

# Learning To Like Disney: Disney's Hollywood Studios

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

So which is your favorite Walt Disney World theme park?

It's a question that most of us could answer immediately and, for the record, mine is Epcot. That question then naturally leads on to another, "Which is your least favorite Disney theme park?" I'm guessing that's something that we could probably answer as well, although we might need to think about it a bit more. For me, the park that somehow is the least appealing is the Disney's Hollywood Studios.

Why? Well, apart from Epcot being my favorite, the Magic Kingdom is, well, just magic really! After all, it's based on Disneyland, which is where it all started. As for Animal Kingdom, Animal Kingdom is beautiful! To me, it's like escaping into a tropical wonderland, filled with hundreds of animals that I could just sit and watch for hours. If only they'd just stop those safari vehicles on the Kilimanjaro Safaris and allow you to do that!

But for many years now, I've felt that there was no such great theming at the Disney's Hollywood Studios. You walk in and yes, the idea is that you're transported back to a golden era of Hollywood, but compared to the other parks, it just looks remarkably normal. And as for the attractions, they've never done much for me. Not being big thrill riders, the Sunset Boulevard area was unfamiliar to us, even though it's the first stop on most people's lists as they head for the Tower of Terror and the Rock 'n' Roller Coaster.

Of course there's not only thrill rides at Disney's Hollywood Studios, but we've also found some of the other attractions less than appealing. Although Who Wants to be a Millionaire? -- Play It! had many fans, we weren't amongst them. It's very much geared to an American audience, which while perfectly understandable. Being from England, it frustrated us immensely. And then there's the Backlot Tour. The last time we'd taken this, it had been severely reduced, as work was underway to create the new stunt show.

So what's happened to change my view? Well, on our last visit to Walt Disney World, we really gave the Disney's Hollywood Studios another chance and I started to learn to love this park.

The first thing that changed was some of the attractions that had never

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appealed to us were either gone or much improved. Who Wants to be a Millionaire -- Play It! disappeared in the summer to make way for Toy Story Mania!, which is now open. And then there's the Backlot Tour which is very much back to its former self, with its route restored now. You really feel as if you're being given a good tour these days, unlike a couple of years ago, when you came off wondering "was that it?"

And the Lights, Motors, Action! Stunt Show Spectacular, the reason for all those changes to the Backlot tour, is proving to be an excellent addition to the Studios. Some have said that two stunt shows may be too much for one park, but for our money, they both showcase very different stunts and there's room for both. If you haven't checked out this new show yet, it's well worth a visit, as it's packed with talented drivers who show off their skills.

We also finally found our way to the Sunset Boulevard area, as I plucked up courage to try the Tower of Terror -- and wow, what a great ride this is! I'm no thrill ride fan, but this was a lot of fun. If you've never tried this, it's definitely worth giving it a go. I found the drops amazingly smooth and far better than some of the ones I've experienced on planes when we've run into turbulence!

Then there are the old favorites that we've always known and loved at the Disney's Hollywood Studios. Who could fail to enjoy the Great Movie Ride, as it takes you on a tour through the magic of Hollywood? Yes, your enjoyment of this ride is likely to depend on whether you get a good guide or not, but in our experience, they usually put 110% into their roles, as you'd expect from any aspiring movie star!

One attraction that many people seem to skip, unless they've got young Ariel fans in their party, is Voyage of the Little Mermaid. It's something that always exceeds my expectations and somehow, I never seem to remember just how good this production is. This live show is packed with surprises, including some really imaginative use of falling water and puppets. There's something magical about watching the story of the Little Mermaid come to life in front of you.

The story of another Disney princess, Belle, also comes to life at Beauty and the Beast -- Live on Stage, another not to be missed attraction at the Studios. Sadly, it's one that we rarely seem to make it to, perhaps because there was so much else to see on our last visit, but we'll make sure we put that right when we're next there.

Perhaps the real hidden treasure at the Studios is One Man's Dream, the story of Walt Disney and the magic he created throughout his life. It's a fitting tribute to the man who started it all. Any Disney fan could

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easily spend hours in there, browsing all the exhibits and learning more about his life. It's another park attraction that many seem to pass by, no doubt heading for high octane thrills elsewhere in the Studios, but if you take the time to head inside, you won't be disappointed. I could linger for hours, learning more about Walt's childhood and his dreams. My personal favorite is the video of him talking about his Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, whose initials spell out EPCOT. While the reality of Epcot may be very different from the vision he talked about in the video, watching it, you can understand how much vision one man possessed.

The other thing that changed on our last trip to the Disney's Hollywood Studios was that we rediscovered their afternoon parade. We made a pledge that we would take in some of the park parades, as we hadn't seen them for many years and of course, none of them disappointed. Somehow though, Disney Stars and Motorcars was far and away my favorite. Maybe it was the fact that it features characters you don't usually see in other parades, such as the Muppets, Darth Vader and R2-D2 or maybe it was the fact that the cars work so well. Instead of floats, there's naturally something for them to be traveling in. Either way, it's well worth a look.

And the moral of this whole story? If you're not convinced by one of the Disney parks, do go back and give it another go. You may be surprised at what you find waiting for you.

*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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