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Boardwalk to unleash Typhoon

By Terri Morgan
Special to the Mercury News

Thrill seekers will have one more reason to head to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk today when the amusement park unveils its latest daredevil ride.

The Typhoon, a 60-foot-high mechanical wonder that takes people on a gravity-defying 90-second ride, will be open to the public after a brief dedication ceremony at 11 a.m. The first 200 riders will receive free "head over heels" buttons commemorating the Typhoon's official opening.

Manufactured in Italy, the Typhoon consists of two cars, each capable of holding 16 brave (or foolish) souls at a time. The two cars swing back and forth, rising higher and higher with each swing until they loop over the top, pausing briefly during each of the three overhead loops so riders can contemplate their own mortality as they hang upside down.

Upside down for an eternity

"This ride really proves Einstein's theory of relativity," joked Marq Lipton, the boardwalk's vice president of marketing. "When you're on the ground, the ride stops upside down for only a second. But when you're on the ride, it stops upside down for three weeks. You don't look at your watch, you look at your calendar."

Boardwalk publicity manager Ann Parker agreed with that assessment after going on the Typhoon's inaugural test run.

Once is enough

"That was the longest minute and a half I've ever experienced," Parker said. "It's a fun ride. I don't think I'll ever do it again, but it was a fun ride."

"It'll probably be a popular ride for the operators," she said, listening to coins land on the metal platform surrounding the ride.

Thrill seeker Robert Roystin, who went on every single test ride for employees, said after his seventh trip that the Typhoon didn't live up to its thrilling billing. "It's not scary at all," Roystin said.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is at 400 Beach St. The Typhoon is near walkway five, next to the WaveJammer ride, between the beach and the roller coaster, and costs \$2.25 per ride.

The Typhoon hangs riders upside down for a thrilling few moments as Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk employees try out the daredevil ride slated to open today. At right, worker Noe Bollas feels the pull of gravity after six trial rides.

Angela Pancrazio — Mercury News

