

Steve Reeves, Building the Classic Physique— The Natural Way, 2nd Edition (Calabasas, CA: Little-Wolff Group, 1995).

Reviewed by Grover L. Porter, Ph.D. University of Alabama, Huntsville.

Do you want a strong, muscular and healthy body? Do you want to win a gold medal in your chosen sport? Do you want to be the best you can be? If "yes," Steve Reeve's *Building the Classic Physique—The Natural* Way is a must read for you.

Mr. America, Mr. World, Mr. Universe and the original Hercules of the movies explains in his new book, *Building the Classic Physique—The Natural Way* how to build a strong and muscular body without using illegal, health-sapping drugs. Reeve's book is divided into four sections: (1) his life in bodybuilding, (2) the science of bodybuilding (3) additional training considerations and (4) a bodybuilding seminar. It also has seven appendices that are filled with details regarding the achievements and bodybuilding principles of the man some consider to be the "greatest physical culturist of all time." In addition, the book is jam packed with awe-inspiring photos of Reeve's classic physique.

Although Reeves' biography is well known to many readers of *Iron Game History*, there is still much to be learned from Part One of *Building the Classic Physique*. Reeve's rise to super stardom began with his victory in the 1947 Mr. America. The following year he took home the Mr. World crown and in 1950 he was also named Mr. Universe. Like Sandow at the turn of the century, however, Reeves soon transcended mere bodybuilding. In the movies Steve played in a number of Hercules films and several westerns. By the end of the 1950s, he was one of the most popular film stars in the world, especially in Europe.

Part Two contains the essence of Reeve's philosophy of bodybuilding. He argues that one should be a "thinking bodybuilder." As such, "you create a picture in your mind of how you want your physique to look when you reach your genetic potential. Then you tram to achieve that image." Reeves contends that the best results are achieved when you work the major muscles of the upper body before you work the muscles of the lower body. He recommends a "top-down" workout routine in this section and with plenty of pictures of Hercules to inspire the reader, even a 97-pound weakling can become a perfectly developed man.

Part Three contains advice for advanced bodybuilders, athletes, executives and seniors. It also contains a brief synopsis of Steve's earlier book, *Power- Walking*, in which he described how to use brisk walking and light weights to maximize aerobic fitness. This third section also covers the value of good nutrition in building and maintaining a healthy and muscular body. In Part Four, Reeves answers the kind of questions usually posed to him at bodybuilding seminars about supplements, nutrition, drugs and so forth.

Although Reeves' book is sold in many bookstores, you can also order an autographed copy directly from him by sending \$29.95 for the soft cover and \$39.95 for the hardback edition to: Steve Reeves, P.O. Box 807, Valley Center, CA, 92082. Prices quoted include postage.