

Travel

10 great places to let good times roll on skates

In an age of X-Games and elaborate theme parks, roller-skating rinks may seem somewhat antiquated. Not so. With high-tech lighting and sound systems, live DJs, theme events and vibrant new skating styles, today's rinks are not your traditional roller domes. To celebrate National Roller Skating Month, **Budd Eversman** of the Roller Skating Association International shares his list of favorite venues with **Tim Smight** for USA TODAY.

Skatetown USA
West Chester, Ohio

This facility outside Cincinnati is really two rinks in one. "Skatetown has a large hardwood rink for regular skaters and a dedicated roller-hockey rink complete with locker rooms, benches, penalty boxes and a scorekeeper's box," Eversman says. Roller-hockey enthusiasts can join leagues of varying age groups, and "open hockey" is offered every Friday night (the roller hockey version of pick-up hoops). 513-874-9855; skatetownusa.us

Interskate 91 North
Hadley, Mass.

Located on the second floor of a large shopping mall, this popular New England rink boasts an unusual skating floor. "Most roller-skating rinks are oval in shape, like a racetrack," Eversman says. "But the floor here is hourglass-shaped, so skaters make right and left turns coming around each end." 413-586-2737; interskate91.com



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By Mark Johnson, Skate Daze



By Scott Friedman, Greater Media Newspapers

United Skates of America
Tampa

This popular skating center is known as one of the top "jam skating" venues in the country. "Jam skating — today's version of roller disco — combines elements of skating, dancing and gymnastic moves set to music," Eversman says. The rink also offers workshops for elementary and middle-school students, where instructors use roller skating to illustrate math and science concepts. 813-876-5826; unitedskates.com/tampa

Sparkles
Hiram, Ga.

"Located just northwest of Atlanta, this newly remodeled skating center includes a multilevel indoor playground, a live DJ spinning tunes, a full-service café and wireless Internet throughout," Eversman says. Wednesday night skating classes include dinner, and on Friday nights, skaters can fuel up at an all-you-can-eat pizza buffet. 770-943-4446; sparklesrollerrinks.com

In Omaha: When you're all rolled out at Skate Daze, hit the arcade, ride bumper cars, try rock climbing or play laser tag.

Skate Daze
Omaha

This 45,000-square-foot skating center has something for just about everyone. "In addition to a first-class skating rink, Skate Daze has a huge arcade with a roller coaster, bumper cars, a rock-climbing wall and laser-tag arena," Eversman says. A special \$20 all-access pass includes all the pizza, hot dogs and soft drinks you can consume. The center offers an "Adult Retro Night" every Tuesday (think roller disco) and a "Wee Skate" session for preschoolers each Tuesday morning. 402-333-3555; skatedaze.com

Oaks Park Amusement Park and Skating Rink
Portland, Ore.

"Opened in 1905, this is one of the oldest continuously operating skating centers in the country," Eversman says. "The skating floor is the largest on the West Coast, and the rink boasts its own Wurlitzer pipe organ." 503-233-5777; oakspark.com

Skate Galaxy
Baton Rouge

"Skate Galaxy includes all the elements that make up an exciting modern skate center," Eversman says. "They have a first-class skating floor, a special skate-and-play area for small children, and a great laser-tag arena and rock-climbing wall." Skate Galaxy hosts a number of theme events, including weekly Retro Nights, Hip-Hop Nights and even a Christian Skate Night. 225-756-2424; skategalaxy.com

Roll Arena
Midland, Mich.

A huge skating facility with an attached full-service restaurant, Roll Arena has an unusual claim to fame: its own in-line speedskating team, the Midland Rockets. "This year, three of the team's racers qualified for the national championships," Eversman says. The arena offers open speedskating practices and tryouts on Saturday mornings from September through May. Roller hockey is also offered. 989-496-2900; rollarena.net

Skate Center of Brentwood
Brentwood, Tenn.

"Where fun meets fitness" is the motto of this skating center in the Nashville area. Fittingly, the facility offers four party rooms, along with live DJs and an elaborate lighting and sound system. "Miley Cyrus skates here, and *American Idol* sensation Kellie Pickler's music video was shot at Skate Center," Eversman says. One amenity that harried parents may appreciate: supervised child care during daytime sessions. 615-373-8611; skatecenter.com

Northridge Skateland
Northridge, Calif.

This family-owned skating center, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, has hosted more than 7 million skaters over that time. "Up to three generations of families have skated here," Eversman says, "including countless Hollywood celebrities." The 12,000-square-foot hardwood skating floor is surrounded by seven giant video screens, complemented by a state-of-the-art lighting and sound system. Several films, TV shows, commercials and videos have been shot at Skateland over the years — most recently a segment of *Jimmy Kimmel Live* and a music video by rapper Jay-Z. 818-885-7655; skateland.net

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