

The Spoken Word

JOHN HANSEN**MR. NATURAL OLYMPIA**

“I wasn’t the most genetically gifted bodybuilder.”

HOMETOWN: Chicago, Illinois**WEIGHT:** 210 lbs (contest)

235 lbs (off-season)

HEIGHT: 5'8"**DOB:** March 10, 1963**WHY YOU KNOW HIS NAME:**

Natural bodybuilder John Hansen has twice been named Mr. Natural Universe and is the first winner ever of the Mr. Natural Olympia title in Greece.

STEROID USE IN BODYBUILDING: When John started weight training at 14, he wanted to emulate the guys who dominated the fitness magazines in the '70s like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lou Ferrigno, and Franco Columbu. "I wanted to win Mr. Universe and live the life of a professional bodybuilder," says John. "But when I got to the national level, I found out that just about everybody was taking steroids on a year-round basis. I didn't want to take the health risk or rely on drugs to build my physique, so in 1990 I began competing in 'natural' bodybuilding competitions." In 1992 John realized his boyhood dream when he was named Mr. Natural Universe for the first time.

A BODYBUILDER'S EDGE: "I wasn't the most genetically gifted bodybuilder by any means. I was pretty skinny and it took seven years of training to develop mass. I had to eat a lot and train a lot. For me, it was a mental drive that gave me more of an edge than anything physical that I had. The guys who aren't genetically gifted really seem to have the desire whereas the ones who are gifted lack it."

SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE: After 25 years of competing, John is now putting his efforts into advocating fitness full-time through personal training, speaking engagements, writing a regular column for Ironman magazine, and writing books for the drug-free bodybuilder. His most recent endeavor, a book called "Natural Bodybuilding" (naturalolympia.com, \$22), provides detailed programs and workouts, proven dietary guidelines and a weeklong precompetition plan for the bodybuilder who wants to gain muscle the healthy way. "The truth is that you can build an awesome, contest-ready physique without ever having to pick up a needle or swallow dangerous drugs. This book shows you how," says John. **AHE**