

## Body Ambition Fitness

- ▶ **Address:** 206 S. Main St., Middleton
- ▶ **Hours:** Mondays through Fridays, 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 7 a.m. to noon; Sundays, 8 a.m. to noon
- ▶ **Offerings:** Personal training, group training and classes, nutrition, and competition prep
- ▶ **More information:** 978-304-1043, janelle@bodyambition.com or www.bodyambition.com



Janelle Nicolo-Monteiro poses at Body Ambition Fitness with a sledgehammer, which is used to pound truck tires as a strengthening exercise.



Dawn Bonfanti of Middleton works out with her personal trainer, Janelle Nicolo-Monteiro, at Body Ambition Fitness. Bonfanti started competing in bodybuilding competitions four years ago.

# BUILDING SUCCESS

Fitness pro helps clients shape goals to reach their *'Body Ambition'*

By JILL DIVER

Photos by JIM VAIKNORAS AND PAUL BILODEAU

**T**he proof is in the photos — from beer belly to six-pack abs, from chain smoker to marathon runner — that hang on the walls of Body Ambition Fitness.

The woman behind those major transformations is Janelle Nicolo-Monteiro, a World Beauty Fitness & Fashion professional who opened the Middleton business in January 2014.

At 35, Nicolo-Monteiro has created a space that offers one-of-a-kind fitness and nutrition plans, personal training, and group classes — all in an atmosphere that she says will immediately feel like home.

Best known in the fitness world for her skillful competition coaching — and the sculpting of

rock-hard abdominal muscles — for bodybuilding shows, the Beverly resident helps men and women become stage-ready in a healthy and holistic way.

"My focus for my clients is more show prep-related, but we do have trainers here that focus on weight loss, general fitness, and trainers who work with young athletes for soccer and football," Nicolo-Monteiro says. "We really do run the gamut as far as our clientele goes."

The average person walking through the door of Body Ambition is looking for general fitness, some toning or weight loss, Nicolo-Monteiro says. She will assess each client through a personal training session and find out his or her goals so that she can recommend the best program.

"Sometimes, it's putting them into our classes," she says. "During our trainer-run classes, clients are lifting weights combined with cardio, so they're getting in that fat-burning zone, which gives them results for the hour they're here. We can always pair that with nutrition if that's something they're interested in."

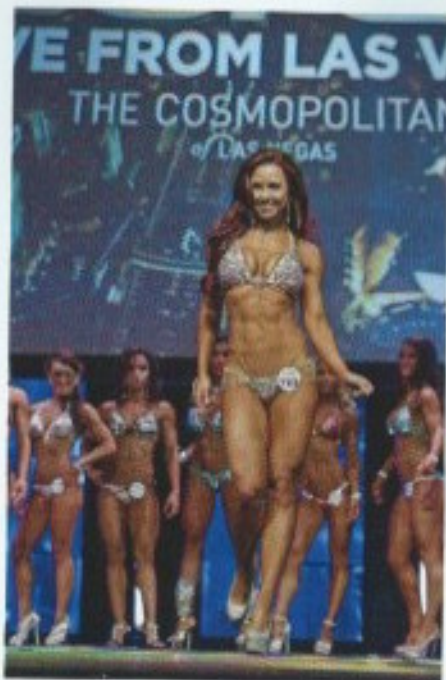
"Other times, it's just a few days of personal training with the staff at BA, and then they work out on their own or go to a spin or yoga class," she says.

The majority of Nicolo-Monteiro's clients are local, but she also offers training through the internet.

"We have a large online presence, so we do online training for lifestyle clients, as well as competition prep clients," she says. "For people looking to compete in the categories of fitness, figure, bikini, or who want to become fitness models — we do all of that through our online programming. If you don't live in the area, we have that option for you."

### Embracing change

While there are often stereotypes attached to the bodybuilding community, it's about more than just growing muscle, Nicolo-Monteiro says. It's about



Courtesy photo

Janelle Nicolo-Monteiro competes at the World Beauty Fitness & Fashion Pro World Championships at The Cosmopolitan in Las Vegas.

the client's growth from the inside out.  
Middleton resident Dawn Bonfanti

started working with Nicolo-Monteiro five years ago. After losing 30 pounds, Bonfanti decided to try competing and has now been doing that for the last four years.

"It's been a great experience. I've learned a lot about how to eat healthy and how to work out," Bonfanti says. "I've been a much healthier person."

It can be hard to kick bad habits and embrace health and fitness as a lifestyle, so clients need to cultivate a positive attitude from the beginning, Nicolo-Monteiro says.

"Are those first few weeks hard? Hell yes, it is," Nicolo-Monteiro says. "But, guarantee, if you stick with it, you're going to succeed."

April Cassidy of Middleton says that her life has "completely changed" since she started attending Nicolo-Monteiro's group classes at Body Ambition.

"Before Janelle, I would sit on Facebook and look at my news feed. I would just waste my time doing a whole lot of nothing," she says. "Now, I'm considering doing competitions, I feel so good about my body and myself, and I've never felt this way."

Cassidy credits her higher energy level

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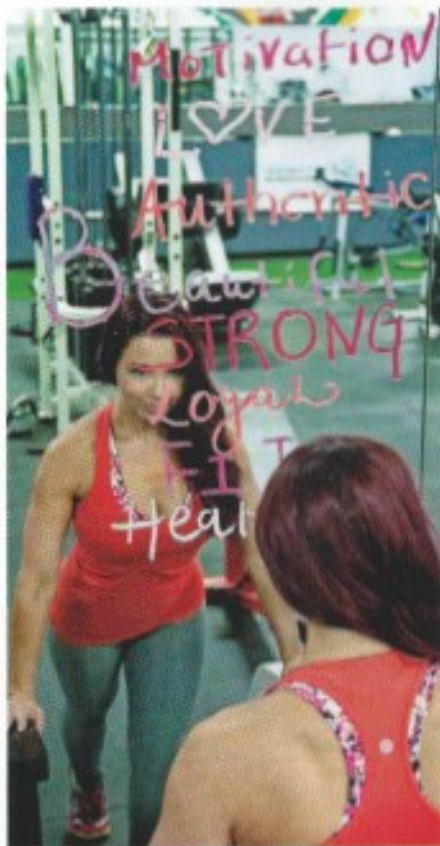


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Janelle Nicolo-Monteiro does squats with kettlebells at Body Ambition Fitness.

and better focus at work to the structure of workouts and nutrition suggestions that Nicolo-Monteiro provides.

"You get hooked when you see changes, and for me, that was in about two months," Cassidy says.

"It can help with numerous things, like depression, grief and stress," Nicolo-Monteiro says. "It's given so many of my clients so much positivity. I think that a lot of our clients have realized this as their careers start to take off because they ended up being confident with their bosses or in that important interview. It's also brought them much success in their life and relationships."

### Bodybuilder equals athlete

Although the public is more educated these days about bodybuilding and fitness, Nicolo-Monteiro says, there are those who say it's not a sport and it's just a beauty pageant. But Nicolo-Monteiro says that her clients should be considered athletes.

"Any sport requires individual dedication and drive and commitment and enthusiasm. Whether you're on a team or working individually, this is exactly what this sport does," she says. "You

work through the struggles and you try to better yourself as you go along, and you learn from everything you put into it. You work to inspire others to be better, not just yourself, and that's exactly what sports do."

The process for the athletes can be grueling, and it can take a client anywhere from eight weeks to six months to become stage-ready.

"Most of the time, when we have clients wanting to do a competition, they've been comfortable in the gym for a little bit; they're not usually clients who don't know what they're doing in the gym," she says. "Sometimes, clients new to the gym and exercising will have that as a long-term goal."

Nicolo-Monteiro calls the process "getting shredded for the stage." The stage-ready body is not one that her clients keep year-round — it's for competition only.

The one thing that Nicolo-Monteiro stresses to everyone with whom she works is that health is always first.

"Everybody is different. It depends on the person and their goals, but I'm not going to diet someone for a show if they're not even taking in enough calories or macronutrients or are not eating right,"

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she says. "I'll tell them if I think they're ready for the stage and how to do it the healthy and right way so they don't crash and burn after the show."

"I don't want this to just be a goal," she says. "I want them to make this a lifetime thing and help them to understand how their body works, what works for them nutritionally, so in the long term, they can stay fit and healthy and not worry about always being in a dieting phase."

Competition prep is a different ball game than just weight loss, Nicolo-Monteiro says.

"There's a little bit of a science to it," she says. "You have to make sure, as I like to say, you feed the machine and you train and eat accordingly to your goals."

Nicolo-Monteiro says sticking to that science is the reason that she's been able to compete for the last 10 years, culminating when she received her WBFF Fitness Model Pro card in 2013.

"I don't have those fluctuations, and I know what works for my body," she says. "It's more holistic and nothing too extreme."

## Teaming up

When Nicolo-Monteiro first started



Janelle Nicolo-Monteiro poses among the free weights at her business, Body Ambition Fitness.

competing, she was on a team that helped make it more fun for her. Remembering that experience, she created a private

team page on Facebook that includes her lifestyle and competition prep clients.

"When you have a team, they can



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support and totally understand exactly what you're going through on days that are hard or when you have children and have to come home and do a lift for an hour," she says. "There's a great individual aspect to competing. However, having a team beside you will make it so much more enjoyable and rewarding."

Team members can count on always having someone to understand exactly what they are going through, Nicolo-Monteiro says. She calls it a "fitness family."

"We are a family, and it doesn't matter what age you are or where you've come from, or if you were an athlete in the past," she says. "You all have this common goal, and you push each other to better yourself."

With a full roster of clients, Nicolo-Monteiro says that Body Ambition welcomes everyone from the exercise newcomer to the mom trying to lose baby weight to seasoned lifters.

"We all know each other, and there's nothing quite like working out next to someone that has goals like you do," she says. "It takes a little while to get excited about working out, but we have the support and we won't let you fail." ▲

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