

STRIKE A POSE

The new YogaWorks studio in Soho opens its arms to everyone and his brother.

WITH EXPOSED-BRICK walls, cast-iron columns, bamboo floors and dry saunas, the new Soho outpost of YogaWorks might seem like a state-of-the-art spa. But look again and you'll notice three practice rooms, a prop wall, self-service tea counters and Lululemon Athletica apparel—all of which contribute to making YogaWorks one of the most-respected yoga studios in the city and beyond.

More than 20 years ago, founders Maty Ezraty, Chuck Miller and Alan Finger set out to open an eclectic yoga center in Santa Monica. Today, the company has 23 locations throughout California and New York, including ones on the Upper East Side, Upper West Side and in Midtown and Gramercy.

Trained by the late K. Pattabhi Jois, Miller and Ezraty have been practicing for more than 30 years and are highly skilled in Ashtanga, a 6,000-year-old discipline that features a set series of poses. Despite their passion for the ancient method, they respected and embraced other styles (including Iyengar, which makes use of props) and longed to create a space that welcomed all types of yoga. Miller and Ezraty achieved their goal when they opened a diverse, accessible studio for all ages, abilities and styles. "They believed that yoga should be for everyone, and their classes and teachers reflect that vision," says Julie Kleinman, YogaWorks' vice president of programming.

The new YogaWorks studio is eco-friendly and offers classes in such yoga styles as Vinyasa Flow, Anusara, Ashtanga and Iyengar, as well as prenatal and kids' classes. SculptWorks and BarWorks classes were also recently added to the roster. "People who were coming for yoga used to feel like they had to go elsewhere for fitness classes," says Kleinman. "But now we offer these specialty fitness sessions, which combine toning exercises and yoga elements."



TOP: A class at YogaWorks. INSET: Yoga merchandise in the boutique

Advisers help direct students to appropriate classes, and the most dedicated can take part in a 200-hour teacher-training course—a program that has expanded into 10 sessions a year in LA, New York and Orange County, California. "Maty wanted to develop a consistent standard of teaching, so she designed this rigorous method to show instructors how to put together a thoughtful, logical and well-constructed sequence," says Kleinman.

Whether for a yoga novice or a seasoned veteran, YogaWorks creates a community that allows students to learn and grow at their own pace—proving that yoga really is for everyone. 495 Broadway, 212-965-0801; yogaworks.com—JENNIFER WELBEL