

Disneyland's Diamond Celebration: A Disneyland Park Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Let's face it, a 60th anniversary is a big deal for anyone, and even more so when it happens to a Disney park.

We all knew the Diamond Celebrations for Disneylan's 60th birthday this year would be something well worth seeing.

As soon as you arrive at Disneyland, the diamond theme is everywhere you look, with banners and decorations all over. The castle, in particular, looks stunning, both at night and during the day, and it's well worth the wait for a Photopass photographer to get a shot of your group in front of it.

□ The main focus is on night-time shows and entertainment, with two (following one after the other) in the Disneyland Park, and the other in the California Adventure. Paint the Night is the new after-dark parade in the Disneyland Park, and it's head and shoulders above any other similar parade you've ever seen. When the Disneyland website tells you it's the "biggest, brightest and most vibrant parade in the history of Disneyland Park", they are not joking. I'd take that one step further and say it's actually the biggest, brightest and most vibrant of any Disney park.

□ My favourite individual float was Cars, the one used on all the Disney publicity material, although I also loved the ones for Toy Story, the Little Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast. And for anyone with a younger fan of Frozen in the family, don't worry, of course there's a float in there, featuring Anna, Elsa and Olaf. My goodness, I can't imagine Disney getting away without a Frozen element in pretty much anything they do now. Of course, it's all rounded off by Mickey, appropriately enough, given it all started with a mouse…

As soon as the parade finishes, you've only got a few minutes before the sky bursts into life with the fireworks from Disneyland Forever. I was cynical about this, as my husband and I watched the fireworks on our first visit to Disneyland together back in 2006. We got to the end, looked at each other and said "was that it?" You definitely couldn't say that about this.

□ It's not just a show in the sky though, with images beamed on to the buildings of Main Street, the Matterhorn, Rivers of America and "it's a small world", complementing the storyline. I found it hard to know

where to look, there's just so much to take in. It is worth thinking carefully about where to watch Paint the Night from, given you won't have much time to move in between the shows. We selected a spot halfway along Main Street USA, thanks to friends who had done the same thing the night before, and it worked beautifully.

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□The other night-time show is in Disney's California Adventure, a special version of World of Color called Celebrate! The Wonderland World of Walt Disney. As the name suggests, it's a completely different show, and any Disney fan needs a tissue or two, as this focuses on Walt's life, and his amazing achievements. As with the regular show, it weaves in projections on water, using nearly 1,200 fountains, and really has to be seen to be believed. If you can, the World of Color dining package is the way to go. We ate beforehand at the Carthay Circle Restaurant, which we love, and that gives you centre stage viewing. We turned up about 10 minutes before show time, and had a perfect view.

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□One bit of entertainment we didn't get to see was the Diamond Mad T Party. In fairness, we'd seen another version of this over the holiday season in 2012, and it was something that didn't do much for us. For those who are curious, it's a dance party, but with a twist, as the Mad Hatter and Alice are on vocals, the March Hare is on bass, with the Cheshire Cat on drums -- you get the idea, it's all Alice in Wonderland themed.

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□One disappointment for me was the 60th anniversary merchandise. I'm used to high prices at Disney, but to me, some were just pushed far too much here. I fell in love with one women's long sleeved top, but it was \$99! I was told by a Cast Member, it was because of what it was made of, but there is no way I can ever justify spending that much on one top. In general, I felt men had a better selection than women, and I saw quite a few items for children that I would have liked to have seen in an adult size. If you are going for the diamond anniversary, and want a souvenir, be prepared for higher prices than you may be used to.

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□Something that was fun and only cost the price of a Photopass package were the pictures with backdrops of some of the most popular rides in each park. In total, there were six, and I only knew about this because a friend showed off the photos she got on Facebook. In the Disneyland Park, you can get shots done of the Matterhorn, Big Thunder (both of which we did) and the Haunted Mansion (which tragically we only realised we missed after we left), while in the California Adventure, the three are California Screamin' (which we deliberately missed, never having ridden it), It's a Bug's Life and the Grizzly River Run, which was perhaps my favourite one out of all of them. Definitely take the time to seek them out, as they are a lot of fun!

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□ There are also some diamond celebration food and drinks, although I didn't sample any of those on our trip. It included cocktails, limited souvenir popcorn baskets, cupcakes and desserts. The only time I could have tried a cupcake was at breakfast, and I couldn't face the thought of one that early. I am bitterly disappointed that we couldn't fit a meal in at the Wine Country Trattoria though, as the Diamond tiramisu is definitely something I would have sampled!

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□ If you're getting the impression it was a struggle to fit in all the diamond celebrations, you'd be right. We had just three short nights at Disneyland, and it wasn't enough to see everything they're doing to mark this momentous occasion. With hindsight, I'd have wanted to add at least another day and night in to do everything justice. What we saw was wonderful, and a lot of it warranted a second viewing. If you're heading to Disneyland to be part of the diamond fun, I doubt you'll come away disappointed.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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