

WORLD PARK

WINTER PART 2 2021

Happy birthday Brogent!

The leading provider of
turnkey media-based
attractions is celebrating
turning 20 with more than
20 new ride openings

INSIDE

Flying Theatres
Global Village Dubai
Tripsdrill
+ more



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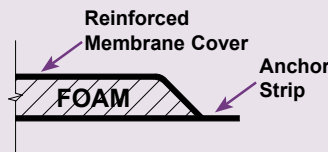
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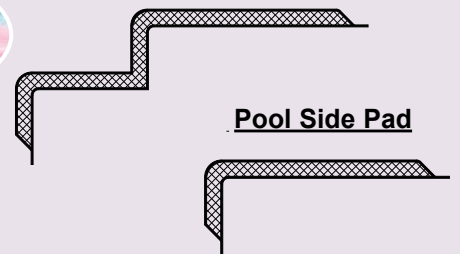
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Sidewinder Tubes



Rope & Netting



Tubes

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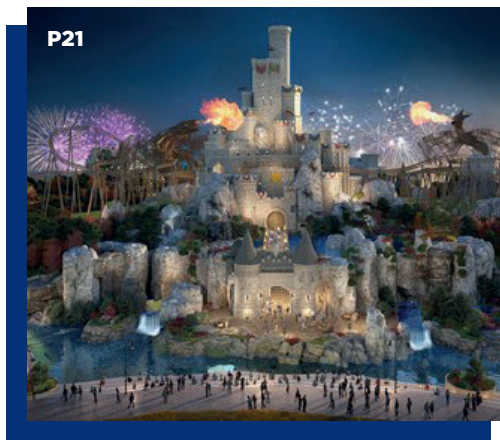
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Park Word

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Welcome to our Winter Part 2 issue! With increasing optimism that with the vaccine rollout, parks that are currently closed may get to re-open in Spring, I ask five operators in Europe if the pandemic has affected purchasing decisions for 2022 and beyond. Their responses are encouraging, turn to page 5 to find out why.

Brogent meanwhile is celebrating turning 20 with 20 new ride openings around the globe. In a conversation with company founder C.H. Ouyang and head of sales and marketing, Stefan Rothaug, I find out what this leading provider of turnkey media-based attractions has in store for 2021 (pp 22-23).

With two new categories included in the line-up, the 2021 Park World Excellence Awards will open for entry on Monday 22 March. Restrictions allowing, this year's event will also return to a live format, in Barcelona, this September. Turn to page 25 to find out why you should get involved.

The first flying theatre opened in the US in 2001. This month's timely Special Feature is, therefore, all about this constantly evolving and increasingly popular ride format (pp 26-40).

In February 2019, I ran a piece on Carnival, the theme park at the centre of Global Village Dubai. This time, I speak to Bader Anwahi, chief executive officer, Global Village, to find out more about the world surrounding it (pp 44-46).

Plus! North American editor, Paul Ruben speaks to Legacy Entertainment president, Taylor Jeffs about the company's work in Asia (pp 52-53); while Bryony Andrews jumps on Zoom with Jonathan Nowak Delgado, managing director and co-founder, Spree Interactive on pages 54 and 55.

All this and much, much more inside!

Enjoy the issue,

Becci

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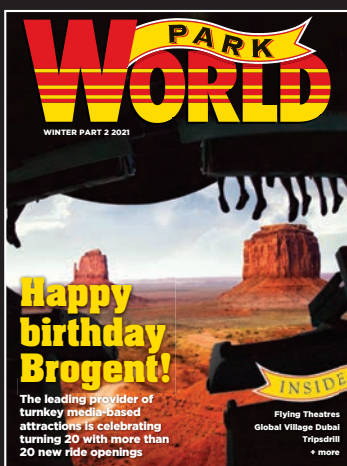
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THIS MONTH'S COVER SHOT:

Leading provider of turnkey media-based attractions Brogent is celebrating turning 20 with 20 new ride openings around the globe. Pictured on this month's front cover is FlyOver Las Vegas. Turn to page 22 to find out more.

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Park News



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Park Hoppin'

with Paul Ruben

Theming a Park

Last year during the coronavirus pandemic I visited Santa's Land Fun Park & Zoo in Cherokee, North Carolina. While there I visited Santa himself, who has been played at the park for years by Clayton Smith, pictured below. The park wasn't busy, so we had some time to talk. In particular, we talked about theming the park to Santa Claus. Since no one owns the intellectual property, it's a very popular idea.

Later I discovered that over the years Santa's Land is just one of at least 15 similarly themed parks to have opened around the world. Of the 15, nine are operating today, three were abandoned and then reopened and are again operating, and three were abandoned. The first to open was Santa Claus Town including Santa's Candy Castle in 1935 in Santa Claus, Indiana. The castle remains standing but is closed. In 1937 a roadside attraction, Santa Claus Town, opened in Santa Claus, Arizona, but has long since been abandoned. Perhaps the most successful park, Santa Claus Land, opened in 1946 in Santa Claus, Indiana. Renamed in 1984 as Holiday World, it operates today as the popular Holiday World & Splashin' Safari.

In 1949 Santa's Workshop opened in Wilmington, New York, where it operates today. Its opening was followed by the 1953 opening of Santa's Village, Jefferson, New Hampshire, and the 1955 debut of Santa's Village, Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada. The same year saw the introduction of Santa's Village, Lake Arrowhead, California. It closed in 1998, then reopened in 2016 as Skypark at Santa's Village.

Santa's Workshop opened in 1956 in Cascade, Colorado, where it continues to operate today. The following year Santa's Land debuted in Putney, Vermont. It subsequently closed in 2011, reopened in 2013, closed the next year, then reopened 2017. 1958 saw the opening of Santa's Village, Scott's Valley, California. It lasted until 1975. Santa's Village, East Dundee, Illinois, opened in 1959, closed in 06 reopen, then reopened in 2011 as Santa's Village Azoosment Park.

Santa's Land Fun Park & Zoo in Cherokee opened in 1966 and is going strong. It's appearance was followed in 1982 by the introduction of Santa's Enchanted Forest, Miami, Florida. Santaworld debuted in 1984 in Mora, Sweden. Perhaps the most authentically themed Santa park opened in 1985 north of the Arctic Circle as Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, Finland. I say authentic because every Christmas Eve Santa Claus himself departs the park in a sleigh pulled by reindeer, to the delight of visitors. Finally, the short-lived Parque Albenoel opened and closed in 2004 in Itaguai, Brazil.

So, there you have it, 15 Santa themed parks. Many of today's largest and most popular parks are themed to the movies, since they all own the rights to these films. To understand the theming it helps to have seen the film. But did you ever notice? Just like the Santa themed parks, when December rolls around, even the largest parks bring out their Christmas decorations, their Christmas celebrations. They don't need a Christmas-themed movie. Everyone understands Christmas, every child loves it.





in association with

Big Question



How has the pandemic affected your purchasing decisions for 2022 and beyond?



Fons Jurgens, Efteling, Netherlands

Although the closure of the park obviously has consequences for Efteling, it is important to keep looking at the long term and to keep working towards our

Vision 2030. This means that we continue to invest in the quality experience for our guests, our employees and technology to ensure that our guests continue to be amazed in our World of Wonders. But we also need to make sure to protect our capacity in the future.

Our goal is to be the only theme park resort in Europe to receive a 9+ rating from visitors by 2030. Despite the park closure, we are moving forward with new developments, albeit moderately and preparing for the reopening. We are looking forward to the opening of the Nest! play forest in early summer and the new Bäckerei Krümel later this year.



Nick Laister, Fairytale Farm, UK

I think one of the biggest changes the pandemic has brought about is that B2B purchasing is getting much more like B2C purchasing.

Before the pandemic, we very much focused on meeting representatives because so little could be done online, but now B2B ecommerce sites are catching up and becoming more like domestic purchases.

We are also leaving decisions until much later than we did before the pandemic, simply

because it is so difficult to plan. We were lucky in 2020, as we didn't have to abandon anything we had paid for, but I expect we will act much more cautiously for 2022 and beyond.

In terms of bigger items, we are still focusing on outdoor attractions because of the uncertainty of our ability to operate indoor facilities. We have just pressed the button on a new dinosaur area instead of the indoor party rooms we had planned for 2022.



Aldo Maria Vigevani, Gardaland, Italy

Despite the pandemic situation, we are positive about the future and will keep on investing in new attractions and accommodations.

In mid-May 2021 we are ready to open the new LEGOLAND Water Park Gardaland, the first LEGOLAND Water Park in Europe and also the world's first inside a theme park that is not LEGOLAND branded.

With an investment of some 20 million euros, LEGOLAND Water Park Gardaland will cover an area of 15,000 square metres and it will be an entirely LEGO themed water park for families. Gardaland, supported by Merlin Entertainments - the UK Group which owns our business, will keep on developing the Resort also over the next few years: we have already planned the launch of a new major attraction for 2022.

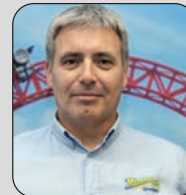


Claudia Leicht, HANSA-PARK, Germany

HANSA-PARK has always had

a well filled project memory which is our basis for decision making. We are constantly pushing projects of all kinds and sizes forward until they are ready for construction. All these projects rank equally, and we are not set to an appointed order. This enables us to decide flexibly and pull the right project at the right time. We've done that very successfully in the past and we will continue to do so in the future. Some projects we have implemented very quickly. KÄRNAPULTEN for example - that project was a matter of less than 12 months, while other projects have had a comparatively long waiting time. T

The Covid-19 pandemic will not change our approach at all. On the contrary, it only shows us that our way of decision making is crisis-proof, and we are thankful for that.

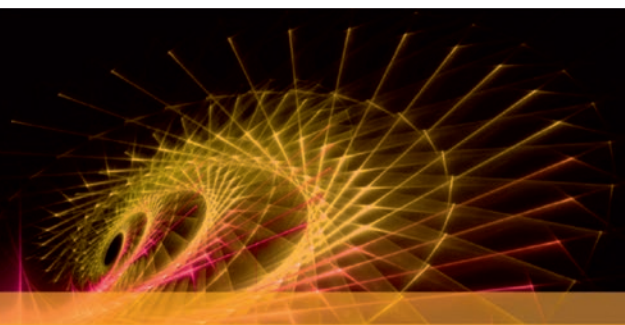


Riccardo Marcante, Mirabilandia, Italy

The pandemic has obviously influenced our decisions, in fact moving all our plans forward, which remain largely unchanged otherwise.

We are about to experience a new season of living with the Covid, but we are confident that the response from visitors will be positive. We have implemented all the necessary measures to ensure our guests have a safe and enjoyable time. Our staff are highly experienced in managing the day-to-day operations of the park safely. We've learned since 2020 that "safe fun" is possible, and park visitors have experienced it directly as well. So, we are convinced that by 2021 the public will still choose to have fun with us.

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COVID-19 impact on the US attractions industry

A study released last month by IAAPA has detailed the massive scope of COVID-19's impact on the US attractions industry workforce – with an employment loss five times larger than the average loss across all other industries.

The report, compiled by Jim Futrell, IAAPA historian and market research professional, showcases an industry in “dire need” of support from elected officials and policymakers who play a key role in facilitating the safe reopening of attractions and can spearhead COVID-19 relief legislation.

“Just as amusement parks and arcades, historical sites, zoos and other attractions were ramping up seasonal hiring last year, the economy shut down,” said John Hallenbeck, vice president, North America, IAAPA. “That meant a sudden and immediate drop in employment. It’s imperative to the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Americans that state and local governments continue to push for the safe reopening of attractions facilities as soon as possible.”

With data sourced directly from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Current Employment Statistics (CES) and Census of Employment and Wages (CEW) programs, key findings from the study included:

- Employees from IAAPA’s constituent industries (which include amusement and theme parks, amusement arcades, historical sites, museums, zoos and aquariums, nature parks and other similar institutions) saw their wages fall by nearly \$1.1 billion, when comparing the second quarter of 2020 to the same period in 2019.
- Amusement and theme park employees were among the hardest hit, accounting for 70% of this drop in wages.
- In July 2020, typically the peak month of employment for the attractions industry, employment fell by 165,000 or 35% compared to July 2019.
- Lost positions in amusement parks and arcades were five times larger than the average loss across other industries.
- Rather than experiencing the usual seasonal



John Hallenbeck



Jim Futrell

employment increase, U.S. amusement parks and arcades, historical sites, zoos and similar attractions saw a combined drop of more than 125,000 employees between March and May 2020, with some sectors seeing employment levels not seen since 1990.

“The economic impact of the pandemic on the attractions industry has been devastating,” said IAAPA in a press statement. “Some attractions closed and were not allowed to reopen. Some closed for several months in 2020, while others remained open, but at limited capacities. Many of these businesses will never reopen.”

Response by elected officials and policymakers is said to have had a measurable effect on how regional attractions have weathered this challenging time. Futrell noted, however, that several factors have contributed to continued employment impacts even in regions that have reopened. “While IAAPA members that have reopened have proven they can do so safely, these businesses continue to struggle due to consumer reluctance and guest capacity limitations, severely affecting revenue and the ability to bring back and rehire staff to previous levels.”

In July 2020, IAAPA published “COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Considerations for the Global Attractions Industry,” a detailed document developed to support attractions facilities as they sought to reopen with new operating protocols and procedures in place. Developed and continually updated in partnership with attractions industry leaders from around the world and in consultation with medical professionals and health-related guidance from governmental agencies, the Guidance has continued to serve as a valuable resource and is available in English and Spanish. The Guidance has also been shared with state and local governments to help tell the complete story of the attractions industry’s commitment and ability to safely reopen. The guidelines have also been referenced globally by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation in their Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism, and the World Tourism and Travel Council in their Attractions: Global Protocols for the New Normal resource.

“IAAPA estimates the effects of the pandemic will have cost \$23 billion in economic losses in 2020 alone,” added Hallenbeck. “On behalf of our industry and the thousands of people who rely upon it, I strongly urge Congress to pass additional relief legislation that includes attractions industry-specific support. This should include additional PPP funding, extension of the employee retention tax credit through 2021, and financial aid to state and local governments to allow for the creation of grant and loan programs specific to our industry and liability protection for businesses that can safely reopen. And I encourage elected officials to continue to work on reopening businesses in their states. Safety has always been the attractions industry’s number-one priority. That will never change. Parks and attractions are ready to reopen responsibly and can do so with guidance and regional support.”

Waterpark Planned for OWA

The Park at OWA, Foley, Alabama, plans an \$84 million expansion that will include an Indoor waterpark, outside wave pool with flow rider, and a luxury RV Park. They are looking at a Spring 2022 opening for all of those amenities. OpenAire is the supplier of the indoor waterpark structure with retractable roof. Pro Slide is the provider of the slides package. More details will be announced soon.



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Experiential adventure Distortions Monster World now open at Denver Pavilions



Distortions Monster World, a new experiential artainment adventure presented by “Monster Makers” at Distortions Unlimited and the award-winning production team at Blazen Illuminations, just debuted its limited-run engagement at Denver Pavilions on Denver Colorado’s 16th Street Mall.

Distortions Monster World is an immersive adventure for all ages that takes guests through a series of cinematic environments featuring interactive installations and infamous creatures and characters including many recognisable from music, film, TV and attractions.

Visitors will be transported to another place as they explore many different worlds in a more than 19,000 square foot (1,765 sq m) space where giants roam, aliens have arrived, and guests never know what’s around the corner – life-sized ghouls,

snarling gargoyles, creatures of the night, and more. This is the perfect opportunity for guests to get up close and personal for an otherworldly photo.

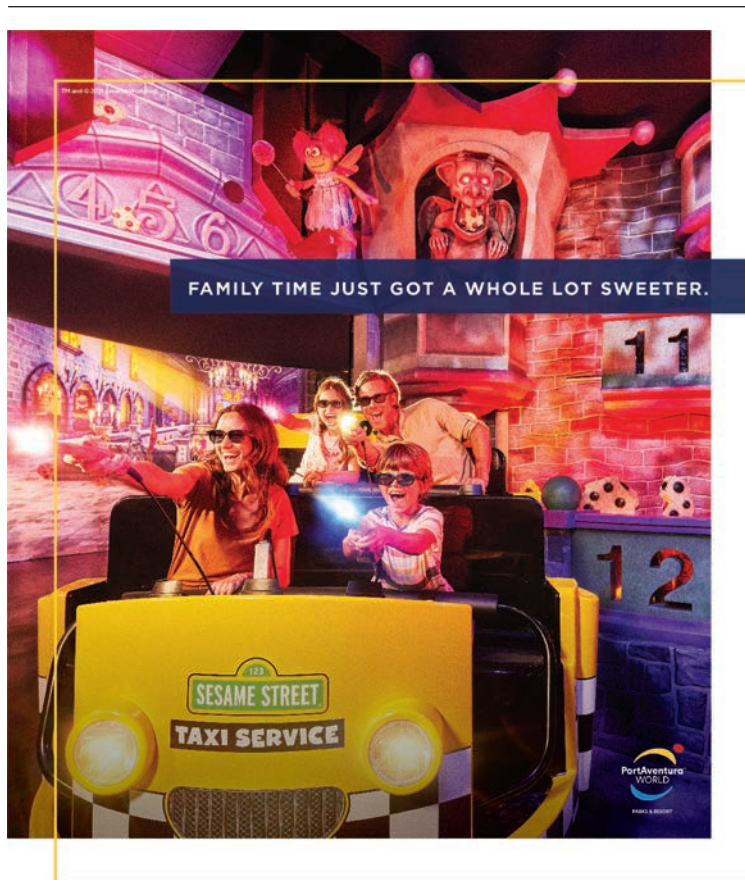
The monsters featured throughout the exhibit are the creations of Distortions Unlimited, owners Ed Edmunds and Marsha Taub-Edmunds, their talented team, and the many artists and sculptors Distortions works with. Distortions has been making monsters out of Greeley, Colorado, for more than 40 years and is one of the preeminent designers of animatronic monsters and displays for the dark entertainment industry. Edmunds, Taub-Edmunds and the creative team at Distortions Unlimited were also the focus of the reality show “Making Monsters” that aired on The Travel Channel in the US for three seasons.

“Distortions Monster World is a celebration of a lifetime of making monsters and a way to share our love for all things monster,” said Edmunds. “I have

never seen monsters as ugly, and certainly haven’t associated them with just one time of the year. My hope is that visitors will walk away appreciating the art and beauty behind these creatures and realise there is more to monsters than meets the eye.”

Each scene features vibrant theatrical lighting and immersive sound design, projection, special effects, and more. These elements of the exhibit are designed, developed, and produced by the award-winning production team from Blazen Illuminations, a Loveland, Colorado, based business.

“Distortions Monster World is a large, explorable, interactive art installation,” stated Nate Webb, co-owner of Blazen Illuminations. “This artainment experience will immerse visitors in unique environments using interactive technology, props, sets, and engaging storylines — all tied together by the theme of a lifetime of making monsters.”



Sunkid provides family ride for Dream Island in Moscow

Leading provider of family attractions Sunkid has revealed details of the interactive tower attraction it has supplied for the ‘Land of Dinosaurs’ at indoor theme park Dream Island in Moscow, Russia.

Dream Island is the largest year-round indoor theme park in Europe, and the first in Russia. The park consists of nine different worlds featuring famous cartoon characters. In one of the fairy tale worlds guests will meet Mowgli and his animal friend Baloo, who are on an adventure hunt in the Land of Dinosaurs.

The interactive Tower from Sunkid has been integrated into the landscape, designed as a tree in keeping with the land’s theme and fitting into the jungle playscape. A giant snake peeks out from between the branches at the very top of the tree. At more than nine metres high, this interactive Sunkid Tower not only offers a trip to lofty heights in the jungle world, but also serves as the perfect vantage point.



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The sky is the limit

First Mirage Amusements location in Abu Dhabi opens

Home to exciting family-friendly experiences, The Galleria on Al Maryah Island, Abu Dhabi has introduced Mirage Amusements, an interactive, kids play area, just in time for the midterm break.

The first Mirage Amusements location in Abu Dhabi, the new attraction is conveniently located between the Family Park and the Level 2 food court. Mirage Amusement includes three distinct experiences designed to provide families with fun and safe activities suitable for all ages as they dine, shop and play at The Galleria.

At Mirage Amusement, kids can put on a construction hat for the day and join an edutainment activity for the whole family at 'Diggers Lab'. The mini construction site offers thrills and excitement while giving guests the opportunity to experience



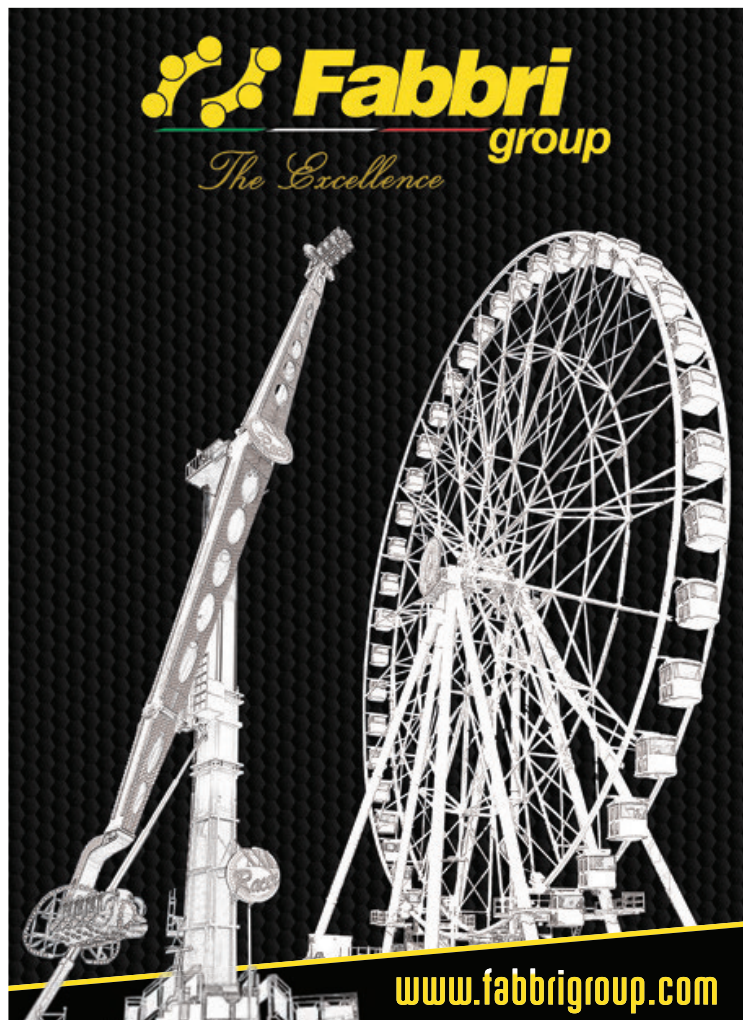
operating small-scale construction machinery.

Guests can experience the joy of indoor driving at 'Drifty'. This electric car offers little ones a safe and fun experience suitable for all ages. Kids can get behind the wheel and enjoy simulation driving on a specially designed track that tests the levels of ability, sensitivity and improvisation.

They can also drive around on their favourite rolling motorised animal at 'Fun Rider'. Little

adventurers choose their pick from a variety of colourful LED animal bikes. Padded and softened with plush material, these bikes are easy enough for young children to manoeuvre and strong enough to carry parents and adults.

Guests can also enjoy family-friendly experiences such as the Xtreme Zone, three rooftop parks as well as some of the world's leading and exclusive retail and entertainment brands.



Six Flags Great America gets world's tallest water coaster

Postponed in 2020, Six Flags Great America, Gurnee, Illinois, will introduce an innovative, record-breaking new water coaster at the park's Hurricane Harbor in 2021. Called Tsunami Surge, it will be the tallest water coaster in the world towering over 86 feet high, using water-blasting jet-propulsion technology for fast uphill speeds and adrenaline-pumping drops. From WhiteWater West, the new coaster will propel riders through 950 feet (290 m) of slides and tunnels at a speed of 42 feet per second (13 m/s). In addition, and for the first time at any Six Flags park, Tsunami Surge will feature new, AquaLucent visual effects that create bursts of colors and patterns, intensifying the ride experience as guests race through the tubes.





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Imagine exhibitions to launch new Harry Potter exhibition in 2022



Great news for Harry Potter fans around the world! A newly innovative WIZARDING WORLD exhibition is now under development and is scheduled to make its worldwide debut in 2022.

Imagine Exhibitions has announced a partnership with Warner Bros. Consumer Products to create an all-new Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts exhibition which is slated to tour in multiple regions around the world including: North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific Region (APAC) and Europe, Middle-East and Africa (EMEA).

The all-new Harry Potter: The Exhibition, will be a scalable experience that will delight fans from around the world, the exhibition will have a footprint between 10,000 square feet (929 square meters) up to 20,000 square feet (1,858 square metres).

"We are honoured to be entrusted with the iconic Harry Potter brand and excited to develop and share an exhibition experience that celebrates the magic of the WIZARDING WORLD," said Tom

Zaller, CEO of Imagine Exhibitions. "We look forward to working with world-class partners, promoters, and sponsors to bring an all-new Harry Potter: The Exhibition to fans around the globe."

The initial venue for the all-new Harry Potter: The Exhibition will be announced in the coming months.

For over 20 years, the Harry Potter stories and films have captivated fans worldwide. For today's growing community, and for generations to come, the WIZARDING WORLD connects all aspects of this magical realm, including seven much-loved novels (which have sold over 500 million copies worldwide), eight timeless Harry Potter films, the multiple Tony and Olivier award-winning stage show Harry Potter and the Cursed Child and the first two of the five-part Fantastic Beasts film series. Harry Potter: The Exhibition will deliver to a devoted and growing fanbase a comprehensive touring exhibition.

The new exhibition will celebrate the most iconic moments of the films and stories of Harry Potter, Fantastic Beasts, and the expanded WIZARDING WORLD through an immersive, behind-the-scenes exhibition experience. This groundbreaking touring exhibition will present beautifully crafted environments that honour the beloved characters, settings, and beasts seen in the films while exploring the filmmaking magic that brought them to life. Visitors will get an up-close look at authentic props and original costumes from the Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts films as they engage with innovative, awe-inspiring, and magical

environments and installations.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with the experts at Imagine Exhibitions, on this all-new Harry Potter exhibition," said Peter van Roden, senior vice president of Global Themed Entertainment at Warner Bros. Consumer Products. "Everyone involved with this project is committed to bringing a masterfully crafted newly innovative WIZARDING WORLD experience to fans around the world."



Ice Storm damages Enchanted Forest

Enchanted Forest, Turner, Oregon, has suffered extensive damage from an ice storm on 12 February. The weight of an inch of ice piling up on tree branches toppled a dozen fir trees and snapped off limbs that crashed into rides and structures.

The train ride was smashed, the tower was smacked off the castle, and other miniature structures were crushed in the villages handmade by park founder Roger Tofte, who started building Enchanted Forest in the mid-1960s. The owners began repairs while the park was still without power.

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Hologate to open extended-reality entertainment facility in Germany

Hologate, a global market leader in immersive location-based entertainment, has broken ground on a first of its kind 1,200m² immersive entertainment facility, Hologate World.

Opening in September 2021, Hologate World will be the largest "Extended-Reality" entertainment space in Germany. In addition to a bar, lounge with food service, and indoor and outdoor gathering areas, Hologate World will feature the latest of Hologate's virtual reality systems, extended reality escape rooms, and a competitive esports arena, in addition to several proprietary entertainment experiences that will be making their world premieres at the opening.

"We are very excited to be partnering with P&P Group on this game-changing project. With the introduction and inclusion of fresh, never-before-seen, immersive entertainment options, alongside our iconic ARENA and BLITZ systems, and all within a large, socially-focused, fun-for-everyone space, Hologate World presents the next level of immersive location-based entertainment for Hologate and the industry as a whole," said Leif Petersen, Hologate CEO and founder.

The Hologate World flagship location will be housed at the new 18,000 m² FLAIR urban marketplace in Fürth, Germany. This ultimate entertainment anchor



serves as a blueprint for further franchise locations looking for a modern entertainment facility to get people off their couches and back into their retail and hospitality locations.

"Our goal with FLAIR is to create a dynamic social experience and to generate maximum attendance through the numerous offers. In addition to an excellent

mix of tenants and innovative gastronomy concepts, we were looking for the ultimate entertainment highlight for this vibrant lifestyle location in the heart of the city. With Hologate World, we have found it and can thus offer a new, incomparable attraction that is globally one of a kind," said Michael Peter, P&P Group CEO and owner.

A surfboard roller coaster experience

New from Extreme Engineering, the Surfin Tsunami is understood to be the only stand-up surfboard roller coaster on the market. This "radical" roller coaster experience utilises all of the safety and design features found in Extreme Engineering's Cloud Coaster. Riders instantly transform into surfers, gliding on a suspended roller coaster surfboard with sharp turns, sudden drops and stops. The surfboard ride vehicle allows participants to stand up safely, easily adjusting to surfers of all ages.



Surfin Tsunami offers any desired length, custom theme, or track layout. This suspended coaster can be designed to fit around existing structures, be designed to fit seamlessly indoors and designed to fit within existing attractions at an amusement park or resort.

Surfin Tsunami features patented, high-load capacity magnetic brakes on every ride vehicle. No power, no friction or brake pads are required to slow down the ride vehicle. The coaster cart has a built-in and adjustable sway control system, creating the banking on the Surfin Tsunami's ride vehicle, not the track. An electronic safety release lap bar is equipped on every seat, comfortably allowing guests to stand on the surfboard ride vehicle. Minimum rider height is 40 inches (102 cm) and up to 250 pounds (113 kg) in rider weight per cart. Increased capacity can be achieved with slight modifications made to the track, additional ride vehicles and block zones.

50th anniversary wheel installation announced at Clacton Pavillion, UK

Clacton Pavilion is set to install Clacton's 150th Anniversary Wheel in March after being granted planning permission. Measuring over 30 metres high and 20 metres wide, the wheel will be situated within the grounds of Pavilion with glorious views across the seafront. The new tourist attraction marks the town's historic landmark and will create 10 new jobs in the town.

The landmark attraction will be in place within the month and ready to accept its first guests once the COVID-19 restrictions begin to be lifted. It will consist of 24 gondolas, able to hold a total of 144 guests at a time, with many adapted for wheelchair access. Local businesses can sponsor gondolas to put their own stamp on a project that celebrates a special occasion for Clacton with half of the monies raised going to local charities. Once open to the public, guests will be able to book a time to enjoy a ride online.

Billy Peak, owner of Clacton Pavilion, said: "We're delighted Tendring District Council were as excited as we were about Clacton's 150th Anniversary Wheel when we put the idea to them last year. It will be a huge tourist



attraction for many years to come and marks a fantastic historical landmark for the town. The idea came to us after seeing a similar project in San Francisco to celebrate 150 years of the Golden Gate Bridge and if it is good enough for them then it is good enough for us! I can't wait to see it in situ within the next few weeks and to welcome our very first guests as and when the lockdown restrictions are lifted around the UK."



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Aqualantis to open at Energylandia

Opening in 2021, Aqualantis is the newest zone at Polish theme park Energylandia. The new section has been designed to resemble an ancient, sunken city over an area of six hectares.

Aqualantis, which was designed by Dutch company Jora Vision, is themed around the ancient city of Atlantis. One day the city was taken by a giant wave, and it wasn't until recently that the ruins have been found by brave explorers. The streets resemble an ancient, sea land with all details made with utmost precision.

The new zone at Energylandia will feature 10 new attractions. Firstly, new coaster Abyssus, a Shockwave

Double Launch Coaster made by Vekoma, which boasts an electromagnetic launch and a maximum speed of 100 km/h. The Roller Coaster has been themed to appear as a pumping station for draining water from the sunken kingdom.

Also featured will be Light Explorer is a family boomerang roller coaster; Grotto Expedition is a sightseeing boat expedition that leads through mysterious caves and a magnificent lagoon outside the city. For younger guests there are several smaller carousels: the Burning Engine, which allows the kids to sit behind the wheel of a "real fire engine" and try to extinguish fire in a small building in the middle, and the Submarine Dive, a carousel with small submarine boats. Elsewhere in the new area is Water Works, a water playground, and new interactive carousels: Stormy Ship and Magic Pump. Finally, Tidal Wave Twister is a Disco Coaster, a twirling disc which moves around a short track pivoting up and down.

In the main market square of the city guests will find a number of snack and sweets selling points, as well as shops with souvenirs.



Organisers of The WLSL Event announce #21in21

Now in its 12th year, The World's Largest Swimming Lesson (WLSL) serves as a crucial platform for the aquatics industry to build awareness about the fundamental importance of teaching children to swim. With a whole year of learn to swim programmes having been lost in 2020, the need to provide children with access to formal swimming lessons this summer is more important than ever.

"A dire consequence of the pool closures created by the 2020 pandemic is that millions of children did not have the chance to begin swimming lessons as they normally would," said Rick Root, president of the World Waterpark Association, founding organisation of the World's Largest Swimming Lesson.

As waterparks, swim schools and other aquatic venues return to a more normal operating schedule in 2021, TEAM WLSL is unveiling a new #21in21 campaign to encourage host locations of all sizes to get back on deck for the WLSL event on 17th June 2021.

Whether facilities are able to host just 21 swimmers and their parents due to social distancing protocols or 2,100 because the whole community is in full-swing, organisers are encouraging as many locations as possible to participate in this year's programme.



"Over the last 11 years of hosting the WLSL event, we've learned we can make a real difference in our communities if we all work together," said Root. "By committing to the #21in21 campaign, we can get kids and families back on track to being water aware by participating in life-saving swim lessons."

Aquatic facilities and trainers in the local community are encouraged to help parents connect the dots between learning to swim and staying safer in and around the water. Registration for host locations opens 1 April at www.WLSL.org.



New virtual conference

IAAPA is bringing together industry leaders and top speakers for an upcoming IAAPA Virtual Conference focused on resilience and recovery on 7-8 April, 2021.

On day one, presenters will focus on recovery planning with valuable forecasts from a top economist. Additional experts will share solutions for safe, profitable operations in a COVID environment.

Day two will feature presenters that specialise in motivation and how to inspire your attractions team. Hear from speakers who have overcome major obstacles and learn new strategies for managing your workforce in uncertain times.

The event will be hosted by Johnathan Lee Iverson, showman and former ringmaster, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey.

Speakers include Leon Logothetis, global adventurer, motivational speaker, & author/creator of the book and Netflix show *The Kindest Diaries*; Adam Sacks, president, Oxford Economics Company; Marc Swanson, interim chief executive officer, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment; Amanda Thompson OBE, ICAE, IAAPA chairman and managing director, Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

Peppa Pig theme park to open at Legoland Florida

The World's First Peppa Pig Theme Park will open in 2022 at Legoland Florida Resort. This all-new stand-alone theme park will feature multiple rides, interactive attractions, themed play-scapes, and water play areas, complete with "muddy puddles" and fun live shows daily, all based on instantly recognisable locations from the popular Peppa Pig brand.

Unlimited Florida sunshine and wonderful weather will allow this new theme park to operate year-round. A separately ticketed park, Annual Passes to

Peppa Pig Theme Park will be available as stand-alone memberships or inclusive passes that will also grant admission to Legoland Theme Park, Legoland Water Park, and other regional Merlin Entertainments attractions.

Merlin Entertainments has an exclusive multi-territory licensing agreement with Hasbro, owner of the Peppa Pig brand, to build and operate the Peppa Pig attractions, targeted at the preschool market, as part of its broader strategy to engage in partnerships with some of the world's most popular brands.



Three new rides coming to Water Safari Resort

Construction is back under way at Enchanted Forest Water Safari in Old Forge, New York with the building of three new rides. The new rides are Mamba Strike, Serengeti Stampede, and Killermanjaro's Revenge, all from ProSlide Technologies.

Serengeti Stampede replaces Serengeti Surf Hill. It's a new 293 foot (89 m) long four lane mat racer. The vision of this ride evokes the racing and playful nature of animals that stampede through the Serengeti in Africa.

Many guests were sad to see the legacy ride "Killermanjaro" go, so what better way than to come back bigger and better as Killermanjaro's Revenge, while showcasing the original speed slide at Water Safari! Killermanjaro's Revenge is a 207 foot long (63 m) speed slide that drops guests through the floor into the slide and zooms them to the finish in one long drop.

Mamba Strike is a 285 foot (87 m) enclosed body slide that loops around

Serengeti Stampede after the trapdoor floor opens and drops guests onto the slide. Mamba Strike is named after a venomous snake that originated in Africa.

All three rides are made of fibreglass material replacing the legacy slides that were made from foam. The Mamba Strike and Killermanjaro's Revenge use Skybox technology where the trapdoor floor unexpectedly opens and drops the riders onto the slide. Located next to the Curse of the Silverback on the Water Safari Island, all three new rides will continue the safari theme that was established years ago with the inception of Water Safari in 1988.

Enchanted Forest Water Safari is New York's largest water theme park with more than 50 rides and attractions, including 32 water rides.

The park also features classic amusement rides for all ages, fun food, exciting games, storybook characters, a family circus show and much more.



Michigan's Adventure adds Camp Snoopy

Michigan's Adventure is getting ready to open both of its Muskegon County amusement parks for the first time since the pandemic gripped Michigan. The amusement park plans to welcome its first visitors of the season on May 29.

When the doors open, so will a new children's area, Camp Snoopy. It features five family-friendly rides and playground, including Camp Bus, Beagle Scout Lookout, Pig Pen's Mud Buddies, Peanuts Trailblazers, and Woodstock Express, all from Zamperla, and Beagle Scout Acres, a play area.

Woodstock Express is a family roller coaster with plenty of ups and downs; Beagle Scout Lookout, a version of a colourful hot air balloon that floats high in the sky; Mud Buggies is an all-terrain vehicle ride; Camp Bus, a fun family ride takes passengers soaring up and down and all around on a wacky bus with Snoopy in the drivers' seat. Aboard Trail Blazers, riders will buckle in and zoom around a track, like an off-road expedition. In addition, the new Beagle Scout Acres will feature a large climb-and-play structure with lots of interactive features and things to climb.



Nicola Masin joins Vekoma



Nicola Masin

Nicola Masin has joined Netherlands based Vekoma Rides Manufacturing as its new global sales and business development manager.

Having Nicola Masin on board means Vekoma Rides will be able to expand its services by providing professional sales support in offering innovative designs and high-quality rides and attractions to its existing and future amusement and theme park customers.

Nicola will be responsible for part of EMEA and CIS Countries. With Vekoma

Rides' substantial customer base in these countries, having Nicola joining the team creates an advantage for both Vekoma and its customers, leveraging his many years in the industry as well as his theme park and attractions expertise.

Nicola Masin is a highly skilled professional with over 20 years' international experience in a leading position in the field of theme and amusement parks.

Nicola has been involved in design and product development as well as planning for parks and attractions and

brings substantial know-how to the Vekoma Rides Group.

Peter van Bilsen – executive vice president sales and marketing, said: "Nicola's has a background in sales, marketing and management and his experience in the development and implementation of strategic business development and product development makes him a valuable addition to our team."

Nicola will work closely with Vekoma's sales and product development teams at its corporate offices.

Swedish investment sees Sidijk and SPI Global Play join forces

Global Leisure Group, which consists of market leading play brands as SPI Global Play, Global Attractions, SPI Global Play Retail, The Play Installation Company, SkyRider and TechSpray, has acquired Dutch supplier of air- and foam-filled products Sidijk. With the acquisition of Sidijk, the group aims to strengthen itself in its position as an international market leader in play and leisure sector.

By doubling the production floor to 8.500 square metres in 2020, Sidijk aims to "become the European market leader in leisure total concepts within five years."

The acquisition allows Sidijk to join forces with SPI Global Play and the rest of the group companies. This collaboration enables the group to realise ground-breaking leisure concepts worldwide.

From fully themed Trampoline Parks and Indoor Playgrounds to Ninja Obstacle Courses, Multi Leisure Centres and a wide range of Family Entertainment concepts such as Glow 'N Golf, SkyRider and Laser Gaming.

Ronald Rotteveel, managing director of Sidijk, commented: "Our market position, knowledge and creative solutions combined with the experience and financial strength of Global Leisure Group, enables us to accelerate our growth plans.

"In the past few years, we already worked together with SPI Global Play on several occasions which led to successful projects within The Wall in Utrecht and very recently a number of great projects for Center Parcs in the Netherlands and abroad."

Mikael Wettergren, Group CEO



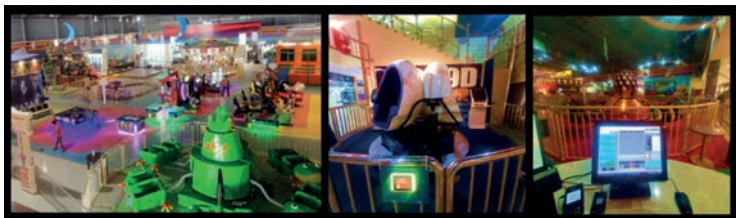
Ronald Rotteveel and Mikael Wettergren

of Global Leisure Group said: "Over the years, Sidijk has become a strong organisation with experienced professionals and an impressive customer base.

"Sidijk's modern confectionery department and expertise in building trampoline parks means we can offer high quality leisure concepts. The

acquisition of Sidijk plays an important role in the future of the group and is a crucial piece of the whole puzzle." With a growing international demand for unique leisure concepts, there is enormous growth potential for the group. "We are therefore looking forward to joining forces with the Sidijk team," said Mikael.

Happy Day migrates to Semnox in Grand Mall Tabuk, Saudi Arabia



Happy Day, a complete go-to family entertainment destination that has been in operation for more than 5 years in Tabuk city, Saudi Arabia has chosen the Semnox's Arcade Debit Card System for a comprehensive and stable customer experience management solution for its operations.

"We were struggling with reporting, CRM and gift management in our old system. Semnox was our best choice with their ease-of-use system we are able

to free our mind and focus more on our customer's needs. We are happy that Semnox has been able to implement and migrate the system smoothly without a downtime amidst the pandemic crisis." said Mr. Khalid Al-Dhakeel, owner of Happy Day.

"Happy Day system migration has been a good experience. We had to work during the pandemic and without any downtime we were able to achieve it successfully. With Semnox system, they can focus on building closer relationship with their customers using multi-tiered membership and loyalty management system. I wish them all the success," said Meghashyam, client manager (MEA) of Semnox Solutions.



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Fire engulfs Playland's Castaway Cove

A January 30 morning fire sent plumes of smoke billowing into the air as it burned at Playland's Castaway Cove, an amusement park on the Ocean City, New Jersey, Boardwalk. Black smoke could be seen from miles away.

Playland's Castaway Cove's arcade and offices, as well as the connected Hamburger Construction Company and Dairy Queen, suffered extensive damage from the west wind-fuelled fire. Neighbouring buildings were spared. The park's signature outdoor amusements that tower over the

Boardwalk such as the Gale Force roller-coaster and Double Shot thrill ride appeared untouched by the flames. There appeared to be no structural damage to the boardwalk. But the decorative pirate ship, located above the boardwalk entrance of the arcade, was destroyed. The cause of the fire has yet to be determined.

Guests were assured on the park's Facebook page that they will rebuild and be open in the Spring. None of the buildings were occupied at the time of the fire and there were no reported injuries.

Auction ordered for Gillian's Wonderland Pier

Gillian's Wonderland Pier, Ocean City, New Jersey, is in foreclosure. The court has ordered the property be put up for auction. However, owner Jay Gillian says that the 92-year-old landmark amusement park will reopen for the 2021 season. He said that although the pier was affected by the pandemic, it had secured financing and would be reopening on 27 March.

According to the court judgement, Gillian defaulted on three loans totaling about \$7.9 million

with the Pier as collateral. Much of the debt was accrued before the pandemic, with a loan of about \$7.3 million due in May 2017. The remainder of the debt was accumulated since then as Gillian took out two more loans without paying off the first.

Because of the pandemic Ocean City was forced to close its beaches and boardwalk just as the tourist season started last year. The pier did reopen later in the summer with adjustments for hygiene and distancing rules in place.



Richard Pretlow named new park president at Six Flags America & Hurricane Harbor

Richard Pretlow has been named park president of Six Flags America theme park and Hurricane Harbor waterpark. Pretlow succeeds Rick Howarth who was promoted to a new role of vice president of procurement after more than 10 years at the helm of Six Flags America.



Pretlow most recently served as director of in-park services at Six Flags Great Escape Resort, located in Lake George, New York.

"We are thrilled to have Richard guiding the Six Flags America team into the next decade of growth for this dynamic property. He brings a fresh perspective, proven track record of success, an understanding of the market, and a collaborative leadership style that will serve him well as park president," said Six Flags regional vice president of park operations, Chris Thorpe. "I am confident he will make an immediate, positive impact as we continue our work to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger than ever."

Pretlow began his theme park career in 2009 at Busch Gardens Williamsburg, in culinary operations, where he found his passion for the theme park industry. After graduating from Hampton University in 2010, he relocated to Langhorne, Pennsylvania, as culinary operations manager at Busch Gardens' sister park, Sesame Place, before departing to become the revenue manager for the Crayola Experience, based in Easton, Pennsylvania. He joined the Six Flags team in 2018 as director of in-park services at Six Flags Great Escape Resort, prior to being promoted to this latest role. Pretlow also holds an MBA from Norwich University.

"It is an honour to join the vibrant and innovative Six Flags America & Hurricane Harbor team," said Pretlow. "We have made major investments in this park in recent years and we are well-positioned for long-term growth. I look forward to working with the team to continually enhance the guest experience and solidify our status as the preferred entertainment provider in the Delaware, Maryland, Virginia area."

Six Flags America will open for its 22nd season on March 6, 2021, the earliest opening in its history.

London Resort a step closer to becoming a reality

In the United Kingdom, The London Resort, one of the most ambitious projects in Europe, has reportedly had its application submission accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.



Comprising over 25,000 pages of reports, assessments and analysis, the Development Consent Order (DCO) – submitted in December – detailed how this largely brownfield former industrial site, will be transformed into one of the most exciting destinations in the world.

The government, through its Planning Inspectorate agency, has a period of 28 days in which they write to the local authorities and, together, assess ‘adequacy’ on the consultation and carry out an evaluation of the application before they accept or reject the submission. It’s understood that it will now be examined by the Planning Inspectorate during a public inquiry to decide whether planning permission will be granted.

Projected to be one of the largest, single site employers in the UK, the London Resort is expected to make a significant contribution to the UK economy. Independent research, contained within the application, forecasts a number of benefits:

- £50bn of gross economic activity (GVA) generated in the UK over the initial 25-year period
- Over 6,000 construction jobs created
- 48,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs created by 2038 including: 8,700 employees by 2024 rising to over 17,000 by 2038, directly employed by the Resort
- Up to £200m in additional tax revenues, directly created by 2038

Crucially, the London Resort is also aiming to be one of the most sustainable, global destinations in the world. It plans to be the first operationally carbon neutral theme park, will deliver a net biodiversity gain and will create a green network of amenity areas and parkland to include areas of environmental enhancement and wildlife habitat creation beside the River Thames for local residents and Resort guests.



Speaking in December 2020, chief executive PY Gerbeau said: “I arrived at this project eighteen months ago and it has been non-stop ever since. We have revived, reviewed, and reprogrammed the entire venture. This will be so much more than just a theme park.”

The application confirms the intent to develop two theme park gates, a waterpark, conference and convention centre, and an e-Sports facility. Over 3,500 hotel rooms will be created and two ferry terminals – one each side of the River Thames – will be built, along with back-of-house facilities, a visitor centre and a new road from the A2. The vast majority of the materials required to construct the Resort will be delivered by River.

Mr Gerbeau continued: “We have built excellent relationships with many stakeholders and are working closely with the elected local council leaders. This has been an incredibly challenging

journey and we look forward to working with the UK government over the next twelve months.”

The London Resort will be the first European development of its kind to be built from scratch since the opening of Disneyland Paris in 1992. If successful in securing development consent, construction could begin in 2022 with a view to opening in 2024.

The London Resort says the success of Disneyland Paris is testament to the impact that a global theme park can have on the economy. A report on the economic contribution of Disneyland Paris found that the attraction added 68bn to the French economy in the 25 years since opening. The region in which the park is located, Seine-et-Marne, has benefitted 22.4bn. The attraction also made 13.7bn in purchases, of which 70% were made locally and 82% were made within France, adding knock-on benefits to local suppliers.



Brogent celebrates turning 20 with 20 new ride openings around the globe!

In a conversation with company founder C.H. Ouyang and head of sales and marketing, Stefan Rothaug, Park World editor, Becci Knowles finds out what this leading provider of turnkey media-based attractions has in store for 2021...



C.H. Ouyang

Headquartered in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, Brogent is a diverse technology company, with rich experience in ride design and digital content creation. The company was founded in 2001 as a developer of software solutions for the mobile phone industry and evolved to a digital content production company. That finally led to contracts with museums and later, amusement parks.

For the past decade, it has been delivering turnkey media-based attractions. Stefan explains: "Media-based attractions have become an integral part of almost every themed entertainment venue, from local amusement parks to destination resorts. With the growing interest in this market segment, Brogent has grown as well."

"One of the regions where media-based experiences are especially valued is the Asian region," says founder C.H. Ouyang. "Interestingly enough, our international breakthrough happened in the US and then in Europe, but

2021/22 will see multiple openings in China and other Asian countries, including a 360-degree panoramic flying experience which is to open at VinWonders Phu Quoc Park in Vietnam."

Team members and partners include interdisciplinary senior designers and engineers, well known theme park designers and film directors. "We are listed on the Taiwanese stock exchange and one of the very few ride suppliers from the Asian region with global impact," C.H. Ouyang says proudly.

Today the company can deliver single subsystems as well as entire projects. Its USP, however, is, and always been, software. "From our earliest beginnings 20 years ago, we were in the software industry the core of our highly integrated ride and entertainment systems is still the software, especially the motion programming of our motion modules," says Stefan.



LEGOLAND Florida



Stefan Rothaug



FlyOver Iceland

C.H. Ouyang continues: “Media-based attractions are the most integrated attractions in the themed entertainment industry. Our projects touch mechanical and electrical engineering, architecture, audio and video systems as well as video production (both live action filming and/or Computer Generated Imaging - CGI). Delivering a product that can compete globally in all those segments is a real challenge and does not only need a lot of in-house expertise but also coordination of large teams with input from clients and third-party suppliers and consultants.

“Our scopes vary from those where we only deliver the ride system (like the Voletarium at Europa-Park in Germany) to those where we deliver the whole attraction including ride system, AV and content (like Sky Voyager at Dreamworld in Australia).”

What’s new for 2021?

“While every project comes with challenges, there is nothing more satisfying than seeing yet another new attraction open”, says C.H. Ouyang: “The greatest achievement is always the next big project that’s about to open: 2021 will be another milestone. We will open more new experiences than in any other year before. Of course, this is also due to one challenge that not only our industry faced this year: all our projects originally planned for 2020 openings have been postponed to 2021 because of COVID-19. But we are ready and committed to make 2021 a great anniversary year, by opening more than 20 new rides around the globe.”

Stefan continues: “Highlights will be a more theatres for the LEGOLAND parks around the world after the success of the first one “THE LEGO® MOVIE Masters of Flight”



Company Headquarters

at LEGOLAND Florida Resort; an experience at Times Square in New York and incredible projects in Asia that you will hear more about in the second half of 2021.”

“That also shows how versatile our rides are,” says C.H. Ouyang. “They can be operated in almost every location-based entertainment facility in the world. Not only theme parks but also shopping centre (like “FlyOver America” at Mall of America or “i-Ride Tapei” at the Nanshan Breeze shopping centre in Taipei, Taiwan), zoos (like “Arctic 1” at Wildlands in Emmen, Netherlands) or as a standalone theatres like the FlyOver branded rides in different cities around the globe or “This is Holland” in Amsterdam. We have successfully supplied flying theatres to standalone projects on three continents and we have converted two IMAX cinema venues to standalone panoramic flying experiences.”

What’s next?

Brogent is already working and implementing new technologies in all areas of its integrated systems, including an even more advanced motion control system, the next generation of audio and video systems with 3D sound and LED technology and record-breaking motion simulators and more personalised experiences. Most of those improvements are already implemented in this year’s projects, but some will debut in 2022. Watch this space!

Key moments

“The breakthrough in the themed entertainment industry happened in two steps, first the opening of our first flying theatre at a local theme park in Taiwan in 2010 and then the opening of our first international project “FlyOver Canada” in Vancouver in 2013; another mile-stone was the first project in Europe in 2016.” Founder C.H. Ouyang.

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Celebrating excellence

Park World Excellence Awards



With two new categories included in the line-up, the 2021 Park World Excellence Awards will open for entry on Monday 22 March.

Restrictions allowing, this year's event will also return to a live format, to be held at an exclusive location in Barcelona this September.

Despite not being able to meet in person, last year's virtual event was very well received by the industry and only underlined the value the industry places on being a Park World Excellence Award winner. Paul Ryder comments: "With entries increasing year-on-year, the Park World Excellence Awards has quickly become a key date in the industry calendar. So, while it is hoped we can celebrate together in Barcelona this September if, due to the ongoing restrictions we are unable to do so, rest assured we will bring the ceremony to you!"

Reflecting on the the journey so far, renowned industry journalist and Park World Excellence Awards judge, François Mayne comments: "Wow, we're already on our way to the fourth edition of the Park World Excellent Awards! And what a success it has been so far, with so many brilliant projects, amazing parks/FECs and inspiring people showing what our industry can do best."

Judge Marcus Gaines of Ride and Park Media comments: "In a very short time, the Park World Excellence Awards have become THE most prestigious awards celebrating the work of attractions and suppliers in the EMEA. Just to be in the shortlist has become a real honour. "The success and growth of the Park World Excellence Awards ensures that every corner of the visitor attractions industry gets a chance to celebrate their creativity and ingenuity.



"I'm proud to have been a judge from the first awards in 2018 in Amsterdam through to today, and in seeing just what it means to the winners to pick up an award."

Richard Pawley, director of operations for rides and safety, VTP Global



Holdings continues:

"The success of these awards is due to the fact we as an industry of entertainment pave the way for exciting, prestigious themed attractions. By entering the Park World Excellence Awards, entrants have an opportunity to give all the judges an insight to the outstanding ways in which they have raised their own bar.

"We have to be aware of the economic realities that this industry has had to endure over the last twelve months. The creativity and skills of our industry make entertainment venues very special, and this will continue for 2021. I look forward as a judge to seeing all their efforts in achieving these standards."



NEW CATEGORIES

2021 marks the introduction of two new awards, Best Green Initiative and Best Use of Technology (Guest experience/Park operations).

"The introduction of the new award categories for 2021 shows the success and growth of the Park World Excellence Awards," says Marcus. "Bringing in the Best Green Initiative category shows just how much work the industry is putting in to creating an environmentally sustainable future, helping ensure future generations can enjoy both the planet and days out to visitor attractions. It's right that Park World helps to champion and recognise that work in helping with climate change.

François agrees: "I'm glad that Park World is introducing the new "Green Initiative" category, because that's a topic that really matters for all of us. I warmly invite all operators, manufacturers and suppliers to present us their eco-responsible actions!"

Commenting on the addition of an award that recognises technology that enhances the guest experience behind the scenes and/or improves park operations, Marcus says: "Recognising some of the great achievements in our industry aren't always the most glamorous. The introduction of Best use of Technologies (Guest experience/Park operations) will ensure the often, over-looked projects and products will get their time to shine."

Richard sums it up well: "Awards always break new ground, and the two new categories are very exciting in that these kinds of innovations, perspectives and practices will become part of a park's policy making and we should embrace, encourage, learn from and share publicly if we are to discover what our way forward is for 2021 and the future. There is therefore a practical reason for every operator, manufacturer and supplier to play a part in the awards."



Flying theatres high

The very first flying theatre opened in the US in 2001. Since then, it's not only become a staple of the larger theme park, it's also found its feet as a stand-alone attraction. Park World editor, Becci Knowles reports.

Stefan Rothaug, head of sales and marketing at Brogent, reveals that as the company celebrates its 20th birthday, its first flying theatre, the 'Beautiful Formosa' attraction at the EDA World Theme Park in its hometown of Kaohsiung, Taiwan is also celebrating its tenth year of operation. Stefan goes on to say that "there is another milestone that is very important for the industry as a whole, and that is the 20th anniversary of Disney's California Adventure which introduced 'Soarin' over California' and marked the birth of what has now become a very successful product category."

Picking up the story, Kevin Murphy, director of sales and marketing at Kraftwerk Living Technologies (KLT) says, "Flying theatres have been around since Disney designed and built the first 'Soarin' ride in 2001 with the grandfather of Flying Theatres, Rick Rothschild. Since then, the ride format has grown in strength with rides installed in many countries and with many different formats and styles of loading and riding, but with the potential not nearly reached yet for introducing this magical ride format to visitors and guests all around the world."

"From a personal point of view," says

Kevin, "I really did fall in love with the format when I first visited Epcot in Orlando. Along with the creative team I was working with at the time, we just loved the whole experience and the real feeling of flying, and we vowed to try and work on a project together. That is where I learnt one of my first fundamental lessons, which I will come back to later. Roll forward a few years to 2016 and I joined KLT only to find that one of its many specialities was working on flying theatres, developing the technology and the experience further. KLT worked on its first flying theatre back in 2014 with the opening of Hubei in the Air for Wanda in China. Since then, we have been involved in over 23 completed installations or projects in progress."

Competing with top tier parks

"Flying theatres are becoming a common staple of larger theme parks that are looking to create their own Disney or Universal style attractions, in a bid to compete with these top tier parks to help them draw in a more international audience, as well as the locals," says Simworx CEO Terry Monkton. "There are currently quite a few stand-alone 'Fly Over...' style attractions, which are great

at attracting both local and international audiences that want the experience of flying over the beautiful local landscapes without the expense of helicopters and private tours. These are especially popular as they can be placed in city centre and resort locations.

"We developed our Mini Flying Theatre pre-empting the desire for smaller venues and attractions wanting to offer a flying theatre experience, as it becomes more popular, but at a more affordable price point with a smaller footprint. We expect this to be the direction the flying theatre market moves in, with a demand for more flexibility making it a more accessible attraction for a wider variety of locations."

Triotech's vice president of communications, Christian Martin is of a similar view: "A particularity of flying theatres, is that most operators want a customised experience that will resonate with their audience," he says. "As we have observed worldwide, most flying theatres bring a 'local' or 'regional' flavour. Case in point, Triotech's The Flyer - San Francisco, or other well-known installations such as Fly Over Canada or Wings Over Washington. The former is about the Bay Area and its perennial favourites, the Golden

on the priority list

“ A particularity of flying theatres is that most operators want a customised experience that will resonate with their audience. ”

Gate bridge, Alcatraz and so on. The others are also focused and themed to a specific geography.

According to Christain, “this has a huge impact on the investment level. Having a specific content, often developed for one single attraction can be quite expensive,” he says, adding “a well-established operator is paramount, or one that has secured a prime location with a tourist traffic that is assured.

“However, flying theatres have typically been very large attractions situated in theme parks. Now we see smaller, scalable solutions being brought to market which allow for more customised layouts that can fit in much tighter spaces. This is important for operators that want to run a flying theatre experience as a stand-alone business in a location-based entertainment model. For instance, downtown of a large city as opposed to an ‘out of the way’ amusement park in the suburbs. Real estate is expensive so access to a smaller more tailored solution can be an advantage to an operator.”

Daryl White, vice president of global licensing and business development, Falcon’s Creative Group has slightly different take on it: “The flying theatre marketplace grew from

a seedling when Disney’s Soarin’ came out, to the scale where it seems everyone in the past decade was clamouring for some kind of ‘fly-over’ experience featuring their country or region. That travelogue type of movie was novel for a time, but it seems more and more clients now are looking for true storytelling to drive the narrative of the experience. Whether character or environment driven, guests want to become part of the story and feel purpose. Also, since the market now has matured to where developers and their guests can clearly see quality differences in both equipment and media, the demand for a higher level of experience is setting a clear demarcation line between a hyped-up 4D theatre and a true flying theatre experience.”

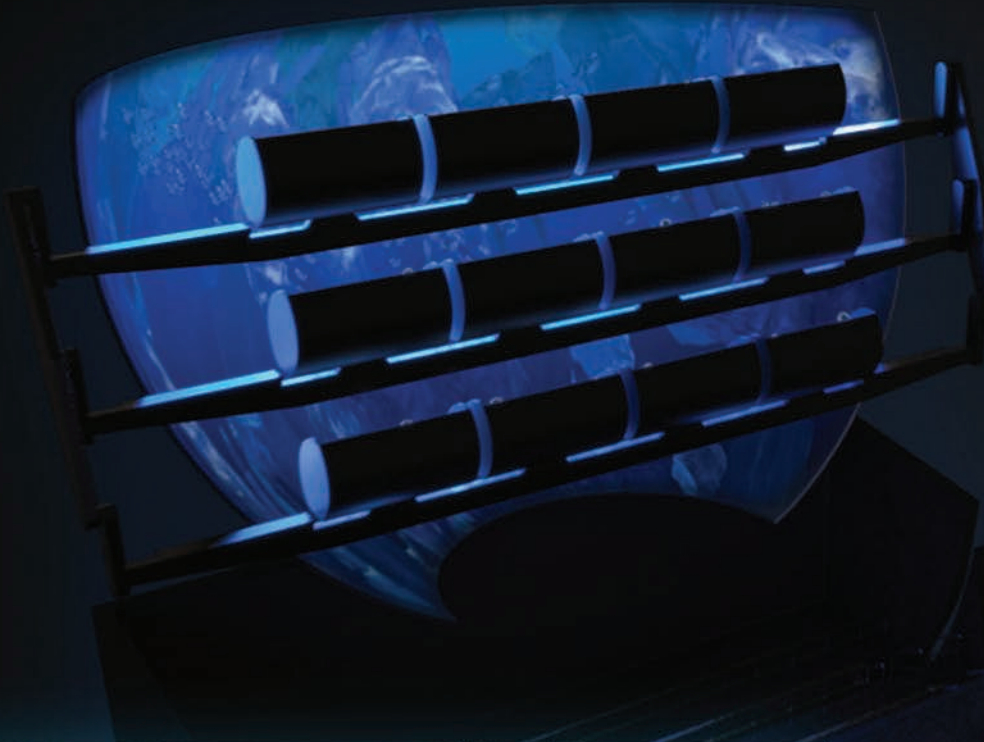
Cindy Emerick Whitson, executive vice president of business development, Dynamic Attractions, continues: “Several clients have successfully designed a more action packed story line and ride profile as an alternate to the fly over concept. You can see examples of this in flying theaters like Krrish: Hero’s Flight at Bollywood Parks Dubai or Batman: Dark Flight at Studio

Continued on page 30



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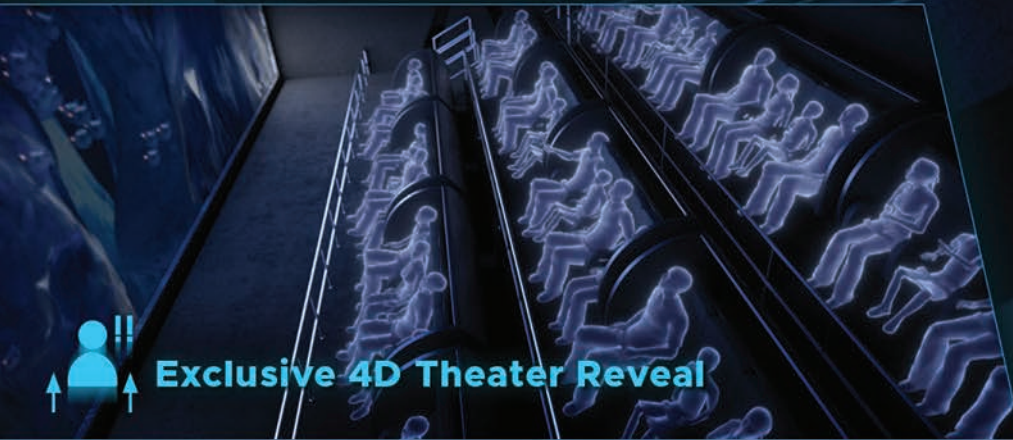
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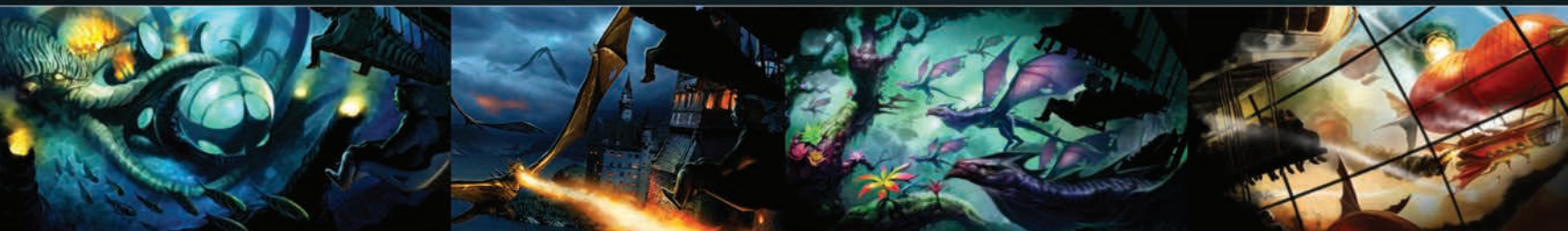


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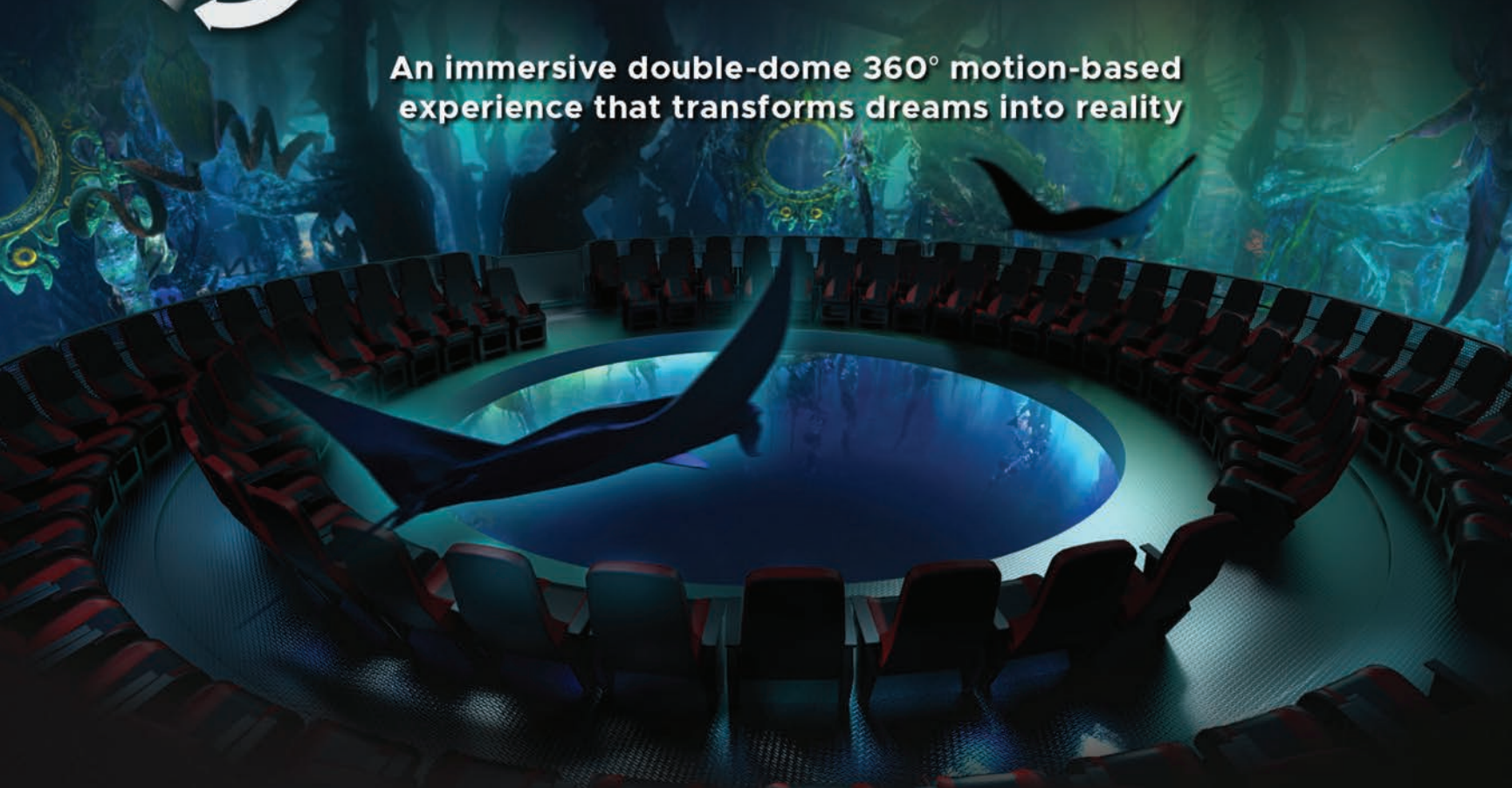
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Kraftwerk Living Technologies (KLT) was involved in the project, *Batman: Dark Flight* at Studio City, Macau



KLT's Kevin Murphy

City in Macau and continuing with some of our new flying theatres opening this year. Our equipment has been a perfect pairing for this evolution as it is electric actuating thus nimble in movement and quiet, giving the creative teams the ability to create a truly thrilling experience."

"We do a lot of different media-based experiences, but there is a reason why we are best known for our flying theatres," says Stefan Rothaug, Brogent. "The flying theatre works not only in a theme or amusement park it is one of the few ride types that have proven to be feasibly operated as standalone/midway attractions. Six of our clients' locations around the world are standalone attractions and there are more are in the pipeline. Currently, they are all running their very own content generally as a panoramic flying attraction over the country/region in which they are situated, but many already started to try a cinema approach with multiple movies or special movies for a short time as marketing event."

Stefan continues, "In the theme park field, flying theatres work perfectly in connection with IPs, for example our ride at Legoland Florida that features the LEGO MOVIE IP, which is also ready to open at Legoland California and Billund. Another example of a strong IP partnership is our i-Ride in Fujiyuki Highland in the greater Tokyo area launched a film based on the Japanese Manga/Anime series Evangelion and just in time for the final season of Anime series 'Attack on Titan'. Brogent, together with its Japanese partners, is launching more 'Attack on Titan' the coming months.

"Besides heavily story driven projects, like Voletarium at Europa-Park (where the attraction has its own micro-themed area and the story starts at the entrance plaza, through the building, the queue into the main show room and the exit store), there are also concepts like "This is Holland" where the ride is part of an educational exhibit," says Stefan.

Mike Frueh, senior vice president, licensing and distribution, SimEx-lwerks Entertainment says: "Having a scalable, flexible and highly cost-effective product is creating opportunities. Presently we're working on over 10 new FlyRide attractions,

primarily in the US. And critically, we're developing a powerful catalogue of flying films, and offering customisation of each film to highlight every location."

Andreas Stickel, director of business development at Simtec Systems, tells Park World, "The trend we can see is to provide turnkey high-quality solutions, including AV systems, screens and media with a certain flexibility in the size of the individual flying theatre systems.

"In the past we have mostly sold our HEXaFLITE 72 system (72 seats), whereas we now see more need for mid-size and smaller systems to fit into venues with smaller dimensions. Simtec has reacted to this trend and is providing the new HEXaFLITE 2.0 system in sizes of 20 to 72 guests per platform. We even have developed a HEXaFLITE 4 mini flying theatre system for venues with a ceiling height of about 6m.

"Clients are also looking for latest projection technique or LED screens to provide a first-class guest experience. Spherical LED screens are bringing the flying theatre attraction to a new

quality level."

Triotech's Christian Martin says that size of the investment requires "a reliable, established operator to have secured a prime location. That is a key cornerstone of any flying theatre experience coming to life. Secondly, it is important that an "experience" mindset becomes the approach to the entire design. A flying theatre cannot be "just a ride". It must be designed as a complete experience that begins as guests arrive at the venue, or even as they scout and shop online. This means heavy theming, peripheral activities to do before and after, and of course staff that complement the experience. A good way to implement this is to base the design on storytelling. Starting design with a story always ends up delivering a more fun experience for the guest, in any attraction."

Simtec Systems', Andreas Stickel offers an analogy: "The success of a flying theatre attraction depends on the usage of its single components, like preparing a first-class meal! If one of the ingredients is not up to the highest quality, your

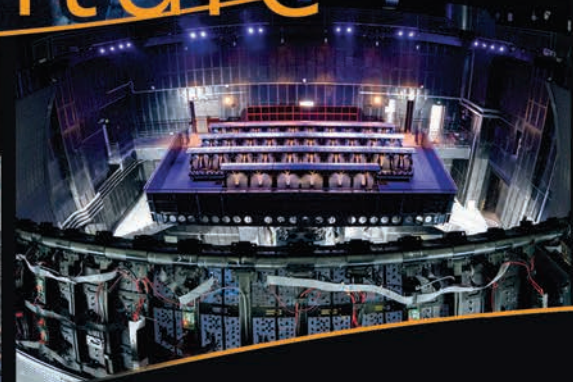


Batman: Dark Flight, Dynamic Attractions



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The Flyer, Triotech



Christian Martin

meal will not fulfil the expectations of your guests. It's the same with your flying theatre," he says.

"The starting point is a well thought through storyline for the creation of the media, which ends with the decision as to who will produce that media. It needs to be a company that understands Flying Theatres in general, and in Simtec's case in particular, the huge capabilities of our motion system to create the correct movements within the media content.

"Easy to say from our point of view, but a successful flying theatre project needs a Simtec HEXaFLITE system, with the advantage of 6 DOF motion system generating a huge motion envelope and using a single loading platform to provide best seating in the centre of the screen in the size that you need to fulfil your capacity requirements.

"The next step is to choose the AV system. Simtec recommends using spherical LED screens creating a breathtaking picture quality. If clients are not willing to spend the extra money for the LED screen, they should use a multiple laser projector set-up to guarantee high brightness and resolution factors.

"The cream on your desert, to come back to our meal, is a well themed pre-show building up the excitement to get onto the ride. The result will be a first-class attraction, which give you the opportunity to combine it with a post-show and a retail outlet where your guests are willing to spend additional money. If you are trying to save money on one of your "ingredients" the entire experience will suffer."

Brogent's Stefan Rothaug, says: "Like a traditional dark ride, a flying theatre is a heavily integrated system: That begins with the motion of the gondola, which has to be synchronised with the movie content. This means both sides, the movie production team and the ride programming team have to work closely together from the early beginnings of the movie production to make sure the final is a great one. But it also includes the pre-show and post-show areas, especially for standalone attractions, where people are taken out of busy city environment and have to be transferred into an immersive environment. So, besides movie production and motion programming, show

control and audio/video setup are very important."

"It all begins with the storyline," says Daryl White, Falcon's Creative Group. "We want to use the equipment merely as a tool to invest guests into a story and entrench them in the experience. Once we've defined the story or type of story, we look at what technology allows us to bring that story to life. Ideally, that means the equipment should be invisible and a non-entity in the storyline. Starting

“The cream on your desert, to come back to our meal, is a well themed pre-show building up the excitement to get on the ride.”

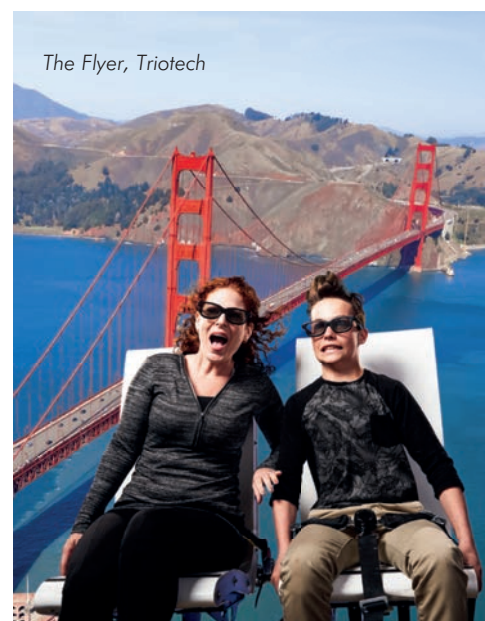
with technology or equipment and then trying to force a story to fit it is a backwards approach, and that will be reflected in the end experience.

"Alongside production of the hardware, and typically taking about the same amount of schedule, is the production of the media. Live footage via drones is quick and easy and can be edited using modern tools in a rapid schedule. Though we still have to recall the old adage of "quality, cost and time – you can only have two". Mixing live footage with visual effects (VFX) is a very popular way of producing a balanced final result. Finally, using full CGI to produce the media can result in the highest quality option, and takes out variables such as weather, live actors, and access to restricted areas."

Daryl continues: "As the equipment and media are joined via programming, the flying theatre experience comes to life. This is the point where the developer opens his arms to guests and welcomes them to an all-new world."

A sprinkling of passion

Kraftwerk Living Technologies' Kevin Murphy says:



"At KLT, whilst we can offer our clients several complete turnkey media-based products, we have the privilege to work on the side of some of the most talented and most experienced ride system manufacturers for flying theatres and film makers. Our key expertise is in the media playback, screen and display technology, special lens development including blending and alignment, audio as well as SFX behind any Flying Theatre.

"We are used to being part of a team and our skills have taken many years to develop - the expertise and techniques to make every opening reliable and magical. Back to the lesson I first learned - a flying theatre is not suitable for every story and all content, and an early mistake I made with colleagues was deciding to use a ride for a story that in hindsight, just did not fit. It could have been mediocre and difficult to get the visitor to believe in, so we had to drop the idea which is the RIGHT thing to do when a technology does not fit the idea.

"A flying theatre is all about the content, the story, the journey and the experience and to a very large degree, the ride technology and the media

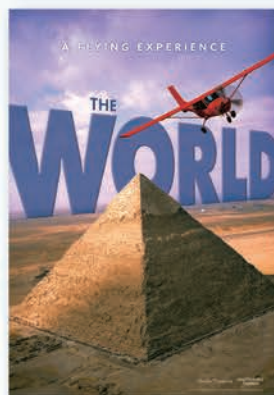
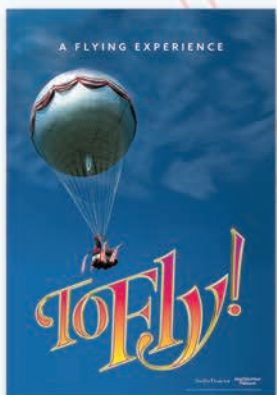
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Simworx Mini Flying Theatre



Terry Monkton

technology take second place. Assuming they do their job well, working smoothly and reliably in operation, then the focus of our guests is on that experience. However, a poor ride or poor technology will let down the greatest of films and spoil the whole experience.

“A flying theatre project needs a client who is inspired, a ride manufacturer, a storyteller and film maker and a technology company like KLT working alongside architects, structural engineers and other specialists to make that theatre work. When completed, it needs operational staff that are thrilled to do what they do, usually a pre-show or two to start the story process and a way to move visitors through the space, quickly, effortlessly and logically as they race to the shop and in many cases, back on the ride.

“So, to answer one of the questions we were asked – ‘what is involved in bringing a Flying

Theatre experience to life’ – it is teamwork with a good sprinkling of passion. Every project is unique and has its own criteria based on size and layout, throughput, type of effects needed, content, operational issues like single floor loading or multiple floors, CGI, live storyline or a mix of the two! I will let others more talented explore and debate the options, but when it comes to the technology, we tend to apply innovation, quality, reliability and budget as key criteria when we start.

“From the early days of a project, we get involved to review the ride layout with the screen, and whilst the technical elements again are important, we actually start with the ride experience and giving every rider ‘the best seat in the house’, which means careful layout and adjusting the ride and screen along with seat angles and locations. The technology we have tended to use over the years is projection technology, and to gain

the best resolution and best quality of view, we utilise multiple projectors with very sophisticated automatic alignment and blending along with very high-quality media players. We need a system that gives the quality but works reliably for many shows a day, every day for many years and that takes engineering. Sound is not a poor partner in any flying theatre experience; it enhances the ride and brings the whole thing alive, so we utilise screen technology that is acoustically transparent along with multiple channel sound processing to move the action through our visitors.”

Commenting on how SimEx-Iwerks brings its flying theatres to life, Mike Fueuh says, “Well thirty years of ride simulator experience helps; our internal attraction design and manufacturing capabilities also help. Having expertise in flying film production, motion and effects programming, theatre operations experience and our worldwide technical support are clear advantages too.”

Simworx completed its first Mini Flying Theatre installation last year, for Bao Son Paradise Park, but it initially began its build back in April 2019 after the design stage was completed and the major materials were delivered. “It was assembled right here in Kingswinford at our on-site facility, beginning with the mechanical, electrical and hydraulic components”, says CEO Terry Monkton.

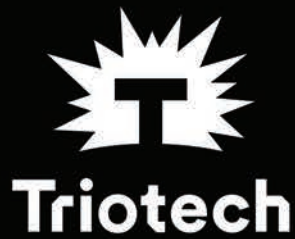
“Once it was built it had to go through rigorous testing and programming to get it ready to ship,” says Terry. “This is when we must tune the motion profiling to match the movement of the flying theatre, testing multiple scenarios to check how the programmes respond to different variables while being fully loaded or empty and how this effect it’s behaviour. Finally, we had to complete an internal and external FAT (Factory Acceptance Test) before we could begin to dismantle the ride for shipment.

“This is also when we at Simworx got to try out the ride for the first time and really get a feel for what it’s like when onboard. This is the fun part for us, and we were able to give our opinions on the movement and the experience overall.

“It took around a month for the Mini Flying



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Andreas Stickel

Theatre to reach Vietnam, where it then had to be unpacked and re-assembled. During the installation the Mini Flying Theatre is electrical tested as well as load tested with water barrels, while the dome screen is constructed around it. Once all complete the team were finally able to test the ride with the screen and media for the first time. The ride was rigorously tested in this commissioning stage, with the motion programming synchronised with the on-screen media as well as having people from the park come in and test out the experience as well." Simworx CEO Terry Monkton continues: "Moving forward we'll probably begin to see operators looking to break the trend a bit and look for more narrative driven content, so the experience is less passive, and visitors feel more immersed in a storyline, which will be more fitting for theme parks as storytelling is one of their main goals with any new attraction. We've begun to see this in examples like Pandora's Flight of Passage where a popular IP is being incorporated into the storytelling.

"Seeing IP's more heavily integrated into the theming and story of flying theatres will be how theme parks continue to make keep this genre of attraction fresh and fun. 4D Cinemas were relatively new 15 years ago but have become a staple attraction for every theme park worldwide now. We believe the same will be true for flying theatres. As with everything, as technology evolves so will the product, we'll continue to see improvements in motion dynamics, special effects integration and screen/ projection techniques. But

“Flying theatres are indoor attractions and as such, have to deal with the same pandemic caused challenges as shopping centres and other indoor facilities.”

we may also begin to see elements from our other favourite media-based attractions incorporated into flying theatres, such as interactivity. As the product matures within the market it will also be about finding more efficient ways of building it with new emerging technology and therefore, we'll slowly begin to see the costs of the Flying theatre reducing in the future as we all find better ways of engineering this type of attraction to reduce the cost per seat.

"Regarding the social distancing aspect, as rides like these can take almost a year from proposal to completion, expecting social distancing to be as imperative a factor when designing rides for the future is unlikely. With the vaccine rollout looking promising across the world, creating attractions that will be expected to be a main stay of parks - for many years - and are suited to accommodate a full capacity with high efficiency will be a bigger priority for when the pandemic has passed, and a ride is still operating. Making such a major

investment in a ride with any major modifications would be unlikely, if parks are thinking long term."

Dynamic Attraction's Cindy Emerick Whitson says: "The flying theatres can be disinfected easy between shows, but we are hopeful that the vaccines will be here so that we can operate efficiently."

"FlyRide guests load into separate ride bays on different levels. Fortunately, and by happy chance, social distancing was built into our FlyRide design" says Mike Frueh, SimEx-lwerks Entertainment."

Triotech's Christian Martin tells Park World: "It will be very hard for attractions designers to completely transform a ride to include current (social) physical distancing guidelines, for several reasons. Firstly, the guidelines vary from region to region. For instance, through the last year we have seen moments when the requirements for distancing in North America was two metres; 1.5m in some European countries, and one metre in China. This makes it particularly hard to design until a standard is adopted."

Secondly, says Christian, rides are "judged" by their capacity: "Parks and other operators always evaluate capacity (THRC) vs investment necessary for any give attraction. Distancing seats, platforms, or any way guests get on a ride tends to cripple this equation. This is ok temporarily in the hard times brought upon by the pandemic. However, it cannot become permanent otherwise these types of attractions will have a hard time to become a justifiable investment."

Thirdly, the temporary nature of current distancing guidelines: "The distancing guidelines

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Flying Theatres



Suspended Theater, Falcon's Creative Group



Daryl White

will go away eventually," says Christian. "Even if they are there for two full seasons, this is nothing compared to the lifespan of a major attraction such as a Flying theatre, which can be 10 years or more.

"However, there could be some impact on a brand-new type of attraction that brings much of the same or let's say, a similar type of experience. For instance, virtual reality can simulate flying quite well if it is included in a platform motion and with special effects. The latter are an absolute must for a successful flying theatre experience, i.e they must be absolutely immersive and for the human brain, if you are not moving, you are certainly not flying! So, yes VR could capture part of the "flying theatre experience" market but only if it comprises motion and special effects."

Reflecting on industries' shared experiences, Brogent's Stefan Rothaug says: "Flying theatres are indoor attractions and as such have to deal with the same pandemic caused challenges as shopping centres and other indoor facilities. To overcome those challenges, operators look at similar solutions, like adding AV treatment to HVAC systems." The company is currently working on system upgrades for all components. However, according to Stefan, "in contrast to the cinema industry there are no well-defined standards yet, for example, for video and audio systems for flying theatre systems. Step by step we are defining those standards for the flying theatre to make the playback of available movies in different theatres easier and creating opportunities for third party movie production companies. Some of which have already started the production of flying theatre movies. We see a lot of great talent and high-quality content in the market and want to support the development as well as we can."

Expectation rising

Commenting on consumer expectation, Daryl White, Falcon's Creative Group, says: "As people have become accustomed to technology such as smart phones, their threshold for awe and amazement correspondingly rises with each new version. It is the same with these media-based attractions. Flying theatres are certainly



Suspended Theater, Falcon's Creative Group

“Flying theatres are indoor attractions and as such have to deal with the same pandemic caused challenges as shopping centres and other indoor facilities.”

still incredible experiences, but guests want more now. Providing multiple scenes is one way we are setting apart our Suspended Theater system from competitors. Also, enhancing guest agency through the use of real time game engines generating all new media on the fly, is another thing we are doing to provide a new experience every time a guest hops onboard. Designers need to keep pushing the bounds to have new options available for guests just before they realise they're bored with the old rides."

"On the subject of the technology, there are some major innovations and changes, and these are mostly to do with the image and what our visitors see," says KLT's Kevin Murphy. "For most flying theatres, the screen and image technology is

projection, and that means a well-designed screen surface that gives a high quality image without the structure visible, again acoustically transparent and built to last and be easy to clean. In the last few years screens have improved considerably and we have taken advantage of the new developments and apply them in our projects. Projectors are getting brighter and now we try to utilise true RGB Laser technology wherever possible to give the best colour, blending and no lamp changes. Another major development is the availability of LED displays with complex curves – dome screens made of LED panels and the end results can be spectacular and allow us great contrast and to push the level of immersion within the ride. "

Upcoming projects

"We are working on several flying theatre projects," reveals Simworx's Terry Monkton. "We recently shipped a Dual 'Fly Over' experience, using a customised version of one of our Cobra dark rides to accommodate a lower ceiling height than that usually required for a traditional flying theatre for a theme park in Vietnam. As the 'flying' sensation can be similarly imitated with other media-based attractions, this is sometimes the best solution for clients with a lot of restrictions on space but that have an idea of the kind of media



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or story they intend to tell.”

Simtec Systems’, Andreas Stickel tells Park World: “After the huge success with our first generation of HEXaFLITE systems, Simtec has created the HEXaFLITE 2.0, which provides even more features and more opportunities for the creative development of media storyboards. Our new system is already able to use its 6DOF motion capabilities in the loading position. The result is the combination of a traditional open cabin simulator with a flying theatre. But that’s not all. The full 6 DOF motion is also continued throughout the whole tilt process. The first system of the new generation will be installed in the south of China, in the greater Macao area.”

“We will soon be introducing DiveRide, an underwater experience, and an outer space FlyRide, with uniquely distinctive seat designs and motion systems,” says Mike Frueh, SimEx-lwerks Entertainment. “We’re thrilled to be working on 10 new FlyRide venues, with our next FlyRide opening soon in the USA. Two recent openings with world-class operators, at Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, and Beyond the Lens in Branson, Missouri, have proven great examples of the success of our partnership approach. And we’ll be making several announcements of new developments soon. Stay tuned!”

“As is the case with most other suppliers in the industry we have some ride openings that had been scheduled for 2020 now scheduled for 2021,” admits Stefan Rothaug, Brogent. “This puts us in the challenging, but unique position of now having 20 (!) rides in the US, Europe and Asia scheduled for an opening in 2021. Most are not officially announced yet, but we have new projects in all areas: theme park and standalone, as well as locations powered by legendary IPs.

Projects already officially announced include: Emmet’s Flying Adventure, Legoland California, USA; Emmet’s Flying Adventure, Legoland Billund, Denmark; Flying Theater Times Square, New York, USA and FlyOver Las Vegas, Las Vegas, USA, all



LEGOLAND Florida, Brogent

of which were originally announced for 2020.”

“We’re currently fabricating multiple Suspended Theater systems for the different Katmandu Group projects in the pipeline,” says s Daryl White, Falcon’s Creative Group. “These will be the first in the marketplace to have multiple scenes, and the storyline is an actual storyline, featuring enchanting characters and a deep narrative. As a company which has roots in attraction design and media production, Falcon’s Licensing is uniquely qualified to providing the ride systems themselves, following our core value of storytelling first.”

KLT’s Kevin Murphy tells Park World: “None of the flying theatre projects we are working on have been cancelled we are delighted to say. Some may be taking longer to complete, but if the operational plan is pulled together well, the natural flow for loading and unloading of a ride is very Covid safe, plus as a family ride, part of the fun is in sharing and pointing whilst riding.

It is worth noting that most Flying Theatres are 2D and whilst we are working on 3D projects, it needs even greater care in the film production and programming with immersive rides to keep visitors comfortable, as too much immersion can result in a bad experience.

“Unfortunately, we cannot say too much about upcoming projects as we let our clients lead with promotion, but the future is very bright with a number of quite incredible projects due to open in 2021 and beyond and some that even challenge the seasoned professionals in an effort to keep the visitors’ eyes on the experience, and not the technology. One of the biggest compliments for us is not being noticed!”

Upcoming projects for Dynamic Attractions meanwhile, include: Pigeon Forger in Gatlinburg; a 3D flying theatre in Doha and a Space theme in Malaysia, “a total thrill ride” according to Cindy Emerick Whitson.

Mini Flying Theatre

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Dynamic concepts: Dynamic Attractions

From robotic rides, to linear induction powered coasters, to advanced mechatronic ride systems, Dynamic Attractions makes the impossible possible. Park World editor Becci Knowles catches up with Dynamic’s executive team to find out how the company survived 2020 and what they have planned for 2021.



Cindy Emerick Whitson

With eight new rides slated to open worldwide, Dynamic Attractions is set to have an exciting year. The 2021 attraction openings include two brand new coasters and three flying theatres, one being Dynamic’s first 3D flying theatre. According to executive vice president of business development, Cindy Emerick Whitson, “While the opening dates of several rides got pushed back as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the attitudes of our clients and our team have remained incredibly positive. We are continuing to progress in the construction and installation of our ride systems.”

Dynamic Attractions has been juggling teams in six different locations since mid-summer. Cindy praises her team and her clients for taking the unusual circumstances in their stride: “Our clients and team have seamlessly integrated all necessary COVID-19 safety precautions and protocols, and our clients have understood the delayed timeline and project turnaround time.”

While the pandemic has presented numerous operational difficulties, Cindy remains optimistic. “We have been fortunate to survive 2020 and enter 2021 in a strong position. Thankfully, we had over US\$100 million in the pipeline. We also have a comprehensive parts and service department that services all types of rides from various manufacturers. Right now, with parks not investing in capital intensive projects, they are using this downtime to concentrate on smaller improvements, which our parts and services team has supported effortlessly.”

“It has been a very challenging time for virtually every company in the world,” states executive chair and chief

executive officer, Guy Nelson. “We used this time to get closer to our customers, critically assess the company’s incredibly valuable intangible assets, and re-organise our employees in such a way as to capitalise on the tremendous opportunities that we have identified in a post-pandemic world.”

Dynamic in Name and Nature

New ride openings are not the only novel things on the horizon. Dynamic Attractions’ parent company, Empire Industries, is taking on a fresh name: Dynamic Technologies Group. The rebranding reflects the company’s focus on innovation and technology and aligns all of its entities-- Dynamic Entertainment, Dynamic Structures, and Dynamic Attraction--under one unifying umbrella.

With the name change also comes new leadership. Jerry Pierson brings his 30 plus years of experience in the themed entertainment industry to the role of president of Dynamic Technologies Group. Jerry has an extensive background of working on projects for major companies and has played a role in a number of visionary attractions. Pierson’s track record of delivering exceptional results makes him a key asset in the future focus of the company.

“The rebranding is reflective of many things,” says Jerry, “not the least of which is the strategic pivot the company has been making towards creating and leveraging its proprietary technology. Over the past five years, the company has made significant investments to engineer and develop first-of-its-kind entertainment ride vehicle technology and intellectual property. One of Dynamic’s core values is its commitment to innovation.”

Coming Up: The SFX Coaster Winner of the 2015 Brass Ring Award for Best New Product Concept

Dynamic Attractions will set a new industry benchmark with the opening of its first SFX coaster. This unique, highly innovative, first-of-its-kind SFX Coaster mixes elements of a dark ride with the thrills of a high-speed roller coaster. This ride not only delivers the intense roller coaster experience but also surprises with track switches and immersive state-of-the-art media.

Cindy explains: "Using our energy efficient linear synchronous motors (LSM), the SFX Coaster is a narrative driven dark ride that occurs on a high-speed, catapult launch coaster. It contains new coaster elements that offer movements and sensations that were previously impossible on a roller coaster. Even more impressive is the perfect synchronisation of the ride's hardware with high definition, immersive sound and visual media. This is a truly remarkable blend of dark ride and coaster technology that allows themed entertainment designers a broad palette for creating new attractions. Guests are going to love it."

The SFX Coaster, a term originally coined by Dynamic Attractions, opens new doors for immersive storytelling and creates compelling experiences "unrivalled by traditional coasters".

Synergy Coaster Winner of the 2018 Brass Ring Award for Best New Product Concept

Dynamic Attractions will also be delivering its first Synergy Coaster at Genting Highlands in Malaysia. Cindy explains, "Our Synergy Coaster yet again raises the bar as the world's first duelling coaster that utilises a hidden onboard drive that works in tandem with linear synchronous motors (LSM)."

The hidden onboard drive system allows guests to focus on the story experience as it unfolds and not anticipate what happens next. The onboard drive allows for variable speeds and works seamlessly with the LSM system to deliver storytelling as it should be, with varied pacing and storyline twists and turns.

In this 2018 award-winning concept guests duel other riders in a high-speed race to the finish. Guy states, "We are here to conceptualise dreams and build attractions. Our speciality lies in being able to convert a creative idea into a physical experience."



Motion Theater Front

Dynamic Flying Theater

As the creator of the original Flying Theater some 20 years ago, Dynamic Attractions is an industry leader for this type of product. Dynamic's focus on safety, reliability, and innovation has led the company to continually evolve its Flying Theater product using the newest technology. Dynamic's development efforts will come to fruition with the opening of its first 3D Flying Theatre, Wings of Destiny, at Doha Oasis Quest, the first of three new Flying Theaters taking flight in 2021.

"There is something about the experience of flying that universally inspires wonderment in all of us," says Guy. "Dynamic has mastered the sensation of flight to deliver an unmatched guest experience. Using our hardware with a realistic ride motion profile, 180-degree immersive media, and onboard effects, we create an unbeatable experience."

Dynamic's patented TrueFlight system allows motion profiles that can either be action packed or gentle, creating wonder, excitement, and fun for guests from eight to eighty years old. Dynamic Attractions is also opening flying theatres at Genting Highlands, Malaysia, and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Dynamic Motion Theater Winner of the 2016 Brass Ring Award for Best New Product Concept

The Dynamic Motion Theater provides limitless options for integrating the ride system with show sets, projections, special effects, and even live performers. The ride hardware features a rotating theatre platform that can raise, lower, tilt, and spin to reveal new sets and scenes, allowing guests to be in the very centre of the action. The shows can be easily changed, encouraging guests to come back again and again for new experiences.

According to Jerry, "This versatile system delivers a unique theatre experience and creates a solid foundation for a diverse range of storytelling opportunities. By allowing the guests' perspective to change and follow the action, guests are immersed in a rich world of media and live theater performance." The Motion Theater has the ability to rotate 360 degrees, while simultaneously tilting in a "coin-roll" fashion. This is coupled with a full metre heave up or down, allowing for family-friendly thrills.

Early next year the company will open its first Dynamic Motion Theatre at Futuroscope, France's first amusement park. Welcoming two million visitors through its gates every year, the park shares Dynamic Attractions' vision says Cindy, providing "attractions that take visitors on extraordinary human and technological adventures."

Reflecting on the Future

The Dynamic team is looking forward to the new attractions opening in 2021. Following the massive sweep of entertainment closures in 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the industry is poised for 2021 to bring new experiences that draw guests back to the parks. As venues around the world open back up, guests are returning to enjoy the magic of rich, immersive experiences. As Cindy puts it, "There is nothing quite like the excitement of a ride that is executed well and leaves guests wanting to get right back in line for another go."



Fun Fact

Dynamic Attractions won IAAPA's Brass Ring award for Best New Product Concept four years in a row:

- 2015: SFX Coaster, opening as an attraction in 2021
- 2016: Dynamic Motion Theatre, opening as an attraction in 2021
- 2017: All-Terrain Dark Ride, project on hold due to COVID-19
- 2018: Dual Power Coaster, opening as an attraction in 2021.

“We are here to conceptualise dreams and build attractions. Our speciality lies in being able to convert a creative idea into a physical experience.”

Chief executive officer Guy Nelson

Bringing people and cultures together

In February 2019, Park World ran a piece on Carnaval, the theme park at the centre of Global Village Dubai. This time, Park World editor Becci Knowles returns (virtually of course!) to speak to Bader Anwahi, chief executive officer, Global Village, to find out more about the world surrounding it.



Bader Anwahi

When was Global Village Dubai established and what was its vision at that time?

We are currently celebrating our 25th season. The sustained success that Global Village has enjoyed since its creation stems from a clear vision, one that has guided the park from the very beginning. The mission to bring peoples and cultures of the world together in one unique destination is still firmly at the heart of everything that Global Village does.

How has Global Village Dubai evolved in the years since? Were there any key moments in its development?

Since 1997, Global Village has grown from a small project on Dubai Creek, with just 18 kiosks to a 1.6 million square metre phenomenon with 3500 retail outlets, 40,000 shows, over 300 F&B outlets and more than 160 rides, skill and arcade games. The destination brings together over 75 different cultures and we generally welcome around 7 million guests over our six-month season.

In 2005, we moved to our current location in Dubai Land, and in 2013 a new strategic masterplan was developed to evolve Global Village to the iconic destination that it has become today. Our world-class facilities and passionate teams are capable of comfortably welcoming over 120,000 guests in a single evening, with a record 140,000 joining us for National Day in 2019.

Describe your visitor base and the range of attractions and experiences on offer.

We attract audiences of all backgrounds, ages and nationalities from around the world with our extensive offering of shopping, dining, entertainment and funfair experiences. It is truly a lifestyle destination that showcases the best of cultures from around the world. From artefacts to apparel, from delicacies to street food and from kids favourite character shows to signature main stage spectaculars and even a full-on stunt show complete with flying bikes and a stunt tank! This nail-biting extravaganza was created in collaboration with renowned Mirage Entertainment, hailing from the stunt capital of the world, Los Angeles. We also welcome like-minded brands, such as Ripley's Believe It Or Not!, to keep it fresh and exciting for our many loyal guests.

Would you say that Global Village Dubai is leading the way in terms of retailainment?

Global Village is a unique seasonal theme park and our guests visit as much for the extensive shopping experience as for the entertainment, dining, rides and attractions. Our 26 Country Pavilions host stalls and shops filled with interesting antiques, unique gifts, authentic clothing, precious gems, elegant handicrafts, spices, and more from all corners of the world. Cultural interactions and the souk-like atmosphere in the Pavilions turns each purchase into a unique experience.



Sword of honour



Main stage

“There are many reasons behind the park's popularity, and one of these is our commitment to present our guests with new, exciting experiences every season.”

What's new at Global Village Dubai in 2021?

There are many reasons behind the Park's popularity, and one of these is our commitment to present our guests with new, exciting experiences every season.

Over and above the countless new shows, rides, restaurants, and dozens of Instagrammable moments, this year we have also implemented an extensive digital transformation. Our new digital platforms include a state-of-the-art navigation system on the Global Village app, as well as ecommerce functionality for entry tickets, Wonder Pass points and parking. We have also introduced WonderBot – an AI chatbot who can assist guests with both purchases and information. Our drive to be able to offer a cashless park experience to guests this year led us to launch a next-generation e-wallet solution GVPay by noqodi.

Whilst we have not been able to host our signature concert series this season, with a little out of the box thinking, we have created excitement with events such as our virtual opening concert with almost 2000 artists from 80 countries and our biggest festive event to date with Santa making his first Global Village appearance on a camel! We are also well on the way to achieving the 25 Guinness World records in 25 weeks challenge that we set ourselves in celebration of our Silver Jubilee Season.

How have you coped with the challenges presented by the pandemic? What changes have you had to make? Has it affected the guest experience?

When we took the decision to open our doors as usual this year, we knew we would be operating under a new normal and asking our operational teams to be more agile than ever before. As we planned for opening we worked hand-in-hand with International organisations and government authorities to fundamentally raise the bar and ensure that the precautionary measures that have been put in place become the new standard. It was important for us to use these enhanced measures as an opportunity to improve guest experience. Instead of social distancing stickers in the Kids Theatre, the entertainment team introduced huge colourful teddy bears to keep guests two metres apart; face covering is obligatory so we designed complimentary masks for kids to make it part of the fun; a partnership with leading producer and supplier of sanitisation services, SHIELDme, allowed us to implement one of the most comprehensive sanitisation plans in the industry; AI enabled security cameras and a roaming safety robot helps us ensure that guests and partners respect our safety guidelines.

These are just a few examples of the many initiatives that were implemented. Coupled with our digital transformation, this considerable programme allows us to give guests the peace of mind they need, so they can concentrate on having fun!

Recognised as HSE Initiative of the Year at the Innovation in Construction & FM awards 2020 and awarded the Sword of Honour by the British Safety Council for the second year running, we are very proud of our team's commitment and achievements this year.

Do you have any plans for expansion? Will we see more 'Global Villages'?

We will continue on our quest to enhance our offerings and craft unique guest experiences by bringing the wonders of the world to our guests. Our mission to bring together extraordinary people from around the globe to redefine how we experience culture, will shape all our future endeavours. We remain open to opportunities and are in discussions with certain international authorities with regards to the Global Village concept.



Carnaval



Kids theatre

“ The Carnaval team are very data driven. They do their homework to understand which rides and attractions are needed. ”

What about the F&B and retail offer, what’s new there?

As ever, culinary delights and the world’s rarest flavours and dishes are available across the park. We have over 200 F&B outlets including 23 restaurants and cafes and the largest street food offering in the region including unique concepts such as Chaat Bazaar, the floating market and the brand new Fiesta street. This season, new offerings from Syria, Georgia and authentic Emirati cuisine are proving particularly popular.

For our Silver Jubilee, we welcomed Russia and Cambodia to our 26 thriving pavilions with over 3,500 retail outlets representing 78 cultures from around the world.

What would be Carnaval’s most popular rides and attractions?

Thrill seekers love Athens Slingshot, which catapults guests 95m in the air, the Global Burj, an 80m drop tower freefall experience and Shang High, one of the tallest rides in the region. Wheel of the World, with its amazing views of the park, is a family favourite and of course the ever-popular London Loop is still a big draw for our growing guests. The Transylvania Towers suspended dark ride and our Haunted house are always popular here in Dubai, where everyone loves the horror genre. New experiences such as Big Top Inflatables and Double Agent laser maze are also proving successful. Carnaval at Global Village is, of course, renowned for its skills games with incredible prizes such as iPhone 12 and the new PS5 flying out of the doors this year, but our ever popular giant banana plush remains the most coveted prize of all.

How has Carnaval changed since PW’s last interview in 2019? Have you introduced any new rides and experiences?

New attractions are added to Carnaval every season and bringing these together with long-time favourites is one of the reasons for its ever-growing fanbase. The area is currently home to over 30 exhilarating kids, family and thrill rides, as well as dozens of skill games and more than 100 arcade games. One of the latest attractions to grace the Carnaval is “Manila Mayhem”, the Italian made, reverse time thrill ride, which hovers seven metres above ground with a 360-degree rotation at 20 revolutions per minute. New addition Big Top Inflatables houses three attractions: Meltdown and Rodeo Bull for tweens, teens and adults, whilst Jungle Land is an inflatable paradise for the little ones. Theming enhancements have been made to the kids and family

zone too and Carnaval has seen a marked increase in family guest numbers.

How do you choose which suppliers to work with and how closely do you like to work with them?

The Carnaval team are very data driven. They do their homework to understand which rides and attractions are needed, they then research renowned ride manufacturers and amusement park vendors that are qualified to provide the required attractions with EN13814 industry standards. Then the collaborative journey begins, as the prospective partner visits Dubai to better understand our environment. Finally the teams discuss commercials and then design the experience which will then become a part of the carefully crafted Carnaval funfair experience. Global Village works closely with Carnaval to support in unearthing new and exciting concepts to introduce to the Carnaval offering.

At Global Village our partners are really part of the team and the unforgettable moments our guests experience would not be possible without their dedication. We work with people and companies who share our deep-rooted values, our drive for excellence and our passion for putting smiles on our guests’ faces.

What do guests want from an amusement park visit and how does Carnaval deliver?

Carnaval at Global Village is drenched in the nostalgia of the yesteryear funfairs, whilst managing to stay relevant for younger generations.

Global Village is a family destination which strives to offer authenticity and simplicity and Carnaval is a cornerstone of that offering. The team at Carnaval take Global Village’s undertaking to bring the wonders of the world to Dubai very seriously so they scour the world for the new and the fun. Carnaval is all about the incredible atmosphere and fun family experiences they create every day of the season.

What’s next for Carnaval?

Carnaval at Global Village is definitely one chapter of a much bigger story. Beyond the funfair, Carnaval is an experience provider, a one-stop shop providing entertainment, rides, character shows and more to the broader industry. The creative, talented and experienced team at Carnaval are in the planning phases of the next chapter. They are in early discussions with major players across the region to expand operations, so watch this space for updates...



Creating safe theme park experiences in 2021 and beyond

Technology will be key says Mel Taylor, CEO, Omnico Group



Mel Taylor

“ Theme park operators that rely on pandemic restrictions easing to recuperate footfall will soon be forced to change tactics; enhancing visitor safety with technology is their only chance for recovery. ”

The events of 2020 have altered the attractions industry beyond recognition. COVID-19 restrictions kept venues closed for months on end, costing millions in revenue. As normality approaches in the form of COVID-19 vaccines, UK and US theme parks have begun announcing their 2021 opening dates, eager to welcome back visitors and make up for a year of slashed profits.

But, while we're all keen for a return to normality, expecting visitors to come back in their usual numbers once lockdowns end is unrealistic.

Based on our recent survey of 4,000 UK and US consumers – including more than 2,000 theme park visitors – at Omnico, we discovered the majority (78%) are hesitant to visit attractions in 2021 due to fear of contracting the virus, while 1 in 4 (27%) simply won't visit at all.

Theme park operators that rely on pandemic restrictions easing to recuperate footfall will soon be forced to change tactics; enhancing visitor safety with technology is their only chance for recovery.

Enabling touch-free interactions with technology

You only have to pick up a map at the entrance of a theme park or resort to appreciate the scale of an attraction business, and the vast number of customer touchpoints they encompass, from gates and turnstiles, to food service areas, to merchandise stores, and – most importantly – the rides.

At many of these touchpoints, visitors have to interact with staff and come into contact with surfaces

touched by thousands of fellow thrill-seekers. Once simply part-and-parcel of the experience, these interactions now represent a serious safety concern.

Enter: contactless technology, once simply a driver of convenience, now a matter of necessity in terms of virus safety. Yet, 30% of the theme park goers we spoke to are worried venues aren't doing enough to deliver contactless experiences upon reopening.

For theme parks, it can be a deal breaker at all stages of the guest journey: for instance, 50% of theme park visitors consider contactless entry (i.e. smart tickets, automated gates, turnstiles, or lockers) a must-have in 2021. Meanwhile, 29% and 34% are more likely to visit parks that offer self-serve kiosks and in-app food orders, respectively.

Delivering impeccable theme park experiences that encourage visitors through the gates this year is about removing friction as well as minimising infection risks.

Consider simple touches like the ability to pay for a meal at your table, or to self-scan products at shops. As a result of the pandemic, the number of people who consider these non-negotiable at a theme park has grown by roughly 10%. It's clear that attraction operators need to make contactless a core part of their strategy in order to make visitors feel safe and boost footfall.

Ensuring safety with reduced crowds and queues

Most theme parks can accommodate tens of thousands of people at any one time. Their buzzing atmosphere is arguably what makes visiting them so

special. It's safe to say, however, that the COVID-19 pandemic changed this perception.

According to our research, crowds are consumers' number one concern when it comes to visiting theme parks this year, with around half of theme park goers likely to favour attractions with clear social distancing guidelines (56%) and capped visitor numbers (48%).

Operators need to make occupancy management a priority to win back consumer trust. A simple way to do this is staggering entries with timed tickets (a measure welcomed by 40% of visitors) or only allowing pre-booked ticket sales. By managing ticket sales across all distributors and resellers in one system, operators gain an accurate view of how many visitors will be onsite at any time, helping cap numbers at busy periods and keep people safe.

One thing that's never been appealing about theme parks is the long waits. Aside from being tedious, in today's climate, queues (unless strictly socially distanced) are simply unsafe. Even more reason for operators to minimise them: 28% of our respondents would feel more comfortable visiting theme parks if given reassurance of reduced queues, and 29% would even pay more for the guarantee.

But how can businesses remove this often-unavoidable characteristic?

Allowing customers to order food and drinks ahead of time via their mobiles is a great way to cut down waiting times and avoid queues, and something half (49%) of theme park visitors now consider 'must-have'. Venues could also implement virtual queues, freeing up visitors to experience the attractions and, crucially, spend money across different areas, while virtually waiting for a ride or meal. Not only would such measures drive safety, but boost revenue opportunities, too.

A safer, tech-savvier future for theme parks

Uncertainty risks keeping consumers away from theme parks this year, casting a dark cloud over the opportunity for recovery. But, for the venues that adapt to new visitor demands and enhance safety with technology, 2021 could be a transformational and successful year. What you do before the gates open will ultimately determine how long they stay that way once a safer, tech-savvier future for theme parks is established.

“ For the venues that adapt to new visitor demands and enhance safety with technology, 2021 could be a transformational and successful year. ”





A legendary experience

Company speaker, Birger Meierjohann tells Park World editor, Becci Knowles why Tripsdrill is so special and reveals what's been happening while gates have been closed.



Birger Meierjohann

Named 'Best Regional Park' at the 2020 Park World Excellence Awards, Tripsdrill is Germany's longest standing theme park. It was founded in 1929 when Eugen Fischer, the grandfather of today's owners, opened the 'Old Ladies' Mill', based on a local legend of a mill in which the old ladies became young again. This first attraction was unfortunately burnt down after a lightning strike in 1946 but was rebuilt and reopened by Eugen Fischer's son Kurt in 1950. According to Birger, "his vision was to create a place of enjoyment for the whole family – from the toddler to the senior. He also chose a very special theme for the park – which is 'Swabia in the year 1880'. Our region's history and tradition are therefore the heartbeat of Tripsdrill."

I ask Birger if that vision has been achieved today: "Yes, definitely," he says, "though today's Tripsdrill is much different from how it looked like in the earlier years – though even the older visitors still recognise some of their childhood memories here. We have

adventure playgrounds for small kids, slower attractions and museums for the elder generation – as well as an increasing offer of coasters, thrilling teenagers and young adults.

"In our neighbouring wildlife park, which is included in the ticket, our visitors can experience mostly indigenous animals in natural surroundings. We have a complete offer for everybody. All attractions are designed according to our traditional theme, profiting from the region's rich heritage of tales and legends. Our goal is to provide quality, authenticity and originality."

Reflecting on what have since become the most popular rides and attractions, Birger says: "After we had been known for decades for our wide variety of family attractions, our roller coasters are today what makes us famous – notably the wooden coaster "Mammut", the launch coaster 'Karacho' and our latest addition, the suspended thrill coaster "Hals-über-Kopf" in an intertwining layout with the family boomerang 'Vollampf'

“ For each milestone project, Tripsdrill’s owners, the Fischer family, seek inspiration from all over the world: visiting other parks, meeting manufacturers at trade shows and discussing ideas with our park planner. ”



(named ‘Best Roller Coaster at the 2020 Park World Excellence Award’). Birger continues, “in the summer months especially, our visitors love refreshing water attractions like the log flume ‘Badewannen-Fahrt zum Jungbrunnen’”.

Commenting on how the team chooses which manufacturers and suppliers to work with, Birger says: “Generally, we are open to all suppliers who have the capacity to fulfil our expectations. At Tripsdrill we pursue a long-term master plan which is continuously developed. For each milestone project, Tripsdrill’s owners, the Fischer family, seek inspiration from all over the world: visiting other parks, meeting manufacturers at trade shows and discussing ideas with our park planner. On this basis we approach the suppliers which we feel are best equipped for the specific project.”

Everything from the rides, to the food, live entertainment and retail outlets fit beautifully within the theme ‘Swabia in the year 1880’. “Our menus are inspired by local traditions. In our service restaurant ‘Gasthaus zur

Altweibermühle’ we serve typical Swabian cuisine, inspired by grandma’s recipes, which you will not find in any other theme park,” says Birger. “However, you will also get fresh burgers in our ‘Restaurant zur Werksküche’ and a large variety of other snacks and dishes in the smaller food outlets.”

While live entertainment is “currently” not offered on a daily basis, it is for special occasions “and then we always select original artists who fit to our concept. Of course, we offer a wide choice of souvenir articles in our shops and our guests especially like those which have been customised for Tripsdrill.”

Go wild!

In 1972 Tripsdrill opened its wildlife park, but prior to this it had a number of, partly exotic, animals, in the theme park. Commenting on the decision to establish a separate park for the animals, Birger says: “We changed our concept – and apart from a few sheep and goats in the theme park, we only keep animals in our wildlife park nowadays.” Stretched across 47 hectares in a natural forest environment, “more than 50 species live here in natural enclosures, which our visitors can partly walk through.,” says Birger. “Our focus is on indigenous animals like wolves, lynx, bears, otters or deer, but we also have some birds of prey from other continents in our falconry. We used to offer regular feedings and flight shows. However, currently, we need to renounce on these demonstrations as the Covid regulations don’t allow larger gatherings.”

With so much to see and do at Tripsdrill, I ask Birger if it’s possible to do both in one day? “As the wildlife park is included in the theme park ticket, most guests visit both parks,” he says. However, with our growing offer, it is hardly possible to make everything in one day. I would therefore recommend each visitor to plan one full day for the theme park and at least half a day for the wildlife park.”

With this in mind, the park now has a number of accommodation options. “Our overnight guests can enjoy 28 tree houses and 20 shepherd’s wagons in the



Nature Resort. The tree houses are equipped with their own bathroom and even underfloor heating. Guests in our shepherd's wagons use shared sanitary facilities. Of course, it's amazing for our guests to hear in the evenings the howling of the wolves or the roaring of the deer from their own tree house's terrace."

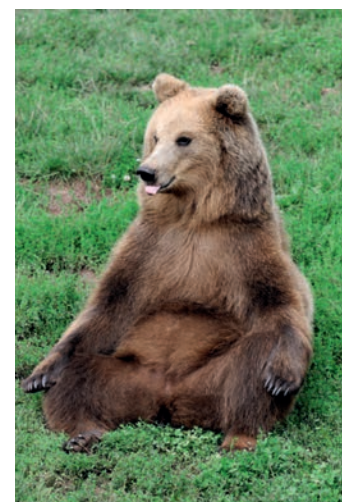
As Tripsdrill's offer has continued to grow, so too has its visitor base: "Traditionally, we used to attract visitors from the surrounding areas in South-Western Germany. The more we extended the offer, our catchment area increased. Most visitors are still domestic, but especially among our overnight guests, many are from neighbouring countries like Switzerland, Netherlands or France. Oversea visitors are still rather the exception, but nowadays theme park enthusiasts from all over the world include Tripsdrill in their itineraries when they are touring Europe."

The show must go on

Tripsdrill may be shut at the moment due to Covid, but the team is still hard at work in both locations – all the animals still need looking after and preparations for the season start on the theme park side are also underway. Revealing what's going on behind the scenes, Birger says: "Our theme park is currently in the regular winter break. We plan to start into the season on March 27th – if the Covid situation allows. Of course, our staff is busy with the required maintenance work and technical checks so that we are prepared for the upcoming season. We are also using the remaining time to complete the station building of "Hals-über-Kopf" and the theming inside. Our gardeners are taking care of all green spaces so that the park will be in full bloom when the season starts. In the theme park, things are therefore going on as usual.

"However, our wildlife park and nature resort, which are usually open all around the year, are now closed due to the corona regulations. Our animals of course need good care each and every day. And it's not only about feeding them and cleaning their enclosures: We also need to continue training with them so that we can resume our flight demonstrations and feedings as soon as we are allowed to resume. So, in the wildlife park, our staff are continuing their daily business – but unfortunately without visitors. The big challenge for everybody is: we have no guarantee of when business can resume, but we need to be prepared for when it does."

"Of course, the pandemic has an impact on our business. We had to spend already in the 2020 season a six-digit amount for all necessary measures for the protection against the coronavirus – costs which were never expected. Also marketing activities had to be re-thought, especially considering that we need to cap our daily number of visitors in the park. We had to introduce a system which only allows the purchase of online tickets for a fixed date. Only for some exceptions (e.g. visitors with disabilities who receive special rates) physical tickets can be bought at the counter. On the one hand, it was not that easy to introduce this system, also considering that many Germans are not as familiar with online ticketing and payment as some other nationalities. On the other hand, we now have the possibility to know in advance how many visitors will come to our park the next day – which creates the potential for new, dynamic and measurable online marketing."



Looking ahead

As Birger says, 2020 saw the opening the new coasters 'Hals-über-Kopf' and 'Vollampf'. However, the theming was not complete at that point in time. He explains, "In Tripsdrill, theming is essential and therefore needs a certain amount of time. Currently, we are working on the station and theming of Hals-über-Kopf. The station building is designed as a historic tavern. With multimedia effects we will tell the story of the "Seven Swabians". This bunch of clumsy dare devils once decided to start into an epic journey to the Lake of Constance, where a huge monster was thought to be hiding. Our theming will tell the whole story."

As our conversation comes to an end, I ask Birger what he is personally most excited about seeing when the season begins, and he speaks for everybody in Europe when he says, "First of all, I am excited to see the park full of happy faces again. Since November, the whole leisure and tourism sector in Germany was closed down – everybody is so much looking forward to things getting back to normal."

“ I am excited to see the park full of happy faces again. Everyone is so looking forward to things getting back to normal. ”



Chimelong

Asian projects keep Legacy Entertainment busy

When it was announced that the Legacy Entertainment-designed Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park took 2020's "Golden Crown Awards" event by storm, winning three major awards, it was time to re-examine what other projects Legacy Entertainment was developing. North American editor, Paul Ruben takes a look.



Taylor Jeffs

The three awards were for "Outstanding Themed Land Park," "Outstanding Family Entertainment Center" and "Outstanding Social Media Famous Tourist Attraction." The awards were presented on December 10th during the 2020 Amusement World Cultural Tourism Development Summit held at the Yinji International Tourism Resort in Zhengzhou, the capital of China's Henan Province.

Legacy has many active projects in the Far East, and Taylor Jeffs, Legacy Entertainment's president, describes the company's progress, beginning with the Chimelong Marine Science Museum project. "This is the kind of project that could only happen in China," admits Jeffs. "With over 4,000,000 square feet (371,612 square meters) of guest area, when the park opens later this year it will shatter the record of 'World's Largest Indoor Theme Park,' and by design it will be the ultimate complimentary experience to the neighboring Chimelong Ocean Kingdom theme park. We've developed some attractions that will either be first to market, like MACK's Submarine

Dark Ride, or first in the world, like the colossal ship simulator which is the largest on the planet."

Another Chimelong project Legacy designed recently celebrated a major milestone. "After five years of design and planning," Jeffs explains, "Chimelong Forest Kingdom is officially under construction as of this past November. It's a very exciting milestone, as this park has the opportunity to be the most transformative animal-centric park Asia has ever seen. It's no secret that Chinese zoological attractions historically have not had the best animal rights history, but we see a chance to lead by example here. Forest Kingdom is a zoo park, but a zoo park unlike any other. Our design mandate was that it needed to be more 'Sanctuary' than 'Zoo,' and that the animal habitats needed to be so luxe that humans would be jealous. Luckily Chimelong has a sprawling site suitable to this ambitious idea."

Work on Lotte's Magic Forest theme park continues. "I believe the new Lotte park in Busan, South Korea, will be a model that can be replicated in many emerging markets around the world," notes Jeffs. "No matter where we

travel, everyone wants Disney or Universal quality, though when reality hits, budgets for a full-day theme park are generally closer to, or less than, \$300,000,000. Lotte's Magic Forest is a beautiful example of what that kind of budget can get you. We'll have a couple signature attractions, including a Blue Fire clone and Power Splash from MACK, as well a slew of fantastic family and teen attractions to round things out."

There's more. "Given that Legacy has such a strong presence in Asia," adds Jeffs, "we got hit early and hard by COVID-19. However, this has fortunately meant that our business has been on the first wave of recovery as well, and we now have several great projects in the works across China, Korea, and Indonesia. In China, we have a very wide variety of work, ranging from an automotive theme park, to a IP-based studio park destination, along with a year-round exhibition on the site of the famous Harbin Ice Festival. In Korea, we're cooking up some exciting new things with our longtime partner Lotte, and in Indonesia, we are at the start of a new relationship with the country's largest developer on something really inspiring. I'm excited to share more details on all of these soon.



Chimelong

Jeffs was asked what current and future trends in the industry he has noticed. "We are continually reminded that the most successful projects are those that respect the tenets of our industry. The reason our medium exists is to allow the entire family to immerse themselves in an environments that engages all five senses, and offer something that can't be experienced at a mall of movie theater. The further we stray from that idea, the more likely we are to fail. One timely example is VR. While there are a few groups out there doing some interesting work, I believe that VR, at its core, is counterintuitive to the themed entertainment medium both artistically and commercially, and it seems the marketplace now is reflecting that, again.

"Geographically, Asia continues to be Legacy's most important market, just as Saudi Arabia continues to be the great sleeping giant, primed to awaken at any moment now," Jeffs concludes. "In 2021, The Sea Shell Aquarium at VinWonders theme park in Vietnam will mark our firm's first project in a country which also shows a great deal of promise. Elsewhere in the world, with an emphasis on emerging markets, we are making an effort to spread the word about our 'Boutique Theme Parks' like Trans Studio Bali, Trans Studio Cibubur, and Lotte's Magic Forest. In most markets which have yet to mature to a point of being able to afford the major western brands, these smaller, budget-conscious parks might be the perfect fit for the moment."



Sidebar

Legacy's Golden Crown Awards

Legacy Entertainment won three awards for their design of Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park. These recognitions are only the latest for Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, a major marine life theme park which welcomed over 3,000,000 guests in its inaugural year. In 2019, Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park was named "Best Theme Park" by China's largest theme park organization, CAAPA (Chinese Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions), whilst one of the park's signature attractions, Lava Drifting, was recognized with IAAPA's prestigious Brass Ring Award for innovation. Haichang invested over \$700,000,000 to build the 73-acre theme park in Shanghai's Pudong district. The park, which debuted in November 2018, is the primary competitor to the nearby Shanghai Disneyland resort.

"From the start of this project in

2013, Haichang was firm in their commitment to building a marine life park that would set a new standard for domestic Chinese audiences," said Taylor Jeffs of Legacy Entertainment, the park's designer. "Obviously we are thrilled to see their audacity has paid off, not only in satisfied customers, but also in recognition from their peers."

Since its grand opening in November 2018, Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park has quickly become recognized as one of China's most successful theme parks, both in terms of operation and commercial performance. The 73-acre, U.S. \$730,000,000 project boasts several notable features, including mainland China's first orca habitat, as well as the world's longest Rapids Ride. The park, located 37 miles from downtown Shanghai, is owned by Haichang Ocean Park Holdings.



Lotte



The experience economy

Based in Germany, Spree Interactive excels in providing turn-key, free-roam VR attractions for location-based entertainment operators. Bryony Andrews, editor of GlobalAmusements&Play.com, spoke to managing director and co-founder Jonathan Nowak Delgado about the future of the experience economy in a post-COVID world, and the role of commercial VR attractions for the LBE industry...

Jonathan has worked in the innovation consulting, natural resources, medTech and entertainment industries, starting his career as a strategy and innovation consultant for Virtual Consulting International in its Perth, Johannesburg and New York offices. As a founder and CEO of the medical company Digital Smile Design, based in São Paulo, he was responsible for the global sales of software to dental clinics. Now, Jonathan is co-founder and managing director of Spree Interactive.

Headquartered in the German cities of Munich and Nuremberg, Spree Interactive (formerly known as Holodeck), has played an integral part in a number of world-first projects in recent years. Of particular note are the VR Roam&Ride tracking system for Europa Park's legendary Valerian coaster, as well as the tracking system for VR Bumper Cars at Erlebnispark Schloss Thurn. Now, however, the company has turned its hand to the product side, creating turn-key VR attractions for the LBE industry.

Spree Interactive's central product offering for operators is its turn-key VR attraction, Spree Arena, which comes in two sizes: 10x10m, catering for ten congruent players, and 6x6m, which caters for six congruent players and which was launched just last month at the ShowUp virtual trade conference.

"As a turn-key offering, Spree Arena includes every aspect an operator needs in order to get started: from hardware and software through to consultation,

installation, training and technical service," explained Jonathan. "The new six player version combines several aspects - a compact footprint, high throughput and affordability. We've deployed a new generation of technology which allows us to eliminate a very expensive component and to pass this cost reduction along to our clients."

A content-led business model

Central to Spree's offering for operators is what Jonathan describes as a "Netflix-style" subscription approach to content, which ensures operators always have access to new games. Operators purchase Spree Arena with a 'content bundle' that fits their needs - whether that's two new games per year as standard, or more specialist content as needed. Aware that content is key when it comes to VR attractions, as well as developing games in-house, Spree has worked with a number of partners to ensure its content offering is

second-to-none.

"Different content genres target different audiences," said Jonathan. "Edutainment content like Mission To Mars targets field trips. Esports titles like Tower Tag target teenagers and the adult segment. Quick turn-around mini-games target the birthday party segment."

Spree's second product offering is its VR bumper car entertainment system. "The addition of VR technology updates these legendary attractions with modern, interactive fun," Jonathan said. "In April 2021 we'll release the newest game for this attraction: a sci-fi based futuristic racing adventure in partnership with I.E. Park."

So what makes Spree stand out within the LBE sector? Jonathan believes the company's values are as important as its product offering.

"Firstly, we are focused," he said. "Keeping the big picture in mind, we execute simple and pragmatic solutions which are flexible. Secondly, we care - we promote an empathetic and friendly team culture based on respect and trust. This is extended to our business relationships with partners and customers where we seek to form long-term, win-win relationships. We conduct business with good humour."

"Thirdly, we listen. We enjoy creating innovative and unique experiences with and for our customers and users; we are customer-centric and use rapid prototyping, early user testing and continuous user feedback. And finally, we are accountable. We focus on commercial success and hold to our self-imposed goals. We implement our current strategy in time and on budget and focus on the essentials."

The COVID effect

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been a huge force affecting the attractions industry over the past 12 months, Jonathan believes that this "COVID induced break" will not permanently damage the sector.

"Overall we are in the midst of a megatrend towards the experience economy. The deep human underlying desire to share great experiences with others will stay the same, if not will increase after the lockdowns, as recent McKinsey studies have found. With many brick and mortar retailers going out of business, we have seen lots of demand and interest from shopping mall operators for location-based VR entertainment, which is exciting. However, our model is not to operate the attraction ourselves, but to find a professional operator who can excel in that role."

Several of Spree's clients have, of course, suffered from the lockdown measures, however Jonathan revealed that many of them are using the time to renovate, innovate and get prepared for reopening after the lockdowns. To support its clients in operating in a post-COVID world, Spree offers a hygiene concept which includes operational & cleaning processes. "We recommend different operational processes - for example, one way systems, operating at a lower capacity, and a cleaning system using alcohol wipes that kill 99.99% of bacteria and germs. We also offer a UV cleaning option but have found that operators prefer the manual cleaning option."



Capitalising on the e-sports boom

Although 2020 was a challenging year for business at every level, Spree Interactive nevertheless managed to complete some very impressive projects. Jonathan identifies the company's partnership with Hollywood studio Pixomondo for immersive educational experience 'Mission to Mars' as a particular highlight. "The 15-minute adventure is well-favoured not only among users but also FECs, since it is a leading attraction for school field trips. In addition, the Mission to Mars experience leaves parents satisfied when their children are having fun and learning at the same time," said Jonathan.

Spree has also recently announced its newest product launch: Tower Tag. Developed from the ground-up for location based entertainment centres, Tower Tag is a 'hyper-dynamic' futuristic PVP shooter - a bit like paintball - with a grappling hook locomotion method that Jonathan says quickly becomes second nature to players. It's particularly well-suited to e-sports competitions, a rapidly growing section of the gaming market that offers great opportunities for publicity and encouraging repeat play.

"We predict Tower Tag will serve as a new major gamechanger for our current and future customers," said Jonathan. "The game has achieved the title of number one VR esports game globally, and has over 1 million plays. Tower Tag has leveled us at the entrance of the esports market and we're excited to keep our audience and game library growing."

Looking forward

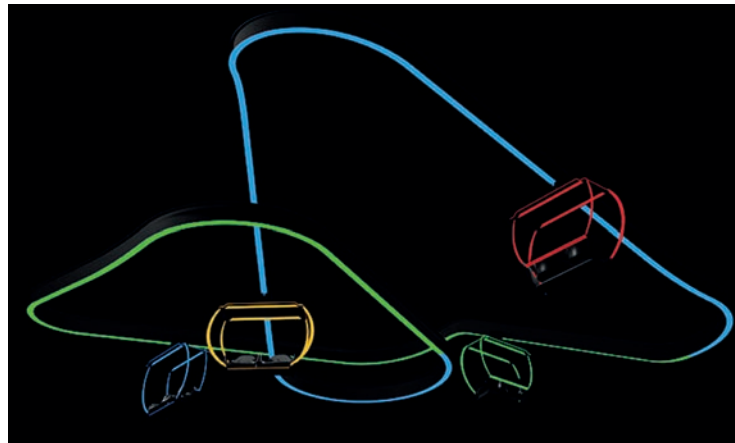
In November 2020, Spree Interactive successfully secured a seven-digit investment from two strategic investors and two financial investors in the second closing of its seed round. So what will this funding enable, in both 2021 and beyond? "We will expand our footprint globally with distribution partnerships," said Jonathan, "and expand the breadth of our game offering to allow our clients to be able to cater different target segments."

Expansion may be on the cards, but Jonathan maintains that Spree Interactive's overall purpose for 2021 will remain the same: "Enabling guests to have unique and emotional experiences with others, every time they play on a Spree system."

“Overall we are in the midst of a megatrend towards the experience economy. The deep human underlying desire to share great experiences with others will stay the same, if not increase after the lockdowns.”

Interactive games for Voxel Arena

Also at the ShowUp event, Scale-1 Portal launched its new cloud-based Voxel Arena, part of the official Oculus for Business program. Voxel Arena features five games including the new Sep's Diner, a multiplayer cooking game where players work together to keep lines of hungry customers satisfied with yummy burgers and crispy fries. Voxel Arena's approach combines a buy-your-own hardware model with an entirely cloud-based solution for operators. FEC owners just buy Oculus Business Edition headsets and subscribe to the Voxel Arena from the Oculus portal, paying a low monthly fee per headset.



Small-footprint Sky Tag coaster

The new Sky Tag from Extreme Engineering is a family friendly, low cost, modular coaster attraction for family entertainment centers. The Sky Tag uses the Cloud Coaster roller coaster to soar guests high in the sky, in complete darkness, providing phasers for each participant to blast other ride vehicles and interactive targets. The attraction can fit in spaces as small as 12 x 12 metres. A standard configuration comes with 4, side-by-side vehicles based on the Cloud Coaster's track design. The all-inclusive price of the Sky Tag allows operators to choose from various standard themes, such as adventure, space, ocean and western. Ride capacity is up to 240 people per hour.

HyperSound Directional Speakers

Videotel Digital, a manufacturer of touch-less peripherals and digital signage, has enhanced its line of HyperSound Directional Speakers. Sound can now be played at lower levels with exceptional clarity, which means users can create even tighter sound zones without concern about ambient noise or adjacent distraction. An ideal solution for the touchfree experiences required by the pandemic, patrons of museums, aquariums and zoos can still get a full immersive experience with touch-less HyperSound directional audio combined with Videotel Digital's VP90 interactive media player. A variety of contactless sensor options allow each exhibit to begin audio and video with simple touch-less gestures – even for exhibits adjacent to one another, allowing for private listening experiences.



JUMP hyper-reality base-jumping experience

Details of JUMP, the latest experience from James Jensen, the former creative visionary from The VOID, were revealed at recent virtual trade event ShowUp. The JUMP hyper-reality experience will include a 'flight suit' and VR helmet. The simulator is a mix of a suspension and wind system that allows people to experience the extreme thrill of jumping off cliffs and skyscrapers without the danger, using the power of virtual reality to enable transformational experiences inaccessible to most people.



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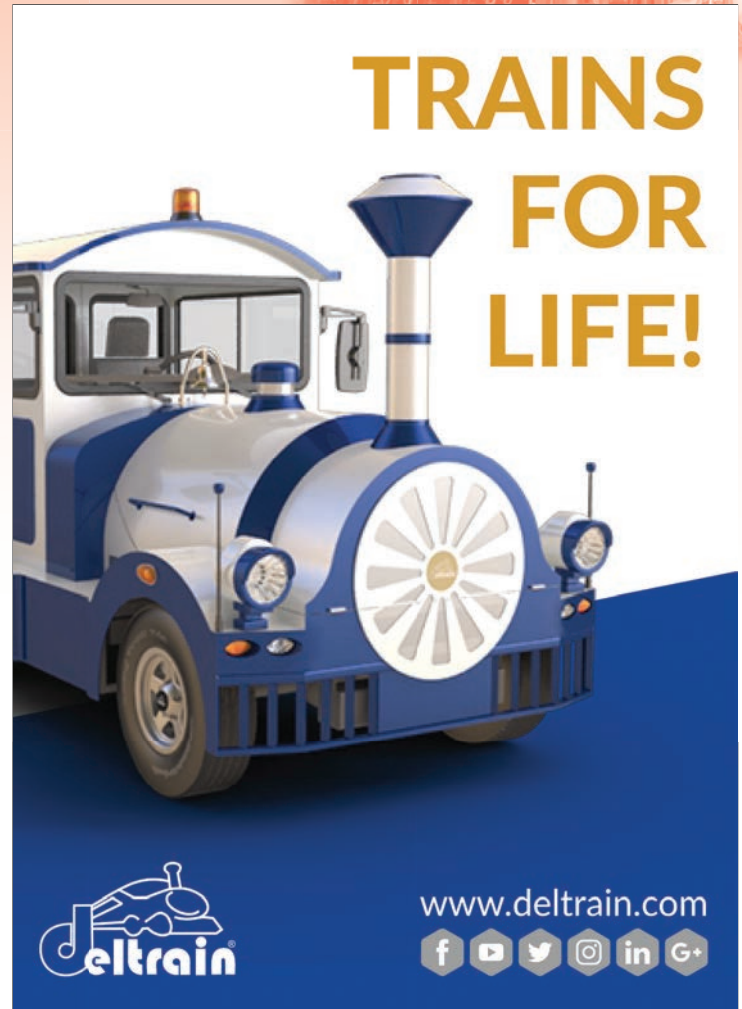
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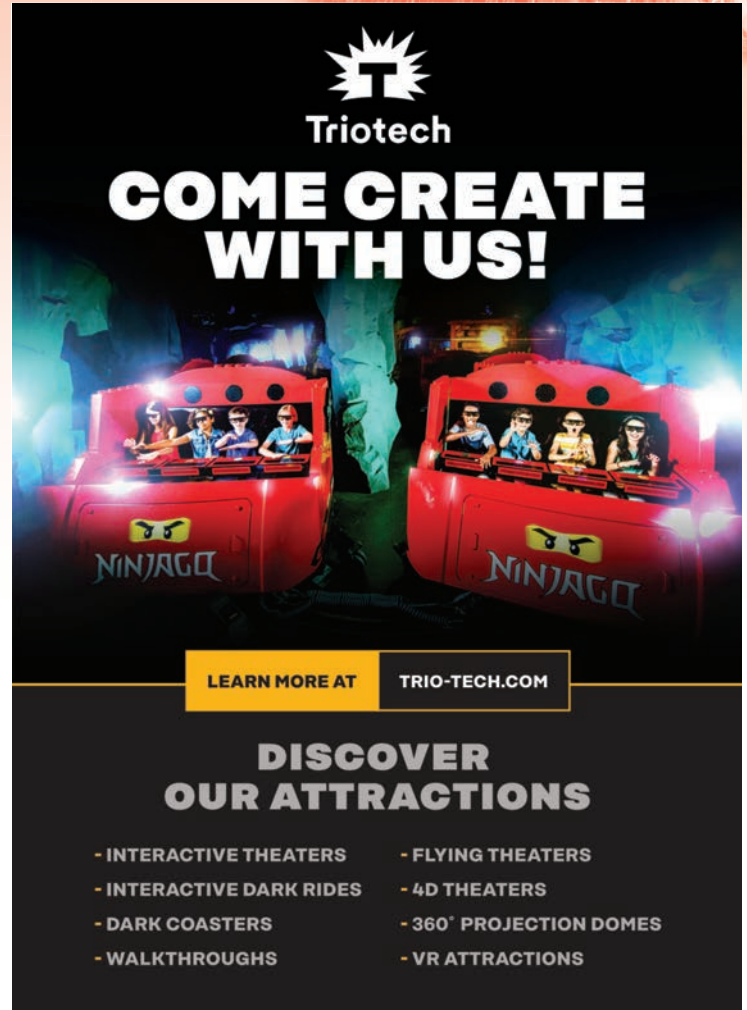
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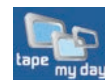
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