

BY CHRIS LUND, UK EDITOR SINCE 1985 PHOTOS BY CHRIS LUND

LOOKING BACK



CASEY VIATOR

The first detailed article and photos on **CASEY VIATOR** appeared in the September 1970 issue of *Iron Man* magazine, just after his Junior Mr America win, and clean sweep of every single body part with the exception of abdominals!

The article mentioned that Casey had been training seven days a week, doing thirty sets per body part but also stated the following: "At the present time he is back on an every other day workout schedule, with a special programme and greatly reduced working time, and results are coming amazingly fast. However, at present we are not permitted to tell you how he is training!"

At this time no one really knew why there was so much secrecy attached to Casey's

workout routines. It was only as the months went by that the names of Arthur Jones, Nautilus, and Casey Viator would become synonymous. All kinds of claims and stories circulated the worldwide bodybuilding community, rumours of superhuman feats of strength, such as full squats with 505 pounds for 14 reps, and other amazing accomplishments. Jones himself even wrote that the amazing Sergio Oliva, one of the greatest physique stars of all time, could not keep up

with Casey during one of these secret workouts.

So just how was he training? How did he build those incredible arms that looked as though they were bigger than his head? The best training article that appeared on Casey during this period was written by Achilles Kallos and published in the October 1971 edition of *Iron Man*. This article listed Casey's measurements as Height 5 ft 8 ins; body weight 217 pounds; arms 19 3/8 ins (cold); chest 50 ins; waist 31 1/2 ins; thighs 28 ins; and calves 18 ins. The article also mentioned the fact that Casey trained his whole body in one workout, three times per week, and that each workout lasted between two and two-and-a-half hours. The writer then detailed the amazing workout that he claimed Casey followed during that period.

LEGS

Leg Press: One set of 20 reps with 750 pounds
Leg Extension: One set of 14-20 reps with 250 pounds

Squat: One set of 14-20 reps with 505 pounds

Leg Curl: One set of 14-20 reps with 150 pounds

The most amazing thing about this leg workout was the fact that Casey did each exercise nonstop, going from one exercise to another without rest!

BACK

Nautilus Pullover Machine: Three sets of 20 reps

Circular Pulldown: Three sets of 20 reps.

Chins: Three sets of 20 reps

DELTOIDS

Standing Lateral Side Raise: Three sets of 20 reps with 60 pounds

Behind-The-Neck Press: Three sets of 20 reps with 215 pounds

Nautilus Special Side Raise: Three sets of 20 reps

TRAPS

Shoulder Shrug: Three sets of 20 reps with 280 pounds



CHEST

Bench Press: Two sets of 20 reps with 350 pounds

Incline Barbell Press: Three sets of 20 reps with 225 pounds

Parallel Bar Dip: Three sets of 20 reps with 100 pounds

Cable Crossover: Three sets of 20 reps with 40 pounds.

ARMS

Barbell Curl: One set of 20 reps with 200 pounds

Nautilus Biceps Curl: One set of 20 reps

Nautilus Triceps: One set of 20 reps with 120 pounds

Nautilus Pushdown: One set of 20 reps with 110 pounds

Compound Triceps Movement: One set of 20 reps

CALVES

Seated Barbell Calf Raise: Two sets of 20 reps

FOREARMS

Wrist Curl: Two sets of 20 reps

LOWER BACK

Deadlift: One set of 30 reps with 400 pounds

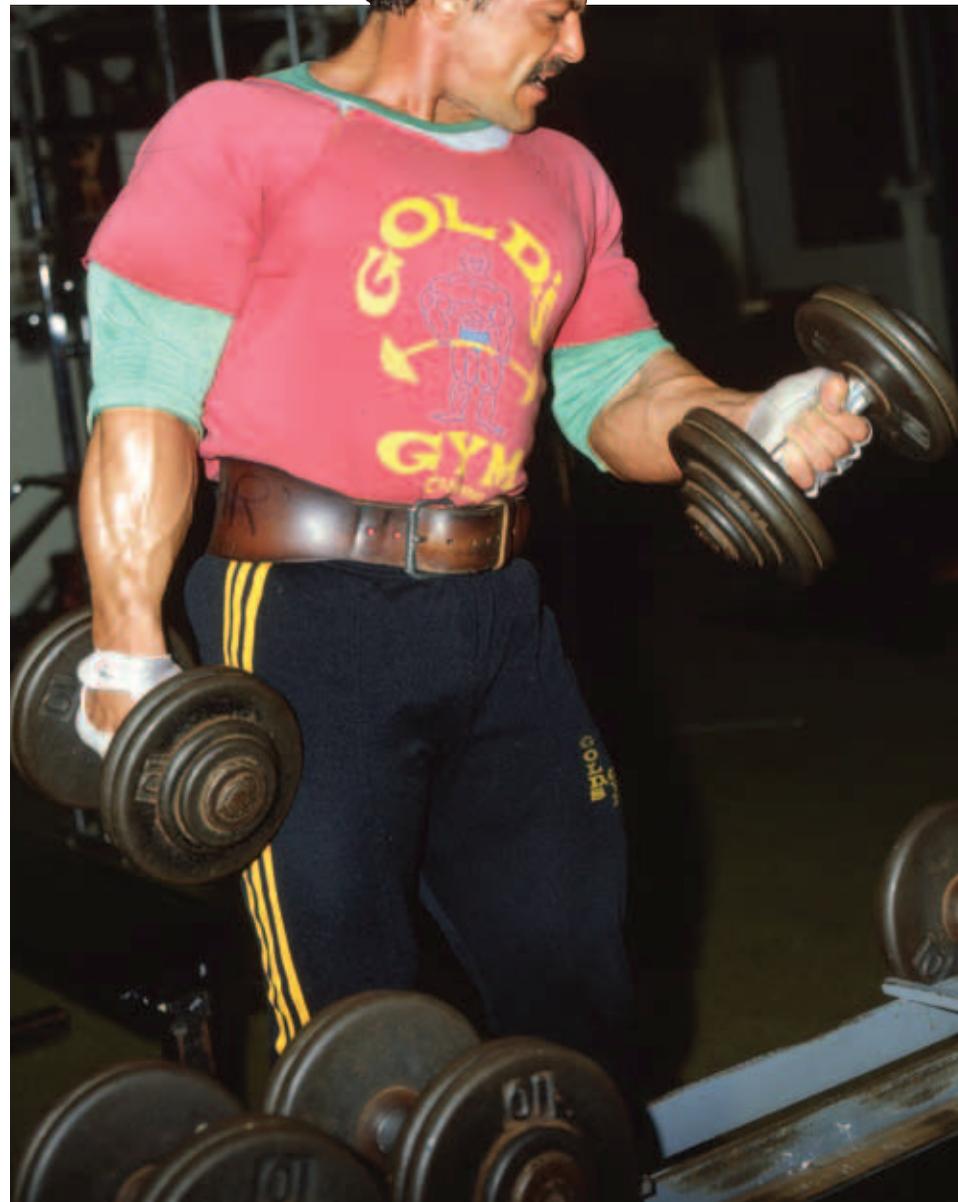
Even now, 42 years after it was written, this workout is nothing less than simply incredible, especially when you consider that the weights Casey was handling were for 20 reps!

Having already won the 1971 Mr America shortly before that article went to print, Casey's appearance at the 1971 NABBA Mr Universe in London was eagerly anticipated, but unfortunately it never materialised. And then Casey Viator disappeared from the face of the bodybuilding world and its publications!

I got to know Casey well when we both lived in California, way back in 1980; it was 32 years later that I contacted him for an exclusive **Looking Back** article.

Chris Lund: Why did you begin training in the first place?

Casey Viator: One of my uncles actually got me started. He was a big "muscle-up" guy from the 1950s. I was only about 13 years old at the time, but I was way ahead of everybody else in my age group on all the strength moves, which included Olympic lifting. I gained lots of size and strength right from the beginning. However, I wasn't too pleased



about the way my chest looked because, to be honest, I wasn't even training it. So, eventually, I started doing bench presses and heavy parallel dips, which quickly fixed the problem. I also started doing heavy bent-over rowing and heavy wide-grip chins which made my whole upper body respond rapidly. Pretty soon I dropped the Olympic lifts, and concentrated purely on bodybuilding.

CL: When you won the Mr America in 1971, you was only 19 years old, and suddenly became the biggest sensation in bodybuilding. How did you accomplish this at such a young age?

CV: "Even though I realised I had more than average genetics to build strength and muscle, I still trained in the most gruelling manner possible. I mostly followed split routines in my training and I trained with as much intensity that I possibly could. Sure, I knew even back then that I was overtraining, but you know, when you are a teenager your body can take a lot of punishment. I would usually train for three hours, doing 40 sets a body part, five days a week. I then walked five miles back home, after every workout. I know it seems like a helluva lot, but that's what I did back then. Anyway, the walk back home was a good way to get my cardio in!"

CL: What was your diet like in those days?

CV: I ate a lot, man! I drank lots of milk, ate lots of eggs, and lean beef, plus milk and egg protein powder. I would say that I ate at least 250 grams of protein every day. Also, my dad used to raise cattle just to keep the fridge-freezer full of first-class cuts of meat. He was always supportive of me in that way, but he could never quite understand the many hours of torturous workouts that I put myself through. You see, it was all so new to him back in those days, but when he saw my progress, (and all the trophies I brought home) he became so proud of me.

CL: You will be forever associated with Arthur Jones, the inventor of Nautilus, because he trained you for the 1971 Mr America and drastically changed your way of training. How did you meet him?

CV: I first met Arthur at the 1970 Mr America contest, where I placed third, but won the most muscular award. He pulled me aside and told me how much potential he thought I had. He told me, "Casey, you have the potential to become the greatest bodybuilder in the world, but you're training way too often. You need to cut back on your sets, and the length of your workouts." I knew that Arthur was a much respected person who certainly knew his stuff, and he was just starting to promote his Nautilus machines at the time. So I was all ears!

CL: How did Arthur have you train between 1970 and the 1971 Mr America?

CV: Arthur convinced me to cut way back on my volume training, and got me to really pour on the intensity throughout every set I did. He

also got me to do very short and faster workouts, which was a huge departure from the way I used to train. This type of high intensity training worked really well for me, and I did only one set of each exercise for the entire 12 months before the 1971 Mr America.

CL: After you won the 1971 Mr America you did not compete for another seven years, and I can remember reading that Arthur told you that you should never compete again. I never quite understood this.

CV: "Yeah, you're absolutely right, except that he just said, "Don't compete for a while" so I didn't. I just continued to train extremely hard, did seminars for Nautilus, and other public relations things. Two years later, Casey's name was inserted into the



bodybuilding record books. This is how it happened. During the month of May 1973, Casey Viator made the largest muscular gains in body weight recorded on a human being. Under the guidance of Arthur Jones, he undertook a scientific exercise experiment at the Colorado State University. The experiment was conducted under the supervision of Doctor Elliot Plese, director of exercise at the physiology laboratory at the University. The experiment lasted from May 1st until May 29th. Casey trained only three days per week, and each workout lasted only 30 minutes.

Only Nautilus Machines were used and after just 28 days or 12 workouts, Casey recorded the following unbelievable results!

INCREASE IN BODY WEIGHT: 45.28 lbs
LOSS OF BODY FAT: 17.93 lbs
MUSCULAR GAIN: 63.21 lbs

In March this year I asked Casey about his memories of the Colorado Experiment and this is what he told me.

"I really had to diet hard to get my body weight down to 168 lbs before the Colorado Experiment, but when we finished it, 28 days later, I had gained 45 pounds of muscle! We calculated that my diet before the experiment was less than 800 calories per day. During the 28-day experiment, I consumed around 5000 calories a day.

"I can remember flying to Colorado in one of Arthur Jones airplanes, a single prop, Cherokee Six. Arthur always flew very high in the commercial jet lanes in a decompressed cabin, which always gave me the worst headaches from flying at that altitude. Arriving from Florida to Fort Collins, Colorado, I had more to contend with than I had prepared myself for. We were actually one mile high in Colorado, and I had to acclimatise to the altitude quickly, but I knew lots food was coming soon. All that dieting was over.

"We arrived at the Lamplighter Inn, just outside of Fort Collins, where I was going to spend the next 28 days of hard work, training and eating, no fun, maybe a movie now and then, because we were there to get results, not play. Think about it, every day for the next month—eating, training my brains out, sleeping—that was my job!

"The next step was my weigh-in and body

fat count at the Colorado State University, which was a very complex process. Dr Elliott Plese used the Merrimac Body Fat Counter. The body fat counter was contained in a solid lead room with a huge crystal that was placed over my body. The radioactivity from my muscles registered my lean body mass. Remember, this was the 70s and this particular machine was considered state of the art, back then. I never questioned the accuracy of this piece of equipment.

"This experiment actually showed that even at my low starting body weight, I gained muscular weight and lost body fat. I averaged around 12 exercises per workout, during the experiment, training every other day, and no two workouts were the same. Eating was quite easy the first week, after I had been dieting down for six whole weeks.

"With a healthy cash incentive per pound of muscle that I gained, I was raring to go, but the next step was to convert the physiology lab into a training facility. We had about 20 pieces of Nautilus equipment and prototypes to move to the second floor. There was even talk of the structural integrity of the second floor, accommodating all these

heavy training pieces. Many tons of equipment was moved to that second floor. We also brought a new line of negative-only prototypes that we used for the experiment. For example, you moved the weight up into the contracted position of the muscle by using the feet, and lowered it with your biceps or triceps. We even had a negative-only bench press which worked in the same fashion. There were many other prototypes such as the single-pad squat machine, which was a great training piece, but in the end, the mechanism that locked you in and out of the machine could not be perfected, hence it never ended up as a production model for Nautilus. But all considered, this was a great machine.

"The first week or so, these training sessions were very difficult. I was untrained for 5 months before the experiment, and my right hand had atrophied quite a bit from a finger accident. After the first two sessions I ended up on the floor, purple, with a pulse rate close to fibrillation (200 bpm). But, as they say, what won't kill you, will only make you stronger!

"I tried to keep my fat intake down during



my 6-8 meals per day, and just about any type of protein source was fair game to eat. I averaged around 400 grams of protein a day. With this type of growth rate, I needed every gram of protein I could lay my hands on.

"During my workout sessions, Arthur would more or less sit in a chair and read the newspaper (eyeing me the whole time). If he saw that I was slowing down my pace, he would say something insulting to egg me on; I would get mad, which pushed me even harder

into the set, and made me achieve better gains. This was a game he and I played for almost 10 years off and on. One thing about the man, he sure knew how to agitate someone to make them work harder through their workouts!

"My workload was so intense that my body absorbed everything I ate. The majority of my diet was high protein foods such as lean beef, chicken, lots of dairy products including milk, and lots of seafood. Carbohydrates were

consumed to a minimum, although I did consume carbs 45 minutes before training.

"My muscles were coming back rapidly. This was a true case of muscle memory, although many people have questioned the validity of this study. A lot of factors came into play, one of which was my genetics. The average man would not have been able to gain 63 lbs of raw muscle, and Arthur Jones and I have been defending this study for years. There have been a lot of questions regarding steroid use during the experiment, because many people claimed that I loaded up for this experiment.

I can honestly say that there was no use of steroids during this study, which is a very important point. I was also closely monitored in a closed-door environment.

"Believe me, I would have done anything to have gained that weight, but I knew my rebound potential to gain muscle, and I also knew I would make remarkable gains even before the study began. Plenty of rest is very important when a gruelling entire body workout is performed. When you work all body parts three times a week briefly, but intensely, your body has to grow. But proper sequence of pre-exhausting exercises is very important also. The safety factor is observed very closely, especially during the first part of each set. This is when you have the strength to injure yourself. The last part of any exercise is usually not the most dangerous point, because your muscles are simply too weak at that stage. Throwing a weight, or dropping or lowering a weight too fast, at any time can injure you. You simply must keep perfect exercise form during every exercise.

"The Denver Broncos came in for training sessions and to watch us go through my fast-paced training. Dick Butkus of the Chicago Bears was also there training, and observing what was going on. I was very proud of the results that took place in Colorado, and feel that this study has contributed to the awareness of how much time is wasted in most individual's workouts. This experiment is still being studied in colleges across America today, and can also be found on the Internet.

"I must say that I have injured myself on many an occasion in the gym with pectoral tears, lower inguinal hernias and many other



injuries. However, I really managed to stay injury-free using high intensity heavy training. I am 61 years old now and my current lifts are: 550 lbs squat, 500 lbs bench press, and 900 lbs leg press. However, as I mature, I feel moderation would have been better for my overall well-being. Every injury I incurred was caused by bad form or explosive movements. If I can teach one person the hazards of explosive training, I would really be very happy. If any trainee is considering doing this type of training, I would make sure that they work at their own individual pace and push themselves just enough so that they can finish the entire full-body routine. High

intensity training is not the average type of workout. People interested in reading more about The Colorado Experiment, can learn all about it in my new book *Articles Of Mass Construction* [Editor's note: More information on this book can be found of Casey's website www.caseyviator.com.]

I asked Casey if he then got the urge to compete again.

"I sure did. The bug bit me because seven years is a long time, man, and I was eager to come back, so I chose the 1978 NABBA Mr Universe in London. I trained mostly in high intensity fashion, but I also added a little volume training to help get me into contest

shape. I followed a three-days-a-week split routine, plus a whole-body workout on Saturday. I trained as hard as I possibly could, using high intensity training methods. On Monday I trained my chest and biceps. On Wednesday I did shoulders, and legs including calves. Finally, on Friday I worked my upper and lower back, and traps, followed by triceps. On Saturday I trained the whole body with only one set per exercise in high intensity fashion."

During the early half of 1978, Oscar Heidenstam, president of NABBA in London, received a very surprising but welcome, entry form from Casey, stating his intentions to

CONTEST CAREER

1969
AAU Teen Mr America, 6th
1970
AAU Mr America, Most Muscular, 3rd
AAU Mr America, 3rd
AAU Teen Mr America, Most Muscular, 1st
AAU Teen Mr America, 1st
AAU Mr USA, Most Muscular, 1st
AAU Mr USA, 1st
1971
AAU Mr America, 1st AAU Mr America, Most Muscular, 1st
AAU Junior Mr America, Most Muscular, 1st
AAU Junior Mr America, 1st
1978
NABBA Mr Universe, Medium, 2nd
1979
Canada Pro Cup, 5th
1980
Grand Prix California, 3rd
Grand Prix Louisiana, 1st
Grand Prix Miami, 2nd Grand Prix Pennsylvania, 1st
Night of Champions, 5th
Mr Olympia, 14th
Pittsburgh Pro Invitational, 1st
1981
Grand Prix California, Did not place
1982
Grand Prix Belgium, 4th Grand Prix Sweden, 3rd
Mr Olympia, 3rd
1995
Masters Olympia, 12th

compete in that year's amateur Mr Universe contest. Along with the entry form, Casey sent some amazing black and white photos which showed that he was in terrific muscular condition. He was as big as ever, but cut to ribbons; he was coming to win!

It was with great excitement that I made the trip to London, to see for myself how the great Casey Viator would match up to NABBA's previous winners, namely Messrs Park, Pearl, Zane, Coe, Dickerson, Nubret, and of course Arnold!

I first set eyes on Casey backstage as he was pumping up prior to the pre-judging. To say I was impressed would be a gross understatement. He was wearing a knee-length steel grey dressing gown (how I remember that I'll never know!). Walter O'Malley, the top British physique star, was standing next to me, and he just couldn't keep his thoughts to himself. "Look at those calves, will you? I've never seen anything like that in all my years in the game," exclaimed Walter, in

his thick Irish brogue. "Never mind the calves, look at those forearms!" I replied.

I have seen Sergio Oliva pump up, nonstop, for what seemed like a whole hour. I have witnessed Don Ross pump himself blue in the face from his isokinetic contraction exercises, and I have watched Roy Duval pump his pecs till they almost burst. But I have never ever seen anyone pump up like Casey Viator. It was not just because he worked so hard at it. It was because he didn't not feel any pain. I watched him perform dips, towel curls, towel triceps extensions, Power Crusher squeezes, plus all the other standard pre-contest pump-up moves. All the time, he was chewing gum and he had a strange expression on his face. It was as though he was willing his body to withstand as much pain as possible. In fact, he looked as though he loved every minute of it. In between exercises, he would strut around the dressing room like a human powerhouse, and I thought to myself, "He will blow them all to bits."

When Casey's name was called out at the pre-judging, he immediately bounced onto the rostrum and blasted the audience with a few of his most famous poses: the double biceps to the front, side chest, one-arm biceps, calf and thigh shot. But no sooner had he appeared, than he suddenly disappeared! In the end they placed him second to Dave Johns, who was a more seasoned veteran to bodybuilding competitions.

In 1979 Casey joined the IFBB and placed 5th at his first show, the Canada Pro Cup. He then moved to California. I asked him why. "Yes, that's correct," he said. "I moved to LA shortly after the Canada Pro Cup, and I made the move because all my friends and fans kept telling me that I was too good not to be competing in world-class bodybuilding contests. Also, I had already asked Arthur for a hefty raise in salary and when he declined, I just picked up my stuff and moved to California to train with the big guys, at Gold's Gym."

"Was this about the time when you started training with Mike Mentzer?" I asked.

"Yes, Mike and I were a fantastic team, and when we started training together we made unbelievable gains. We both trained with tremendous intensity along with some volume training as well. Later, when Ray Mentzer joined us, our training was actually

scary to watch, and we nearly always had crowds of people watching us train over at the old Gold's Gym in Santa Monica."

Casey was doing really well with the IFBB, but then he suddenly quit bodybuilding competitions after the 1982 Mr Olympia in London. This is his explanation:

"I did win a few shows with the IFBB between 1980 and 1982, but when I was handed the third place award at the '82 Mr Olympia behind Chris Dickerson and Frank Zane, I thought, 'This is it, I've had enough!' It was the deciding factor which made me stop all the madness. Dickerson and Zane placing ahead of me was a horrible thing to encounter, because I was in the best shape of my life! It's really quite funny because I received bags of mail telling me how I had been screwed at that show. It's even funnier now, because today people are still saying I got screwed at that show, 30 years later!"

"So, you never felt that urge to compete again?"

"Naw, what was the point? The 1982 Mr Olympia was either political or perhaps the judges were blind or something. It's funny because Arnold kept asking me to compete the following year in Munich (at the 1983 Mr Olympia) but I just turned him down and told him that I had had enough of all this craziness. I was totally pissed off so I left LA and moved to Arizona. I started up a personal training business, and I've never looked back. Today I do mail order personal training, which is really doing very well."

"Do you ever go to the bodybuilding contests nowadays, and what is your opinion of bodybuilding today?"

"Not really. I only attend a show if one of my clients is competing. As far as today's bodybuilding is concerned, all I can say is, I wouldn't do the things to myself that the guys of today are doing. You have to think about what the drugs will do to you down the line. It's just not worth it, as far as I'm concerned!"

Incredibly, it's 41 years since Casey Viator won the 1971 Mr America at the age of only 19, and 30 years since he quit the sport after the 1982 IFBB Mr Olympia. He quit the sport because he felt that he had been robbed of the Mr Olympia title in London. Personally, I have to agree with him! **FLEX**