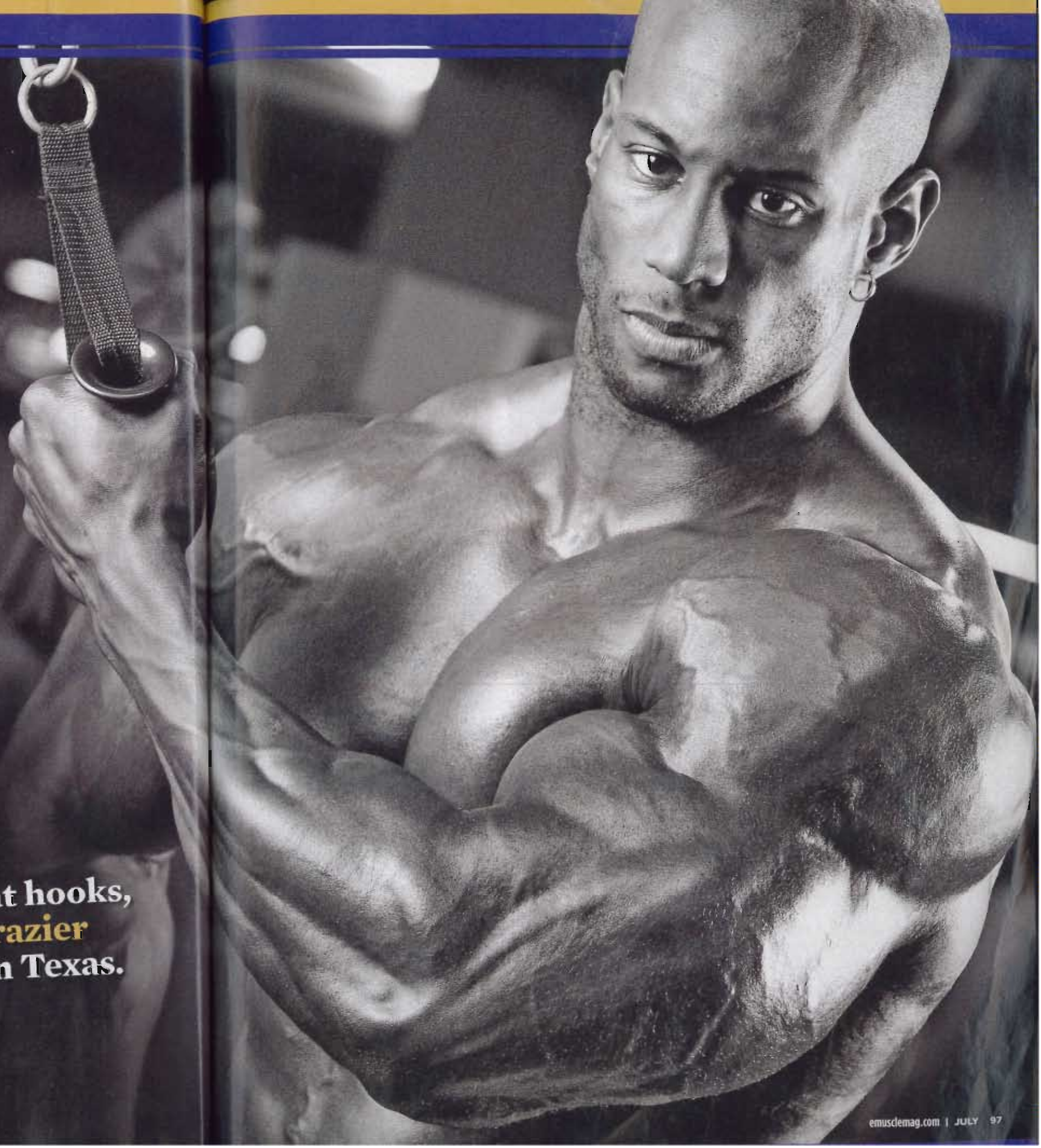


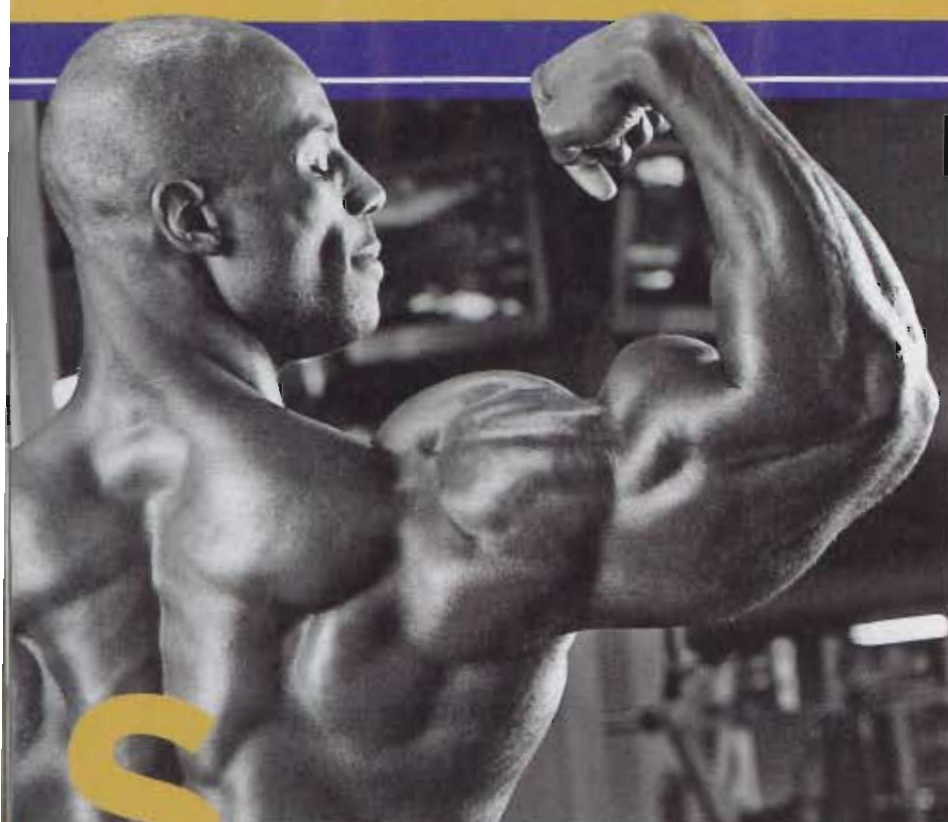


# LONE STAR ARMS

With bi's and tri's the size of meat hooks, amateur bodybuilder **Stephen Frazier** shows why everything's bigger in Texas.

By Lara McGlashan, MFA, CPT  
Photos by Ralph DeHaan





**S** Stephen Frazier sits quietly in his office at his private training facility, South Grand Prairie Fitness, attending to crucial business —

the business of eating, that is. He methodically consumes three ground-beef patties and two cups of rice, chewing each bite thoroughly, enjoying his third meal of the day. "I usually eat 5-7 meals daily, with one shake post-workout," says the 30-year-old Texas native, scrapping his Tupperware clean. "Believe it or not, I never get sick eating this close to a workout, either. I could even eat while I trained if I had to!"

He then stands, unfolding his 6'1" frame from behind his desk, revealing the 300-pound physique that explains his hefty brunch. After a downward slide from third at the Nationals in 2007 to eighth in 2008 and off the radar to 16th in 2009, Stephen decided a year-long break was in order. "I wasn't putting competition and winning as high on the priority list as I should've been," he admits when asked about his ranking retreat. "I didn't realize how hard I'd worked for [that initial third-place finish] and how

important it was for me to win. For three years, I didn't take any time off at all from dieting, doing photo shoots and appearances for MuscleTech and competing, and it took a toll on my body. So this year I decided to go through the holidays like a normal person — going to Sea World with my son, regrouping and then being ready for the Nationals come November."

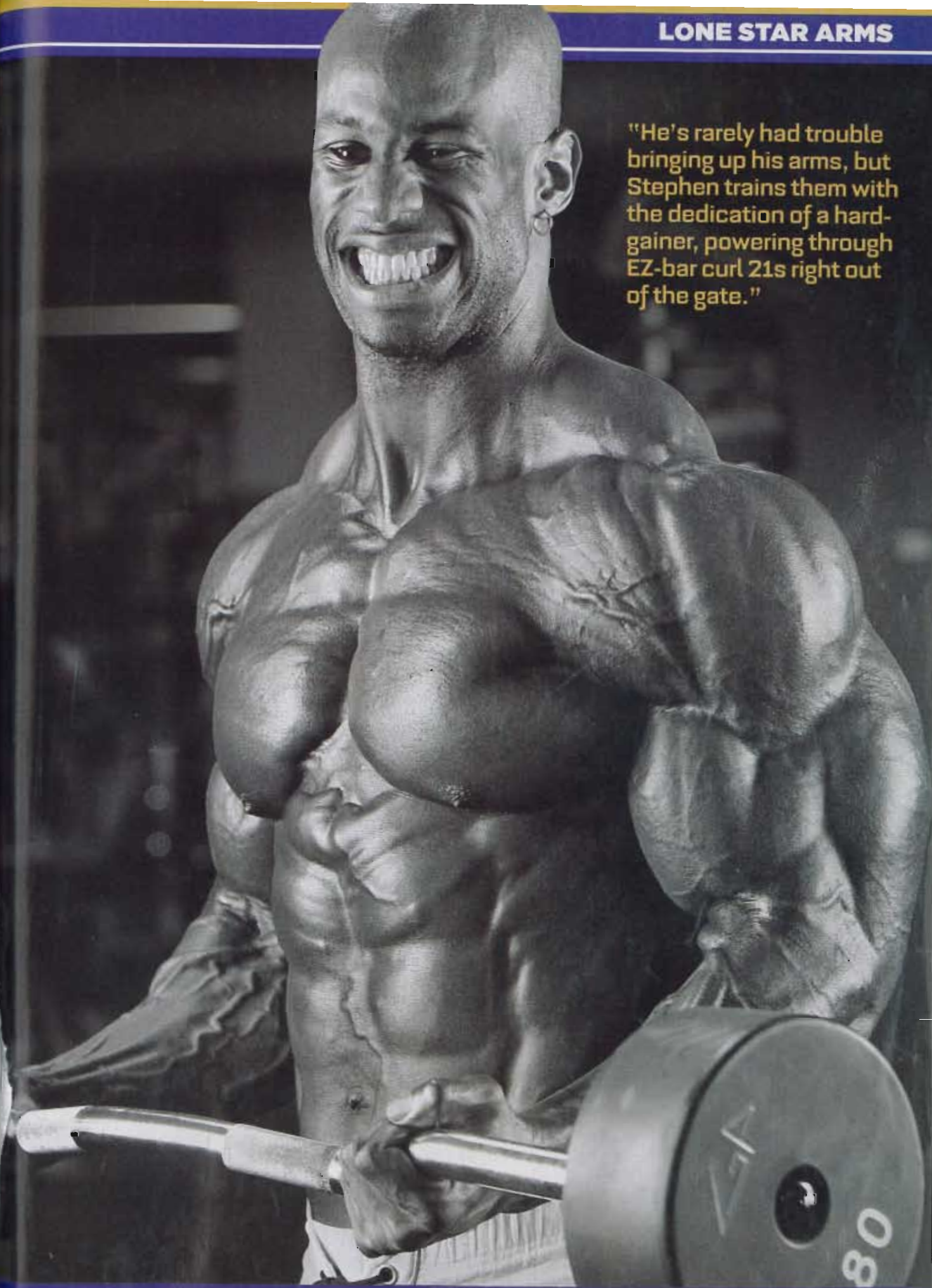
Stephen grabs his gear and heads onto the floor of his gym, greeting his training partner, producer Eric Morgan, as he enters. They share a little banter, but then visibly shift into another gear reserved for training — eyes intense, focus direct — and walk to the free-weight area. Sometimes, to avoid the mind-meddling concerns of owning a business, Stephen trains at nearby MetroFlex Gym, home to such mass monsters as 2009 Mr. Olympia runner-up Branch Warren and eight-time Mr. Olympia Ronnie Coleman. "But during time-crunched days, I stay here to make everything fit — training clients, training myself, being a dad to my son, Miles, and a husband to my wife, Deidra," he says. "Today is one of those days."

#### 21-GUN SALUTE

On the menu today are biceps and triceps. Normally, shoulders would get pummeled alongside arms, but because of time constraints, shoulder training will be done another day. The workout pace is swift and workmanlike, with the

### STEPHEN'S ARM ROUTINE

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
<b>BICEPS</b>		
EZ-Bar Curl	2-3	21
Seated Alternating Dumbbell Curl	3-4	8
Rope Hammer Curl	3	15-25
Concentration Curl	3	10-12
<b>TRICEPS</b>		
Reverse-Grip Pressdown	4	15
Rope Pressdown	3	25
Seated One-Arm Overhead Extension	3	15



"He's rarely had trouble bringing up his arms, but Stephen trains them with the dedication of a hard-gainer, powering through EZ-bar curl 21s right out of the gate."

once and was like, 'Okay, if it works for him, it will work for me, too!'"

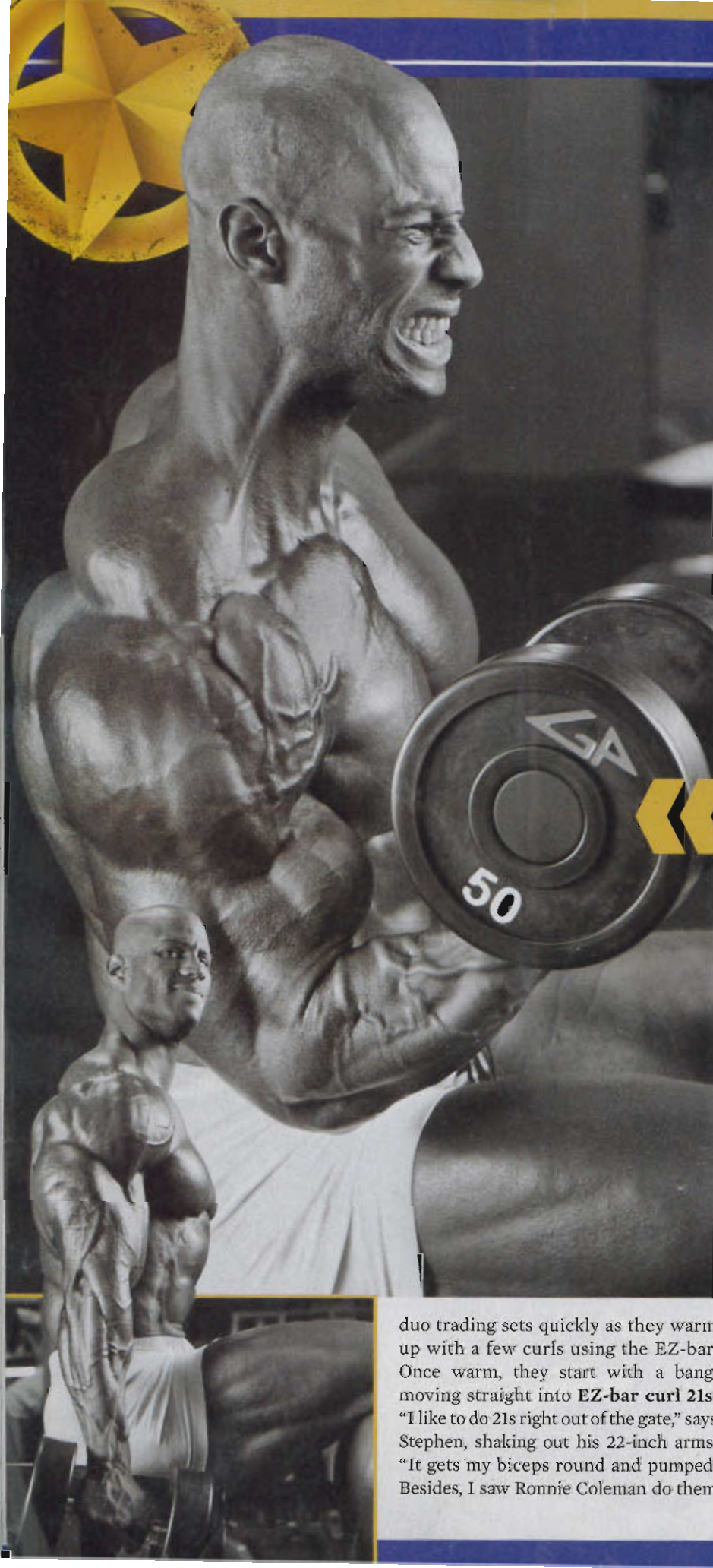
Stephen slaps a 45-pound plate on each side of the bar and, taking a shoulder-width grip, curls it up just halfway, stopping when his elbows form a 90-degree angle, forearms parallel to the floor. He squeezes for a brief contraction; then Stephen lowers the bar back to a full extension. He does seven reps in this manner. He then repeats these half-reps starting from the top with his biceps fully contracted and lowers the bar to the halfway point. After seven controlled top-heavy reps, Stephen finishes the set with seven full-range repetitions, curling the bar completely from bottom to top and back down again. He strains on the final few but shakes off Eric's offer of assistance. Stephen drops the bar, and Eric immediately picks it up, beginning his own set of triple sevens.

Though he's rarely had trouble bringing up his arms, Stephen still trains them with the dedication of a hardgainer, powering through two more sets of 21s, increasing the weight by 10 pounds on each side for the final set.

#### CURLING WITHOUT MOMENTUM

Stephen and Eric move laterally in the free-weight area, arranging their gear around a bench with a short back to do **seated alternating dumbbell curls**. "Sitting slows me down, which is a good thing," he explains as he rolls his shoulders back and sits up tall, grasping a pair of 50-pound dumbbells with his palms neutral. "I could swing the 80s standing up for sure, but staying seated forces me to be diligent with my form and doesn't allow me to use momentum." With that, he begins his set, curling the right dumbbell up toward his shoulder, corkscrewing his wrist as he pulls and turning his palm up to face the ceiling. Beneath the skin on his arm, his biceps bunch into a lumpy softball. At the top he gives his wrist a little extra tweak, turning his pinkie upward and dropping his thumb, and his biceps peak in response. After a brief pause he slowly lowers the weight back to the start. He continues, alternating sides, until he completes eight reps for each arm. The men trade two more sets, increasing to 55 pounds for the second and 60s for the third. Then they move quickly to the cable machine, taking time only to attach a rope to the lower pulley and sip water.

duo trading sets quickly as they warm up with a few curls using the EZ-bar. Once warm, they start with a bang, moving straight into **EZ-bar curl 21s**. "I like to do 21s right out of the gate," says Stephen, shaking out his 22-inch arms. "It gets my biceps round and pumped. Besides, I saw Ronnie Coleman do them



## STEPHEN'S WEEKLY TRAINING SPLIT

DAY	BODYPART(S)
Monday	Chest
Tuesday	Abs, back
Wednesday	Shoulders, arms, calves
Thursday	Off
Friday	Hamstrings
Saturday	Quads
Sunday	Off

Offseason, Stephen does 30 minutes of cardio 1-2 days a week; precontest, he ups that amount to 30-60 minutes twice a day, five days a week.

his right hand. He places his left hand on his thigh for support and secures his right arm inside his leg; his elbow gets snugly placed just behind his knee, his arm hanging straight down toward the floor. Slowly bending his elbow, Stephen curls the weight upward, squeezing his biceps hard as he reaches maximum elevation while keeping the upper arm perpendicular to the floor. Then he slowly uncurls his arm, stretching his biceps as he comes to full extension. He repeats this deliberate process 11 more times and then does the same on his left side. As Eric does his set, Stephen notes: "Most guys use too much weight for concentration curls and try to muscle it up. But you should flex it up and flex it down by controlling the negative rep. Always be flexing. Never use momentum." He demonstrates as his turn comes up once again, narrating as he flexes up, then flexes down with each of 12 more reps, once again using the 50s and taking the set to failure. One more similar set, and the team is ready for triceps.

## HAMMER-TIME

"Sometimes we'll do preacher curls next, but today I want to work my forearms a bit, so we're doing **rope hammer curls**," explains Stephen, setting the pin one-third of the way down into the stack. "This move gives me a great pump, and I like to do high reps to force the maximum amount of blood into the muscle." He begins amassing reps — 1, 2, 10, 14, 18, 20, 23 — and even though he's nearly two dozen in, each rep is done with perfect form: elbows in tight to his sides, chest lifted, back straight, arms moving in a smooth arc, no torquing or twisting. At No. 24 he's beginning to strain, but he ekes out one more rep for a total of 25; then he lets the rope fall and steps aside so Eric can work in. "To really hit the peak hard, I supinate my wrists like I do with the dumbbell curls, pulling the ends of the rope outward," he says, then steps back into the machine as his training partner does his set. Stephen adds a few more plates to the stack and they both push out 19 reps with relative ease. Another weight increase and one more set of 15 and the duo moves to a flat bench.

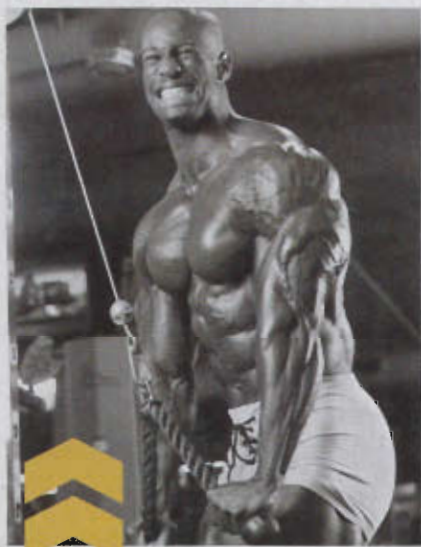
## FLEXING UP, FLEXING DOWN

Stephen sits down at the end of the bench and Eric hands him a 50-pound weight, which he sets on the floor between his feet, ready to do **concentration curls**. "I gotta admit, my arms are pretty fried right now," he laughs, shaking out his right arm then bending over with a flat back and taking the weight in

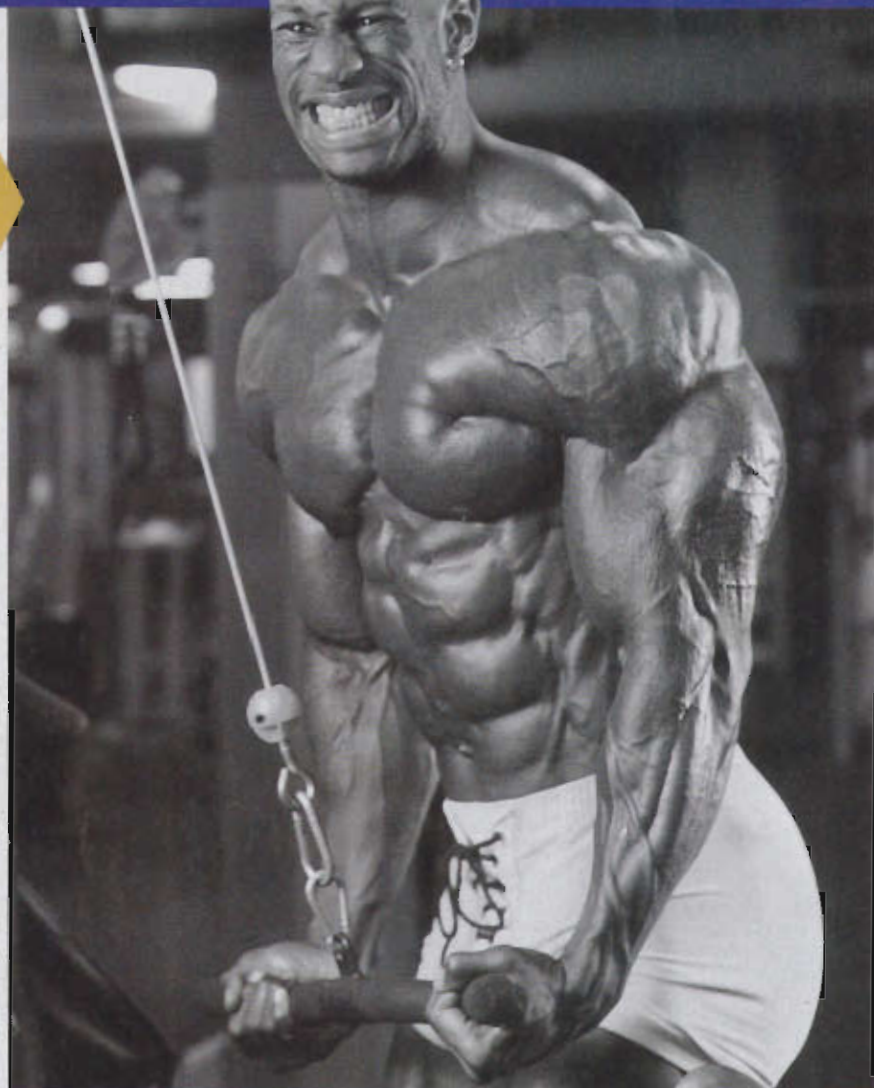


## CABLE ALTERNATIVES

Stephen attaches a straight bar to the upper pulley, slides a pin about one-quarter of the way down the stack and rolls his wrists to stretch them out. "I like to start with **reverse-grip press-downs** because they're essentially the opposite of biceps curls," he explains. "These stretch your biceps particularly well as you contract your triceps." He takes a shoulder-width, underhand grip on the bar and takes a small step back to create tension on the cable. Then he pulls his elbows in to his sides and draws his shoulders back, standing tall with the bar at chest level. Keeping his elbows in tight to his sides, he presses the bar down in a smooth arc by contracting his triceps, straightening his arms until they come to full extension. He holds the peak contraction for a count as the fibers jump underneath his skin; then he slowly reverses the move to come back to the start position, resisting the pull of gravity on the return. He does 15 total reps, swapping with Eric for three more sets, increasing the weight each time until they're lifting more than half the stack for 15.

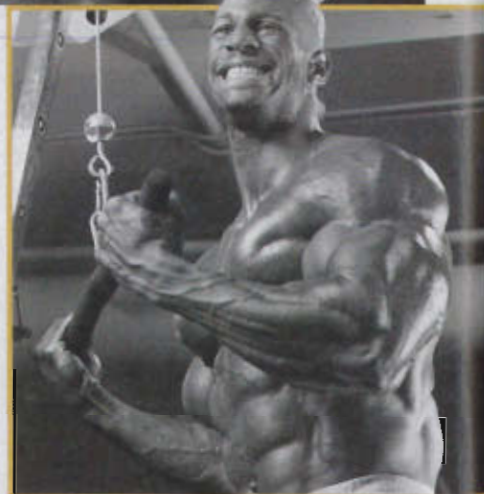


Stephen moves on and trades the straight bar for the rope attachment, explaining, "Sometimes I do dips after reverse-grip pressdowns, but since we're pressed for time I'm going to do **rope**



**pressdowns** instead, which are great for the lateral head. By turning the rope outward at the bottom, you can also get a much stronger contraction."

He slides the pin halfway down the stack and takes a neutral grip on the rope heads. Pulling his elbows in to his sides, he draws his shoulders back and lifts his chest. Forcefully he extends his arms, pulling the rope ends outward as he straightens his arms to a point just outside his thighs in the fully contracted position. Slowly, he reverses the move, again "flexing" his way back to the start position. As with the rope hammer curls, he amasses reps: 5, 10, 15, 20, finally 25. Stephen's kaput, and he steps aside for Eric's turn. "I can tolerate a lot of weight and a lot of burn," says Stephen. "Sometimes if I'm feeling crazy, I'll do one set of 100 and call it a day." But not today. When his turn comes again, he increases the weight and pushes out 25 more. "Make sure you don't hunch over when you use cables," he adds between sets.



"A lot of guys round over like a caveman, but in that position your bodyweight can help you push down, assisting the triceps. Stand up as straight as possible and use only your triceps to do the work." For his next set, he demonstrates a few reps using poor form then snaps up into perfect position and cranks out 25 more reps ... and cables are through.



### SINGLED OUT

Back in the free-weight area, the men prepare for their last move: **seated one-arm overhead extensions**, which target the remaining long head. Stephen sits on the short-back bench once more, and Eric hands him a 35-pound weight. "I rarely do overhead extensions with two hands," he says, palming the dumbbell into his right

hand. "I'd have to use too much weight to get a pump, and that would be hard on my shoulders and elbows." He hefts the weight overhead, pulling his elbow in close to his head as he stacks his shoulder, elbow and wrist into a vertical line. He bends his elbow, dropping the weight slowly behind his head and across toward his left shoulder until his arm comes to about 90 degrees. Forcefully, Stephen contracts his triceps and straightens his arm back to the start; then he goes right into his next rep, completing 15 in this manner on each side. "Remember: Flex it up and flex it down," he remarks. "Your shoulders and elbows are in a compromised position with the weight behind your head, so controlling it on the way down is even more important than pushing it up." Stephen and Eric do two more sets of 15 using a 40-pound dumbbell, and the arm workout finishes.

Remarkably, on the clock, only 25 minutes have passed.

"I want to be in and out of the gym as quickly as I can, so there's no wasting time around here," Stephen offers. "No walking to the water fountain, no chatting. We keep our pace fast and we train hard, and as a bonus my metabolism stays revved. That way I don't need to do as much cardio to stay in shape."

Eric and Stephen walk back to the front of the gym. Stephen mixes a shake as he slaps Eric across the back, both men owning arms that now feel as heavy as lead weights. He returns to his desk once more and says thoughtfully: "To become a pro I have to prepare like a pro. This year, finally, I'm doing that. I'll go to [the NPC Nationals in] Atlanta prepared and will take people with me who have positive energy and who support me. I'll get there a week ahead of time to shake off the stress of traveling, and I'll give it all I've got. That's the way I'll get to where I want to go. And I'll get there. I'll get there."

Suddenly the phone rings and it's back to the reality of taking care of his clients. Stephen downs the shake, bids us *adieu* and gets back to the business of becoming a professional bodybuilder. ♦♦

For more on Stephen Frazier, check out [www.stephenfrazier.com](http://www.stephenfrazier.com).

Lana McClashan, MFA, CPT, is a health and fitness freelance writer who lives in Los Angeles. Her first book, *Your Body, Your Life*, co-written with "The Biggest Loser" trainer Kim Lyons, is in bookstores now. To order your copy today, go to [www.lanamcclashan.com](http://www.lanamcclashan.com).