

The SKY'S the LIMIT

Shambhala, Europe's tallest and fastest rollercoaster, opened in May at PortAventura. CEO Sergio Feder explains why the ride's so important to the park

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Inside his cool, air-conditioned office, Sergio Feder, the CEO of PortAventura theme park, talks in a calm but excited manner. He outlines the importance of the following day – 12th May – which is the official launch date of the park's new rollercoaster Shambhala. It's set to be a flagship ride and a record-breaker – the tallest and fastest in Europe – which will cement PortAventura's position as one of the continent's premier parks.

"We want to become the leading park within Europe, in terms of both innovation

and breaking records," Feder says. "It's imperative to do this so we can attract more visitors, not only from Spain, but from all over Europe, especially from markets such as the UK, France, Russia, Germany and the Benelux countries." Make no mistake – when it comes to competing for foreign visitors to theme parks, Feder is turning up the heat on his European rivals.

Located in Salou, on Catalonia's Costa Dorada, PortAventura first opened to the public in 1995. It was established initially (and somewhat unusually) as a



It's hoped that the new ride will increase visitor numbers to four million a year



THE PARK'S HISTORY

1995
Park opens

1997
Universal acquires majority share. Park renamed Universal's PortAventura

2002
PortAventura develops into a tourist destination, thanks to the launch of two hotels and an aquatic park

2003
The Caribe Resort hotel opens its doors for the first time

2005
The arrival of the signature free fall tower, Hurakan Condor