



APP.COM The Jersey Shore's Biggest and Best News Source

Sunday, January 14, 2007

Weather | Jobs | Cars | Real Estate | Apartments | Shopping | Classifieds | PressPix | Calendar | EZClassifieds

Back Issues:

Sat | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Today

Subscribe Now!

Customer Service

E-mail Alerts

Contact Us

News, events, shopping, cars, jobs and more: Find what you need in our new search »

Order 7 Day Delivery Get a Free Gift Subscribe Now



Text Size: A A A E-mail Print Subscribe E-mail Alerts

ULTIMATE WARRIOR

Holmdel's Gracie gives his all when competing and teaching

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 01/14/07

STORY ARCHIVE

FRONT PAGE

NEWS

NATION / WORLD

SPORTS

FISHING & BOATING

OBITUARIES

OPINION

BUSINESS

ENTERTAINMENT

JERSEY LIFE

COMMUNITIES

FORUMS

JERSEY SHORE

TRAVEL

TROUBLE SHOOTER

MULTIMEDIA

TECHNOLOGY

PHOTOGRAPHY

STAFF BLOGS

PUBLICATIONS

RSS NEWS

BY STEPHEN EDELSON
STAFF WRITER

STORYCHAT: [Post Comment](#)

NEW YORK — It seems that unlocking the complexities of Renzo Gracie, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu master, world renowned fighter, entrepreneur and family man, is like trying to understand the mixed martial arts scene itself, where past perceptions, new products and visions of a glorious future commingle amid a tapestry of technique, power and pain.

The bustling cityscape and the cool night air quickly gives way to a blast of heat, fluorescent glare and the sound of organized chaos as you make your way down a back staircase just a block from Madison Square Garden.

As Gracie prepares for a training session with the New York Pitbulls, a team he coaches in the International Fight League, which begins its first full season this month, he looks out over a sea of bodies twisting and rolling in concert at the Renzo Gracie Academy, with classes for men and women of all ability levels in progress throughout the compact facility.

But ultimately, it's the 39-year-old's competitive spirit that surfaces from depths of his brown eyes, tracing an ancestral path back to the very foundation of today's ultimate fighting.

"It's about showing who you are. If you are a coward, everybody will see that," said Gracie, who has lived in Holmdel since emigrating with his family from his native Brazil a decade ago. "If you're going to do cowardly things like kicking someone when he's on the mat, things like that show a person's character. In the ring, you can't lie. The moment that bell rings you forget about everything, so it's one of the best measurements."



(STAFF PHOTOS: MICHAEL J. TREOLA)

Holmdel resident Renzo Gracie, a mixed martial arts champion, is coaching the New York Pitbulls, a team in the International Fight League. Gracie looks on as the students in his martial arts class train.

RELATED LINKS

- Video: Martial artist Renzo Gracie

Related news from the Web

Latest headlines by topic:

- Entertainment
- 60 Minutes
- Television

Powered by Topix.net

Advertisement

NJ Lottery	At a less-than-imposing 5-10, 185 pounds, you'd have no problem kicking sand in Gracie's face at the beach. Except that would be the last thing you ever did.
JOB OPENINGS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work for Us • Earn \$600/mo. 	Just glance at his lengthy fighting resume, peek at some of the grainy video clips on YouTube or watch the recent "60 Minutes" segment in which he was prominently featured and the reality of who he is begins to sink in.
CONTESTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader Rewards 	Then there are the images from last September's IFL Superfight against Pat Miletich. Gracie literally climbed his more powerful opponent, one of the top teachers and most identifiable figures in mixed martial arts, before getting him to submit, or end the fight, using a choke-hold called a "flying guillotine."
EDUCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper in Education Program 	With business booming amid a wave of martial arts popularity, and plans to open a studio in Holmdel, Gracie has managed to resurrect his competitive career. On Dec. 29 he decisioned Carlos Newton, a former Ultimate Fighting Championships welterweight titleholder. On Feb. 10 he steps into the ring with UFC legend Frank Shamrock in a match to be broadcast on Showtime, showing just how mainstream mixed martial arts, banned from every outlet including pay-per-view not too long ago, has become.
MERCHANDISE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper Store 	
MARKETPLACE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing & Boating • Restaurants 	Gracie is a descendent of a famous family that invented Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. His grandfather, Carlos, was one of the family members who learned it from a Japanese fighter in the early 1900s and helped created the unique style. Gracie's cousin, Royce, first brought it to the attention of a mass audience in this country in the early 1990s when he won the first two Ultimate Fighting Championships.
READERS' CHOICE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best of 2005 	
ADVERTISING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising Services 	"It's like if you were getting into rock and roll, and you were hanging out with Bon Jovi. That's what it's like being involved with Jiu-Jitsu and hanging out with Renzo," said Bill Scott, the former Brick Memorial wrestling standout who trains with Gracie and his protege, Ricardo Almeida, and recently earned his black belt under their tutelage. "Other guys snub you when they get a big name, but he treats you always like one of the guys. No different."
LISTINGS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing Tails • Vacation Rentals • Submit Club/Bar Schedules • Bars, Bands & Clubs • Things to Do • Weddings • Engagements • Anniversaries • Celebrations • Dating • Births • In Remembrance and Thank You's • Hot Properties 	Added Gracie: "(Scott's) a great addition to our family." Nothing, including the Brazilian titles, a win in the world combat championship and the countless other honors he's earned, says as much about Gracie as a loss in the PRIDE Championships in Japan against Kazushi Sakuraba six years ago. Gracie refused to submit even though his opponent was in the process of breaking his right arm in half. "That was one of the proud points in my life because I was taken there and my mind was stronger than my body," he said. "I knew what was happening, I was conscious of everything. I felt everything, but I enjoyed everything. I saw my elbow coming out, I heard the tendons popping, and the pain was agonizing but I thought I could still fight with one arm. "You hear a lot of people say, 'I'll never give up. I won't quit.' But when the time comes, they do it. I know for sure that I won't quit because I've been there. I can say to you with 100 percent certainty."
GANNETT NJ NEWSPAPERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asbury Park Press • Gannett State Bureau • Courier News • Courier-Post 	The referee eventually stopped that fight, but the incident also highlights the feeling of many that the sport is too violent for the masses. Today, however, it's a more sanitized version of the original UFC matches billed as "no holds barred." Competitors wear small gloves with padding over their knuckles, and there are rules against things like head-butting, low blows and kicking an opponent when he's down.

- The Daily Journal
 - Daily Record
 - Home News Tribune
 - Ocean County Observer
 - Times Beacon
- Newspapers
- Other Gannett
- Newspapers



Advertisement

Instead of being underground events, mixed martial arts matches are now sanctioned by state athletic commissions, subject to a host of rules and regulations. Last year there were more MMA shows in Atlantic City than boxing events. For advertisers, it has provided an avenue of entry to the coveted and highly elusive 18- to 40-year-old demographic. IFL matches, for instance, are televised on Fox Sports Net.

"You have to understand that if you look back, Elvis Presley could not dance on TV. They had to show him from the waist up," Gracie said. "So I did not expect this sport to take off right away. I knew for the layman some aspects would not be good. But people now have a better understanding of what the art is. And once you understand you start accepting."

As his competitive career winds down, Gracie has turned more of his focus toward his legacy as an instructor, spreading the word about Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu like a black-belted Johnny Appleseed.

"The most important thing I can teach people is the Jiu-Jitsu point of view and the way that you live," he added. "On the mat there's no race or no religion or nothing that can put one human being below the other. Everyone is equal. It doesn't matter how well off you are financially, there you're the same as everybody else. And it's the passion that you have to learn and achieve that will separate you."

STORYCHAT [Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

Thanks for the pat on the back. Good idea on the MMA online column. If you know of anyone who is interested in doing that, please let me know at tjacobs@app.com.

Posted by: TheBigJib on Wed Jan 17, 2007 5:26 pm

Great piece on Renzo Gracie and the IFL...Steve shows that these guys are athletes not brawlers and they do things the right way...congrats to the APP on "getting it" and hopefully covering Renzo and his team regularly...how about creating an online MMA column like other papers?

Posted by: chris smith on Sun Jan 14, 2007 9:04 am

[Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

Text Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) E-mail Print Subscribe E-mail Alerts

Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) • [Cars: Cars.com](#) • [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) • [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

Copyright © 2007 Asbury Park Press. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). (Updated June 7, 2005)

Site design by [Asbury Park Press](#) / [Contact us](#)

[USA Today](#) • [USA Weekend](#) • [Gannett Co. Inc.](#) • [Gannett Foundation](#)