



Panda World, a world class indoor and outdoor environment for pandas designed by the Berlin-based architectural company dan pearlman Experience Architecture is opening at Everland Resort, a zoo and leisure park in South Korea.

Now, dan pearlman is also designing the new panda enclosure for the Berlin Zoo

The giant panda is one of the most popular animals in the world. It is an ambassador for species conservation and is threatened by extinction. Only 1,864 pandas are still living in the wild; forty-eight others can be marvelled at in zoos outside China.

South Korea is now the fourteenth country China has honoured by loaning it a panda pair. In early March, Ai Bao and Le Bao moved into their new home, the dan pearlman-designed panda environment at Everland Resort zoo and leisure park.

Panda World's opening on 21 April, 2016 coincides with the park's fortieth anniversary. The park is located only two hours away from Seoul.

Panda World, an enchanting, immersive, 7,000-square-metre area showcases not only the panda enclosure – the centrepiece of the facility – but also a modern building, featuring an exhibition, classrooms, a shop, a cafe and caretaker areas.

The giant pandas are the main protagonists of the complex. In order to handle the expected visitor volumes and prepare visitors for their encounter with the rare animals, the team from dan pearlman incorporated a number of preliminary highlights into the design.

Accordingly, the Panda World adventure starts at Panda Plaza. Here, Panda sculptures and F&B welcome visitors. The path to Otter Falls leads through a green, water-rich landscape modelled after China's Sichuan Province, home of the pandas. Once visitors have passed by the koi pond and the otter enclosure, they arrive at the informative and entertaining permanent exhibition, which is dedicated to all aspects of panda life and also educates visitors about species conservation.



A curved path leads from Panda Plaza to the Otter Falls



Next up is Twilight Experience, which provides visitors a glimpse of the panda's nocturnal habitat—the only one of its kind in the world.



Twilight Experience (Visualisation)

Now visitors have reached the main attraction of Panda World: situated before them is the show house for pandas, flooded with light.

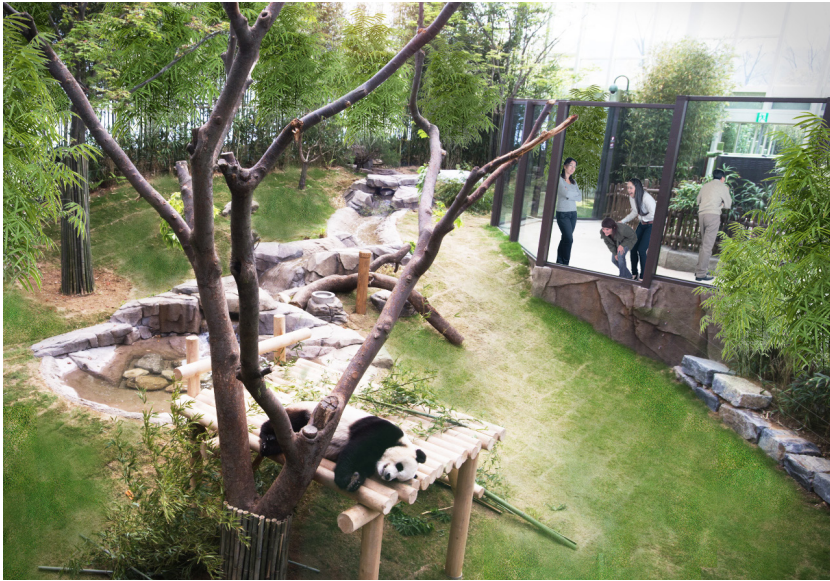
A meandering path leads through a bamboo grove and along the enclosure. In the event the pandas are not up and about, the current daily activities of the idle animals are looped on screens. The landscape concept carries over into the outdoor enclosure without any perceptible breaks. Here, in addition to the giant pandas, their relatives the red pandas as well as golden monkeys can be observed.

“The landscape of Sichuan Province”, says Kieran Stanley, CEO of dan pearlman, „was our main theme in designing the exhibition. We wanted visitors to feel like they're transported to the habitat of the giant pandas and immersed in their lush natural surroundings“.

Sichuan Province, located east of the Tibetan high plateau, is marked by mountain ranges, rivers and dense forests. Bamboo, ginkgo and coniferous trees, rock formations, small streams and waterfalls create a feeling of authenticity at Panda World. By cladding the main building with artificial rock, the modern, functional building is also embedded in the landscape, which also continues on the inside. The adjoining show house, with its corpus of glass and polycarbonate, has a light and transparent feel.

Since giant pandas are particularly sensitive, the welfare of the animals played a major role during the planning. Accordingly, the show house was designed to provide a sufficient amount of shade, and the dens, constructed as a building within a building, was situated on a separate foundation in order to minimize vibration and noise. To collect as much knowledge as possible, dan pearlman contacted 15 international panda experts at the project's beginning. The architects also took into account the animals' mating behaviour. The solitary pandas are kept apart except for only a few days a year. For the purpose of making contact, each enclosure at Panda World features two trees for climbing, which both animals can climb in order to get a view of one another at the same time.

Panda World is the second project completed by dan pearlman in the zoological realm of the leisure park. A safari winding its way through the immersive environment of Lost Valley represents the largest single project in the history of Everland Resort and has proven extremely popular with visitors since its opening in 2013.



View into the panda enclosure

„I am particularly pleased with the confidence Everland Resort has shown us. Designing a panda enclosure, which was also the first of its kind in the country, was a great honour for our office“, says Kieran Stanley. „After the opening, what remains is only our hope that the pandas will feel especially comfortable and safe in their new habitat. Who knows, with a little luck, there may soon be offspring.“

Meanwhile, the architects are drawing on their knowledge of how giant pandas conduct themselves and are already planning another panda enclosure. After it was announced last fall that China will loan a panda pair to Berlin's Zoological Garden, dan pearlman was commissioned with its design. In 2017, the new facility will be accomplished.

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