Water FUN

By KIRKLAND ROOP

Asiana was bitten by the canoeing bug in the mid-1970's, shortly after the Scenic Rivers Program in Louisiana came to fruition. With the establishment of the program by the state Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, and regulatory materials made available by the Louisiana Education Research Association, Asiana rediscovered the beauty of the waterways within a short driving distance of this area and have made canoeing one of the favorite pastimes of occasional boaters and campers alike.

The emergence of canoeing as well as other quiet water sports such as kayaking, windsurfing and even sailboat sailing can be partially attributed to sporting goods stores in the area which have promoted the sport by making it easy and inexpensive to spend a day exploring Louisiana's beautiful rivers, lakes, bayous and creeks. A natural emphasis placed on land-based sports has also made it easier for tourists in the pursuit of some outdoor leisure in Louisiana, where the calm waters of the bays is essential for beginners and the winds can be challenging enough for more experienced sailors.

The enjoyment of the quiet water sports is unequalled. Those who aren't quite ready to exert themselves too hard in fast currents will instead enjoy the leisure of bayous and creeks where the scenery is the focal point. More experienced canoeists looking for a challenge will find it in less than a three-hour drive from Lafayette.

Even the selection of waterways is vast, as owners and managers of the river's sporting points stores are also enthusiasts of these sports. Becoming familiar with the waterways is only a matter of asking. Richard and Jean Williams, owners of Peak and Paddle in Lafayette, have written "Canoeing in Louisiana," published by the Lafayette Natural History Museum. This comprehensive guide includes descriptions and histories of the waterways and access points, tips of equipment needed and survival tips. This book is currently in its fourth edition and printing, and will be reissued this fall. Much of the information in this article uses "Canoeing in Louisiana" as a reference.

Canoeing and kayaking enthusiasts will be looking for the scenic rivers, bayous and creeks of the area—along with windsurfing, clay target and shells for exploring, resting or camping overnight. Windsurfers and cabin and tenters will be connected in open waters, with faster legs and no allergies.

The abundance of waterways near Asiana are not suited for canoeing, but kayak enthusiasts Joie Piner says many of these streams can be enjoyable for that sport, although there is no "white water" in Louisiana.

A renewed effort in cleaning up the lake and shore of Lake Charles has also renewed interest in waterfowling in southwest Louisiana. A day stay there is much more enjoyable this year even than it was last year, Cypress Point has long been a favorite, among Asiana's wild...