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Authentic WWII Ducks - Seven Tons of Pure American Steel, Pure American Fun

WISCONSIN DELLS, Wis. (April 30, 2013) – Generations of families have loaded up the troops each summer to take a classic Duck tour through Wisconsin Dells’ famous scenery. A ride on an Original Wisconsin Duck is a quintessential part of any Wisconsin Dells vacation; a unique American adventure on land and water, all from the seat of one vehicle.

“Year after year, we have families that return, remembering when they first took a Duck tour, and now they are back with their kids or grandkids to share in this special adventure,” said Dan Gavinski, general manager of Original Wisconsin Ducks, the largest operator of tour Ducks in the nation.

It’s often said, “*You haven’t done the Dells, if you haven’t done the Ducks!*” That may be why these novel World War II amphibious vehicles remain one of the most popular attractions in this Midwest family vacation spot. The Original Wisconsin Ducks embarks on its 68th season this year, carrying thousands of travelers on adventurous sightseeing tours from mid spring through early fall.

From the Duck Dock, the lumbering craft sets out on a one-hour, 8½-mile journey through exclusive wilderness trails featuring some of the most spectacular scenery of the region. Away from the hustle-and-bustle of the Dells’ man-made amusements, the seven-ton Duck winds its way through lush wooded trails, creeps into shaded canyons and trudges to the tops of bluffs overlooking the Wisconsin River for great views and picture-perfect snapshots.

For most passengers, the highlight of the tour is “splashdown,” that moment when our rugged Duck shows off its amphibian powers with a spectacular water entry. Each tour has two splashdowns, one into the Wisconsin River for an up-close look at the famous sandstone cliffs that line its banks and a second into Lake Delton.

“Even with all of the thrill rides in the Dells today, our Ducks still hold their own when it comes to a great wow factor for visitors,” added Gavinski. “People just think it’s cool to be driving along one minute, and the next, you’re floating down the river.”

This seemingly odd idea is in part what helped the Ducks earn their stripes during WW II. The vehicles proved to be versatile where other larger military craft could not. The mighty Ducks carried thousands of troops and tons of supplies to the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific; shuttling from the large battleships right to the beachfront and up and onto the land. More than 2,000 Ducks were used in the historic D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944 at Normandy, France, which is touted as the greatest amphibious operation in history. Soon military leaders sang the praises of the handy vehicle, a far cry from early doubts about the vessel which almost kept it from production. In all, General Motors manufactured 21,200 Ducks for the war effort from 1942 to 1945.

Today vacationers laud the Ducks as a favorite; a nostalgic ride for many and an awesome example of how technology in the past helped our country gain advantage during the war effort. The tour gives visitors a spectacular scenic experience and shows off the special amphibious capabilities of the Duck itself. That’s a big part of why Original Wisconsin Ducks works hard to maintain the legacy of these distinctive amphibious vehicles. Custom-made parts and hands-on craftsmanship of a highly-skilled maintenance team, keep the Ducks in ship-shape. Original Wisconsin Ducks has a full-time crew of year-round mechanical professionals, who have more than 165 combined years of experience, working on the vehicles.

“Our maintenance experts are arguably the foremost authorities on amphibious Ducks,” said Gavinski. “We take pride in preserving these historically significant vehicles and so that generations of visitors can keep coming back for a nostalgic tour.”

With more than 90 vehicles, Original Wisconsin Ducks is the largest “flock” of amphibious tour Ducks in the United States. There are about a dozen Duck tours nationwide, with only about 300 operational Ducks combined. Original Wisconsin Ducks’ 2013 season runs mid-March through early November, weather permitting. Tours run every few minutes during the peak summer season. For more information about Original Wisconsin Ducks, please call (608) 254-8751 or visit www.wisconsinducktours.com.

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