

Swank fitness center opening in Glendale

Public facility sports high-end amenities

By Suzanne S. Brown

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Bars and nightspots outnumber health clubs in Glendale, but the city's newest facility for checking out hot bodies is a fitness center rather than another strip joint.

When the Glendale Sports Center at Infinity Park opens at 5:30 a.m. Tuesday, visitors will find 35,000 square feet of amenities that include high-end workout equipment from Technogym and Expresso, studios for group fitness classes, a basketball court, locker rooms, personal training services and specialized classes for teens and seniors. Twenty-two flat-screen TVs are sprinkled about, as are rooms for teens and tots, meeting spaces, a cafe and lounge areas with leather furniture.

The \$10 million center, managed by the YMCA for the city of Glendale, was designed by Ohlson Lavoie Collaborative of Denver. With dark woods and a muted color palette, the space feels more like a hotel than a gym. From the entrance with a fireplace, bookshelves and leather seating on the right and a curved check-in desk on the left, members are welcomed into a space with 30-foot ceilings and a view of the rugby pitch (field) in the background.

"We patterned it after the hospitality industry and higher-end clubs," said architect Doni Visani. When three apartment complexes to the south of the complex are torn down and a park is developed, the view will be to "infinity," as architects planned.

Glendale residents who don't become members are missing a fitness bargain: Monthly dues are a mere \$2.50 for youths; adults pay \$8; and families, \$20. Rates increase for nonresidents to \$30, youths; \$68, adults; and \$100, families.

Glendale businesses get discounted corporate rates. Folks who just want to sample the facility can pay a drop-in rate of \$10 per person.

Fitness buffs are going to like the Italian-designed Technogym gear with flat-screen TV panels and hookups for personal music systems. The center will also offer such services as equipment orientation, body composition analysis, personal training and a performance center for advanced testing. Group fitness classes start Aug. 1 and include Zumba, power pump, yoga, mat Pilates, step, boot camp and Silver Sneakers.

Larry Harte, Glendale's mayor, says the goal of the center was to create a gathering place for youths and elderly folks as well as a lively spot where the city's 5,000 residents, whose average age is 28, "can congregate and recreate."

He said planners didn't want to duplicate what's already available in the city, where one health club and numerous apartment complexes have swimming pools, so they didn't include one. And instead of a room dedicated to cycling, there is one for serious weightlifters.

Staff members tried out various types of equipment before making their choices, says Debbie Ford, executive director. They ended up with Technogym equipment because it performed well and has good design features, from TV screens to keep track of workouts to loops for hanging towels and rubber pulls for stretching.

Ford says she's increased her staff from seven to 38 people for the new facility and plans to devote resources to orienting members on how to use the equipment. In addition, the facility will continue the YMCA's mission of children's programming. More than 1,200 children will learn to play flag rugby at the facility this summer, according to Ford.

Partnerships with Tony Rosacci's Fine Catering for a cafe and the Arapahoe Library District for book and media lending bring additional amenities to the facility, as will arts education classes and after-school programs for children and teens.

The fitness center is the second of three phases in a major building project for the city. Last fall the Infinity Park rugby pitch opened, and now construction efforts turn to an event center that will accommodate 800 people.

"Our goal is to make this a big community gathering place," Harte says.

Glendale Sports Center at Infinity Park

Location: 4500 E. Kentucky Ave., Glendale

Opens: Tuesday, with grand-opening ceremony and tours 4:30 to 8 p.m. Saturday

Regular hours are Monday through Friday; 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 9 am. to 5 p.m.;

Facilities: 30,000 square feet of new space devoted to cardio and strength-training equipment, weight room, group fitness classes and locker rooms. Refurbished basketball gym. Teen and children's centers offering after-school programs. A cafe, kiosk library, rugby club overlooking the stadium and multiple lounge areas.

Membership info: sportscenterglendale.com; 303-639-4711