

Disney Blends Imagination and Technology to Deliver Landmarks in Theme Park Innovation

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Through a rich combination of storytelling, guest service, imagination and complex engineering born out of years of research and development, Disney's resorts around the world have become synonymous with cutting-edge achievements in themed entertainment since Disneyland opened in 1955.

Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI), the most diverse creative design and development company in the world, is responsible for the creation — from concept through installation — of all Disney resorts, theme parks and attractions, real estate development and new entertainment venues.

The Imagineering team includes show designers, artists, writers, project managers, engineers, architects, filmmakers, audio and visual specialists, animators, manufacturing groups, computer programmers, land planners, ride system designers, finance experts and researchers. Together they are responsible for all phases of project development — from concept initiation to field at direction and show installation. WDI maintains facilities in Glendale, Calif., Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland Resort, Tokyo Disney Resort and Disneyland Resort Paris.

Walt Disney Imagineering has been granted more than 115 company-owned patents in areas including ride systems, special effects, interactive technology, live entertainment, fiber optics and advanced audio systems. Technological landmarks first introduced in Disney's theme parks include:

- A 360-degree motion picture technology using multiple synchronized cameras (*Circarama, U.S.A.*, Disneyland, 1955); later refined and updated for multiple attractions around the world including *Le Visionarium* (Disneyland Paris, 1992).
- The first daily operating monorail system in the United States (Disneyland, 1959).
- The first roller coaster to use cylindrical rails and urethane wheels (*Matterhorn Bobsleds*, Disneyland, 1959).
- The creation of Audio-Animatronics figures, which allow humans, animals and creatures of fantasy to be animated in three dimensions with an astonishing degree of realism (*Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room*, Disneyland, 1963).
- The first computer-controlled thrill ride (*Space Mountain*, Magic Kingdom, Walt Disney World Resort, 1975).
- An advanced 3-D motion picture photography system (*Magic Journeys*, Epcot, Walt Disney World Resort, 1982); later enhanced for multiple attractions around the world including "*Mickey's PhilharMagic*" (Magic Kingdom, Walt Disney World Resort, 2003).
- A thrilling free-fall attraction with random programming for an unpredictable ride experience (*The Twilight Zone™ Tower of Terror*, Disney's Hollywood Studios, Walt Disney World Resort, 1994).
- State-of-the-art vehicles that move through three-dimensional environments with a capacity for random motion-simulator effects (*Indiana Jones Adventure*, Disneyland, 1995).
- Trackless ride vehicles that follow a random path by relying upon unseen transmitters in the floor (*Pooh's Hunny Hunt*, Tokyo Disneyland, 2000).
- A virtual hang-gliding experience that provides a panoramic view of sweeping landscapes augmented by

scents released during key scenes (*Soarin' Over California*, Disney California Adventure, 2001).

- A custom ride system that combines centrifuge technology with sophisticated virtual imagery for an exhilarating astronaut adventure to Mars (*Mission: SPACE*, Epcot, 2003).
- A blend of digital projection and voice-activated, real-time animation that permit live, unscripted conversations between theme park guests and an animated character (*Turtle Talk With Crush*, Epcot, 2004).

As Walt Disney once said, "It's kind of fun to do the impossible."

-30-

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