

Mystic Manor ([Traditional Chinese](#): 迷離大宅)

Making of Mystic Manor with Imagineers and executives at Hong Kong Disneyland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjjV8ODNMWI&feature=youtu.be>



[Date of opening](#)

May 17, 2013.

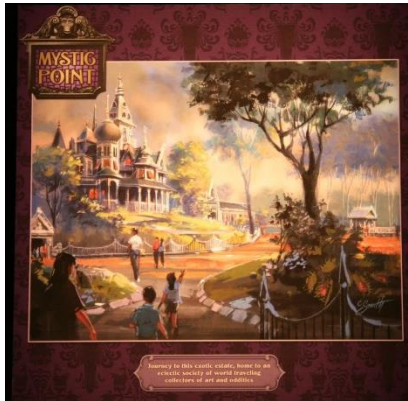
[Type of attraction](#)

Dark ride

Mystic Manor tells the story of Lord Henry Mystic and his monkey Albert. Having recently acquired an enchanted music box, Albert opens the box and brings everything inside the house to life.

[Park](#)

Hong Kong Disneyland.



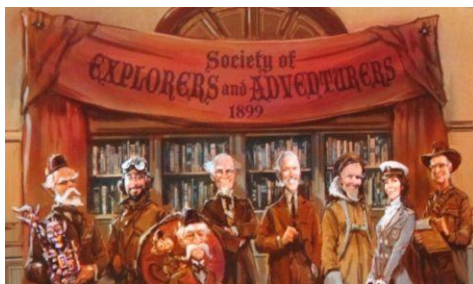
Theme Land
[Mystic Point](#) section

Continuation of the Society of Explorers and Adventurers theme of [Tokyo DisneySea](#)

'Journey to this exotic estate, home to an eclectic society of world traveling collectors of art and oddities'

Storyline World - Society of Explorers and Adventurers (S.E.A.), 1899

Mystic Manor is part of the world of the Society of Explorers and Adventurers, 1899



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We first heard of the Society of Explorers and Adventurers at [Tokyo DisneySea](#), where the group (take a moment to figure out its acronym...) plays prominent roles in several attractions inside the park. The Society makes its headquarters in the park's [Fortress Explorations](#) Citadel, which also serves as home to [Magellan's](#) restaurant, which one can consider the official Society dining room. But the Citadel's not the only Society presence in the Tokyo park. DisneySea's [Tower of Terror](#) attraction focuses on Society member [Harrison Hightower](#), a world explorer and antiques collector whose arrogance and contempt toward the ancient cultures he seeks becomes his undoing.

And there we find the conflict that animates this wonderful narrative. In [Fortress Explorations](#), we see how the Society inspires visitors with the wonder of scientific discovery. But in [Tower of Terror](#), we see the dark side of global exploration, when the greedy drive it toward exploitation of native people and their cultures instead. [Mystic Manor](#) introduces us to another Society member, Henry Mystic. Mystic's not as overtly evil as Hightower. If anything, Mystic's sin seems more of benign neglect -- failing to properly control his monkey assistant, Albert, who unleashes the potentially destructive magic of Mystic's artifact collection during our visit to the Manor.

With its conflicts in [Tower of Terror](#) and [Mystic Manor](#), Disney's Society of Explorers and Adventurers' narrative echoes epic tales of discovery and of conflict between civilizations at first contact. And it does so while introducing notes of the supernatural, an archetypal element that's driven stories since the beginning of time. This isn't a single narrative driving a single attraction. It's an epic tableau, with the potential to drive a limitless number of attractions around the world.

What Disney has created so far tantalizes visitors with the suggestion of many more members of the Society of Explorers and Adventurers, with epically engaging conflicts of their own, all as yet to be discovered by us. By doing so, Disney's created space in its as-yet under-developed Society narrative for our own imaginations to fill in, further engaging us in the story. True interactivity isn't simply triggering a special effect. It's causing us to become emotionally and intellectually engaged in a narrative, helping to craft and move it along, even if we're the only ones who see it happen. Disney's accomplished that grand task with the Society of Explorers and Adventurers.

The story of Mystic Point– Imagineer style

For Hong Kong Disneyland, Schirmer and his Imagineering team crafted an elaborate story inspired by some of the most widely-enjoyed Disney attractions of all time, knowing that what they were creating would immediately be compared to The Haunted Mansion.

“We actually embraced that,” Schirmer admitted. “That was one of the things we took on as a challenge from a design point of view. On one hand we wanted to go back to classic Disney roots and figure out what is it that was done in the days that Walt developed The Haunted Mansion and Pirates of the Caribbean, or some of the great dark rides, and we wanted to go back to that, which was obviously core storytelling.”

But in today’s high-tech society, it wouldn’t be good enough to simply rehash the past. Disney wanted to create something that had never been seen before.

“The idea of this brand new story and brand new characters – that was something that we really wanted to dive into, but at the same time bring it forward to 21st century and really embellish it with state-of-the-art special effects. So that combination of the old and new was really something we were going after.” And so began the tale of Mystic Point.

Schirmer said it all started when Imagineers decided on the topic of world travel and exploration. “I think that set the stage for us to go forward and really get into the backstory of Mystic Point. Using that, obviously developing the character Lord Henry Mystic, [...] and setting it back in 1908, is the essence where we’re taking you back,” explained Schirmer. From there, the backstory of Mystic Point was developed, as Schirmer tells it:

On one of his expeditions he basically fell in love with this location – this uncharted tropical wilderness – and wanted to stake his claim, make his home there. So he cleared out part of the jungle along the river bank and built this Victorian manor. He’s obviously a well to-do British gentleman and he wanted a little bit of home in this tropical wilderness. He started with the essence of a Victorian manor but of course wanted to embellish it with all the different places that he’s been. So it’s this eclectic Victorian manor sitting in this cleared out jungle along the river.

While he was there, that’s where he met and actually rescued his traveling companion, a young monkey that he named Albert, after one of his beloved uncles. Between finding this location and meeting his now lifelong pal and companion Albert, this is really the essence of Mystic Point.

Continuing that idea through, we wanted to tell the story about his collection. Anyone willing to make this hard journey and stumble on or find Mystic Point, he – being kind of a philanthropic character – wanted to open the doors of his home to showcase his collection. And that’s what guests are coming to Mystic Point for, to showcase and be able to view the collection and also meet Lord Henry and Albert.

Mystic Point is comprised of multiple locations to explore, but the centerpiece is clearly the ornately decorated Mystic Manor, residence of Lord Henry Mystic and home to Hong Kong Disneyland’s newest ride.

Storyline Mystic Manor

Music & storyline continues the Society of Explorers and Adventurers theme of [Tokyo DisneySea](#)

Sure Harrison Hightower might give S.E.A. a bad name, but a visit to Mystic Manor across the sea at Hong Kong Disneyland will help you see the bright side of this international organization. Lord Henry Mystic is just the saving grace that S.E.A. needed. Lord Mystic toured the world just as fervently, stumbling upon many cultures and locales and all the while collecting his treasures the old-fashioned way: without stealing them. The kindly fellow did just as much exploring as Hightower, but made a lot more friends in the process, including the mischievous monkey Albert, whom he saved from a giant spider somewhere in the African jungle.

When Lord Mystic decided it was high time to retire from S.E.A. and his expeditions, he took one final journey to Peru where he built himself an elaborate hilltop Victorian mansion. The mesmerizing architecture of Mystic Manor (featuring elements from many different cultures around the world all combined together) well represents the experience within, where Lord Mystic and Albert welcome guests to tour their collection of treasures. It is supposed to be 1908 and Lord Mystic is still alive and exploring the world. He is inviting us to this remote outpost in the Jungle. Mystic has a friendly companion, a monkey called Albert.

Waiting line

98% of guests visiting Hong Kong Disneyland have seen probably only one or two print ads or commercials on television presented by the main stream media that they are exposed to before ever entering the park. This means in order to immerse them into the story, they need to be exposed to [certain pieces of information](#) before they set foot on a ride vehicle.

In the waiting line a lot of photo's and artifacts can be found concerning Lord Henry Mystic, his Monkey Albert and the Society of Explorers and Adventurers (S.E.A.). According to legend, Mystic Manor was opened in 1896 by Lord Henry Mystic, an eccentric explorer who collects artifacts from all around the world. Mystic Point, the town where he built his estate, is still home to his private residence. Henry created a small annex to the side of his mansion for the public to enter through so they can admire his collection.






Once inside, guests can study pieces from Lord Henry's artifact collection that he has acquired over the years. More important than the artifacts are pictures and portraits hung around the gallery/queue. Not all items located within Mystic Manor are on display. A drummer idol Henry found in Tahiti was placed in his private residence. It bears a striking resemblance to drumming Tiki Gods found in Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room. Many times, instead of having an actual photograph of the item that Lord Henry collected, there was a painter there who would draw a portrait of the event.

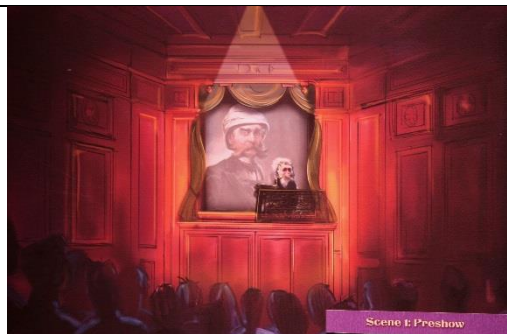
Albert seemed to go with Lord Henry everywhere he went. Regardless of the language you speak, you can start to tell that he is a bit of a trouble maker. Despite being a bit mischievous, you can tell Lord Henry and Albert have a genuine affection for each other. Lord Henry didn't only collect cultural artifacts to bring back to Mystic Manor, he was also interested in new technologies. The ENTIRE WAITING LINE CAN BE FOUND HERE: <http://dejiki.com/2013/12/hkdl-mystic-manor-queue-preshow/>

The day we happen to arrive, the newest piece to the collection is on display. A music box all the way from Bali. According to legend, once the box is opened and music starts playing, it can breathe life into inanimate objects. I believe we all know what may happen just by putting together the clues from the queue. It's all these subtle hints that make this such a [great attraction](#), regardless of what language you speak.

Storyboard

<p>Scene 0-1: Arrival</p>		 <p>The queue starts at the gate of the manor - a large Victorian mansion in an elaborate Queen Anne architectural style.</p>	
<p>Scene 0-2: Waiting Line</p>		<p>Guests enter the front garden and continue into the building. Inside, guests see a portrait of Lord Henry Mystic and Albert, Henry's adorable pet. Other pictures in the queue show how Henry met Albert, rescuing him from a large spider; the ribbon-cutting of Mystic Point in 1896; and an 1899 group portrait of the Society of Explorers and Adventurers (including Harrison Hightower and Shiriki Utundu of Tokyo DisneySea's Tower of Terror as well as Danny Elfman who composed a Musical Score for the ride).</p>	

Scene 1:
Preshow



Guests then enter the pre-show area where they watch a slide show narrated by Lord Mystic. He gives a short speech about the exhibition rooms and his latest collections, emphasizing an enchanted music box full of rare magic which must be opened with caution. From time to time, Albert appears in different corners of the pre-show.

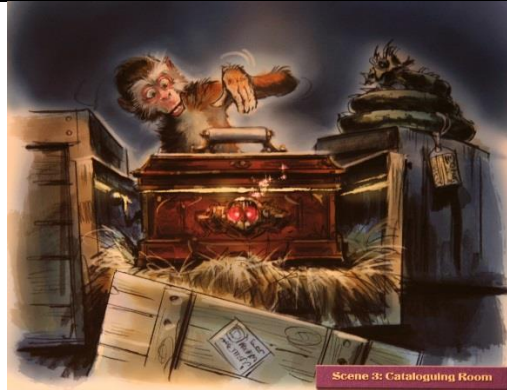


Scene 2:
Load

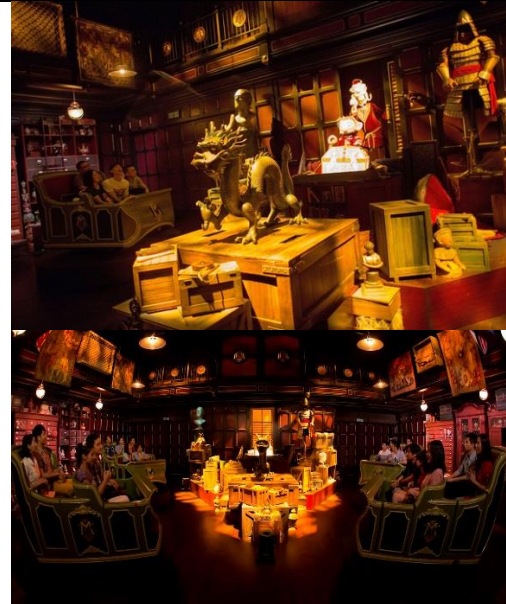


After the presentation, guests enter the loading area and board Henry's Mystic Magneto-Electric Carriages, the special vehicles he invented to take them on a tour of the museum. The attraction vehicles will be able to move in any directions or even spin.

Scene 3:
Cataloguing room



The first room, the **Acquisitions and Cataloguing Room**, is where Lord Mystic's collections are temporarily stored and await placement on shelves. The music box Lord Mystic mentioned is now in front of guests. Lord Mystic appears from a door in the middle of the room, looking for Albert. He greets the guests and acknowledges the music box before leaving to continue his search. Albert suddenly pops out and unlocks the box. And when he does, just like the box of "Pandora", the forces inside the box will be unleashed. A mysterious smoke will get out of it and will start to take over the different rooms. All the artifacts that guests will see in all the rooms will suddenly and magically come to life.



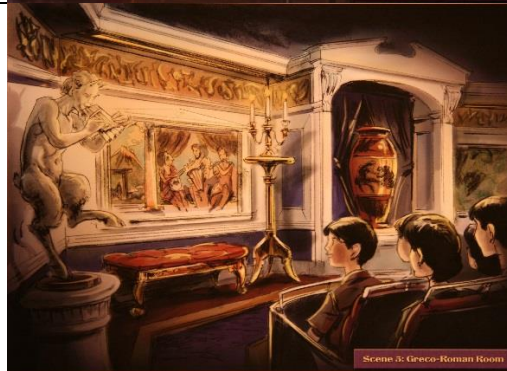
Scene 4:
Music room



In the **Music Room**, many exotic musical instruments are displayed. A harpsichord is placed in the center of the room. The magic dust gives life to instruments and music begins to play. The music follows the carriage and plays in the background for the remainder of the journey. Albert watches in fascination from atop a large [pipe organ](#), curious to visit the rest of the manor.



Scene 5:
Greco-Roman Room




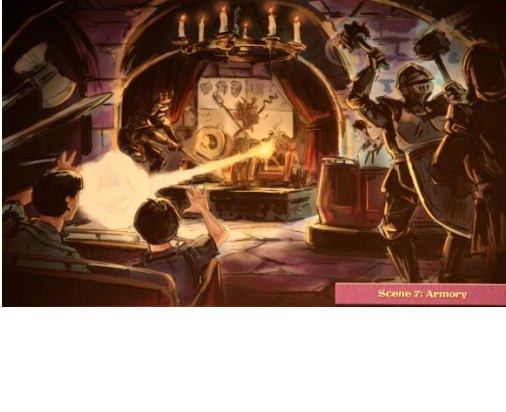

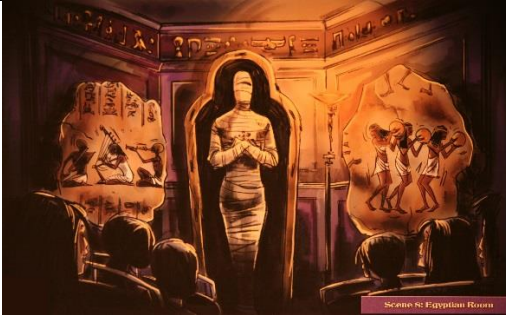
In the room for **Mediterranean Antiquities**, paintings, ceramics, and [Audio-Animatronic](#) statues start to move under the influence of the magic. The carriages first pass a painting portraying four people outside with a volcano visible in the background. As the magic affects the painting, the volcano erupts, submerging the people in lava, who then clink their glasses. The lava falls off of the scene to restart the animation for the next viewer. An [amphora](#) with [Hercules](#) actually fighting the [Nemean lion](#) spins and rocks when the carriage passes, and Hercules jumps above the lion and fights; the painting on the amphora is animated. The carriages then pass a large painting of a beautiful [Medusa](#) who morphs into a frightening [Gorgon](#), and her eyes flash before turning back to the beautiful woman. A brief snake rattle is heard to foreshadow her transformation into a monster a second before she does. This painting is a reference to the other [Haunted Mansion](#) attractions, which contain portraits of a beautiful Medusa changing to and from a hideous Gorgon. In the Mansions, however, the Gorgon Medusa is made of stone. In Mystic Manor, she is not.







Scene 5/6:
Extra scene added




In the **Solarium Room**, Albert curiously points his finger near the mouth of a [Venus flytrap](#). A larger one faces the riders and roars loudly, lightning crashes, and the room becomes pitch black.



<p>Scene 6: Nordic Chamber</p>		<p>Soon afterward, the carriage enters the Slavic-Nordic Chamber, where there is a Slavic painting. She comes to life and blows freezing wind towards guests. The freezing wind leaves the painting and spreads ice throughout the entire room, finally gathering on a large mirror that shatters the guests' reflection.</p>	
<p>Scene 7: Armory</p>		<p>The Arms & Armour room is full of weapons and armor that have come alive. First seen is a samurai armor wielding a katana that tries to hack Albert's head off, but he dodges each slash with success, then a cannon opens fire on the guests which knocks the carriage back and sends it spinning away. The carriage passes through a hallway containing three suits of armor, their helmets floating next to their bodies and singing along with the music. The carriage then moves in front of a large medieval catapult, which loads and takes aim at the guests, knocking them into the next room. On the other side of the room, a Mongolian suit of armor can be seen holding a few helmets aloft and laughing evilly.</p>	
<p>Scene 8: Egyptian room</p>		<p>Egyptian Mummy lovers should be delight with the next room - the Egyptian room - where we can expect mummies coming alive and interesting special effects on the Egyptians bas-reliefs. In a swift move, guests enter the Egyptian Antiquities room, where a sarcophagus glows an unearthly green as swarms of scarabs emerge from it, to which the sarcophagus' face turns scared before being covered. The scarabs cover all the lights and guests are stuck riding through the darkness.</p>	

<p>Scene 9: Tribal room</p>		<p>The guests reached the end of the darkness and reach Tribal Arts room, where a large tiki figure dominates the room, spewing lava from its mouth. Two tiki poles stand on either side, as well as multiple other tiki statues. The room is full of chanting and tribal drums, all in tune with the music. Three tiki statues rotate and aim arrows and blow dart guns, which reveals Albert pinned to the opposite wall, stuck but unharmed by their ammunition.</p> <p>The scene is called "The Tribal Room" and there is two renderings for it. The first one below is not only a dramatic scene with the "lava" statue but is also interesting on other points. If you look at the left of the artwork you will see a Tiki room tribute with not only Tikis masks but also a Tiki drummer, exactly the same one that we can see in the Disneyland beloved attraction. If you look at the right part of the artwork you'll see other tribal masks who obviously are throwing darts.</p>	
<p>Scene 10: Chinese room</p>		<p>Then the Carriages go into the Chinese Salon where a giant jade Monkey King statue is brought to life and uses its staff to create a turbulent vortex, like a tornado, making the room spin and causing all the tapestries in the salon to be shaken. A red panda goes out of one of them and enters in another one with two common cranes. Four vehicles will join together and, due to the tornado wind effect, will begin to continuously circle the room during this scene. Albert appears on a wall and the statue tries to hit him with a lightning bolt. This only succeeds in blowing away a portion of the wall, which crumbles, showing the dusk sky. Albert is then blown away from the manor and manages to hold onto a large harp as the enchanted music box suddenly appears. Albert jumps onto the box as the carriages move back to the Acquisitions and Cataloguing Room. At this point Albert the monkey understand that if he doesn't stop all this hell he will be in trouble forever...</p>	

<p>Scene 11: Cataloguing Room</p>		<p>In the final scene Albert will try desperately to close the enchanted box. Of course, at the last second he will succeed and bring everything back down to normal. The music climaxes as the magic flies back into the music box. Albert slams the lid shut and breathes a sigh of relief as the lights come back on, revealing a perfectly normal room. Lord Mystic then appears behind Albert, happy to have finally found him. He asks if Albert touched the music box, which Albert immediately denies. Wondering as to whether the legends regarding it are true, Lord Mystic thanks the guests for touring his home and bids them farewell as the vehicles move back into the station.</p> <p>"Hi everybody, I hope you enjoyed your trip, I'm sure there was no problem with any of the artifacts and that everything is fine. Please come back and visit again when you're in the neighborhood!"</p>	
<p>EXIT Garden of Wonders</p>		<p>When HKDL guests exit the ride they can be amazed with the optical illusions of the Garden of Wonders.</p> <p>Mystic Point also contains an area called the Garden of Wonders, filled with elements for guests to discover.</p> <p>"It's basically a sculpture garden that has several illusions connected with it," describes Schirmer. "So if you see the sculptures on their own they're really quite nice and interesting to look at, but we've set up these viewing stations that if you look through the viewing station a visual illusion happens where their friends can interact with the sculptures and they take on a slightly different shape or morphs the people to be either really close or really far away or it morphs the sculpture itself into taking on a new shape."</p>	

<p>ARCHIVE SHOP</p>		<p>Disney’s merchandising team has worked hard to make sure Mystic Point debuts with nearly every kind of products guests could possibly want to remember their visit. The Archive Shop not only features merchandise exclusive to Hong Kong Disneyland, but in keeping with the theme of exploration also includes products from Disney theme parks worldwide.</p>	
<p>FREIGHT TRAIN DEPOT</p>			
<p>EXPLORERS CLUB restaurant</p>		<p>“It also contains a 400-seat restaurant called the Explorers Club,” explains Schirmer. “So anyone going to Mystic Point actually becomes an honorary member for the day, that gets access not only to the manor and the collection but also the Explorers Club restaurant. You get rights and privileges around the restaurant and the manor and his garden and his estate where he also is perpetuating that idea of his collection.”</p> <p>The Explorers Club is separated into rooms inspired by countries around the world – China, Morocco, Egypt, and more. And fans of the extinct Adventurers Club at Walt Disney World will recognize some animated elements scattered throughout, though Schirmer didn’t want to give away those surprises.</p> <p>The food and beverages served in the Explorers Club also mirrors the international theme, serving a variety of cuisines.</p>	

The story line of the attraction as described above is coming from an Imagineer video interview that you can see on [Youtube HERE](#).
The ENTIRE WAITING LINE, PRESHOW AND VISUALS CAN BE FOUND HERE:
<http://dejiki.com/2013/12/hkdl-mystic-manor-queue-preshow/>

Presentation description: Featuring an innovative ride system, a mysterious music box, and a mischievous monkey named Albert, Mystic Manor is an inventive new attraction at Hong Kong Disneyland that takes guests on a highly immersive adventure filled with surprises, special effects, and theatrical wonders. Imagineers Joe Lanzisero and Mark Schirmer pull back the curtain on this amazing new Disney attraction.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXWZ6zI9mgQ>

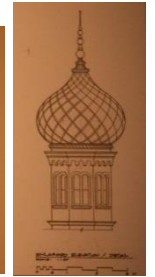
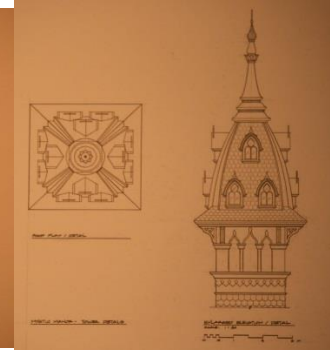
Prototypes
Model



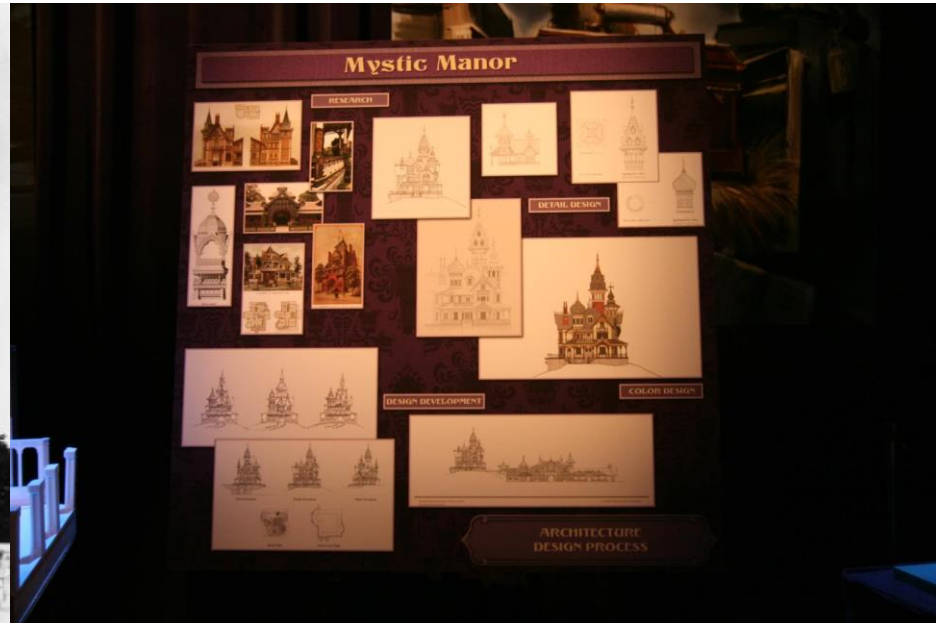


Interior scene of pre-show room

Concept Art

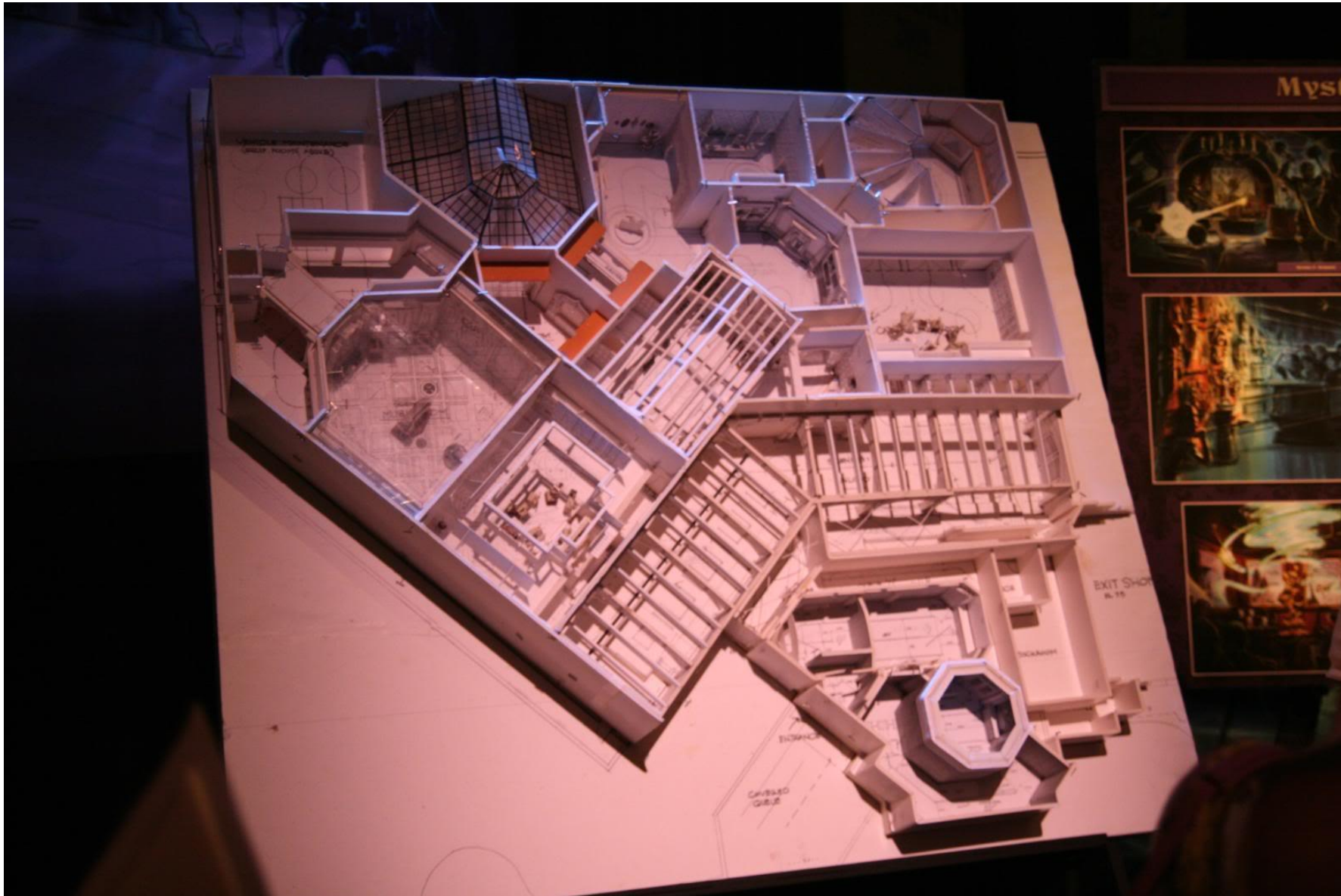


Architecture



The Manor's exterior design is inspired by the [now-demolished Bradbury Mansion](#) that stood at 147 North Hill Street in [Los Angeles' Bunker Hill](#), designed by Samuel Newsom and Joseph Cather Newsom, who also designed the still-standing [Carson Mansion](#) in [Eureka, California](#).

Architecture Design Process Mystic Manor: Research, Detail design, Color design, Design development

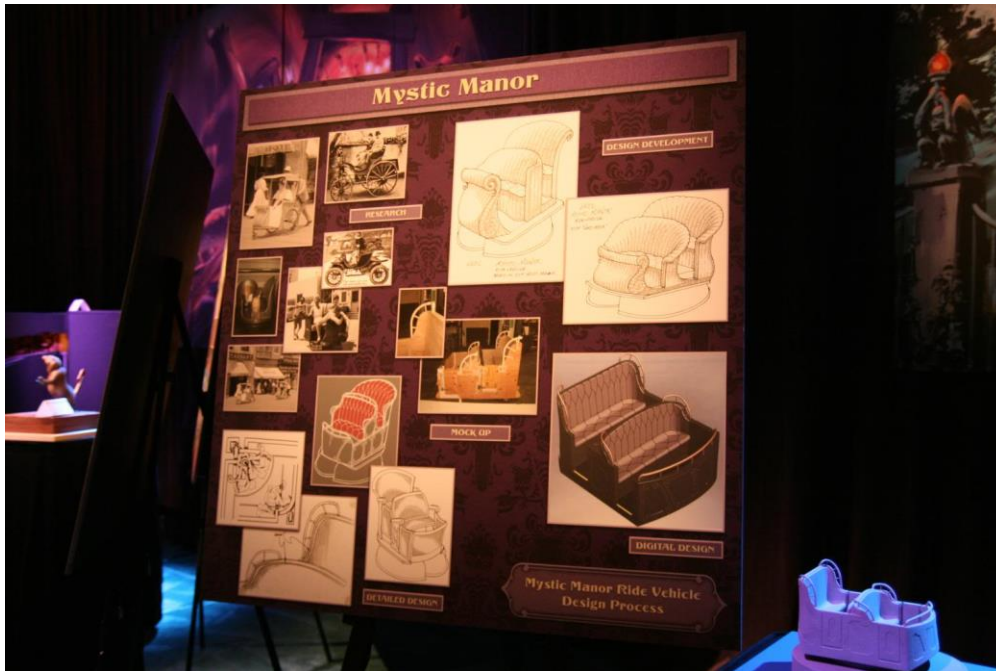


Bird-eye view of Mystic Manor

Ride system
Trackless ride system



Ride vehicle Maquette



Mystic Manor Ride Vehicle Design Process: Research, Design development, Mock up, Detailed design, Digital design

The Mystic Magneto-Electric Carriage inside the Mystic Manor is the first trackless ride that applies radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology ever built by Disney.

The attraction's 37 Mystic Magneto-Electric Carriages are [automated guided vehicles](#) that can travel freely throughout the mansion, receiving directional instruction via [radio-frequency identification](#) technology in the floor and [Wi-Fi](#). Thirty five of them are normal vehicles holding up to 6 guests. The 36th and 37th are specially modified to carry a wheelchair and an accompanying person. The carriages travel in groups of four, each group following a unique path influenced by its most recent loading position. Because the carriages are not restricted to a single path, the handicapped carriages can be easily rotated in and out of a group. Riders experience 40 [ultra-high-definition](#) images created by 36 projectors. The attraction is one of Hong Kong Disneyland's most complex.

Each Magneto-Electric Carriage operates at a speed of 4 km per hour. For safety reasons, if a guest stands while a carriage is in motion, it stops immediately.

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) uses [electromagnetic fields](#) to automatically identify and track tags attached to objects. The tags contain electronically stored information. Passive tags collect energy from a nearby RFID reader's interrogating [radio waves](#). Active tags have a local power source such as a battery and may operate at hundreds of meters from the RFID reader. Unlike a [barcode](#), the tag need not be within the line of sight of the reader, so it may be embedded in the tracked object. RFID is one method for [Automatic Identification and Data Capture](#) (AIDC).^[1]

Audio-Animatronics (Animatronics, AA) is the registered trademark for a form of robotics animation created by Walt Disney Imagineering for shows and attractions at Disney theme parks, and subsequently expanded on and used by other companies. The robots move and make noise (generally a recorded speech or song), but are usually fixed to whatever supports them. They can sit and stand but usually cannot walk. An Audio-Animatron is different from an android-type robot in that it uses prerecorded movements and sounds, rather than responding to external stimuli. In 2009, Disney created an interactive version of the technology called Autonomatronics. "Animatronics" has become a generic name for similar robots created by firms other than Disney.

The "Magneto-Electric Carriage" Schirmer mentioned is the ornate, trackless ride system that guides guests freely through Mystic Manor, sometimes gathering multiple vehicles together, other times breaking apart to offer a closer look at the events that unfold inside. He calls the unique ride system "one of our biggest advantages and biggest challenges at the same time."

But unlike the linear path of The Haunted Mansion's famous Omnimover system of Doom Buggies, Mystic Manor's trackless system allows a certain freedom of exploration. "Having this whole idea of illusion, mystery, and intrigue, the vehicle being able to follow a unique path and not get in your way by seeing a bus bar nor a track through the entire attraction has really been a plus for us," said Schirmer. "And it's really giving each vehicle almost a front row seat for all of the different scenes. That's one of the things we think is really fun. It begs you to take on different vehicles, come back a second and third time and ride from a different perspective so you can see that."

Character development

The whimsical look of the ghostly characters that reside inside The Haunted Mansion can be attributed to famed Imagineer Marc Davis, whose inimitable style has influenced many a Disney artist. And it was exactly Davis' style that Imagineers looked to when developing Mystic Manor. "Interesting that you bring up Marc's name," replied Schirmer when asked about the caricature-like looks of Lord Henry Mystic and Albert. "That was certainly one of our inspirations too and a chance for us to tip our hat back. And that was something we really wanted to do."

Albert's big eyes and strong features make him instantly recognizable.

But there was some debate as to exactly how these characters would appear in the attraction.

"We initially were looking at doing real characters dressed in costume, possibly be on green screen and inserting them into the show as we could we that kind of media expertise," explained Schirmer. "But if you go back to what I said earlier, we really went back to our roots and said that works for certain scenes, this really wants to be classic Disney caricatures and storytelling and so we ended up going away into the direction of really pushing these characters to be really unique and special, iconic, and immediately identifiable."

Imagineers took the character designs in the exact opposite direction, making sure guests could easily follow them throughout the experience, despite having just met them.

"We don't have a whole lot of time in these attractions. Our overall attraction is just over 5 minutes, which isn't a whole lot of time and so these characters want to be really recognizable immediately seeing them," said Schirmer. "Albert is the star of the show, really, and we wanted to push him and make him immediately identifiable to the guests and have that immediate connection where you're going to want to follow him through his adventure."

And after guests form that connection, naturally, the next stop is a visit to the gift shop to snatch up plenty of merchandise featuring these new friends.

FULL RIDE VIDEO

Mystic Manor with routes explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgXLCwSDLmE>

Capacity

Riders per vehicle 6 (2 rows of 3 persons max.), 4 vehicles start at the same time, but during the ride usually travel in pairs. Each vehicle has a specific route (not randomised!). To see everything you have to go on this ride at least twice in different vehicles as some vehicles will bypass certain area of scenes in the ride. (see FULL RIDE VIDEO for example).

Average waiting time

30 minutes

Despite having ride vehicles with low ride capacity, the ride is designed in such a way that all of its scenes would be running almost all the time.

Restrictions

There is no height requirement or minimum age to go on the Mystic Manor ride. Young children must be supervised by adult at all times. This, due to loud sound effects and moments of darkness, as well as large props with slightly scary expressions that some kids may find frightening.

You need to be sober and in good health to ride. Wheelchair access is possible. Prior to riding all loose articles need to be secured.

Duration

5.30 minutes

Musical score

[Danny Elfman](#).

Scored by Hollywood heavyweight Danny Elfman, the bouncingly eerie soundtrack reacts to the drawing crossbows and drumming tribal idols. "For the first time in our attractions, the musical score was treated just like composing for a feature film," says Schirmer. "Instead of looping tracks there are musical arcs that follow the story, setting the emotion for each scene... Danny's music not only became the perfect complement to the story, at times it became the story." That's especially important, he points out, in an attraction whose guests may speak English, Cantonese or Mandarin depending on their nationality.

Influence of cultural differences – adaptation of Haunted Mansion

Unlike [Disneyland's Haunted Mansion](#) attraction and its counterparts in other Disney parks, Mystic Manor has a lighthearted, fantasy-based theme with no references to [departed spirits](#) or the afterlife, due to differences in traditional Chinese culture.

"So [in the case of *hong za*] there is an 'essence' of death, if you will, that can still stay in the apartment. The problem for the Chinese is that even if you yourself do not believe, your relatives and friends will be made uncomfortable by the fact you live there."

This wasn't the first time that Disney bowed to Hong Kong's local tastes - the fact that the Hong Kong Government holds joint ownership of the park practically guarantees there will be some local accommodations. During construction, *feng shui* experts [consulted on the park's design](#) in order to make it a prosperous environment, and local favorites like caramel popcorn and shredded squid dot the park's concession stands. It's proof Disney learned hard lessons from Disneyland Paris, where an initial failure to localize plagued the park's opening years (one major issue: you [couldn't buy wine](#)).

To accommodate the international clientele, throughout the design process the team tried to limit spoken dialogue, instead telling the story visually or conveying the emotional arc through music. While Lord Henry delivers the welcome in English, the accompanying slideshow includes stylish Chinese characters so no one's left out of the loop.

Creating Mystic Point and Mystic Manor for Hong Kong Disneyland presented Imagineers with a challenge, ensuring their stories and visuals fit in with the local cultures. "That was something we did a lot of research on and why the idea of just lifting The Haunted Mansion really maybe didn't make sense for the core audience here at Hong Kong Disneyland," noted Schirmer. "We wanted to not only develop something brand new and exciting for the guests coming to Hong Kong Disneyland but also make it culturally relevant and be sensitive to that piece, so the idea of illusions, mystery, a little bit of intrigue was really something, as opposed to full on ghosts and things like that, and staying more in that mysterious vein."

Voice cast

[Stephen Stanton](#) as Lord Henry Mystic^[1]

[Frank Welker](#) as Albert / Roaring Plant

[Danny Elfman](#) as Singing Helmets (English)^[2]

Awards

In November 2013, Mystic Manor received the "Award for Outstanding Achievement – Attraction" from [Themed Entertainment Association](#) (TEA).^[3]

Link to other Disney attractions

The attraction does feature several references to the [Haunted Mansion](#), such as a [Medusa](#) changing portrait, a conservatory, and the busts that turn to follow visitors as they move. References to other Disney attractions include several figures from [The Enchanted Tiki Room](#) in the Tribal Arts room.

There are no ghosts in Mystic Manor, nor does it have cobwebs, dust or anything you'd traditionally associate with a haunted house. It has residents -- namely the explorer and antiques collector Lord Henry Mystic and his monkey companion Albert. Guests enter the mansion to view Lord Henry's collection, including his new acquisition, an ancient music box rumored to bring inanimate objects to life.

Mystic Manor has more scares than its haunted cousins. Cannons discharge right at you and 4-D effects provide some real startles. It helps that the entire production, from the new trackless ride system to digital projections, operates on cutting edge tech. Two different routes change the experience on subsequent rides, an experience I found so compelling that staff members started laughing and waving at me on my fourth consecutive ride-through. "We ... wanted to try and infuse new state of the art technologies alongside a brand new story with original characters," says Schirmer, who points out that Mystic Manor gives HK Disneyland a unique experience and "bragging rights" over other Disney parks.

But it would be wrong to say that Mystic Manor totally upends the Haunted Mansion experience. Rather, Schirmer sees the relationship between the two as "50% evolution and 50% inspiration." Even with the thematic differences and superior technological presentation, there's still that old Haunted Mansion feel. Both attractions feature a room with instruments that play by themselves. Both have shifting wall art, living suits of armor, and a cylindrical orientation room that explains the attraction's story.

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