

CLASSIC BOWL

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INTERNATIONAL

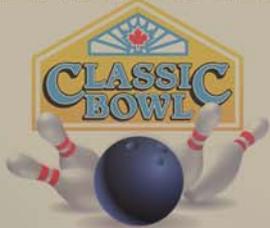
GO BOWLING

Vol. 25 | August 2017

BOWLING INDUSTRY

THE WORLD'S ONLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE BUSINESS OF BOWLING

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RONALD MCDONALD STRIKES BIG IN BOWLING

ED SOUSA, CLASSIC BOWL AND PAUL OLIVEIRA, BOWL CANADA TEAM UP WITH RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES



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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One copy of *International Bowling Industry* is sent free to every bowling center, independently owned pro shop and collegiate bowling center in the U.S., and every military bowling center and pro shop worldwide. Publisher reserves the right to provide free subscriptions to those individuals who meet publication qualifications. Additional subscriptions may be purchased for delivery in the U.S. for \$50 per year. Subscriptions for Canada and Mexico are \$65 per year, all other foreign subscriptions are \$80 per year. All foreign subscriptions should be paid in U.S. funds using International Money Orders. POSTMASTER: Please send new as well as old address to *International Bowling Industry*, 12655 Ventura Boulevard, Studio City, CA 91604 USA. If possible, please furnish address mailing label. Printed in U.S.A. Copyright 2017, B2B Media, Inc. No part of this magazine may be reprinted without the publisher's permission.

MEMBER AND/OR SUPPORTER OF:





First Impressions

David Breen is all he seems to be – plus a successful proprietor.

By Paul Lane

There's an old saying, "You can only make a first impression once." The first impression when you meet David Breen, the proprietor of two centers in Massachusetts, is that he's an outgoing personality, a man with a mission who knows where he is going and how to get there. Subsequent meetings only serve to reconfirm that first impression.

This is hardly surprising when you consider Breen's rich, colorful résumé: former board of directors member of the International Roller Skating Association; former selectman for the town of Mendon, MA; private pilot of fixed-wing, single engine aircraft; radio announcer and on-air talent with a major Boston market radio station; CEO/owner of a real estate management company; CEO/owner Skate Palace Roller Skating and Skate Park; and CEO/owner of two bowling centers in Milford and Kingston, MA.

David Breen opened his first center in the town of Milford, MA, in 2006 — a 20-lane facility including a 4-lane private bowling suite, a 200-seat, full-service restaurant, two premium bars, three function rooms, laser tag, billiards, arcade, an outdoor patio and much more.

Breen opened his second center in Kingston, MA, in 2016 and will open a third in Hadley, MA, before the end of 2017. Why the sudden momentum with the opening of two more centers ten years after the first and with two more planned for 2018 we asked. "When we opened our first center, Pinz, in 2006, we had no idea what we were doing," said Breen. "It was a huge learning curve, and we made many mistakes along the way. In short, we had to learn the hard way and, for sure, we did not want to replicate our mistakes in multiple venues. We were simply just not ready," he added.

The Milford facility was originally an ice skating rink, later converted to roller skating, and then to a family entertainment center (FEC), including bowling. Roller skating was Breen's introduction to the recreation and entertainment industry. "We



David Breen



soon discovered that bowling is an entirely different business with only a few comparisons to roller skating," said Breen.

Unlike the Milford conversion, the second Pinz center, located in Kingston, occupies 36,000 square feet in a redeveloped shopping mall, with access from the parking lot and within the mall.

The amenities at Kingston are similar to the Milford center with the addition of a 5,000-square-foot, dual-purpose concert venue and function room called Pinz Live, with a 1,000-1,400 person capacity, depending on usage.

When the room is not being used as a live performance venue, the space is available and used for private events and parties. Pinz Live has a fully equipped stage featuring state-of-the-art lighting and sound for all audio visual needs.

The special effects lighting and audio visual systems were provided by New Jersey-based DFX Sound Vision. Mike Bovino, the president of DFX, said, "The Pinz projects include bowling, sports bars, arcades and a nightclub/concert live entertainment venue. We needed to create the wow effect throughout the space while being versatile, energy efficient, easy to operate, and on budget. Versatility was essential throughout each of the venues."

The live entertainment venue had to accommodate small local and large national acts. The bowling area needed the ability to easily switch between environments for party and corporate team building events, birthday parties and fund raising promotions. To accomplish this the system had to include additional audio, video and lighting ports and programming to provide the required flexibility. DFX used digital audio and video processors, VersaLamp high-efficiency, color-changing LED lighting fixtures and Crestron automation systems. All of these systems work seamlessly together from programmable touch panels to achieve the goal.

"The concert/function room was already planned in the construction. Being an old radio man [disk jockey and announcer], the idea of a room that could serve as a concert venue appealed to me," Breen replied. "Typically, we feature local and national bands and singers on an average two nights a week, for example, Friday and Saturday. These are usually sold out with ticket sales averaging 800 to 1,000 a night," he added.

Kingston also features a large restaurant with a 300-seat capacity, which can easily be reconfigured to accommodate up to 400 when necessary. "Having flexibility with space within the various amenities is a key factor for our business," says Breen. "It enables us to tailor our space and services to meet the needs of any given corporate group or party."

And unlike the Milford facility, Kingston features 16 lanes equipped with string machines from US Bowling Corp. Presently Milford has 20 lanes with traditional AMF 82-90 free-fall pinspotters. "Since we have

no leagues whatsoever, string machines from US Bowling are the best option for us. They are energy efficient and virtually maintenance free, and we don't need a full-time mechanic to service them. On occasion, we may get a die-hard traditional bowler complain that this is not real bowling, but for the most part, that type of customer does not visit our centers. Our customer base is driven by the market segment that's looking for a fun night out, with bowling, good food, time in the arcade, laser tag or billiards, dinner in our restaurants, and/or a few drinks in our sports bars," added Breen.

David Frewing, president of US Bowling Corp., had this to say about David Breen and his partner, Jim Smith, "These are two people who are focused and who have developed a business model that's right for the recreation/entertainment market and for their management style. Their choice of string machines from US Bowling is a perfect fit for their customer base. There's a misconception about string machines that the pins do not fly or score like pins set by a traditional free-fall pinsetter. That's why, at US Bowling, we do not hide the pins or the strings behind a shield when they are being magically raised or lowered to the pindeck. Everything is in the open which dramatically adds to the recreational bowler's entertainment value. And, the pins are USBC approved pins that have simply had strings added. Combined with our flat gutters, kickbacks and pindecks that meet all USBC specifications, the pins will fly and will react almost the same as free-standing pins. The difference is negligible. This is a rapidly growing trend and 80% of our quotations for bowling center packages today include string machines."



David Frewing, president of US Bowling Corp.

Always on the lookout for something different, David Breen plans to install US Bowling Corp.'s MML-3000 Black Lanes at his next project in Hadley which will open before the end of 2017.

The Hadley center will include 8 lanes with string machines and Pulse Scoring from US Bowling, along with a 200-plus seat restaurant, an arcade, sports bar and other amenities similar to his centers in Milford and Kingston. Like Kingston, the Hadley center will be located in a shopping mall with access from the parking lot and inside the mall.

All three Pinz locations feature a large arcade with the emphasis on redemption machines. "Redemption machines are very popular, as players like the challenge of earning points and redeeming them for prizes, usually a prize they set as a goal for themselves in terms of earning points. 80% of our arcade games are redemption machines, with the remaining 20% being crane and video games," said Breen.

Pinz specializes in team building, corporate meetings, fundraisers and special occasions like graduations, rehearsal dinners and holiday and birthday parties. Catering options are available for all meetings and events, whether it's fine dining in a full-service restaurant, or buffet-style catering anywhere within the facility's various amenities. Depending on the location, Pinz can accommodate groups from 10 to 1,500. And, large groups can arrange for a facility buyout where Pinz becomes their own private playground.

The demographics of the three centers are similar in terms of median household income. "Of the three, Hadley has the smallest population, but it enjoys a thriving tourist industry which is a good fit for our business model," said Breen. "With its bowling, restaurant, sports bar, arcade and other entertainment and recreation amenities, the Hadley facility will be a venue that will attract both locals and tourists."

Each Pinz venue has a general manager and departmental managers or supervisors. With a third venue on the horizon, plus two more in 2018, Pinz has added a regional general manager who interacts with CFO Jim Smith and the general managers. Between them, they share and review P & L reports which enables the department



The rock band Fuel's sold out concert at Pinz's Kingston location.

managers to monitor performance. The goal is for every department to be independently profitable without one department subsidizing another.

The ownership team at Pinz is David and Susan Breen and business partner Jim Smith. David is the CEO and describes himself as the crazy extrovert, the ideas man who creates innovative marketing programs and is hands-on in all aspects of developing the physical properties. Susan Breen manages human resources and sales, including managing the team in the sales offices. Partner Jim Smith is the CFO who works quietly behind the scenes serving as the catalyst in the overall business. "Having a team with contrasting personalities and skills is what it takes in this business, and Susan and my partner Jim Smith are invaluable to our success," says Breen.

The goal for Pinz is to have five centers operating by the end of 2018 or early 2019. All five centers will fall within a 100-mile radius of their head office in Milford, thereby making the cluster manageable from a control and administration standpoint.

The message below the Pinz corporate logo reads *Eat ■ Drink ■ Bowl ■ Play*. "That's pretty much what we are all about, along with dynamite service," added Breen. However, they are a lot more than that, and David and Susan Breen and Jim Smith will continue to introduce innovative ideas into their business. They clearly understand the importance of being versatile and flexible and anticipating the ever-changing wants and needs of today's and tomorrow's entertainment-seeking customers. ❖

PINZ BOWL AND THEIR INDUSTRY PARTNERS

- Bowling equipment from US Bowling Corporation
- Lighting and audio-visual by DFX Sound Vision
- Swipe card system by Intercard
- Top five redemption games
 1. Ticket Time RFID
 2. Wizard of Oz
 3. Big One Crane Extreme
 4. Bar-Ber-Cut
 5. Jurassic Park
- BPAA Member

Note: They own their arcade game machines.



Paul Lane is former Director of Marketing and Marketing Services for AMF Bowling, Inc. He has been the director of 18 AMF World Cups, an officer in national and international trade associations, and a pro bowler during a career that spans more than 60 countries and 50 years.