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san diego, california

When Rob Pettman, David Wertz and I started Wakeboard San Diego three years ago, it was suggested we make our motto: "Wakeboarding we have plenty of committed, passionate riders." ing was born in San Diego, and it's going to die here!" Despite its place in wakeboarding history, San Diego faces a number of challenges that have kept it from becoming a riding hub. For starters, San Diego's recreational resources are limited, so riders have only a handful of options. Also, the two biggest riding spots – Mission Bay and San Diego Harbor – are both salt water, which can deter any boat owner. Plus, San Diego is an iconic surf spot with some famous locations, so when there's a huge swell coming in, we lose riders to the waves. Luckily, the scene is changing for the better. In April, Mission Bay hosted the 2009 Collegiate Nationals, which helped increase local awareness, and we're starting to see more towers buzzing around "The Bay." Since 2006, Wakeboard San Diego has grown from three riders to 60, and we're picking up new riders at a rate of 20 per year. So while San Diego will probably never be the epicenter of wakeboarding, we have plenty of committed, passionate riders who will keep our scene alive and well. — **Corey MITSKEVICH**, wakeboard san diego founder

Where to Ride: We mainly stick to Mission Bay. It's easily accessible and right off Interstate 5 in the heart of the community. The only problem is that it's a state park, so you need a permit from the city to give lessons and the boat captain needs a Coast Guard license. As a result, we don't have a ton of schools out there. San Diego Harbor has some hidden spots too, but they're just not as convenient as The Bay.

When to Come: Our MasterCraft X-2 is in the water year-round. To our benefit, both San Diego's weather and water temperatures stay between 60 and 75 degrees all year, so when most of the nation is covered in snow, we're still out riding. Oddly enough, winter is the best time to ride here. The water is smoother and you don't have the boat traffic you see in the summer. The season really starts to pick up near April, when the snowboarding season ends. It usually stays busy until November. During the summer, we're out three to four times a week, grabbing sessions early in the morning or late in the day to avoid the boat traffic.

Where to Get a Pull: Just head to wakeboardsandiego.com to join a session. Wakeboard San Diego is all about riders pulling

riders, having fun and helping people get to the next level. We're not competitive, and we never put people down for being unskilled. Plus, we're out on the water 70 to 80 times per year, and we have extra boards, wetsuits and other gear for those who don't have any.

Super Shops: We have two shops fully dedicated to wakeboarding in San Diego. Wakesports Unlimited (wakesports.com) has been around forever. It carries all the latest gear from Hyperlite, Liquid Force and Ronix. Seaforth Boat Rentals, also known as SBR Wakeboarding (sbrwakeboarding.com), is the other shop to go to. SBR runs a wake business on Mission Bay with a Centurion Enzo 230 and carries gear from Byerly, Hyperlite, Jet Pilot and Slingshot. Both have super-friendly staffs that are always willing to help and give good advice.

Best Events: In April, 16 college wake teams from across the country descended on Hidden Anchorage Cove in Mission Bay for the 2009 Collegiate Nationals. Last summer, SBR held its first-ever rail jam to celebrate its grand reopening. Justin Fischer, Kyle Murphy, Daniel Doud, Reed Watson and Kaesen Suyderhoud all rode, and there was tons of live music, free food and giveaways. — **as told to justine griffin**