

Recent Changes to Disneyland: Part 2

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Disneyland in California has seen many changes over the last couple of years and nowhere is that more evident than at California Adventure.

This park was much more enjoyable than I expected. Part of those low expectations were due to the stories I had heard from others. It's fair to say that this park is not a particularly popular one amongst many guests. People don't seem to feel that it does a good enough job of representing California and complain particularly about the Paradise Pier end of the park, which is generally felt to be too reliant on midway games, with very little here in the way of imaginative rides.

It's a view I came to agree with during our first visit in 2006 and, on our return, it was nice to see that the Imagineers were starting to tackle this issue, with the opening of Toy Story Midway Mania. For any recent visitors to Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World, this ride will be familiar, as both parks have received the same new attraction. What is very different is the line to reach it. While Florida's is all undercover, here in California, much of it is outside and there's not nearly as much theming, but that's not that important when the waits appear to be shorter. We visited both parks in the space of just over a week and found the Walt Disney World version of this ride to be mobbed from early in the morning onwards, whereas we saw waits of no more 30 minutes during our time in the California Adventure.

During our exploration of the park, we discovered that Toy Story Midway Mania is just the first part of a massive sequence of changes that will be taking place in the park over the next three years. The charge of not enough Disney theming has been taken on board and a wholesale makeover is coming to the park in gradual stages, no doubt in the hope of making it more appealing to those who visit it. Full details of these plans can be seen in the Walt Disney Imagineering Blue Sky Cellar, now located in what used to be Seasons of the Vine. While it was fascinating to take a step into the Imagineers' plans, it was a shame that we never got to find out more about the Seasons of the Vine, especially as some of the display outside was still in place.

Once inside, any thoughts of wine disappeared, as we were transported into a new world that will one day become Disney's California Adventure. That includes a complete change to the park's entrance, which will see the removal of the iconic California letters outside the park and the Golden Gate Bridge just inside the entrance. It seems a great shame that both will be disappearing in time, as these have always

been favorites of ours, but the idea is for the entrance to become the Los Angeles of Walt Disney's youth, so there's no place for them in this theming.

Some of the most radical changes will be made to Paradise Pier and the second phase of those changes have already begun, with the closure of Golden Dreams. Previously home to a stirring film history of California, this is now making way for a new Little Mermaid dark ride, due to open in 2011. I can't wait to see this, as the concept drawings looked quite something.

Paradise Pier will see the biggest changes, with the arrival of the new World of Color, an evening show on the lake, which appeared to be similar to Fantasmic!, from what I could see of it. I can imagine this drawing the crowds at night. The rides that exist in Paradise Pier will become more Disney-themed, with the Sun Wheel becoming the Fun Wheel, complete with a huge Mickey Mouse face on it. The Orange Stinger will be transformed into the Silly Symphony Swings, a tribute to some old Disney history, with Mulholland Madness also undergoing a major rehab.

The most stunning part of this work is likely to be the addition of a completely new land, Cars Land, due to be open by 2012, when the upgrade of the park should be finished. Recreating Radiator Springs from the popular movie, it will feature its own race track, and will be slotted in between A Bug's Land and Pacific Wharf. It will be fascinating to come back and see how these various changes develop and what the park looks like when it's all done.

But that's all in the future. Something that is very much in the present is the addition of the first ever Disney Vacation Club units in California. Building work is underway at the Grand Californian Hotel to add DVC units to the building. Judging by how much of the building work could be seen from Disney's California Adventure, I would imagine that these units are going to have some stunning theme park views and I, for one, can't wait to try them out.

So, not only have there been changes at Disneyland, there will continue to be changes over the next few years as the resort perhaps undergoes the most dramatic transformation since the opening of Disney's California Adventure back in 2000. All of these changes though amount to one thing -- an even better Disney product to enjoy in the future in California.

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

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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: 2/19/2009

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