

Plano's New Pinstack Bowling Alley Takes a Strike at Main Event's Home Turf

Alex Bentley 2.6.15



The fight for your entertainment dollar is heating up around Dallas-Fort Worth — and, of all things, bowling is at the center of it.

Pinstack, a new concept that opened in Plano on January 30, is a bowling and entertainment complex designed to appeal to both kids and adults. If that sounds familiar, that's because the also Dallas-based Main Event Entertainment has been at the forefront of that market in recent years, with five locations in Dallas-Fort Worth and 19 around the country.

That rivalry will soon come to a head in northern Fort Worth: Both companies have announced plans to open new locations in the next year within a couple of blocks of each other, at I-35W and Heritage Trace Parkway. Veteran Main Event (it was founded in 1998) will unveil its latest prototype there.

For now, Pinstack has the buzz with its Plano location. But both companies will open branches in Fort Worth within a couple of blocks of each other.

If you're tempted to write that off as a coincidence, check out each company's verbiage regarding what it offers:

Pinstack: “A 28 lane bowling experience, ropes course suspended 20 feet above the gaming center, two-story laser tag, bumper cars, LED lit six-lane rock climbing walls, hundreds of interactive games and simulator technology. For those that come with an appetite, a full-service restaurant featuring a chef-inspired menu of modern American classics, stacked bar and craft cocktails is perfect for enjoying before or after gaming.”

Main Event: “More than 20 cutting-edge bowling lanes, multi-level laser tag, a gravity ropes course that features a swaying bridge, tightrope walking and sky treks, all suspended over the game room, and more than 125 interactive video games. Other attractions include top-notch dining with chef-inspired menus, a full bar, billiards and private rooms with Wi-Fi and A/V capabilities for birthday parties and corporate events.”

For now, Pinstack has the buzz with its new West Plano location, situated off the Dallas North Tollway between Spring Creek and Windhaven parkways. Unlike most bowling alleys, you won’t initially know you’re in for a night at the lanes, because the front is dominated by the restaurant, complete with patio and private dining areas.

Those areas are set away from the rest of the building by design, to create a buffer between the restaurant and the mayhem of the game room and bowling alley, so diners can eat their meals in relative peace. In fact, the lanes are the very last things you encounter; they’re located at the back of the complex.

As with Main Event, televisions abound throughout Pinstack, both in the restaurant and in the bowling area. Although you may experience some déjà vu when you enter the gaming area if you’ve ever been to a Main Street, the massive Pinstack claims to have a few exclusive games you won’t find anywhere else.

Of the 28 bowling lanes, eight are housed in a private room that can be reserved for parties or corporate functions. If that area is not reserved, smaller groups can bowl there for a slightly higher cost.

The restaurant aims to impress, with menu choices like macaroni and cheese pops, hummus trio, grilled salmon, barbecue prawns, Sriracha chicken pizza and a big selection of craft beers on tap. A reduced version of the menu is available for bowlers.

“We’ve designed the venue with moms and dads in mind so that when they come to Pinstack for an afternoon or evening, they will enjoy themselves just as much as their

kids, if not more,” said Mark Moore, president and CEO of Entertainment Properties Group, in a release.

For now, Pinstack and Main Event can peacefully coexist, as Main Event’s two closest locations — north of Main Street in Frisco and off Central Expressway in East Plano — are far enough away to draw their own distinct crowds.

But it will be interesting to see what happens when the respective Fort Worth locations come to fruition. Main Event plans to open its branch in late 2015, with Pinstack hot on its heels soon thereafter.

Let the games begin.