

# IN FINE FORM

CHRISTOPHE MARCHESSEAU, A MASSAGE AND PHYSICAL THERAPIST WORKING OUT OF ST. BARTH'S, WAS ENLISTED BY THE GRAND-HÔTEL DU CAP-FERRAT TO BRING A PATENTED PHYSICAL TRAINING METHOD, GYROTONIC, INTO THE HEART OF ITS SPA. THE RESULT IS A STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNIQUE FOR TONING THE BODY INTO TOP FORM.

The name Gyrotonic is derived from gyro (circle) and tonic (strength and flexibility). Perhaps what is most remarkable about this method is the fluid and multidimensional movement by which it trains, or retrains, the body's intelligence. It is used for physical rehabilitation as well as for strength training and overall conditioning of highly accomplished athletes and dancers – or for those somewhere in the middle simply looking to tone and refine their form. For the figure-conscious, women particularly have found the Gyrotonic method ideal because it streamlines silhouettes, never overdeveloping or bulking the muscles. It helps everyone, nevertheless, increases energy flow and deal with daily stresses that often become internalised in the body.

As an organic approach to movement, muscles are worked according to their inherent intelligence and coordinated with conscious breathing. Gyrotonic movements facilitate one not to "muscle" the body through space, at which point strains and injuries can occur, but rather to "release" the body through space – meanwhile stretching and

strengthening muscles and tendons as well as articulating and mobilising the joints, in a connected and sequentially integrated manner.

While exercise fads come and go, Gyrotonic mixes too many important and age-old traditions to be taken so lightly. Formulated between studios in St. Thomas and New York City in the 1970s by a former professional ballet dancer, Hungarian-born Juliu Horvath at first called his method "Yoga for Dancers".

Now largely referred to as The Gyrotonic Expansion System, the method integrates and offers many of the benefits found in yoga, dance, gymnastics, swimming and tai chi. It further incorporates advanced machines that use pulleys for constant and smooth resistance. Accompanying a session could well be a massage, Lymphatic drainage and targeted postural exercises for an overall awakening of the body, not to mention the enveloping interior design of the spa. Pristine, clear and calm – tension evaporates.



Photo: Jean-Philippe Pfler