

## American Dream given shopping center award

CANNES, France — During the global retail real estate community's annual gathering in November at MAPIC (the event's acronym is derived from French for "the international professional market of commercial establishments and distribution"), the convergence of physical and digital retail — and enhancing the customer experience — received special focus.

**American Dream**, a retail and entertainment center being completed by **Triple Five Group of Companies** in East Rutherford, N.J., and set to open this year, was honored as Best Futura Shopping Center at the three-day event, which welcomed participants from 80 countries. The three-million-square-foot complex was one of a number of innovative projects to receive awards in various categories.

The Best Futura category honors shopping destinations currently under construction. Selection criteria include architectural and environmental qualities; use of innovative materials, equipment and techniques; concept originality; integration of the project into its environment; and its impact on the local community.

**GH+A Design Studios** and **Gensler Architects**, collaborators on design elements at American Dream, also were recognized.

"We are honored and exhilarated to have American Dream selected by MAPIC colleagues and luminaries as the winner of the Best Futura Shopping Center," said **Don Ghermezian**, president and CEO of American Dream. "Our approach to entertainment, dining and retail will create a truly unique customer experience."

American Dream will offer more than 450 retail, food and specialty shops, plus 18 acres of entertainment. Attractions include a **DreamWorks Water Park**, a **Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park**, a 16-story **Big Snow Indoor Ski & Snow Park**, **Kidzania**, a 285-foot-tall observation wheel, luxury movie theaters by **CMX Cinemas**, a **Sea Life Aquarium** and a **Lego Discovery Center**.

—Dean Lamanna



## Zamperla tapped as operator, ride supplier for food park FEC



Billed as the world's largest agri-food park, FICO (Fabbrica Italiana Contadina) Eataly World in Bologna, Italy, is adding amusements to its huge menu of trattorias and food kiosks. Leading ride manufacturer Zamperla, headquartered less than two hours away in Vicenza, will supply and operate 13 rides and attractions as part of a 6,500-square-meter family entertainment center (FEC) expansion at the 100,000-square-meter property. Zamperla is working with Brendola, Italy-based Team Park Project on the design of the facility, which will include a show arena and farmhouse theming complete with human and animal characters. As of its one-year anniversary last November, the food park had attracted 2.8 million visitors. The FEC is set to open this fall.

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## Career reflections in 'Always Cedar Point: A Memoir of the Midway'

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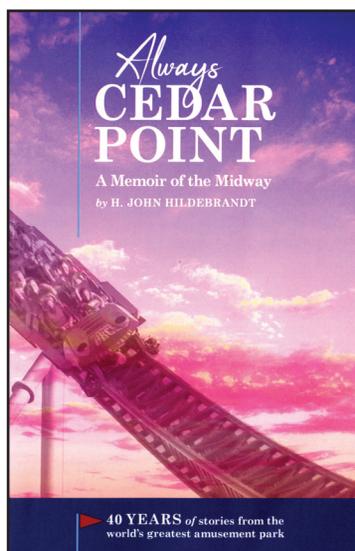
John Hildebrandt enjoyed a four-decade career within the confines of a peninsula surrounded by the waters of Lake Erie. Cedar Point, the world-famous America's Roller Coast, is a place of legends. Following his retirement as general manager in 2013, Hildebrandt carried home with him a treasure chest of tales and memories.

Whether the reader is a fan of the park, has ever worked there or works in the amusement industry, Hildebrandt's *Always Cedar Point: A Memoir of the Midway* (Casa Flamingo Literary Arts, Oct. 2018) is an easily relatable ride.

While basically following

a timeline, the book, with occasional random insights into history and broad overviews, isn't a slave to chronology. But for the most part, the adventure follows Hildebrandt's journey starting out in his 20s in public relations and marketing and rising to management. Along the way, he discovers that operating an amusement park — a huge one, at that — is filled with uncertainties, risks and creative thinking. Hildebrandt doesn't pull any punches whether discussing hits or flops, attendance drivers and unexpected problems.

What makes *Always Cedar Point* such a fun read is how the author intertwines the growth of the park with his own life including how the



openings of the Gemini and Millennium Force roller coasters ran up against the birth of his twins and their college graduation. His fear of heights

adds comical touches to many stories, and his first ride on Top Thrill Dragster is nothing short of hysterical.

Along the way, industry professionals can identify with and learn from the challenges of marketing new attractions, selecting the right ride names and facing changes in technology. Nowhere is embracing trends more vivid than in Hildebrandt's recollections of the mushrooming evolution of the park's Halloween weekends juggernaut.

Two later sections of the book relive his time as a general manager, first for a year at Dorney Park and then his last nine years at Cedar Point. Observations of how the weight of suddenly being

responsible for everything are sincerely conveyed and how the position is both daunting (particularly under the microscope of corporate figureheads right on property) and ultimately rewarding.

The book culminates with Hildebrandt's "Closing Act." His final season, final operating day and final day in the park are shared from the heart. Although Cedar Point was closed in the coldness of December, before leaving the park for the last time, he made a point to drive to many places where he had made daily walks throughout his career. The reader, having just taken the journey with him, can relate to the teary-eyed reflections.

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