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Doppelmayr/Garaventa built the Hogwarts Express Funicular ropeway enchants Harry Potter fans

There is a brand new attraction at Universal Orlando Resort: the Hogwarts Express. For this, Universal put their trust in the know-how and technical competence of the Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group. Hiding behind the detailed reproduction of the renowned steam train is a modern funicular ropeway constructed by the world market leader in ropeway engineering. The system consists of a steam locomotive, a coal wagon and three passenger carriages and connects the Island of Adventure with the Universal Studios Florida. During the four-minute ride, it offers the passengers a very special experience just like the one Harry Potter and his friends had on their way from King's Cross Station in London to Hogsmeade.

Ropeway expertise of the Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group is embedded in the all-new Hogwarts Express experience, created for guests of Universal Orlando Resort by Universal's creative team. From July 8, the Hogwarts Express began transporting guests between Hogsmeade Station at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Hogsmeade in Islands of Adventure to King's Cross Station and The Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Diagon Alley, in Universal Studios Florida. The two lands are expansive, themed areas that include shops, restaurants and the attractions, Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts and Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey.

The four-minute Hogwarts Express journey transports visitors between the two lands, giving them a chance to ride the iconic train. The Hogwarts Express, composed of two carriage sets, is a faithful reproduction of the iconic locomotive from the Harry Potter films. The train is made up of a steam locomotive, a coal tender and three passenger carriages. When visitors board the Hogwarts Express, they have leading ropeway technology to rely on: Behind the steam train hides a state-of-the-art funicular railway system. The Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group entered into new territory in building the Hogwarts Express. Due to the significant weight of the train (overall length around 70 metres) and tight curve radii and high rope tension, a funicular railway in this form had never before been built.

To achieve a faithful visual reproduction, CWA Constructions S.A. in Olten, a company specialising in the construction of innovative funicular railway cabins and also part of the Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group, was commissioned. Faithfully reproducing every detail of the Hogwarts Express was a unique challenge for the cabin builders. The carriage set is constructed to look of solid, heavy iron and wood sections and the interiors of the carriages are accurately lit and equipped with best-in-class entertainment systems to innovatively present the most realistic images, sound and acoustics.

For the controls behind the funicular railway, general contractor Doppelmayr/Garaventa commissioned the Swiss company Frey AG from Stans in Nidwalden, on the state-of-the-art wiring of 42 train compartments for film and sound installations. Additionally, Frey AG Stans was tasked with outfitting all compartments with industry-standard technical equipment traditionally used in the construction of both aerial funicular systems and funicular railways, enabling a fully automatic railway drive system.

The Group is proud to have mastered the technical aspects and designs needed to create a one-of-a-kind funicular railway that is true to the Harry Potter films and honoured to have been entrusted by Universal Orlando Resort with recreating such a beloved and iconic element of the Harry Potter stories.

The Doppelmayr Group

The Doppelmayr Group is a leader in high-quality ropeway engineering. An accurate understanding of client requirements and professional, precise working methods are the basis for the Group's international market leadership. As a leader in ropeway technology, Doppelmayr is responsible for numerous world firsts and has set the milestones of modern ropeway technology. The corporate group has production facilities and sales and service offices in over 35 countries around the world. To date, it has constructed over 14,500 ropeway systems for clients in more than 88 countries.

Technical details

Year of construction	2014
Length	676 metres
Speed	3.4 m/s
Number of trains	2
Diameter of haul rope	46 mm
Diameter of counter rope	46 mm
Diameter of line sheaves	400 mm
Track gauge	1800 mm
Weight of locomotive	13 tonnes
Weight of tender	15 tonnes
Weight of carriages	27 tonnes
North station drive	
Required rated performance	215 kW
Required peak performance	636 kW

Inquiries

Doppelmayr Seilbahnen GmbH
Mag. Ekkehard Assmann
Head of Marketing and Public Relations
Rickenbacherstraße 8-10, Postfach 20
6922 Wolfurt
AUSTRIA
T: +43 5574 604 223
F: +43 5574 75590
ekkehard.assmann@doppelmayr.com
www.doppelmayr.com