

A KRUSTY EXPERIENCE

• *The Simpsons Ride at Universal Studios Florida and Universal Studios Hollywood*



by Brian Szaks

The Simpson family hasn't exactly been known for flawless family vacations. It seems that every time Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie embark on a trip, we can expect something to go wrong. In fact, the family has never visited a theme park without causing mayhem in one form or another.

In the past, the family has triggered human-killing parade robots with the flash of a camera at Itchy and Scratchy Land, Homer has had his one-too-many-donuts stomach stuck in the H2WHOA! waterslide at Mt. Splashmore Water Park, and even sweet innocent Lisa has gone on a drunk rampage through Duff Gardens after drinking the water from "Little Land of Duff" ride. Viewers of *The Simpsons* TV episodes can be assured that the yellow (or canary and goldenrod) clan of five will be experiencing just under 30 minutes of comedy, action and mayhem.

These factors made the concept of The Simpsons Ride a natural fit for both Universal Studios Orlando and Universal Studios Hollywood. Of course, being a great fit does not mean a simple task. Universal Creative had to design and construct a ride that would not only fit inside of a preexisting ride building, but would also fit the brand: the overall theme and culture of *The Simpsons*.

Throughout the 1990s and well into the 2000s, the ride buildings on both coasts were occupied by the Back to the Future – the Ride simulator attractions. But in 2007, Universal Creative decided that Doc Brown had flown his last DeLorean, and it was time for something fresh... and yellow. Universal's project team worked closely with vendors to ensure that every aspect

of the ride would be refreshed or new. They also applied green-building values through such measures as utilizing some 2,500 LED lights to cut power usage by almost 75%.

The Simpsons Ride is a perfect homage to everything "D'oh!" The ride sits within its own unique environment: Krustyland theme park. It is ostensibly owned by Krusty the Clown, who has a knack for "sparing all expenses," and has, as the story goes, opened his own property adjacent to Universal Studios. Guests are treated to a facade that boasts a faux roller coaster and themed carny games, and even a giant Krusty head that guests walk through.

The queue, which leads guests to three different levels, houses monitors that play a mixture of classic *Simpsons* clips as well as new material, including a fantastic short featuring Doc Brown that explains why Krusty built his theme park

where Back to the Future – the Ride once stood. Inside the show building is a "midway" lined with carnival booths manned by Springfield's "finest" residents, ranging from Patty and Selma to Hans Moleman. Here, character videos seem to interact with each other creating a witty and entertaining banter.

A large monitor overhead begins the first pre-show, drawing guests further into the storyline and evoking a sense of escapism into the *Simpsons* realm. Here guests learn that Sideshow Bob has snuck into Krustyland in another attempt to kill Bart (he has had numerous failed attempts in the past) and the guests have been invited to ride Krusty's new "thrill-tacular" ride. Breaking up into groups of six, guests are led into a second pre-show room where they learn more about the ride, are pulled further into the story and watch a humorous safety video featuring Itchy and Scratchy.



The Simpsons Ride at Universal Studios Hollywood



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Once the attraction doors open, guests filter into the loading area for the main show, designed to look like a station for a classic dark ride. The cars, complete with faux dark-ride guide wheels on the back, are somewhat reminiscent of the original Back to the Future ride with their over the head “gull-wing” doors. Each car has 12 speakers that utilize an impressive 6.1 surround sound system. Those, together with the 90 other speakers in the dome (including subwoofers) all assist in transporting riders into Springfield.

As the cars begin to rise nine feet on their scissor-lift motion based platform, placing visitors inside the vast dome screen, the video starts and they are plunged into the animated world that literally surrounds them. Disbelief is readily suspended and from that moment on, the ride is a fastpaced, laugh-a-second romp through Krustyland as Sideshow Bob chases after Bart as the guests follow along. Hidden jokes, nods to the past and light-hearted jabs at numerous other theme park attractions and at Universal itself, are assisted with water squirts, flashes of light and a surprisingly effective baby powder scent. The attraction leaves guests with a reminder why *The Simpsons* is still going strong as the longest running sitcom after 20 years, why motion simulators are still effective and why details and creativity are essential to the creation of a successful immersive and compelling experience.





The Simpsons Ride, Universal Studios Hollywood and Universal Studios Florida

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement: Attraction

Universal Parks & Resorts

Tom Williams, Chairman & CEO
Mark Woodbury, Pres. & CCO, Universal Creative
Michael Silver, Sr. V.P., Business & Legal Affairs
Charlie Gundacker, Sr. V.P., Attraction Dev.
Steve Blum, Sr. V.P., Engineering & Safety
Dale Mason, V.P., Creative & Executive Art Dir.
Dan Memis, V.P., Finance & Administration
Brawner Greer, V.P., Business & Legal Affairs
Mike Kiddoo, Director, Engineering
Justin Schwartz, Ride and Show Engineer

Contract Administration

Karen Trauger, **Michelle Hines**, **Kathy Wheeler**,
Elan MacIntosh
Simon Hiracheta, Financial Analyst
James Kirkpatrick, Senior Cost Analyst
Katy Pacitti, Creative Resources Manager

Executive Offices

Sonya Berish, **Michael McGuire**, **Jen Bark**,
Carol Biagetti, **Dianne Decker**
Michael McGuire, UP&R Rep. to THEA

The Project Team

Michael A. West, Executive Producer
Scott Stewart, Project Director
Mark Rhodes, Media Producer
Chris Lauren and **Jennifer Sauer**, Creative Directors
Eric Thomas, Attraction Designer
Mike Esmonde, Technical Manager
Jay Kuiper, Technical Manager
Randy Mazely, Construction Manager
Robert Frazer, Technical Coordinator
Deborah Witt, Project Coordinator
Kathleen Parrish, Project Assistant
Jim Dooley, Principal Music Production
Peter J Lehman, *Visible Sound Inc.*, Princ. Audio Mixing
Tony Micelli, Sound Editor

Universal Creative, Hollywood

Chip Largman, Vice President, Universal Creative
Frasier Thompson, Project Director
Chris Lauren, Creative Director
Bill Whitcomb, Technical Director
Paul Cuocco and **John Dunne**, Technical Mgrs.

Universal Studios Florida

Bill Davis, President and Chief Operating Officer
Michael Hightower, Sr. V.P., Technical Services
Rich Costales, Sr. V.P., Operations
Jim Timon, Sr. V. P., Entertainment

Universal Studios Hollywood

Larry Kurzweil, Pres. and COO
Michael Taylor, V.P., Operations
Tim Runco, V.P., Entertainment

Executive Offices

Linda Mousseau, **Kristy Mersola**, **Paola Guerin**,
Ampy Gonzalez, **Denise Wilson**
Georgia Treharne, Manager, Administration
Lesley Smith, Project Assistant

Gracie Films

Matt Groening, Creator and Executive Producer
James L Brooks, Executive Producer
Denise Sirkot, Executive Vice President

The Cast

Nancy Cartwright: Bart Simpson, Maggie Simpson, Nelson Muntz, Ralph Wiggum, and The Happy Little Elves
Dan Castellaneta: Homer Simpson, Krusty the Clown, Grampa Simpson, Groundskeeper Willie, Squeaky Voiced Teen, Hans Moleman, Barney Gumble, Kodos, Repo man, and Mr. Freidman
Julie Kavner: Marge Simpson, Patty Bouvier and Selma Bouvier
Yeardley Smith: Lisa Simpson
Hank Azaria: Chief Wiggum, Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, Moe Szyslak, Professor Frink, Cletus Spuckler, Officer Lou, the Sarcastic Man, Snake Jailbird and Pants-Off Johnson
Kelsey Grammer: Sideshow Bob
Pamela Hayden: Milhouse Van Houten
Russi Taylor: Martin Prince
Christopher Lloyd: Doc Brown

Writers

Al Jean, **John Frink**, **Tim Long**, **Daniel Chun**, **Joel Cohen**, **Michael Price**, **Matthew Warburton**, **Matthew Selman**

Directors

Richard Raynis, **Matthew Selman**

20th Century Fox

Elie Dekel, Exec. V.P., Licensing & Merchandising
Howard Nelson, V.P., Worldwide Promotion

Blur Studios - CG Animation

Al Shier and **Debbie Yu**, Producers
Yas Takata, Ride Director
Leo Santos and **Dan Rice**, CG Supervisors
Andy Grisdale, Layout Artist

Reel FX Entertainment - Additional CG Animation

Nick Bliobenes, Executive Producer
Chuck Peil, Main Show Producer
Pete Herzog, Producer
Dale Carman, Director

Film Roman - 2-D Animation

Tom Klein, **Jan Hirota**, **Mike Wolf**, **Jaspreet Dhillon**, **John Rice**

The Pixel Factory - 3-D Test Media

Stan Johnson

The Simpsons at Universal Studios Florida

Joseph Korte, 3D Animator
Patrice Ragusa, Area Development Concepts
Manuel Cordero, CAD Design
Nathan Naversen, CAD Design
Natalia Younger, *St. George Cont. and Design, Inc.*, CAD Services

Maureen Johnston, Color Boards
Mitchell Schneider, Concept Designer
Mike Marquez, Concept Illustrations
Erik Neergaard, *Themespace, Inc.*, Concept Illustr.
Matt Walker, Concept Writer
Ryan Harmon, Concept Writer
Brian Dudash, *B. Dudash & Associates, Inc.*, Cost Est.
Frank Moynihan, Estimating Service
Thomas Potter, *H. W. Davis Construction, Inc.*, General Construction / Management
Jill Shargaa, Graphic Designer - Presentations
Andy Crabtree, Graphic Illustrator
Raymond Keim, Graphic Illustrator
Scott Wren, Graphic Illustrator
Wayne Clark, *Miller Clarke Design*, Graphics Designer
David Morris, Illustrator
Ryan Smith, Illustrator
David Tear, Management of Scenic Components
Eric Morgan, *Eric L. Morgan, Architect, P.A.*, Onsite Design Support
Jonathan Douglas, *VOA Associates, Inc.*, Retail Concept Designer
Erik Neergaard, *Themespace, Inc.*, Ride vehicle Concepts
Jeff Smith, Scope Writer
Tim Madison, Script writer
Jason Townley, Second Shift Support
Deborah Palmer, Show Set & CAD Designer
Steve Mitchell, Show Set Designer
David Morris, Show Set Designer
Rich West, Show Set Designer
Robert Michael Noles, Show Set Designer
Stephanie Girard, Show Set Designer
Steve Mitchell, Show Set Designer
Paul Dennis, Show Set Support
Pat Vogtli, Storyboard Art
Eric Thomas, Storyboard Art and Illustration
Mitchell Schneider, Storyboard Artist
Whitworth Stokes, *The Truly Dangerous Company*, Technical Consultant
Paul Kent, *Electrosonic Systems, Inc.*, 3D Projection Study
Jeff Bobbin, *Show System Integrators, LLC*, A/V System Design and Build
Neil Weiner, *Hyper Image Inc.*, Animatic Production
Jim Hodson, *Advantage Audio*, Audio Production
Kane Fritz, *Entertainment Techknowledge*, Audio/Visual System Evaluation
Oliver Vanacore, *Sundog Design, Inc.*, Construction Fence Graphics
Dominic Carola, *Project Firefly, LLC*, Film Test Media
Trevor MacLaine, *Icarus Exhibits, Inc.*, Hot Dog Cart Renovations
Chris Murphy, *Murphy Lighting*, Lighting Control, Dimmer System Refurbishment and Upgrade
Dan Donohue, *Back Stage Technologies, Inc.*, LN2 Fog Mock Up
Eric Lehman, Main Dome Projection Systems



The Simpsons Ride, Universal Studios Hollywood and Universal Studios Florida

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement: Attraction

- Andy Reisman**, *Reisman Models*, Maquette Const.
Scott Ramirez, *Reisman Models*, Maquette Const.
Barbara Grill, *Festival Artists Worldwide*, Marquee Fabrication and Installation
John Miceli, *Technomedia Solutions, LLC*, Media Capt.
Betty Elliott, *Group 3 Studio, Inc.*, Model Maker
Kenneth Eff, *Attraction Design Services, LLC*, Pop Jet Concept and Set Design
Matt Freeby, *Water Technology, Inc.*, Popjet Fount. Dsgn.
Woody Hildebrand, *Triangle Reprographics, Inc.*, Printing & Mounting
John Shaw, *Spitz, Inc.*, Projection Screen Mods
Cindy White, *Cindy White Art*, Prop details
John Marhofer, *Entech Creative Industries*, Ride Vehicle Modifications
Phil Bloom, *American Scenic*, Schem. Draw. Packages
Louis Allen, *Adirondack Scenic, Inc.*, Set Scenic Fabrication & Installation
Bettina Buckley, *WOW!Works International, Inc.*, SFX Charette
John Albarian, *DVD Productions*, Simpson's Comp. Reel
Thomas Zampini, *Integrated Illumination Systems, Inc.*, Snap-In LED Light Assemblies
Carl Yates, *InCryo Systems, Inc.*, Special Effects
Brad Vancata, Story Boards
Jerry Rinnert, *JMR Surveying Group, LLC*, 3D Laser Scan Survey
Brian King, *Recreation Engineering, Inc.*, Accelerometric Testing of Simulators
Steve Alkhoja, *ITEC Entertainment Corporation*, Control System Evaluation
Greg Rude, *GR Engineering Group, LLC*, Failure Analysis Report
Mike Gauvin, *Grunau Company*, Halon Room Fire Sprinklers Revision
Michael Von Horne, *Simulation Technologies, Inc.*, Hydraulic Hazard Analysis
Phil von Kamecke, *PVK Architects, Inc.*, Investigate/Report Systems & Elements
Greg Bryant, *Universal Studios Hollywood*, Mechanical Evaluation of Ride System
John Guarnero, *Moonlight Creations, Inc.*, Program & Develop Alternative Ride Vehicle Profile
Steve McIntyre, *Anitech Systems Inc.*, Ride Show Supervisor System
Ben Lovelace, *RB Lovelace Inc.*, Scissor Lift Ground Support Equipment
Dave Mauck, *Oceaneering Entertainment Systems*, Scissor Lift Manual Lowering Circuit
Tim Linamen, *Point of Light*, Show Lighting Evaluation
Hamid Bahadori, *Hughes Associates, Inc.*, Smoke Evacuation System Inspection
Arvin Blank, *Sypris Test & Measurement*, Strain Gauging Testing
Louis Higuera, *S.M.A.R.T., Inc.*, Vehicle Programming & Mock Up
Jeff Begovich, *Professional Service Industries, Inc.*, Welding and Roofing Inspection Services
Michael Scime, *Sign Producers, Inc.*, Sign Removal & Temporary Construction Fence Graphics
Jamie Boone, *Edlen Electric*, Projection Integ. Circuits
Steven Pendley, *All Wired Up, Inc.*, Conduit, Cabling, Voice & Data Drops
Nelson Bramley, *Pro Line Fence Corp.*, Fencing, Storage & Clean Up Assistance
Robert Slotabec, *Siemens Water Technologies Corp.*, Hydraulic Oil Purge
Robert Nasca, *Hydradyne Hydraulics, LLC*, Hydraulic Pump System
Scott Maddox, *Ermco of Florida*, Hydraulic Room Lighting & Emergency Pump
Mark Black, *InterAmerica Stage, Inc.*, Ride Vehicle Removal
Larry Williamson, *JK2 Holmes Constructors, LLC*, Site Project Trailer Development
Ken Flanagan, *Cinnabar*, Vehicle Maquette Production, Frame Testing & Analysis Support
The Simpsons at Universal Studios Hollywood
Larry Wyatt, *MSI*, Art Direction/Production Design
Paul Buckley, *Scenario Design Inc.*, Attract. Set Scenic
Jeff Bobbin, *Show System Integrators*, A/V System Design and Build
Theron Mehr, Contracts Administration
Brian Dudash, *B. Dudash & Associates, Inc.*, Cost Est.
Ryan Smith, Illustration
Chris Medvitz, *Lightswitch Los Angeles*, Lighting Design Services
Philip McDowell, *McDowell Scheduling, Inc.*, Proj. Sched.
Jeff Porter, *Olesen/Raleigh Studios*, Show Lighting
David Smith, *Media Bus, Inc.*, Show Lighting
Theo Mundell, *Smart Ride, Inc.*, Tech. Support
Louis Higuera, *SMART, Inc.*, Technical Support
Tim Madison, Writer
Danny Hartigan, Writer-Attraction Concepts
John Rust, *Jinky Buffalo Productions LLC*, Writer-Attraction Concepts
Tim Madison, Writer - Attraction Concepts
Trey Stokes, Writer - Attraction Concepts
Brian King, *Recreation Engineering, Inc.*, Accelerometric Testing of Simulators
John Cato, *Dynamic Engineering*, Control System Evaluation
Dennis Murphy, *Dennis A Murphy Design and Drafting Service*, Engineering Support to Technical Services
James Jordan, *Budlong & Associates, Inc.*, Fac. Aud.
Mark Riddlesperger, *L.A. Propoint*, Fall Arrest Sys.
Greg Rude, *GR Engineering Group LLC*, Failure Analysis Report
Bryan Roe, *Koolfog Inc.*, Queue Area Misting System Refurbishment
Scott Burrows, *Eversoft*, Reverse Osmosis Sys. Install.
Steve McIntyre, *Anitech Systems, Inc.*, Ride Control System Enhancements
John Kreider, *Oceaneering International, Inc.*, Scissor Lift Lower Circuit
Lisa Passamonte Green, *Visual Terrain, Inc.*, Show Lighting System Evaluation
Larry Bernicky, *Sypris Test & Measurement*, Strain Gauge Testing
David Hunt, *ATA Engineering*, Vehicle Frame Structural Assessment
Larry Wyatt, *Wyatt Design Group, Inc.*, Art Direction/Production Design
Chris Conte, *Electrosonic Systems, Inc.*, Audio-Visual System Evaluation
Kurt Wilson, *Lexington Design + Fabrication*, Graphics - Kwik-E-Mart
Mark Bencivengo, *Lexington Design + Fabrication*, Graphics - Kwik-E-Mart
Todd Chaney, *Lexington Design + Fabrication*, Graphics - Kwik-E-Mart
Steve Allen, *Lexington Design + Fabrication*, Graphics - Kwik-E-Mart
Doug George, *Lexington Design + Fabrication*, Graphics - Kwik-E-Mart
Mario Kamberg, Key Art - Galactica
Sloan Bunting, *Pro Dek Inc.*, Krusty Tongue
Patti Skoglund, *Superior Electrical Advertising, Inc.*, Krustyland Signs
Timothy Mast, *Cryotech International, Inc.*, LN2 Distribution and Effects
Craig Bugajski, *Artistic Entertainment*, Main Show and Operational Show Graphics
John Shaw, *Spitz, Inc.*, New Dome Screens
David MacMurtry, *Advanced Entertainment Technology*, Off-Board Water Effects
Bob Chambers, *It's Alive Company*, Project Consultant
Sarkis Mehtemetian, *Sark Custom Awning*, Queue Line Awning
Shawn Siqueira, *Pro Sound CA, Inc.*, Retail A/V
Todd Erlandson, *Marchstudio*, Retail Cabinets and Counters Design
Craig Bugajski, *Artistic Entertainment*, Retail Scenic and Attraction Marquee
John Marhofer, *Entech Creative Industries*, Ride Vehicle Refurbishment
Terry Downing, *California All Design, Inc.*, Set Scenic Development Support
Scott Meyer, *Electrosonic Systems, Inc.*, Ty Projection System
David MacMurtry, *Advanced Entertainment Technology*, Ty Ride FX Mock Up
Mario Kamberg, Writer-Attraction Concepts
Craig Hanna, Writer-Attraction Concepts
Vince Petito, *LHA a Division of gkkworks*, Architectural Services
Dana Roberts, *C. W. Driver, Inc.*, Con. Mgmt.
Daryl W. Parker, *Cable Art Incorporated*, Queue Area Cabling