

Typhoon blows into Boardwalk

New ride puts a much different spin on things

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SANTA CRUZ — A typhoon spawned in Italy got nothing but laughs when it began whipping around at the Boardwalk Thursday morning.

About 50 employees volunteered to test ride the Typhoon, a new attraction at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk that will open to the public today.

"I only rode it one time, and I felt its effects for an hour afterward," said Ann Parker, a spokeswoman for the Boardwalk. "I had shaky knees, and was hoarse from laughing and screaming."

"I wanted to see Monterey Bay upside down, but the only thing I remember seeing were my knuckles gripping the bar."

The \$450,000 ride — relatively inexpensive by amusement park standards — was built in Italy by FarFabbri.

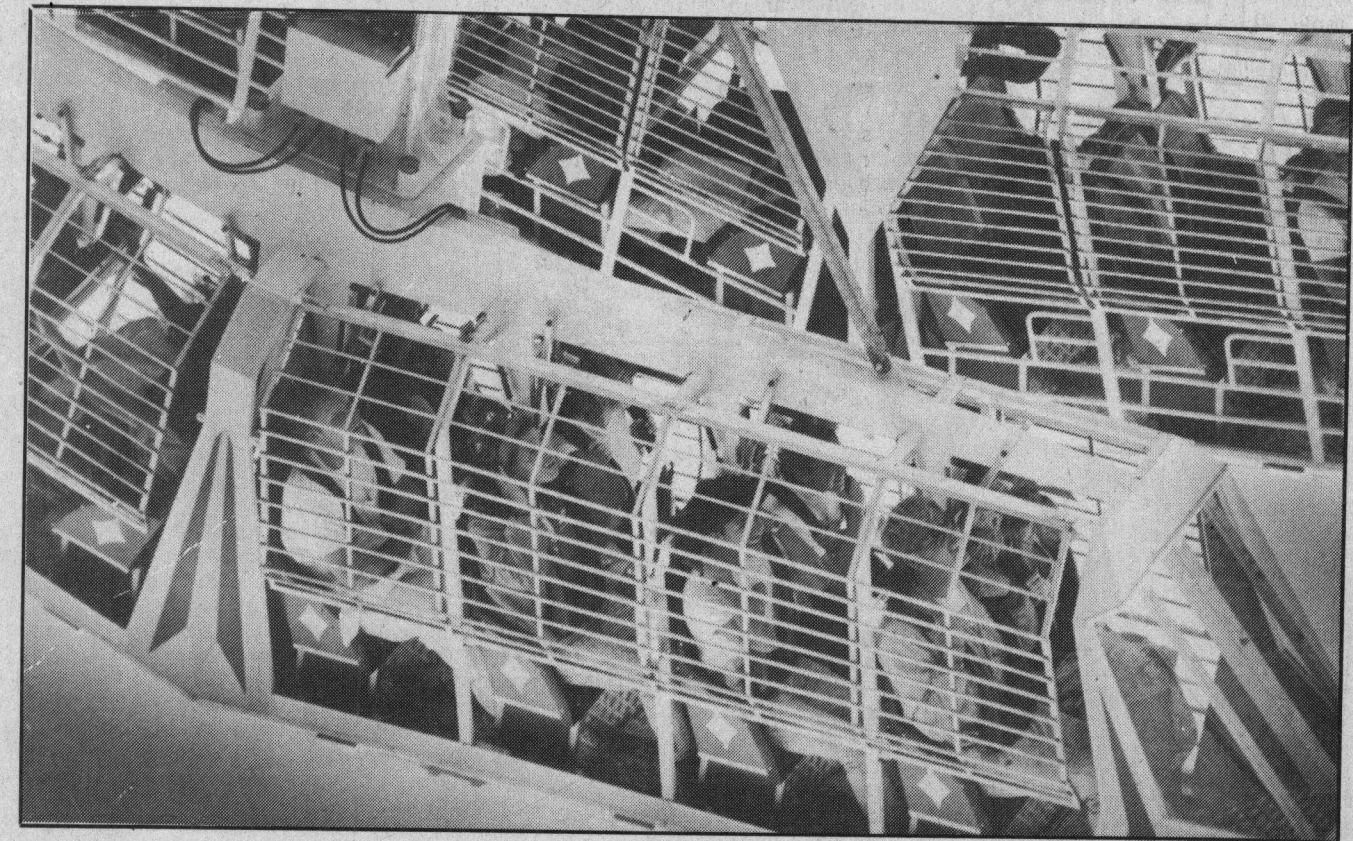
Its voyage to Santa Cruz started on a slow boat to Boston, where it touched port before moving on down through the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston, Texas.

The trip got rocky after that.

"The truck driver picked up the wrong ride in Galveston, believe it or not," said Parker. "He called us later and said he had blown out two tires because the (wrong) ride was too heavy."

Parker said the driver was sent back to get the right ride, "and then we lost contact with him. We didn't hear from him again for a week."

"We thought if he had picked up the



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Boardwalk workers' world turned upside down briefly, as the Typhoon was unveiled.

wrong ride, he could easily have gotten lost in Utah," said Parker.

The Typhoon finally was dropped off in a Boardwalk parking lot in early June, where it sat for two days until equipment could be rounded up to drag it up the beach and into place.

"That was quite a sight," said Parker.

The ride is a 60-foot pair of swinging cars, kind of a sexier version of the old carnival Hammer Head rides.

"I don't think I'll ride on it again, but I think people who enjoy being upside-down will love it," said Parker.

The ride, which can take 32 people

at a time, replaces the old Roundup, which, said Parker, "was coming to the end of the line" after long years on the Boardwalk.

She said Typhoon was chosen after many hours of research because it had the right characteristics for a Boardwalk ride: a compact thrill ride that didn't cost a fortune.

A special ceremony will be conducted at 11 a.m. today. The first 200 riders will get a "Head Over Heels" Typhoon button.

Like everyone else, though, they'll have to tear off the \$2.25 worth of tickets to climb aboard.

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