

The American Dream

America's latest shopping & leisure experience in New Jersey

Many years ago so-called "XXL shopping malls" the urban shopping experience in concentrated form spread as a major trend from America to Europe and the rest of the world.

The West Edmonton Mall, which opened in Canada in 1981 and was considered the world's largest shopping centre until 2004, set standards for modern shopping facilities early on combined with a wealth of entertainment offerings. The Mall of America in Bloomington/Minnesota (USA, opened in 1992) can also boast superlatives: with more than 40 million visitors annually, it is the world's most visited shopping mall.

All these projects have a connection to the Edmonton/Alberta-based project developer Triple Five Group, a company founded by the Ghermezian family in the mid-Sixties and still owned by them. The West Edmonton Mall and the Mall of America were developed and continue to be operated by the Canadian company.

The most recent projects of the Triple Five conglomerate include the new American Dream shopping and entertainment centre in the US state of New Jersey, the first section of which was officially opened on 25 October 2019 (see EAP News of 25 October 2019). In 2011 the Triple Five Group took over the retail project in East Rutherford, originally planned under the name "Meadowlands Xanadu", which had been under construction since 2004. The complex is now to be completed in four phases and will subsequently contain hundreds of retail, catering, entertainment and fashion offerings on an area of approximately 279,000 square meters. As stated by the developer and operator, 55 percent of the new shopping and entertainment centre's facilities will consist of entertainment and 45 percent of retail - this shows what role the "entertainment" factor now actually plays in such large-scale shopping mall projects today: the buzzword is "retailtainment".

The first part of the complex, the Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park with over 35 attractions and rides for families and adrenaline junkies, opened in October. The original master planning for the theme park and the DreamWorks Water Park, which is also part of the shopping mall portfolio and was opened at the end of November; and the concept development for thematic elements were carried out in collaboration with Triple Five by the Canadian firm of FORREC which designs projects in the "mixed-use & entertainment" field worldwide. These two parks alone occupy a total area of approx. 65,000 square meters.

Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park

Even before the future shops of the new shopping destination can attract the public, the American Dream Mall is already thrilling visitors with one of its highlights, the Nickelodeon Universe indoor theme park. Similarly, to the Mall of America, where a branded indoor theme park can be found under the

same name, this one has also been created on a licence basis with the Viacom media group. With “SpongeBob – Square Pants”, Dora”, the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” and other character, well-known comic characters of the “Nickelodeon” brand have moved into the new park and serve as the thematic background for the design of the attractions.

“The Shredder”, a spinning coaster from Gerstlauer Amusement Rides, provides some great thrills for passengers with a steep drop – according to the park it is the highest and longest freely rotating spinning coaster in the world. On the 685-meter-long and 28-meter-high track the passengers (in a total of eight trains) pass through various elements at a maximum speed of 57km/h, including an Immelman turn and drop, two wild mouse turns, an airtime hill and two camelbacks.

The 43-meter-high roller coaster “The Shellraiser”, which was also supplied by the German manufacture, should provide an even more thrilling ride. The track layout of the 1,000-meter-long Euro Fighter includes an LSM long Euro Fighter opened in 2011 and “Takabisha” in Fuji-Q Highland park, Japan. In contrast to this track, however, the coaster in the USA has the steepest (beyond vertical) drop in the world at an inclination of around 122 degrees. During the launch section the trains (a total of six) are accelerated to 100km/h. The firm of KCL Engineering provided special lighting for the roller coaster – especially in the acceleration phase, with corresponding lighting effects visually enhancing the sensation of speed. The fact that the track layouts of the two Gerstlauer roller coasters are partly interwoven is another special feature of this design.

A “SkyTrail” climbing course with eight levels and a total height of 28 meters was supplied by the US corporation RCI Adventure Products – according to its own information currently the highest indoor SkyTrail in the world. Numerous interactive features, including a “QUICKjump” free-fall element, ensure varied climbing fun under the roof of the amusement park with the “Legends of the Hidden Temple Challenge”. Both the two Gerstlauer coasters and the climbing structure from RCI were added to the park portfolio by sales partner Ride Entertainment.

The Liechtenstein-based manufacture Intamin Amusement Rides was also able to install two roller coasters in the park; “Sandy’s Blasting Branco” is a short-loop coaster with LSM launch and loopings, while “Timmy’s half Pipe Havoc” is a surf rider which is also equipped with an LSM launch element. The US firm of Chance Rides supplies another indoor roller coaster entitled “Nickelodeon Slime Streak”, which rushes through the 385-meter-long track with a single train (for two passengers in five cars each). “Skyline Scream” is also an indoor spinning drop tower by S&S Rides. For the younger public well-known manufactures such as Zamperla and Zierer also supply other rides and attractions.

In October “The Rink” ice rink was also opened in the shopping mall. It meets the size requirements of the National Hockey League (NHL) and is therefore also suitable for ice hockey games. On 5 December an indoor snow park called “Big SNOW” was opened in the American Dream Mall.

DreamWorks Water Park

Guests who are more interested in having fun in the water and want to go swimming in one of the largest indoor water parks in North America have been able to do so since 27 November right next to the ice rink in the “Dream Works Water Park”. With more than 40 water slides and 15 other attractions, including a 6,000 square meter wave pool and a lazy river, the water park attracts guests not only with its special theming, which features well-known characters from the “Madagascar”, “Shrek” and “Kung Fu Panda” movies, for example, but also offers a wealth of exciting experiences.

The Shopping Experience

From March 2020 the shopping and entertainment centre will ultimately also meet the demands of its future shopping visitors when more than 450 shops open. In addition, there will be over 100 different food outlets.

The mall will also feature a Sea Life aquarium and a LEGOLAND Discovery Centre by Merlin Entertainments, a CMX Luxury Movie Theater, a KidZania, an Observation Wheel and other attractions, all of which will be added next spring. The complex is expected to attract 40 million visitors annually.

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