

= Montu (roller coaster) =

Montu is an inverted roller coaster at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay in Tampa , Florida . Built by Bolliger & Mabillard , it is the park 's second roller coaster designed by the Swiss company following the success of Kumba which opened 3 years prior . When the ride opened on May 16 , 1996 , it was the world 's tallest and fastest inverted roller coaster , a title it has since conceded to Alpengeist at sister park Busch Gardens Williamsburg . The ride stands 150 feet (46 m) tall and reaches speeds of 65 miles per hour (105 km / h) .

= = History = =

The concept of an inverted roller coaster with inversions was developed by Jim Wintrode , the general manager of Six Flags Great America , in the early 1990s . To develop the idea , Wintrode worked with Walter Bolliger and Claude Mabillard ? from Swiss roller coaster manufacturer Bolliger & Mabillard ? and engineer Robert Mampe to develop Batman : The Ride which opened in May 1992 .

In early 1995 , planning began for Montu , fourteen months prior to the ride opening to the public . The owners of Busch Gardens Tampa Bay , Busch Entertainment (since renamed SeaWorld Entertainment) , entered into an agreement with Bolliger and Mabillard which would see them add Montu to Busch Gardens Tampa Bay in 1996 , followed in 1997 by the additions of Alpengeist at Busch Gardens Williamsburg and The Great White at SeaWorld San Antonio . On May 16 , 1996 , Montu officially opened to the public . At the time of its opening to the public , the ride was the tallest and fastest inverted roller coaster in the world .

= = Characteristics = =

The 3 @, @ 983 @-@ foot @-@ long (1 @, @ 214 m) Montu stands 150 feet (46 m) tall . With a top speed of 65 miles per hour (105km / h) , the ride features seven inversions including two vertical loops measuring 104 and 60 feet (32 and 18 m) , respectively , an Immelmann loop , a zero @-@ g roll , a batwing and a corkscrew . Riders experience up to 3 @. @ 8 times the force of gravity on the 3 minute ride . Montu operates with three steel and fiberglass trains , each containing eight cars . Each car seats four riders in a single row for a total of 32 riders per train .

Montu was launched alongside Busch Gardens Tampa Bay 's Egypt section of the park , which reportedly cost approximately US \$ 20 million . With an overall theme around Egyptian mythology , the ride is named after the god of war Montu , a man depicted with the head of a hawk . When the ride was first launched , a Nile crocodile exhibit was located underneath the first section of the ride . These animals were later relocated to the park 's main animal habitat .

= = Ride experience = =

The ride begins with the floor retracting which leads to the front gate opening . The trains leaves the station with a small dip and turnaround out of the station tracking towards the 150 @-@ foot @-@ tall (46 m) chain lift hill . Once at the top , riders twist down 128 feet (39 m) and into a 104 @-@ foot @-@ tall (32 m) vertical loop , reaching speeds of up to 65 miles per hour (105km / h) . Following the vertical loop , an Immelmann loop comes next , and provides a footchopper element with the pylon . After completing the Immelmann , the train goes through a zero @-@ g roll , where riders experience a feeling of weightlessness . Following the zero @-@ G roll , riders are then inverted twice during the batwing element which leads into the mid @-@ course brake run . A twisting dive to the right immediately follows the brake run and leads into a 60 @-@ foot @-@ tall (18 m) vertical loop . A series of corners and a corkscrew lead the train to the final brake run and back into the station .

= = Reception = =

Montu has generally been well received . Tom Buckingham of the Sarasota Herald @-@ Tribune commended the ride , giving kudos to the park " for designing its monster rides so that wait times put Disney to shame " . He stated " you 'll generally be on the ride and screaming " before riders get a chance to change their mind . Sabrina Rojas Weiss of the Lakeland Ledger stated " the way this ride twisted my body upside @-@ down and sideways seriously confused my senses " . The Los Angeles Times put the ride on their " high rollers " list of new roller coasters for 1996 . In 2012 , Montu was featured on the Travel Channel TV series Insane Coaster Wars in the " Hang ' em High " category . Although the ride lost out to Aftershock at Silverwood Theme Park , Theme Park Review 's Robb Alvey believed Montu would beat the competition which also included SeaWorld Orlando 's Manta and Busch Gardens Williamsburg 's Alpengeist .

In Amusement Today 's annual Golden Ticket Awards , Montu has consistently ranked highly . Montu is also one of only seven roller coasters to appear in the top 50 for all 15 years . It debuted at position 3 in 1998 , before rising to position 2 the following year . Montu has remained at position 14 for 2011 and 2012 .

In Mitch Hawker 's worldwide Best Roller Coaster Poll , Montu entered at position 2 in 1999 , before dropping to a low of 20 in 2010 . The ride 's ranking in subsequent polls is shown in the table below .