

FIT AND FREE

Suzanne Bowen delivers a powerful workout and much needed stress relief in her Williamson County studio, Seren Motus

BY STACIE STANDIFER • PHOTOS BY SHERRY CLAGG

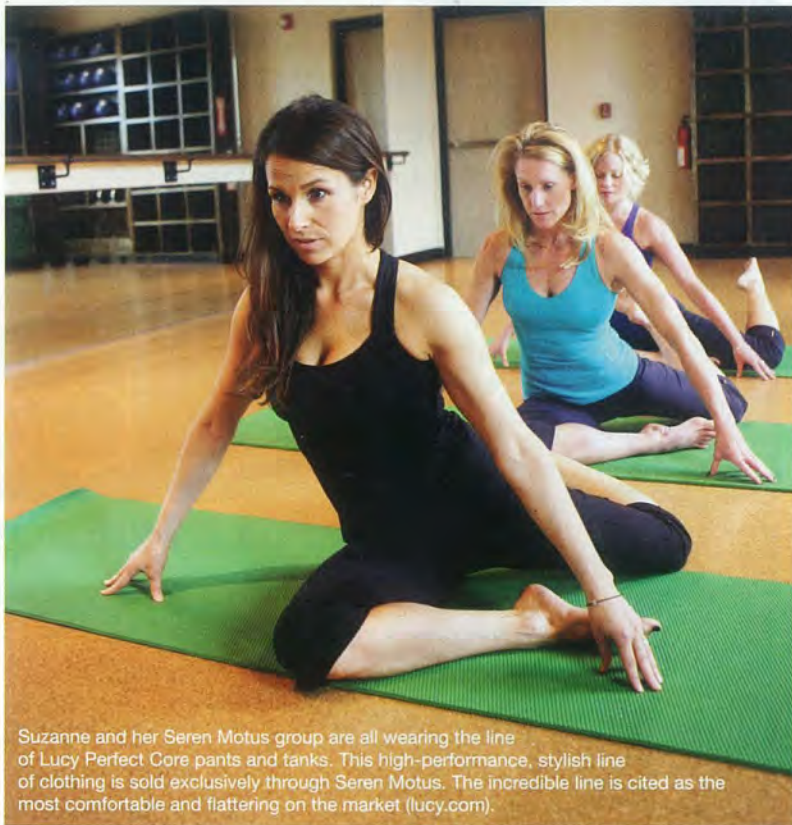
At-home workout enthusiasts will likely recognize the area's newest fitness studio owner from her nationally sold line of DVDs. For years, her effective workout videos have been recognized by countless magazines, including *Fitness* and *Pilates Style*, and she's been highly rated by fitness experts across the country. The good news is that her distinctive style and approach is now available for us to experience first-hand with the opening of Seren Motus Fitness Studios.

Along with her husband, Suzanne Bowen opened this private boutique studio in early January and since that time, she's developed a loyal group of attendees and followers. As there's already an existing buzz about the "barre sculpt" method, with other centers opening in various areas of town, I jumped at the chance to visit Seren Motus to find out what the fuss was all about.

My first visit came after a short workout hiatus—doing absolutely no exercise at all—so I had a bit of anxiety about how I'd fare in the group. Luckily, Bowen keeps her classes very small, so at least I wasn't lost in a large, experienced crowd. But the reasoning behind her limited class sizes really rests in her belief in personal attention to form for each student, which she offers throughout the 55-minute toning program centered around barre and floor exercises.

She's very hands on, actually reaching out to straighten a back, turn a hip or even to adjust the position of shoulders. The entire experience is very personal, comforting—but in all honesty, quite hard. She quickly explained to me that even after months of attending the exercises continue to prove challenging to her devotees, even as they just learn to push themselves harder. Holding positions and isometric movements allow everyone to operate at their own pace, and Bowen is constantly giving options for variations to make each exercise more advanced – or in my case, less so.

The best thing I found about this women-only studio was that Suzanne and her other talented instructors all seemed to have a sincere desire to reach out to each student and make the best of



Suzanne and her Seren Motus group are all wearing the line of Lucy Perfect Core pants and tanks. This high-performance, stylish line of clothing is sold exclusively through Seren Motus. The incredible line is cited as the most comfortable and flattering on the market (lucy.com).

that person's workout. I also really felt that while some of the exercises were difficult and challenging to my underworked muscles, the combination of stretching both between tougher moves and near the end of the session seemed to be stress relieving. Instead of leaving exhausted like I have from some boot camp-style programs, after completing a class, my body and mind were uplifted, rested and somehow improved.

Of course, what we all want from our workout programs is results. This is something Seren Motus can certainly guarantee. I spoke with a number of other members and found they had two things in common—their love of the hour just reserved for them in this haven and their report of measurable results. Within only a few classes, I could feel my own limbs and core toning up, and found that those who had only a few



“These classes have changed my whole perspective on what “working out” means. I’m not only more toned, but much stronger than when I first started. Suzanne is such a bright spot in my day ... constantly reminding me that I “can do anything for 20 more seconds” as my legs shake on a difficult move or my abs are just burning so much! Her training methods have truly helped to motivate me to become a better, healthier me.”

—Local TV personality Jennifer Vickery Smith



weeks under their belt had experienced tremendous improvements. One mother of three small children, Kim Biggs, describes the classes as her own personal “nirvana.”

“When I started, I was 30 pounds heavier, with very weak muscles due to abdominal surgeries. Now, thanks to Suzanne, that’s the strongest part of my body. Working out here feels less like a class and more like a personal training session,” she says.

Kim Biggs wasn’t alone in her response—everyone seemed happy, friendly and anxious to share their positive stories and experience at Seren Motus. After only a couple of sessions, I understood the bond, since the instructors are more like friends—willing to help with everything from getting a great physical workout to assisting with lifestyle and nutrition changes.

It felt more like a private “girls’ club” with the bonus of having a better body (and relaxed mind) after becoming a member. There are no forced long-term commitments for those wanting to visit the studio or to attend class, but most everyone is hooked once they begin. Noticeable improvements and a general attitude boost continue long after class, keeping devotees coming back for more. I can’t imagine a better place to clear the mind, share some smiles and leave knowing that my thighs might be a little tighter (and getting there wasn’t torture, either!)

For more information visit serenmotus.com or suzannebowenfitness.com.

SUMMER FUN

Connect with nature through your outdoor workout

BY JOSH ROGERS

There’s something special about being outdoors—it’s where we belong. Outdoor workouts enliven, energize and invigorate us, resonating in our brains with a sense of unity, oneness and connection to the natural world.

Take a deep breath, totally fill your lungs and then exhale slowly—embrace the warmth and smell of my favorite time of year: *summer!* Nature is all around us here in beautiful Middle Tennessee. Exercising outdoors adds a sense of freedom, peace, connection and openness.

Runners and walkers are well aware of the consciousness shift that occurs when you connect with nature through an exhilarating outdoor workout. Whether at Centennial Park, Radnor Lake, an outdoor boot camp, the lakefront or right in your own backyard, working out in the natural world promotes a sense of uninhibited connection between the inner self and Mother Nature.

As we’re all well aware, Tennessee boasts some hot and humid summers. When working out outdoors, observe the same rules for warming up and hydration as you would indoors. In fact, you may require more fluid than you would indoors. Avoid training during the most humid time of the day and shoot for an early morning or late afternoon workout.

Try this bootie-kicking outdoor workout and see if you connect with nature, while getting “energy fit”:

This workout is designed to help you accomplish the following:

1. Increase flexibility
2. Tone up
3. Lose body fat
4. Build muscular and aerobic endurance

After warming up sufficiently, begin stretching the major muscle groups (core, legs, back) followed by the smaller muscles (chest and arms), holding each stretch for 30 to 60



seconds. Remember not to bounce or stretch to the point of pain, while continuing to breathe as you stretch (some people have a tendency to hold their breath when stretching and exercising). You should feel a slight discomfort during each stretch—the key word being *slight*. Spend at least 10 minutes stretching.

Moving on to the toning component of your outdoor workout, beginning with the legs. Here are a few options for working your legs:

1. Walking/running uphill
2. Walking lunges, with varying depth
3. The trusty squat
4. Hops or skipping
5. Shuffling or walking/running backwards
6. Mountain climbers, squat thrust (burpees)

These exercises will serve as aerobic activities as well.

For Josh’s core, chest, back and shoulder exercises, visit nashvillelifestyles.com.

After your workout, perform stretching for all muscles worked. Breathe deeply while stretching to release tension and energize muscles.

Here’s to a fit and healthy summer of 2010!

COMMIT 2 BE FIT,
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