

INTERNATIONAL

# BOWLING INDUSTRY

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## THE WILD GAME ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE

COME FOR THE FOOD,  
STAY FOR THE FUN



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Eight full-scale lanes with QubicaAMF's TMS String Machines.

# The Wild Game

## ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE



**The Wild Game**  
ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE

**COME FOR THE FOOD, STAY FOR THE FUN**

## ■ By Paul Lane

**N**estled comfortably in the Bergen Park area of Evergreen, CO, you'll find The Wild Game, a fine dining and entertainment center which, indigenous by design, is a perfect fit for a community named for evergreen trees near the original town site. Evergreen sits at an elevation of 7,200 feet in the Rocky Mountains, 15 miles west of Denver.

While The Wild Game features many amenities found in today's modern FEC's, the resemblance ends there. The architecture is unique in almost every aspect, being somewhat rustic and more akin to a hunting lodge than the cookie-cutter, modern design concepts found in so many of the FECs developed in recent years. You'll even find a large preserved black bear and buffalo, plus, bull elk and moose heads mounted on the walls.

The site of The Wild Game was formerly the home of a seven screen AMC movie theater.

Evergreen property developer, Dave Wilson, president of Wild Game Entertainment (LLC), had a vision of the business model that would be a good fit for the local market. It became even clearer after he toured the country looking for ideas by visiting numerous established entertainment and recreation facilities that included bowling. He knew he wanted something different, something special, and something that fit the demographic profile of the local community.

Working closely on the three-year long project with Dave Wilson was his partner, Evergreen native, Sean Lynch. As General Contractor, Sean Lynch managed all aspects of the construction, from concept to completion.

According to a 2010 census, the median age and income for a household in Evergreen skews higher than nearby Denver at 48-years old and a family income of \$88,589.

"Evergreen's older and more affluent society are typically more discriminating in their choice of dining and entertainment options and more demanding in terms of their expectations with regards to quality and service," said Wilson.

He added, "One of our goals was to improve a community asset; providing a fun place where people can enjoy quality food, recreation and entertainment at its highest level."

The 25,000-square-foot Wild Game facility features the Rendezvous Tap and Kitchen that can accommodate up to 150 guests within an upscale, yet casual, atmosphere. The restaurant offers Angus burgers, steaks, pasta, fish, sandwiches and salads complimented by a wide selection of cocktails and beers. Adjacent to the restaurant is the bar area for up to another 80 people, and an intimate wine tasting room which is perfect for small parties of up to 16 people.

"First and foremost, we push the concept of quality food," says Wilson. "Then we promote the recreation and entertainment elements. Hence the theme of our business: 'Come for the Food, Stay for the Fun'".

Wilson said, "We believe that if the food service is below average the fun aspect may not be enough to convince a customer to return. Whereas, if the quality of the food and service is above average, the



The owner, Dave Wilson, and business partner, Sean Lynch.



## COVER STORY

customer will likely return multiple times and not necessarily just for the fun.”

The fun features include the Clubhouse, an action-packed sports and entertainment hall featuring large format HD TVs and 12-foot projection screens where one can catch games and special events. Also The Wild Game regularly provides live entertainment, featuring name bands and entertainers that perform on the stage area of the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse also includes the regions first and only full-scale indoor bocce ball court, plus multiple ping-pong tables, darts, billiards, shuffle boards, foosball and an outdoor patio featuring horseshoes. It also has its own bar area providing food and beverage service to patrons while they enjoy the various recreation and entertainment activities.

Next is the Game Zone: a site offering a state-of-the-art video and redemption arcade featuring the most exciting and popular skill games in the industry. Players can accumulate points on a specially designed custom magnetic game card that can be used to redeem a variety of fun and unique prizes.



The Clubhouse, an action-packed sports and entertainment hall.

Eight full-scale lanes of bowling lanes equipped with QubicaAMF's newest automatic scoring and TMS String Machines complete with four lane mask video projection screens round out the choices.

Neil Pennington, director of product management and performance equipment for QubicaAMF, said: “Since the business model that Dave Wilson was implementing was focused on pure entertainment, the TMS String Machine was the right option for The Wild Game. Dave visited the QubicaAMF office



Rendezvous Tap and Kitchen upscale restaurant.

in Richmond, VA where we have a showroom with both the TMS String Machine and our Xli Edge Pinspotter side by side. Dave was able to bowl on both machines and concluded that, for the type of customers his business would be targeting, string pinspotters would be just fine.”

Given the somewhat unique design concept of The Wild Game, the venue called for equally unique lighting architecture, not just for the bowling but for the entire facility. Mike Bovino, president of New Jersey based DFX Sound Vision said, “The Wild Game is a unique venue with its rustic feel and western theme. The goal of our design team was to continue the overall look and feel of this environment while bringing in the most updated and creative lighting and audio systems. Lighting highlighted the architectural elements in the building by using energy efficient LED and creative placement within the space. The entire system, audio, video and lighting are automated for ease and multiple users maintaining a consistent feel throughout the day to day uses.”

The Wild Game offers a VIP room, accommodating up to 150 people when set up theater style; and is an ideal location for more formal meetings. The VIP Room can be reconfigured with dining tables, ideal for receptions, banquets and more informal gatherings, it is flexible and is easily divided into smaller rooms for smaller groups.

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## COVER STORY

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Being located just 25-minutes from downtown Denver and the vast Denver Tech Center corporate business area, The Wild Game and its VIP room offers a unique place where corporations can conduct meetings and team-building events. The Wild Game has proven to be a popular venue for corporate businesses, finding it beneficial to have their employees participate in bowling and other recreational activities, in a relaxing fun-filled environment away from the daily stress of the city and corporate office.

Dave Wilson shared that, in order of priority, his target customers are: families, adults and groups. Contrary to the emphasis on food and fun, and the fact that they have string machines, The Wild Game does have a league program, targeted to couples and families and are designed to be more of a social and recreational activity than the traditional sport of bowling. The Wild Game also participates in the Kid's Bowl Free program and last summer around 1,100 kids were signed on for the program by their parents.. "With just eight lanes we really packed them in," said Wilson. "Some days we had as many as eight on a lane, which was quite something to see. While the bowling was free, we did charge \$3.00 for shoe rental. More important, we saw a significant residual benefit of added food and beverage sales, including from parents who accompanied their kids, many of whom also purchased family passes."

Birthday parties are virtually an everyday occurrence. "It's always somebody's birthday", said Wilson, "and youngsters and adults alike have so much fun as guests at their friend's party that they want to come back when it's their birthday too."

The marketing effort at The Wild Game is aggressive and far reaching with focused efforts through local schools, the



Sheba: one of the venue's many wall-mounted animals.

Evergreen Chambers of Commerce (where Dave Wilson currently serves as a member of the board), and participation in local community events. Social media plays its part in their promotional activities too and is supported by advertising in local periodicals and newspapers. As you approach the Evergreen exit off Interstate I-70 in both directions, you'll see billboard advertising including the message: "Come for the

Game Zone: state-of-the-art video and redemption arcade.





Intimate 16-person wine room.

### Food, Stay for the Fun.”

California based Trifecta Management Group (TMG), with their vast experience and expertise in providing extensive innovative and comprehensive management services to the restaurant and retail entertainment business, have been retained to manage all aspects of The Wild Game. Dave Wilson selects the general manager and sales manager, but all the employees are on the payroll of TMG. In short, Wild Game has no employees working for them directly.

This is a concept that works well for Dave Wilson and the Wild Game Development Group, leaving Dave and Sean Lynch free to focus on their many and varied other interests. For example, Wilson currently operates a number of real estate investment LLC's. Over the past decade Wilson has developed a number of entities where he is responsible for acquisition, partnering, financing, leasing, maintenance,

## THE WILD GAME AND THEIR INDUSTRY PARTNERS

- ▶ Bowling Equipment by QubicaAMF
- ▶ Lighting by DFX
- ▶ Swipe Card System by Embed
- ▶ Top 5 Redemption Games
  1. Big Bass Wheel by Bay Tek Games
  2. Spongebob Pineapple by Bandai Namco
  3. Fishbowl Frenzy by Team Play
  4. Quick Drop by Bay Tek Games
  5. Dragons Claw by Benchmark Games
- ▶ Management Group: Trifecta
- ▶ BPAA Smart Buy Member

repair, tax, accounting and reporting for each of these multiple entities.

So, what's next for Wilson and Wild Game Development? Well, the next has already happened. In late February they opened a second flagship Wild Game facility in Longmont, CO, situated in the more affluent northern side of the Longmont-Boulder-Diagonal which again makes the upscale Wild Game concept a perfect fit for the local demographic.

The Wild Game Longmont is virtually a carbon copy of their Evergreen venue. It is housed in a redeveloped property, this time a former 25,000-square-foot Office Depot outlet. In addition to all that the Evergreen venue offers, there is an exclusive private event banquet and meeting space that can accommodate up to 500 guests.

For sure, Dave Wilson and the team at The Wild Game have developed a winning formula based on exceptional food, excellent service and exceptional fun. Like Wilson says, "We want our customers to walk in the door and say 'Wow'. More importantly, after visiting The Wild Game, we want our customers to walk OUT the door and say 'WOW!'"

If you should happen to be in the area, "Come [in] for the Food, and Stay for the Fun." You won't regret it — The Wild Game is an exceptional experience. ♦



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.