

Could it be MAGIC?

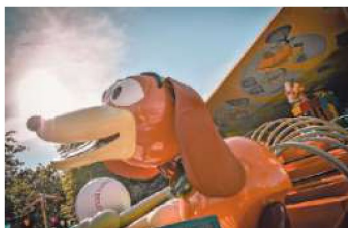


Lifestyle Editor **CATHERINE BENNION-PEDLEY** reckons so, after visiting Disneyland Paris

Recently, my four-year-old daughter Poppy announced: "When I grow up, I want to be Spider-Man." Which is one of the reasons why we find ourselves slinging webs alongside a virtual Spidey himself at Disneyland Paris on the Spider-Man Web Adventure, which launched last year. As we emerge with huge grins and tired arms – web slinging, it turns out, is quite the workout – Spider-Man himself is now somersaulting across a rooftop and I don't think anything can top this morning for my little girl.

HIP, HIP, HOORAY!

The other reason we're here is that Disneyland Paris is celebrating its 30th anniversary, so there's a party vibe throughout (as well as special souvenirs, like Mickey-Mouse-shaped ice creams). Experiencing it all for the first time with my little ones makes it feel extra-special. Raffy, who's 22 months old, may not remember it, but under-threes are free both on the Eurostar to get here and at the two parks (Disneyland and Walt Disney Studios), which helps keep costs down. Plus, he adores high-fiving all the characters we meet, and I reckon the whole weekend must feel like a mega version of baby sensory to him – particularly Ratatouille: The Adventure, a 4D



experience of being a rat scuttling through a Parisian restaurant, smells and all.

After riding crowd-pleasers like the Slinky Dog Zigzag Spin together, we chance upon the award-winning *Mickey And The Magician* show, while looking for a chance to rest our feet. And what a find it is. With no clue what to expect, we discover it's packed with illusions and favourites from *Aladdin*, *Beauty And The Beast*, *The Lion King* and *Frozen* – all performing their greatest hits. I feel a child-like joy, just as I did arriving this morning to the spectacle of the famous character parade and spotting the candy-coloured castle in real life.

DISNEY LAND OF NOD

During nap time, my husband Andy and I take



The iconic castle; have a Slinky ride; enjoy the suite life at Hôtel L'Élysée

turns to ride the thrilling Avengers Assemble: Flight Force, an in-the-dark rollercoaster, as well as the iconic Tower Of Terror, before we hit more family favourites like Buzz Lightyear Laser Blast and the colour-popping It's A Small World boat trip, once the kids wake.

Come the end of the day, it's a welcome break to hop on the free shuttle bus back to Hôtel L'Élysée Val d'Europe, a sophisticated pad just 10 minutes from the parks, and offering a much-needed spot of calm. Crayons, balloons and Disney-themed printouts await the kids in the sleek, spacious rooms, but it's a place for couples just as much as it is for families,

with a sun-trap of a terrace to sip cocktails on – we can recommend the moreish whisky and Chambord-based Le Bombardier.

Meanwhile, relaxed bistro Le George serves treats such as stuffed truffle chicken, £18, and flavoursome steak and chips, from £16, with a summer crumble, £9, to finish. If you're exhausted, though, order the best take on a croque monsieur – made with brie – I've ever had, £13, alongside a glass of crisp rosé to your room, and you'll soon feel ready to hit Mickey's kingdom again... **F**

BTW

Double rooms at Hôtel L'Élysée Val d'Europe cost from £91 per night (Hotelelysee.com).

Adult tickets for Disneyland Paris cost from £53.60 per day (Disneylandparis.com).

Eurostar tickets cost from £78 return (Eurostar.com).



The Mickey show is pure magic