



## **INSIDER INTERVIEW: SMOKE TREE RANCH ROUNDUP: PETE RENOUDET**

At January's D23 Smoke Tree Ranch Roundup Event, the Insider was lucky enough to chat with actor Pete RenouDET. From film and television roles to off-camera voiceovers for video games and Theme Park attractions, Pete continues to have one of the most recognizable voices of Disney.

### **WHEN DID YOU BEGIN WORKING FOR THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY?**

August of 1959.

### **DID YOU START AS A VOICEOVER ACTOR?**

No. I started as a messenger like almost everyone else.

### **HOW WAS YOUR "HIDDEN TALENT" DISCOVERED?**

There used to be a group called the Disney Players on the Lot. We were a theatrical group, mostly people who either wanted to be an actor, or those who wanted to be actors but gave up on it. We'd do one play every year, and the proceeds went to Walt's favorite charity -- the John Tracy Clinic. I guess they saw me in those plays and thought, "Hey, wait a minute ... he looks like he knows what he's doing." They gave me little parts in the big pictures, and some voiceover work, like narration for the 16-millimeter films. So that's how I got started.

### **CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT SOME OF THAT WORK?**

I did a lot of voiceovers, mostly for the Park, and lots of bit parts in the '60s and '70s.

### **IN WHICH MOVIES?**

Oh, I started off with "Lt. Robin Crusoe, U.S.N.," "The One and Only, Genuine, Original Family Band," "The Love Bug," "The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes," and "The Barefoot Executive" -- a lot of films like that at that time. And I was usually playing cops.

### **IS THERE A CERTAIN ATTITUDE, OR VOICE, THAT MADE YOU THE PERFECT CHOICE TO PLAY A COP?**

Well, I think it was more the size of the part, you know.

### **WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU DO FOR DISNEY PARKS?**

The main thing that everyone remembers, I guess, is Henry, the emcee of the Country Bear Jamboree. I voiced Captain Nemo at Walt Disney World for the Nautilus attraction, and also Abe Lincoln in the Hall of Presidents. But that's been redone ... I think they've got Royal's [Dano] voice (the original Abe Lincoln voice) back in. I voiced Third Officer Collins in Mission to Mars, the Captain on the Columbia, and Mark Twain's (Samuel Clemens') voice on the Mark Twain Riverboat. Then there was the Walt Disney story narration, and some incidental voices. I did a lot of the records from the late '60s through the '70s, like Mickey Mouse's voice for the LPs [records] and a talking Mickey toy that was selling at the time.

**WOULD LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU HADN'T WORKED FOR THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY?**

Well, for one thing, it's certainly kept me here in the California area. I might've wound up going to New York had I not started doing a lot of things for Disney. But it was also having a steady job. Beside the voiceover work, I had a regular job with the Studio ... and they'd let me come and go whenever I'd get an acting job, which was pretty rare.

**WAS THAT THE MESSENGER JOB?**

No. The messenger job was only for about seven months. After that I was building art props.

**WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING WITH D23 AT THESE EVENTS?**

Well, this is the first one I've done. It's great so far -- I had no idea what to expect, as I've never been to the Smoke Tree Ranch before. They [the D23 event coordinators] were laughing at me because I said, "Not only that, I've never been to Palm Springs before!" I've been here for 50 years but NEVER to Palm Springs. Anyway, it looks like it'll be a good bunch, and we'll have a great time.