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# Tinker Bell and friends attraction coming to Disney World

Scott Powers | Sentinel Staff Writer  
September 25, 2008



The Magic Kingdom's newest attraction -- Pixie Hollow -- features Iridessa (from left), Rosetta, Tinker Bell, Silvermist and Fawn. The Disney Fairies are a new set of characters, developed for books, movies, Internet games and merchandise. (WALT DISNEY WORLD)

Move over, [Cinderella](#), [Snow White](#) and Ariel: The Disney Fairies are on their way.

Preparing for the Oct. 28 release of a straight-to-DVD animated children's movie about Tinker Bell, [Walt Disney World](#) is about to open a walk-through attraction in the Magic Kingdom based on, and featuring, that pixie and four other Disney Fairies characters.

The Disney Fairies are a new set of characters, developed for books, movies, Internet games and merchandise, that expand the role of the always-popular Tinker Bell. Four DVD movies are in the works. The theme park's Pixie Hollow attraction opens Oct. 24 in Mickey's Toontown Fair.

"This is a franchise that is soon to be like our princesses franchise," declared Francois Leroux, a vice president of character programs with Walt Disney World Entertainment, who introduced the characters to the media on Wednesday in downtown Orlando.

The theme-park fairies made their debut as Disney World officials briefed the news media on a broad range of plans and strategies, from minority-owned business contracting to the recently announced "celebrations" campaign in 2009 to a cross-promotion with the Disney-owned ESPN cable-TV network that will result in the renaming of Disney World's athletic complex as the ESPN Wide World of Sports.

While company officials had cautioned that they had no intention

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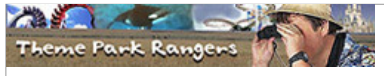
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of using the forum to announce a major World attraction, the briefing had many close



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Disney observers wondering when or if the giant resort might unveil plans for new rides in 2009 or beyond. Disney has often used such briefings to announce big new rides, shows, restaurants and hotels.

Rivals Universal Orlando and SeaWorld Orlando are both building new, signature roller coasters for next summer, and the following year Universal is opening the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, one of the most highly anticipated theme-park attractions in the world.

"This is the first time in our 15 years of covering the Walt Disney World scene that there isn't a single announced new attraction for any of the four parks," Simon Veness, co-author with his wife, Susan Veness, of the Brit Guide to Orlando & Walt Disney World, wrote in an e-mail.

In February, Disney announced a new game-show venue: a theme-park version of the hit Fox TV show American Idol. But that show initially was to open late this year; Disney now says it's likely to open early next. Disney has not announced any iconic attractions to follow that.

"It's also unusual given that Universal is coming out with both barrels blazing in the next couple of years," said Robert Niles editor of the blog Theme Park Insider.

In addition to Pixie Hollow and the American Idol Experience, upcoming attractions include new street parties; a new technology-based game tied to the Disney animated TV show Kim Possible; a big family restaurant in Downtown Disney called T-Rex; and other dining and entertainment expansions in Downtown Disney. This past

summer, the company opened a major new ride called Toy Story Midway Mania, Disney World spokeswoman Jacquee Polak said.

"We continue to grow in traditional and nontraditional ways," Polak said. "We are going to continue to focus on delivering experiences that only Disney can provide."

John Frost, editor of The Disney Blog, a popular Internet source of news and commentary, considers 2009 "essentially a planned off year for Disney."

"With just American Idol opening next year, Walt Disney World is really relying a lot on this year's crop of new attractions. Toy Story Midway Mania is great, and they probably haven't gotten all the yardage they can out of that as far as attracting new guests," Frost said. "The Pixie Hollow Disney Fairies experience isn't an attendance driver, except for a very small target market."

John Gerner, a theme-park industry analyst with Leisure Business Advisers of Virginia, said Disney World is in a position where it does not have to add major rides all the time.

"As a strategy, one thing you don't necessarily try to do is expand the same year your competition does. It doesn't tend to serve either player," Gerner said. "The fact that Universal is putting in the big Potter area may have Disney saying, 'Let's pause and see what happens, and then we'll follow up.'"

To capitalize on both ESPN's popularity and the existing Disney's Wide World of Sports brand, Disney will rename its athletic complex ESPN Wide World of Sports.

"You really want to focus on your equities. One equity is ESPN. The other one is the fact that over the last 12 years we have built an enormous amount of equity behind the Wide World of Sports brand," said Ken Potrock, senior vice president for sports enterprises.

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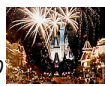
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"Not necessarily the ABC-Jim McKay brand, but the Wide World of Sports the Complex brand."

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