

in brief...

ihrsa leadership award

Anastasia Yusina, president of Strata Partners in Russia, and Franck Gueguen, chair and CEO of Club Med Gym in France, were recognised for their achievements at the 2011 IHRSA European Congress, which took place in Milan at the end of October (see p20 for a full review of the event).

Yusina and Gueguen were joint winners of the 2011 IHRSA European Club Leadership Award, which is awarded annually and which recognises the European club leaders who have done the most to advance both their own company and the industry.

sale of bally total fitness sites

Fitness International – an affiliate of LA Fitness International – has acquired 171 Bally Total Fitness clubs in the US in a deal reported to be worth US\$153m.

The acquisition relates to all of the Bally locations in the states of Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington, the District of Columbia, all clubs in the greater Los Angeles area and certain sites in New Jersey, New York, Texas and Virginia.

The remaining 100 Bally-owned clubs will continue to be operated by Bally under the Bally name.

new signings for gymaround

GymAround – a network linking the best fitness clubs worldwide and designed to help business travellers to stay fit – has signed up more clubs to its international network.

In Spain, DiR has been signed up as the group's exclusive Barcelona partner. DiR operates 18 high quality clubs, of which 17 are located in the city centre (for an interview with DiR CEO Ramon Canela, see HCM Oct 10, p24).

GymAround works by allowing travelling executives to purchase day passes to health clubs belonging to the GymAround network, helping them stay fit as well as driving extra revenue to the clubs.

gogo launches fifth and sixth clubs

Finnish operator GoGo Liikuntakeskus opened its fifth club on 31 October, with the sixth scheduled to open on 11 January.

The chain, owned by Taru Vähätalo and Päivi Aholaita-Mäenpää, operates two distinct brands: full-service GoGo clubs and the low-cost gym brand GoGo Express.



The Finnish operator has two brands: a full-service fitness club and a low-cost gym offer

GoGo Express Seppälä, which opened in Jyväskylä at the end of October, is the operator's third budget site, while GoGo Hermia will be the third full-service club in the chain when it opens this month.

Equipped by Life Fitness, Concept2 and Sterling, the 1,100sq m GoGo Express Seppälä charges just €18 a month – the lowest membership fees in the country. Members have access to top quality facilities and equipment 365 days a year, including a 200sq m free weights area, virtual group cycling and a café.

Meanwhile GoGo Hermia, in Tampere, is a 2,000sq m new build club. For €40–60 a month, members have access to two large group fitness studios, a group cycling studio, large Star Trac gym, free weight and cardio areas, functional training area, core zone, Finnish saunas and free childcare.

vivafit opens first club in uruguay

Vivafit has opened its first club in the Americas with the launch in October of its inaugural club in Uruguay.

Located in downtown Montevideo, the club is overseen by master franchisee Ulises Fontanini. The master agreement foresees the opening of 20 Vivafits clubs in Uruguay over the next three years, and includes the right of refusal and the right to sell franchises in Argentina, Chile and the southern states of Brazil. Negotiations are now underway for more openings in Montevideo and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In addition to its market-leading position in Portugal, Vivafit already has clubs in Singapore, India and Spain, with the first club in Cyprus also under construction.



There are plans to open 20 Vivafit facilities in Uruguay over the next three years

club med gym: new smoking cessation course

Club Med Gyms (CMG) has recently launched a new smoking cessation programme at all of its clubs.

The programme, which has been developed in conjunction with medical professionals, lasts for two to three months and focuses on cardiovascular work. "This has been shown to help get rid of the desire for a cigarette," says CMG CEO Franck Gueguen.

There's also a strong nutritional element. "People think they'll get fat if they quit smoking," says Gueguen. "But

with our programme, which takes place in a health club environment, that's not true – we get them fit." Personal training sessions "with empathetic coaches" are also used to coach people in behaviour change, transforming their mentality to that of a non-smoker and breaking negative habits.

Different programmes are available for those under and over the age of 35 years, acknowledging that the smoking habit will be more deeply ingrained in older people.