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Last Update: Thursday,
June 30, 2005. 9:21am
(AEST)

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Surf's up at the local swimming pool

If a surfer one day tells you he learnt to do a Pipeline Break in Iowa, Switzerland or Kazakhstan, don't laugh - it may soon become a reality.

New Zealand researchers have devised a shape-shifting rubber reef that can be fitted to the floor of a swimming pool and, with the help of a wave machine, generates surf as mighty as any in Hawaii, California or Queensland, *New Scientist* magazine says.

The innovation, Versareef, is the fruit of two companies, ASR and Surf Pools, which spent five years surveying the best reefs in the Pacific to find out which seabed characteristics generate the best surf.

They then adapted the knowledge for the swimming pool.

Computer-controlled pneumatic jacks lie beneath a tough rubber mat, subtly altering its shape so that a rush of water, sent by a wave machine similar to those already in use in swimming pools, is moulded into a powerful, curling surf wave.

The Versareef will generate four types of wave - Australian, Hawaiian, Indonesian and Californian - named after the places in which they are typically found, the British science weekly says in next Saturday's issue.

Surfing beginners can start off with the Californian, which is a slower, easier wave.

They can work up to the Hawaiian, whose finest waves are generated when a wave hits a sharply inclined seabed with ridges running at right angles to the wave's direction.

The first three surfing reefs will open at a Florida surfing park next year, creating a ride of up to 70 metres on waves as high as three

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Programs



metres, making it the biggest wave facility in the world, the report says.

-AFP

 

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