

= Apollo 's Chariot =

Apollo 's Chariot is steel roller coaster at the Busch Gardens Williamsburg theme park in James City County , Virginia , United States . The ride was the first Hyper Coaster designed by Swiss firm Bolliger & Mabillard . It officially opened to the public on March 30 , 1999 .

The 4 @, @ 882 @-@ foot @-@ long (1 @, @ 488 m) ride is characterised by eight air @-@ time hills , with heights ranging between 49 and 131 feet (15 and 40 m) . Riders ascend 170 feet (52 m) on the chain lift hill before dropping 210 feet (64 m) at an angle of 65 ° . Apollo 's Chariot is generally well received with it consistently rating highly in industry rankings .

= = History = =

Apollo 's Chariot was announced on September 5 , 1998 , as the tallest and fastest roller coaster at Busch Gardens Williamsburg . On January 23 , 1999 , the ride was nearing completion with approximately 20 pieces of track left to be installed . Apollo 's Chariot opened as the first Hyper Coaster from Swiss manufacturer , Bolliger & Mabillard .

Busch Gardens held Apollo 's Chariot 's opening ceremony on March 30 , 1999 . Italian fashion model Fabio Lanzoni was brought in to promote the new roller coaster . During the ride 's inaugural run , a 10 @-@ pound goose struck him in the face leaving his nose covered with blood . He was treated at a nearby hospital for minor cuts .

= = Characteristics = =

The 4 @, @ 882 @-@ foot @-@ long (1 @, @ 488 m) Apollo 's Chariot is a Bolliger & Mabillard Hyper Coaster . The park 's existing terrain is utilised to allow a 170 @-@ foot @-@ tall (52 m) lift hill to be translated into a first drop stretching 210 feet (64 m) . With a top speed of 73 miles per hour (117 km / h) , the ride features eight air @-@ time hills . Riders of Apollo 's Chariot experience up to 4 @. @ 1 times the force of gravity on the 2 @-@ minute , 15 @-@ second ride . Apollo 's Chariot operates with three trains with nine cars per train . Riders are arranged four across in a single row for a total of 36 riders per train . This configuration of trains allows for a theoretical capacity of 1 @, @ 750 riders per hour . Riders are restrained by a lapbar and the seats are elevated so riders ? feet don 't touch the ground .

= = Ride experience = =

After departing from the station , the train begins to climb the 170 @-@ foot (52 m) chain lift hill . When the train reaches the top , it drops down a few feet in a pre @-@ drop . The pre @-@ drop serves to reduce the stress and pull of the chain . After the pre @-@ drop , the train goes down a 210 feet (64 m) drop toward a water @-@ filled ravine at a 65 degree angle and reaching a top speed of 73 miles per hour (117 km / h) . At the end of the ravine , the train enters a second airtime hill with a 131 @-@ foot (40 m) drop . A short narrow above ground tunnel is at the bottom of the second drop . After the tunnel , the train descends a 144 @-@ foot (44 m) drop , which banks to the left as it descends . The train then goes through an upward helix . Coming out of the helix , the train drops 102 feet (31 m) then turns right and rises up into the mid @-@ course brake run . The train drops 48 feet (15 m) out of the brake run followed by another drop at 87 feet (27 m) toward the ravine . The train then banks right , makes a 38 @-@ foot (12 m) dip , turns left and goes through a small 16 @-@ foot (4 @. @ 9 m) dip . The train then makes one last 49 @-@ foot (15 m) airtime drop before climbing up and into the final brake run . There is approximately 26 seconds of airtime during the 2 minute and 15 second ride .

= = Reception = =

In the ride 's debut year , Busch Gardens Williamsburg had lower attendance levels than they were

expecting . This was attributed to prolonged periods of inclement weather . As a result of this , the park planned to re @-@ launch Apollo 's Chariot in 2000 in an attempt to drive attendance .

In Amusement Today 's annual Golden Ticket Awards , Apollo 's Chariot has consistently ranked highly . In its debut year , it ranked position 20 . In the 13 years since , the coaster has consistently ranked higher , peaking at # 4 in 2005 , 2007 , 2008 and 2012 .

In Mitch Hawker 's worldwide Best Roller Coaster Poll , Apollo 's Chariot entered at position 6 in 1999 , before dropping to a low of 32 in 2012 . The ride 's ranking in subsequent polls is shown in the table below .