

New Free-Standing Wave Machine to Debut in Sweden

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You can surf in a lake. Or in a river. Or in a pool. That's right, American Wave Machines (AWM) has unleashed a brand new technology, allowing for the first free-standing wave machine that creates artificial lefts, rights, and even barrels in the comfort of a pool.

"You're in a standing wave in one place. It's got its own kind of feeling," said CEO Bruce McFarland. "The more lateral speed you've got, the faster you can cut back and the more spray you get. It becomes kind of addicting, because you want to get to where you can turn a little bit harder."

Sure, there are already locations where blue foam and blasted water produce experiences that simulate surfing.

However, this company claims they've taken it further. Denise Herich, PR Representative for AWM, says, "The main difference is it's more of a real, deep water, authentic surfing experience versus standing on a thin sheet of water. With these machines, you can actually use a real surfboard [fins and all], and the experience directly translates to surfing the ocean or a river."



East Coast competitive surfer Lauren McClean was asked to give one of their other models a try, and after learning on a foam board, she whipped out a real board she had made for the wave. "It's about the appearance of surfing. It looked just like it and it felt like it once you got enough speed," she said. She wishes she had one near her home, because it is perfect when no real waves are rolling in. "That would definitely cure the surfer blues," she said.

The newest synthetic wave will be unveiled at the Himlabadet Pool Facility in Sundsvall, Sweden, set to open next summer. The company asserts that its SurfStream will manufacture the largest waves created using AWM machinery.

Themed with natural elements such as forest, heat, fire, and water, the facility will offer adventure-seekers of all ages the opportunity to test their dexterity on a climbing wall, whirlpools, and of course, a man-made wave.

The machine works by creating a deep cushion of water where surfers can carve on an endless wave. No paddling required. The current design for the Swedish attraction entails a 16-foot-wide wave that can be up to 4-feet-high. "All of our installations have a user control of speed and water depth, so it can be customized for different groups of people," McFarland explained. "For body boarding, you need a standing wave that breaks, so we can make a constantly reforming wave. It breaks then comes to a green face, and then whitewater, and then a green face," he said.

The customizability of the apparatus allows surfers of all skill levels to participate. According to McFarland, it is extremely easy for beginners to learn to stand up on a board in such a controlled environment. The company maintains that the skills learned on their chlorine creation will carry over to real-world surfing. Only time will tell, but if this is so could the next generation of surfers be pool-trained groms who've hardly seen the sea?