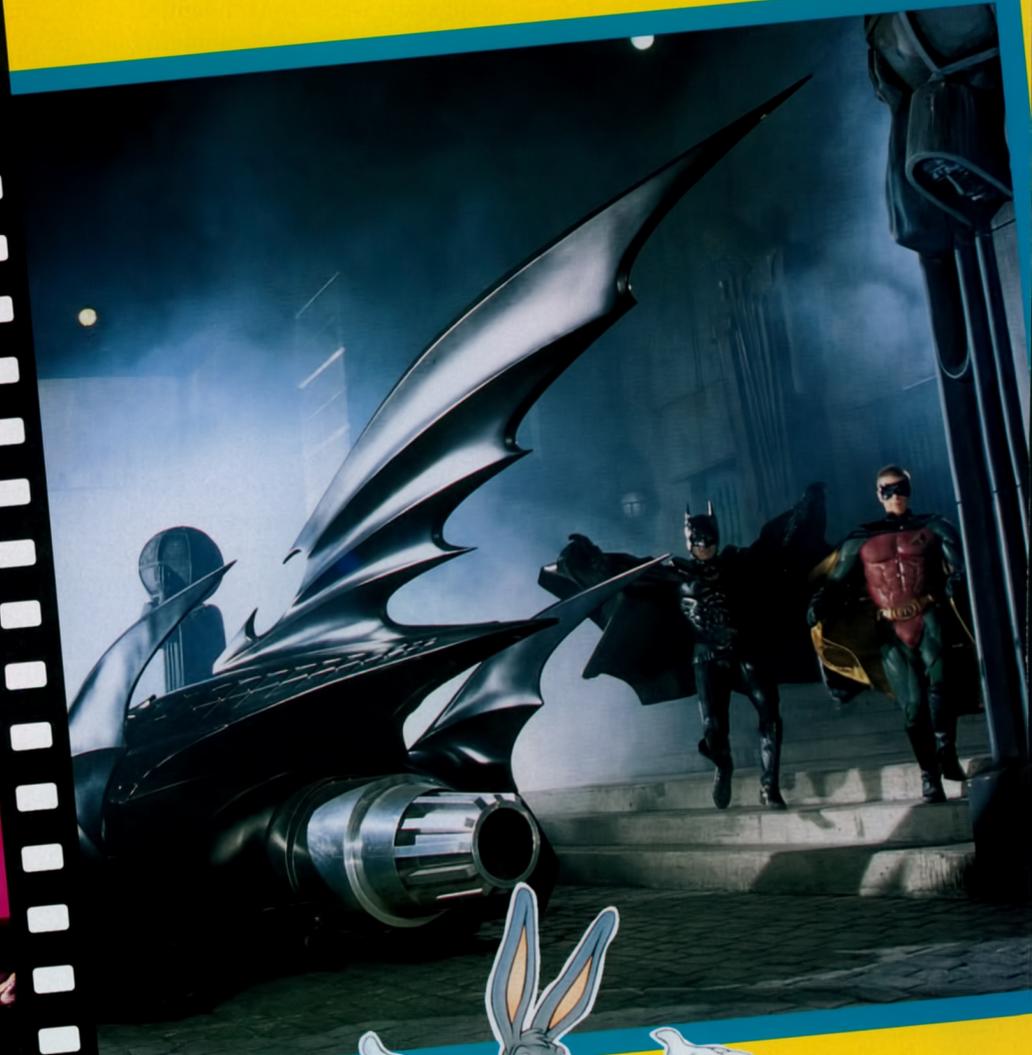
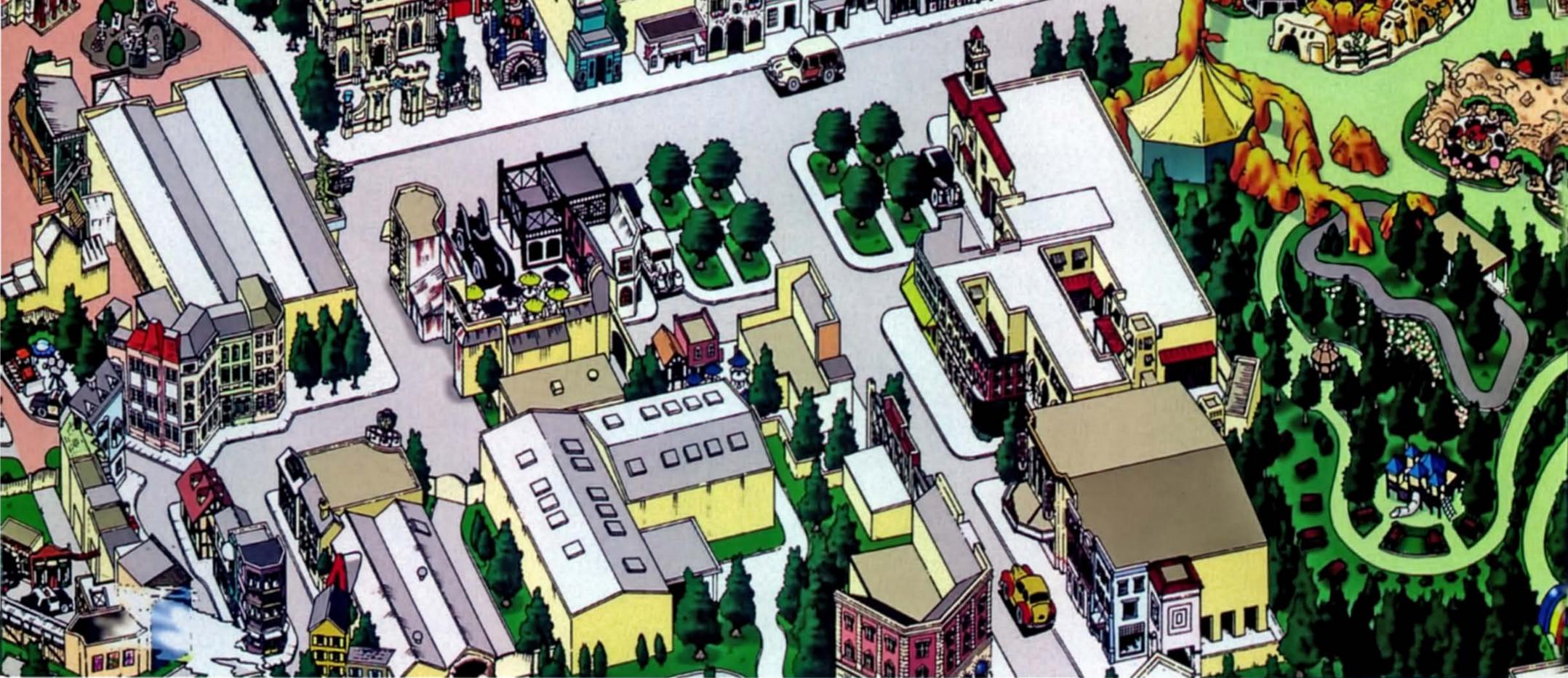


WARNER BROS.



HOLLYWOOD IN GERMANY

MOVIE WORLD



When the management of Warner Bros. International Recreation Enterprises (WB) announced in 1994 that they would start construction on a movie-based theme park in Bottrop-Kirchhellen, Germany, the local response to the park was overwhelmingly negative. And there were some good reasons. The site WB had selected had been the site for two other theme parks, both of which went bankrupt soon after their inaugural seasons.

WB's management has been able to overcome the problems that plagued its predecessors, and the park, now in its third season, received more than 2 million guests last year. In fact, Warner Brothers now ranks among the top three attractions in Germany.

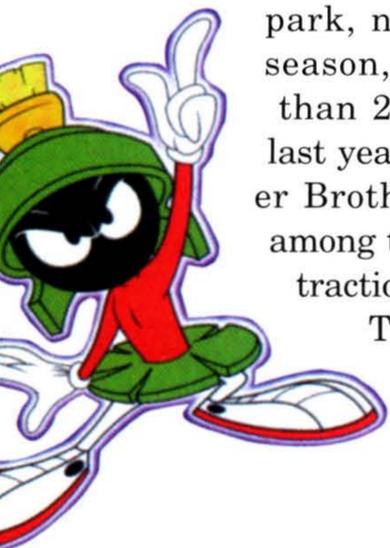
The park is the first movie-

themed park in Europe, all of its rides and attractions have a strong link with the corporate brand of Warner Bros., and the park advertises itself as "Hollywood in Germany." From the outside, everything is more or less hidden and built low to the ground. Strategic landscaping and fences prohibit a view "to the set," with only the *Lethal Weapon Pursuit* roller coaster visible from the parking lot.

A Tour

Guests enter through the Grand Archway, a 45-foot-tall entrance to the park reminiscent of Hollywood studios. The impressive Fountain of Fame, which anchors the entrance plaza, is surrounded by brass plaques of stars who have visited the facility. The *Bermuda Triangle*, a high-tech water ride through an active volcano, is found in this area. Guests get close to a number of pyrotechnic effects

The first movie-themed park in Europe, with all of its rides and attractions strongly linked with the corporate brand of Warner Bros., has become "Hollywood in Germany."



BY MARK WIJMAN

International Profile



The Fountain of Fame welcomes guests in true Hollywood style.

“We are not focusing on specific rides or attractions but on the total concept of the park. We not only have rides and shows, we have something more to deliver—a feeling of Hollywood.”

and “alien” animatronics before ending their ride with a splash into a lagoon.

Also on the square is The Warner Bros. Studio Tour, the park’s longest show with a duration of 50 minutes. The first part is a Tram Tour that takes guests into the back lot of the park, where, on an area of 12 acres, the studio complexes are located. After the Studio Tour, guests enter the Movie Magic complex where, on three separate stages, guests are taken behind the scenes and invited to discover the secrets of audio and visual special effects.

Because both of these attractions are located in the front of the park, it has led to flow and capacity problems during the afternoon. The park is instituting new measures to alleviate this problem. General manager Mark Germyn explains, “This year we will

open the Studio Tour a little bit later during the day. And with our show schedule for the Roxy Theater at Hollywood Boulevard (showing *Marvin the Martian in the Third Dimension*) we will try to further enforce a flow back into the front of the park. By doing all this we feel that people will still come back to the front of the park.”

The Studio Commissary, which is modeled after the famous canteen where stars and crew dined at the Warner Bros. studios in Burbank, Calif., is also in the entrance plaza.

Farther down the street is the Warner Bros. department store, the biggest shop at the park, boasting a variety of movie and Looney Tunes related souvenirs.

Opposite the store is the Roxy Theater, modeled after the Broadway theater of the same name in New

York City. The film shown here is the world's first 3D, 70 millimeter computer-generated cartoon. The multigalactic quest with the easily recognized helmeted alien is the only ride in the park with an English spiel, which makes it even more appealing to non-German-speaking visitors.

Park management is trying to make Warner Bros. Movie World more accessible to the non-German-speaking guest by offering entertainment in other languages such as English and Dutch. For example, the Flinstones Event in late April was done in Dutch because the event coincided with Queens Day, a Dutch National Holiday that brought quite a few Dutch guests to the park. "We are quite flexible to adapt to those changes in demographics," says the marketing director, Thomas Wirz. He adds that the park has quite a few Dutch employees and that a basic course of Dutch is given with the job training.

At the end of Hollywood Boulevard is the *Police Academy Stunt Show*, one of the park's top

attractions. It features impressive driving and helicopter stunts, explosions, and pyrotechnics. The show, with a duration of about 30 minutes, takes place in a 2,900-seat amphitheater, which fills up six times a day.

Another area of the park is the Looney Tunes area, featuring 12 rides and attractions for younger guests. Rides include a junior roller coaster by Vekoma themed

as Coyote's and Roadrunner's train ride. New for this year is the Looney Tunes Park, a spacious green area where guests can relax or have a picnic. An interactive play area is also located nearby.

One of the primary draws to this area is the *Looney Tunes Adventure*. This water ride takes guests through the deep black forest on a mission to find and bring back Bugs Bunny to the set of his latest Hollywood shoot.

Numerous Looney Tunes animatronics can be found along the way. The grand exit lifts boats onto the bridge of a medieval castle and releases them to a splashing finale.

Next to the *Looney Tunes Adventure* is the *Neverending Story*, a river rapids attraction, built in collaboration with the Swiss company Intamin. The ride transports guests into the elaborately themed world of the film trilogy. This is one ride that has



The Maverick Illusion Show is one of WB's most popular movie-themed live shows.

International Profile

to be experienced to be appreciated since spinning boats and the churning water make photography inside the ride difficult.

On the other side of Hollywood Boulevard is Gotham City, home to Wayne Manor. Here, guests attend a private reception with Bruce Wayne (a.k.a. Batman). Of course, during the reception something goes terribly wrong and guests soon find themselves aboard a 20-seat flight simulator saving the children of Gotham City from the fiendish Penguin.

Other popular shows include the *Maverick Illusion Show*, a can-can show in the Wild West Saloon, and the *Great Gremlin's Adventure* where guests are rescued from a gremlin attack by television star ALF.

The final section is the Marienhof area, where guests can visit scenes from popular German television series and visit the German Film His-

tory Museum, which pays tribute to the legacy of German filmmaking. The museum features one of the world's finest collections, of cinematographic equipment and a special film celebrating the best of German movies.

Also in the Marienhof area is *Lethal Weapon Pursuit*, a twin-tracked roller coaster with special effects and a zero-g-roll. The ride features more than 600 tons of steel and 2,000 feet of track.

Special Events

For the 1998 season the park's main focus was special events branded under the umbrella of "Warner Specials." The Flinstones Week, during the end of April, turned out to be a big Dutch party, according to Wirz. "We had anticipated a higher attendance from the lowlands during the week because of the national holi-

days, but it turned out there were so many Dutch people in the park that it would be very appropriate to host the whole event in Dutch, which we eventually did." During the week guests were invited to Yabba Dabba Doo all sorts of activities with the new members of the Warner Bros. family, Fred and Wilma Flinstone, Barney and Betty Rubble, and Dino the primeval pet.

In July the park held a Batman Week where audiences were treated to special movie screenings and shows and Mr. Freeze was there to help guests cool off. During the last days of the season it was time for Halloween, when terrifying monsters and other weird creatures tried to freeze the blood of even the most hard-boiled visitor. And, of course, the park was filled with Halloween pumpkins and stuffed to the brim with other surprises.

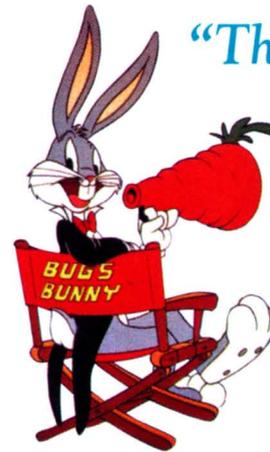
International Profile

Competition as an Advantage

The park is located in close proximity to Centro, a large retail-based entertainment venue near the city of Oberhausen. The development includes more than 200 shops, a nighttime entertainment center, and a cinema complex, where Bugs Bunny plays the host. The complex also has a Planet Hollywood restaurant. Both venues are linked to the park, and they work together on joint promotions. "We use the changes in society to our advantage," says Germyn. "If people have more things to do in your area than just you, they have more reasons to extend their stay and more reasons to come to your area. It would be very naive of us to think that we could say come to Bottrop for the weekend when the "only" thing to do here is Warner Bros. Movie World."

New for 1999

As the park expands to a higher attendance level it needs more capacity. For this reason, three new attractions will open at the park in 1999. The first will be a \$9 million wooden roller coaster designed by Werner Stengel and built by Intamin Rollercoaster Corporation of America, which will be the new anchoring attraction of the western themed section. "The woodie fits perfectly with the theming and feeling of the western section," says Germyn. The ride, which will be the first wooden roller coaster in Germany, will open in late spring and will feature a 100-foot lift hill, reach speeds of up to 40 miles per hour, and have an hourly capacity of around 1,500 riders. "A woodie is a distinct attraction for Germany," notes Germyn, "and it is just what we were looking for as it is appealing to both younger age groups and families."



"That is why people have to come to Movie World; we are a distinct different experience which people cannot get anywhere else."

International Profile

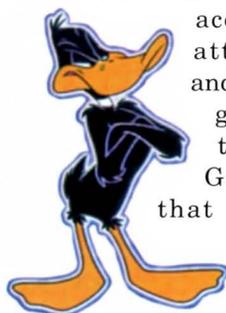


The *Police Academy Stunt Show* makes a fiery impression on audiences.

The ride will be themed to the upcoming Warner Bros. feature film *Wild, Wild, West*, and will feature some original sets and decorations from the film.

But the woodie is not the only ride to debut next season. The park is adding a top spin-style attraction themed around the *Riddler's Revenge* in the Gotham City area that is targeted at teenagers. Also a teacup-type attraction will be added to the Looney Tunes children's area to appeal to younger guests. "The combination of those three attractions helps Warner Bros. Movie World get a wide spread of demographics as we will have three new attractions appealing to three different age groups.

It also allows us to better accommodate our attendance now and our anticipated growth in the future," says Wirz. Gernyn notes that this was one of the challenges when he



the flow when the new wooden coaster will be operating between those sections. "This creates much more of a circular flow within the park," says Gernyn. "Also, the teacup attraction is going to take some pressure from the *Coyote's and Roadrunner* junior roller coaster which will be right across from there, because that is an extremely popular ride."

Marketing

"What we are trying to stress in our marketing is that we really are a different theme park," says Wirz. "We are not focusing on specific rides or attractions but on the total concept of the park. We not only have rides and shows, we have some-

thing more to deliver—a feeling of Hollywood."

assumed his position earlier this year: "We are successful, but we have a low capacity on a big day, so this expansion really alleviates a lot of that pressure."

The park design replicates a classic "T" layout with rounds at the end of the "T." The park has opened a connecting road from the Marienhof area to the western section

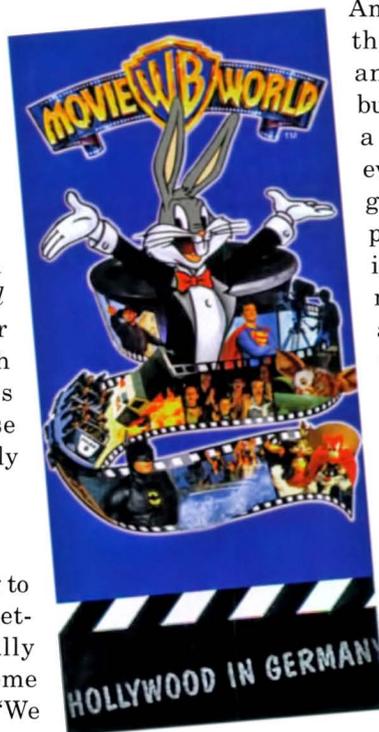
that will accommodate

thing more to deliver—a feeling of Hollywood."

The park stresses the majority of its marketing efforts on TV commercials because Wirz feels that it is the best way to deliver the park. "It is film-related," says Wirz. "In our opinion, TV is the medium that makes the feeling of the park come across in the best possible way, the feeling is really difficult to capture in print media, and also our main target audience watches TV quite a lot." For this season the park also used radio commercials for the promotion of special events taking place throughout the season.

The focus for next year's marketing campaign will be the new wooden coaster, but it won't dominate the park's marketing efforts. "We want to make sure that everybody is aware of the fact that when people come to Warner Bros. they can get everything they would normally expect from a park experience and a lot more," says

Wirz. "We are not an American regional park that is well established and survives on repeat business. We do not have a target market in which every person of every age group basically knows 80 percent of the product inventory by heart. We need to tell them over and over again 'this is what's new this year, check it out,' we need to do so with every radio spot, television commercial, and local news topic on the park," says Gernyn. When *Wild, Wild, West* the movie is released on July 4, the park will have the European premiere, with the obvious link



to the attraction.

"Starting this year we also have a public relations consultant for the



The Bermuda Triangle takes riders on a high-tech water ride through an active volcano.

Benelux market," says junior public relations manager Caroliene Götz. "This has proved to be very helpful," says Wirz. "The Dutch people are more looking for fun in their leisure time. We know that 35 percent of the Dutch people go to a theme park once a year, while only 12–13 percent of the German people are going to a theme park once a year. "Obviously it is much easier to get Dutch people into the park than German people," adds Götz. "And also when they are in the park, they are more relaxed than Germans."

Admission Policy

The park features a pay-one-price system. Admission is \$21 for adults and \$18 for children ages 4–11. At present the park does not feature season passes, but, according to Wirz, it may introduce them in 1999. "We have not sold season

passes so far because for us it is very important to get the first-time visitors in the first few years." The park is open from early April until the end of October, operating from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the peak summer season.

Human Resources

"We have about a 70 percent rehire rate this season; that makes clear to us we are doing something right," says Germyn. "Each year we organize a job fair which is very successful; we have a pool of serious applicants which is more than double of what we had last year. How that is to continue remains to be seen. We are looking for people who are enthusiastic. People who have an enjoyment of interacting not only with the guests but also with their fellow team-members."

Germyn says one of the challenges the park has is recruiting entertainers, again mainly due to the location of the park. "We are in Bottrop, not in Düsseldorf, Cologne, Hollywood, or Orlando. Performers are more rare because there isn't traditionally a lot of opportunity in this city; another major factor in retaining talent is that entertainers like to be on stage, but ours is 100 acres, which needs some adaptation.

"We create memories here," says Germyn. "That is why people have to come to Movie World; we are a distinct experience." Take one has been very successful, and the expansion for next season should make this park a star.

fw
Mark Wijman, based in The Netherlands, provides marketing and public relations services for amusement parks, theme parks, and attractions worldwide that wish to target their facility to the European continent.