

Fantasy of Flight Aviation-Themed Attraction a ‘Unique Find’ Says Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitor’s Bureau Chief

POLK CITY, Fla. – Fifteen minutes west of Disney’s gates in the heart of Central Florida, visitors can discover a world of real adventure that adds a new dimension to the increasingly popular Central Florida travel experience.

Fantasy of Flight, voted #1 of “Orlando’s 101 Best Kept Secrets” by *Orlando Sentinel* readers in 2007, is an aviation-themed attraction built around decades of historic achievements in flight. With the world’s largest private vintage and restored aircraft collection, themed immersion experiences, flight simulators, interactive exhibits and daily aerial demonstrations, Fantasy of Flight offers hands-on fun for everyone.

"There are so many undiscovered experiences across Central Florida, and Fantasy of Flight is one of those unique finds," says Gary Sain, president and CEO of the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitor's Bureau. "Visitors are always looking for more adventure, and demand is high for interactive experiences, which means there's something for every member of the family at Fantasy of Flight."

Families of several generations can share an inspiring experience as they venture into the past, absorb fascinating stories of heroism and American ingenuity, and celebrate mankind’s achievements. Together, they can stroll among airplanes dating from the early 1900s, including World War II standouts like the rare P-51C Mustang and the B-26 Marauder. Kids are awestruck by the Ford Tri-Motor cinema star – the actual plane featured in the Stephen Spielberg classic, “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.”

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At the new *WASP – A Passionate Pursuit* multi-media exhibit, guests will discover the thrilling story of the Women Airforce Service Pilots who were the first women in history to fly U.S. military aircraft. Children can have a field day checking out a hot-air balloon or hang-gliding simulator at the Fun with Flight Center, where parents, and their parents, can join in the fun or sit back and take a breather. And the entire family can “ooh” and “ah” as the pilot of a vintage biplane performs an air show overhead – a signature daily event (weather permitting) included in Fantasy of Flight admission.

The beauty of planning a Fantasy of Flight visit is that the experience can be combined easily with other undiscovered Central Florida activities, including: a shopping excursion to the antique galleries and boutiques of nearby Lakeland, which also boasts the Polk Museum of Art; a visit to the Lake Wales National Historic District or a live carillon concert among the lush gardens of Historic Bok Sanctuary in nearby Lake Wales. There's even a chance to explore the mysterious Indian Legend of Spook Hill in Lake Wales, where your car will travel uphill while parked in neutral!

Fantasy of Flight, located just off of Interstate 4, offers new adventure for families in search of inspirational fun, says creator and owner, Kermit Weeks.

“The Fantasy of Flight concept is all about going beyond your perceived limitations, just as those early aviators did,” says Weeks, a former aerobatics champion and aircraft designer. “Here, we offer a variety of experiences that let kids’ and parents’ imaginations soar.”

Families can climb aboard the huge 1944 Short Sunderland flying boat and also scamper through a B-17 Flying Fortress, where the bomb hatch offers the sensation of flying over enemy countryside. They'll stroll through scenes that recreate mankind's first attempts at flight and watch a World War I dogfight as seen from the trenches.

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Flight simulators provide the experience of shooting down enemy aircraft in the South Pacific. And an Audio Tour of vintage and restored aircraft broadcasts special effects and remarkable stories and details about the 40-plus planes and their pilots, all written and narrated by Kermit Weeks. A special tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen honors these brave African-American pilots who overcame extreme odds with dignity and valor.

When lunchtime arrives, the 1940s-style Compass Rose Diner serves soups, salads, sandwiches and entrees daily between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Visitors who touch down at Fantasy of Flight and the surrounding area will experience a memorable journey ideal for the entire family.

Fantasy of Flight is an aviation-themed attraction showcasing vintage aircraft from the world's largest private collection; themed immersion experiences; flight simulators; interactive exhibits; a tram tour of aircraft maintenance areas; Restoration and Backlot tours; and an Aerial Demonstration of the Day. Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily, and general admission is \$28.95. Audio tours, hot air balloon rides and biplane rides also are available for an additional charge. The Art Deco-styled Compass Rose Diner serves lunch daily from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Recent additions to Fantasy of Flight attractions include the Fun with Flight Center for families; The Tuskegee Airmen – *They Dared to Fly* exhibit; and a multimedia tribute to the WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) – *A Passionate Pursuit*. For more information about Fantasy of Flight, call 1.863.984.3500 or visit www.fantasyofflight.com.
