

In Their Own Words: Walt Disney Imagineers on the Making of New Fantasyland

Overall:

“Walt came up with the idea of letting our guests step into animated stories, and that was our inspiration for the entire expansion.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

“Our top priorities for this expansion were to create great new guest experiences along with guest comfort. By creating a forest environment, we are able to bring in natural elements such as trees and water. Not only are we able to immerse our guests in these classic Disney stories, we’re able to do it in a cool, calming place that both parents and children can enjoy.” – Tim Warzecha, Senior Project Manager

“Walt once said as long as there is imagination in the world, Disneyland would never be complete. The same principle applies here. At Walt Disney Imagineering, we are always looking to transform our guests’ favorite film environments into the physical world. Our guests will be really impressed with all of the innovation and innovative technology incorporated into New Fantasyland. All of these things fit seamlessly together, hidden behind the show, to take our guests to these magical places.” – Tim Warzecha, Senior Project Manager

“At Walt Disney Imagineering, we are all about the story. Whether we are incorporating circus peanuts in the concrete near Dumbo the Flying Elephant or bringing Lumiere to life in an incredible new way, the goal is all about bringing those cherished Disney stories to life.” – Tim Warzecha, Senior Project Manager

“What we were essentially asked to do is double the size of Fantasyland – a challenge that was both daunting and thrilling. As we do with all projects, we began asking ourselves what stories we wanted to tell and where we wanted to take our Guests. We quickly fell in love with the idea of a forest. So many great Disney films involve a princess venturing out into the woods. That’s where the real adventure happens before the stories get wrapped up at the castle ... We just loved that story thread, and that proved to be our most critical creative decision. As much as we love the regal, renaissance environment of the Fantasyland we know today, the creation of a forest gave us a new palette to work with and a new world to explore beyond the castle wall.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

“To finally see guests experience something you’ve helped bring to life is absolutely like Christmas. The guest experience is our singular focus throughout the design process. We aren’t just trying to create worlds; we’re trying to create feelings and reactions. So the emotion we feel the first time we see guests exit a new attraction and react to the experience is really hard to describe. Seeing guests enjoy our work is – for all of us – the pinnacle.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

Under the Sea ~ Journey of The Little Mermaid:

“The queue of this attraction is incredible. The sound of the waterfalls as you travel down into the grottos, coupled with the sea-shanty music and the rich vegetation and detailed rockwork and the dramatic lighting – it all comes together to really transport you. We’re taking you down into the foundation of Prince Eric’s castle. It’s truly the first scene in this story.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

“What we’ve done is taken you from an animated world to a 3D environment. We’re bringing Prince Eric’s castle from the classic Little Mermaid film to life. Guests will be able to walk through and explore the tide pools below the castle and eventually board their clamshell vehicle and go under the sea with Ariel and her friends.” – Dave

Minichiello, Director, Creative Development

Mermaid Mural – Guest Load-in Area:

“This was the first time that we have used digital artwork to create a piece like this, so it was an interesting experiment with some of the modern technology that really helped us.” – Colleen Meyers, Principle Show Production Designer

Be Our Guest Restaurant:

“One of the ways that we are immersing our Guests into the story of Beauty and the Beast is through our mural. It transports you to the time and place—where there’s a beautiful starry sky over a fictional valley in France that comes directly from the film. It reinforces the idea that you are way out in the middle of nowhere...you have just been magically transported to somewhere far beyond.” – Ted Robledo, Senior Concept Designer

“Where do you even begin with details in the Be Our Guest Restaurant? My favorite part of that restaurant is just the transformation that happens to you as a Guest when you walk through it. It’s something that most of our Guests won’t be able to pick up on, but as Walt used to say, sometimes it’s the details you don’t notice that are the most important. As a Guest, you may not know why you’re feeling what you’re feeling, but you’re definitely feeling it.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

“When you see the Beast’s castle, it feels like it’s two miles up the cold mountain. We’ve even carved the rockwork around the castle to capture the personality. You’ll notice everything is very sharp and angular.” -Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

Gaston’s Fountain:

“Gaston was never shy at expressing how important he thought he was. In the movie, there is a fountain at the center of the village that Belle sits down at. We thought, if we’re going to bring in a fountain, why not take that a step further?” – Ted Robledo, Senior Concept Designer

Gaston’s Tavern:

“Gaston’s Tavern is fabulous! The team has made things out of antlers I never thought possible – chandeliers and door pulls and window locks, you name it. The place really captures Gaston. If any space we’ve created is a representation of a character’s personality, this is it. Even the marquee is incredible. This might be the sleeper hit of the entire project.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

Enchanted Tales With Belle:

“Immediately when guests enter Maurice’s workshop, they see expressions of his inventive nature in the form of objects and half-made projects. The one thing that is completely out of place, though, is a beautiful gilded mirror. What our guests discover is that the mirror will come to life and become a portal into the Beast’s castle.” – Ted Robledo, Senior Concept Designer

“Guests will act out roles from the story recounting some of Belle’s adventures. You’re not just watching the experience...you’re living it.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

“The storytelling starts when you enter the queue. You’ll see that Maurice has used all this old stuff and cobbled them together to create this environment. Everything looks like Maurice made it except for the Enchanted Mirror. That’s the star of the show...and Maurice’s most treasured possession.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

Seven Dwarfs Mine Train:

“One of the exciting things about creating new experiences is that we are to take familiar stories and explore new parts of them. Our guests have been able to spend time exploring the story focused on Snow White; now it’s time to spend time with the Dwarfs as they mine for gems.”

- Mark Kohl, Director, Project Management

Princess Fairytale Hall:

“At New Fantasyland, we’re all about the details. And Princess Fairytale Hall is no exception. Guests will be immersed in the world of the Princesses like never before with regal stained glass windows, portraits of the Princesses themselves and more.” – Mark Kohl, Director, Project Management

“When we think about Walt Disney World Resort, we think about the Magic Kingdom. When we think about the Magic Kingdom, we think about Fantasyland. And when we think about the Princesses, we think about the land where we celebrate their stories every day; Fantasyland! Fantasyland is the heart of the Magic Kingdom. And what better place is there for our guests to meet their favorite Princesses?” – Mark Kohl, Director, Project Management

Casey Jr. Splash ‘n’ Soak Station:

“What I love most about the Casey Jr. Splash ‘n’ Soak Station isn’t something you physically see, but rather a great memory I have from the research that went into the project. We took a trip up to a circus museum in Baraboo, Wis., which has an amazing collection of old circus wagons. It was so much fun to be able to climb over, underneath and inside those incredible old wagons. We took thousands of photos and made countless sketches that influenced the colors, textures and details of our water-play area. That research trip was one of my favorite days on the entire project.” - Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

Dumbo, the Flying Elephant:

“My favorite details at the expanded Dumbo, the Flying Elephant attraction have to be the sculptures of the storks carrying the little baby Dumbos atop the attraction. Our artists really did a great job, not only creating those details, but also capturing that wonderful moment in the film when the stork delivers baby Dumbo. It’s very cute.” – Chris Beatty, Creative Director, New Fantasyland

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