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Digital Edition

Santa Cruz County suffers from fires for 37 days



The California wildfires, prompted by a local lightning storm, loomed over area attractions for more than a month, threatening some and irreparably damaging others. COURTESY SFGATE

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SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — **Tom Canfield**, whose family owns and operates the **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**, was just one of thousands watching as lightning bolts streaked the sky in the hours before dawn on Aug. 16.

It lasted for about three hours over his home located on 80 acres of land on a ridge above Santa Cruz. When it was over, he, his wife and son went back to bed.

They were to find out later that there had been between 10,000 and 11,000 strikes of lightning within 72 hours in Santa Cruz County as well as other counties to the north. Called a dry storm, the lightning wasn't accompanied by rain. It streaked the night sky striking the ground that had been scorched by a very hot and dry summer.

On Aug. 19, the Canfields were awakened at 2 a.m. with the county sheriff banging on their door. They were told it was time to evacuate. Fires created by that storm were on the way.

"We had seen a fire over on the ridge north of us at the state park," Canfield said. "The fire had started on the northern county line and was burning south."

Canfield felt they were in pretty good shape to sustain the threat of fire. He had taken some preventative measures after a fire had advanced on the property in 2009 including installing a 20,000-gallon water tank.

"My brother-in-law, **Montiel Tremaine**, lives on our property," Canfield said. "He had been a front line guy fighting fires his entire life."

They had worked together after the 2009 incident.

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Vekoma's flying coaster integrates into steampunk area

Phantasialand astounds guests with record-breaking coaster, Rookburgh

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BRÜHL, Germany — Much to the surprise of local residents and coaster fans everywhere, the highly themed **Phantasialand** unveiled its long-awaited new area and new coaster in the middle of September. With close to four years in development, the steampunk-themed area, Rookburgh, and its iconic attraction, F.L.Y., was met with rave reviews over social media following the soft opening.

In addition to the coaster, the incredibly immersive land offers a new restaurant, a candy store and the new Hotel Charles Lindbergh.

Front and center, however, is the unmistakable tangle of maroon track that soars and dives throughout the area. Coaster historians know that **Vekoma** manufactured the first flying coaster in the year 2000.

Now two decades later, the company has come full circle reimagining the genre into a sleek, fluid crowd-pleasing thriller.

"The flying coaster has always been a very challenging ride position with lots of room for improvement. Working together with Phantasialand, our goal was to create a pure flying sensation with the best possible passenger experience," said Sales Manager **Stefan Holtman**, Vekoma. "With F.L.Y., we have created a totally flying experience like never seen before in the world."

Park officials reported to *Amusement Today* that the vision of the Owner and Managing Director **Robert Löffelhardt** was to create a theme world that is truly self-contained. Rookburgh is to be a world into which one can completely immerse oneself by day and night. Where everything merges together, from the theming to the food

and the experience at night. Over time, this has led to the planning of the Rookburgh theme world with the flying launched coaster, F.L.Y., in perfect harmony with the Hotel Charles Lindbergh.

"The decision to cooperate with Vekoma was primarily based on their willingness to fully engage with us," said **Sarah Collas**, communications/marketing, Phantasialand. "We needed a partner with whom we could develop a completely new system — according to our specifications, requirements and wishes. As always at Phantasialand, we didn't want to create an 'off-the-shelf' coaster, but a completely new roller coaster experience. In the case of F.L.Y., it is a flying experience like no other flying coaster in the world. This required a completely

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new seating system, a new technology and a special track layout. We knew that, and that was our declared goal.”

Many of the ride’s attributes are hidden from view, most notably the station. The ride’s ingenious secret is concealed. The loading process finds the track twisted 90 degrees. Passengers board and exit from an upright sitting position.

“During the discussions with Phantasialand about the flying coaster, we all were never satisfied with the loading position,” said Holtman. “While we were testing the flying and lying position on a mock-up in our factory, the idea was born to turn the vehicles 90 degrees and [the rider’s] back to the track.”

After dispatch, the vehicles turn forward while the track twists into a traditional placement gracefully placing riders comfortably in the flying position. Shortly thereafter, trains enter a launch sending riders out into the sky and over the streets of Rookburgh. No logical description can convey the ride’s layout as its entanglement with the entire area is a masterpiece of spectator appeal. The snarl of track soars above and dives below Rookburgh’s walkways and interacts brilliantly with the steampunk theming. After hitting the final brakes, the train keeps on slowly running and as swiftly as passengers turned into the flying position, the seats turn back upright, as does the track. In the exit station, the restraints open and riders simply step forward and leave.

“[Vekoma] knows and appreciates our commitment and expertise and knows what can become out of it,” said Collas. “Hardly any other company is involved as inten-



Many of F.L.Y.'s attributes are hidden from view, most notably the loading station.

The ride's layout is an entanglement with the entire area and a masterpiece of spectator appeal.

COURTESY RIK ENGELN

sively as Phantasialand. Such a close cooperation is rare in the development of a roller coaster. Together we have created a completely new roller coaster experience. This was only possible with this close cooperation with Vekoma involved with us.”

“In order to improve the comfort of the passengers, we have modified a number of things on the train,” said Holtman. “We tilted the passenger seats 15 degrees away from parallel in order to have a better forward view. This spreads the weight over the whole body. The leg restraint is completely modified for better support. The pitch between passengers is increased 30cm which creates a very open and individual feeling.”

Boasting of the record for “world’s longest flying coaster,” Phantasialand has kept the



ride’s stats of length — as well as height and speed — close to the vest. Numbers remain secret, but the park notes the length at just under 1.3 kilometers (4,265 feet). Whatever the actual figure might be, the previous record holder was just over 3,600 feet.

Four trains of 20 keep the queue moving.

Holtman is particularly proud of Vekoma’s track work. “Regarding the track design and fabrication, we are using state-of-the-art 3D CNC bending machines, which are specially developed for Vekoma. This, together with a G-force based design tool and special procedures on track assembly, can cre-

ate a constant and very smooth ride experience,” he said.

The Hotel Charles Lindbergh is the property’s third. In contrast to the Hotel Ling Bao and Hotel Matamba, which showcase Far East and African theming, Hotel Charles Lindbergh immerses guests into deeper storytelling. The hotel itself is unique as all rooms sleep two in cylindrical spaces like an airplane carrier. The immersion is carried throughout from check-in to the hotel’s bar and other spaces. Only hotel guests can enter the facility, and one of the bigger perks is the overview of the entire Rookburgh area.

According to the park, the

new hotel being merged into the new area was a challenge which they had not faced before. Construction was quite complex with the special architecture of the hotel with its five buildings, six levels and special cabin design, not to mention the enormously tangled track right through the middle of the themed world.

Bar 1919 is exclusive to hotel guests and the storytelling is in full force with the steampunk atmosphere. Restaurant Uhrwerk is open to all guests during the operating day but caters exclusively to hotel guests in the morning and evening. From crunchy pastries to traditional pasta to the Rook-Burger, Uhrwerk offers handcrafted cuisine with dishes made with culinary inventiveness.

“Just like the food of Rookburgh, or rather the Taste of Rookburgh, our colleagues from our gastronomy department have developed all the culinary delights in the Uhrwerk restaurant, the sandwich shop Zum Kohleschipper and Emilie’s Chocoladen & Candy Werkstatt especially for us — with our own recipes, home-made dishes and high-quality ingredients,” press representatives said.

The Rookburgh themed area extends from the Berlin section where the park has offered “The Magic Rose – Spirit of Light” final show during the park’s Wintertraum winter season. That show had featured a steampunk vibe, and Phantasialand carried this theme to greater levels with the new section. According to the park, the intention was “to create a world in which industrial tones and the theme of aviation were central, while innovative yet charmingly old-fashioned characteristics of steampunk shaped the

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The elaborate steampunk theming carries into the hotel bar and restaurant (above left and right). Soaring over the midways and interacting with the theming makes for an increased sense of speed (above middle). COURTESY PHANTASIALAND; VEKOMA

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design and spirit.” Spectators have been impressed by the attention to detail with the numerous gears, pipes, smoke and fog, inventions and industrial surroundings.

“No other theme park in the world uses the theme of steampunk in such a tangible and detailed way. Rookburgh became a world of explorers and adventurers, of aeronauts and free spirits — but also of craftsmen and workers. It is where the sky is conquered and amazing machines are invented. This is who we are at our core. At Phantasialand we enjoy creating our very own worlds with a ‘wow factor,’” press officials proudly stated.

“We are very proud to have successfully completed this project that shows a masterpiece of engineering,” said Holtman. “Together with Phantasialand, we succeeded to create a ride that is one of a kind in the roller coaster industry.”

When *AT* asked if there were any surprises once the land opened, Phantasialand management stated: “The complete immersion — which was our declared goal with Rookburgh

— is felt so intensely by the guests, and they become so much a part of Rookburgh and its stories. That really surprised us — and we love it! That our ideas and stories of Rookburgh would be felt this way was our hope, and that our guests now formulate and experience this so intensely is, of course, something we are very excited about. It’s also surprising that for many Rookburgh visitors, the overall experience is more important than the coaster — even if it’s what we wanted to create. Many guests first talk about their experiences with the restaurant Uhrwerk or their astonishment about the design of the world or their experiences in the Hotel Charles Lindbergh before they address their flight with F.L.Y., so it is a little upside down to a ‘normal’ perception of a coaster and a themed world. Most of the time, a coaster is the focus of attention. The fact that our theme world as an overall experience, in which hotel, coaster, design and enjoyment merge completely with each other, works out so well and that our guests literally become “Rookburghers” themselves, has surprised and inspired us anew every day.”



Hotel Charles Lindbergh (above) is the park’s third hotel. A throwback air carrier theme immerses hotel rooms in storytelling (inset).

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PHANTASIALAND



CONGRATULATIONS TO PHANTASIALAND WITH THE OPENING OF F.L.Y.!

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AND FIRST LAUNCHED
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