

Disney Takes Four Themed Entertainment Awards

TEA Honors Go to Disney Attractions, Cruise Ship and Veteran Imagineer

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The Force was with Walt Disney Parks and Resorts recently when **Star Tours – The Adventures Continue** earned one of four top Disney honors among the 18th annual Thea Awards announced by the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA).

Star Tours – The Adventures Continue, which opened at Disneyland Park and Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World Resort this past summer, took a Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement – Attraction Refresh. Other top Thea Awards went to **The Magic, The Memories, and You!** at Magic Kingdom in Walt Disney World Resort for Outstanding Achievement – Show Spectacular and to **Animation Magic** at Animator's Palate aboard the soon-to-launch **Disney Fantasy** cruise ship for Ingenious use of Technology.

TEA, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, gave the Buzz Price Thea Award Recognizing a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements to **Disney Imagineer Joe Rohde**, who led the team that created and built Disney's Animal Kingdom and who recently oversaw the creative development of Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, Ko Olina, Hawai'i.

The awards, to be presented at a March gala at the Disneyland Hotel, pay tribute to excellence in the creation of extraordinary experiences, attractions, exhibits and places around the world. TEA International Board President Rick Rothschild says the themed entertainment industry is "producing wonderful examples of achievement in a broader and broader market." And while technology, interactivity and sophistication of themed environments are key factors in presenting the awards, storytelling is at the heart of the best themed attractions.

"It all starts with story, and that's certainly a thing well understood by Disney and by our industry," says Rothschild, adding that the themed-entertainment creative bar gets higher each year. "The proficiency and capabilities availed by technological advances do certainly play into the bar, but it's not technology alone. It's the creative ingenuity of the individuals at all levels of our industry that challenge themselves to discover new ways of storytelling."

The Thea Awards committee praised **Star Tours – The Adventures Continue** for staying true to the "Star Wars" stories and for the attraction's "breakthrough experience" featuring new story elements, advanced special effects, guest interaction and 54 potential show scenarios.

The Magic, The Memories, and You! projection show at Cinderella Castle inside Magic Kingdom Park at Walt Disney World Resort won the top "Spectacular" category for its technology, visual creativity, adept directorial pacing and stirring musical score that deliver a "unique, emotionally fulfilling experience for the audience."

Animation Magic in the Animator's Palate restaurant aboard the forthcoming **Disney Fantasy** cruise ship won a Thea for its one-of-a-kind experience for diners at which they will see their own hand-drawn characters come to life and interact with animated Disney characters on a screen. The fourth ship in the Disney Cruise Line fleet, Disney Fantasy will set sail on its inaugural cruise in March 2012.

Joe Rohde, senior vice president and creative executive at Walt Disney Imagineering, will receive the Buzz Price Thea Award recognizing a lifetime of distinguished achievements. Rothschild says Rohde represents "the continuing creative energy within our industry" and that "he's a legend in his own time, of course."

A 30-year Disney veteran, Rohde says he is grateful to TEA “for their gracious consideration of my name and efforts.

“It’s a great honor to be counted among the names that are already graced with this recognition,” Rohde says. “I hope that I’ll have the opportunity for a few more lifetime achievements to flesh out my portfolio a bit, and better deserve the honor.”

TEA is an international non-profit alliance founded in 1991 and based in Burbank, Calif., that represents some 7,000 creative specialists including architects, designers, technical specialists and scenic fabricators who work in more than 650 firms in 40 countries.