

# Sentosa to have Asia's biggest man-made volcano

By Dawn Tan

RRRRUMBLE, rumble...the volcano on Sentosa Island is set to erupt next month, spewing "smoke" 10 metres into the sky every half-hour.

A pit cage will plunge visitors into the bowels of the 20-metre high volcano, where they will see boiling hot "lava" and smell its sulphurous fumes.

They will be transported 500 years back in time on an archaeological expedition to discover more about the mysterious Maya tribe, a long-lost Central American Indian civilisation.

Walking past underground waterfalls and prehistoric bones, visitors will also see the formation of the universe and its evolution in a three-dimensional show.

VolcanoLand, which cost \$20 million to build, will have the biggest and most active man-made volcano in Asia.

Its owner and manager,

Leisure Park (S) Pte Ltd, said there are only two other such volcanoes in the world, one in the United States and the other in Japan.

"But they don't allow visitors to go inside and discover for themselves what it's like at the centre of the earth," said Mr David Tan, the park's assistant general manager.

"Nobody has ever gone inside a volcano before. It is something that is intriguing and fearsome, something that people would want to find out about," he added.

Mr Tan expects the theme park to attract more than one million visitors annually, half of whom will be tourists. Four million people visited Sentosa last year.

VolcanoLand, which covers 25,000 square metres — about 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools — is situated next to the musical fountain. It will open from 9 am to 9 pm daily. Adults will pay an entrance fee of \$10, while children under 13 will be charged

\$5. Entry is free for those under three.

A Maya Street outside the volcano will feature tribal dances and performances, allowing visitors to experience the Mayan culture.

To maintain visitors' interest, Leisure Park may change its tribal theme constantly, and present other exotic ancient civilisations which worshipped the volcano.

The volcanic eruption can be seen from as far away as the World Trade Centre. Leisure Park's designers, Mr Barry Ellery and Mr John Barber, said the volcano was built using about 700,000 kg of concrete, fibreglass and steel.

Said Mr Barber: "Water is heated up inside the volcano so it becomes steam, and together with the lighting effects to create the flames, there will be a simulated eruption." The volcano is even "environmentally friendly" as the steam dissipates into the air, leaving no trace behind, they quipped.