

The End of the Toontown Era: Cartoon Life Concludes at the Magic Kingdom

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Toontown is never an area that I've been particularly fond of at Walt Disney World. It has nothing to do with the fact that it's very much aimed at younger members of the family. Even though we don't have any children, I adore the Toontown areas at both Disneyland in California and Tokyo Disneyland. Somehow, theirs seem to work much better, especially as they seem to be in a more enclosed area and full of lots and lots of crazy curves. You walk in there and instantly feel that you've arrived somewhere completely different that really could be home to some of your favourite cartoon characters.

I have no idea why I've never quite felt the same about the Walt Disney World version, but perhaps I'm not alone in feeling that way, as last September, Disney announced that Toontown there would be disappearing to make way for the expansion of Fantasyland. It's the biggest overhaul in the Magic Kingdom's almost 40 year history, so it's hardly surprising that something had to make way for all the new additions to the park.

Mickey's Toontown at Walt Disney World has an interesting history. For starters, it was never intended to be a permanent land, having originally opened as Mickey's Birthdayland to celebrate the main mouse's 60th birthday. It proved to be so successful that Disney chose to retain it, renaming it as Mickey's Starland. By 1996, it was once again rehabbed to become Mickey's Toontown Fair Hall of Fame.

To refresh your memory of the expansion, by 2013, Fantasyland will vastly increase in size, taking over pretty much all of the Toontown that exists today, plus parts of Fantasyland occupied by Dumbo and the old 20,000 Leagues lagoon (Ariel's Grotto and Pooh's Playful Spot). Toontown will make way for the improved Dumbo ride, which will double in size thanks to adding a second carousel, and Pixie Hollow, where you'll be able to meet Tinker Bell and her friends. Never fear, because meets and greets with Mickey and his friends are too important to lose altogether, so Disney has promised that those will continue elsewhere in the park, with new homes for Mickey and Minnie planned near the front of the park.

There is one part of Toontown that will remain and that's the popular children's roller coaster, the Barnstormer. This makes sense, as it's the only coaster aimed at children in the park. No doubt it will be in for some re-theming to make it fit into this new part of Fantasyland. Another

element that will remain and undergo some re-theming is Toontown Station. Both are expected to get a new circus feel to them, as one part of Toontown will be transformed into Dumbo's Circus, where the centrepiece will be an expanded version of Dumbo the Flying Elephant, which should help to reduce waits for this popular attraction.

One attraction that won't be making the transition to the new expanded Fantasyland is Mickey's Country House and that's a shame, as like his good Minnie's Country House, it's packed with superb little details as you walk around. Admittedly, many who visit here are hustling through to get to see the main mouse, but it's worth pausing on the way round to check out everything. Examples include checking to see who's sent post to Mickey recently and listening to the radio in his living room.

The final parts of Mickey's Country House are perhaps some of our favourite parts. The garden is a delight, not only because it's home to Pluto's doghouse, but because of the wonderful vegetables, some with familiar shapes to them, and cactus creations you find out there. Mickey's workshop can be found in his garage and it's worth taking some serious time to look at the various books he has in there. The titles of them are wonderful! We always seem to spend ages, just exploring every nook and cranny of these two areas.

Meanwhile, life is very pretty in pink over at Minnie's Country House. You can't help but think that it's probably every girl's dream at some time or another to have a pink house and Minnie's certainly succeeded in achieving that dream! Here, our favourite spot has to be the kitchen. There's just so much to see and do there. Her packed refrigerator is a sight to see and it's lovely to get some cold air from it. Much as I adore dairy products, even I have to admit that the idea of cheese-flavoured ice cream just doesn't do anything for me! I'll also admit to having a very soft spot for the exterior of Minnie's Country House. It's a beautiful and fun building and the mailboxes outside are just superb.

I wish the same could be same of the Toontown Hall of Fame. Controversial as it might be, this is one area that I won't be sad to see the back of. Sure, it's home to some truly magical character encounters and we've enjoyed many there over the years ourselves, but I've also thought that there's so much wasted space here. Somehow, walking in and seeing the County Bounty with its selection of goodies, spread out over too wide an area, has never done much for me. I'm sure there can be a better use for this area.

We'll soon be seeing that, as the work is expected to begin in Toontown in early 2011 (Ariel's Grotto and Pooh's Playful Spot in Fantasyland have already closed). Part of me will be very sad to bid farewell to Toontown

.....

at Walt Disney World, but in truth, it's probably the least appealing of the three Toontowns at the world's Disney parks. I can't help but think that somehow the new, improved and massively expanded Fantasyland will be a fitting way to replace Toontown.

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!](#)

Article last updated: 06-02-2010

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/toontown-end-of-era.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>