

The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco - Part 3: A Walt Disney Attraction Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In the final part of this [series of articles](#) looking at the Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco, we've just passed what I thought was the end to the museum, a room that takes an in-depth look at many of Walt's animated classics from the 1950s and early 1960s. However, there was still much more to enjoy.

□ You move into, perhaps appropriately, the smallest room of the whole museum, which focuses on Walt's love of creating miniatures, and having read about this in some of Jim Korkis' exceptionally detailed books, it was fascinating to be able to see them for myself close-up.

From here, you round a corner, and what you see next is truly beautiful, and also a wonderful surprise. As such, I won't spoil it here, but I'll just say get your cameras ready! It was very cleverly done, and you could see a lot of thought had been put into creating this museum to ensure that visitors got the best possible experience.

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□ As you make your way down the ramp back towards the lower level, you find perhaps one of the most emotive items in the whole collection, for me anyway. It's one of the original benches from Griffith Park, and any Disney fan will know that's where Walt used to sit and watch his daughters play, and according to his own words, where he came up with the idea for Disneyland, so whole families could play together. I got quite a lump in my throat seeing it, and that's something you should be prepared for, as this museum does have a lot of emotion within it, particularly towards the end…

□ Now it's time for the section on Disneyland, for my money, amazing as all the other rooms and displays had been so far, to me, this was the one that really stood out. I honestly stood there with my mouth hanging open in awe, as I took in the scene before me. The centrepiece was an amazing model of the park, complete with a commentary from Walt himself, which takes you through each different land. Just in case you're not a Disney fan, the land being discussed lights up in time with his words, which was a lovely touch, so that no-one would feel left out.

As you descended into this area, via a circular ramp, there was so much more to see, including Walt's own personal railroad, the Carolwood Pacific, and the plans for Disneyland. In particular, I loved seeing the famous Disneyland drawing. For those of you who haven't heard the

story of this, essentially Herb Ryman was asked by Walt to put this together, and he did, with Walt's help, over the course of a weekend. You may have previously seen the drawing, without realizing the significance of it.

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□ There are also numerous photos of the construction of Disneyland, along with a car from Autopia, and those famous books of A to E tickets. Although I've been fortunate enough to see those before at an exhibition in Disneyland, I still love seeing these, having heard about them for so many years, before I finally clapped eyes on them.

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□ From here, the story continues through Walt's involvement with the Squaw Valley Winter Olympics of 1960, something else I knew nothing of before our visit, before heading into the section about the World's Fair. Given that this had some true Disney classic rides, I felt it was given the prominence it deserved, with souvenir maps, photos, and models of those attractions.

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□ Sadly, given when the World's Fair took place, I could tell that we were indeed finally heading to the end of the museum, as it charts Walt's life beautifully. The final room was by far the most emotional of all, and I'm sure not just for me, commemorating Walt's all too early death. I don't mind admitting I was moved to tears here, and I was very glad that the museum was relatively quiet on the day we visited, so no-one else could see.

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□ Although this is the final room of Walt's life, there is one final one that gives you a short reminder of everything he did, and achieved through photos, and the one thing that again comes through here is family. The Walt Disney Family Museum is certainly appropriately named, as family flows through everything you see here.

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□ So as a Disney fan, how did I find the museum? I will be honest, I came here with very high expectations, having heard great things about it from friends who had previously visited. I was worried perhaps it wouldn't live up to those expectations, but how wrong I was. It's a perfect tribute to an exceptional man. The best way I can describe it for those who haven't been fortunate enough to visit is that it's a bit like One Man's Dream in Disney's Hollywood Studios, but expanded, so that it fills hours of your time.

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□ Talking of time, it took us approximately two hours to get around everything, and I felt that was a good pace, as I got to spend sufficient time in every room, just taking in all the exhibits, and learning more about Walt. I certainly wouldn't have wanted any less time than that.

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□ The only disappointment to me here was the shop, as everything seemed pretty expensive, even compared to Disney prices. I wanted a fridge magnet for our collection, but I drew the line at spending \$14 on one, so we left empty handed. They did have a superb range of books here, although they were all big coffee table style books, so if you're flying, they may send your case over its weight limit. As a result, we didn't buy any here.

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□ Tickets are \$20/adults, \$15 for seniors and students, \$12/ages 6-17, while those under the age of six are admitted free of charge. It's also well worth checking out the calendar on the museum website before your visit to see whether there are any special exhibitions, film showings or talks on when you're visiting. The museum is located at 104 Montgomery Street in the Presidio, CA 94129.

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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