Walt Disney World News

Voyagers Travel ‘Under the Sea’ Encountering Ariel and Her Friends As ‘Under The Sea ~ Journey of The Little Mermaid’ Opens at New Fantasyland

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – Guests enter the enchanting story of “The Little Mermaid,” complete with characters and songs from the Academy Award-winning Disney animated motion picture, when they board **Under the Sea ~ Journey of the Little Mermaid**, in Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World Resort.

Set in and around Ariel’s underwater world and located inside New Fantasyland, the new attraction combines the enduring appeal of a classic Disney “dark ride” with wonderful technological innovations to offer guests a personal journey into the scenes of the film.

Adventurers on the attraction will feel as if they are descending below the ocean’s surface, one of the special effects that take this “dark ride” to a new level of sophistication. Once “under the sea,” guests will find themselves immersed in the classic story of “The Little Mermaid,” sharing Ariel’s adventure through advanced *Audio-Animatronics* technology, a magical cast of characters and a captivating musical score that will entice everyone to sing along.

“It’s so exciting to bring these classic Disney characters to life,” said Chris Beatty, creative director for New Fantasyland. “To be able to recreate Ariel’s world and invite our guests to Prince Eric’s Castle and then under the sea to meet Ariel and her friends is something that’s truly magical.”

‘Out of the sea … Wish I could be … Part of that world’

Guests arrive at the shoreline of Prince Eric’s Castle and descend through the grottos and caverns to board their clamshell.

Along the queue, the fun begins. Guests encounter a shipwreck along the smooth rocks of the cliffs. As guests descend deeper into the grottos and caverns, sea life, including barnacles and starfish, appear to help guide them to their destination. Mischievous little crabs engage guests in games of “trash” or “treasure” to help the crabs fill their treasure chest.

The ride loading area features a one-of-a-kind 86-foot hand-painted mural depicting the characters from “The Little Mermaid.”

Guests begin their journey by boarding their own colorful “clamshell” ride vehicles, part of the Omnimover ride system that is familiar to fans of the “Doom Buggies” in the Haunted Mansion attraction at Magic Kingdom and Disneyland park. The Omnimover, a Walt Disney Imagineering design, gives passengers a point-of-view experience, directing their attention to the key scenes in the attraction.

Scuttle, the tale-spinning seagull, welcomes guests as they embark on their adventure, doing his best to tell the story of Ariel’s ambition to leave her ocean home and become part of the human world.

'I wanna be …Walking around on those – what do you call 'em? Oh – feet!'

To meet Ariel and participate in her adventure, guests must first head "under the sea." A combination of special effects creates a sense of descending to the ocean floor, all without leaving the clamshell vehicle.

The first locale on the underwater journey is Ariel's grotto, where she keeps the treasures she has found on land – whozits, whatzits and thingamabobs – and sings "Part of Your World."

Next, in a dazzling musical extravaganza with an underwater party atmosphere, dozens of singing and playing marine creatures ("the carp with the harp, the newt with the flute") try to encourage Ariel to remain "Under the Sea." The conductor, of course, is Sebastian the crab.

'It won't cost much … Just your voice! … You poor unfortunate soul'

Despite the warnings, Ariel is determined to visit the Sea Witch to find a way to become human. Ursula's lair is another stunning scene, featuring her slithering henchmen Flotsam and Jetsam and Ursula herself – 7½-feet tall and 12-feet wide, from tentacle tip to tentacle tip. Ursula sings her signature piece, "Poor Unfortunate Souls."

Next, as Ariel's wish to be human is granted, guests follow her up to the ocean surface, where they witness Ariel's friends encouraging Prince Eric to "Kiss the Girl." This inspires a stormy response from the villainous Ursula and leads to the finale, which holds some surprises – even for those who know and love the motion picture.

Created by Walt Disney Imagineering, Under the Sea ~ Journey of the Little Mermaid features the characters from the beloved motion picture, including many of the original voice talents, and is enhanced with the iconic award-winning songs of Howard Ashman and Alan Menken. Glen Keane, supervising animator and character designer for Ariel in the film, was a creative consultant in the attraction's development.

"Many times I've thought, 'Why didn't we have a Mermaid attraction sooner?'" Keane said. "But now I'm glad we didn't. They've done this one so well."

About Walt Disney World Resort

Walt Disney World Resort is a contiguous, nearly 40-square-mile, world-class entertainment and recreation destination featuring four theme parks (Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom); two water adventure parks (Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon); 35 resort hotels (25 owned and operated by Walt Disney World, includes seven Disney Vacation Club resort properties); 81 holes of golf on five courses; two full-service spas; Disney's Wedding Pavilion; ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex; and Downtown Disney, an entertainment-shopping-dining complex. Walt Disney World Resort is also included in vacation packages of Disney Cruise Line. Located at Lake Buena Vista, Fla., 20 miles southwest of Orlando, Walt Disney World Resort opened Oct. 1, 1971. Open daily, year-round.

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