



## **200 YEARS OF FAME: MADAME TUSSAUD - KEY DATES**

- 1761 Madame Tussaud is born Marie Grosholtz in Strasbourg.
- 1777 Marie models the famous author and philosopher, Francois Voltaire.
- 1780 Marie becomes art tutor to King Louis XVI's sister and goes to live at the Royal Court in Versailles.
- 1789 On the eve of The French Revolution, Marie returns to Paris.
- 1793 Marie is imprisoned with her mother in the notorious Laforce Prison, Paris. On her release she is forced to prove her allegiance to the Revolution by making death masks of executed nobles and her former employers, the King and Queen.
- 1794 The French Revolution ends and Marie inherits Dr Philippe Curtius' wax exhibition.
- 1795 Marie marries Francois Tussaud.
- 1802 Madame Tussaud takes her exhibition on tour to the British Isles, leaving behind her husband.
- 1835 With her sons, Madame Tussaud establishes a base in London at 'The Baker Street Bazaar.'
- 1846 Punch Magazine coins the name Chamber Of Horrors for Madame Tussaud's 'Separate Room', where gruesome relics of the French Revolution are displayed.
- 1850 Madame Tussaud dies.
- 1884 Marie's grandsons move the attraction to its current site on Marylebone Road.
- 1925 The attraction is devastated by fire.
- 1928 Restoration is completed with the addition of a cinema and restaurant.
- 1940 Madame Tussauds is struck by a German World War II bomb destroying 352 head moulds, and the cinema.
- 1958 Madame Tussauds opens the Commonwealth's first Planetarium.
- 1990-1993 The attraction undergoes extensive refurbishment, with the inclusion of new interactive, themed areas.
- 1993 The Spirit Of London, a spectacular animatronic ride, arrives at Madame Tussauds. The London Planetarium is re-opened after a £4.5 million re-development, including the installation of the world's first Digistar II star projector.

- 1995 A new star show 'Planetary Quest' opens at Tussauds' Planetarium. Later, the Planetarium dome is transformed into the biggest red nose in the universe for Comic Relief.
- 1996 Madame Tussauds opens a special display in conjunction with Time Magazine, portraying some of the publication's nominated Top 100 people of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 1997 Madame Tussauds opens a special exhibition of wedding dresses made for its Diana, Princess Of Wales, Sarah, Duchess Of York and Sophie, Countess Of Wessex.
- 1999 A major new star show 'Wonders Of The Universe' opens at The London Planetarium.
- 2000 Madame Tussauds introduces timed entry for visitors who prefer to book in advance
- 2001 A new area 'Premiere Night' opens showcasing Hollywood's hottest celebrities. The attraction also removes the ropes and poles surrounding figures – allowing guests to fully interact with the great and good.
- 2002 The first of a series of special temporary attractions opens. Goal! gives guests the chance to relive the moment England qualified for the 2002 World Cup finals.
- The infamous Marylebone Road queue disappears with the opening of a new 'pre show' area where guests are entertained in comfort whilst waiting to purchase tickets.
- 2003 Madame Tussauds unveils new 'Blush' area, taking guests behind the usually closed doors of an A-list party.
- 2004 The 'Journey To Infinity' show opens At The London Planetarium.
- 2005 Reality TV phenomenon Big Brother comes to Madame Tussauds, offering guests a chance to sit in the fabled Diary Room and meet presenter Davina McCall.
- 2006 Prince Harry is unveiled as part of Madame Tussauds' popular royal attraction, and Johnny Depp, in character as Capt'n Jack Sparrow, arrives in a new Pirates Of The Caribbean experience.
- The London Planetarium closes, paving the way for an exciting new cinematic show, based on fame and celebrity, created by Aardman Animations - the Oscar-winning team behind Wallace & Gromit.
- 2007 World Stage relaunches following an extensive, £1m refurbishment – guests can enjoy brand new, fully interactive Sports, Royal, Culture, Music and Political Zones. A special History Zone also opens, sharing some of the secrets behind figure-making with visitors and highlighting Madame Tussauds' world famous 200-year heritage.
- 2008 Bond experience, Hugh School Musical area, close 'Aardman' show closes
- 2009 Oval Office set is re-created and Britney Spears Dance Chain is launched

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## **Editors Notes:**

- Madame Tussauds Studios London has been making wax figures for over 150 years. Each masterpiece takes four months, and a team of 20 dedicated sculptors, to create. Over 500 precise body measurements are referenced, real head hairs are inserted one by one, and countless layers of paints and tints are applied to build up skin tones - all to achieve the kind of astonishing realism that has kept Madame Tussauds world renowned for over two centuries.
- Madame Tussauds has attractions in London, New York, Las Vegas, Berlin, Washington D.C., Amsterdam, Hong Kong and Shanghai with interactive figures and experiences built around fame and celebrity. In London, guests can get up, close and personal with incredibly lifelike replicas of 21<sup>st</sup> century stars like Kate Moss, Johnny Depp and Kylie Minogue, brave the scariest Chamber Of Horrors yet, complete with actors as bloodthirsty serial killers, take a time-travelling taxi ride through 400 years of amazing London history, and soak up the iconic Stardome, featuring out-of-this world 360-degree animation by Oscar-winning movie-makers Aardman.
- Merlin Entertainments Group is the leading name in location based, family entertainment, and has seen the most successful and dynamic growth of any company in the sector over the last five years. The world's No 2 visitor attraction operator, Merlin aims to deliver memorable and rewarding experiences to its 30 million visitors worldwide, through its iconic global and local brands, and the commitment and passion of its managers and 13000 employees.

Bigger than Universal and second only to Disney, Merlin Entertainments brings together LEGOLAND, Madame Tussauds, The London Eye, London Aquarium, SEA LIFE, Gardaland, Dungeons – as well as national brands such as Alton Towers, Thorpe Park, Warwick Castle, Heide Park and Chessington World of Adventures. All brands which are distinctive, challenging and innovative – and which have great potential for growth in the future.