

Suzanne Bowen

With her Suzanne Bowen Fitness workout regime and her cutting-edge BarreAmped method, the fitness guru certainly knows how to whip you into shape Writer Vivienne Tang



Forget about happy hour drinks. Everyone is hitting another kind of barre these days. Barre workouts, which are some of the fastest, most effective ways to change your body (they lift your seat, tone your thighs, abs and arms, lengthen tight muscles and burn fat), have taken the US by storm and are now becoming widely popular in Asia through fitness mavens such as Suzanne Bowen, who has come up with her very own barre technique named BarreAmped, a method based on dance (modern and classical), Pilates, as well as active and relaxation stretching, taking classic barre moves and amping them up with power, precision and focused intensity.

"I was classically trained at the Lotte Berk Method, which is the original barre studio in the States," says Suzanne Bowen, looking back at what kick-started her career.

It was the best; it was an ideal training in fitness for me, and I learnt the most incredible technique. I was just in the right place at the right moment. It really became a sensation about ten years ago, and it's just become a household name in the last three years in the States."

Bowen eventually went on to create Suzanne Bowen Fitness (SBF)—under which she launched BarreAmped, which has been licensed to over 60 studios worldwide with 330 instructors, as well as Seren Motus, a mind-body alignment method—pouring 13 years of fitness experience and training into it. SBF is a simple formula that combines cutting-edge cardio, intelligent strengthening and dynamic stretching, inspiring people to be the best versions of themselves.

"I feel that you can do non-punishing

mother of two, who knows what it is like having to balance job and private life. She understands the daily struggle women can possibly go through in relation to body issues and self-acceptance. "I used to be obsessed with being thin," she shares openly. "I chased perfection. If I ate something I wasn't supposed to, I had to run to the gym to burn off the calories. When I got pregnant with our first child, I lost the body I had worked so hard to keep. Having children gave me full freedom. That's when I learnt life really is about people pursuing their best, not about being perfect."

No wonder, women all around the world, and yes men too, are religiously following Bowen's method, be it in a studio, such as Barre 2 Barre in Hong Kong (a training studio and hub for Asia), online through her streaming classes or simply by working out to

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"For 35 years it was an institution on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and I was an apprentice there back in 2000. I had to go through a series of auditions, and I got a paid apprenticeship, but this was after I was a flight attendant for United Airlines during 9/11. I was JFK based; in 2001 I lost my job as a junior flight attendant. I just did not want to leave, and I was already in exercise. I was studying to be a personal trainer and I was a perpetual gym junkie. I was one of those people who would work out two to three hours doing an excessive amount of cardio, and I walked into Lotte Berk Method and saw all the walls lined with the most amazing fashion magazines—not just fitness magazines—but Vogue and WWJD, and all of these magazines had covered Lotte Berk Method for years. And I had not heard about

exercises and get amazing results," she says. "You can be kind to your body, age well and get great results without having to flip tires. I have two mottos. One is 'shake to change', like muscle shaking, shaking up your workout so you don't plateau. And the other one is 'excellence, not perfection'. I'm really into being your best you and not being on a treadmill of perfection...just from my own personal journey with perfection and body image issues. A lot of women, be it in Hong Kong or back in the States...it's just something that we struggle with. So it's a good reminder to just know that you can be your best, that you can have flaws, and there's freedom in that."

Despite being an internationally successful leader in the fitness arena, Bowen is first and foremost a working wife and

one of her numerous DVDs, which include bestsellers, such as *BarreAmped (Classic Barre)*, *BarreAmped Boot Camp*, *Slim & Toned Prenatal Barre Workout*, *Gorgeous Core*, as well as *Tighten Tone and Torch*.

Bowen has big plans to open more studios in Asia and has just returned from a trip to Thailand where she researched that stretching methods to include in the Seren Motus technique, which will eventually be incorporated into BarreAmped with barre stretches. And with the number of BarreAmped teachers and studios mushrooming all over the world, and with her enthusiastic can-do approach, Bowen is definitely one to keep an eye on. Watch this space!

www.suzannebowenfitness.com
www.barreamp.com ✓