https://www.nola.com/news/business/marucci-sports-to-open-hitters-house-in-new-orleans/article_db47a1be-2746-11ef-99f5-ef3b64777799.html

Baton Rouge's Marucci Sports to open first New Orleans area 'Hitter's House' outlet

The Airline Drive complex will offer membership with 24-hour access to batting cages.

BY ANTHONY MCAULEY | Staff writer
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Marucci Sports manufactures wood bats for Major League Baseball teams across the country. It also sells metal bats produced overseas.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARUCCI SPORTS

Fast-growing Baton Rouge-based Marucci Sports, one of the top baseball bat makers in the U.S., said it will soon open its first New Orleans area "experiential" retail outlet, which will include batting cages open 24 hours a day for fee-paying members.

The new Marucci Hitter's House will be located at 1801 Airline Drive in Metairie in an 11,000-square-foot warehouse-like facility that will include seven batting cages.

The company said the official opening would be "late summer," but they didn't yet have a specific date.

Roll-up strategy

Kurt Ainsworth, 45, a former LSU pitcher whose Major League Baseball career was marred by injuries, started the Marucci Bat Co. with former LSU athletic trainer Jack Marucci in 2004.

In 2009, Ainsworth joined with Joe Lawrence, also a former LSU player who had a stint with the Toronto Blue Jays, and former assistant White House Press Secretary, Reed Dickens, to found Marucci Sports.

Marucci Sports acquired the Marucci Bat Co. in 2011 and later the Victus and Baum bat brands, and Lizard Skins, which makes bat tape, gloves and other products.

Marucci grew quickly through acquisition, endorsement deals and clever marketing and has overtaken the maker of the Louisville Slugger to claim the crown as top supplier of bats to Major League Baseball teams. On Friday, Marucci and Victus announced they would become the official bats of MLB starting in January.

Compass Diversified Holdings, a publicly traded investment company, bought Marucci for $200 million in 2020 and expanded its product line and retail network, opening outlets across the country.

Marucci was sold again in November, to Fox Factory Holding Corp., a sports equipment maker based in Duluth, Georgia, for $572 million. Fox said it plans to continue Marucci's growth strategy.

Marucci now has 10 locations, including the hometown spot in Baton Rouge and one in Lafayette; three in Texas, at Austin, Cedar Park, and Houston; and others in Denver, Las Vegas, the Ozarks in Missouri, Orlando, Phoenix, and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The first international outlet is due to open this month in Japan, the company said.

“Expanding our Louisiana footprint into New Orleans was an obvious decision,” said Ainsworth, who has remained as Marucci's CEO through its changes of ownership. “There is a lot of baseball and softball talent in

and around the New Orleans area."

Early bird offer

Any visitor to the Hitter's House facility can test out Marucci baseball and softball products for free during regular operating hours, which are from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. in Baton Rouge.

Membership gives 24/7 access to the batting cages as well as product discounts, Marucci said in a news release announcing the New Orleans outlet's opening.

There is a $50 per month "early bird" membership offer and various other pricing options.

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