

BUMPER CARS VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Bumper Cars: Perfect for Fun both Here and Abroad

Throughout the history of bumper cars, the fun factor has never waned - although design and mechanics have considerably improved since early renditions. For this article, locations that installed Ride Development Company (RDC) bumper cars described their experiences with the attraction.

In South Africa, they still refer to bumper cars as dodgems. The Fun Company has 13 family entertainment centers in five different provinces of South Africa and every one of them features bumper cars. Located in prominent cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban, "We pretty much cover half our country," said Chief Executive Officer **Guy Caminsky**. The Fun Company has been in business since 1978 and its first three stores featured battery-operated bumper cars. As much as patrons loved the attraction, there was a hitch. "Battery-operated cars that began running at 9 in the morning couldn't hold the charge to last a

15-hour day. We needed the electric floor model so we could run the bumper cars non-stop," Caminsky explained. The Fun Company turned to RDC bumper cars to supply bumper cars featuring RDC's patented electric floor platform for their next 10 stores. They haven't looked back.

As essential as an electric floor is to The Fun Company, there are plenty of other features that sold them on RDC bumper cars. "We like the inflated tubes that surround them (Neoprene covered bumpers) as opposed to the hard fiberglass shells of traditional bumper cars which we felt could lead to more injuries," Caminsky said. The cars' expansive range of motion plus the colorful LED lighting featured on the top and underside of the bumpers are very appealing too. "The old dodgems really only had a forward and backward motion whereas the cylindrical tube



The Fun Company includes bumper cars with its party packages, and it is a sought after add-on.

gives you a 360-degree range of motion which is quite fun and the kids just love. And when a center's overall lighting is switched to nighttime setting, the cars' LEDs really look fantastic."

Despite bumper cars' strength as a stand-alone activity, all 13 of The Fun Company locations seek to leverage them by adding them to party packages. "We always use bumper cars as an add-on and it's probably the most sought-after add-on. You could do laser tag and mini-golf and other things, but bumper cars work as an add-on because at five minutes or so, they're relatively short and they won't cause a party themed around another activity to drag on too long," said Caminsky. He also advised placing bumper cars at the front of a facility because the rate of discovery is exponentially higher. "You can look over them and still see the back of the shop and when kids see them, they want to go on them. Even the adults, I see a lot of them going on the bumper cars with their kids." Finally, Caminsky is a big proponent of the electric floor model. "From an operation standpoint, the maintenance requirements are much reduced. And one of the



Riders enjoying bumper cars at a Fun Company installation in South Africa. The company appreciates the neoprene-covered bumpers on RDC cars.

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other things that makes this style attractive is that the actual tubes (Neoprene covered bumpers) are easily replaced which can make the whole car look new again.”

The Quality Inn & Conference Centre in Orillia, Ont., Canada, enjoys the benefit of being the only facility in the immediate area to feature indoor bumper cars. “I think kids enjoy them because it is something they can experience on their own – the look on their faces when they can operate such equipment by themselves shows it all. Adults enjoy them because it allows them to take a few moments and reflect on a much simpler time in their lives, their childhood,” said **Ankit Amin**, director of operations. Situated in the province of Ontario’s scenic Lake Country, the hotel installed RDC bumper cars in April 2018. They’re housed in its onsite restaurant facility known as 201 Grill & Game Bar along with other attractions such as arcade games and bowling.

“We create an environment where the atmosphere is relaxed and fun. We feature different-colored lights because most people don’t like all the spotlight on them,” explained Amin. He advised that a bumper car ride experience does not last too long. “But long enough to enjoy and make people want to do it again!” The Quality Inn & Conference Centre and by extension, its 201 Grill & Game Bar always advertises

its bumper cars as fun for everyone. “They may come across as a kids’ activity but during parties, if there are extra cars, I always encourage parents to hop on a car to fill them up. Kids love that. All in all, the bumper cars speak for themselves. They’re something no one else around us has,” he concluded.

Luv 2 Play Indoor Playground & Café in Royal Palm Beach, Fla., installed its own set of RDC bumper cars about a year ago and they have become one of the facility’s featured attractions. “Everybody loves them – young kids, parents, older siblings,” said Owner **Fran-cine Dinnall**. Their cross-generational appeal is refreshing in what is essentially a kid-centric setting and ultimately increases the center’s bottom line. The bumper cars’ 360-degree spin feature is compelling as are the LED lights along the bottom. Luv 2 Play keeps the bumper car area purposefully dim so when the cars’ LED lights come on, the whole experience is given an extra boost. “Nine times out of 10 what happens is we use them as an attraction for a birthday party or the parents will buy a ticket and when the other kids hear the screaming and fun, then we end up selling more tickets. They’ve worked out very well,” Dinnall concluded.

Minto Bowl in Prince Albert,



The Fun Company relies on the electrified floors that are part of bumper cars from RDC to run its cars nonstop.

Sask., Canada installed RDC bumper cars in 2003 when they built a new facility. Their main business may be bowling, but Minto Bowl nonetheless features a Himalaya ride, redemption games, a kids’ play area, bouncy castle and of course, its bumper car attraction. According to Manager **Mark Hlewka**, son of owner Derrik Hlewka, the bumper cars have been a fantastic addition and they are always very busy. “We have seven cars right now and we’ve even talked about expanding soon.” Situated right by the front door, patrons can’t help but notice the bumper cars when they first walk in.

Birthday packages at Minto Bowl always include a bumper car experience, made more attractive by special pricing. Mark Hlewka’s best piece of advice, however, on how to do well with bumper cars boils down to regular maintenance. “Make sure all the cars are working. There are regular things that you must keep up with them. It’s nice when all of them are going. That’s really the biggest thing. Other than that, when people come in the building, they kind of sell themselves.” 🌟



A view of a Ride Development Company (RDC) installation for The Fun Company in South Africa. All of The Fun Company’s 13 family entertainment centers have bumper cars.