

From bowling to food to movies, Delray complex wants to be “one-stop” nightspot

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It's a movie theater...and a bar...and a bowling alley...and a restaurant...and the latest effort to create a one-stop entertainment center in Palm Beach County.

Frank Theatres CineBowl and Grille was scheduled to open Wednesday at the new Delray Marketplace complex, at the corner of West Atlantic Avenue and Lyons Road. The 70,000 square-foot entertainment center features 12 theatres including an IMAX, a 16-lane bowling alley, a video arcade, a full-service restaurant, a bar and a private patio bar.

“Our goal is to be the one spot for all the amenities, your single source for entertainment,” said Bruce Frank, who runs the Jupiter-based Frank Family Entertainment Group, along with his sister, Debbie.

Merging reserved seating, VIP-style movie amenities and food is not new, but a bowling alley is a different touch. “We’re always thinking...How can I entertain you next?” said Bruce Frank.

The IMAX theater, the only one between West Palm and Fort Lauderdale, has an 85-foot-by-55-foot screen and seating for 300.



Gary Coronado

Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille located at 9025 W. Atlantic Blvd. at the Delray Market Place. Frank Theatres will feature a 300 seat IMAX theater, a 400 seat 80 feet wide and 50 feet tall large format screen with Dolby Atmos 10.1 sound system, a bowling alley, games, grill and bar under one roof. (Gary Coronado/The Palm Beach Post)



Gary Coronado

Raul Pantle, of Be Media, installs computer programmed lighting in the bowling alley at Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille. (Gary Coronado/The Palm Beach Post)

This is Frank Theatres' first complex in Palm Beach County, though it runs theaters in Broward and Dade counties. The company is also behind Revolutions, the bowling alley-bar-restaurant-nightspot scheduled to open at CityPlace in the spring.

The company was formed in Philadelphia in 1906 by Bruce and Debbie's grandfather, Samuel Frank, who loved the movies and even gave Los Angeles a try, serving as Al Jolson's double at Paramount studios.

"He was a vaudevillian," Debbie said.

But Samuel's dream of being in the movies was shortlived. His wife didn't like L.A. and they returned to Philadelphia, where Samuel opened his first theater, a palace that showed silent films. But as the movie business blossomed, Frank Theatres kept pace. In 1966, the company opened the first twin theater.



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"My father was practical," Bruce said. "He realized he could use the same space and staff and show twice as many movies."

Eventually they moved the company headquarters to New Jersey, and in 1986, they opened their first multiplex.

Bruce Frank, president/CEO, shows the bar area at Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille. (Gary Coronado/The Palm Beach Post)

"We're pioneers," Bruce said. "We don't have to go to a board of directors to get things done."

Debbie is the film buff of the family, visits film festivals for product and has the final say on many of the films screened at the 25-plus Frank Theatres located up and down the Eastern Seaboard. On tap: "The Gatekeepers," the Chilean film "No," and the Robert Redford film, "The Company You Keep."

The facility will employ about 150 people, the Franks said. Many of those people will staff the high-end Brunswick Vector Plus bowling area with its cherry wood lanes, intelligent lighting that makes the lanes and pins glow, and super-wide high-tech video screen that can show content on one gigantic solid screen or break it up into a nearly limitless combinations using its 32 independent sections.

The cost to bowl averages \$4.50 per game, including shoe rental, during the week. On weekends, you can rent a lane for up to six people for \$40 an hour.

The adjacent Red Brick Bar and Grille "is very cool and upscale," Bruce Frank said. "We have 16-person party booths or family tables, which come with its own flatscreen. If you have a party, we can play your personal DVD on the screen," another way to personalize the experience, he added.

The menu ("Think sports bar on steroids," Bruce said) is a blend of American favorites like burgers and pizza with steaks and fish. "We'll serve fresh-made organic food," Bruce said. His wife, Joyce, is in charge of food and beverage, and the restaurant uses Houston's as its model.

The complex is unified by the use of color: deep reds and tans and beige spread from the oversized, faux leather seating in the auditoriums to the walls of the lobby to the booths in the Red Brick Grille.

Bruce moved the headquarters of Frank Theatres south from New Jersey to Jupiter in 1996 for the weather.

The Franks signed a lease on this then-barren corner of west Delray six years ago. No one is quite sure if Bruce or his father Al discovered the spot and saw the potential. Al lived in the Polo Club, so the area was familiar to the family. Now the rest of the Marketplace is getting ready to open. The Publix is open and more clients are readying their spaces.

For this project, the challenge has been “patience,” Bruce said. Waiting for the roads to be finished has been draining. “But we were passionate about the project and believed in it from the beginning.”