

# Jorge Betancourt

## Back to Aesthetic Bodybuilding

**In the late eighties and early nineties bodybuilding stars like Shawn Ray, Berry DeMay, Bob Paris, Lee Labrada and Francis Benfatto dominated the scene. They were times of symmetrical physiques when aesthetics prevailed over size at any cost. At the time a new star emerged on the North American panorama, a young adolescent with a physique of fine lines and proportions, who won everything... and then disappeared. I'm talking about Jorge Betancourt.**

**T**here are many of us who yearn for the days when symmetry and proportion were valued attributes highly praised in bodybuilders.

There were big guys, the Mr. Olympia Lee Haney was one, but there were also an abundance of exceptional physiques that had something that their inheritors don't seem to have today: people wanted to be like them. Thousands and thousands of fans dreamed of transforming their bodies to look like Bob Paris, Berry DeMay or Labrada or Benfatto - they didn't just admire them, they wanted to be like them.

That's the big difference between bodybuilding a couple of decades ago and now. Today there are fewer fans, and although they admire the champs, if you asked them they would tell you they don't want to be like them, whereas they used to.

In the late eighties there emerged a boy of just 18 years who won the junior category at the USA bodybuilding championships and the overall title the same year at the Teen Nationals. The following year he won the middleweight category at the Southern States championships but not just in the juniors, he also competed in the open category and took out the overall title. Until then, no one

had ever done that at only 19 years of age.

It was 1991 and the young Betancourt appeared in all the muscle mags, but he never returned to competition, disappearing from the face of the bodybuilding world with the same stealth as he had arrived.

Now, 14 years later Jorge Betancourt is back in the pages of the industry's publications because he has finally returned, and with him we might just get back to aesthetic bodybuilding. At a time when it seems the bodybuilding world is casting its eyes toward proportioned physiques again, the reappearance of Betancourt is like a breath of fresh air to push us in that direction.

Jorge Betancourt was born in Puerto Rico in 1971 to a Cuban family, but grew up in Florida where they moved when he was a boy.

He measures 164cm (5'5") in height and weighs 90kg (200lb) off-season and 79kg (175lb) in competition. His arms measure 46cm (18") and his waist 64 (25).

From a young age Jorge played all kinds of

sport, except basketball, since he was too short, he says laughing...

**BodyFitness:** For how many years have you been in bodybuilding now?

**Jorge Betancourt:** I've been training for 18 years altogether, but for 12 I've been out of competition.

**BF:** So how old were you when you started training?

**JB:** If I'm going to be truthful then I started experimenting with weights when I was just nine years old, but seriously it wasn't until I was 14.

**BF:** Did you have any particular idol at that point, or someone you admired?

**JB:** Shawn Ray, Lee Haney and Lee Labrada.

**BF:** And now?

**JB:** Now nobody.

**BF:** What were you like physically when you got involved with weights?

**JB:** I was just a typical eighth grade kid - really skinny with long hair.

**Bent-over rows may be the best all round exercise for the back there is.**



Jorge displays the kind of aesthetic lines that are becoming more and more popular these days.



📷 Phil Clarke

📷 Irvin Gelb

## JORGE BETANCOURT: COMPETITION HISTORY

1989 Mr. Teen USA	1st, middleweight
1990 Teen Nationals	1st, middleweight and overall
1991 Southern States	1st, middleweight and overall senior (19 years old)

**BF:** And what were the first changes you noticed?

**JB:** My chest grew quickly, and my self-esteem just skyrocketed.

**BF:** How did your parents feel about your new hobby? Were they supportive?

**JB:** No, they never liked bodybuilding because of the drugs that were always associated with it, but with time they've seen that everybody is not like that, and I opened my own gym and their attitude towards it changed.

**BF:** How did you train back then and how has your training changed, if that has what has happened?

**JB:** When I was younger the mentality was, "the more the better", so I trained a lot. Now I've cut everything back to half and the results

are the same, if not better.

**BF:** What type of routine do you follow now?

**JB:** Off-season I train four days a week, and five when I'm preparing for a contest. I do 9-12 sets per body part and 8-12 reps per set. My workouts last about an hour and a quarter.

**BF:** What are your favourite groups or exercises when it comes to training?

**JB:** I used to love training legs, but I injured my quadriceps twice - once while wrestling with a friend in the gym and then again doing lunges. Another of my favourite groups was the chest, but when I was 20 I tore a pectoral and I have never done a heavy barbell bench press since.

**BF:** Is there any group that you don't like training?

**JB:** No, there has never been a body part I haven't liked training. I enjoy them all equally.

**BF:** What priority would you grant training, diet and supplements?



Despite his classic lines, the man still likes to pound his muscles with fairly heavy weights.



Once the golden boy of bodybuilding, Jorge has finally returned to competition.

**JB:** For me diet and supplements are the most important. Training anybody can do but where they fall down is with the diet. I used to take every supplement I could find, but now I use my own.

**BF:** Describe your off-season diet for us.

**JB:** During the off-season I eat half clean and half what I want. I know my body so well now that I know what I can and can't do. Also, if you do it in moderation you should be able to eat anything.

**BF:** And when you're preparing for a competition, how does it change?



Betancourt has released his own line of supplements.

**JB:** Well, then my diet is basically made up of chicken, fish, egg whites, oatmeal, toast, rice and potatoes. Nothing unusual, but I eat more often, every three hours no matter what. The pre-comp diet starts 12 weeks out from the event. I know I could get into shape in 10 weeks, but I've always preferred to start a bit early.

**BF:** How important is bodybuilding in your life, and what do you think of current trends in the sport?

**JB:** For me the most important things are my family and my business. I'm married to Charlene and we have a son, Alexander. Then I have a gym, and I'm going to make my dream come true with my own line of sports supplements. As far as current trends in bodybuilding, it's a monsters' game. None of them could be pleased with what they see in the mirror, except one or two and they're talking about retiring. Nowadays nobody has a physique worthy of admiration.

**BF:** If you could change something, what would it be?

**JB:** Very simple, substitute the physiques of the nineties and 2000s for those that were around in the eighties and early nineties.

**BF:** What does your wife think of bodybuilding?

**JB:** She sees it as a business, but she still feels uncomfortable with the strange things I go through.

**BF:** You seem to have the potential to grow a lot more, what weight would you like to be?

**JB:** I don't want to get any bigger. It doesn't feel right and I don't like it.

**BF:** Aside from bodybuilding, what other hobbies do you have?

## JORGE BETANCOURT: VITAL STATISTICS

Height	164cm
Weight off-season	90kg (200lb)
Weight in contest	79kg (175lb)
Hobbies	Video games
Music	Hip hop
Movie	<i>Brave Heart</i>
Colour	Green
Food	Cuban
Food dislikes	Shellfish
Bodybuilder	Lee Haney
Pastime	Eating out
Holidays	Disney World



Jorge Betancourt really is a breath of fresh air amongst the muscle monsters.



Smart training has allowed Betancourt to add a lot of mass and retain a pleasing physique.

**JB:** I love games. I know all there is to know about video games. I have an X-box and last year I built a game console with the best of everything. I can take the console apart and put it back together in the blink of an eye.

**BF:** Your short-term objectives?

**JB:** Finish my new house and release my new range of products.

**BF:** And long term?

**JB:** To be the new Lee Labrada of the supplement business.

**BF:** You seem very focussed on that objective.

**JB:** Well, for 15 years now I've been dreaming of having my own line of supplements. I expect them to be in stores this year, and I trust that they will satisfy the needs of today's athletes. And as with bodybuilding, I put 100% effort into making products of the highest quality.

**BF:** Well, we wish you the best of luck in a business as complicated and competitive as that of sports supplements.

**JB:** Thanks for the opportunity, and let's keep in touch.

