

# Vintage arcade opens in Ste-Anne Village

Baie-D'Urfé resident Gursagar Singh opened a vintage arcade in the heart of Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue.

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Gursagar Singh plays pinball in his recently opened arcade in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue. Photo by John Mahoney /Montreal Gazette

Gursagar Singh says growing up in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, there wasn't

always much to do for entertainment. And while he and his friends would commute downtown for fun, Singh wished there was more to do in his hometown.

That's why when Singh, a 20-year-old McGill University student, saw that a space in the heart of the community was for sale, he used his savings to open Singh's Arcade, a vintage arcade.

"We are really trying to build a community space with the arcade," said Singh, who now resides in Baie-D'Urfé. "An arcade brings people together, games and competition centers people in the moment. I'm hoping the arcade brings the town closer together and drives tourism as well."

The arcade opened Labour Day weekend, and since its opening, Singh says the arcade has seen hundreds of people.

"It's been great seeing people having a good time, Singh said. "I saw people posting their videos and photos on social media and it made me happy. I wanted to be creative and give everyone the best experience when they come. A lot of students and parents told me that this addition was much needed."

Singh says the response from nearby businesses has also been positive, with Singh's priority being not to compete with them, but to add to the area.

"They have been really supportive and I'm grateful for their guidance and advice," he said. "My business doesn't put me in direct competition with anyone, it adds to what is already here. They told me that they're excited because they feel like this arcade is going to bring a lot of traffic into the area."

Singh's Arcade is equipped with vintage machines like Street Fighter, Fast

and Furious, Fireball Fury, Terminator 2, and Pac-Man. His space also has a Step Mania dance machine, air hockey, and a basketball game.

The arcade also has a milkshake bar featuring milkshakes inspired by cereal flavours like Oreo Os, Chips Ahoy!, Fruity Pebbles, Lucky Charms and Cinnamon Toast Crunch, which his sister Jasraj Kaur, crafted the recipes for.

"I feel like I achieved my goal when I saw how much fun people were having," he said. "Some people came expecting to be there for 30 minutes but stayed for three hours. It was nice to also see people enjoying the milkshakes. I would see one person from a group of friends buy a milkshake, but after I would see the others come back and buy one for themselves as well. It was motivating and it feels like I'm on the right track."

And to make the space more creative and vibrant, Singh decided that for each month, the arcade will feature and project a different local artists' work on some of the walls of the arcade.

"It definitely gives a "wow" factor when people see the space," he said. "The goal is to support local art and to keep the space creative. We exhibit a new local artist on the walls every month, so the art changes the feeling of the whole space and there is an incentive for locals to come back every month and see how the space has changed. It really brings the whole space together."

With the arcade being a hit in its first week of opening, Singh says the goal is to keep adding to the space by tracking what games are most popular among his clients. The arcade's next addition is a photo booth.

"We are continuously investing in the space to make it better," he said. "All the games are different, and they are the first games we think of when we think of an arcade. The games are all retro, classic games, so we are trying

to create a timeless experience."

And while Singh says the arcade is welcoming people from around the island of Montreal, he says his goal of giving the west island community a fun space in town has been achieved.

"I grew up in this town and there was nothing to do. I saw there was a building for sale, and I had this idea and I wanted to be creative," Singh said. "In the west island, everyone knows each other, it's a community on its own. I was trying something that could add to the culture of the town and with the west island being such a strong community, that aspect of the business really became possible."

The arcade is located in part of the building that once housed the Rex Theatre, which closed in 2000.

*Singh's Arcade is located 83 Ste-Anne, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue.*

*Opening hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday noon-midnight, and Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday noon-10 p.m. Closed on Mondays.*

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