

# SIZE MATTERS

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feel great. Besides, I find there's an inverse correlation between someone being gorgeous and being a nice, interesting person."

The link between how one feels about oneself inside and how one carries oneself on the outside is strong.

"I didn't perceive myself as attractive until I came out at the age of 25," Patrick says. "Until I gave in to my own attraction to men, I subconsciously rejected approaches from both women and men. I thought I must be asexual."

When Patrick finally admitted his own desires, he began to attract others to him and, even though he is quite shy and isn't built like a *Frontiers* Model/Escort, he is never wanting for dates. Perspective is the key.

Milo, a 55-year-old bear, agrees. Heavy his whole adult life, Milo had grown accustomed to feeling invisible among other gay men.

"Like that song from the musical *Chicago*," he says. "Mister Cellophane should have been my name... 'cause you can look right through me, walk right by me, and never know I'm there."

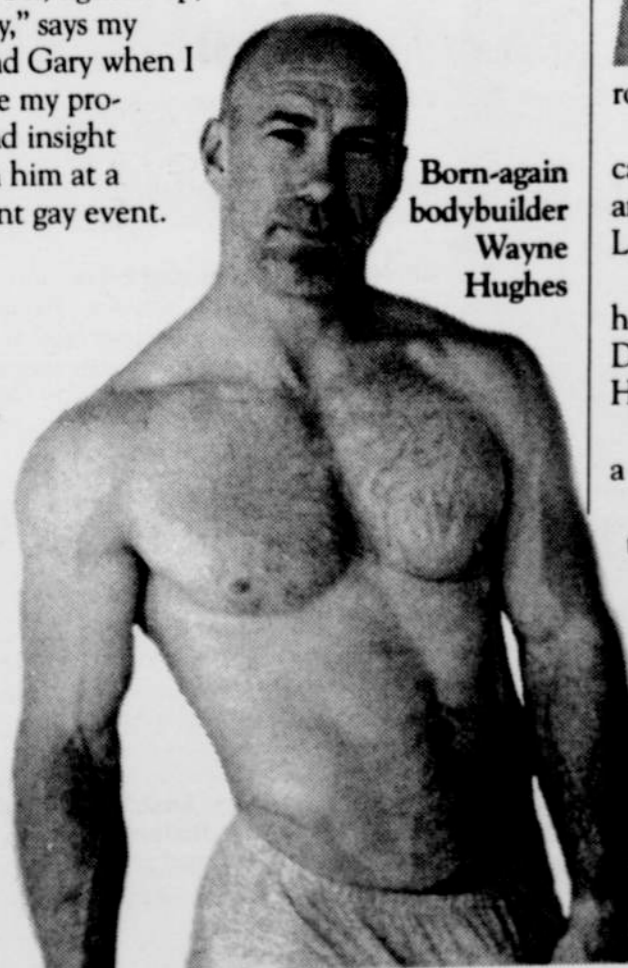
All that changed when he went to his first bear party: "I hadn't even put down my casserole dish when, out of nowhere, men were practically knocking over the table to get to me. It was so unexpected, so shocking."

Yet even during those times when he felt invisible, Milo had the wherewithal to value himself.

"Those people who ignored me—I figured they were the losers, not me," he explains. "Sure, I suffered from low self-esteem, not because of my body image but because my family was so horribly homophobic."

Milo and Patrick touch on a provocative point. Does the gay male obsession with beauty and perfection derive from our childhood feelings that our attractions are wrong and shameful? Do we feel we have to be built like Superman to live in a straight man's world? Perhaps. I know I've often felt that it wasn't enough to be as good as straight guys in whatever I did—I had to be better.

"Oh, lighten up, Mary," says my friend Gary when I share my profound insight with him at a recent gay event.



Born-again bodybuilder Wayne Hughes

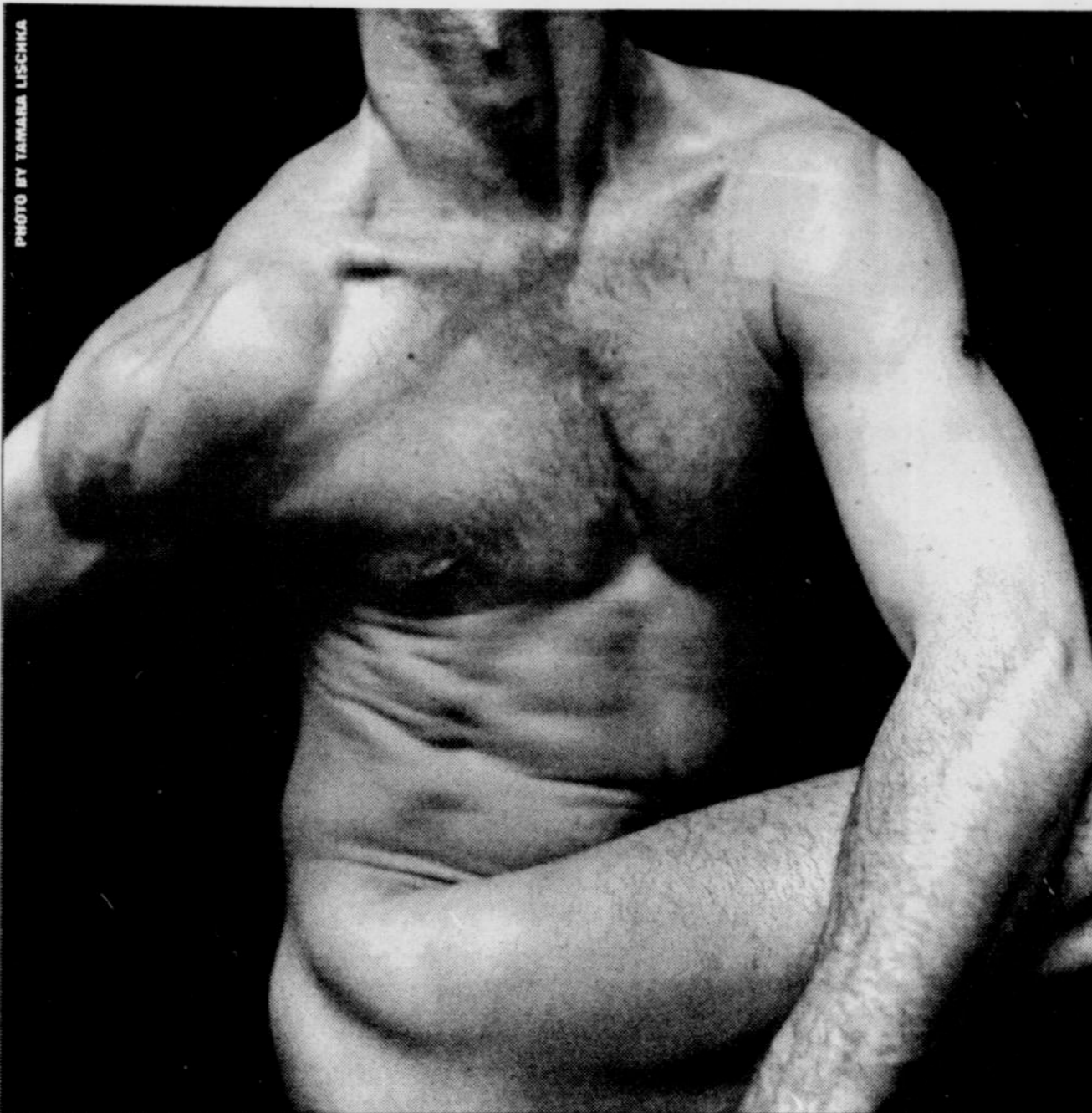


PHOTO BY TAMARA LISCHKA

"But don't you think there's all this pressure among gay men to be gorgeous?" I ask. (Gary's a former Los Angeleno; I figured he'd understand.)

"Puh-leeze! Take a look around..." he says with a sweeping gesture at a roomful of perfectly ordinary-looking men. "If these guys are feeling any pressure to be gorgeous, darling, they're doing a damn good job not succumbing to it. You want to know pressure? Go to a bar in West Hollywood where everyone looks like a friggin' Calvin Klein model and then let's talk about pressure."

He's right, in a way. I've found that most Northwesterners pride themselves on being more substantive than our neighbors to the south—as if the rain and gloom automatically make us more serious.

## Let's get physical

An exception is Wayne Hughes, who does have a body that could turn heads at a SoCal circuit party—and he has been routinely and openly criticized for it.

"Once," he crows, "someone actually came up to me in the gym and said, 'What are you working out for like that? This isn't L.A.'"

I suppose it's easy to call the daily three-hour workout of Hughes and his partner, Danny Hills, obsessive and shallow, and Hughes is quick to agree.

"Deep down, I'm superficial," he says with a wink.

But for this dynamic duo—Hills being the more slender, Boy Wonder type to Hughes' beefy Batman—self-acceptance comes from the outside in, rather than the inside out.

"I know what it's like to be fat," says Hughes, who has only sported his buff build for three years, giving hope to us all. "I was heading towards 40, and I realized I was built like an avocado."

He admits that the three-hour regimen, combined with a Spartan diet, is extreme to the point that his having only

5 percent body fat ("you need a flashlight and a hand mirror to find it") actually causes him to catch colds more frequently than most. But for Hughes, who used to back out of a room, it's worth it to have "an ass you can bend metal on."

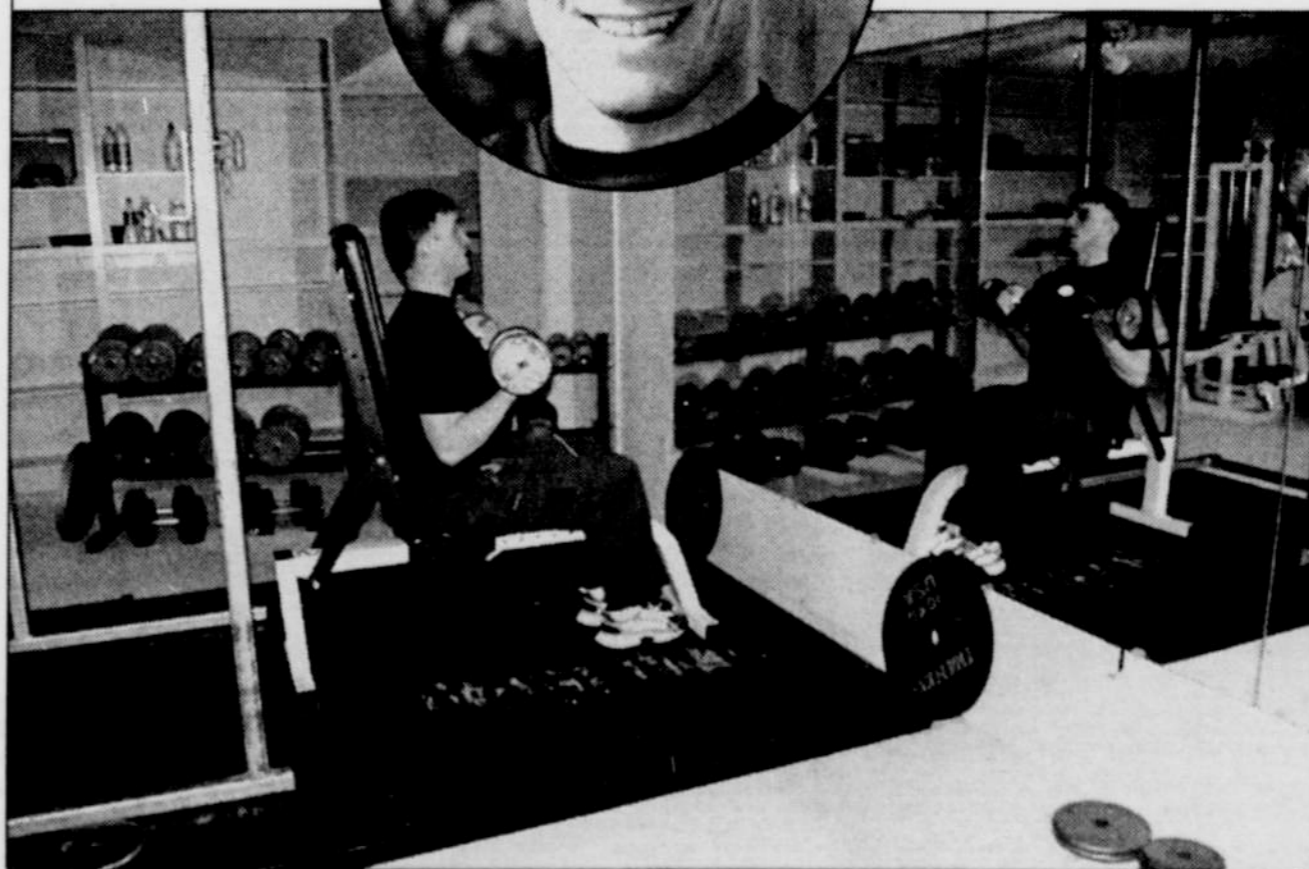
"You can't deny the vanity factor," he adds, "but it's more than that."

The confidence he and Hills have developed, for instance. Both report feeling safer, no longer intimidated by straight men.

"I can camp it up all I want, and what's one of these soft, tiny straight boys going to do about it? 'Cause they know I could rip their heads off and crap down their throats," Hughes brags.

Now c'mon, guys, admit it: Who among us wouldn't love to feel that way?

Personal trainer Sean Parries



PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS

## Let me hear your body talk

, for one, leave Hughes and Hills' house inspired. Perhaps the mature, spiritually evolved person can accept his body the way it is...but if it's in my power to change it, hell, I still want arms the size of my thighs.

I consult the *Just Out* classified ads for a personal trainer. Now, I'm a firm believer in the adage "If you want what someone has, do what they do," so when I see the photo of the trim-waisted, broad-shouldered Sean Parries, I don't hesitate to call. I'm ready to do what it takes to build a hard body. What Parries says, however, stops me dead in my tracks.

"The core thing, Marc, is that people yearn to connect," he says.

When asked what that's got to do with beefing up biceps, the smooth voice on the other end of the line says softly: "Strengthening the body is a form of healing, and to do that you've got to listen to your body. And to listen to your body you've got to slow down. It's amazing what your body will say when you give it a chance."

Parries took his own advice two years ago and decided that in order to share his holistic approach to health, his clients needed to be in an atmosphere that created that mentality, not in some noisy gym. So he built a workout studio in his own home.

"Someone calls me looking for a hard body, that's fine," he says, reading my mind. "But they're going to get so much more, Marc."

Parries uses my name frequently in the conversation, and I'm comforted by it and the gentle way in which he teaches his clients to re-prioritize: "What we all must learn is that people are perfect the way they are today."

I hear myself heave a sigh of relief and think, "Only in Portland, Oregon, could you find a personal trainer who says, 'People are perfect the way they are today.'"

Now that's something you won't find in the back of *Frontiers* magazine.

**Please Note: Some of the names of those interviewed have been changed to protect their privacy. (Sorry, boys, that means you can't get the phone number of the guy with the big cock.)**

■ MARC ACITO and his partner own *Fastsigns* in Tigard. He draws the comic strip "The Boys Next Door" and says he would go to the gym more often if it had a better selection of cakes and pies.