Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero is Locked In

In a town more famous for growing lettuce, broccoli and artichokes, Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero proved you can grow world champion fighters too.

Born and raised in the migrant fields of Salinas, Guerrero is the first boxer from the town of 130,000 to win a world title and he's not planning to let anyone pick his belt when he fights Orlando Salido on Saturday Nov. 4, at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino.

"I really haven't had time to go anywhere and talk to people," says Guerrero, who crushed former titleholder Eric Aiken in five rounds last September. "They asked me if I wanted to fight again on television and I couldn't say no."

You can describe Guerrero as a 5-foot-9, tall and lean fighter who looks like he's never had a dessert in his life. The Bay area fighter rarely looks out of fighting shape, even when he's not scheduled to fight.

Salido, the number one contender in the IBF rankings, is getting his second shot at a world title. Recently Salido was providing sparring for Manny Pacquiao at the Wild Card Boxing gym where Guerrero also frequents.

"I saw him leaving the gym as I was coming in," said Guerrero. "We locked eyes."

In a week's time the two will lock in a decisive battle for the featherweight world title.

"I know he's a veteran and he's got a lot of experience," said Guerrero. "I'm anxious to get back in the ring again. I still have a lot to do."

Guerrero said the IBF title is great, but he intends to make his mark on the boxing world similar to his other Northern California compadre Diego Corrales.

"Really, I don't feel like I've done anything," Guerrero said. "I'm still hungry. I feel like I haven't done anything yet. I feel like I'm chasing the world title."

Because of the quick exodus of marquee fighters from the featherweight division by such noted boxers as Pacquiao, Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera and Rocky Juarez, the 126-pound division seems wide open for one enterprising prizefighter.

"I want the big fights," he says. "That's my dream to fight big fights."

Guerrero's world title defense against Salido will be shown on HBO pay-per-view.

Chico signs with Golden Boy

Diego “Chico” Corrales signed with Golden Boy Promotions last week. Both Corrales and Shane Mosley are great friends and spend time at each other’s house. So it wasn’t a complete surprise. “At this point of my career, it’s important that that I go into a fight knowing that the business end of it is taken care of,” stated Corrales in a press release. “I wanted to be with a promoter that understands us fighters.” Corrales lost his last fight by split-decision against Joel Casamayor. He had hinted toward retirement but now he’s heading into the junior welterweight and welterweight divisions.

“I know that Diego always gives his best inside the ring,” stated Oscar De La Hoya, president of Golden Boy Promotions on Friday, Oct. 20.

So who does he fight next?

There are dozens of possible opponents in the talent-heavy junior welterweight division including the guy who wrapped up all of the titles before moving up: Ricky “The Hitman” Hatton makes the most sense. First, the tough Brit beat the man Kostya Tszyu, then won a welterweight world title. He discovered he’s more suited for 140-pounds and is presumably moving back. In terms of dollars, who wouldn’t want to see Corrales against Hatton? That would be the greatest match between an American and British in more than 200 years. These two guys don’t bring daisies to the fight.

Of course there are alternatives like Tszyu, who’s made some statements about returning. And there’s Jose Luis Castillo.

Mongoose is managing fighters

Steve “The Mongoose” Quinonez retired last May but he’s now managing fighters. “I have a lot of experience in the fight game and with the business end of it,” said Quinonez, who was ranked as a lightweight and junior welterweight. He also runs his own construction company in the Palm Springs area. To reach Quinonez call (760) 835-3234. Or he can be reached by e-mail at boxingchamp@earthlink.net

Big dinner show in Montebello, California

All Star Boxing presents an impressive boxing dinner show for $100 a plate that features two light heavyweight contenders Rico Hoye and Jesus Ruiz in separate matches at the Quiet Cannon Country Club in Montebello. The ambitious fight card takes place on Friday Nov. 10 and begins at 7 p.m. Also on the fight card will be Cleotis Pendarvis facing Jair Aguiar in a junior welterweight bout. In a bantamweight bout, Manuel Roman meets Valentin Leon. For tickets and information call (323) 781-4871.