



## **LEGOLAND and Merlin Entertainments**

**On 7 June 1968, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, son of LEGO founder Ole Kirk Christiansen, opened the first LEGOLAND park at the headquarters of the LEGO Group in Billund, Denmark. The idea of building a family play paradise of colourful LEGO bricks turned out to be a huge success. And so, from the 90s, the company began to promote the concept in other countries too. It all worked out well: the eight LEGOLAND parks are now among the most important amusement parks in the world. The LEGOLAND concept celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018, and is still widely popular.**

When Godtfred Kirk Christiansen opened the first LEGOLAND park in Billund, Denmark on 7 June 1968, the new world consisted of MINILAND, an impressive LEGO railway line, a puppet theatre, a small Indian camp, and a driving school. Christiansen did not expect a lot of visitors back then, but the very first season already exceeded the expectations of everyone, counting more than 625,000 guests. Within half a century, LEGOLAND had gained unprecedented success. Fifty years later, the now eight LEGOLAND parks in Europe, America, Dubai, Malaysia, and Japan are among the most notable theme parks in the world.

### **Investing in Günzburg**

LEGOLAND Windsor opened in 1996 west of London. Only three years later, this was followed by the first LEGOLAND park to be open year-round in Carlsbad, California. Germany has had its own LEGOLAND in the Bavarian town of Günzburg since 2002. Back in 1999, owing to its geographical and structural qualities, the Günzburg location prevailed against Japan's capital Tokyo in the decisive final round. The park had already received more than 150 million euros in investments by the time it opened, and so already featured all the highlights of its predecessors as well as countless new attractions. To this date, the LEGOLAND team has had the pleasure of welcoming visitors from over 120 countries, who all shared a memorable family experience in the world of LEGO.

The district of Günzburg has adapted very well to the public and became a family and children-friendly region with numerous leisure and holiday offers, all tailored to the LEGOLAND target group. Today, LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort belongs to the top amusement parks in Germany. LEGOLAND Florida, the second park in North America, opened in 2011. Malaysia followed in 2012 as the first LEGOLAND in Asia, and along came Dubai in 2016 and Japan in 2017. New parks are already under construction in New York and South Korea.

### **Merlin Entertainments Group: employment for 27,000 people**

Since 2005, all LEGOLAND parks belong to the British Merlin Entertainments Group. Merlin now attracts over 66 million visitors annually at more than 120 locations in 25 different countries on 4 continents. The company is the largest supplier of entertainment in Europe and ranks second on a global scale. The aim of the group is to create unique and unforgettable memories for millions of visitors every day. It relies on the commitment and passion of its teams (27,000 employees worldwide) - and on the innovative power of its distinctive brands - to achieve this goal.

Its twelve established brands entertain visitors worldwide: SEA LIFE, Madame Tussauds, LEGOLAND, The Coca-Cola London Eye, The Dungeons, Gardaland Resort, LEGOLAND Discovery Centres, Little BIG City, Alton Towers Resort, Warwick Castle, THORPE PARK Resort, Blackpool Tower, Heide Park Resort, Sydney Tower Eye and SKYWALK. All brands are unique, full of imagination and innovative, and have great growth potential for the future.

“Merlin is a world-class company and operates unique amusement and theme parks on four continents. We have a well-defined and proven strategy to further develop our international entertainment company: attractions for the whole family with great expansion potential. We have a balanced portfolio built on strong brands with respect to geography, products, and demographics,” explains Nick Varney, CEO of Merlin Entertainments Group.

Merlin Entertainments has been listed on the London Stock Exchange since November 2013.

More information at: [www.merlinentertainments.biz](http://www.merlinentertainments.biz)

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Press information and image material can be found at [www.LEGOLAND.de/Presse](http://www.LEGOLAND.de/Presse).

Broadcast footage material can be downloaded from [www.LEGOLAND-Videogalerie.de](http://www.LEGOLAND-Videogalerie.de).

**Note to the editor:**

LEGOLAND® Deutschland Resort opened May 17, 2002 in the Bavarian town of Günzburg and is one of the four most visited amusement parks in Germany. The holiday village next to the park has also been one of the most popular family hotels in Germany for years featuring various LEGO-themed accommodations. Information about LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort can be found at [www.LEGOLAND.de](http://www.LEGOLAND.de). Tickets and accommodation packages can be booked online here.

**The 2019 season runs from the 6<sup>th</sup> of April until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November**

LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort is part of the Merlin Entertainments Group. Information at [www.merlinentertainments.biz](http://www.merlinentertainments.biz).

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