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MILLION-DOLLAR WONDERWORLD OF WAX
ON VIEW AT NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

NEW YORK -- A million-dollar wax museum, feature attraction at the Lake Amusement Area of the New York World's Fair, is a wonderworld of drama, history, and romance.

Walter's International Wax Museum, the largest and costliest presentation of wax mastercraft ever shown in this country, occupies a special exhibit building of almost half an acre.

The Walter extravaganza is an outgrowth of a smaller exhibit that was the No. 1 box-office success at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair amusement center. More than one in 10 visitors to the fair saw the "Paris Spectacular" wax pageant, presented by Lou and Manny Walter, Los Angeles industrialists who have become the leading waxworks impresarios in the United States.

Europe's most outstanding wax sculptors were commissioned two years ago by the Walter brothers to create a surpassingly dramatic and extensive exhibit for the New York fair, featuring historical, religious, legendary, and art themes as well as contemporary events and personalities.

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Wonderworld of Wax - add 1

Among lavish and impressive tableaux, authentic in every detail, are the Court of Cleopatra, a palace scene of entertainment by Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie, and Louis XV in a garden scene at Versailles.

Another unique scene features two famous television medical personalities, Richard Chamberlain as Dr. Kildare and Shirl Conway as Nurse Liz Thorpe. Other television luminaries include Ed Sullivan, Johnny Carson, and Steve Allen.

The motion-picture industry is represented by film favorites Rock Hudson and Doris Day; a scene from "Robin and the Seven Hoods" with Bing Crosby, Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, and Frank Sinatra; and a trio of movie horrors, Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster, Bela Lugosi as Dracula, and Lon Chaney Jr. in the role of the Wolfman.

Famous religious works will be exhibited in separate groupings at the International Wax Museum display center, distinct from the secular art. A monumental representation of "The Last Supper", based on Jesus's final meeting with the Disciples as painted by da Vinci, will be featured. This is one of the most exacting and costly wax tableaux ever attempted. A special recorded narration by TV-radio personality Art Baker is played at "The Last Supper" exhibit, with appropriate sacred music.

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Other religious groupings are Daniel in the Lions' Den, Moses Receiving the Ten Commandments, Madonna and Child, Popes John XXIII and Paul VI with Francis Cardinal Spellman, and Joan of Arc at the Stake.

The cast in more than 30 separate displays includes Biblical patriarchs, famous courtesans, slave girls, and saints and sinners of all degree -- ranging from prehistoric times to the space age.

Nearly all displays in the Walter collection are imported works by European masters. The outstanding artists in wax sculpture are largely concentrated in Europe, descendants of mediaeval family guilds.

Katherine Stubergh of Los Angeles is the only American wax artisan whose stature is respected in Europe. The Stubergh studio is responsible for "The Last Supper" and all contemporary works in Walter's International Wax Museum, including an impressive display of President Johnson with the late John F. Kennedy and former Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Other spectacular exhibits in the New York installation include a nine-foot figure of the mythical Cyclops with Superman, Toulouse-Lautrec at the Moulin Rouge, the Sleeping Beauty with automated breathing, Cardinal Richelieu with Anne of Austria and the Three Musketeers, Burning of the Sardanapalus Palace, Nimrod, Marie Antionette, Dr. Albert Schweitzer with David Ben-Gurion and Dr. George Washington Carver, Chopin and George Sand, da Vinci Painting la Gioconda, and the Ride of Lady Godiva.

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Wonderworld of Wax - add 3

The International Wax Museum exhibit center at the fairgrounds, designed by John Harold Barry, AIA, is gracious, spacious, and functional. It is equipped with a year-round temperature-control system to maintain the human complexion glow of the wax figures at a maximum.

All details of the Walter displays have been carefully researched by a professional staff. Dress, jewelry, hair styles, and background settings are historically accurate. Wherever possible, genuine antiques have been obtained, such as the 18th-century brass-and-tortoise-shell piano in the Chopin tableau.

The complete Walter show has been assembled at the impresarios' Los Angeles studios to eliminate any production flaws before shipment to New York. Backgrounds were created by stage and film designers, and a corps of supporting craftsmen were required for coiffures, cosmetology, costuming, and daily grooming of the wax stars. A security force is maintained round the clock.

The insurance underwriters insist on the guards. The heads of the principal figures in the wax displays cost up to \$5000 and take months to create. Cost is high because every step in their creation is painstaking hand work. The 40,000 to 60,000 hairs on the average head must be emplaced one by one with a tiny, needle-like instrument.

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Wonderworld of Wax - add 4

And getting the eyes of an elderly figure to the life may require hours of exacting work. Some tableaux cost in excess of \$50,000 -- not counting their much greater artistic value.

Lou and Manny Walter, whose Seattle exhibit revived American interest in an almost lost art, are Los Angeles industrialists who made their fortunes in aircraft-components brokerage and metals speculation. As producers of the 1964-65 New York World's Fair wax-museum display, they now are recognized as the foremost entrepreneurs in the American field.

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