

## Unique and Worldwide:

# ZOT TURNS 50



*Nick Keppe, currently managing director of Bowltech UK, with Roger Lindblad, president of ZOT.*

*Akira Nakano, president of Eastern Sports Japan with Roger Lindblad, president of ZOT.*

In the early '60s when bowling proprietors were looking for ways to speed up play, especially in league matches, a leading Colorado manufacturer of canning equipment had an idea. Or rather, two ideas.

One was a ball booster, the other a conversion assembly for Brunswick As, both designed to get the ball back to the bowler faster. The canner, Precision Metal Fabricators, brought the booster to market in 1964, the conversion a year later. Together they saved about 20 minutes for a 5-person team. They also launched a bowling division of the manufacturer and a new brand of bowling equipment, both with the same name, ZOT.

Fast-forward 20 years. It's 1984. Roger Lindblad, a ZOT Sales and Service employee for 17 years, buys ZOT and sets to work expanding the product line and building a nationwide network of distributors. Lindblad is determined to keep ZOT's focus on unique, problem-solving items.

"It's not difficult to build a line of 'me too' products," says Lindblad today, still heading ZOT as the company celebrates its first half-century, "but they don't solve problems or generate revenues for proprietors through savings or making bowling more appealing to customers. ZOT's line achieves both with products that are popular with mechanics and proprietors alike."

More than 200 products in the catalog run a very wide gamut for AMF- and Brunswick-equipped centers, from foul

detectors with self-diagnostics, electronic triggering, and pinsetter control systems, to ball conditioners and re-engineered metal parts and assemblies. A recent addition, the ColorSplash LED Pindeck Light fixture, adds effects such as an array of ambient colored lighting, and is switchable to standard white light for league play at the touch of a button.

In 1993, Lindblad added Paul Lane to the ZOT team. With 30 years marketing experience in 60+ overseas markets, the retired director of marketing and marketing services for AMF was "the ideal person" to expand ZOT internationally, Lindblad felt.

Lane was quickly in touch with Nick Keppe, managing director of Complete Leisure, headquartered in England, who became ZOT's first international distributor. Scant months later, Lane had added Bowltech (Netherlands), AMF (Australia), and Eastern Sports (formerly Asahi Capital, Japan) to the roster, and he and Lindblad were winging overseas to train sales staff and conduct product seminars for mechanics in all four countries. Today ZOT's network is global.

As Lindblad blows out the candles and the company starts its second 50 years, his attention is directed near and far. It is as wide as the bowling world and, unchanged after his 30 years of ZOT ownership, as minute as the smallest detail of equipment that can be re-thought, optimized and made more profitable. ❖