

Blue Horizons: At SeaWorld Orlando

by Barry Hom, PassPorter Guest Contributor

For many years, the Key West Dolphin Fest at SeaWorld Orlando entertained and delighted many park guests. Now that show is a memory. The Key West Dolphin Fest departed to make way for the new Blue Horizons show, which opened in May 2005. On a recent trip, I decided to take a look at this new-to-me production.

The [SeaWorld Orlando web site](#) describes Blue Horizons as such:

"Venture beyond the horizon in an experience that takes you into a world of acrobatic dolphins and whales, soaring birds and leaping water with a spirit all its own. Blue Horizons - an all-new theatrical performance about the place where the sea meets the sky."

After reading the description and other information on Blue Horizons, it reminded me of the Viva! dolphin show at Sea World San Antonio. Viva! is best described as a mix between a dolphin show and Cirque du Soleil. As unusual as that may sound, the show actually worked and was entertaining. The only problem I found with Viva! was that it was too much Cirque du Soleil and not enough dolphins. The show was about 65% Cirque du Soleil and 35% dolphins. If Blue Horizons is a mixture of the same two mediums, would it encounter the same problem as Viva? We shall see...

The story of Blue Horizons revolves around Marina, a young woman dressed in pink. Marina wants to dance on ocean waves with Dolphus, the spirit of the sea, and soar through the air with Aurora, the spirit of the sky. She dives out of her bedroom window to a wondrous place - the Blue Horizons. I don't know about you, but if I dove out of my bedroom window, I'd hit prickly bushes. But I will suspend reality for a moment and enjoy the show.

The show begins with the "Blue Horizons" theme song, which you will probably be humming throughout the park after you hear it. The show is divided into three acts. The first act was the appearance of Marina. Marina meets Dolphus, a man in a gray wetsuit with a dolphin's tail emblazoned on his chest, during this act. Dolphus and Marina hold hands as they watch the dolphins perform their tricks. If you sit in the first few rows, watch out! The dolphins will splash water on you.

In the second act, the dolphins step aside and the show begins to resemble a Cirque du Soleil production. Performers portraying birds perform an aerial act while others dive on and off a platform.

During the second act, the evil performers broke up the good fun. I knew that they were evil because, in theme park show tradition, they were dressed in black. There is even a vulture that landed on stage to accentuate their evilness. Marina, Dolphus, Aurora, and the trainers run away when the bad guys appear on stage. The bad guys strap themselves onto bungee cables. They bounce and flip around in the air as water cannons spray in front of them. Two false killer whales swim around and perform for the audience. The bad guys end their show by diving into the water.

Marina and the rest of the "good guy" performers return to the stage in the last act. The finale features the dolphins pulling out all the stops. After the dolphins do numerous tricks, the music swells, the other performers appear and wave huge flags, and we we're treated to a spectacular dolphin jump.

Did Blue Horizons suffer the same problem as Viva? Viva! used a lot of human performers, so I think to use them in the most effective way, they needed to be seen many times during the show. Blue Horizons has a smaller number of human performers, so they can be used more sparingly and the dolphins take center stage. Blue Horizons seems about $1/3$ of Cirque du Soleil and $2/3$ dolphins.

Blue Horizons could have the dolphins on stage more often, but I have to think about the other dolphin shows I've seen. If we look at the grand tradition of dolphin shows from Sea World and other theme parks, Blue Horizons is following the three-act tradition. The three acts in dolphin shows consist of act one of dolphins, act two is something else on the stage as the dolphins take a break to smoke or eat junk out of the vending machines (kidding, just kidding...), and the dolphins return in act three for the finale.

The dolphin tricks and performances are pretty amazing. One thing of particular note is that the dolphins seem to be behaving on their own. In other Sea World shows, the trainers give bold and sweeping hand signals, so you know that the marine animal will soon perform a trick. I didn't see the trainers give overt hand signals or any indication that they were signaling the dolphins to do a certain trick. If they are giving signals, they must be very subtle or perhaps using audio signaling.

If you want to see a Cirque du Soleil show, you might want to buy tickets for the actual thing at the Walt Disney World Resort. Overall, though, I found the Blue Horizons entertaining and an enjoyable way to spend its 20-minute show time. I do miss the Key West Dolphin Fest, but in exchange, I hummed the Blue Horizons theme song for the rest of the day!

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[Jennifer's Note: Interested in the "Other" Orlando? Check out the excellent [The Other Orlando guidebook](#) by Kelly Monaghan, which we carry in the PassPorter Store]

About The Author: Barry is a roller coaster and theme/amusement park enthusiast. So far, he has ridden 471 roller coasters and visited over 80 theme and amusement parks in many U.S. states, France, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, and Japan. He is also a columnist and a moderator for the website IOA Central (<http://www.ioacentral.com>). He is looking forward to the opening of the Hard Rock Park in Myrtle Beach, SC in Spring 2008.

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