

Disneyland Resort: The 'Original' Magic Kingdom - Part 6

by Sarah Mudd, PassPorter Guest Contributor

In my [last installment](#), I took you through the "under reconstruction" turnstiles of Disney California Adventure park.

□ We've taken a look at what currently exists and what is to come inside the entrance area. We've taken a stroll into the Hollywood Pictures Backlot, seen things from a bug's eye view and started a tour of the Golden State but there is so much more to be seen and so much more to come!

When we left off in the Golden State section of Disney California Adventure, we had seen Pacific Wharf and Grizzly Peak Recreation Area. As you walk over the bridge from the Pacific Wharf area, along the way to the Grizzly Peak Recreation Area, you might have noticed a short section of iconic San Francisco row houses along the way. This is the only remaining piece of The Bay Area sub-section of the Golden State. The Bay Area was formerly home to the California history movie "Golden Dreams," however, the movie has been replaced by the new Little Mermaid attraction (which has been incorporated into the Paradise Pier section).

□ Continuing on through the Golden State, past the grizzlies' stompin' grounds and the folks on their Grand Californian Hotel balconies overlooking the park, is Condor Flats. This section is themed as an airstrip and honors California's great aviators especially Chuck Yeager, who was the first pilot to break the sound barrier over California in 1947. Condor Flats is home to Soarin' Over California. While the attraction itself is just the same as its Florida counterpart, the theming of the show building is very different (California's 1940s/50s airplane hangar vs. Florida's "high-tech" airport terminal).

Next up, we're headed towards the back of the park and Paradise Pier! The Paradise Pier section is themed as an old beach boardwalk with games, a roller coaster, ferris wheel, and carousel. Its largest resident is California Screamin', the second-longest steel coaster in the United States. (Yes, although it looks wooden, it is actually a steel coaster!) Your train will be catapulted to begin the ride, shooting you from zero to 55 miles per hour in less than 5 seconds, and you will encounter one "loop" along the way. (Trivia! Fans of the show "How I Met Your Mother" will be happy to listen to the safety announcements and countdown to launch, as the ride's "host" is Neil Patrick Harris!)

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□ In the shadow of California Screamin' are a few classic midway games, a souvenir shop, King Triton's Carousel, and Toy Story Midway Mania (Tip: If you want to ride, the best time to do so would be first thing in the morning or during a showing of World of Color. There is no FastPASS for this attraction at Disney California Adventure!) Alongside the lagoon, you will find Mickey Mouse's smiling face on Mickey's Fun Wheel, a large ferris wheel that offers both swinging and stationary cars, as well as the Silly Symphony Swings (a "Wave Swinger" type attraction), Jumpin' Jellyfish, and Golden Zephyr.

□ Beginning July 1, 2011, two new counter-service eateries and a beer and pretzel stand opened to the public at Paradise Pier. Boardwalk Pizza and Pasta offers pastas, flatbreads and salads while its neighbor, Paradise Garden Grill, offers Mediterranean fare. Bayside Brews offers several different types of beer as well as soft pretzels.

□ Also opening on July 1 was Goofy's Sky School, a wild mouse-type coaster whose theme is based on the 1940 Disney short, "Goofy's Glider." (Goofy's Sky School took the place of the former Mulholland Madness coaster.)

□ The final attraction in the Paradise Pier section of Disney California Adventure park is the brand new The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure. The ride's facade resembles that of a more modern-day aquarium. Inside the ride, you will board your vehicles (which look almost identical to the "clam-mobiles" used in The Seas with Nemo & Friends attraction at Epcot) and ride slowly through the story of Ariel, the Little Mermaid. This is probably the attraction I am most looking forward to experiencing on my next trip, not just because it is new but because, from all accounts, the ride is just phenomenal. I am told it is a ride not to be missed!

□ Another attraction of sorts in the Paradise Pier area happens only after dark: World of Color. This is an amazing 27-minute-long show which takes place in the lagoon using fire, lasers, fog, colorful lights, and lots of water. Images of Disney characters and scenes for the different parts of the show are projected in high-definition on screens of mist across the lagoon. This show is something you shouldn't miss. Due to its popularity, the park offers several options to get the best view of the show. Your first option is to get a FastPASS first thing in the morning. The FastPASS machines at Grizzly River Run give out the World of Color tickets, and only around park opening time. The lines can be VERY long and the passes do go fast, so if you'd rather not chance waiting in line for a FastPASS, you can book a World of Color dining package. The two table service eateries in the park offer meal packages (Wine Country Trattoria for lunch and dinner, Ariel's Grotto

for dinner only) which include a ticket for a reserved viewing area. Another option is to order a World of Color Picnic package. This package can be purchased online up to 30 days in advance or on the day of the show. You will receive one of four types of picnic meals and a ticket for a reserved viewing area for the show.

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□So... "What's behind those walls," you ask? The short answer, "Progress!" Next summer, Disney California Adventure will be expanding, opening an entirely new land based on the Cars movies! Cars Land currently has a projected opening of "Summer 2012" and will include many of the Radiator Springs sights seen in the Cars movies: Ornament Valley, Flo's V8 Cafe, and the Cozy Cone Motel, just to name a few. There will be shopping, eateries, and three attractions in Cars Land. Luigi's Flying Tires will be a throwback to Disneyland's original Flying Saucers ride from the early 1960s (think "human air hockey!"). Mater's Junkyard Jamboree will send you spinning and whipping around courtesy of a baby tractor! The E-Ticket ride of Cars Land, though, will be Radiator Springs Racers. This attraction uses similar technology to that of Epcot's Test Track. The ride takes you through "Radiator Springs" where you'll meet a few of the Cars characters, and it ends with your car racing side-by-side with another car to the finish. My son is a huge fan of the Cars characters, so it looks like I should probably start planning my return trip for next year!

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□So, as you can see, there is PLENTY to do (and plenty more to come) at the Disneyland Resort! We've got that West Coast laid-back attitude out here, so you won't need as much of a schedule as you might at Walt Disney World. Just know where you're going, hang loose, and enjoy your California Adventure!

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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