

Radiator Springs Racers at Disney California Adventure: A Disney California Adventure Attraction Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Things are forever changing at Disney parks. Attractions come and go, and they also sometimes wane in popularity.

However, usually when something new opens, you can pretty much guarantee it will be mobbed. We've been fortunate enough to visit Disneyland on a number of occasions when they've had recently opened attractions, such as the Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage, Monsters Inc., Mike and Sully to the Rescue, and the Little Mermaid -- Ariel's Undersea Adventure. With all of them, you had to head to the park at opening to stand a chance of riding without a long wait. But on our most recent visit back to California in fall 2015, we were able to pretty much walk to all of them on at any time of the day, with one exception: Radiator Springs Racers.

In summer 2012, Disney's California Adventure welcomed the arrival of Cars Land, and an immediate success in the shape of Radiator Springs Racers. When we visited for the holiday season that year, we knew that we would need to be there at opening to try and snag Fastpasses for this extremely popular ride. In the three years that passed until our next visit in September 2015, I did wonder whether we'd see much lower waits at Radiator Springs Racers, but from the reports I heard, it's popularity didn't seem to be waning. And indeed that proved to be the case.

□ As one of our friends commented, Radiator Springs Racers has now very much become a Fastpass only attraction, unless that is you want to spend hours waiting to enjoy it. But why has Radiator Springs Racers retained its popularity over so long? I think there are a number of reasons for it.

□ Firstly, Radiator Springs Racers is based on a hugely popular ride on the other coast of the States: Test Track in Walt Disney World. The cars are essentially, as I understand it from what I've been told, using the same type of technology, and they certainly give the same type of smooth ride, particularly when you get to put your foot to the metal at the end and fly round the track!

However, this technology is also probably the cause of some of the long wait times regularly seen at Radiator Springs Racers, as it's still

notoriously unreliable. On our recent visits to Walt Disney World, we haven't found that many problems with Test Track, but the same can't be said on the eastern coast. On the first morning we headed into Disney's California Adventure, we found a very quiet Cars Land, and quickly realised Radiator Springs Racers were down. We were able to ride it later in the day, but a couple of days later, when we headed into the park for early opening, we were stuck on the thing, frustratingly just as we came back to the finish line. We were very lucky, and were only sat there about 10 minutes, as we saw other cars being evacuated as we left, with people walking down the track.

□ Technical problems aside, there are other reasons why this ride is so popular. It's based on a hugely popular movie, and let's face it, if you look at another of the newer rides in Disneyland, Monsters Inc., Mike and Sully to the Rescue, you can't say that about the film it's derived from. The Cars franchise is also squarely aimed at boys, both young and old, and that's a rarity these days, given how many Disney princesses there are. But despite this, the movie and the ride are both popular with everyone in the family. Let's face it, I can't see young boys queuing up to see the Little Mermaid in the same way…

□ In keeping with Walt's idea of always having "wieners" that would make people want to explore the park, when they see something exciting ahead of them, Radiator Springs Racers has a tremendous draw for anyone walking through to Cars Land from the Pacific Wharf area of the park. There is something about that view, and seeing the amazing landscaping with the cars passing through it that I imagine would make just about anyone keep to get themselves on the ride as soon as possible.

□ It doesn't hurt Radiator Springs Racers that it's also located in the most wonderfully themed part of a Disney theme park that I've seen in a long time. Maybe when Avatar adds on its land to Animal Kingdom and the Star Wars expansions are complete, I'll change my view, but for me, Cars Land is second only to some of the first class theming we witnessed at Tokyo DisneySea -- huge praise indeed. If you've got a location that good, it's going to draw people, and they're going to want to sample the biggest attraction there.

□ And the theming of course doesn't stop when you get to the entrance of Radiator Springs Racers, it carries on the whole way through the ride… and the waiting area, which is probably just as well, given people may be standing in the same spot for some time. The only shame I find with this ride is that you just can't take everything in once you're on the ride, particularly in the latter section, as you're just moving too fast.

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□ But perhaps the most important thing about Radiator Springs Racers is that it's a thrill ride that just about the whole family can enjoy. Sure, there's a height limit on it, and it is dark in places, and it's certainly fast, but despite that, it's also a huge amount of fun, and I'm willing to bet there are kids who have desperately waited to reach the magic height, so they could take their first spin on it.

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□ There are many reasons why Radiator Springs Racers is such a hugely popular attraction even more than three years after it opened. It's certainly one of my favourites at Disneyland, and something we have to do, otherwise our Californian vacation isn't complete. Long may it continue to be such a hit with everyone who visits, that's so long as there's a Fastpass option on it of course…

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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