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JUST BACK: The Silver Ball Museum

The biggest challenge facing pinball wizards these days is finding a place to tilt.

The Broadway Arcade in Times Square closed a few years ago, and the boardwalks on the Jersey Shore, once a haven for bells, lights and flippers, are mostly pinball machines-free.

But players can still shoot for a high-score at the **Silver Ball Pinball Museum and Hall of Fame** in Asbury Park, NJ (the very same we mentioned in today's [end-of-summer round-up](#)), which houses 108 vintage pinball machines. \$10 admission give you an hour of free game playing. No quarters required.



More than 6000 different pinball machines were manufactured in the game's heyday of the '50s, '60s, and '70s. Museum owner Rob Ilvento, who is also the founder of Cluck-U-Chicken, says he cherrypicked the best games available and hopes to add nearly a 100 more, once he gets a bigger space. For now the museum is tucked behind a vintage clothing store in town, but he hopes to move to the boardwalk.

Playing pinball on these old machines, oldies such as "Rock Around the Clock" and "My Cherie Amour" blast above the beeps, is a flip through the pop culture of the last 50 years - with these games themes including the Space Lab, Playboy, KISS, Superman, Charlie's Angels, Evel Knievel and even the one featured in Arnold's Drive-In on "Happy Days."

Along sports pinball games, such as Army-Navy Football and Yankees Baseball, the museum has a mechanical bowling game from the '50s and rare mini-golf games as well. Some of the first non-mechanical games from the '30s and '40s are for a historical perspective. In that vein, each device has the year and history of the game posted above it.

It's still a drag when your own silver ball bounces off a bumper and shoots down the middle, but you don't feel like a loser when you're using these vintage machines. Plus you don't have to dig into your pocket for another quarter -- there's always another free ball, for the hour at least.

Info: 639 Cookman Ave., Asbury Park, N.J ; (609) 577-0232; silverballmuseum.com

-- Mary Huhn