

Busch Gardens® Williamsburg and Water Country USA Extend the Theme Park Experience into the Restrooms with Custom Scranton Products® Hiny Hiders®



Busch Gardens®, home to some of Virginia’s best roller coasters and thrill rides, and Water Country USA, the Mid-Atlantic’s largest water park, are renowned theme parks located in Williamsburg, Virginia. The parks provide a transformative, themed experience to millions of visitors per year. After completing three key renovations, the themed experience now continues into the restrooms in certain areas of the parks.

The restroom renovations, which spanned one restroom at Busch Gardens Williamsburg and two at Water Country USA, were initiated to elevate the guest experience, recognizing how small details make a big impact on visitors.

“Before the renovations, the restrooms all felt very dated,” said Hayley Duffy, Director of Design and Engineering for Busch Gardens and Water Country USA. “They just didn’t feel like a theme park. We don’t want our guests to walk into the bathroom and suddenly, the theme is gone and it feels like they’re back in a standard public restroom.”



It was determined that the selected restrooms needed a head-to-toe refresh to reflect the standards of modern amusement parks. Key considerations for the redesigns included:

- o Design consistency and customization: Each restroom needed to reflect the theme of its respective park section to maintain immersion for guests.
- o Durability and maintenance: With high foot traffic and the potential for vandalism, the restrooms and partitions needed to be durable, easy to clean, and resistant to graffiti.
- o Accessible and user-friendly features: Considerations were made for child and family-friendly facilities so the restrooms felt safe and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities.

Customization

“We didn’t want it to just look like any old bathroom,” said Duffy. Instead, the parks sought to design restrooms that work in tandem with the themed experience so that guests can remain in “vacation mode” even when using the facilities.

The restroom designs were led by Ann Marie Smith, Interior Designer at GuernseyTingle. “In a set of restrooms, the stalls occupy almost all the space,” said Smith. “So, one of the objectives was to make the stalls part of the design.”

She set out to create custom engravings on each stall that would carry the Busch Gardens and Water Country USA brands into the facilities. Scranton Products® was selected as the provider and Hiny Hiders® restroom stalls were chosen for their durability, graffiti resistance, and customizable options.

“Scranton Products was the only provider willing to attempt the custom design process with us. I knew that other manufacturers weren’t really interested in trying to do the engraving,” said Smith.

Scranton Products and Smith worked collaboratively to create two designs for the stalls across the two parks. The Busch Gardens restroom is a Festa Italia theme, a subcategory of the overall old-world Europe theme throughout the park. To reflect that aesthetic, the stalls were engraved with Roman numerals, each a unique number, and given finishes in Scranton’s Hammered Stainless tone for a polished, cohesive look.

The stalls in the Water Country USA restroom were engraved with the brand's intricate wave logo and filled with an epoxy resin solution to make the colors vibrant.

"Scranton Products was great about sending us several versions of the custom product and coordinating with me and the contractors to find the right engraving solution," said Smith. "They service my industry the best in terms of ease of sampling the product, providing an array of different colors and different options for hinges, locks, and mounting options. The customizations turned out beautifully."

Design Choices and Functionality

No small details were spared when selecting the building materials and finishes for the restrooms.

Ed Somervell, Project Manager for general contractor David Nice Builders, David Nice Builders, led the implementation of the renovation. He said, "With the Busch Gardens restroom being Festa Italia themed, we used a lot of Italian tile and marble for a very ornate restroom style. The tile work was extensive in this restroom, with many different colors, layers, shapes, styles, and patterns, which really made it look unique. We gave everything a nice big facelift."

Given the high traffic at the parks, maintaining restroom facilities that are clean, functional, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing is crucial. The installation of Hiny Hiders supports this objective because they are easy to clean, impermeable to moisture, and will never rust, corrode, delaminate, or require painting.

To further ensure functionality, cleanliness, and aesthetics, the design team selected a dark grout color that keeps surfaces looking clean and won't stain. The restrooms at Water Country USA were completely waterproofed and equipped with hoses to spray them down nightly.

Safety considerations were also top of mind throughout the renovation process. The floors were selected with safety as the top priority. All the tiles were tested to meet the parks' stringent slip-resistant standards. Improved LED lighting was installed to improve visibility, enhance the vibrancy of colors and partitions, and create a better restroom experience. Smith emphasized that lighting is important not only for physical safety but also to enhance the overall sense of security in the bathroom because it's well-lit.

Accessibility and User-Friendly Features

Busch Gardens and Water Country USA prioritized making the restrooms user-friendly for all patrons, including children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities. They aimed to upgrade the restrooms to meet the needs of today's accessibility standards and help all guests feel comfortable and empowered.

"We're trying to make the bathrooms as inclusive as possible," said Duffy. A few key features being added throughout the restrooms at Busch Gardens and Water Country USA include separate family restrooms, ADA-compliant elements, child-sized toilets, and oversized changing tables to accommodate larger children or people with disabilities.

Elaborating on the value of child-sized features, Smith said, “We want kids to feel as independent as possible using the bathroom, and it’s more user-friendly for parents who bring their children to the parks.” Transforming the older bathrooms into modern, inclusive spaces is part of the parks’ overall effort to meet the evolving needs of their diverse visitor base.

Construction Challenges

“Anytime you renovate a bathroom, there are always a lot of challenges because most of the walls are covered with a hard surface such as tile, so you can’t see what’s happening,” said Smith. “Across the board in any restroom renovation, there will be unexpected challenges behind the wall.”

The team adeptly addressed the challenges within a short timeframe. The contractors replaced the ceiling, made repairs to the plumbing, and substituted certain products to avoid supply chain delays. Another challenge was ensuring the walls had adequate reinforcements to support the installation of new toilet partitions, cabinets, and countertops.

“We rebuilt several walls and added new reinforcements to ensure the new restroom features would be securely installed and hold up well over the long term,” said Somervell.

Results and Feedback

The collaboration between Scranton Products, park administrators, architects, and contractors resulted in successful restroom renovations that met the unique needs of Busch Gardens and Water Country USA. By prioritizing durability, design consistency, and user-friendliness, the parks were able to enhance guest satisfaction and maintain their reputation as premier destinations for family-friendly entertainment. The renovated restrooms received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both park administrators and guests. Visitors appreciate the attention to detail and thematic consistency, which contributes to a more immersive park experience.

To learn more about Scranton Products Hiny Hiders, please visit www.scrantonproducts.com or call 800-445-5148.