

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM



Knott's Berry Farm offers signature drinks that have become a highlight of visiting the park.

I'll Drink to That

Attractions wow guests with one-of-a-kind beverages

by Jodi Helmer

AT DORNEY PARK, "Dominador," "Revolution," and "Possessed" are more than just rides. The park created one-of-a-kind beverages named after its thrill rides: Revolution is a colorful frozen blend of strawberry and lime flavors, while Possessed mixes pineapple juice and lemonade with a splash of grenadine.

Director of Food and Beverage Katie Knopf believes signature drinks, "make the menu fun for our guests."

The Allentown, Pennsylvania, park is one of several attractions expanding their drink menus beyond traditional sodas and slushy drinks to include branded beverages that are unique to their locations.

"Signature drinks become a must-have item when guests visit the park," explains Alex Curavo, assistant director of food and beverage at the Columbus Zoo and member of the IAAPA Food and Beverage Committee. "It's something that breaks through all of the options and

connects with the audience."

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal parks lists several flavors of butterbeer on its restaurant and concession menus; Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom serves up a frozen apple juice drink known as LeFou's Brew at Gaston's Tavern; and a vanilla-infused Coca-Cola product called the South Pole Chill is the official drink of the Antarctica section at SeaWorld Orlando.

At Knott's Berry Farm in California, the park is built around a farm where boysenberries are a staple crop; featuring signature beverages made from the sweet red berries helped reinforce the brand. All of the beverages from lemonade and lattes to milkshakes offer boysenberry flavors.


"It enhances the guest experience because these signature drinks can only be found at Knott's Berry Farm," says Vice President of Food and Beverage Russ Knibbs.

While a signature drink menu can boost revenues, the process of developing one-of-a-kind beverages can be expensive.

The Columbus Zoo researched the possibility of adding a signature apple juice beverage to coincide with the 2015 opening of Pirate Island. Executing the concept—which would have included a custom drink dispenser, cups with containers for dry ice, and the apple juice mix—would have resulted in a price point upward of \$8—too much for a non-alcoholic beverage.

"Signature drinks give you a premium product that is a great upsell item, but it has to be a good value to the guest," Curavo says.

Instead of creating new recipes, Dorney Park renamed existing beverages on the Chickie's and Pete's menu. The move kept costs in check and a simple name change made the drinks more popular.

"Kids love the signature drinks," Knopf says. "They see the menu and think, 'I can ride that ride and I can have that drink.' It's part of the overall experience in the park." 

IAAPA

Attractions
Expo

2016 Food and
Beverage Trends

Nov. 14, 2-3:15 p.m.

Learn the hot ideas, new products, and innovative food-related promotions that are driving business this year. For more information, visit bit.ly/IAE16Trends.

Jodi Helmer is a frequent contributor to Funworld, focusing on operational trends and issues across the attractions industry.



A Sip of Success

Beverage containers help attractions boost revenues

by Jodi Helmer

WHEN IT COMES TO creating a successful beverage program, the cup matters. “It boosts revenues and gives guests a souvenir from the park to take home,” explains Larry Stottlemeyer, CEO of Adventure Park USA.

The Maryland family entertainment center (FEC) introduced its souvenir cup program in 2011 and immediately saw an increase in sales. Although the cup has a higher upfront retail price (\$6 for a 32-ounce souvenir cup compared with \$2.50 for a 16-ounce soda in a paper cup), Stottlemeyer believes guests are willing to spend more because the \$.99 refills offer great value. But it’s not just guests who get value from the souvenir cup program.

“It never hurts to have guests riding around with cups with your logo on them to get people thinking about the park,” Stottlemeyer says.

On Long Island, New York, Bob Amoruso often sees souvenir cups from Adventureland being used outside the park, including at Little League games and high school sporting events.

In addition to serving as a successful marketing tool, Amoruso, director of operators at the park, notes the souvenir cup program has helped boost revenues. Soda sales spiked after the souvenir cups were introduced in 2009 and guests come to anticipate purchasing a new cup each season. “The cups have become collectible,” Amoruso says.


Adventureland sells its 32-ounce souvenir cups for \$6.99 each with discounts for purchasing more than one cup; refills are \$1 all season. To encourage guests to purchase new souvenir cups each

season, Adventureland changes the colors, choosing combinations that reflect park attractions. In 2015, the cups were green and yellow as a nod to the new “Turbulence” roller coaster painted the same colors.

Adventure Park USA also changes the colors of its souvenir cups each season but Stottlemeyer decided not to brand the cups with the year. “We’re not moving the same volume as a big park,” he says. “If we order cups that don’t sell this season, we can use them again next season.”

Souvenir cups are also a big deal for kids. Both Adventureland and Adventure Park USA sell 16-ounce slushie cups and encourage kids (and kids-at-heart) to create their own slush mixes in souvenir cups. “We sell the heck out of them,” Stottlemeyer says.

As chair of the IAAPA Food and Beverage Committee, Amoruso has talked to countless operators about their souvenir beverage containers, and their effect on park revenues is overwhelmingly positive.

“If you don’t have a souvenir cup program, get one,” he says. “You’ll see your sales go up tremendously while you put a smile on people’s faces.” 

Souvenir Cup Programs

Adventureland and Adventure Park USA both worked with Whirly-DrinkWorks to create the souvenir cup programs. Al Conarro, the company’s amusement parks and attractions channel manager, offers these questions and considerations for designing and creating your own program:

1. How is my beverage category performing to the rest of the industry? Your beverage supplier can provide insight.
2. What souvenir programs are being run by other parks in the industry? Visits other parks as a guest and observe the programs and guest interaction.
3. Consider the eight ingredients to successful souvenir programs that will lead to creating a top revenue and profit drive in food and beverage: benchmarking and measurement, product, retail offer, refill offer, point of sale, crew initiative, online efforts, and legacy bottles.
4. Do I have unique or licensed characters in my park that can help leverage my souvenir program with a custom container?
5. What food and beverage category would best fit a custom container?
6. What value should I consider in offering a custom container?

Jodi Helmer is a frequent contributor to Funworld, focusing on operational trends and issues across the attractions industry.