hell—unless you're someone whose digestive system can't handle deep-fried battered fish served with deep-fried potatoes.

# ALICE IN WONDERLAND

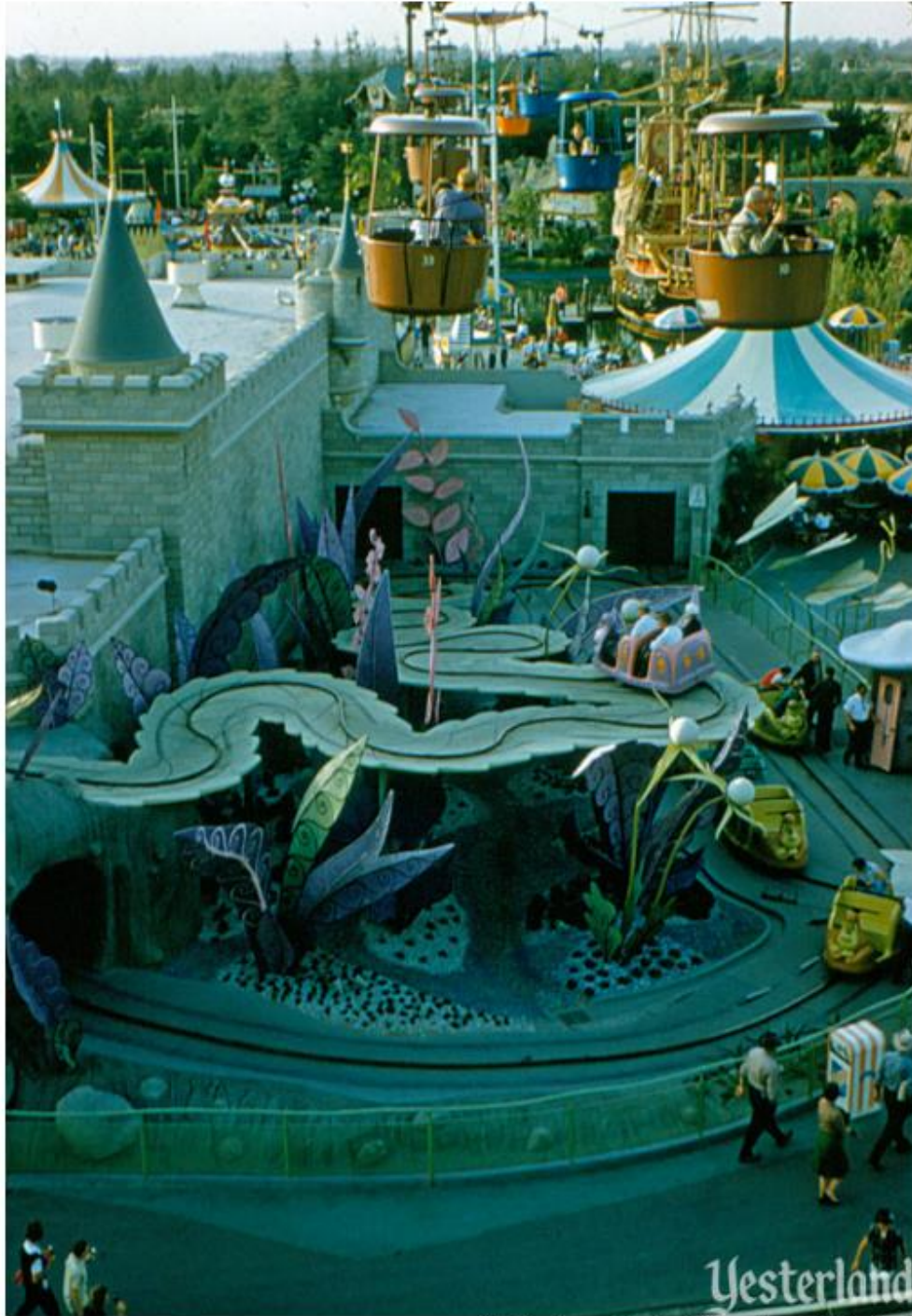


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

There are indoor Disney rides, outdoor Disney rides, and a few that are both. For example, the Mine Train Through Nature's Wonderland enters a show building for its climactic Rainbow Caverns scene. And the Submarine Voyage is partially in a water-filled show building.

Disney dark rides, such as Mr. Toad's Wild Ride, operate in the dark. Only their load areas see any daylight—with one exception.

Welcome to Alice in Wonderland, based on Walt Disney's animated feature of the same name. In the 1951 movie and the 1865 fantasy novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, Alice follows a white rabbit into the rabbit hole. Now it's your turn.

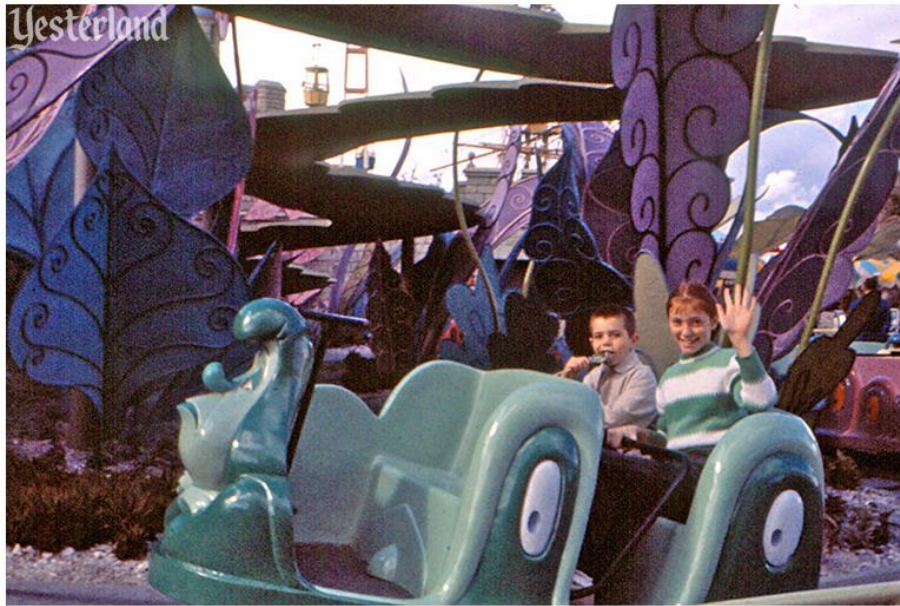


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1961, courtesy of Robin Runck

Caterpillar

Have a seat in a two-row caterpillar—possibly the most unusual looking ride vehicle ever to come out of WED Enterprises. You begin in a garden of giant fiberglass leaves. Shortly after you're dispatched, you enter a black-light world featuring bizarre scenes such as the Upside Down Room and doors that keep getting smaller—smaller than you are—but you somehow fit through anyway.



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, circa 1958, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Construction at the Holiday Hill site adjacent to *Alice in Wonderland*

Your caterpillar vehicle exits from the show building onto a narrow ramp which resembles a series of leaves forming a vine. From your elevated vantage point, take a quick glance above the construction wall at the site where the mountain for the Matterhorn Bobsleds will soon rise.

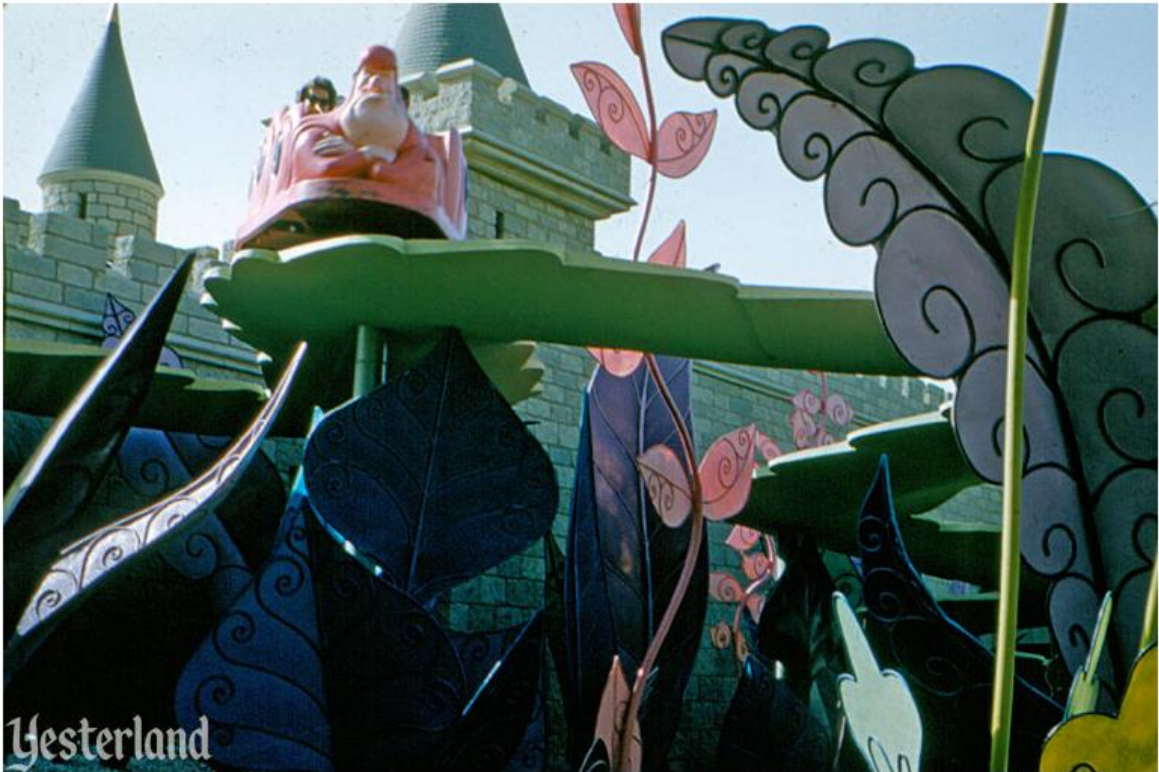


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

Almost floating in the air

The delicate-looking vine is hardly wider than your caterpillar. You quickly navigate a series of hairpin turns as you return to the load area—sort of like a real caterpillar sliding across the tops of leaves.



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1961, courtesy of Robin Runck

Fiberglass landscaping

The narrow vine is flanked by oversized fiberglass foliage. There are some small shrubs at ground level, but there's mainly gravel. There are certainly no actual trees here.

Alice in Wonderland was one of two new attractions that opened at Disneyland on June 14, 1958. The other was the Columbia, a \$300,000 replica of the first American ship to circumnavigate the globe.

A display ad for Disneyland in the Los Angeles Times (June 18, 1958) described the new Fantasyland ride:

NEW

#### ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Join Alice in the wonderful, whimsical adventures that beckon inside the Rabbit Hole. Meet all the astounding characters... the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, even the Oversize Chamber and the Upside Down Room... it's all here to delight and thrill you in this outstanding NEW attraction.

The park was not yet three years old.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Looking better than ever in 2004

While it can be said that the original version of Alice in Wonderland has "gone to Yesterland," the ride is still alive and well at Disneyland. There have been three major versions:

1. The original 1958 version, which relied heavily on painted scenery and flat-board characters;
2. The enhanced 1984 version, which opened one year after the rest of the 1983 New Fantasyland, with dimensional characters replacing the flat-board ones and with show scenes enhanced, rearranged, or replaced entirely (good bye, Upside Down Room);
3. The 2014 version, which added sophisticated digital projections.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Hairpin turns



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2007

Load area in 2007

And then there's the story of the vine...

For more than 50 years, the winding vine defined the ride's exterior. Other Fantasyland dark rides had tournament facades until 1982 and European village facades from 1983 onward. But Alice in Wonderland was always unique. The vine was the ride's signature. For guests walking by, it was a delightful kinetic sculpture.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Heading toward the finale

The first notable change to the vine came in 1984, but it was really about what came at the bottom of the vine, not about the vine itself. Where the track previously made a U-turn to the unload area, it now reentered the show building for an additional dark ride scene—the Unbirthday finale.

During the first half of July 2010, the vine was still about the same as in 1958.

Then, on Thursday, July 15, 2010—in the middle of Disneyland's busy summer season and just days before the park's 55th anniversary—Alice in Wonderland closed abruptly and unexpectedly.

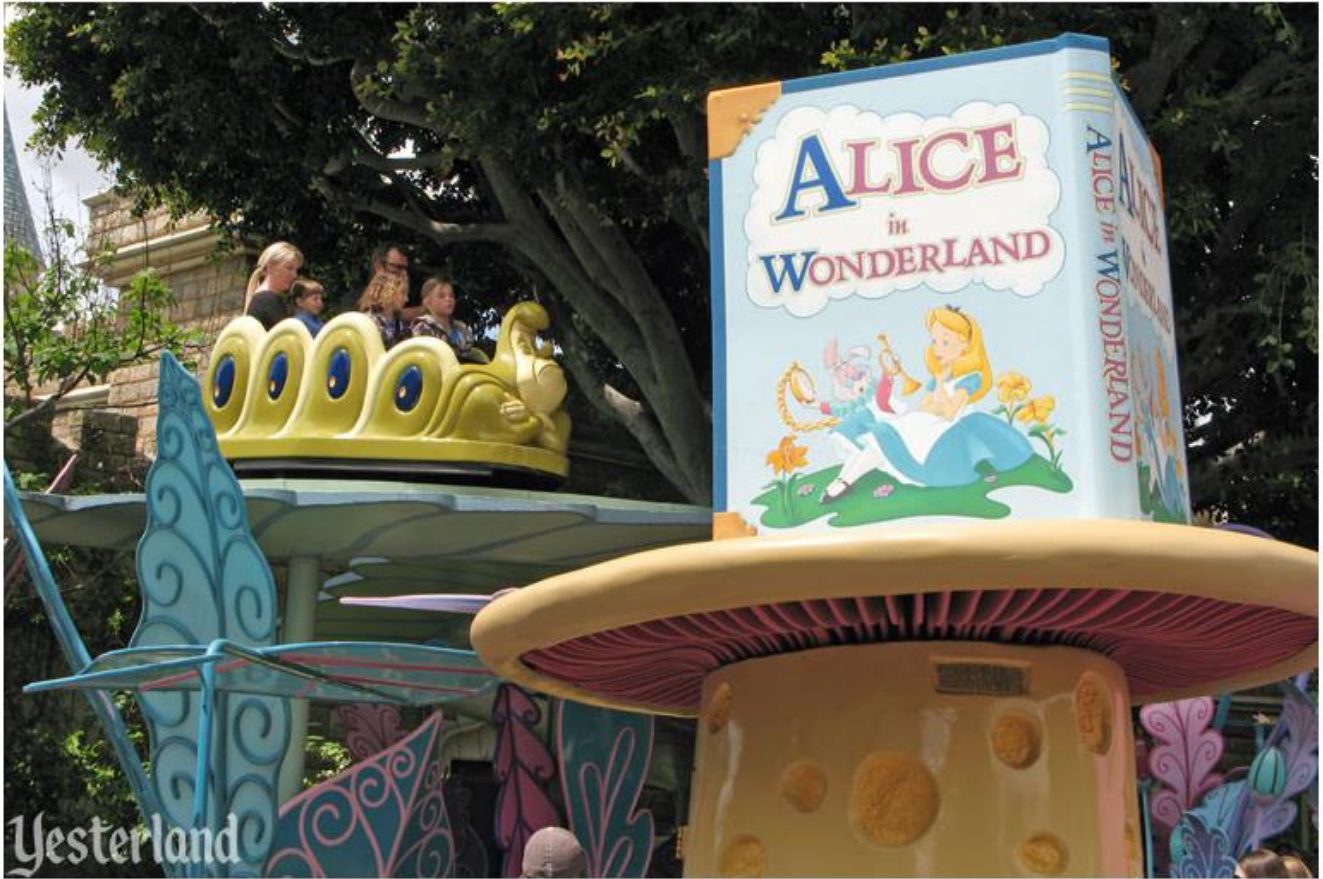


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Timeless track



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

Busy summer day in 2010



The Los Angeles Times (“Disneyland’s Alice in Wonderland ride closed to install safety equipment,” by Hugo Martín, July 22, 2010) had this explanation:

One of Disneyland’s oldest attractions, the Alice in Wonderland ride, has been closed since last week while workers install safety barriers recommended by California work-safety inspectors. Park officials said they hope to reopen the ride in the next few weeks.

Disney officials said the Anaheim park voluntarily closed the ride July 15 after California Department of Occupational Safety and Health inspectors pointed out that it lacked handrails needed for maintenance crews who work on an elevated segment of the ride.

The Cal/OSHA inspectors were in the park on a separate matter and did not order closure of the ride, Disneyland spokeswoman Suzi Brown said. “We like to have all of our rides ready for our guests,” she said.

The ride remained closed for about a month.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Temporary fix

The Orange County Register (“Disney ride reopens after safety fix” by Eric Carpenter, Aug. 13, 2010) reported on the reopening:

The Alice in Wonderland ride at Disneyland reopened Friday after a monthlong closure to fix a potential safety hazard, park officials said.

The ride, in the Fantasyland area of the park, was shut starting July 15 so that crews could install a barrier along the outside, elevated track where the ride’s carriages travel. The barrier is intended to help prevent maintenance workers from falling off the ride’s track.

Disney said it voluntarily closed the ride to fix the potential problem.

The delicate vine would never be the same.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

No longer “floating”

There were not only railings on the elevated section, but the narrow track now had a wide floor beneath it. It changed the guest experience.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Decorations

Although it was a temporary fix, an effort was made to dress up the railings with large leaves in a style that would match the ride. That didn't prevent postings on Disney fan forums from using adjectives such as “ugly” and “hideous” to describe the changes.

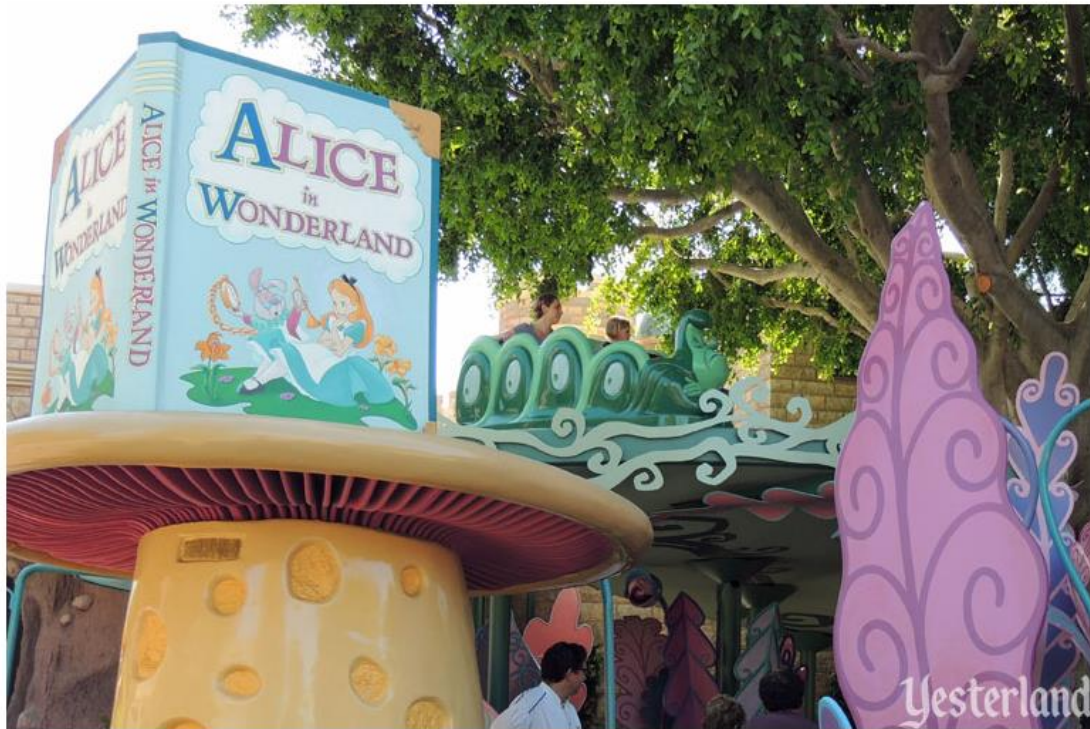


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Permanent fix

Alice in Wonderland continued to operate with its temporary safety fixes until Disneyland's closing time on March 9, 2014. After an extended refurbishment, the ride reopened July 4, 2014.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Big improvement

Rails along the edge of the track allow maintenance employees to attach harnesses. Some parts of the track have permanent safety railings. Everything looks much better than the temporary fix.

For the rest of this article, let's take a ride down the vine...



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Much wider than the original 1958 track



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Much wider from below too



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Approaching the Unbirthday room



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2014

Big tree Wonderland



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2017

The big green tree



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Impressive tree trunk too

Although Alice in Wonderland lost its signature delicate vine track, it gained a huge tree over the years.

The photos at the top of this article show Alice without any trees. Now a huge tree dominates the attraction's exterior. It's not quite the size of the Swiss Family Treehouse—but Alice's tree is real.

# SKYWAY TO TOMORROWLAND



Photo by Ron Yungul, 1956

Welcome to the Fantasyland attraction that has Tomorrowland as part of its name. Walk up the stairs to a traditional chalet in the Alps of Fantasyland. After waiting in line and handing over a "D" coupon, a Cast Member opens the door of a round metal bucket for you. There are two chairs in it. Have a seat. It's a bit awkward because the center post goes right down the middle of the bucket.



Photo by Charles R. Lympany, circa 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor.

Swiss chalet surrounded by tiny pine trees

There's a support cable in each direction. It moves at a constant speed to pull the buckets through the sky using a proven, reliable mechanism made by the Von Roll Company in Switzerland. When you're seated, your bucket is engaged onto the cable. Up, up, and away!



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1959

Cinderella's Castle, right after you leave the chalet

Enjoy a great view of Storybook Land from the Skyway. You're on your way to a very different station at the other end. There's plenty to see. The view from up here is wonderful! Each time you ride, you'll discover new details about the park. And there's always a breeze on a hot summer day.

Look down onto Captain Hook's Pirate Ship. Perhaps it will make you hungry for a hot tuna pie.



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1959

View of the first half of the journey





Photos by Charles R. Lympany, circa 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor.

### Buckets

The Skyway is simultaneously a mild sightseeing ride and a bit of a thrill ride. Some guests find it scary to be dangling from a slender cable high in the sky. The bucket sways back and forth whenever the cable goes over a support tower, causing occasional gasps from guests.

Soon you'll enter the mighty Matterhorn mountain.

Hey! The imposing Alpine peak is hollow inside! The park map calls the interior Glacier Grotto, but you might just call it an unfinished hollow chamber. The exposed framework has been dressed up minimally. The manmade mountain is more impressive from the outside. Still, it's fun to share the space briefly with the screaming riders of the Matterhorn Bobsleds.

To return from Tomorrowland, you may want to take the Skyway to Fantasyland, but it will cost you another "D" Ticket.

The aerial tramway ride opened in Disneyland in June 1956 as two attractions: the Skyway to Tomorrowland and the Skyway to Fantasyland. According to *Disney A to Z* by Dave Smith, "In the early days of Disneyland, guests could purchase either a one-way or round-trip ticket. Later it was one-way only."



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1959

### Mountain in your path!

When the Matterhorn opened in 1959—directly in the path of the Skyway—the Skyway passed through two large openings on each side of the mountain. The Matterhorn also served as the center support tower for the cables.

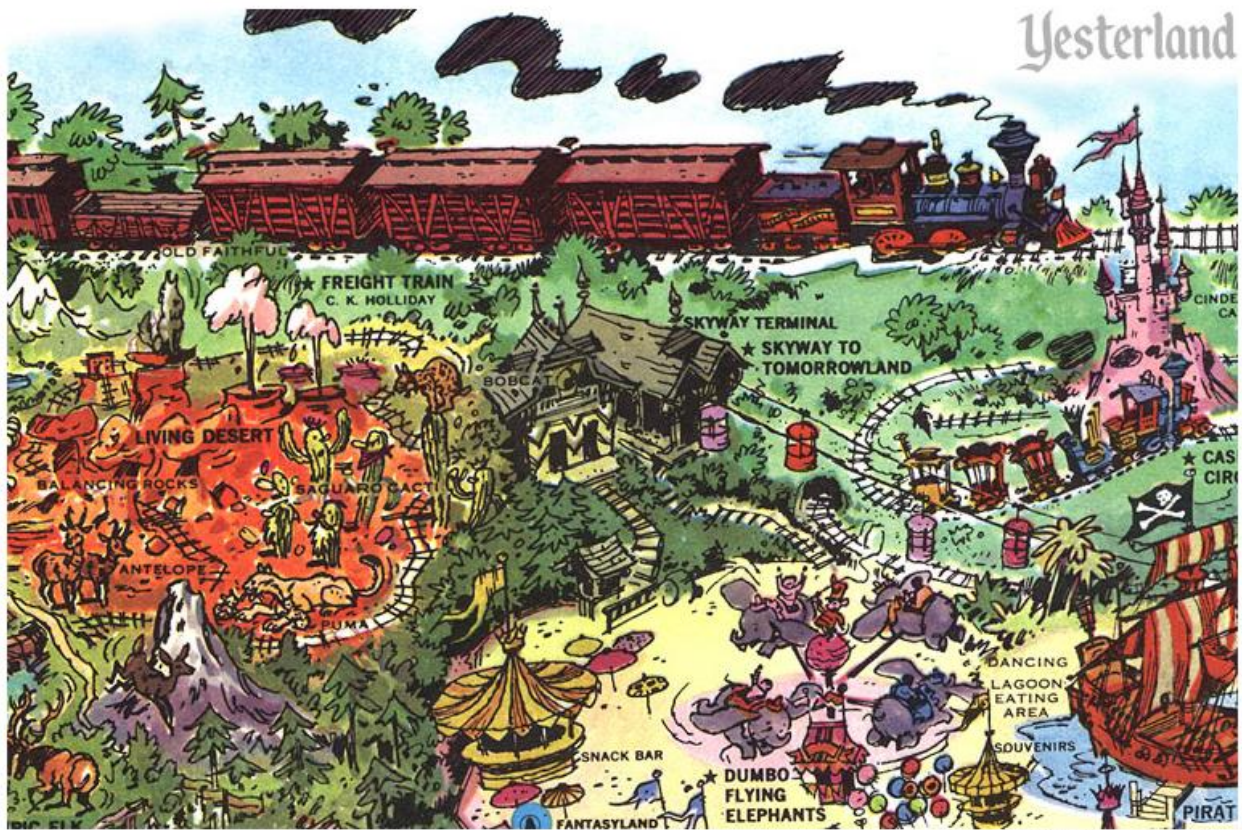


Photo by Charles R. Lympany, circa 1956, courtesy of Chris Taylor.

Rare photo of the Skyway before Matterhorn mountain was built

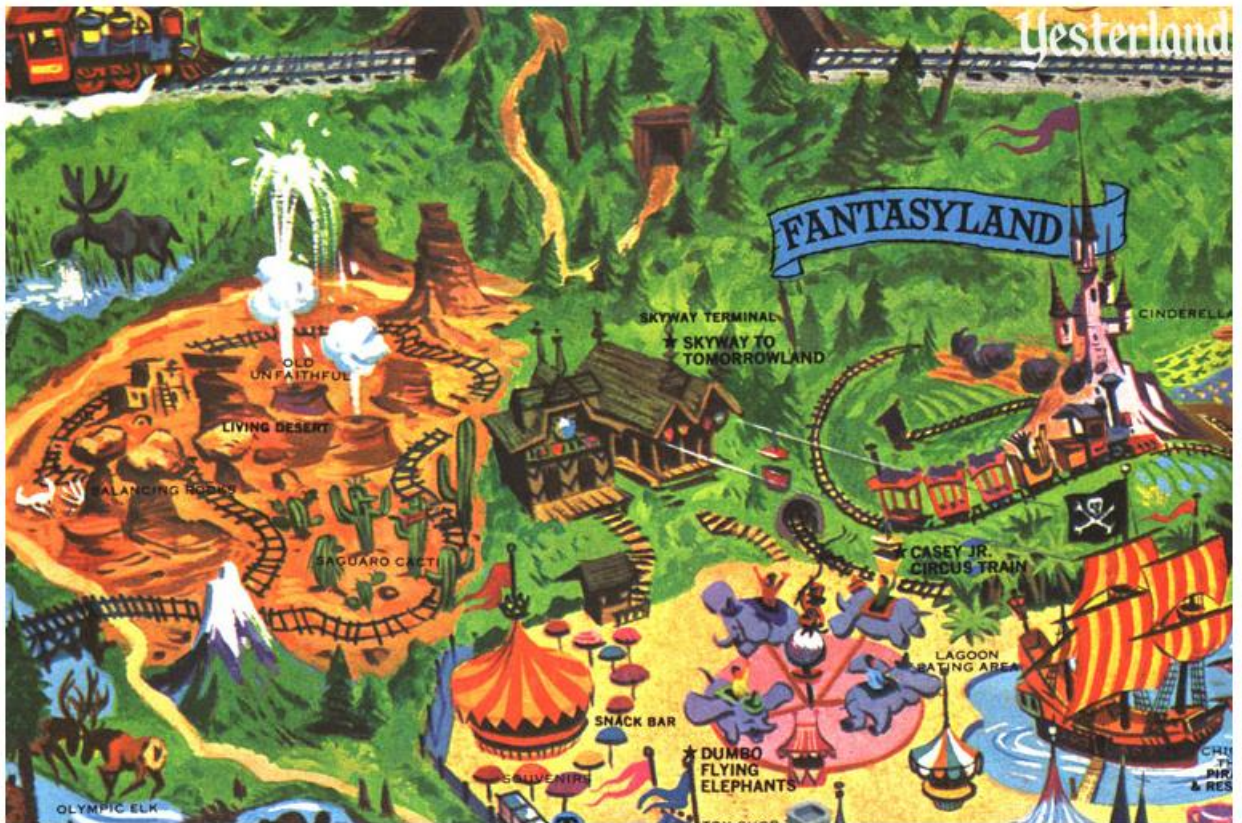
In 1965, rectangular buckets replaced the original round buckets.

Disney Legend Bob Gurr had been asked to design new buckets with four seats instead of two, doubling the capacity. But he could only add a few pounds to the total weight. Gurr's innovative design used lightweight ABS plastic with a steel frame, eliminated the center post, had important safety features—and looked great.



Map © 1964 Walt Disney Productions

Detail from 1964 Disneyland souvenir map, showing round buckets



Map © 1968 Walt Disney Productions

Detail from 1968 Disneyland souvenir map, showing rectangular buckets

The rectangular buckets were a familiar sight in the skies of Disneyland for almost 30 years.



Photo by Robert Demoss, 1987

Rectangular buckets overhead



Photo by Werner Weiss, 1974

Skyway over Pirate Ship



Photo by Robert Demoss, 1987

Skyway with Matterhorn mountain

On November 5, 1994, Orange County Register writer Jerry Hirsch reported, "After ferrying 150 million passengers between Tomorrowland and Fantasyland over the past 38 years, Disneyland's Skyway will make its last trip Wednesday."

Fans of the Skyway rushed to Disneyland for one last ride. On November 7, 1994, Los Angeles Times writer Ken Ellingwood wrote about the reason for the closure:

A former Disney employee visiting the park Sunday to take pictures from the Skyway speculated that the park was closing the ride to prevent accidents such as one in April, when a man was injured after falling from a Skyway gondola onto a tree 20 feet below.

But Disney officials said the Skyway's safety has never been a problem, and its closure was simply a matter of popularity and work force needs.

Demand for the ride has fallen off and the 10 workers who staff it will be needed to tend an "Indiana Jones" ride scheduled to open in February. The closing of the Skyway mirrors the closing of "Mission to Mars" and the "Motorboat Cruise" last year following the opening of "Mickey's Toontown," said Scott Swan, a park spokesman.

"It's an evolving change. You look at one attraction and say, 'Its time has come,'" Swan said. "As people have grown up and have memories of the Skyway, there will be a new generation that will grow up and have memories of Indiana Jones."

On November 9, 1994, the ride closed permanently.

It's hard to believe that "demand for the ride" had really fallen off, considering that the Skyway consistently had a line at both stations, even on Disneyland's lightest days. Perhaps the total guest count was down, but only because of reduced staffing at the stations.

The more likely explanation was cost containment. In the 1990s, Disney executive management kept operating costs under control by closing older attractions whenever new attractions opened. It wasn't a matter of needing the specific cast members from the Skyway to operate Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye. It was a matter of keeping overall attraction labor costs from growing, even if it meant eliminating popular attractions and limiting guest capacity. And rumors suggested the Skyway needed some costly structural repairs.

Later in the same Los Angeles Times article, Ellingwood had this promising paragraph:

Disney designers plan to turn the Fantasyland terminus into a dining area attached to the nearby Village Haus restaurant. No plans have been announced yet for the station at Tomorrowland, Swan said.

Cool! Although the Skyway was dead, that news indicated there would be a second life ahead for the charming Alpine chalet.

Workers quickly removed the cables and support towers. They pulled the mechanism out of the chalet, but the hillside structure itself remained in place. A chain was usually across the bottom of the stairs, making the chalet off-limits to park guests.

When would it welcome guests again?

Even before the Skyway closed, the tiny evergreens around the chalet had grown into a mighty forest. Years passed. There was no longer a need to keep the path of aerial gondolas clear, so the forest enveloped the chalet. Guests who knew where to look could still see it through the trees.

More than 20 years passed. The chalet stubbornly remained in place. By now, nobody expected the chalet to get a new life. Apparently, it was simply cheaper for Disneyland management to ignore it than to reuse it or remove it.

Considering the shortage of space at Disneyland, it's surprising that the chalet never went through "adaptive reuse"—perhaps emerging as a place to relax with some Swiss hot chocolate on a cold day, or Swiss chocolate ice cream on a hot day. A large balcony could have extended from where aerial gondolas had once soared into the sky. Sure, it would have required a passenger lift of some sort being built into the hillside to make the chalet accessible to all, but that wouldn't have been too hard.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Abandoned Skyway chalet

On August 15, 2015, Robert Iger, chairman of The Walt Disney Company, announced that a 14-acre Star Wars-themed land would be coming to Disneyland.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2016

Site preparation for *Star Wars*-themed land

Serious work began in early 2016.

Photos taken from the Mickey & Friends parking structure showed the chalet defiantly clinging to life at the edge of a huge construction site. The former main backstage area of Disneyland had been obliterated.

In the center of the photo above, there's a little hill with a chalet on it. The next photo provides a closer look.





Photo by Chris Bales, 2016

### Ready for demolition

On May 11, 2016, the city of Anaheim issued a permit for “Demolition of 5,132 sq.ft for Skyway Building.” According to an Orange County Register article by Joseph Pimentel and Mark Eades on May 16, 2016, paperwork filed at City Hall estimated the cost of the demolition to be \$67,000.

That shows how the value of the U.S. Dollar has changed. Originally, the Skyway cost \$300,000 to build—including both stations, all support towers, the cables, mechanical system, and the whole fleet of round “buckets.” Now just the removal of its last remnant is \$67,000.

Magic Kingdom Park at Walt Disney World in Florida had a similar Skyway between its Fantasyland and Tomorrowland. On November 9, 1999, exactly five years after the grounding of Disneyland’s Skyway, the Florida version carried its last guest. It had been a popular attraction since the park opened in 1971.

Fantasyland in Florida had its own Alpine-style station, which was demolished in 2011 to make way for the Tangled (Rapunzel) restrooms.

## STORYBOOK LAND FROM SKYWAY



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1959

*Cinderella's Castle and the Skyway*

Here at Yesterland, there's a ride that provides an overhead view of the intricate miniature buildings and landscapes of Storybook Land—not the water-level view from the Storybook Land Canal Boats or the slightly elevated view from the Casey Jr. Circus Train enjoyed by Disneyland guests.

There are actually two such Yesterland rides—if you count the Skyway to Fantasyland and the Skyway to Tomorrowland separately.

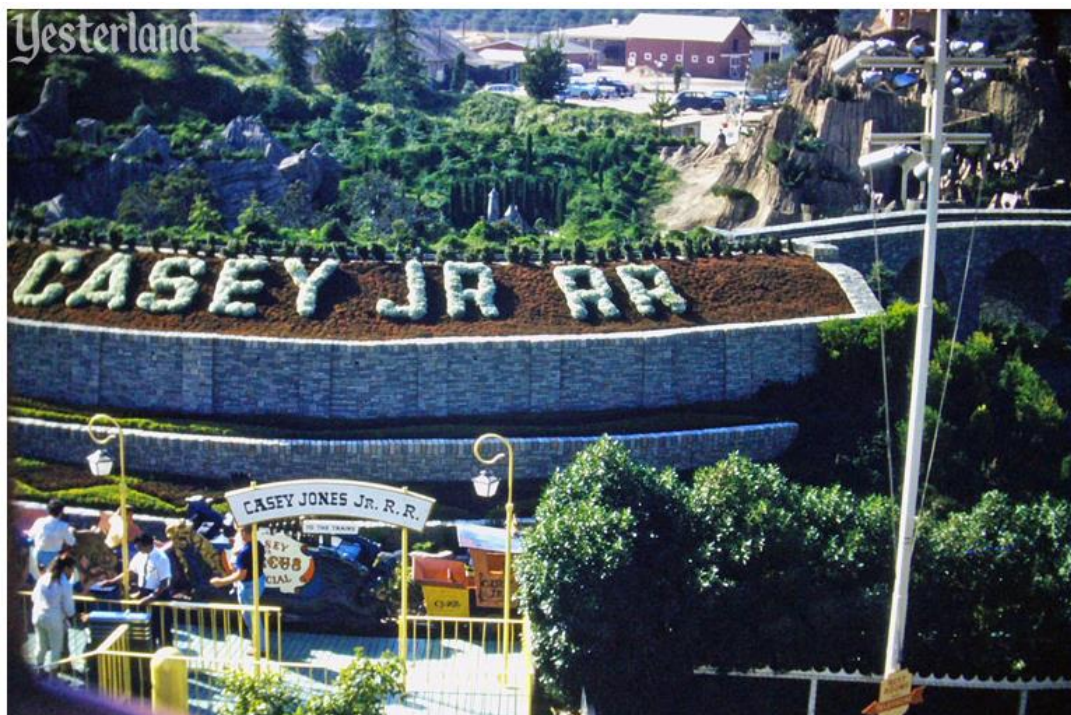


Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

*Casey Jones Jr. R.R.*

Welcome aboard Yesterland's Skyway. Frankly, you won't see much of the little cottages from up here, and Cinderella's Castle loses much of the forced perspective that makes it look bigger than it really is from down below. But you'll get a great overview of Storybook Land as a whole—and the backstage areas behind it.



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

Circle D Ranch, backstage beyond Storybook Land

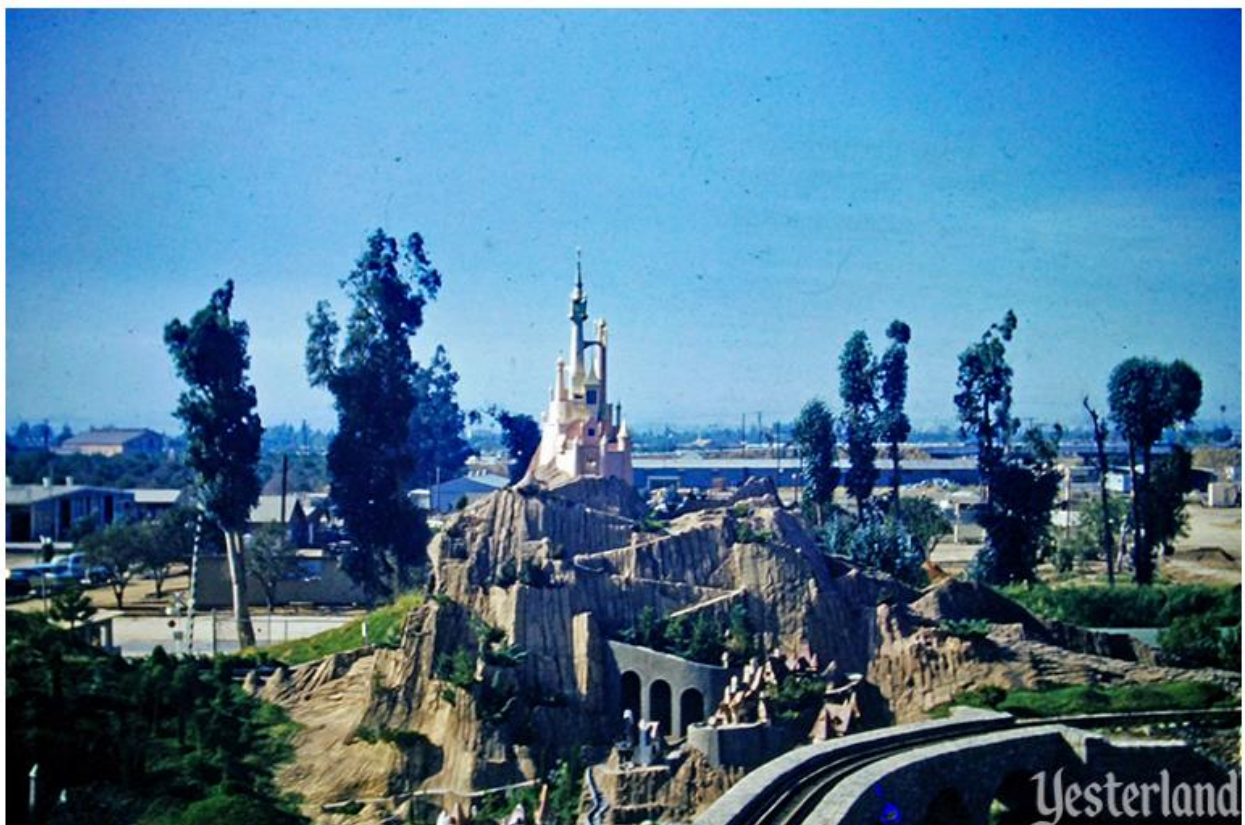


Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

Cinderella's Castle at the northern edge of the park

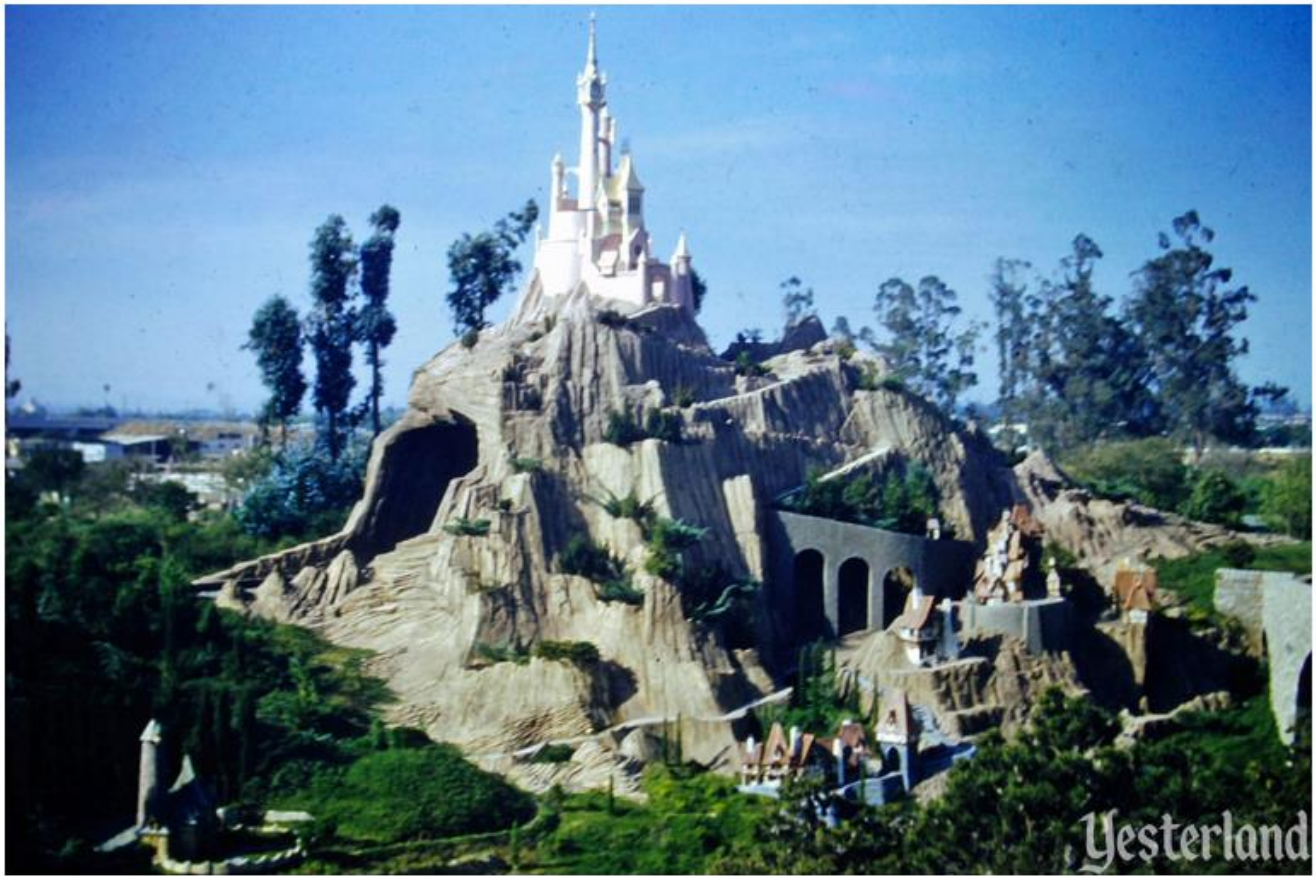


Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

A closer look at Cinderella's Castle



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, circa 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Cinderella's Castle high atop a mountain

You can also take in the view beyond the berm of the park. This park is located in an area that's primarily agricultural. There are residential areas to the north. Good luck finding anything more than two stories high—unless you want to use “stories” to measure the height of the eucalyptus windbreaks that separate the orange groves to the east.



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

The French village at the base of Cinderella's Castle

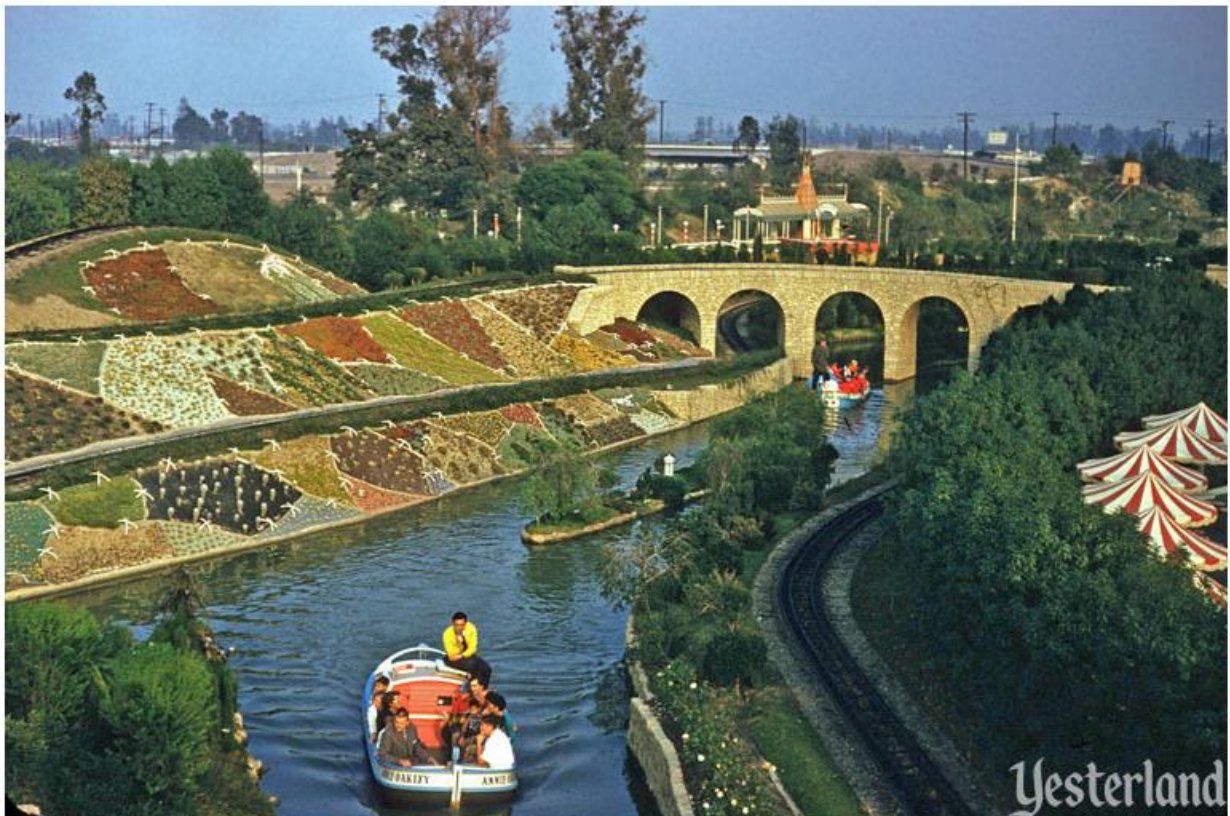


Photo by Charles R. Lypany, circa 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Crazy Quilt Country



Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

Another look at Crazy Quilt Country



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

A different angle on Crazy Quilt Country

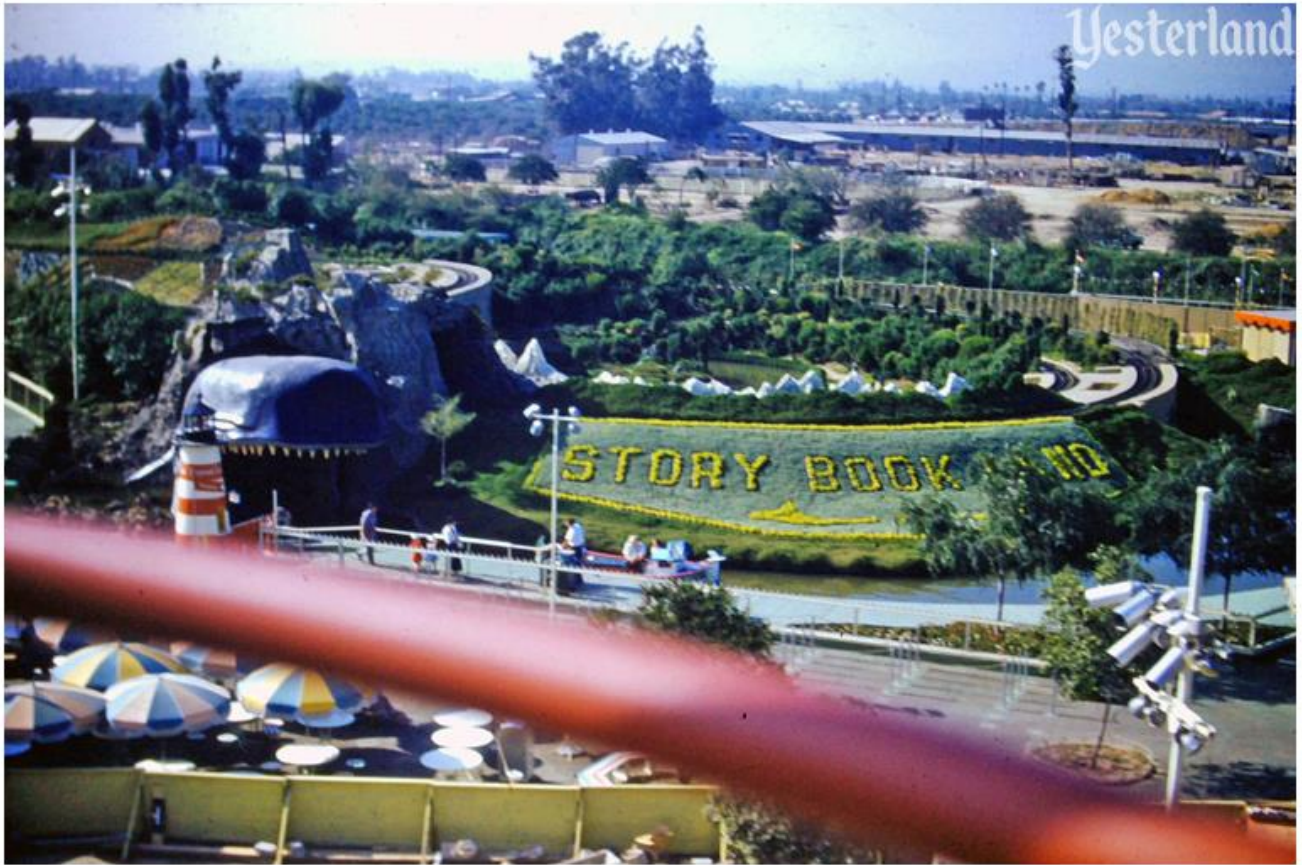


Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

Storybook Land and rural land to its north



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

Storybook Land and beyond

There's a good view of the queue for the Storybook Land Canal Boats from up here.



Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

Monstro the whale, who swallows canal boats



Photo by Charles R. Lympny, circa 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Another look at Monstro the Whale

Guests who don't have a "D" ticket left in their ticket books can buy their ride tickets at a ticket booth that looks like a traditional red-and-white-striped lighthouse. Then they board a boat right in front of the gaping mouth and menacing teeth of Monstro the Whale from Pinocchio.





Fantasyland Station (top) and *Storybook Land Canal Boats* queue (lower right)

The little yellow barn near the canal is part of the Midget Autopia. If they ever get rid of the Midget Autopia, that might be a good place for the *Storybook Land Canal Boats* queue.

At Disneyland, the *Storybook Land Canal Boats* and the *Skyway* had a lot in common. Both opened within days of each other—June 18, 1956 for the former and June 23, 1956 for the latter.

The Spring 1958 issue of Disneyland’s promotional *Disneyland Holiday* magazine used these words to describe the finished product:

Storybook Land, inside Fantasyland, is one of Disneyland’s finest examples of the Disney magic in artistry and the creation of unique and entertaining attractions.

A kingdom in miniature, Storybook Land presents life-like re-creations of villages, castles, houses and other buildings from the pages of fabled stories—scene after scene of painstakingly detailed settings.

If you’ve ever wanted to actually see, from close up, Geppetto’s Village high in the snow covered Alps; Kensington Gardens from the story of *Peter Pan*; the straw, stick and brick houses of the *Three Little Pigs*; and the *Crazy Quilt Country* from “*Wynken, Blinken and Nod*,” they’re all there—along with many more—in Storybook Land.

Gaily painted, picturesque European canal boats take visitors through the mouth of *Monstro the Whale* into this wonderful world.

The same *Disneyland Holiday* article even mentioned the *Skyway* above Storybook Land:

Fantasyland is literally alive with activity. From the *Swiss Chalet*, the exciting *Skyway* carries its passengers high above Disneyland to Tomorrowland. Below, the unique cars of *Casey Jr. train* huff and puff up hills and down, over bridges and through valleys.

The *Skyway* carried its final guests on November 9, 1994, but Storybook Land continues to delight guests five decades after it opened. Landmarks from *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, and *Frozen* have joined the classic miniatures that received Walt Disney’s personal attention.

But why are the village and the Beast’s castle from *Beauty and the Beast* missing?

## STORYBOOK LAND, CLASS OF '55



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Striped lighthouse with two shades of gold

It's 2005 at Yesterland. The Happiest Homecoming on Earth marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of Disneyland. The familiar red-and-white-striped lighthouse of the Storybook Land Canal Boats has an unfamiliar paint scheme and a medallion on its side.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

"Class of '55—An Original"

Some attractions—the "Class of '55"— have been operating since the park's opening year. The Storybook Land Canal Boats ride proudly wears the badge.

Other alumni of the “Class of ’55” are:

- Autopia (originally Richfield Autopia)
- Casey Jr. Circus Train
- Disneyland Railroad (originally Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad)
- Dumbo the Flying Elephant (originally Dumbo Flying Elephants)
- Horse-Drawn Street Cars
- Jungle Cruise
- King Arthur Carousel
- Mad Tea Party
- Main Street Cinema
- Mark Twain Riverboat
- Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride
- Peter Pan’s Flight (originally Peter Pan Flight)
- Snow White’s Scary Adventures (originally Snow White’s Adventures)

They’ve been dressed up with gold paint for this golden anniversary.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

One canal boat stands out

The colorful Dutch canal boats look familiar—with one exception. Let some other guests go in front of you so that you can take a ride on the golden boat.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Golden vessel

Take a seat where the cast member tells you to. Although this boat looks different, it's like the other boats, just with a temporary paint scheme.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Passing small miniatures and large ducks

Enjoy the ride. But don't expect to see the same scenery that guests would have seen 50 years ago. Originally, the canals went past bare dirt and wooden railroad trestles.



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

*Casey Jr. Circus Train*



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

*"Class of '55"*

From your golden boat, you're likely to see a golden locomotive. The Casey Jr. Circus Train is from 1955. Back then, its passengers could see canal boats going through ditches in bare dirt.

The Storybook Land Canal Boats at Disneyland opened June 18, 1956—which begs the question, why is this second-year attraction part of the “Class of ’55”?



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, courtesy of Chris Taylor  
*Casey Jr. Circus Train and Canal Boats of the World*

The answer is that the canal boats themselves go back to the opening of Disneyland. Walt Disney wanted Canal Boats of the World to be patterned after Madurodam in the Netherlands, an attraction which had opened in 1952 with miniature Dutch landmarks viewed from small boats. Walt planned to give his guests an international tour.

Canal Boats of the World opened without scenery. With Disneyland construction severely over budget, the miniatures would have to wait. Until then, the boats themselves would have to be the attraction. Guests did not have to wait long.

According to *Disney A to Z* by Dave Smith (Hyperion, 1998), Canal Boats of the World in Fantasyland only lasted from July 17 to September 15, 1955.



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, courtesy of Chris Taylor  
*Monstro, the canal-boat-swallowing whale*

Eleven months after the opening of Disneyland, this boat ride became Storybook Land Canal Boats.

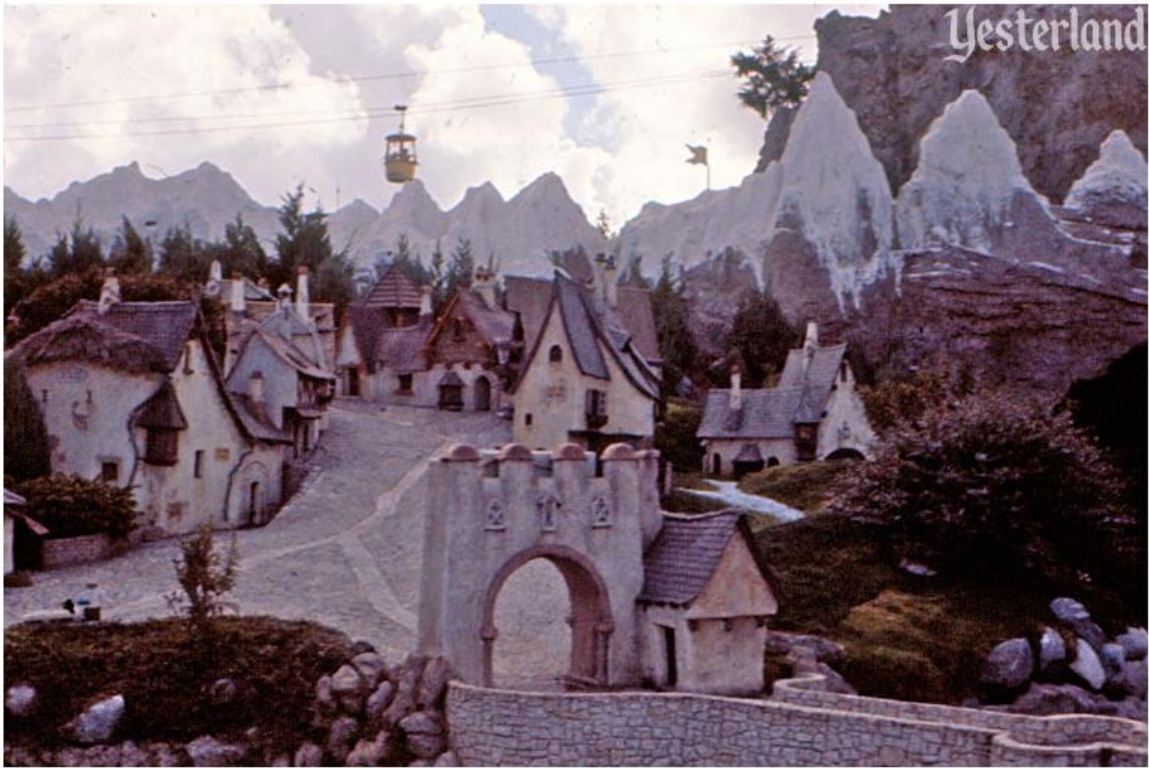


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1961, courtesy of Robin Runck

Geppetto's Village

Now guests would get a world tour—a Eurocentric world tour—using miniatures based on settings from some of Walt Disney's animated features and shorts: England, home of Mr. Toad and Alice; Germany, home of Snow White; France, home of Cinderella; the Italian Alps, home of Pinocchio; and Holland, home of the windmills from *The Old Mill*.



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Casey Jr. Circus Train platform

What had been bare dirt was covered with plants—carefully chosen and pruned to enhance the miniature worlds. Storybook Land also served as scenery for the winding route of the Casey Jr. Circus Train.

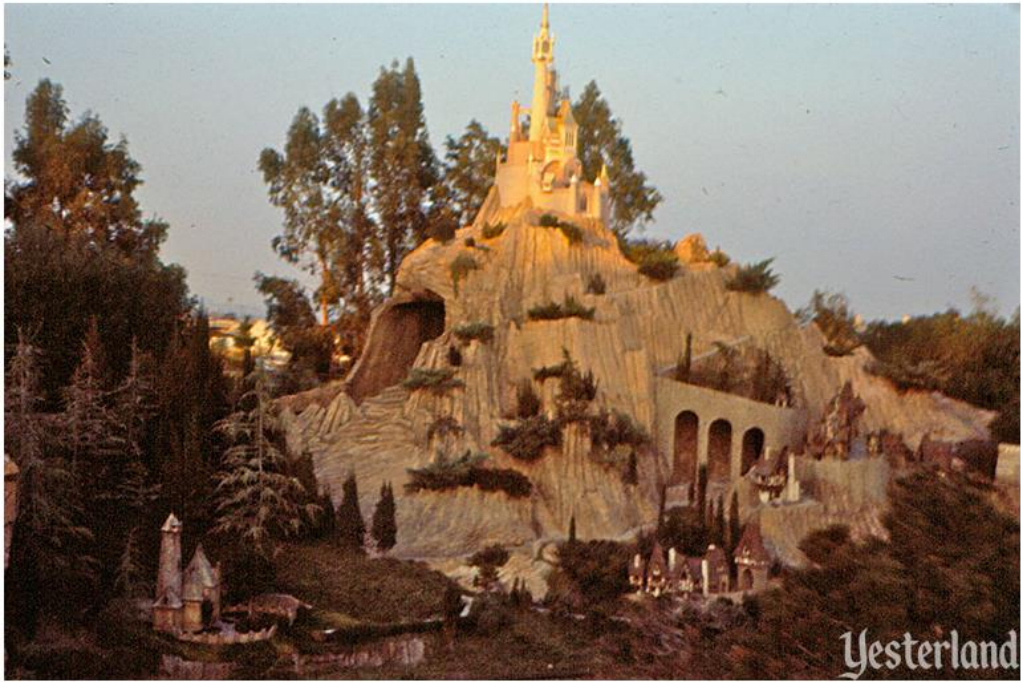


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1961, courtesy of Robin Runck

Cinderella's Castle

Because Cinderella's Castle stood on the top of a tapering "mountain" and there were no large trees around it (when viewed from below), a forced perspective effect made it look larger than its actual size—even though it was meant to be one of the miniatures of Storybook Land.



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1960, courtesy of Robin Runck

Cinderella's Castle, from the *Santa Fe & Disneyland Railroad*



For the first ten years of Cinderella's Castle, guests could get a different perspective on it. Until the railroad track around Disneyland was rerouted to provide room for expansion (including "it's a small world"), it went right by the north side of the castle.



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Circus train at Storybook Land, early years

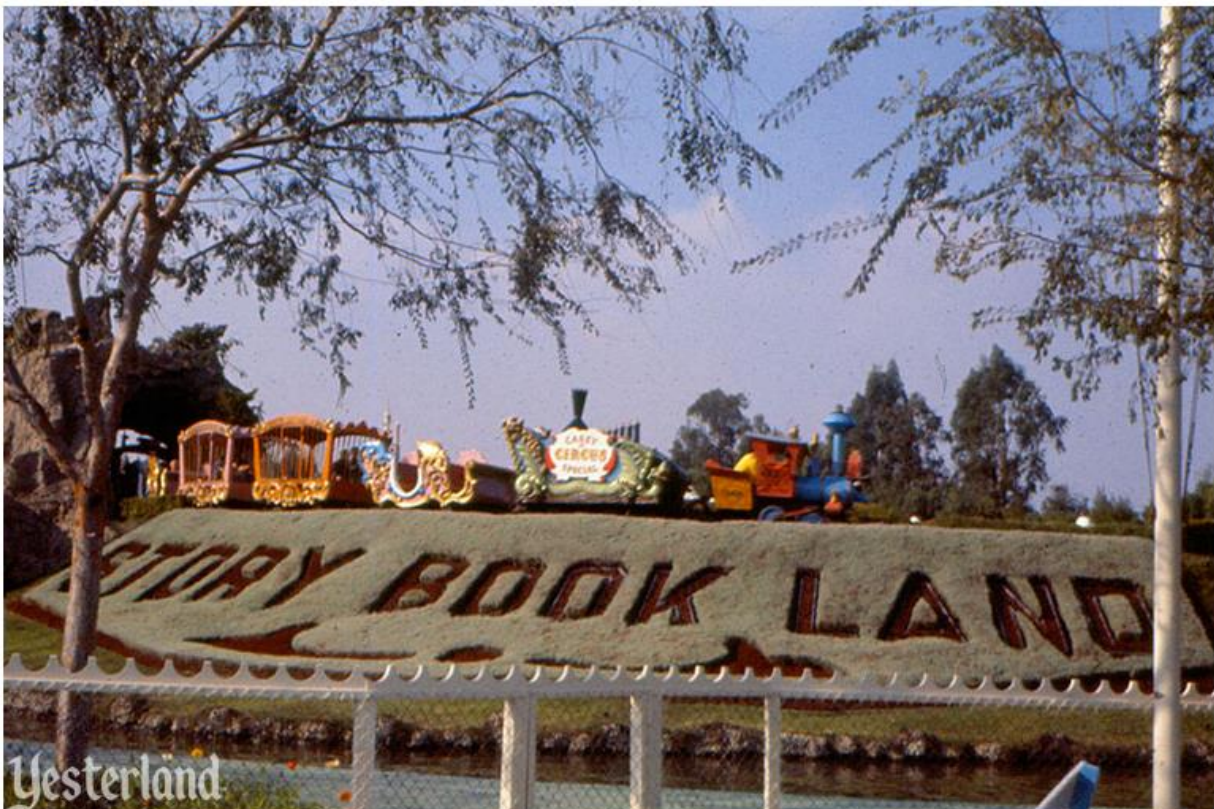


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1961, courtesy of Robin Runck

Circus train at Storybook Land, 1961



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2009

Circus train at Storybook Land, 2009

Storybook Land has aged gracefully. The miniatures have been maintained meticulously. The trees have grown and the landscaping looks better than ever.

## THE OLD MILL AT STORYBOOK LAND



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

You're in a Dutch canal boat at Yesterland, so it's fitting that you're cruising past Dutch windmills.

Your skipper delivers a live spiel: "On the left are the three Dutch windmills. The center windmill is most famous for sheltering local animals during a fierce winter storm in the Academy Award-winning *Silly Symphony The Old Mill*."

If your skipper is a comedian yearning for a transfer to the *Jungle Cruise*, you might hear this additional line: "The other two windmills—those are just General Mills."



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

### Canals of Storybook Land

This ride's Holland has not only the three windmills, but an elaborate miniature farmland with canals, locks, sluices, rows of crops, and bridges. It's one of the many delightful scenes of the Storybook Land Canal Boats.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010

### Center windmill

Walt Disney's 1937 animated short *The Old Mill* had the first use of the innovative Multiplane Camera, which gave the film stunning depth and perspective. The film's "plot" is simple: Animals survive a destructive thunderstorm in a decrepit windmill, as the storm batters it. The scenes are inventive and artistic. In some ways, the film was a "study" for techniques that would be used in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which premiered later the same year.

Compared to the derelict windmill in the 1937 film, the center windmill here is pristine. Perhaps it's the same windmill, but many years before it was abandoned. Maybe it's the New Mill that later became the Old Mill.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

White windmill

The two other Dutch windmills here—the “General Mills”—show off different styles.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

Dutch canal gate

Holland is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Netherlands means low countries or lowlands. Even before the massive land reclamation engineering projects of the 20th century, much of the country was essentially around sea level, so dikes, drainage, and flood protection have long been necessities.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2005

### Christmas at the windmills

Although not on the scale of Haunted Mansion Holiday or “it’s a small world” Holiday, there are also holiday decorations at Storybook Land Canal Boats. Even the canal gates are decorated—which is probably not something you would see in the real Holland.

A decade before “it’s a small world” (1966) began taking Disneyland guests on “the happiest cruise that ever sailed ‘round the world,” Canal Boats of the World (1955) became Storybook Land Canal Boats (1956), taking guests to England, France, Germany, Italy, and Holland.

Many of the ride’s scenes are still much as they were in 1956. Carefully scaled landscaping enhances the miniature villages. The gentle ride is a throwback to the past—but it’s also been updated over the years.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Arendelle



Photo by Chris Bales, 2015

Where the Old Mill used to be

In 2014, the Dutch landscape of The Old Mill disappeared. It was replaced by the fictional kingdom of Arendelle—inspired by the architecture and geography of Norway—from the mega-hit animated feature *Frozen* (2013).



Photo by Chris Bales, 2014

Mountains

The mountains of Arendelle blend nicely with the Italian Alps behind Pinocchio's village and Matterhorn mountain—especially when viewed from the Casey Jr. Circus Train.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Arendelle Castle

The Arendelle scene is far more elaborate than the Dutch windmill scene. And it's safe to say that Frozen has far more fans these days than The Old Mill.



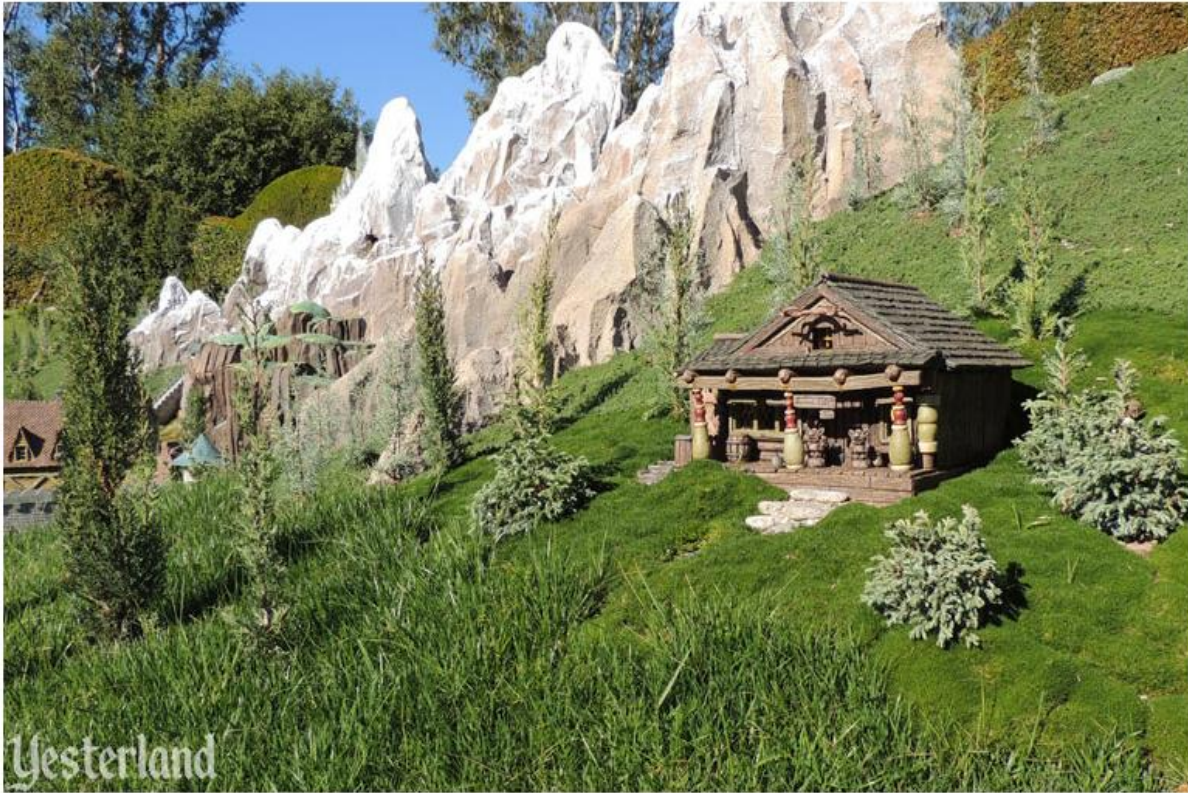


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Trading Post from *Frozen*

Even Wandering Oaken's Trading Post is now part of the ride.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

Arendelle at night

By day, it's easy to miss Elsa's Ice Palace on a mountaintop as you focus on the details of the castle and harbor below. But at night, the Ice Palace is a glowing jewel.

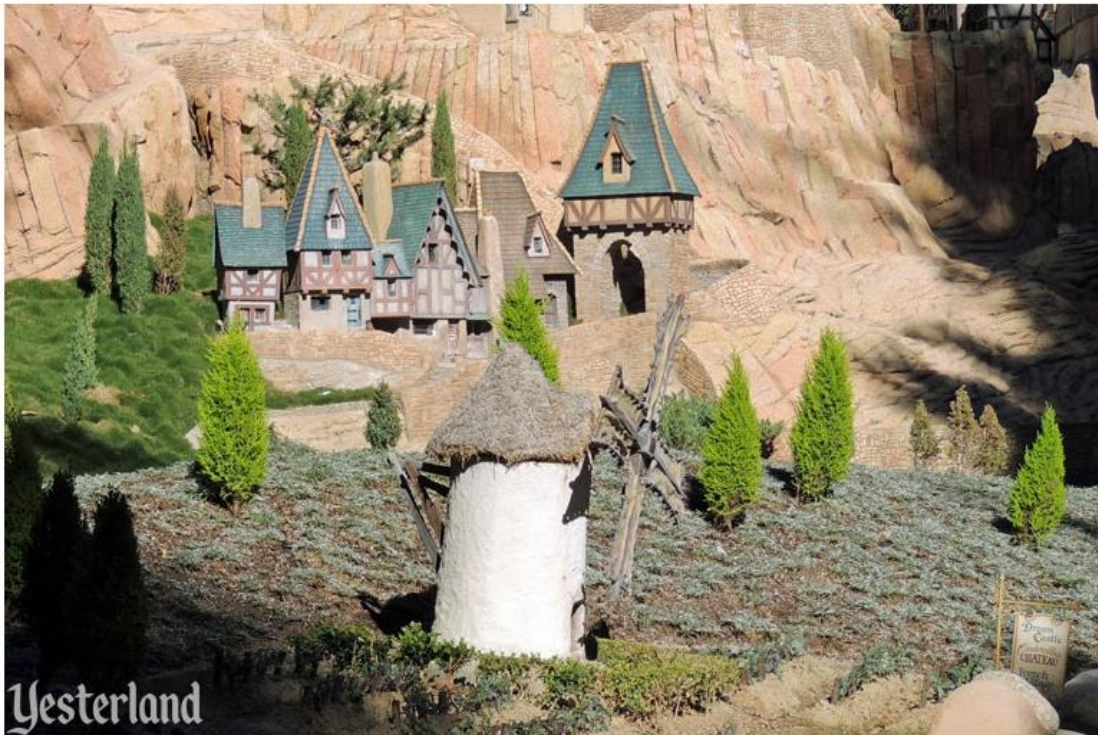


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2015

French windmill at Cinderella's village

You can still see a windmill on the ride. It's at the French village below Cinderella's castle, but it's not homage to the departed Dutch windmills; it's been there since 1956.

Arendelle is not the only major change to the Storybook Land Canal Boats. A major renovation in 1994 added scenes from two Disney features of that era.

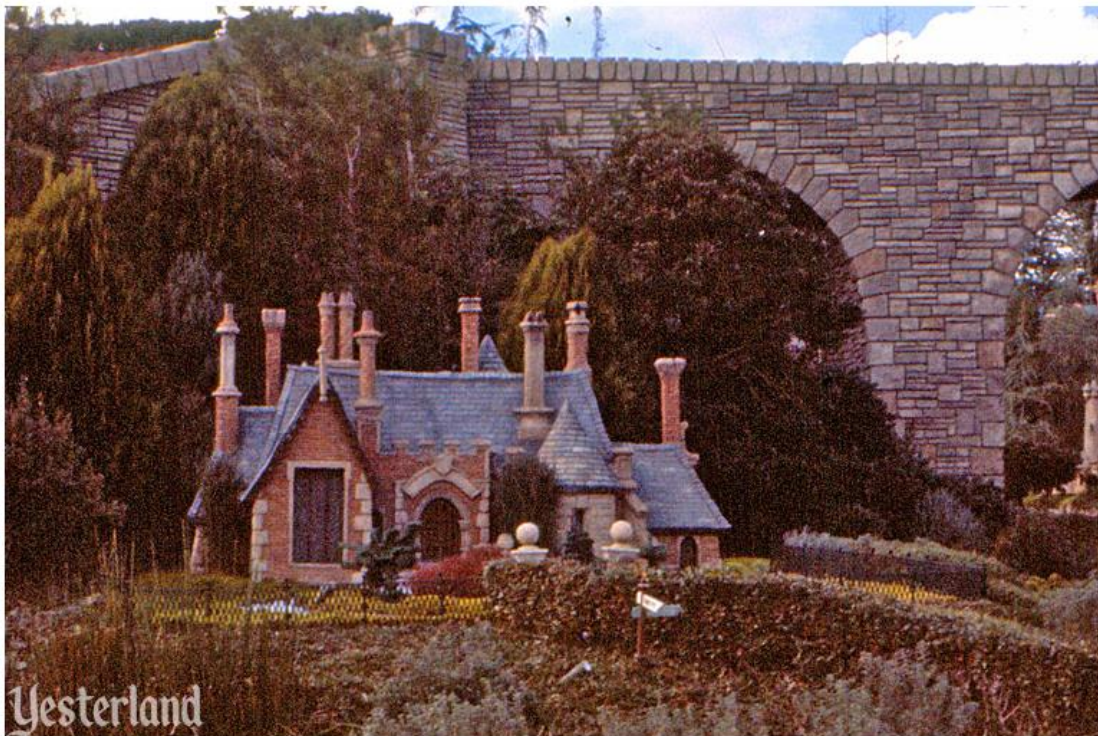


Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1961, courtesy of Robin Runck

Toad Hall in its original location

Originally, Toad Hall from Walt Disney's *The Wind and the Willows* (1949) had one of the most prominent locations of the ride.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Sultan's Palace

In 1994, the Sultan's Palace and marketplace of Agrabah from the animated feature Aladdin (1992) took its place. The nearby tunnel became the Cave of Wonders with Aladdin's lamp.

Toad Hall disappeared—but not forever.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

Toad Hall at its current location

Toad Hall returned in 1995 in a new spot just before the windmills.



Photo by Frank Taylor, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Neverland

Another “yester” feature of Storybook Land was the service tunnel just before the boats returned to the dock. Skippers typically told their passengers, “Through the cave on your left is Neverland. We call it that because we never take you there. It’s where our canal boats go to sleep at night.”

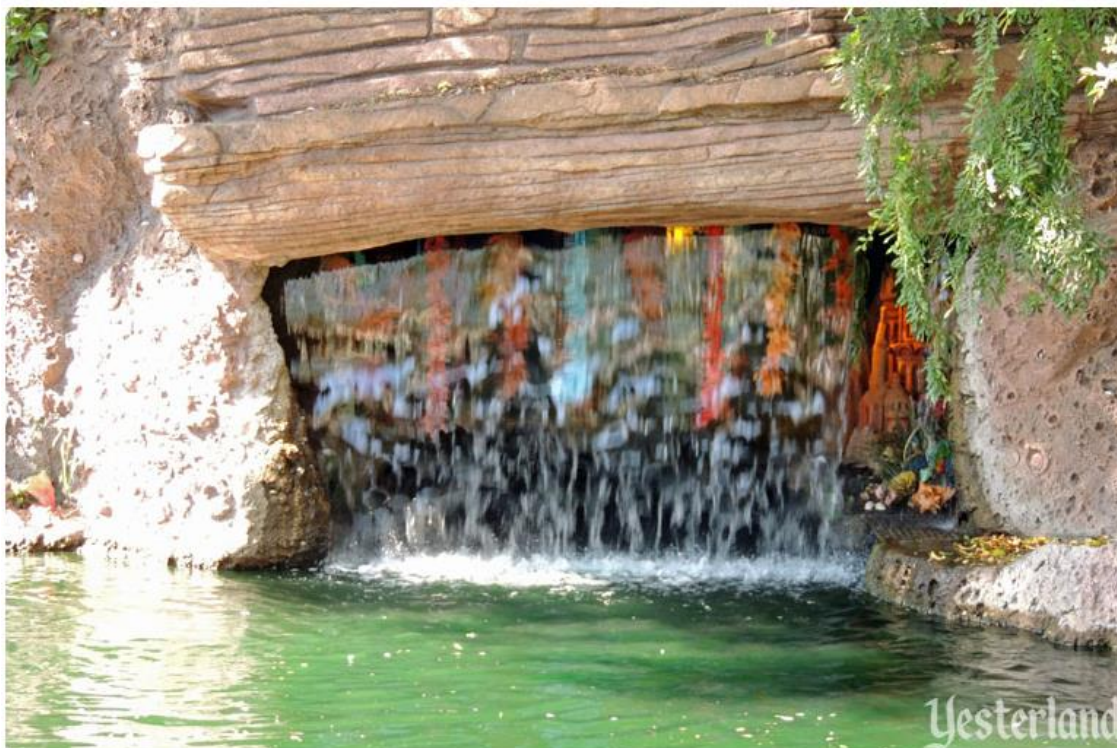


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

King Triton’s underwater kingdom

In 1994, Neverland became King Triton’s Castle and underwater kingdom from *The Little Mermaid* (1989). What had been a view into a backstage area—part of the show only because of the narration—became an actual show scene, with Prince Eric’s seaside palace and ship nearby.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

Prince Eric's ship and castle near King Triton's underwater kingdom

There are still underused sections along the canals—room for future enhancements.

## MIDGET AUTOPIA



Get behind the steering wheel—either one—of a sporty two-seater.

Are you too small to drive an Autopia car or even a Junior Autopia car? If you're around four years old, the answer is undoubtedly "yes." Don't worry. You're not too small for a Midget Autopia car.



Get ready to hit the road.

It's the only Autopia where every car has two steering wheels. But Mom or Dad can't sit next to you. This Autopia is for kids only. And while the other Autopias look like freeways, this one is more of a country road.



Yesterland.com

The windshield is absolutely clear—because there's no glass in it.



Yesterland.com

A future California freeway driver feels the wind in his hair.



Steering the car accurately is no more important here than in *Mr. Toad's Wild Ride*.



This curve is a great photo opportunity for Dad and his 36-exposure roll of Kodachrome.



Now it's your turn. Start by driving down a winding road. Head up and down a hill, through a tunnel, and finally right through a little yellow barn.



Quick! Pose for a picture before you drive away.



When there are two kids, there's no arguing about who gets the steering wheel.



In the ride's exciting climax, the barn doors swing open—just in time.

At Disneyland, the Midget Autopia made its debut in 1957. It was the third (and smallest) Autopia track, following the Tomorrowland Autopia (1955) and the Junior Autopia in Fantasyland (1956). The Midget Autopia was located right next to the Storybook Land Canal Boats, across from the Motor Boat Cruise.

The Midget Autopia was a favorite of Very Young guests. But it fell victim to another favorite of the Very Young—It's a Small World. The Midget Autopia closed in April 1966 to make way for a wide new path up to It's a Small World (June 1966). The once-popular Midget Autopia was paved over.

But that wasn't the end of the Midget Autopia. Walt Disney donated the ride to his boyhood hometown of Marceline, Missouri, where it was installed in a park named in his honor. For several years, the former Disneyland attraction operated as a ride for the children of Marceline. Unfortunately, the cars were too difficult and expensive to maintain.

You can still see a Midget Autopia car in Marceline. An original car is on display in the town's Walt Disney Hometown Museum. The museum is open daily (except Monday) from April through October in the town's former Santa Fe railroad depot—an appropriate place to honor lifelong train buff Walt Disney.

What happened to the other two Autopias? The Junior Autopia closed in 1958, and reopened in 1959 as the expanded Fantasyland Autopia. The Tomorrowland Autopia and the Fantasyland Autopia operated until 1999, when work began to combine the tracks into a single attraction. In 2000, the redesigned attraction opened as Autopia, Presented by Chevron, with a new fleet of cleverly designed cars.

In 2012, Chevron dropped its sponsorship, but almost nothing changed. In 2016, the attraction became Autopia, Powered by Honda, with new car colors, new engines, Honda emblems on the cars, and a new color scheme for the load area.

If you look carefully while you're driving your Autopia car, you'll see a bronzed Midget Autopia car on a pedestal at the side of the track. This "statue" is a tribute to the Autopia's long-gone relative. It's an actual car that once operated in Fantasyland and Marceline.

For more than six decades, the Autopia rides have given many future Southern California freeway drivers their first experience behind the steering wheel.

Disneyland used "midget" as an adjective for a ride with small cars, not to refer to people of short stature. But it's still worth noting that the term "midget" is now viewed differently than back when Disneyland's Midget Autopia was in operation. A FAQ at the website of the Little People of America explains why the term is offensive:

Q: What is a midget?

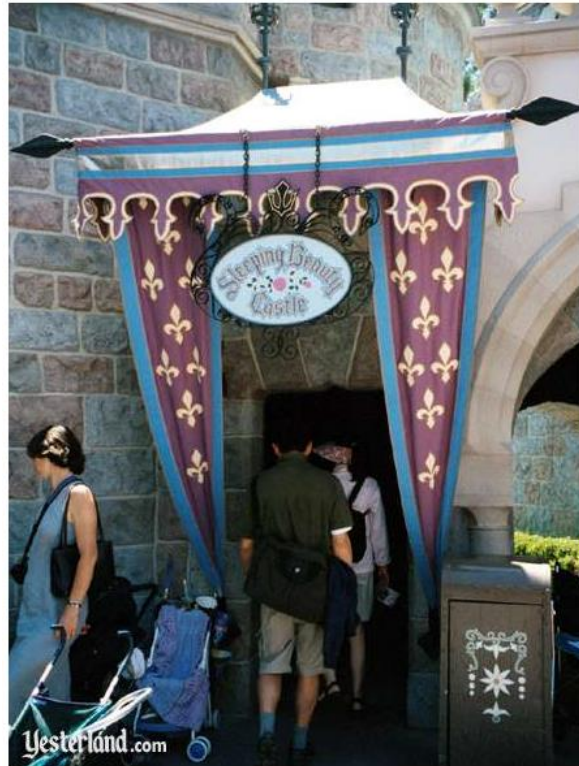
A: In some circles, a midget is the term used for a proportionate dwarf. However, the term has fallen into disfavor and is considered offensive by most people of short stature. The term dates back to 1865, the height of the "freak show" era, and was generally applied only to short-statured persons who were displayed for public amusement, which is why it is considered so unacceptable today.

Such terms as dwarf, little person, LP, and person of short stature are all acceptable, but most people would rather be referred to by their name than by a label.

On July 5, 2009, the Associated Press (AP) reported that the Little People of America were calling on the Federal Communications Commission to ban the use of the word "midget" on broadcast TV because the word is just as offensive as racial slurs.

At least Disneyland doesn't have to worry about criticism over the attraction name. The Midget Autopia has been gone for more than 40 years.

# SLEEPING BEAUTY CASTLE

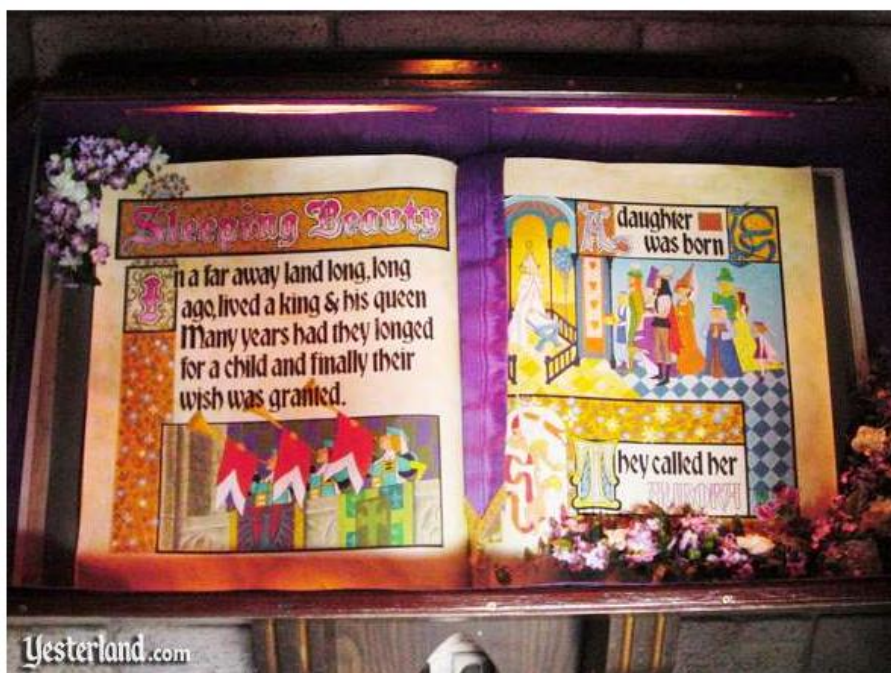


If you have a stroller, park it. There are many steps inside.

Would you like to go inside Sleeping Beauty Castle? Not just across the drawbridge and through Sleeping Beauty Castle... and not just into Glassblower shop... but actually up into the Castle?

Then look for the entrance to the Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through. It's located between the Glassblower and the Tinker Bell Toy Store.

This door and canopy might be the most modest entrance to any attraction in the park. Or you can think of the entire Castle as the attraction building, in which case this "A" ticket attraction has the grandest attraction building of all.



Illuminated manuscripts, like those of the Middle Ages, tell the story of Sleeping Beauty.

If you take time to read (and admire) the beautiful manuscripts along the way, you'll enjoy the dioramas even more because the manuscripts and dioramas tell the story of how and why Princess Aurora grew up as Briar Rose, unaware that she was a princess—and what happened after she turned 16.

I hope you don't mind stairs. You'll be going up stairs twice and down stairs twice. You'll see ten sophisticated miniature dioramas, each with little animated figures. You'll hear music from the Sleeping Beauty film score—which was adapted from Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's 1890 Sleeping Beauty ballet—as well as appropriate sounds from the various dioramas.



The king's loyal subjects trek to the Castle to pay homage to the infant princess.



Maleficent predicts death for Aurora from the prick of her finger on a spinning wheel.



Briar Rose, on her 16th birthday, is still protected by Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather.



Prince Phillip awakens Princess Aurora with a kiss.



Walk back down the stairs to the exit.

The dioramas are fun to look at. They tell the story of Sleeping Beauty. But the best part of the Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through is just being inside the world-famous Castle.



And they all lived happily ever after.

Sleeping Beauty Castle has been the symbol and centerpiece of Disneyland since the park's televised opening event on July 17, 1955. There wasn't an attraction in the Castle when the park opened—just an empty space on the Castle's second level.

According to the 1987 book *Disneyland: Inside Story* by Randy Bright, the Castle was never intended to host a show. However, "empty spaces were an anathema to [Walt] Disney." He challenged his Imagineers to use the limited space. After an unexpected encounter with the cats and fleas living in there, the Imagineers designed a walk-through attraction. It opened April 29, 1957.

The results in 1957 were quite different from the pictures in this Yesterland article. The initial dioramas reflected the style of artist Eyvind Earle, the brilliant Production Designer of Walt Disney's 1959 feature *Sleeping Beauty*, who gave the film its distinctive design. He personally painted most of the film's backgrounds. And Earle was directly involved with the creation of the *Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through*.

The *Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through* was redesigned in 1977. New dioramas replaced the Earle originals. Presumably, someone felt that Eyvind Earle's style looked dated by the standards of 1977. (We now admire the mid-century style, but it was seriously out of fashion in 1977.) The 1977 dioramas had more movement and depth. They were highly detailed. However, they looked like Main Street Emporium display windows; they lacked the artistry of Eyvind Earle.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, guest attendance and revenue at the Disney parks and resorts plummeted. Disney cut theme park and resort operating costs wherever they could. On October 7, 2001, *Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through* was closed "for refurbishment."

Over time, *Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through* dropped off the refurbishment list. The attraction's sign disappeared from its portal. Disneyland celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2005. The park's guest count and revenue recovered, but the doors to the *Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through* didn't reopen to guests.



Disneyland never announced a permanent closing and never provided an official reason. There was widespread speculation on the Internet that the reason was due to security concerns. More likely, the reason was cost. Although the Sleeping Beauty Walk-Through was not particularly costly to operate, it wasn't particularly popular either. Finally, there was the issue of accessibility. Although the attraction was exempt from ADA requirements because it predated the 1990 law, Disney now strives to make attractions accessible to all guests, whenever possible.

For years, there was a difference of opinion about whether the dioramas were still in place behind the locked doors. The bigger question was whether the attraction would ever return. It turned out that it didn't matter if the dioramas from 1977 were still there—because folks at Disney had something better in mind.



In 2008 the *Sleeping Beauty Walkthrough* reopened at Disneyland.

On July 17, 2008, Disneyland officially announced that the Sleeping Beauty Walkthrough would return by the end of the year:

The interior of Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland will open in time for the December holiday season, offering guests a “reawakened” version of its classic walkthrough presentation kissed with vibrant scenes of Aurora, her charming prince, the evil Maleficent and other characters from the beloved fairy tale film.

It wouldn't simply involve dusting off the little dolls from the 1977 version. Disneyland would do it right:

When the attraction is unveiled later this year, the “show” will differ from the dioramas of the 1980s and '90s, returning to the unique style of the original 1957 show and motion picture. Enhanced with new scenes and special effects magic, the re-Imagineered attraction will employ technology not available in the 1950s to represent scenes from the story of “Sleeping Beauty,” including the magic of good fairies Flora, Fauna and Merryweather, and the more sinister spells of the evil Maleficent.

In other words, the attraction would combine the legendary art of Eyvind Earle with current technology to make the Sleeping Beauty Walkthrough better than ever. It would represent the combined talents of the Imagineers from the 1950s and from today.

Disney also addressed the accessibility issue:

For the first time, guests who are unable to climb stairs or navigate the passageways of the Castle will be able to experience the walkthrough “virtually” in a special room on the ground floor of the Castle.



Guests in late 2008 saw dioramas based on the original 1957 version.

The Sleeping Beauty Walkthrough opened to guests at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 26, 2008—just in time for the long Thanksgiving weekend. It had been closed for more than seven years. Actually, the version with the Eyvind Earle art had been closed for almost three decades.

Disneyland guests posted glowing reviews on the Internet. The consensus was that the Imagineers had succeeded magnificently. Once again, the Castle isn't just a symbol of Disneyland and the entrance to Fantasyland; it contains a jewel of an attraction.



Compare this Maleficent in the 2008 version to the 1977 version.

What about the other Magic Kingdoms?

- Cinderella Castle in the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World doesn't have a walk-through attraction, but has a very popular restaurant, Cinderella's Royal Table.
- Cinderella Castle at Tokyo Disneyland had a spectacular guided tour, The Cinderella Castle Mystery Tour, from 1986 until 2006.
- Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland Paris has a lavish walk-through, la Galerie de la Belle au Bois Dormant, with illustrated books, tapestries, and stained glass windows.
- Sleeping Beauty Castle at Hong Kong Disneyland, which is similar to Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland, does not contain an attraction or restaurant, although the Royal Banquet Hall is nearby.



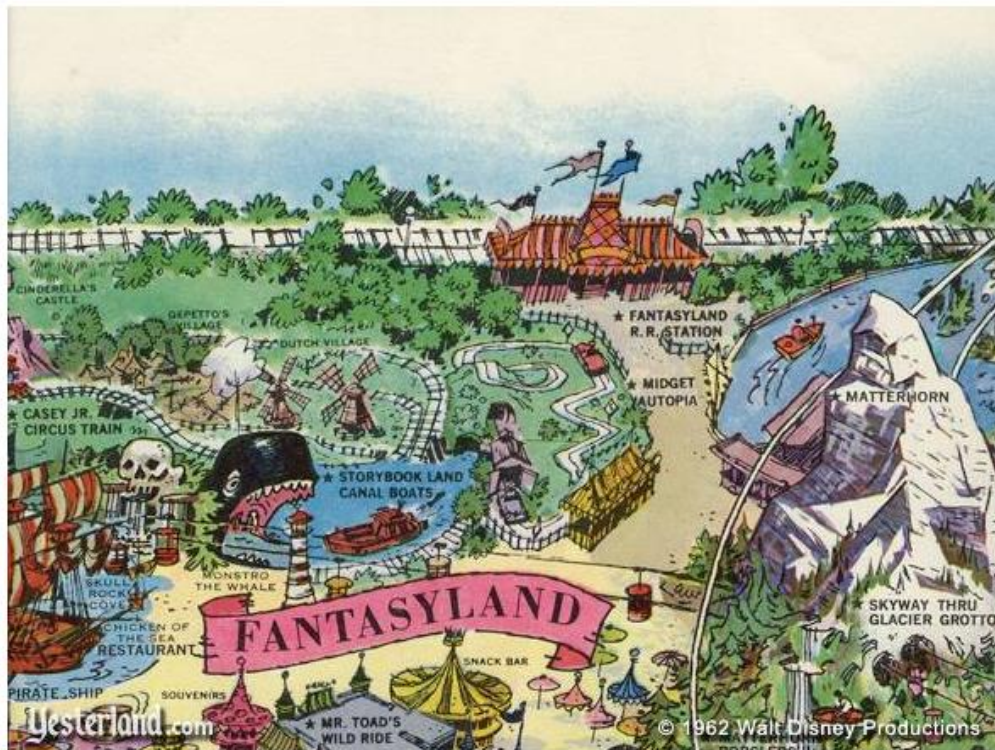
The Disneyland Paris Castle tells the story of Sleeping Beauty in stained glass windows.

The 50th Anniversary Edition of Walt Disney's Sleeping Beauty (1959) includes a bonus feature about the new Sleeping Beauty Castle Walkthrough at Disneyland. The CGI visuals are spectacular. Vice President of Walt Disney Imagineering Tony Baxter and Imagineer Chris Merritt provide fascinating commentary about the 1957 version of the attraction, what they found inside the Castle, and how they brought the walkthrough back to its original glory.

# FANTASYLAND DEPOT



The Fantasyland Depot (upper left corner) is just a short walk from Monstro.



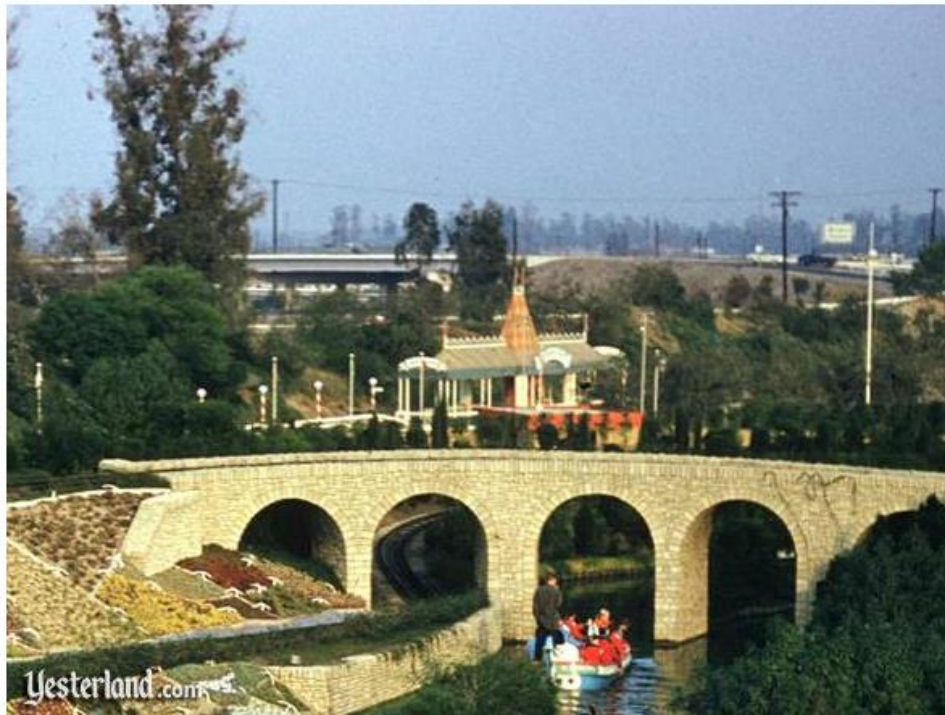
Check your 1962 park map for the location of the Fantasyland Depot.

The Santa Fe & Yesterland Railroad has a station conveniently located near the Midget Autopia, the Motorboat Cruise, and Skull Rock. On the park map, it's labeled as the "Fantasyland R.R. Station," but the sign on the station reads "Fantasyland Depot."



The Fantasyland Depot is right behind the *Midget Autopia*.

The festive little Fantasyland Depot has a striped roof that suggests a medieval tournament tent. It's really not much more than a canopy to shelter guests from sun and rain. The little structure draws attention to the fact that the train stops here.



The citrus groves of Anaheim, with their eucalyptus windbreaks, are off in the distance.

If you start your train ride at the Fantasyland Depot, be sure to ride the train all the way around the park. You'll get a great view of the Burning Settler's Cabin. The Santa Fe & Yesterland Railroad is a good way to see the Living Desert without having to use one of your valuable tickets for the Conestoga Wagons, the Stagecoach Ride, the Rainbow Ridge Pack Mules, or the Rainbow Caverns Mine Train.

When Disneyland opened in 1955, there were two train stations and two trains. The Passenger Train offered nonstop round trip rides from Main Street Station, while the Freight Train provided round trip rides from Frontierland Station. For more information, see Passenger Train, Santa Fe & Yesterland Railroad.

In 1956, Disneyland opened a third railroad station, the Fantasyland Depot.



1959 aerial photo of Disneyland, with the Fantasyland Depot in the yellow circle.

The original railroad route from 1955 had a long, straight stretch on the north side of the park. It went along the edge of the Living Desert and passed just north of the Storybook Land Canal Boats.

In 1966, just ten years after it opened, the Fantasyland Depot disappeared. It was a victim of progress—or actually a victim of “the happiest cruise that ever sailed the world.”



1970 aerial photo of Disneyland, showing the 1967 railroad route around the park.

The railroad track was rerouted when it's a small world was built. This provided room for the loading area of the ride and a future expansion area. The area between the Storybook Land Canal Boats and the new track was eventually used for Videopolis (1985), the dance club, which later became the Fantasyland Theatre, home to such shows as The Spirit of Pocahontas.

Railroad passengers lost the great view of the Living Desert because there was now a large meadow between the train track and the Living Desert. But the narration still pointed out the Living Desert and the space for expansion:

“Across the open grass meadow, you can see part of the colorful Living Desert and Old Unfaithful geyser in Nature’s Wonderland. Walt Disney once said, ‘Disneyland will never be completed as long as there is imagination left in the world.’ And here in Frontierland there are still wide-open spaces for imagination to conquer someday.”



The Fantasyland Depot returned in a new location.

After an absence of almost 20 years, Fantasyland once again had a train station in 1985. The Videopolis Station opened along with the Videopolis dance club. It was little more than a concrete platform and some landscaping, just west of it's a small world.

In 1993, Fantasyland once again lost its train station—even though the station didn't move. Fantasyland's Videopolis Station became Mickey's Toontown Train Depot.



Mickey's Toontown Train Depot sign



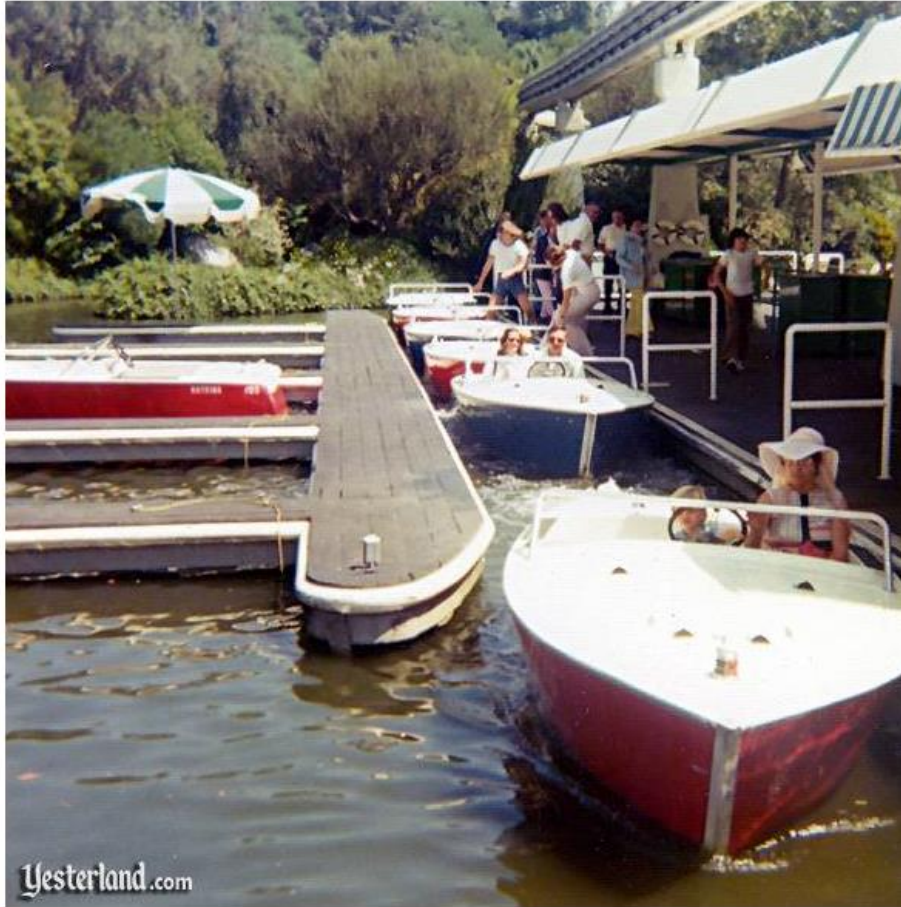
*Mickey's Toontown Train Depot is more elaborate than the Videopolis Station.*

At first, Disneyland park maps continued to list the station under Fantasyland, but eventually it joined the new land, Mickey's Toontown.

Train stations don't last very long in Fantasyland.

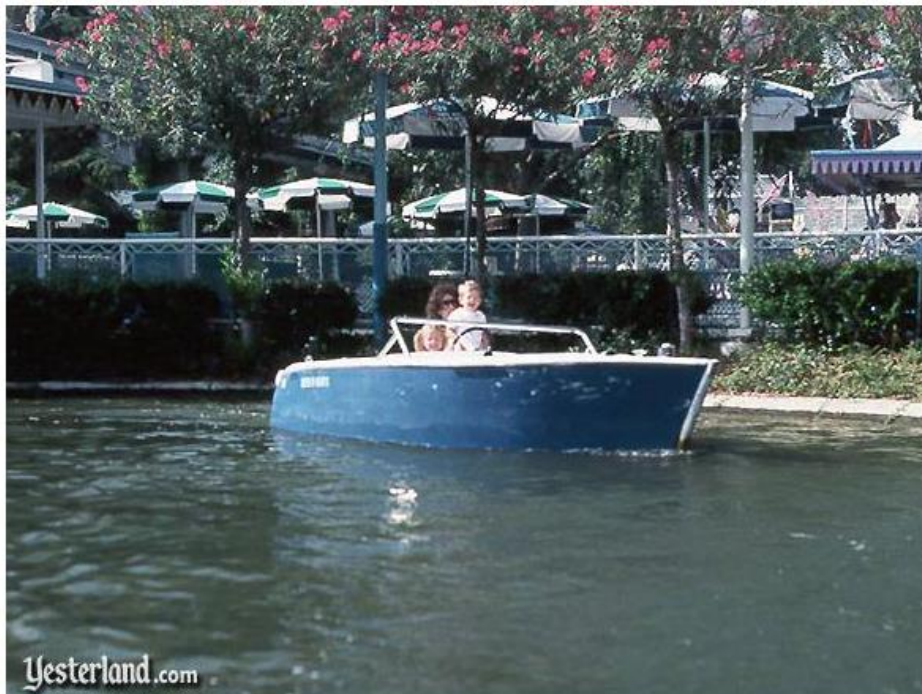


## MOTOR BOAT CRUISE



Board a boat for a ride through the outdoor waterways.

Have a seat in a genuine motorboat. The bench seat is perfect for two adults and one or two small children. The steering wheel is in the middle, so everyone has access to it.



They'll let anyone use the boat's steering wheel.

There's no scenery along the waterways—at least no scenes from animated movies or television shows. But there's attractive landscaping, including flowering trees, bushes, and beautifully arranged rocks. Also, you'll have glimpses at other attractions.



The Monorail passengers have a view of *Motor Boat Cruise*.

Are you sure you really want to pilot your boat down that treacherous waterway? How will you avoid hitting those rocks, Monorail pylons, and other obstacles? Don't worry. Your boat is on a track and the steering wheel doesn't do anything.



Someone forgot to close the hood.

So just sit back and enjoy the ride. Wave to the kids driving Autopia cars. Catch a glimpse of the Submarines. And try to figure out whether that gas pedal on the floor is any more functional than your steering wheel. (It does seem to make the boat's engine somewhat louder.)



When you return to the dock, take a look at the boats that are out of commission.

Okay, so it's not the best ride in the park, but what else were you going to do with that "B" Ticket?

In Disneyland, the Motor Boat Cruise opened in 1957 on the border of Fantasyland and Tomorrowland. The waterways of the Motor Boat Cruise shared space with other attractions. As the Viewliner train went speeding by, young motorists crossed the waterways on Junior Autopia bridges.



The *Disneyland Alweg Monorail* beams were added in 1959.

In 1959, almost everything changed in the corner of Disneyland where the Motor Boat Cruise, Junior Autopia, and Viewliner had been. The Viewliner and its little railroad track were gone. Instead, the elevated beam of the new Disneyland Alweg Monorail curved gracefully overhead. The new Fantasyland Autopia and an expanded Tomorrowland Autopia replaced the Junior Autopia. And the lagoon which had once been home to the Phantom Boats (which opened in 1955 and closed forever in 1956) was rebuilt as the crystal clear lagoon of the Submarine Voyage. But instead of joining the Viewliner and the Junior Autopia as mere memories, the Motor Boat Cruise survived.



The *Motor Boat Cruise* finally gained some scenery in 1991.

In 1991, as part of The Disney Afternoon LIVE!, the Motor Boat Cruise became the Motor Boat Cruise to Gummi Glen. Plywood characters from Disney's animated Gummi Bears television series made Gummi Berry juice along the waterway.

Although the Motor Boat Cruise survived the major 1959 project, it didn't survive the January 1993 opening of Mickey's Toontown a few hundred yards away. The word on the Internet was that to control overall park operating expenses, the operating budget for the Motor Boat Cruise was reallocated to Mickey's Toontown. So in January 1993, the Motor Boat Cruise closed permanently.



Guests use the former loading platform as a seating area. (2004 photo).

After the Motor Boat Cruise closed, Disneyland gave the loading platform and landscaped grounds a new name: Fantasia Gardens. The canopy that once provided shade to guests waiting for the ride now provided shade to guests enjoying food from nearby counter-service and outdoor vending locations—or just taking a break from the crowds of Disneyland.

In 2008, the loading platform became one of Disneyland Park's three designated smoking areas.



There's still water, but there are no boats (2004 photo).

If the managers of Disneyland ever want to add more ride capacity, they might want to consider a new boat ride in the former channels of the Motor Boat Cruise.

# PIRATE SHIP RESTAURANT



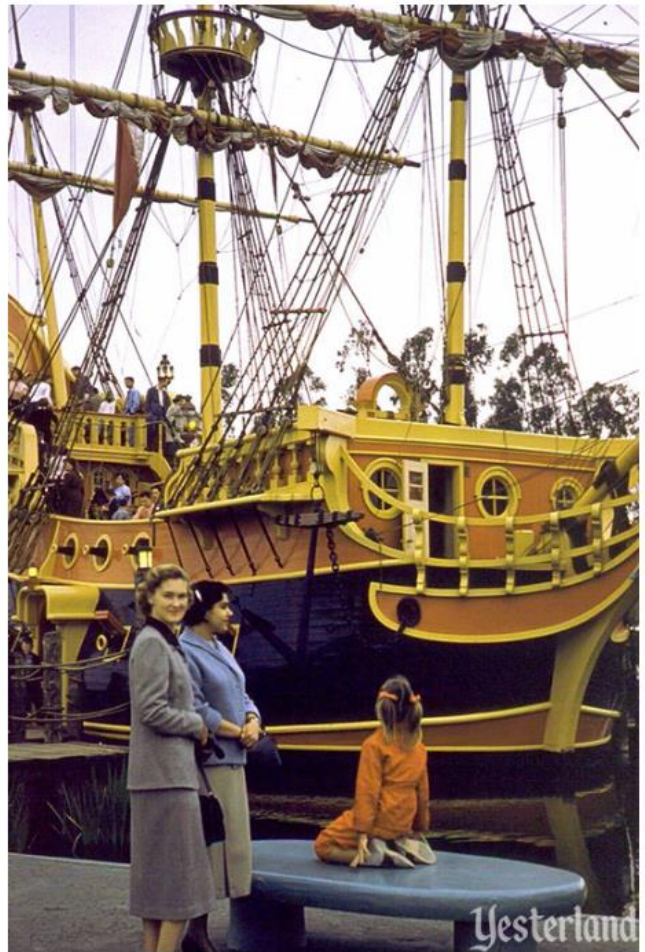
Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

“Ask any mermaid you happen to see... What’s the best tuna? Chicken of the Sea.” Are you hungry for a tuna sandwich, a tuna burger, or a hot tuna pie? Then plan to eat at the Pirate Ship. Get your food at the counter below the deck. Then head for a table in Skull Rock Cove, right behind the ship.



No name on the bow yet

Photo, 1956, courtesy of Ron Yungul



Dressing well

Photo, 1956, courtesy of Ron Yungul



Photo by Robert Breneman, 1958, courtesy of David Breneman

Skyway over the Pirate Ship

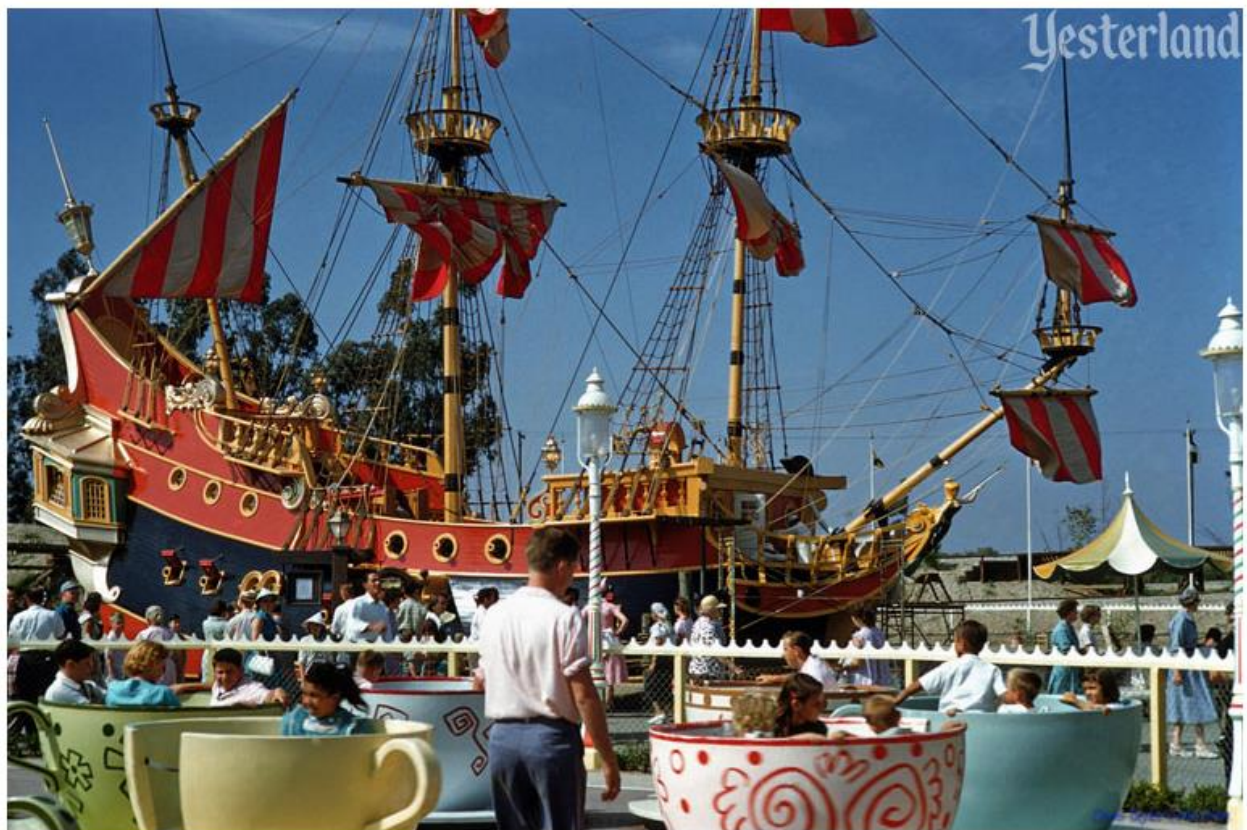


Photo by Charles R. Lympany, circa 1958, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Pirate Ship as a colorful backdrop for the *Mad Tea Party* ride



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, circa 1958, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Wooden gangplanks



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1959

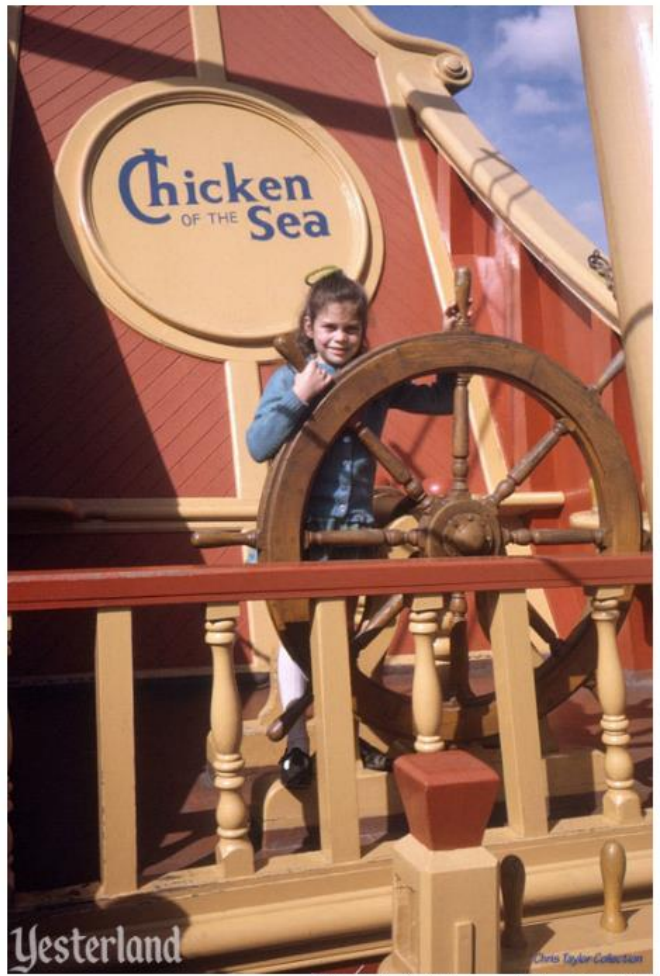
Right behind Monstro





Sails lowered fully

Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1959



Ship's wheel photo opportunity

Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1969, courtesy of Chris Taylor



Pearly Band from *Mary Poppins*

Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1969, courtesy of Chris Taylor



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1969

Entrance through the ship's hull



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1969

Man with a ticket book possibly exclaiming, "Here's an attraction that doesn't require a ticket!"



Photo by Werner Weiss, 1974

No sails

Did you have a chance to visit Paco the Talking Parrot while you were onboard? He's a real parrot, unlike those Audio-Animatronic ones you might find elsewhere.

The Chicken of the Sea Pirate Ship and Restaurant was a Disneyland landmark from 1955 until 1982, although the name changed to Captain Hook's Galley when Chicken of the Sea dropped its sponsorship in 1969.

You may remember that in Walt Disney's 1953 animated classic, Peter Pan, our hero Peter flies the pirate ship back to London, thanks to pixie dust from Tinker Bell. The Pirate Ship at Disneyland flew once too. Here's how the book *Disneyland: The Nickel Tour* (Bruce Gordon and David Mumford, 1995) explains the flight:

As construction of Fantasyland reached a frantic pace prior to opening in 1955, it became apparent that there wasn't enough room left in Fantasyland to build the Pirate Ship. So space was cleared behind the Main Street Opera House (which was being used as the lumber mill) and the entire ship was constructed backstage. Shortly before opening, the fantasy of the flying ship came true, when the Chicken of the Sea Pirate Ship actually flew into Fantasyland... courtesy of a nearby construction crane.

Originally, Captain Hook's Pirate Ship sat in a simple pond. In 1960, the pond became an exotic, tropical setting from Peter Pan with the addition of Skull Rock.



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr., 1973

### Skull Rock

The Pirate Ship was supposed to move a second time. In 1981, work began on Disneyland's New Fantasyland. To improve pedestrian flow in the crowded land, plans called for the Pirate Ship to be relocated to the Small World Promenade.

It wasn't a simple matter of digging a canal and floating the ship to the new location. In fact, the ship wasn't really a ship. It was an aging wooden building in which wood at the base had been replaced with concrete over the years to better withstand sitting in the water of a tropical lagoon. By summer 1982, the ship was sitting in a dry construction site, but the ship could not be moved. Bulldozers unceremoniously demolished the longtime landmark. Trucks hauled away the mangled timbers and chunks of concrete.

There was neither the time nor the budget to build a replacement. So when the New Fantasyland opened in 1983, the ship had “flown away” forever. A new version of the popular Dumbo attraction occupies the ship’s former space.

Although Disneyland’s Pirate Ship has been gone since 1982, the Imagineers didn’t forget about it.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Neverland Pool at the Disneyland Hotel

The Disneyland Hotel's old Olympic size pool was demolished to make way for Downtown Disney. To take its place, a new feature pool opened in 1999 between the hotel’s three towers, where there had previously been a marina and a lake. The Never Land Pool, with its Peter Pan theme, had its own little version of Captain Hook’s ship (but it’s now gone).

If you want a full-size Pirate Ship, you’ll have to head to Adventureland at Disneyland Paris. Captain Hook’s Galley is a counter-service restaurant. It sits adjacent to ominous Skull Rock—just like the long-lost original.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2017

Captain Hook’s Galley at Disneyland Paris



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2005

The ominous stern of Captain Hook's Galley

Sorry. There are no tuna sandwiches, tuna burgers, or hot tuna pies at the Paris version. You'll have to settle for hot dogs, potato crisps, doughnuts, and ice cream.

# SKULL ROCK



Photo by Charles R. Lympany, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Welcome to Skull Rock Cove. You're in the world of Peter Pan, Wendy, John, Michael, Captain Hook, and Mr. Smee from Walt Disney's 1953 classic, Peter Pan. The secluded cove is hidden behind Captain Hook's Pirate Ship Restaurant.

Get your hot tuna pie below deck on the Pirate Ship. Take the gangplank from the ship's port side directly to the cove. Sit on a barrel at a table and enjoy your Chicken of the Sea cuisine. Listen to the sound of the many waterfalls emerging from eerie Skull Rock and from around it.



Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr.

Just steps away from the Pirate Ship Restaurant

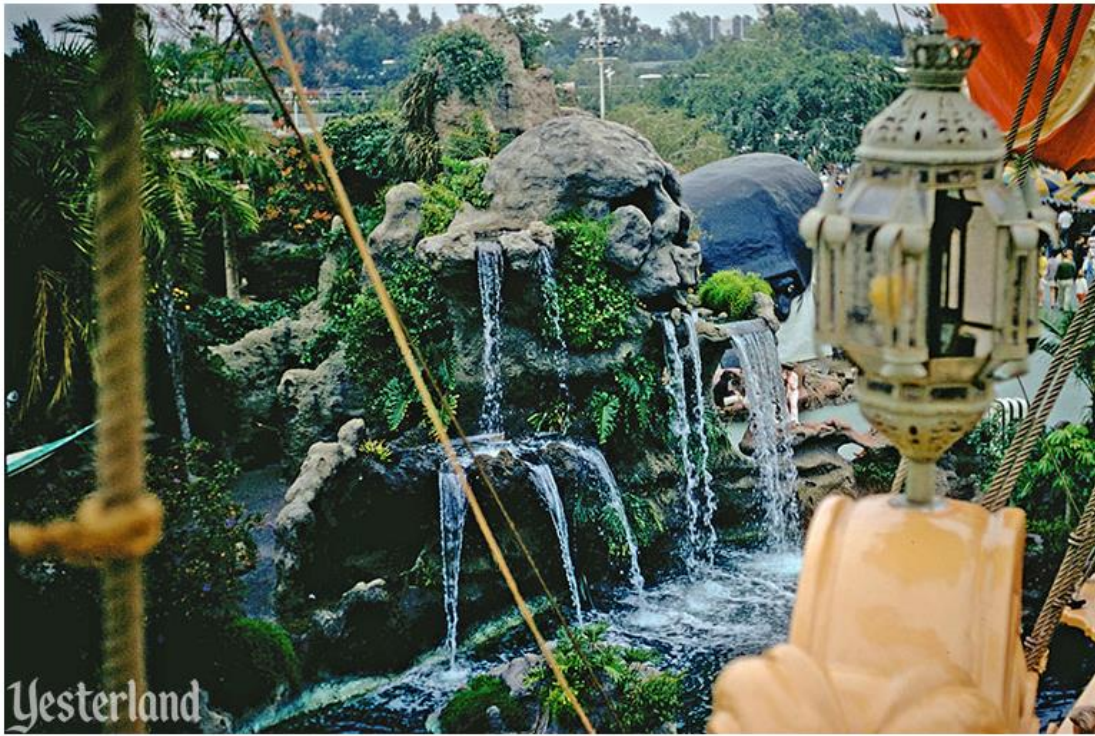


Photo by Fred M. Nelson, Sr.

With the lantern at the stern of Captain Hook's ship.



Photo by Ron Garrison, 1962

Walking behind a waterfall



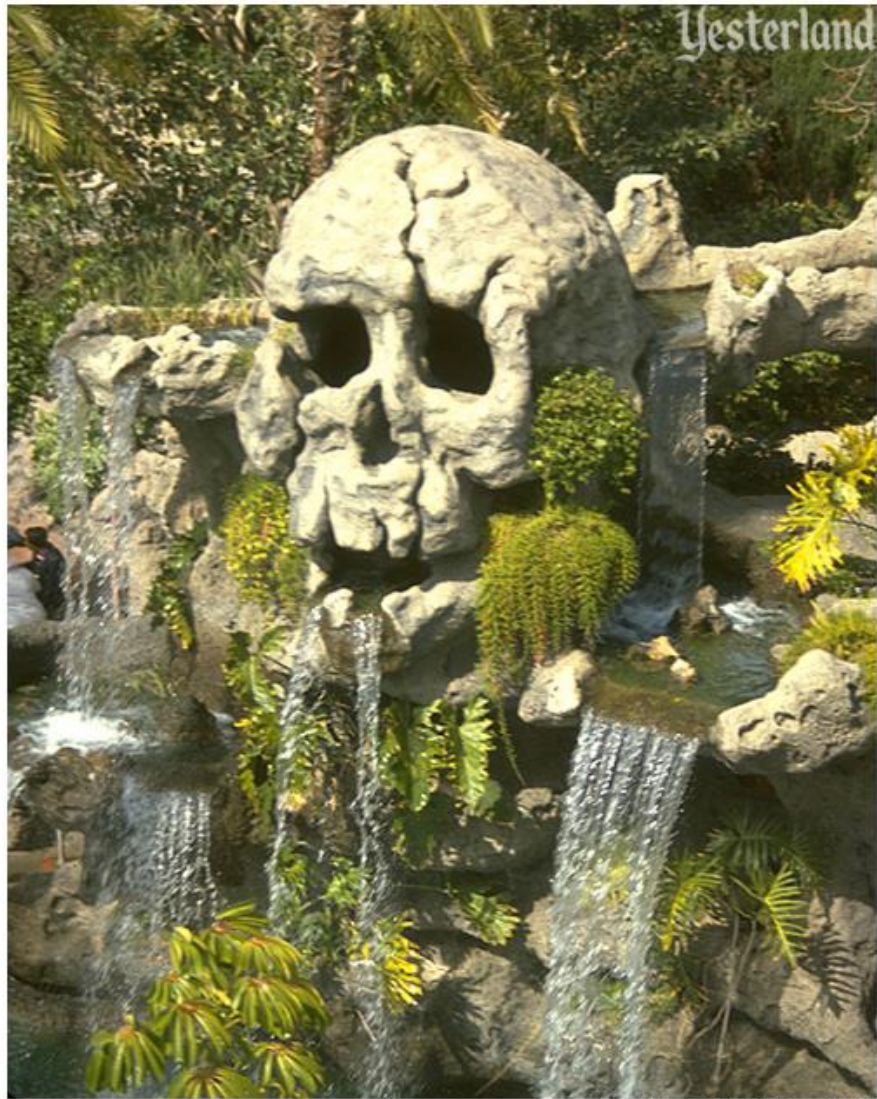


Photo by Dennis Caswell, 1972

View from the Skyway

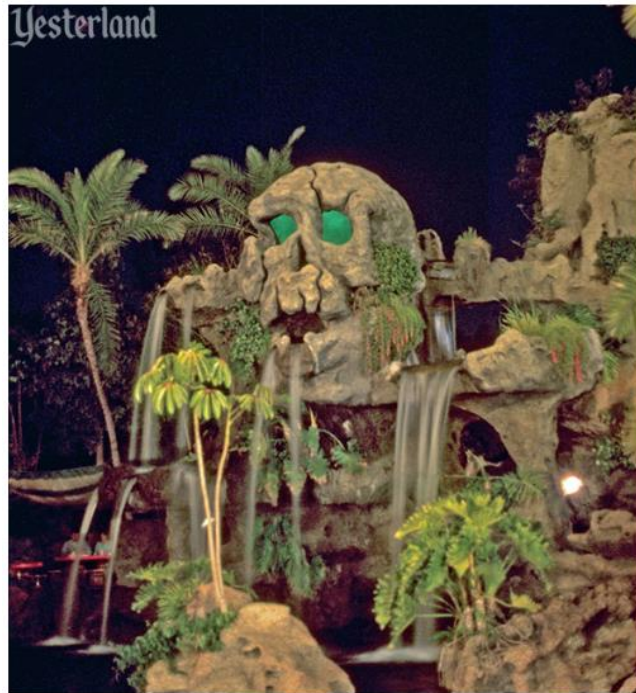
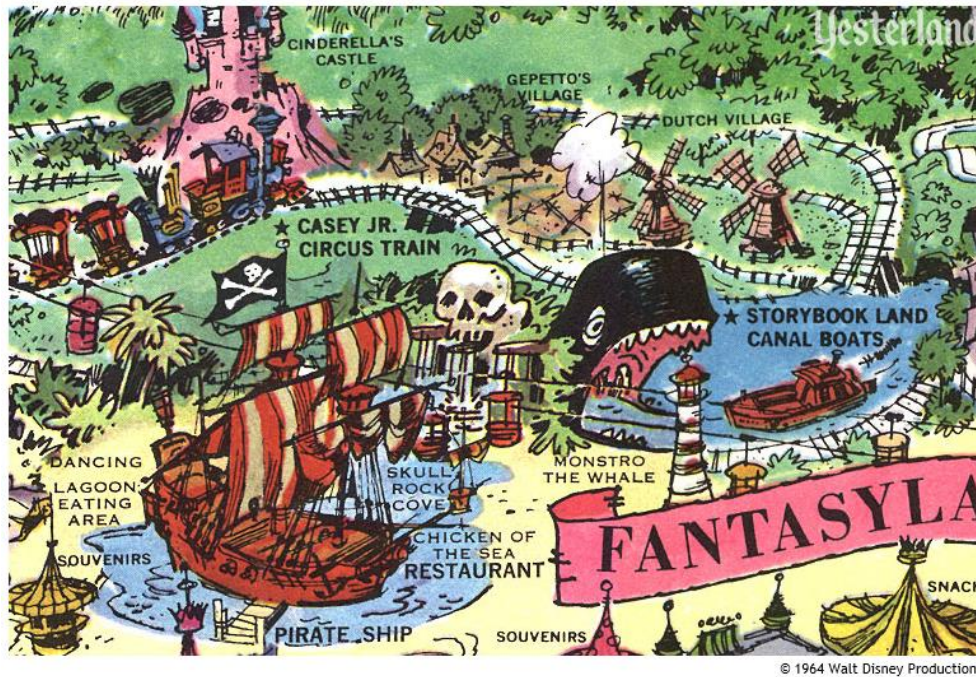


Photo by Dennis Caswell, 1975

Even more dramatic at night

You don't have to buy food to enjoy Skull Rock. You can treat Skull Rock Cove and Captain Hook's Pirate Ship as a walk-through attraction.

Skull Rock became part of Disneyland in 1960, joining another icon from Peter Pan, Captain Hook's Pirate Ship, which had been in Disneyland since 1955.



Detail from the souvenir map of Disneyland, 1964

Skull Rock and the Pirate Ship were both victims of the New Fantasyland project in 1982. When the New Fantasyland opened in May 1983, guests found that the old tournament façades had been replaced by charming architecture; the old dark rides had been improved; Pinocchio's Daring Journey had been added; and rides such as King Arthur Carrousel had been moved around to eliminate Fantasyland's previously cramped layout. But Skull Rock and the Pirate Ship were gone—Dumbo the Flying Elephant had taken over the space.

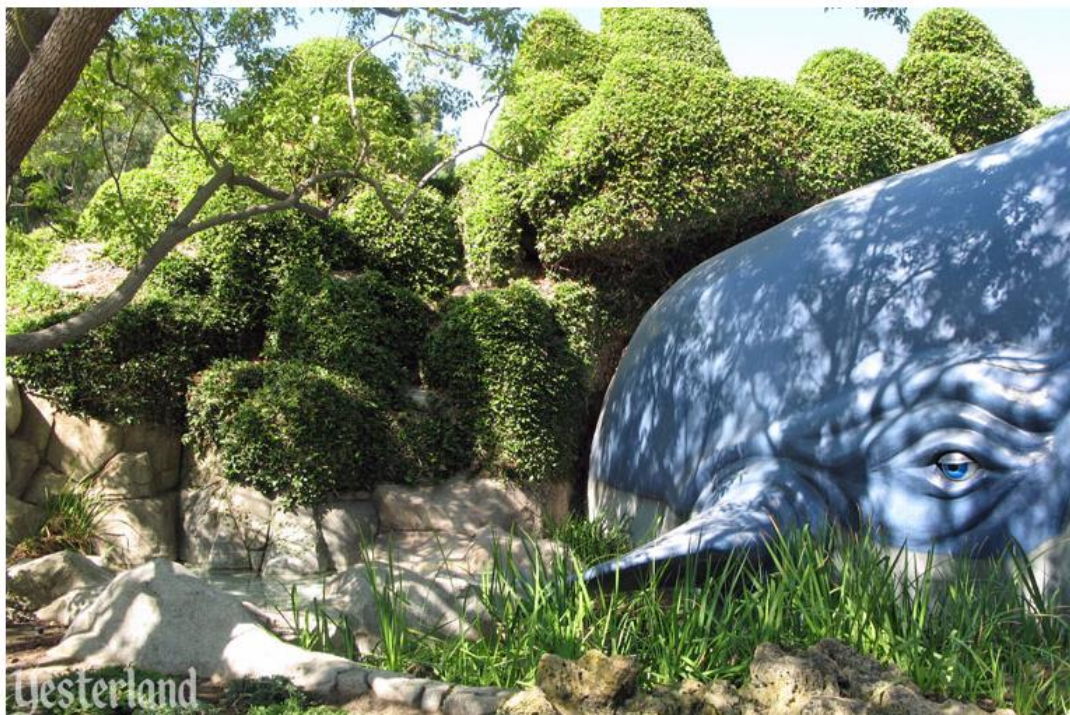


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2009

Rockwork between *Dumbo the Flying Elephant* and *Storybook Land Canal Boats*

Although Skull Rock is gone, the rockwork to the left of Monstro the Whale is said to be a remnant from Skull Rock Cove.

Today, you can still visit Skull Rock at a park called Disneyland. But it's the one in France—Disneyland Paris.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2005

Skull Rock at Disneyland Paris

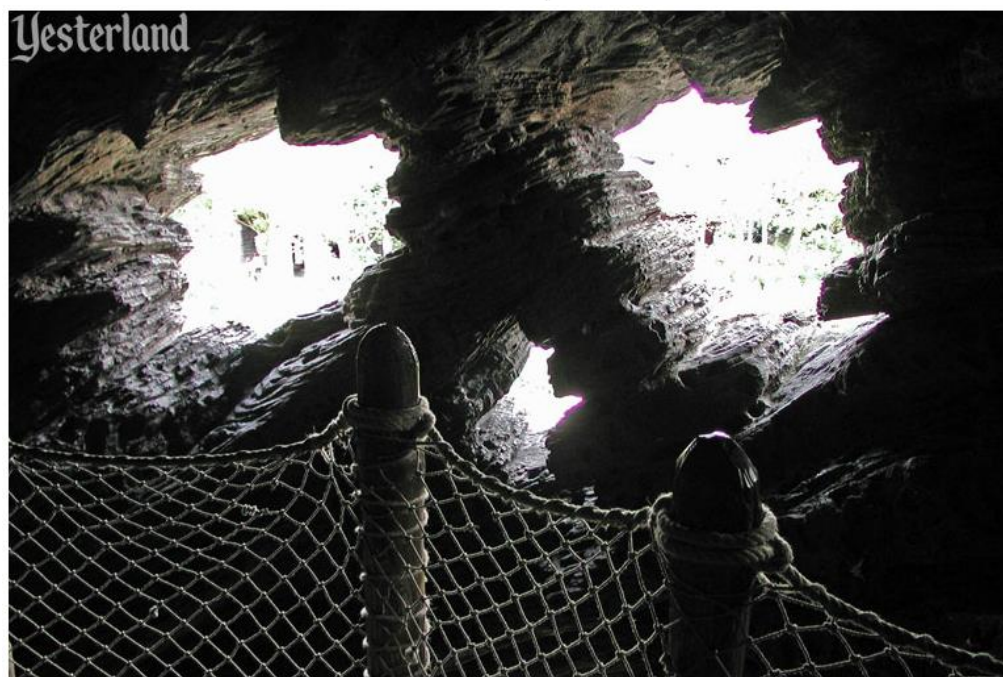


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2005

Inside Skull Rock at Disneyland Paris

At the Paris park, “Captain Hook’s Pirate Ship and Galley” and Skull Rock are in an area of Adventureland called Adventure Isle. With caves, a suspension bridge, and a pirate lookout, Adventure Isle plays a similar role to Tom Sawyer Island at Disneyland—except that it’s reached by bridges, not by a raft ride.

The Imagineers who designed Disneyland Paris didn’t simply dust off the blueprints for the original Skull Rock. The skull now looks like sedimentary rock, upheaved so that the layers are at an angle. The inside of Skull Rock is a cave. The eye cavities are openings that provide a view toward Fantasyland from inside the skull.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2018

Skull Rock as a float at the *Festival of Fantasy Parade*, Magic Kingdom, Walt Disney World

Magic Kingdom Park never had a permanent outdoor Skull Rock, but it has one as part of a long-running daytime parade, as well as inside Peter Pan Flight.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2007

Skull Rock at Disneyland Hotel's Never Land Pool

For around a dozen years, the Disneyland Hotel at the Disneyland Resort had its own versions of Captain Hook's Pirate Ship and Skull Rock. They were part of the Never Land Pool, which opened in 1999. They weren't as large and detailed as their departed cousins in Disneyland's Fantasyland—but the old Skull Rock didn't have a hot tub or a 100-foot water slide. The hotel's nod to Peter Pan didn't survive the 2011 transformation of the Never Land Pool into the E-Ticket Pool.

If you're in Southern California and you still want to visit Skull Rock, there are three ways to do so.

First, go on the Peter Pan's Flight ride in Fantasyland. Skull Rock is part of the imaginative scenery that makes Peter Pan's Flight a classic ride that can be enjoyed over and over by all ages.

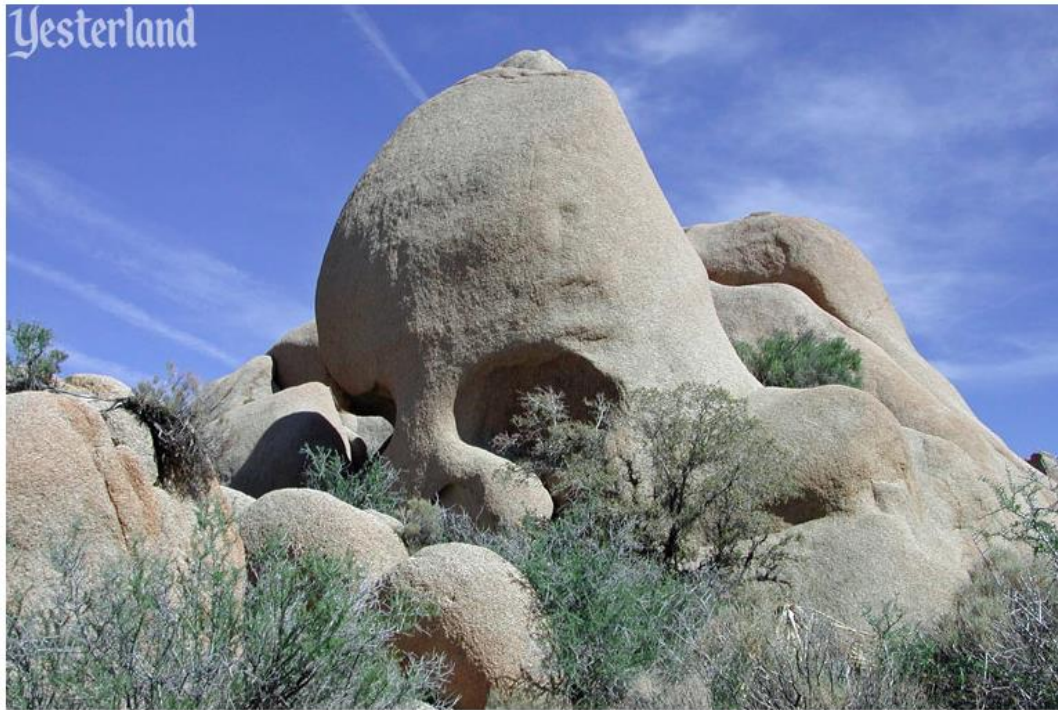


Photo by Werner Weiss, 2003

Skull Rock at Joshua Tree National Park

Next, drive out to Joshua Tree National Park, where Skull Rock was "imagineered by nature." Take the 1.7-mile Skull Rock nature trail to see rock formations, plants and animals of the high desert. But you won't find a shop with Peter Pan souvenirs (or hot tuna pie, for that matter).

Finally, watch a Blu-ray or stream of Peter Pan, in which Peter Pan fights Captain Hook at Skull Rock.

# THE OLD MATTERHORN



Photo by Werner Weiss, 1969

Your long wait in line is finally over. No more listening to recorded yodeling and messages advising you—“for expediency in loading”—to look at overhead signs for proper seating arrangements.

Did you look overhead? Your bobsled has two single-file seats, but holds four guests. The larger guest should sit against the backrest—and will be the backrest for the smaller guest. It’s a rather cozy arrangement. No wonder teenage boys like to take their dates on this ride.

You’ve boarded your bobsled. Latch your seat belt. You’re on your way to thrills!

As on an old-fashioned roller coaster, you go clickety-click up a steep ramp in the large, hollow mountain. Though beautifully finished on the outside, the interior of the Old Matterhorn is nothing special to look at. It’s obvious that you’re in a steel-frame structure. At the top of the ramp, enjoy a brief but spectacular view of the lights of Main Street, U.S.A. through one of the many openings in the mountain.

Now the fun really begins. You take a series of quick dips and hairpin turns, ending with a splash in an Alpine lake. Great ride!



Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

A bobsled that looks like a bobsled

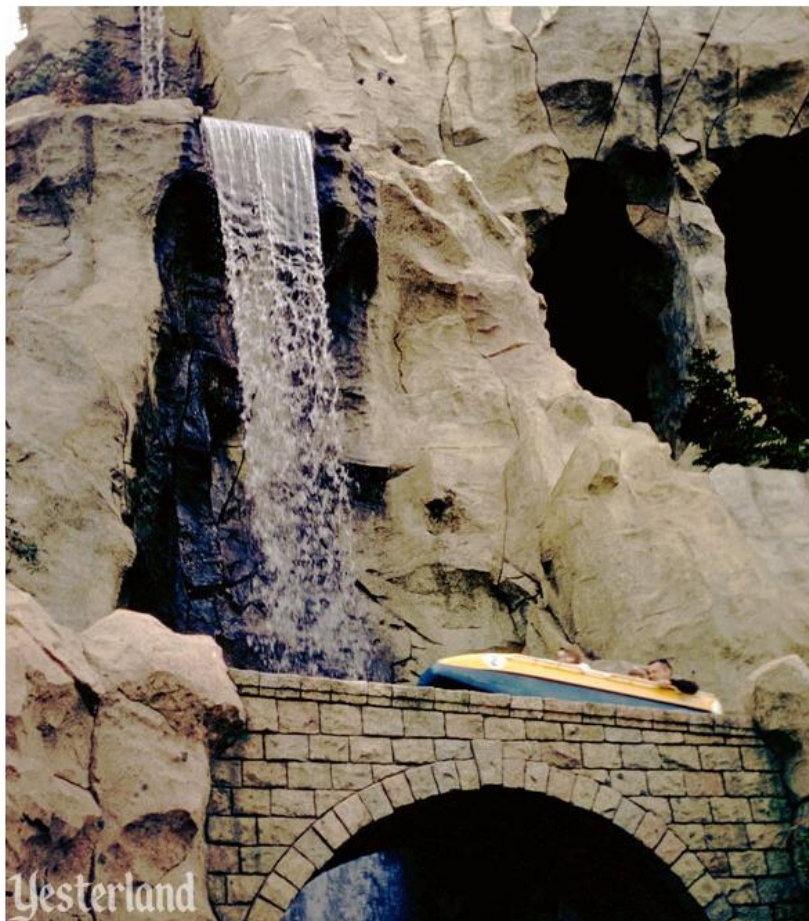


Photo by Fred M. Nelson Sr., 1959

Ziping in front of a waterfall

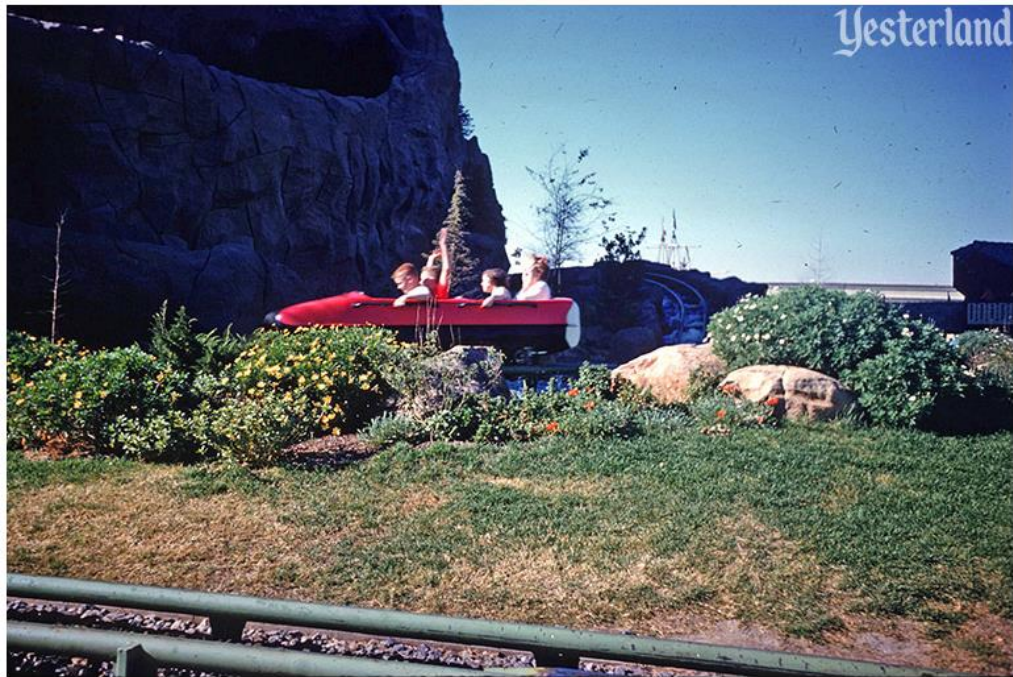


Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor

Mountain lake level



Photo by Roger J. Runck, 1959, courtesy of Robin Runck

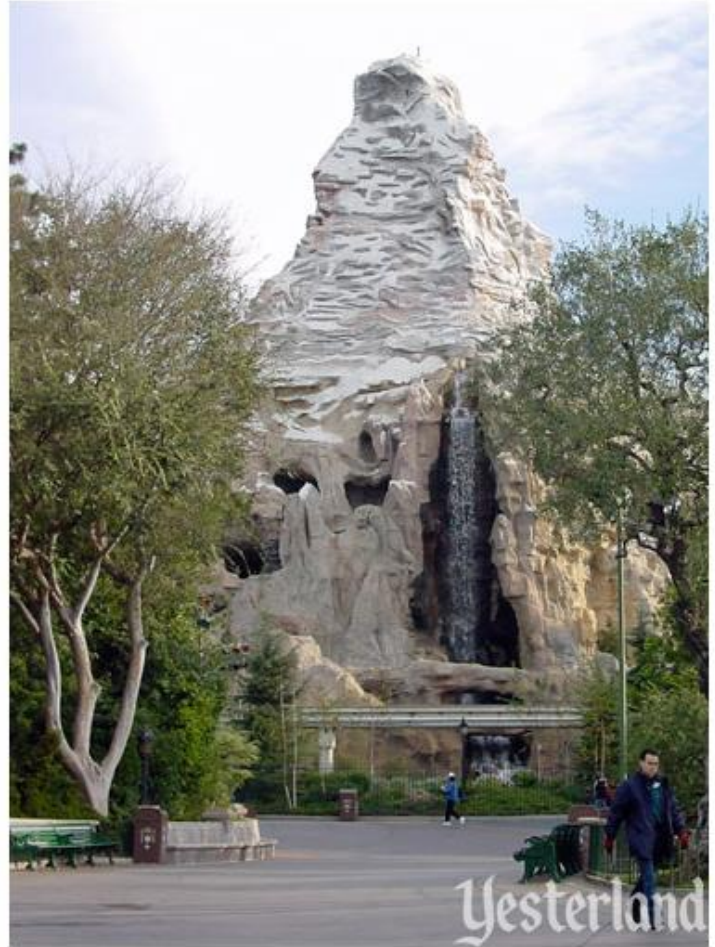
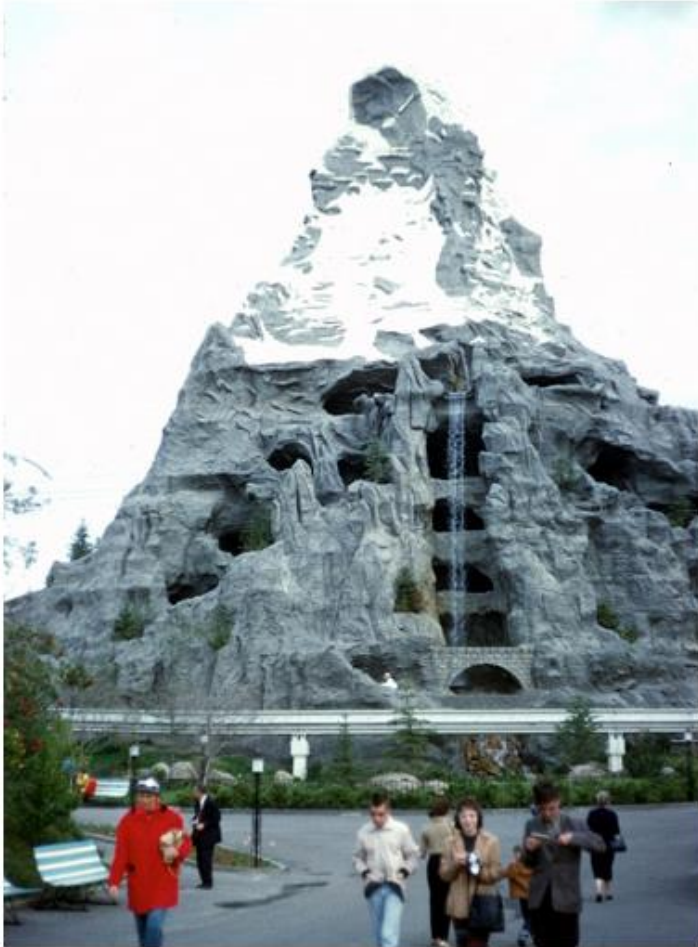
The other way to enter the Matterhorn



For a tame way to see the Matterhorn (unless you're afraid of heights), try the Skyway, which passes through a pair of large holes on either side of the mountain.

The Matterhorn Bobsleds attraction opened at Disneyland on June 14, 1959. It was known for its thrills—and its long lines.

What is the Matterhorn doing in Yesterland? After all, the attraction is still running and still very popular. The answer is that the current Matterhorn is quite different than it was in 1959.



Photos (left) by Photo by Charles R. Lympany, 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor, and (right) by Allen Huffman, 2002  
Matterhorn from the Hub, 1959 (left) and 2002 (right)

Disney's Swiss mountain used to be a lot more like swiss cheese—full of holes. Some holes were filled in soon after the Matterhorn opened. The track ran too close to what Jungle Cruise skippers call the “back side of water.”

More holes were filled in when the Matterhorn Bobsleds attraction was updated in 1978. At that time, the experience of riding the Matterhorn Bobsleds changed substantially:

The inside was changed from a large, open space into a network of “ice caves.” Several scenes of the Abominable Snowman were added. The single-car, four-passenger bobsleds were replaced by two-car, eight-passenger bobsleds, which (along with new computer controls) doubled the ride capacity—and shortened the waits.

And that first great view was eliminated because the opening was filled in.

After the removal of the Skyway in late 1994, the Matterhorn was again remodeled. The space previously used by the Skyway became a glacier grotto.



Photo by Paul Groves, 1958

Tomorrowland with a Skyway support tower on Holiday Hill, where the Matterhorn would be built



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004

Tandem bobsled trains with a capacity of eight guests per train



Photo by Werner Weiss, 1969

Tomorrowland with the Matterhorn where the Skyway support tower once stood



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2000

Tomorrowland and the Matterhorn after the removal of the Skyway in 1994



Photo by Charles R. Lypany, 1959, courtesy of Chris Taylor  
Matterhorn from the Submarine Lagoon, 1959



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2004  
Matterhorn from the Submarine Lagoon, 2004



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Still cozy seating



Yesterland

Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

“Cast of Footprint Discovered by Matterhorn Expedition, South Slope, May 27, 1978”



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2018

The Abominable Snowman at the top of the lift hill



Photos by Allen Huffman, 1998

Wells Expedition scene, a tribute to Frank Wells (1932-1994)

In 1995, Disneyland added a tribute to Frank Wells, the accomplished mountain climber and highly respected President of The Walt Disney Company, who died in a helicopter accident on Easter Sunday, 1994.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2017

Newest bobsled trains

On June 15, 2012, after a refurbishment of more than five months, Matterhorn Bobsleds reopened with new bobsled trains. Each guest had an individual seat and a headrest, so the capacity of the trains dropped from eight guests to six.

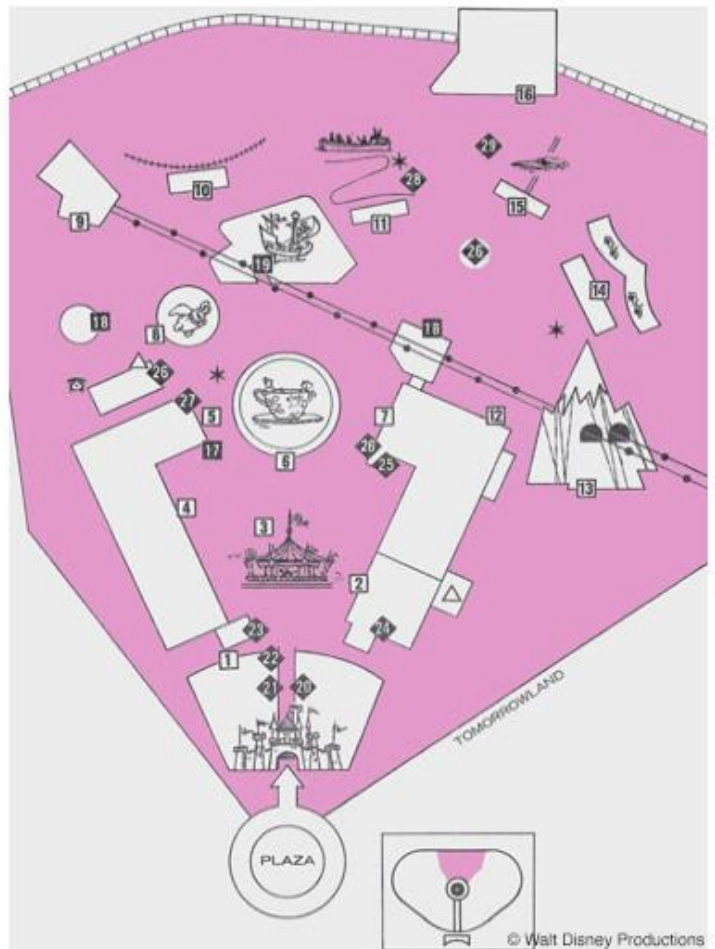
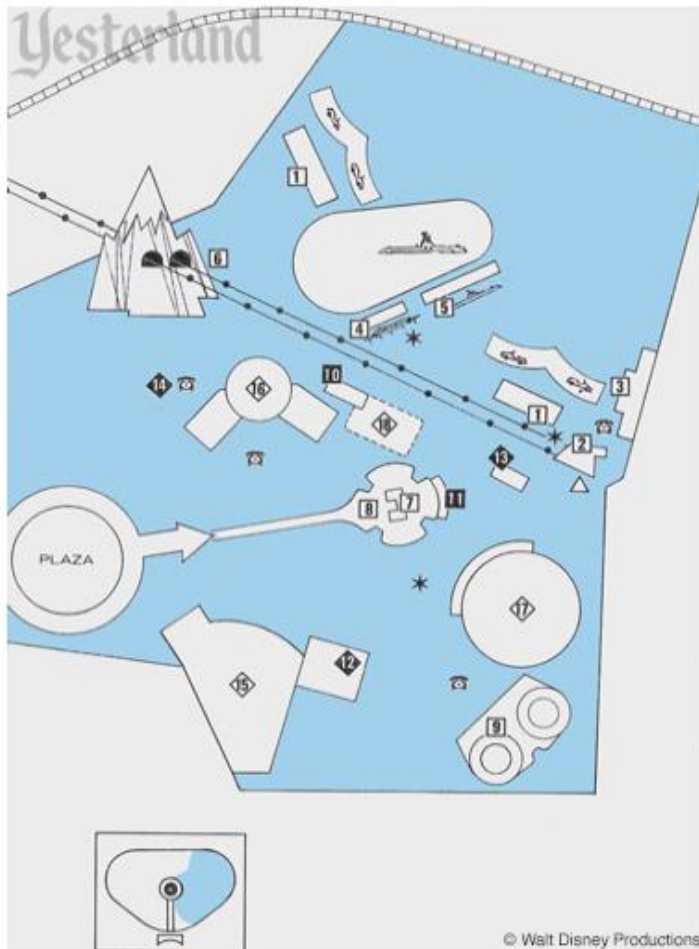
No more cozy seating.

The Matterhorn Bobsleds attraction can claim numerous “firsts.”

- First thrill ride in Disneyland;
- First tubular steel track roller coaster in the world;
- First roller coaster with multiple cars on the same track (made possible through individual braking zones);
- First roller coaster built by Arrow Development (later Arrow Dynamics), which went on to become a leading, worldwide supplier of roller coasters.

When it opened in 1959, the 147-foot tall Matterhorn claimed the title of tallest manmade structure in Orange County, California. It lost the title when high-rise office buildings began to appear in Orange County in the 1960s and 1970s.

For a while, three attractions at Disney's California Adventure exceeded the height of the Matterhorn—the Maliboomer, The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, and the Sun Wheel. The Maliboomer has been removed. The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror is now Guardians of the Galaxy - Mission: BREAKOUT! The Sun Wheel became Mickey's Fun Wheel and is now Pixar Pal-A-Round.



© Walt Disney Productions

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Scanned images from from *Disneyland Guide Summer 1970* and *Spring 1972* © Walt Disney Productions

### Matterhorn in Tomorrowland, 1970 / Matterhorn in Fantasyland, 1972

Did you know that the Matterhorn moved from Tomorrowland to Fantasyland around 1971? No, they didn't use lots of casters and a really strong tractor. The Matterhorn wasn't moved physically.

From 1965 through 1976, Disneyland guests received 4-inch-by-6-inch Disneyland Guide booklets, sponsored by INA, the Insurance Company of North America. Through 1970 the booklets listed Matterhorn Bobsleds under Tomorrowland. By 1972, Matterhorn Bobsleds had moved to Fantasyland, where it remains on current Disneyland guide maps.

During the 1960s, there seemed to be official uncertainty about exactly where the Matterhorn belonged. For 1961, the back cover of the glossy souvenir book, *Walt Disney's Guide to Disneyland*, listed Matterhorn Bobsleds under Fantasyland. However, inside the same book, the ride was pictured in the book's Tomorrowland section.

Some of the confusion might be because the Matterhorn straddles the boundary of Tomorrowland and Fantasyland. The ride has always had two tracks, commonly called the Tomorrowland side and the Fantasyland side. And, if you think about it, the ride really doesn't belong in the World of Tomorrow or in the Land of Classic Stories of Childhood.

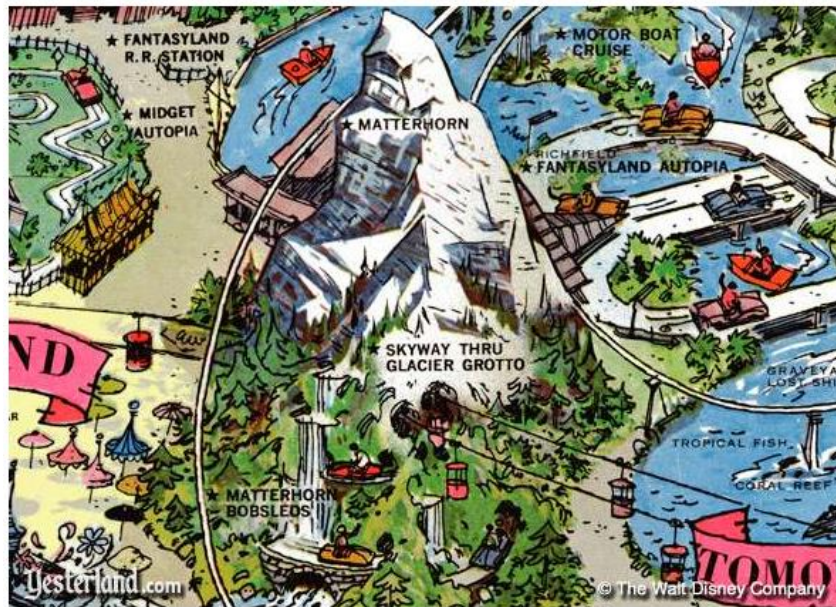
But, in the end, that doesn't matter. The Matterhorn was a welcome addition to Disneyland in 1959, no matter what land it was in. After more than 60 years, Matterhorn Bobsleds remains a unique attraction found at no other Disney park in the world.

### INSIDE THE MATTERHORN

Imagineer Tom Morris recalled taking some snapshots as a guest back in the early 1970s. As a pre-teen park-goer at Disneyland in 1971, Tom used an ordinary Kodak Instamatic camera with ordinary "126" cartridge film to take three surprisingly good pictures. According to Tom, "I must have been intrigued with capturing on film what had always been just a fleeting experience on the ride."

Although park maps promised a "Glacier Grotto" within the Matterhorn, the reality was less impressive.





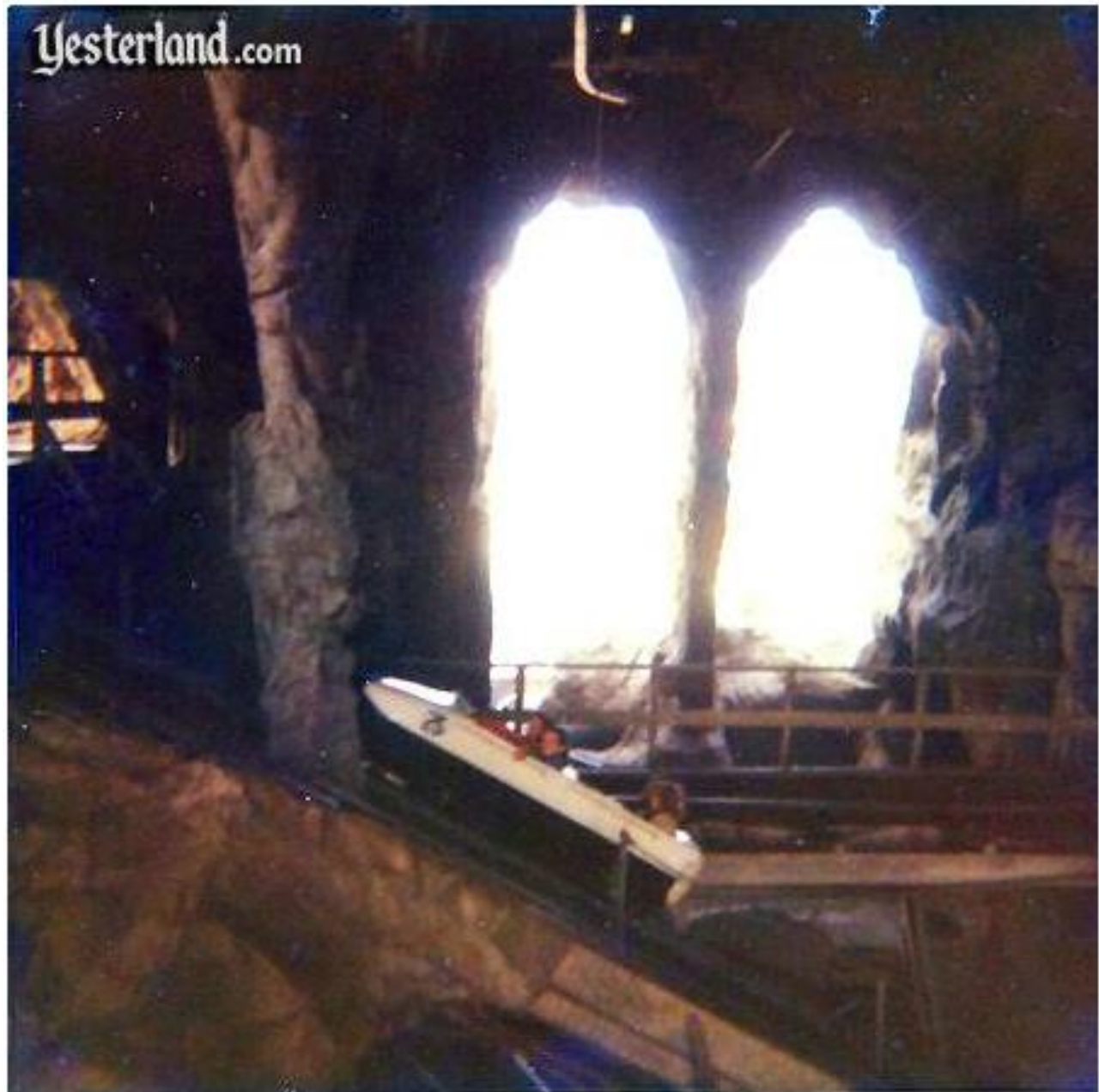
The 1962 Disneyland souvenir map showed the "Skyway Thru Glacier Grotto."

The following photograph shows the lift hills. There have always been two similar (but not truly mirror-image) tracks. The left track loads from the Tomorrowland side and the right track loads from the Fantasyland side.

Before the 1978 redo of the mountain's interior, guests entered a large, hollow void. Although the structural beams were covered to resemble rock, it was still obvious to guests that they were in a structure built of steel beams of various lengths and angles. There were wooden stairways, catwalks and hand railings for service access throughout the interior.



The lift hills headed toward large openings at the top.



A Bobsled heads up a lift hill.

The light within the mountain came from the openings in the rock-like “skin” of the structure—especially from the large openings for the Skyway on either side of the mountain. Despite those openings, the interior was dim during the day and quite dark at night. From the top of the lift hill at night, there was an impressive view of the bright lights of Main Street and the motels around Disneyland.

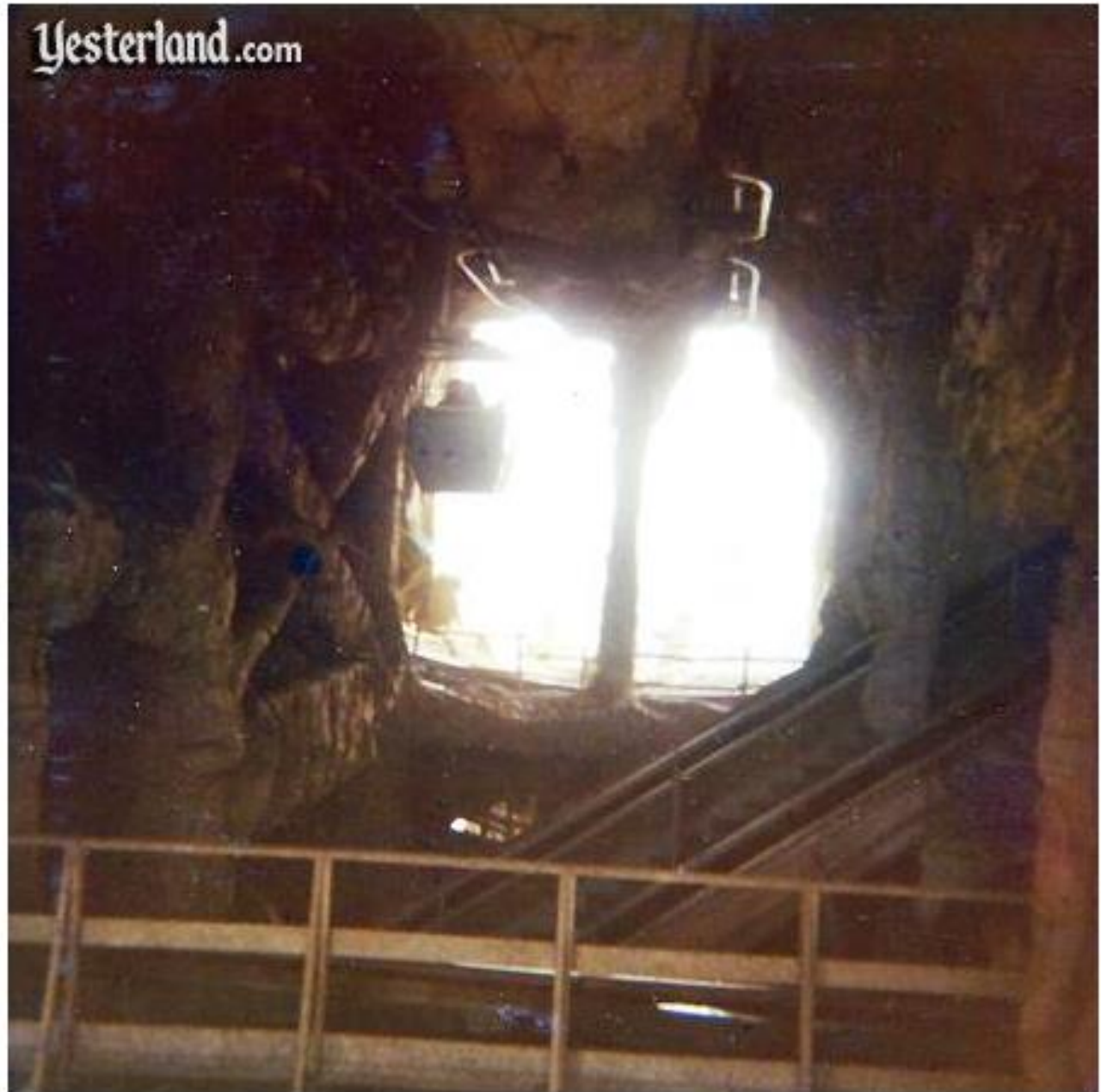
In the final following picture, take a look at the X-shaped structural beams to the left of the Skyway “bucket” and the horizontal beams above and below the X. That’s an example of how the interior wasn’t very convincing as a natural grotto.

Nobody that I know who visited the Matterhorn before 1978 felt cheated by the less-than-glacier-like space within the faux mountain. When passing through in the Skyway, it was fun to have a brief glimpse of the Bobsleds within the hollow space and to hear the screams of their riders.

When riding the Matterhorn Bobsleds ride, we were too focused on the ride itself. In those days, the ride was smoother than it is today, and the turns and (especially) the dips were more fun because the track was engineered for single-car Bobsleds, not tandem Bobsleds. There was a feeling of height—after all, you were high above the floor of the Matterhorn, not enveloped by “ice” tunnels.

The Matterhorn of today is a more immersive, more theatrical experience—in this regard, it's more like the kind of experience we expect from Disney. The Abominable Snowman is a welcome addition. (The 1978 advertising campaign featured the Snowman and asked the question, "What's gotten into the Matterhorn at Disneyland?") I'm glad the Matterhorn was upgraded in 1978.

But if Disney management ever wants to make another change to the Matterhorn, I have a wish: reopen the "cave openings" in the side of the Matterhorn at the top of the lift hills to restore the brief but spectacular views of the lights of Disneyland and Anaheim.



A Skyway "bucket" enters the hollow mountain.

# DISNEY AFTERNOON LIVE



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

It's 1991 at Yesterland. The park is celebrating Disney's successful entry into afternoon syndicated television with Adventures of the Gummi Bears, DuckTales, Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers, and TaleSpin. Perhaps you programmed your VCR to capture today's entire two-hour block of animated half-hour episodes. They fit perfectly on a 120-minute VHS tape. After all, you don't want to miss them, even though you're at the park. Isn't VCR technology amazing?

But enough about the animated characters. You're here to see their live counterparts!

The Small World Promenade has become Disney Afternoon Avenue. Here's your chance to meet Launchpad McQuack, Scrooge McDuck, Chip 'n' Dale, King Louie, Gadget, and the Gummi Bears.

Be sure to get a Disney Afternoon Live map, which has a dozen white circles along its border. Then, go to a dozen locations such as Scrooge's vault and Duckburg City Hall to collect the correct stamp for each circle.



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

Colorful Duckburg, USA.



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

The Disney Afternoon Train Depot

Don't call it Videopolis Station. This version of the Fantasyland Depot has a new name and new look.



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

*Motor Boat Cruise to Gummi Glen*

The Motor Boat Cruise now goes to Gummi Glen. Along the canals, learn how Gummi Berry juice is made.



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

*Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers Raceway*

It's not Fantasyland Autopia now. It's Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers Raceway, with cutouts of characters from their show along the "raceway."



Photo by Werner Weiss, 1991

A Beagle Boy—LIVE



Photo by Werner Weiss, 1991

Smile for the camera!

Some characters walk around Disney Afternoon Avenue. But not Baloo. The bear from The Jungle Book is now the air delivery pilot in Tale Spin, so he's a big star with a private dressing room.

But Baloo hasn't forgotten his fans. Everyone is welcome to visit him. Make sure there's enough film in your camera.



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

Dressing room on the other side of the railroad track



Photo by Chris Bales, 1991

Dressing room entrance

After you visit Baloo, enjoy themed refreshments nearby. How about a frozen Gummi Berry Juice bar?

Finally, be sure to catch the "Plane Crazy" Stage Show at the Videopolis Stage. It's presented five times daily. Villains Don Karnage and Fat Cat have teamed up to steal the X-22 spy plane. Will they get away with their crime?

The Disney Afternoon LIVE! was a promotional overlay—a temporary "land"—at Disneyland from March 15, 1991, to November 10, 1991. Disney Afternoon Avenue was the walkway from Storybook Land Canal Boats to "it's a small world".



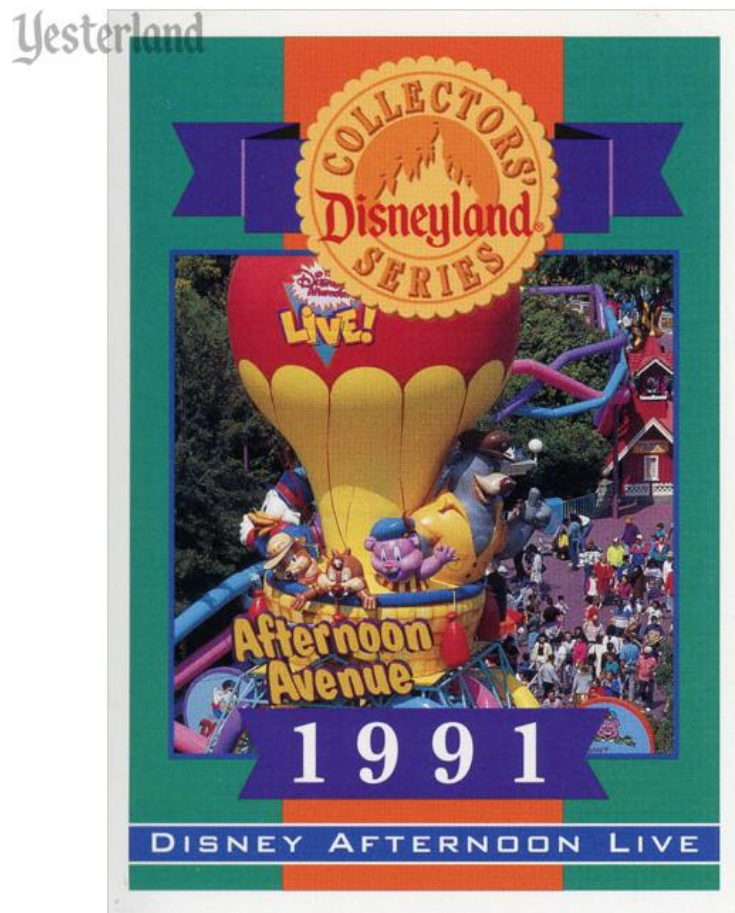


Photo by Chris Bales, 1992

Remnants near Videopolis in 1992

Some features of The Disney Afternoon LIVE! survived to 1992, but the branding did not.

The Disneyland Railroad underpass that went to Baloo's dressing room became the entrance to Mickey's Toontown when that land opened January 24, 1993.



© The Walt Disney Company / from the collection of Chris Bales

**1991****DISNEY  
AFTERNOON LIVE**

The world of Disney cartoon television stars came alive at Disneyland Park.... "Hands on" activities for youngsters gave them a chance to interact with familiar stars and scenes from their favorite shows.... Afternoon Avenue, the main focus of the activities, was staged in Fantasyland in front of "It's a Small World."

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1995 Disneyland Collectors' Series card featuring 1991

The Disney Afternoon LIVE! was temporary, but it was Disneyland's biggest new attraction of 1991. When Disneyland issued Collectors' Series cards for its 40th anniversary, the card for 1991 featured the promotional overlay.

## “PLANE CRAZY” STAGE SHOW



You've now seen the top-secret X-22 spy plane. I guess it's not secret anymore.

Sit back and enjoy “Plane Crazy,” a colorful and imaginative stage spectacular. Don Karnage and Fat Cat have stolen the X-22 spy plane. Now it's up to all the heroes from Disney Afternoon programs to recover it. Enjoy comedy, music, romance, and dance in this fast-paced show.

The “Plane Crazy” stage show ran on Disneyland's Videopolis Stage in 1991 as a feature of The Disney Afternoon LIVE!

Videopolis was built in 1985 as a dance-floor and music arena for young adults. The “Video” in Videopolis referred to the 70 huge video screens that provided images to go with the dance music. Seating areas overlooked the 5,000 square foot dance floor.

With the addition of bench seats on what had been the dance floor, Videopolis became a 2,000 seat outdoor theater for stage shows. In addition to “Plane Crazy,” Videopolis was the venue for “One Man's Dream,” a 1990 stage show about Walt Disney; “Dick Tracy: Diamond Double-Cross,” based on the 1990 Touchstone release; and “Beauty and the Beast,” an amazing stage version of Disney's Academy Award nominated, 1991 animated feature. With the opening of “The Spirit of Pocahontas” in June 1995, Videopolis was renamed the Fantasyland Theatre.

Here's a bit of trivia: Plane Crazy was also the name of the first Mickey Mouse cartoon ever made. If you think this honor belongs to Steamboat Willie, you're sort-of right. Steamboat Willie—the first “talking picture” cartoon—was the first Mickey Mouse cartoon released, but was actually the third Mickey Mouse cartoon made. There is no similarity between the cartoon and the stage show, except that they both involve an aircraft.

# THE SPIRIT OF POCAHONTAS



The Fantasyland Theatre takes on a Frontierland look.

Have a seat in the open-air Fantasyland Theatre. Take a moment to admire the stage, which represents sacred ceremonial grounds in a Virginia forest. There's a flash of fire, and the show begins.



A fire burns before the performance begins.

Instead of just presenting a condensed, live version of Disney's animated Pocahontas, the show creatively retells the story from the perspective of the storyteller Werowance and the Powhatan tribe. They bring to life the legend of Pocahontas. When Pocahontas is summoned, Werowance takes on the role of her father, Chief Powhatan.

To represent the English settlers, members of the tribe don silver ceremonial masks. But the part of English adventurer John Smith calls for more than a silver mask. Werowance makes John Smith materialize from a burning campfire.



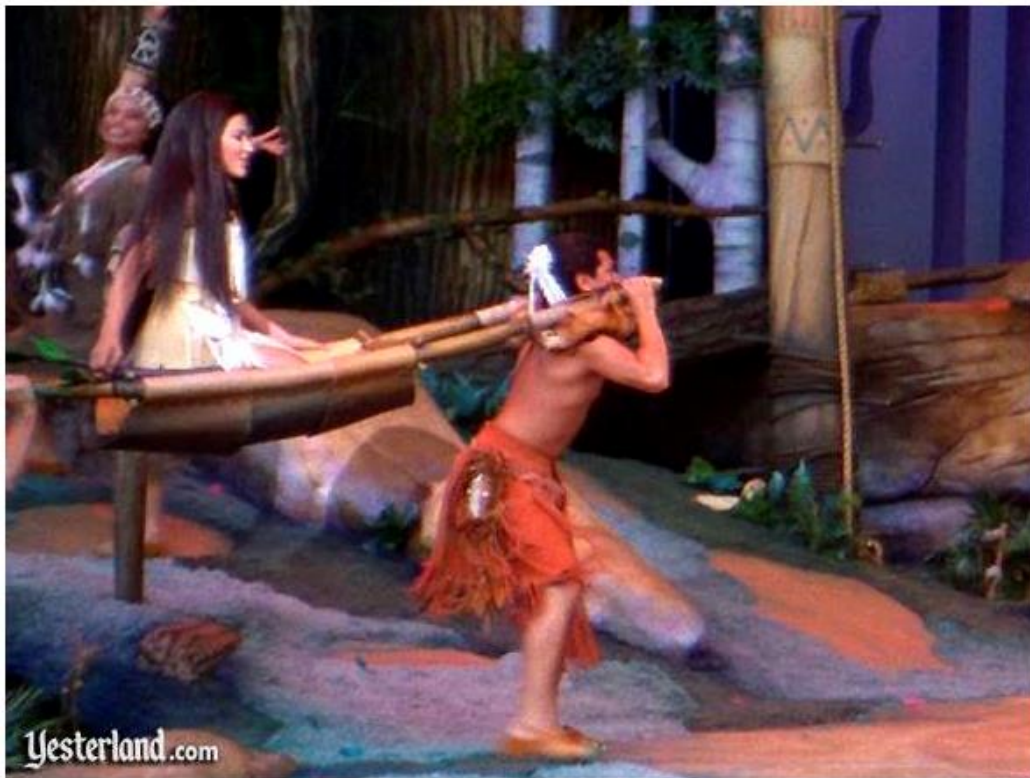
The stage set is large and elaborate.

Throughout the show's half hour, you'll be dazzled by talented performers, clever special effects (including fire and wind), and the memorable score and songs by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz. The songs include the Oscar winner for Best Original Song of 1995, "Colors of the Wind."



Grandmother Willow offers guidance.

In a particularly effective scene, the puppet face of Grandmother Willow appears on a huge willow tree to offer guidance to Pocahontas and John Smith.



Pocanhontas is carried around the stage.

Don't expect to see Meeko and Flit, who provided much of the film's humor and its appeal to children. They're not in the show.

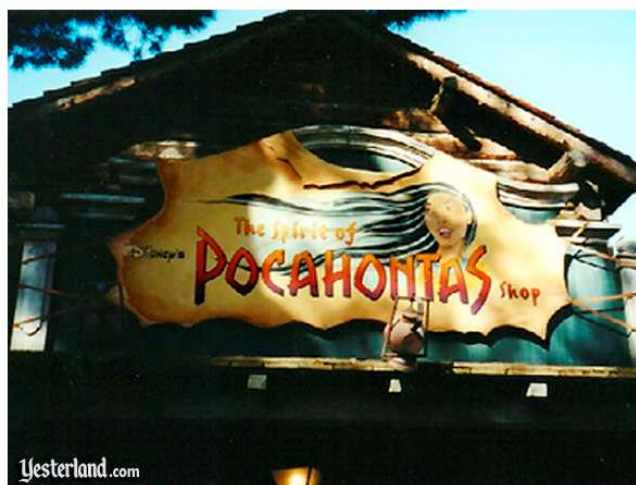


*The Spirit of Pocahontas* has talented dancers and elaborate choreography.

The Spirit of Pocahontas opened at Disneyland's Fantasyland Theatre on June 23, 1995, the same day that Disney's 33rd full-length animated feature, Pocahontas, opened in movie theaters.

Disneyland's stage version of Beauty and the Beast was a tough act to follow, and adapting Pocahontas for the stage was a real challenge. Disneyland Entertainment was up to the challenge.

Although only 17 performers appeared in The Spirit of Pocahontas per performance, the show looked lavish and polished. By telling the story through the storyteller and the tribe, the creative team delivered a show that worked well on stage, while dealing with the budget realities and performance length constraints of a theme park show.



*The Spirit of Pocahontas* Shop in Frontierland.

The final performance of The Spirit of Pocahontas was September 4, 1997. Its long run is testimony to its popularity and quality—although cynics suggested that the show was kept around to help Disneyland promote the mountains of unsold Pocahontas merchandise that filled the park's shelves and warehouses.

During the first half of 1998, the formerly open-air Fantasyland Theatre grew a tent roof. The first new show under the Fantasyland Theatre tent roof was Disneyland Presents Animazement - The Musical.

# TRITON'S GARDEN



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2006

Walking up to King Triton's Garden, you might recall some dialog from the 1989 animated feature, *The Little Mermaid*:

Triton: "Oh, Ariel. How many times must we go through this? You could've been seen by one of those barbarians! By... by one of those humans!"

Ariel: "Daddy, they're not barbarians!"

Triton: "They're dangerous. Do you think I want to see my youngest daughter snared by some fish-eater's hook?"

Even though you're human, King Triton invites you to visit his garden. You may even have a chance to snap a photo with his daughter and to get her autograph.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

A clean, clear pond





Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

Triton's trident fountain



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Leaping laminar streams!

Triton's Garden isn't just a beautiful patch of pools, plants, and paths. It's also a playful water garden where "leaping laminar streams"—also known as "rod of glass" streams of water—jump over the walkways and reenter the ground without a splash.

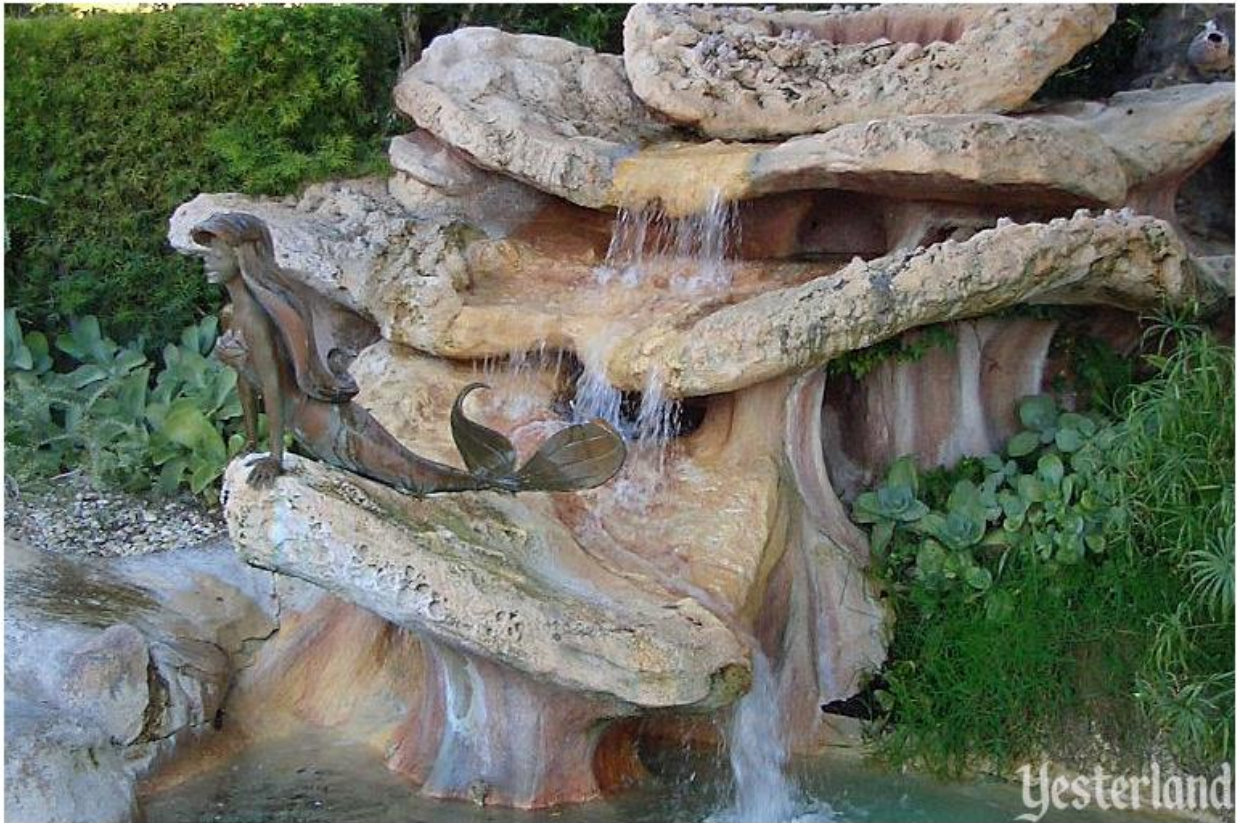


Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Bronze sculpture of Ariel, resting on a waterfall fountain

King Triton has seven daughters, but only his youngest is honored with a sculpture in Triton's Garden. (I thought parents aren't supposed to favor one of their children.)

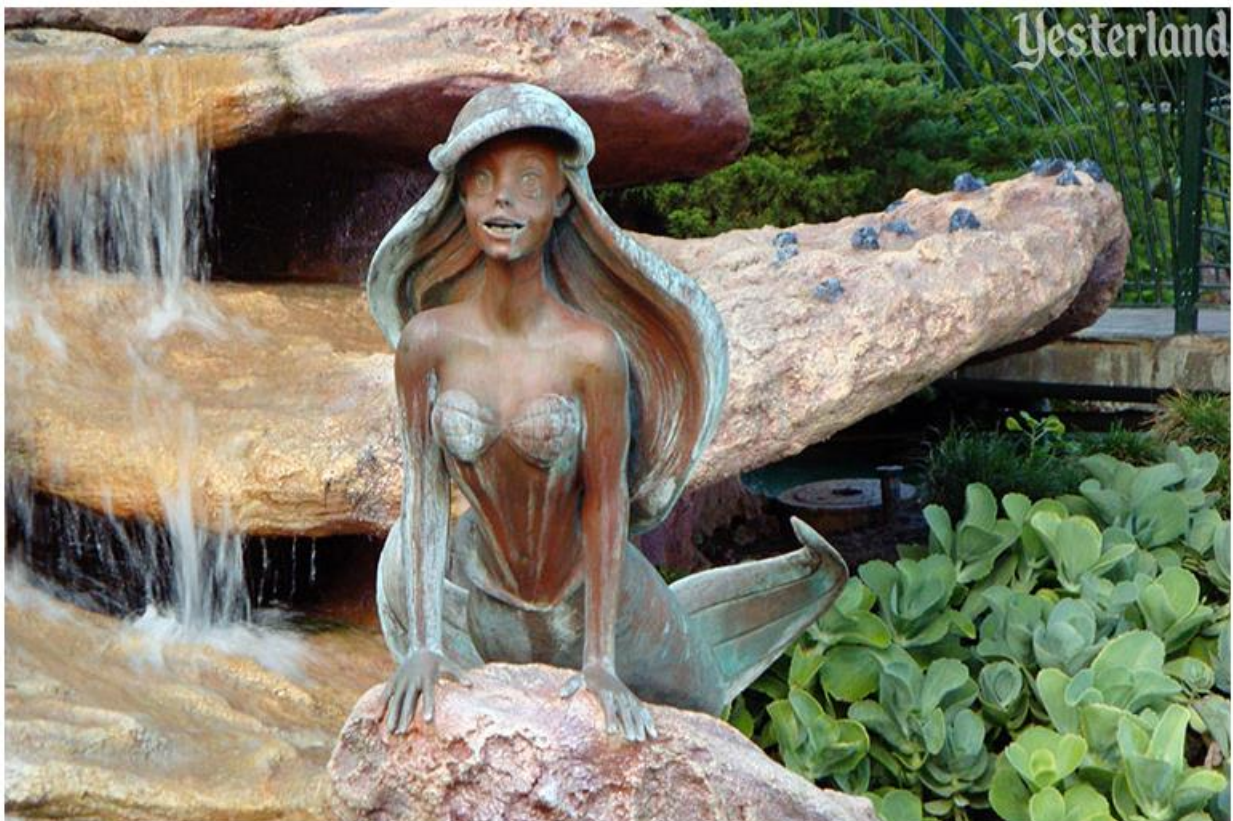


Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

A closer look at Ariel

For an autograph, you'll need to find the real Ariel, not the bronze Ariel. Head over to Ariel's Grotto within Triton's Garden.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

King Triton's Garden, home of Ariel's Grotto

Don't confuse this Ariel's Grotto with the one at Disney's California Adventure. That Ariel's Grotto was a restaurant—the home of “Ariel's Disney Princess Celebration.” It closed January 8, 2018, to be transformed into the Lamplight Lounge at Pixar Pier.



Photo by Chris Bales, 2008

Ariel's throne, closed



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Ariel emerges



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2003

Ready to sign autographs and pose for photos

Ask Ariel to show you her dinglehopper.

Triton's Garden—also known as Triton Gardens—opened at Disneyland in early 1996, replacing Tomorrowland's Alpine Gardens. Before it was Alpine Gardens, it was the site of the Monsanto House of the Future.

With the changeover to Triton's Garden, this plot of Tomorrowland officially became part of Fantasyland. According to Disneyland Entertainment Times Guide pamphlets, Triton's Garden was in Fantasyland, "next to Sleeping Beauty Castle." In reality, it was still on the Tomorrowland side of the Matterhorn walkway, right next to Astro Orbiter and Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters.

The last day of operations for Triton's Garden was August 17, 2008.

Before the end of October 2008, the gardens were transformed into Pixie Hollow. The idea is that as guests wind down the path, past the "enchanted pond," they'll feel that they've shrunk to fairy-size—magically!



Welcome to Pixie Hollow

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Pond without bronze King Triton

Photo by Werner Weiss, 2010



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2008

Tinker Bell and her friends

Ariel's throne is now a teapot. Depending on how you look at it, it's either a giant teapot, or if you buy into the fantasy that you've shrunk down to fairy-size, it's a normal-sized teapot and you're really small. There, you can meet venerable Disney star Tinker Bell and her four co-stars from the 2008 Tinker Bell movie—Silvermist, Iridessa, Fawn and Rosetta.



Photo by Werner Weiss, 2013

King Triton at Disney California Adventure

The bronze upper half of King Triton is still at the Disneyland Resort. He's the highest point on the building that houses The Little Mermaid - Ariel's Undersea Adventure at Disney California Adventure.

Triton's trident no longer squirts water. That's good. Otherwise, guests walking past the attraction would get rather wet.

# DISNEY AFTERNOON CHARACTERS

It's time for a counter-service character breakfast in Yester-Fantasyland. Let's see who the characters are here.



Notorious criminal Don Karnage interrupts the meal.



Rebecca Cunningham towers over two breakfast guests.

Interrupting a breakfast of french toast sticks, it's Don Karnage. In the Disney Afternoon series TaleSpin, Don Karnage is the captain of the Air Pirates. But in the picture above he's more of a Hair Pirate.

Rebecca Cunningham invites the young breakfast guests to pose with her. Astute businesswoman Rebecca Cunningham is the owner of the Higher for Hire Air Cargo Service in TaleSpin.



It's Genie, granting a wish for a posed picture.

In addition to being the real star of the very entertaining animated 1992 feature, Aladdin, Genie is also in the Disney Afternoon series, Aladdin.



No, the Beagle Boy isn't hitting the little girl in the face.



It's Geppetto from *Geppetto's Adventure Squad*.



Rafiki stopped by after breakfast.

While seeing the Disney Afternoon characters at the character breakfast, we're reminded of an encounter with another Disney Afternoon character—one of the Beagle Boys—five years earlier at Afternoon Avenue. The Beagle Boys, a gang of criminals after Scrooge McDuck's riches, were created by Disney comic book legend Carl Barks. The Beagle Boys have a prominent role in the Disney Afternoon series, *DuckTails*.

Of all the Disney Afternoon series, the least well known is *Geppetto's Adventure Squad*. Woodcarver Geppetto from the 1940 Walt Disney masterpiece *Pinocchio* is a daredevil adventurer who gets out of dangerous situations by carving ingenious inventions from whatever pieces of wood he can find.

Just kidding.

There was no *Geppetto's Adventure Squad*. But Geppetto is at the character breakfast too, perhaps because his wooden son is the proprietor of the Village Haus restaurant. In fact, if you look closely at the background, you can see his picture in the leaded glass window.

Just as attractions come and go, characters come and go too. With the exception of the photo of the Beagle Boy, all photos in this article are from Fantasyland at Disneyland on the same morning in August 1996.

Under the name "Disney Afternoon," The Walt Disney Company syndicated a two-hour block of original, made-for-television animated series to television stations throughout the United States for seven seasons (1990-91 through 1996-97). Each block consisted of four half-hour programs. Each season, the line-up of shows was slightly different. By the sixth season (1995-96), when most of the photos in this article were taken, the line-up was *Goof Troop*, *Bonkers*, *Aladdin*, and *Gargoyles*. Strangely, although two of the characters in this article were from *TaleSpin*, that series had not aired since season four (1993-94).

There's more at Yesterland about how Disneyland promoted the Disney Afternoon. In 1991, *The Disney Afternoon LIVE!* was a temporary "land"—actually an overlay of part of Fantasyland. Also in 1991, the "Plane Crazy" stage show ran on Disneyland's Videopolis Stage.



## ANIMAZEMENT - THE MUSICAL



"You're just in time for a singing crustacean, a Belle and bellringer, a girl who's fish, and the wish that would bring her..."  
— opening lines from Animazement - The Musical

Take a seat in the Fantasyland Theatre for the show that brings animation to life—and puts characters from different animated movies onto the same stage and even into the same scenes.

Animazement begins with four singing, dancing animators working on large paintings. Of course, animators are artists. You can tell they're artists because they're wearing vests and berets.



The artists complete their paintings of Hercules, Ariel, Quasimoto, and Belle.

The paintings on stage aren't simple, flat paintings. They're actually three-sided, wheeled cabinets which can be spun around and pushed aside. A character emerges from each cabinet, and other characters appear just as quickly. They sing a line or two from various Disney features.



Pocahontas, Hercules, Aladdin, Ariel, and Quasimodo share the stage with four animators.

This show includes familiar songs from animated Disney features released between 1989 and 1997—and a brand new, original song, "It Starts With A Sketch," written just for this theme park musical. It's reprised several times during the show.



"Be our guest! Be our guest! Put our service to the test.  
Tie your napkin 'round your neck, chérie, and we'll provide the rest."

Soon, there's a big production of "Be Our Guest" from Beauty and the Beast. That's immediately followed by a big production of "One Jump Ahead," from Aladdin. During these production numbers, there's no attempt to merge multiple movies—except that evil Minister of Justice Claude Frollo from The Hunchback of Notre Dame interrupts "One Jump Ahead," with a snippet of "Hellfire," for some strange reason.



"Under the sea, Under the sea,  
Darling it's better, down where it's wetter,  
Take it from me."

That's followed by a big production of "Under the Sea" from The Little Mermaid. Next, from the same movie, Ariel yearns to be in a place where people have legs rather than fins in "Part of Your World." And there's more yearning ahead.



That famous trio: Hercules, Quasimoto, and Pocahontas.

You may wonder what Hercules, Quasimoto, and Pocahontas have in common and why they're on stage together. Actually, it makes sense—they all sing songs of hope and yearning. (Ariel isn't the only Disney star who yearns for something.) Pocahontas starts with "Just Around the Riverbend," yearning for exciting new experiences. Hercules joins in with "Go the Distance," yearning to achieve fame and glory. Then, Quasimoto completes the trio with "Out There," yearning for a life among the citizens of Paris. All three of them blend their songs together, heightening and reinforcing the sense of yearning.



"Madames and Monsieurs! We asked for the ugliest face in Paris, and here he is."

It's Topsy Turvy Day for the next big production number, a rousing performance of "Topsy Turvy" from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Clopin sings, as stage full of gypsies dance and sing with him.



You can't have a big multi-movie Disney stage show without *The Lion King*

The final big production number before the finale is the "Circle of Life" from *The Lion King*.



“Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls...  
the page to stage, presenting your animazing friends!”

The show concludes as it started, with the animators, the three-sided cabinets, and a reprise of “It Starts With A Sketch.” Just for good measure, they throw in a little bit of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Animazement - The Musical opened in Disneyland’s Fantasyland Theatre in June 1998. It was the first new show after the venue was roofed over with a translucent, twin-peaked roof.

The full name of the show was Disneyland Presents Animazement - The Musical. I’m not sure why the powers at Disneyland felt a need to include The Musical as part of the name. Did they think that some day there would be Animazement - The Book, Animazement - The Movie, and Animazement - The Ride?

It could have been worse. The show was almost called Disney Stars LIVE! - Where Animation Steps On Stage.

Although Animazement had fans who loved the show, others missed the heart and real story lines of the two prior musicals on the same stage—*Beauty and the Beast* and *The Spirit of Pocahontas*. Because of the inherent strength of the songs and the talented performers who presented them, Animazement was not without emotional appeal, despite the lack of a story. The sets were spectacular for the theme park show.

The content of Animazement came from seven Disney features from a relatively brief period of Disney animation history—*The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994), *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), and *Hercules* (1997). With the exception of *The Lion King*, Alan Menken was the composer for all of them. Alan Menken also composed “It Starts With A Sketch,” the new song for this musical.

Animazement promised to bring characters and stories together from different Disney movies. At one point in the show, one of the animators even says, “It’s a daunting task bringing all these stories together. In fact, it’s Animazement.”

Perhaps the task was too daunting. The scene with *Hercules*, *Quasimodo*, and *Pocahontas* expressing hopes for their futures delivered on the promise (and was probably the most original and best scene in the show). Most of the show was a series of production numbers, each from a different movie. And in several cases we had seen similar production numbers in earlier Disneyland shows—*Beauty and the Beast*, *The Spirit of Pocahontas*, and the *Hunchback of Notre Dame Festival of Fools*. The production numbers in Animazement were done well, but they didn’t add up to a cohesive show.

Animazement closed in October 2001 after a long run. The next shows at the Fantasyland Theatre were *Minnie’s Christmas Party* (holiday season 2001), and *Mickey’s Detective School - A Musical Toondunit* (opened April 2002).

# MINNIE'S CHRISTMAS PARTY



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Fantasyland Theatre, Presented by Nestlé

You've arrived in the Fantasyland Theatre just in time for Minnie's Christmas Party.

Singer-dancer-actor-hosts Eric and Dawn are headed to the annual Christmas party at Minnie's house to help her decorate. As they head over, they sing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"—the first of a bunch of Christmas carols that they'll sing throughout the show. They speculate about who will play Santa this year.

With this speculation, they've introduced the show's plot. Chip 'n' Dale, Goofy, and Pluto each think that it's their turn to play Santa. They all show up at the party wearing Santa garb. The final guest to arrive is Mickey Mouse. With Mickey's arrival, the plot is resolved.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Six performances daily

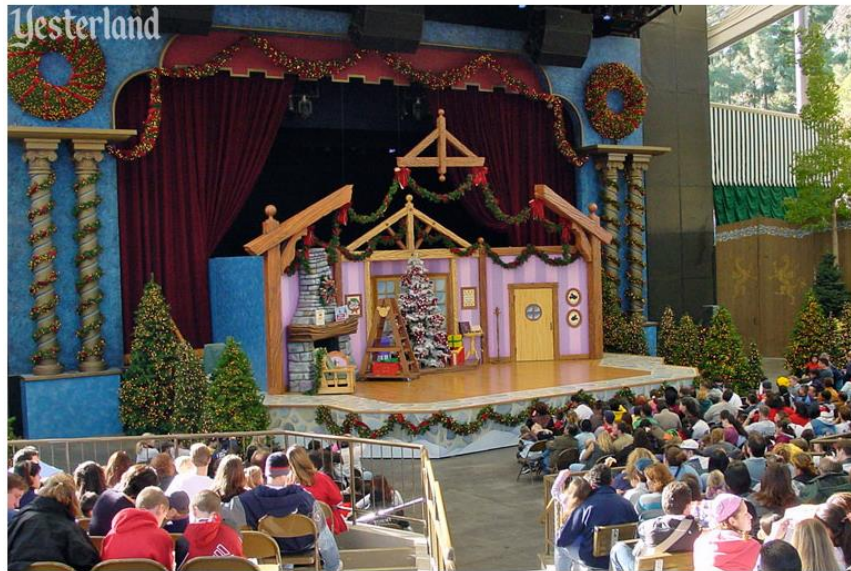


Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The simple set is flanked by Christmas trees.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Eric and Dawn introduce themselves to the audience.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Minnie Mouse welcomes guests to her Christmassy house.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Chip 'n' Dale think it's their turn to play Santa.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Chip 'n' Dale sing "We Need a Little Chris-Mouse."



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Each musical number is choreographed with dancing and jumping.





Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Goofy thinks it's his turn to play Santa. Then Pluto is next.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Frosty the Snowman makes an appearance during the song about him.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Minnie reads "The Night Before Christmas." Pluto senses another visitor.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

Mickey emerges from the fireplace after sliding down the chimney.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

It's gift time. Santa Mickey has something special for everyone.



Photo by Allen Huffman, 2001

The show ends with snow falling on the audience.

Merry Chris-Mouse!

Minnie's Christmas Party premiered at Disneyland on November 2, 2001, for the 2001 holiday season, exactly one week before LuminAria premiered across the Esplanade at Disney's California Adventure. Unlike LuminAria, Minnie's Christmas Party returned for the 2002 holiday season. But that was the end of its run. In fact, that was the end of having Christmas shows in the Fantasyland Theatre.

Compared to Animazement - The Musical, the prior show in the same theater, Minnie's Christmas Party was modest in scope. The set was simple. The cast was small. The plot was minimal. The script seemed to be written for children, rather than for all ages.

As a Disney theme park theatrical production, Minnie's Christmas Party could be considered a disappointment. But it could still be enjoyed as a pleasant little Christmas concert. The show had two talented singers performing well-known Christmas carols, with six classic characters giving the show its Disney content. The performers—humans and characters—were excellent.

Although Disneyland Park hasn't presented a holiday show at the Fantasyland Theater since the 2002 holiday season, the park celebrates the holidays in a big way. For 2015, in addition to lavish decorations throughout the park, the holiday offerings included "it's a small world" Holiday, Haunted Mansion Holiday, and A Christmas Fantasy Parade.

Minnie's Christmas Party was never performed at other Disney parks—with one exception. The date was December 6, 2009. The location was Stage 17 at Disney's California Adventure, the former Who Wants to Be a Millionaire - Play it! building. The audience consisted of D23 Members who had paid \$275 per person for a day of activities, including reserved seats for the Candlelight Processional and Ceremony on Town Square, a group dinner in Stage 17, and "a special show" for D23 Members—a reprise of Minnie's Christmas Party.