

Guide

DINING
9 NOTABLE
RESTAURANTS
IN PLANO

Try new TexPlex Park for an
adventure that's just your speed

GOING TO EXTREMES

MOVIES: 'IT COMES AT NIGHT' AND 'THE MUMMY' CREEP INTO THEATERS



Photos by Louis DeLuca/Staff Photographer

The **TexPlex extreme-sports park** in Midlothian offers speedboat rides, off-road courses and heavy-duty construction equipment for outdoor fun.

A full-throttle adventure

By **BRENTNEY HAMILTON**
Staff Writer
bhamilton@dallasnews.com

You don't have to know what "whiskey throttle" even means — or any other motocross lingo, for that matter — to know it sounds a tad reckless. At TexPlex Park in Midlothian, you can go full speed or just get a tiny taste. Let's call it customizable daredevilry.

TexPlex Park, opening this weekend, is a 1,000-acre extreme-sports playground about 30 miles from downtown Dallas. It features off-road tracks for mountain and dirt bikes as well as speedboat rides and heavy-duty construction equipment for outdoor fun.

Fulfill your need for speed and other big-kid fun at TexPlex Park

That's right: You can roll around in a bulldozer or excavator, digging up earth in a 10-acre pit, just because. This is real-life Tonka Trucks and Matchbox Motorcycles for grown-ups and kids who want to go fast.

I headed out to TexPlex to see what it's all about. I grew up riding ATVs,

hauling a little bit of hay and driving the occasional tractor on a 500-acre ranch. But it had been more than 15 years since I'd crawled into the cab of a John Deere or toiled around in a forklift at my family's business. I've been a cubicle dweller most of my adult life. Even worse in the coolness department: I'm a 30-something mom. Think I could possibly fall in TexPlex's target demographic?

If you said, "Heck, yes," you're right — but possibly not for the reasons you'd expect. It's the people behind the playground that make it special.

TexPlex was created by president and co-founder Tommy Kehoe, who searched the country for BMX champions and

racing superstars to bring on as site designers and consultants. He and the board of directors gave passionate pros a blank canvas and essentially said, "Build your dream park."

They did. But more than that, they built a park that feels open to every experience level and ability.

Instructors are patient. They know that most people who would pay money to run heavy-duty construction equipment (an actual *job* for some people) are probably more proficient with an Xbox joystick than one that manipulates the bucket of a 30,000-pound Cat.

At TexPlex, it's OK to be new at something. In fact, stepping out of your



In the **Dig This** area, patrons can learn how to use construction equipment.

comfort zone is encouraged, whether that's digging a 6-foot hole at the flip of a toggle or riding down a bike ramp and flying through the air onto a massive airbag.

That doesn't mean everything is for beginners, though. Each of the park's courses is built with different skill levels in mind and with opportunities to progress through more challenging obstacles. Think of the bike and off-road courses as being similar to a ski resort with bunny slopes building up to black diamonds.

Other experiences — the speedboats, for example — are operated by professional drivers only. Sure, it would be fun to drive yourself, but these folks are better trained. You're in for a next-level thrill at the mercy of a highly skilled adrenaline junkie.

Attractions at TexPlex range from \$10 to \$249, for now, but that will change as the park evolves. And it will: The wide-open Texas skies are the limits for growth when it comes to new toys, special events and changing features.

So far, there are four main types of adventures at TexPlex Park: Dig This, which is affiliated with the Las Vegas company of the same name that allows anyone to learn how to use construction equipment; off-road courses for motor vehicles; bicycle courses and ramps; and a canal for

boat rides.

Director of operations Casey Jarzombek says she hasn't heard an idea yet that sounds too crazy. *American Ninja Warrior*-style obstacle courses: Why not? Concerts, festivals, professional races? Bring it.

Make a day of it

The first rule of TexPlex Park: Take sunscreen. Wear sunscreen. Reapply sunscreen.

Located outside Midlothian, TexPlex Park is south of Arlington, roughly 30 miles from both Fort Worth and Dallas.

There aren't a lot of restaurants or other entertainment attractions in the area, but the park features food trucks and concession stands. It's family-friendly — all ages are welcome, though some attractions have additional age guidelines — and no alcohol is allowed in the park.

On-site parking is usually plentiful and free, as is entry to the park itself, though that might vary for special events. You should dress comfortably and wear closed-toe shoes.

TexPlex Park is adjacent to Blaine Stone Lodge, a 10,000-square-foot, climate-controlled, indoor event venue set to open on June 9. It features a rustic yet well-finished ballroom with an industrial-size kitchen, chefs for hire, chairs, tables, a sound system and

2018
SEASON TICKET
MEMBERSHIPS

ON SALE
NOW

FCDALLAS.COM/MEMBERSHIPS
888-FCD-GOAL

DN-1612078-01

The advertisement features a red and blue color scheme. At the top, there is a photograph of two soccer players in action, with the FC Dallas logo overlaid. Below the photo, the year "2018" is written in large white numbers. Underneath, "SEASON TICKET MEMBERSHIPS" is written in bold white capital letters. A horizontal red line separates this from the "ON SALE NOW" text, which is in large, bold red capital letters. At the bottom, the website "FCDALLAS.COM/MEMBERSHIPS" and the phone number "888-FCD-GOAL" are listed in white capital letters. A small code "DN-1612078-01" is visible in the bottom left corner of the ad.



Frisco Rough Riders™



972.334.1993 RIDERSBASEBALL.com

TICKETS START AT JUST \$7

THURSDAY, JUNE 15TH @ 7:05PM
THIRSTY THURSDAY \$1 BEER

FRIDAY, JUNE 16TH @ 7:05PM
FREE ROUGHNED ODOR BOBBLEHEAD GIVEAWAY (FIRST 1,500 FANS)



SUNDAY, JUNE 18TH @ 7:05PM
FREE FATHER'S DAY BOWTIE GIVEAWAY (FIRST 1,000 MEN 18+)




Photos by Louis DeLuca/Staff Photographer

An off-road ATV course is one of the featured attractions at TexPlex Park.



A stunt biker heads down a ramp before landing on a giant air bag.

video projector, all designed for corporate team-building days, birthday parties or other swank affairs.

Want to take wedding vows on the back of a dirt bike? You do you.

of calculated risk involved. You'll be required to sign a waiver when you arrive. All staff members are CPR-certified and trained for emergency situations.

This weekend

During TexPlex Park's grand-opening weekend, June 9-11, park officials will be scoping the scene and occasionally handing out cash for things like impressive tricks, super-fast rides, first attempts at something new or sick bike builds — anything that captures the TexPlex Park spirit.

■ Opens June 9 at 881 Miller Road, Midlothian. Opening-day hours will be from noon to 6 p.m.; regular hours will be Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. until dark. Park admission is free, and prices for the individual attractions range from \$10 to \$249; military discounts are offered. 972-752-2223. texplexpark.com.

How much does it cost?

Because TexPlex caters to a variety of interests, prices range from \$10 for the peewee bike park gate fee all the way up to \$249 for about 90 minutes in the Big Dig experience. It can be smart to make a reservation, but most attractions on most days are open to walk-ups. Costs for special events like races may vary, and rain checks may be available if the park closes unexpectedly due to inclement weather.

Is it safe?

As with most things, there's a level

Twitter: @brentneyh