

Nature-Inspired Design Segway Tour: Walt Disney World Backstage Tour Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Are you a lover of those wonderful Segways that the Disney Cast Members zip around on?

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□If you are, and if like us, you've tried the Around the World on a Segway adventure (three times for my husband and twice for me) and you want something that's just a little bit different, then the Nature Inspired Design Segway tour should tick that box for you.

The usual place you'd start finding out more about a behind the scenes tour at Walt Disney World would be their official website, but this is where things get slightly surreal. Have a look at the site and you'll find no mention of this tour at all. It's almost as if it doesn't exist. Indeed, someone asked that very question on the [PassPorter message boards](#) in early 2010. If you head to [AllEars.Net](#), then you'll find out all about it, but otherwise, it's presumably a mystery to many Disney guests.

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□That could help to explain why, on the day we were due to take it, the Cast Members at the entrance to Epcot, where you take the tour, knew nothing about it when we arrived. We had to be there by 8:00 am and we were greeted with questioning looks and the repeated phrase "Do you mean the Undiscovered Future World Tour?" It wasn't the most auspicious start, but thankfully things quickly improved from there. Before we could get further with the Cast Member, our guide for the tour, Wade, arrived on his Segway and explained why we were there.

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□We followed him to Guest Relations, enjoying the sensation of walking through the park before it opened to the public, signed our waivers, and met our other guide for the tour, Anne. We were delighted to find that we were the only two booked on this tour for the day. I guess that's what happens when you don't advertise it on your website, although Wade and Anne told us that some days are busy, while others are deserted.

We headed over to Innoventions for our orientation, and here I have to say that our guides were excellent. We had a long chat with them about our Segway experience, which includes Around the World on a Segway, the Wilderness Trail Back Adventure Segway Tour at Fort Wilderness and a session on the streets of Madrid. As a result, they told us that we could do a shorter orientation to enjoy more time outside. Result? We quickly got to grips with our X-2 Segways, the same as they use at Fort

Wilderness, and we were then off and running.

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□Wade and Anne told us that with the extra time, we could take a run around World Showcase, which was a lovely treat. I'm assuming from the way they spoke, that this was additional to the usual tour itinerary. We were able to get lots of photos taken amongst the various topiaries that decorate Epcot during the Flower and Garden Festival.

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□To explain a bit about this tour, it's designed to look at how Disney incorporates nature designs into Epcot, hence the tour's name. The idea is you enjoy air, land, and sea during your tour, visiting three very different pavilions.

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□Once we'd circled the World Showcase once, it was over to Journey Into Imagination, to head backstage. Our first stop was Soarin' ("air"), where we climbed off our Segways. Wade escorted us through the VIP entrance and we were soon riding Soarin' with absolutely no wait! Back on the ground, we met up with Wade and headed back outside and onto our Segways to experience the land portion of our tour. On the way, we saw supplies for the Flower and Garden Festival, and more permanent supplies in the form of trees that can be replanted into any park, as required.

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□We headed for the backstage entrance to the Land pavilion and met our guide for this section, Sarah, who took us on a tour of the greenhouses, learning about the work they do, the nutrients the plants need, and what they produce. I found the whole thing fascinating, as an avid gardener, and I certainly learnt a lot from it.

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□Our time in the greenhouses finished, we hopped back on our Segways and this time made for the Seas with Nemo and Friends. Here, it was a little disorganized, as the Cast Member who was supposed to take us on a tour of the pavilion wasn't anywhere to be seen, but Wade stepped into the breach and did an admirable job.

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□Once we had experienced all three elements of the job, then it was time to have some fun! The finale is free time on a helipad in the backstage area, where you can zap around on your Segway. It was great to have the whole place to ourselves and just whizz around, with Wade and Anne keeping an eye on us, ensuring we weren't doing anything too stupid!

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□We made our way back, passing through various backstage areas, including the greenhouses, and enjoyed some more off-road work on our Segways. Soon we were back onstage, making our way back to Innoventions. Like every Disney behind the scenes tour we've taken, it

was over far too quickly, but had been immense fun. I'm not sure how much fun it would have been in a big group or without our special World Showcase interlude at the start, but if you are a Segway fan, you'll love it, and unlike many of the other tours, you get chances at regular intervals to get off your Segway and walk around, which really does help your legs!

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□The Nature Inspired Design Segway Tour is only available on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 8:15 am. It costs \$124 per person, although do ask about whether there are any discounts available to Annual Passholders, Disney Vacation Club members, or Disney Visa cardholders. To take part in this, you must be at least 16 years old, and if you're under 18 years old, you have to be accompanied by an adult. To ride the Segways, you must weigh between 100 and 250 pounds. Tours can be booked by calling 407-WDW-TOUR.

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!](#)

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