

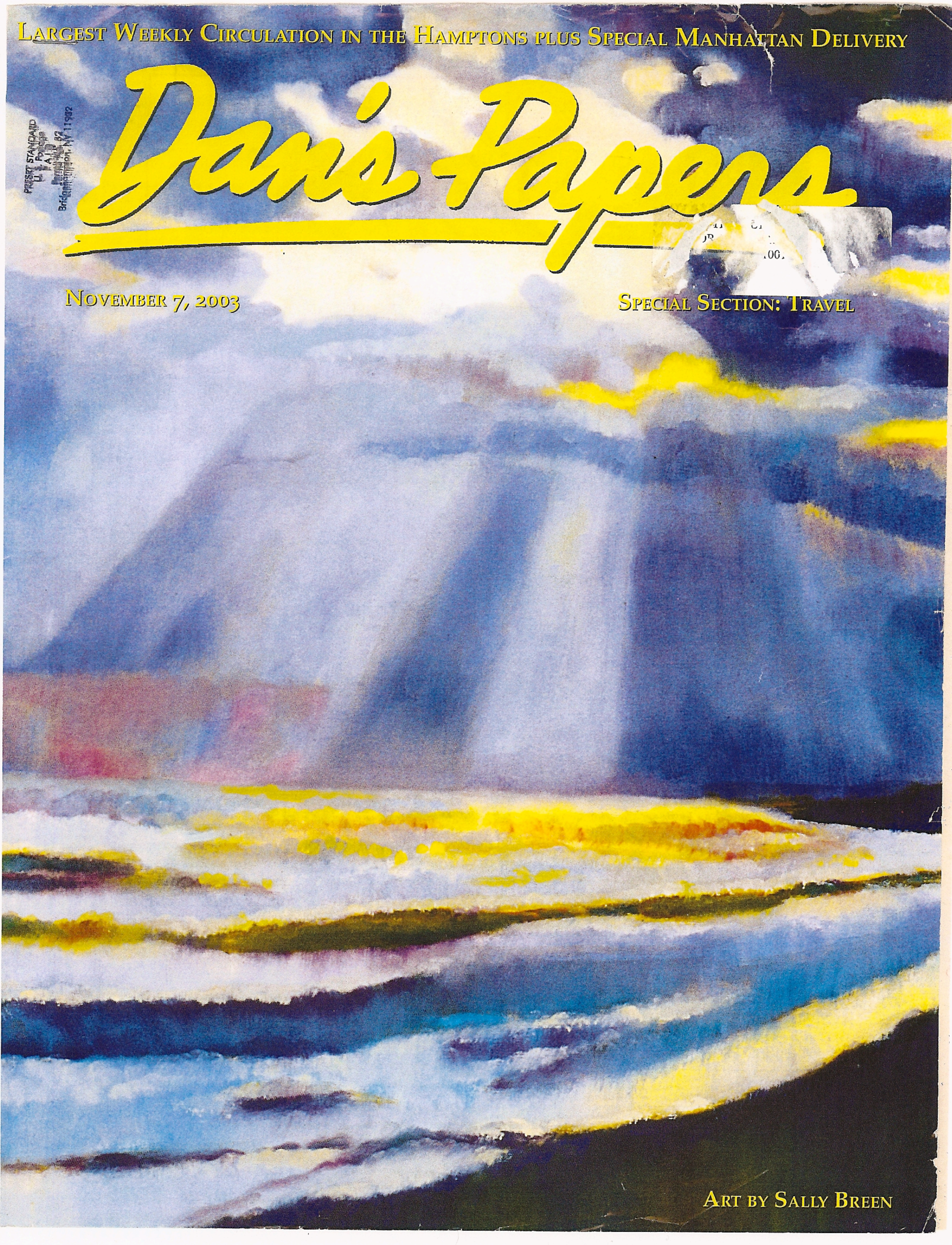
LARGEST WEEKLY CIRCULATION IN THE HAMPTONS PLUS SPECIAL MANHATTAN DELIVERY

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# Dani's Papers

NOVEMBER 7, 2003

SPECIAL SECTION: TRAVEL



ART BY SALLY BREEN

# HEALTH & BEAUTY

## Skin deep with Samantha Altea

### Pilates, the oldest-new trend in town

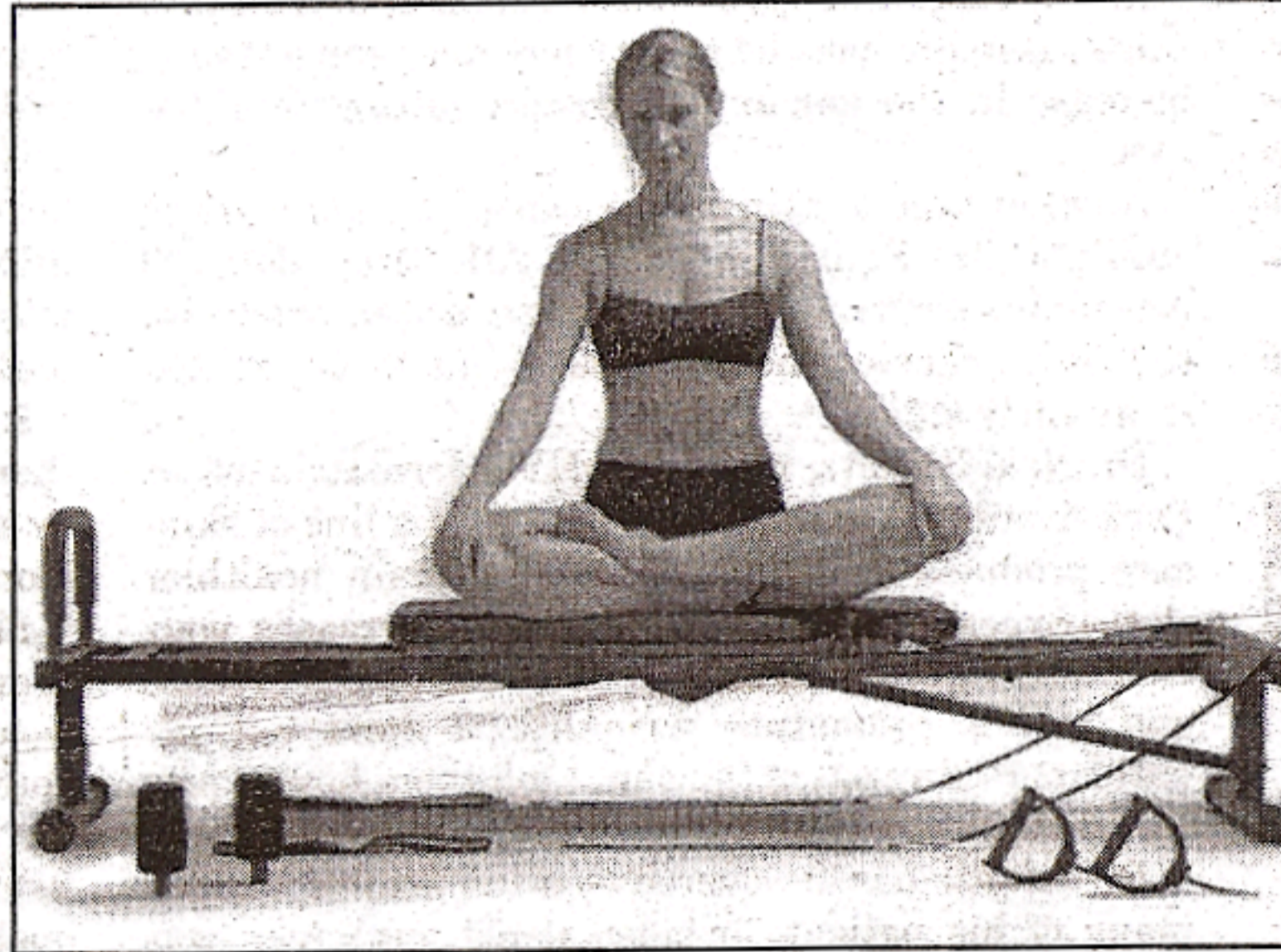
Looking for a low impact workout regime to bring mind and body together in perfect harmony? Well, look no further. Move over yoga, because the buzzword flying around Hollywood, and off the lips of those in the "know" is Pilates. But here's the scoop. Though hipsters may think that they are on the cutting edge of what's new and cool, the real story is that Pilates was invented over 80 years ago. Joseph Pilates came up with the concept when, as a young man, he encountered health issues and in an endeavor to deal with his own physical frailty, began to study and became intrigued with the human form. Early on in his search, Pilates began strengthening his own body with his workout regime and his practices have been doing the same for others ever since.

So what is Pilates? And more to the point, what's all the fuss about?

"Pilates is a total mind and body conditioning system," says Jeannette Davis-Esposito, from Symmetry Studios in Southampton. It's about learning to control your body and build strength in it, and a strong body means a beautiful, healthy body. What's more, if you're not a high impact exercise person, "no impact" Pilates could be for you. You can do it regardless of age or fitness level. But why do it? The potential mind-body benefits of Pilates are numerous and include improved breathing and posture, increased strength and flexibility, enhanced mind-body awareness, and prevention of future injury. "It takes about 10 sessions to feel better, 20 to look better, and in 30 sessions have a completely

new body," says Jeanette.

Sounds great, but how does Pilates work? Joseph Pilates initial research was based around a mat, which is why people often associate Pilates with



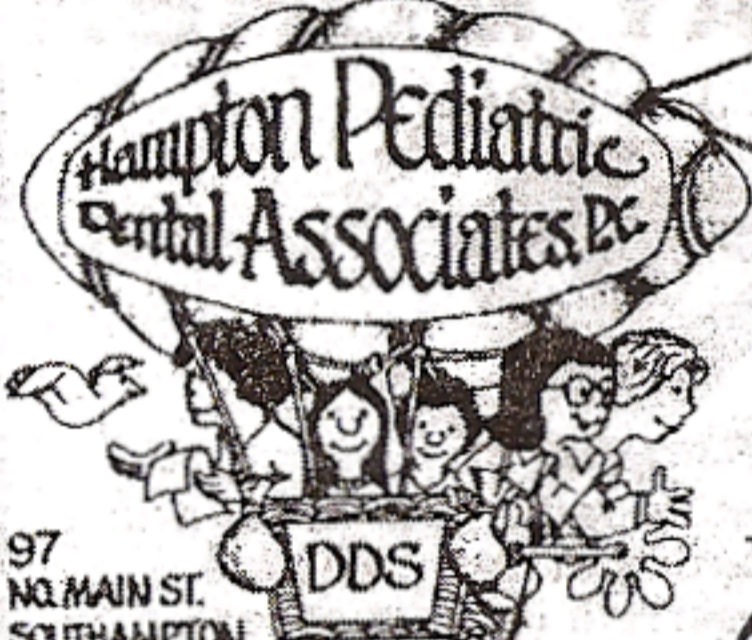
yoga. So there's something known as "matwork." This is also called "contrology," meaning that one learns to contort one's body while lying on the floor and build up a routine of fluid movements. While tending to patients in a hospital during WWI, Pilates devised elaborate equipment for a workout regime. He used spring tension with straps to hold their feet or hands, and supports for back, neck and shoulders. Today, during part of a Pilates workout, people still lie on bed-like equipment as they once

did. Nothing like exercising while being comfortable, right?

But if you're not someone who just likes to laze around in bed - you're more of a power house, who'd rather spend time hanging out in style - you can still switch gears to a Pilates workout. Intrigued? Well, the primary parts of the body worked on in Pilates are what's known as your "power house." Your power house being the back, torso, stomach, hips and buttocks. The belief is that once these middle core elements are strong and centered, then the rest of the body will be easier to sculpt. Strengthening your "power house" can be done with mat work. But workouts can also incorporate varied equipment, with names like the transformer, the barrel and, for that *je ne sais quoi* - "The Cadillac." There's no slumming it in a chic Pilates class, though I'm not too sure about the sound of the barrel. Nonetheless, this stylish equipment both challenges and supports the body, while you make controlled, Zen-like flowing movements.

It sounds like an intriguing exercise regimen, but I asked newcomer to Pilates, Kristi Roche, what she really thought. "It's fantastic, I really felt calmer; the movements were exact and challenging, but do-able. I was a yoga fan, but this is fun, too. I LOVED all the wild equipment. I'll definitely do it again," she says.

So you're a mere 80 years late with this "new" Pilates trend? Well, better late than never. Why not test-drive a Pilates "Caddy" today, and get on route to a new healthy you.



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