

Sailing On Sand

Sailing, with the simple, sweet sound of the boat sliding through the water, propelled only by the wind, can be relaxing and exhilarating.

Sand & Sails H2O, a new business in Ocean Shores, offers unusual sailing experiences that definitely tend toward the exciting side. With simple instructions and friendly encouragement from owner Paul DiGangi, you can try out “land sailing” on the beach in a purpose-built vehicle called a “BloKart.”

DiGangi explained that operating a BloKart is easy to learn, especially for those who have sailed a small boat.

After viewing a 10-minute instructional video, you follow him to the beach, where he unloads the kart, offers a few more words of wisdom, and your land sailing experience begins. He stays with you for your entire rental.

“They’re really safe,” he said, noting a couple of factors: the design of the tubular steel chassis makes it impossible to flip the kart onto its top; it can only lay over onto its side. And, the sail is controlled with a rope (“sheet” is the sailing term). He tells all his customers, if it feels like you’re losing control or going too fast, “there are three rules: let go, let go and let go.”

Sand & Sails H2O, located at 676 Ocean Shores Blvd. NW, is the only BloKart distributor on the West Coast that offers rentals as well as sales.

Rental rates are \$35 for a half-hour, \$50 an hour and \$75 an hour for a two-seat kart. Those rates compare with the next closest rental location, in Las Vegas, where the cheapest rental package is \$200.

DiGangi also sells BloKarts, with a base model going for \$3,250. BloKarts set up for racing can cost up to \$6,000.

The speed limit on the Ocean Shores beach is 25 mph, plenty fast for land sailing fun, according to DiGangi.

In his experience, “18 mph feels exciting; 25 feels like you’re flying!”

DiGangi said he got interested in BloKarts when he was looking for a fun activity he and his eight-year-old son could enjoy together. He discovered that there are about seven owners in the North Beach area, and a few more in and around Westport.

His goal is to start a BloKarting club in the area.

The operating hours for his business, which opened its doors July 15, are based on when low tides occur. He said the beach is wide enough for land sailing about two and a half hours on either side of the low tide.

The other factor is wind, with a breeze of at least 10 mph necessary.

When conditions are right, DiGangi said, the results are great. "I haven't rented to anybody yet that hasn't gone by me with the biggest smile on their face!"

More information is available at www.sandandsailsh20.com, and by phone at 360-261-5975.