

# THIS AIN'T YOUR MAMA'S SPIN CLASS

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Photos by Michael John Murphy

Can you believe that it's been almost 40 years since Johnny G invented Spinning® in the 1980's? The hair, the music, the legwarmers—and spin classes!—were big trends of the decade, the latter of whose popularity has been stronger than ever. On the heels of the demand for a new-age spin class, Black Sheep Studios (nestled in the old Sink R Swim location at 11101 Long Beach Blvd in Haven Beach) nails it once again, with a cult-like following, offering the most exciting, heart-pounding, sweat-drenching workout of your life with Cyclopedia. Get ready to learn more, because this ain't your mama's spin class.



DEVON TAYLOR KARVAN



KACIE FIDLER



ANGELA BERNABEO



JENNIFER ERRICKSON

"We can guarantee that you haven't taken a spin class like this before," shares Devon Karvan, founder of Black Sheep. "I can tell you I used to run a lot, but when it started bothering my knees, the solution was spinning because it's so low impact without sacrificing any of the intensity," continues the fitness studio owner, who acknowledges the ability to work hard on a spin bike without hurting your joints—helping you focus on results instead of the fear of potential injuries. The dancer-turned-skateboarder/surfer-turned-fitness instructor now adds successful entrepreneur to her résumé. Having opened her first studio with four spin bikes in a tiny sublet space in 2016, she would have never imagined that her fourth year in business would already include employing almost two dozen instructors and having classes sell-out daily.

One of the most important factors that sets her studio's Cyclopedia class apart from an average spin class is that Black Sheep is equipped with state-of-the-art RealRyder® indoor cycles. At first, they may look like your run-of-the-mill indoor stationary spin bikes, but RealRyder's greatest distinction is that it enables riders to actually tilt, lean and rock the bike—resulting in a workout that not only targets your hamstrings and glutes but your quads, entire midsection, triceps, shoulders and

back as well. Riding a RealRyder bike requires balance, coordination and nonstop core engagement, and pedaling out of the saddle (a.k.a. standing) on a RealRyder requires full-body integrated movement to balance and control the movement of the bike. The cycle's pivot points allow the RealRyder to rock back and forth, lean and turn like a real bike, and the actual bike geometry adds to the real cycling feel.

"We tell new people to come in early so we can fit them on their bikes," shares Angela Bernabeo, a certified personal trainer and one of the instructors of the wildly popular Cyclopedia classes. "This will benefit them two-fold, as first it will allow them to be positioned properly on the bike, and secondly, it will make their experience more focused on the 'ryde' with less stressing about the technicalities," she adds. Bernabeo shares that instructors prefer newcomers "ryde" within their capability until they get a few "rydes" in and become a bit more comfortable with the bikes. After that point, they push class takers to challenge themselves and their perceived abilities, ultimately resulting in an addictive sense of accomplishment after they've experienced how far they can truly push themselves beyond their preconceived limits.



Kacie Fidler, another CPT and instructor of the class, dishes about the atmosphere of the acclaimed classes,

“all of Black Sheep’s classes are unique, exciting and challenging in their own right, but there’s just something about our cycling classes—the music, the dark room, the black lights, the excited [screaming]instructors—it’s exhilarating. It’s as much of an experience as it is an awesome workout,”

she notes while describing the studio as a dark, yet energizing oasis that many students describe as invigorating.



Jennifer Errickson, also a CPT and one of the studios spin instructors, elaborates on the addictive allure of the spinning phenomena. “I love to spin because it burns off the crazy and creates an intense vibe and connection with the music and spinners... it pumps you up, motivates and affects you emotionally, physically and mentally, allowing you to lose yourself and release so much pent up energy, frustration, and whatever else you’re feeling—leaving all the BS behind. There’s something about riding with a large energetic group in a black lit room with crazy tunes blaring; you can’t help but let out your inner baaa’d ass... spin totally inspires and motivates you to push yourself to the limits—it’s YOU vs. YOU!” she shares.

Errickson goes on to say that upon taking the class, clients should expect to feel challenged; they will be pushed beyond the boundaries of their comfort zone, their limits and beyond. Overcoming mental plateaus is an added bonus to the physical workout as clients often realize they have so much potential and can do one more climb, can actually hang on for one more minute, and are able to get completely through the intensely butt-kicking class. In the end, Errickson shares, “They feel energized, excited, exerted—but happy! It is a positive experience that leaves clients feeling incredibly motivated, inspired, and on cloud nine—and wanting to come back for more.” She notes that students often feel as if they’re

getting closer to their fitness goals, and feel freer with a balanced mind, body, and soul. “As their instructor, I want them to have fun, but know they worked out; I want them to burn off all of the bottled-up emotions, find and unleash their inner baaa’dass!”

Key benefits of taking the Cyclopedia include increased core strength and stability, challenge balance and recruit more muscles during leaning and steering to burn approximately 150 more calories compared to a conventional stationary bike. Devon Karvan confirms that an average of 850 calories are burned for every hour of spin class. Swoon. “The class and these cycles are designed as functional bikes to increase core strength and stability, to challenge balance coordination, to correct muscle imbalances and joint mobility. And the icing on the cake (also so we can eat the cake) is that you can burn up to 20% more calories than that of other bikes out there,” notes Angela. “Aside from the obvious cardiovascular, endurance and strength benefits, the benefits go way beyond just physical... pushing yourself to finish a climb or a sprint and finding out that you actually can do it... it’s almost like a natural high,” adds Kacie.

So, if you would like to escape to Black Sheep’s black lit room and pedal to the beat of their hand-picked music selection, give their popular spin class a try. As the class description promises, “The bike doesn’t leave the ground, but our instructors will take you for a ride.”

