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How A Fine Dining Background Serves This Fitness Studio Founder



As a restaurant industry veteran, Olivia Young is accustomed to the stress of opening a new space and navigating a soft opening. But her most recent project, [Box + Flow](#), is not a restaurant. It's a fitness studio. And though it seems a departure from her area of expertise, Young's hospitality background is proving surprisingly relevant to opening the Manhattan workout space.

Young prides herself on balancing discipline and indulgence, chaos and self-care. For the last 6 years, she was the brand director for Altamarea Group, where she helped expand the hospitality company to include 15 restaurants. And she consulted with two food service firms

on the side. Her career required late nights and hardcore dining — she is known to eat steak with her hands — but Young balanced the lifestyle with daily boxing and yoga.

She says, "I'm an incredibly committed person. But I tend to have a lot going on at once." She wanted to have something of her own, where she can merge her interests in food and wellness. She decided to open a fitness studio.

Her background in hospitality comes through in her founder philosophy. "Fitness studios seem to be very much like restaurants, but serving fitness, not food," she explains. "If you make people feel special, wanted, you have people coming back regardless of anything else. It's about building a community. It's about people leaving feeling better than they came. It's all hospitality."

The studio's layout has a few subtle nods to restaurants, too. With just 11 boxing bags and yoga mats that face each other, seating is limited and the experience is intimate. Her instructors, like good waiters, are trained to lead but also to listen. And the speaker system was switched out four times to get the acoustics just right. "It's about the energy that's created internally."

And Young hopes to build a community that bridges health and hospitality. She has plans to host workout and dinner parties and to invite restaurant staffs in for group classes. The lounge will eventually be stocked with both green juice and beer, to encourage patrons to spend time together after class.

In workouts, and in restaurants, Young says, "I go for a feeling, I go for an energy." She wants to create a space that draws people in. "I've been boxing so long, I've been doing yoga so long, I could do it alone at my house. I could do it alone on the beach. But I will only go to classes because it's about the energy around me. And it's the same for restaurants."