



[Home](#) ▶ [Articles](#) ▶ [The Wennerstrom Report](#) ▶ Shrink-Wrapped Rita Bello Wins Chicago Pro Bodybuilding

## SHRINK-WRAPPED RITA BELLO WINS CHICAGO PRO BODYBUILDING

Published on Thursday, 10 July 2014 11:25

Written by Steve Wennerstrom, IFBB Women's Historian



One of the hallmarks of a top athlete in any sport is consistency. It is the ability to produce an outstanding performance over and over again. And on the weekend of July 4-5 at the Tinley Park Convention Center in Chicago, Argentina's Rita Bello showed, in no uncertain terms, she possesses that ability as she out-flexed a field of 18 additional challengers to win the Wings of Strength Chicago Pro Championships.

Promoted by Tim Gardner, the Wings of Strength in Chicago is in its third year, and the contest has developed a popular reputation among competitors and a solid following with fans of bodybuilding. In two previous years the winner was Monique Jones, and this year, in her absence, a new champion would claim the crown. Enter Maria Rita Bello.

For longtime followers of women's bodybuilding, Rita Bello is a familiar personage at the international level – both as an amateur and as a professional. Already well known in her Argentinian homeland prior to 1997, it was that year she surfaced at the IFBB World Amateur Championships held in Bratislava, Slovakia. Bello placed 4th in the middleweight class at the Worlds – a class that was won by future Ms. Olympia Valentina Chepiga. But the buzz at the event came by way of her remarkable level of conditioning. She was 33 at the time. If that makes you curious, do the math. Yep, amazingly, she's 50 now... an extraordinary 50 at that.

And for the last 17 years, she has brought the same level of muscular definition to each contest she has entered. But where does one begin to assemble the adjectives to properly describe her muscular visibility? As a certifiable and deserving recipient of the moniker 'The Argentinian Anatomy Chart', virtually every part of her structure is lathered with highly defined groups of muscle tissue. Her back, real delts, triceps, gluteal tie-ins and pecs that are striated right up to her clavicles are all primary focal points of her physique. Even in repose, she appears flexed. In the decades that have passed since women's bodybuilding has taken hold, few, if any women have displayed her level of chiseled muscularity.

That said, she is a polarizing figure. Critics will be quick to point out that she has 'taken it too far for a female bodybuilder', while admirers will sing her praises in achieving a look that is extremely difficult to attain. Either way, her look elicits some level of response. She is unique in the world of women's bodybuilding – a sport that has always drawn opinions of every kind regarding a quest for the extremes.

Turning pro in 2009 after winning the Arnold Amateur Classic in Columbus, Bello made her pro debut at the Ms. International where she finished 10th. She followed up that placing with a fourth place finish at the Tampa Pro. The 2012 season saw her place two more times outside the top six. But 2013 could be considered her breakout year with a third place spot at the Toronto Super Show, and a runner-up finish at the Tampa Pro leading up to her first qualification for the Ms. Olympia where she landed 11th. So, the Wings of Strength will carry a special memory for Maria Rita Bello. A first time victory at the IFBB pro level always does. The Chicago triumph also punches her ticket for another Ms. Olympia entry to go with the \$4,000 in Wings of Strength prize money.

### A Loaded Field

To properly understand just how high-end this 19-woman field was, you only need to look at the collective contest resume of its entrants. No fewer than six contestants claimed prior experience at the Ms. Olympia. And once Rita Bello, Juanita Blaino, Kim Perez, Zoa Linsey, Kim Buck and Lisa Giesbrecht checked in as Olympia veterans, others like Australian Christine Enval and Russian Alevtina Goroshinskaya had also achieved World Champion level status along the way. Still others held victorious multiple national-level credentials. Competing in this field was not for the faint of heart.

Sorting out who would wedge their way into the top five was a judging dilemma. The first call-out of prejudging included six competitors – all of whom would make up the top six. But throughout the prejudging, the order (outside of Bello's dominance) was unclear.

With the eventual runner-up finish, Canadian Lisa Giesbrecht used her 5'8" frame, lean physique, clean bodylines, and an eye-catching stage presence that grew on the judges as the contest moved along. It appeared early on that she was being considered for a 4th or 5th position, but that changed in the evening. A winner of the Toronto Super Show in 2012 to go

with a 13th place finish at the Ms. Olympia that year, she has come back strong again this year placing fifth in Toronto, and second here. Now Giesbrecht's four points earned at this event moves her into contention for an invitational spot to the Olympia. Her prize winning for second place came to \$2,500.

Aussie Christine Enval continues to make sweeping changes in her physique, refining the highly cultivated muscle she has carried for many years into a much more pleasing overall look. A former 3-time World champion in another organization from 1997 to 2000, Enval turned pro in the IFBB in 2001. This year she has scored two third place finishes (Omaha and Chicago) to equal her highest previous pro finish at the Southwest Pro Cup in 2002. Hopefully, the wait has been worth it as she is also now in the mix to qualify for the upcoming Ms. Olympia. Her prize money amounted to \$1,500.

Fourth place went to Chicago's Juanita Blaino. Earning her pro card in 2012 when she won the heavyweight and overall titles at the NPC Nationals, this impressive competitor shows a level of muscular thickness that reaches from head to toe. As the runner-up at last year's Wings of Strength, Blaino continued to show her overall excellence by placing sixth at the Ms. Olympia. Hopefully, she will make a trip to Tampa in an attempt to secure another invite to Las Vegas. Clearly, she has all the tools to hang with the best. She collected \$1,000 for fourth place.

Placing fifth was the biggest surprise, albeit a pleasant one, of the entire event – Emery Miller. Competing now for the past 12 years, Miller turned pro at the 2004 NPC National with a middleweight victory. In a pro career that has been varied with her placings, Miller has been loyal to the Wings of Strength as the only contestant who has competed in all three. In 2012 she placed fifth, last year she dropped to 11th, and here she bravely pulled herself back into the top five.



Photos By Chris Nicoll



Photos By Chris Nicoll



Photos By Chris Nicoll



Miller's placing here has to be even more gratifying considering she endured a 12th place finish at the Toronto Super Show just five weeks earlier. Her finish is even more impressive considering she out-pointed former Olympians Zoa Linsey, Kim Buck and Kim Perez. Her secret was just the right level of conditioning and holding on to her well-balanced overall musculature shapes and structure that shows up well in lineups where other competitors have slight weaknesses. Fifth was worth \$500 and as an added perk she won the 'Best Poser' award for an additional \$500.

#### Outside The Top Five

- 6- Virginia Sanchez, Spain 56
- 7- Kim Buck, Jonesboro, Georgia 72
- 8- Kim Perez, Long beach, California 78
- 9- Judy Gaillard, Ripley, Mississippi 90
- 10- Roxanne Edwards, Brooklyn, New York 100
- 11- Alevtina Goroshinskaya, Russia 110
- 12- Zoa Linsey, Canada 120
- 13- Janeen Lankowski, Canada 130
- 14- Maria Segura, Mexico 142
- 15- Nancy Clark, Canada 148
- 16- Tananarive McGowan, Canada 158
- 17- Miriam Girard, Curacao 160
- 17- Gillian Kovack, Canada 160

17- Nicole Pfuetzenreuter, Germany 160

#### Discuss This Article

[Like 10](#) [Share](#)

[Share](#)

0 Comments

Sort by [Newest](#)



Add a comment...

[Facebook Comments Plugin](#)

< Prev

Next >

#### Subscribe to RxMuscle on YouTube

