

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.



By Mark Johnson, Skate Daze

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



Looking for more travel ideas? Review "10 Great" lists online at 10great.usatoday.com.



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.

In Tampa: Put your kids in limbo at United Skates of America's special sessions and workshops for children.

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 Wurliitzer 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

Save up to 75% on Term Life Insurance!

Save time, too! Call Matrix Direct for a quick, accurate quote—right over the phone.

Why pay more for the quality life insurance coverage you need to help protect your family? Take advantage of big savings on quality term life insurance coverage with term choices from 10 to 30 years. Call now for your FREE, no obligation life insurance quote. Expert advice, convenient service, and affordable rates...with one easy phone call to 1-888-491-3773!

Look at how little you could pay each month.*

Coverage Amount		Guaranteed Level Premium Period	
		10 year \$250,000	10 year \$500,000
AGE 45	Male	\$ 19.47	\$ 34.56
	Female	\$ 17.50	\$ 30.63
AGE 55	Male	\$ 42.00	\$ 79.63
	Female	\$ 33.91	\$ 63.44

For more specific rates, call Matrix Direct at 1-888-491-3773.

**Call Toll-Free
1-888-491-3773
or go to MatrixDirect.com**

**MATRIX
DIRECT
INSURANCE SERVICES**

*Matrix Direct, Inc. is a subsidiary of American General Life Insurance Company (AGL) and an affiliate of The United States Life Insurance Company in the City of New York (USL), subsidiaries of American International Group, Inc. (AIG). Rates current as of 9/01/08, Preferred Plus Underwriting Class, Policy Form #07007, issued by AGL, Houston, TX. Premium charges will depend on each applicant's evidence of insurability and will increase at the end of the guaranteed term if policy is renewed. Death benefit remains level and is payable in lump sum, or installments. The insurance company may contest the policy for two years from date of policy issue for material misstatements or omissions on the application. In the event of suicide in the first two years, policy is limited to return of premium paid. The underwriting risks, financial and contractual obligations and support functions associated with products issued by AGL are its responsibility. AGL does not solicit business in the state of New York. Policies and riders not available in all states. In NY State, term life insurance is available through the United States Life Insurance Company in the City of New York, Policy Form #07007N. AIG does not underwrite any insurance policy referenced herein. Comparison based on monthly premiums for a 10 year level term policy, issued at each company's best published rates for a male, age 40, non-smoker, as of 7/29/08. Agency services provided by Ronald J. (John) Harris in IA, TN and VT; Matrix Direct Insurance Services in CA (#0857619), ME, MA, and OK; Matrix Direct Insurance Agency, Inc. in UT; and Matrix Direct, Inc. in all other states, except SD.