

AMUSEMENT TODAY™

CELEBRATING 16 YEARS OF GOLDEN TICKETS

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Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk hosts 2013 Golden Tickets



Annual awards event goes to family-owned seaside park for the first time



Above, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk hosts the Golden Ticket Awards event for the first time. Below, the 100-plus-year-old historic Looff Carousel still lets riders grab a Brass Ring and is highlighted by multiple band organs that rotate music selections throughout the day. COURTESY SCBB

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk

Host Park • 2013 Golden Ticket Awards • September 6 & 7, 2013

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — Not since 2009 has The Golden State hosted *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards. Each year, the host brings its own character and signature specialty to the industry ceremony, and the management staff at **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** have eagerly been anticipating welcoming the amusement industry with their own Northern California flair.

Tom Canfield, vice president operations, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, says, "We're really excited to welcome the amusement industry to Santa Cruz for the Golden Ticket Awards. This is a tremendous honor and everyone at the Boardwalk is busy getting ready to host an awesome weekend. We are looking forward to sharing all of the great things about our park and providing attendees with a unique Santa Cruz experience." Canfield smiles, "It's going to be a great beach party!"

As winner of **Best Seaside Park**, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has taken their Golden Ticket to heart and given it a particular significance among their park staff and guests. Used in marketing and employee training, the illustrious designation of ranking at the top of the industry accomplishments is not taken lightly.

Amusement Today has bestowed the prestigious awards since 1998. Now in its 16th year, the Golden Ticket Awards have evolved from a simple publication designation into a full-fledged industry event that al-

lows professionals to come together and celebrate the amazing work done to entertain families around the globe year after year. Victories are championed, people we've lost are remembered, and the networking opportunities to learn from each other are immeasurable.

There is a special difference to the Golden Ticket Awards in comparison to any other type of awards out there — everyone is eligible. Contrary to the Oscars where only specific movies are nominated (to the inevitable outcry of particular "snubs"), or the music industry where only certain musicians are on the ballot, the Golden Ticket Awards celebrate the entire industry. Does this create a certain challenge for some parks to go up against monumental giants? Most likely, but our panel of voters are instructed to go out and experience the work that we do and to tell us one thing: Who is "The Best of the Best!" There are inevitably perennial winners that can be expected, but their success is gained by continued hard work and an outstanding product. To watch the coaster charts, one can't help but be reminded of watching the American Top 40 listings that had our favorite songs moving up and down with each week.

Take a moment, everyone. Join *Amusement Today* in applauding what this magical industry does day after day.

— **Tim Baldwin**



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EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Your Golden Tickets



Slade

It's hard to believe that we are gathered together again for this year's winners of the Golden Ticket Awards, presented annually by *Amusement Today*.

Although I've written it many times, I still cannot believe how our annual survey became such a must-attend and fun industry event.

But, as good our event has been, thanks to our wonderful host parks and sponsors, we need participation!

We don't see nearly enough parks attending from the New England region or from the East coast and Jersey shore. That's where we need you to help us spread the word, and encourage these parks to attend for fun, food, tours, and of course, the awards!

It has been mentioned in the past by numerous attendees, that one way *Amusement Today* could get more parks to participate in the event is to hand out Silver and Bronze Golden Tickets to the second and third place finishers. This is a really good idea and one we can easily do. Our fear is how to do this without lengthening the current two-hour long ceremony.

I've also had suggestions to change up the voting process and to put detailed criteria on the categories.

We've also had the suggestions to get the parks more engaged in the process is to have each park enter their facility into the voting process with an official ballot and limit the number of categories they can enter.

These are all good suggestions, but I don't want to make any changes until I've heard from you, our winners, presenters and attendees that make up the Golden Ticket weekend.

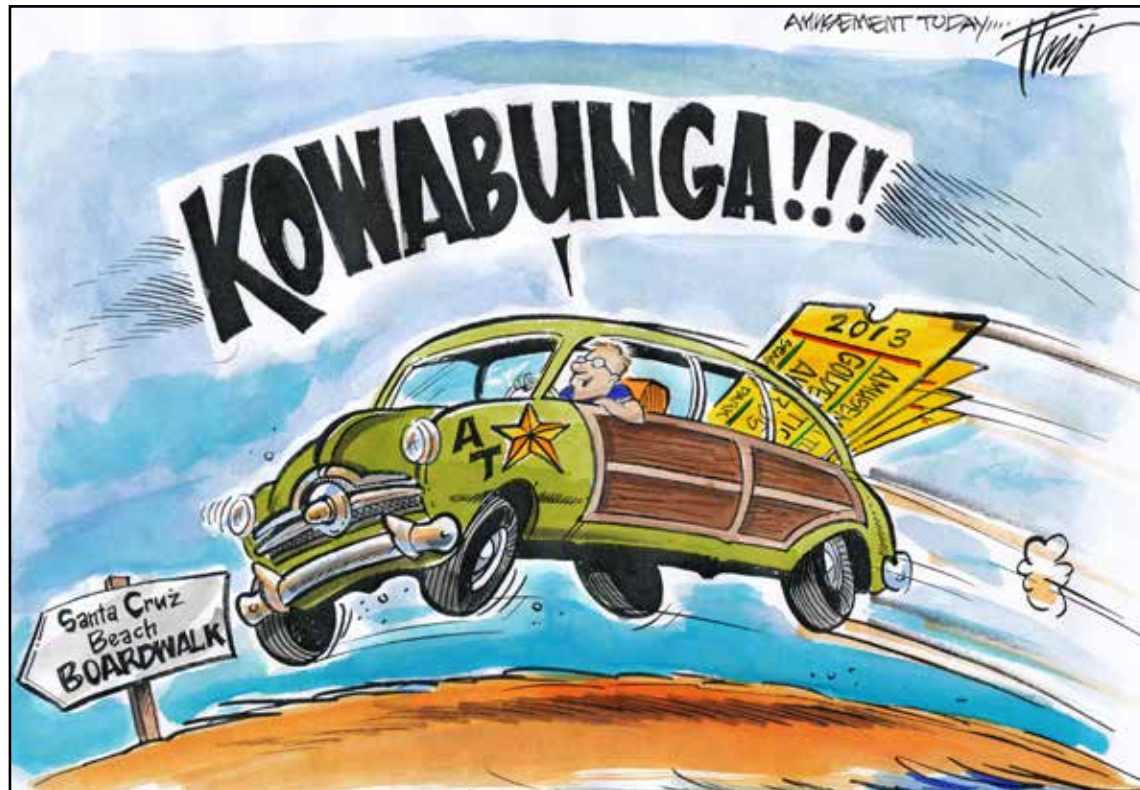
I look forward to hearing from you. You can email me at: gslade@amusementtoday.com.

Thanks for your continued support!

—Gary Slade

Gary Slade is founder and publisher of Amusement Today

CARTOON: Bubba Flint



EDITORIAL: Tim Baldwin, tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Global spotlight



Baldwin

There are always things that excite me about the Golden Tickets. While some winners hang onto their accolades, what I particularly notice is the change in finalists. This year, we see first time appearances for **California's Great America** in Santa Clara; **Ocean Park** in Hong Kong, China; **Story Land** in Glen, New Hampshire; **Phantasialand** in Brühl, Germany; **Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas** in Nevada and **Splish Splash** in Long Island, New York. I can imagine the exhilaration of being put on a list of such esteemed icons. Congratulations to you all on your successes.

As witnessed right there, our panel of experts get around. As the industry's best customers, our voters are among the most experienced park-goers on the globe. This year's charts reflect 13 different countries, which speaks volumes to the passion of our voters.

Some often ask "Is it the same panel each year?" The simple answer is "no." *Amusement Today* has never had the exact same panel twice. While there are many avid and well-travelled voters who strongly support our awards and are dedicated to completing a ballot year after year, we also add new qualified candidates each and every year. Fresh perspectives

and new eyes always make sure our panel is on their toes. Likewise, some enthusiasts for whatever reason reduce their travels and rotate off the panel, making way for new opinions.

So how does AT find these qualified individuals? Frankly, sometimes they find us! Each year, both before the ballots go out as well as following the annual announcement of winners in late summer, I am contacted by eager parties who feel they have the experience to be one of our newest contributors. With a little discussion about experience, we often can indeed find new people because they take the time to contact us.

Other than that, I'm observant. There are numerous events, tours, clubs and special activities that showcase people who are willing to travel and embrace all the great aspects of the many parks around the world. Some aficionados can only dream as to having the resources to travel Planet Earth and enjoy the industry — even more than those that work in the industry itself. But if those opportunities ever arise, the Golden Ticket Awards can certainly direct them to where to focus their travels.

We continue to seek out more interested fans from other countries outside the U.S. to add even further "umph" to our international scope.

If you feel you have the passion and wish to share the best you've seen, we are ready to hear from you.

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Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's roots trace back to 1865

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's roots go back to 1865, when a public bathhouse opened near the mouth of the San Lorenzo River. Other bathhouses followed and scores of tourists began visiting Santa Cruz to enjoy this highly touted "natural medicine" of bathing in salt water.

Soon more concessions sprang up including restaurants, curio shops, and photo stands. Toward the end of the 1800s, Fred W. Swanton, considered one of the greatest promoters and entrepreneurs of his time, laid plans for a casino and boardwalk a "Coney Island of the West."

The first Casino opened in 1904 but survived only 22 months; on June 22, 1906, the uninsured building was completely destroyed by fire.

Legend has it that Swanton was on the phone before the last wisps of smoke disappeared, lining up financing and ordering materials to rebuild. By summer's end, famed architect William H. Weeks was drawing up plans, and in October a foundation was laid for the new Casino complete with ballroom, the Plunge indoor swimming pool, a pleasure pier, and boardwalk. Some 500 people worked on the project, and on June 22, 1907, exactly one year after the devastating fire, the new attractions opened.

The Boardwalk's first thrill ride, the L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway, a four-minute coaster on a mile of wooden track opened in 1908 and cost \$35,000 to build.

In 1911 European wood-carver Charles I.D. Loeff delivered a new hand-carved, merry-go-round along with a 342-pipe, 1894 Ruth and Sohn band organ which is still operating in the carousel building. It was Loeff's son, Arthur, who convinced the Boardwalk to replace the Scenic Railway to make way for a modern wooden roller coaster. The Giant Dipper coaster opened in 1924 and soon became the park's most popular ride; the Dipper's ridership is now over 60 million.

Also in 1924, the first of many Miss California Pageants was held at the Boardwalk. The first winner, Faye Lanphier, went on to become



Miss America. During the 1930s and 1940s, the Boardwalk's Coconut Grove held regular concerts with some of the biggest names of the big band era: Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Lawrence Welk, and many other top name performers.

Over many decades the Boardwalk has experienced booms and slowdowns, tied to changing economic times and public interests. Fortunately, the Boardwalk has always been beloved by generations of Northern California families, and thanks to strong leadership from the Canfield Family, the park has not only



From its beginning in 1865 as a public bathhouse on the beach to the seaside amusement park we know today, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk offers more than 35 rides and attractions, a large arcade as well as unique food and shopping options for its guests.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SCBB survived, it is stronger than ever.

Today the Boardwalk offers 35 rides and attractions. In addition, the park houses three arcades with both vintage machines and hundreds of modern video games, a game deck, games of skill,

food vendors, electronic shooting gallery, indoor miniature golf, and gift shops with everything from beachwear to sunglasses and jewelry.

Boardwalk rides are open daily Memorial Day to Labor Day and most weekends and

holidays during the year. Admission to the park is free. Season tickets, all day passes, single ride tickets, group rates, exclusive ride rentals, and corporate events are available.

•www.beachboardwalk.com



A few of the attractions offered to Santa Cruz beach Boardwalk's guests include, clockwise from top left, shopping and dining; the 1924 Giant Dipper; new in 2013 is the Undertow; a classic Eli Bridge Ferris wheel and the Double Shot.



Park winners see a close race for Best Park category

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

A handful of AT's Golden Ticket Awards categories have gone unchallenged since they were created. But over time, we have seen some long-running victors unseated by parks of equal caliber. The continual flux of category finalists bear witness to that.

The latest close race came this year. **Cedar Point**, the long running champ for **BEST PARK**, took the gold once again, but by a margin of less than one percent. Like an Olympic event, one should watch all the participants.

In 2010 **Europa-Park** entered the arena of top five finalists. The following year, they moved up from No. 5 to



No. 3. Last year, Europa-Park nudged up into second place. Some experienced voters were speculating this could be the year of an upset, but Cedar Point held firm and took the Golden Ticket for a 16th year. John Hildebrandt, vice-president and general manager for Cedar Point, has announced his retirement at the end of the year. With a long career with Cedar Fair, he enjoys going out on top with an award in hand.

"Looking back on 40
► See **PARKS**, page 6



BEST SEASIDE PARK No. 1: Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk COURTESY SCBB

PARK AND RIDE WINNERS

RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF VOTES CAST



Best New Attraction for 2013 (Amusement Park)

Outlaw Run	Silver Dollar City	45%
Iron Rattler	Six Flags Fiesta Texas	19%
GateKeeper	Cedar Point	15%
Gold Striker	California's Great America	6%
Tranformers the Ride	Universal Studios Orlando	5%

Best New Ride for 2013 (Waterpark)

River Rush	Dollywood's Splash Country	53%
Bonzai Pipelines	Six Flags New England	23%
Constrictor	Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas	7%
Bonzai Pipelines	Six Flags America	6%
Bootlegger's Run	Splish Splash	5%

Best Park

Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	23%
Europa-Park	Rust, Germany	22%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	9%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	8%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	7%
Tokyo DisneySea	Tokyo, Japan	6%
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	(tie) 5%
Universal's Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 5%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	4.50%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	4%

Best Seaside Park

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	36%
Pleasure Beach, Blackpool	Blackpool, England	20%
Morey's Piers	Wildwood, N.J.	15%
Gröna Lund	Stockholm, Sweden	14%
Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier	Galveston, Texas	5%

Best Kids' Area

Kings Island	Mason, Ohio	32%
Universal's Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	15%
Nickelodeon Universe	Bloomington, Minn.	12%
Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands	8%
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	(tie) 7%
Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	(tie) 7%

Best Waterpark

Schlitterbahn	New Braunfels, Texas	45%
Splashin' Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.	17%
Aquatica	Orlando, Fla.	6%
Dollywood's Splash Country	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	(tie) 5%
Noah's Ark	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	(tie) 5%

Cleanest Park

Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	26%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	14%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	10%
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	9%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	8.50%

Best Children's Park

Idlewild & SoakZone	Ligonier, Pa.	39%
Legoland California	Carlsbad, Calif.	16%
Legoland Florida	Winter Haven, Fla.	11%
Dutch Wonderland	Lancaster, Pa.	(tie) 7%
Story Land	Glen, N.H.	(tie) 7%

Friendliest Park

Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	35%
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	21%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	13%
Knoebel's Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	10%
Six Flags New England	Agawam, Mass.	7%

Best Marine Life Park

SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	58%
SeaWorld San Diego	San Diego, Calif.	13%
SeaWorld San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	9%
Discovery Cove	Orlando, Fla.	7%
Ocean Park	Hong Kong, China	(tie) 6%
Six Flags Discovery Kingdom	Vallejo, Calif.	(tie) 6%

Best Shows

Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	41%
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	23%
Disney's Hollywood Studios	Orlando, Fla.	6%
Europa-Park	Rust, Germany	(tie) 5%
SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 5%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	(tie) 5%



BEST PARK No. 1: Cedar Point AT/TIM BALDWIN



BEST PARK No. 2: Europa-Park AT/TIM BALDWIN

PARK AND RIDE WINNERS

RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF VOTES CAST



Best Outdoor Show Production

Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	29%
Disney California Adventure	Anaheim, Calif.	18%
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	12%
Disney's Hollywood Studios	Orlando, Fla.	11.50%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	8%

Best Landscaping

Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg Va.	33%
Gilroy Gardens	Gilroy, Calif.	12%
Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands	11%
Tivoli Gardens	Copenhagen, Denmark	8%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	7%

Best Food

Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	(tie) 24%
Knoebel's Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	(tie) 24%
Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	18%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	14%
Tivoli Gardens	Copenhagen, Denmark	5%

Best Carousel

Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	48%
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	17%
Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	8%
Six Flags Over Georgia	Austell, Ga.	7%
Universal's Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	4%

Best Water Ride

Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls	Universal's Islands of Adventure	20%
Splash Mountain	Magic Kingdom	13%
Timber Mountain Log Ride	Knott's Berry Farm	10%
Valhalla	Blackpool Pleasure Beach	9%
Mountain Slidewinder	Dollywood	8.50%

Best Waterpark Ride

Wildebeest	Splashin' Safari	24%
Master Blaster	Schlitterbahn	22%
Mammoth	Splashin' Safari	15%
The Falls	Schlitterbahn	10%
Congo River Expedition	Schlitterbahn	9%

Best Dark Ride

Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey	Universal's Islands of Adventure	19%
The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man	Universal's Islands of Adventure	16%
Twilight Zone Tower of Terror	Disney's Hollywood Studios	13%
Haunted Mansion	Knoebels Amusement Resort	8%
Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye	Disneyland	(tie) 7%
Pirates of the Caribbean	Disneyland	(tie) 7%

Best Indoor Waterpark

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island	Galveston, Texas	31%
Kalahari	Sandusky, Ohio	21%
Kalahari	Wisconsin Dells, Ohio	15%
World Waterpark	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	12%
Splash Landings	Staffordshire, England	8%

Best Indoor Roller Coaster

Revenge of the Mummy	Universal Studios Orlando	23%
Space Mountain	Disneyland	14%
Winjas	Phantasialand	11%
Mindbender	Galaxyland	(tie) 10%
Rock 'n' Roller Coaster	Disney's Hollywood Studios	(tie) 10%

Best Funhouse/Walk-Through

Noah's Ark	Kennywood	34%
Frankenstein's Castle	Indiana Beach	23%
Gastern Ghost Hotel	Liseberg	14%
Lustiga Huset	Gröna Lund	13%
Ghost Ship	Morey's Piers	12%

Best Halloween Event

Universal Studios Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	30%
Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	22%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	11%
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	10%
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	7%

Best Christmas Event

Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	47%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	12%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	10%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	8%
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	5%



► PARKS

Continued from page 4

seasons with the company—and eight as general manager of Cedar Point—one of the things I'm most proud of is Cedar Point winning the Golden Ticket as the World's Best Amusement Park. It really means a lot to all of us who work at the park." Hildebrandt acknowledges, "It's a great honor, especially because we're being recognized by people who really know amusement parks. The competition is tough, and always getting tougher as our industry gets better and better at delivering fun on a big stage."

Michael Mack, member of the executive board at Europa-Park, is also pleased. "How exciting to see our park climb so high on the charts! It shows once again, that attention to detail, continuous innovation and high quality-standards pay off." Mack adds, "With our new attraction for 2014: Arthur – In the Minimoy's Kingdom, in which we are currently working on with the famous French director Luc Besson, we are sure to bring even more attention to our park. It is exciting to see this very creative attraction becoming reality."

Completing the top five is **Knoebels Amusement Resort** bumping up to No. 3, and **Dollywood** and **Disneyland** taking Nos. 4 and 5, respectively.

For **BEST WATERPARK**, **Schlitterbahn** continues its domination of the category. As one of the largest waterparks on the planet, it boasts more signature innovative one-of-a-kind attractions than anywhere else.

Splashin' Safari keeps its spot at No. 2. What started as a small little addition to Holiday World in 1993 has now mushroomed into a massive playground of giant-sized attractions. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this season, Splashin' Safari has grown to boast several firsts and record-holders, including the first ProSlide Tornado (Zinga), the longest hydromagnetic uphill water coaster (at its debut;



BEST WATERPARK No. 1: Schlitterbahn AT/TIM BALDWIN



BEST CHILDREN'S PARK No. 1: Idlewild & SoakZone AT/TIM BALDWIN

Wildebeest) and the first ever six-passenger water coaster (Mammoth) beating the records set by its sibling. This year the park added Hyena Falls, a slide complex that includes four in-the-dark slides, one of which includes a wave maneuver finale.

"I remember writing that press release for Splashin' Safari in 1993," reflects Paula Werne, public relations, Holiday World and Splashin' Safari. "It was to be a five-year project with an investment of \$3 million total and then we were going to be done." Werne laughs as the waterpark has now grown to 40 acres with annual additions doubling or tripling that original "entire park" investment.

Over the years, Holiday World has really found that Splashin' Safari really drives the gate. "When we have a hot summer, it really turns us from a one-day park to a two-day park," says Werne.

Aquatica in Orlando leaps into the No. 3 spot, and **Dollywood's Splash Country**

(No. 4) and **Noah's Ark** (No. 5) complete the list of finalists.

BEST MARINE LIFE PARK has the stiffest competition of all, particularly shared within the same company. **SeaWorld Orlando** had the highest percentage win of any winner in all of the Golden Ticket categories. Three sister properties — **SeaWorld San Diego** (No. 2), **SeaWorld San Antonio** (No. 3) and **Discovery Cove** (No. 4) — may be envious, but all deliver an outstanding product.

A new finalist enters this category, **Ocean Park** in Hong Kong ties **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom** for the No. 5 spot.

BEST SEASIDE PARK sees host **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** accepting top honors. However, being a multi-year winner isn't lost on the Californian traditional park.

"Our Golden Ticket Awards are a very important part of our employee training program," says Marq Lipton, vice president, marketing and sales for SCBB. "Every year we



BEST MARINE LIFE PARK No. 1: SeaWorld Orlando COURTESY SEAWORLD



BEST INDOOR WATERPARK No. 1, Schlitterbahn Galveston Island COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

hire hundreds of local youth, and for many this is their very first job. They've grown up in Santa Cruz, with the Boardwalk as 'just' their local park. Receiving an international award for Best Seaside Park gives all of our employees a sense of pride, and helps them understand the importance of their role in providing guests from all over the world with an excellent experience."

Blackpool Pleasure Beach is a favorite of amusement park historians and coaster fans alike. The traditional park perched at the edge of the Irish Sea has a history dating back more than 100 years with rides upon rides stacked upon each other. It keeps it standing as the No. 2 park.

Morey's Piers (No. 3), **Gröna Lund** (No. 4) and the **Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier** (No. 5) also get high marks for their seaside fun.


When **Idlewild & SoakZone** snatched the Golden Ticket for **BEST CHILDREN'S PARK** in 2010, they were

elated. With a win for a fourth year in a row, the park just might plan on keeping it.

Previous Golden Ticket holder **Legoland California** (No. 2) might have some competition from within in its efforts to reclaim the prize. **Legoland Florida** moves up a notch in 2013 to the No. 3 spot. Other Legoland properties around the world are wanting in on the action as well.



Fourth place welcomes a brand new finalist to the list with a tie between newcomer **Story Land** in Glen, New Hampshire with long-time finalist **Dutch Wonderland**.



BEST INDOOR WATERPARK sees an exact rematch as last year: **Schlitterbahn Galveston Island** takes the gold, the two **Kalahari Resorts** (Sandusky and Wisconsin Dells) take the silver and bronze respectively, and the five finalists are rounded out by No. 4 **World Waterpark in West Edmonton Mall** and No. 5 **Splash Landings** at Alton Towers in England.







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Entertainment Company

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World-Class FUN *from*

Best New Ride



#3 GateKeeper® Cedar Point



#4 Gold Striker® California's Great America

Best Halloween Event



#2 Knott's Berry Farm



#5 Cedar Point

Best Kids' Area



#5 Cedar Point



#5 Kings Dominion

Best Landscaping



#2 Gilroy Gardens

Top Wooden Roller Coasters



#8 The Beast® Kings Island



#10 Shivering Timbers® Michigan's Adventure



#12 Prowler® Worlds of Fun



#26 Gold Striker® California's Great America



#27 Blue Streak Cedar Point



#29 GhostRider® Knott's Berry Farm

Coast to Coast!



Top Steel Roller Coasters



#8 Intimidator[™] Carowinds



#9 Magnum XL-200 Cedar Point



#10 Intimidator[™] 305 Kings Dominion



#12 Top Thrill Dragster[®] Cedar Point



#14 Diamondback[®] Kings Island



#15 Leviathan[™] Canada's Wonderland



#17 Behemoth[®] Canada's Wonderland



#22 Maverick[®] Cedar Point



#28 GateKeeper[®] Cedar Point



#30 Raptor[®] Cedar Point

Best Water Ride



#3 Timber Mountain Log Ride Knott's Berry Farm

Cedar Point[®]

Sandusky, OH cedarpoint.com

Soak City[®]

Sandusky, OH www.soakcitycp.com

Knott's Berry Farm[®]

Buena Park, CA knotts.com

Knott's Soak City[®]

Orange County www.soakcityoc.com

Kings Island[®]

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Canada's Wonderland[®]

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Kings Dominion[®]

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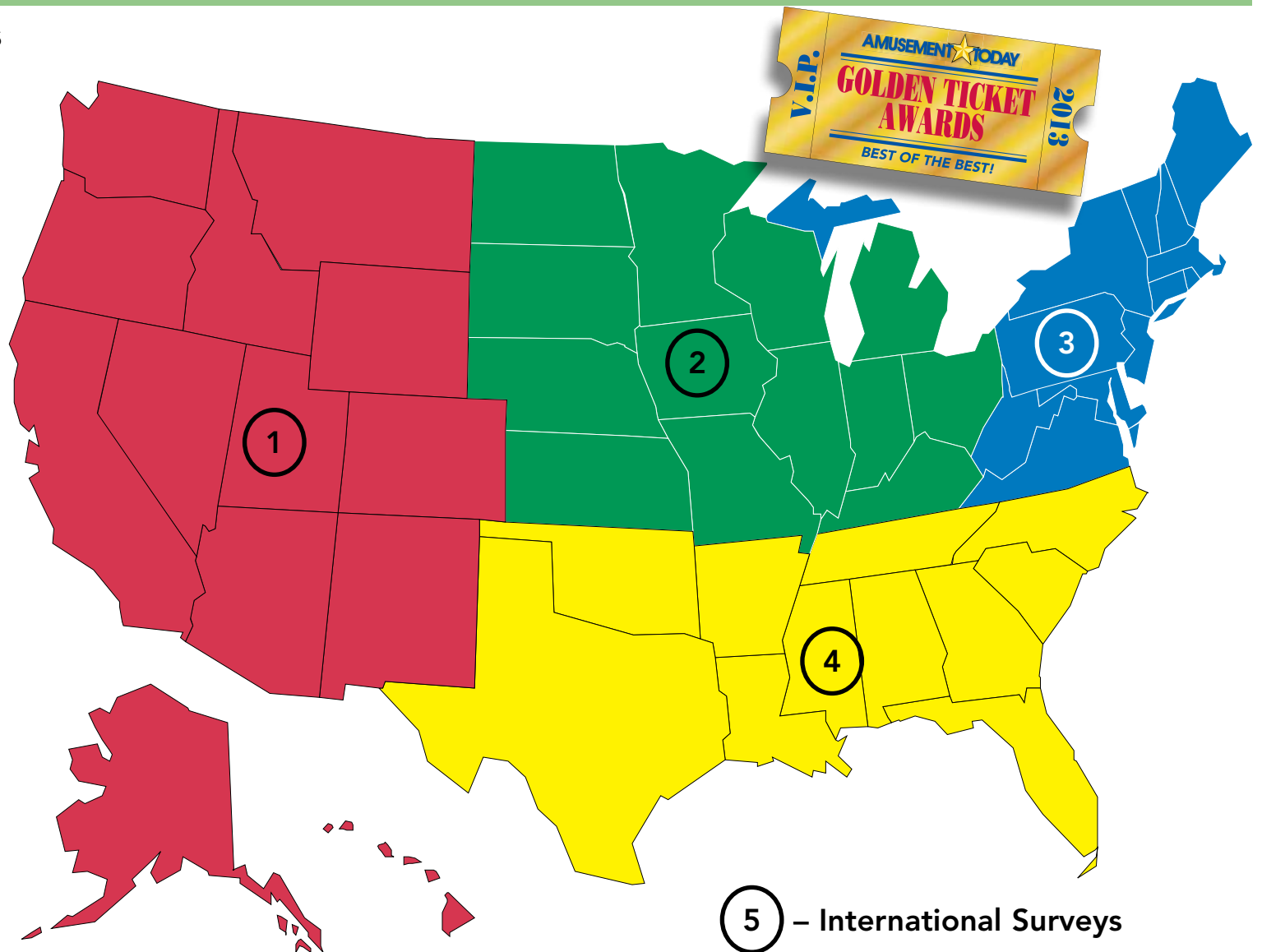
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2013

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 **2013 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.



**Thanks for your support in
the Golden Ticket Awards!**
See you all soon at Europa-Park!



Dollywood and Knoebels create first-ever Golden Ticket tie for Best Food



STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Now in its 16th year, Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Awards are still able to deliver surprises. In a first-ever occurrence, an exact tie vote between **Dollywood** and **Knoebels Amusement Resort** has been cast for the category of **BEST FOOD**.

Publisher and Editor-in-chief Gary Slade comments, "Both parks deserve such high praise. We felt it inappropriate for the AT staff to break such an important tie and declare one park the sole winner when the voters had clearly noted their favorites. Such an event is sure to be so rare we don't actually expect it to happen again for taking a Golden Ticket win. We felt sharing the victory was the only true way to acknowledge both park's notable efforts."

Some people might recall that Dollywood had broken a long-reigning streak by Knoebels in this category last year with an abrupt capture of the Golden Ticket win. Often this sets the stage for a wrestling match in the subsequent years. Who would have ever expected a tie?

Joe Mascato of Knoebels laughs, "We were disappointed to drop to second in the Best Food category last year



No. 1: Dollywood, Food (tie) and No. 1: Friendliest
AT/TIM BALDWIN

so we dedicated ourselves to stepping it up in a big way. We decided the world needs more food on a stick, so to go along with our fried cheese on a stick, corn dogs and pickle on a stick, we opened the Aloha stand with kabobs, shrimp on a stick and pork chop on a stick. We don't believe anyone can top that lineup of foods on sticks!"

We'll stay tuned in 2014.

Rounding out the top five are **Epcot** (No. 3), **Silver Dollar City** (No. 4) and **Tivoli Gar-**

dens (No. 5). Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, Denmark is a new finalist for this category.

CLEANEST PARK is one of the toughest competitions. Every park has dedicated policies to keeping their respective parks clean and certainly should be praised for their efforts. Some, however, just make an effort only on the midways, but cleanliness should spread throughout, including queue lines, bathrooms and public areas. **Holiday World** has placed an em-



No. 1: Knoebels Amusement Resort, Food (tie)
COURTESY KNOEBELS

phasis on cleanliness and their reputation is evident even in their marketing. That keeps their streak going with another Golden Ticket win.

Dollywood comes in at No. 2 for a second year in a row. **Disneyland** (No. 3) and **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** (No. 4) switch places in contrast to the 2012 chart.

A new finalist in this category is **Silver Dollar City** (No. 5). With roots shared with Dollywood, expect even more rivalry between the two in the

years ahead.

For **FRIENDLIEST PARK**, the chart begins all too familiar with last year. **Dollywood** nabbed the Golden Ticket in 2012 for the first time. The Pigeon Forge theme park was followed by **Holiday World** (long a Golden Ticket recipient in the category; No. 2), **Knoebels Amusement Resort** (No. 3) and the ever-beloved **Disneyland** at No. 4.

A new player enters the arena and it is a significant accomplishment in doing so, considering other long-established players that were dislodged. **Six Flags New England** makes a first time appearance in the category rounding out the top five.

BEST LANDSCAPING is one of the most rewarding categories as it brings sheer beauty to the park. Some consider **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** to be a lock on this category, and the Virginia themer still remains undefeated taking the gold for a 16th straight year.

Gilroy Gardens (No. 2) and **Efteling** (No. 3) retain their places from 2012, but **Tivoli Gardens** moves up a notch to No. 4, while **Dollywood** (No. 5) slips a notch, but still holds a place as one of the five finalists.



No. 1: Holiday World, Cleanest
AT/TIM BALDWIN



No. 1: Busch Gardens Williamsburg
COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS

Shows and holiday festivals entertain the crowds



STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

For a fifth year **Dollywood** wins the ticket for **BEST SHOWS**. This was following a 10 year run by **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** (No. 2). A close race in 2011 placed the two front runners in a stiff competition. Dollywood raced in front last year, but the San Antonio themer gains back some of its lost ground in 2013. **Disney's Hollywood Studios** hangs on to its position in the third place.

A newcomer to the category is **Europa-Park**, joining **SeaWorld Orlando** and **Silver Dollar City** in a three-way tie at No. 4. Europa-Park offers an extensive line-up of shows with more than 15 offerings daily that include song and dance, magic, comedy, horse-back jousting and ice shows, in addition to a park parade.

BEST OUTDOOR SHOW PRODUCTION once again sees a Disney stronghold. **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** (No. 3) is the only non-Disney park to break into the arena of all things Mickey with its "Lone Star Nights." While its hold loosens a bit each year, **Epcot** fans still hand the Golden Ticket to the Orlando megapark for its long-running "Illuminations: Reflections of Earth." Predictions were that Disney fans would have put "World of Color" at **Disney California Adventure** on top this year. While results are inching that way, Epcot hasn't given it up yet.

"Fantasmic!" at both **Disney Hollywood Studios** (No. 4) and **Disneyland** (No. 5) complete our list of finalists. Of note, Disneyland scoots near-twin Magic Kingdom off the chart to take its place.

Holiday festivals are big business for theme parks nowadays. Halloween has long been a cash cow at some parks, but little by little parks are finding an extended season with Christmas events.

Although a closer race in 2013 between the two strongest competitors, **BEST HAL-**



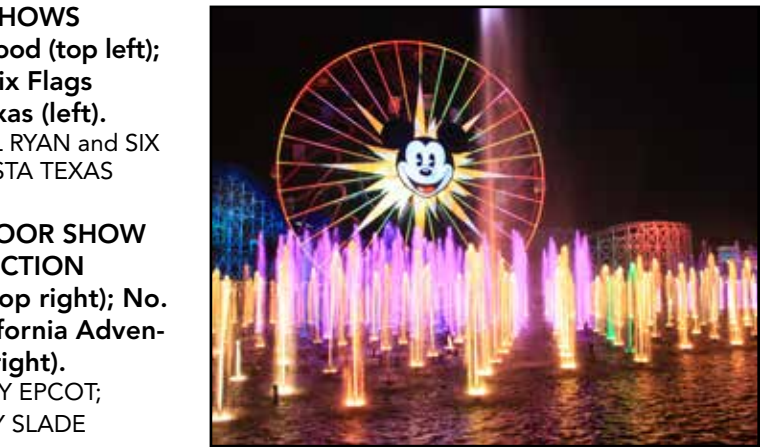
LOWEEN EVENT frighteningly is still under lock and key at **Universal Studios Orlando**. While most Halloween events are local, Universal has built a reputation to make it an annual pilgrimage for some. **Knott's Berry Farm** has a strong showing at No. 2 and the park's holiday festival is known throughout the West Coast.

Knoebels and **Kennywood** keep their haunts in place with the Nos. 3 and 4 spots they landed in last year, but **Cedar Point** now enters the list of finalists this year, charting at No. 5.

For Christmas, Herschend Entertainment has the spirit. **Dollywood** has taken **BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT** since AT originated the category

BEST SHOWS
No. 1: Dollywood (top left);
No. 2: Six Flags
Fiesta Texas (left).
COURTESY JILL RYAN and SIX
FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

BEST OUTDOOR SHOW PRODUCTION
No 1: Epcot (top right); No.
2: Disney California Adventure (right).
COURTESY EPCOT;
AT/GARY SLADE



BEST HALLOWEEN
No. 1: Universal Studios
Orlando (top left);
No. 2: Knott's Berry Farm
(left).
COURTESY USO and KNOTT'S

BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT
No. 1: Dollywood (top right);
No. 2: Silver Dollar City
(right).
COURTESY DOLLYWOOD;
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT



in 2008. However, Ms. Parton and crew might need to watch cousin **Silver Dollar City** as it jumps up two places into the No. 2 spot. The Branson theme park just might find some enthusiasts looking for a winter ride on the park's new Outlaw Run this Christmas.

Silver Dollar City causes **Disneyland** (No. 3) and **Mag-ic Kingdom** (No. 4) to slip a

rung, but **Kennywood** sleds onto this list of finalists at No. 5.

Of note, the new finalists in both of the holiday categories made for a fine how-do-you-do for **Busch Gardens Williamsburg**, which made its first appearances on both charts last year, only to be bumped out this year.

Ride on! — 2013 top rides and attractions

STORY: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com



In the category of **BEST CAROUSEL**, it is only fitting that **Knoebels' Grand Carousel** tops our list. This beloved treasure celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Knoebels gives much credit to its long time caretaker David Wynn, who has looked after the carousel for decades and whose son Matthew is now involved in the restoration process. Each year the park removes a dozen horses and loving restores them by going all the way down to the wood, making the Grand Carousel an ongoing effort. On a daily basis, the carousel operates with at least three of the park's many working band organs.

When asked about the incorporation of the brass ring dispenser, Knoebels' Joe Muscato says, "I think other parks are glad we continue to operate our carousel with the ring dispenser. I really believe they wish they could do the same thing."

Along a similar theme, host **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** makes the list at No. 2 and recently celebrated a 100th anniversary of their 1911 **Loeffl Carousel** in 2011. It too features a brass ring dispenser, much to the delight of guests and Golden Ticket Awards ceremony attendees.

Two Six Flags parks flip positions this year. **Six Flags Great America** and its **Columbia Carousel**, one of the world's largest, and **Six Flags Over Georgia** and its preserved 1908 **Riverview Carousel** hold the Nos. 3 and 4 spots respectively.

Universal's Islands of Adventure and its comical **Caro-Seuss-El** round out the top five.

IOA is a finalist again, but this time in the top spot for the Golden Ticket. A hot summer invites people to get wet. **BEST WATER RIDE** goes to **Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls**. The outrageously themed Mack flume has taken this award every year but two since the category was introduced.

Moving up into the No. 2 spot in 2013 is **Splash Mountain** at **Magic Kingdom**. Often a finalist, this mega-

themed flume attraction has never scored this high.

For the first time ever, **Knott's Berry Farm** is a finalist in this category (No. 3) for its totally revamped **Timber Mountain Log Ride**. The impressive transformation of the beloved — and the park's most popular — attraction was covered in the July 2013 issue of AT. [Be sure to note Publisher's Pick on page 29 also.]

Valhalla at **Blackpool Pleasure Beach**, a former Golden Ticket winner in 2003 and 2005 slips to No. 4 this year, with **Mountain Slide-winder** at **Dollywood** hanging onto No. 5.

BEST WATERPARK RIDE put some speculation to rest. **Wildebeest** at **Splashin' Safari** took the Golden Ticket in 2010 when it opened, but some insiders questioned if its younger, but bigger, sibling **Mammoth**, which took Best New Waterpark Ride in 2012, might overtake this category. However, **Wildebeest** keeps the Golden Ticket for a fourth year, and **Mammoth** jumps on the chart at No. 3. Park officials may credit the wonderful "airtime" on **Wildebeest** as a key factor, but rest assured, this sibling rivalry is probably far from settled at this point. Both innovative attractions were supplied by **ProSlide**.

Schlitterbahn, and its wide array of signature attractions overtake the rest of this category. **Master Blaster** comes in at No. 2, **The Falls** at No. 4 and the highly-themed **Congo River Expedition** at No. 5.

Universal's Islands of Adventure has dominated the **BEST DARK RIDE** category since it was added to the Golden Tickets in 2001. First it was **The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man** that controlled the top spot, but was then unseated by **Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey** in 2011. Recently, IOA has given the webslinger a dramatic makeover to uproarious rave reviews. Both have passionate fans, but Harry Potter claims the gold for a third year, with Spider-Man at No. 2. The gap, however, has shrunk and makes for a close race. It would appear, this competition also isn't finished yet.

Disney also is in the game with three entries: **Twilight Zone Tower of Terror** at **Disney's Hollywood Studios** (No. 3) and two **Disneyland** attractions tying for fifth: **Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye** and for the first time on our charts, **Pirates of the Caribbean**.

Standing its ground against the high tech big boys is **Knoebels' Haunted Mansion** (No. 4), considered by many as one the best maintained traditional dark rides in the country.

In the category of **BEST**
▶ See RIDES, page 18



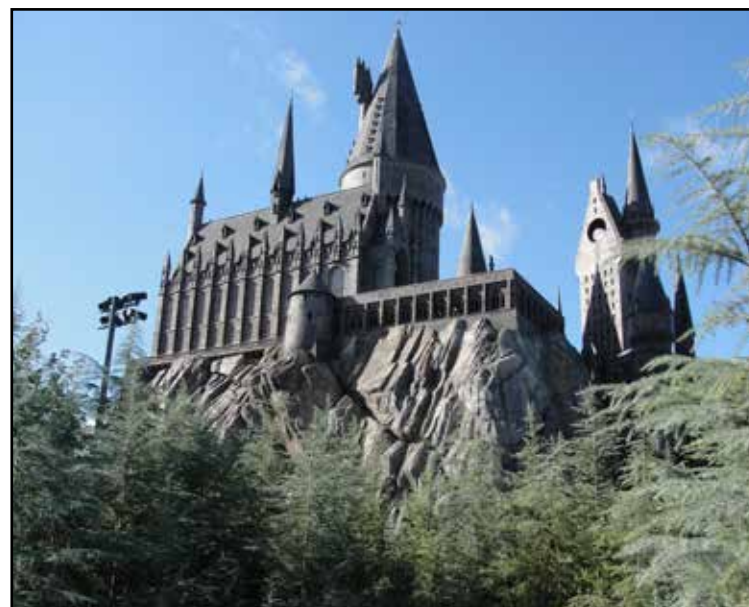
No.1: Knoebels, Grand Carousel AT/TIM BALDWIN



No. 1: Universal's Islands of Adventure, Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls COURTESY DAVID LIPNICKY



No. 1; Splashin' Safari, Wildebeest AT/TIM BALDWIN



No. 1: Universal's Islands of Adventure, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey COURTESY UNIVERSAL

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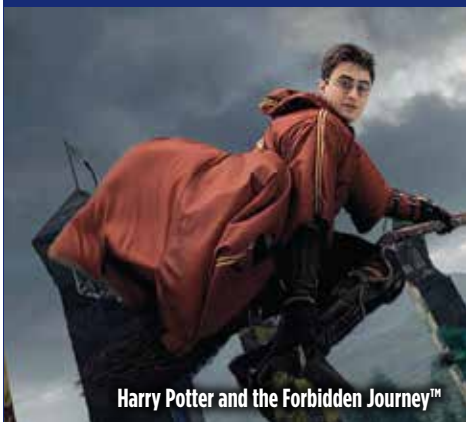


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►RIDES

Continued from page 16

INDOOR COASTER, the top two finalists from 2012 repeat their positions. **Universal Studios Orlando** takes the Golden Ticket Award with its **Revenge of the Mummy**, and **Space Mountain** at **Disneyland** placing in second.

Two new entries into the finalist list now join the challenge. **Winjas**, a masterpiece themed intertwined pair of spinning coasters (No. 3) by **Maurer Söhne** at **Phantasialand** in Brühl, Germany is seeing the spotlight, as well as **Mindbender** at **Galaxyland** in Canada's West Edmonton Mall (No.4).

Closing out the finalists is a former Golden Ticket holder. **Rock 'n' Roller Coaster** at **Disney's Hollywood Studios** rocks in at No. 5.

Noah's Ark at **Kenny-**



No. 1: Universal Studios Orlando, revenge of the Mummy
COURTESY UNIVERSAL

wood claims the Golden Ticket for **BEST FUNHOUSE/ WALK-THROUGH** for a fourth year. The rocking, tipping multi-scene family favorite has entertained guests since the 1930s.

Former winner **Frankenstein's Castle** at **Indiana Beach** remains in second place.

After slipping off the charts two years ago and resurfacing last year, **Gasten Ghost Hotel** at **Liseberg** jumps up a spot to No. 3. Also in Sweden is the zany **Lustiga**

Huset at **Gröna Lund** (No. 4).

Morey's Piers' Ghost Ship, which debuted in 2010, completes this distinct genre at No. 5.

It's no surprise to see **Kings Island** maintain its lock on **BEST KIDS AREA**. In fact, 2012's top four finalist competitors maintain their positions with **Universal's Islands of Adventure** at No. 2, **Nickelodeon Universe** at No. 3, and **Efteling** at No. 4. Newcomers from the Cedar Fair chain tie for No. 5 — **Cedar Point** and **Kings Dominion**.



No. 1: Kennywood, Noah's Ark COURTESY MARK ROSENZWEIG



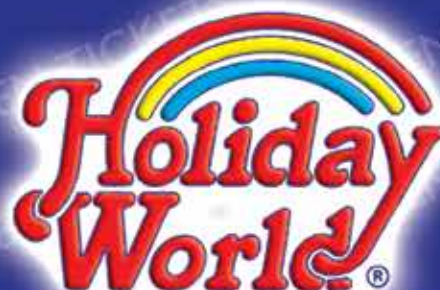
No. 1: Kings Island, Planet Snoopy AT/TIM BALDWIN

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Silver Dollar City, Dollywood win Best New Rides



STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Innovation took the top spot this year. Competition can often be very formidable, but 2013 was quite fierce. Speculation was all over the place surrounding **BEST NEW RIDE** with worthy contenders from across the country, as well as around the globe. One ride, however, raced its way to the Golden Ticket — **Outlaw Run** at **Silver Dollar City**.

At its opening, Duane Marden, owner of Roller Coaster DataBase (RCDB.com), commented on how many new installations for 2013 were continuations of successes from recent years. "Outlaw Run is the most innovative ride this year," said Marden. "This is the ride that has truly 'never been done;' it's different from the ground up."

Brad Thomas, general manager for Silver Dollar City, agrees. "Three years ago, we set out to build a wood coaster that would be unique with a global footprint. We wanted something that would give guests a reason to travel hundreds of miles to visit Silver Dollar City," Thomas adds, "Because of **Rocky Mountain Construction's** innovative design, Outlaw Run has exceeded expectations, drawing



No. 1: Outlaw Run, Silver Dollar City AT/GARY SLADE

unprecedented worldwide media attention."

Among the ride's unique qualities is a newly-developed train from RMC, as well as an entire layout designed with a wood bed completed with modern Topper Track throughout. The smooth-running coaster has a rollicking ride experience that includes an incredibly steep drop at 81 degrees, outrageous banked maneuvers and a double barrel roll finale.

Rocky Mountain's success continued with the second place win of **Iron Rattler** at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**. The 1992 world record holder at the San Antonio theme underwent a miraculous transformation thanks to RMC (along with engineering by **Ride Centerline's** Alan Schilke). With the addition of an exciting new I-Box steel track, Iron Rattler is the newest (and tallest) hybrid coaster in operation.

Park President Martin Bozer comments, "Iron Rattler has been enthusiastically

received. People are loving it and we are on track to having one of our best seasons ever."

In the northern U.S., **Cedar Point** debuted **GateKeeper** to visually impressive results. The No. 3 Best New Ride created an entirely new front entrance experience as arriving guests watched thrill-seekers soar overhead as they entered the turnstiles, giving the park reason to give the front gate an entirely new dramatic makeover.

GateKeeper pushed the envelope of **B&M's** newest genre — the wing coaster — to new dimensions. Tallest, fastest and with the most inversions on a wing coaster to date, GateKeeper keeps in line with the Point's reputation for producing record-breaking coasters. With GateKeeper landing on AT's Golden Ticket chart, Cedar Point now has six coasters on the Steel list for the first time ever.

Gold Striker at **California's Great America** (No. 4) has brought new life to the



No 2: Iron Rattler, Six Flags Fiesta Texas AT/GARY SLADE

Santa Clara theme park. As reported in AT's August issue, this long-in-the-planning woodie from Great Coasters International, Inc. has opened to rave reviews and is sure to vault up the wood chart in the years ahead.

The hot climate of Orlando's theme park utopia has produced monumental indoor attractions, which of course, also allows for elaborate theming. **Transformers the Ride** (No. 5) opened at **Universal Studios** giving Florida one more new totally immersive experience while entering the world of the movies. The new high-tech dark ride utilized space previously occupied by the **Murder She Wrote** and **Xena** attractions.

In the category of **BEST NEW WATERPARK RIDE**, Dollywood continues their flood of applause with **River Rush**, a new hydro-magnetic uphill water coaster at **Dollywood's Splash Country**. Marketed as Tennessee's only water coaster, passengers ride in tandem up to

four people. Ride length is 1,176 feet that includes four drops, and the **ProSlide** ride is designed to entertain 720 riders an hour. "River Rush has quickly become a guest favorite at Dollywood's Splash Country," says Pete Owens, public relations, the Dollywood Company. "It is such a unique ride in a unique setting that many of our guests did not know what to expect when they rode it the first time. They love the acceleration a water coaster provides in the uphill sections."

Six Flags New England comes in at No. 2 with their **Bonzai Pipelines**. As the newest addition to their Hurricane Harbor — a waterpark included with park admission, this new pulse-pounding attraction designed by **SplashTacular** takes the trap-door waterslide concept to a new level with six riders at a time. Positioned to where each rider can see other friends or family at the same moment of suspense, thrill-seekers are released and freefall from a height of 75 feet before swirling in an intense, high-speed race to the bottom. A similar attraction was also installed at **Six Flags America** (No. 4).

Coming in third is **Constrictor**, a new multi-person raft at the recently opened **Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas**. Complete with some of the tightest turns on a raft ride, the enclosed flume was supplied by **WhiteWater West Industries**.

Rounding out the top five finalists is **Bootlegger's Run** at New York's **Splash Splash**. Like River Rush, this ProSlide LIM launched water coaster has uphill sections propelling riders through a 983-foot long course.



No. 1: River Rush, Dollywood's Splash Country
COURTESY DOLLYWOOD



No. 2: Bonzai Pipelines, Six Flags New England
AT/TIM BALDWIN

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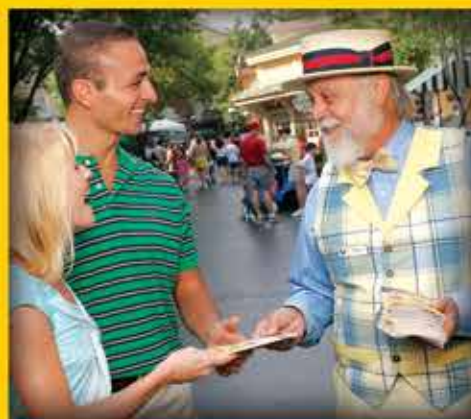
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And to Holiday World's Wildebbeest for its Best Water Park Ride award. It's a four-time champion, winning every year since the HM ROCKET was installed.

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2013 Publisher's Picks: Supplier, Turnstile

Bussink Design reinvents the giant wheel

The great designers and suppliers have a knack for focusing on details. It's the small things added together that ensure an end product that's as near to perfection as anything man-made can be. When each of an amusement ride's phases — from design/engineering to fabrication to onsite operation — is fulfilled to exacting standards, it's more likely that amusement history will be made.

One such industry innovator is **Ronald Bussink**. His approach toward building giant observation wheels is breaking records as well as making history.

Bussink Design GmbH recently opened its **260-foot-tall R80XL Observation Wheel** at a city park in Puebla, Mexico. On July 14, the ride was certified by **Guinness World Records** as the world's largest transportable observation wheel.

Bussink's wheel designs have rolled forth from a career spanning more than 30 years. He started out working with the showmen at the **Dutch Fun Fair**; subsequently, he moved to The Netherlands, where he worked on Spider rides and giant Ferris wheels.

In 1983, Bussink partnered with an engineer and started **Carrousel Holland BV** to design and manufacture portable amusement rides and, most important, giant wheels. His first three wheel orders originated in the U.S.: he delivered the rides to **Ray Cammack Shows**, **Magic Landing** and **Arrow Huss** for the **1984 World's Fair** in New Orleans.

Today, **Bussink Design GmbH** partners with **Maurer Wheels** for international clients and **Chance American Wheels** for North America.

Bussink's wheels are so loaded with state-of-the-art safety and passenger features that it takes a two-hour-plus tour just to catch the highlights. These include cabins equipped with an in-house phone system for staff and operator communications, a cash control room, employee break room and a self-leveling support system that allows the wheel to adapt to all weather conditions. For the ride experience, guests can choose from general seating, cocktail or dinner setups, or a VIP luxury cabin package.

Ronald Bussink and his team have put a practical, cutting-edge contemporary spin on the observation wheel. Recognizing the company's success, **AT** names **Bussink Design GmbH** the **2013 Supplier of the Year**.



Bussink



Standing 260 feet tall, The Star of Puebla (above) currently is the world's largest transportable wheel according to Guinness World Records. Bussink Design's Ronald Bussink (far left) shows off the new attractions to Puebla's Secretary of Transportation Bernardo Huerta Couttolenc.

AT/GARY SLADE

Knott's preserves its 'heirloom' log ride

A dependable turnstile-spinner for **Knott's Berry Farm** in Buena Park, Calif., for 44 years, the **Timber Mountain Log Ride** cemented its place as the most popular attraction at the park this season with the completion of a \$5 million-plus refurbishment.

The ride's structural and extensive animatronic figure makeover, performed under the direction and watchful eye of **Raffi Kaprelyan**, vice president and general manager of Knott's, has spurred guests to "log" as many as three trips per visit on the themed flume/dark ride hybrid's 2,100-foot course.

Telling the story of a late-19th century logging community and sawmill in the Sierra Nevada, the three-level Timber Mountain was the brainchild of late theme park pioneer **Wendell "Bud" Hurlbut**, who also created the classic **Calico Mine Ride** for Knott's. San Bernardino, Calif.-based **Garner Holt Productions**, a major supplier of park and museum animatronics, provided hundreds of state-of-the-art animated figures and props—most modeled directly from the preexisting scenes.

Bill Butler, Garner Holt's creative design director, took what he called a "preservationist's approach to the project that he hoped would carry it through the next 45 years.

"Bud Hurlbut said in an interview that he really wished he could've gotten back to [his Knott's] attractions to add new technologies... we wanted to enhance and continue to tell the story of the logging camp and add to that new animatronics technologies that would really change the way we're able to create characters and scenes," Butler told **AT**.

Park general manager Kaprelyan felt a strong sense of duty to Hurlbut's legacy and the decades-long loyalty Knott's customers have shown to Timber Mountain when he undertook the complex decision-making that went into the renovations.

"This ride not only embodies the spirit of Knott's Berry Farm, but it also set the bar for all themed attractions that came after," Kaprelyan told **AT** at Timber Mountain's grand reopening in May. "Bud made numerous contributions to the park, but I think that this one remains his crowning achievement."

AT couldn't agree more, and therefore it honors the **Timber Mountain Log Ride** with the **2013 Turnstile Award**.



Working with Garner Holt Productions, Knott's Berry Farm spent more than \$5 million refurbishing the classic 44-year-old Timber Mountain Log Ride. The project included new animatronic figures, LED lighting, an improved sound system, and new paint and trees on the mountain's exterior. The attraction has been drawing record ridership since its May 30 reopening.

TOP ROW COURTESY KNOTT'S; BOTTOM ROW AT/GARY SLADE

2013 Publisher's Picks: Person

John Arie, Sr., drives affordability home

The amusement industry is made up of successful dreamers who, through dedication and hard work, turn their visions of fun into vivid reality.

John Arie, Sr., is one such dreamer. This year, he spent \$25 million expanding his 1996-introduced **Fun Spot Action Park**, just off International Drive in Orlando, Fla., into the 15-acre **Fun Spot America**.

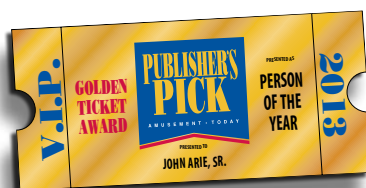
Arie grew up in the park business — cutting his teeth in 1969 at the **Lil' 500 Mini Bike Track** in Maitland, Fla. where his love for go-karts continued on the fast track. In 1979, he opened **Fun 'n Wheels Amusement Park** locations in Orlando and Kissimmee, Fla. He would go on to trademark and patent many of his innovative go-kart track designs.

When this publisher first met him, Arie had just installed a cutting-edge wet-dry waterslide from **Bill Crandall's New Wave Rides** at the Orlando location. It was instant hit.

With this and the eventual purchase of a 300-foot-tall **SkyCoaster** in Kissimmee, Arie's goal to have a park with landmark rides was drawing closer. It arrived this past June when **Fun Spot America**, with two new family roller coasters and a slew of other improvements, made its debut. The grand re-opening day's record-setting revenues put a smile on Arie's face that could be seen from the NASA launch pads at Cape Canaveral.

Never intimidated or influenced by the burgeoning theme parks down the street, Arie long has believed in providing affordable fun that families could enjoy on a whim, without advance budgetary planning or fear of being gouged.

As the Fun Spot properties have proven, affordable thrills work in today's amusement market. For that, **John Arie, Sr.**, is AT's co-choice for **2013 Person of the Year**.



Arie, Sr.



John Arie, Sr. is living the dream. His ride park Fun Spot America is open for business and proving that affordable pricing plans can lead to a success family audience. Most of all, he now enjoys his two thrilling, but still family-driven roller coasters.

AT/GARY SLADE



Kim Samarelli stands tall in storm aftermath

Many inspirational stories of survival and recovery in our industry emerged after Superstorm Sandy delivered its punishing blow to the Northeast last fall.

In our reporting on them, **Kimberle R. Samarelli**, executive director of the **New Jersey Amusement Association (NJAA)** and a resident of particularly hard-hit Seaside Heights, N.J., was the person most often thanked.

With infrastructure a mess and thousands left homeless, tending to the extreme needs of her 200-member organization and her community was a monumental task for Samarelli. Yet it remained a priority even as she and her husband, **James Samarelli**, then the town's fire chief and director of its **Office of Emergency Management**, and their two children coped with the loss of their own home. The Samarellis were so engulfed by their respective commitments, in fact, that they barely saw each other in the first days of the crisis.

Despite the odds and obstacles, Samarelli held **NJAA** together and cheered-on the gradual reopening of the Jersey Shore's beloved amusements through the summer.

AT teamed with Samarelli and NJAA to devote one of our pages to post-storm news and the ongoing recovery effort every month. It has become this publication's longest coverage commitment to a single industry-impacting event.

When she spoke at the **Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association Spring Meeting** in Hershey, Pa., last March, Samarelli and her family had just found a furnished home to rent so that they could spend some time on their own recovery. For her unwavering dedication to the amusement industry in its darkest hour, **Kim Samarelli** is AT's co-choice for **2013 Person of the Year**.



Samarelli



Above, NJAA's Kim Samarelli, organized a tour of the damaged park properties along the Jersey shore for members of IAAPA. Below, Samarelli visits with New Jersey Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno about the recovery efforts following Superstorm Sandy.

COURTESY IAAPA and NJAA



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Steel giants jockey for position on the coaster chart



No 1: Millennium Force, Cedar Point
COURTESY S. MADONNA HORCHER

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

It looks to be **Cedar Point's** second big battle (see page 4). **Millennium Force**, the world's first coaster to break the 300-foot mark claims the top spot once again for a fourth consecutive year as **BEST STEEL COASTER**. But take notice, **Bizarro** at **Six Flags New England** has made such a resurgent charge at the Golden Ticket holder, that a lead in 2012 by more than 300 points was reduced to less than a hundred in 2013. Clearly, this war of giants is not over yet. Long time followers of the Golden Tickets will remember that both of these coasters opened in 2000 and debuted in the Top 10. Over the course of the subsequent years, the two Intamin coasters wrestled back and forth for top prize. Start-



ing in 2006 and continuing through 2009, **Bizarro** (formerly **Superman Ride of Steel**) took the honors for a four-year run. In 2010, **Millennium Force** fought back and claimed the gold. Now with the 2013 grab, both coasters have finished a four-year sprint, with a gap that is closing once again. Stay tuned. This battle is one to watch.

Climbing to its highest rung on the steel ladder ever, **Expedition GeForce** speeds into the top three. Making for a Win-Place-Show for Intamin, **Expedition GeForce** at **Holiday Park** in Germany continues to claim new fans. The mega-coaster, known for

its skillful airtime, has always rated as Europe's highest ranking coaster, but the No. 3 spot is clearly a new level of popularity.

The remaining Top 10 coasters shuffle a bit. **GeForce's** Olympian surge causes **Nitro** at **Six Flags Great Adventure** (No. 4), **Apollo's Chariot** at **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** (No. 5), and **New Texas Giant** at **Six Flags Over Texas** (No. 6) to all slip a notch over the 2012 rankings. **Six Flags Over Georgia's Goliath** (No. 7) and **Intimidator** at **Carowinds** (No. 8) are two more B&M coasters, giving that firm four finalists in the Top 10. **Magnum XL-200** (No. 9), Cedar Point's original Golden Ticket winner, is the only coaster in the Top 10 that was in existence when *Amusement Today* inaugurated the Golden Tickets in 1998. **Intimidator 305** at **Kings Dominion** bursts into the Top 10 for the first time at No. 10.

Nine coasters appear on the Steel charts that did not last year. Among them are two new-for-2013 installations. **Iron Rattler** at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** makes an impressive debut just shy of the Top 10 in the No. 11 spot. **GateKeeper** at **Cedar Point** (No. 28) now gives the Sandusky park six steel coasters on the chart for the first time in history.

A returning favorite finds itself among Schwarzkopf brethren. **Whizzer** (No. 40) from **Six Flags Great America** is the oldest coaster on the chart dating to 1976. Its siblings, Georgia's **Mind Bender** (No. 19) and Texas' **Shock Wave** (No. 29) shared that honor in 2012 with a 1978 birth year. Also in the Schwarzkopf family is the only coaster on the chart to not have a permanent home. **Olympia Looping** is a sought-after masterpiece for any true enthusiast. Dominating the German fair circuit, this portable legend surfaces back on our charts at No. 45.

Other coasters seeing their day in the sun for the first time on the charts are two deserving B&Ms. **Black Mamba** at **Phantasialand** (No. 34) and **X Flight** at **Six Flags Great America** (No. 45) are now seeing some voter love.



No 2: Bizarro, Six Flags New England
AT/TIM BALDWIN



No 3: Expedition GeForce, Holiday Park
COURTESY HOLIDAY PARK



No 4: Nitro, Six Flags Great Adventure
AT/GARY SLADE



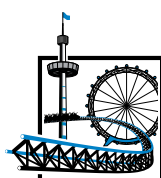
No. 5: Apollo's Chariot, Busch Gardens Williamsburg
AT/GARY SLADE



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THE LIST

2013 Top 50 Steel Roller Coasters



RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
1	Millennium Force	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2000	Intamin	1204
2	Bizarro	Six Flags New England	Agawam, Mass.	2000	Intamin	1011
3	Expedition GeForce	Holiday Park	Hassloch, Germany	2001	Intamin	598
4	Nitro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2001	B & M	596
5	Apollo's Chariot	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	1999	B & M	542
6	New Texas Giant	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	2011	Rocky Mountain	512
7	Goliath	Six Flags Over Georgia	Austell, Ga.	2006	B & M	494
8	Intimidator	Carowinds	Charlotte, N.C.	2010	B & M	478
9	Magnum XL-200	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1989	Arrow	416
10	Intimidator-305	Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	2010	Intamin	412
11	Iron Rattler	Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	2013	Rocky Mountain	393
12	Top Thrill Dragster	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2003	Intamin	356
13	Phantom's Revenge	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	2001	Morgan/Arrow	334
14	Diamondback	Kings Island	Mason, Ohio	2009	B & M	301
15	Leviathan	Canada's Wonderland	Vaughan, Ontario, Canada	2012	B & M	298
16	X2	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2002	Arrow	290
17	Behemoth	Canada's Wonderland	Vaughan, Ontario, Canada	2008	B & M	276
18	Montu	Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Tampa, Fla.	1996	B & M	257
19	Mind Bender	Six Flags Over Georgia	Austell, Ga.	1978	Schwarzkopf	247
20	Nemesis	Alton Towers	Staffordshire, England	1994	B & M	210
21	Blue Fire	Europa-Park	Rust, Germany	2009	Mack	192
22	Maverick	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2007	Intamin	183
23	Goliath	La Ronde	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	2006	B & M	156
24	Wild Eagle	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	2012	B & M	148
25	Alpengeist	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	1997	B & M	147



THE LIST

2013 Top 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS



RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
26	Skyrush	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	2012	Intamin	136
27	Kumba	Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Tampa, Fla.	1993	B & M	134
28	GateKeeper	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2013	B & M	113
29	Shock Wave	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	1978	Schwarzkopf	103
30	Raptor	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1994	B & M	102
31	Raging Bull	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1999	B & M	100
32	SheiKra	Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Tampa, Fla.	2005	B & M	98
33	Griffon	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	2007	B & M	97
34	Black Mamba	Phantasialand	Brühl, Germany	2006	B & M	94
35 (tie)	Afterburn	Carowinds	Charlotte, N.C.	1999	B & M	92
35 (tie)	Kingda Ka	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2005	Intamin	92
37	Steel Force	Dorney Park	Allentown, Pa.	1998	Morgan	87
38	Superman Ride of Steel	Six Flags America	Largo, Md.	2000	Intamin	86
39	Volcano: The Blast Coaster	Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	1998	Intamin	85
40	Whizzer	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1976	Schwarzkopf	80
41	Goliath	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2000	Giovanola	78
42 (tie)	Expedition Everest	Disney's Animal Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	2006	Vekoma/WED Imagineering	76
42 (tie)	PowderKeg	Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	2005	S & S	76
42 (tie)	Titan	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	2001	Giovanola	76
45 (tie)	Olympia Looping	owner: R. Barth and Sohn KG	[traveling]	1989	Schwarzkopf	73
45 (tie)	X Flight	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	2012	B & M	73
47	Dominator	Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	2008	B & M	63
48 (tie)	Kraken	SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	2000	B & M	60
48 (tie)	Lisebergbanen	Liseberg	Gothenburg, Sweden	1987	Schwarzkopf	60
50	Tatsu	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2006	B & M	58

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Boulder Dash reclaims number-one wooden coaster



No. 1: Boulder Dash, Lake Compounce
COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

When **El Toro** at **Six Flags Great Adventure** seized the Golden Ticket following a five-year streak by **Holiday World's The Voyage**, a battle of the titans between these two was expected for our 2013 wooden coaster chart. However, they placed at No. 2 and No. 4 respectively. In an amazing upset, **Boulder Dash** at **Lake Compounce** staged a coup reclaiming the gold. Boulder Dash, always a top-five contender, once took the Golden Ticket in 2004 and now has once again as **BEST WOODEN COASTER**.

"I was excited for the park and especially the team that has done a lot of work on the coaster and helped maintain it over the years. To have a coaster that was once



number one and regain the top spot years later is quite an honor. Fantastic!" cheers Jerry Brick, general manager at Lake Compounce. "This means a lot to the park; we are very grateful for everyone who voted Boulder Dash their favorite."

Like the steel chart, the listings somewhat celebrate the young — a strong indication that some of the greatest roller coasters in history are being built today; 37 of the woodies are under the age of 20. Still, eight roller coasters aged 50 or older stand proudly among them. The oldest of them — **Kenny-**

wood's Jack Rabbit (No. 18) — opened in 1920, soon to reach a ripe old age of 100. Other coasters from the 20s include: **Giant Dipper** from **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** (No. 22; 1924), the classic **Coney Island Cyclone** (No. 19; 1927), and **Kennywood's Racer** (No. 35; 1927). **Yankee Cannonball** (No. 50; 1936) at **Canobie Lake Park** received an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark designation this summer by American Coaster Enthusiasts.

But certainly, some fresh wood makes an appearance. **Silver Dollar City**, with its astounding new **Outlaw Run**, makes an impressive debut in the Top 10 at No. 7. **Gold Striker** from **California's Great America** lands at No. 26. Both of these coasters are new-for-2013. Absent from our charts last year, but making a later debut is the 2012 **Wodan Timbur Coaster** at **Europa-Park** (No. 31).

Only two of our Top 10 were rolling when AT's first wood chart premiered in 1998 — **Phoenix** at **Knoebels** (No. 3) and **Kings Island's The Beast** (No. 8). Both have remained in the Top 10 every year a Golden Ticket Awards list has been published.

The remaining coasters in the Top 10 are **Thunderhead** at **Dollywood** (No. 5), **Ravine Flyer II** at **Waldameer Park** (No. 6), **Lightning Racer** at **Hersheypark** (No. 9) and **Shivering Timbers** at **Michigan's Adventure** (No. 10).

Ten coasters on the list operate outside the U.S. **Balder** at **Liseberg** (No. 13; Sweden) still ranks the highest. Others include: **Colossos** at **Heide Park** (No. 17, Germany), **El Toro** at **Freizeitpark Plohn** (No. 23, Germany), **Troy** at **Toverland** (No. 28, the Netherlands), **Playland Wooden Coaster** at **Playland at the PNE** (No. 30; Canada); **Thunderbird** at **PowerLand** (No. 38, Finland), **Grand National** at **Blackpool Pleasure Beach** (England) and **T Express** at **Everland** (South Korea; both tied at No. 41), **Tonnerre de Zeus** from **Parc Astérix** (No. 44, France), **Twister** at **Gröna Lund** (No. 46, Sweden), as well as the afore-mentioned Wodan Timbur Coaster.



No. 2: El Toro, Six Flags Great Adventure
AT/TIM BALDWIN



No. 3: Phoenix, Knoebels Amusement Resort
AT/TIM BALDWIN



No. 4: The Voyage, Holiday World
AT/FAN FEICHT



No. 5: Thunderhead, Dollywood
AT/TIM BALDWIN

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THE LIST

2013 Top 50 Wooden Roller Coasters



RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
1	Bouder Dash	Lake Compounce	Bristol, Conn.	2000	CCI	1333
2	El Toro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2006	Intamin	1302
3	Phoenix	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	1985	Dinn/PTC-Schmeck	1088
4	The Voyage	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	2006	Gravity Group	1086
5	Thunderhead	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	2004	GCII	923
6	Ravine Flyer II	Waldameer	Erie, Pa.	2008	Gravity Group	712
7	Outlaw Run	Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	2013	Rocky Mountain	599
8	The Beast	Kings Island	Mason, Ohio	1979	KECO	555
9	Lightning Racer	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	2000	GCII	364
10	Shivering Timbers	Michigan's Adventure	Muskegon, Mich.	1998	CCI	304
11	The Raven	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	1995	CCI	296
12	Prowler	Worlds of Fun	Kansas City, Mo.	2009	GCII	290
13	Balder	Liseberg	Gothenburg, Sweden	2003	Intamin	278
14	Hades 360	Mt. Olympus Theme Park	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	2005	Gravity Group	225
15	Thunderbolt	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1968	Vettel/Miller	222
16	Comet	The Great Escape	Lake George, N.Y.	1994	PTC - Schmeck	215
17	Colossos	Heide Park	Soltau, Germany	2001	Intamin	207
18	Jack Rabbit	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1920	PTC - Miller	192
19 (tie)	Cyclone	Luna Park (Coney Island)	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1927	Keenan/Baker	166
19 (tie)	The Legend	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	2000	CCI	166
21	Kentucky Rumbler	Beech Bend	Bowling Green, Ky.	2006	GCII	160
22	Giant Dipper	Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	1924	Prior & Church/Looff	146
23	El Toro	Freizeitpark Plohn	Lengenfeld, Germany	2009	GCII	138
24	Tremors	Silverwood	Athol, Idaho	1999	CCI	132
25	American Thunder	Six Flags St. Louis	Eureka, Mo.	2008	GCII	127

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THE LIST

2013 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS



RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
26	Gold Striker	California's Great America	Santa Clara, Calif.	2013	GCII	118
27	Blue Streak	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1964	PTC - Hoover	116
28	Troy	Toverland	Sevenum, Netherlands	2007	GCII	115
29	GhostRider	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	1998	CCI	113
30	Playland Wooden Coaster	Playland at the PNE	Vancouver, B.C., Canada	1958	Phare	111
31	Wodan Timbur Coaster	Europa-Park	Rust, Germany	2012	GCII	108
32	Cornball Express	Indiana Beach	Monticello, Ind.	2001	CCI	100
33	Blue Streak	Conneaut Lake Park	Conneaut Lake, Pa.	1938	Vettel	99
34	Boardwalk Bullet	Kemah Boardwalk	Kemah, Texas	2007	M&V/Gravity Group	94
35	Racer	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1927	PTC - Miller	90
36	Wooden Warrior	Quassy Amusement Park	Middlebury, Conn.	2011	Gravity Group	88
37	Zippin Pippin	Bay Beach Amusement Park	Green Bay, Wis.	2011	M&V	84
38	Thunderbird	PowerLand	Alahärmä, Finland	2006	GCII	83
39	Twister	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	1999	Fetterman-Knoebels	80
40	Megaferia	Oakwood	Pembrokeshire, Wales	1996	CCI	76
41 (tie)	Grand National	Pleasure Beach, Blackpool	Blackpool, England	1935	Paige	70
41 (tie)	T Express	Everland	Yongin-si, South Korea	2008	Intamin	70
43	Great American Scream Machine	Six Flags Over Georgia	Austell, Ga.	1973	PTC - Allen	66
44 (tie)	Tonnerre de Zeus	Parc Astérix	Plailly, France	1997	CCI	64
44 (tie)	Viper	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1995	Starkey - Six Flags	64
46 (tie)	HellCat	Timber Falls	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	2004	S & S	62
46 (tie)	Twister	Gröna Lund	Stockholm, Sweden	2011	Gravity Group	62
48	Cyclone	Lakeside Park	Denver, Colo.	1940	Vettel	60
49	Apocalypse	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2009	GCII	59
50	Yankee Cannonball	Canobie Lake Park	Salem, N.H.	1936	PTC - Schmeck	55



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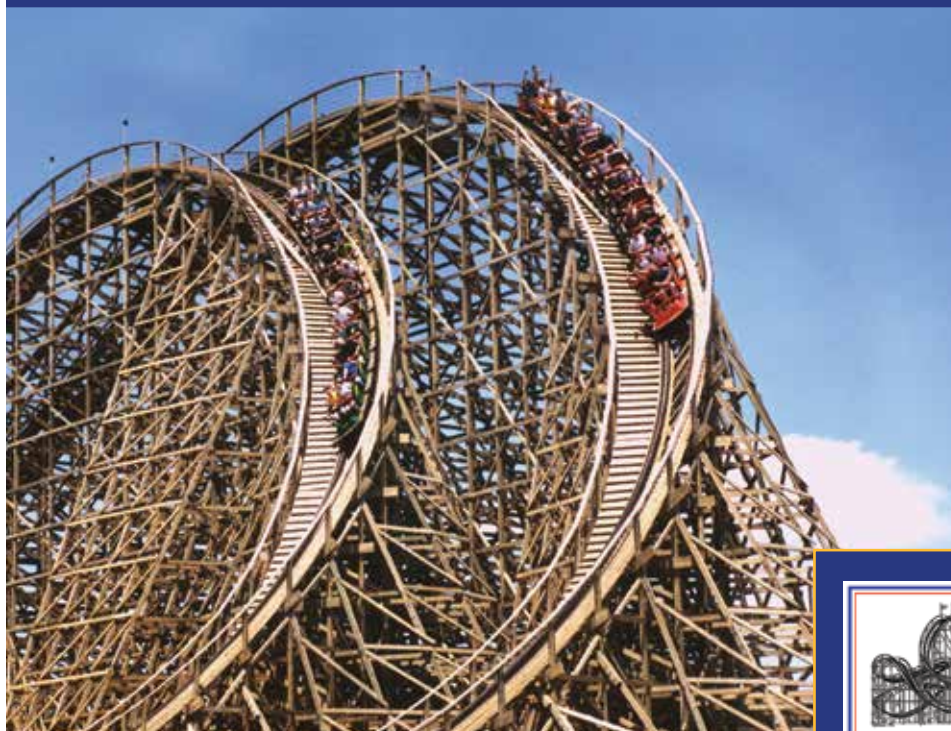
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