

Finally Forty Inches (Part 2): Disney California Adventure Attractions for Little Ones

by Brian Rawson, PassPorter Guest Contributor

This is Part 2 of our two-part series, [Finally Forty Inches: Part 1](#) outlines our Disneyland Park experiences, while Part 2 is our review of Disney California Adventure.

Our first thrill ride after entering Disney California Adventure was Radiator Springs Racers. My daughter grudgingly tolerated the 45-minute line first thing in the morning, but her eyes got big as we got closer to boarding. It's an awesome ride. There are a couple scary bits in the indoor section, including Frank the combine, but the rest of the ride was a lot of fun for us. During the race part of the ride, my little girl held her hands in the air and cheered all the way.

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□ Out in Paradise Pier, she wanted to ride California Screamin', but she's a long way from meeting the 48-inch height requirement. As it has a 40-inch minimum, she could ride the Silly Symphony Swings in a tandem chair, sitting beside me. She won't be able to have a chair to herself until she's 48 inches tall. I loved the swings when I was young, but they don't have the same appeal to my daughter. She could take them or leave them.

□ Her favorite corner of Paradise Pier was the "magic triangle of fun" connecting Jumpin' Jellyfish, Golden Zephyr, and Goofy's Sky School. We absolutely had to repeat all of them, she was so excited! Jumpin' Jellyfish is a fun drop ride, with a slow line, but she loved it and wanted to ride it repeatedly. I used Jumpin' Jellyfish as a bargaining tool to ride Tower of Terror. Goofy's Sky School had me a bit nervous. It's an intense, wild mouse-style roller coaster. My daughter loved it even more than Big Thunder Mountain Railroad. It's distinctive lack of darkness or monsters really appealed to her. Golden Zephyr was the sleeper attraction. It has a relatively fast loading time, and the ride is much more spectacular than it looks, especially in the evening, before it closes for World of Color.

While it doesn't have a height requirement, guests should pay special attention to the swinging gondolas on Mickey's Fun Wheel. There's no doubt that riding in the swinging gondolas is a thrill ride, perfect for my thrill-seeking girl.

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□ Grizzly River Rapids has a height requirement of 42 inches, significantly higher than the 38-inch requirement for the similar Kali

River Rapids in Animal Kingdom. My daughter loved Kali River Rapids, and was looking forward to Grizzly River Rapids. There was a very nervous 6-year-old boy riding with us. He hated the huge drop in Splash Mountain and after riding Grizzly River Rapids, decided that the rapids were much more fun than the log flume. My daughter preferred Splash Mountain because of the drop, but she also appreciated the lack of villains on Grizzly River.

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□ Soarin' was the only big ride where I didn't warn her about anything. She's used to ski hill chair lifts and has no fear of flying. So she walked in, buckled her seatbelt, and took off on an amazing ride. She was cheering and shouting at the top of her lungs when she saw the fireworks over Disneyland. Several times on our vacation, she asked to go back to "that flying ride."

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□ The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror was the biggest challenge, and one we approached very carefully. I actually rode it first by myself, and reported back to her exactly what the frightening elements were. But try as I might, I just can't think like she does. I prepared her for the darkness and breaking glass in the library. The ghost actors in the elevator were just pretend. And the drops were just like Jumpin' Jellyfish, only a little faster. But who could have predicted that the thing that would scare the willies out of my little girl was the video image of herself and the rest of our elevator, waving to ourselves, and then our image being distorted and twisted away. My daughter was upset. "Daddy, why did we wave good bye to ourselves? Why did our video go fuzzy and disappear?" Unsatisfied with my "it's just pretend" explanation, she vows never to ride it again.

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□ Here's a quick summary of my daughter's favorite rides. Most are fast-paced outdoor attractions.

- • Jumpin' Jellyfish
- • Goofy's Sky School
- • Golden Zephyr
- • Radiator Springs Racers
- • Mater's Junkyard Jamboree
- • Mickey's Fun Wheel (swinging gondolas)
- • Heimlich's Chew Chew Train
- • Francis' Ladybug Boogie
- • Soarin'
- • Grizzly River Rapids

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□ The following attractions were too frightening for her to experience more than once. Frightening characters dominated her experience:

- • It's Tough to be a Bug
- • Twilight Zone Tower of Terror (the video of herself scared her)

- Disney's Aladdin - A Musical Spectacular
- Monster's, Inc. Mike and Sulley to the Rescue

About The Author: Brian Rawson is a single dad, now living near Calgary. His father took him on the Matterhorn Bobsleds when he was five, and since then, he has traveled extensively to feed his roller coaster addiction. He has ridden around 200 different roller coasters and experienced all the "Disney Mountains" in Florida, California, France, and Japan.

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