

**Two-story fitness complex—Manila’s biggest—is the newest place to be seen at**  
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*SYNRGY 360 group class includes suspension training.  
PHOTOS BY KIMBERLY DELA CRUZ*

IT'S THE new place to see and be seen, where mornings are spent sipping kale-apple-ginger smoothies with friends after a vigorous spin class, or nightcaps by the pool after a brisk, 15-lap swim.

Last week, a sprawling playground opened for health buffs, weekend warriors, wannabes and anyone in between. The two-story Kerry Sports Manila at Shangri-La at the Fort in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, has fitness, fun, recreation, relaxation, technology and luxury under one roof.

It's a massive fitness and wellness facility, the likes of which have never been seen in the country. With a floor area of more than 8,300 square meters, Kerry Sports offers a multitude of fitness choices to allow members to find their own space.

“There may be similar facilities offering similar services in the Philippines, but here at Kerry Sports, you don’t need to buy shares to get in. All you have to do is sign up for a membership, as you would in a regular gym, and that’s it,” said Michael Montes, director of Kerry Sports & Recreation, Shangri-La at the Fort.

Montes not only has a solid background in sports, health and fitness; he was also the former manager of Hard Candy Toronto, the gym owned by Madonna.

This Canadian-Filipino is bringing into Kerry Sports a work philosophy he learned while running the Queen of Pop’s gym.

### Real dancers

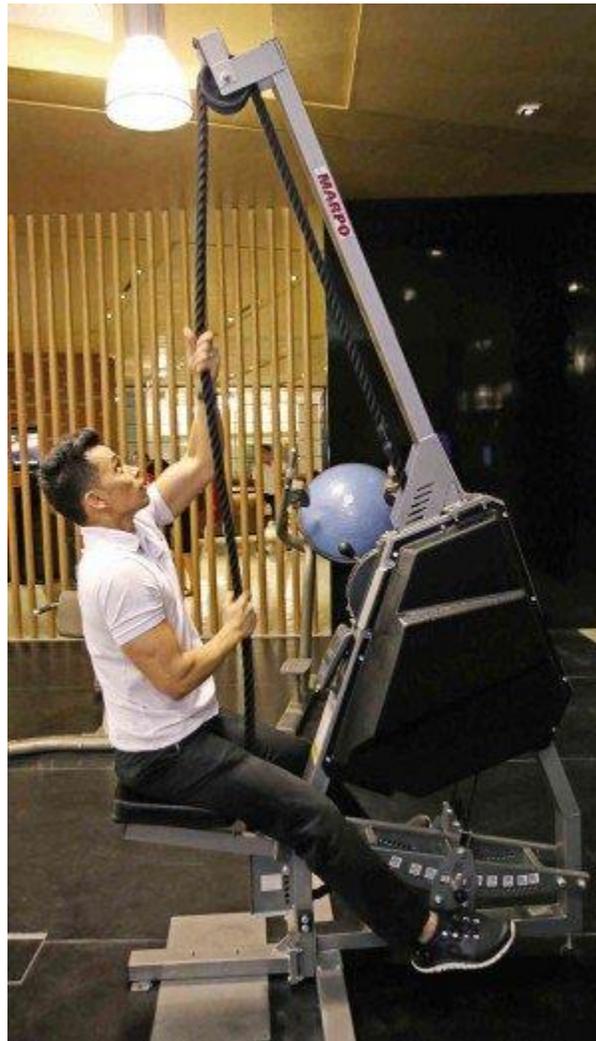


*Healthy snacks and drinks are offered at Kerry Sprouts*

Dance classes, still one of the top favorite activities in the gym, will be among Kerry’s Sports key features. But instead of having fitness instructors teach, say, Zumba or Hip Hop classes, Montes hired real dancers, all licensed, to handle the sessions.

“That’s one of the things I learned at Hard Candy—you get dancers to teach dance classes. Dancers will focus on the dance moves, whereas fitness instructors will put fitness first. We’re excited about this. It’s going to be a different experience,” Montes said.

When Madonna flew into Toronto for the club’s opening, Montes said the pop superstar taught a one-hour dance class, proving that dancers are still the best teachers for dance. The fitness part is a natural component of dance; learning the moves is an entirely different matter.



*KERRY Sports director Michael Montes trying out the rope trainer*

“I have to give it to her. For someone her age, she still has it,” Montes said of Madonna.

Kerry Sports, on the hotel's fifth and sixth levels, is much bigger than Hard Candy, though. The wide spaces, panoramic views and high ceilings instantly set it apart.

By the reception area is the Kerry Sprout, a café with a yogurt bar, salad selection menu, fruit muffin and healthy smoothies and juices.

Behind the café is a water station for free, invigorating, healthy mixes, such as cucumber water or grapefruit mix, formulated to refresh and replenish your system.

Beyond this point are the training zones: Functional Zone, Boxing/MMA Zone, Cardio Zone, Free Weights Zone, Adventure Race Zone and Core Zone.

It has four dedicated studios for group exercises—the Yoga Studio, Pilates Studio, Multipurpose Studio and Spin Studio—with multiple levels so that each student can see the instructor.

Spinning became popular in the country when a dedicated studio opened last year. At Kerry Sports, Montes said you can still enjoy intense spinning classes while having access to the entire facility and other classes as well.

The Boxmaster is a completely new concept of a boxing class. Instead of having boxing instructors with punching mitts, the Boxmaster is like a huge punching bag that mimics the body parts of a human being.



*THE Boxmaster, a boxing-style conditioning class, is predicted to become a huge hit.*

It's boxing-style conditioning, with numbered pads replicating different styles of punching and kicking. Learning is simple, Montes said. When the instructors say "1-3-4," students throw their punches to the corresponding pads.

Women generally attend fitness classes, he said, but he believes the Boxmaster will draw in a good mix of the sexes.

The mat is soft, designed specifically for mixed martial arts training. The class will cover basic boxing movement and conditioning, but it's not going to train you, for instance, to qualify for the Ultimate Fighting Championships.

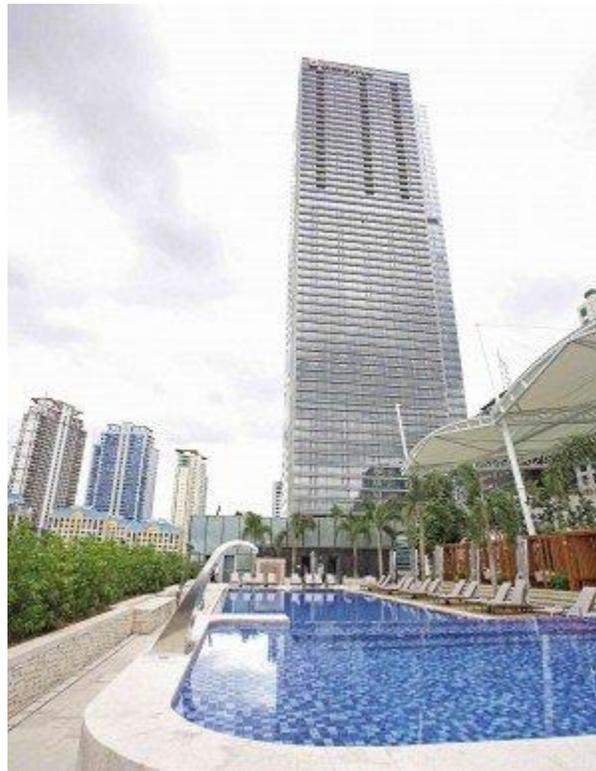
### **Fitness and fun**

"We're here for the fitness and fun part of your lifestyle," Montes said.

Kerry Sports will also be introducing Synrgy 360, circuit training modular machines for a multitude of exercise options and body weights. There are kettlebells, battle rope trainers, core and shoulder machines, rowers, trampolines and weighted balls.

Since more and more Filipinos are joining tri events, Kerry Sports built the Adventure Racing Zone, equipment that mimics the training you get from the great outdoors. You can row, bike, run, climb, pull yourself up, and do core all in one area.

The machine-assisted rope trainer has a seat that sinks unless you start to earnestly pull yourself up with the rope. You need to stack up the weights to match yours, too, so that it simulates the act of pulling yourself up a cliff with a rope.



*KERRY Sports Manila brings in a new era of recreational lifestyle: Stay fit in the Health Club, relax at the Spa, or discover thrills in the Adventure Zone.*

Jacob's Ladder, another feature at the Adventure Racing Zone, simulates going up the mountain.

"We want to cover all areas of exercise as much as possible. Our equipment is the latest and top-of-the-line. I purchased some of them myself," Montes said.

There's also the Arena, an NBA-grade basketball court with multiviewing seats for 200 and American maple wood flooring, digital scoreboard, PA system and separate team lockers, with provisions to set it up for volleyball and badminton tourneys.

A few meters away are two glass-backed squash courts, for a sport that has been steadily gaining popularity among club members in the country for the past five years.

Across the bridge outside, toward the next building, are two covered tennis courts, a 25-meter outdoor lap pool, and The Upper Deck, an outdoor poolside bar/café for light cocktails and snacks.

Children are welcome as well. At the Adventure Zone, a 1,000-sq m area dedicated to kids, there are slides and drops, Role Playing Village, board games, arts and crafts, and even a snack zone café for the little ones. Parents can even opt to hold children-theme parties here.

The Arena is also accepting bookings for events, sporting or otherwise.

Kerry Sports has 40-60 classes scheduled per week. The health club is open 24 hours a day, save for the courts and pools. To open soon is a spa.

*For more info, check out its website, [www.shangri-la.com/fort](http://www.shangri-la.com/fort); call tel. no. 8200888; or e-mail [kerrysportsmanila@shangri-la.com](mailto:kerrysportsmanila@shangri-la.com)*