

# Capturing Disney Parks presents **DISNEY ICON SPOTLIGHT**

**Episode 66 | Alex or Zan from @TheDisneyZan | August 5, 2021**

In this series of Q&A's, Capturing Disney Parks introduces you to some of the biggest and most iconic Disney Parks fans sharing the magic on their social media, video platform, blog, vlog, podcast, or website. Questions by Niels van Eijkelenburg.

## **Q 01 | THE ICON**

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**Please introduce yourself to our readers.**

Hi all! My name is Alex (or sometimes Zan – either works) and while I'm from New York originally, I've been living in Tokyo for the past 15 years and have been visiting Tokyo Disney Resort (TDR) all that time too. In fact, my very first visit to Tokyo Disneyland was my very first weekend in Tokyo! "Want to go see some temples and shrines," one of my new co-trainees was sure to have asked at the time, and I certainly went to visit my shrine. 15 years later, I'm still visiting Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea VERY often (though not as often as I'd like recently with APs suspended these days) and think you'd be hard-pressed to meet someone non-Japanese who knows as much about TDR as I do.



*Pictures provided by Zan*

## Q 02 | THE PARKS

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**Which Disney Parks have you experienced, and which one do you consider your 'home' Park?**

I've visited all 12 Disney parks around the world and love each one in their own special, unique ways. My home park is, of course, Tokyo Disney Resort. I live about half an hour away from the parks by subway (which isn't very far at all for Tokyo. We take the train EVERYWHERE in Japan) and can't imagine anywhere I'd feel more at home than standing in the hub at Tokyo Disneyland looking up at "Cinderella Castle", or over at Tokyo DisneySea paying a visit to Duffy and his friends. But it's great living on this end of the world and being so near to Hong Kong and Shanghai Disneylands as well. Hong Kong is especially a favorite of mine for having one of the best rides in the world, "Mystic Manor"!

## Q 03 | THE PLATFORM(S)

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**Where can we find your Disney fan platforms?**

You can find me mostly on Instagram @TheDisneyZan (<https://www.instagram.com/TheDisneyZan>), though I've just recently started to try to get into Twitter at the same name (<https://www.twitter.com/TheDisneyZan>).

## Q 04 | THE FORMAT

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**Tell us something about the format of your online platform(s), how it all started, which Disney Parks you cover, and why you love to put such a lot of effort in those activities.**

I'm actually a bit mad at myself for not having gotten into Instagram sooner! I got the idea to start a Disney account when I was taking a trip to Anaheim in 2019 and thought it would be fun to document it. I had just bought my first real camera (which I've since sold and upgraded) and I'm so mad at myself for having not gotten into photography sooner too! There's so much I'm kicking myself now for having not captured during all those years I spent exploring our parks here in Tokyo. I think back to watching my favorite show, "Legend of Mythica", at Tokyo DisneySea and can't believe I barely have any pictures or video of it now. Good thing for Youtube, I guess. Nowadays, the mission of my Instagram account is to try to share the Tokyo parks with people around the world who may never have a chance to come over here and experience it in person. I think DisneySea is especially mysterious to a lot of overseas Disney Parks fans, so I like to try to break the mystery a little and give people a taste of what it's all about.

## Q 05 | THE LOVE

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**How and when did your love for Disney Parks start?**

My love for Disney Parks started the second I walked in to my first park, Magic Kingdom, when I was, I think, four years old. My family visited Walt Disney World a number of times over the years – for the opening of "Splash Mountain", MGM Studios, Animal Kingdom, etc, etc – and my love of the Disney experience just grew and grew. My family still makes fun of me to this day for bursting into tears when we drove under the Walt Disney World sign on our second trip to Florida. I guess I really, really liked it the first time! From as young as I can remember, I'd have my mom buy me a WDW guidebook (always the Unofficial Guide – I still buy them!) when I knew a trip was upcoming and study it to the point of memorizing it.

We'd get to the parks and I'd be a very pushy little tour guide for my family and would tell anyone who would listen that I was going to work here someday. Who knew I was right?!

## Q 06 | THE TRIPS

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**How many times/days a year do you visit Disney Parks (estimate)? And how many days are most of your trips?**

When APs are around as usual, a lot. A lot a lot. Too much. But why not? I'm always around the Resort anyway, so there's no reason not to pop in and have dinner at DisneySea or watch the "Electrical Parade" at Disneyland. I used to be a bit shy about going to the parks by myself, but since discovering photography, I've started actually preferring going to the parks alone so I can focus on getting some good shots and not having to weigh anyone down with wanting to stop all the time to do some shooting. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, it's been hard not being able to go very often. APs were suspended and capacity has stayed very, very low since the parks reopened, making tickets really tough to buy. These days I've been lucky to get to the parks as a day guest once a month or so. Can't wait till things get back to normal!

## Q 07 | THE FAVORITS

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**Please name your favorite Disney attractions, parades, or shows.**

I have so many. All of them? My all-time favorite show might be Tokyo DisneySea's "The Legend of Mythica". It was a daytime show that ran from 2006 to 2014 in Mediterranean Harbor. I legitimately think it might be the best daytime show Disney has ever done at any park anywhere in the world, and I BEG you to go watch it on Youtube! But I've loved so many shows over the years. "Fantasmic!" in Anaheim, "Illuminations" at Epcot, "Wishes" at Magic Kingdom. I could make a list 10 pages long of all the Disney shows I've loved, so I'd better stop here. But go watch "Legend of Mythica"!

## Q 08 | THE MEMORY

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**What's your most memorable Disney Parks moment? Tell us all about it please!**

Too many to list. So many wonderful Disney memories over the years. But recently it was definitely the first day back in the parks after the covid closure. We were pretty lucky over here that Tokyo Disney Resort was only closed for four months – the parks closed February 29th and reopened July 1st – but even those few months closed felt so long and so sad without our happy place to escape to. Walking back into Tokyo Disneyland on July 1st was such an emotional moment, seeing so many Cast Members lined up on Main Street waving, welcoming us back home, and giving us back a little piece of normalcy.

## Q 09 | THE TIP

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**Do you have a tip or advise - about anything Disney Parks related - to share with our readers?**

Do. Your. Homework. Do not come all this way to Japan to show up at the parks asking people how to use the app, how to get FastPasses, asking for restaurant recommendations, etc. etc. etc. Learn all of this before you visit! Tokyo Disneyland and Sea get really, really busy in normal times. If you're waiting till you get to the parks to figure it all out, you're going to miss your chance at so many things.

Restaurants will be fully booked, FastPasses will disappear (yes, they can disappear for the day as early as 10am on weekends) and you will just have so much less fun than you could have if you had planned ahead!

## Q 10 | THE CHOICES

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**Make your choice! You have to choose one...**

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|--|----|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mickey                          | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Donald                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Characters                      | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attractions            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Star Wars            | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Marvel                            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parades              | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nighttime spectaculars |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site hotel        | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-site hotel                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual Pass          | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket                            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animation            | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Live-action                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pins                 | or | <input type="checkbox"/> TsumTsums                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early morning visits | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evening visits         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PhotoPass                       | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FastPass               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jack Sparrow                    | or | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Captain Hook           |

## Q 11 | THE QUESTION

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**Do you have a question for me?**

My question for you is what your impression of Tokyo Disney Resort is. How do you imagine the parks, what do you think DisneySea is like. I'm really curious what impression Disney Parks fans who haven't visited TDR have of it!

*Niels: Thanks for that interesting question Zan! Although I have seen lots of pictures and videos of the Tokyo Disney Resort, it's still hard to imagine how it will feel when being actually there. Tokyo Disneyland must be a great park, for sure, but has less attraction to me since I've been visiting Magic Kingdom and Disneyland Park in Paris many times. Tokyo DisneySea definitely is on my bucket list. It looks so realistic, so many amazing details, and in such a unique surrounding... On the pictures it almost doesn't feel like a theme park. And, there's no Disney park around the globe with the same atmosphere and vibes. Unique in every way. It really feels like a mystery park that I need to explore one day.*

## THE END

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I would like to thank Zan for participating in this Q&A series. Hope you've enjoyed this episode. Until next time and have a magical day!



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owner of Capturing Disney Parks

**Instagram** <https://www.instagram.com/capturingdisneyparks>  
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