



RAISING THE BARRE

Jenny Conlon meets fitness guru and founder of Paola's BodyBarre, **Paola Di Lanzo** to find out how she came up with the dynamic concept

I attended my first Paola's BodyBarre class (PBB) in anticipation of meeting Paola, and it's safe to say, I'm a convert. Not only does your body get worked to the core, but you can see and feel a difference after only a few classes. Seemingly, it lives up to the hype that surrounds it.

Paola filled me in on how her natural zest for fitness started at a very young age, on the other side of the world. "Growing up in Australia we were always in the great outdoors. We were fit – running from pillar to post in friends' backyards, swimming, playing at the beach and surfing. We would be out getting ourselves dirty and hanging with all the surfers. I've always been a really active person, engaging in a lot of sport, ballet and gymnastics. You name it, I've played it. It's always been in my blood."

It took a few years in the business before Paola hit upon the idea of BodyBarre. "The concept did not come until much later. I originally studied to be a high school PE Teacher and health educator. But I found that I didn't really like teaching high school children, so I got myself into personal training. All the way through university I was doing

different courses – I did aerobics courses, gym instructing courses, and then ended up as a personal trainer, before flitting between personal training and my family business."

It wasn't until Paola hit British soil that she realised what fitness route she wanted to go down. "I moved to the UK in 1998. I was really just over here on a holiday and I got a job in Knightsbridge in quite a high-end gym. I worked there for two or three years, got some great clients and met my husband."

"After my first child, I realised that pounding the pavement, lifting weights and the high-intensity style of workouts were not for me. I studied Pilates with the Pilates Institute and that's where I formed my Dynamic Pilates routine. I went from traditional to Dynamic Pilates, which was not really what people were doing back then. I tried and tested it on my clients and they loved it, until I realised that it was time to move on."

"I was going back and forth to Australia and noticed that Ballet Barre classes were becoming big there, so I tried them. I loved it, and combined my Dynamic Pilates routine with Ballet Barre



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Conditioning, personal training and a little bit of HIIT, and that’s how BodyBarre started”.

Paola opened her first studio in Fulham, and has since opened studios across London. “My first site launched in 2014 in Fulham – it was a beautiful space next door to my house. I created pop-ups and we are now in ten studios. We have contracts in big private members’ clubs such as South Kensington Club, Grace Belgravia, KX in Chelsea. I’ve got my own site in Wimbledon Village and we are about to launch near Sloane Square – that’s my new biggie. It’s a huge space with a café and PT studios. It’s launching around August/September, we are just securing the lease.”

With three children and a hectic schedule, I have to ask how Paola crams everything into a day. “I don’t know!” she says. “It’s all go. I work a lot so I make sure that weekends and evenings are spent with the children. I always make sure that I pick up my children from school and we have dinner together every night.”

PBB offers a wide variety of classes and Paola explains that there is something for everyone. “There are multi levels, however, we do have more advanced high-intensity classes such as PBB Burn or the PBB Blast. Those are more advanced classes for ladies that like to include a bit of HIIT or more complicated movements into the workout. Someone who is new to the method should try PBB Dynamic Pilates Barre Fusion, Floor Barre Fusion or our Signature class.”

“We also have fusions with the TRX which is very unique to PBB. We launched this at the beginning of last year and it’s our registered name Boxerina®. It sounds like an unusual mix of Barre and boxing but the mix is perfect. You get your conditioning and strength training from boxing without that tight ‘all-closed in’ feel!”

Paola believes that moderation and balance are key to enjoying life. “I’m an 80/20 girl – I am 80 percent good, 20 per cent bad. I drink red wine; I love my red wine. If the children are having a burger on the weekends, then I’m going to have a burger too. I eat meat and I love fish and chicken. I’m not a vegan or gluten free, though I do avoid dairy and try to avoid alcohol during the week, otherwise I can’t get out of bed at 5:30am in the morning!”

“Everything in moderation, a bit of what you fancy – just like exercise. Not over-exercising, keeping it all moderate. What I really want to get across is that our exercise is fun.” T&L

■ Paola’s BodyBarre classes are available at Vida Pilates, 2 Fulham High Street, SW6 3LQ Visit www.paolasbodybarre.com for more details

PAOLA’S FAVOURITE PLACES IN FULHAM

- Bootcamp Pilates
- Boyz ‘N’ Berry
- Indian Summer
- The Captain Cook
- Hally’s