

Scotland, Disney/Pixar Partner for Global Ad Campaign

By Kevin Sanson

4 minutes

VisitScotland has joined forces with Disney/Pixar to launch the biggest promotional [campaign](#) in the tourism agency's history, spending GBP 7 million on television and cinema advertisements, a new [website](#), and a series of promotional [events](#) across Europe, Asia, and North America. The campaign coincides with the premiere of the animated feature [Brave](#), and according to [VisitScotland](#), it marks the first time Disney/Pixar has partnered on such a scale with a country's tourism agency.

As the movie rolls out across 72 territories, the campaign will reach more than 80 million people, and includes the first advertisement Scotland has aired in North America in a decade.

Yet, even more notable is the enthusiastic endorsement the campaign has received from the Scottish Government, especially First Minister Alex Salmond, who [believes](#) the public investment will inject GBP 140 million into the Scottish economy. Along with VisitScotland Chairman Dr. Michael Cantlay, Salmond [attended](#) the film's world premiere in Los Angeles as

part of a broader [mission](#) to talk up Scotland in front of potential US investors.



Such excitement for film is not [unfounded](#). More than 15 years ago, Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*(1995) was credited for increasing annual visits to the National Wallace Monument from 40,000 to over 200,000 and annual revenues at the site from GBP 40,000 to GBP 1 million. That film's lucrative legacy [frames](#) current ambitions for *Brave*.

A more recent [report](#) says tourism is at the forefront of a slight economic improvement in Scotland, though the boost is confined to urban areas and limited to travelers from within the UK. Thus, *Brave*, which takes place in the Scottish Highlands, is considered an excellent vehicle to lure international visitors, particularly Americans, to the scenic countryside.

Disney/Pixar and VisitScotland have [positioned](#) the campaign as an unprecedented opportunity to spotlight the “majesty” and “mystery” of the rural landscape from which the film takes inspiration. Yet, some writers have [bristled](#) at the wee, whimsical Scotland on display, suggesting Pixar has recycled the same tired [tropes](#) Hollywood historically has used to represent Scottish land and people.

VisitScotland's own promotional efforts are vulnerable to similar criticisms. Last week, the agency invited film critics to Edinburgh for a five-day, expense-paid press junket. The [event](#) had “all the stereotypical trappings” of Scotland, and culminated when guests were “coaxed with promises of free whisky, a high tea,

storytelling and bagpipes onto a chartered private train ride for the day to the southern Highlands, dubbed the *Brave Express*.”

Likewise, Salmond’s support for the film has also drawn [ire](#) from political opponents who say he is missing out on other opportunities to promote Scotland, like the 2012 London Olympics and the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. These concerns mirror more general [complaints](#) about the Scottish National Party--namely, that its platform for a fully [independent](#) Scotland is more invested in media glitz and international investors than thinking strategically about the country’s future. Likewise, the criticism raises crucial questions about the government's support for local production firms and indigenous filmmaking.



Disney's Brave Highlanders