





**RON MATZ**  
GERMAN POWERHOUSE

CLASSIC MUSCLE  
**LOOKING BACK**



**DURING THE 1980s,** the muscular attraction of Gold's Gym in Venice, California knew no bounds. Bodybuilders of all sizes and descriptions came from every part of the world to lap up the atmosphere of true hard core muscle building. Some of them came for three or four weeks at a time just to get themselves in awe inspiring condition for their forthcoming bodybuilding contest. Some simply came to visit, but never went back.

When Gold's gym first opened its doors many moons before, they reckoned that they had a truly hard core membership of no more than 500. By the time the 1980s arrived, they had an overall body count membership of 5,000! But the most astonishing fact was that the same hard core bodybuilding membership remained at 500. So, who were the other 4,500 members? They were movie actors trying to get in shape for a film.



There were keep fit addicts and the older generation trying desperately to turn back the hands of time. There was even a large contingent of strippers or exotic dancers trying to get themselves into better body shape.

Most of the serious hard core bodybuilders trained in the morning when the gym was less busy, and in 1988 this is how I met Ron Matz—a young bodybuilder from Germany. Not that you could ever miss him. He stood six feet tall and weighed a monstrous 250 pounds, which was really huge to say the least back in those days. He also had 21.5 -inch arms!

To make matters even better for the likes of me, Ron always trained in Gold's Gym wearing a tank top, which enabled photographers to grab shots of him while he actually trained. Believe it or not, most top bodybuilders back in those days trained fully clothed, and only revealed themselves for a few minutes after their workout when they were totally pumped up.

As I began to get to know Ron over the next couple of years, I found out that he had been competing in the NABBA Federation, and his best achievements were a tall class win at the 1985 Mr. Universe and World Championships. In 1986, he pulled off a third place at the Mr. Universe and a runner-up spot at the NABBA World Championships. But, just like many bodybuilders before him,

Ron Matz was hungry for tougher competition, so he joined the IFBB to compete against the very best of modern day bodybuilding.

Ronald Matz was born in Hamburg, Germany but spent many years living in Australia, which meant that he spoke the English language perfectly. He was always athletic and took part in many different sports including gymnastics, soccer, table tennis, and volleyball. As a teenager, Ron took up Karate and, at 17, started weight training to strengthen his muscles.

"I had no ambition to become a bodybuilder at the time," Ron declared, but by the time he was 19, he had developed an outstanding physique. After another four years of training, even he knew that he had a future in bodybuilding.

Here's how Ron Matz usually trained when he was a top IFBB pro bodybuilder during the 1980s. For a start, he said he used full movements with heavy weights and always made certain that he contracted his muscles at the end of each exercise. He explained that the most common mistake he saw bodybuilders make was being preoccupied with using the heaviest weights, "Strength training is different than muscle building, and it does not build size. It's far more important to use strict form, with full movements and hard muscular contractions." He preferred to train 5 to 6 days a week for about 2 hours

each time. While he often changed things around, his workouts usually consisted of 4 to 8 exercises per body part, depending upon the size of each muscle. He also preferred to keep his reps between 8 and 12, although he never counted them. Ron said he always used poundages that he could handle for his target rep range.

He always started off with warm-up poundages and worked up in weight to maximum efforts, taking full advantage of the pyramid system. Ron also believed in straight sets only, because when he did super-sets or tri-sets, he found himself rushing between movements which made him lose his concentration.

"Without deep concentration," he said, "it's impossible to induce optimum muscle hypertrophy. Super-sets are for the pump artists who don't give a damn about using heavy weights with good form, so they can keep them!"

He also did not believe in forced reps or negatives, and usually worked without assistance, except when he needed a spotter. He preferred training without a partner, because he took longer rests in between sets than most bodybuilders, usually around two or three minutes. He did not believe in training past failure "because it leads to overtraining."

In terms of upper arm strength, Ron could do six fairly strict

Ron with his band, Boerney & The Tri Tops

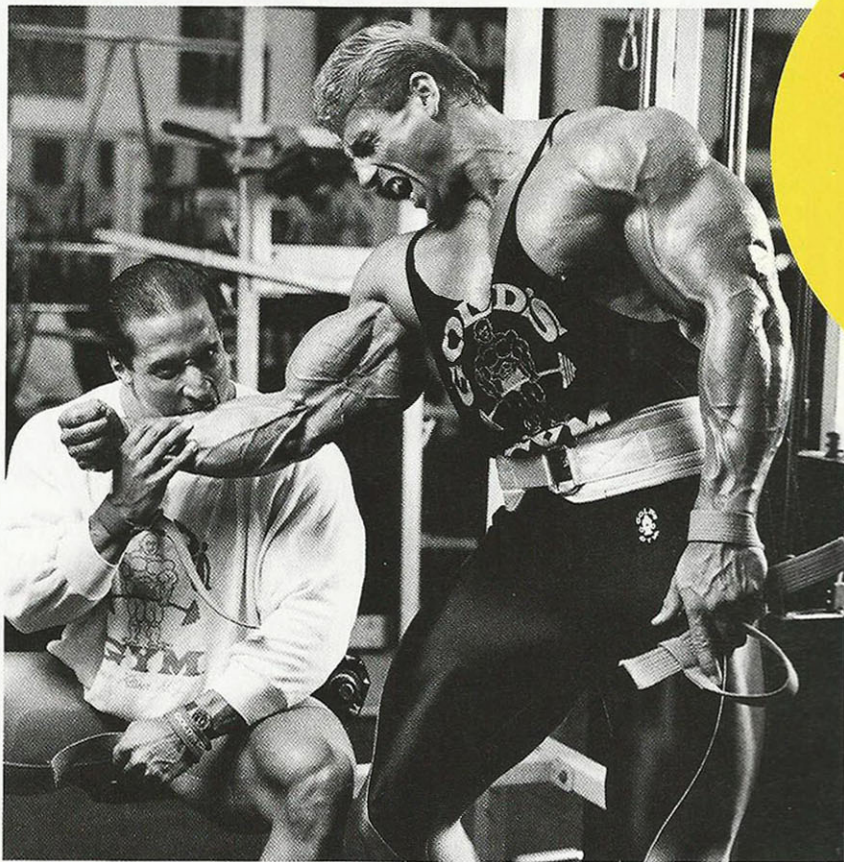




**Ron stood six feet tall and weighed a monstrous 250 pounds, which was really huge back in those days. He also had 21½-inch arms!**



GOLI



Big Mike Quinn takes a bite out of Ron in Gold's Gym.

Preacher curls also build mass, particularly down near the elbow in the lower biceps area.

reps on the barbell curl with his bodyweight, and an easy six rep set with 300 pounds on lying triceps extensions using an EZ curl bar. "There's no question that becoming progressively stronger on basic movements forces my muscle to keep growing larger and larger."

When Ronald Matz was training for contests in Gold's Gym, he trained three days on and one day off. He trained his triceps on day one as follows:

#### 1. LYING EZ TRICEPS EXTENSIONS

5 sets, 6 - 12 reps

#### 2. SEATED EZ TRICEPS EXTENSIONS

5 sets, 6 - 12 reps

#### 3. TRICEPS PUSHDOWNS

5 sets, 8 - 10 reps

#### 4. ONE-ARM DUMBBELL KICKBACKS

5 sets, 10 - 12 reps

#### 5. TRICEPS DIPS BETWEEN 2 BENCHES

2 - 3 sets, 15 - 20 reps

On day two, he bombed his biceps as follows:

#### 1. STANDING BARBELL CURLS

5 sets, 6 - 12 reps

#### 2. BARBELL PREACHER CURLS

4 sets, 8 - 10 reps

#### 3. DUMBBELL CONCENTRATION CURLS

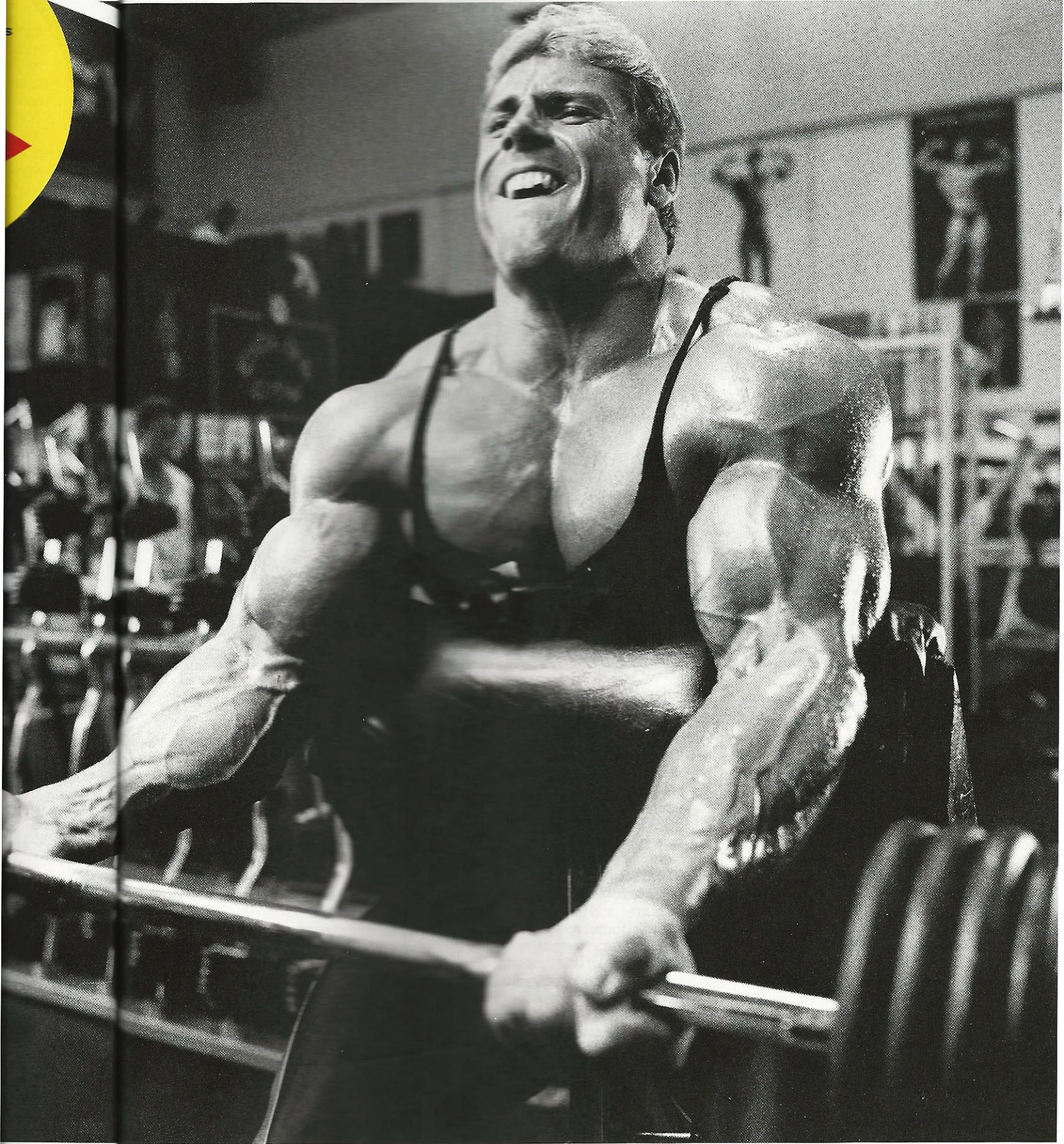
4 sets, 8 - 10 reps

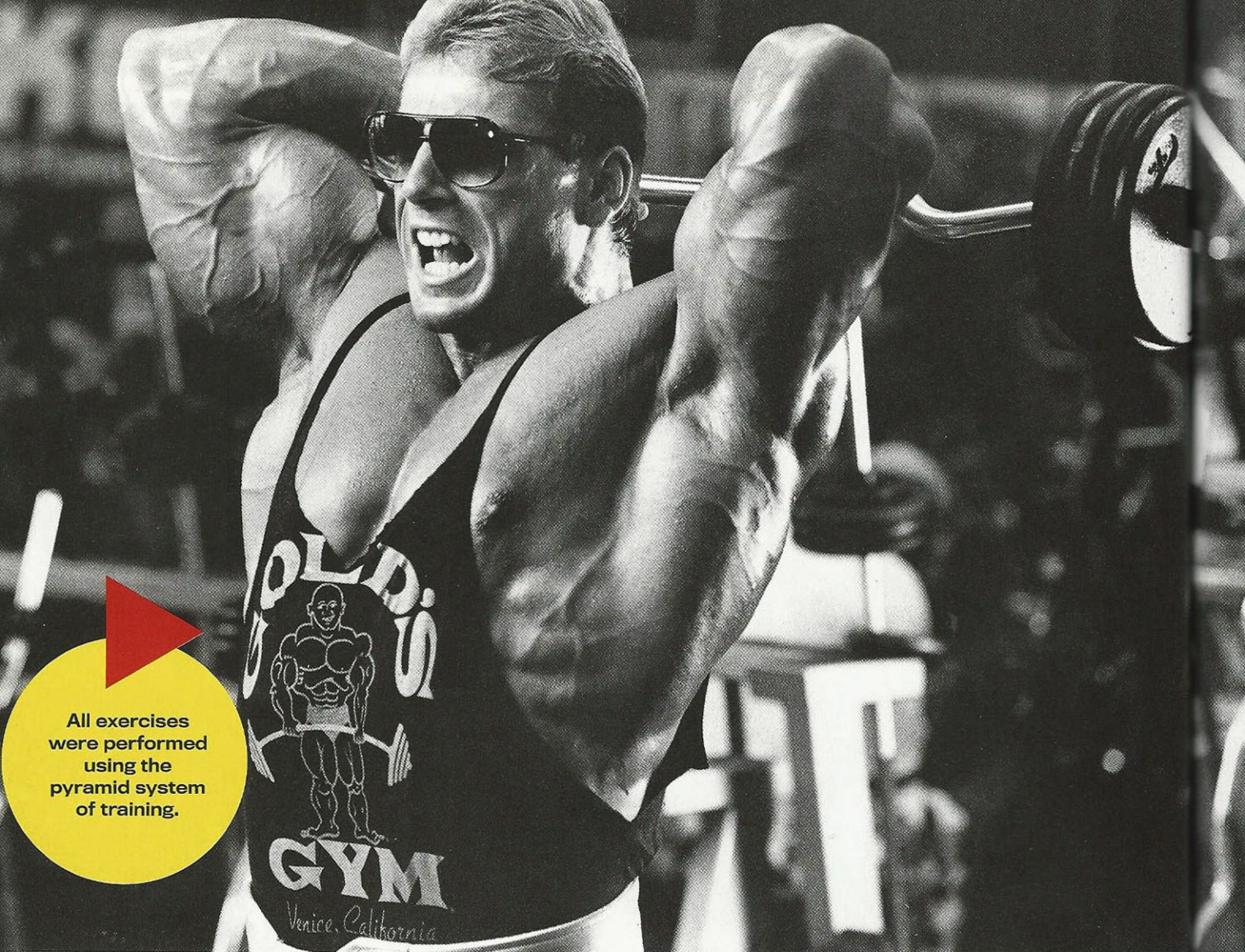
#### 4. ONE-ARM PULLEY CURLS

2 - 3 sets, 15 - 20 reps

All exercises were performed using the pyramid system of training, which meant that he increased the weight each set, then reduced his reps. He also believed in regularly changing the exercises around so that the target muscle group would often be hit from a different angle. "I usually interchange barbell curls one workout, with alternate dumbbell curls. Both are great mass building movements. Preacher curls can also be done using two or one dumbbell, and you can even use the base pulley. Regardless of the variation, preacher curls also build mass, particularly down near the elbow in the lower biceps area. Concentration curls and cable curls are pure shape movements, and I always do my reps a little more slowly but with greater concentration on these two."

Appreciating the fact that his own arm routine is extremely advanced, Ron offers up the following arm





All exercises were performed using the pyramid system of training.

routine for the average bodybuilder, which should be performed no more than twice a week:

### **BICEPS**

#### **1. STANDING BARBELL CURLS**

4 sets, 6 - 12 reps

#### **2. SEATED INCLINE DUMBBELL CURLS**

3 sets, 6 - 10 reps

### **TRICEPS**

#### **1. CLOSE-GRIP BENCH PRESSES**

4 sets, 6 - 12 reps

#### **2. INCLINE PULLEY TRICEPS EXTENSION**

3 sets, 6 - 10 reps

#### **3. TRICEPS PUSHDOWNS**

2 sets, 10 - 15 reps

Pyramid all exercises.

Ron Matz is one of those rare bodybuilders who actually eats more when contest time comes around, even eating every three hours before a really big show.

This consists of three main meals and several snacks, but Ron feels that he needs around 4,000 calories a day to maintain his muscle size as he gets into contest shape. His diet contains 30% protein, 60% carbohydrates, and 10% fat. Here is what he eats during a typical day:

### **FIRST MEAL**

Dark or whole wheat bread with nonfat butter and jam or honey.

Muesli with nonfat milk.

Juice or coffee.

### **SECOND MEAL**

A couple of apples or other fruit.

### **THIRD MEAL**

Protein drink made with 5 scoops of protein powder and 10 oz of nonfat milk.

2 to 3 scoops of carbo-plex.

### **FOURTH MEAL**

Fish, chicken, or lean red meat. Rice, potato, or pasta.

Steamed fresh green vegetables.

Pineapple, sliced or juiced.

### **FIFTH MEAL**

Muesli with carbo-plex, nonfat milk, and fruit.

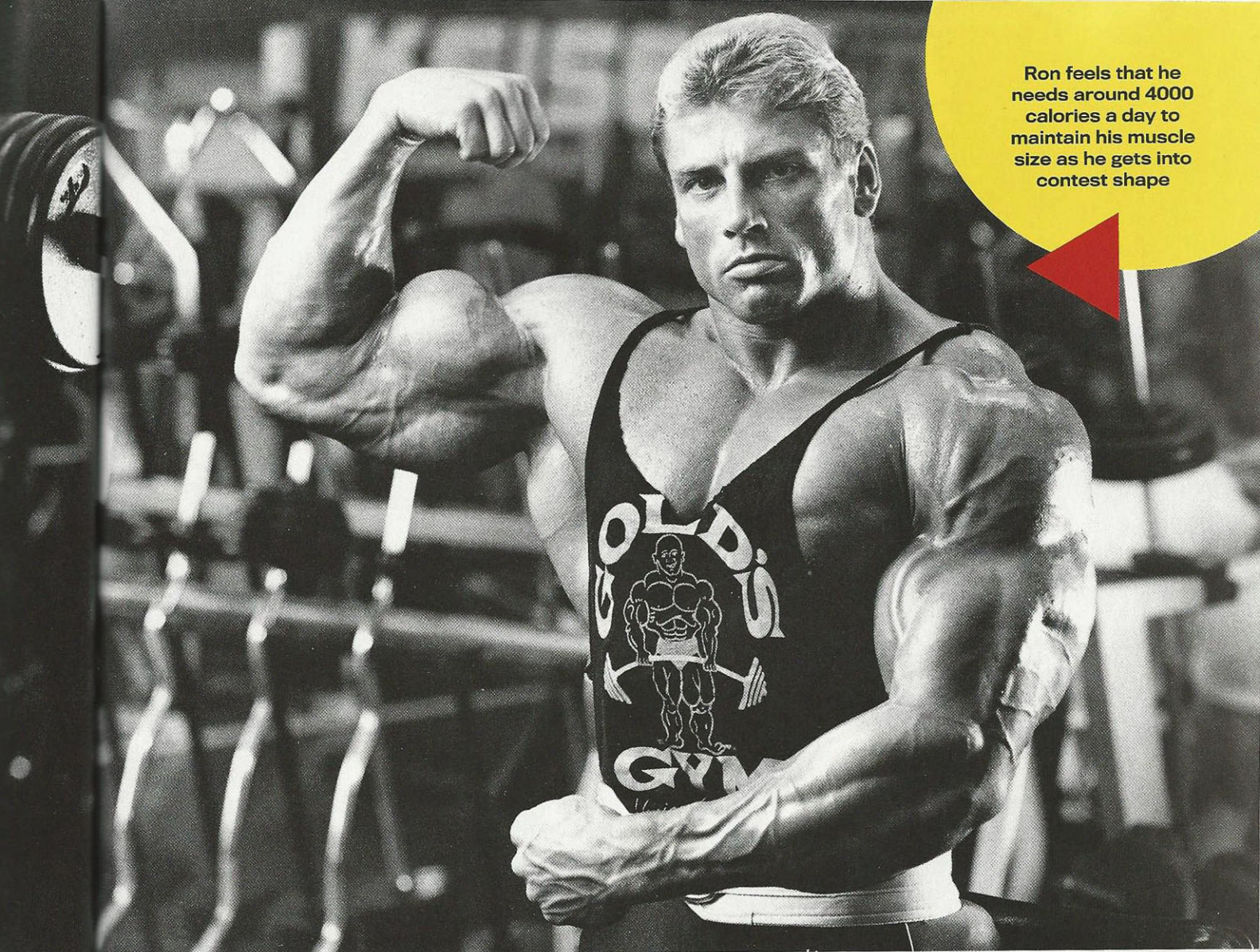
### **SIXTH MEAL**

Protein drink as before.

Chicken, turkey, fish, or lean red meat.

Rice, potato or pasta.

Matz never eliminated salt from his diet: "Sodium is an important element, especially when you're training in hot weather or sweating a lot doing aerobics. Bodybuilders who are on salt-free diets, can rarely train hard for any length of time, and they 'run out of gas' really fast in hot weather." Though Hamburg had some excellent gyms with all the latest equipment, Matz kept returning to California to train at Gold's. "The inspiration there is great. The calibre of bodybuilders and their training attitude makes Gold's the best gym in the world."



Ron feels that he needs around 4000 calories a day to maintain his muscle size as he gets into contest shape

In July of this year, I tracked Ron down on a cruise ship in the North Sea playing with his band, Boerney & The Tri Tops, which are really successful in Germany. "We gig at least 70-80 times a year playing covers of AC/DC, Kiss, Deep Purple, Steppenwolf, Iggy Pop, and the like. We use lots of parody and disguise in our shows. It's great." I then took Ron back to his life as a world-class professional bodybuilder, and asked him the following questions for FLEX magazine:

**Q. Ron, you did extremely well for 4 years with NABBA, at the beginning of your pro career. What made you switch over to the IFBB?**

**A.** In 1986, I decided to move over to the U.S. to study acting at the Lee Strasberg College in L.A. so I guess it made sense for me to join a federation that was based close by. I also had the opportunity to play in an American glam rock band called

Nitro, together with my pal Markus Mueller from Freiburg, who tragically got shot in Florida back in 1996

**Q. You entered 11 IFBB shows in only two years, but your best placing was 7th at your very first contest, the 1988 Chicago Pro. How did you feel about this? I mean, you were absolutely huge. You had great symmetry, with a massive chest and arms. Exactly what it takes to win lots of big contests.**

**A.** Yeah, being honest, I thought it should have been a close call between Gary Strydom and myself. Like you say, I was pretty packed in 1988!

**Q. Did you feel that there was a negative prejudice against non-US bodybuilders at that time?**

**A.** Good gracious, there has always been politics in sports, particularly when judges are involved, and especially in bodybuilding. They frequently like to tip the scales so that things often turn

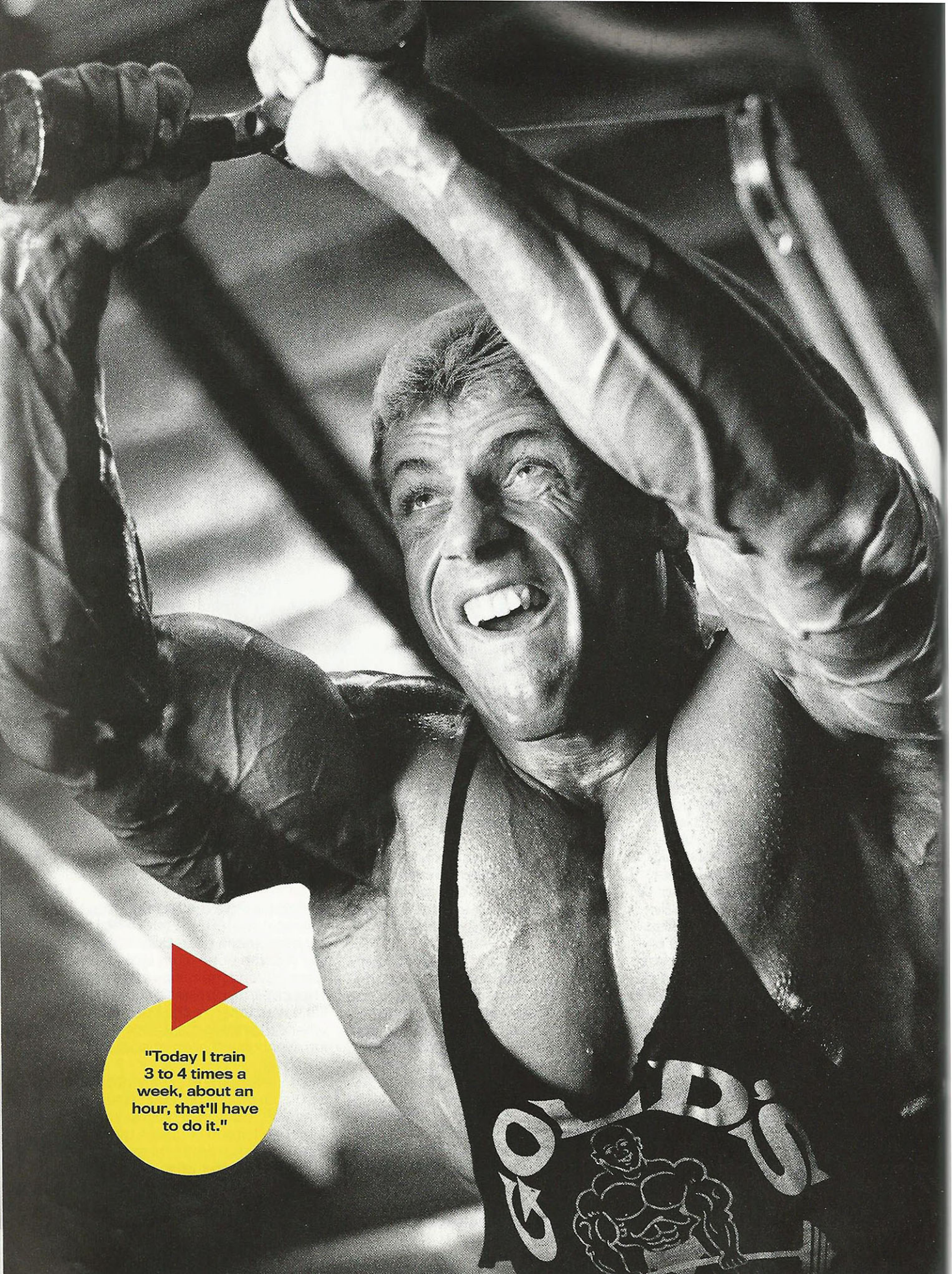
out differently than expected.

**Q. When you trained at Gold's in 1988 and 1989 you were always happy and you loved training there. What made you suddenly leave and quit professional bodybuilding forever?**

**A.** Right before the Night of The Champions in 1989, I felt I was in my best shape ever. Unfortunately, I took some potassium tablets that were beyond their expiration date. That capital error nearly cost my life. I was taken to the hospital, where they gave me a seven-litre intravenous infusion of sodium chloride!

Well, everyone knows what a sodium dosage like that does with your body prior to a contest. Although I stood on stage the next day, I realized that I had to totally change the order of my priorities in life. I decided then and there to get the hell out of professional bodybuilding!





  
"Today I train  
3 to 4 times a  
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hour, that'll have  
to do it."



With Reginetta Drave in 1989.

**Q.** There must have been a huge vacuum in your life when you retired from the sport. What did you do at first, and did you continue with your training as usual, or did you simply cut back?

**A.** Quite the contrary, I never once deplored my decision. I started running the marathon weighing 235 pounds and even got through a triathlon. But of course, I cut back my workouts to a lower level.

**Q.** I notice you now have your own band. Were you a musician when you were one of the greatest bodybuilders in the world?

**A.** Yep, I've been playing guitar since I was 12 years old. At that time, I liked British glam rock such as The Sweet, T. Rex, or Slade. Then I copied Ritchie Blackmore from Deep Purple and later the entire Chick Corea's *Return To Forever* stuff. That's how I got into jazz-rock fusion. During my time in New York, I often played in Jazz clubs.

**Q.** You are also an actor. How did that happen?

**A.** It all started out in Germany back in 1986 when director Frank Ripplöh (R.I.P.) asked me to play in his road movie *Taxi To Cairo*. During my time at the Strasberg College, I had lots of auditions, so I received offers for episodic roles in *L.A. Law*, and *Sledgehammer*, and *Hunter* among others.

**Q.** How do you train today compared to 1989?

**A.** 3 to 4 times a week, about an hour, that'll have to do.

**Q.** How do you eat compared to when you were a pro bodybuilder?

**A.** I guess it's 7,000 calories less

now; but wait, I think I have to add the extra 2,000 calories found in liquid food! Ha!

**Q.** Anything else you want to say about your life in bodybuilding, good or bad, any regrets?

**A.** Well, I'm a neat guy with bounce-back-ability! There were many backstrokes and rabbit punches in my life, but also a lot of happiness, luck, singularities, and friends. And there is always my beloved sonny Valentino who turns five in August. However; on a final note, I can say that I'm a real happy, humbly-type guy. Like French chansonette, Edith Piaf, once sang, "*Non, je ne regrette rien!*"

**Q.** Do you have anybody to thank for helping you with your career?

**A.** Yes, there are quite a few people I need to mention. Chiefly, the very fine person Mr. Ed Connors who made his whole Gold's Gym world accessible to me. Also, Manfred Theilig, who invited me to his place on Hollywood Boulevard, back in 1981. We became training partners and good friends, which led us to the Mr. Germany contest in 1984 in Dusseldorf. We both won. Many became Mr. Germany over 40. Mr. Benno Dahmen who made his magazine *Sport & Fitness* look like the *Ronald Matz Journal* for a very long time. Also Ralf Meier and Peter Lenzen. Mr. Joe Weider of course, (R.I.P.) who allowed me to switch over from NABBA to the IFBB. Plus many more: gym

## CAREER

1984

**MR. UNIVERSE**  
NABBA, TALL, 2ND

1985

**MR. UNIVERSE**  
NABBA, TALL, 1ST  
**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
NABBA, TALL, 1ST

1986

**MR. UNIVERSE**  
NABBA, TALL, 3RD  
**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
NABBA, TALL, 2ND

1988

**CHICAGO PRO CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
IFBB, 7TH  
**GRAND PRIX FRANCE**  
IFBB, 14TH  
**GRAND PRIX GERMANY**  
IFBB, 13TH  
**GRAND PRIX SPAIN (2)**  
IFBB, 11TH

1989

**ARNOLD CLASSIC**  
IFBB, 11TH  
**GRAND PRIX FRANCE**  
IFBB, 16TH  
**GRAND PRIX GERMANY**  
IFBB, 11TH  
**GRAND PRIX SPAIN (2)**  
IFBB, 14TH  
**GRAND PRIX SPAIN**  
IFBB, 12TH  
**GRAND PRIX SWEDEN**  
IFBB, 17TH  
**NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS**  
IFBB, DID NOT PLACE

owners Rainer Preuss, Nil's Thom, Heinz Dolata, Wolfgang Franke, Peter Paszkiet (R.I.P.), René Milde, Michael Hoffmann, Jürgen Schulz, Karl Häussler, and Mario Czaya. Training pals Peter Bosch, Wilfried Dubbels, Thomas Born (R.I.P.), Frank Weber, Bernd Ossowsky, Claus Maibaum, Rolf Kastir, Gaby Sievers, Peter Hensel, and Anja Schreiner. Not forgetting the great Jim Quinn and Samir Bannout! But beyond, everything stands Reginetta (Drave), who was my girl during that decade—I would never, ever have made it without her. All my love and deep respect, Reginetta.

You can contact Ron as follows:  
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[www.ronmatz.com](http://www.ronmatz.com)  
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[www.instagram.com/don\\_roncito](https://www.instagram.com/don_roncito)