

# The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco - Part 2: A Walt Disney Attraction Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In the second part of this [series of articles](#) looking at the Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco, you join me just as the story of Walt has progressed to him arriving in Hollywood, and starting to hit the big time.

□The focus here, perhaps unsurprisingly, is on the animated classics he was developing, and this was a theme that continued on for some time throughout the museum as well. Firstly, they take you through the individual images the artists create, with one side of the room given over to almost 350 frame enlargements from Steamboat Willie. It really is mind boggling to stare at this collection, and then see that this made up less than 15 seconds of motion picture. I know I wouldn't have the patience for something like this, and it made me eternally grateful that people, like Walt, were and were able to create things like this.

The attention then turns to music, and the important role that plays in any movie, be it animation or not. Now, unlike many modern museums, there weren't hands-on displays at this point, as you might expect. In fact, the Walt Disney Family Museum is, in many ways, a very traditional one, and as such, I'm not sure how much it might hold the attention of younger visitors. There's certainly lots to look at, and lots to read, but there isn't much interaction, although in truth, that wasn't a problem for us, as we were fascinated by everything we were seeing.

□The next room at the Walt Disney Family Museum takes you into what can perhaps be described as the most successful phase of Walt's life, including such achievements as the release of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, and the subsequent industry awards he received for this, along with the establishment of his own company. This room was very deceptive, as when we first walked in, we thought it was quite small. How wrong we were! As we wandered our way around, paying careful attention to every display in here, we realized that in fact the room wound its way on, and you cleverly moved from one section to another, almost without noticing.

□Once again, I loved seeing all the animated drawings in this room, as it really brought home to me the immense talent, not just of Walt, but also of everyone who worked with him. It was a real treat to be able to admire these artist's rendering close-up, and I will admit to spending some time, standing in front of them, just staring at them, and wishing I

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had a fraction of that talent to create something this amazing.

If you're a Disney fan, a lot of what you learn in the Walt Disney Family Museum will probably be things you're already familiar with, but don't let that lull you into a false sense of security. I've read a lot of books and articles about Walt, and I still came away learning plenty about the man, and his work. One of the things that sticks in my mind were the photographs of the artists at his studio studying animals, as Walt used some of the profits from Snow White and the Seven Dwarves to ensure his artists received more training. I never knew that, although of course, it didn't come as a surprise that Walt re-invested in his workforce.

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□ He also invested in new studios, and I loved reading the menu from the studio restaurant, which somehow made everything seem more personal. That's one of the things I loved about this museum, the way that they managed to personalize everything you saw. Also in this section were some of the models they used for their next features, including Bambi and Pinocchio, and a bit like the drawings in the previous room, what stuck with me with how realistic, and expressive each one was. They were so good at the attention to detail, and capturing every aspect of whichever animal they were working on.

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□ After a brief interlude into Fantasia, a Disney film I am ashamed to say I've never watched in full (one day!), then you rounded a corner, and thematically, Walt's life also turned a corner here, which was a nice touch. This was the tougher part of his life, and a part I knew nothing about, so it was a real treat to me to learn new facts about him. One of the things that stuck with me was the strike that hit the studios, and they had posters, and leaflets from the strikers, who seemed to be extremely well organized.

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□ This led into the period of the Second World War, and again I had no idea that Walt and Lily had made a goodwill visit to South America during the war. I was aware of the support the studios had given to the war effort in terms of promotional material, both posters and films, and they have plenty of examples of the posters here.

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□ The next room at the Walt Disney Family Museum highlights the various productions of the studios of the post-war years, and it's a great reminder of just how many classics came out in this period. There are constantly rotating images of them at the top of the wall, then below, more original drawings, and again, the detail in them really was something.

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□ At this point, I thought this was the end of the museum, as my

geography was telling me we'd come to the end of the top floor. How on earth I thought this, given how much of Walt's life there was still to explore, I'm not sure, but let's just say I was very wrong! In the third, and final, part of this series of articles, we'll be exploring the remainder of the Walt Disney Family Museum, and you can find out just how much more there was to experience from this point onwards.

*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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