

Vivafit opens 100th gym

> With the opening of the Bela Vista gym, in Lisbon, franchisor Vivafit now has 100 facilities. Vivafit is a Portuguese brand that brought the “30 minute workout” concept to Portugal seven years ago. The brand added a twist by also offering group Pilates and “Body Vive” classes. Today, Vivafit is the largest gym chain in the market, with 40,000 members and an annual turnover of 16 million Euros.

“By the end of the year we want to open a total of 19 new Vivafit gyms in Portugal,” says Pedro Ruiz, Vivafit’s CEO. “Reaching the one hundred milestone—without any closing during the last six years—is a clear indicator

that our brand and our franchising system are secure investments.”

Ruiz, who co-owns the Vivafit brand with his wife Constance Ruiz, noted that the company also plans to open two facilities in Spain before year-end, investing 3 million Euros in the 21 new locations. The couple owns five facilities and franchises the other 95 locations. They plan to have a network of 150 gyms in Portugal, 250 in Spain and five master franchises in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East by the year 2014.

“Portugal is still a growing market for this industry,” said Pedro Ruiz. “The exercise rates among the Portuguese



Marking a milestone: Pedro Ruiz, CEO of Vivafit, has plenty to smile about with the opening of the brand’s 100th facility, and 19 more openings planned by the end of the year

population are lower if compared with the average rate in the EU; this means we still have a large market of prospects.”

Despite the economic challenges, Vivafit was

the fastest growing franchise brand in Portugal in 2008, according to the Portuguese Franchising Institute. The company opened a total of 26 new locations last year. ■

New strategic partnership will strengthen fitness industry in the Netherlands

> IHRSA is partnering with WellPro and *BodyBiz* to better serve the Netherlands health and fitness industry.

WellPro, a leading consulting company consisting of industry experts and WellnessClubs, has a network of approximately 50 health clubs in the Netherlands. Hans Muench, IHRSA Director of Europe, solidified the partnership with WellPro at the 16th EFAA convention at the Papendal Congress Centre with Sander de Bruijn and Eva de Beijer from WellPro.

“We are proud to be IHRSA’s main partner in the Netherlands,” says Eva de Beijer of WellPro. “There is a wealth of knowledge, research, and experience in the international market that we can share to strengthen the industry.”

BodyBiz, a leading industry magazine, was selected as IHRSA’s premium media partner in the Netherlands. The company will be organising a tour to the IHRSA Convention in San Diego, California, 10-13 March 2010. *BodyBiz*, together with Sagonline, will award the first-ever Retention Award in November. The winner will receive a free trip to IHRSA’s Convention and Trade Show in San Diego. Interested clubs/staff can apply at: <http://www.sagbodybizaward.nl>.

“The quality and regularity of social and business networking and partnership is increasing in importance,” stated Hans Muench, IHRSA Director of Europe. “We look forward to working with WellPro and *Body Biz* in the future to help clubs share best practices and improve their communication with their members on the benefits of exercise. IHRSA is committed to playing a role in improving the connectedness and profitability of the fitness market in the Netherlands, and helping the industry grow.”

According to the *2009 IHRSA Global Report*, the Netherlands market:

- Ranks third in Europe, and fifth globally, for members as a percentage of population: 14.55%
- Ranks fifth in Europe, and seventh globally, for total revenue: over \$2.2m USD (1.54m Euros)
- Ranks sixth in Europe for number of health club members: 2.4 million
- Ranks seventh in Europe for number of health clubs: 2,030 (1,800 last year). ■