

From Sun Magazine: David Cordish Q&A

Developer David Cordish doubles down with a new casino near Arundel Mills and a revamped Power Plant Live!

By Sam Sessa Baltimore Sun reporter

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Love him or hate him, David S. Cordish, 71, is a man who gets things done. As the head of the [Cordish Companies](#), he turned a languid patch of downtown into the open-air dining and night life destination Power Plant Live! and then brought the idea to other cities such as Louisville (4th Street Live!), Houston (Live! at Bayou Place) and Kansas City (Power & Light District). This month, he put the finishing touches on a \$10 million upgrade to Power Plant Live!, and right now, he's building Maryland Live!, a controversial slots and entertainment complex near Arundel Mills mall, which should be finished next year. He's even trademarked the term "Live!" "If anybody else in the U.S. wants to do a Live! district, they can do it, but they better not call it Live!," he said with a smile. "We've copyrighted it."

When was the last time you found yourself in Power Plant Live! at 2 a.m.?

At 2 a.m.? You're pushing me. [My wife] Suzi and I were there very late a couple weeks ago. We frequently eat dinner at Tatu. It's my favorite restaurant in Baltimore, by far. We took a couple couples with us. It was probably close to 1 a.m. when we left.

That's not bad for a gentleman of your age. Do you come to work early?

I get to work early, I work out in the mornings, and I run about 3.5 miles a day, most days. Age has a lot to do with a state of mind. I've been lifting weights for the past 25 years. I lift heavier weights now than I did 25 years ago.

Do you gamble?

Yeah, I like to gamble. My favorite thing is craps, but also blackjack, poker and a little bit of slots. We will have all of those games, electronically, the day [Maryland Live!] opens.

But other states nearby already have real table games.

We'll have them here. How soon? It's inevitable. If they don't do it this year, they'll do it next year.

Have you ever hit it big on the craps table?

When I go to gamble, I take \$100. When the \$100 is gone, it's gone. If I get ahead, at some point

I quit. I think that's how 99 percent of the world gambles. [Gambling] is just a form of recreation.

Speaking of recreation, aren't you a tennis buff? I love to go to tennis matches. (Gestures at a photo on the wall). That's me hitting with [Roger Federer](#).

What's the smartest business decision you've ever made?

Years ago, I decided that business is business. If you came in here and said, 'David, it's very important to the United States that you run a widget manufacturing plant,' I think I could do it. Business is business. We could be real estate developers, which is something we'd done for decades, but we could become entertainment entrepreneurs. We could become casino operators. The main decision was not to fear the unknown. Business is business.

Fix one Baltimore problem that makes this city a better place.

The big thing that would change Baltimore is a Maglev (short for magnetic levitation) train like they have in Japan, China and Singapore. It would take you from Washington to Baltimore in about 15 minutes. That would change Baltimore. Washington is one of the most expensive cities in the world. Baltimore is one of the cheapest -- either for office rent or home purchases. If we could connect the two cities quickly, Baltimore would blossom. All its problems would go away. They have Maglev trains all over the world, and the U.S. government has been talking about it forever. Go do it.