

= Wonder Mountain 's Guardian =

Wonder Mountain 's Guardian (also known as Guardian or WMG ; during Halloween Haunt known as Zombies 4D) is a 4D , interactive dark ride roller coaster at the Canada 's Wonderland amusement park located in Vaughan , Ontario , Canada . It is also the first ride part of Cedar Fair 's Amusement Dark collection . Park management first proposed a dark ride located inside Wonder Mountain around 2004 . Technology and budget limitations at the time delayed the project 's planning and design stages until 2011 . The steel track was manufactured by Art Engineering ; it is approximately 1 @, @ 000 feet (300 m) long and has a maximum height of about 60 feet (18 m) . The ride also has one of the largest drop tracks in the world .

Triotech designed the ride 's interactive 3D animations , which are accompanied by other special effects such as wind , adding the fourth dimension . During the park 's Halloween Haunt event in October , the animations are replaced with zombie @-@ themed effects . Delays during construction delayed the ride 's opening until May 24 , 2014 ; three weeks after the 2014 season began . Guardian was inspired by the dragon in Thunder Run ? another roller coaster located in the mountain area of the park ? and Starlight Spectacular ? a nightly light @-@ and @-@ sound show focused on Wonder Mountain .

= = History = =

Canada 's Wonderland 's first interactive dark ride was Scooby @-@ Doo 's Haunted Mansion (renamed Boo Blasters on Boo Hill after Cedar Fair 's purchase of the park) , which opened in 2000 . It was designed by Sally Corporation and relies entirely on physical sets and theming rather than projected animations , and uses basic , moving props . About four years later , park management began discussing the addition of a new attraction inside Wonder Mountain . The technology available at the time meant the cost of building a more advanced dark ride was too expensive for a regional amusement park . In 2011 , as technology improved and the costs decreased , the park started planning a second interactive dark ride . Several companies were contacted to design the audio @-@ visual portion of the future ride ; park management chose Triotech to do so .

Speculation that Canada 's Wonderland would build a new attraction for the 2014 season began at the end of July 2013 when maintenance work on the western side of Wonder Mountain was discovered . On August 8 , Cedar Fair confirmed an interactive dark ride would be built at one of the company 's parks . Wonderland officially announced Wonder Mountain 's Guardian ? a ten million dollar attraction ? on August 30 , 2013 , on Breakfast Television , a morning news program for the Toronto area . During the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Attractions Expo 2013 , the characters of the ride were revealed during president and CEO of Cedar Fair Matt Ouimet 's keynote address .

The first pieces of track and other parts from arrived at the park from Germany in mid @-@ January 2014 . A month later , installation of the track began inside the mountain . By the end of February , erection of the framing for the 3D screens began . By the beginning of March , support columns for the outside portion of the ride were installed . The lift hill was completed at the beginning of April . The park opened to the public on May 4 but the opening of Guardian was delayed . On May 23 , the park announced the ride would open the next day . The entire project involved 10 contractors and at least 47 workers .

On November 7 , 2013 , Cedar Fair announced that during Halloween Haunt , Guardian would be altered to a zombie @-@ themed ride . The name of this version of the attraction was later revealed to be Zombies 4D .

= = Ride experience = =

When Guardian first opened , Fast Lane was available to guests but within the first week of operation the Fast Lane option was removed . Riders must be at least 42 inches (107 cm) tall to ride with an adult or 48 inches (122 cm) to ride alone .

The rider 's experience is dependent upon the location of her or his seat on the train . Screens are located on both sides of the track but the only continuous screen on the track is on the right @-@ hand side . The train makes several tight turns during the ride ; riders facing forward experience all the animations while riders facing backward miss some scenes because of a the lack of screen space . The cars rotate 90 degrees clockwise to face the screens ; forward @-@ facing riders rotate toward the continuous screen .

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In the ride 's narrative of events preceding those that occur during the ride , King Adelsten entered the mountain to fight a dragon called Ormaar . During the battle , the king lost his crown . Stansein , one of the king 's servants , guides riders through the mountain to find and retrieve the crown . Throughout the ride , riders can score points by hitting objects on the screen with their light guns . At the end , the highest scores are placed in the ' Wonder Mountain 's Guardian Hall of Fame ' .

After the train leaves the station , it turns 180 @-@ degrees right and exits the mountain , leading into a 60 @-@ foot (18 m) chain lift hill . Once at the top , the train enters a shallow , right @-@ hand drop and runs along the side of the mountain . It makes a banked right turn back into the mountain , then a tarpaulin drops , blocking the entrance to prevent light from entering . The train slows and the cars rotate 90 degrees to face the screens . Stansein tells riders to prepare to battle the enemies . The first scene takes place in forest environment where riders fight Sneaky Spiders and Beasty Bats . At the end of the first scene , riders who began the ride facing forward see Stansein 's first appearance , in which he points in the direction riders should go next . Backward @-@ facing riders do not see this transition . In the next scene , riders ? who are surrounded by a lake inside the mountain ? battle Wet Ones and Crazy Crabs . The scene starts above the surface of the water but later moves downwards . As the scene ends , the train passes two waterfalls ; this transition is absent for backward @-@ facing riders .

Riders then arrive in an underground city named Draconian City , where they battle against Draconians and Archers . Nearing the finale , forward @-@ facing riders see Stansein making his final appearance , following the train . Riders are then confronted by more Draconians and Archers before entering a gold @-@ covered area where King Adelsten 's crown is found . Soon after , Ormaar arrives and breathes fire toward the ground . After a few seconds , the drop track releases the train into a 30 @-@ foot (9 @-@ 1 m) free fall , escaping from Ormaar . As the train leaves the drop track , the trains are rotated to their original positions and all of the riders ' scores are displayed on both sides of the track . After turning left into the station , riders disembark and the next riders board . One cycle of the ride lasts approximately three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half minutes .

= = = Zombies 4D = = =

In the ride 's Zombies 4D version , riders score points for shooting zombies and police badges found throughout the ride , but lose points if they shoot civilians .

After the train is dispatched and enters Wonder Mountain , riders find themselves in a graveyard where zombies are roaming . At the end of the scene , riders who began facing forward see a survivor directing them to the next scene . Riders who were seated backwards do not see this transition . The next scene takes place in a house overrun by the zombies and large spiders . At the end of the scene a truck crashes into the house . Riders then leave the house and pass the survivor ; this transition is again absent for backward @-@ seated riders . The train continues to a road with zombies , where three cars with zombies on them join the riders . Two of the cars crash at the end of the scene . The train then passes through a tunnel with abandoned cars ; this scene is absent for riders facing backward . Riders then battle the zombies for the final time before entering the drop track sequence . The names of the highest @-@ scoring riders are displayed on a leader @-@ board for this version of the attraction .

= = = Characteristics = = =

=== Trains ===

Guardian operates with five trains , each containing two cars that were manufactured by Art Engineering . Each car seats four riders back @-@ to @-@ back in seated rows ; each train can seat eight riders . Every seat has a lap @-@ bar restraint , a light gun , and a loudspeaker that provides sound during the ride . This configuration allows the ride to theoretically carry 650 riders per hour . The cars can rotate 90 degrees in both directions . The trains ' light guns are programmed to display a unique colour on the ride 's screens to indicate where each rider is shooting and to distinguish between shooters .

=== Track ===

The steel track of Guardian is approximately 1 @, @ 000 feet (300 m) long and the lift is about 60 feet (18 m) high ; it was manufactured by Kubes Steel located in Stoney Creek , Ontario . The outside portion of the track is grey and has beige supports ; indoor portions of the ride 's infrastructure are painted black . When the train is inside the mountain , drive tires move the trains along the track . The drive tires and other moving parts within the track system were manufactured by Art Engineering .

At the end of the interactive part of the ride , there is a 30 @-@ foot (9 @. @ 1 m) free @-@ fall drop track , a movable piece of track that can be released into free fall . As of 2015 , this roller coaster element has only been used on five coasters in the world . Once the train exits the drop track , the track returns to its starting position for the next train . Both Polar X @-@ plorer at Legoland Billund Resort and Thirteen at Alton Towers have vertical drop tracks that release riders into a 16 @. @ 4 @-@ foot (5 @. @ 0 m) drop . Verbolten at Busch Gardens Williamsburg has a drop track measuring 18 feet (5 @. @ 5 m) . The drop track used on Guardian is one of the largest drop tracks in the world .

=== Screens ===

Guardian uses 64 720p projectors to display interactive content on the ride 's screens . As the train enters the mountain , the cars rotate to face the screens . Because riders are seated both forwards and backwards , two sets of screens ? one for each side ? are required . Because Guardian makes tight turns , only the screen on the right @-@ hand side of the track continuously shows content until the end . This screen holds the record for being the longest continuous interactive screen in the world , with a length of approximately 500 feet (150 m) and a height of 13 feet (4 @. @ 0 m) . The other screen is set up so that as one scene finishes , the transition scene that is seen on the continuous screen is skipped and the next scene begins soon after , keeping both screens in synchronization . Because no physical sets are used in the attraction , the park management can change the film and theme of Guardian at any time .

=== Characters ===

The Wonder Mountain 's Guardian version of the attraction features eight characters . Stansien is the riders ' guide who leads them through the mountain . Crazy Crabs are characterized as attractive but dangerous . Beasty Bats are recognizable by their oversized fangs compared to those of regular bats . Sneaky Spiders have the ability to ambush riders and their bites contain venom . Archers fight with bows and arrows , and can move around quickly . Wet Ones are reptilian creatures similar to fish but they can walk on land . These reptiles are most dangerous when they are in the water . Draconians protect Draconian City and carry swords and shields . Ormaar is the dragon that lives inside the mountain and confronts riders at the end of the ride .

In the Zombies 4D version of the ride , a survivor of the zombie apocalypse replaces Stansien as

the guide character ; zombies are the enemy .

= = Reception = =

Brady MacDonald from Los Angeles Times ranked Guardian as the ninth most anticipated new ride of 2014 ; Sarah Sekula from Fox News ranked the ride in the top nine . Jody Robbins from MSN ranked Guardian in the top 11 best new attractions in Canada .

According to Triotech and Cedar Fair , the response from the public during the ride 's opening weekend was positive . Children and parents interviewed by Adam Martin @-@ Robbins from Yorkregion.com said they enjoyed the ride . Jeremy Schoolfield from the IAAPA said , " Cedar Fair seems to have figured out how to create a lavish dark ride on a regional theme park budget " .

During the 2014 season , attendance at Canada 's Wonderland dropped one percent ? a loss of approximately 36 @, @ 000 visitors ? compared to that of the 2013 season . The park 's most recent increase in attendance was in 2012 , the season Leviathan debuted , where there was a five percent increase . Wonder Mountain 's Guardian did not place in the top 50 roller coasters in the world , nor was it in the top five new roller coasters in the Golden Ticket Awards for the 2014 season .