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Photo courtesy of Jimmy Lewis

Mike Waltz flies through their while kiteboarding in Maui, Hawaii.

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**Katie Miller**  
 Oregon Daily Emerald

If a sailor and a surfer crossed, what do you get? Windsurfing. If a surfer and a body surfer crossed, what do you get? Body boarding. If a water skier and a surfer crossed, what do you get? Wakeboarding. But what if a wakeboarder, a windsurfer, a surfer and a paraglider crossed? Well you get the latest trend in the wide variety of crossbred watersports: kiteboarding.

"Kiteboarding is a cross-breed between a lot of different sports," says Brian Hinde, a sailboard shaper and manufacturer in Hood River, Ore. "People who surf can do it; wakeboarders are into it; windsurfers can do it. Anyone can do it."

For the past three years, kiteboarding has gradually begun to emerge from the underground world of obscure sports, making its way into the more mainstream market of water sports, causing a frenzy of windsurfers, wakeboarding and surfers to pick up the sport, starting a huge trend throughout the board sports world.

Is it a passing trend (remember scurfing?) or is it a legitimate sport ready to be introduced to a wider audience of board enthusiasts on the mainland United States? But for the majority of people who are not involved in the surf industry, kiteboarding remains a mystery, and that may be one of its biggest appeals, offering a new challenge and adventure to a fresh market of people ready to experience an "extreme sport."

"It's kind of a bastardization of previous sports that people are getting tired of," said Tom James, editor of the new Kiteboarding

magazine. "It keeps the board sports world fresh, which is what it's all about. It's gotta be fresh or else it's old news."

Since the birth of the "extreme sport" in the early '90s, athletes of all ages have been integrating various sports to maximize the adrenaline and dare-devil factors. Creating every type of sport from sky surfing to earthboarding. These types of sports tend to be more trick-oriented, which is the exact point of kiteboarding.

"Kiteboarding is mostly about freestyle. Who does the best tricks, hangs in the air the longest?" said James. "There are some people who race and are more speed oriented, but that's being phased out because that's not what the sport is about."

What the sport is about is tricks. Instead of being strapped to a heavy board or needing the strength to control a huge windsurf sail, kiteboarders are able to position their kites into the wind and can catch huge air, swirl, skip, jump, float, hand up-side down and gain speeds in excess of 30 to 35 knots.

So it's no wonder that everyone from ultra-hip teens to jaded forty-somethings are attracted to the sport. All it takes to kiteboards is a little balance, knowledge of wind conditions and patience, and before you know it, you're up and catching a huge adrenaline rush.

"It's not really a strength-intensive sport," said James. "It's remarkably easy. You gotta have some patience, though, because you get your ass kicked the first couple of times you do it."

Kiteboarding's rise began nearly 14 years ago with Corey "The Man" Roeseler, who many say is the godfather of kiteboarding.

"Corey's had a huge influence on the sport," said Hinde, who has been in the surf industry for more than 25 years.

In early 1987, a 17-year-old Roeseler strapped on a pair of water skis, launched a kite his father had originally designed for a boat and gave birth to kiteboarding.

Unfortunately, many integrated sports such as kiteboarding tend to take awhile to fully develop into the sport it will eventually become.

Since 1987, kiteboarding has continued to grow and absorb influence from its sister sports: wakeboarding, surfing and windsurfing. However, it wasn't until 1996 that people began to take notice of the sport.

Just a year ago, kiteboarders were seen sprinkled throughout the Columbia Gorge in Oregon, one the of the most desired sailboard locations in the world. Today, Hinde sees as many as 40 to 50 kiteboarders out at one time.

In the meantime, shapers all over the world continue to reap the benefits of this new sport and are picking up the craft of kiteboard shaping.

Jimmy Lewis, a sailboard shaper from Maui, has been in the business of sailboard shaping for more than 25 years is now seeing an increase in business because of the growing demand for kiteboards.

"Several years ago, I was making around 300 windsurf boards a year. That slowly tapered down over a period of 3 to 4 years to only 70 windsurf boards in 1999," Lewis said. "I've made 170 plus kiteboards in 1999, and I expect to make a lot more this year."

Not only is Lewis world re-Turn to **Kiteboard**, page 8B

**Raw Talent.**

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