

Global Project News

Selected stories from the newswire, compiled October 2007

Harry Potter Theme Park Attraction Set to Open in '09

Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. and Universal Orlando Resort are partnering to create the world's first fully immersive Harry Potter themed environment based on the bestselling books by J.K. Rowling and blockbuster feature films from Warner Bros. Envisioned as a "theme park within a theme park" and titled "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter," the new environment will become part of the experience within Universal's Islands of Adventure theme park at the Universal Orlando Resort.

"Over the years we've received thousands of letters from fans around the world wishing they could visit Hogwarts and the wonderful locations described in each of J.K. Rowling's beloved stories," said Barry Meyer, chairman and CEO, Warner Bros. Entertainment. "Working with Universal Orlando Resort, we are confident that we'll be able to provide Harry Potter fans with an incredible experience that upholds the richness of J.K. Rowling's books and delivers on the authentic detail portrayed in our films."

"We will rely on our company's rich movie heritage and expertise in transforming film concepts into theme park entertainment experiences," said Ron Meyer, president and COO, Universal Studios. "The Harry Potter stories are among the most compelling of our time. The millions of people who have read the books and seen the movies will now be able to experience the world of Harry Potter in person."

Inspired by J.K. Rowling's compelling stories and characters – and faithful to the visual landscapes of the films – "The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" will provide a one-of-a-kind opportunity to experience the magical world of Harry and his friends. The fully immersive, themed land will enable guests to visit some of the most iconic locations found in the books and the films including the village of Hogsmeade, the mysterious Forbidden Forest, and even Hogwarts castle itself.

"The plans I've seen look incredibly exciting, and I don't think fans of the books or films will be disappointed," said J.K. Rowling.

"We have a profound sense of responsibility for the Harry Potter franchise at Warner Bros. Bringing the magic of J.K. Rowling's written word

to the motion picture screen was the first step in expanding this amazing and imaginative world. Working with Universal Orlando Resort to bring it to life in a physical environment that you can walk through, relax in and ride on is the natural next step for fans to experience and enjoy," said Alan Horn, president and COO, Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

Expected to open in late 2009, the new environment will feature immersive rides and interactive attractions, as well as experiential shops and restaurants that will enable guests to sample fare from the wizarding world's best known establishments. Also debuting will be a state-of-the-art attraction that will bring the magic, characters and stories of Harry Potter to life in an exciting way that guests have never before experienced.

"We are going to devote more time, more money, more expertise and more executive talent from throughout our entire organization and creative team – as well as from Warner Bros., our partners – to ensure that this entire environment is second-to-none," said Tom Williams, chairman and CEO, Universal Parks and Resorts.

The Academy Award-winning production designer Stuart Craig, who has worked to bring



Harry Potter scene rendering courtesy of Universal Studios

the world of Harry Potter to life in all of the feature films to date, leads the creative design for the area to ensure it remains faithful to the look and feel of the films.

"Our primary goal is to make sure this experience is an authentic extension of Harry Potter's world as it is portrayed in the books and films," said Craig. "I am very excited to be working closely with the Universal Orlando team to bring the area to life."

Ruwaad and Paramount Licensing Announce Long-Term Licensing Arrangement for the Creation of a Themed Destination in the UAE

Real estate, hospitality and tourism investment and development company Ruwaad Holdings and Paramount Licensing Inc. announced a long-term licensing agreement in connection with Ruwaad's development of a Paramount Pictures-branded theme park in the United Arab Emirates. The development would be part of a \$2.5 billion destination that will incorporate boutique hotels and resorts, large themed retail areas and adjoining lifestyle properties.

Under the licensing arrangement, International Destination Brands Limited, an affiliate of Ruwaad Holdings will be responsible for funding development for the large-scale destination.

Paramount Licensing will not invest funds, but instead provide access to the vast Paramount Pictures' intellectual property library – one of the largest of any Hollywood

studio – and its intellectual capital through the oversight of planning and design aspects.

The Paramount Pictures-branded theme park would be the entertainment hub of the family destination, featuring rides, shows, and attractions based on its rich Hollywood heritage and library of motion picture titles. The theme park would benefit from Paramount Pictures' stable of new titles, which would provide the basis for the development of new rides and attractions. It would also be the first-in-the-world to have a unique blend of Hollywood, Bollywood and Arabian motion picture entertainment content to address the family entertainment needs of existing and future global tourism trends.

Ruwaad and Paramount Licensing are also exploring other developments in select countries within the Middle East and elsewhere.

"The UAE is a spectacular center of growing commerce, tourism and entertainment and we look forward to working together to bring a taste of Paramount and Hollywood to this dynamic market," said Michael Bartok, Executive Vice President and head of Paramount Licensing.

"The long-term scope and scale of this alliance confirms Ruwaad's and its affiliates' place as one of the leading developers in the global tourism and destination development industry," said Hayan Merchant, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ruwaad Holdings. "Such projects provide a tremendous platform to achieve solid investment returns. Historically, destinations of this nature create far more sustainable returns to retail, hospitality, commercial



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and residential investments than those properties would receive outside of such a development."

Darrell Metzger, CEO of Ruwaad Destinations, will manage the development aspects of the project. A renowned international expert in the destination development industry, Metzger has held leadership positions at the Walt Disney Co., the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, and, most recently, the Sentosa Islands in Singapore. Metzger is also the Vice-Chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA).

Ruwaad Holdings is a real estate, hospitality and tourism investment and development company dedicated to creating iconic destinations with a strong focus on entertainment, hospitality and lifestyle in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Established in 2006, Ruwaad Holdings is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Dubai 9 Group, a UAE-based investment company with holdings in Australia, China, North Africa, East Africa, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE.

Paramount Pictures Corporation (PPC), a global producer and distributor of filmed entertainment, is a unit of Viacom (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), a leading content company with prominent and respected film, television and digital entertainment brands. Paramount Licensing handles licensing rights worldwide for properties of Paramount Pictures, DreamWorks Studios, Paramount Vantage, Nickelodeon Movies and MTV Films.


Warner Bros. Entertainment, Aldar and Abu Dhabi Media Co. Ally to Develop Theme Park, Cinemas, Film Projects

Warner Bros. Entertainment along with Abu Dhabi's leading and fully integrated real estate developer ALDAR and the newly established Abu Dhabi Media Company have formed a long-term, multi-faceted strategic alliance calling for the creation of a theme park and hotel, jointly owned multiplex cinemas, a co-finance agreement covering feature film production and the development and publication of videogames, and the build-out of the infrastructure for Abu Dhabi's digital transformation. The deal was unveiled Sept 26, 2007 by Barry Meyer, Chairman & CEO and Alan Horn, President & COO, Warner Bros.; Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, Chairman and Ronald Barrott, CEO, ALDAR; Mohammed Khalaf Al Mazrouei, Chairman and Riyadh Al Mubarak, CEO, Abu Dhabi Media Co.; and Hunt Lowry, who brought the two parties together and will serve as the CEO of the yet-to-be-named film company formed by this venture.

"We look forward to working alongside ALDAR and the Abu Dhabi Media Company to not only create an exciting and unique cultural destination in Abu Dhabi, but to have the opportunity to extend the Warner Bros. businesses and brand throughout the region," said Meyer.


"From theme parks to hotels and cinemas, this agreement will put Abu Dhabi at the center of the world's entertainment map," said Al Mazrouei.

For the hotel and theme park project, Warner Bros. Entertainment will rely on its vast experience in character and brand marketing and licensing, drawing on select properties from its live-action and animated libraries, to provide themes for the overall project as well as individual attractions. Warner Bros. will also help develop and design the theme park based on its history in that arena, which includes the development, ownership and management of Warner Bros. Movie World theme parks and previous ownership of and ongoing licensing agreement with Six Flags theme parks in the United States. ALDAR will coordinate and oversee physical construction of both the theme park and hotel. Groundbreaking on the theme park and hotel is expected in 2009.



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"Entertainment is a powerful tool for differentiating a community," added Al Mubarak. "We are delighted to be working with regional and international market leaders on this project, which will put Abu Dhabi on the global entertainment map."

Warner Bros. International Cinemas will develop, design and manage jointly owned multiplex cinemas in Abu Dhabi to be built by ALDAR. Initial plans call for the construction of four cinemas, in Al Ruwais, Al Ain, Yas Island and Central Market in Abu Dhabi, which will be Warner Bros.-branded and themed, featuring iconic characters and titles from Warner Bros.' classic and contemporary film libraries. Groundbreaking on the multiplex cinemas at the Central Market Development has occurred and they are due to open first quarter of 2010.

The film production fund, a 50-50 venture, calls for the development and production of mutually agreed-upon, broad-appeal films, with Warner Bros. retaining worldwide distribution options/rights. Separate from this arrangement, Warner Bros. Pictures International will work with Abu Dhabi Media Company to develop and produce a slate of Arabic-language films for local and pan-Arabic distribution.

In addition, under the interactive games part of this deal which will be overseen by WBHEG, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment will serve as publisher and hold worldwide distribution rights on all gaming properties (based on both Warner Bros.-owned brands and titles and third-party properties) created under this first-of-its-kind fund. Approximately a dozen game are currently in various stages of development and publishing as part of the agreement; the first games published as part of the deal are "Looney Tunes: ACME Arsenal" for X-Box 360, Wii and PlayStation 2 and the accompanying "Duck Amuck" on Nintendo DS with a domestic release date of October 9 and distribution throughout the EMEA region on November 30, 2007.

Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Group brings together Warner Bros. Entertainment's home video, digital distribution, interactive entertainment/ videogames, direct-to-DVD production, technical operations and anti-piracy businesses in order to maximize current and next-generation distribution scenarios. WBHEG is responsible for the global distribution of content through DVD, electronic sell-through and transactional VOD, and delivery of theatrical content to wireless and online channels, and is also a significant worldwide publisher of videogame titles. ■■■■



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