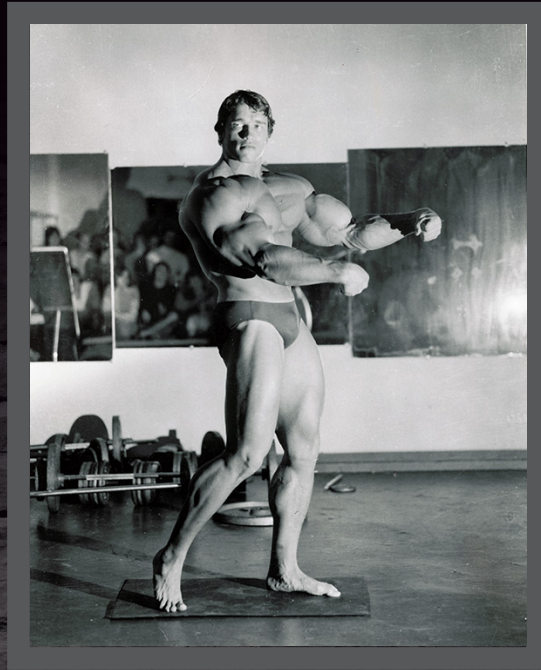


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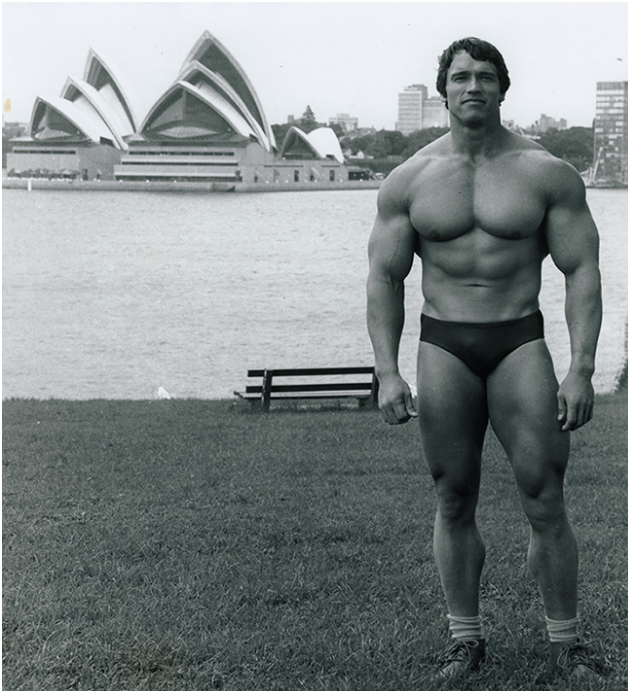
Spending time with  
Arnold Schwarzenegger

*By Robert Nailon*

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# Spending time with Arnold Schwarzenegger!



Arnold in Sydney Australia

interview. Arnold had arrived from the American winter, so naturally he lacked a tan etc. It was February, our summer, and everyone had a tan except them. The interview was interesting; the press as usual asked the same questions as they do the world over, but both stars answered the questions with ease and added a little humor to them. Both the boys stripped down to their singlet's and gave a few of their best poses to the cameramen. I was standing across the other side of the room and Arnold waved to me and said "hi". I had never met him before and didn't even have a chance to say hello when they were hustled off to the pressroom. I eventually found out that Arnold had seen a few of my photos in some English mags. He was familiar with most of the boys in the body building game. After the press room about eight of us went to eat at the restaurant upstairs. The 17-hour flight from Honolulu left the boys a bit hungry so a steak and a light salad filled the stomach.

They had another 600-mile flight from Sydney to North Queensland, known as "Surfers Paradise", one of Australia's holiday resorts. The show was to be held in a week's time, so this gave them the chance to get a tan and get cut up a bit.

The following Friday, I flew up North with a friend of mine, Paul Graham, a former Mr. South Pacific, and a good friend of Arnold's.

We both kept ourselves entertained by quietly looking around the local spots and watching the

In 1972 Arnold Schwarzenegger and Franco Columbo came out to Australia to guest star at the Mr. Southern Universe and Mr. Australasia. This was the first time they had been to Australia. The Promoter (Bob Bruce) had organized the show six months in advance and had posters in just about every gym in the country.

The morning Arnold and Franco arrived there was a big press meeting in the overseas terminal. I was out at the airport at 7:30 a.m. to wait for the arrival. The plane was late and we were all anxious to meet them. Unexpectedly, Arnold walked out first. We were waiting at another gate and to our surprise he was behind us, chatting to a few people.

The first stop was to the pressroom for the



Arnold carrying flight attendant



Arnold & Robert in Surfers Paradise Australia

girl's parade around in their bikinis. That evening a group of us, consisting of around ten or so, went to a nightclub for a meal and entertainment. Arnold and Franco were amused by the Australian customs and habits. I noticed that Arnold was drinking a lot of beer, and since our beer has a higher alcohol content than American or European, it hit him all of a sudden; not too much but enough to affect him.

The next day the gym was packed with spectators and competitors from all over the country. Arnold and Franco were both on the judging panel. I noticed that Arnold was the first to finish the judging, which took about two or three hours overall.

Afterwards I sat down and talked to a few of the boys. I presented Arnold with a sketch (three quarter back) that I had done of him a few weeks before. He was quite pleased with it, which made me very happy.

The night of the show arrived! It was held at the Chevron Hotel and the theatre was packed to the rafters. It was a modern hall and it had great atmosphere. The start of the show went quite smoothly. It was well organized by Bob Bruce (he ran a gym in the area). The audience was awaiting the guest stars from overseas. Franco was the first to appear on stage and give an exhibition on deadlifting. He started at 600 lbs., which he did several times, one after another, and went up to 680 or 700. He impressed a lot of people that bodybuilders were strong.

Both Arnold and Franco came out on stage and did an individual routine, then finished doing their famous duo. At this time everyone was watching including all the contestants. I remember before Arnold went on he was pumping up backstage. Actually it was a tent that had been erected beside the entrance door at the side. Anyway I applied the oil to his back. It was the biggest back I had seen – in



fact it was awe-inspiring. It was like rubbing shoulders (so to speak) with the best feeling you can't describe.

After the show we all went out for a late dinner to another nightclub. All the guys could relax and go off their diet and have a good time. The night was long and we didn't get much sleep because we had to rise early in the morning and leave for Sydney. We called into Arnold's hotel to say goodbye as he was flying back to L.A. the next day and Franco was coming to Sydney as guest star at the Mr.

South Pacific. The show had been a success, Arnold had made a lot of new friends, and it was an exciting new experience for him.



Arnold in Sydney Australia

Over the years I kept up my correspondence with Arnold and noted his improvement in the magazines. It was in March 1974 that he was again to do a show in Australia. There was one being held at the famous Sydney Opera House and one in Melbourne as well.

The morning was cold especially around 7 a.m. at the airport. The overseas flights always seem to be early morning. This time there was only a small gathering. Again the press was there and T.V. coverage. Arnold always gives a good interview. From the airport we drove straight over to North Sydney over the Sydney Harbour Bridge, just under the bridge to the left where more journalists and Photographers were waiting eagerly for Arnold to arrive. This time they took some photos using the opera house, the venue for the show and the Sydney Skyline, as a background. It was quite a cold morning over the north side. Arnold stripped down to his trunks (Underwear) for the photos but left on his shoes and socks because the grass was cold and wet. I brought my camera along (Mamiya R.B.67)

to get a few shots for myself. I only got a few, but they were good ones. Everything was a rush. After that Paul Graham, Arnold and myself headed for Channel Nine (T.V. Station). Arnold was to do an interview on an early morning women's program. On the way we called in to a snack bar for a quick meal; we were starving and it gave us a chance to relax.

When we arrived at the T.V. Station we sat for about fifteen minutes before anyone saw us, I suppose they were busy arranging a camera and crew for the take. They also wanted a quick interview for the news since they were the only channel to miss the airport interview. The news interview was quick and they got straight into the woman's segment. The girl asking the questions was about six feet herself, and with high shoes she was taller than Arnold. He ended the talk by picking her up licking his lips and

walking off with her. After a hectic morning we all headed back towards home. Paul had booked Arnold into a nice hotel just ten minutes away from my home, which was handy for me as I would be showing him around the town. At that stage I had my '71 Corvette convertible. It had just been painted bright yellow - a real eye catcher. There were not many of them around Sydney at that point either.

Paul had arranged to pick Arnold up every morning at 8:00am. Arnold would have an early breakfast and they would both train at Paul's gym for around two hours and sit in the sun afterwards to get a tan for the show. He arrived on the Tuesday and the show was on the Saturday so he had five days to get that finished look. He is lucky to have a good quality skin that tans quickly.



Arnold & Mike Walsh



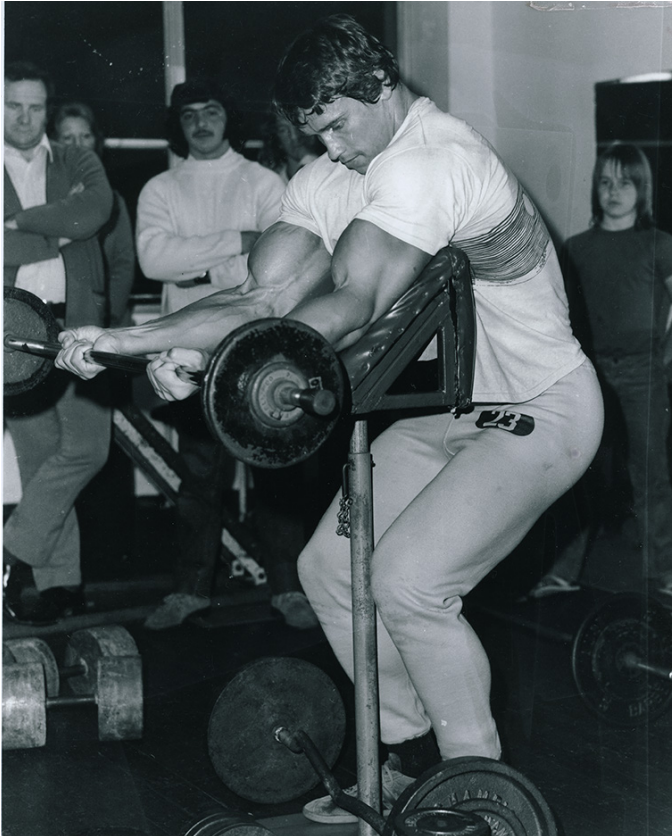
Arnold showing his arm size

The next few days were hectic, rushing around doing interviews for radio, talk shows on T.V. etc. I took Arnold around to show him the sights in the afternoons. (We had a quiet meal once or twice in the city, which was relaxing for him.) I remember one time I parked the car in the city and had a few errands to do around town. Arnold decided to sit and wait in the car. He said, "don't be long." Although I was an hour and a half and on the way back I saw him pacing up and down cursing me! He wasn't too happy but cooled down quickly. Saturday arrived quickly. The judging was in the afternoon at the Opera House in the recording hall. It

seated around 1200 people. Only a few contestants' friends were at the judging. It started at 1 p.m. and went through to 5 p.m., they were arranging the lighting and music plus a few other items. Arnold and I left at 5 p.m. and I drove straight home to get changed for the show. Arnold came inside and my mother gave him a cold drink. Some of the neighbors came in to meet him, all women *of* course.

Some brought their young daughters in. It delayed us a bit but Arnold was his usual charming self. One woman said, "If I was only twenty years younger!", but he was more interested in her young daughter; only flirting of course. Eventually we got away and headed to a friend's place. I was leaving my car in his garage and going in his car. I picked a nice restaurant down off the beach. It was 6 p.m., we had an hour to eat and run. Seeing the show was to start at 7 p.m. the service at the restaurant was slow but the food was delicious. That was the main thing.

By the time we arrived the show had started. Paul was worried because Arnold was late. He wanted to discuss the program with him and his posing spot. The acts varied from Jazz, Ballet to hand balancing with the contestants posing in between the juniors, novice and the open division. The contest was the Mr. New South Wales (state title) with around forty entrants. The audience was all waiting for Arnold's appearance. The show was a sell out with a packed house.



Arnold demonstrating on the preacher bench

The time came, and all the house lights were turned out with only one spot overhead on the stage. The theme 'Exodus' began, the acoustics in the recording hall were fantastic. The place had atmosphere. Arnold stepped out under the light with unbelievable gasps from the audience. He went straight into his posing routine, each pose better than the last. The audience's applause at the end was loud. He was called back for another spot. He held the audience in the palm of his hand.

The charisma flowed. He had that magnetic appeal that only a few people in the world have. Minutes after he stepped off stage the applause was still there. He returned quickly to the stage dressed, thanked the audience for their response and answered some questions.

This lasted for 15 minutes. At the end of the show Arnold helped present the trophies and thanked the audience for attending. The

show was a success and afterwards he autographed photos etc., for the fans.

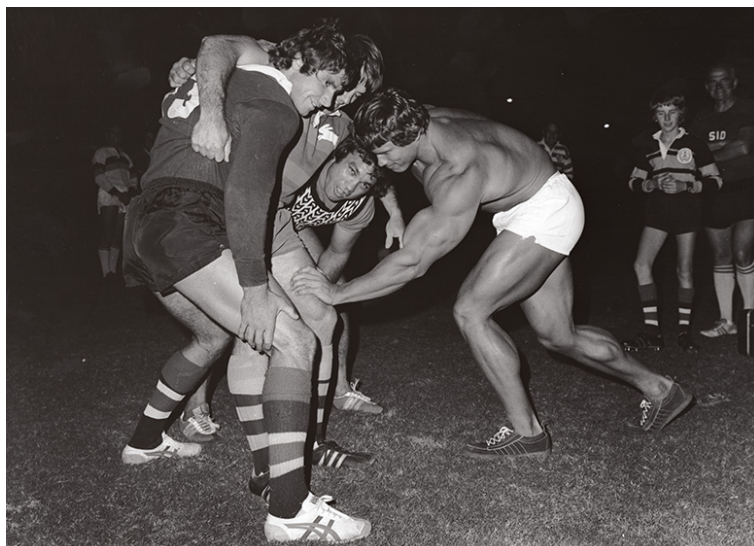
A get together smorgasbord was arranged after the show for contestants and friends. It was held a few miles away at one of Paul's friend's business premises, a large parlor, and pool hall. The food was laid out with lots of goodies that bodybuilders like eating after contests. It was a good relaxing night to finish off the festivities with.

Arnold's stay on his second trip was only two weeks altogether; one week before the show and another after. He relaxed a few days after and prepared for his second appearance in Melbourne, 500 miles South. He flew down a few days before for a bit of publicity for the show. It was the Mr. Southern Hemisphere being held in a city cabaret. The press took a few shots, stripped to the waist posing, in the main street with a wide-angle lens to give the photos effect.

The show was given a lot of publicity and the cabaret was filled with tables, which seated about six to ten people, placed all around the hall. The judging had been on in the afternoon. The results had been decided. In the evening the show was to begin at 8 p.m.



We arrived early and had a table at the back of the hall. The night was hot so we ordered a few beers to cool us down. After four or so we were a little heavy under the eyes. Arnold was quite happy; occasionally people would pass to say hello and ask a few questions. He always obliged them. When it was his turn to pose he made sure everyone was out of the change room because people bombard him with



Arnold in a scrum with Arthur Beatson

questions. He came out did his posing, and then did a routine to strobe lights. And left the stage quickly followed by a mob of excited enthusiasts. They all bolted through the door after him just to get a closer look. It took ten minutes to clear everyone out. He got dressed and came out greeted by a small applause. The questions were fired left, right and center - after twenty minutes or so he left the stage.

By this time it was intermission and he announced he would be selling photos at the back of the hall and autographing

them. To my surprise the line consisted mostly of females, some leaving their phone numbers and names. I mentioned this to him and he just smiled. The night ended late and we didn't get to bed until early a.m. We all enjoyed our Melbourne trip. It was short but sweet.

Before leaving for Los Angeles Arnold spent the last few days in Sydney.

I remember one evening Arnold had his photo taken with Sydney's top football team! It was the beginning of the season and the newspapers wanted interesting news. What better than Mr. Olympia playing for Sydney's top team! We drove out to the field where the team was gathered before practice. The evening was cool; it was the beginning of winter. In the dressing room they were hunting around for a pair of shorts, shoes and no way would a top fit him. So they decided to take a few shots posing (not flexing) around with the team just in shorts and shoes. When Arnold took off his top most of the team couldn't believe how big he was even though they picked out the biggest guys. He still dwarfed the lot. I took a few photos myself. Not many because it was quick and cold and over in ten minutes. The best of the photos was a scrum with Arthur Beatson and a couple of others.

One daytime T.V. program had Arnold as a guest. This program had mainly women as the audience and they all lapped it up. His posing and interview went over very well. He also gave a few seminars around the local gyms, training, posing and answering questions for an hour or so. The seminars lasted for about one and a half to two hours. Before we knew it Arnold's stay was over again. I drove him out to the Airport and said farewell.

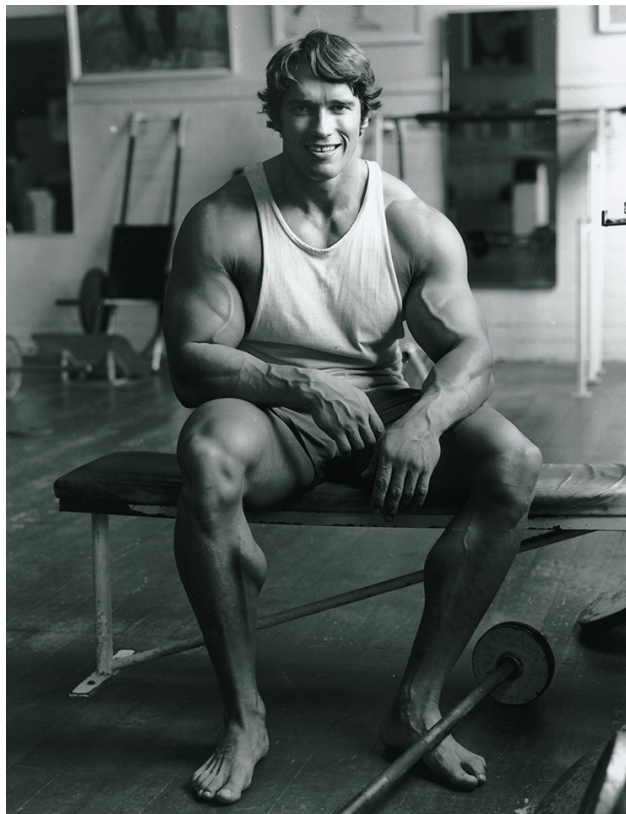
1975 was the year; I was training hard, in good shape and everything was going well for me. It was August and our winter was finishing. The warm, sunny hot days were with us. I received a phone call from Paul Graham to tell me he was promoting a state title contest and may bring Arnold out again as the guest star. I said "great!".

It had been over sixteen months since he had been out and rumors were that this maybe his last year competing, so it would be good to see him again in good shape before he retired.

This time Arnold flew in with Ken Waller. He had a quick interview and then was straight off to their motel. Ken was on his way to Japan to do a show and this was a good opportunity to see Australia. I was training at the gym down the road, which was only a ten minute walk so it was ideal for them to have a few workouts and it was right on the beach. It was a very compact area called Coogee. It was also a treat for the other members of the gym.

I spent many hours with Arnold and Ken talking bodybuilding etc. There was a pool in their motel. We spent a lot of time preparing for the contest tanning there. I had decided to enter the show and started training a lot harder, watching my diet and working out twice a day. Most mornings I would pick Arnold up from his motel and go to the gym at 8 a.m. for two hours. Ken would train with him in the evenings. At that time I had a job managing a gym for a friend of mine so I spent the evening training there. I did take a week off to fully prepare then I trained morning and evening with him. It was interesting to watch Arnold pose after he finished a set. He blows right up and looks very cut which is unusual. In the early morning his veins always seem to be very outstanding especially on his arms and legs.

One evening we were doing seated calf raises. After four sets he measured them at 19 1/2" and he said he'd make 20" in two months. Ken and Arnold did a lot of donkey raises together and both had great calves.



Arnold in Coogee Gym  
after training legs with Robert

The evenings were spent quietly, after training there was a nice meal and the boys relaxed in their motel room talking; occasionally taking in a movie.

The first time I asked Arnold and Ken to dinner I went out that afternoon and bought the biggest T-Bone steaks I could find.

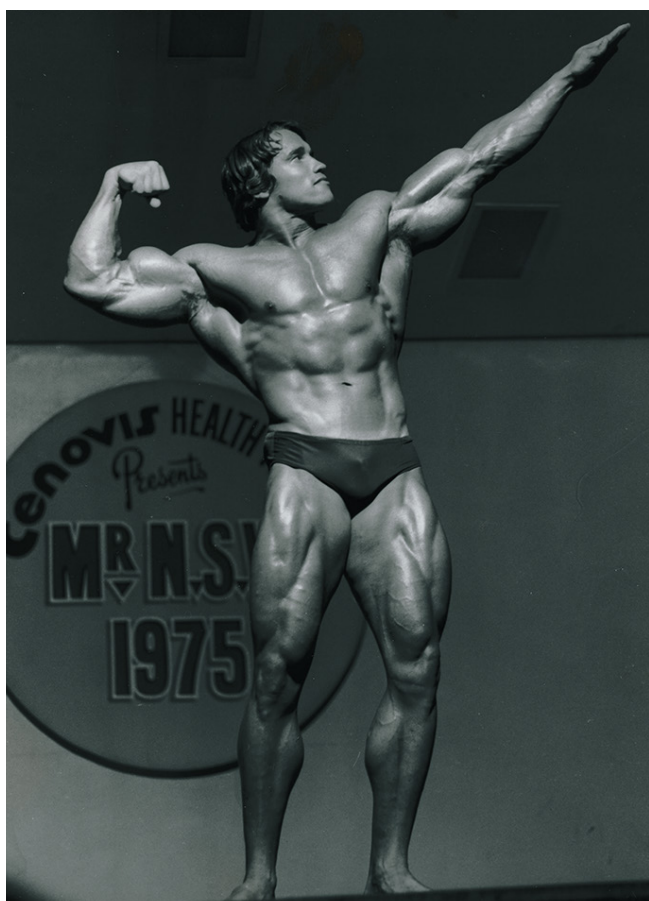
Here in Australia meat is cheap. They only cost me \$1.00 each. Ken told me that in the US they would be \$5.00 each. My mother prepared a lot thinking that they were so big they need as much food as she could dish out. I gave Ken a chair that I forgot was only stuck together roughly, and when he sat down it collapsed and he fell on his ass.



He gave me a dirty look as if I had done it intentionally! But I didn't, Arnold laughed for at least five minutes. My mother brought out the food with the plates piled full of meat, eggs and salad. We all got stuck into it. Arnold took his time as he was watching a T.V. program at the same time and it had him intrigued. After second servings then dessert we all sat and had a rest for fifteen minutes.

Later I took the boys into my room to show them the albums I had collected over the years. They were mainly on the early bodybuilders like Reeves, Grimek, Park (Arnold's early idol) etc. He was fascinated with the photos of Reeves probably because I had so many plus Steve Reeves original entry forms from the 1948 and 1950 Universe competitions complete with measurements. Arnold remarked, "That guy was so good looking and had nice shape". Of course Early in Arnolds Career he was influenced by Reg Park, mainly with the size factor, and only now he started to appreciate the Reeves style of physique.

I think Arnold is very critical but he is also correct with his criticism. He knows because he had to work hard to reach the top. He always gives credit where it's due; many times he was impressed with smaller guys. He is a bodybuilder not a big head. I remember when Zane won the Olympia Arnold wrote and said, "I am glad that Zane won the Olympia. He is a fantastic bodybuilder and a credit to the sport." That is a statement from a man not an egotist.



Arnold guest posing at the Mr NSW 1975

The day of the Mr. N.S.W. contest arrived. I had been training in the mornings with Arnold for two weeks and looked OK to myself. I wasn't sure whether to enter the show, but a bit of coaxing from the boys, and I decided I would. Arnold had brought out some of his contest tan lotion with him. I got a bottle of it off him. I went home and applied the lot with cotton wool which was so slow in the end I used a paint brush and put on a few coats and off I went to the judging.

Being a contestant can be confusing as to how you compare with the rest of the body builders in the line up. You can only give your best and that afternoon I did just that. After the judging I helped set up the lighting for the evening show. It was difficult because there was only one light set at a certain angle on the stage and the posing platform was just right. After setting up, two friends and I went to eat at a Chinese restaurant, in between the rest period. We had over an hour to relax and talk about the

comparisons. The meal was great especially after the hectic time we'd just been through.

We arrived back at the show a little late, but our stomachs were full and most of the stress was behind us. The juniors were on stage. We stood at the back of the hall and watched the show. Ken Waller came

out straight after the juniors and gave a posing display followed by a small speech to the audience. He had to leave immediately for the airport to catch his plane and only had half an hour to meet the deadline.

He received a great applause. As he left I shook hands with him and he said to me, “ I don’t know how you went in the show Robert, but all the best anyway.” Ken was on his way to Japan to give an exhibition. He left his stay in Australia to the last moment.



Arnold guest posing at the Mr NSW 1975

The show was in full swing and most of the line-ups and acts had been on. Only my open event and Arnold’s spot were left to go, plus the presentation of the trophies. Our class went on first. I was backstage pumping up. I was in the middle so I stood in the wings and watched the guys pose. A lot of guys make the mistake of spending too much time pumping; they over pump and lose it as soon as the cold air hits them on the stage.

When it was my turn on stage I walked out and posed to a routine of a combination of poses. I had practiced last week. When on stage you forget your nerves because you have to concentrate on the routine and “give ‘em all you’ve got”. Before long our class had finished and it was Arnold’s spot.

The theme song Exodus must have been the most popular background theme to use to pose to for most body builders. Reg Park was the first to use it and when Arnold saw Reg

pose to the music it impressed him greatly. Wag Bennet in London suggested to Arnold that he should pose to music so he stuck to Exodus. The dramatic music suits his physique.

Paul Graham was the M.C. and gave a little speech about Arnold to the audience before he went on and then introduced him as “The best built man in the world”. Arnold walked out slowly with a smile and stood relaxed for a moment then the Exodus theme began and he hit a double bicep pose and then a twisting back. The audience applauded and lapped it all up. I noticed that when Arnold posed his eyes seem to be half-mast, whether he was concentrating or whatever, he was in a totally different world. The lighting looked good that I had set up, excellent for photographs. Arnold ‘s routine was fantastic. He came back and did a second spot. All his poses were different to the audiences delight too. I was sitting in the front row with my camera trying to get all his poses on film. I didn’t need a flash because the light was so good. Luckily I got most of them.



His routine was *over* and again he answered questions from the audience, the usual, steroids, sets, reps, diet etc. At the finish of the show Arnold presented the winners with their trophies. The juniors, novice and finally the open which I was fortunate to win plus a few body parts - best arms, best abs, most muscular and best poser. The guy that came second won the other parts. He looked better proportionally but lost out due to smoothness. After the show a reception was held for contestants at a nearby local hotel. All of the entrants and some of their friends came along. Everyone talked about the show! Arnold was totally surrounded by girls! One girl was feeling his thighs and others feeling his arms and so on. In general it was a relaxing evening after a good show.



Arnold in Coogee Gym after training legs with Robert

The “Mr. Australia” show was being held a week later in Melbourne. I didn’t intend entering but Arnold persuaded me to. I shouldn’t have because in that extra week I gained 7 - 9 pounds of weight and smoothed right out. The show was held at the town hall right in the center of the city. The attendance was good. The hall was a sell out. There were several other acts on with the show, which caused it to run a bit overtime, Karate, singing acts, dancing, etc. A lot of guys from Sydney drove down to enter or to see the show. The

roads aren’t the best either – all 600 miles of it. We flew so we got it easy, it took just over an hour. It was a rush drive down and straight back after the show for the others.

Again Arnold was the center of attraction. When he arrived in the city he was in all the newspapers and on a local T.V. program, advertising the contest. One commentator asked Arnold where he bought the sweater he was wearing. It fit like a glove. He replied that he bought it at a shop in the town. It was a big make, (XX-large) and the shop owner couldn’t sell it because it was too big to fit any of his customers, so he got it at a special price, believe me, for a super large sweater it was skin tight on him.

Melbourne is a quiet city. It’s all set out in square blocks and to me all the streets look the same when you get out in the suburbs. After the contest there was a reception given at one of the gyms. We got lost several times but eventually found it. We were all starving too so it was a welcome relief to get some food into our stomachs. At these “after the contest parties” they always serve the best food. Lots of different varieties of meat and salads etc.

The next day some of the Sydney boys flew back including Arnold. He only had a few more days left before he left for Los Angeles. He kept training but only once a day, in the evenings around 5 or 6. I had dinner with him several times at the restaurant in the motel. He always had a lot of interesting stories to tell me - competitions he had entered and people he had met, little things that happen in the gym etc.

I suppose I got to know Arnold better than most and personally I found him to be a very interesting and likeable person. He is a very genuine guy and generous. The people in Australia were very impressed with his physique and his magnetic personality. I read a few items in various newspapers and magazines, written by women mostly, criticizing the average physical pot gutted male and praising the superior physique of Arnold Schwarzenegger. And one woman said he was a credit to manhood. She only wished more men took an interest in their bodies.

The day Arnold left I picked him up at his motel and drove him out to the Airport. He said his goodbyes to all his friends and was on his way home to L.A.

Since 1972 I have been corresponding with him up to this day and he has always replied to my letters. In fact he hasn't missed one letter. I feel that he has put so much effort into bodybuilding over the years and it was so demanding he was due for a rest. He is the perfect Ambassador for the game and is still promoting bodybuilding not only in America but also around the world. I think Arnold has done more for the bodybuilding game in this day and age than anyone. I realize he is now getting into movies and will make a name for himself here also; maybe one day he may decide to get into top shape again for exhibitions or whatever. It's OK to see photos of him but to see Arnold in the flesh is an experience in itself after all. So far there has only been one Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I don't think there will be another one like him to come on the scene for a long, long time.

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ROBERT NAILON