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ride winners

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AMUSEMENT TODAY BONUS SECTION

BONUS SECTION

AUGUST 1998

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Winners named in 14 categories

Amusement Today bestows Golden Ticket Awards

Conducting a survey of any kind produces a certain amount of challenges. One strives to be thorough, but at the same time wishes to be fair and balanced. That said, *Amusement Today* set some ground rules for its 1998 survey of parks and rides.

Park employees, suppliers, and ride manufacturers were not allowed to participate.

Survey participants were selected at random from various sources of park patrons with experience at many different parks. An equal number of names was selected from four geographic regions of the United States.

Completed surveys were to be postmarked by June 26, with results tabulated July 2.

Two roller coaster charts on pages 6B and 7B list the 25 highest-ranked wooden coasters and the 25 highest-ranked steel roller coasters. First-place picks received 10 points, second-place choices received nine points, and so on, with the 10th choice receiving one point. Total point values determined winners, and those point totals are included on each chart.

Park and ride categories, listed on page 3B, rank the top parks and rides by vote percentages. Only the highest-ranking parks and rides were included in this listing.

Survey overview

The core group selected to complete the survey certainly could boast some well-traveled experience. A greater familiarity with the North American coasters is apparent among those chosen, but the wood and steel coaster lists each landed an overseas entry.

Nemesis at Alton Towers in Staffordshire, England placed at No. 10 on the steel list; and Megafobia at Oakwood Park in Pembrookshire, Wales was among the top five wooden coasters.

Votes were cast for coasters from far reaches, including Serpiente de



Fuego at La Feria in Mexico City; Tonnerre de Zues at Parc Asterix in Plailly, France; and Dragon Khan at Port Aventura in Tarragona, Spain.

To the surprise of *Amusement Today* staff members, even coasters of mixed regard could claim fans out there. All in all, 75 wooden coasters and 91 steel coasters garnered votes.

New for 1998

Because the surveys had to be sent back to *Amusement Today* by late June, new-for-'98 installations had a challenge to work their way into the ranks in such a short time.

Top performers were Worlds of Fun's Mamba, ranked the No. 7 steel coaster; and Shivering Timbers at Michigan's Adventure, rising to an impressive No. 6 on the wood chart. Both coasters are new this season.

Other new coasters to rank highly were VisionLand's Rampage; Six Flags Over Texas' Mr. Freeze; and Taz's Texas Tornado, the legendary Thriller relocated from Germany to Six Flags AstroWorld in Houston, Texas.

Something old...

But modern coasters didn't necessarily have total control. Coney

Island's Cyclone, the 1927 benchmark for all wooden coasters, rides comfortably in the top 10.

Relocation has proven to be quite the success story for some rides, as the No. 4, No. 10 and No. 15 wooden roller coasters — Comet at Great Escape, Phoenix at Knoebel's Grove and Wild One at Adventure World, respectively — had been moved from their former homes, only to be reborn winners at their new parks.

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AWARDS

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Of greater importance is the uncertain future of Playland's wooden Coaster (No. 22) in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The relocation of the Pacific National Exhibition may sadly doom this outstanding classic to the wrecking ball. Hopefully, a method of salvation will materialize to preserve this historic ride.

Park categories

Over one-third of the survey participants voted Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio as the best park to visit. Renowned for its sheer number of rides and record-setting collection of roller coasters, Cedar Point continues to be among the top regional destination parks.

Busch Gardens Williamsburg in Virginia was a prominent player in most categories, and stands proudly at second position in the Best Amusement Park category.

Celebrating its 100th anniversary this season, Kennywood Park outside Pittsburgh, Pa. demonstrates its longevity by rounding out the three most popular amusement parks.

Of the 19 waterparks recognized by the survey, Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels, Texas takes its one-of-a-kind mix of attractions and splashes to the top of the list for Best Waterpark. In second place is Blizzard Beach at Orlando, Fla., the only other contender to receive a solid portion of votes.

Survey participants had several categories in which to applaud the outstanding achievements of their favorite parks.

Holiday World in Santa Claus, Ind. took top honors in the Friendliest Park category; with Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington and Busch Gardens Williamsburg completing the top three.

Cedar Point clearly was the best at moving lines, as 38 percent claimed it had Best Capacity. In fact, only one other park, Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., could claim a

respectable vote share in this category.

The category Cleanest Park garnered mentions of 25 parks, so it would appear the industry is looking pretty spruced. Almost one-fourth of the votes were cast in favor of Busch Gardens Williamsburg. A Disney stronghold was evident, with the California park beating out Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. for the second-place spot.

The most dramatic lead of the survey was in the Best Landscaping category, with Busch Gardens Williamsburg collecting over 10 times the votes of anyone behind them. Tying for a distant second place were Disneyland; Walt Disney World; and the first-place winner's Florida sister park, Busch Gardens Tampa.

Busch Gardens Williamsburg also took the spotlight in Best Shows. Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio and Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. were voted solid performers in this category as well.

In the topic of Best Food, 19 parks caught attention with something good to eat, all the way down to Hoffman's Playland in Albany, N.Y. Top spot again went to Busch Gardens Williamsburg, with Kennywood Park taking second place. EPCOT in Orlando, Fla. and Knoebel's Grove in Elysburg, Pa. tied for third.

Ride categories

Among the individual

rides, a few categories examined what the industry is doing right. Some simply voted for Disney or Busch for ride theming, but three rides tied for best theming.

Sharing accolades for first place are Nemesis at Alton Towers, Batman The Ride in several Six Flags Theme Parks, and Alpengeist at Busch Gardens Williamsburg. A mere fraction of a percentage behind these three is Walt Disney World's Twilight Zone Tower of Terror.

Among the waterparks, only two attractions took a significant lead: Schlitterbahn's towering Master Blaster, gathering 29 percent of the votes; and the highly themed Journey to the Center of the Earth at Hyland Hills Water World in Denver, Colo.

In the category of Best Simulator/Interactive Attraction, Universal's Back to the Future is tops. Disney's Star Tours rides into second place, with Universal's Terminator 2 close behind in third. Iwerk's Dino Island gained an honorable mention with a solid 11 percent.

Favorite rides (noncoaster) are Intamin's Giant Drops, such as Kennywood's Pittfall. S&S Towers, such as World's of Fun's Detonator and Cedar Point's Power Tower, are second in popularity; and ThrillTime Entertainment's prevalent Sky Coasters placed third.

— Tim Baldwin



Photos courtesy of Busch Gardens/Holiday World

Above, a young guest enjoys some of the highly touted food at Busch Gardens Williamsburg. Below, a rider gets pointers on enjoying the bumper boats at Holiday World, voted Friendliest Park.



Thank You!

1998 Golden Ticket Awards



Voted
Friendliest Staff



The Raven: Voted
one of the Best
Wooden Coasters

Thank you to the staff and to all the readers of *Amusement Today* for this honor. As the first-ever recipient of the Golden Ticket Award for Friendliest Staff, we'd like to thank all of our staff members for a job well done.

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The Golden Ticket Awards Bonus Section was produced by the staff of *Amusement Today*.

Golden Ticket Awards were bestowed upon all first-place finishers in each category. *Amusement Today* congratulates the many fine parks that won or placed in this year's categories.

Amusement Today would like to thank Ted Davidson and Corporate Graphics in Arlington, Texas for the design of the Golden Ticket Award logos. We could not have done it without the help of his staff.

We would also like to thank the many people who took the time to return our survey forms and participate in the polling process. If you were not selected to vote, and would like your name added to the selection list, please drop us a postcard and we'll be glad to add it to next year's list of names. Remember, industry employees are ineligible to vote.

Park and ride winners

Ranked by percentage of votes cast

Best Amusement/Theme Park			Cleanest Park		
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	37%	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	24%
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	16%	Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	14%
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	9%	Walt Disney World	Orlando, Fla.	11%
Best Waterpark			Best Capacity (fastest-moving lines)		
Schlitterbahn	New Braunfels, Texas	28%	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	38%
Blizzard Beach	Orlando, Fla.	12%	Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	15%
Friendliest Park			Best-Themed Ride		
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	22%	Nemesis	Alton Towers	11%
Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	17%	Batman The Ride	Six Flags Theme Parks	11%
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	10%	Alpengeist	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	11%
			Twilight Zone Tower of Terror	Disney MGM Studios	10%
Best Landscaping			Best Waterpark Ride		
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	62%	Master Blaster	Schlitterbahn	29%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	6%	Journey to the Center of the Earth	Hyland Hills Water World	10%
Walt Disney World	Orlando, Fla.	6%			
Busch Gardens Tampa	Tampa, Fla.	6%			
Best Shows			Best Noncoaster Ride		
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	19%	Giant Drop	Intamin/Ride Trade	21%
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	14%	Space Shot	S&S Sports Power	15%
Walt Disney World	Orlando, Fla.	12%	Sky Coaster	ThrillTime Entertainment	11%
Best Food			Best Simulator/Interactive Attraction		
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	21%	Back to the Future	Universal Studios	23%
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	15%	Star Tours	Disneyland/ Walt Disney World	17%
Knoebels Grove	Elysburg, Pa.	9%	Terminator 2	Universal Studios	15%
Epcot Center	Orlando, Fla.	9%	Dino Island	Iwerks	11%

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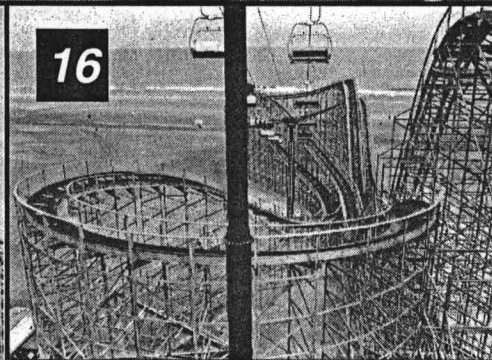
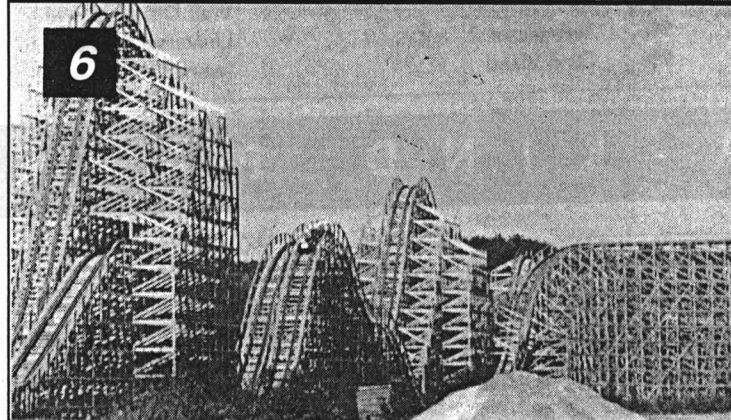


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From the top: (2) Holiday World's Raven, (5) Oakwood's Megaphobia,
(6) Michigan Adventure's Shivering Timbers, (16) Wild Wheels Pier Great White
and (17) VisionLand's Rampage

*for the
top 25 votes*

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Thank You

for voting



the BEST Wooden Roller Coaster



THE LIST

Top 25 wooden roller coasters

RANK	COASTER	YEAR	PARK	LOCATION	POINTS
1	Texas Giant	1990	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	447
2	Raven	1995	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	295
3	Beast	1979	Paramount's Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	231
4	Comet	1994*	The Great Escape	Lake George, N.Y.	213
5	Megafobia	1996	Oakwood	Pembrookshire, Wales	197
6	Shivering Timbers	1998	Michigan's Adventure	Muskegon, Mich.	193
7	Cyclone	1927	Astroland (Coney Island)	Brooklyn, N.Y.	189
8	Timberwolf	1989	Worlds of Fun	Kansas City, Mo.	168
9	Thunderbolt	1968	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	157
10	Phoenix	1985*	Knoebel's Grove	Elysburg, Pa.	135
11	Wildcat	1996	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	121
12	Georgia Cyclone	1990	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	96
13	Cyclone	1983	Riverside Park	Agawam, Mass.	95
14	Grizzly	1982	Paramount's Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	85
15	Wild One	1986*	Adventure World	Largo, Md.	77
16	Great White	1996	Wild Wheels Pier	Wildwood, N.J.	69
17	Rampage	1998	VisionLand	Bessemer, Ala.	66
18	Giant Dipper	1924	Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	65
18	Screamin' Eagle	1976	Six Flags St. Louis	Eureka, Mo.	65
20	Jack Rabbit	1920	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	57
21	Mean Streak	1991	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	50
22	Coaster	1958	Playland	Vancouver, B.C., Canada	49
23	Rebel Yell	1975	Paramount's Kings Dominion	Roswell, Va.	48
24	Viper	1995	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	47
25	Blue Streak	1937	Conneaut Lake Park	Conneaut Lake, Pa.	44

Fast Facts: Custom Coasters Inc., co-owned by Denise Dinn Larrick, built five of the coasters listed; the Charlie Dinn family has involvement with 12 coasters listed. A Great Coasters International ride is just outside the top 10. Design work by the late Curtis Summers appears on six entries. John Pierce was involved with construction work on one entry. Veteran designers Cobb, Keenan, Prior and Church, and Mitchell exhibit their craft on the list, along with two entries from John Allen, Ed Vettel and John Miller. PTC trains run on 18 of the 25 coasters listed. * Indicates coasters relocated from other parks. The Great Escape's Comet was originally built in 1947 at Crystal Beach, Ontario, Canada. Phoenix at Knoebels Grove was moved from Playland Park in San Antonio, Texas, where it was built in 1947. The Wild One at Adventure World was moved from its 1917 home at Paragon Park in Hull, Mass. Point totals were tallied from an exclusive number of experienced park patrons equally selected from four geographic regions of the United States. Top choice received 10 points, with the 10th choice receiving one point. Point totals are listed on the charts.

THE LIST

Top 25 steel roller coasters

RANK	COASTER	YEAR	PARK	LOCATION	POINTS
1	Magnum XL-200	1989	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	466
2	Alpengeist	1997	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	329
3	Montu	1996	Busch Gardens Tampa	Tampa, Fla.	311
4	Kumba	1993	Busch Gardens Tampa	Tampa, Fla.	257
5	Steel Force	1997	Dorney Park	Allentown, Pa.	241
6	Raptor	1994	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	203
7	Mamba	1998	Worlds of Fun	Kansas City, Mo.	176
8	Desperado	1994	Buffalo Bill's Casino	Primm, Nev.	146
9	Big Bad Wolf	1984	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	113
10	Nemesis	1994	Alton Towers	Staffordshire, England	100
11	Steel Phantom	1991	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	94
12	Mind Bender	1978	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	90
13	Mindbender	1985	Galaxyland	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	84
14	Mantis	1996	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	83
15	Taz's Texas Tornado	1998*	Six Flags AstroWorld	Houston, Texas	82
15	Loch Ness Monster	1978	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.	82
17	Shockwave	1978	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	74
18	Big One	1994	Blackpool Pleasure Beach	Blackpool, England	61
19	Batman The Ride	1993	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	57
20	Superman The Escape	1997	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	53
21	Batman The Ride	1995	Six Flags St. Louis	Eureka, Mo.	52
22	Great White	1997	Sea World of Texas	San Antonio, Texas	49
23	Mr. Freeze	1998	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	47
23	Batman The Ride	1992	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	47
25	Crazy Mouse	1997	Dinosaur Beach	Wildwood, N.J.	45

Fast Facts: Ten of the top 25 steel coasters are designed by Bolliger and Mabillard. Six of Arrow's steel coasters appear on the list. Four classic Schwarzkopf masterpieces hold their own among the latest creations. The two latest designs by Morgan Manufacturing land in the top 10. Single entries from Intamin, Premier and Reverchon complete the statistics.

*Taz's Texas Tornado originally traveled on the German fair circuit under the name Thriller. It was built in 1985.

Point totals were tallied from an exclusive number of experienced park patrons equally selected from four geographic regions of the United States. Top choice received 10 points, with the 10th choice receiving one point. Point totals are listed on the charts.



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