

RUTH SILVERMAN'S

# PUMP&CIRCUM

## Ms. O's Fate

Plus, fun in Santa Barbara

The first Ms. Olympia competition I ever attended was in 1986, at the Felt Forum of Madison Square Garden in New York, the greatest city in the world. **Rick Wayne** had just hired me to be his executive editor at *Flex*, and I was taking a crash course in the wacky world of weight training. I knew very little about bodybuilding, particularly the women's sport, but I was eager to learn, and, hey, any excuse to go to New York for Thanksgiving weekend, the contest's date and destination for several years back then.

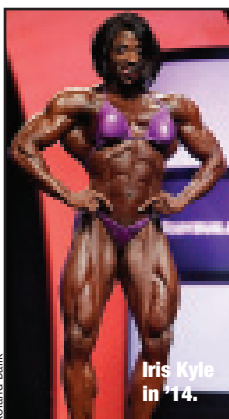
**Cory Everson** was at the height of her six-year reign. She was attractive; had nice, round, athletic-looking muscle and was the definition of symmetry and proportion. The venue, now known as The Theater at Madison Square Garden, was packed with fans and celebs. **Andy Warhol** was in the house, and before I had time to absorb that, bodybuilding royalty I hadn't even known existed a few months earlier were shaking my hand.

Flash-forward 28 years, and the days when a pro women's bodybuilding competition would be held on its own are long gone. The most recent twist is that the 2015 IFBB Pro League schedule does not include the Ms. Olympia.

When the schedules came out, athletes and hardcore fans took to social media with alarm. Save the Ms. Olympia! A petition to Pro League head **Jim Manion** was started (find it at [www.change.org](http://www.change.org)) that had garnered more than 2,100 signatures as of this writing. Will it affect the outcome? I'm not betting the ranch on it.

The facts are, women who train and want to compete have many size options now. Not that many want to get as big and as cut as the current standards for women bodybuilders dictate, and not that many people want to pay to see them or sponsor their contests. (It is up for debate how many want to pay to see medium- or bikini-sized women either, as attested by the presence of the Mr. Olympia judging during the Friday-night women's-division finals. But I digress.)

So women's physique, or "bigger figger," will become the biggest-babe lineup at the Olympia, which was its destiny, intended or not. Whether I agree with the call, it is certainly the promoter's business decision to make. With five women's divisions and three men's, something was gonna have to give, as it did at the Arnold last year, when the Ms. International was eliminated from the schedule. This year, in what seems like a



Roland Baillif



Cory in '88.

Neveux



Lenda Murray in '02.

Baillif

natural evolution, the huge Columbus, Ohio, weekend is adding 212-and-under men's bodybuilding as well as men's and women's physique.

As for the Ms. Olympia, promoter **Robin Chang** hasn't made any announcements, but based on all those years of observation, I'd imagine that the organizers are still considering what to do and that the contest may be held somewhere near the end of the season, in conjunction with another event. Recall that in 1999, after that year's promoter could not pull it off as a standing show, the late **Kenny Kassel** and the still very alive **Bob Bonham** stepped up and added the Ms. O to the late-season show they were putting on in New Jersey. The next year the competition joined the Mr. and Fitness Os in Las Vegas.

If ever there was a time to stay tuned, this is it.

**PS.** Everyone who has followed women's bodybuilding from early on has his or her idea of when the sport crossed the line. When the women got too big, too hard, too veiny, too whatever you object to. When the judges went too far in their love of muscle. When the coaches, nutritionists and gurus pushed too hard. For me it was the night **Kim Chizevsky** dethroned **Lenda Murray** at the '96 Ms. O, which was held in Chicago. Murray, the most commercially beautiful Ms. Olympia since the first, **Rachel McLish**—and the only one to date who has appeared in the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue—had reigned for six years, succeeding

Everson's run, but Chizevsky, with her ever-developing muscularity, was pushing her hard. Everson had fought off a similar challenge from **Sandy Riddell** before she retired after her 1989 win. Cory had the better package overall, in my opinion, but I also thought the decision was at least partly because Riddell's body was further than the judges wanted to go. In '96, Lenda was just too far off her best condition to fight off Chizevsky.

There were attempts to rein it in—**Andrulla Blanchette**, **Juliette Bergmann** and a couple of years with weight classes—before Murray came back for two more wins. Then history repeated itself as an ever-improving **Iris Kyle** finally pushed past her to the title. Ten titles later—and with physique waiting in the wings—we seem to be at another crossroads.



Silverman

Kim Chizevsky in '98.





## The Lou Show: Scenes From the Ferrigno Legacy Pro

Photography by Ruth Silverman

**Sarah LeBlanc,** as spectacular in person as she is in the contest photos.



**Jamie Postill** took the physique stage by storm.



**Jane Santos** scored a personal best, fourth.



**Awesome Aussies Barbie Heng and Ebony Quince.**

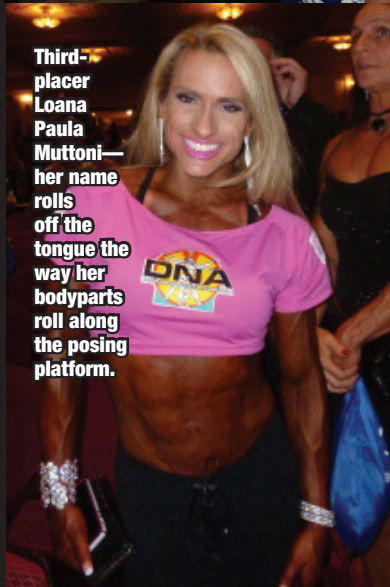


**November 28, 2014**

The old tradition of holding a pro show over Thanksgiving weekend got a reboot, Hulk-style, with the Ferrigno Legacy Championships, co-promoted by Lou and held at the elegant Granda Theatre in Santa Barbara, California. It attracted solid lineups in men's bodybuilding, men's and women's physique and bikini and proved an opportunity for stars-in-the-making to get noticed, like WPD winner Jamie Postill, a Canadian who returned to the stage this year after a long absence. The exception: bikini champ Sarah LeBlanc notched her second win of the '15 season.



Speaking of Cory Everson, can you believe that her kids, Boris and Nina Donia, here with head judge Steve Weinberger, are all grown up?



Third-placer **Loana Paula Muttoni**—her name rolls off the tongue the way her bodyparts roll along the posing platform.

**Dominique Furuta** was moved to tears when she made the first callout.



**Marlene Koekemoer** of South Africa earned the "Came the Farthest" award—and her best placing by far, fifth.

Full confession: I'd have given runner-up **Candrea Judd-Adams** the top spot in WPD.



Speaking of things I never thought I'd see, here's **John Tuman en famille**—with wife Noelle and beautiful baby Rostam.