

Colorful Combat



This Volkswagen bus serves as a prop at Paintball Palace in Eugene.

Nick Medley/Emerald

With the closure of other paintball and laser tag locations in Eugene, Paintball Palace has decided to expand its services

By Michael Hines
Oregon Daily Emerald

Even with its status as the only joint of its kind in town, Paintball Palace is still working hard to corner an ever-increasing market.

On the heels of the closing of Hotshots Paintball & Pro Shop and Zap Entertainment, Paintball Palace, located at 1820 W. 17th Ave., is offering an increasing number of competitive opportunities and games.

Outdoor paintball, a mobile arena, laser tag and "Night Owl Paintball" are all works in progress for the growing business.

It all starts with the basic game—paintball.

"There's nothing like it for camaraderie-building," said Paintball Palace manager Grant Williams.

Just ask the University football team. Almost 50 of them came in last December before the team left for the Aloha Bowl in Hawaii. Reportedly, Jason Cooper is quite the gamer.

Strangers who come in for open play often become buddies over the course of a few games, Williams said.

"Somehow they get on a first-name basis, giving each other high-fives," he said.

Paintball Palace offers an 8,000-square-foot indoor space with towers, a Volkswagen bus and other strategic debris for up to 40 gamers to play in at once.

Is this for college students?

"It's pretty diverse," Williams said. "It's most popular now between the ages of 12 and 17, but we've got people from 10 to 70."

Many people are under the misconception that they can be badly hurt by a paintball.

The balls, which travel about 220 feet per second, sometimes hurt, Williams said, but in its four years of operation, Paintball Palace has never had a customer seriously injured.

"Let's just say you know when you've been hit," he said. "But that's what makes it paintball."

Williams recommends wearing enough clothing to cover exposed skin but not so much that it inhibits mobility.

The paintballs are generally made to travel faster in outdoor paintball because of the larger distances. Paintball Palace has a

30-acre outdoor space about four miles from its indoor arena for spring and summer use when the weather clears.

Many people want to play the game but can't accommodate the hours, Williams said. To serve those customers, Paintball Palace has created a mobile arena that has already been booked for a high school graduation party. It will also soon have "Night Owl Paintball," offering open play until 4 a.m. two nights a week this spring and summer.

"Everybody who comes always has fun," Williams said.

Paintballing is only allowed for people 10 and older. So with the closure of Zap Entertainment, the only laser tag business in town, Paintball Palace is adding laser tag for all ages to its second floor.

Paintball Palace is aiming for spring break as its laser tag opening time.

Paintball Palace offers rental packages to those people who don't own the proper equipment. Either \$15 or \$19 will cover a pump shooter or semi-automatic gun, respectively, 50 paint balls, two hours of play and a helmet. But this month, there is a cost discount for students with identification.

Open play hours are from 2 p.m. every day to 8 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays, midnight Fridays and Saturdays and 6 p.m. Sundays.

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