



The central hallway of **The Firkin and Kegler FEC** curves past a restaurant, mini bowling, golf simulator and the gameroom before spilling into the main attraction.

# Un-Firkin-Believable!

## Firkin and Kegler FEC Blends Bowling, Games and Nightlife for New Spectacle of Fun

**E**ven for Orlando citizens, surrounded by spectacular displays of leisure options, The Firkin and Kegler Family Entertainment Center feels unrivaled. The welcoming receptionist has tips and suggestions ready, but nothing can quite prepare first-time visitors except for a full-on plunge into the attractions and options that increase the deeper one goes.

"It's a collage of entertainment and

bowling to create a center of high-end caliber," summarizes Kainer, who operates the game equipment and gave *RePlay* a personal tour earlier this summer. "You're inundated like in a casino."

Combine the associations with a firkin (an Old World unit of volume for beer and ale) and a kegler (a German term for bowler), and the result is one of Florida's hottest spots for location-based entertainment.

By mixing up traditions from both the bowling and FEC industries, Firkin and Kegler — one of the latest franchises from the Firkin Group of Pubs — has become an exemplar on the frontier of location-based entertainment, marrying an all-American pastime to amusement, dining and nightlife in bold new ways.

The sprawling facility — comprising 48,000 sq. ft. downstairs, 6,000 sq. ft. up-

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Thirty-two lanes of **bowling** glow from neon lighting and the large TV screens at the Firkin and Kegler FEC.



Stylish **red-velvet seating** trumped the idea of traditional booth designs for bowlers waiting their turn.



**Lanes of Their Own:** curtains may be drawn to give more privacy to special groups who want to better enjoy one another's company.



*Fast and Furious Drifts* and *Haunted Adventures* glow temptingly in the **gameroom's** ambient lighting.



**Deal or No Deal** was expected to be so popular at Firkin and Kegler that Hot Shot Amusement installed two.



Hot Shot Amusement's **Darrel Kainer** shows off the branded kiosk for Embed's debit card system that runs the facility's games. It can't be missed beside the gameroom entrance.

shops — dominates the surrounding area on its five acres overlooking State Road 408. With over 2 million people in the greater Orlando area, many of whom occupy the surrounding towns thanks to the University of Central Florida only four miles away, Firkin and Kegler is a convenient beacon, fulfilling the locals' desire for leisure activity and more. "We built this right in their backyard," Darrel says.

An upscale British pub atmosphere pervades Firkin and Kegler with dark wood, etched frosted glass dividers and wrought-iron filigree. Omnipresent red velvet upholstery, ornate carpeting and more detailing help contribute to the theme with a modern, funky style. Neon lighting bathes the 32 lanes of bowling situated beneath 22' TV screens. Towering, stage-like curtains may be pulled out to

cord off select lanes for private parties.

The 1,400-sq.-ft. enclosed gameroom sits off the main hall, boasting several *Deal or No Deals*, *Haunted Adventures* and *Fast and Furious Drifts*, as well as basketball, air hockey and redemption pieces. When counting the games positioned along the hallway, about 1,600-sq.-ft. total is dedicated to arcade equipment plus a golf simulator and mini bowling in



**Darrel Kainer** strikes a pose in the luxurious billiards room, an upstairs retreat from bowling and other activities.



For those who can't wait to strike on the big lanes, there's **mini bowling** conveniently offered right by the front entrance.



Shell **dart boards** await smart wrist action from guests getting competitive. The boards are located off the billiards room upstairs.

windowed rooms designed just for them.

Attractions are run through Embed's *Color-Glo* system whose kiosks are branded with Hot Shot Amusement identification. A handsome, all-hardwood redemption center, whose cases are outfitted with strobing LEDs tying in with the light-up card readers, turns points into prizes. "It's

very futuristic," Darrel describes. "There are no tokens, and it's all ticketless. The future has landed, and it's beautiful." Games extend upstairs with an extensive billiards room and dart area, along with the occasional *Golden Tee* and other scattered coin-op pieces. The second story is a comfortable retreat for those 21 and over after enjoying the full restaurant and bar, which it overlooks on one side and the bowling setup on the other.

On Friday and Saturday nights, a dance floor known as The Loft kicks into high

gear for clubgoers. Situated off of The Loft is an intimate party room underwritten by Van Gogh Vodka — one of several sponsors including Budweiser who contributed, naturally, to the downstairs Budweiser Room, a rentable bar beside the bowling action.

This concept formula — the cheeky name, the *Cheers* theme song brought vibrantly to life — came not from England but rather Canada, where it's been flourishing as an eatery since the late 1980s. There are over 30 locations open in Canada and 17 in the U.S. with well over 100 more in development. Over the next few years, the Firkin Group anticipates having over 1,000 pubs in planning stages.

The Firkin and Kegler, however, significantly raised the bar on the franchise's potential — well, five bars to be exact. Managed by a group of principal partners and board members, the location reportedly cost \$16.5 million. The amusement equipment investment ran upwards of several hundred thousand, and Hot Shot Amusement has a 50/50 split with Firkin and Kegler, according to Darrel.

Hot Shot Amusement was selected in what Darrel described as a visionary competitive bid. "Other vendors were considered, but they couldn't see the potential," Darrel explains. "It was just a shell of empty plans, and you had to be able to envision it. Your intelligence level in construction is essential now in being an operator."

Even as a fully realized bowling entertainment facility, you still have to see it to believe it.

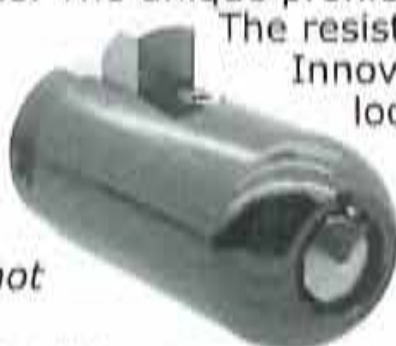
For more details, see [www.firkinkeglercenter.com](http://www.firkinkeglercenter.com), as well as [www.firkinpubs.com](http://www.firkinpubs.com) for corporate and franchise information. Also check out *RePlay's* September 2007 issue for our Operator Profile of Hot Shot Amusement. ♦

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