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After Being Closed for a Year, Bowling Alley (Tropical Ten Pins) Reopens Monday With Major Upgrades

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Bowling action at Tropical Ten Pins. By. REEMY REEMZ Photography and Videography (screenshot from video)

Tropical Ten Pins, the long-running bowling alley located in Castle Coakley, St. Croix, like many other businesses in the leisure industry was ordered closed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic that swept the world in March 2020. Now, after being shuttered for more than a year, Tropical Ten Pins — whose customers come to play and stay for the food — is set to restart operations Monday, April 19, complete with an array of upgrades for a better experience.

Hours of Operation

- Monday- 4:00pm-11:00pm
- Tuesday- 4:00pm-11:00pm
- Wednesday- Closed
- Thursday-4:00pm-11:00pm
- Friday-4:00pm-11:00pm
- Saturday-2:00pm-11:00pm
- Sunday- Closed

The reopening of one of St. Croix's premier family-friendly businesses represents another sign of the movement towards normalcy in the territory and the U.S. mainland, sparked by continued vaccine acceptance.

The Consortium spoke with Edmund Ferrol Jr., an owner of Tropical Ten Pins, who detailed the upgrades made to the bowling machines and other changes aimed at improving user experience. "We've been closed for a year so we had a lot of time to do different things," he said.

The twelve bowling lanes were upgraded. "You're going to have a better experience on the lanes; you're not going to have too many errors," Mr. Ferrol said. The company has also hired as head mechanic a professional out of Texas with over twenty-five years of experience in the bowling industry. "It boosts business for us as far as the level of skill that he has. We've never really seen that," he said.

Other upgrades include the change of ball-return equipment, new gutters and even adding bumpers to all lanes, the latter allowing children to bowl on any lane and not just a specific set. The gutters were changed to replace the old metal material that would damage balls of professional bowlers. "We changed them out completely to an upgraded version made out of a type of plastic material" that softens impact of landing and also helps move the balls down the lane when they slide to the gutters, Mr. Ferrol stated.

Tropical Ten Pins has a full arcade area for kids complete with a variety of games — dancing, basketball, racing, among others — and even a classic Mortal Kombat game, which older millennials and younger Generation X individuals will remember. The entertainment facility also has a screen to monitor kids in the arcade while adults bowl or engage in other activity.

Speaking of other activity, Tropical Ten Pins is known for its good food, and the owners have expanded its restaurant offerings and dining areas to include three spaces, the main room that includes a lounge and a bar, a smaller, more intimate dining setup, and seating in the open area that once housed the arcade, which now facilitates not only dining activity, but front-seat view of bowling action.

Tropical Ten Pins has birthday packages for not only children but adults. Specifically, the company promotes a Saturdays-only Rave Bowling package for adult parties, which starts at 7:00 p.m. and runs through 11:00 p.m. The package includes switching from the regular fluorescent lights to club lights, projectors and other cool features that sets a party atmosphere.

For Mr. Ferrol, who is part of a well established family dynasty known for parent company Ferrol Trucking, the reopening is a chance not only to start generating income for the company and its

employees, but also to provide recreation for families on St. Croix. "Our main thing are the families. A lot of people enjoyed coming here even on a regular day, and it's a good recreation not just for one age group but for the young, old, everyone."

He added, "I feel like it's the only place on St. Croix where families come to bowl together, but also provides a place for adults on their own beat in the bar and restaurant, while the kids go to the arcade."

As with every business in the Covid era, Tropical Ten Pins has guidelines aimed at preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus. There will be two entrances both with sanitizing stations. The facility will utilize temperature checks as well, and mandatory mask-wearing at all times is required except when seated at a table for dining, and when an individual steps up on the platform to bowl. Once the bowling has taken place, persons are to place back on their masks. Mr. Ferrol said the reason for removing the mask during the actual action of bowling is because bowling is a sport that requires the player to exert physical force.

Tropical Ten Pins has long been a place of fun, but the owners have made a number of improvements not only aimed at making the bowling experience better, but the overall stay at the facility — whether it's for gaming with your kids, drinking adult beverages with friends in the bar and lounge, dining — or good ole bowling.