

WHAT'S NEW IN ORLANDO 2011

What's New at Theme Parks in 2011

Orlando theme parks and attractions are starting off 2011 with exciting enhancements and new additions. **SeaWorld Orlando** will debut "One Ocean," an all-new killer whale show, at the end of April. This show, replacing "Believe," will feature simultaneous whale performances, including high-energy leaps and interactive stunts. **Walt Disney World Resort's Hollywood Studios** recently introduced a new parade called "Pixar Pals Countdown to Fun" and announced the new Star Tours 3-D attraction scheduled to open May 20. Also coming to **Walt Disney World Resort** in 2012, is the opening of new Fantasyland attractions in the Magic Kingdom and Disney's Art of Animation Resort, the newest family-friendly resort on property. Looking ahead, a three-year plan has been announced for Pleasure Island at Downtown Disney to transform it into "Hyperion Wharf," a modern take on an early 20th century port city and amusement pier.

ATTRACTIONS

SEAWORLD ORLANDO

SeaWorld Orlando will debut "One Ocean," an all-new killer whale show, at the end of April at Shamu Stadium. The show will feature simultaneous whale performances, including high-energy leaps and interactive stunts. "One Ocean" will replace the "Believe" show at all three SeaWorld parks. SeaWorld.com

WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT

Walt Disney World Resort introduced a new parade called "Pixar Pals Countdown to Fun" at Disney's Hollywood Studios in January. The parade, replacing "Block Party Bash," features characters from Pixar movies, including "Up," "Monsters Inc.," "Toy Story" and "A Bug's Life." Disneyworld.com

Walt Disney World Resort announced the new Star Tours 3-D attraction at Disney's Hollywood Studios is scheduled to open May 20. Star Tours: The Adventures Continue will feature new droids, a new Starspeeder, new destinations and even a new pilot. disneyworld.com

Walt Disney World Resort's Fantasyland expansion in Magic Kingdom is underway, with attractions scheduled to open in phases beginning in late 2012. The expansion highlights include:

- Under the Sea ~ Journey of the Little Mermaid, a major, all-new attraction during which guests will travel with Ariel and her friends through their exciting adventures above and below the waves.
- Be Our Guest Restaurant will feature a lavish dining experience in the elegant ballroom, gallery and mysterious "West Wing" of the castle. With seating for 550, this magnificent facility will offer "great food fast" service by day and full table service dining in the evening.

- The Seven Dwarfs Mine Train will take guests on a rollicking, musical ride into the mine “where a million diamonds shine.” The coaster will feature a first-of-its-kind ride system with a train of ride vehicles that swing back and forth, responding to every twist and turn of the track. Disneyworld.com

Walt Disney World Resort’s newest hotel, Disney’s Art of Animation Resort, is set to open May 2012. The family-friendly resort features themed room interiors in its nearly 2,000 new units — 1,120 family suites in “The Lion King,” “Cars” and “Finding Nemo” wings and 864 themed rooms in “The Little Mermaid” wings. Suites will have both a living room and bedroom. The resort will mark the 26th at Walt Disney World Resort. disneyworld.com; 407-566-6397 (media); 407-934-7639 (public)

Walt Disney World Resort announced the transformation of Pleasure Island at Downtown Disney into “Hyperion Wharf,” a modern take on an early 20th century port city and amusement pier. The port district will feature stylish boutiques, innovative restaurants, a relaxing lakeside park with enhanced pedestrian walkways, and thousands of lights illuminating the night. In addition to the new wharf district, other projects are underway, including a renovation of Lego Imagination Center; enhancements at AMC with digital technology and new concession; dining options; and new retail shops, merchandise vignettes and atmosphere entertainment. The project is expected to take three years. disneyworld.com

CENTRAL FLORIDA ATTRACTIONS

Fun Spot Action Park, located off International Drive, announced its plans for an expansion. The 13-year-old, 5-acre park purchased an adjacent 10 acres to triple its size. The expanded park will include more tracks, rides and a smaller version of the SkyCoaster thrill ride located at the Kissimmee park location, Fun Spot USA. The Kissimmee location is also expanding its park with a new Soaring Eagle Ride, birthday/meeting room and its first rollercoaster, a Wild Mouse ride, opening in March 2011. FunSpotAttractions.com

Gatorland broke ground on its new zip line slated to open summer 2011. The Screamin’ Gator Zip Line will carry riders along 1,200 feet (366 meters) of high-flying adventure. At heights exceeding seven stories (23 meters), guests will fly at speeds near 25 mph (40 kph) over many of the attraction’s exhibits and entertainment venues. Gatorland.com

Kennedy Space Center announced that it will transform NASA's Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex into a place where visitors can engage with the people and machines of space exploration. The marquee element of the renovation is a \$100 million exhibit displaying one of three remaining flown space shuttle orbiters. The transformation is estimated to take 10 years and will include 10 interactive-themed areas, plus new and enhanced visitor amenities. kennedyspacecenter.com

LEGOLAND Florida extended its discount on general admission tickets and Standard Annual Passes through April 30, 2011. General admission tickets are \$65 for adults and \$55 for children and seniors. Standard Annual Passes are offered at the children’s prices of \$99 with no black-out dates. The interactive theme park is scheduled to open October 2011. Legoland.com

Orlando Air Tour, Mauiva’s aerial tour division, added a new Celebration Tour excursion. This airplane expedition departs daily from Mauiva at the Kissimmee Airport and provides

unique views of the Central Florida area and attractions. The tour, \$60 per person, lasts approximately 45 minutes. Orlandoairtour.com

ACCOMMODATIONS

Drury Hotels, based out of Missouri, announced plans to build a 236-room Drury Inn & Suites on Sand Lake Road in Orlando. Slated to open in spring 2012, the affordable lodging chain will also include amenities, such as wireless Internet, premium TV channels, hot breakfasts and more. druryhotels.com

The Kessler Collection's Castle Hotel has been rebranded as **Holiday Inn Resort – The Castle**. With the rebranding comes refurbishments and improvements including free kids' meals, KidSuites featuring bunk beds and entertainment systems, and "Smart Rooms," providing business travelers with in-room tools and technology including computer access, fax, copier and scanning capabilities. The property also offers a heated outdoor pool, rooftop terraces and meals at Castle Café. thecastleorlando.com

The **Regal Sun Resort** is now the **Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort**. The resort is an official Walt Disney World hotel and located across the street from the Downtown Disney Area with complimentary shuttle services to and from Disney parks. wyndhamlakebuenavista.com

Sheraton Safari Hotel and Suites on Lake Buena Vista Drive has been purchased by AREA Property Partners and Winston Harton Holdings, LLC for an undisclosed amount. The \$25 million redevelopment is scheduled to begin immediately, with completion anticipated by spring 2012. Sheratonsafari.com

Star Island Resort & Club recently completed a \$7.5 million renovation. All mini-suite and villa renovations include flat screen televisions, granite counter tops, new furniture, carpet, art work and lighting. Star-island.com

CULTURAL TOURISM

The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art will open its new wing Feb. 19, 2011. The expansion will include 11 new galleries featuring art and architectural objects from Louis Comfort Tiffany's Long Island estate, such as prize-winning leaded-glass windows, iconic Tiffany lamps and custom furnishings. An open house will be offered free to museum guests Feb 19 – March 20. morsemuseum.org

DINING & NIGHTLIFE

Dave & Buster's on International Drive began construction. The entertainment complex will feature a full-service restaurant, bar and a "Million Dollar Midway" filled with the latest interactive and video games. Expected to open summer 2011, it will be the first Dave & Buster's in Orlando. daveandbusters.com

The Peabody Orlando celebrated the grand opening of Rocks, its newest upscale lounge. Overlooking International Drive, Rocks offers an extensive wine list, bottled beers from

around the world and specialty cocktails infused with fresh ingredients. The lounge also offers live music seven nights a week and a select bar menu. peabodyorlando.com

Pine 22, a create-your-own burger restaurant, recently opened in downtown Orlando. With 322,000 different combinations, diners can create a customized burger from locally grown ingredients. The restaurant also serves appetizers, sweet potato or pine fries, seasonal fried pies and wine and beer. Pine22.com

Rosen Centre Hotel recently opened 98Forty Tapas & Tequila featuring 40 different brands of premium tequilas and fresh menu items, such as salsas, guacamoles, quesadillas, tacos and more. The restaurant is open daily at 5 p.m. Rosencentre.com

SPORTS & RECREATION

Winter Park City Tours launches its new group walking tours Dec. 2, featuring four distinct routes at about 1 mile (1.61 km) in length each. Winter Park showcases its unique history and architecture with visits to historical sites that feature stories about key people and events. Tickets are \$18.87 for adults, \$15.75 for students 13-18 and free for children 12 and under. winterparkcitytours.com

TRANSPORTATION

The Florida High Speed Rail Program, which would link Orlando and Tampa, received \$342 million from government stimulus funds. The project is almost entirely paid for and phase one of the construction is expected to start early in 2011, with the removal of obstacles, replacement of bridges and alignment of several sections of I-4. Phase two of the construction is expected to start in 2012 and operation is scheduled to begin in 2015. floridahighspeedrail.org

Disney Cruise Line welcomed the Disney Dream to its fleet. The 4,000-passenger ship sailed its maiden voyage out of Port Canaveral, Fla., on Jan. 26. It joined the 2,700-passenger Disney Magic and Disney Wonder, with the Disney Fantasy scheduled to join the fleet in 2012. disneycruise.com

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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