



Features

Don't understand the appeal of roller coasters? Watch this.

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To thrill ride fanatics, excitement from roller coasters comes almost as naturally as breathing. But to those frightened by modern scream machines, the appeal of roller coasters may be a mystery.

So, self-proclaimed "roller coaster academic" (yep, that title now exists) and video producer **Malcolm Burt** traveled around the world to ask: "Why do roller coasters exist? Why have coasters become such enduring icons of popular culture?"

His journey and the answers? Fascinating!

On one hand, roller coasters fill a psychological need for excitement, a way to flirt with danger without the risk of actually getting hurt. In another way, roller coasters become emotional monuments, cultural icons of sorts, especially legendary rides like Disney's *Matterhorn* or the *Coney Island Cyclone*.



Malcolm Burt

Of course, marketing goes a long way, too. Compared to other forms of thrills – skydiving, skiing, and the like – amusement park visits are less expensive and comparatively easier to pursue, and they are highly advertised during peak travel seasons.

That marketing, though, Burt says, is in an effort to provide truly memorable experiences for park-goers.

"Even if it's just a small, seemingly insignificant thrill and the magic is manufactured," he says, "we can for just a moment be truly free to forget, to fly, to laugh, to scream, to have a shared experience and just for a short moment in time, be fully present, fully alive."

His new documentary is free to view on YouTube and embedded below. It's well worth watching!



Amusement Park Pro is on a mission to equip thrill-seekers and bag-holders alike with the insights to most effectively enjoy North America's best amusement parks.



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