

Trainer Two-fers

Coaches are augmenting their services so they'll stand out in a crowded field

By Alexis Alagem

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Boot camp-style workouts helped Jill Bowers, a Lake Balboa resident, lose 40 pounds but robbed her of the energy to walk Quinn, her Doberman, at night. So the professional dog trainer earned certification in fitness coaching and created Thank Dog! Bootcamp, a “doggy and me” cardio workout held in Burbank’s Johnny Carson Park. She and her instructors teach pets to sit and stay while ordering owners to execute push-ups or sprints around traffic cones (classes cost \$12.50 to \$25, depending on how many you sign up for). “I am a natural multitasker,” says Lynda Keeler, a Hancock Park Internet entrepreneur who attends three times a week with Lenny, her pug-basset hound mix. “Having him exercise with me means he will be worn out and less nutty all day.”

With trainers as ubiquitous as Louboutins, the enterprising ones are distinguishing themselves by offering more than squats and crunches. Dennis Grounds, who put in 27 years as a traditional trainer, has added life coaching and spiritual healing to his sessions at the West Hollywood studio Training Grounds for Life. “This is where fitness is going, because we are more than our physical body,” says Grounds, whose classes

(a minimum series costs \$2,400) involve woo-woo aspects (discussing chakras) as well as practical ones (he writes down life goals on a dry erase board while you jog on a treadmill).

Some coaches lure students with extras rather than extra tasks. Yoga for Foodies, a hybrid created by New York City-based yoga instructor David Romanelli, comes to the L.A. area several times a year (the latest round of \$35 sessions took place at Venice's Exhale Spa). Noting that food tasted better after a set of asanas, he teamed with Katrina Markoff, a chocolatier friend with a similar love of unusual combinations. Her Vosges Haut-Chocolat samplers—sweets spiked with bacon or curry—proved a popular postclass treat. The yogic notion of living in the present, Romanelli believes, applies as much to eating a bonbon as it does to standing on your hands. The concept has been a boon for business; Romanelli now tours nationally with classes that incorporate wine tastings and full-course dinners.