

= Afterburn (roller coaster) =

Afterburn is a steel inverted roller coaster located at Carowinds amusement park . After more than two years of planning and construction , the roller coaster opened on March 20 , 1999 . The ride previously operated as Top Gun : The Jet Coaster , before it was renamed Afterburn following Cedar Fair 's purchase of the park in 2006 .

Designed by Bolliger & Mabillard , Afterburn stands 113 feet (34 m) tall and reaches speeds of 62 miles per hour (100 km / h) . It features a 2 @, @ 956 @-@ foot @-@ long (901 m) track and a nearly three @-@ minute @-@ long ride time . Afterburn has generally been well received , having been featured several times as a top 50 roller coaster in Amusement Today 's Golden Ticket Awards .

= = History = =

In early 1997 , Paramount 's Carowinds began consultations with roller coaster manufacturer Bolliger & Mabillard about adding a new ride to their park . During 18 months of discussions , several designs and themes for the ride were developed , including theming it to the Godzilla franchise . In July 1998 , the park announced the addition of Top Gun : The Jet Coaster for the 1999 season . At a cost of \$ 10 @. @ 5 million , it would be the single biggest investment in the park 's history . The announcement followed Paramount Parks adding Top Gun @-@ themed inverted and suspended roller coasters to several of their parks throughout the 1990s , including Paramount 's Great America , Paramount Canada 's Wonderland , and Paramount 's Kings Island . To construct the attraction at Carowinds , the park 's Bayern Kurve ride , Wild Bull , had to be removed . The park intended to keep the ride in storage for a potential relocation elsewhere within the park . The removal of Wild Bull shortened construction time because no trees or buildings had to be removed . Construction began in late July 1998 , with the first track arriving in August . Testing was completed in January 1999 .

Top Gun : The Jet Coaster soft opened to guests and media on March 16 , 1999 . Riders of the first cycle included NASCAR drivers Stanton Barrett , Tony Stewart , Jerry Nadeau , and Kenny Wallace . The ride officially opened to the public on March 20 , 1999 . On July 1 , 2006 , the Cedar Fair Entertainment Company announced their acquisition of all of the Paramount Parks , including Carowinds . The aforementioned Top Gun roller coasters at other parks were all renamed to Flight Deck by the 2008 season , with Carowinds ' installation being renamed to Afterburn . For the 2014 season , the ride 's 15th season , Afterburn will receive a new coat of paint .

= = Characteristics = =

The 2 @, @ 956 @-@ foot @-@ long (901 m) Afterburn stands 113 feet (34 m) tall . The ride features a total of six inversions including a vertical loop , an Immelmann loop , a zero @-@ g roll , a batwing , and a corkscrew . Riders over 54 inches (140 cm) achieve a top speed of 62 miles per hour (100 km / h) on the two @-@ minute forty @-@ seven second ride . Afterburn operates with two trains featuring eight cars . Each car seats riders four across , for a total of 32 riders per train . The theoretical hourly capacity of the ride is 1 @, @ 380 riders .

To match the original Top Gun theme , the ride 's area was designed to feel like a military base . The main queue was housed in a hangar with a two @-@ third scale F14 Tomcat fighter . Guests enter the ride area by passing through the batwing element .

= = Ride experience = =

As the train leaves the station , a recorded message , " Clear for Takeoff , " is played . Afterburn then climbs its chain lift hill , reaching a peak height of 113 feet (34 m) . After a small pre @-@ drop , the roller coaster train then drops to the right before entering its first inversion , a vertical loop . Riders then travel through an underground trench and enter an Immelmann loop which sends the

train in the opposite direction . The train then drops towards the ground , climbs back up , and spins through a zero @-@ g roll , an inverting element where riders experience the feeling of weightlessness . Afterwards , the train dives back towards the ground and enters the two @-@ inversion batwing element which crosses through a tunnel underneath the park 's rear entrance .

As Afterburn exits the batwing , it climbs through a camelback hill over the station before entering its final inversion , a corkscrew to the right . The train then begins a 270 @-@ degree climbing helix to the left , after which it reaches the ride 's brake run and returns to the station .

= = Reception = =

Afterburn has been well received . Arthur Levine of About.com stated the ride " is among the best inverted coasters " he 's ridden , giving the ride a 4 out of 5 rating . Levine praises the ride for the lack of headbanging that results from over @-@ the @-@ shoulder @-@ restraints (OTSR) on many roller coasters . The Coaster Critic describes the " pacing and order of inversions [as] near perfect " , giving the ride an " excellent " rating of 9 out of 10 .

Afterburn has appeared in Amusement Today 's annual Golden Ticket Awards several times . It debuted at position 18 in 1999 , before disappearing from the poll for the three years to follow . The ride returned to the poll , before hitting a low of 45 in 2012 .

In Mitch Hawker 's worldwide Best Roller Coaster Poll , Afterburn entered at position 12 in 1999 , before slowly declining to a low of 41 in 2012 . The ride 's ranking in subsequent polls is shown in the table below .