

Gators get top billing at Thorpe Park Resort

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John Deere has struck a new fleet deal with Thorpe Park Resort, the Surrey-based theme park famous for its signature rollercoasters such as Stealth – the nation’s tallest and fastest launch rollercoaster, which accelerates from 0 to 80mph in 2.3 seconds. This season also sees the launch of the theme park’s most exciting attraction to date, Derren Brown’s Ghost Train.

The deal brings the working relationship between the two businesses into its 23rd year, which is attributed to the reliability and quality of the equipment delivered over this period to the nation’s top thrill park. In particular, Thorpe Park Resort is one of the country’s oldest customers of John Deere’s popular and versatile Gator utility vehicle, variations of which it has run on-site for over two decades.

Gators feature strongly once more in the Resort’s latest three-year grounds equipment fleet renewal deal with John Deere dealer Godfreys Golf & Turf of Wokingham in Berkshire, following two successful lease hire contracts lasting three years each.

The upgraded, 14-strong fleet now includes a 1580 front rotary mower, 5100M 100hp utility tractor, 4066R compact tractor plus front loader, 3038R compact tractor and 10 Gator utility vehicles: two XUV 855D S4s, three HPX 4x4s (all diesel), three TE electric and two TS 4x2 petrol models. All the machines feature John Deere’s PowerGard maintenance only warranty cover and Datatag theft protection on the tractors.

Recently appointed senior landscape and conservation manager Ian Stanbridge says: “We look forward to our 23rd year using John Deere equipment and we are happy with the additional Gators ordered for various departments on site, from Entertainments to Waste Management & Recycling.”

Ian has worked at Thorpe Park Resort for 16 years, and took over from his predecessor Dave Hill when the latter retired in spring 2015 after 30 years of service. “The new four-seater diesel S4 Gators offer a premium specification and are an improvement on the previous models, with a larger full-size load bay and a full windscreen.

“This means they can be used with our water bowzers for example, so every one of our vehicles is now capable of doing that job. As we lose more land area to new rides, there are fewer grass areas to maintain, but more planters that need more regular watering,” explains Ian.

"The park also opens earlier these days, so the staff must be out of there by around 9am in high season, just when more watering is required. This puts on extra pressure, so the more staff we can get out on site in more vehicles, the better – it's all about timeliness of operations.

"The quieter TE electric Gators are especially useful due to the daily bird counts and conservation work that take place here at Thorpe Park Resort," Ian adds. "We are actively promoting water fowl on the resort's Manor Lake and we are judged on key performance indicators against other water bodies. We therefore need to maintain the numbers of key birds that nest and feed here, including Northern Shoveler and Gadwall ducks, so the electric Gators allow us to do this without disturbing the wildlife."

Source: John Deere GmbH & Co. KG; ASM Public Relations Ltd

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