

Finding Her Inner Fire

Marit Sathrum, Inner Fire Yoga Center

The Madison area has a strong and growing yoga community. While University Avenue's resident studio, Inner Fire, where classes are done in a 100-degree-plus room, has been open since 2002, growth has moved the studio up the road, to a larger, eco-friendly facility featuring sustainable flooring, low-VOC paints and reclaimed building materials, including an expansive front desk from EPIC's former headquarters. Director Marit Sathrum took the time to chat with *BusinessWatch* about the local yoga scene, going green and running a niche business.

—Amanda N. Wegner

How has the local yoga scene changed since you first opened Inner Fire? The national scene?

Yoga has mainstreamed in our society, locally and nationally. People are choosing it more and more as a fitness option over, or in conjunction with, the health club, running, etc. I think that — with all of the negative, stressful things happening in our world, often witnessed in real time on our televisions — people are looking for something “more,” something that has a spiritual component, if you will. Yoga fits this bill. You also will not find dogma at our yoga center.

There are an increasing number of yoga studios and facilities offering yoga in Madison. How does Inner Fire set itself apart?

Inner Fire Yoga is not just a yoga studio but a community center. Our students really get to know each other and feel a kinship with each other. We offer not just yoga classes, but opportunities to learn about related topics, such as nutrition and aromatherapy. We are expanding our service offerings in the coming months to include private therapies (massage therapy, private yoga therapy, etc.), teacher training, weekend workshops by nationally known yoga instructors, retreats, social opportunities and more. We pride ourselves on the strength of our community, as well as the breadth of our services to our community. It is important to mention that our instructors are the best.

What prompted the move to the new studio?

We grew out of our old space. Our new studio is brand-new, custom-designed, spacious and really beautiful. We now have the opportunity to offer two classes at the same time, three private therapy rooms, a lounge area, a larger retail space, and dressing rooms with showers, not to mention great parking.

Why was going green with the new studio important?

The yoga community has always been ahead of the larger community in terms of eco-consciousness. We understand the connection we have as individuals and a community to the health of everyone and everything around us, including our Earth. We also operate our studio as green as we possibly can.



Marit Sathrum

Photo by Amy Lynn Scherck

Online at www.innerfireyogacenter.com

We are working on a plan to offset our carbon usage as a yoga studio, a plan that will engage our community members to action.

Having opened a yoga studio after working in the corporate world, what has the shift offered you personally and professionally?

Running my own small business is much more difficult, time — consuming and stressful than I could have anticipated or can explain. However, I wouldn't change it for the world. It is an honor to provide a vehicle that promotes individual and community wellness. I am thrilled to be an example to my children and others of “doing what you love.” That said, I look forward to the day that I can spend more time teaching and studying yoga (what I really love), and “doing” less business and time — consuming administrative tasks. ■