

Prokarting

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The Colombo ProKart Centre, which opened to the public on the 3rd of December 1996, embodies the latest concept in motor sport leisure to arrive in Sri Lanka. It is the first of its kind in South Asia. The nearest centres to Colombo are in Hong Kong and Dubai.

ProKarting has evolved from the well-established GoKarting formula. A Prokart has a four-stroke engine fitted with an automatic clutch and just two operating pedals. It may be driven by anyone over the age of 14 with minimum instruction. The Colombo ProKart Centre is housed in a 23,000 square foot warehouse in the centre of the town. Driving ProKarts on the 160m indoor track, will appeal not only to budding Schumachers but to all those who like to have a good time.

Colombo Prokart Centre (pvt) Ltd., is a Sri Lankan registered company, 40% of which is foreign- owned. The driving force behind ProKarting in Sri Lanka is Steve Hollman a charismatic Englishman with over 25 years of experience in top-level, professional, international motor sport. The directors of Colombo ProKart Centre (pvt) Ltd., Azgi Akberally, Tilak Conrad, Steve Hollman, Pradip Jayewardene, Les Merber and Anthony Page are described by Hollman as an “eclectic bunch who get on very well”. When asked why he chose to set up a ProKarting centre in Sri Lanka he replied that it was for purely personal reasons. “I fell in love with the country and set up the business in order to stay here”, he said. A huge amount of interest in motor sport already exists in Sri Lanka and this, no doubt,

will contribute to the success of the venture.

Hollman hopes to attract many clients from the corporate world. "In the UK, places like the Colombo ProKart Centre play a big part in corporate hospitality and staff entertainment. The centre can be booked for the night and upto 50 people can unwind and thoroughly enjoy themselves", said Hollman. He added that he enjoys being present on such occasions to give free advice and lessons to those who like to perfect their racing technique.

The Colombo ProKart Centre is a great opportunity for those who like to race without the burden of racing car ownership and maintenance. Membership is available for frequent users and once ProKarting is popularized there will be many championship events.

Further plans include three-quarter size CadetKarts for younger racing enthusiasts and a refreshment area for onlookers. Sophisticated computer lap-timing will be introduced in February and this will lead to endurance events lasting upto 6 hours with upto six drivers in each competing team.

However, the main point of ProKarting is that it is motor sport *leisure*. As Steve Hollman says "don't take it too seriously, the main objective is to have fun."

The Colombo ProKart Centre is situated at 338, T.B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10 (Tel: 072 75277). It is open from 5pm to 10pm on weekdays and from 12pm to 10pm on weekends. Prices start from Rs 150 for a trial run and Rs 350 for a five minute race.