



INSIDE THE MIND OF WING CHAO

By June A. Chow • Photographs courtesy of Wing Chao

Wing Chao的特質之一就是具備卓越的眼光與創新的想法。做為迪士尼樂園及度假村亞太地區發展部的副主席及迪士尼形象公司的執行副總裁，Chao在迪士尼樂園在亞洲的拓展計畫中扮演一個非常關鍵的角色，他替這個娛樂界的巨人負責整體的監督計畫、設計、研究及開發。

他在迪士尼工作已長達三十多年，他就像一個掌舵者，負責重大的專案像是設計全方位、重達83000噸的迪士尼遊輪，還有迪士尼位於日本東京的遊樂園，也是該集團第一個國際的遊樂園，此外香港迪士尼樂園及法國巴黎的迪士尼樂園也都是在他的執行下計畫完成的。

擁有柏克萊大學及哈佛大學的建築學位，Chao結合他在學校所學與他敏銳的商業頭腦，創造出各式各樣的迪士尼地標，包括餐廳、飯店、商店街還有高爾夫球場等。更可貴的是，這些地標都充分的與迪士尼遊樂場的路線及童話故事般的訴求完全吻合。

Vivid藉著這個機會帶大家一起深入瞭解擁有鬼才頭腦的Wing Chao他的偉大成就。

JC：可以簡單聊一下您的背景嗎？一開始是怎麼開始在迪士尼工作的？

WC：我在哈佛大學設計研究所快畢業的時候，迪士尼的代表到學校面試找尋一些有潛力的儲備員工。我和當時在迪士尼擔任顧問建築師的面試官談了一下。那個時候有大概15個人有面試的機會，最後篩選剩下三個人獲得在紐約的第二次面試的機會。在那個時候迪士尼還是個很小的公司，他們並沒有很多人可以來進行面試，所以當時他們找了一個負責佛羅里達州迪士尼樂園主要規劃工作的建築師做為面試官。後來他告訴我我被錄取的時候，我還不是很清楚我要去的公司到底是怎麼樣的一個公司。

他只說這個工作有是一個大型土地開發商在佛羅里達州中部有一個娛樂商業開發的案子，他們需要找一個專職的建築師及規劃師。後來我發現這是一個為迪士尼工作的機會時，當時我的反應就是「哇，真棒！」不過因為我還同時有另外四個工作機會，所以我必須好好考慮一下。畢業以後，即使當時連這個地方我都還沒有親眼看過，我終於還是決定要試試這份工作。原本我希望可以先休息兩個月，不過公司表示他們希望我馬上開始。那個時候，迪士尼已經非常成功了，是所有遊客都想去的目的地之一。這就是我跟迪士尼公司結緣的開始。後來，我被轉調到迪士尼形象公司的總部所在的加州Glendale。

JC：所以你在迪士尼公司已長達30多年？

WC：是的，時光飛逝啊（大笑）

JC：為迪士尼公司最令人振奮的部分是什麼？是那個部分讓你最樂在其中呢？

WC：能夠為迪士尼形象公司工作是非常幸運的。怎麼說呢？我們不斷的接受管理階層的挑戰，不斷的為各式各樣的產品、專案，有時是位在不同區域的開發甚至在海上四處停泊的遊輪產生新的創意及概念。在這裡每天都是全新的一天，我們總是在思索怎麼樣可以更好。在這裡你絕對不會覺得無聊。

像是要能夠承載4000名遊客及1250船員的遊輪這樣大規模的案子，基本上就是個漂浮的城市。我們必須思考如何讓客人在旅程中玩得盡興，確保他們受到賓至如歸的照料，甚至是他們在甲板上要玩些什麼，到了晚上如何把甲板變成一個可以讓家庭成員同樂慶祝的場所，還要顧慮到不同年齡層的需要。所以重點是，在迪士尼我們做的每一件事背後都有一個故事。不管你是在廚房、餐廳或是遊樂場，都是故事的一部份。每個設計背後都有一個故事。這就是為什麼我們的產品與眾不同之處。

JC：你在開發美國境外的迪士尼樂園有面臨到什麼樣的挑戰呢？

WC：我們試著針對該國家的文化及歷史先做深入的瞭解，以確認我們瞭解我們的觀眾、我們的顧客，像是他們旅遊的習慣，他們喜歡的飲食。我們也慶祝當地的節慶，像是在香港慶祝中國新年。香港也有很注重萬聖節這個節日。我們注意到，不管在什麼地方，迪士尼都很受到歡迎。即使我們的產品沒有在國外推出，人們也是會到美國來拜訪迪士尼。我們的產品非常的國際化。在我們11個主題樂園，每年有超過10億遊客。站在公司的立場，我們仔細聆聽並瞭解每個文化喜惡。評估迪士尼成功與否的最好方法便是看遊客是不是會想一來再來。除了吸引第一次到訪的遊客，我們也希望遊客願意一再的舊地重遊。

JC：在你參與的專案中，哪一個令你最有成就感？原因為何？

WC：這是個很難回答的問題。其實每個案子都帶給我不同的滿足感。就像前主席曾經說過：成就感其實是來自客人的反應。他們對我們創造出的空間的反應。最近我們剛啟用中庭挑高約七層樓的東京迪士尼樂園飯店，我坐在飯店的大廳觀察人們的反應，每個人都讚嘆不已。我們的工作就是讓客人感到高興。看到這些反應透過各種表達方式是非常愉悅的經驗。只要我有時間，我總是會試著在遊樂園中漫步，觀察客人的反應，有時也和他們聊聊。我會問問他們有什麼不滿意的地方，所以我們知道可以從何改進。我希望能夠得到回饋，這是個不斷進步的過程，創造出好的產品，然後不斷改善、進步。

JC：您怎麼打發空閒的時間？你有什麼嗜好或消遣嗎？

WC：（大笑）其實，我們工作時間非常的長。我還喜歡電影、運動、還有閱讀。從我年輕的時候開始，我就很喜歡電影，我還曾經想過要當一個演員呢！雖然不是在攝影機前，不過至少我現在是在一個電影公司工作。還有，就像其他中國人一樣，我喜歡美食。

JC：在尋找你的團隊成員時，你會希望他具有什麼樣子的特質？

WC：我們喜歡有天分且可以廣納別人的意見的人。迪士尼形象公司非常棒的地方就在於我們有來自各種不同行業的人，超過140種不同的專業領域，包括作家、建築師、工程師、特效工作者等。我們通常是團隊工作。每個創意都是好創意。我們有所謂腦力激盪時間，每個人都可以充分表達意見，不管他進公司的時間是長是短，或是負責哪個專案。我們喜歡聽到各種聲音，加以融會貫通，然後才開始設限，最終每個案子都會有時間表。我認為這就是一種態度，基本上我們就是迪士尼的創意實驗室，所以我們總是不斷的找尋最好的點子。我想這一點George Bernard Shaw詮釋的最好，他說：大部分的人看見事情的表面，並問為什麼；我們則夢想事情的另一面，然後問有什麼不可以。即使是華德迪士尼本人也有相同的哲學，他說：不可能的事才是最有趣的。

JC：你會怎麼形容你的領導風格？什麼樣的特質讓你有這樣的風格？

WC：我認為為整個團隊才是讓工作順利進行的關鍵。在加入公司之後，我學到你必須要自己努力往上爬，所以你必須要瞭解別人並學習。我們鼓勵員工丟出自己的創意，我們創造一個讓員工可以表達自己意見的環境。我們儘量提供一個可以溝通討論的工作氣氛。透過集思廣益，我們可以提供更好的方案。我認為一個好的領導者必須是一個好的聽眾及執行者。



JC：你認為為什麼迪士尼這個品牌在世界各地如此深得人心？你有參與過任何一個迪士尼失敗的案子嗎？是什麼原因？

WC：我們非常高興我們的電影、產品及主題樂園帶給這麼多人歡樂。當然，有些產品會受限於一些技術上的因素或是電腦故障。但是因為我們試著去改善我們的產品，我們必須去感受一般大眾的心聲。我們做了很多研究跟調查來確認我們迎合了家庭的需求。迪士尼本人也是如此。小孩不是我們唯一的客戶，我們也服務成年人。為什麼成年人會喜歡這些產品？原因很簡單，因為每個成年人都曾經有童年啊。很多時候那些關門時不願意離開主題樂園的都是成年人！他們度過了美好的時光，且深深的被我們所訴說的故事所吸引。在這裡他們可以拋開現實世界，進入一個充滿想像力的國度。這就是為什麼

Wing Chao is certainly no stranger to prescience and innovation. As Vice Chairman of Asia Pacific Development for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts and Executive Vice-President of Walt Disney Imagineering, Chao plays a pivotal role in expanding Disney's theme park presence in Asia and overseeing the planning, design and research and development arm for the entertainment giant.

In his thirty-plus years with Disney, Chao has been at the helm of such endeavors as designing the fully-themed, 83,000-ton Disney cruise ships and administering the planning and negotiation for the company's first international theme park in Japan, Tokyo Disneyland, as well as Hong Kong Disneyland and Disneyland Paris

這裡是世界上最快樂的地方。所以的細節、音樂、建築還有色彩都根據你的視覺打造，而且我們不斷的讓這樣的體驗更加美好。

JC：接下來的五到十年，迪士尼主題樂園及迪士尼形象公司有什麼計畫？

WC：我們有好多新的計畫在進行。我們的主管一直不斷的在找尋成長的機會。這也是為什麼我稍早的時候提過，在這邊工作是非常有趣的。我們是世界上最的娛樂公司，我們也一直不斷的找新的且令人振奮

Resort in Paris, France.

An architecture major with degrees from UC Berkeley and Harvard University, Wing Chao has been able to blend his formal education with his business acumen to create a variety of Disney landmarks, including restaurants, resort hotels, retail shops and golf courses that are all consistent with the company's theme-based approach and story-telling philosophy.

Here, ViViD gains an in-depth look at the accomplishments of this dynamic mastermind.

JC: Tell us a little about your background. How did you get started with Disney?

WC: I was graduating from Harvard Graduate School of Design, and [Disney had] sent representatives to the school to interview potential cast members. I spoke with the interviewer, who was a consultant architect for Disney. He spoke to about 15 students and narrowed it down to 3, and then there was a second interview in New York. Disney at the time was pretty small, and they didn't have enough people to interview, so Disney hired this architect who was doing the master planning work for Walt Disney World in Florida. I was told that I was selected as the guy for

的舞台。

JC：你對那些想要跟隨你的腳步的年輕人有什麼建議？

WC：喔，天啊。我想我必須很虛心的說，我還在學習。我每天都不斷的在常識並尋求進步。對於那些對形象包裝有興趣的人，我們不是一個單一的部門，我們結合了許多各行各業的菁英。我想重點是要非常的有熱情，並有強烈的興趣。對創造出能讓人高興的產品有強烈的使命感。

the company, but I still didn't know which company this was!

All he said was that the position was for a large land developer in central Florida doing recreational commercial development and looking for an in-house architect and planner. Then I found out it was Walt Disney World....then I was like, 'Wow, how nice!' But I already had 4 other job offers, so I had a lot to think about. After graduation, I eventually decided to take the job....even without seeing the place. I tried to request two months vacation but was told that they needed me to start right away. By then, Disney was already very successful. It was the #1 tourist destination....so....that's how I got started with Walt Disney Company! I was eventually transferred to Glendale, California where Walt Disney Imagineering's headquarters are.

JC: So you've had 30-some years with Disney then?

WC: Yes....how times flies, huh? [laughs]

JC: What is the most exhilarating thing about working for Disney? What do you enjoy most about what you do?

WC: We're lucky to work at Walt Disney Imagineering, because we're always challenged by management



to come up with new ideas and concepts for various products, projects and different geographic locations, or even a floating resort like a cruise ship which will go to different places. Working here is almost like a new day every day. We're always thinking of ways to improve upon things. You can't get bored here!

Even with something large-scale like a cruise ship, which will carry 4000 passengers and 1250 crew members....it's literally a floating city. So we really have to think about how to entertain our guests while they're cruising, and make sure they're well-taken care of.... how they can have fun on the sun deck....and in the evening, how we can turn the sun deck into a place of fun, partying and celebration for families..... all different age groups, really. So the key thing is....everything we do at Disney has a story, where you are immersed into the story, whether you are in a stateroom, restaurant or theme park....everything has a story behind the design. That's why our products are so different from other people's creations.

JC: What were some of the challenges you faced developing Disney outside of the U.S.?

WC: We try to do a lot of research into countries' cultures and histories to make sure we understand the audience, our guests..... what are their vacation habits, the type of food they like to eat. We celebrate local customs as well....Chinese New Year in Hong Kong, for example. We celebrate local culture, but we also introduce Disney and American culture. Halloween, for instance, is really big in Hong Kong. One thing we notice is that everywhere we go, people want Disney. Even if we didn't take our products overseas, people would always come visit here in the U.S.. Our products are truly international. Each year we entertain over 100 million guests in the 11 theme parks we have. And as a company, we need to put our ears to the ground to understand each culture's likes and dislikes. As you know, the best way to measure Disney is through repeat visitors.

Year after year, we want to attract not only new guests, but also repeat visitors.

JC: Describe the most rewarding project you have been involved with. Why did this project stand out as being particularly satisfying?

WC: That's a rough question. I think each project has its own different [kind of] satisfaction. Thinking back to what a former chairman said, "The reward is seeing the guests' reactions." Their reactions toward certain spaces we create. We just opened the Tokyo Disneyland Hotel, with a 7-story atrium lobby. I sat in the lobby and watched people's reactions, their jaws wide open....it's our job to make people happy. It's always gratifying to see these reactions in different ways. Whenever I have time, I try to walk around the parks to look at the reactions and also talk to the guests. I always ask which parts they don't like so we can make it better. I want to get feedback....it's a continuous process....create a good product and make it better for the next time.

JC: How do you spend your free time? Do you have any favorite hobbies or pastimes?

WC: [laughs] Well, we do work long hours! I enjoy movies, sports, exercise, and reading a lot. But ever since I was young, I've always enjoyed movies. I even thought about becoming an actor! At least I joined a movie company, just not in front of the camera! I also enjoy good restaurants, like every Chinese person does, I guess.

JC: What qualities or traits do you look for in people when considering key players for your management team?

WC: We're looking for talent and open-mindedness. One thing that's great about Disney Imagineering is that we have people from different disciplines....over 140 different professionals, including writers, architects, engineers, special effects people, etc. We tend to work in teams. No idea is a bad idea. We have Blue Sky (brainstorm) sessions, and

everyone always speaks up, no matter how long they've been with the company or on a certain project. We like to hear all ideas, shake them up a bit and then start putting constraints. Eventually you have to set a time schedule for the project. It's a matter of attitude....we are the idea lab for Disney, so we're constantly searching for the best ideas. I think George Bernard Shaw said it best: "Most people see things as they are and ask why. We try to dream of things as they never were and ask why not." Even Walt Disney himself had the same philosophy....he had a quote, "It's fun to do the impossible."

JC: How would you characterize your leadership style? What kinds of personalities do you feel complement this style?

WC: I think that we all work well as a team. I've [gathered] along the way since joining the company that you have to work your way up, so you study and learn a lot about people. We encourage people to drum our ideas.... we encourage an environment where people can speak up. We tend to provide the working environment where people can communicate and discuss. Collectively, we can provide much better solutions. A good leader is a good listener and facilitator.

JC: Why do you think the Disney brand appeals so strongly in many parts of the world? Have you ever been involved in a development effort with Disney where things didn't go so well? What happened?

WC: We are so blessed that our movies, products and theme parks have served so many people. Of course, certain products have been [hampered] by technical issues and computer glitches. But since we are trying to improve what we create....we have to feel the pulse of the general public. We do a lot of research and surveys to make sure we cater to the families. Disney himself did this as well. We do things not only for children, but for the adults as well. Why would adults like this? Because adults are just children grown up! Many times, it's the adults who don't want to leave the park at night! They are having so much fun, and they get emotionally attached to our stories. Hopefully they can leave their realistic world behind and enter into a magical world. That's why we're the happiest place on earth. All the details, the music, the architecture and the colors are working on your visual sensories....and we're constantly trying to make this even better.

JC: What might we expect to see out of Disney Parks and Resorts and Disney Imagineering over the next five to ten years?

WC: We have many things on our drawing boards. Our leaders are constantly looking for growth opportunities. That's why I said earlier that it's so much fun to work here. We are the largest entertainment company in the world. We're always looking for new and exciting venues.

JC: What advice do you have for someone who might want to follow in your footsteps?

WC: Oh my gosh! I'd like to speak modestly here....I'm still learning every day. I still try and improve my skills daily. For those who are interested in becoming an Imagineer, for example, we are not just one division. We have so many talented people from different fields. I think the key here is to have passion and strong interest. A strong dedication to creating products that make people happy.