

Disney Links with Chevy's Tech Center Designers to Develop Epcot Test Track Ride

by Irena Granaas

Thanks to a collaborative effort between Chevrolet and Disney, guests at Walt Disney World in Florida can experience the thrill and excitement of designing their own automobile.

Chevrolet engineers and Walt Disney Imagineers have teamed up to revamp and enhance the Chevrolet Test Track ride at EPCOT, which has been closed since April while the changes were implemented.

The result is a highly interactive, virtual experience in the world of automotive design for resort guests.

Design talent from Chevrolet and Disney began their collaborative effort 18 months ago, combining the talents of people with a variety of relevant skills including architecture, animation, industrial and automotive design.

Teams went to work on the ambitious project both at GM's Design Studios in Warren, and at Test Track Epcot in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. While allowing for the maximum level of innovation, Disney and GM team members made sure that the core values of both brands would be accurately represented throughout the Test Track experience.

"At Chevrolet, the diversity of talent on our team allows us to consistently produce sophisti-

cated, refined and detailed design – but we don't typically design through the eyes of a 12-year-old," said Jeff Mylenek, GM Design manager, Global Exhibit and Merchandising Design.

"Working with Walt Disney Imagineering, we were inspired to see our brand story from a more youthful perspective and really opened the parameters on how to approach this design challenge."

Efforts were focused on creating a future-focused experience, while giving guests an authentic look at the actual automotive design process and a chance to create their own designs.

General Motors spokesman David Barnas discussed the guest experience at the "re-imagined" attraction in a little more detail.

Asked if the redeveloped Chevrolet Test Track really gives guests the experience of being an automotive designer, he affirmed that it does.

"It really takes into consideration that a guest is really immersed in what it's like to be an automotive designer, including while you're waiting in line to get into the experience," Barnas explained.

"It's one of the more popular rides at EPCOT."

And while the aim of the Chevrolet Test Track, which opens Dec. 6, is largely to enter-

tain, could the experience inspire the next generation of auto designers?

Barnas said, "It's really aimed at families, which means children as well . . . That would be great if we had young boys or young girls who eventually wanted to become Chevrolet designers, we would love that – it would be fantastic."



Chevrolet engineers and Walt Disney Imagineers inspire design and innovation with new test track ride, which opens Dec. 6 at Epcot Center.

Chrysler Lights Up Detroit Hopes with \$240 Million in Area Plants, Additional Jobs

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joyed successful careers as a basketball player and a businessman. Chrysler has given elected officials such as himself an example to follow of an enterprise that has been able to turn itself around and prosper.

Holiefield praised Marchionne, saying that the Chrysler chairman had delivered on every promise he made.

When asked about the situation in Europe, Marchionne said that a lot of manufacturers – Ford, Fiat, GM, Peugeot – have lost a lot of money and things have to change. He has believed that when something stops working, you tear it down and come up with something new. That's what he did at Chrysler and that's what has to be done in Europe.

On the subject of the contract with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union, Marchionne said it was the result of tough negotiations by both sides.

"Liking is a strong word to apply to the contract," Marchionne said. "It's an agreement we can live with."

When questioned about Fiat's finances, Marchionne said Chrysler borrowed \$7 billion last year and there were strict protocols limiting money being transferred to Fiat.

But, Marchionne said, Fiat has to be looked at as a company with a lot of businesses that generate cash. He noted that it is the largest auto company in Brazil by a wide margin. Last year, the Brazilian market generated a billion Euros in revenue.

When asked the name of the vehicle that will replace the Liberty,

Marchionne joked, saying they're calling it the Liberty successor.

Marchionne was also asked if he's ready to retire and if someone is being put into place to take over once he's gone.

"Let my people work their butts off and we'll see what happens when I'm ready to retire," Marchionne said. "But that won't happen anytime soon."

Another question was about the Jeep Grand Cherokee diesel model, which will be introduced in the U.S. market in the next couple of years.

"I believe the Grand Cherokee diesel will make a big difference with the diesel market in the U.S.," Marchionne said. "People here have the wrong idea about diesel vehicles. The Grand Cherokee will open a lot of eyes."

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