

# Marina's bowling a curve

It's not a diet, it's not a gym, but you will improve your figure and your health...

By Harry Eddington

**M**ARINA Chrysanthou has just returned from six years in New York, with one of the world's most successful franchises in her hands.

Curves, a fitness franchise based on a simple series of circuit training exercises which keeps bodies in shape and takes off weight, is considered a highly viable alternative to dieting, and Marina is opening the first Cyprus outlet on Lykavitos Avenue in Nicosia's Makedonitssa suburb in mid-September.

"It is not a gym," Marina explained. "There are enough of those around."

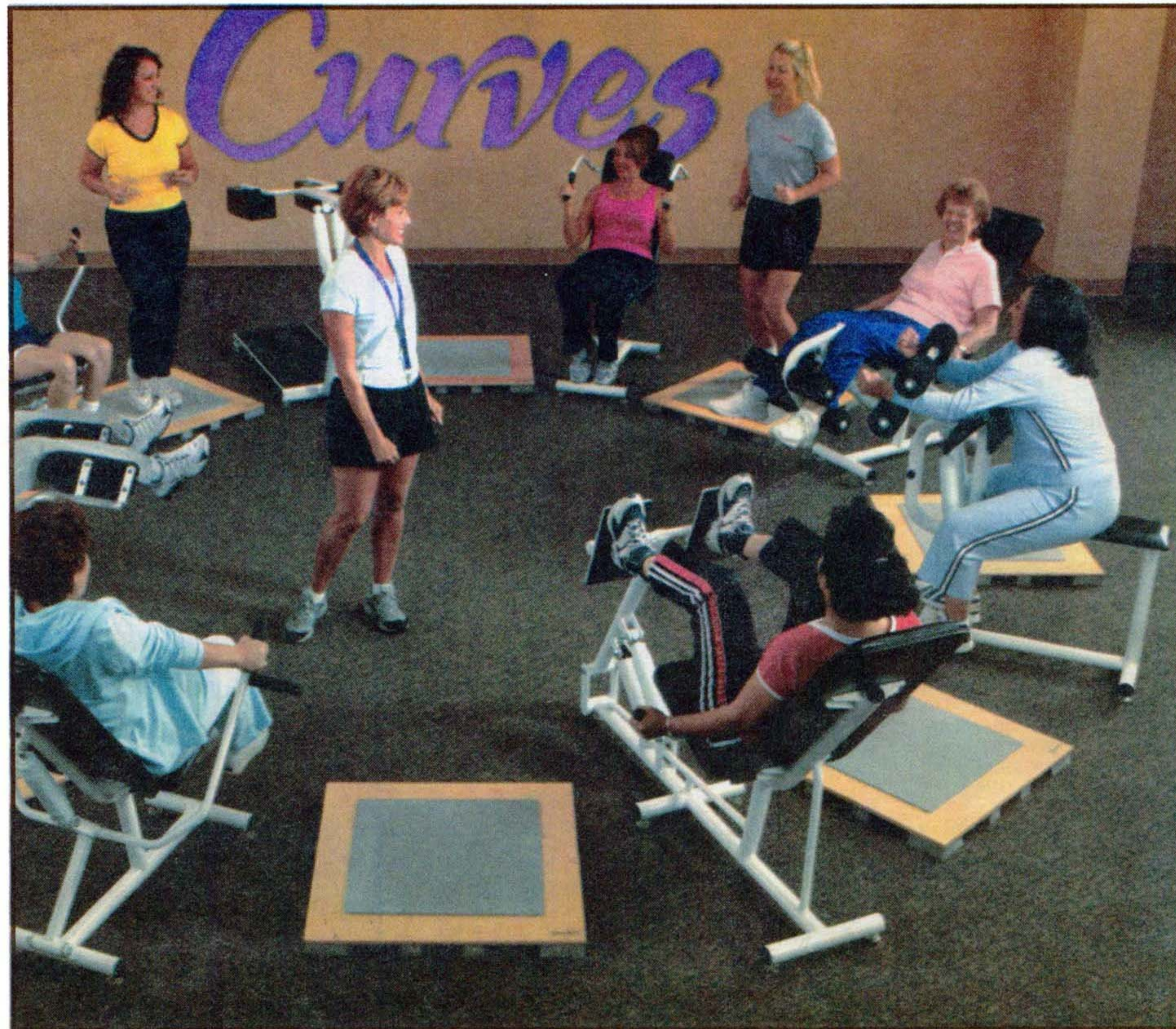
"Curves is a highly affordable, specialised system designed to produce the desired weight and health results, and monthly fees are less than half those of gyms."

"It is a concept based around 30 minutes of strength training, weight loss guidance, and set in a comfortable environment designed especially for women."

"Each machine on the circuit works on different groups of muscles, and the 30-minute workouts are carefully monitored by a fitness trainer."

Marina, a mother of two, got hooked on the system when she tried it in America: "It was great for me, and I knew this was just what the people of my homeland were looking for. So I decided to bring the franchise here, and offer the system to my countryfolk."

The Curves concept had its beginning some 27 years ago in Houston, Texas, when Gary Heavin dropped out of a pre-med programme he could no longer afford and took over a failing health club in the city, intending to provide a fitness service which would pre-



vent illness.

He built a fitness centre chain with 17 locations, but by the age of 30 he had lost it all.

So he decided to reconstruct his business, carefully applying the lessons he had learned from both

his successes and failures.

Gary and his wife Diane formulated Curves, based around the concept of around 30 minutes of strength training and weight loss guidance, specially designed for women.

Explained Marina: "The Curves system allows women of all ages and fitness levels to perform all five of the components of a complete fitness programme, combining strength and cardiovascular training through hydraulic resistance."

"Experienced instructors offer one on one training, while members talk and inspire one another during the workout, and the comfortable, welcoming atmosphere helps women at all fitness levels to achieve their desired results through a carefully worked out programme."

The first Curves outlet, set up in Harlingen, Texas, in 1992, was an immediate success, and the concept was adapted for a franchise

development with the first franchise opening its doors in 1995.

Within just 36 months, Curves passed its first 1,000 locations, and now, after nine years, there are over 7,500 outlets throughout North America and Europe.

A measure of its success is the fact that in America, for every two McDonald's franchises, there is now one Curves.

CURVES has consistently ranked in *Entrepreneur* magazine's annual survey as one of the best new franchises, and in the magazine's 2004 list of the top 500 franchises, Curves was named the fastest growing franchise of any kind in the world, as well as the No 2 best franchise overall.

In fact, it is acknowledged by the industry as the fastest growing franchise in history.

The organisation has now also achieved a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as "The World's Largest Fitness Centre Franchise."

Curves currently has more than two million members in its 7,500 locations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Italy, France and the UK. A new Curves centre opens on average every three hours.

"You can't argue with figures like that," said Marina, whose franchise

**More than 90 per cent of dieters cannot maintain their weight loss even for as long as a year**

covers a couple of square miles in Makedonitssa.

"Because I knew it was such a fabulous system, and I had seen how successful it was, I took up this first Cyprus franchise, and Curves has suggested that I should be appointed their representative for Cyprus and Greece."

In America, Marina took the full and very rigorous Curves training, which also involves nutrition and anatomy: "I aim to help people to say goodbye to unhealthy lifestyles, unachievable diet resolutions and unreasonable fitness regimes, to give women an entirely new outlook on exercise and to handle properly the energy quotients of their bodies."

"I look forward to providing women with a complete 30 minutes aerobic and strength training workout, which will enable them to stay with the fitness programme, and reach and sustain a healthy weight."

"A great advantage of the Curves system is that it is built around easy to handle hydraulic resistance machines, which means there are no cumbersome weight stacks to change or manage."

"It is also fun, and many members say their 30 minutes sessions at Curves is the fastest 30 minutes of the week."

"The laughter, conversation, and sense of support you see at a typical Curves is different from any other health club."

"The environment is totally relaxed, the exercise is to music, and clients using equipment designed specially for women will also find the support and guidance they need to reach desired weight goals with a Curves counselor."

MARINA argues that the average person's annual weight gain can be avoided by the Curves workout regime, tailored to fit today's busy lifestyle. The resulting benefits can be critical in helping combat ailments like diabetes, osteoporosis, hypertension, and many other health risks faced by women.

Marina adds: "Many women are reluctant to embark on a new weight loss programme because they have been disappointed by so many others."

"If they failed they are not alone. More than 90 per cent of dieters cannot maintain their weight loss even for as long as a year."

"The reason is simple: conventional diets set you up for failure."

"They ask you to do the impossible: diet for ever."

What happens, she explains, is that our bodies react to dieting by becoming more efficient.

"As we begin to lose weight on a diet, our bodies sense that we are starving and we start producing starvation hormones, lipogenic enzymes, which make us more fuel efficient."

"The longer we diet, the heavier the saturation of starvation hormones becomes, and our metabolic rate slows down dramatically."

"This is why weight loss often plateaus, and why we must diet forever to maintain weight loss on conventional diet plans."

"Eating stops the production of starvation hormones and increases the metabolic rate."

"So we encourage our members to eat normally, though paying attention to correct nutrition and their anatomy."

"Once they reach their target weight and manage to increase their metabolic rate to pre-diet levels, they find they can eat normally for as many as 29 days a month, dieting only two days a month to burn off the small accumulation that got them into trouble in the past."

"Curves, judging by the number of calls I am already receiving, is clearly something that women are looking for, and I am delighted that I am about to provide it here in Cyprus."



Marina Chrysanthou: you can't argue with the figures

■ Curves opens in Nicosia in mid-September. For more information, call Marina Chrysanthou on 22-658165. [www.curvesinternational.com](http://www.curvesinternational.com)