



NEW & CLASSIC AT DISNEYLAND

It may be a small world, but grand new lands are enhancing the epic SoCal destination

BY SUSAN G. HAUSER

The thrilling attraction "Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run" puts guests in the cockpit (facing page) and in other parts of the storied ship.



» The sky over Planet Batuu was steel gray when I first arrived at the Black Spire Outpost. It was early morning, and a fog over Disneyland had not yet lifted to reveal the usual sunny blue skies of Orange County, California. However, the temporary mists added to the ambiance of the park's new 14-acre expansion—*Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*, which opened on May 31 with some of Disneyland's newest attractions.

There were some familiar sights on this strange new planet: an assortment of droids—some of them beeping, some whirring and most looking a bit weathered (intentionally). And of course, there was the *Millennium Falcon*, the legendary starship of the *Star Wars* films, at the outpost's dock.

After being told to keep an eye out for popular *Star Wars* characters such as Rey, the scavenger turned heroine, and Vi Moradi, the Resistance super spy, a question came to mind.

"Where's Princess Leia?" I asked, trying to gain my bearings. A friendly cast member gave my shoulder a comforting squeeze. "She is many generations in the past," she told me gently.

Suddenly, Chewbacca appeared, ambling down the road, a bandolier draped across his chest. Wookiees are apparently timeless. I was so glad to see him, I could have hugged him. And I did, as a matter of fact, while Chewie made an otherworldly purring vocalization.

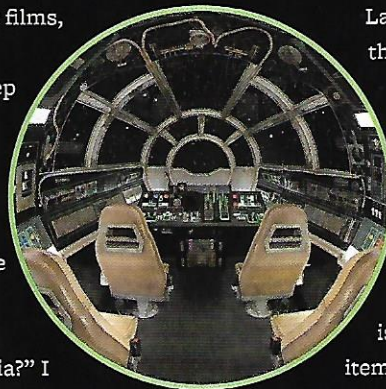
Moments after parting from the famed and furry co-pilot of the *Millennium Falcon*, I found Princess Leia, after all. Well, I found reminders of her, I should say. In Dok-Ondar's Den of Antiquities, souvenirs

of bygone *Star Wars* eras line the shop's walls, and there I found two quite familiar items associated with the original heroine of the series. If I had felt I could have done the princess' tonsorial or sartorial styles justice, I would have certainly purchased a Princess Leia-style wig or an ivory-colored Princess Leia gown.

In no time at all, I went from awkward stranger to confident intergalactic adventurer, enjoying the sights and sounds of Batuu. At Oga's Cantina, I bellied up to the bar and ordered a Blue Bantha, a non-alcoholic berry-flavored blue milk drink served with a cookie on top; various colorful mocktails and cocktails are available at this classic *Star Wars* gathering place.

Later, while strolling through the Black Spire Outpost Marketplace, I learned that the market's authenticity comes from being modeled after the souks of Marrakech, Morocco. The exotic air is enhanced by the bizarre items for sale. I was especially drawn to the pet store. No animal companion I've ever owned resembled in any way the oddly shaped toy pets available on Batuu.

Visitors can also make their own pint-size sidekicks at the Droid Depot or construct a lightsaber at Savi's Workshop. And, as I did, they can ride the attraction "*Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run*," taking on the role of pilot, gunner or flight engineer during an action-packed space flight. Guests needn't fear making serious errors; we were at the controls, but we were also guided in by the capable hands of someone who has eons of experience piloting the ship: Chewbacca. Who else?





Clockwise from top: Oga's Cantina at Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge; a Princess Breakfast Adventure at Napa Rose restaurant; "Radiator Springs Racers."

There's still more to come in this galaxy ... and it's not far away. The attraction "Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance," which will allow guests to join a battle set inside a Star Destroyer, is scheduled to open at Disneyland on January 17, 2020. Also, next spring, Disneyland will debut a "Magic Happens" parade, with floats, costumes and characters from *Moana*, *Coco*, *Sleeping Beauty* and other Disney and Pixar films. And at Disneyland's neighbor, Disney California Adventure Park, a new Avengers Campus is scheduled to open in phases beginning in 2020, and will feature interactive attractions with Avengers Super Heroes.

In addition to my cosmic adventures at the new *Star Wars* attractions, I had an important mission of my own, relating to the longer-established parts of Disneyland. I hurried to The Mad Hatter shop on Main Street, U.S.A., to purchase an infant-size Mickey Mouse ears hat for my newborn granddaughter. Her name looked pretty in pink, stitched in cursive on the hat's back.

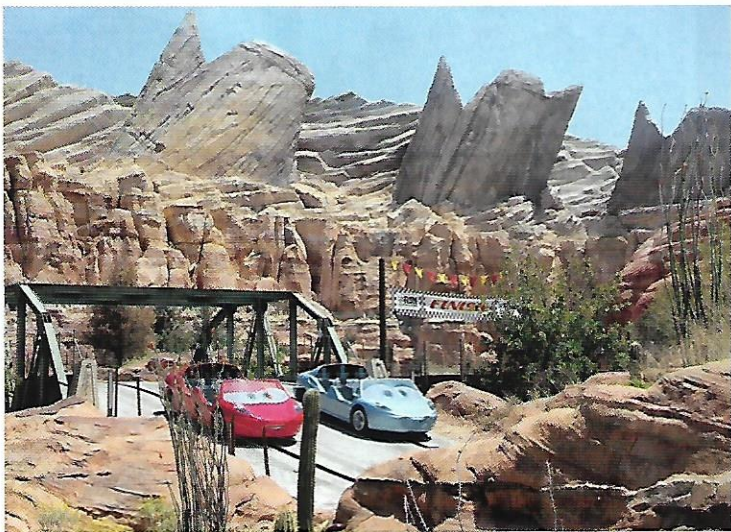
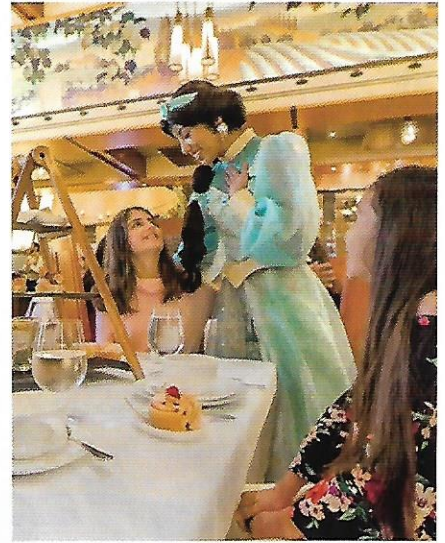
I also began scouting for a future trip when my granddaughter might develop the passion for princesses that is found throughout the park. At Bibbidi

Bobbidi Boutique in Fantasyland, little girls aged 3 through 12 line up before tall mirrors in salon chairs, getting the royal treatment as part of their princess makeovers. With glamorous new hairstyles and colorful ankle-length gowns, they are ready to meet costumed Disney princesses (whose appearances, along with those by other characters, are trackable on the Disneyland app).

Such royalty is always in attendance at the Disney Princess Breakfast Adventures at the elegant Napa Rose restaurant at Disney Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, located next to Disney California Adventure Park. Held Thursday through Monday mornings, the breakfasts feature three courses—and up to eight princesses making personal visits to each child's table. The restaurant itself is so lovely, it's hard for me to imagine the full dazzling effect of all those princesses among the beautiful Arts and Crafts-style decor.

At Disney California Adventure Park, I made a beeline for a favorite attraction: "Radiator Springs Racers." I'm not alone in favoring this thrilling ride, inspired by the *Cars* films, which features a high-speed auto race on the winding roads of Ornament Valley. The attraction is one of the favorites at Disney California Adventure Park.

With Halloween approaching, the ride and its surroundings have been temporarily redecorated and recast as "Radiator Screams"—one of several areas resortwide that are taking on spooky aspects. The Downtown Disney District outside the parks will feature themed Halloween decor. And, on select October dates, there will be trick-or-treating for guests of the three hotels of Disneyland Resort—the Disney Grand Californian Hotel, Disneyland



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RICHARD HARBAUGH / © 2019 DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.; LUCASFILM LTD.; JOSHUA SUDOCK / © 2019 DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.; PAUL HIPFNER / © 2012 DISNEYLAND ENTERPRISES, INC.

From top: The “Incredicoaster” at Disney California Adventure Park and the World of Disney shop in the Downtown Disney District.

Hotel and Disney’s Paradise Pier Hotel. The Halloween season at Disneyland runs through October 31 this year.

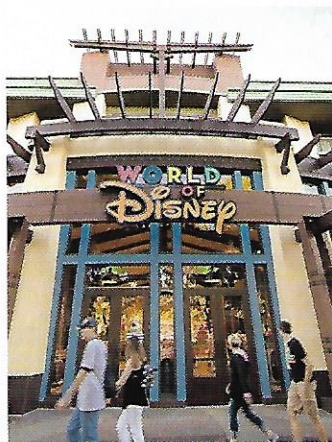
The newest area in Disney California Adventure Park is Pixar Pier, which partially opened in summer 2018 and was completed this year. The pier is divided into four neighborhoods: Incredibles Park, Inside Out Headquarters, Pixar Promenade and Toy Story Boardwalk.

When it came to riding the “Incredicoaster” in Incredibles Park, I was too scared, though others were enthusiastic. The story behind the attraction is that guests join the stars of *The Incredibles* films in a high-speed coaster chase to catch the youngest Incredible, Jack-Jack. Did I mention high speed? Did I mention sometimes upside down?

For me, defying gravity is OK only in small doses. So I opted for the mellower yet enjoyable “*Inside Out: Emotional Whirlwind*” and “*Jessie’s Critter Carousel*,” both at Pixar Pier.

Lamplight Lounge is a great dining option on Pixar Pier. Through its decor, the restaurant celebrates Imagineers from every department of Pixar Studios. It also overlooks the water from which 1,200 fountains blast during the nighttime “World of Color” spectacular. This water-fire-fog-and-laser show provides a lively journey through the history of beloved Disney and Pixar films and songs.

For additional food options, the Downtown Disney District has various choices. If you like to bowl while dining, Splitsville is for you. There are 20 bowling lanes on two levels, with sushi, pizza and burgers. Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes is another favorite. You won’t believe those CrazyShakes milkshakes, containing whole pieces of cake, ice cream bars, cotton candy or churros. For alfresco dining, try Ballast Point Brewing Co. or Naples Ristorante e Bar.



In the Downtown Disney District, I spent the most time at three stores: World of Disney, which offers popular Disney products, Disney Home (Mickey Mouse potholders, anyone?) and the Disney Dress Shop that features classic dress styles in Disney-themed fabrics.

Tucked among the restaurants and shops are additional interactive attractions. I approached “The VOID” experience with trepidation, afraid that its hyperreality and I might not get along. But then two girlfriends and I were outfitted with Oculus Rift headsets and ushered into a small room. Once our headsets were activated, we were suddenly in a *Star Wars*-style battle, blasters in hand. We could feel heat, simulating lava, as we were transported to our mission, and later felt very mild stings from Stormtroopers’ blasters. We held our own against them but were no match for Darth Vader. He strode toward us, slicing his lightsaber in the air. But then, in a flash, we were rescued by a droid.

Before my Disneyland adventures ended, I reflected on the last time I’d been here—in 2015, on the occasion of Disneyland’s 60th anniversary. A lot has changed since then, and even more since my first childhood visit ... but each visit has been filled with wonder and excitement.

And now our family has a new generation, and a new Disneyland lover-to-be. I’m busy planning my granddaughter’s first visit. She already has her first ears. ✨

Susan G. Hauser can’t stop humming “it’s a small world.”

Learn more at disneyland.com. To visit Disneyland Resort, fly Alaska Airlines (alaskaair.com) to Orange County (SNA) or the Los Angeles area (LAX or BUR).

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Watch for the newest Disneyland Resort special aircraft, which will begin flights this month. And updated Disneyland Resort coloring books and Kids’ Choice Picnic Packs will be available soon. A limited number of complimentary books and crayons are available on all flights.