

Amazing Joe Weider

By
Alan Palmieri

Recently I had to fly to Los Angeles on business. I dread flying and sure didn't look forward to the flight. Since I was headed to the West Coast, I contacted Joe Weider's office to see if it would be possible to meet with him. It's been many years since our last person to person meeting and I was really hoping his schedule would permit it. My visit with Joe would be an opportunity to discuss business as well as personal matters and revisit old memories.

I knew Joe was not back into full swing as he had recently undergone a major back reconstruction surgery. Not simply back surgery but a full reconstruction. In addition he was in Intensive Care five times, that's right, five times. Not an easy thing for anyone to endure.

Joe has always been very gracious and kind to me in every respect. From the first day we met and all through the years. I really hoped his schedule, as well as his health would allow us the chance to get together and as things worked out it did. Joe was gracious enough to invite me to his home for a Sunday lunch. For a few hours we spent time talking business, reminiscing about the "good ole days", and talking about a lot of different things. I know I had a great time and believe Joe did also.

Joe has always been a straight shooter with me. He's never pulled any punches. Good or bad, like it or not, he's has always told me what he thought... exactly what he

thought. This visit was filled with the same honesty and straight talk Joe always delivered.

Joe was sitting at the dining room table when I arrived. Before I got close enough for us to shake hands I said, “Joe, how are you?” At the same time Joe said, “Hello Alan.” “Don’t get up Joe,” I said as we shook hands. The first thing out of Joe’s mouth was typical Joe Weider. With that great accent of his he said: “You still got size and carrying a lot of muscle mass Alan and that’s good but you should have kept the weight off.” Like I said, Joe never pulled any punches with me, ever. Truth was, I was carrying some extra weight, Joe was right so what was I to say? Joe can size up a person faster than anyone I’ve ever known. Even fully clothed he can just about tell what a person’s physique looks like.

We talked about his surgery and his health, my heart attack and my health. What he thought about the changes in the magazines he sold. We talked about his home, which is beautiful. We discussed supplements and Weider Nutrition. We talked about training, Larry Scott, Harold Poole, and Arnold Schwarzenegger among others. I made mention to him of my website and the website of some of my friends. We talked how bodybuilding had changed over the years and reminisced about vintage magazines and courses. We touched on the book Joe is working on, an autobiography. It was a great time and brought back some wonderful memories. I told Joe how I was hooked on Super Pro 101 and hated it when I could no longer get it; loved the taste of the chocolate flavor. Only you “old timers” will remember those cans of Super Pro 101.

While on the subject of vintage magazines and courses, Joe said something that is so true. He said: “You can have a table full of gold, silver, expensive jewelry and old bodybuilding magazines and courses. Real bodybuilders will look at, pick up, and take old magazines and courses and leave the gold, silver, and jewelry alone.”

For all Joe had been through he looked great, surprisingly so. I took a couple of pictures and they didn’t come out very well. Still, you can see that Joe is in remarkable

shape. He still has that overpowering positive attitude and will power. He can talk bodybuilding non stop all day. Joe believes and lives bodybuilding. Joe Weider is amazing.

As time permits I may try to write an article detailing more of our visit, if time permits that is. As great as it was I hate I did not get to see Betty. She is without a doubt one of the most beautiful women I've ever met, inside and out. Gracious and charm describe her personality. I can't think of a single person who has anything but nice things to say about her.

For the fun of looking back, I have attached two pictures to this article. The first one in black and white appeared in an IFBB Newsletter many years ago. The second one was taken during my recent visit with Joe. Maybe grey but Joe has kept his hair. Over lunch I kidded Joe about a booklet he authored many years ago, maybe in the late 60's or early 70's, relating to hair care. I told Joe it looked like he followed his own advice and maybe I should have too. Forget the hairline, or lack of it in my case, check out those lovely thin ties! Now you talk about a fashion statement! I'll bet you I was wearing black Penny Loafers too!



Joe and I in front of his offices at 801 Palisades Ave,
Union City, NJ summer of 1966



An older Joe and an older Alan enjoying lunch at Joe's home March 2005

Time marches on and we all get older and hopefully wiser. Friendships whether they are those that have frequent and regular contact or those that have only rare and distant contact are to be cherished. I am grateful for Joe's friendship.

I'm fortunate in many respects. One of them is in having had the opportunity to meet and know Joe. Over the forty years I've known him he has always been a man of his word, helpful, sincere, and dedicated to what he believed in. Bodybuilding owes a lot to Joe Weider. His love and devotion to bodybuilding is unquestionable. Joe's influence extends to every aspect of bodybuilding and into every corner of the world. It would be hard to imagine bodybuilding without Joe Weider.

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