

Disneyland Resort: The 'Original' Magic Kingdom - Part 5

by Sarah Mudd, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Just across the way from the entrance to Disneyland Park stand the turnstiles to Disney California Adventure.

□ Opened on February 8, 2001, the park was originally named "Disney's California Adventure Park" however, in May 2010, Disney officially shortened its name to Disney California Adventure Park.

Currently, Disney's California Adventure park is 30 acres smaller in area than its "partner," Disneyland Park, at just 55 acres. With the addition of a large project currently in the works on a reclaimed piece of old Disneyland parking lot, the park's size will increase by an additional 12 acres.

□ Disney California Adventure is currently a "re-work in progress," as it is being reimagined and rethemed. The original theme of the park, a tribute to all things California. Just inside the entrance stood a replica Golden Gate Bridge, representing California's Bay Area. Throughout the day the Disneyland Monorail zipped across the span. A miniature "farm" featuring agricultural exhibits represented California's farmlands, a midway ride housed in a giant orange represented the orange groves that stood on the land that is now Disneyland Resort, and just outside of the turnstiles, the word "CALIFORNIA" was spelled out in 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ foot tall letters spanning the width of the park's entrance. All these things are gone (or on their way out), though, in preparation for the new themes, rides and attractions.

The first major change to the park is the turnstiles. To be honest, the original turnstile area was rather . . . plain. The new entrance has been under construction since January 2011, and is themed much like the entrance to Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World (both entrances are themed after the Pan-Pacific Auditorium, a Los Angeles landmark destroyed by fire in 1989). The rethemed entrance area is slated to open late summer 2011.

□ Making your way through the turnstiles, you originally might have felt as if you just stepped into a California postcard with the mock-up of the Golden Gate Bridge flanked by colorful mountains, a big stamp calling out "Welcome to California" (which is currently the name of the largest shop in the park), as you walked toward the "sun" in Sunshine Plaza. Upon the opening of the new entrance area, however, the "postcard" theme will be logged into the Disneyland Resort history books, as work

will begin to transform the area into Buena Vista Street, a tribute to 1930s Los Angeles. The building facades will be reworked to evoke the feel of the era. They will substitute the Hyperion Avenue Bridge for the Golden Gate and add Pacific Electric Railway Red Car trolleys running down Buena Vista Street from the entrance to the former Sunshine Plaza (renamed Carthay Circle) and into what is now the Hollywood Pictures Backlot. The centerpiece on Carthay Circle will be the recreation of the Carthay Circle Theater, the theater where Disney's first animated feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, premiered in 1937.

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□ To the left of the plaza is the Hollywood Pictures Backlot, which will also get a bit of retheming to match Buena Vista Street. Being renamed Hollywoodland, it will play host to the Red Car as well as receive new signage. The Hollywood Pictures Backlot is currently home to Disney Junior -- Live on Stage, Muppet Vision 3D, and the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, as well as Disneyland Resort original attraction *Monsters Inc.: Mike and Sulley to the Rescue*, and the absolutely AMAZING Broadway-style show *Disney's Aladdin -- A Musical Spectacular*. There is currently only one way in and out of the Backlot area but come summer 2012, there will be another Backlot access point leading into a new "land." But we'll get to that later! Let's head next door to a bug's land!

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□ When you walk into a bug's land you immediately get the illusion that you are the size of . . . well, an ant! As you pass by *It's Tough to be a Bug* (familiar from Disney's *Animal Kingdom*), you walk into a giant cereal box (*Cowboy Crunchies*, to be exact) and when you come out the other end of the box, you have an ant's-eye view of the world. You're surrounded by huge "human" items like garden hoses and beach umbrellas, enormous clovers and grasses and *Flik's Fun Fair!* All of the rides in "a bug's land" are little-kid friendly. On *Heimlich's Chew Chew Train*, Heimlich the caterpillar takes you on a journey through what seems to have once been someone's picnic! You'll "eat" your way through a slice of watermelon and a box of animal crackers, pass some candy corn and a cupcake that appears to be past its prime, and when you come to the end of your ride, Heimlich will remind you to eat your veggies. Other attractions include *Francis' Ladybug Boogie* (similar to *Mad Tea Party*, but on a small figure-8 track), *Flik's Flyers* (a spinning, balloon-type ride made by Flik from recycled food cartons and leaves), *Tuck & Roll's Drive 'Em Buggies* (bumper cars) and the little ones can splash around in *Princess Dot's Puddle Park*.

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□ When you reemerge from the *Cowboy Crunchies* box, you will see a rocky peak ahead of you. This is *Grizzly Peak*, the centerpiece of the largest land in the park, *Golden State*. *Golden State* has five different

themed areas: Pacific Wharf, Grizzly Peak Recreation Area, The Bay Area, Golden Vine Winery, and Condor Flats. The Pacific Wharf is just to the left of "a bug's land" and currently its only attraction is the Boudin Bakery Tour, where you will learn, and see, how fresh sourdough bread is made (and yes, there are samples!). After the tour, stop into the Pacific Wharf Cafe where you can buy fresh bread to take home with you or enjoy some delicious soup served inside a fresh sourdough bread bowl. This is a favorite place of mine to have lunch, even on a hot day! The Pacific Wharf area was formerly home to the Mission Tortilla Factory where, like the Bakery tour, you learned about and saw tortillas being made, then received a fresh warm sample, but the attraction closed on May 31, 2011. The factory is currently being refurbished and will reopen in 2012 as the Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory and Soda Fountain.

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□The Grizzly Peak Recreation Area is home to the wettest attraction on Disneyland Resort property, Grizzly River Run. Like Kali River Rapids at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom park, Grizzly River Run is a large round raft ride that spins down "white water rapids." Everyone on your raft WILL get wet in some way or another, be it from dripping pipes that spray at various spots along the course, or from splashing down the falls. But that is not such a bad thing if you visit in the hot summer time!

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□Across from Grizzly River Run is the Redwood Creek Challenge Trail, themed after the wilderness areas of Northern California. This is a very large play structure, with a mountaintop lookout tower, log slides, and rope bridges. Kids can learn to traverse rock climbing walls, pretend to be smokejumpers-in-training on mini zip lines, and count the rings on a 1,000+ year-old tree trunk. While on the Trail, keep your eyes peeled for bears! Koda and Kenai from Brother Bear have been known to surprise folks along the trail. The best way to deal with these bears, though, is with smiles and hugs. (Tip: Please do not try that with actual bears!)

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□After my climb down from the lookout tower, I am feeling like a little rest is in order. Next time, we will finish out our trip around the Golden State, venture on to Paradise Pier, and find out just what is behind those construction walls!

About The Author: Sarah is a busy stay-at-home mom, Travel Consultant with [Ears to You Travel](#), PassPorter Message Board Guide and Navy wife whose family is currently stationed in Washington state. She has made many trips to both Walt Disney World and Disneyland. Her family is excited to be heading to Disneyland (her husband and 2-year-old son's first trip) in August 2011!

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