

# Outdoor yoga classes a hit at Royal Poinciana Plaza

NEWS By Matt Morgan - Daily News Staff Writer



Holly Weston, owner of Haute Yoga, teaches a free class on the courtyard at Royal Poinciana Plaza. The plaza management pushed hard to get the council to approve outdoor events like yoga. (Allen Eyestone / Daily News)

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Experienced and new yoga students alike say they feel a different energy when they are doing the poses outside rather than on a hard wood floor in an air-conditioned room.

That's why many Haute Yoga students were thrilled when the Palm Beach Town Council [approved Royal Poinciana Plaza's request to allow outdoor events](#) like yoga in the shopping district's courtyard.

"There's nothing better than going into a sun salutation and looking into the sky," said Mary Gocke, a New York resident recently visiting the island.

Representatives from Up Markets, the plaza's long-term leaseholders, told the Town Council that customers were clamoring for the outdoor events — and this yoga class at least showed that.

Monica Spilotro, a Palm Beach resident, said it's nice to spend time outside on a beautiful day rather than being cooped up inside practicing next to an air-conditioning unit.

"It's very healthy. It's very spiritual. It's very peaceful," she said.

And the events don't stop with yoga.

The plaza recently [held an Easter Egg Hunt](#) to celebrate the holiday, and management is planning even more to liven up the warmer, quieter summer months.

"This summer we are looking forward to expanding our courtyard series with music, backgammon, petanque, art classes, story time and yoga, among other activities," said Plaza Manager Lori Berg.

[Haute Yoga](#) owner Holly Weston said she was thrilled when outdoor yoga was approved.

Weston opened her studio in Royal Poinciana Plaza five years ago — when it was just "real estate and hair salons" — long before Up Markets renovated the place into the bustling retail hub it is today, she said.

She has two other locations — in downtown West Palm Beach and in Jupiter — and is a veteran of offering outdoor classes. Her outdoor West Palm Beach sessions get as many as 70 people, so she was excited to see what could be done on the island.

"We needed it in Palm Beach," she said. "Everyone loves being outside. We have beautiful weather, and there is nothing like this."

For now, the outdoor class, which typically attracts 25-30 people, is being offered at 9 a.m. Thursdays. It's free, but students are asked to bring their own mats.

Overall, she said she's overjoyed with the renovations at the plaza and is eager to see how interest in the plaza continues to grow.

"I'm obsessed with it," Weston said of the plaza. "I'm here every day, whether it's eating or shopping."

