

# THE LOOP BIZ

BY CHRIS KELLY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE SOEFER  
AND DEBORA SMAIL



MAN WITH THE PLAN Lutwak at Crome

## YOUNG URBAN PRO

*What's a guy do after his H-Town gym and club concepts explode? California dream...*

Four years ago, Scott Lutwak was neither in the fitness nor entertainment biz, but now he's an undisputed titan in both. His stunningly successful gym, Fit, is poised to open a second location in San Diego and will soon expand to at least one new locale in Houston. Lutwak's nightclub, Crome, is one of the hottest scenes in town (with plans for future expansion to other cities), and Lutwak is simultaneously developing a new restaurant in Midtown while launching a weekly Museum District pool-party concept that is a first in Houston. And it's all come as a bit of surprise to the man himself.

"If someone had told me a week before I decided to open a gym that this was what I was going to do, I would have thought he was crazy," laughs Lutwak, taking a swig of his smoothie in the sleek café section of the upscale health club he launched for the young-and-the-restless-and-the-successful.

Lutwak, 40, looks every bit the surfer-type with bronzed skin, longish silver-streaked hair and a sturdy build that clearly benefits from workouts at his gym. Although he's constantly surrounded by the sexy, sculpted bodies of his female members, Lutwak is a one-woman man who declines to discuss his girlfriend beyond noting, "She's great." And she must be patient and low-maintenance, as well, because Lutwak is in perpetual motion, overseeing several major projects at once while dreaming up new ones at a quick clip even the instructors in his spinning classes would admire.

It all started in 2004 as Lutwak's loft overlooked the former site of the Cineplex Odeon in River Oaks Plaza. And when the space became vacant, he dropped by to take a look. "Immediately, I saw that it was the

perfect location for a fitness center," Lutwak recalls. "All this open area for equipment and 270 parking spaces right in the heart of where single urban professionals lived. I made the decision right on the spot."

Although he had no experience in the health club business at the time, Lutwak had founded restaurant.com seven years earlier, a national restaurant marketing firm which had flourished, in great measure, because he followed his hunches. "Look, I graduated from the University of Oklahoma in business, but just barely," confides Lutwak. "But once I got out into the world, I realized that I just had this knack for making deals work."

In the maverick tradition of former Houstonian John Mackey, who co-founded Whole Foods on the belief that people wanted a hip shopping experience when they bought organic groceries, Lutwak