

# The Evolution of a Better Idea: A Blast of Colors In The Weight Room



by Chet Groskreutz,  
Vice-President of Sales and Marketing

*Note: The Ivanko articles, normally written by Tom Lincir, take care to document the history behind the products that you see today. Knowing what has gone right and wrong in the past helps in understanding the strengths and limitations of today's choices in materials, fabrication, assembly, and finishing. Overall, this promises more informed and intelligent buying decisions, and advances higher standards in safety, durability, and member appreciation. This article by Chet Groskreutz is a little different because it has only about a year of recent history to report, but it points out that some opportunities can be right under your nose.*

For about a year now, members of selected health clubs in the UK have been waiting their turn to use Ivanko red, yellow, and blue colored E-Z Lift plates while the gray and black plates sit idle. Watching this phenomenon unfold in it's UK test, Ivanko has realized something that should have been obvious to everyone all along. The same level of aesthetics that members appreciate in furnishings and equipment throughout the club are appreciated just as much in the weight training area. So, the popularity of these plates now demonstrated across the "big pond", is about to be introduced into American clubs, bringing a fresh new blast of color and excitement to the weight training environment. This is the story of how this concept has evolved.

In marketing its products in 57 countries worldwide, Ivanko has always received a wealth of new ideas and input

from its international customers. The company is constantly evaluating and testing new ways to serve the marketplace better with innovations in product safety and in the workout experience. About three years ago a European customer began placing orders for Ivanko's Olympic calibrated bumper plates, which are normally intended only for international competition. These plates are significantly more expensive than conventional ones because they must be precisely calibrated to within 10 grams of weight accuracy. So, we wondered why clubs were buying our most expensive plates for non-competitive use. When we asked them, they told us it was for the appearance. These particular plates just happened to come in bright colors, and the clubs thought their splashy high tech good looks would make a positive statement to their members. And they didn't care that they cost a quite a bit more.

*"Looking back, we should have known that members who love aesthetics everywhere else in the club would naturally want the same thing in the weight training area".*

Then the light bulb went off! Why not develop a line of more affordably priced colored plates and try them out in some additional European clubs? The products were developed, and a special



Clubs thought the splashy high tech look of Ivanko's calibrated Olympic plates would make a positive statement to their members.



The popularity of Ivanko's new plates in the UK is coming soon to America, bringing a fresh blast of color and excitement into the weight training environment.

production run of a container quantity was shipped to the UK last year. To be honest, the member response took us a little by surprise at first. Seldom have we seen a new idea receive such enthusiastic response. But looking back, we should have known that members who love aesthetics everywhere else in the club would naturally want the same thing in the weight training area.

Ivanko's new colored E-Z Lift line is built around the popular seven-hole grip design, which is said to be the most beautiful Olympic plate design Ivanko has ever manufactured. The explanation for this comes from Robert Reiff, a photographer recognized by his peers nationally as the preeminent expert in lighting. He explains that the Ivanko E-Z plate looks so good to people because the seven large holes allow a great deal of light to pass through. This brings out a multitude of visual highlights and accents in the plate, and in the weight

training area, that you don't get with fewer openings, or smaller ones. Having selected the design, Ivanko elected to rubber coat the plates because rubber is easier on club equipment, and in our experience, nothing protects like rubber. Although there have been colored plates in Europe in the past, none have combined E-Z Lift's good looks with colors this brilliant and crisp.

A key challenge has been to achieve brilliance and clarity in colored rubber coatings. Black is easy, but rubber does not as readily integrate with colored dyes. When Ivanko first began to create colored rubber coatings 18 years ago, a great deal of research and development went into finding the right combination of rubber formulation and dye chemistry. And getting the formula right is only half the battle. You also have to make sure the colors hold their consistency from one production run to the next, so that as clubs add more plates down the road, the colors match.

*"With Ivanko's new plates, for about the cost of a couple of new cardio machines, a club can bring a blast of vibrant color to their entire weight area".*

Clubs in the U.S. are no different from European clubs in one important respect. All clubs know they need to keep the overall environment and the workout experience fresh and exciting. This is important in recruiting new members and keeping existing ones from dropping out or being lured away by flashier clubs. This is why clubs make ongoing investments in new equipment and surroundings. With Ivanko's new plates, for about the cost of a couple of new cardio machines, a club can bring a

blast of vibrant color to their entire weight area, generating visual excitement and a fresh feel to the surroundings. Now when members enter the weight room, they don't have to leave their love of aesthetics behind.

*Ivanko Barbell Company was founded in 1967 by Tom Lincir, President, and it is the leading provider of professional and*

*commercial grade barbell and dumbbell products worldwide. Your comments or questions are welcome. Write Chet Groskreutz, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Ivanko Barbell Company, P.O. Box 1470, San Pedro, CA U.S.A. 90733. Or phone (310) 514-1155, fax (310) 514-1363, or email [chet@ivankobarbell.com](mailto:chet@ivankobarbell.com).*

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