

## # 22 Frama Martial Arts

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Today, we are publishing **the 22nd in a series of stories** focusing on Commercial Center as written by noted long-time Las Vegas journalist, Diane Taylor

**In this article, Diane visits FRAMA Martial Arts Studio for a discussion with its owner, Angel:**

- *What is the unique business strategy behind this successful Commercial Center enterprise?*
- *What is the age range of people who take classes there?*
- *Why did the owner, Angel, decide to move from Cuba to Las Vegas? You won't guess this one!*

Read on and find out...just by scrolling down in this email.

Thanks again to Diane for her continued help with uncovering the fascinating stories that live throughout Commercial Center every day.

FRAMA Martial Arts Exterior



A class in progress at Angel's FRAMA studios



Angel's studio is fully equipped for fitness and Martial Arts classes.



FRAMA Martial Arts Studios Owner Angel Montes Oca



### **An Angel At Home with Instructors**

Angel Montes Oca rents a Commercial Center building whose sign in large letters says “Martial Arts”. In smaller letters, we read “FRAMA Studios for Rent.” The sign also has an illustration defining FRAMA: “Fitness-Related Activities and Martial Arts”.

Does that mean Angel is looking for students? No indeed. Angel is looking for “instructors” in martial arts and fitness, and THEY bring the students.

Angel explains that being in martial arts is a passion and many of the people with that passion want to open their own studios. But, that can be expensive in terms of rent, insurance, utilities, etc. “Some folks end up with studios in their garages. Other folks simply lose money and quit. And some instructors stay in business, but don’t really make money; they teach because of their passion.”

Then comes Angel Montes Oca, a Martial Arts student since childhood in Cuba. He arrived in the United States at age 27 and, when US immigration gave him a choice of

cities to become his home, he chose Las Vegas. He had seen the movie *Casino* more than once and had fallen in love with this city.

By the way, Angel knew enough English to get by because he had previously had a Cuban girlfriend who was an English teacher.

In Las Vegas, Angel started work in a casino, first as a coin runner, then as a trained casino dealer and finally as a restaurant bus person and later a waiter. For the past 15 years, he has been a waiter at Aria Resort and Casino.

Angel also kept up with the Martial Arts, especially with a local entertainer, musician and martial arts instructor, Jimmy Lockett. Angel had a dream to have his own studio, but he knew how difficult that was. When he got the idea to simply have a studio that other instructors could rent, Jimmy said, "Great idea, but you are crazy!"

Looking for a studio location took Angel almost two years. Some places had the right location, but the wrong landlord rules. Other places had the right rules but wrong location. COVID then entered the picture and put a stop to everything.

Finally, Angel came to Commercial Center and was talking about the rental of a building that had been a former sports facility. The conversation lagged; Angel rode past his current location and saw a For Rent sign. He inquired and ultimately moved in. His new studio, fully equipped, opened in February of 2022.

Angel knew some instructors from his time in Las Vegas, but new ones were welcomed via advertising he placed, as well. He gave a free class to potential instructors to see how their students would react.

Instructors can rent the full facility or rent half-spaces for smaller classes. Because Las Vegas is a 24-hour town, the times to be reserved are fluid. Instructors were given keys to the facility for classes. And, yes, they are also required to have their own insurance before renting a space.

Students at the Commercial Center Martial Arts Studio range in age from children to adults. Angel himself teaches a children's class three times a week, emphasizing striking and conditioning.

Today, Angel is a happy man. He still holds his waiter's job at Aria. He lives with a lady named YeYa and has a 12-year-old son. He has healed from lumbar spine fusion

surgery. And, he's not done yet. In fact, he is in the planning stages of taking on an after-school and summer project for kids combining art and fitness.

Angel is full of energy and enthusiasm. He says he is one lucky man. He even calls himself (just sometimes) a spoiled brat!

Angel's dream is definitely coming true.