

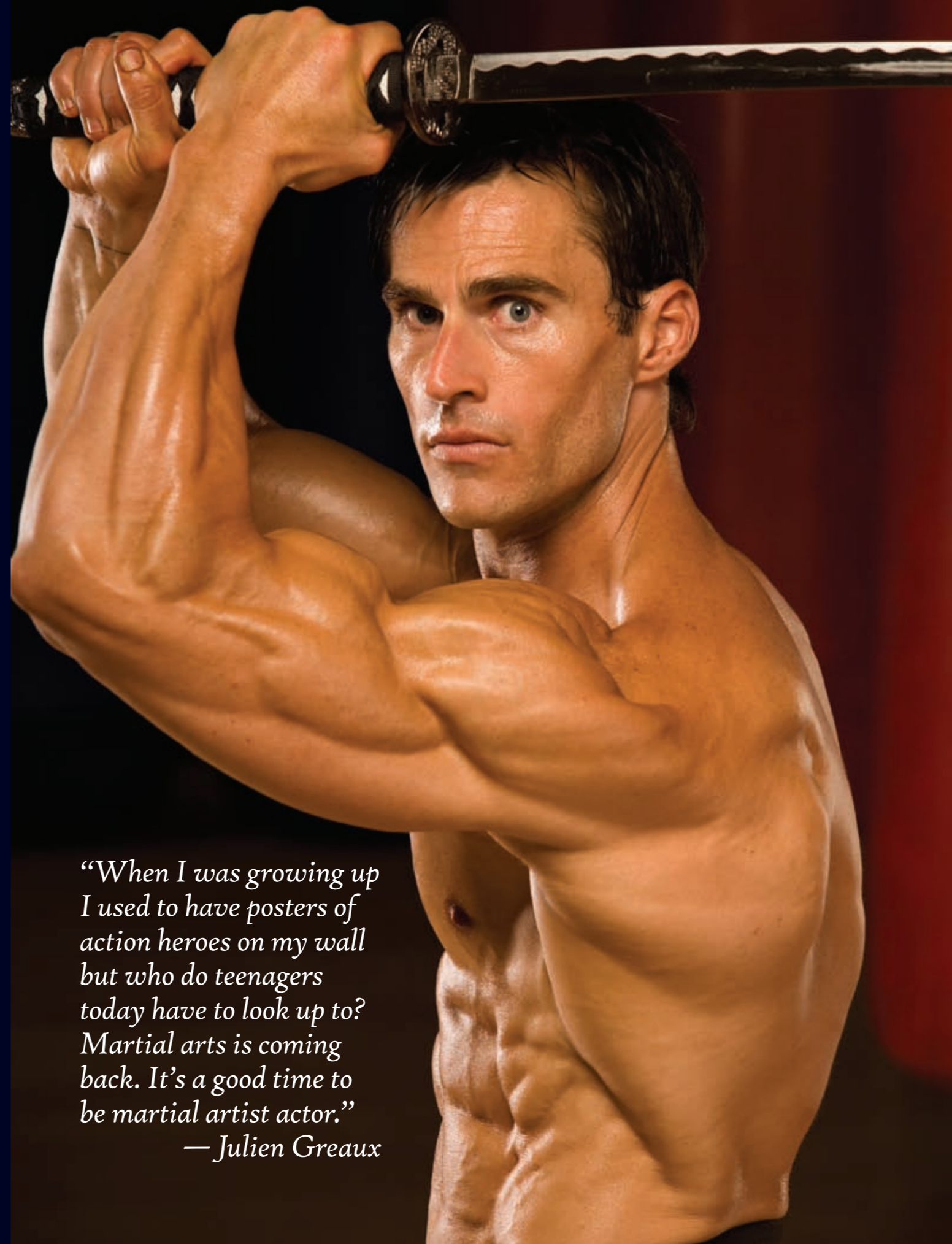
# Julien Greaux

## The Next Martial Arts Action Hero?

BRUCE LEE LED THE WAY IN THE 1970S. THEN CAME THE LIKES OF ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, STEVEN SEAGAL, SYLVESTER STALLONE, CHUCK NORRIS, JACKIE CHAN: ALL GREAT MOVIE ACTION HEROES WHO COULD PACK A PUNCH IN THE GYM AS WELL AS AT THE BOX OFFICE.

**THESE KINDS OF GUYS HAVE BEEN THIN ON THE GROUND LATELY.** When did the last Hollywood star emerge with a decent physique and fighting skills? 🥋 The enduring popularity of the legends listed above and the recent surge in popularity of mixed martial arts, and the UFC in particular, shows there is plenty of interest in guys who can fight and have good physiques.

**BY JOHN PLUMMER**  
**PHOTOS BY ALEX ARDENTI**



*“When I was growing up I used to have posters of action heroes on my wall but who do teenagers today have to look up to? Martial arts is coming back. It’s a good time to be martial artist actor.”*

*— Julien Greaux*

If Hollywood wants to tap into this market it might not have to look far for a new action hero. Julien Greaux is a European-born bodybuilder/martial artist who relocated to Los Angeles to make it big in movies. So far, the signs are promising. Few would argue that he has the physique and looks to match the stars of yester-year: he is pretty handy with his fists and feet and at the age of 32 is at his physical peak.

His model looks and chiselled torso have already caught the eyes of photographers in the United States. Leading supplements company BSN has also snapped him up for a sponsorship deal. Julien's ambition now is to make a name for himself in the movie industry. He recently signed a big movie deal and is set to play the lead in a martial arts action trilogy entitled *Wings Of The Dragon*, which he hopes will catapult him into the big time. Things are starting to happen. "It's an incredibly exciting time for me," he says.

### LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM

With this in mind, we thought it would be good to catch up with Julien, who was born in France and speaks French, English, Spanish and Creole, to find out what it's like to do what Arnold did, and numerous other Europeans have dreamed of doing, by saying goodbye to their native land and moving to Los Angeles, California, to pursue the American Dream. Everyone knows California is the Mecca of fitness and nearly everyone who is seriously into working out has at some point imagined living there. But what's it really like? The first thing we discovered is that there isn't much time for dreaming. Julien is a worker: he wakes at 3.30am every morning and goes to bed at about 10.30pm. In between he has training, acting and a family to take care of, not to mention that other vital ingredient of LA life, self-promotion. Life's tough. But not half as tough as it was when he first moved to the United States six years ago.

At that time he had been working as



## SNAPSHOT

**DATE OF BIRTH** 28th June, 1976

**PLACE OF BIRTH** Brittany, France

**LIVES** Los Angeles, California

**HEIGHT** 175 cm

**WEIGHT** 85 kg

**CAREER HIGHLIGHT** Becoming a BSN athlete and a fitness model

**AMBITION** To become the next action hero

**TRAINING ADVICE** Keep it varied and know your goal

**TO CONTACT**

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a landscape gardener in the Caribbean, where he had spent most of his youth. "I thought it was time for me to go and do something different," he says. "I hadn't saved any money - I just thought I would try my luck. When I arrived in America I had \$400 and two bags, nothing else. I knew nobody at all."

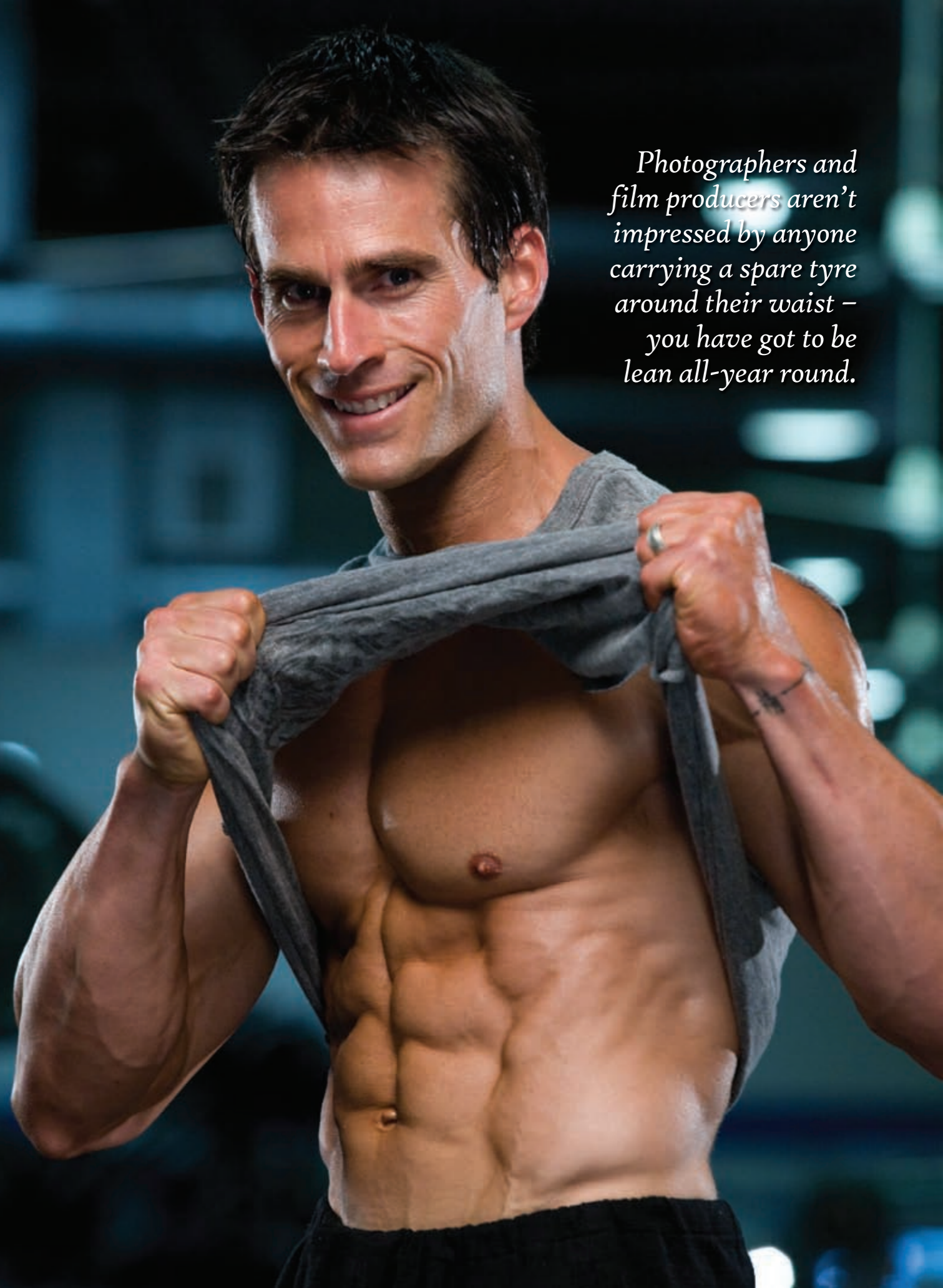
It was a crazy gamble and his prospects weren't good, and they soon got worse. "I spent my first night in a hotel which was expensive, so the second night I moved to a youth hostel, which cost \$15 a night and I had to share a room with five other guys," he recalls. "I became friends with the manager and he said I could work in the reception for four hours a day, seven days a week, in return for not having to pay for my bed." Those four hours turned out to be the

graveyard shift in the middle of the night - welcome to America!

But it was a start. He had a roof and he had a bed. Still, he needed money to survive, so he did what lots of guys who can fight do and took a job working as a doorman on the clubs in Los Angeles. He would work the doors from 9.00pm until 2.00am then go back to his hostel on Venice Beach and sit in reception from 4.00am to 8.00am dealing with all manner of bums and weirdoes before trying to grab a few hours sleep in his shared room just as everybody else was getting up. There was something else he had to do each day: train. He got a gym membership at Gold's gym and worked out with weights during the day. He also had to find time for practising martial arts. It was a punishing start to his new life but it was fuelled by a dream. "Like everybody, I thought I was going to be successful," he says.

Of course, many people say that but few achieve it. Julien, however, wasn't prepared to take 'no' for an answer. He also had something to sell: his looks, physique and ability to fight. But like everyone, he needed a little luck to secure his first big break. The story of how he achieved that dates back to a trip to he had made to New York three years earlier to watch the Night of Champions bodybuilding contest. Bodybuilding photographer Irvin Gelb spotted him in the crowd and gave him his card, saying he should get in touch if he ever visited Los Angeles. To get noticed by someone who knows a good physique, at an event attended by hundreds of guys with awesome bodies, is quite a compliment.

Unfortunately at the time Julien had to catch a plane back home to the Caribbean. However, he made sure he kept the card and when he moved to Los Angeles three years later he called. Fortunately, Irvin still had the same number and the two hooked up, did a shoot, and the results were fantastic. It was the first of many shoots Julien has done that led to him appearing on the covers of numerous fitness and martial arts magazines in the United States.



*Photographers and film producers aren't impressed by anyone carrying a spare tyre around their waist - you have got to be lean all-year round.*

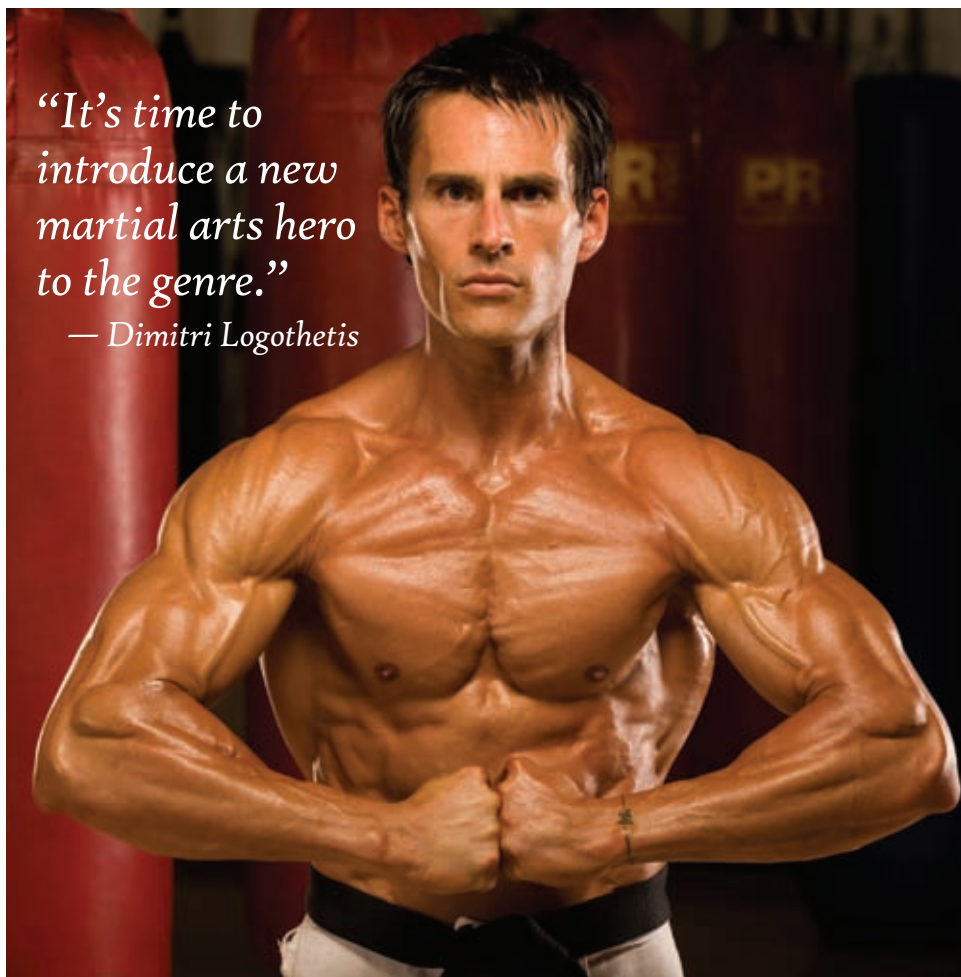
## THE NEXT BIG STEP

While he enjoyed modelling his main ambition has always been to become a movie star and he took a big step towards this recently when he signed a six-film deal with producer Dimitri Logothetis. "It's time to introduce a new martial arts hero to the genre and Julien has the stuff," said Dimitri when the deal was announced. Naturally, Julien is thrilled at the prospect. "It's fantastic," he says. "I'm so excited by this. We have the money in place to go ahead with filming, but we want to show it to the big studios first to see if they want to get involved." In the meantime, he is taking lessons at the Baron Brown acting school in Santa Monica. He is convinced the time is right to unleash a new kick-ass movie hero into the world and that he is the person to fill the void. "When I was growing up I used to have posters of action heroes on my wall but who do teenagers today have to look up to?" he says. "Martial arts is coming back. The UFC is so popular now. It's a good time to be a martial artist actor."

So, what has he got that sets him apart from the thousands of other movie wannabes hanging around Los Angeles? Well, first and foremost, as his popularity in front of the lens has shown, he has 'the look'. Being the best fighter or possessing the best physique in the world means nothing if you look wooden or plain ugly in front of a camera. Julien is also very much a martial artist for the movies. He trains with Hollywood in mind rather than the dojo, perfecting kicks and moves that look good for the camera. His style has evolved from all forms of fighting. He started with judo at the age of seven and has subsequently studied most forms of fighting, including karate, Muay Thai and jiu-jitsu. He doesn't claim to be the world's best martial artist or have any great titles to boast of. After leaving France at the age of six he spent most of his childhood on the French Caribbean island of St Barth where organised sport was difficult to get into at a serious level.

*"It's time to introduce a new martial arts hero to the genre."*

— Dimitri Logothetis



"I competed until I was 16 years old," he says. "I had to fly to different islands to take part. It was never my goal to compete at the highest level. I always wanted to be in the movies; I simply enjoyed training." He says Thai boxing is his favourite. "It's very hard on the body and it's great for conditioning."

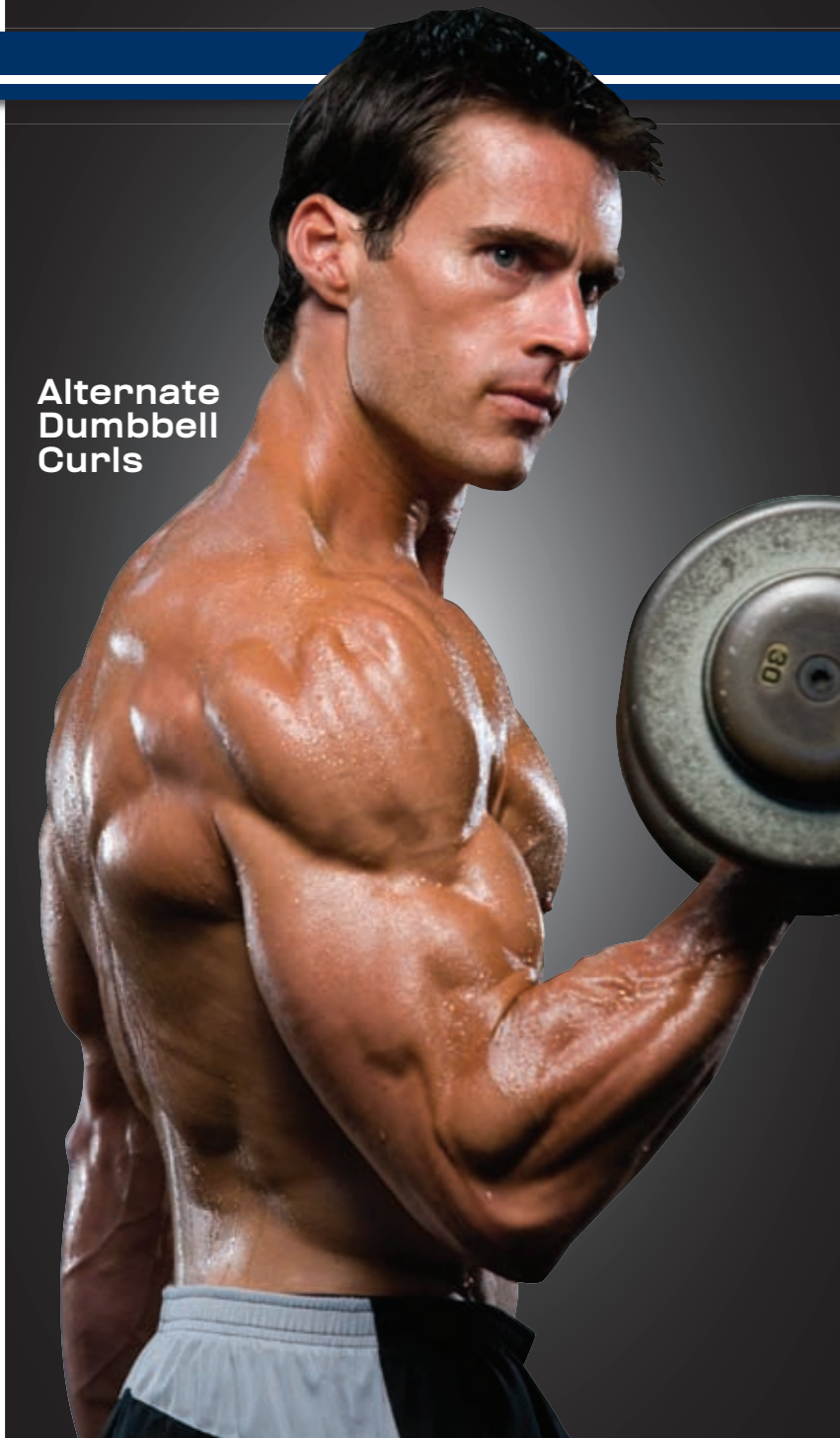
### DEDICATION 24/7

What advice would he give to anyone thinking of following in his footsteps and trading on their physique to make a living in California? "Honestly, it's difficult," he says, with more than a touch of understatement. "But if you don't take 'no' for an answer it can be done. I spent two years living with five guys in one bedroom and working seven days a week. You've got to be prepared to do that." You've also got to be prepared to look good all-year around. Photographers and producers aren't impressed by

anyone carrying a spare tyre around their waist – you've got to be lean all-year round. That's tough. But Julien makes sure he is never more than a kilo or two above his ideal 85 kg weight and can't remember the last time he didn't have his abdominals showing. "My wife says *how can you train every day, doing the same thing, and not get bored?*" says Julien. "But I have a lot of dedication. For me it's 24/7. Fitness is something I have always done and I love doing, so it's not a chore." Does he have any weaknesses? "Sushi," he replies.

He's equally disciplined when it comes to finding work. There's no sitting back and waiting to be asked in Los Angeles – you have to push yourself and network assiduously. Fortunately, in body-obsessed California the gym is a great place to meet people and Julien is there regularly, either to train or hang out, and has made many of his best

## Alternate Dumbbell Curls



contacts there. The gym has played a big role in most of his ventures: he is now working with former British IFBB pro bodybuilder Jamo Nezzar on the fitness project [myfittribe.com](http://myfittribe.com). His sponsorship deal with BSN, which he signed two years ago, has also increased his exposure. Julien is overjoyed to belong to a company that has worked with athletes of the calibre of Ronnie Coleman and Monica Brant. "It's perfect for me," he says.

After appearing on the cover of *MUSCLE & FITNESS*, he has achieved just about everything he can within modeling. "I don't think I can do much more in the fitness industry," he says. "I have done many covers and now I have great sponsorship. My main focus now is on movies and promoting myself as this new action guy." With his cosmopolitan background Julien certainly has plenty of international appeal. Because of his father's military back-

ground, he has lived in France, the Ivory Coast, Tahiti, St Barth, Guadalupe and Mexico, as well as the United States. His legal name is Julien Frognet but he adopted the surname Greaux when he moved to the United States. He's unlikely to leave Los Angeles any time soon: if you want to make it in Hollywood it's the place to be. The next couple of years certainly promise to be exciting ones for Julien. Whatever happens he has a wife and one-year-old daughter at home making sure he keeps his feet on the ground. When we left him in the afternoon his little girl had just woken up and was demanding attention. "The American Dream - yeah, right, man," he joked, as he disappeared to play with her.

### WORKOUT REGIME

Julien has been working out with weights for 15 years and practising martial arts for 20 years so has reached a physical peak that means his training is all about maintaining what he has now rather than striving for extra muscle.

He is the perfect size for his look as a muscular martial artist and has to concentrate on staying in shape all year round. So weight training doesn't feature as heavily in his weekly workout as it used to. Instead the emphasis is on staying lean, defined and supple. Diet is crucial for this and Julien calls on the services of French IFBB pro bodybuilder Eric Castagnet. "I train for functional muscle rather than like a bodybuilder," he says. "There is no point in me getting heavier because I don't want to get any bigger. I want to maintain the muscle I have while becoming stronger and faster. I don't want to say I'm perfect but physically I don't want to change anything!"

He works out six days a week, which is broken down into two heavy weight-training sessions, two martial arts workouts and two cardio-type workouts that promote all-round fitness. Each lasts for about 90 minutes each. For his two weights sessions, he works every major muscle group using simple,

## JULIEN'S TRAINING PROGRAMME

### MONDAY

#### AM - Stretching & Martial Arts

30 minutes of stretching and martial arts work

#### PM - Chest, Shoulders & Cardio

exercise	sets	reps
Incline dumbbell presses	5	8-10
Incline dumbbell flyes	5	8-10
Dips	5	maximum
Dumbbell lateral raises	15	10-20
Cardio - 30 minutes on stationary bike/treadmill		

### TUESDAY

#### AM - Stretching & Martial Arts

30 minutes of stretching and martial arts work

#### PM - Thai Boxing

Thai boxing for 2 hours

### WEDNESDAY

#### AM - Stretching & Martial Arts

30 minutes of stretching and martial arts work

#### PM - Back & Rear Delts

exercise	sets	reps
Wide-grip, close-grip, and reverse-grip pull-ups	25	10-20
Dumbbell bent-over flyes	5	10-15
Rear delt machine	5	10-15
Cardio - 30 minutes on stationary bike/treadmill		

### THURSDAY

#### AM - Stretching & Martial Arts

30 minutes of stretching and martial arts work

#### PM - Thai Boxing

Thai boxing for 2 hours

### FRIDAY

#### AM - Stretching & Martial Arts

30 minutes of stretching and martial arts work

#### PM - Legs

exercise	sets	reps
Leg curls	5	10-15
Lunges -20 pound weighed vest	1	1 hour
Cardio - 30 minutes on stationary bike/treadmill		

### SATURDAY

#### AM - Stretching & Martial Arts

30 minutes of stretching and martial arts work

#### PM - Biceps, Triceps & Calves

exercise	sets	reps
Alternate dumbbell curls	5	8-12
Triceps pushdowns	5	8-12
Straight-bar curls	5	10-15
Ez-bar curls (skull crushers)	5	10-15
Seated calf raises	5	15-30
Donkey calf raises	5	8-12

### SUNDAY

Rest

**Note:** Julien trains his abs every training day, choosing two separate exercises per day and doing 100 reps per exercise.



## JULIEN'S NUTRITION & SUPPLEMENT PLAN

### MEAL 1

8 egg whites, 235 g porridge and strawberries

### MEAL 2

Multi-source protein supplement shake

### MEAL 3

2 chicken breasts, broccoli and brown rice

### MEAL 4

Multi-source protein supplement shake

### MEAL 5

Steamed fish

### SUPPLEMENTS

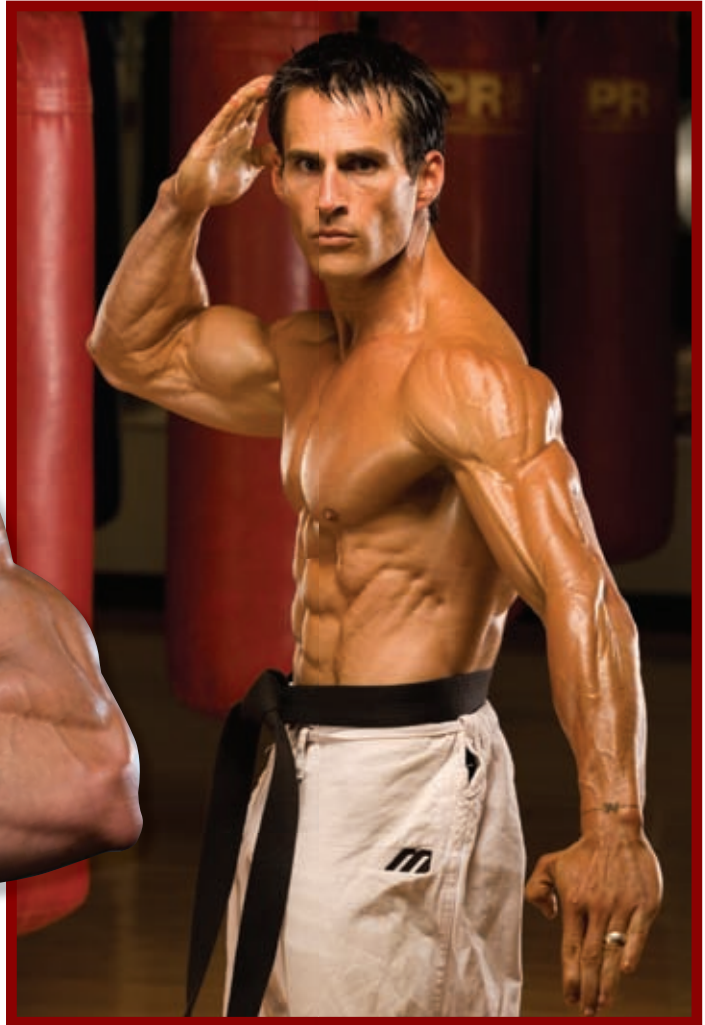
Thermogenic supplement on an empty stomach before each meal

Creatine, nitrous oxide, energy supplement before training

Cell volumising supplement during training

"I really want to maintain the muscle I have while becoming stronger and faster."

—Julien Greaux



**“I’ve done many covers and I’ve got great sponsorship. My main focus now is on movies and promoting myself as this new action guy.”**

*—Julien Greaux*

basic exercises, such as squats, bench presses and dumbbell rows. He works in the six to eight repetitions range to keep things hard and heavy but by only training twice a week he isn’t going to grow significantly. On his two weights days he usually also does 30 minutes cardiovascular work. His two martial arts sessions produce good cardio benefits as well. “I

do a lot of stand-up stuff because this is what looks good in the movies,” he says. He does one other session that combines circuit training exercises, such as push-ups, pull-ups, dips and abdominal exercises, with plyometrics moves designed to enhance speed and power and which are performed wearing a 20-pound vest for added resistance.

His sixth session each week follows the TRX suspension training programme, which is used by US Navy Seals, and involves using your own body weight to harness resistance.

“I have followed this programme for three years,” says Julien. “When I was younger I did train more like a body-builder. I first started lifting weights seriously when I was 16, I weighed 72 kg then, but now my needs have changed.” Working out six days a week for about 90 minutes a time is quite intense. “Some people say I overtrain but I don’t know. If you look at rugby players they are out there every day and they still have big legs. Every pro athlete trains nearly every day now,” he says. The bottom line is results and there is no doubt Julien has found a system that works for him. **M&F**