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Namibia: Champion Arising - Chantal Williams

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By Sheefeni Nikodemus

CHANTAL Williams dreams of being a world bodybuilding champion someday.

The 39-year-old fitness fanatic is off to Potchefstroom on Thursday ahead of Saturday's 'Champions Arise Fitness and Bodybuilding Show' sanctioned by Bodybuilding South Africa, where she intends to meet the qualifying requirements for the prestigious Arnold Classic Africa set for 5-6 May.

"That is my main goal at this stage. I want to make it to the Arnold Classic, and see how I perform there. Then after that, I will have a better picture of how I compare with my rivals," she said.

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In the world of bodybuilding, there are several divisions women can enter, being bikini, figure, physique, fitness and bodybuilding.

Williams specialises in the fitness category, which fuses female bodybuilding and gymnastics.

Five years ago, she was just an ordinary Namibian leaning towards the plus-size side of life. However, after a lengthy introspection, the mother of two pre-teen boys decided to carve a new path for herself.

"I was pretty chubby, and just did not like being that way anymore, so I started to work out. At first it was just to lose weight, and I was not doing it right. But once I started getting results, I was inspired to keep going and competing," she said.

The winner of the fitness bikini division at the inaugural Dome Classic in Swakopmund last year, Williams is determined to be a household name.

"I will not stop till I get first place. I am a very motivated person. Once I have set a goal, I push towards achieving it," she added.

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Her friend and business partner Daphne Sam is confident that Williams will reach the very top. The pair run the fitness group Body Squad in Windhoek. Sam, who is also a budding bodybuilder, is in charge of nutrition, while Williams is the fitness expert.

"She has the potential to make it as far as she wants. She is hardworking, persistent and disciplined. She is also caring, and just a really good person to be around," Sam said.

Formed last year, Body Squad has 57 members, with over 80 percent of them women.

"I would like to see more women involved. Hopefully in the next few years, we can have a women's bodybuilding team to compete internationally," said Williams.

Sam added: "People have misconceptions about bodybuilding. I too had my reservations in the beginning, until I got to understand what it is all about. We do not impose it onto our clients, it is a personal choice. What we encourage is healthy lifestyles through eating right and exercising."

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There are no shortcuts to getting the body you desire, Williams said. Hard work and perseverance are the only ingredients to attaining your goals.

Nonetheless, it is also important that the workouts are fun and not a chore.

"People must understand that it will not happen overnight. You have to be patient and trust in the process. So, stay away from steroids. It is not worth it," Williams warned.

"It's a lonely sport. You have to be very disciplined and dedicated to achieve the right results. That's why it's important to have people around who support you. I'm lucky that I have that support," she continued.

"I have a school reunion coming up soon, and I am sure most of my former schoolmates will not recognise me. I am definitely looking forward to rocking up and showing off my hot body," she chirped.

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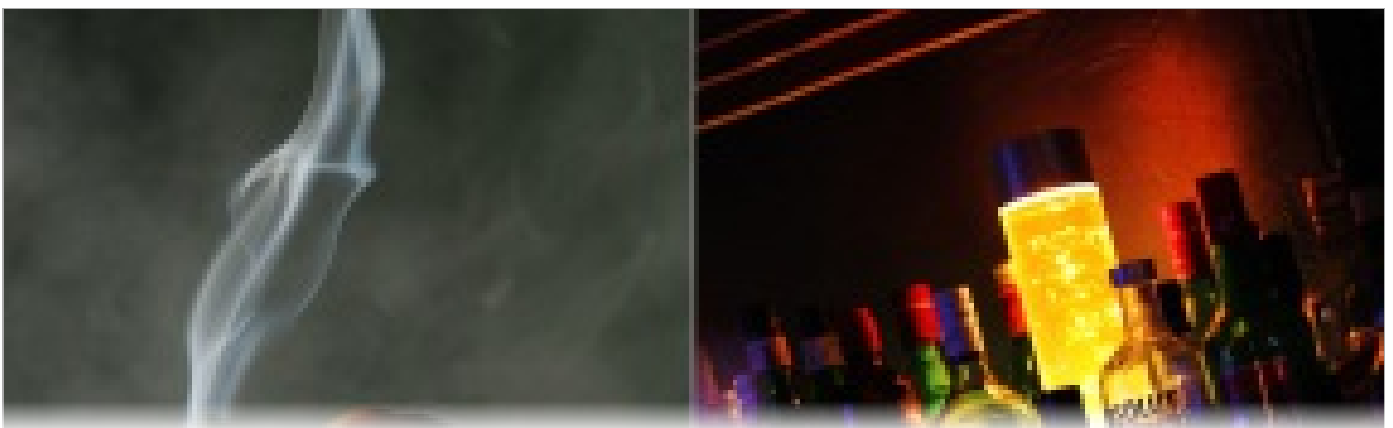
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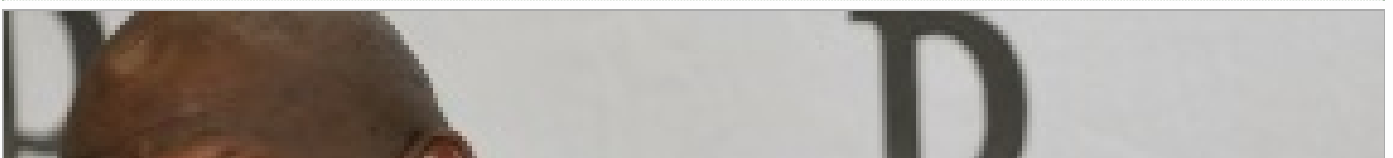
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