SeaWorld San Diego hosts 2014 Golden Ticket Awards

Amusement Today presents awards in 29 categories

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — In 1964, George Millay debuted SeaWorld San Diego, bringing us up close and personal to the experiences found in a marine life park. Incorporating sea life attractions and making it the focus of an entire day of discovery would prove to be a success. Following this, Millay would eventually expand SeaWorld into a chain of parks. Over the years, the SeaWorld family of parks has evolved — educating, entertaining and moving those that come. The number of animals saved and protected has been inspiring. Bringing people and animals together in encounters and interactions, these are life memories people take home with them every day.

Rick Schuiteman, vice president of entertainment, looks forward to welcoming the industry. “It’s so cool for SeaWorld San Diego to be hosting this year’s Golden Ticket Awards ceremony…what an honor! We not only have the opportunity to showcase our beautiful park to the leaders of the theme park industry, it also allows them to experience the wonders of San Diego, also known as America’s Finest City!”

John Reilly, general manager for SeaWorld San Diego, enjoys this property on a daily basis. When AT asked what he feels is the defining attribute of the San Diego property, Reilly responds, “Our team members. Their passion and talent wow me every day.”

Amusement Today is thrilled to be hosting its 17th annual Golden Ticket Awards at SeaWorld San Diego. Here, attendees enjoy a dynamic mix of shows, encounters, rides and beauty — all at the original SeaWorld park, now celebrating its 50th anniversary.

“I hope our industry visitors leave the Golden Ticket Awards weekend so inspired by the animals at SeaWorld that they take action to make a difference for wild populations,” says Reilly.

The annual awards presented by Amusement Today have not only become prized keepsakes honoring our industry winners and their accomplishments, but the ceremony weekend has become an enjoyable networking opportunity full of laughter and fun, as well as a chance to experience the strengths of each host park.

Like athletes in training or musicians pouring their soul into their songs, the many parks and water parks within the amusement industry strive to make their guests’ days at the park the best they can possibly be and to continue to push themselves harder to make the best even better. Or perhaps, making connections within families that children will remember long after they are grown is a way they touch lives day after day. The Golden Ticket Awards salute the finest in the industry. Congratulations go to those that not only have taken top prize, but also to those that have worked hard to rank on the charts, and even especially those who each day try to make it there in the future with their continual expectations of excellence.

With each year, our experienced panel of experts continues to grow worldwide. AT has never had the exact same group of voters twice. Hundreds of people around the globe have shared their collective expertise with us along with their hard-earned dollars in the parks to give back to those that have made their lives a little more pleasurable.

Amusement Today is indebted to the fan, those enthusiastic individuals that “get” what this industry does day after day, and celebrates with parks when they’ve given it more than 100 percent.

— Tim Baldwin

SeaWorld San Diego, celebrating its 50th anniversary this season, hosted the 2014 Golden Ticket Awards, presented by Amusement Today, on Sept. 6, 2014. Event attendees were treated to the park’s mix of animal shows and marine-themed rides. COURTESY SEAWORLD
EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Golden Ticket Awards fun facts

When Amusement Today and SeaWorld San Diego hosted the 2014 Golden Ticket Awards on Sept. 6 in the Mission Bay Theater, it’s easy to remember and recognize the 29 award categories that will be given out to those who won. But so many other parks have placed, or are simply worth a mention. Here are a few GTA fun facts as tabulated by AT’s Tim Baldwin:

• **Dollywood** (along with its sister property Dollywood’s Splash Country) is a finalist in more categories than any other park — 10.
• **Cedar Point** has more coasters on the charts than any other park — seven. **Six Flags Magic Mountain** is a close six.
• A total of 94 parks from 11 different countries are on the GTA charts.
• Winners in seven categories, out of 25, have gone undefeated.
• The oldest coaster on the charts is **Rutschebanen**. It opened at Tivoli Gardens in 1914 and celebrates its 100th birthday this year. The newest coaster is **Goliath at Six Flags Great America**, which opened on June 19 of this year.
• The fastest coaster from the Amusement Today offices is **Wood Coaster** at Knight Valley in China.
• Thirteen roller coasters on the charts have been designated ACE Roller Coaster Landmarks by American Coaster Enthusiasts.
• No roller coasters in the Top 10 Steel Coaster list go upside down. **Iron Rattler at Six Flags Fiesta Texas** is the highest ranking coaster with a full inversion. Ironically, **Outlaw Run at Silver Dollar City** does go upside down and is in the Top 10 on the Wood Coaster chart.
• **Mammoth at Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari** is the most expensive Water Park Ride on the charts pricing out at $8 million. **The Falls at Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort** gives the longest ride. One circuit on The Falls lasts more than 20 minutes.

Amusement Today would like to thank our 2014 host facilities, U.S.S. Midway, Belmont Park, San Diego Zoo, and our host park SeaWorld San Diego, as well as our event sponsors, Mack Rides, Leisure Labs LLC, Chance Rides, Larson International, Extreme Engineering, Dynamic Advantage and Chestnut Identity Apparel, for all their help in making this year’s event another success!

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A Year of Innovation

What a year of amazing new rides. Granted some had some delays in opening, but I have to admit that this year’s crop of new rides saw one of the most impressive displays of innovation I’ve seen in years. Each season typically brings about a crop of solid new rides, but 2014 made it supremely challenging for the voters.

Start with record holders. **Kings Island** not only brings back the inverted coaster after an eight year absence in the U.S., but delivers the longest, tallest and fastest version ever made. **Six Flags Great Adventure** took the drop ride to terrifying new heights. **Canada’s Wonderland** created an interactive dark ride with the longest uninterrupted projection screen. **Six Flags Great America** created the steepest drop on a wooden coaster that currently holds records for speed and height on that drop as well. **Schlitterbahn Kansas City** captivated the media with the world’s tallest waterslide. Then there was the reimagining of classic ride concepts. Phantasialand pushed the flume ride to spectacular new levels. **Europa-Park** created the next-generation dark ride with an entirely new innovative ride system that is nothing short of amazing. Universal Orlando took the indoor coaster idea and gave it a sensory overload as they’ve never done before. And who couldn’t be moved by the Knoebel family successfully opening a ride concept from almost a century past? After countless people told them to give up after years of trial and error, Knoebels triumphantly opens the only wood trough **Flying Turns** on earth.

Family rides opened to great success as well. Filling a void at **Dollywood**, **FireChaser Express** proved a less intimidating ride can still be exciting no matter what your age. **Story Land** in Glen, New Hampshire rose up the charts by opening a junior sized woodie that is packed with excitement and was met with great fanfare.

Before the year closes out, I will have visited more than 30 parks in 2014 alone, and I feel extremely blessed to have enjoyed so many of these marvelous new attractions. And yet, I still yearn to embrace those I have yet to do, because I know the dedication and effort that goes into opening each one. Kudos to the industry for making a memorable new year for visitors to parks everywhere.

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Thank you from SeaWorld and Amusement Today to all who attended the 2014 event.

Belmont Park • SeaWorld • The Midway • San Diego Zoo • Aquatica San Diego
Europa-Park overtakes top spot for Best Park

**STORY:** Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

It could potentially be called the biggest upset in Golden Ticket history. For the past 16 years, Cedar Point has claimed the ticket for BEST PARK. Their massive collection of rides, extensive roller coaster line-up and resort hotels made for a dynamic package that most fans thought to be unbeatable. Across the waters, Europa-Park has quietly been gaining momentum. First charting in 2005, the largest attended theme park in Germany would step forward and move back for a period of years, ranking in various positions from No. 4 to No. 8. It was all forward starting three years ago. In 2011, the park finally moved into third, and the following year it was No. 2. Last year, the vote was so close that it was less than 1 percent difference in the voting. Today, the park welcomes more than 5 million guests a year with its successful formula and has done what many thought to be impossible — taken the Golden Ticket.

"We graciously thank the voters for this prestigious honor, says Roland Mack, owner of Europa-Park. "Every day we pour our hearts into the attention to details and into making Europa-Park a little bit better. What a thrill to know that the most experienced enthusiasts in the world have voted Europa-Park as Best Amusement Park and also the first European park to achieve this award. It is a great honor for the whole Mack family and our 235 years of family business. I wish my father was able to share this award in person." Mack adds, "A big thank you to our production company, Mack Rides, whose top level attractions have contributed largely to our success."

Cedar Point, however, still claims its sheer legions of fans. Unquestionably the highest rated park in North America, the land of giants stands tall in the No. 2 position. Dollywood, as a finalist in more categories than any other park, moves up a notch to No. 3, nudging Knoebels Amusement Resort to the No. 4 spot. Disneyland keeps its No. 5 ranking to complete the upper half of the 10 parks on our BEST PARK list.

Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort, also considered to be an untouchable legend, maintains its lead to take BEST WATER PARK. Nestled along the Comal River in New Braunfels, Texas, the property redefines one-of-a-kind with its abundance of signature attractions and imaginative creativity. The massive Splashin' Safari (No. 2), which has grown by monumental proportions from its simple debut in 1993, today occupies close to 40 acres. Dollywood's Splash Country first appeared on the finalist charts three years ago in the No. 4 position. It moves up a ranking this year to No. 3. Ironically, Walt Disney World's Blizzard Beach (No. 4) and Typhoon Lagoon (No. 5) make a return to the charts, bumping off two other contenders from last season.

BEST CHILDREN'S PARK gives Idlewild & Soak Zone a five-year run with the Golden Ticket. Taking control in 2010, the idyllic haven in the woods has delighted families with youngsters since 1878. Knoebels and Story Land what it is. It is an honor to be included in the list."

Two sister properties, Legoland California (No. 3) and Legoland Florida (No. 4) challenge each other for the next positions. Following those siblings is a pair of newcomers gladly welcomed to the charts. Scoring an equal amount of votes, Enchanted Forest in Turner, Oregon, and Santa's Village in Jefferson, N.H. score a tie for the final charts this year.

As of yet uncontested, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk glides to a cozy win for BEST SEASIDE PARK in 2014. Its perfect mix of sand, sun and fun resonates with our voters. Blackpool Pleasure Beach holds onto the No. 2 spot with its location adjacent to the Irish Sea. This English classic has welcomed holiday travelers since 1896. Also in Europe, Gröna Lund holds onto the No. 1 spot with its location adjacent to the Irish Sea. This English classic has welcomed holiday travelers since 1896.

Thanks to all our fans for supporting us in the Golden Ticket Awards! It is a great honor to follow in the footsteps of Cedar Point. See you soon – at EUROPA-PARK, the best park 2014!
Continued from page 4

SeaWorld San Antonio  San Antonio, Texas  8%
Discovery Cove  Orlando, Fla.  10%
SeaWorld San Diego  San Diego, Calif.  12%
SeaWorld Orlando  Orlando, Fla.  52%

**BEST MARINE LIFE PARK**

Idlewild & SoakZone  Ligonier, Pa.  34%
Dollywood’s Splash Country  Pigeon Forge, Tenn.  4%
Splashin’ Safari  Santa Claus, Ind.  27%

**BEST WATER PARK**

Lightning Run  Knoebels Amusement Resort  9%
Kalahari Resort  Wisconsin Dells, Wis.  8%

**BEST KIDS’ AREA**

Enchanted Forest  Buena Park, Calif.  12%

**CLEANESEST PARK**

Holiday World  Santa Claus, Ind.  29%

**BEST SHOWS**

Dollywood  Pigeon Forge, Tenn.  45%

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**PARK AND RIDE WINNERS**

RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF VOTES CAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2014 (Amusement Park)</th>
<th>BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2014 (Water Park)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flying Turns</td>
<td>Verrückt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banshee</td>
<td>Colossal Curl</td>
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<td>Goliath</td>
<td>Bahama Blasters</td>
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<td>Harry Potter and the</td>
<td>Deep Water Dive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Escape from Gringotts</td>
<td>Snake Pit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lightning Run</td>
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### BEST PARK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europa-Park</td>
<td>Rust, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dollywood</td>
<td>Elyisburg, Pa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knoebels Amusement Resort</td>
<td>Anaheim, Calif.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disneyland</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal’s Islands of Adventure</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magic Kingdom</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tokyo DisneySea</td>
<td>Williamsburg, Va.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Busch Gardens Williamsburg</td>
<td>Santa Claus, Ind.</td>
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### BEST WATER PARK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schlitterbahn</td>
<td>New Braunfels, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Splashin’ Safari</td>
<td>Santa Claus, Ind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollywood’s Splash Country</td>
<td>Pigeon Forge, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blizzard Beach</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoon Lagoon</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
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### BEST CHILDREN’S PARK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idlewild &amp; SoakZone</td>
<td>Ligonier, Pa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Land</td>
<td>Glen, N.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legoland California</td>
<td>Carlsbad, Calif.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legoland Florida</td>
<td>Winter Haven, Fla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enchanted Forest</td>
<td>Turner, Ore.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa’s Village</td>
<td>Jefferson, N.H.</td>
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### BEST MARINE LIFE PARK

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<tr>
<th>Park</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SeaWorld Orlando</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeaWorld San Diego</td>
<td>San Diego, Calif.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discovery Cove</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Six Flags Discovery Kingdom</td>
<td>Vallejo, Calif.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SeaWorld San Antonio</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
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PARKS

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island snags the Golden Ticket for **BEST INDOOR WATER PARK** for 2014. The South Texas property has a unique roofing system that can change from indoors to outdoors during desirable temperatures and back to an indoor setting in a matter of minutes. Kalahari Resort Sandusky continues to hold the No. 2 spot, while its sister property, Kalahari Resort Wisconsin Dells, slips a notch to No. 4. Taking that third place position is World Waterpark inside West Edmonton Mall. This park was the first to take the Golden Ticket in this category. Splash Landings at the Alton Towers Resort in Staffordshire, England completes the top five.

Event host SeaWorld San Diego has a tough challenge to go up against for **BEST MARINE LIFE PARK**. SeaWorld Orlando has always maintained a solid lead in this category and once again ranks No. 1. The San Diego property, the original.
PARKS
Continued from page 6
in the chain of parks, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and keeps the silver in the No. 2 position. Also in Orlando, Discovery Cove, where all guests get to swim with dolphins, moves up into the No. 3 spot. Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo, Calif., mixes marine life, zoo animals and thrill rides into one multi-faceted property. It also climbs a rung slotting in at No. 4. These two climbs cause SeaWorld San Antonio to slip a couple of notches back to the No. 5 position.

BEST CHILDREN’S PARK: Idlewild & SoakZone
COURTESY IDLEWILD

BEST SEASIDE PARK: Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

BEST WATER RIDE (PARK)
Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls
Universal’s Islands of Adventure 21%
Valhalla
Pleasure Beach, Blackpool 12%
Splash Mountain
Disneyland 11%
Timber Mountain Log Ride
Knot’s Berry Farm 10.5%
Mountain Slidewinder
Dollywood 9%

BEST FOOD
Dollywood
Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 21%
Knoebels Amusement Resort
Elysburg, Pa. 18%
Epcot
Orlando, Fla. 17.5%
Silver Dollar City
Branson, Mo. 13%
Europa-Park
Rust, Germany 7%

BEST WATER PARK RIDE
Wildebeest
Splashin’ Safari 23%
Master Blaster
Schräubteich 16%
Mammoth
Splashin’ Safari 15%
The Falls
Schräubteich 7%
Congo River Expedition
Schräubteich 8% (tie)
Verrückt
Schräubteich Kansas City 8% (tie)

BEST LANDSCAPING
Busch Gardens Williamsburg
Williamsburg, Va. 24%
Gilroy Gardens
Gilroy Calif. 23%
Efeling
Kaatsheuvel, the Netherlands 17%
Dollywood
Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 6%
Epcot
Orlando, Fl. 5%

BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT
Dollywood
Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 41%
Disneyland
Anaheim, Calif. 10%
Silver Dollar City
Branson, Mo. 9.5%
Knoebels Amusement Resort
Elysburg, Pa. 9%
Kennywood
West Mifflin, Pa. 7%

BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT
Universal Orlando Resort
Orlando, Fla. 28%
Knott’s Berry Farm
Buena Park, Calif. 20%
Knoebels Amusement Resort
Elysburg, Pa. 14%
Kennywood
West Mifflin, Pa. 9%
Cedar Point
Sandusky, Ohio 6%

BEST INDOOR COASTER
Revenge of the Mummy
Universal Studios Orlando 21%
Space Mountain
Disneyland 14%
Winjas
Phantasialand 12%
Black Diamond
Knoebels Amusement Resort 9%
Mindbender
Galaxyland 8.5%

BEST OUTDOOR SHOW PRODUCTION
Illuminations
Epcot 27%
World of Color
Disney California Adventure 19%
Fantasmic!
Disneyland 11%
Lone Star Nights
Six Flags Fiesta Texas 10%
Fantasmic!
Disney’s Hollywood Studios 9%

BEST CAROUSEL
Knoebels Amusement Resort
Elysburg, Pa. 40%
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk
Santa Cruz, Calif. 27%
Six Flags Great America
Gurnee, Ill. 5.5%
Kennywood
West Mifflin, Pa. 5% (tie)
Phantasialand
Brühl, Germany 5% (tie)

BEST DARK RIDE
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey
Universal’s Islands of Adventure 20%
Twilight Zone Tower of Terror
Disney’s Hollywood Studios 10.5%
Radiator Springs Racers
Disney California Adventure 10%
Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man
Universal’s Islands of Adv. 9% (tie)
Haunted Mansion
Knoebels Amusement Resort 9% (tie)

BEST FRIENDEST PARK
Dollywood
Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 39%
Holiday World
Santa Claus, Ind. 14%
Silver Dollar City
Branson, Mo. 11%
Knoebels Amusement Resort
Elysburg, Pa. 6%
Disneyland
Anaheim, Calif. 5%

BEST FUNHOUSE/WALK-THROUGH ATTRACTION
Noah’s Ark
Kennywood 32%
Frankenstein’s Castle
Indiana Beach 17%
Gasten Ghost Hotel
Liseberg 15%
Ghost Ship
Morey’s Piers 12%
Lustiga Huset
Gröna Lund 11%

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Anaheim, Calif. 5%
We’re flying high with excitement! Thank you for voting us Best Children's Park.
It’s a Giant Thrill

TO BE VOTED THE WORLD’S BEST SEASIDE PARK—THANK YOU!

Giant Dipper Roller Coaster—since 1924

beachboardwalk.com
THANK YOU Amusement Today and Golden Ticket Voters for this honor. For the seventh year in a row, you’ve voted us THE WORLD’S BEST INDOOR WATERPARK!
Congratulations
to Europa-Park!

Enjoy The Ride!
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT

Cedar Fair
Entertainment Company.
Thanks for your support in the Golden Ticket Awards!

Cedar Fair is proud to be the winner of two Golden Ticket Awards, and to have 25 other amusement parks, rides and roller coasters ranked among the best in the world!
from Coast to Coast!

Offering Best Day of the Summer Experiences Every Day

Cedar Point®
Sandusky, OH    cedarpoint.com
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from Coast to Coast!
Busch and Gilroy duke out Landscaping in close race

Two garden theme parks separated by just two votes

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

From time to time, the Golden Ticket Awards can prompt some fierce competitions. Long time winner Busch Gardens Williamsburg is the only park to claim BEST LANDSCAPING. This year, however, became battle of the Gardens. Gilroy Gardens made a charge against the Busch Gardens powerhouse and all but came down to a photo finish, with Williamsburg holding on to the prize, but only by a mere two votes. Could second place Gilroy unseat the perennial giant? The true winners here would be visitors to both parks who would benefit from the beauty that such a competition brings. Kudos to both challengers for dazzling your audiences.

When AT asked Barbara Granter, general manager for Gilroy Gardens, how she felt about the close race, she said, “Really! We were that close? It does feel a bit like the Olympics – winning a silver medal is fantastic, especially for such a little property, but it would have been incredible to have gotten gold.” Granter smiles, “Gilroy is ‘the little park that could,’ so watch out! One day we will make it.”

In addition to a variety of color the landscaping provides, the sculpted bushes and famous Circus Trees add a completely unique and one-of-a-kind experience to a visit to Gilroy.

Last year’s tight race ended in a tie between Dollywood and Knoebels for BEST FOOD. This year the tie was broken with Dollywood taking the Golden Ticket and Knoebels maintaining a relatively close second.

Joel Lindsey, director of foods for Dollywood believes eating is a part of the day’s experience. “There is such steep competition in our industry. We are so excited with this Golden Ticket; it is a testament to our team’s focus on quality and variety.”

Rounding out the five finalists are familiar faces: Epcot (No. 3) with its world-wide smorgasbord, and Silver Dollar City (No. 4) and its hometown cooking. Europa-Park is our newcomer on the chart this year. The German theme park offers 54 restaurants today with a vast array of cuisine, compared to five when the park opened in 1975.

FRIENDLIEST PARK could be an extremely tough category for our voters as most parks train employees to be friendly. To make it on the charts is a true accomplishment. Dollywood has taken the Golden Ticket for a third year in a row. Three parks have claimed top rank in this category in Golden Ticket history. Holiday World, a long-time recipient, still holds the No. 2 spot, and Silver Dollar City still charts highly at No. 3.

Knoebels Amusement Resort has been noted for friendly employees among its many charms and takes No. 4 on the list, and Disneyland makes a return to the chart, rounding out the top five.

CLEANEST PARK: Holiday World

Holiday World makes it a 15-year lock on the CLEANEST PARK category. The Golden Ticket is utilized in training of new employees to stress not only the reputation of the park, but the importance of a commitment by everyone to continue the exemplary standards.

Dollywood (No. 2) and Disneyland (No. 3) keep their respective rankings from last year’s chart. Europa-Park enters this category in the No. 4 position, bumping down Busch Gardens Williamsburg a notch, but still retains its claim to finalist in the category.
Thank you very mulch!

To our landscapers, voters and everyone who help make Busch Gardens® naturally fun and beautifully wild year after year, Thank you.

buschgardens.com/va
Dollywood takes BEST SHOWS for a sixth year, this time with an impressive margin. With the park’s namesake at the helm, entertainment must certainly be a high priority. Many genres of music are featured in numerous shows as well as family offerings in other varieties of performances. Even with such formidable competition, Six Flags Fiesta Texas retains its second place hold and still maintains its 20-plus year reputation for outstanding performances. Europa-Park, in a first year appearance last year, was locked in a three-way tie for fourth place. The German theme park, which offers 15 different shows daily, moves up a notch to claim the bronze this year. Silver Dollar City continues its tradition of being one of the honored finalists in fourth place, while Disney California Adventure is a newcomer to the chart rounding out the top five.

In the category of BEST OUTDOOR NIGHT SHOW PRODUCTION, our five finalists remain, but positions have juggled. Epcot fans have stayed the course when it comes to voting, still loving the “Illuminations: Reflections of Earth” multi-media extravaganza for more than a decade. It has only been unseated once. Industry speculation persists that its West Coast cousin will eventually overtake it with “World of Color” at Disney California Adventure. The gap continues to shrink, but Epcot stays strong, leaving “World of Color” still locked in at No. 2.

The other three positions have shifted. Disney California Adventure has moved up by one notch, but still hangs on to the chart as finalists.

Due to their short run, holiday festivals are often challenging for voters to get to numerous incarnations. Parks have now established reputations for making the trek more of a planned destination for many voters. Many people make an annual pilgrimage to Universal Studios Orlando for its Halloween Horror Nights. The mega-event once again claims the ticket for BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT. Knott’s Berry Farm dominates the West Coast with its legendary “The Haunt at Knott’s Scary Farm,” and takes the No. 2 spot. In this category, all positions remain unchanged (for now) with Knoebels Amusement Resort (No. 3) and Kennywood (No. 4) taking Halloween fun to the traditional park scale. Cedar Point jumped on the charts last year and keeps its spooky fun in place again this year completing the top five.

If the weather cooperates, the addition of Christmas operating days has really allowed many parks to extend their season and up their attendance. The magic of the holidays is a time for families to have fun together and this often can make for the right formula for a successful yuletide festival. BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT is once again wrapped up by Dollywood, keeping its shiny bow as the sole winner of this category intact. Our No. 2 and No. 3 spots flip-flop this year, with Disneyland nudging up just ever-so-barely ahead of Silver Dollar City. Magic Kingdom continues its spirited popularity in the No. 4 spot. Kennywood was a new contender on our charts last year, and it looks to start a yuletide tradition of staying in the top five finalists.
Thank You Amusement Today!

BEST SHOWS  BEST FOOD  FRIENDLIEST PARK  BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT

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2014 Publisher’s Picks: Turnstile, Legend

Hyland Hills Water World protects its icons

When a water park has entertained long enough to celebrate 35 summers of providing fun to its guests, it means they have done their job during that time, or the guests would not continue to come back as repeat customers.

Along the way it usually means the park has created a ride, or attraction, that becomes a park icon in the guests eyes. Such is the case with the community-owned Water World, part of the Hyland Hills Parks & Recreation District in Federal Heights, Colorado, just outside of Denver.

But in this case, the park created not one, but two unique rides that are truly entrenched into the park’s slide lineup, and labeled as “must-do” rides.

First up was the 1990 installation of Lost River of the Pharaohs, followed by the 1993 installation of Voyage to the Center of the Earth. Both of these family rafting type rides are indoors and are of dark ride in nature.

The creative minds of R&R Creative Design, Sally Corporation’s lifelike animatronic figures, special effects, and custom rockwork from National Rock & Sculpture allowed the park to create these two iconic attractions inhouse and with lasting success.

Now in 2014, these two guest favorite dark-ride attractions have been enhanced in a big way. Voyage to the Center of the Earth, with its 1,600 foot-long course, now features a more realistic looking, life-sized T-Rex which underwent a complete overhaul this winter. The T-Rex is now able to take a six-foot leap towards the floating guests with four very intimidating movements. Also added were three animated prehistoric turtles and two birds featuring wingspans of 10 feet. The T-Rex Cave was enhanced with even more animation as well as all new lighting and sounds effects from R&R Creative.

At the 1,500 foot-long Lost River of the Pharaohs, the park added animation to the two scary statues in the Throne Room. It added laser effects to both a new mural and numerous mummies and added the off-the-wall water effects of the spitting Pharaoh hounds.

Hyland Hills Water World spent just $150,000 to upgrade these two classics for their guests to enjoy, proving that just a little effort can move the turnstile. The results have been phenomenal with guest feedback off the charts.

With their vision to enhance these two very unique icons through added storylines, visuals, animation, lighting and sound, Amusement Today is honored to name Hyland Hills Water World as our Publisher’s Pick for the 2014 Turnstile Award.

George Millay reshaped industry with water

If ever an individual created a sea change in the amusement industry, it was George Millay. As the leading creative force behind the SeaWorld theme park chain and the father of the water park, Millay had a vision that was more than just adding water to fun — it revolutionized our business by using our most vital natural resource to engage parkgoers and enhance the interactivity of their experience.

Water, or at least his close proximity to it, was a constant in Millay’s life. Born in 1929 in San Diego, he grew up in Ocean Beach, San Francisco and Hawaii and served in the Navy for three years. Upon graduating from UCLA in 1955, he worked briefly as a stockbroker before he and a business partner opened the Reef Restaurant in Long Beach in 1956. That eatery became the cornerstone of Specialty Restaurants Corporation, with which Millay remained involved for another decade.

Even while enjoying that success, Millay partnered with two UCLA fraternity brothers, Dave DeMotte and Milt Sheed, and the wildlife curator at Marineland in Palos Verdes, Ken Norris, to begin developing a marine life park called SeaWorld on San Diego’s Mission Bay. Today, half a century after that landmark opened in 1964, the company encompasses 11 destination and regional parks across the U.S.

Millay’s enthusiasm for the business of fun did not stop with SeaWorld. At the start of the 1970s, he assisted with the development of Magic Mountain theme park north of Los Angeles. And in 1974, he formed another company, Leisure Marine, in San Diego, with which he explored the feasibility of a new type of park featuring water-based attractions. From this, the national Wet ’n Wild water park chain emerged.

“We never got into this business for money. It was a business of doing something that we knew was right,” Millay told a large audience at the SeaWorld chain’s Christmas Gala in 1999. “We wanted to give a thrill to people and we were successful in doing that. We also wanted to educate people about the wonder and beauty of the ocean and the biology of marine life. We did that in our own way, and we did it well.”

Millay left us in 2006, but he also has left us with a legacy of entertainment that has fulfilled the public’s desire for participatory fun while also promoting conservation and showcasing the natural wonders of our world. Like water is to humanity, his concepts will remain a life force in our industry — and for this, Amusement Today honors George Millay with its 2014 Legend Series Award.
2014 Publisher’s Picks: Person, Persons

Jeff Pike gave the gift of ‘life’

Finding one’s dream job is a goal to which many of us aspire. Those able to attain it do so through desire, diligence and hard work. Jeff Pike is one of those people. He knew as a young boy that he wanted to design roller coasters. His unwavering resolve paid off handsomely when Great Coasters International, Inc. co-founders Clair Hain, Jr. and Michael L. Boodley recognized Jeff’s potential and hired him as he completed his engineering degree in the late ’90s.

While Jeff brought with him the technical wizardry of modern engineering techniques, he was able to flourish due to the assistance of Mike, who acted as his mentor. Mike and Jeff combined their talents, and along with the GCII team, they created some of the most amazing wooden coasters seen since the industry’s Golden Age in the early 20th century. During this time, a close bond between the pair developed, which further facilitated their inspired work.

When Mike decided to retire in 2000, he effectively passed the torch to Jeff, who was working his way up to a position as GCII’s lead designer. Thanks to Mike’s influence and tutelage, Jeff helped GCII become a respected global leader in finely crafted wooden coasters. Jeff would forever be grateful to Mike for taking the chance on him and allowing him to realize his dream.

Thirteen years later, Jeff faced a difficult decision when he learned that Mike’s health was in rapid decline with his kidneys failing due to complications from diabetes. He needed a kidney transplant. Many of Mike’s close friends stepped up to help by being tested to see if they were a match. Of course, Jeff would not be deterred. Against astronomical odds, he turned out to be a perfect match. After much testing and working to lose weight as the doctors ordered, both Mike and Jeff checked into a New Jersey hospital for the procedure in December 2013.

The surgery was a complete success, but the road to recovery was a difficult one, especially for Jeff. The pain he endured as he healed was substantial, but with the same fortitude that served him all his life, he persevered. Today, both Mike and Jeff are healthy and living life to the fullest with their enduring friendship intact.

For selflessly offering the ultimate gift — the gift of life to a dear friend — as well as helping to keep the traditional wooden roller coaster alive and well into the 21st century, Jeff Pike is AT’s choice for 2014 Person of the Year.

SeaWorld Rescue teams rehabilitate wildlife

The 50th anniversary of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment this year celebrates a milestone beyond the creation of fun. It marks the fifth decade of the company’s unique commitment to conservation. This includes public education and — through the work of the nonprofit Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute, established in 1963 — species study and preservation, as well as environmental stewardship.

This commitment culminates with SeaWorld’s recently announced Blue World Project, a greatly expanded, state-of-the-art killer whale environment that first will be built at SeaWorld San Diego, plus more than $10 million in new matching funds for research and conservation projects related to killer whales and ocean health. These developments will enhance further the company’s reputation as one of the world’s foremost zoological organizations and a global leader in animal welfare, training, husbandry and veterinary care.

Behind the scenes, important work has long been carried out through SeaWorld’s animal and rehabilitation program, which gives ill, injured and stranded animals a second chance at life and with the goal of returning them to their ocean home. Nationally, SeaWorld Animal Rescue Teams have rescued and rehabilitated more than 1,000 marine mammals and more than 1,000 marine birds since 1965.

In 2013, the SeaWorld San Diego team — utilizing a state-of-the-art medical and laboratory facility — rescued a near-record number of California sea lions as a result of an Unusual Mortality Event (UME) that caused juvenile sea lions to strand on beaches along the central and southern coastline of California. SeaWorld cared for more than 411 sea lions, the majority of which were part of the UME, in addition to other marine mammal species, including 10 elephant seals, 12 harbor seals, one fur seal and five dolphins. In addition, SeaWorld took in and cared for 267 birds. As of the first quarter of this year, the park had already rescued more than 185 marine mammals and more than 120 sea birds.

For their tireless dedication to animal welfare, Amusement Today presents its 2014 Persons of the Year Award to the SeaWorld Animal Rescue Teams based in San Diego, Calif.; Orlando, Fla.; and San Antonio, Texas.
SeaWorld® thanks Amusement Today for recognizing the efforts of our dedicated and passionate employees.
Knoebels, Schlitterbahn Kansas City win Best New Rides

When Amusement Today introduced the Best New Ride categories in 2005, Hades at Mount Olympus Water & Theme Park became our first winner, which was followed by Voyage at Holiday World a year later. These two coasters pushed the boundaries of what a wooden coaster could do. Maverick at Cedar Point was our next winner. For a park of giants, it was a new direction of something exciting that remained low to the ground with Intamin using a dual launch. Each year since, we’ve continued to see some real innovations. Wal-dameer’s Ravine Flyer II by The Gravity Group overcame years of obstacles to become the signature ride for the park, one that jumps a roadway below. Prowler at Worlds of Fun pushed Great Coasters International into a more traditional out-and-back layout that sometimes incorporates the action of their twister coasters. Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey at Universal’s Islands of Adventure showed us we only thought we knew what a dark ride could do. New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas from the minds at Rocky Mountain Construction and Ride Centerline innovatively transformed an aging woodie into a new, smooth, dynamic experience. Dollywood's Wild Eagle brought the new B&M wing coaster genre to North America with its biggest incarnation at the time. Last year, Silver Dollar City utilized Rocky Mountain and Ride Centerline to rethink the wooden coaster from the ground up. The innovative Outlaw Run raced to a Golden Ticket win.

Water parks also saw innovation over the years with LIM water coasters such as Splashin’ Safari’s Wildebeest and Mammoth. Schlitterbahn reintroduced thematic versions of aging rides into visual and interactive experiences such as Dragon’s Revenge and Congo River Expedition. Later they truly pushed the envelope with the Falls, creating an endless attraction that lasted longer than 20 minutes for a single circuit.

Innovation was still strong in 2014 (see editorial, page 2). BEST NEW RIDE (PARK) arrives this year in a mindset not seen in the category before. In contrast to all our previous winners for new attractions, Knoebels' new Flying Turns is not intended to be a thriller at all. Joe Muscato of Knoebels Amusement Resort said, “It was never meant to be an extreme ride. We wanted a ride that is unique and a lot of fun. We’re very pleased with the reception the Turns has received. The squalls and laughter we hear coming from the trough tell us it’s a success.” Having ridden a Flying Turns at Euclid Beach and being completely thrilled by it in his younger years, Dick Knoebel adds, “When the idea was brought to the Knoebel family about recreating it, I was convinced this would be a coup. At the IAAPA summer meet- ing in 2005, I was told by Kurt Mack-Even ‘you’ll never get it.’ I replied sternly that, ‘We would.’ And, with my German stubbornness and Marine Corps resolution, we pushed on, overcoming each obstacle that we met – and there were substantial ones.” Knoebel grins, “But, with the perseverance of the Knoebel family and staff, we won.” A true testament to dedication, Flying Turns takes the Golden Ticket.

Other finalists took previous successes and carried them further. Banshee at Kings Island (No. 2) reintroduced America to the excitement of the inverted roller coaster, B&M’s most prolific style of coaster. After an eight year absence since the last U.S. installation, Kings Island sculpted the skyline with mega-statistics creating the tallest, longest and fastest version ever created. Likewise, Six Flags Great America followed the success of last year’s winner and built a new wooden coaster from the ground up that incorporates radical maneuvers, including one of the longest spans of upside down travel. Yes, on a wooden coaster, Goliath (No. 3) also boasted records of tallest, steepest and fastest drop of any woodie running today.

Universal Studios Orlando knows a good themed attraction, and the indoor coaster Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts (No. 4) continues to capitalize on the immense popularity of that literary and film franchise. Our fifth finalist actually came down to a battle between two new steel coasters: Helix, a dual-launched multi-inversion coaster from Mack Rides at Liseberg and Lightning Run from Chance Rides at the newly re-opened Kentucky Kingdom. Separated by a mere two votes, Lightning Run snags the final spot and proved a coaster with modest height can still pack an amazing punch.

For BEST NEW RIDE (WA-TER PARK), one stood above the others, literally. Verrückt at Schlitterbahn Kansas City and its journey to opening day has been under scrutiny via the internet microscope. At more than 17 stories, the world’s tallest waterslide is thrilling passengers with its high-speed plummet in three-person rafts. Terri Adams, COO of Schlitterbahn Waterparks, says, “Having ridden, it is an incredible ride! Everyone I’ve talked to – whether from Kansas, Texas or wherever they traveled from – has said the ride was more than worth it and lived up to the hype. Now that is gratifying!” She adds, “The ride isn’t just a great success, it has created an icon in the city, something that is a ‘must do’ when you are in the area. In that way, we have given something back to our local fans that have supported us year after year.”

ProSlide supplied a trio of finalists this season. Colossal Curl stands dramatically at the front of Water Country USA combining a funnel and wave into the exhilarat- ing four-person slide. Bahama Blasters at Six Flags Fiesta Texas and Deep Water Dive at Kentucky Kingdom capitalize on the hot trend of drop capsule waterslides. The San Antonio version is the world’s steepest, while the Louisville installation is the tallest of all drop capsule rides. These attractions come in at Nos. 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

WhiteWater West brings in Snake Pit at Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom to round out the five finalists. This multi-slide complex includes six slides, three of which are drop capsule slides, a pair of tube slides and a tight-twist- ing Constrictor slide.
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Hang on! – 2014 Golden Ticket ride winners

For BEST INDOOR COASTER, the top three spots remain unchanged: Revenge of the Mummy at Universal Studios Orlando (No. 1), Space Mountain at Disneyland (No. 2), and Wingerjas at Phantasialand (No. 3). Knoebels surfaces in this category with Black Diamond in fourth place, moving down Galaxyland’s Mindbender to fifth, and incidentally pushes Rock ‘n’ Roller Coaster – once a Golden Ticket winner – at Disney’s Hollywood Studios off the chart of finalists.

A new question is pondered: How long will it be before Universal becomes its own competition with Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts once voters get Gringotts off the chart of finalists. Considering the size, they should be back to Orlando for this new attraction. Although the separation of first and second was reduced considerably this year, the Grand Carousel at Knoebels Amusement Resort still keeps BEST CAROUSEL and is the only park to ever do so. Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk would seem to be possibly closing in. Both historic carousels feature beautifully restored band organs and offer ring dispensers to thrill both the young and old.

For BEST WATER RIDE, Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls, Universal’s Island of Adventure (No. 2) and Gasten Ghost Hotel at Liseberg (No. 3). Ghost Ship at Morey’s Piers climbs a rung up to No. 4 and Lustiga Huset at Gröna Lund rounds out the five finalists.

In the category of BEST KIDS’ AREA, the apparent lock on the Golden Ticket remains with Planet Snoopy at Kings Island, the only park to ever claim this prize. Efteling in the Netherlands moves up two spots into the No. 2 spot, while Knott’s Berry Farm (No. 3) jumps back on the charts following its kids’ area revamp. These two developments push back Universal’s Islands of Adventure to No. 4 and Nickelodeon Universe to No. 5.

Although the separation of first and second was reduced considerably this year, Planet Snoopy at Kings Island (No. 1), and Ghost Hotel at Liseberg (No. 2) and Lustiga Huset at Gröna Lund keeps its third place position, while indoors before bursting into a race with an opposing vehicle outdoors for a grand finish. Our other two finalists stay on the charts, but drop a couple of notches – The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man at Islands of Adventure (No. 4) and Haunted Mansion at Knoebels Amusement Resort at No. 5.

While not quite making the official charts, it was very inspiring to see the newly-refurbished Calico Mine Ride at Knott’s Berry Farm receive a significantly large number of votes this year thanks to the park’s dedication and respect for rides from the past.

The wide variety of ride attractions is what makes the true amusement park experience completely memorable. Our 2014 charts see some consistent winners and some new faces.

For BEST DARK RIDE, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey at Universal’s Islands of Adventure takes the Golden Ticket for a fourth year. Twilight Zone Tower of Terror at Disney’s Hollywood Studios takes a step higher over last year and moves into second place. A new player, Radiator Springs Racers in Disney California Adventure’s amazing new Cars Land hits our charts at No. 3. This super dark ride has passengers experiencing all the characters from the famous film while indoors before bursting into a race with an opposing vehicle outdoors for a grand finish. Our other two finalists stay on the charts, but drop a couple of notches – The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man at Islands of Adventure (No. 4) and Haunted Mansion at Knoebels Amusement Resort at No. 5.
Ken nyw ood says “Thank You!!”
to Amusement Today
and its readers
for this prestigious award.

Kennywood says “Thank You!!” to Amusement Today and its readers for this prestigious award.
RIDE
Continued from page 26

to No. 5.

Want to get wet? People seem to love doing just that during a hot day at an amusement park. Universal’s Islands of Adventure and their long-running favorite, Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls, take the gold for BEST WATER RIDE. Interestingly, Valhalla at Blackpool Pleasure Beach climbs back to second place. The Intamin ride took the Golden Ticket in 2003. Splash Mountain at Disneyland appears on our charts this year (No. 3), while interestingly it was its Florida counterpart in 2013. Timber Mountain Log Ride at Knott’s Berry Farm (No. 4) remains in the list after its fantastic 2013 restoration, and Dollywood’s Mountain Slidewinder still has numerous fans keeping it on our chart of finalists at No. 5.

Two parks have established a stronghold on BEST WATER PARK RIDE in recent years, and that would still remain true, but a tie for the No. 5 spot introduces a new player, and one that is sure to be a significant challenger in the years ahead. The standings in this category start with Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari with its Golden Ticket win for Wildebeest and the third place win for Mammoth, both built by ProSlide. Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort in New Braunfels boasts three finalists: Master Blaster (No. 2), The Falls (No. 4) and Congo River Expedition (No. 5). All of these world famous attractions were developed in-house. Now, tying for that fifth spot is sister park Schlitterbahn Kansas City. The debut of Verrückt created a media frenzy from the moment it was announced as the world’s tallest water slide. Three riders at a time plummet down a steep drop from more than 17 stories. Watch this one. It’s going to climb.

BEST INDOOR COASTER: Revenge of the Mummy, (top) Universal Studios Orlando COURTESY UNIVERSAL

BEST WATER PARK RIDE: Wildebeest, (left) Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari AT/TIM BALDWIN
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The roar of wood — old and new — continues to thrill

STORY: Tim Baldwin
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The look, the sound, the smell — there is something unique and special about the nostalgic charm of a wooden coaster. From century old classic to the most modern of marvels, a wooden coaster is a “must have” for any park. And those parks that have dismantled one know the loss that this entails. Wooden coasters have a loyalty among enthusiasts that no other genre can claim. As evidence to that, Magic Mountain’s Colossus has never placed on the Golden Ticket charts, until this year when it was announced the ride would be closing in August. Perhaps as an homage to the appeal of wood, it appears on our charts for the first time at No. 44.

Ever since 2008, five power hitters are dominating the top spots for BEST WOODEN COASTER. Four of them have snatched the ticket at some point, and true to the nature of coaster rankings, it flexes just a bit this year. Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce snagged top billing last year, just as it had done in 2004. It holds tight a second year in a row. El Toro at Six Flags Great Adventure refuses to slip any further than No. 2, and The Voyage at Holiday World inches back up to third place after a five-year streak of taking the Golden Ticket. Phoenix at Knoebels Amusement Resort, a true testament to preservation, keeps a Top 5 grasp at No. 4, while Thunderhead at Dollywood competes with the pack. Like a race of fine thoroughbreds, this charge of wooden coasters could quite possibly be the most nail-biting category of all.

The remainder of the Top 10 is story-filled as well. Ravine Flyer II at Waldameer Park, the only coaster on Earth to jump a highway, has firmly held the No. 6 spot for years, not giving an inch. Gold Striker at California’s Great America, a co-host park of last year’s Golden Ticket Awards, jumps higher than any other coaster from its previous position, moving from No. 26 last year into the Top 10 at No. 7. The Beast at Kings Island (No. 8) shares bragging rights with Knoebels’ Phoenix as the only two Top 10 coasters from our inaugural year in 1998 that still remain rated with that prestige in today’s charts. Outlaw Run at Silver Dollar City was voted Best New Ride last year and stays in the top tier at No. 9. Balder at Liseberg in Sweden climbs a few notches into upper rungs making it the highest rated international wooden coaster and the only one to break into the ten most popular woodies.

Two other international coasters make significant climbs. Troy at Toverland located in the Netherlands leaps from its No. 28 spot last year up to No. 16. Wodan Timbur Coaster at Germany’s Europa-Park climbs from its previous spot of No. 31 up to No. 21. Overall, 12 wooden coasters outside the U.S. land on our charts. With those coming from nine international destinations, such diversity speaks to the experience of our panelists.

First timers on our charts also include the new-for-2014 Goliath at Six Flags Great America (No. 23), the long awaited first See WOOD, page 35
And making a return is the oldest coaster on the charts, Rutschebanen at Tivoli Gardens in Denmark. The Denmark coaster celebrates its 100th birthday this year.
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Celebrating 110 years building wooden coasters

Five of the Top Ten wooden coasters use PTCI trains

Congratulations to the 2014 Golden Ticket winners, and thanks for your patronage!

Tom Rebbie
President, PTCI
## THE LIST

### 2014 TOP 50 WOOD ROLLER COASTERS

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Lightning Racer at Hershey Park 2000
Thunderhead at Dollywood 2004
Gold Striker at California’s Great America 2013
White Lightning at Fun Spot Orlando 2013

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Our panel of experts

Since Amusement Today introduced the Golden Ticket Awards in 1998, we continue to seek out the most experienced park enthusiasts to participate in our survey. AT follows a fair and balanced protocol of dividing our ballots between four geographical regions (see color map at right) of the United States. In addition to the hundreds of surveys sent to American enthusiasts, international fans are also sought out and we invite such fans to contact us for participation in future years. Amusement Today thanks the hundreds of voters who helped form this year’s panel of experts and make the 2014 Golden Ticket Awards a reality.

Are you a qualified candidate? Contact Golden Ticket Awards Communications Coordinator Tim Baldwin at tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com and we’ll see if you would make a good representative for your region on next year’s new panel.

Of note, park employees, manufacturers, and Amusement Today staff are not eligible to be on the panel.
New favorites break into Steel Top 10 survey results

With barely a half century of history behind them, tubular steel coasters don’t retain the admiration quite to the extent that wooden coasters do. Voters — and the public — tend to be drawn to newer, flashier installations. In that light, a glance at this year’s BEST STEEL COASTER chart will find that not a single ride in the Top 10 even existed when Amusement Today introduced the Golden Ticket Awards in 1998. Certainly a shout out has to go to Arrow’s Magnum XL-200 at Cedar Point for holding on the longest. For a time a No. 1 Golden Ticket holder, Magnum remained in the upper tier longer than any other 20th century coaster. It is only this year that it finally slips from the Top 10, still popular at No. 13.

A trio of Intamin powerhouses still control the top three spots. Millennium Force at Cedar Point maintains its wild popularity and takes the tremendous climb to No. 6 from its previous ranking at No. 15. The 300-foot coaster has made major advances each year since being built. Other B&M coasters on the Top 10 list are Six Flags Great Adventure’s Nitro (No. 5), Apollo’s Chariot at Busch Gardens Williamsburg (No. 7), Six Flags Over Georgia’s Goliath (No. 9), and Intimidator at Carowinds (No. 10).

Completing the Top 10 is Rocky Mountain Construction’s original hit, New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas. The wood-to-steel transformation saved this legendary woodie from the wrecking ball years back and started a successful strand of transformations that continue to deliver hit after hit.

Three new-for-2014 coasters debut on the charts this year, all provided by different manufacturers. Banshee at Kings Island reintroduced the B&M inverted coaster to America, complete with record-breaking dimensions. It lands at No. 16. Lightning Run at Kentucky Kingdom, a new style Hyper GT-X coaster from Chance, appears in the upper half at No. 25, and Helix, an impressive new double-launched, multi-inversion thriller at Sweden’s Liseberg screams in at No. 30.

Seeing a surge in popularity are other European installations, including Blue Fire Megacoaster at Europa-Park, rising up to No. 17, Phantasialand’s Black Mamba vaults up to No. 24 from its 2013 position at No. 34. Lisebergbanan at Liseberg, streams up to No. 35 from its prior ranking of No. 48. Back here in the states, another interesting and radical climb is Six Flags Magic Mountain’s Tatsu, flying into the No. 34 spot from its 2013 ranking at No. 50.

Eleven international coasters are on our steel charts. Those not yet mentioned are Behemoth at Canada’s Wonderland (No. 15), Alton Towers’ Nemesis (No. 21), Goliath at La Ronde (No. 26), Euro-Mir at Europa-Park (No. 42), and Piraten, a returning favorite from Djurs Sommerland, now at No. 46. The oldest coaster on the charts? Six Flags Great America’s bicentennial family favorite, the Whizzer.
AND AGAIN: THE VERY BEST IN STEEL

AND OUR WOODIES DON’T NEED TO HIDE EITHER!

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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mind Bender</td>
<td>Six Flags Over Georgia</td>
<td>Austell, Ga.</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Schwarzkopf</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nemesis</td>
<td>Alton Towers</td>
<td>Staffordshire, England</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Montu</td>
<td>Busch Gardens Tampa Bay</td>
<td>Tampa, Fla.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Black Mamba</td>
<td>Phantasialand</td>
<td>Brühl, Germany</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lightning Run</td>
<td>Kentucky Kingdom</td>
<td>Louisville, Ky.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# THE LIST

## 2014 TOP 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PARK</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SUPPLIER</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 (tie)</td>
<td>Goliath</td>
<td>La Ronde</td>
<td>Montreal, Quebec, Canada</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 (tie)</td>
<td>Skyrush</td>
<td>Hersheypark</td>
<td>Hershey, Pa.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 (tie)</td>
<td>Maverick</td>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Helix</td>
<td>Liseberg</td>
<td>Gothenburg, Sweden</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Mack</td>
<td>134</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Raging Bull</td>
<td>Six Flags Great America</td>
<td>Gurnee, Ill.</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Griffon</td>
<td>Busch Gardens Williamsburg</td>
<td>Williamsburg, Va.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Tatsu</td>
<td>Six Flags Magic Mountain</td>
<td>Valencia, Calif.</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Lisebergbanan</td>
<td>Liseberg</td>
<td>Gothenburg, Sweden</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>Tampa, Fla.</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Steel Force</td>
<td>Dorney Park</td>
<td>Allentown, Pa.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Morgan</td>
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<td>Full Throttle</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>Arlington, Texas</td>
<td>1978</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Manta</td>
<td>SeaWorld Orlando</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Euro-Mir</td>
<td>Europa-Park</td>
<td>Rust, Germany</td>
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<td>Giovanola</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Kingda Ka</td>
<td>Six Flags Great Adventure</td>
<td>Jackson, N.J.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Piraten</td>
<td>Djurs Sommerland</td>
<td>Jylland, Denmark</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>Raptor</td>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Cheetah Hunt</td>
<td>Busch Gardens Tampa Bay</td>
<td>Tampa, Fla.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>49 (tie)</td>
<td>California Screamin’</td>
<td>Disney California Adventure</td>
<td>Anaheim, Calif.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>49 (tie)</td>
<td>Volcano: The Blast Coaster</td>
<td>Kings Dominion</td>
<td>Doswell, Va.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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