



REVIEW

Stunning 3D attraction at Universal gets the heart racing

"Transformers: The Ride - 3D" puts guests in the midst of an intergalactic battle between Autobots and Decepticons. UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

## Action-packed 'Transformers' ride doesn't disappoint franchise fans

By Tim Walters  
FLORIDA TODAY

After we fell out of a building in the new "Transformers: The Ride — 3D," we hoped to high Heaven we still had the AllSpark.

After all, the fate of the world depended on it.

Entertainment reporter Jennifer Sangalang and I duelled the Decepticons with ferocity as not to let our Autobot allies down.

And, thankfully, we didn't.

Universal Creative worked closely with "Transformers" director Michael Bay to create a true-to-the movie ride that left me with an ear-to-ear grin.

I was chosen to try out the ride because I have been a fan of the Transformers since they were introduced to the United States in 1984. I was 7, and a vehicle or jet that converted into a robot seemed like the most ingenious thing ever. Come

to think of it, it still does.

This ride could easily be a mini Transformers film. And the coolest part: It was in 3D.

It's cold. It's hot. It's even a little wet.

Universal Studios certainly earns its reputation as the theme park where you can ride the movies.

Optimus Prime preps you for the ride of your life aboard a new Autobot hero named EVAC. He helped navigate us through a harrowing battle where Megatron relentlessly attacked, Starscream made a surprise appearance and Devastator tried tearing us to shreds using his tractor-beam-like suction weapon.

But despite warm blasts from laser cannons and battles that tore apart buildings, when the ride ended, we were in possession of the AllSpark, and Megatron had been defeated.

So, how would we rate

the ride?

I gave it an overall 4.5 of 5 stars, while Jennifer gave it a 4. I'm more familiar with the storyline, so she said she needs to ride it again to fully take in all of the story and detail.

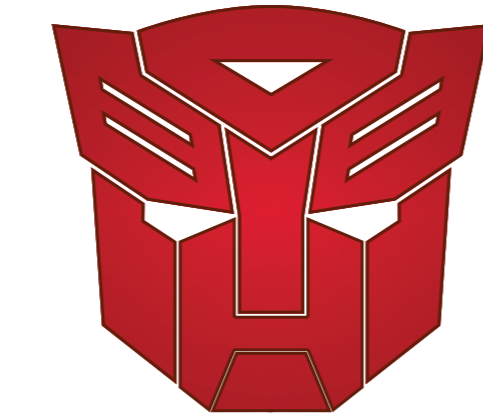
However, we both gave the ride a 5 for the fun factor.

As far as the fear factor, it doesn't have the speed of a roller coaster, but the enemy attacks might be a little much for small children.

For those kids — big and small — who make it through, the payoff is a huge memorabilia store with toys and other gifts that are a collector's dream.

So if you're a big Transformers fan, it would be well worth it to check out this ride.

Jennifer was so pumped up after, that she kept staring at tractor-trailers on State Road 528, waiting for Optimus Prime to help us through our 90-minute drive home.



COVER STORY

# PREPARE FOR BATTLE



Megatron, Decepticons wrestle for control in 'Transformers 3D: The Ride' at Universal

By Jennifer Sangalang  
FLORIDA TODAY

The storyline for Universal Orlando's newest attraction, "Transformers: The Ride — 3D," sounds simple: Get the AllSpark. Keep it safe. Avoid the Decepticons.

But when a Transformer the size of a city block — aptly named Devastator — comes at you, that's a tall order.

"We get sucked in by Devastator. We get towed by Starscream through a building and then a final battle by Megatron," said Mike West of Universal Creative team. "It's a whirlwind tour. It's the greatest battle you'll ever ride."

The theme park's newest attraction opened to great fanfare Thursday. "It's been a huge success and award-winning attraction in Singapore and Hollywood, Calif.," West said. "It was a thrill for us to bring it here at Universal Orlando."

The ride starts with a tour of the NEST Facility (Non-biological Extraterrestrial Species Treaty) and brief introduction of the main players. Guests get an overview of the AllSpark and its significance. Grumbles and slight tremors from beyond the room help build the excitement and anticipation. This is the calm before the storm.

Megatron, leader of

the Decepticons, makes several memorable appearances. Don't make the 28-foot-tall Transformer angry. But remember your orders from Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots (the good guys): Don't give up the AllSpark.

"Our job is to take it to a safe place. Since we are only human, we have to have some help," West said.

That's where brand new character Autobot EVAC steps in. EVAC transforms into a vehicle that takes guests out of headquarters and into a larger-than-life battle. Fan favorite Bumblebee dukes it out with Ravage. Starscream steps in.

You may recognize the original voices from the characters of the "Transformers" '80s cartoon series. There was another animated series, "Transformers: Beast Wars," in the 1990s and a trilogy of big-screen adaptations from director Michael Bay. A fourth picture is in the works with actor Mark Wahlberg taking the lead for Shia LeBeouf.

"It lives up to the big Transformer fans and for those guests who might not be into it," West said.

Universal's creative team worked closely with Bay for the 3D ride. The two-story attraction, jam-packed with moving platforms and special effects, stays true to the



Optimus Prime and Bumblebee make in-park appearances at Universal Studios Florida.

UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

### THE DETAILS

**What:** "Transformers: The Ride — 3D"

**When:** Hours vary. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday in June and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily in July.

**Where:** Universal Studios, 6000 Universal Blvd., Orlando

**Cost:** Tickets are \$92 for adults, \$86 for kids. Discounts available online.

**Info:** Call 407-363-8000 or visit [universallorlando.com](http://universallorlando.com). Send a Tweet to @UniversalORL or use hashtag #transformers

film series.

One of the biggest challenges for designers was the Transformers' transformation from car to Autobot or tank to Decepticon. In the movies, West said, when you see a character transform, the scenes are cut for dramatic effect.

"In ours, you see the Transformers change and unfold right before your eyes."

He's heard comparisons of "Transformers:

The Ride — 3D" to Universal's "Spider-man" ride. The difference? "We placed you in the middle of a real world, in a real city. Everything had to be very exact," he said.

The response to the ride has been overwhelming.

"People are just blown away by it," he said. "We saved the world in a little over four minutes."

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TRIVIA

## Test your 'Transformers' trivia

By Tim Walters | FLORIDA TODAY

How well do you know the "Transformers"? FLORIDA TODAY's Visuals Editor Tim Walters, a die-hard "Transformers" fan, came up with some trivia about the iconic Hasbro characters.

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**1.** Christopher Latta was the original voice actor for the Decepticon Starscream. He also voiced two original "Simpsons" characters, including Mr. Burns in the first-ever "Simpsons" episode. Who was the other character voiced briefly by Latta?

- a. Moe Szyslak
- b. Homer Simpson
- c. Barney Gumble
- d. Apu

**2.** Peter Cullen has been the voice of Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots, since the 1980s. He also voiced a character in "The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh." Which character did he voice?

- a. Winnie the Pooh
- b. Piglet
- c. Tigger
- d. Eeyore

**3.** Before becoming a Prime, Optimus Prime had a different name. What was that name?

- a. Alpha Trion
- b. Orion Pax
- c. Hot Rod
- d. Ultra Magnus

**4.** Fans today know the Autobot Bumblebee as a yellow Camaro with black stripes. What was he in the original cartoon series?

- a. Red Lamborghini
- b. White ambulance
- c. Yellow Volkswagen bug
- d. Army-style Jeep

**5.** In the "Transformers" cartoon series, there was a storyline involving Dinobots, in which the Transformers transformed into dinosaurs. Of the four choices listed, which one is NOT one of the original three Dinobots?

- a. T-Rex
- b. Triceratops
- c. Pterodactyl
- d. Brontosaurus

**6.** As a Hasbro toy, Megatron, leader of the Decepticons,

transformed into a Walther P38 handgun. In the "Transformers" films directed by Michael Bay, he changes into a flying aircraft. What did he transform into in the "Transformers: Beast Wars" cartoon?

- a. Alligator
- b. Cheetah
- c. Gorilla
- d. Banana Slug

**7.** Frank Welker was the voice of Megatron in the original animated series, and his voice talents were used for other characters in Bay's movies. However, he did not voice Megatron. Who did?

- a. Jess Harnell
- b. Charles Adler
- c. Hugo Weaving
- d. Robert Foxworth

**8.** Bay filmed scenes locally at Kennedy Space Center for "Transformers: Dark of the Moon." What other film brought him to KSC?

- a. "Bad Boys II"
- b. "The Rock"
- c. "Pearl Harbor"
- d. "Armageddon"

**9.** Shia LeBeouf played a character named Sam Witwicky in Bay's "Transformers" trilogy. But in the original cartoon series, Witwicky went by a different first name. What was it?

- a. Chip
- b. Spike
- c. Sparkplug
- d. Daniel

**10.** In the original "Transformers: The Movie" animated movie released in 1986, several big Hollywood stars lent their voice talents to characters. Which of the following was NOT a voice talent in that movie?

- a. Harrison Ford
- b. Orson Welles
- c. Leonard Nimoy
- d. Casey Kasem

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### VIDEO ONLINE

For scenes from "Transformers: The Ride — 3D," scan this code.



### RATING

On a scale of 1 to 5, our reviewer rated "Transformers: The Ride — 3D":

**Overall:** 4.5  
**Fun factor:** 5  
**Fear factor:** 3.5

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