



Walt Disney's Legends of Imagineering and the Genesis of the Disney Theme Park

Jeff Kurti , Bruce Gordon (Illustrator) , Walt Disney Company

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Fifty years ago, Walt Disney utterly transformed the concept of outdoor entertainment venues from tawdry carnivals and seedy amusement piers called "amusement parks," to an entirely new destination that would come into common vernacular as the "theme park."

Although Disneyland was the inspiration of one man, Walt did not achieve this history-altering concept on his own. Using his innate talent for combining disparate skills and personalities, he assembled a creative team that blended imagination with engineering. Walt called this group his "Imagineers."

Walt Disney's Legends of Imagineering and the Genesis of the Disney Theme Park introduces a core group of the originators of Disneyland and the other Disney parks. It explores their individual relationships with Walt and each other, their creative breakthroughs and failures, and their rivalries and professional politics. This candid narrative of their lives and contributions to a very special form of entertainment illustrates why, half a century later, their work continues to be vital and important to millions of people every day, and all over the world.

Lavishly illustrated throughout with rare and never-before-seen artwork and photographs, *Walt Disney's Legends of Imagineering and the Genesis of the Disney Theme Park* will further enrich the reader's appreciation of the exceptional talent behind Disneyland's creation and ongoing evolution.

Walt Disney's Legends of Imagineering and the Genesis of the Disney Theme Park Details

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From Reader Review Walt Disney's Legends of Imagineering and the Genesis of the Disney Theme Park for online ebook

Sharon says

I really took my time reading this book, as you can see. I would read one or two of the biographies each night and let them really sink in.

You see, this is a coffee table book about the men and women who helped create one of my favorite places on Earth: Disneyland. They came from a variety of backgrounds: automotive design, animation, music, fine art. Each of them was called upon to develop a whole new set of skills in the process of making Disneyland come to life, because there were no existing experts out there to do it.

Thus, all of the people in this book found themselves stretching their knowledge, skills and abilities to do something that many claimed was impossible: bring movies to life outside the theatre by creating attractions that matched them.

As anyone who has been to Disneyland can attest, they succeeded.

I had the honor to meet three of the men mentioned in the book: Marty Sklar, Bob Gurr, and Frank Stanek. This added some extra fun to my reading as I learned of the struggles they had to before becoming Disney Legends.

Highly recommended for Disneyphiles.

Sesana says

Legends of Imagineering is basically a collection of biographies, focusing mostly on imagineers who had an impact on early Disneyland. Each one reads much like a mini-bio in a magazine might, with some really nice behind the scenes pictures.

This is definitely a book for Disneyphiles, especially those of us who tend to obsess over the parks (guilty). Because of the format, a basic knowledge of Disney park history would be really helpful to follow what's going on. I don't mean dates and specifics, but just knowing that, say, Pirates of the Caribbean wasn't an opening day ride in Disneyland would make your reading smoother. That said, I highly doubt anyone who doesn't have that background knowledge would even be interested in a book like this. This is very much a book for somebody who can already name at least two imagineers, and who will be excited to read about their favorite.

There's some really great information and stories in here for those of us who are obsessed with the parks. I tend to read more (a lot more) about Disney World, so somebody who focuses on Disneyland might not find so much new information. But I'd never read about the feral cat colony in Sleeping Beauty's castle, and I didn't realize just how many of the early imagineers had started in animation at Disney. I had not, for instance, realized that the Marc Davis who animated Maleficent was the same Marc Davis who painted the stretching portraits in the Haunted Mansion.

For a fan of the Disney parks, especially Disneyland, this is probably a must-read. But you'd have to be a pretty big fan to maintain interest.

Mireille Duval says

Took me a good long while to read. It wasn't what I thought it'd be - mostly little biographies of people involved with the parks. I thought it was interesting mostly when I knew who they were talking about (the Sherman Brothers, Ward Kimball, etc.), otherwise I got a little bored. Still, not a bad read.

Tom says

What did I learn? Tons. I'll never visit the park the same way again. I love being able to put names to some of my favorite attractions. Kurtti has done a great service to the many talented people who helped create that happy place and make it what it is today. I'd love to see a sequel about some of the imagineers involved in the park since it's opening, but this makes a great history of the people who made Disneyland possible.

With a book this size, filled with full-color photos it's tempting to ignore the text, but it's well worth reading. Each bio is loaded with fascinating information. Each person has their own story of how they came to be associated with Disney and Disneyland.

Nicholas says

Easy table read is sure to inspire fun conversations about Disneyland and all the wonderful memories it brings. As a former employee "cast member" of the parks it was really neat to learn the unknown stories of some of the attractions I had worked on. A must read for all enthusiast of the theme park and Disney lovers of all types. Only drawback, I wanted more details regarding the unsung heroes of Disneyland.

Katie says

This was a really interesting look at the men (and one woman) behind a lot of the concepts and attractions that Disney fans now hold near and dear to our hearts. I would recommend making sure when you sit down to read it that you have the time to read an entire chapter at a time - I found that if I started reading about a specific Imagineer, and then stopped, when I started again it was confusing.

A recurring theme throughout is how they were affected by their relationship with Walt Disney, and how he was the planet they were all orbiting around. Some had better relationships with him than others, but it was clear from every chapter how pivotal Walt was in every aspect of the early years at Disney, especially when it came to developing Disneyland. It was also made clear how lost everyone was at first when he passed away, and I think that if he hadn't had such a diversely talented group of people working there, it may not have survived.

I highly recommend if you're interested in Disney history, as it goes very in-depth on a period that I don't

know a lot about!

Mark says

While I really enjoyed reading this coffee table book about the crew of imaginative geniuses that Walt Disney tapped to design & execute building Disneyland, I realize that it's not everyone's cup of tea. It reads more like a series of magazine profiles (mini-biographies) of the various Imagineers... I found myself wanting more detail and more stories.

At the same time, it's fascinating to me that Walt put the incredible level of trust he did in these people - and what an amazing legacy they've left in the parks.

Stephen says

This is a very mixed volume. For one, a lot of the information has been available before through video interviews, dvd bonus features and other books on the subject. The photographs and accompanying art though are often never-before-seen. The book seems hurried without a proper editor (this is not to say that Kurtti is not a good writer). The book could also use a designer that has a sense of text, spacing, page usage etc. I think it is a great volume for the disney enthusiast and historian- it really does accomplish what it sets out to do with the subject matter, and in the long run was not a disappointment to read.

Mark says

A great little book about some of the men & women who helped make the Disney Legend (the man and the company) as we know it today.
