

## FAITHFUL ATTRACTION

# Disney recreates Santa Cruz Boardwalk

By DAN WHITE

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

29.0

SANTA CRUZ — Disney designers have built a spitting image of the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk amusement park next door to Disneyland, but they aren't fessing up to it.

The mock-up is called Paradise Pier, and it's one of the main attractions at Disney's California Adventure in Southern California, which opened Thursday.

While Paradise Pier and the Boardwalk have different attractions, frontal shots of the Boardwalk and the Disneyfied version are tough to tell apart, down to the profile of the rollercoasters, location of the Ferris wheel and arrangement of rides along the water.

Boardwalk spokesmen say they're flattered, not miffed. But they think it's a bit Goofy to put such a Mickey Mouse pier in the middle of a landlocked city, on a man-made lakelet instead of a real ocean shore.

The Boardwalkers also think Disney, in downplaying the Boardwalk's influence on the Anaheim design, could be ducking the issue.

Santa Cruz's park, which dates to the late 1800s, is the real deal, the spokesmen say, not some Dumbo-ed down rendition.

"Do we sense some rivalry?" Boardwalk spokesman John Robinson said. "Only in the sense we're authentic. We don't have to fake it. Are we getting the credit we deserve? Probably not. But the credit we get is, 'We are still here, we're doing well, and still in Santa Cruz.'"

The Disneyfied version of the Boardwalk is part of a theme park that charges

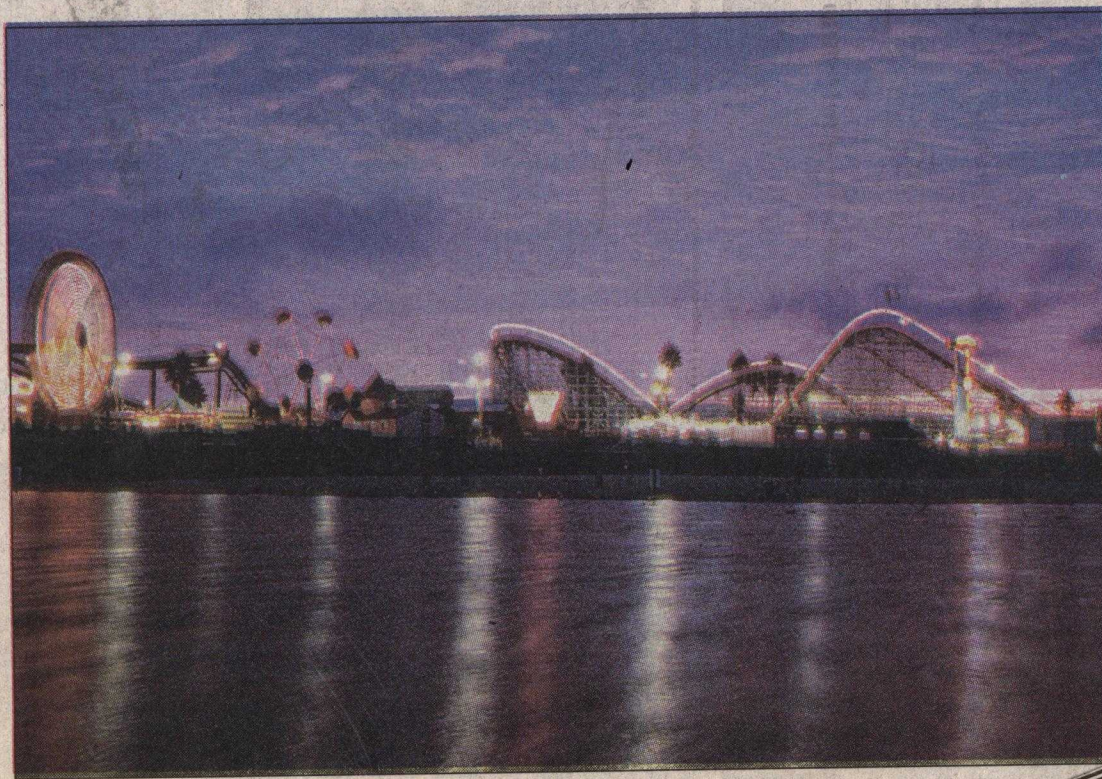
Please see **IMITATION** on **BACK PAGE**

**Walt Disney checked out Boardwalk ride/Back Page**



The Associated Press

Paradise Pier, above, is one of the main attractions at Disney's new California Adventure theme park in Southern California. It bears more than a passing resemblance to the venerable Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk amusement park, below.



## Imitation

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\$40 for adult admission and is part of a billion-dollar Disney expansion. The park also features midget recreations of the Golden Gate Bridge, Cannery Row, Hollywood Boulevard, even a Napa-style vineyard.

Admission to the family-owned Boardwalk is free, though it charges for rides.

The Boardwalk is the only full-fledged seaside amusement park still in operation on the West Coast. Disney reps visited the Boardwalk when seeking inspiration for their new park, Boardwalk officials said.

Disney representatives say they mostly got their inspiration from old archival photos of now-torn-down West Coast parks.

The Disney version has some upscale restaurants, unlike the local version, and its rollercoaster may look old-fashioned and wooden, but it's really new and made of metal, with a loop-the-loop concealed behind a huge profile of Mickey Mouse's head.

The real Boardwalk, on the other hand, has an assortment of burgers, taffy and other junk food, and a 78-year-old authentic wooden coaster.

Disney insists Paradise Pier is an amusement-park composite.

"When the designers talk about (Paradise Pier), in all honesty, they don't mention the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk," said Disney spokesman and former Northern Californian John McClintock. "More often, they mention (now defunct) parks like the Long Beach Pike. And there used to be Pacific Ocean Park in Santa Monica."

Internet photos of the old Long Beach and Santa Monica parks, however, bear little resemblance to the Boardwalk.

While Disney downplays the Boardwalk's influence, it can't dispute the fact that there is, quite literally, a piece of Santa Cruz in its new theme park. Disney spent more than \$500,000 on 136 smog-resistant Aptos Blue and Soquel redwoods from the Santa Cruz area to give a section of the park an authentic

### A peek at the parks

#### DISNEYLAND

**HISTORY:** Opened in 1955 in Southern California. Other parks opened later in Florida, Japan and France. Disney's California Adventure opened Thursday.

**OWNERSHIP:** Publicly traded company.

**ADMISSION:** Disneyland and California Adventure each cost about \$40 for adult admission, rides included.

**REVENUE:** Disney's collection of theme parks generates an estimated \$1 billion annually.

#### THE BEACH BOARDWALK

**HISTORY:** A public bathhouse opened at the Santa Cruz site in 1865, then a pleasure casino, ballroom and indoor plunge swimming pool in 1907. The original rollercoaster, called "Scenic Railway," opened in 1908. The Giant Dipper dates to 1924.

**OWNERSHIP:** Owned by the Seaside Co., which is owned by the Canfield family.

**ADMISSION:** Free, but the Boardwalk charges for rides.

**REVENUE:** The Boardwalk is privately held and would not release its earnings.

"rustic look," the Los Angeles Times reported.

In another local connection, a La Selva Beach company, D.H. Morgan, designed two of Disney's Paradise Pier attractions: the carousel and the California Zephyr. The same company designed the cars on Santa Cruz's Giant Dipper. Company representatives would not comment about their role, however, citing a confidentiality clause with Disney.

Early visitors have given Paradise Pier reviews ranging from glowing to blah.

Travel writer Joan Allen, in the lat-

## Thousands jam park

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANAHEIM — With a dazzling daylight display of fireworks, twirling umbrellas and balloons filled with make-believe gold dust, Disney opened its billion-dollar California Adventure theme park to the public on Thursday.

Thousands of visitors paid \$43 to get into the new 55-acre park — the same price as a ticket to adjacent Disneyland — which is three times the size.

Visitors didn't seem to mind the cost or the long hours spent in line to be among the first in the picturesque park about 30 miles south of Los Angeles.

Steven W. Smith of Azusa, just 40 miles away, spent nearly 28 hours in line. "I would do it again, too. It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me."

Smith, 43, braved temperatures that dipped into the low 40s while spending the night in line with a friend and hundreds of other Disney die-hards.

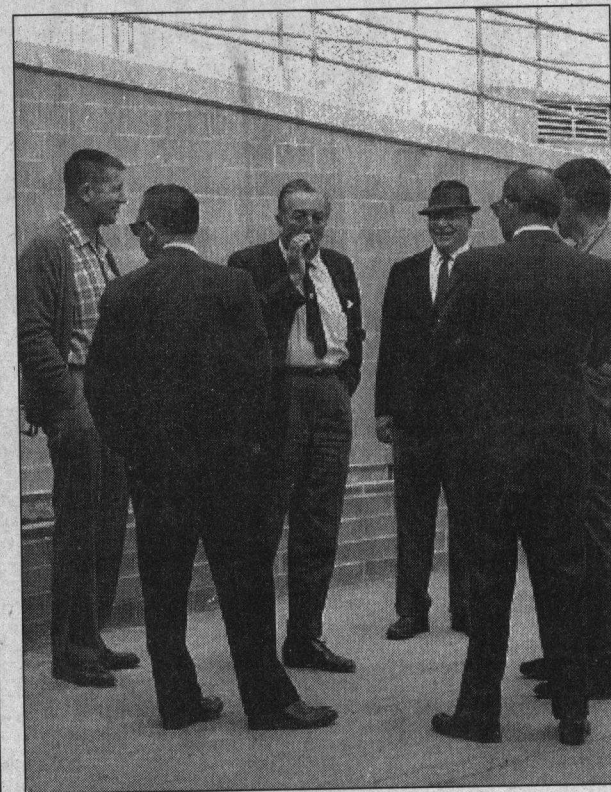
Walt Disney Co. chief executive Michael Eisner greeted guests at an opening ceremony.

est issue of Via Magazine, wrote that the attraction "lacks the inventiveness visitors expect from Disney. Disney recreating an old-time amusement park is like Wolfgang Puck recreating an authentic grilled-cheese sandwich."

Marq Lipton, vice president of marketing and sales at the Seaside Co., had a dig of his own.

"When you're done with Disneyland, you're in Anaheim," he said. "When you're done with the Boardwalk, you're in Santa Cruz."

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A Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk archive photo shows a cigar-puffing Walt Disney standing under the Giant Dipper rollercoaster in 1962.

## Disney had designs on Boardwalk ride features

By DAN WHITE  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Disney employees recently visited the Boardwalk in search of inspiration, but they weren't the first wave.

In the early 1960s, Walt Disney himself took a close look at the park, apparently because he was interested in the design features of the park's miniature-car ride.

The Boardwalk photo archives include a shot of a cigar-puffing, scruffy-looking Disney standing underneath the Giant Dipper roller coaster.

Disney's Autopia, in which visitors steer tiny cars down a winding road,

predates the Boardwalk version by several years.

But Boardwalk spokesmen say the Boardwalk auto ride had a special design feature that intrigued Disney — a central rail that kept cars from straying from side to side and hitting curbs that confined the riders.

Disney spokesman John McClintock said he could neither prove nor discount the claim but called it plausible.

He referred to Disneyland's addition of "a center rail that keeps you from killing yourself. It's true that in the early days of Autopia at Disneyland, you could pretty well go crazy with those cars."