

For Immediate Release

**GARY IRIZA NAMED AS
INTERNATIONAL MR. LEATHER 2008
30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND IN CHICAGO**

CHICAGO (May 26, 2008) – **Gary Iriza (e-ree-zee-ah)**, Mr. Palm Springs Leather 2008, has been named **International Mr. Leather 2008**, winning over a field of 51 contestants from 22 states and six countries, including Canada, Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden and the United States. He is sponsored by the Palm Springs Leather Order of the Desert, the Barracks Bar of Cathedral City, CA and Gear Leather of Palm Springs, CA.

A resident of Palm Springs, CA, he works as a personal trainer. Among his community service involvement, Gary has worked as a fundraiser for Well in the Desert - an organization serving the homeless and has hosted the 'Fetish Ball,' a fundraiser for the Gay Associate Youth organization as well as volunteering at many events. He is a member of the Palm Springs Leather Order of the Desert and the Desert Pride Community Center.

The 30th annual International Mr. Leather Contest was held Sunday, May 25th in the Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Chicago. This year's entertainment was provided by Andy Bell of Erasure. Brad Balof returned for his fourth consecutive year as emcee.

Overall attendance for IML 2008 shattered all previous records, with an estimated 16,000+ visitors taking part in many of the events held during the 30th Anniversary celebration.

As the **International Mr. Leather 2008** titleholder, **Gary Iriza** will represent IML and the leather community over the next year. He also receives a prize package that includes \$5,000 in travel funds plus donations from businesses and organizations supporting the leather and fetish community.

Bob Firth-Tessier, M. Cuir Montreal 2008, was named first runner up. He is sponsored by Priape of Montreal, Canada and Inseam Clothing of Boston, MA. **Scott Melton**, Mr. Ramrod 2008, was named second runner up. He is sponsored by The Ramrod of Fort Lauderdale.

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Contestants are judged on a variety criteria, including community involvement, speech, presentation and overall presence. The IML 2008 Judges included: Mikel Gerle (West Hollywood, CA), Lady Caro (Philadelphia, PA), Derek Cohen (London, England), Nigel Cotterill (Cincinnati, OH), Vick Germany (San Francisco, CA), Frank Nowicki (Washington, DC), Phillip Redmond (Chicago, IL), Thor Stockman (New York, NY) and Ian "Black" Turner (Toronto, Canada). The 2008 IML Tally Masters include: Phil "Boymeat" Wolf (New York, NY) and Wolf Freed (San Leandro, CA).

The winner of the **16th annual International Mr. Bootblack Competition** is **Boot Dog**, winning over a pool of five contestants. He is from Oakland, CA and is sponsored by the Alameda County Leather Corps.

Over 2,000 leatherfolk attended the 30th annual International Mr. Leather Contest. The weekend kicked-off on Thursday, May 22nd with **Opening Ceremonies** at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, where all 51 contestants were introduced. On Saturday, contestants returned to the stage at the Hyatt Regency for the **Physique Competition (Pecs and Personality)**. Sunday's contest was followed by the **IML Victory Celebration Party** at Chicago's House of Blues. The "traditional" final blow out of the weekend, the high-energy **Black and Blue Ball**, capped-off the IML weekend on Monday at Excalibur Nightclub.

This year's **Leather Market** at the Hyatt Regency was the largest in IML history and featured more than 130 leather and fetish vendors, clubs and organizations.

The **31st annual International Mr. Leather Weekend** will be held May 21 - 25, 2009 (Memorial Day Weekend). The Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL, will be the official host hotel of IML 2009. Hotel reservations can be made after June 15, 2008 on the official IML website at imrl.com. Weekend packages can be purchased online at boxofficetickets.com or by calling (800) 494-TIXS. Updates on International Mr. Leather 2009 will be posted frequently on the official IML website.

For more information on International Mr. Leather, go to the official IML website, imrl.com. **Press releases and high-resolution JPEGs are available for download: just click on "Press Center."**

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