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## A Studio For Serious Spinners

### Fitness

By **GABRIELLE BIRKNER** | January 21, 2008

The first time I took a spinning class, about four years ago, the half-liter water bottle I had brought with me was empty after 10 minutes of pedaling. I spent the remainder of the 45-minute class running back and forth between the water fountain, to refill the bottle, and the cycling studio, where I would drink the water in between simulated "sprints" and "hills" on the stationary bicycle. By the end of the arduous session, it looked as if all of that water had been poured on my head.

I took a few more loud-music-filled spin classes after that, accompanied by successively larger bottles of water. Ultimately, I decided that the regimen was just a little too type-A for my Pilatesesque taste. But when, last week, I heard about a new spin-only studio, ZoneHampton, opening up on the Upper East Side, I decided to take another shot at spinning — an exercise regimen that first became popular in the mid-1990s and has successfully defied exercise faddism.

For about a decade, the Hamptons' residents have flocked

to ZoneHampton, a spin-centric East Hampton exercise studio. Owner Marion Roaman, 35, acquired the space about eight years ago; ever since, her devoted clients who live in New York and summer on the East End have been urging her to open up a ZoneHampton in the city. But Ms. Roaman was busy running the East End location and raising her two young children.

Recently, though, she turned her attention to finding and funding a city space — and last Thursday, she launched her first city-based venture inside MonQi Fitness studio on East 67th Street.

On Friday, I traded my sneakers for a pair of borrowed spinning shoes that snap into the pedals of the stationary bicycles at Zone-Hampton. Since I was clicked in — and not quite sure how to extricate myself from the machine — I had to nurse my bottle of water throughout the 45-minute session. I rode alongside about a dozen other spinners, most of whom told me they had taken ZoneHampton classes for years out east. The instructor, "mb," rode her bike on a platform, all the while adjusting the dance party music — and challenging us, at different intervals, to increase and decrease speed and resistance, to stand up and sit down.

Throughout the pedaling session, the instructor kept singling me out. "Shoulders back; tummy in," she said. Eventually she gave up and set up a stationary bike in front of mine to guide me — clearly the most amateur rider of the group — through the remainder of the workout.

There was one problem: After all of my classmates had dismounted and begun their post-cycling stretching, I was still on the bike, unable to unsnap my shoes from the pedals. The instructor helped with that, too. I was a little embarrassed, but more exhilarated by the surprisingly fun, high-energy calorie burn of the last 45-minutes — and I

vowed to add cycling classes into my workout repertoire.

While I was spinning at ZoneHampton, hundreds were gathered in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall to take part in "Saints and Spinners," a New York Sports Club-sponsored spin marathon, made up of 24 nearly consecutive 45-minute classes. It began at 7 a.m. on Friday and concluded the following morning. All told, the event brought out more than 2,000 people — including celebrity chef Rocco DiSpirito and New York City schools chancellor Joel Klein — who each rode one of 100 stationary bicycles set up in the busy transit hub. It wasn't just for good exercise; it was for a good cause: Each rider paid a minimum of \$100 to take part and, altogether, raised \$250,000 for Health-Corps, an organization dedicated to fighting youth obesity.

"Whatever level you're at, you can make the ride your own — and everyone can feel such a sense of accomplishment," the director of group exercise for New York Sports Club, Jill Venezia, said, explaining why spin has remained a popular form of exercise for more than a decade. "It's hard work, but it's only 45 minutes of it."

Just remember to bring water.

(ZoneHampton@MonQi, 207 E. 67th St. at Third Avenue, 212-327-2170, \$28 a session; 10 classes for \$260.)