

I Believe in the Future of Leisure Parks...

In conversation
with Roland Mack,
co-founder and
managing partner of
Europa-Park

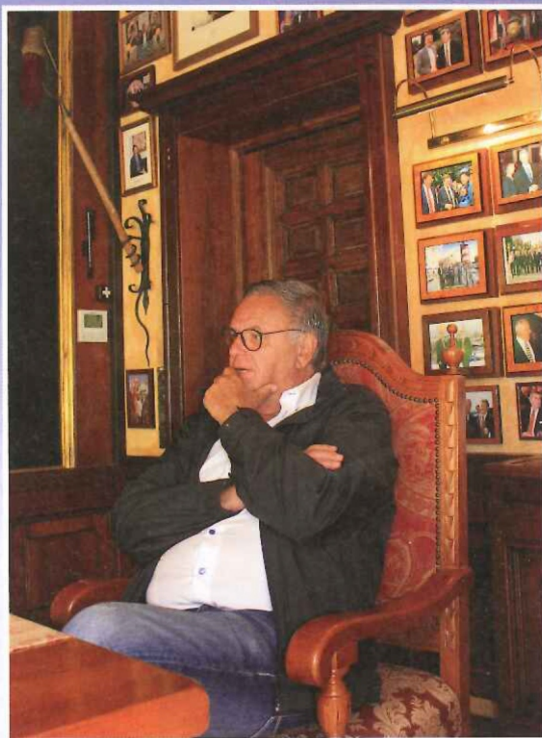
? Petra Probst (PP): In
April of this year you
received the Thea Buzz
Price Lifetime Award from
TEA, the Themed
Entertainment Association.
Harrison Alan "Buzz"

Price (1921 – 2010), the man after whom this award was named, studied
mechanical engineering like you and is known for his analyses of the economics
of leisure operations – but above all for the fact that he advised and guided
Walt Disney in the choice of location for his large parks in California and
Florida, among other things. Roland, you are now the first park operator to
receive this Lifetime Award from the creative community. The creative
community regards you as one of them! What was your first thought when you
learned you were to receive this honour?

Roland Mack (RM): Yes, this is indeed a great honour for me, although
between the announcement and the big award gala in Los Angeles I had a
little time to understand what was behind this special Lifetime Award. I knew
Buzz Price personally: we met frequently in Orlando and have done a lot
together. The fact that the creative people of the world have now honoured me
as a businessman makes this award very special, of course. I think that my role
in the development and design of this park – as the first large European theme
park that also bears Europe in its name – was decisive for the committee.
I have since been appointed to the Thea award committee myself, and have
experienced its discussions at countless meetings and the selection process
for the next award winners in person. I must say, that actually makes this Buzz
Price Lifetime Award even more significant for me. And the facts that I was
in Los Angeles with my father Franz more than 50 years ago to collect ideas
and suggestions for our own leisure park plans, that I knew Buzz myself
and hold him in very high esteem, have of course given this award and the
place where it was presented to me a very special and also very emotional
significance.

? PP: You once said: "It's our guests who are the best designers. We just
need to listen to them". Could you please elaborate on that a bit more? And
what role does design play in an amusement park today?

RM: I am noticing more and more – especially since we have had the themed
hotels – how important this "immersion in other worlds" is. What may simply
have sounded like a slogan in the past has become more and more concrete
over the course of time. At the end of the day – to speak for us, for Europa-
Park – it's about not simply imitating Europe, but interpreting it. In doing
so, however, we attach great importance to the highest level of authenticity,
for example by actually buying materials such as stones and roof tiles in the
corresponding regions, and by using colours and plants that have a high
recognition value. Because they stay longer in our hotels, guests today also



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