

Living the Dream

April Cosimano takes her fitness routine to the top, building more than just muscle

BY RENEE NOVELLE

It's hard not to notice April Cosimano's smile. It radiates from her dimpled cheeks with a contagious joy, hinting at her bottomless reserve of inner peace. And it's authentic, which is a refreshing change. She wears it confidently as she works her way around the gym, and it serves her well. People take notice. Eyes follow her in curious wonderment at who this charismatic personality might be. But this personal trainer is too focused on her client to notice the attention.

As we sit down together to chat over protein smoothies, I ask what her secret is. "I absolutely love what I'm doing," Cosimano declares. Then she goes on to explain that she isn't just there to help people transform their physical bodies, but to motivate their inner selves as well. "People come to me unhappy with their bodies, with their lives and with their lifestyles," she explains. Cosimano gives them the tools they need to be happy again. "Seeing them smile and walk with

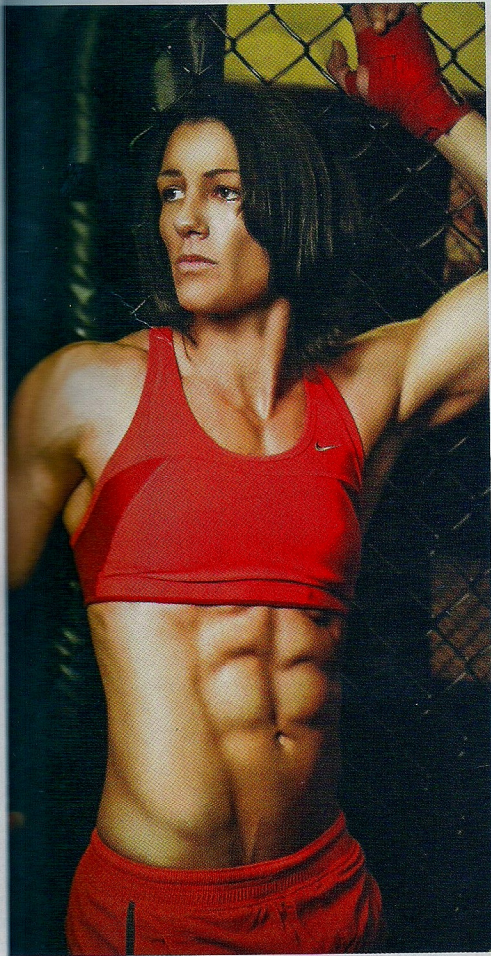
more confidence is the most rewarding thing I could ask for."

From all appearances, Cosimano has found her life's calling. But it wasn't always so simple.

This former graphic artist had a lifelong passion for health and fitness. But after a corporate layoff left her unemployed just one day before Thanksgiving in 2012, she decided to turn the frustrating situation to her advantage. It was a chance for her to dictate her own freedoms and to



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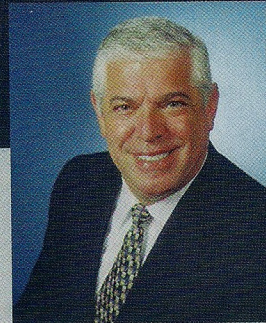
pursue her passions with her full focus and attention. "I knew I wanted to be in this positive environment all day," she says, indicating the gym around us.

The choice has paid off well for her. Now she offers a variety of one-on-one training packages for a full schedule of clients and has even been working in partnership with NYMAG in Naples to provide women's kickboxing boot camps at their studio. "The boot camps are as much about empowerment as they are about exercise," Cosimano explains. It's about helping others to craft for themselves the lives they've always wanted—inside the gym and out of it—which is all the motivation she needs to meet her clients for those early morning sessions.

And Cosimano certainly knows about motivation. She's a driven woman who's sculpted her own precisely toned body. After seeing all that work, others encouraged her to begin looking into the world of women's physique competitions.

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From left: Helene Mayer Bingley, 2013 Ontario Physique Champion; April Cosimano; NPC/IFBB competitive bodybuilder Marijan Lipsinic, April's current coach and certified personal trainer

"I'd wanted to do a show all year, but my grandmother got very sick with cancer so I was traveling almost every weekend to spend as much time with her as I could," Cosimano says, her eyes glistening with the memory. "In her last few weeks, she impressed on me that she really supported what I was doing. She knew it was my dream to win a competition."

When her grandmother passed away in October 2013, Cosimano used the show as a much needed distraction, throwing herself into four-hour training sessions, seven days a week. She also kept to a demanding diet in order to prepare.

In the end, the effort paid off. Exactly one year after initially losing her job, she won first place in her Women's Physique height category and first place in Women's Physique overall at the 2013 National Physique Committee (NPC) South Florida Physique Championship. Cosimano also caught the eye of several judges, including head judge Peter Potter, who encouraged her to pursue a career in this area.

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—NPC COMPETITOR DANIEL MESIDOR

And though she still seems surprised by her early success, those who watched her prepare were not. "From the time I saw April, I knew she could do a lot of damage on the stage," says NPC competitor Daniel Mesidor. "Her body is just flawless and ... her hard work and drive prove that she has what it takes to compete against the best women on the NPC level. The sky is the limit for her."

Indeed it is. Her next show is the 2014 NPC Southern States Championship in Fort Lauderdale, which could bring her one step closer to that highly coveted "pro" status. After that, the doors open to the world of corporate endorsements,

guest appearances and many other opportunities that at one time Cosimano could only dream about.

But in the meantime, she hopes her own journey can impart inspiration to others. "Understand that setbacks are only momentary," she advises. "And whatever your goals are—whether personal, professional or health—they are always achievable if you want them badly enough and are willing to commit the time and effort to creating them." She certainly is a living example of that. 🐾

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