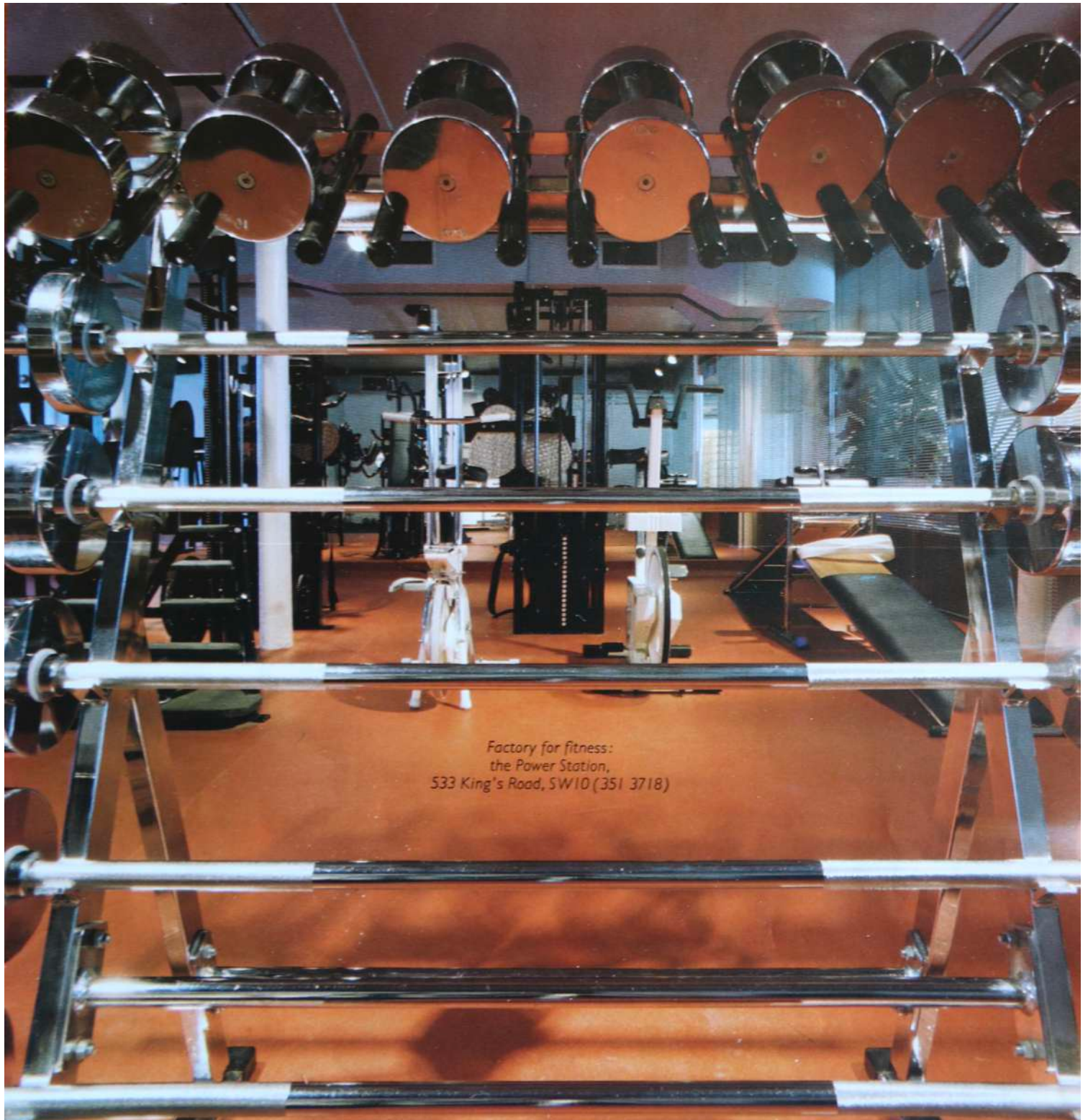


**UK HARPERS & QUEEN MAGAZINE - POWER STATION,
LONDON - 1984**

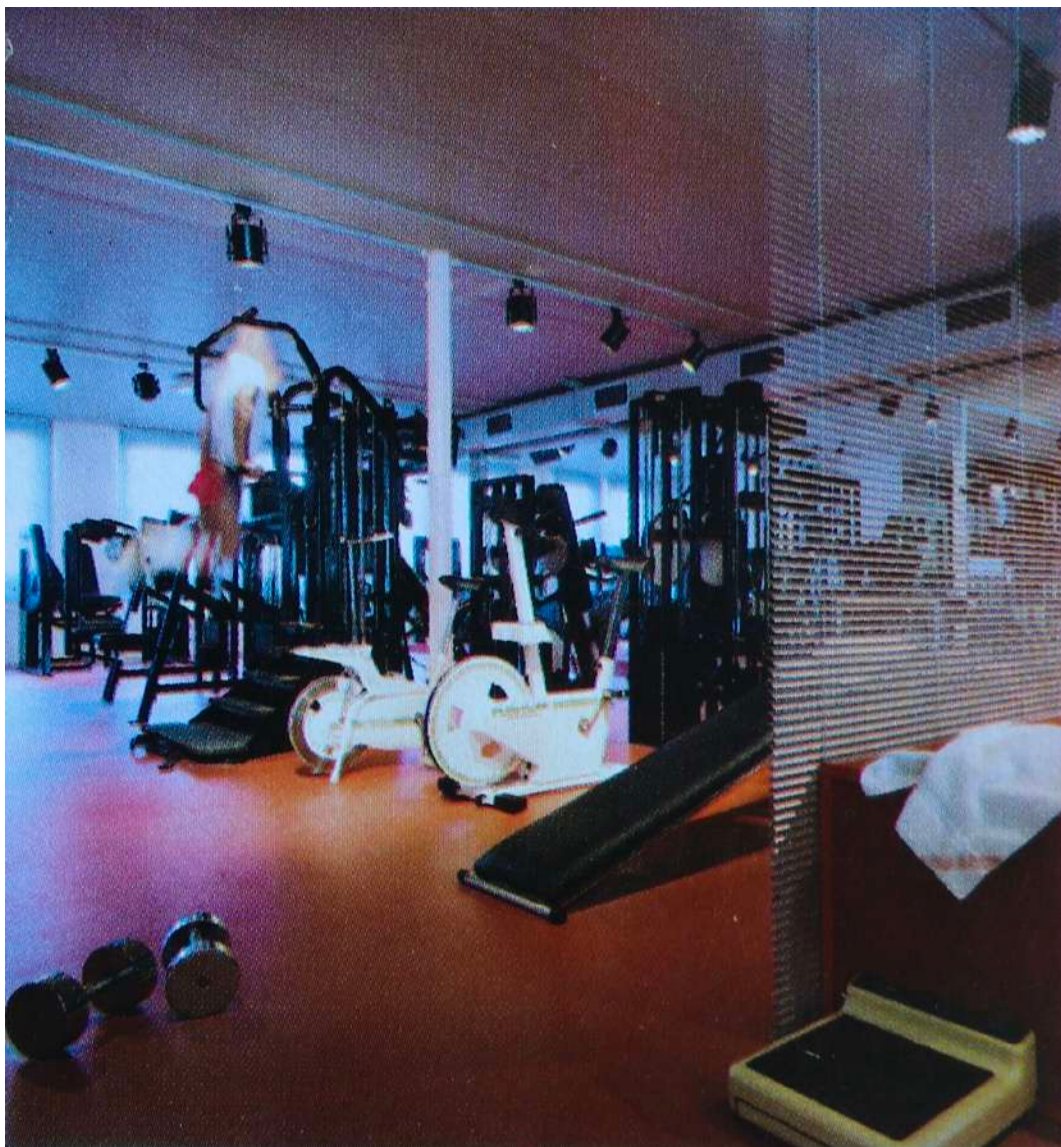


*Factory for fitness:
the Power Station,
533 King's Road, SW10 (351 3718)*

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London SW10

A short jog up the road, the **Power Station**, a men-only gym designed by Derek Frost (ex-Mary Fox Linton, now of Derek Frost Associates) is a different, rather cast-iron, kettle of fish. With an exercise programme based on weight-training with both free weights like the almost totemically arranged and dazzlingly chromed Olympic free weights (above) and the complete Nautilus range of weight machines, the atmosphere is mechanistic – a factory for fitness full of unconscious reference to the machine age aesthetic of Léger's paintings.

As in the Chelsea Dance Studios though, the practical and the decorative merge frequently. The sensibly spartan Altro safety flooring has



been used throughout, providing a vital non-slip surface, but also unifying the various areas of the gym and even turning up as a decorative covering applied to a series of rectangular benches (right). The apparent simplicity of the power station – it looks like a basic machine hall made glamorous – conceals a tremendous artfulness in space planning as a large amount of facilities are crammed into a tight 3,200 square-foot site on the third floor of a Victorian wine warehouse.

The Power Station is more than just a gym and owner Jeremy Norman very much wants to 'build up the social side of the club'. So unusually, for a health club, there is a large (42 ft long) bar which flogs hard stuff as well as fruit juice, and the bar and work-out area are plainly but elegantly separated by brushed aluminium Venetian blinds which give the optimum combination of spatial flow and a decent amount of privacy to drinkers and





Lift weights or lift the elbow; the bar and the work-out area are elegantly separated.

weight-lifters alike. For wild parties the blinds can be lifted and the rectangular benches moved aside to create a generous area of open floor space. Perhaps the most stunning feature of the club is the 'house within a house' glass blocked shower unit (right) around which the other facilities of the wet area – whirlpool, sauna and locker rooms – are orientated. All this water in a building whose lower floors house antique dealers is no joke, and the whole area has been tanked out – that is, asphalt-coated water traps have been built beneath the floor to prevent embarrassing and costly floods.

Although Chelsea Dance Studios and the Power Station take completely different approaches to physical fitness they both intend, and succeed at, creating dramatic and delightful spaces which are efficient and good-humoured – as much for hanging-out as for working out.

