

Recent Changes to Disneyland: Part 1

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

There's one constant at Disney parks around the world and that's the fact that they're always changing. Perhaps it's one of the things that keeps us all going back so often, as we know there will always be something new to explore.

On our most recent return to Disneyland in California, it had been exactly two and a half years since we were last there and a lot had changed in that time. Sadly, some of those changes were to do with the end of the park's 50th anniversary celebrations. The golden vehicles from the original rides had disappeared, along with the wonderful photo mosaics of popular Disney characters, made up from thousands of images submitted from Disney guests. Both had been great additions to Disneyland park and I was sorry to see them go.

Of course, there are always new additions to make up for any such disappointments, and the biggest addition since our last trip was the Finding Nemo submarine voyage. The second I heard that they were working on this, I knew we had to come back to Disneyland to see this once it was operational, as it sounded like such a superb addition to the park -- and so it proved to be. Like anything else new in a park, it's still drawing massive crowds and the only way to enjoy this attraction without huge waits is to either head there first thing in the morning, as we did, or perhaps to try it last thing at night, which sadly we didn't think to do.

Even if you are faced with a long wait, it's one that's worth it for what awaits you when you board your submarine. You descend a spiral staircase and take up your position in front of a port-hole, with everyone having their own and then you're taken on a magical voyage below the seas to visit Nemo and his friends. And, just like the Seas with Nemo and Friends at Walt Disney World, you can't help but leave here wondering how on earth Disney has managed to seamlessly blend animation characters into the waters you're seeing.

Something else that hadn't been in full operation during our last visit was the monorail. Due to the construction of the submarine voyage, the monorail had only operated one way, through the Disneyland Park and over to the neighboring Disney Village station. You still got the same service, but you missed the entire section of track that takes you through Disney's California Adventure and the Grand Californian hotel and it was a great treat to finally be able to enjoy this, although sadly, I didn't feel that there was as much to see on this route as I had hoped

for. I had envisaged it as being a bit like going through World Showcase at Epcot, with a unique view of the park, but that doesn't really happen here. You pass through the park so quickly, it's gone before you know it, which is a shame.

Back in the Disneyland Park itself, we were also finally able to enjoy the newly enhanced version of Pirates of the Caribbean. Just like its Florida cousin, this ride was undergoing a massive upgrade when we last visited, which saw the arrival of Captain Jack Sparrow at various points during the ride and the wonderful addition of Davy Jones.

As the first chance we had had to sample Pirates in California, we were immediately struck by the differences from Florida. That first difference is as soon as you enter the pavilion, with a scene awaiting you of a treasure map with a trusty parrot perched above it. It's only once you complete the ride that you realize that this is the final scene on your ride. The ride actually starts with a wonderful glide past the Blue Bayou restaurant and this was something else that we hadn't been able to sample on our last visit either.

Because of the renovation work to Pirates of the Caribbean, the Blue Bayou was understandably shut. I can only imagine how off-putting it would've been to try and eat there with building work in the background. Of course, we took the opportunity to sample this restaurant, having heard very good things about it and we were impressed with what we were served up. It was certainly excellent value for money, as you get a choice of salad or soup with your main course. My only complaint would be the lighting in here. I fully appreciate the need for it to be relatively dark in here to add to the atmosphere, but there is a fine line between that and making it so dark that you can't see what you're eating and I felt that perhaps that line was crossed a little.

Just a short walk around the corner was another of those wonderful changes to the park, this one though was due to the time of year we were visiting. Every year, between early October and early January, the Haunted Mansion is transformed into the Haunted Mansion Holiday, with an invasion from Jack Skellington in a mixture of Halloween and Christmas decorations. It's a superb idea and works exceptionally well, to the point that we both came away wishing that this could be implemented in Florida. It gives an old favorite a very different and enjoyable dimension and makes a visit to Disneyland at this time of year very worthwhile.

Now that's just the changes in the Disneyland Park itself. We were to discover many other changes -- and many more to come -- just across the courtyard in Disney's California Adventure. I'll be looking at those in

.....

a forthcoming article.

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: 02/12/2009

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/disneyland-recent-changes-part1.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/>