

# Life in the Fast Lanes

A keen eye on customer service and catering to a modern audience make Laurel Lanes more than just your average bowling center.

**Laurel Lanes Bowling Center was built in 1958.** Bruce Abate bought the center in 1989 and brought in Keith Johnson as a partner in 1997. “I got interested in the bowling business and bought this in 1989 and soon after realized I didn’t know how to run the bowling business as well as I did in retail,” Abate says. “So, early on I started looking for someone who was sharp, trustworthy and top-notch in every way and I found Keith and it’s been a tremendous business relationship and personal friendship for the last 20 some years.”

Johnson has had a long relationship with the bowling industry. “I started in the business when I was 16 years old, cleaning in bowling centers after school and worked my way up with a chain of bowling centers.”

“I have no doubt that he is capable of running a large corporation because of what I’ve experienced with him over the last couple of decades,” says Abate. “Without him, this place could not have gotten where it is today.”

For the past 20 years, the two co-owners have focused on maintaining strict standards of excellence and keeping the bowling center ahead of the times.

“Hands-on ownership means a higher standard of service. With the large chains, in any chain business, it’s not the owners who are operating the business every day. ...at the end of the day, when it’s your own business, you see and react to things in a different way,” says Johnson.

Laurel Lanes’ recent renovation and addition of a luxury suite provides guests the option of booking private parties with a multitude of entertainment options. “The idea behind this was a way to provide something that nobody else in the area has, which could take more upscale corporate and private parties to an even higher level,” Johnson explains.

The area is a completely private venue with six private cherry [wood] lanes, two plush lounge seating areas, its own dining area, its own gaming center, which includes a billiards table, foosball table, putting green and Playstation 4 area, as well as several



other games to entertain guests.

“It also has its own DJ booth, projection screens, large televisions throughout the whole room and personal music and AV capabilities,” says marketing director Brandi Cuffari. “It’s the ideal venue for a corporate event, group parties, fundraisers, team builds and celebrations.”

Every luxury suite package is customized for each individual event and includes a private server to attend to guests’ needs throughout the party. Indeed, Splitz Luxury Suite has already booked a wedding for early next year, in addition to numerous corporate events and milestone birthday parties.

“It caters to both children and adults,” Cuffari says. “However, not everyone who attends an event in the luxury suite has to bowl, we’ve provided several different amenities and areas to entertain guests.”

The improvements at Laurel Lanes don’t stop there, though.

“We’re really focusing on updating, keeping on-trend and modern throughout the whole center,” Cuffari explains. “We’ve implemented a new American grill menu, that’s not your typical bowling center fare, and have expanded our kitchen. We’re continuing to update what was formerly Brew-

sters Pub and has been rebranded as Splitz Bar & Grill. To sustain relevancy in the entertainment center industry, you must consistently make improvements, renovations and upgrades.”

There is also a new, state-of-the-art, fully integrated scoring system in place. And, Johnson adds, “We’re starting construction on an outside deck for our Splitz Bar & Grill that will seat between 60 and 75 people.” This will include outdoor heating elements as well as a fireplace.

There really is something here for everyone. And, that’s just what Abate envisioned years ago. “Something that appealed to me initially with this business is that it’s a cross-generational sport. It’s not inconceivable to see a grandchild and grandparent on the same lane bowling,” he says. With all of these advancements, it’s easy to see why Laurel Lanes is an entertainment destination for all ages. ■

## Laurel Lanes Splitz Bar and Grille

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