

Eat Your Heart Out, Spielberg



"Restless Planet" transports guests to a Jurassic landscape with more than 100 animatronic dinosaurs.

A new dinosaur-based theme park that blends science and entertainment will be the closest thing to exploring the prehistoric past for visitors to the City of Arabia in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Operating under the working title, "Restless Planet," the 500,000-square-foot attraction will put guests face to face with giant dinosaurs in the world's first true fusion of thrilling and educational entertainment.

The "real-life Jurassic Park" will feature more than 100 dinosaurs created by Kokoro Company Ltd., a leading Japanese manufacturer of robotically controlled animatronics. The Natural History Museum in London will provide interpretive content for the project while also serving as a scientific consultant to Kokoro.

"The Kokoro Company has vastly improved the speed and smoothness of the dinosaur movements, making them more realistic than ever before," says Claudine Fontana, media-relations manager at the museum. "The new design incorporates servo-feedback technology with a combined analog/digital system of pneumatic controllers and electronic circuitry. The system allows us to witness large and impressively scary movements, as well as subtle movements such as breathing and lip curling."

Kokoro Company has over 500 dinosaur creations around the world, including 250 animatronic designs at the Dinosaur Adventure Park in Saitama Prefecture, in Japan. Upon completion, the Restless Planet theme park will boast one of the largest collections of animatronic dinosaurs in the world.

Fontana says the Ilyas & Mustafa Galadai Group invited the museum into the project to help represent the Mesozoic era. "We were brought in to ensure that the theme park was not only entertaining and fun, but scientifically accurate."

According to the company's press release, tourists will be transported to a place where earthquakes, eruptions and meteor showers come alive before their eyes. They'll also experience the dinosaurs first-hand as they travel across a Jurassic landscape.

The promotional video at the website boasts a terrifying monorail ride into the past, featuring music reminiscent of certain blockbuster dinosaur movies. Still, they've come a long way since the crude animatronics of *Jaws*.

"From dramatic rides that plunge visitors into the world of giant sauropods and terrifying raptors, to special zones exploring the prehistoric past and links to the latest discoveries, the theme park will meld science and entertainment like never before," says Fontana. "It will combine breathtaking theme park experiences with educational content, dramatic lighting and audio/visual effects."

The museum will continue to support the attraction beyond completion of the project by offering educational programs and relevant updates on new scientific discoveries.

Restless Planet is just a small slice of the 20-million-square-foot residential/commercial development in Dubai known as the City of Arabia, a monumental architectural endeavor that includes the Mall of Arabia, and the Wadi Walk, a collection of Mediterranean retail shops, apartments and restaurants lining a waterway. The City of Arabia is set to be completed June of 2009.

Restless Planet is being designed by international theme park specialists Jack Rouse & Associates and enclosed under a 75-meter dome designed by RH Architects. It's scheduled to open in Dubai in 2010. For more information visit, www.cityofarabiame.com.