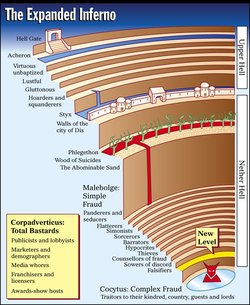
Tenth Circle Added To Rapidly Growing Hell

CITY OF DIS, NETHER HELL–After nearly four years of construction at an estimated cost of 750 million souls, Corpadverticus, the new 10th circle of Hell, finally opened its doors Monday.



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The Blockbuster Video-sponsored circle, located in Nether Hell between the former eighth and ninth levels of Malebolge and Cocytus, is expected to greatly alleviate the overcrowding problems that have plagued the infernal underworld in recent years. The circle is the first added to Hell in its countless-millennia history.

"A nightmarishly large glut of condemned spirits in recent years necessitated the expansion of Hell," inferno spokesperson Antedeus said. "The traditional nine-tiered system had grown insufficient to accommodate the exponentially rising numbers of Hellbound."

Adding to the need for expansion, Antedeus said, was the fact that a majority of the new arrivals possessed souls far more evil than the original nine circles were equipped to handle. "Demographers, advertising executives, tobacco lobbyists, monopoly-law experts retained by major corporations, and creators of office-based sitcoms–these new arrivals represent a wave of spiritual decay and horror the likes of which Hell has never before seen," Antedeus said.

Despite the need for expansion, the plan faced considerable resistance, largely due to the considerable costs of insuring construction projects within the Kingdom Of Lies. Opposition also came from Hell purists concerned about the detrimental effect a tenth level would have on the intricate numerology of Hell's meticulously arranged allegorical structure. In 1994, however, funding was finally secured in a deal brokered between Blockbuster CEO Wayne Huizenga and Satan himself.

Prior to the construction of the tenth circle, many among the new wave of sinners had been placed in such circles as Hoarders and Squanderers, Sowers of Discord, Flatterers and Seducers, Violent Against Art, and Hypocrites. Hell authorities, however, say that the new level, the Circle of Total Bastards, located at the site of the former Well of Giants just above the Frozen Lake at Hell's center, better suits their insidious brand of evil.

Frigax The Vile, a leading demonic presence, is one of the most vocal supporters of the new circle.

"In the past, the underworld was ill-equipped to handle the new breed of sinners flooding our gates–downsizing CEOs, focus-group coordinators, telemarketing sales representatives, and vast hordes of pony-tailed entertainment-industry executives rollerblading and talking on miniaturized cell-phones at the same time. But now, we've finally got the sort of top-notch Pits of Doom necessary to give such repellent abominations the quality boilings they deserve."

Pausing to tear off the limbs of an *Access Hollywood* host, Frigax added, "We're all tremendously excited about the many brand-new forms of torture and eternal pain this new level's state-of-the-art facilities will make possible."

Among the tortures the Corpadverticus Circle of Total Bastards boasts: the Never-Ending Drive-Thru Bank, the Bottomless Pit of Promotional Tie-In Keychains, and the dreaded Chamber of Emotionally Manipulative Home Shopping Network Products.

The Circle also features a Hall of Aerobics, where condemned TV-exercise-show personalities, clad in skin-tight Spandex outfits soaked in flesh-dissolving acid, are forced to exercise for centuries on end, covered in vomit and prodded with the distended ribs of skeletal, anorexic demons, accompanied by an unending, ear-splittingly loud dance-remix version of the 1988 Rick Astley hit "Together Forever."

In a nearby area, corporate raiders are forced to carry the golf clubs of uneducated Hispanic migrant workers from hole to hole for eternity, withering under a constant barrage of verbal abuse from their former subservients as crows descend from trees to peck at their eyes. In one of the deepest and most profane portions of the circle, unspeakable acts are said to be committed with a mail-order Roly-Kit.

"In life, I was a Salomon Brothers investment banker," one flame-blackened shade told reporters. "When I arrived here, they didn't know what to do with me. They put me in with those condemned to walk backwards with their heads turned all the way around on their necks, for the crime of attempting to see the future. But then I sent a couple of fruit baskets to the right people, and in no time flat, I secured a cushy spot for myself in the first circle of the Virtuous Unbaptized. Now that was a sweet deal. But before long, they caught on to my game and transferred me here to the realm of Total Bastards. I've been shrieking for mercy like a goddamn woman ever since."

His face contorted in the Misery of the Damned, a Disney lawyer said: "It's hell here–there are no executive lounges, I can't get any decent risotto, and the suit I have to wear is a cheap Brooks Brothers knock-off. I'm beeped every 30 seconds, and there's no way to return the calls. Plus, I'm being boiled upside down in lard while jackals gnaw at the soles of my feet. If I could just reach the fax machine on that nearby rock, I could contact some well-placed associates and work something out, but it's just out of my grasp, and it's out of ink and constantly blinking the message, 'Replace Toner Cartridge, Replace Toner Cartridge, Replace Toner Cartridge.'"

He then resumed screaming in agony.

Grogar The Malefic, a Captain in Hell's elite Demon Corps and supervisor in charge of admissions for the new circle, said Hell's future looks bright, thanks to the new circle.

"Things are definitely looking up," Grogar said. "We're now far better equipped, and we're ready to take on the most Unholy Atrocities humanity has to offer."

"We're really on the grow down here," Grogar added. "This is an exciting time to be in Hell."