## **A Story From the Past: Epcot's GM Test Track**

recently that it would soon close the GM-Disney Test Track ride at Epcot in Florida to renoopening of Test Track on March 17, 1999, and we are reprinting that report here.

by Gerald Scott News Dept.

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. -Shed no Mouska-tears for the GM-Disney Test Track ride.

It's alive. And then some. Much to the delight – and relief – of top corporate executives from General Motors Corp. and Walt Disney World Resort, Test Track, which has figuratively had a wheel in the ditch for a couple of years now, is finally on the road.

And that road, they hope, is the one leading to theme park success in the ultra-competitive Orlando entertainment environment, where yesterday's Space Mountain at Disney is being topped by today's Terminator 2/In 3-D ride over at Universal Studios.

The talk of the town in greater Orlando these days, however, is the newly opened Test Track, which is music to the mouse ears of GM and Disexecutives following months of delays and false

March 17, Disney On blocked off half of Epcot, invited several thousand VIP guests between GM and Disnev constituencies and had a big blowout party to officially open the ride to the entertainment-hungry public.

"This is an amazing ride and attraction because it is Detroit was led by marketing the longest and the fastest Vice President Phil Guarascio, thrill attraction that we have along with other GM corpoat any Disney theme park in rate, media relations and car the world," said Al Weiss, division executives, including your socks off.

Editor's Note: GM announced president of Walt Disney

"I think it's something that will take a lot of nerve - and vate it as the new Chevrolet not only by our passengers -Design Center. Our News Edi- but when you look at the pertor, Gerald Scott, covered the formance of these automobiles, it is nothing short of spectacular.

> 'Creating this exceptional new attraction is something that has been a lot of fun. It really has tested the boundaries of technology, engineering and imagination and has pushed them to the limits of creativity.

"Test Track is going to help ensure that Epcot continues to achieve its vision of bringing forth the newest technology from around the world in front of our guests, every

That's quite a claim, of course, but then Test Track at almost one mile in length and at speeds of up to 65 mph - is also quite a ride, even by Orlando's escalating stan-

With its clever re-creation of rigorous automotive road testing, Test Track enables both General Motors and Disney to demonstrate each company's unique approach to creating stronger relationships with their customers. and in a viscerally fun way.

Disney Imagineering created Test Track to be the most compelling public showcase of GM's commitment to automotive safety, quality and advanced technology. For GM, Test Track is an important milestone in the company's development of innovative new ways to reach new customers.



The GM-Disney Test Track ride lobby as it looked when the attraction opened at Epcot back in 1999. GM announced recently that the ride would close for renovations and reopen later this year as the all-new Chevrolet Design Center.

Bill O'Neill, Dean Rotondo, Donna Fontana, Randy Fox and Terry Rhadigan.

Helping to cut the ribbon and turn the GM ignition key to figuratively start up the ride were race car driver Richard Petty, NASA astronaut Buzz Aldrin and supermodel Christie Brinkley.

Other Detroiters attending the kickoff party were radiocasters Dick and Gail Purtan from WOMC-FM along with WJR's Paul W. Smith.

"This is really a very much anticipated moment for us," GM's Guarascio said. "We are more than thrilled to be here tonight to officially launch Test Track.

"But what we really want to do, however, is to dedicate this opening to the men and women of General Motors who helped make this possi-The GM contingent from ble and particularly our partners from the UAW who are here with us tonight. We're delighted with that and we think this is going to blow



When it first opened back in 1999, the GM-Disney Test Track ride used three onboard computers, per car, that reportedly had more processing power than the space shuttle. The ride, almost one mile long, was among the most technologically advanced in Disney theme park history.

formal GM-Disney theme park relationship dates back to 1982, when they teamed up to create the prior World in Motion pavilion at Epcot, which, of course, has now been replaced by Test Track and its related pavilion, the GM showroom and gift

The one-of-a-kind ride offers a realistic re-creation of the GM Proving Ground experience. And, for "maximum impact," the already popular Test Track also includes a closer look at high-speed barrier crash test simulations.

It's all part of a behind-thescenes peek at how the No. 1 automaker conducts its rigorous road safety testing, long before a given vehicle reaches the showroom floor.

Powered by three onboard computers, which together have more processing power than the space shuttle, each test vehicle on the ride steers passengers through more than five minutes of tiresquealing and heart-pounding simulated road testing.

"This venue is absolutely

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unique to both the automoentertainment and worlds." GM's Guarascio said. "Test Track takes guests deep behind the scenes and provides comprehensive insight you can't experience unless you happen to work at a GM proving ground."

Short of that, there is now the GM Test Track, in the heart of Disney's Epcot pavilion. The line forms early and it's currently about a twohour wait.

Visitors, however, say it's well worth the time.

## U-M Study Shows Consumers Pick Vehicles with Good Fuel Economy

fuel economy of current model year vehicles is 14 percent all vehicles available," said higher than just four years ago, say researchers at the University of Michigan.

For all 2012 light-duty vehiminivans, vans and SUVs) offered for sale, average mpg is 21.5, compared to 18.9 mpg for model year 2008 vehicles. The averages were 21.2 for 2011, 20.7 for 2010 and 19 for

For new vehicles actually 2010, 21.3 for 2009 and 20.8

"This implies that consumers tend to choose vehi- (including station wagons) mpg.

ANN ARBOR - The average cle models with better fuel and 1.6 mpg for light trucks economy than the average of Brandon Schoettle of the U-M Transportation Research Insti-

recent economic "The cles (cars, pickup trucks, downturn, coupled with rising gas prices, has led to an increased interest in purchasing more fuel-efficient vehicles."

Using data from the EPA, Schoettle and UMTRI colleague Michael Sivak also examined fuel economy changes by vehicle characteristics: purchased, average fuel econ- cars vs. light trucks, vehicle omy is typically one to two class size, transmission type, miles per gallon higher – 22.5 number of engine cylinders,

fuel economy:

(pickups, minivans, vans and SUVs) from model year 2008 to model year 2012. Average fuel economy is currently 23.4 mpg for cars and 18.6 mpg for light trucks.

• Increased for all 12 vehicle-size classes between the 2008 and 2012 model years. The largest increases were 4.1 mpg for station wagons, which had the highest average 2012 rating of 26 mpg, and 3.8 mpg for compact cars, which had the second-highest average of 25.6 mpg.

The smallest increases were 0.2 mpg for full-size mpg for model year 2011 (the drive type, fuel type and hy- vans, which had the lowest last full year of sales), 22.1 for brid vs. conventional vehicles. average 2012 rating of 13.4 They found that average mpg, and 0.4 mpg for small pickup trucks, which had the • Improved 2.8 mpg for cars third-lowest average of 18.6



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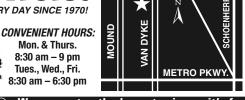


\*All prices based on GM Employee pricing. Leases require 1st payment, taxes, security deposit, and plate feup front unless otherwise noted. Pictures may not represent actual vehicle. Must qualify for GM owner loyalty Purchase payment is based on approved credit. 75 months at 2.99%, plus tax, title & plate. Ends 2-29-12 Free shuttle service to home, office or shopping.

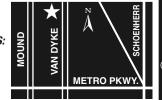
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