

# Busch Gardens offers days of fun

Visitors to Busch Gardens Old Country in Williamsburg, Va., this summer will be doing things with their heads — holding them and scratching them.

The new thrill ride, the "Loch Ness Monster" will leave riders holding onto their heads, while Mark Wilson's new magic show, *The Magic of the Globe*, will have viewers scratching their heads in amazement.

The "Loch Ness Monster," described as an "insidious technological mutation," features vertical and interlocking loops along with one of the steepest roller-coaster drops in the world.

Mark Wilson's show features a big cast, an original musical score and a script by a former *Laugh In* writer. The set designer did the *Ed Sullivan Show* and now does *Donny & Marie*. And the lighting director lists *Beatlemania* and tours by the Rolling Stones and Kiss rock groups to his credits.

Not to mention the magic. Wilson's show quarters in the Globe Theatre in the English section of the park. Will Shakespeare himself appears, disappears and reappears several times.

Three — not one but three — girls are dissected, only to be re-membered with each other's members.

Another girl is shot from a cannon, only to reappear somewhere else . . . while an associate exhibits the fine art of passing through a plate of glass.

Finally, a motorcycle vanishes without a trace.

Also new in this summer in the Old Country is *Circus Europa*, a family-style extravaganza in the tradition of the one-ring traveling shows of yore . . . with jugglers, acrobats, clowns and the Mongrel Revue, a trained puppy act. It will alternate with *Le Music Hall*, a Broadway-Las Vegas style revue. Both are staged in the open-air round in the Three Musketeers Theatre in the park's French Village.

But not everything will be new this summer in the Old Country. Bill Baird's marionettes will be back again to perform in *Once Upon a Dragon*, a medieval melodrama complete with maidens in distress, false-fanged dragons and an assortment of other heroes and villains.

And, of course, there is Oktoberfest, which features an hourly show of Bavarian bravado inside Das Festhaus. It's strictly sing, dance and toast along — "Ein, Zwei, Drei, Prosit" — as The Old Country schuhplatt troupe perform in the mammoth hall, surrounded by hundreds of visitors enjoying authentic German foods and beverages.

Outside Das Festhaus, pandemonium reigns on the "Glissade," a spring-tight steel roller coaster. On the other side of Oktoberfest, "Die Wildkatze," a different type of German-built coaster, keeps the spirit equally in a dither. In between are a half-dozen slightly milder courage challengers, including the "Red Baron," a kiddies-only contraption for reliving some of the epic air-to-air dog fights of early aviation history.

Elsewhere, theatrical productions include the Anheuser-Busch Bird Circus in *La Jolie Plume*, a sylvan open-air amphitheatre between Hastings and France . . . rousing blue grass music and authentic clog dancing in the Trappers' Village . . . a street puppet show in France . . . strolling jugglers, magicians and madrigal singers . . . and impromptu appearances by a small army of engaging costume characters.

Offsetting the high-style kicks of Oktoberfest, the park's neighboring German hamlet changes the pace with an antique carousel with 36 proud prancing stallions, remarkable shops and stores and a serene packet boat trip on a miniature Rhine River.

The Rhine River trip past banks abundant with wildlife is one of many ways to travel through The Old Country. Real steam locomotives — 36-inch-gauge antique replicas — stop at two stations, and take visitors through enchanted Virginia woodlands dense with wildlife.

An alpine skylift makes a triangular swath between the park's three main theme areas, providing spectacular views of the activities below.

A fleet of London double-decker buses ferry arriving visitors from outlying parking lots to the main gate.

The park's English hamlet, just inside the main entrance, is



"Le Scoot," the log flume ride at Busch Gardens.

an Elizabethan wonderland. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre is surrounded by a Tudor town full of quaint shops and restaurants.

Scotland, not far from England, is home for a family of kingly Clydesdale horses, main depot for the trans-park railway and scene of a continuous array of native entertainment . . . and, of course, the launching pad for the awesome "Loch Ness Monster." And for the wee ones who can't pass the height requirement to ride the Monster, there'll be a mini-Nessie in Scotland.

A drawbridge away, Hastings is a Norman-inspired action hub with a shooting gallery, penny arcade, restaurant and "The Catapult," an in-the-dark variation of the more familiar scrambler ride that comes alive when tense moments of the Battle of Hastings explode electronically on surrounding walls.

Hastings is also the place to see Bill Baird's *Once Upon A Dragon*.

France is a hop, skip and jump through the woods away. It's an assortment of jewelry, art and flower boutiques; a sidewalk restaurant with chicken and wine; street-corner artists; strolling musicians; a gourmet ice cream parlor; and LeMans — a road racecourse complete with hairpin turns, tunnels, bridges and old-style European raceabouts you drive yourself.

New France, next, is an encampment of log cabins and lean-tos. It's a showcase of authentic crafts, including a studio where visitors dress in old-time costumes and pose for tintype photos. And there's "Le Scoot" — with a final flirt with a "famished" sawmill blade and a 50-foot straight-down climax drop.

One admission price, \$8.75 per person (aged three and older), covers all rides, shows and attractions. Special two-day and night-time ticket plans also are available, as are group discount rates.

The Old Country is three miles east of historic Williamsburg. Take Interstate 64 to Route 199 and follow the directional signs.



A panoramic view of "Rhineland," a German hamlet in Busch Gardens.

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