

= Griffon (roller coaster) =

Griffon is a steel Dive Coaster roller coaster located at the Busch Gardens Williamsburg amusement park in James City County , Virginia , United States . Designed by Bolliger & Mabillard , it is 205 feet (62 m) high , and is the second @-@ fastest (71 miles per hour (114 km / h)) Dive Coaster built . The roller coaster features two Immelmann loops , a splashdown , two vertical drops and was the first of its kind to use floorless trains . Griffon was announced to the public on August 23 , 2006 and opened on May 18 , 2007 to positive reviews by both newspapers and enthusiasts . In 2007 , Amusement Today 's annual Golden Ticket Awards voted it the third @-@ best new steel roller coaster of that year and the 27th @-@ best steel roller coaster . It was voted the 33rd @-@ best steel roller coaster in 2013 .

= = History = =

On June 30 , 2006 , Busch Gardens Williamsburg announced that LeMans Raceway would be closing to the public on July 5 , 2006 in order to make room for the next year 's new attraction . Construction for Griffon began the next day with the demolishing of the raceway . A trademark for the name " Griffon " was filed by SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment on July 12 , 2006 . The roller coaster was announced to the public on August 23 , 2006 . On December 11 , 2006 , two cranes installed the highest piece of Griffon with an evergreen tree . The vertical drop and immelmann loop were completed in January 2007 and the final piece of track was installed in late February . After testing was complete , the roller coaster opened on May 18 , 2007 ; one week earlier than its original scheduled opening date .

When Griffon opened it 2007 , it held the records for the tallest , and fastest Dive Coaster in the world ; both which were previously held by Sheikra at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay . Griffon was also the first Dive Coaster to feature floorless trains and is the only roller coaster of its kind to have more than one inversion . In 2009 , Diving Coaster opened Happy Valley Shanghai , it took the drop length record at 213 @. @ 3 feet (65 @. @ 0 m) .

= = Ride experience = =

After the floors drop and the front gate opens , the train is dispatched from the station and makes a downward right turn immediately followed by an upward right turn which leads directly to 45 @-@ degree inclined chain lift hill . Once the train reaches the top of the 205 @-@ foot (62 m) lift , it makes a right turn into a holding brake where the train slowly moves over the first drop (which is 205 @-@ foot (62 m)) , stops for a few seconds , and then is released down the 90 degree drop . By the time the train makes it to the bottom of the drop , it reaches its maximum speed of 71 miles per hour (114 km / h) . Then , the train enters an immelmann loop before dropping back to the ground and making a banked upward left turn into the mid course brake run . After the train slows down , it enters a second 130 @-@ foot (40 m) 90 degree drop into another immelmann loop . Following a small airtime hill , the train goes through a splashdown which sprays two 50 @-@ foot (15 m) lines of water in the air . Finally , the train makes a banked turn to the left leading into the final brake run . One cycle of the ride lasts about three minutes .

= = Characteristics = =

= = Track = = =

The steel track of Griffon is 3 @, @ 108 feet (947 m) long and the lift is approximately 205 feet (62 m) high . The ride is equipped with an elevator that can return riders to ground level if a train must be evacuated while on the lift hill . Both the track and supports are blue ; however , the track uses a darker shade . The track was fabricated by Clermont Steel Fabricators in Batavia , Ohio , which

manufactures Bolliger & Mabillard 's roller coasters .

= = = Trains = = =

Griffon operates with three steel and fiberglass trains , colored red , yellow , and black . Each train has three rows that seat ten riders across for a total of 30 riders per train ; each seat has its own individual over @-@ the @-@ shoulder restraint with a seatbelt . This configuration allows the ride to achieve a theoretical hourly capacity of 1 @,@ 400 riders per hour . Unlike traditional roller coasters , Griffon 's trains are floorless , allowing the riders ' legs to dangle throughout the ride . Riders also experience up to 4 times the force of gravity .

= = Reception = =

Preston Wong from Hampton Roads said , " [The floorless trains] giv [e] riders a sense of vulnerability and , for those in the front row , an idea of what it must feel like to fly " and that enthusiasts would like the ride . Nicole Paitsel , Lisa Deaderick , and Joe Atkinson from Daily Press each rated the roller coaster for its vomiting and scream factors . Nicole and Lisa rated the vomiting factor a one (out of five) for the roller coaster 's smoothness ; Joe gave a four as he began feeling ill after his second ride . For the scream factor Nicole gave a five , Lisa gave a ten , and Joe gave a four . Mike from NewsPlusNotes praised the first drop for its freefall experience .

In Griffon 's opening year , it was voted the third best new ride for 2007 and the 27th best steel roller coaster in Amusement Today 's Golden Ticket Awards . The roller coaster peaked at position 19 in 2010 when it tied with SheiKra , another Dive Coaster .

In Mitch Hawker 's Best Steel Roller Coaster Poll , Griffon was voted as the 13th best steel roller coaster in the world in its first year ; its highest position in the poll to date .

Griffon has also made several television appearances . It was featured on Discovery Channel 's television series Build It Bigger and Travel Channel 's television series ' Bert the Conqueror and Insane Coaster Wars : World Domination .

= = Incidents = =

On August 5 , 2010 , five riders who sustained minor injuries were sent to a hospital after being hit with a 25 @-@ foot (7 @.@ 6 m) balloon while riding the roller coaster . The balloon was in the process of being deflated when it broke free and was carried into Griffon 's path due to strong winds .