



The centerpiece of Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge is a life-size Millennium Falcon, home to the ride Millennium Falcon: Smuggler’s Run. Below: Unique cocktails are served at Oga’s Cantina.

DISNEY EXPANDS TO GALAXY’S EDGE

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Alarms blared, buttons blinked furiously and the cockpit lights went dark. The view outside tipped sharply downward and I realized it was my fault. I had crashed the Millennium Falcon.

Thanks to my crew members' hasty button pushing, we made it out alive and returned safely — mission accomplished, a few new dings on the fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy.

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, the newest land at Disney parks in California and Florida, is engaging entertainment: A land that launches guests into an ever-evolving galactic story and literally hands them the creative controls.

This hotly anticipated, immersive Star Wars playground opened at Disneyland in California on May 31. The Orlando version launched at Walt Disney World's

Hollywood Studios on Aug. 29. I recently had an early look at Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge in Orlando. Here are five interstellar takeaways.

The planet

When you visit Galaxy's Edge you're visiting the Black Spire Outpost on the remote planet Batuu.

I sank into the scenery, as the land sprawled through wooded areas dotted with recognizable spacecraft, past a buzzing marketplace, and out to a First Order base. Domed buildings and rocklike spires (petrified trees if we're following the narrative) soared high above, almost embracing visitors. Alcoves and stone stairwells added authenticity, the kind of place where scum and villainy — and tourists — would lurk about.

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HERE

A NEW WHALE-WATCH VESSEL
Hop aboard the new Dolphin XI in Provincetown and see humpback, minke, finback, and other whales off the coast. The new purpose-built vessel, part of the Dolphin Fleet, holds up to 300 people. The three- to four-hour tours head out to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and other areas off Cape Cod. This season, passengers have seen as many as 40 whales per trip. Tours depart MacMillan Pier and have a naturalist onboard who offers fascinating commentary on the area's marine life and history (find out where the Mayflower first landed before heading to Plymouth). Trips run through Oct. 27. Rates are \$53 ages 13 and older; \$33 for 5-12, free 4 and under; save \$2 per order online (use "whale" for discount code) or print coupon. 800-826-9300, www.whalewatch.com

ENJOY THE AREA'S FALL BLOSSOMS AND MORE
Stroll through a botanic garden, enjoy live music, and sip local craft beverages made from plants during Asters in the Evening at Framingham's Garden in the Woods. The event, 6-8 p.m. on Sept. 27, includes after-hour access to the garden, entertainment, and a chance to learn about the area's plants and flowers from volunteer docents. Grab a map and go on a self-guided tour of the property, where you'll see asters, goldenrods, and other local flowers in bloom. Tickets \$23 for members, \$30 nonmembers; includes light refreshments. 508-877-7630, www.nativeplanttrust.org



EXPERIENCE THE LIFE OF CATERPILLARS
Don't miss a fleeting new exhibit, "Caterpillars: Life on the Leaf Edge," at Acton's Discovery Museum through Oct. 6. One section of the exhibit, open daily, includes hands-on activities through which visitors learn about caterpillars' anatomy, defensive adaptations, and shelter building. Another section, only accessible Wednesdays through Sundays, features live caterpillars, giving visitors a look at caterpillars in various stages of development, from larva to chrysalis to butterfly. The exhibit has been created with the help of Sam Jaffe, a naturalist, photographer, and educator, and founder of The Caterpillar Lab, based in New Hampshire. Museum closed Mondays. Admission \$14.50 up to 59 years old, \$13.50 ages 60 and older, free for those 1 year old and younger, teachers,

and for anyone after 4:30 p.m. on the first Friday of every month. 978-264-4200, www.discoveryacton.org

THERE

SHEEP MIGRATE DOWN MAIN STREET
Ranchers herd more than a thousand sheep through Sun Valley, Idaho, each year while locals and visitors enjoy a festival built around this 150-year-old tradition. A highlight of the Trailing of the Sheep Festival, Oct. 9-13, includes the act of moving sheep ("trailing") from summer mountain pastures to



winter grazing and lambing areas down in the valley — via Main Street in Ketchum. Considered one of the world's top festivals, it celebrates this annual migration with all things sheep-related: sheepdog trials with 80 of the country's top border collies, a Wool Festival with hands-on classes and workshops, and lamb cooking classes and cuisine. It also includes a Sheep Folklife Fair, featuring Basque, Scottish, and Peruvian dancers and musicians, sheep-shearing, storytelling, and art. Also, don't miss the talk by food history author Mark Kurlansky, "Food as Culture." Many events free; classes and workshops \$75-\$150. 208-720-0585, www.trailing-ofthesheep.org

A CUSTOM-BUILT CANOE FOR DOG'S SAKE
Take your pooch on a paddling adventure when you stay at the Stanford Inn Resort in Mendocino, Calif. The resort rents Canine Cruiser outrigger-style canoes, designed and built by two local businesses. These unique boats have two outrigger floats that provide extra stability, a narrow hull to reduce drag, a foot-operated rudder for easy navigating, and a raised and padded floor in the middle of the boat where your dog can chill as you paddle around Mendocino Bay. The luxury resort also rents single and tandem kayaks, paddleboards, and bikes, and organizes nature tours and more. It has an indoor pool, a restaurant that serves organic plant-based cuisine, and a wellness center that offers massage in the forest, Chinese medicine, cooking classes, yoga, and meditation. Room rates start at \$340. Canine Cruiser rentals cost \$35-\$50 for

adults, \$15-\$20 for ages 6-17, and are free for those 5 and under and for dogs; get a 10 percent discount on Canine Cruiser Sept. 24-30. 707-937-5622, www.stanfordinn.com

EVERYWHERE

AT LAST: SINGLE-SERVE COFFEE BAGS
Enjoy fresh coffee on the go with a single-serving teabag-like product that's perfect for the airplane, your hotel room, your campsite, and more. Santa Cruz, Calif.-based Steeped Inc. has created Steeped Coffee, a line of specialty coffee that includes light roast (Sunshine Blend) to extra dark roast (Driftwood Blend) and even decaf (Eventide Decaf). Each coffee pouch comes in a nitro-sealed bag that keeps the coffee fresh (by keeping oxygen out) and is made from plant-based renewable and compostable materials. Drop your coffee bag in a cup of hot water and you'll have a fresh brew in minutes. The best part: The coffee tastes great. \$15 for a 10-pack, \$39 for a 30-pack, or subscribe for regular delivery and save up to 23 percent per order. www.steepedcoffee.com

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