

= Iron Rattler =

Iron Rattler is a steel roller coaster located at Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio , Texas . The ride opened in 2013 , replacing The Rattler , a wooden roller coaster , by putting a new steel track on top of The Rattler 's wooden support structure . The distance between the lowest and highest points of the first drop was increased from 124 to 171 feet ( 38 to 52 m ) and the drop was made steeper by changing the angle to 81 degrees . The resulting modifications increased the speed of the trains from 65 to 70 miles per hour ( 105 to 113 km / h ) . It is the first hybrid wood and steel roller coaster to feature an inversion , in which riders are turned upside @-@ down and then back upright . The inversion is a barrel roll , which is when the train goes through a combination of a loop and a roll .

The Iron Rattler was designed by Alan Schilke and built by Rocky Mountain Construction . The wooden Rattler had been constructed by Roller Coaster Corporation of America . When it opened in 1992 , it was the tallest and fastest wooden coaster in the world , with a height of 179 feet ( 55 m ) , a first drop of 166 feet ( 51 m ) and a top speed of 73 mph ( 117 km / h ) .

= = History = =

Six Flags Fiesta Texas announced in August 2012 , that they would be revamping their wooden coaster , The Rattler , into a steel track coaster , to be called Iron Rattler . The renovation would be performed by Rocky Mountain Construction and would feature the I @-@ Box steel track on some of the original wooden coaster supports , Rattler @-@ themed trains supplied by Gerstlauer , and a barrel roll . The new ride would open for the 2013 season .

The Rattler had been constructed by Roller Coaster Corporation of America . When the coaster debuted on March 14 , 1992 , it was the tallest and fastest wooden coaster in the world , with a height of 179 feet ( 55 m ) , a first drop of 166 feet ( 51 m ) and a top speed of 73 mph ( 117 km / h ) , outdoing its then rival , Mean Streak at Ohio 's Cedar Point . Designer John Pierce stated that the original plans kept changing as park co @-@ developers Gaylord Entertainment Company insisted on having the tallest wooden coaster in the world . It held this title until 1994 , when its first drop was shortened from 166 to 124 feet ( 51 to 38 m ) , resulting in a reduction of its top speed from 73 to 65 miles per hour ( 117 to 105 km / h ) .

In late 2009 , Six Flags Over Texas closed their Texas Giant wooden roller coaster for a \$ 10 million renovation which took more than a year to complete . Idaho @-@ firm Rocky Mountain Construction replaced the wooden track with a new steel I @-@ Box track , retaining a wooden support structure . The refurbishment was ultimately a success with " resoundingly positive reviews from riders " . The park 's parent company , Six Flags , immediately began looking for other rides in its chain which would benefit from a similar overhaul .

At the IAAPA 2011 Trade Show , Alan Schilke of Rocky Mountain Construction revealed their company had two projects that they would be working on for 2013 openings ? one of which was an I @-@ Box conversion of a wooden roller coaster . It was later revealed by the Spokane Journal of Business that The Rattler would be completely refurbished in 2013 with new track and trains in a manner similar to that used by the company on the New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas in 2011 . Although Six Flags had not publicly confirmed their plans , the park announced that The Rattler would close on August 5 , 2012 . At the end of the operating day on August 5 , 2012 , park personnel and select enthusiasts took the final ride , after which , The Rattler , as a wood coaster , ceased operation .

The National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives announced on April 16 , 2013 , they would be auctioning off the first ride of Iron Rattler on the evening of May 17 , 2013 , and proceeds going towards the museum . Also a soft @-@ opening was held to the media on May 15 , 2013 . The grand opening of the Iron Rattler was May 25 , 2013 .

After the deadly incident on the New Texas Giant on July 19 , 2013 , and because the two rides share several similarities , Six Flags Fiesta Texas had ceased running Iron Rattler pending investigation findings from its sister park . In under a month , Iron Rattler reopened on August 14

with seat belts as another added restraint to the two trains .

#### = = Characteristics = =

Iron Rattler is located in the Western @-@ themed Crackaxle Canyon area of Fiesta Texas , sitting next to the Road Runner Express and The Gully Washer . It is Rocky Mountain Construction 's second installation of I @-@ Box track , and the first to feature a barrel roll inversion . Iron Rattler operates with two Rattler @-@ themed trains manufactured by Gerstlauer . Each train is made up of six cars which seat riders in two rows of two . Riders are restrained through the use of a lap bar and a seat belt .

The table below compares the original Rattler , with the updated Iron Rattler ride . The original ride by the Roller Coaster Corporation of America was approximately 1 @, @ 800 feet ( 550 m ) longer due to a 900 ° helix atop the quarry walls . The refurbished ride by Rocky Mountain Construction features a steeper and longer first drop , thus achieving a faster speed .

#### = = Ride experience = =

The ride begins by exiting out of the station and turning around under Road Runner Express . It ascends a 179 @-@ foot @-@ tall ( 55 m ) chain lift hill , before dropping 171 feet ( 52 m ) at an angle of 81 ° . The track then ascends to the top of the quarry wall where it enters a 110 ° over @-@ banked turn . A 95 ° over @-@ banked turn leads to the left , back off the quarry wall . The ride then rises into the zero @-@ g roll which sits atop the quarry wall . A camelback hill is followed by two more over @-@ banked turns measuring 98 ° and 93 ° , respectively . The ride then drops back off the quarry wall and enters a tunnel near its base . The tunnel features fog and lighting effects . After exiting the tunnel , the train enters brake run and returns to the station .

#### = = Reception = =

Iron Rattler has generally been well received . Keith Miller of Funworld Magazine described the ride as " wonderfully smooth " highlighting the slow cresting of the lift hill as an " enjoyable element " . He concludes by stating " there 's not one restful moment on this ride " . Arthur Levine of About.com gave the ride 4 @. @ 5 out of 5 stars . Levine applauded Six Flags for replacing a bad wooden roller coaster with " a wonderful , remarkably smooth , thoroughly fun and enjoyable ride " . He also gives kudos to Rocky Mountain Construction who manufactured the I @-@ Box track and redesigned the ride . Brenda Solis of KLQB described the ride as " the most intense , craziest roller coaster ever " . She also compared the renovated ride to the original ride , stating " the old Rattler wasn 't as scary or intense or fast as the new one " .

Before Iron Rattler 's debut year , Rattler was only ranked once in the Amusement Today 's Golden Ticket Awards for the 2011 Top 50 Wooden Coasters ranked at 47 in the world , since the creation of the award in 1998 . After the renovation in 2013 , Iron Rattler was ranked highly by the voters . The ride was ranked the second @-@ best new ride of 2013 with 19 % of the vote . It also ranked at position 11 for the world 's best steel roller coasters its debut year .