

Phillip Thomas Gives Small Town Bowling Alley a Fresh New Designer Look

Stephanie Rogers, Dornob • April 20, 2020

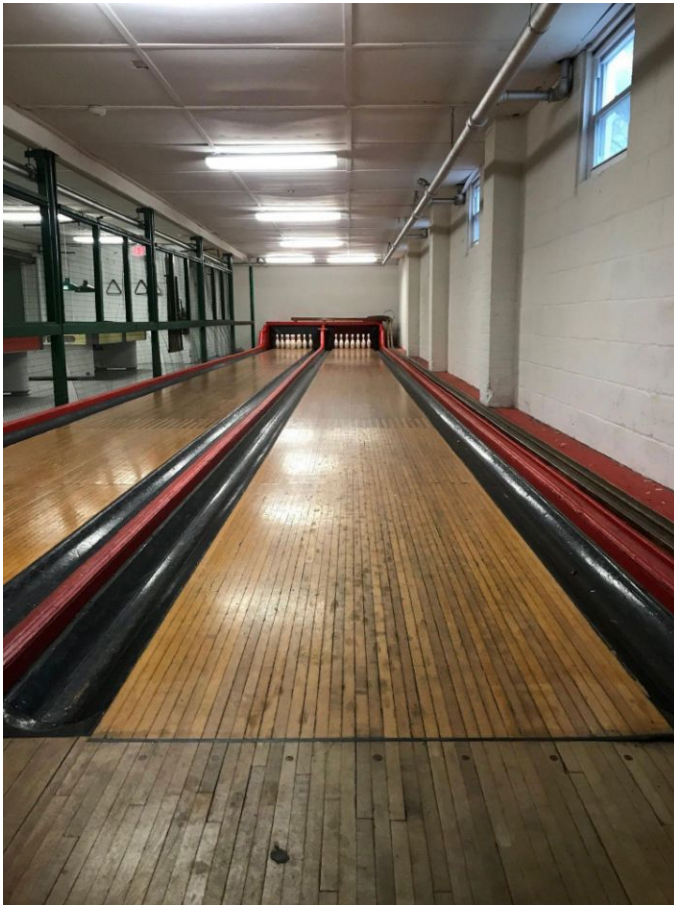
Public bowling alleys aren't exactly known for their high-end interior design. Typically running on the more utilitarian end of the design spectrum, they have their own particular sense of lowbrow charm. Most simply don't have the budgets to hire big-name designers to give them cool makeovers, and the flashiest bowling alleys are usually only found within the mansions of millionaires.



The colorful lanes of the newly renovated Bellport Bowling Alley.

But it just so happens that interior designer [Phillip Thomass](#) spent a lot of time in his small town bowling alley as a kid. The Bellport Community Center's 90-year-old facility was a refuge for him and his siblings in the 80s, chock-full of fluorescent lights and Formica counters and offering a place for the budding designer to work on art projects while his sister and brother played. Unfortunately, in the ensuing decades, the building began to deteriorate, and it was locked up and forgotten.

As luck would have it, Thomas is now on the board of the not-for-profit Bellport Village Program Fund, which helps the village execute projects that aren't in their budget each year. The committee decided to [renovate and reopen the bowling alley in 2019](#), giving Thomas the chance to revisit his childhood hangout and give it a whole new look.



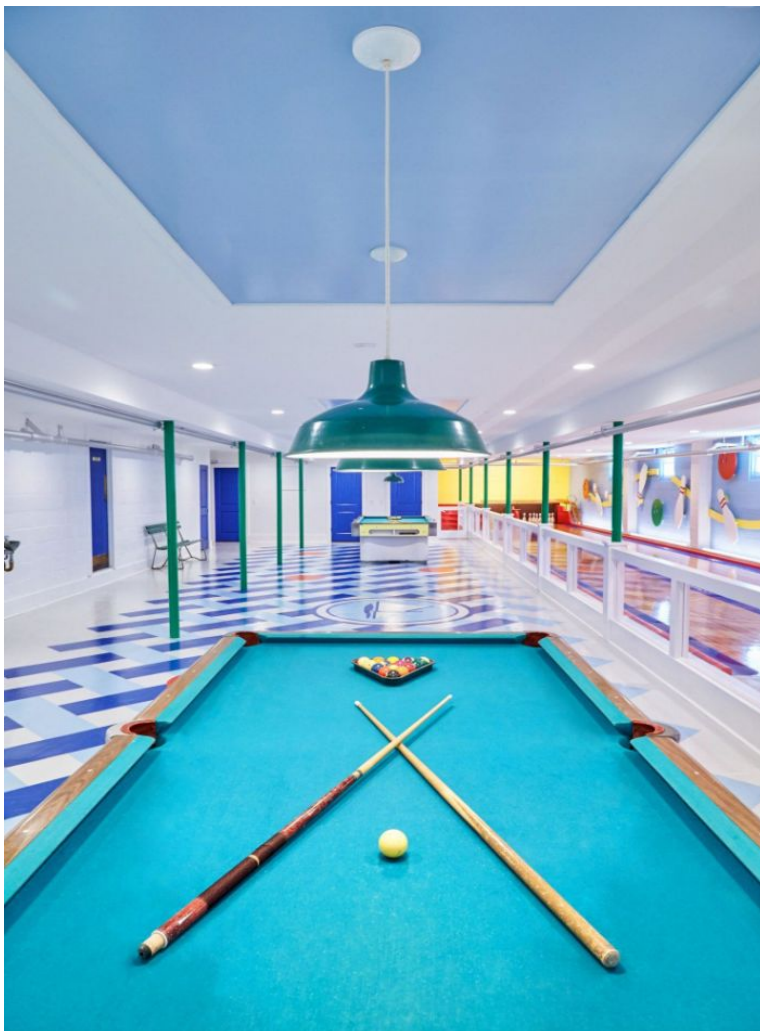
Before its renovation, the Bellport Bowling Alley was looking decidedly out-of-date.



Today, the bowling alley's lanes sparkle like they did when it first opened.

Before the renovation, the bowling alley looked just as you'd expect, with twin lanes of weathered wood surrounded by chipping paint and [cinder block walls](#). On the other side of a glass wall is a dimly lit recreation area containing pool and ping pong tables.

Thomas took inspiration from existing [yellow tiles in the bathrooms](#) to create a cheerful color palette with references to the town's setting on Long Island's Great South Bay. The light and dark blues on the new hand-painted checkered flooring represent the surf, and the red circles represent the buoys floating on the surface.



Pool and ping pong tables have also been worked into the renovated bowling alley.



Pool and ping pong tables have also been worked into the renovated bowling alley.



Colorful bowling balls and sleek wooden rails grace the lanes of the renovated Bellport Bowling Alley.



The front counter of the renovated Bellport Bowling Alley.

Thomas tapped a bowling alley restorer in Massachusetts to make the floors of the lanes sparkle again, and he added LED-backlit bowling balls and pins on the wall across from the entrance to help make a big first impression on visitors. Since everything was completed on a tight budget, he enlisted the help of highway crews and village workers to do the painting and heavy lifting.

Now there's a kitchenette for children's birthday parties, a wide open space for arts and crafts, recessed lighting, and lots of fun details, like Bellport-branded bowling balls and custom millwork on the shoe storage cabinets. The renovation was completed just before Memorial Day weekend, too, helping to draw in year-round and summertime residents. The alley is just open to village locals for now.



Designer Phillip Thomas smiles proudly inside the renovated Bellport Bowling Alley.

Thomas believes in achieving highly customized results by working closely with his clients every step of the way.

“It is extremely important to remember that, within this rarified world in which we work, we are creating homes for our clients to live in and to enjoy,” he says. “Having a warm relationship with all my clients is vital and, equally important, is to have an easy rapport with everyone who works with us from contractors, to craftspeople, to artisans. I like everyone to feel proud of the work we’ve accomplished as a team.”