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**At Royal Billiard & Recreation, it's all
fun and games until ... well, forever.**

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Gametime

Decisions

by LEIGH STUART
photos by ERIC STROHM

Audra DelConte's parents opened Royal Billiard & Recreation when she was just 12 years old—the perfect time for any kid to get in on the ground floor of a business based on fun. Yet, like most kids, she was also naturally inclined to raise an eyebrow at anything Mom and Dad said was cool, including a family shop offering the greatest in gaming to folks throughout eastern Pennsylvania and beyond.

Of course, with some time and a little growing up, DelConte realized (as most grown-ups tend to do) that maybe Mom and Dad were right about one or two things after all. After pursuing a career in finance in Boston in her early 20s, DelConte moved back to this area nearly 30 years ago. She has been the next-generation owner of Royal Billiard for nearly a decade.

Today, the mom-and-pop legacy that Frank and Connie Gorup started way-back-when carries on in the spirit, style, and air of good times that still envelops all that Royal Billiard &

Recreation stands for as a business.

"We've evolved to keep up with styles and current home trends, but our product line is really largely the same because a lot of the masterpieces of a game room—shuffleboard, chess, card tables—have really been around forever," DelConte says. "We offer video arcades, Skee-Ball, retro arcades with Donkey Kong, Pac-Man, and all that, and we are very fortunate that because we are in a smaller niche industry, a lot of our products are still made here in America."

Royal Treatment

In addition to offering a robust selection of top-quality, U.S.-made products, Royal Billiard is proud of its hands-on, client-centered approach to helping folks design and create bespoke gaming experiences for both homes and commercial recreational spaces. Each setup is as unique as each client's imagination.

"We are the best for customer service," DelConte beams. "I love what we do, and so does every one of us. It's family all around. Our general manager has been with me almost 27 years. My brother-in-law has been here many, many years, all our sales staff—we love what we do."

Not only are team members genuinely enthusiastic about their work, but they are also willing to go the extra mile to help someone bring a little more joy into their life through gaming.

"We get excited when somebody walks in and wants to create a game space," she says. "We will come out to your home and measure if you want, and we can definitely help you find what fits your space best."

As a full-service gaming destination, Royal Billiard offers an array of complementary and coordinating product lines, too, so that rooms can maintain stylistic flow even with the addition of multiple, varied gaming elements.

"We specialize in whole game rooms, so we can help you bring your imagination to life and pull it all together," she says. "We can provide finish samples or offer cloth samples, for example, for you to look at in your home's lighting. We work with a lot of designers as well."

The Royal Billiard showroom itself offers the ultimate experience, of course, for those who wish to see for themselves the myriad styles and samples available.

"Our showroom is such a great place to see, feel, and play these games," she says. "We have a large display of items, representing many décor styles and finishes. We encourage our customers to try the games, sit in the bar stools, throw the darts, hit with the [pool] cues, and generally enjoy themselves when visiting us. We educate people as to what they're getting, versus someone accidentally ordering a fake pool table play surface online."

In addition, Royal Billiard prides itself on helping steward one-of-a-kind game pieces from generation to generation. Services



Owner Audra DelConte opened a dedicated pickleball pro shop within Royal Billiard & Recreation last year.

include not only resurfacing gaming tables but also moving them and restoring or revitalizing beloved heirloom pieces.

The Next Great Game

Even though Royal Billiard has reverence for beautiful gaming pieces from days gone by, the company also looks to the future with the latest and greatest in-home entertainment. DelConte always keeps an ear to the ground for new design trends and fun, new games. She cites one recent newcomer to the scene: Skeece, a tabletop game from Colorado-based inventors.

“If someone has a pool table, a shuffleboard, but wants something new to add to a room, this is a great choice,” she adds. “If someone has a room that can’t fit a full-sized shuffleboard, which can be nine to 22 feet in length, this is a moveable, not-super-heavy alternative.”

Also growing in popularity are what DelConte refers to as “gathering-height tables,” which are closer to counter height. In addition, walk-up bars are becoming ever more popular, as these don’t take up much space but can accommodate much-loved commodities such as space for a refrigerator or a wine rack.

Another favorite only poised to grow: pickleball. In fact, DelConte opened a dedicated pickleball pro shop just last year.

“It’s the best social game,” she shares. “With tennis, you have to find a court, reserve it if you’re playing inside, plus you have to have an opponent. With pickleball, you can generally just go to a public court and rotate in, even if you’re by yourself.

“It’s a really easy game that you can just kind of fit into your schedule and meet people, which is huge,” she continues. “I’m a very big tennis and pickleball player and I can say it’s an easy game for a single person to just jump in and meet people.”

No matter the game, the goal is the same: good games, good people, good times.

“We feel like the game room just truly brings family and friends together,” DelConte says. “Typically, people gather around the kitchen table. When you’re entertaining, there’s a lot to be said too about bringing family and friends around the pool table, card table, or shuffleboard table. It’s a great place to gather, and we want you to have a cozy place filled with fun and laughter.” ■



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Royal Billiard & Recreation

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