



The 10 Most Exciting New Theme Park Attractions Opening in 2012

By Nick Sim, Brian Krosnick and Sebastian Wiseman

TPT Theme Park **Tourist**
<http://www.themeparktourist.com/>

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
10. Mammoth at Holiday World	4
9. Manta at SeaWorld San Diego	7
8. Wodan: Timbur Coaster at Europa Park.....	11
7. Leviathan at Canada’s Wonderland.....	14
6. Big Grizzly Mountain Coaster at Hong Kong Disneyland	19
5. Verbolten at Busch Gardens Williamsburg	22
4. The Swarm at Thorpe Park.....	27
3. Transformers The Ride – 3D at Universal Studios Hollywood	31
2. Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom at Six Flags Magic Mountain	35
1. Radiator Springs Racers at Disney California Adventure	39
About Theme Park Tourist.....	44
About the Authors	44
Copyright Information.....	45

Introduction

Despite all the forecasts of global economic gloom, 2012 looks set to be something of a banner year for theme park fans. With attendances recovering, parks all over the world are investing in major new attractions to keep guests coming back through their gates. After a relatively quiet 2011, excitement levels look set to soar to match those seen when Universal's Wizarding World of Harry Potter made its debut in 2010.

As is often the case, theme parks in the US are leading the charge. The revival of Disney California Adventure will continue unabated with the opening of the sprawling Cars Land expansion, while Six Flags will install new attractions at every one of its parks across the country. Universal isn't spent out either, turning its attention to its Hollywood park with the debut of Transformers The Ride – 3D.

Much of the growth in the theme park industry is coming from outside of the US, and it's no surprise to see a number of major additions at theme parks in Europe and Asia. Coaster-crazy Europe will receive several towering new thrill machines, including The Swarm at Thorpe Park and Europa Park's Wodan: Timbur Coaster. Meanwhile, Hong Kong Disneyland's expansion programme will continue with the opening of the Grizzly Gulch land.

In previous years, we've posted a brief run-down of the most exciting new theme park attractions on Theme Park Tourist. This year, we felt that a more in-depth approach was warranted. That's why we've published this free e-book, which provides a detailed look at the 10 most impressive rides and shows that will make their debuts during 2012.

While it's easy to focus on major roller coasters and dark rides, we've tried to spread our choices across more than one type of attraction. We hope you'll enjoy reading about the new experiences that will be on offer in 2012, and will follow the year in theme park news and reviews with us on Theme Park Tourist. You can keep up to date with all the latest opening dates for new rides and shows via our [New Attraction Watch](#) section.

Nick Sim
Editor, Theme Park Tourist

10. Mammoth at Holiday World

Holiday World has been a surprise success story over the past decade, growing rapidly in popularity whilst retaining its family-run feel. Under the leadership of its late owner and President, Will Koch, the park expanded rapidly and became one of the most respected regional amusement parks in the world. New additions have included a water park (Splashin' Safari), one of the world's best wooden roller coasters (The Voyage) and the world's longest water coaster (Wildebeest).

After Koch's sudden, tragic death in June 2010, the following year proved to be a much quieter one for Holiday World. No major attractions were added to the park during 2011, with only the minor Safari Sam's Splashland water play area and Rudolph's Round-Up children's ride making their debuts.



Image © Holiday World

Fortunately, Holiday World has regained its footing and will launch itself back into the headlines in 2012 with the opening of two new attractions. The first, Sparkler, will replace Paul Revere's Midnight Ride and is a small-scale version of the spinning tower rides that debuted at many Six Flags and Cedar Fair parks during 2011. The second, Mammoth, is a different beast altogether.

Breaking Records

Not content with smashing the water coaster length record with Wildebeest in 2010, Holiday World will set a new benchmark in 2012. Mammoth will be the most expensive ride in the park's history at \$9 million, and at 1,763 feet long will outstrip even Wildebeest's 1,710 feet circuit.



Image © Holiday World

The appropriately-named Mammoth will cover some 3 acres, with guests riding in 6-person boats that will allow them to face in multiple directions. Following a 53-foot, 45-degree first drop, linear induction motors will propel the boats up 5 additional hills, as well as into enclosed sections and through a number of twists and turns.

Although some may view Mammoth's design as basically a retread of old ground covered by Wildebeest, the new boats should add a new dimension to the ride. Riders will be able to face forwards, backwards or sideways, ensuring that the experience will be different each time. Plus, the ability to carry 6 people in each boat will ensure an improved capacity.

Our Thoughts

The raw stats relating to Mammoth – its height, length and speed – are very impressive, and on their own might warrant a higher place in this list. However, the ride does have to be seen in the context of its near-neighbor, Wildebeest. We'll confess to having experienced a slight feeling of disappointment when Holiday World announced its new addition, as we'd

been hoping for a major new ride for the theme park, rather than another epic water coaster for Splashin' Safari.



Image © Holiday World

In fairness, Holiday World clearly believes it has found a template for success and cites the popularity of Wildebeest as the reason for the installation of Mammoth. There's no doubt that possessing the two longest water coasters in the world will help firmly establish Splashin' Safari as one of the top water parks in the US, and we have no doubt that guests will flock to ride it in droves.

The ambition of Holiday World continues to be impressive, and it offers an example from which many other regional theme parks could learn. We hope that 2013 sees a new addition to the main theme park that matches Mammoth in scale, ambition and sheer audacity.

9. Manta at SeaWorld San Diego

SeaWorld has always found a way to introduce innovative and awe-inspiring connections between humans and the sea. From state-of-the-art aquariums to adventurous, intelligent dark rides, and unbelievable, unforgettable encounters, the chain has attempted to bring the denizens of two worlds closer together through a whimsical combination of technology and mythology.

What's the best way to explore the frigid habitats and inhabitants of the arctic? Why, to take a hair-raising polar helicopter ride via Wild Arctic! How can you better understand society's dependence on the sea than by hands-on encounters with the local population? And no one has ever so vibrantly told of the myths and mystery of the ocean than SeaWorld, with Journey to Atlantis, Kraken, and countless other incredible thrill rides.

But it takes a *really* special attraction to wrap it all together with a bow on top – to combine education, mystery, thrill, and entertainment in one exhilarating package. SeaWorld Orlando seemed to have found that perfect package in [2009's Manta](#), a B&M flying coaster that interacts with water elements and replicates the smooth, gliding underwater flight of the manta ray while also letting guests pass through a massive grotto filled with aquariums, waterfalls, caverns, and facts about the graceful species.

Manta was a runaway (or should we say flyaway) success in Orlando, and come 2012, we can expect that success to be duplicated at SeaWorld San Diego.

A Different Kind of Ray



Image © SeaWorld Parks

However, just because you can expect to be thrilled on the wings of a graceful ray after a trip through a world-class interactive aquarium, it doesn't mean that SeaWorld San Diego is copying Orlando's flying coaster. Quite the opposite, *this* Manta coaster will offer a completely different experience – one that will be thrilling, but also family-friendly (where the 140 foot, four inversion Orlando attraction was not).

When Manta opens at SeaWorld San Diego, it will feature a vastly different design. It will soar down a tallest drop of 54 feet and travel at “only” 43 miles per hour, but don't let the simple statistics fool you. This Manta is a more traditional, sitting coaster made by German manufacturer Mack Rides (most widely known for their dozens of Wild Mouse coasters, Journey to Atlantis at the three SeaWorld parks, and Europa Park's Blue Fire). It's also a launch coaster, using Linear Synchronous Motors (LSMs) to accelerate the ray-shaped train to its maximum speed.

The Ride



Image © SeaWorld Parks

Manta's circuit will contain no inversions, instead offering a twisted, turning layout that the whole family will enjoy. Manta's real appeal, though, will be in its sense of immersion. Its entrance will be the park's re-themed Forbidden Reef, now filled with rays skating and gliding across beautifully decorated exhibits. The ride itself will also be embedded into the terrain, passing through caves, gliding through tree canopies, and interacting with bodies of water like its older, Floridian sister.

The most innovative feature will certainly be the launch tunnel, surrounded by screens that will enable guests to zoom alongside projections of giant, graceful rays before they blast skyward and into an overbanked turn. This

projection tunnel, SeaWorld promises, will be the first of its kind in the world, and will truly connect the interactive, aquarium-style queue to the physical ride experience itself, allowing guests to observe the rays, then swim “with” them before becoming one themselves.

Our Thoughts



Image © SeaWorld Parks

Manta will contain leaping turns, swerving transitions, and airtime hills sure to leave families smiling with glee. It isn't especially long or intense, and it's not meant to be. Like SeaWorld Parks' forthcoming / recent additions of [Verbolten](#) and [Cheetah Hunt](#), Manta has been a family ride from the get-go, meant to be enjoyable and fun, not pulse-pounding and scary.

The park, located literally less than a half-mile inland from the Pacific Ocean on Mission Bay, has long been subject to the California Coastal Commission's 30-foot height limit. That's the reason that it has never followed in the footsteps of its Floridian and Texan sister parks in adding skyline-dominating thrill rides, and indeed, the only way SeaWorld San Diego is getting round it this time is by having the ride dive 23 feet underground (the hill will only stand 30 feet above ground, as permitted).

We think that Manta is a great addition to a SeaWorld park that otherwise had fallen behind. With festive coloring, new rockwork, bubbling pools of water, and lush vegetation, Manta will be a visually striking attraction, and one that uses the land and sea to its advantage. While it may not be the

most immediately thrilling roller coaster, it is designed to be captivating and immersive in a way even Disney might be jealous of. After so many years without a true thrill ride, SeaWorld San Diego probably isn't expecting much of a thrill-seeking clientele anyway, so Manta will certainly prove popular with the park's established fans and vacationers.

Manta is not poised to alter the thrill ride landscape, but it's likely to be a solid, popular, and much-needed addition at SeaWorld San Diego in summer 2012.

8. Wodan: Timbur Coaster at Europa Park

Every good park needs a wooden rollercoaster. This rule of the theme park world is well known, and generally true. There are obvious exceptions: Islands of Adventure, the Disney parks, Alton Towers, and until now Europa Park. The German favorite is undoubtedly one of the world's stand-out parks; its renowned theming, friendliness, ride roster and all around care is legendary. Many go as far as saying that it is pretty much the complete park. But with the planned 2012 wooden roller coaster, could it be about to become even *more* complete?

A Thrill Machine

Europa Park has a strict policy that it will never install a ride with over-the-shoulder restraints, so that all of the park's rides are accessible to the whole family. This rule has made it hard to add generic thrill machines to its line-up, as most models from Intamin, B&M, Gerstlauer etc. all utilise the safety mechanism. In the past the park has got around the restriction by carefully selecting its ride models. For example, 2002's Silver Star, is an impressive 239 feet tall hypercoaster, the only B&M model that uses lap bar restraints.

In 2009 when Europa Park installed Blue Fire, a launched multi-looping coaster manufactured by the park's owner Mack, it featured an entirely new track and train system. 2012's new coaster will also be very much a thrill-oriented attraction. The only criticism of Germany's leading theme park in the past has been that there was a distinctive lack of real adrenaline rides, but this will certainly have been rectified by next year; it'll have a strong trio of big boys in Silver Star, Blue Fire and the upcoming Wodan: Timbur Coaster.



Image © Europa Park

What's in a Name?

The new ride's name and theme are derived from the Germanic version of Norse god Odin, a leading figure in Viking mythology. We've seen similar themes work brilliantly before, specifically on Valhalla at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, and with Europa Park's attention to detail this should be executed very well. Even the primitive concept art released at its announcement looks stunning to say the least.

The Ride

As stated above, most attractions in Europa Park are built by Mack, its parent company. Wodan however will not follow this trend, with Mack having never built a wooden roller coaster. Although it was anticipated that the company may try itself, it has more sensibly turned to Great Coaster International, Inc. to manufacture its latest addition. Mack actually has very strong ties with GCII, representing it in Europe (many anticipate a future merger).

Originally, in the late nineties, GCII were very much the second place wooden manufacturers, behind CCI, producing atrocities such as Gwazi at Busch Gardens Tampa, and Roar at multiple Six Flags parks. However since CCI's demise the company has picked up its game massively, putting out numerous winners in the past 5 or 6 years, such as Troy and Thunderhead.



Image © GCII

Wodan: Timbur Coaster will push the limits of the company. Most of its roller coasters stand at around 100 feet and travel at 50 miles per hour, while its latest construction will stand taller at 115 feet and race at a swift 62 miles per hour. At 3444 feet long, it's also a very decent length. The highlight of the ride will no doubt be the first drop - it's set to be a twisting, diving descent that curls back under the lift hill, around the station and into an underground ravine. There will then be a raised bank, which will swerve around the Blue Fire roller coaster, before it dives back under a pathway and seemingly passes through the station again. It will then break into a low-to-the-ground hill, which looks like it could provide some serious airtime, and wraps around Atlantica SuperSplash's drop. Finally, it will fire along more, smaller airtime hills before curving back into the station.



Image © Europa Park

Our Thoughts

2012 is shaping up to be a great year for European coasters, but this could well be the icing on the cake. Separately, Europa Park and GCII have delivered consistently throughout the last half-decade, and with the two coming together we could really be seeing something spectacular. We can expect to be given an intense ride, packed with airtime, which is also themed and integrated beautifully into Europa Park's immersive environment. If this matches up to Knight Valley's new coaster, and the aforementioned Troy at Toverland, this could well be a new addition to Top 10 lists. If you have any excuse to get out to Germany next year, take it, and definitely consider Europa Park a two-day job.

7. Leviathan at Canada's Wonderland

The tides are rising at Canada's Wonderland in Vaughan, Ontario, and so is a massive steel creature the likes of which have truly not been seen before.

In 2008, Canada's Wonderland unleashed an enormous, towering creature on the unsuspecting citizens of Ontario. B&M's 200-foot **Behemoth** roller coaster was not unlike its namesake creature of myth – a gargantuan, skyline-altering foray into parabolic hills, speed helices, and enough airtime to lift even the most cemented of stomachs. Behemoth was the first coaster in North America to employ B&M's V-designed trains, with a staggered second row that provides panoramic views for all riders.

And for fans of Canada's Wonderland, it simply couldn't have gotten any better. But mythology also tells of Behemoth's sister. A beast not of land, but of water. It was said that the dominion of the sea was ruled by a serpentine creature, and according to the book of Job in the Hebrew Bible:

²⁵ When he rises up, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before his thrashing. ²⁶ The sword that reaches him has no effect, nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin. ²⁷ Iron he treats like straw and bronze like rotten wood. ²⁸ Arrows do not make him flee, slingstones are like chaff to him. ²⁹ A club seems to him but a piece of straw, he laughs at the rattling of the lance. ³⁰ His undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing-sledge. ³¹ He makes the depths churn like a boiling cauldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. ³² Behind him he leaves a glistening wake; one would think the deep had white hair. ³³ Nothing on earth is his equal— a creature without fear.

And come 2012, he will rise at Canada's Wonderland.

The Creature Arises

In recent years, Cedar Fair (the owners of Canada's Wonderland, Cedar Point, Kings Island, Knott's Berry Farm, and a half-dozen other parks scattered around North America) has had an undeniable penchant for two things: NASCAR, and serpents. Of the latter, the firm operates such rides as Kings Island's *Diamondback*, Carowinds' *Carolina Cobra*, Kings Dominion's *Anaconda*, Worlds of Fun's *Mamba*, and (on the mythological side), Dorney Park's *Hydra* and Cedar Point's *Iron Dragon*.



Image © 2011 Cedar Fair

But all would certainly bow down to the king: Leviathan stands among the tallest rides Cedar Fair has ever developed. It will be the tallest, fastest roller coaster in Canada (snatching those records from its older sister, Behemoth), and stand taller than Cedar Fair's latest giga-coaster, Intimidator 305 at Kings Dominion in Virginia, making it one of the tallest gravity-driven roller coasters in existence.

Serpentine Features

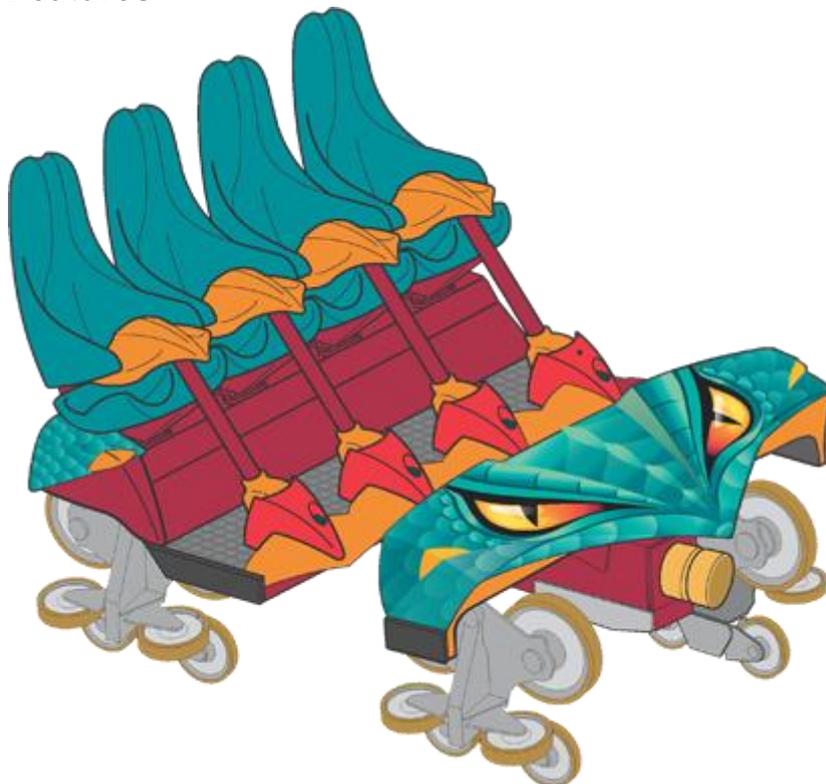


Image © 2011 Cedar Fair

Even among similar rides like Intimidator 305 and Millennium Force, Leviathan will provide an experience its cousins cannot match. It will be B&M's first (and almost certainly not last) stretch into the world of giga-coasters. B&M is renowned for their incredibly reliable, smooth, and comfortable roller coasters.

With an origin in “plain, old, traditional” fare, the company has since branched off into more specialized pursuits, trying its hand at flying coasters, one launched coaster, and dueling chasing coasters. Along the way, it practically invented the inverted and stand-up coasters we see today, and made its hyper-coasters a must-have for any large thrill park.

But never before has B&M surpassed the 300-foot barrier. So even with rides like Intimidator 305, Millennium Force, and Steel Dragon, we simply don't know what it's like to ascend over 300 feet and travel in excess of 90 miles per hour in the comfort of B&M's ergonomic, freedom-flyer style trains along their effortlessly smooth track and soaring airtime hills.

Indeed, Leviathan will do what no other giga-coaster has done – it will see what happens when the speed and force of that height is combined with the leaping, weightless, twisting layout that that has only been used before on hyper-coasters.

Their Reaction

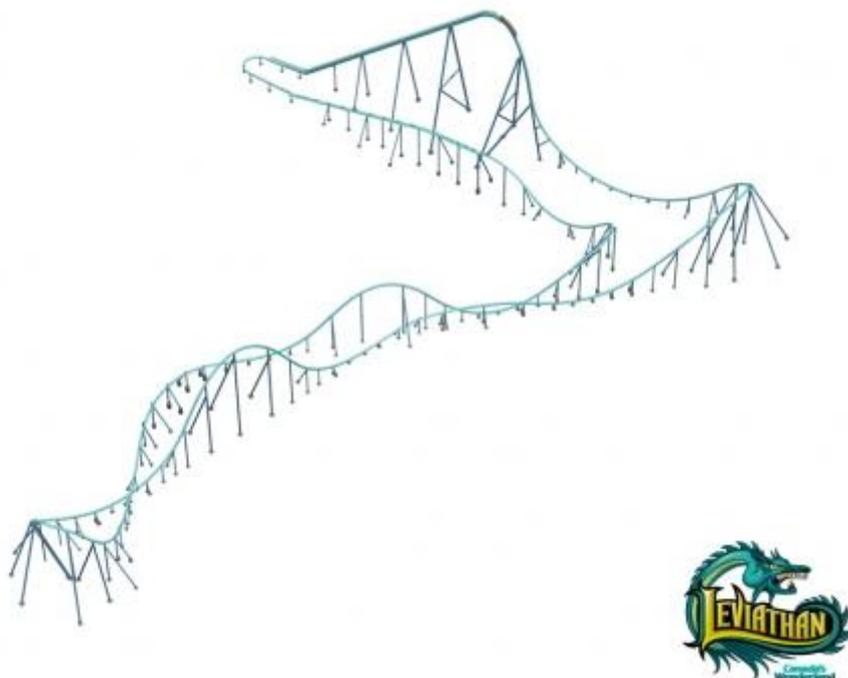


Image © 2011 Cedar Fair

Sometimes when coasters are announced, they're met with opposition or lackluster first-impression (think Intimidator's ground-hugging layout and

Maverick's short stature, both of which ended up being massive hits despite initial criticism). Of course, fans of Canada's Wonderland aren't wishing that Leviathan wasn't coming their way. Instead, they're asking why. The ride's announcement hasn't earned as much revulsion or opposition as those two classic cases above, but it *has* elicited a sense of confusion from enthusiasts, who lift their voices in a massive, "huh?"

After all, Leviathan, in many ways, looks like nothing more than a taller, faster Behemoth. And it's true that, come 2012, Wonderland will have two B&M coasters with similar layouts, the same basic style of train, and related themed sitting across the park from each other. We don't necessarily buy that.

Our Thoughts



Image © 2011 Cedar Fair

At first, it may seem that Leviathan would be more appropriate at a park without a B&M airtime machine so newly stationed. But in our estimation, Leviathan will be worlds apart from Behemoth. Enthusiasts will undoubtedly notice the familiar & comfortable trains, the single clamshell restraint, and the giddy, weightless freedom that B&M's out-and-back layouts elicit. But that aside, this ride *will* be faster and that means that the quick, nimble, low transitions popularized by Intimidator 305 and Maverick that are built right in will be experienced differently than anything Behemoth has to offer.

The coaster also took all of Behemoth's huge, parabolic airtime hills and squished them down into elongated jumps and overbanked turns that will provide a unique sensation. And while the layout of Leviathan might not

initially provoke squeals and gasps, it will certainly be a real thrill taking that first overbanked turn at 90 miles per hour.

Continuing in their ever-reliable style, B&M has also elected to install a traditional chain-lift instead of the elevator-lift system on Millennium and Intimidator 305. As such, the ride to the summit will be *long*. Intimidator 305 had numerous magnetic breaks throughout, earning it the not-so-loving nickname *Intrimidator* long before the 300-foot hill was adorned with brakes of its own, slowing the ride's maximum speed to a cool 76 miles per hour for a time. Leviathan is also expected to include trim brakes, which could disappoint some fans.

Despite initial questioning, we think Leviathan will be an incredible ride, and a testament to the powers of B&M. Once visitors get their first rides, we think that any comparisons to Behemoth will be positive, and that both rides will continue to fill a very smart niche in the park's coaster line-up.

6. Big Grizzly Mountain Coaster at Hong Kong Disneyland

Hong Kong Disneyland has suffered a troubled few years since its debut in 2005, with attendance figures falling well below the original, ambitious targets. Although performance has improved over the last two years, Disney and its partners perhaps suffered from their own lack of ambition – the park opened with the lowest daily capacity of any Magic Kingdom-style property (34,000). Its small scale and lack of original attractions had led many to speculate that it could face a bleak future, particularly in the face of competition from the planned Shanghai Disneyland.

Fortunately, few Disney parks are left unchanged for long (although the Disneyland Paris Resort could certainly use some new investment). Hong Kong Disneyland is currently undertaking a major expansion programme, which will see the addition of three new lands by the end of 2013. Toy Story Playland, featuring a number of themed versions of off-the-shelf attractions, has already opened. However, the real fun starts in 2012 with the debut of the Western-themed Grizzly Gulch.



Image © Disney

While it is basically Hong Kong Disneyland's version of Frontierland as seen at other Disney parks, Grizzly Gulch will feature a number of all-new elements. Themed around an abandoned mining town, its central feature will be the enormous Grizzly Peak. One of Disney's trademark faux mountains,

this will play host to the land's headline attraction – the highly-anticipated Big Grizzly Mountain Coaster.

Building on the Classics

The coaster will see guests boarding a mine train, which will then race around a series of twists and turns on the mountain. The ride will be manufactured by roller coaster specialist Vekoma, with Disney adding in a host of its trademark audio-animatronic creatures alongside it to provide something of a storyline.

For anyone who has experienced one of Disney's existing Big Thunder Mountain Railroad coasters, this is probably all sounding a little familiar. Indeed, Big Grizzly Mountain Coaster does seem certain to borrow elements of the enduringly popular Frontierland favorites, and why not? Few roller coasters have stood the test of time quite like the heavily-themed Big Thunders, and Hong Kong Disneyland could certainly use such as an attraction.

Look closer at the plans, though, and Big Grizzly Mountain Coaster proves to be a very different take on the concept. Borrowing elements from the more recent Expedition Everest at Disney's Animal Kingdom, the ride promises to be more intense and thrilling than any of Disney's other mine train coasters, although it will still be aimed very much at a family market.



Image © Disney

It is believed that the ride will start with a stunning backwards plunge down a steep hill, with the train then racing around a series of turns in reverse. While this section is clearly inspired by Expedition Everest, what follows is entirely original. An “explosion” will blast the train forward, sending it up the mountain at breakneck speed. On the way, riders will experience close encounters with

a number of grizzly bears, who could play a more active role than the sedate goats seen on other versions of the Big Thunder Mountain concept.

Our Thoughts

The stakes are high for Hong Kong Disneyland, and it desperately needs Big Grizzly Mountain Coaster to deliver an experience that will bring guests to the park again and again. Thankfully, given the quality of the existing Big Thunder Mountain Railroad and Expedition Everest attractions that inspired the new ride, it's difficult to see Disney dropping the ball on this one.

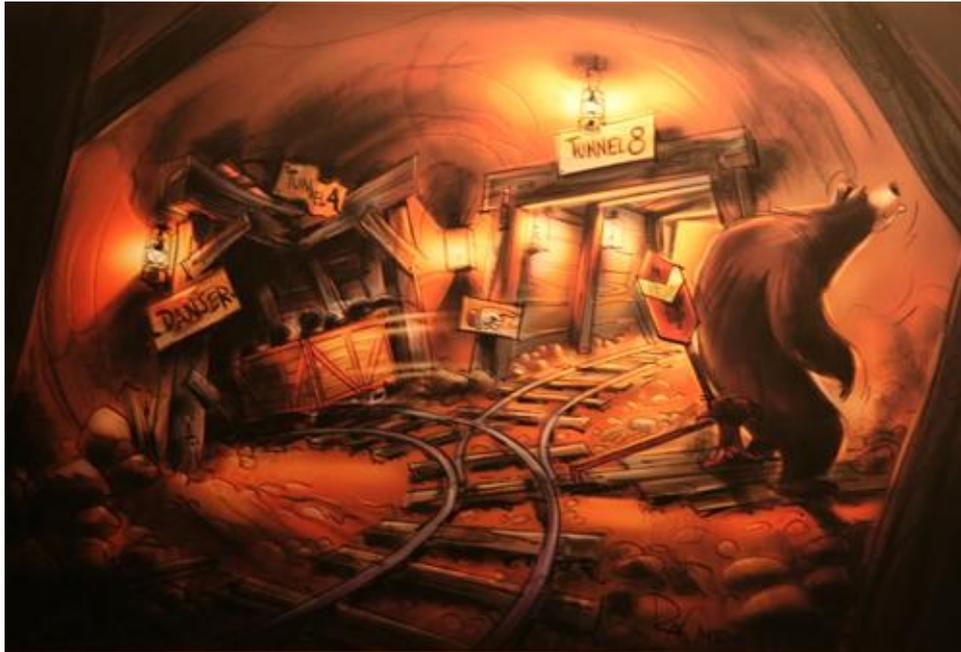


Image © Disney

Quite simply, Big Thunder Mountain Railroad and Expedition Everest are among the best theme park attractions ever built. Combining elements of the two is an inspired idea, and the launch section will add an all-new dimension to what is already an almost nailed-on success.

While Toy Story Playland was essentially “filler”, we’re really excited about both Grizzly Gulch and the park’s other planned new land, Mystic Point (which will host a re-imagined version of another Disney classic, the Haunted Mansion). Hong Kong Disneyland’s expansion looks set to transform the park, and quite possibly its fortunes.

5. Verbolten at Busch Gardens Williamsburg

While Busch Gardens Williamsburg may have celebrated its annual Howl-O-Scream festival with a nod toward “The Dark Side of the Gardens,” the *real* shroud of mystery, suspense, and legend won’t be lifted until late spring 2012. It’s then that the park – as well known for its beautiful landscaping as its thematic and thrilling rides – will unveil its sixth roller coaster, Verbolten.

The mysterious new ride will be located in the park’s Oktoberfest area, joining a line-up of attractions that have called the German-themed forest home. Whether it’s the Spiderman-style follow-up Curse of DarKastle, the much-maligned (or perhaps just misaligned) Drachen Fire, the revered Big Bad Wolf, or the against-all-odds Mäch Tower, Verbolten will need to have a trick up its sleeve if it wants to stand out among its famous and infamous peers; luckily, all our sources seem to indicate that it will.

The Experience



Image © SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment

The experience most appropriately begins in the Oktoberfest section as a whole. For 2011, the entire area was renovated with a unifying architectural style, live “streetmosphere” entertainment, a festive, stylistic new collection of festival flags throughout, and of course, the towering centerpiece of the project’s first phase, Mäch Tower, a 245 foot drop tower. But there was something a bit unsettling about the otherwise bright new area – a fence constructed all along the outskirts of the town, blocking visitors’ view of the woods (the former prowling ground of Arrow’s suspended terrain coaster, Big Bad Wolf).

A little later on in the season, as Mäch Tower finally opened to the public, another strange detail appeared: striped, red ‘Warning’ tape criss-crossed the fence, and danger-ridden road signs were posted, advertising sliding cars,

falling rocks, and one very large, very clear warning: “Now Entering the Black Forest.”

And indeed, come 2012, visitors will once again be able to enter the ramshackle lodge-style station for the Big Bad Wolf, but this time, it will be a bright, welcoming visitor center advertising completely free car tours of the world famous German Autobahn. Follow our advice: take the tour. The speed-limitless Autobahn itself is a fitting ride, but when a nasty, last-second detour sends the car hurtling into the Black Forest, you can bet on a thrill or two.

Legend of the Black Forest



Image © SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, via BGWfans.com

Like any good sinister, dark, twisted mystery coaster, the details of Verbolten were few and far between before its [official announcement](#), and even now, there’s not much we can say for sure, but there are a few things we could speculate on from the beginning.

Most basically, we know that Busch Gardens in Williamsburg and its sister park in Tampa have a knack for complimenting each other. In 1996, Tampa opened the B&M inverted coaster Montu. The following year, Williamsburg opened the B&M inverted coaster Alpengiest. In 1993, Tampa opened Kumba, a B&M multi-looping coaster and a would-be sister-ride to the Virginian Drachen Fire. Both opened Sesame Street areas (Forest of Fun and Safari of Fun, respectively) just a year apart, and there’s no question that Tampa’s SheiKra dive coaster paved the way for Williamsburg’s Griffon two seasons later.

Given all that, it seems pretty logical that Verbolten would at least follow in the footsteps of Tampa’s new, smash-hit family coaster, Cheetah Hunt. The similarities *are* notable: both clock in around 60 miles per hour and feature three launch areas. But it’s the differences that are so interesting. First, the

cutting-edge industry leaders behind [Cheetah Hunt](#), Intamin, are not manufacturing Verbolten. Busch Gardens isn't even going with their favorite, reliable Bollinger & Mabillard this time around.

Instead, the (appropriately) German company Zierer has been brought in to design and manufacture the attraction. While Zierer's contribution to the industry is not negligible (with nearly 150 roller coaster installations), few have been notable – sure, they've done their share of kid's coasters (like Shamu Express at SeaWorld Orlando and the two Grover roller coasters at the Busch parks), but they're not necessarily industry titans.

Mysteries Abound

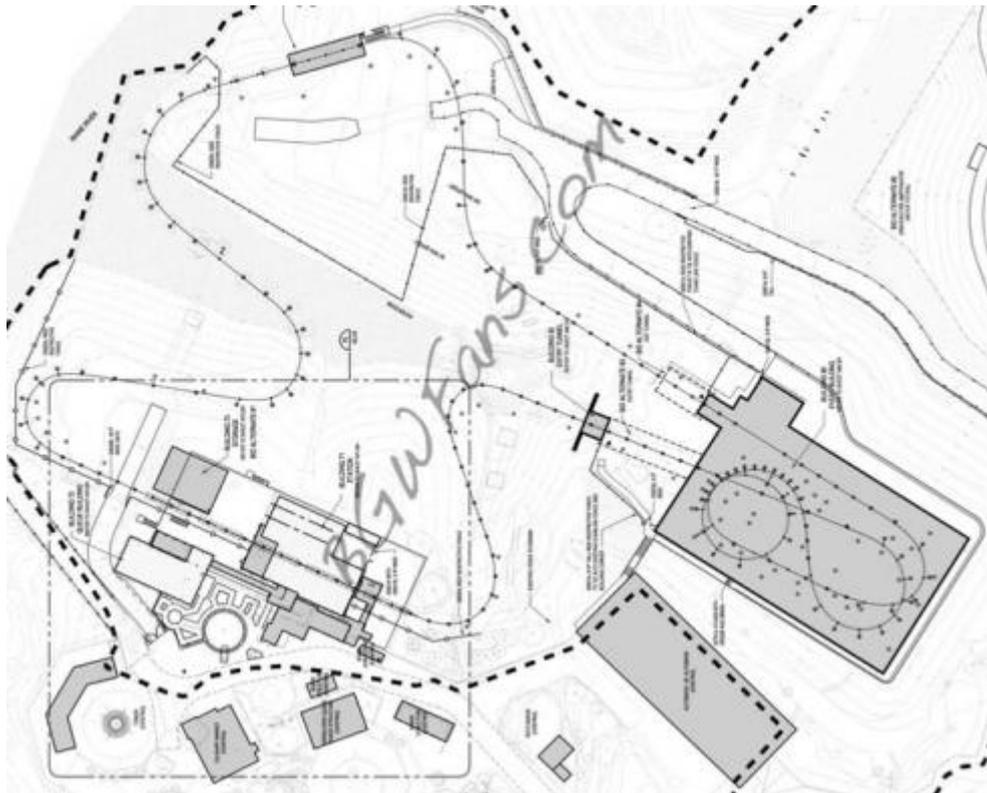


Image © SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, via BGWfans.com

In another unexpected twist, instead of increasing the statistics and capacity of its “second generation” ride over the Floridian counterpart (as the park did with Alpengeist and Griffon), Verbolten's statistics are not as immediately impressive at Cheetah Hunt's. Instead of a staggeringly lengthy attraction (Cheetah Hunt is 4,429 feet, or about 1,350 metres), Verbolten will be 2,835 feet (864 metres). It's also a bit slower at 53 miles per hour (85 kilometers per hour) compared to Cheetah's 60 miles per hour (97 kilometers per hour) and boasts a largest drop that it about 14 feet (4 metres) shorter.

But it's what we don't know about Verbolten that promises to set it apart. Williamsburg's park has always stuck very valiantly to its thematic roots in European folklore, myth, and celebration. In keeping with that tradition, leaked concept art and current construction verify the existence of a massive show

building hiding within the Black Forest. And in a marketing campaign not unlike [Alton Towers' Thirteen](#), it's the mysteries of that building that are keeping enthusiasts on their toes.

WARNING: SPOILERS BELOW!

The park's promise of a "first in the U.S." experience also seemed to indicate that a drop-section similar in style to Thirteen may be on the bill. And indeed, on October 7th, 2011, members of [BGWfans.com](#) captured images of a drop-section of track constructed on the concrete base of the ride's showbuilding, matching a leaked schematic drawing posted on the same site. The track section in question indeed looks to be about the same size and height as Thirteen's, so barring any mechanical delays (of which Busch Gardens is all too familiar after this year's Mäch Tower), Zierer will indeed prove that their technological team can match (or perhaps even outdo) Intamin's.

Interestingly, both Thirteen and Verbolten are themed to dark and sinister forests where a mysterious building promises a first-of-its-kind experience.

END SPOILERS.

Popular opinion has it that Verbolten will also recreate the famous river-dive finale of Big Bad Wolf, saving the largest hill for last and seeing riders careen towards the water below, pulling up at just the last second before rocketing back up the hillside and into the woods.

Our Thoughts



Image © SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment

So what is there to think about a ride of which so little is known? Well, we know one thing: Busch Gardens Tampa's Cheetah Hunt was a rousing success once the public (and enthusiasts) caught onto the fact that it was a family coaster, and always had been. The same can be said of Alton Towers' Thirteen, and we have a distinct feeling that if Alton Towers could do it all over again, they'd dial back the marketing schtick on Thirteen and promote it more like Verbolten is being promoted – a fun, fast-paced adventure ride with a surprise or two, but certain nothing to immobilize patrons with fear.

Of concern is Verbolten's technological reliability. Three LSM launches and a "secret" element in the show-building promise to put a strain on the mechanical aspects of the ride and the affiliated employees responsible for its

upkeep. Cheetah Hunt had a hard time maintaining operation with just the launches, and rides like Thirteen have a hard time staying operational with just a unique element, so combining them might admittedly be disastrous. But Busch Gardens Williamsburg is known for their operations and very reliable choices, so hopefully it'll all work out.

All-in-all, Verbolten will be something new and different for Virginian visitors who, until now, have really only had white-knuckle thrills to chase (even if Busch Garden's coasters add a bit of back story to those thrills). Busch Gardens Williamsburg has always been quality over quantity, and it appears the wait for Verbolten will be worth it. Like the rest of the park's coaster line-up, Verbolten promises to maintain the park's high standard of entertainment with record-setting thrills and top-notch storytelling, and how could we complain about that?

4. The Swarm at Thorpe Park

It has been a crazy decade in which we've seen one of the most rapid theme park expansions ever. When Tussauds (now Merlin) first bought Thorpe Park it was little more than a small family amusement park attached to a petting farm. The first mega-attraction installed was the record-breaking 10 looping roller coaster Colossus, in 2002, and in just 10 years the park has added an incredible 4 roller coasters, 4 flat rides and a water ride.

To celebrate 10 years of frantic spending (totalling well over £50 million) Merlin are spending their largest sum yet (£18 million) on what looks to be a fantastic new rollercoaster, named The Swarm.

The Manufacturer

Thorpe Park have no particular allegiance with any rollercoaster manufacturer; the park has used pretty much all the big names over the years, but this time it's going back to a proven formula with Bolliger & Mabillard, the Swiss master engineers. Nemesis Inferno, the park's 2003 B&M inverter, is one of the most reliable, popular and critically-acclaimed rides in the park so it seems like Merlin is stepping up on customer satisfaction, and sparing nothing in terms of investment.

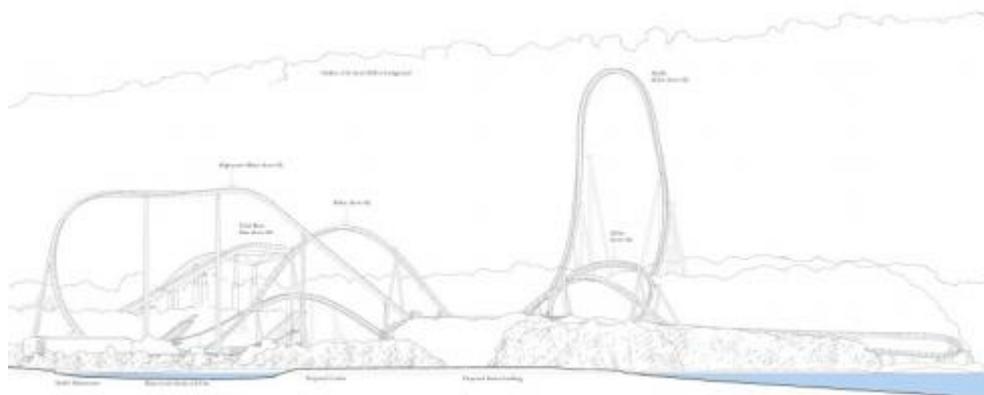


Image © Thorpe Park

The Coaster

The coaster itself will be a Wing Rider, B&M's latest model, where, instead of being seated above the track, riders are seated in pods of 2 on each side of the track. This gives an unrivalled feeling of freedom; there is no track beneath or above you. 2011 was the first year that the Wing Rider was introduced, [Gardaland's Raptor](#) being the first, and already B&M should have 4 installed across the globe by the end of 2012.



Image © Thorpe Park

A rise of a design this quickly hasn't been seen since Intamin's Accelerators first took off, and it is a testament to the success of the aforementioned Raptor. That ride, situated in one of Thorpe Park's sister parks, seems to have been a test as much as anything, a first attempt at the model to try out elements and gain an idea of what the new train system is capable of. Despite the prototype feel it has, it has still garnered fantastic reviews, although some say it is a little too tame. This is where Thorpe Park will step things up dramatically.

The Layout

The Swarm will stand at an impressive 127 feet tall, making it the second tallest attraction in the park, behind only Stealth. Originally, the ceiling height of the park was 100 feet, but this seems to have been permanently increased now by local planning authorities. Although no official statistic has been released for speed, from the height it seems likely that The Swarm could top out at over 60 miles per hour. Following the lift hill the ride begins with what could be one of the most interesting elements in the rollercoaster world: the train rolls 180 degrees so that it is hanging upside down, before performing a half-loop, dropping down to ground level.

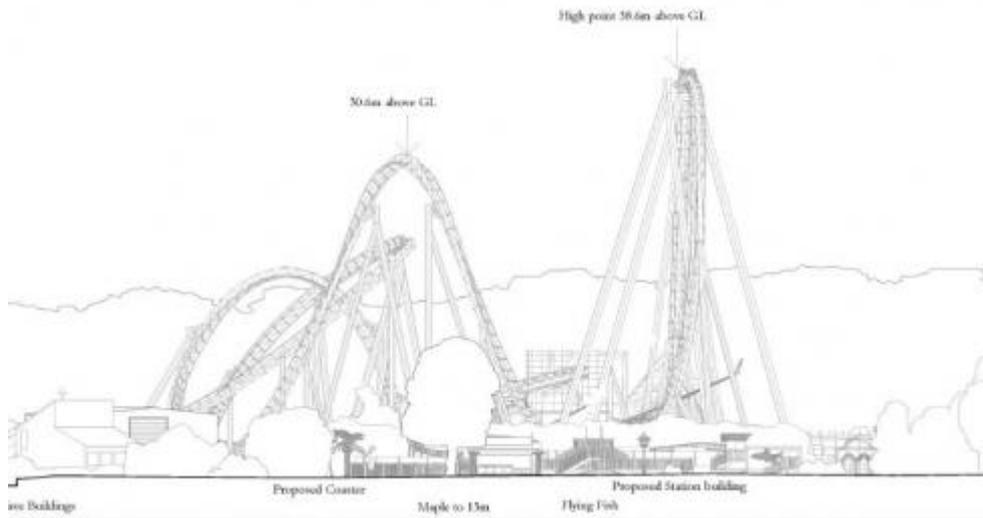


Image © Thorpe Park

This first drop/inversion will hopefully provide hang time aplenty, as well as strong airtime on the bizarre drop. The train will then travel through a zero-G roll, standing 100 feet tall, before a twisted mess of highly banked turns and a corkscrew. It will then turn back towards the station, flying through a barrel roll and back home. That's a total of 4 inversions, over a length of about 2700 feet, making it one of the longest rides in the park, along with Colossus. Placed on a newly-made island behind Flying Fish and painted a charcoal grey, The Swarm will likely be the most imposing ride in an already impressive skyline.

The Theme



Image © Thorpe Park

Exactly what The Swarm's theme is we don't know yet, but overall the idea is of a war zone. Slogans such as *'the end is near'* and *'war is coming'* suggest that we are in the middle of a battle with another race, presumably the titular

'Swarm,' and it seems us humans aren't doing too well. Plans submitted to date show very extensive theming set pieces; the station will be themed to a ruined chapel, the trains will fly under the wing of a destroyed plane after the first drop, and there seems to be a helicopter crash scene as well. We can only hope that Thorpe Park holds firm with all these ideas, if so it could easily become the UK's best-themed coaster.

Our Thoughts

It is great to see something this bold from Thorpe Park. Following the [disappointment of Thirteen](#), Merlin has gone all out to rectify its mistakes. There is no doubt that this is the most anticipated ride in the UK for 2012, and it could well be the best ride in the country since the arrival of Nemesis at Alton Towers back in 1994. The Swarm adds to Thorpe Park's incredible ride arsenal, and it already has both enthusiasts and the general public salivating. With its planned extensive theming and intriguing layout, there is no reason it shouldn't live up to the lofty expectations.

3. Transformers The Ride – 3D at Universal Studios Hollywood

Universal Studios Hollywood's new ride for 2012 has the capacity to transform the world. Can it live up to the hype?

Right now, there's not much flair and festivity around the massive, grey show building taking form in Universal Studios Hollywood's backlot. It's a rather nondescript structure, with a few large air conditioners on top and a fair share of fire escapes, and not particularly different from the dozens of other large warehouses strewn throughout Universal's Californian property. But this building is an entirely appropriate habitat for its impending, soon-to-be residents; it's more than meets the eye.



Image © 2011 Universal Creative

Transformers The Ride is expected to open in May 2012 on Universal's Lower Lot, and all sources indicate that it will change the West Coast park for the better. Meanwhile, a near-identical version of the ride opened at Universal Studios Singapore on December 3, 2011.

Reclaiming A Crown

For years, Universal Studios Hollywood has grown used to being overshadowed by its younger, Floridian sister, Universal Studios Florida. Hollywood's park *does* have a charm and originality that Florida's can't touch. It's also a working movie studio with a classic tram tour that conglomerates many of Orlando's most popular rides into one tremendous tour.

There's no question that, especially in the last decade, Universal has taken steps to transition the Hollywood park into a thrilling, multi-day destination like its Universal Orlando Resort. Hollywood has finally restarted its Halloween Horror Nights after a period of inactivity and the Orlando event's rapid growth

in popularity. They've also opened their own Revenge of the Mummy rollercoaster (albeit, alongside Orlando's superior take on the concept), and fire forced their hand on updating the age-old King Kong portion of the studio tour into the popular high-tech take, King Kong 360 3-D.

And, finally, Universal has decided to implement the groundbreaking motion-base dark ride technology made popular on The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man at Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure. The ride system – absolutely revolutionary in 1999 – sees dark ride carts attached to a motion-base physically travelling on a track through a warehouse and interacting with 3-D projections that integrate seamlessly into physical props and tactile effects.

In other words, your vehicle gets tossed and turned as it moves through scenes like a traditional dark ride. In the case of Spider-Man, there's fire and water to further amp up the immersion factor, and in both Spider-Man and Busch Garden Williamsburg's popular follow-up, The Curse of DarkKastle, the culmination is in a mostly-psychological, simulated drop from hundreds of feet in the air, as projected on massive, all-encompassing Omni-Max style screens.

Joining the Fight

Granted, there's not too much *official* information out there about Transformers The Ride – 3D, and unlike Busch Gardens Williamsburg's "secret" rollercoaster, [Verbolten](#), construction is entirely indoors, and thus hidden from prying eyes. Fortunately, we now have Universal Studios Singapore's version to learn from.



Image © 2011 Universal Creative

What we don't know for sure is how much of the Singapore experience will be recreated in Hollywood. While it's a fairly safe bet that the ride itself will be identical, it's still possible that the elaborate, scene-setting queue seen in the Singapore version could be scaled down. Universal Studios Hollywood has already simplified the planned exterior of the building to cut costs – we hope it doesn't do the same on the inside.

If it doesn't, then Transformers The Ride will include a waiting area themed around a top-secret facility operated by NEST, the shadowy organisation that features in the *Transformers* movies. At its heart will be a shard of the AllSpark, a cube of energy that creates life from mechanical objects. The robots will both do battle over this object, with riders being carried inside a new Transformer known as EVAC.



The ride's queue will snake through a NEST facility.

The attraction's scenes will include subway tunnels, city streets and rooftops, with EVAC being hunted down by enemy robots. The story of the 4-minute ride is a "natural follow-up" to the movies, rather than based on them directly. It will be told through a variety of simulator and 3D effects, and will place riders at the center of a battle between the human-friendly Autobots and the evil Decepticons.

Our Thoughts

Transformers: The Ride will be a popular attraction Universal Studios, and a major draw for visitors. However, we do have to question the choice of intellectual property. *Transformers* was a popular enough film financially, but the franchise has been met with less-than-superb reviews from critics and viewers alike. The all-out, explosion-packed, CGI battles are what the films are known for, and indeed, perhaps those are the part of the films that are meant to translate to the ride. But in a park that celebrates Hollywood's classics, it's hard to imagine *Transformers* standing alongside King Kong, Jaws, Terminator, and Jurassic Park in terms of longevity and long-term critical popularity.

It may have been inappropriate for Universal Studios Hollywood to simply copy Spider-Man (especially thirteen years later – imagine how the Facebook

page would enflame after that announcement), but to us, the development of a *Transformers* ride feels like it's missing something. Like Orlando's *Twister: Ride It Out* (which has admittedly run its course, based on a "fad" film that was very, very popular in 1996, but which was not still ride-worthy even by the new millennium), there is a fear that a decade down the road, *Transformers: The Ride* will feel worn and dated, lacking the staying power and classic status of other Universal rides' films.

One might even venture that Universal might re-think plans for *Transformers The Ride* if construction wasn't already well underway, now that we're basking in the remains of two poorly received sequels (having a 20% and 35% respectively on film review aggregator site [Rotten Tomatoes](#)). That said, both were cash cows, which matters far more than reviews, or quality in today's Hollywood. So in that sense, *Transformers: The Ride* does indeed capture the cinematic expectations of the 2010s, which has got to be worth something.



Image © Universal Creative 2011.

Will Universal Studios' spring 2012 addition be a tremendous draw for the park? Absolutely. Will it represent a sizable technological upgrade for an already-innovative ride system? Undoubtedly. And while we may have reservations about the theme, *Transformers: The Ride* has the ability to change our minds and we really truly are looking forward to it.

2. Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom at Six Flags Magic Mountain

It's a bird. It's a plane! It's... don't even think about it. The world's tallest drop tower is on its way to Six Flags Magic Mountain. What can you expect?

When it comes to dizzying, death-defying, gravity-strangling heights, Superman is being demoted to silver status. In 2012, Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia, California plans to open Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom as the infamous comic book villain finally seems to conquer his Kryptonian arch-nemesis. And his diabolical Drop of Doom looks like it may truly overtake Superman once and for all. But above and beyond the comic-style turmoil, it's the staggering statistics and impossible design of this strata-drop tower that may leave you nearly as breathless as the ride itself.

Doom-Inducing Drop



Image © 2011 Six Flags.

Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom is billed as the world's tallest vertical drop ride, and all predictions point to that record sticking. Riders on Drop of Doom will be placed in one of two eight-person gondolas situated on either side of the ride's massive steel lattice tower. Then, the two carts affixed to either side of the tower (moving independently, if the official animation is to be believed) will climb the lofty 415-feet of steel in 95 seconds.

That's about a minute-and-a-half to soak in what will surely be one of the most serene and incredible views offered at any amusement park, with the rustic Californian hills and valleys all around.

And while you're up there, pondering the unprecedented, 400-foot, 85 mile per hour, villainous freefall of fate that awaits, you and your fellow riders may

feel an unexpected, rapidly passing adrenaline rush or two. But it's not your own.

Two-for-One



Image © 2011 Six Flags.

In summer 2011, the world's most recognizable superhero and his Travel-Channel-favorite roller coaster namesake received a facelift when Superman: The Escape was repainted, re-themed, and re-directioned as the backward-launching Superman: Escape from Krypton. And come 2012, he has yet another reason to make that escape, because Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom is being integrated into the existing 415-foot tower of Escape from Krypton. For them, it means that the two arch-nemeses need to find a way to play nice. For you, it means that, during your ascent, you just may feel the rush of a cart blasting up the massive tower behind you. And if riders on either attraction can summon the strength to scream, you just may feel a false alarm or two as your anticipation-ridden rides merge, if only for a moment, into one massive, unbelievable experience.

The entire ride should last less than two minutes (with the lengthy ascent eating up most of that time), but it's the few glorious, weightless seconds of 85 mile per hour freefall that should really twist stomachs. After all, when one of the world's greatest villains builds the world's tallest drop tower, cowards need not apply. Go Big, indeed.

Just a Drop Tower?

So what does Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom have to offer the adventure-seeker besides white knuckle thrills? There's no question that this drop tower's statistics are impressive enough to stand alone, but given Six Flags' recent interest in incorporating smart, stylish superhero references into their attractions, we have faith that Drop of Doom will contain a sufficient build-up and storyline.

Take, for example, Doctor Doom's FearFall at Universal's Islands of Adventure. Like Drop of Doom, it may look like a carnival-class drop ride to onlookers. But a simply designed queue, a short voiceover spiel during the loading procedure and a few surprises make it an experience that you can really sink your teeth into, and one that nearly holds its own among rides like The Amazing Adventures of Spiderman and Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey.

It seems unlikely that Six Flags would exert so much effort on the Superman: Escape from Krypton reconfiguration, only to make its second-phase expansion ride a generic, off-the-shelf attraction, especially when even the slightest hint of a storyline or the smallest attention to detail can go a long way with a drop tower, like Busch Gardens Williamsburg's [Mäch Tower](#).

And since it's being designed and constructed by Intamin (creators of Cedar Fair's many Drop Zone: Stunt Towers and the former record-holder, Giant Drop at Dreamworld in Australia), we can rest easy that Drop of Doom will inspire awe and terror in all who experience it (coincidentally, Giant Drop is also constructed into a pre-existing Intamin launched coaster which, just like Superman, was just this year reversed to launch backwards as [Tower of Terror II](#)).

Our Thoughts

Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom should be a massive hit at Six Flags Magic Mountain. It's almost odd to consider that the park, known so well for its fascinating assortment of prototype and classic coasters, has been without a drop ride since 2004's closure of the park's Intamin first generation drop ride, Freefall. And while the [removal of the park's Déjà Vu roller coaster](#) again ties it with Cedar Point in the unofficial "Coaster Wars," the world's tallest drop tower is certainly a great replacement.

Of course, we do have our concerns about Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom. With an ascension time of 95 seconds and only 16 riders at a time, the ride has a theoretical, best-case-scenario capacity of 550 riders per hour – dismally low for a park of Magic Mountain's size. In comparison, the park's Tatsu flying roller coaster (a notoriously slow loader) has a theoretical capacity of 1600 riders per hour. Déjà Vu (again, one of the slower loading coasters) maxed out at 870.

So for at least the first few years, Six Flags stands to make quite a pretty penny off of Flash Pass sales stemming from their three newest attractions being very low capacity (Drop of Doom, Escape from Krypton, and Green Lantern: First Flight, also opened in 2011). So maybe that's all part of the plan.

One thing is for sure, though. Lex Luthor: Drop of Doom will be an unprecedented drop ride, offering a thrill that no other attraction on Earth can. So perhaps an extra wait will be worth it. 400 feet, at 80 miles per hour...

Sounds pretty worth the wait to us. We'll know for sure come Spring 2012.

1. Radiator Springs Racers at Disney California Adventure

The race is on as a proverbial army of mechanics, architects, artisans, craftsmen, electricians, and Imagineers put the pedal to the metal to finish the \$1.1 billion reconstruction of Disney California Adventure on a high note. The park, criticized from conception to opening for its lack of rides, lack of characters, and shortage of Disney-quality storytelling, will finally give its sister park, neighboring Disneyland, a run for its money.

In a much-publicized change, the park's entrance (formerly, the Sunshine Plaza), will be re-themed to an idealized Los Angeles of the 1920s, with warm, sunset shades, adobe walls, a city park, and the Red Car Trolley. In effect, the new [Buena Vista Street](#) will be the Southwestern version of Main Street U.S.A., so guests passing from park to park will literally travel through time and space as they step between the parallel cities.



Image © Disney

The announced renovation revitalized the once carnival-style [Paradise Pier](#) area into a Victorian era boardwalk with classic incandescent white light bulbs, new midway games (including the massively successful Toy Story Midway Mania dark ride), the re-themed Sun Wheel, and the wildly popular World of Color nighttime water spectacular. Recently, [The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure](#) brought a much-needed classic touch to the Pier and the park.

The Hollywood Pictures Backlot area (themed to a behind-the-scenes, cardboard-façade-style movie studio) is about to undergo a transformation

designed to cement the area into the architectural and thematic style of the more recent Twilight Zone Tower of Terror. The area, renamed Hollywoodland, will recall the glitz and glamour of the bustling young movie town of the 1920s with roving spotlights, elegant dress, and timeless classic cinema.

The Race Begins



Image © Disney

But easily the largest change guests can expect is from an entirely new land, built from scratch, and built to last. The massive Cars Land will be the anchor of the reinvigorated park, and at its center, the brand new E-ticket Radiator Springs Racers will be California Adventure's newest calling card. The ride is estimated to be costing some \$200 million – the most expensive single attraction ever constructed by the Walt Disney Company – and all reports suggest that it should be worth it.

Radiator Springs Racers, set amid (and within) the massive Southwestern-style mountain range looming over Disney California Adventure, will pay homage to the characters and setting of Disney/Pixar's 2006 film, *Cars*, while also recalling the classic car culture of California. It will re-use the technology most recently used on Epcot's Test Track wherein vehicles holding six passengers navigate a dark-ride before accelerating (in Test Track's case, up to 65 miles per hour) around an outdoor track.

What Happens Inside



Image © Disney

Little is known about the scale or style of the attraction in Cars Land, but there are a few hints and rumors. Riders will encounter many of Radiator Springs' famous inhabitants, including Mater (on a tractor-tipping spree), Luigi (for a tire change before the big race), and Ramone (for a quick spray of paint to keep the car looking fresh). These indoor scenes will undoubtedly mimic many of Test Track's well-known effects, including near-collisions, an "extreme" test under heat lamps, sprays of mist, and the limited enhanced motion capabilities of the vehicle (which can simulate rough terrain, tires popping, or swaying).

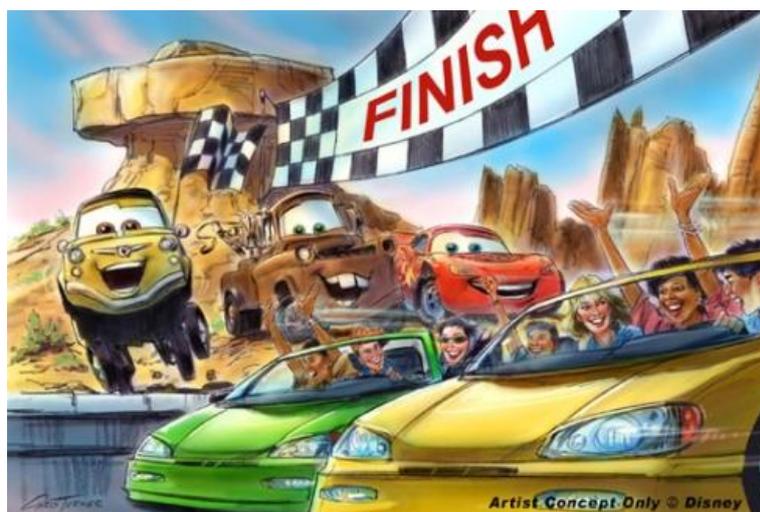


Image © Disney

And of course, the ride's climax is a speedy burst out of the show building and along the outdoor tracks (visible to onlookers) as the cars race through caverns, around hoodoos, and past near misses with rockwork.

Part-dark ride and part-thrill ride, Radiator Springs Racers in Cars Land will be a fantastic anchor for the new Disney California Adventure, and its presence will certainly draw crowds from Disneyland Park. The new ride may even be enough to keep the infamous second gate open as long as Disneyland, giving the two parks equal operating hours which they haven't seen in years (Disney California Adventure typically opens two hours after Disneyland, and closes two hours earlier).

Our Thoughts



Image © Disney

The Test Track ride system is a massive hit at Epcot, so we can only imagine that, combined with the well-loved cast of characters from *Cars*, Radiator Springs Racers (and indeed, all of Cars Land) will be a hit. Of course, *Cars* has entered a certain sector of pop culture as “the Pixar movie people didn't see”, so is the franchise really significant enough to anchor the new land?

The answer is almost certainly “yes”. The *Cars* franchise is massively successful with children of a certain age, so that alone will probably be enough to draw the crowds in droves. Disneyland, after all, is meant for families. Plus, as we've seen with the underwhelming [Toy Story Playland](#) areas at Walt Disney Studios, Paris and Hong Kong Disneyland, a franchise's popularity isn't always the best indicator of its translation to a theme park. There's more than a film's popularity to account for, and it seems

that Radiator Springs Racers has also brought to the table a unique and high-capacity ride system and a visually stunning setting (elements that the Toy Story Playlands may admittedly have been missing).



Image © Disney.

Our only lingering fear is that the park may find itself in a thematic corner. Disneyland almost exclusively features “old” Disney classics, while California Adventure’s call for “more Disney characters” has truly resulted in more *Pixar* characters. It’s a long-fought battle of Disney purists, but maybe it’s worth thinking about. Disney California Adventure, after all, is home to *Monsters Inc* (Mike and Sully to the Ressue), *Finding Nemo* (Turtle Talk), *Toy Story* (Midway Mania), *A Bug's Life* (A Bug's Land and “It’s Tough to be a Bug”) and now, *Cars*, with *The Little Mermaid* being the only “classic” exception. The question is, should one park cater to the classics while another focuses on the new age of animation? Where should a line be drawn? Perhaps Radiator Springs Racers should be the last Pixar addition for a while as Disney California Adventure re-adjusts to its soon-to-be-newfound popularity.

In the meantime, we can’t wait to find out what surprises this mega attraction has in store, and we’re sure Radiator Springs Racers will be a welcome addition to a park given new life.

About Theme Park Tourist

Theme Park Tourist is your essential source for news, reviews and money-saving tips from theme parks around the world. Whether you are looking for cheap deals on tickets and hotels, want to know when a new attraction is scheduled to open, or are hoping to keep up-to-date with the latest news and updates from your favorite theme parks, Theme Park Tourist has got you covered.

We have been helping readers save time and money at theme parks since February 2009, and offer a wide range of tools to assist you in planning your theme park trip.

About the Authors

Nick Sim



[Nick Sim](#) is the founder and lead editor of Theme Park Tourist, and is responsible for keeping readers up-to-date with all the latest theme park news and reviews. Through the time he dedicates to tracking plans for new attractions and updates to existing rides, Nick has developed Theme Park Tourist into one of the web's leading sources for information on theme parks' future plans.

Brian Krosnick



[Brian Krosnick](#) covers previews and reviews of new attractions in the US, and further afield on occasion. A twenty-year-old Ohioan, he has been an avid fan of theme parks for many years. His favourite attractions are Indiana Jones Adventure (Disneyland, California), Tomb Raider: The Ride (formerly at Kings Island, Ohio) and The Revenge of the Mummy (Universal Studios Florida).

Sebastian Wiseman



[Sebastian Wiseman](#) covers previews of new attractions and events in the UK. Based in London, he is a frequent visitor to the UK's many excellent theme parks, including nearby Thorpe Park and Chessington World of Adventures. However, his favourite destination is Port Aventura in Spain.

Copyright Information

Copyright © Nick Sim, Brian Krosnick and Sebastian Wiseman

Cover image copyright © Disney

All other images copyright © as credited

Published by Theme Park Tourist
<http://www.themeparktourist.com/>

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without written permission except in the case of short excerpts embedded in articles relating to the book. For more information contact Theme Park Tourist via <http://www.themeparktourist.com/contact>