



Ozone's arcades feature the latest games

# More than a bowling business

**Mike Dawber** discovers how one man's vision has enhanced the lives of guests, staff and the communities through bowling FECs

**THE history of bowling in Spain is synonymous with the vision of one man, José Antonio Quereda, founder of Ozone Bowling.**

In fact, you can place the birth of bowling in Spain to June 8, 1974 – the day that Quereda was officially granted an import licence so he could acquire bowling equipment to fulfil his dream of opening the first approved bowling alley in Spain.

Tenpin bowling had been prohibited in Spain and it was only the tenacity and youthful confidence of Quereda that made him start building the centre on Avenida del Mediterráneo in Benidorm, before he had even been assured of being granted a licence.

He had come across the game while at university in Germany and decided to apply to the Spanish government for a licence to import bowling equipment. The government refused because at that time bowling was equated with gaming. He decided to take the risk and go ahead with building the centre and importing the equipment anyway, and thankfully the licence was granted when the venue was just about complete.

The Benidorm location was created as a family leisure centre orientated towards sports and healthy entertainment; values that are still as valid as ever to Ozone.

Since that day Mr Quereda has devoted all his efforts to making Ozone the authentic “home of bowling,” creating each and every one of the centres with the same values, enthusiasm and commitment as he did with that first bowling alley in Benidorm.

The vision which inspired Ozone's inception almost 50 years ago was to provide entertainment for the public, and also enhance the lives all the people within its reach, that is its employees and the community in which its venues are located. Those values are as relevant now as they were then.

It is a mission which Nicolás Quereda, CEO of Ozone Bowling, sums up as: “The leisure that everyone dreams of, created in the best possible way.”

This vision means anticipating and meeting the needs of all its stakeholders, both customers and staff.



World Football Pro, from ICE Games, has been a hit with Ozone players

This means Ozone Bowling is always striving to be aware of what the tastes in amusements are and the new trends that people are demanding. This is only possible, Quereda says, thanks to six guiding principles.

“This means, first of all, remaining faithful to our values. This in turn means we always invest in and take care of the training and wellbeing of our employees. Thirdly, it means making efforts to promote the local economy where our bowling alleys are located. This leads on to our fourth premise of always striving to put people before everything else. Additionally, we are constantly looking for new ways to innovate, and finally we look to incorporate new technology and avant-garde design in everything we do.”

The company adds that it has always remained faithful to the virtues of excellence and attention to detail over the years, and a “perfect synergy” has been created between the past and the future, in which all the traditional values that have accompanied Ozone throughout its history have been fused with innovation.

From that first centre in Benidorm, Ozone Bowling has consistently expanded over the years, so that today it has more than 20 bowling alleys with locations in almost every corner of Spain, employing more than 400 staff, with more openings on the way.

In line with company's all-embracing inclusivity mission, Quereda stresses that the company aims to please different generations.

“While bowling as a leisure activity is popular in Spain, Ozone is focused on being a leisure centre for the whole family, from the grandfather who goes with his grandson to teach him how to play, to groups of young teenagers,



Ozone locations feature up to 26 lanes of bowling

couples, classmates or work colleagues. Bowling is popular because it allows everyone to participate.”

Increasing competition for people’s leisure time, whether from traditional attractions such as go-karts or the cinema, or new activities such as VR simulation experiences and escape rooms, means that the public have a bigger choice than ever before on how and where to spend their leisure time.

For this reason, Ozone recognises the importance of staying up to date and offering a wide variety of options so as to make it the first leisure option that people turn to.

Ozone, therefore, while remaining focused on tenpin bowling does not limit itself to that activity.

“Tenpin bowling is our main axis, but all our centres have a large recreational area with sports machines, arcade games and simulation experiences,” the company said.

Attractions, many of which are sourced from ICE Games, such as the hugely popular World Football Pro, are to be found inside Ozone locations.

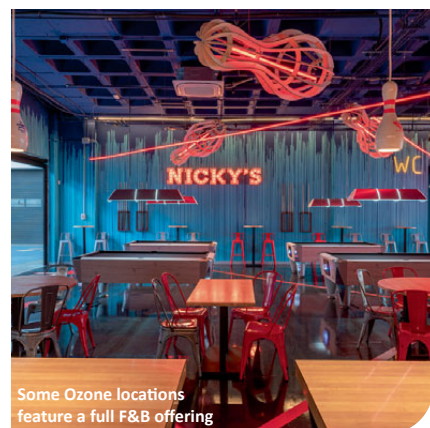
“In addition, we try to make each centre unique and contribute something different to the brand. That is why some of our centres also have ice rinks, trampoline areas, interactive targets or giant inflatables.



The company recently opened a venue in Benidorm



Inflatable basketball features strongly



Some Ozone locations feature a full F&B offering

“All our centres have a wide range of recreational machines, simulation experiences and sports games since, in addition to leisure centres, we are also a national distributor for leading manufacturers in the family leisure sector. That is why we are continuously aware of what the latest trends are in bowling and also in simulation experiences, recreational and sports game sectors.”

Quereda believes that Ozone Bowling works so well in Spain because of the country’s Mediterranean culture which emphasises sociability.

“In Spain, bowling is participated in as sport but also as leisure and fun,” he said.

“People are encouraged to go outside because of the good weather and the sociable Latino culture makes us more want to carry out group activities. This combination of good weather and desire to socialise means that we

Spanish can enjoy many more hours of free time doing activities with family, partners or friends than in colder places or places with a more individualistic culture.

“Bowling as a sport is not a mass participation activity, but more of a niche one, so although Ozone holds leagues and tournaments for professionals, the main emphasis is on the leisure aspect. We promote bowling as a style of leisure that is fun, healthy and suitable for all types of people.”

As befitting a company which is as much concerned with adding value to communities as improving the bottom line, Ozone tailors its centres to suit the demands of the communities where its locations are based.

“What an individual Ozone centre offers depends on the city in which the location is based and the desires of its community,” Quereda said.

“Opening a bowling alley in a new city is always a challenge. Although at Ozone we have the knowhow, every city is different and that’s where the challenge lies. In each city the inhabitants, culture and consumption habits and tourism level, among many other things, are different. That is why, when we take our concept to each city, we always keep in mind who lives there and what type of amusements would be most desirable for that particular location.”

Ozone Bowling centres traditionally featured bowling alleys with 16 to 26 bowling lanes, but a few years ago the company launched a bowling alley concept for urban areas called City. These City concept locations are designed for smaller venues, and have between four and 12 lanes.

“This means we have venue sizes and offerings

to suit the custom level in a particular area. “So while demand for bowling may be variable, all our centres usually have a large influx of people which is usually stable,” Quereda said.

“It can vary a bit in summer when there is an influx of people to coastal cities while our centres in provincial capitals are often at their busiest in the winter months.”

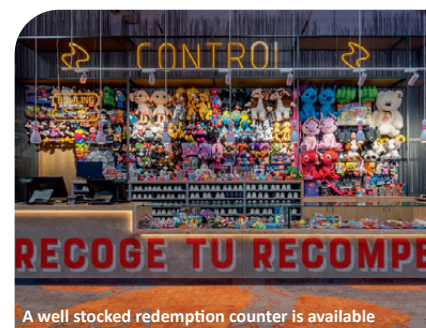
While always taking care to stay strong to its traditional values, Ozone is keenly aware of the need to attract new generations of customers

Quereda said: “It is essential to attract the new generations. This means being up to date on communication methods. This means being active in the use of social media, always being aware of the latest trends and taking note of the impact of influencers.

“But we cannot forget how important communication is on the premises itself as well as offline communication to reinforce the visibility of the centre in each of the cities. That is why we need to use offline and online communication in order to have a good positioning in the market and in the minds of consumers.”

Ozone Bowling’s commitment to fusing traditional values with new concepts is clearly working as the company is currently embarking on a programme of expansion.

“Ozone is in a great moment,” said the company. “So far this year, we have opened four new centres, one of them being the largest bowling leisure centre in Spain, located in the city of Zaragoza. But it does not end there, we plan to open three more centres before the end of the year.



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