

Swizzle!



A NIGHT AT ROUND1 (LEFT) AND THE BAR AT LEVEL UP ARCADE (RIGHT) Photos by Mason Falor

PINBALL WIZARDS

Lane County arcade roundup

BY SAMANTHA SOBEL

Why go to a bar and get bored on your night off, when you could go to an arcade? From nostalgic classics to new modern style games, there is something for every age. Despite arcades losing popularity from the '70s and '80s, the craze has had a resurgence (stranger things have happened), and there are plenty of hidden gems around the community for pinball wizards and arcade enthusiasts alike.

Quarter Drop Arcade

With a versatile selection of arcade games from the '80s and '90s, Quarter Drop Arcade and Pinball revives the retro ambiance associated with old school arcades. Operating since Jan. 25, Quarter Drop Arcade brought the classic neon lights and black-light, space-themed carpet to Cottage Grove. Bashi Ale, the arcade's owner, has dreamed of opening a vintage arcade his whole life. One night playing pinball in his garage, Ale realized he was finally in a good place to open his dream arcade.

Ale says, "This really is a love letter to the true, authentic, retro arcade experience, and it was a no compromise. I had an idea of what it had to be and what an arcade meant to me growing up, so it's all the little things coming together that you just don't see anymore."

Staying true to the roots of a classic arcade, every machine takes quarters rather than the card system that's recently grown in popularity. All of the machines are classics with original hardware, boards, joysticks and CRT monitors — cathode ray tube monitors are a type of display device that creates images on a phosphor-coated screen by firing electron beams from an electron gun that were used in arcade games.

Quarter Drop Arcade is open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 9 pm. It is located at 527 East Main Street, Cottage Grove. QuarterDropArcade.com.

Level Up Arcade

In April, Level Up Arcade celebrates its 13th anniversary. Joshua Docherty, Level Up Arcade owner, was a computer technician at the University of Oregon before he started fixing games.

Open seven days a week, Level Up Arcade is the hot spot for pinball enthusiasts and pool players looking to get their game on. From new to classic arcade games, air hockey, two pool tables and tabletop chess, there are a multitude of fun activities to help you lose track of time.

"When I decided to create Level Up in April 2012, we wanted to create a place that would just be what I remember about Eugene from growing up here," Docherty says, "which was, a community-oriented place that would be welcoming to everyone, in a safe, happy place for everyone, without kind of the nonsense that you get in a lot of bars."

In January, Level Up hosted the Oregon State Pinball Championship where people came from all over Oregon to compete. Level Up also hosts the Eugene Foosball Club and Emerald Valley Pinball League. There is a DJ on Fridays and Saturdays, and on Tuesdays at 9 pm there is karaoke.

Level Up is open from 2 pm to 2 am every weekday and noon to 2 am on weekends. After 9 pm the arcade becomes 21-plus. It is located at 1290 Oak Street. LevelUpArcade.com.

Blairally Vintage Arcade

Blairally Vintage Arcade, the night club, music hall, bar and arcade is located in Eugene's Whiteaker District and has new events every week featuring local musicians and comedians. Boasting over 30 pinball machines and vintage arcade games, Blairally attracts pinball wizards from far and wide.

Cassie Carter, a Blairally bartender, says, "It's just a really good neighborhood bar. I've worked here for 12

years, and most of the bar staff has been here just about as long, and it's a place where all of us like to spend time even when we're not working."

With a good mix of vintage arcade games, classic pinball and some newer pinball games, the bar-arcade (the bar features local microbrews) has something for every arcade enthusiast.

Carter says, "We are really lucky to be located in the Whiteaker neighborhood. I think that it's a place that often gets missed by people. I've met quite a few people who didn't know we existed. So in a way that's pretty cool, but we would rather for people to know about us. It's better to not really keep us a secret."

Blairally hosts karaoke on Wednesdays, '80s nights on Fridays and Trivia Sundays as well as pinball tournaments every Wednesday and Sunday evening. There is also plenty of space for kids to run about and a handful of games are free on Fridays. Pinball is half off on Wednesdays and there are new events every week.

Blair Alley is open from 4 pm to 2 am on Mondays and Tuesdays and 2 pm to 2 am Wednesday through Sunday, and after 9 pm the arcade becomes 21-plus. It is located at 245 Blair Boulevard. Blairally.com.

Round1 Bowling and Arcade at the Valley River Center

Between bowling, the sprawling arcade and karaoke rooms, it's easy to lose track of time in Round1, which is the only chain in this roundup. With a litany of claw machines to choose from, it feels like another plushy is just around the corner. Round1 has pool tables, darts and Ping-Pong. Open every day, 365 days a year, Round1 keeps the heart of the Valley River Center beating year round — as well as the '80s alive

Round1 is open from 10 am to 2 am daily. It's located at 600 Valley River Center #101. Round1usa.com.