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New Research Study Examines How Shanghai Disney Resort Built a Park That Is “Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese”

China Center for International Economic Exchanges releases landmark report on the resort’s 15-year journey as it approaches its 10th opening anniversary

Shanghai, April 8, 2026 – The China Center for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE) today released a landmark research report examining the founding vision of Shanghai Disney Resort — “Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese” — and the role it has played in shaping the resort’s identity and growth over fifteen years. The study offers an in-depth look at how this principle has been woven into every aspect of the resort, from its earliest architectural designs through daily operations and ongoing expansion.

First introduced by Bob Iger, then President and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, at the resort’s groundbreaking on April 8, 2011, “Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese” has since defined the resort’s approach to guest experience, community engagement, and cultural exchange. As the resort marks the 15th anniversary of that milestone today and prepares for its Grand Opening 10th Anniversary in June, the report arrives as both a record of that journey and a blueprint for what comes next.

Officially titled “Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese – A Successful Example of Foreign Investment Localization – A Case Study of Shanghai Disney Resort’s Ten-Year Development,” the report serves as the first half of The Walt Disney Company China Impact Report, which CCIEE will release in the second half of this year. The report examines how this concept has been integrated into every facet of the resort’s journey: from architectural design and festive celebrations to the cast members who bring Disney magic to life each day, and to the deep-rooted community engagement that has made local guests see Shanghai Disneyland as a place that feels inherently theirs.

The report was released earlier today at a ceremony attended by leadership and representatives of Shanghai Disney Resort, CCIEE, Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission, the



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Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism, Pudong New Area Culture, Sports, and Tourism Bureau, the Administrative Commission of Shanghai International Resort, and Shanghai Shendi Group, as well as culture and tourism experts and scholars.



Andrew Bolstein, President and General Manager of Shanghai Disney Resort and Pan Feng, Council Member at China Center for International Economic Exchanges, President of Europe-China Economic Cooperation and Development Council (from left to right) celebrated the launch of the report

"Since the day it all began at Shanghai Disney Resort, we have been dedicated to creating a place where the magic of Disney blends with the profound beauty of Chinese culture, resonating with guests and fans from near and far," said Andrew Bolstein, President and General Manager of Shanghai Disney Resort. "The 'Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese' vision has been woven into every detail of the guest experience to build deep emotional connections with our guests. We are grateful to the China Center for International Economic Exchanges for their comprehensive study of the resort's decade-long journey of growing together with Shanghai, the culture and tourism industry, our guests, and the broader community. We hope this report can



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serve as a practical reference for advancing cultural tourism development and sustainable community engagement in the years ahead.”



The report’s findings underscore the resort’s remarkable scale and performance. By October 2025, Shanghai Disneyland had welcomed more than 100 million guests — an impressive milestone reached in just over nine years of operation.

"As Shanghai Disney Resort marks its tenth anniversary this year, this study provides a record of a significant journey in cross-cultural collaboration," said Pan Feng, Council Member at China Center for International Economic Exchanges, President of Europe-China Economic Cooperation and Development Council. "The resort's consistent adherence to the 'Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese' principle offers a compelling blueprint for how international brands can successfully integrate into the Chinese market. It demonstrates how a brand can drive economic growth, foster community, champion sustainability, and become a cherished part of people's lives."

As Shanghai Disney Resort approaches its 10th Grand Opening Anniversary in June, the “Authentically Disney, Distinctly Chinese” spirit will continue to guide its path forward — delivering Disney storytelling and experiences that celebrate the best of Disney and the beauty of Chinese culture for generations to come.



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