

# Disney's Art of Animation Resort Opens, Putting Hundreds More Cast Members to Work in Central Florida

## ***Central Florida Leaders Gather for Historic Moment at Walt Disney World Resort***

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. May 31, 2012 – Disney's Art of Animation Resort opened its doors for the first time today as hundreds of Cast Members welcomed guests and community leaders from across Central Florida who shared in the historic moment.

Disney's Art of Animation Resort supported 800 jobs during construction and once completely open later this year, will employ 750 Cast Members.

"Disney's Art of Animation Resort is part of our continued investment in Central Florida and helps keep our region squarely on the map as the world's premiere family vacation destination," said Meg Crofton, president of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Operations, US and France. "As more and more families travel and make memories together, they also want to stay together, which has created demand for family suites."

The big blue world of Nemo and friends comes to life as Disney's Art of Animation Resort opens its first phase today with 320 *Finding Nemo* family suites, which sleep up to six guests. *Cars* will open June 18 with 480 suites, and *The Lion King* opens Aug. 10 with another 320 suites. All the themed areas offer elaborate storytelling both inside and out, from each of the classic films. Standard-sized guest rooms will make up *The Little Mermaid* wing, the final phase set to open Sept. 15 with 864 rooms.

The three-story, value-priced resort hotel tells the story of the animation process in phases from pencil drawings to close ups. It immediately transports guests into the worlds of favorite Disney characters and animated films beginning at check-in. Pencil drawings of Nemo, Ariel, Lightning McQueen and Simba adorn the entryway, and a chandelier composed of 77 animation storyboards enhances the lively and modern Animation Hall lobby.

At each wing of the resort, giant sketchbooks filled with favorite characters pave the way to each storyline revealed. And the character sketches become three dimensional with some 2,500 sculpted figures decorating the resort's exterior and interior.

"Our goal is to make guests feel like they have been immersed in the artistry and enchantment of Walt Disney and Disney•Pixar animated classics," said Walt Disney Imagineer Frank Paris.

Inside the guestrooms, everything from linens and carpeting to fixtures and furniture, all tie to the storyline. In *Finding Nemo*, there's coral-shaped chairs and bubble ceiling lights; rusty metallic tiles in the bathroom make guests feel as though they are in the submarine.

Kids of all ages can make a splash at the "Big Blue" pool, the largest resort hotel swimming pool at Walt Disney World Resort measuring 11,859 square feet. Guests will feel like they are swimming with Dory and Nemo as underwater speakers periodically pipe in music and messages from film characters. Guests will enter scenes from the animated world and can explore the colorful reef and East Australian Current with a giant-sized Mr. Ray whose

wings span 27 feet, pose for a picture with Crush or frolic with Squirt in the Righteous Reef, a children's play area.

The food and beverage offerings at Disney's Art of Animation are drawn from guest feedback received at restaurants across Walt Disney World Resort. As a result, the Landscape of Flavors food court will feature new offerings that include fresh smoothies, hand-scooped gelato and a Mongolian grill.

The Pixel Play Arcade, Drop Off pool bar and Ink and Paint gift shop round out the offerings. Kids will enjoy the daily character artist in the main lobby and nighttime movies poolside.

Disney Imagineers continue to put finishing touches on the three wings of the resort opening throughout the summer and into September. At *Cars*, a freshly paved road will lead to the Cozy Cone Motel complete with a Cozy Cone pool and cone-shaped cabanas. It's a journey through an African landscape in *The Lion King* complete with an elephant graveyard play area that invites youngsters to seek hakuna matata time. Treasures from the human world fill Ariel's grotto in an under-the-sea kingdom in *The Little Mermaid* courtyard.

Situated adjacent to Disney's Pop Century Resort, Disney's Art of Animation Resort will open in phases with family suite rates from \$248 per night. The 1,120 family suites include two bathrooms, a kitchenette and three separate sleeping areas that can sleep up to six. The 864 standard rooms sleep up to four, with rates as low as \$95.

Those staying at Disney's Art of Animation Resort are treated to complimentary transportation, Extra Magic Hours and other benefits available to a Disney Resort hotel guest.