

OUT & ABOUT >

Posted May 19, 2019 | Updated May 30, 2019

INCREASE FONT SIZE

Rainy Day: Candlepin reigns in Maine

When it rains in Maine, that doesn't mean the fun stops. Try one of many local bowling alleys for hours of friendly (or fierce) competition.

BY ALEXANDRA HALL

When you live in New England and you hear the word "bowling," there's usually no debate about what that means. Around here, bowling is traditionally assumed to mean candlepin, whereas elsewhere the default is ten-pin. (We generally specify ten-pin as "big ball bowling.") And there are historic reasons for that bias; candlepin began in this region in 1880, when Justin "Pop" White invented it in Worcester, Massachusetts, and it became the de facto local way to play the sport thereafter.

All that said, the retro-cool appeal of big ball bowling has fueled a resurgence in its popularity in recent years, and you'll now find a smattering of hip and often design-conscious alleys that combine ten-pin with a smorgasbord of other entertainment (sometimes including candlepin, too) often with notably trendy dining options, to boot.

So what are the main differences between candlepin bowling and ten-pin? In candlepin, each player uses three balls per frame rather than two, and the balls are much smaller (each ball weighs only as much as one candlepin) and they have no holes. The pins are also thinner and don't get cleared between balls during each player's turn. All of that makes candlepin pins harder to knock down, so most bowlers consider candlepin a lot more challenging than ten-pin, and, therefore, superior.

The truth of that is the subject of much debate and, of course, depends largely on whether you grew up in New England or not.

Stars & Strikes

Decked out just as its name would suggest — with red-striped bowling lanes and blue walls — this classic 14-lane candlepin joint has a friendly staff and a neighborhood feel. Between your turns, nosh on the kitchen's solid pub-style food and pizza, swing by the bar full of families and couples, or throw down for a round in the sizable arcade room.

Advertisement

WHAT: Stars & Strikes

WHERE: 108 Park St., South Paris

HOURS: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, noon-7 p.m.

INFO: 207-743-9863, @starsandstrikesme on Facebook

Moose Alley

The tough part about a visit to Rangeley's upscale answer to a classic ten-pin alley is deciding what to do first. Sure, there are the state-of-the-art lanes (with a system that lets players use bumpers individually), but there's also a slew of other diversions.

Advertisement

The impressive billiards lounge, for instance, sports three tournament-edition pool tables and a 16-foot shuffleboard table with an electronic scorer, dart boards, a foosball table and air hockey. The video arcade pulls in the kids while everyone else hangs at the indoor fire pit, or in Spirits Bar & Grill, where they down ice-cold gimlets, onion ring towers, and shrimp boys. Meanwhile, in the music room, you'll find live local band performances on weekends.

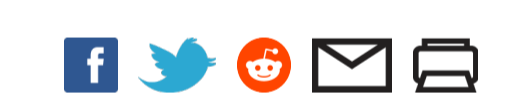
WHAT: Moose Alley

WHERE: 2809 Main St., Rangeley

HOURS: Monday-Thursday, 3 p.m.-10 p.m.; Friday 3 p.m.-midnight; Saturday, noon-1 a.m.; Sunday, noon-10 p.m.

INFO: 207-864-9955, <https://moosealley.me>, @moosealley on Facebook

Alexandra Hall is a longtime New England lifestyle writer who recently moved to Maine.



Hi, to comment on stories you must [create a commenting profile](#). This profile is in addition to your subscription and website login. Already have one? [Login](#).

[Send questions/comments to the editors.](#)

< PREVIOUS

Get Wet: Mt. Blue State Park offers family fun, or a rigorous hike. You pick

NEXT >

Local departments of recreation will keep you busy

FILED UNDER:
OUT & ABOUT WESTERN MAINE, RAINY DAY

DAILY HEADLINES

Sign up and get the top stories to begin the day delivered to your inbox at 6 a.m.

SUBMIT

RELATED STORIES

LATEST ARTICLES

- LEWISTON-AUBURN**
Street Talk: Eureka! Walmart pole mystery solved!
- ENCORE**
Maine Event Comedy presents Latasha Hughes
- ENCORE**
Gallery to hold artist reception for featured artist of the month
- ENCORE**
Black Cat Road to play concert in park
- SPORTS**
Wimbledon: Djokovic advances, but slippery footing remains an issue for many players

Sun Journal



CONTACT US

- Staff Directory
- About the Sun Journal
- Send a News Tip
- Send a Letter to the Editor
- Send a Press Release
- Send an Announcement
- Add an Event
- Ask Sun Spots
- Order Photos

SUBSCRIBERS

- Subscribe
- Subscriber Benefits
- Subscribe: Western Maine weeklies
- Manage Subscription Account
- Login to SunJournal.com
- Mobile Apps
- FAQs
- Access ePaper

ADVERTISE

- Advertise with Us
- Contact Advertising
- Submit an Obituary

NETWORK

- CentralMaine.com
- PressHerald.com
- TimesRecord.com
- Advertiser Democrat
- Bethel Citizen
- Franklin Journal
- Livermore Falls Advertiser
- Rangeley Highlander
- Rumford Falls Times

CONNECT WITH US

- Email Newsletters
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube

close x

