

## Trikes Are Not for Tots

"I'd call it a motorcycle in the sky," says Frank Dempsey, talking about the contraption that has become his passion. "They travel the same speed, about 50 miles an hour," he says, but with his kind of trike you're up in the air, not on the pavement. "They've gone to 30,000 feet," Dempsey brags, "but normally we fly about 1,000 feet above the ground."

Basically, a trike is a three-wheeled motorized hang glider. It looks something like a Vespa in the clutches of a neon-colored pterodactyl. The engine spins a propeller that launches the trike, but once it's airborne, if the engine is cut, the trike can still soar on its own. Watching the videos on Dempsey's Web site ([www.newmexicotrikes.com](http://www.newmexicotrikes.com)), it looks irresistibly fun, but triking really hasn't caught on yet. Dempsey estimates



there are probably only a dozen or so trikers in the state, spread out between Taos and Las Cruces.



Triking in New Mexico: It's like a motorcycle trip through the air. (Photos: Frank Dempsey.)

Unfortunately, trikes can't fly into the Santa Fe airport and there don't seem to be any trikers in our city. You could be the first! "The first lesson is free and the second costs you about \$20,000," Dempsey jokes, referring to the expense of buying your own trike. In reality, lessons cost about \$100 per hour.

Legally, trikers are not allowed to simply give rides, only lessons. So Dempsey offers an easy introductory lesson and short ride for interested parties. Full-on lessons end with the student flying solo from Double Eagle Airport west of Albuquerque. "My job is to get more

people into the sport," he says. "They either absolutely love it or never want to do it again. It's about 50-50. Some love it and some get sick."

If you're interested in getting in the air, but want to do more! Go faster! Go farther! Triking could be it. From 100 feet or 1,500 feet, the vast expanse of New Mexico is yours to explore. Dempsey likes to search for wild horses and watch (but not disturb) them from high above. After a trike ride like that with a passenger, he says, "We land and people are like all right!"

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