

# Park premieres

Excitement abounds with new openings at some of the world's top theme parks, find **Alice Barnes-Brown** and **India-Jayne Trainor**

It's shaping up to be an unforgettable year for theme park thrill seekers, with new attractions for everyone from big kids to tiny tots, meaning there's always something exciting to discover.

One colossal opening is leading the charge: Universal's Epic Universe. As Universal Orlando's most ambitious project yet, this new park will contain five immersive worlds, including Super Nintendo World, Dark Universe and How to Train Your Dragon – Isle of Berk.

It may be the one on everyone's lips, but it's far from the only new attraction. Families can look forward to PortAventura's 30th anniversary, a new Minion Land at Universal Studios Singapore and Busch Gardens Tampa Bay's toddler-friendly

Wild Oasis, to name just a few. Discover what's new at some of the world's most popular theme parks to help sell a first-time trip or a return visit.

## A WHOLE NEW WORLD

New themed lands are adding entire areas to discover. Universal Studios Singapore, on the tropical island of Sentosa, opened Minion Land last month, where guests can explore Gru's Neighbourhood, Minion Marketplace and Super Silly Fun Land, along with a party-themed carousel the Buggie Boogie, which is exclusive to the Singapore park.

If your clients – and their kids – are Frozen fans, 2026 will see a €2 billion expansion to Paris's Walt Disney Studios Park. World of Frozen, already ➤

Dark Universe,  
Universal's Epic Universe





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Paw Patrol room, Land of Legends, Nickelodeon Hotels & Resorts, Turkey; Efteling Grand Hotel, Netherlands; Minion Land at Universal Studios Singapore; play area at Land of Legends **PICTURES:** Disney Enterprises; Resorts World Sentosa

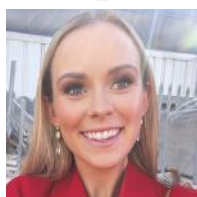
open in Hong Kong Disneyland and Tokyo Disney Resort, will transport guests to the Nordic wonderland of Arendelle, complete with Elsa's Ice Palace, Arendelle Village and Scandi-style shops and food outlets.

Meanwhile, the biggest-ever expansion of Magic Kingdom is underway at Florida's Walt Disney World. A new *Cars*-themed land within Frontierland is set to bring Route 66's Radiator Springs to life, featuring two new attractions.

A much-anticipated Villains Land is also in the works, promising a dark twist on classic Disney storytelling. The foreboding attraction will focus on 13 major Disney villains, from Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty* to Aladdin's enemy Jafar. In the meantime, new night-time parade Disney Starlight is coming to Magic Kingdom this year.

Looking further ahead, the 'house of mouse' also plans to introduce Monstropolis at Disney's Hollywood Studios in Orlando, an area themed on hit film franchise *Monsters, Inc.* This will be followed in 2027 by a Tropical Americas area in Disney's Animal Kingdom, inspired by the misty equatorial highlands and dusty plains depicted in *Encanto*.

Elsewhere in the Sunshine State, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay is soon to open a Wild Oasis zone aimed at younger visitors.



### Kelly Borrill, product and marketing manager, MagicBreaks

"The next 12 months are going to be exciting for this sector, with Universal Orlando opening Epic Universe in May, and Disneyland Paris set to debut its long-awaited World of Frozen in 2026. At MagicBreaks, we continue to see strong demand for Disneyland Paris, Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando, but it's exciting to see growing interest in theme park holidays to destinations such as Efteling in the Netherlands and PortAventura World in Spain. My biggest tip is to broaden your audience: theme park holidays aren't just for families. There's a market for couples, groups of friends and even solo travellers, so tailoring your approach to target different demographics can make all the difference."

Little ones will be able to explore a new multi-species habitat featuring an array of colourful birds and cute capybaras.

### STAY AND PLAY

Every great theme park trip needs a good hotel to rest your head afterwards and several new options are opening this year. In Antalya, Turkey, the Land of Legends park launched Nickelodeon Land earlier this month, complete with three fun-filled areas and a Nickelodeon Hotels & Resorts property. Colourful and themed rooms are inspired by popular Nickelodeon shows including

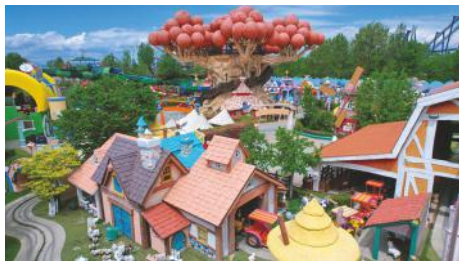
*SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Paw Patrol*, *Dora the Explorer* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, plus there are interactive play areas and character dining as part of the Club Nick kids' club.

Land of Legends managing director Semih Elbaba says: "Guests staying at all Rixos properties in Antalya have complimentary, unlimited access to the theme park – taking away the additional cost of park admission."

Over in the Netherlands, the folklore-inspired Efteling park will open its first hotel within the park on August 1. The fairytale-esque Efteling Grand Hotel will feature two restaurants, including

## DESTINATIONS

### THEME PARKS & ATTRACTIONS | WHAT'S NEW



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Gardaland's Fantasy Kingdom, Italy; Gardaland castle, Italy; Parc Astérix, France; AlpenFury at Canada's Wonderland

a magic-themed brasserie, as well as 140 rooms and suites where families can wake up to views of Efteling's rides and water shows. For grown-ups, wellness facilities include a spa with a pool, sauna and steam bath.

#### SKY-HIGH THRILLS

Adrenaline junkies have a plethora of new options this year. Canada's Wonderland, near Toronto, is unveiling AlpenFury, which will be Canada's longest, tallest and fastest launch coaster. Riders will be propelled vertically from Wonder Mountain, before hurtling through twists and turns at speeds of more than 70mph.

Closer to home, Celtic-inspired spinning coaster Cétautomatix is coming to France's Parc Astérix this May. The premise of the attraction is that riders will be 'testing' a range of rotating chariots on behalf of a fictional Roman blacksmith. With a minimum height requirement of just one metre, it's an exciting yet accessible experience for families.

Closer to home, earlier this month Alton Towers launched the exhilarating Toxicator ride – a towering 23m spinning swing that is the first of its kind in the UK.

#### WATERY WONDERS

New openings in the world of water parks are also making a splash. Set in a canyon outside

AlpenFury will be Canada's longest, tallest and fastest launch coaster

Riyadh, Aquarabia is set to open towards the end of this year and will be Saudi Arabia's biggest water park, featuring 22 rides and experiences ranging from a cooling wave pool to extreme rafting adventures. Plus, Virgin Atlantic launches flights to Riyadh this week, making it easier for British travellers to get to the Saudi capital.

European theme parks are also set for a wet and wild summer. Gardaland, on the shores of Italy's Lake Garda, is welcoming a new water-based dark ride called Animal Treasure Island, which will see families travel through 20 animated scenes.

France's Futuroscope, meanwhile, is debuting Mission Bermudes in June: the innovative water-based rollercoaster navigates steep climbs and swaying turns to simulate the mysterious power of the Bermuda Triangle.

With so much in store, agents have plenty of appealing new attractions they can use to sell a theme park break. The only question will be which one to pick. **TW**

#### BOOK IT

**EasyJet holidays** sells seven nights' full-board at the Land of Legends Nickelodeon Hotels & Resorts Antalya from £2,065 per person, based on two adults and two children sharing. Includes luggage, transfers and flights on August 6. [easyjet.com/holidays](https://easyjet.com/holidays)

**Efteling** offers three nights at Efteling Bosrijk holiday village from £1,184 for a family of four sharing a Premium Room Landhuys in July, including a four-day park ticket. [efteling.com](https://efteling.com)

**Jet2holidays** offers seven nights' half-board at the Ponient Pirámide Salou by PortAventura World from £958 per person, based on two adults and two children sharing. Includes 22kg luggage each, transfers and flights on July 24. [jet2holidays.com](https://jet2holidays.com)

**French Leave Holidays** offers a night's B&B at Le Cité Suspendue hotel at Parc Asterix for £719 for two adults and two children between three and 11. The price includes two-day theme park passes and Le Shuttle tunnel crossing, departing May 26 or 27. [frenchleaveholidays.com](https://frenchleaveholidays.com)

**Ocean Florida** offers 14 nights at a High Grove villa, a 15-minute drive from Walt Disney World, from £1,069 per person, based on eight sharing. Includes flights from Heathrow in October, plus entrance tickets to attractions worth \$435. [ocean-florida.co.uk](https://ocean-florida.co.uk)