# British entrepreneurs raise £25 million to launch innovative pool venue



Pool sharks may soon experience a technologically enhanced version of their beloved game, as British entrepreneurs Steve and Dave Jolliffe have successfully raised £25 million ($34 million) to launch an innovative venture called Poolhouse. The first venue is set to open near Liverpool Street station in London next year, offering a unique blend of traditional pool and modern technology.

The Jolliffe twins, known for founding popular leisure venues Topgolf and Puttshack, aim to create an environment that combines "the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas" with "the grit of iconic pool halls". This new venue is positioned to tap into the burgeoning activity bar market, which seeks to attract younger audiences who prefer engaging experiences alongside food and drinks.

Poolhouse will retain the classic elements of pool, incorporating traditional tables, balls, and cues, while layering in sophisticated tracking technology and video projections. These advancements aim to introduce additional features such as bonus targets and obstacles, designed to appeal to larger groups and facilitate a lively atmosphere.

In addition to operating its own venues, Poolhouse has plans to collaborate with franchise partners and sell its cutting-edge equipment to existing pubs and bars, allowing them to refresh and modernise their pool offerings. Speaking to The Guardian, Steve Jolliffe remarked on the potential impact of their project, stating, “Today, more people play at Topgolf than on traditional golf courses in the US, and we aim to make an even greater impact on the world of pool. While we have a strong track record, this project has been our most challenging endeavour yet.”

The rise of activity bars in the UK began in 2006 with the debut of bowling and cocktail venue All Star Lanes in London, followed by the table tennis venue Bounce in 2012. The trend has surged due to an increasing demand for social-media-friendly outings that resonate well on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Additionally, these venues cater to patrons who may drink less or prefer not to drink at all, providing alternatives for night-time entertainment.

The expansion of these venues is also in response to landlords’ efforts to fill high streets and shopping centres left vacant by departing department stores and other retail businesses. While bowling, indoor crazy golf, and escape rooms remain among the most prevalent concepts, there is an eclectic mix of other activities now being featured, including darts, shuffleboard, table tennis, trampolining, bingo, and even axe throwing.

According to property consultancy Savills, the number of venues offering diverse activities has more than quadrupled over the last five years, and the firm anticipates further growth as consumer preferences evolve. Paul Davies, director of consumer leisure habits at market research company Mintel, noted the expansion of the competitive socialising sector, particularly among younger consumers. He stated, “The competitive socialising sector continues to expand, driven by demand from younger consumers who are seeking out thrilling and novel experiences. In fact, Mintel’s research shows that 18 to 24 year olds are now as likely to take part in competitive socialising as they are to drink in a pub.”

However, Davies also cautioned that new ventures may face challenges achieving guaranteed success due to potential oversupply, especially in city centres where activities such as crazy golf and ping pong have become well-established and may risk market saturation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.sportspro.com/news/topgolf-poolhouse-investment-tech-sport-april-2025/> - This article supports the claim that Steve and Dave Jolliffe have raised $34 million for their new venture called Poolhouse, combining interactive pool games with upmarket food and drink. It also notes that Poolhouse will open its first site near Liverpool Street Station in London.
2. <https://www.thecaterer.com/news/poolhouse-to-open-debut-london-site-after-raising-over-28m-funding> - This article confirms that Poolhouse has secured funding to open its first London site, aligning with the concept of bringing advanced technology to traditional pool games.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/homesandproperty/property-news/haggerston-baths-set-for-ps25m-transformation-into-a-shopping-and-restaurant-destination-a115951.html> - Although not directly related to Poolhouse, this article highlights the trend of transforming historical venues in London into modern entertainment spaces, similar to the concept of activity bars and venues like Poolhouse.
4. <https://www.housebeautiful.com/uk/lifestyle/property/a20457631/luxurious-25-million-mansion-for-sale-west-london/> - This article is not directly related to Poolhouse but provides context on the luxurious and modern lifestyle trends in London, which could influence venue design and customer expectations.
5. <https://www.leisuredevelopmentpartners.com/newsdetail/lets-get-this-party-started-how-competitive-socialising-is-changing-the-uk-leisure-scene> - Unfortunately, this specific URL was not found. However, similar articles from other sources discuss how competitive socializing has transformed the UK leisure scene, supporting the rise of activity bars and venues like Poolhouse.
6. <https://www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/320593-0> - Unfortunately, the specific URL for Savills' report on the expansion of activity venues was not directly available. Savills often reports on market trends that support the growth of diverse leisure activities in the UK.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/apr/14/topgolf-founders-raise-34m-to-turn-pool-hi-tech-poolhouse> - Please view link - unable to able to access data