

RePlay magazine

COVERING THE ROUTE AND GAME CENTER BUSINESS
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Everything's Up to Date at Uptown Alley

Even Some of the Best FEC Food Around

Just northwest of Phoenix sits the suburban retirement community bearing the prosaic name of Surprise. And the surprise there is one of the most wholesome looking and operating FECs you'll find anywhere in the country. So, it's no surprise that they bill themselves as "Arizona's Ultimate Entertainment Venue."

This eat, drink and play facility is called Uptown Alley, and as its name implies, it's got bowling, but also around 50 coin-op games, a gorgeous bar lounge, two-level laser tag and a full menu restaurant called the Red Embers Bar & Grille (a customer draw all by itself).

The three-year-old facility was planned out and built for Steve and Linda Uphoff by the Trifecta Management Group, which also did another Uptown Alley for Uphoff Ventures a year afterward in Midlothia (Richmond), Virginia. Trifecta Management is one of those consultancies you call to say "I want you to put a family entertainment center for me in such and such a place" and they make it happen, soup to nuts, all based on



Boy meets (maybe even beats) girl on the motorcycle race while young friends cheer them on. The exterior of Uptown Alley in Surprise, Ariz., (see photo at top) is done in that gorgeous southwestern style seen so often in the Arizona-New Mexico region.

your concept.

Trifecta is a partnership comprised of three GameWorks veterans, Michael Auger, Ron Lam and Bruce Nussbaum.

Michael came to GameWorks from the Famous Restaurants chain to run GameWorks' food and beverage service. He rose to become GameWorks'



Young and old enjoy Uptown Alley's videos. The majority of this FEC's games, however, are redemption machines. All operate on Sacoa Playcards.

overall Operations VP working out of Universal City, Calif. headquarters. He and his partners formed Trifecta

in 2006 and today either manage or have a stake in 16 entertainment facilities, most of which he describes as



Finished with basic training and ready for action at Uptown's two-level laser tag arena.

FECs. Others on their "chain" include Alley E, Axis Alley, the Plank and KDB (the Columbus, Ohio place that sports around 160 coin-op games).

"Our mission for the customer who wants to get into this business is to provide all the market studies, site selection, architectural layout, construction administration... a turnkey operation, and we've been successful at it," Michael advised. "And we're already at work to put two

more Uptown Alleys on the map in Virginia, one in Virginia Beach and another in Manassas. After they're all up and running, we provide the management."

Regarding the Surprise, Ariz., place, he said the town itself has a population of 117,000, the majority of whom are retired. Patronage comes from Surprise residents, but also from the general Phoenix suburban region (you can drive from downtown Phoenix to Uptown Alley in a bit over 35-40 minutes with normal traffic).

"You see a lot of grandparents with their youngsters coming in," said Mike, "and of course we have a ton of young adults drawn here by the restaurant, the bowling, the beautiful tag operation or the amusement games. Many people from all over this part of the state know about us by now, and business has been good," he added. "By the way, it's a great place for a corporate event or a kid birthday party!"

Uptown Arcade

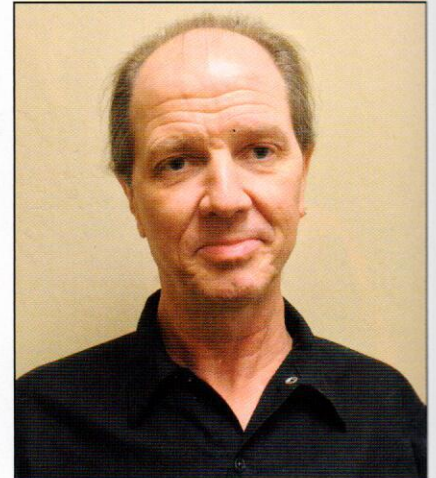
Just like the Trifecta partners, the fellow in charge of Uptown's game room, Bill Danclovic, has had his hand



Michael Auger is one of the partners of Trifecta Management Group, the consultancy that put Uptown Alley together. With two of those locations up and running, Trifecta is working on building two more and are involved in a total of 16 entertainment facilities.

in the arcade business for years, going all the way back to his position at American Laser Games, the Albuquerque maker of coin-op shoot 'em ups. Bill's been at Uptown Alley

since it opened and wears the title of Technical Manager because in addition to overseeing the game room, he's responsible for everything in the facility running smoothly, including laser



Bill Danclovic is Technical Manager and oversees game operations. The facility deals with Betson Distributing for its games.

tag and the bowling alleys.

At the time we talked, he said they had 48 machines on the floor, with redemption games accounting for 75% of them, videos around 20%, plus two cranes and a *Key Master* auto-prize unit. The videos, mostly deluxe models, include *Aliens*, *Deadstorm Pirates*, *Jurassic Park*, *Big Buck World*, *Superbikes* and *Dead Heat*.

As expected, they maintain a beautiful redemption counter. They use Sacoa Playcards both to key-up game play and to store and transfer the winning points for prizes. They also run promotions. "At Christmas, we sold \$10 value game cards for \$5, for example," Bill advised. "We can do a lot of that kind of thing with this flexible system."

The player mix is all over the demographic map. "You'll see a grandpa with his grandson, lots of moms, pops and kids, college people and the young 24-30 adults." Do you have parties? "Lots and lots of parties," Bill smiles. "Besides the kid area, we have a VIP section for corporate affairs for folks 21 and older. Uptown Alley is a great place for a party," he added. That's exactly what Mike said!



It's called Uptown Alley and here's why. Actually, the Trifecta Management Group probably offers the sport in most of the 16 facilities they run in the U.S.