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Instructor Spotlight: Michaela Bimbi-Dresp

Wednesday, June 20, 2018 by Laura F.



Michaela Bimbi-Dresp
Merrithew™ Lead Instructor Trainer

IT qualifications

Mat & Reformer, Cadillac, Barrels, ISP, Total Barre®, ZEN+GA®, Merrithew™
Fascial Movement

Additional training

MBA

Founder, [The Pilatesbody](#)

Michaela Bimbi-Dresp was working at a YMCA just outside of NYC when she first discovered Pilates. After returning to Germany, she opened up one of the first Pilates studios in Munich.

This is her story.

When Michaela Bimbi-Dresp was living in the U.S., just outside New York City, she had a membership at the local YMCA. She had always been a bit of a fitness junkie—she started ballroom dancing at three years old and became a competitive dancer when she was older—and the staff at the YMCA took notice, and asked her if she wanted to get her personal trainer certification and teach group fitness classes in their facilities. She said yes. It was during her stint working at the YMCA that she began to attend fitness conferences, and she noticed a new method of exercise making the rounds—Pilates. She tried it for the first time in 1998 and was hooked. “For me it felt like a dance,” she says. “I thought, if I like it so much, I’ll find other people who will feel the same.”

The internet was just beginning to boom and she took advantage of what was available online, checking out different Pilates training options. She decided on Pilates on Fifth, a studio based in New York City. After becoming a Certified Instructor, she underwent additional training in London, UK, and at the Corporate Training Center in Toronto, Canada.

When Michaela moved back to Germany, she landed in Munich, a city where “I was the first person there who knew Pilates,” she says. She began working at an American-run gym that had Merrithew equipment, but the core of the business was athletic training, and Merrithew had yet to branch out into **CORE™ Athletic Conditioning and Performance Training™** and **Halo® Training**. “I thought it was worth it to try a little studio of my own,” Michaela says. She had calculated what she earned working in other health clubs to use as a metric for measuring potential earnings with her own studio. She searched for a space to rent, keeping in mind the habits of the Munich public. “Customers walk, take bikes,” she says. “So it’s not as necessary to be near a subway stop. People will walk or bike to places within a 1-2km radius, so I chose a space that was at least 2km from any other fitness studios.” She also kept working at her other fitness industry jobs while building her client base.

In 2003, she opened **The Pilatesbody** in Munich, with 3 Reformers, 1 Cadillac and 1 Ladder Barrel. “I was the only Pilates studio in Munich.” Michaela’s degree in economics and master’s in business administration from Friar University, Berlin, definitely helped her shape the beginning of her business. “A sense of doing business is so important,” she says. She estimates she spends roughly 3-4 hours on administrative work, but “I teach a lot as well, because that’s what I really love.”



In 2003, Michaela became an Instructor Trainer, and continued to broaden programming at her studio, adding **Total Barre**, **ZEN+GA** and **Fascial Movement** to her tool belt. “Total Barre is very popular, it fits a Pilates studio,” she says. “People often like the cardio element of it. And I often mix ZEN+GA exercises into different modalities.”

Business began to pick up, and it wasn’t long before she needed to move to a larger location.

The Pilatesbody now occupies 180 square metres of space, with 8 Reformers, 1 Cadillac, 6 Stability Chairs and 1 Ladder Barrel, and is a Merrithew Licensed Training Center, which brings a special advantage to Michaela’s business. “Certifications,” she says. “Everybody in Munich is asking if I know Instructors.” By offering Instructor Training courses at The Pilatesbody, not only does Michaela have a chance to connect with qualified Instructors, she also has a chance to observe them to see if any are the right fit for her business. “The personality has to be right,” she says. “You have to be present for the full hour when teaching. It’s not for everybody.”

Michaela continues to grow The Pilatesbody through word of mouth referrals, putting up flyers around the neighborhood, and by writing articles for different magazines and companies, as well as books on Pilates. “I try to be present in the Pilates scene,” she says.

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Laura F

As Global PR & Content Specialist, Laura is constantly creating new and compelling ways to share the Merrithew™ story with the community and the world at large. In her off time, you can find her on a yoga mat, behind the pages of a book, or testing out her culinary prowess in the kitchen.

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