

# HER FAMILY / HIS

## Reviewing Family Entertainment



### HERS

In the blink of an eye, it is October. Where did 2004 go? The leaves may not change color and drop in Southern California but we have our own distinct Fall traditions: the much anticipated premieres of the new television season, the furious film release schedule anticipating Oscar deadlines and the fabulous Halloween Haunts in all of our theme parks. Add to this flurry of activity the fact that the temperature is cooling down and how could anyone not love a California autumn?

We started the season by taking advantage of the "Big! World! Fun! Adventures 2004" at the Ford Amphitheater. We joined the "Adventures in TRAVEL" and set out with nearly 800 other family members on a scavenger hunt through this legendary Los Angeles landmark. The hunt ended with the gift of a personal pith helmet that would be used as an integral prop in an interactive outdoor screening of the 1956 Oscar winning film, *Around the World in 80 Days*. What a beautiful way to spend a fall evening in LA – outdoors, surrounded by nature, watching a classic family film in a classic Hollywood setting! And lest you think you have to be rich to enjoy this type of culture, the whole family event was free for kids and only \$5 a ticket for adults. Alas, The Ford Family Adventures Series is over for 2004 but mark your calendars for 2005 and don't miss this great family activity next year.

Our family also made its ritual pilgrimage to Universal Studios Hollywood to experience "Revenge of the Mummy – The Ride." Signs warned us that the experience could be fatal to those with weak hearts and bad backs but my intrepid family pushed forward. We boarded the Pharaoh's barge and were quickly thrust deep into the dark Mummy's cavern-home and one of the most thrilling and frightening experiences imaginable.

Stephen Sommers, the visionary filmmaker and creator of the *Mummy* films, also served as the creator of the theme park attraction. In answer to the question, "Does Revenge of the Mummy tread into scarier territory than the movies?" Sommers said, "The difference between a ride and a movie is that we only have a few minutes to get people's adrenaline pumping. To create an unforgettable, screaming, riveting experience, to scare the hell out of our riders, fear has to be immediate and it has to be extreme." It was and we were and I love Universal Studios at Halloween!

*Both having degrees in theater and having studied in Oxford and Paris respectively, Suzanne and Chris Shoemaker have worked as freelance artists and writers in England, Canada, France, China and Hawaii. They now call Los Angeles their home where they live with 3 three sons and 2 grandsons. They can be reached at [suzanne@actsofcreation.com](mailto:suzanne@actsofcreation.com) or [chris2@actsofcreation.com](mailto:chris2@actsofcreation.com).*

### HIS

Hence away wicked ghosts, ghouls and goblins! Happy Halloween and hello to all the fun and weirdness the month of October ushers in. More so than ever, this 2004 Halloween season has exponentially grown into an even bigger retailer's bonanza, with niftier, better detailed and higher priced products hitting our neighborhood shelves as early as August! That alone makes the shopping budget bones turn in their graves.

If you polled a thousand Los Angelinos, I'd guess one out of ten could tell you where The Ford Amphitheatre is located and just what it is – a cultural treasure. First off, if you've never visited this amphitheatre that hugs the 101 Freeway nestled in the Hollywood Hills, you're in for an architectural surprise and ambience-laden treat. I've attended many a show in modern amphitheatres built without a hillside in sight, but this venue takes advantage of a mountainous topography. As a quintessential Southern California landmark, the 1241 seat outdoor theatre features a stage surrounded by verdant chaparral, soaring cypress, and a panoramic view of the bright starry sky above. Who ever said LA stargazing was impossible?

We recently attended a really fun, offbeat evening as part of the "BIG!WORLD!FUN! ADVENTURES 2004" program presented by the Ford Theatre Foundation. We embarked upon a shortened version of a Treasure Hunt on the Ford's outdoor plaza that outfitted kids with a wicker-style pith helmet, an activity book and goody bag of sweets to reward their participation. The "Adventures in TRAVEL" hunt was in keeping with the "journey theme" of the 1956 classic movie *Around the World in 80 Days* that immediately followed.

The movie's entertainment value holds up to its film "classic" status. My pith helmet off to the innovative folks at the Ford Amphitheatre for creating a unique and discovery-filled experience for kids and adults alike.

If you're middle-aged like me, you may well remember the original black and white film version (1935) of *The Mummy* starring Boris Karloff that aired as reruns on Saturday afternoons for years. The Mummy's persistence to strangle his next victim scared the dickens out of me. Your kids may not have seen the old version of this guy, but they may discover his latest reincarnation with *Revenge of the Mummy - The Ride*, Universal Studios Hollywood's newest ride and introduced to coincide with their 40th Anniversary.

What a spooky, moody thrill! Per the film's press kit, the ride promises to prey upon our most deep rooted phobias—Lysgophobia: fear of the dark, Entomophobia: fear of insects, Tachophobia: fear of speed, Acrophobia: fear of heights, Demonophobia: fear of evil spirits, and Necrophobia: fear of death. After that litany of phobias, what's to fear but fear itself? *Revenge of the Mummy - The Ride* delivers on each and every one of these pesky fears, and you can even buy the photo at the ride's end to prove it!

If this attraction has a downside, it's that it's too short. But on second thought, who wants to be scared to death for long? Boo!...Happy Halloween.

