

Disney Trivia from the Vault by Dave Smith: A Disney Book Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

The second I spotted "Disney Trivia from the Vault" by Dave Smith on Amazon, I just knew I had to have the book.

What attracted me to it? Well, first the title intrigued me, but the main selling point for me was the author, one Dave Smith, otherwise known as Chief Archivist Emeritus of the Walt Disney Archives.

Dave is perhaps best known for the "Ask Dave" feature, first in the Disney Magazine, then online at the Disney Insider, and finally on the D23 web site. As the introduction from Dave says, after answering more than 1,100 questions, a book seemed like a natural progression.

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□I will be honest, when the book arrived and I turned to the contents page, I wasn't sure how much I'd enjoy this book. I'm a Disney fan, but much of my love for it is around the history of Walt himself, and the theme parks. When I saw the chapter titles included sections on live action films, publications, and television, I didn't think I'd find much to interest me in there. I even thought for a moment of skipping past them, but I'm glad I didn't. Every chapter was filled with fascinating facts and information.

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□As I started the book, the first question immediately jumped out at me. It was asking about the significance of A113 in some of the Pixar movies, and the answer is that this was the room number of the animation classroom at the California Institute of Arts, where some Pixar students studied. It's something I'd never have learned without reading this, but perhaps just as rewarding, it's something I can now look out for in Wall-E and Toy Story 3, and then think, "Now I understand why that's there."

That sense of fulfilment continued as I went through the book and learned a lot more about both animated features, and animated shorts. I now know what Mickey Mouse's name is in Hungary (handy if we finally make it to Budapest, which is on my "to visit" list!), what Walt's first animated cartoon was, the full list of Walt Disney's "Nine Old Men," how the animators ensured that the elephants in Dumbo were truly lifelike, and details of how storyboards are created for Disney animated films.

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□It was when I moved on to the Disneyland and Walt Disney World chapters of the book that my interest was really piqued. I was relieved that, in these sections anyway, I did already know some of the answers

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to the questions being asked, so I guess my years of being a Disney geek must've paid dividends. But I drew a complete blank with how many trash cans there are at Disneyland and Disney California Adventure. At least now I know! I found it fascinating to learn more about how celebrities are treated when they visit the parks, and the answer to this may surprise you -- I know it wasn't what I was expecting! I now know where to go in Disneyland, when we next visit, to pick up a telephone, and listen into the conversation on the other end of the line.

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□ In the Walt Disney World chapter, I learned what happened to the audio-animatronics from World of Motion, where the coins tossed into the water at It's A Small World go, why there's a name tag on one of the soldiers at the Osborne Spectacle of Lights, and more. My husband felt vindicated when I told him that he was right about having seen live elephants at Epcot. I have to confess, I'd always been sceptical about this, but no, there was a circus spectacular there for 18 months in the late 1980s.

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□ Of course, I also loved the final chapter, all about Walt himself. They really did save the best for last, with snippets covering topics as varied as the French origins of the Disney name, his love of trains, dogs, and playing polo, and even what his favorite food was.

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□ Even in the chapters that I didn't think would be of as much interest to me, covering live-action films, publications, and televisions, I still made some fascinating discoveries. Things like where the scenes of Genovia in the Princess Diaries were actually filmed (I'll give you a clue, it's in the States somewhere!), details about the Tomorrowland programs that President Eisenhower borrowed from Walt, and information about which Disney artists originally drew the Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck cartoon strips.

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□ I really like the fact that some of the answers set the record straight, for example the fact that Chip and Dale were never in Looney Tunes cartoons, and at some points, there are no answers given, because they don't exist. Ever wondered what the Q stands for in Timothy Q. Mouse, the mouse from Dumbo? Well, you'll have to keep wondering, because the answer is that we just don't know. It was refreshing to read that, as sometimes there's a temptation to come up with an answer to every question.

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□ There's even recognition when those asking questions spot mistakes. One close to my heart, as I love Winnie the Pooh, and more importantly his donkey friend Eeyore, related to the video of the Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh. The questioner wants to know what Pooh's original name was, as the books state Edward Bear, but the narrator on the video

says Edwin Bear. Again, refreshingly, Dave admits there's a mistake on the video, as of course, the book is correct on this point.

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□I challenge you to read this book and not learn something. It's packed with information, much of it about things you'd never even thought of. However, the challenge, once you finish it, is retaining that information in your head. I know I want to try and do that, so that I can use some of it to enhance our future visits to both Walt Disney World, and Disneyland.

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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