

More Mouse Tales: A Behind the Ears Look at Disneyland: A Disney Book Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

A while ago, I reviewed [Mouse Tales: A Behind the Ears Look at Disneyland by David Koenig](#).

I enjoyed *Mouse Tales* a lot, so much so that when I found out he had a sequel out, I had to buy that as well.

Called *More Mouse Tales: A Closer Peek Backstage at Disneyland*, it's still one of the older books that's available on Disney, having been published in 1999, but it's a significant step forward from the 1994 publication date of the original book, and you can feel this as you read through it. I suspect parts were added in a 2002 reprint, as towards the end, there is now a reference to Disney's California Adventure, which says it had recently opened.

□ My main criticism of the first book was that it felt quite disjointed, with no logical sequence as you read through. That's something that Koenig rectified with his second book, with the chapters flowing logically from one land of Disneyland Park on to the next. The first chapter takes you through Main Street USA, but is an introduction rather than an in-depth treatment.

□ It's only when you reach the second chapter, and head into Fantasyland that the fascinating tales from behind the scenes that I loved from the first book, many of them from Cast Members, really begin. One very nice addition to this book is the maps of various attractions that are scattered across the pages. I don't know about you, but whenever I'm on a Disney ride, I can't get my head around how it actually looks on paper, so to see how Pirates of the Caribbean and the Haunted Mansion are laid out fascinated me. I spent ages just gazing at those pages, taking everything in about the maps.

Throughout the book is another nice addition, called "guest pains," highlighted in boxes. They showcase what the Cast Members called "questions," or for the rest of us, the dumb questions that guests ask. There are some real doozies in here, too! You've heard the famous one about, "What time is the three o'clock parade?" These are all in a similar vein, and highly entertaining. One example is the excuses that guests gave for misbehaving in the Skyway. I know, this former attraction hardly seemed like a den of inequity, but read this book, and you'll see it

in a very different light, trust me). Those who aren't fans of It's A Small World, will appreciate the anecdote about the ride being referred to by a guest as the "Mad, Mad World of Children." The story about the hours-long lines for the Jungle Cruise in the 1970s is an absolute classic, and really has to be read to be believed.

□ On that very subject, one of the most interesting sections of the book was dedicated to the skippers on the Jungle Cruise, and how they were trained for their role. I bet you never realized that, depending how many times a gun was fired on this ride, it meant different things to the Cast Members, while the stories about the boat skippers were exceptionally entertaining. I personally liked the one about the skipper who managed to get the entire ride spiel down to just 42 words. But nothing can prepare you for what happened to the Jungle Cruise and its skippers over the years, and that really is something you need to read for yourself. Had the book not included a copy of a flyer, supposedly from "Trader Sam," I don't think I'd have believed a word of it.

□ One of my favorite attractions at Disneyland (and Walt Disney World, for that matter) was 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea, although from the descriptions of it, I don't think I'd have wanted to be a pilot on these subs. However, despite what the pilots had to endure, there were also tales of the fun pranks that went on, and I'd love to have seen the submarines bringing back a "dead mermaid," as described in the book.

□ After the land-by-land tour of the park is completed, the book moves on to look at the live characters. There's a wonderfully touching story about Eeyore and a wheelchair-bound child that I defy you not to have tears in your eyes when you read it. Sadly, too many of the stories in this chapter are about the appalling treatment that the characters suffer at the hands of both children and parents. How people can behave like this is beyond me.

□ As the book draws to its conclusion, it turns much darker in nature, first looking at the role of Disney security, and how it's changed over the years, then considering how Walt Disney's philosophy has been changed, and to a certain extent, forgotten over the years. There's a disturbing recounting of the sailing ship Columbia accident, which if you haven't heard of it before, makes for very troubling reading. Then there's the description of what happened to many of the park's managers, and how the company managed to ease them out by changing their working patterns and conditions. It's a frightening insight into the workings of a company that we all know, and love for creating magic, so be warned, this book, towards the end, does start to make you think again about that perception.

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□With that "health" warning in mind, I have to say that More Mouse Tales was another interesting read, although do be prepared that by the time you reach the final pages, you may find yourself in a more sombre mood that you'd perhaps expected from the fun and frivolity of its earlier chapters.

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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