

# Healthy Appetite



*By Rick Weinberg, Editor, California  
Business Journal*

***Huntington Harbour Athletic Club owner  
Michael Bernstein is a passionate fitness ex-  
pert who runs one of the finest athletic and  
training facilities in Orange County and  
Southern California.***

For 12 years, Michael Bernstein ran health clubs like Bally's and L.A. Fitness, but he often dreamed of having his own facility and running it "my way."

Bernstein's "dream finally came true" when he bought Huntington Harbour Athletic Club. It was exactly what Bernstein had envisioned all along: an upscale, elegant club with personality, one where he could "offer more personal service and personal training."

As he sits in his office on the second floor of the premier club, Bernstein is happy and content while talking about his prize possession.

"We have more of a different atmosphere than most health clubs," he says. "Our club has more personality. We're not a club where masses of people are shuffled in and out. We have a friendlier, personal environment."

Most of the so-called "big clubs" lock in customers with long-term contracts, not to mention a big initiation fee. Bernstein vowed that when he had his own club, he'd conduct business differently.

"The way I did it is by having a competitive initiative fee with a month-to-month membership so people wouldn't feel locked in," Bernstein says. "I want my customers to have flexibility and freedom."

That approach has netted a membership of thousands of customers over the years who have a wide selection of equipment and programs to choose.

Bernstein created a wellness center to go along with a full free-weight room, a cardiovascular center with treadmills, recumbent bikes and step machines, and a full aerobics program that has yoga, Tai-Chi, sculpting and step classes.

There are also popular senior fitness programs, free locker and towel service with on-site shower facilities, kickboxing, martial arts, massages and tanning.

Equally important are the club's top personal trainers.

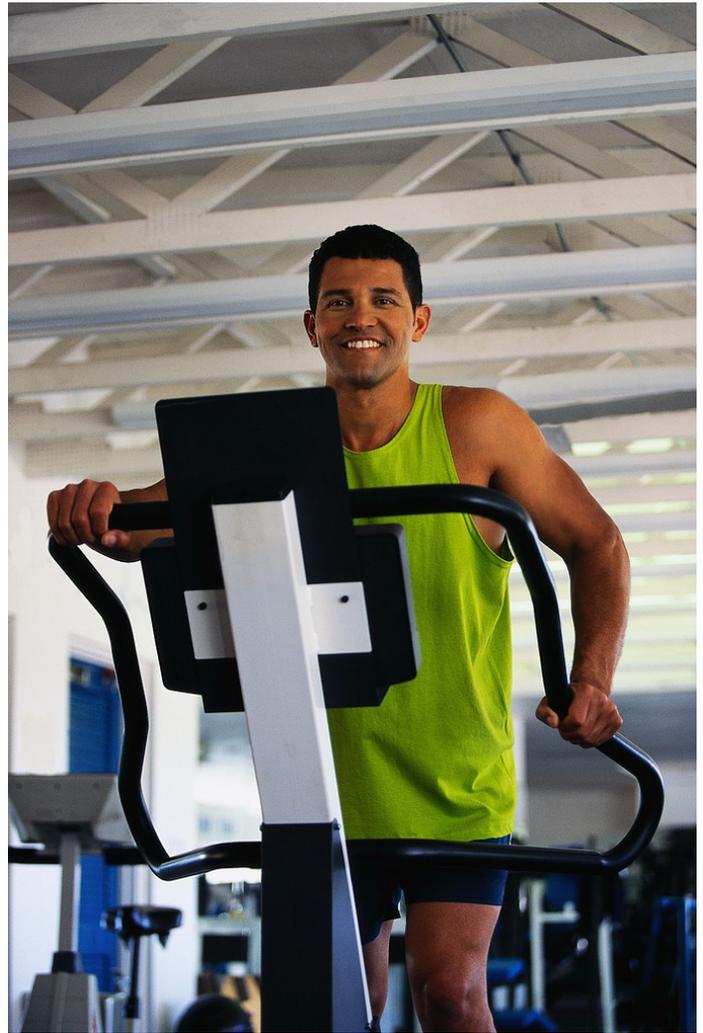
Bernstein and his staff, which includes his wife and co-owner Mayra, pride themselves on the club's personal touch.

"You're not dealing with a corporation," Bernstein says. "If you have a question or a concern, it's handled immediately."

The club is a haven for customers.

For Bernstein, it's heaven.

"I found the perfect scenario—the type of clientele I want-



ed, an elegant club in a beautiful city, a short commute from my home and an area that has great schools for my children," he says.

The business has enabled Bernstein to have an attractive lifestyle where he has freedom and can spend time with his children.

"By living so close to the club, I got to participate in my children's lives," he says. "I couldn't have asked for more."

Health, fitness and athletics have always been a big part of Bernstein's life. He was an aspiring tennis player as a child and he has ranked as high as No. 1 in Southern California's numerous advanced men's divisions. He's also won 30+ tournaments in his career.

"I have always been an athlete and I have always enjoyed being around people concerned with their health and fitness level."

**Huntington Harbour Athletic Club**  
16861 Algonquin Street  
Huntington Beach, CA 92649  
(714) 840-0460