Kaliesha “Wild, Wild” West, a 21-year-old cocoa buttery smooth fighting contender from Southern California, has signed to meet former bantamweight world champion Anita Christensen of Denmark in that fighters home country.

“I’m going to show them all of my love for the sport,” said West.

With several years of professional fights under her belt, West (11-1-1, 2 KOs) will travel across the world to meet Christensen (24-1, 8 KOs) for the vacant WBO bantamweight title in Kjellerup, Denmark on Friday March 26 at Arena Midt.

“I’ve always thought I would be fighting for a world title since day one (10 years old),” said West, who lives in Moreno Valley a small city located adjacent to Riverside. “But I never understood the fight and struggle it would take when I first stepped foot in the gym.”

As a young child she remembers watching her father Juan West enter the boxing ring at the historic Olympic Auditorium as thousands cheered and booed. She also recalls screaming for her dad as he battled in a four round welterweight bout. You could say she has boxing in her blood.

When West’s father began training fighters she begged to be part of the sport but her father wouldn’t allow it. In those days he was busy training amateur stand outs like Chris “The Nightmare” Arreola and others. It was no sport for girls. But sometimes life has a way of opening doors. When several of his amateur fighters quit or moved to other gyms, he changed his mind about his daughter.

“She kept pestering me to let her fight,” said Juan West whose boxing nickname was “Wild Wild” West that the daughter now parades proudly. “So one day I said ok.”

What he discovered was her loyalty and devotion to the sport was intense.

“Bank on me dad,” West said she told her father. “I won’t let you down.”

As a 10-year-old amateur the hyper active girl lost her first fight in a tournament held in a boxing gym located in East Los Angeles. She remembers that loss changed her forever. She also remembers winning the rematch decisively.

“I couldn’t wait to face her again,” West says of the return win over her former conqueror.

A club full of boys

The years rolled on and she became one of the more feared amateur fighters. Usually she was in the finals or semi-finals of local and regional tournaments. In her gym she was also usually

the only female boxer in a club full of boys.

Outside of the gym West has a different demeanor and displays a bubbly personality that's quite opposite of her boxing face. She laughs and smiles freely and generally makes friends quite easily.

Inside the gym her body hunches and when she puts on a hoodie it's pretty difficult to surmise that a female is among the dozen or so boxers going through extensive drills like running, shadow boxing and hitting the various bags. It's like she's trying to hide the fact she's a woman.

But after a day of training has ceased the body straightens, the smiles return and the young woman who prefers to be called Kay becomes a regular female suburbanite and all that it entails.

Well, not quite. Unlike most young females West prefers to stay home.

"I'm so into the simple things in life it's ridiculous," she says. "I enjoy doing family activities such as fishing, watching DVDs at home, or just playing video games with my dad."

Black, Mexican, Puerto Rican and Asian

Among female fighters in the 118-pound bantamweight division West is considered the number one contender in the world. One might think that equates to riches or some kind of monetary success.

It does not.

On a daily basis the 21-year-old Black, Mexican, Puerto Rican and Asian female works as a greeter and valet in a hospital where she stands for six or more hours through intense heat or cold. Then she returns home for a quick nap before heading to the boxing gym for several hours of souped up training.

She gets one day a week off.

At home she's the oldest of four daughters, the youngest around two years old and with that comes the usual at home chores. Just recently she completed a hospital technician course as an ultra-sound tech. When she finally graduated she learned the school had lost it accreditation.

Just recently she bought a car from money earned from a fight. It broke down.

Throughout 2009 she only had one single fight. It was a dismal year where two scheduled bouts evaporated on the eve of the fight. But that was last year, this year she has already performed in a match against a three-time world champion Ada Velez that ended in a draw.

"I definitely learned to be much more settled in the ring. Just as settled as I am when I spar. It allows me to be able to put my punches together like I really want to," said West who fought

Velez on Jan. 21 at San Manuel Casino. “Ada being a vet in the game showed me how being relaxed in the ring is very important.”

Christensen also fought Velez several years ago and won by split-decision. The fight against West will be the Danish fighter’s first boxing match since losing her GBU, WBC and the vacant WBA bantamweight titles to Russia’s Galina Ivanova about 20 months ago.

It’s not an easy fight for either West or Christensen.

“I’ve seen a tape of one of her fights,” West said. “She’s a good boxer.”

Heather Percival

Fighting in Europe is another venture for West who has never fought outside of the United States.

Heather Percival, a former junior bantamweight contender from Fontana, California knows what her friend West will be experiencing.

“It’s very different fighting in another country,” says Percival, who stopped fighting to concentrate on college. “They’re very polite but very quiet.”

Percival often sparred with West and other female prizefighters from Southern California. Most times they’re sparring against each other was far superior to actual fights as Percival’s polished boxing style meshed against West’s athleticism and speed.

“Kaliesha always messages me when she has a fight,” says Percival who fought in Germany for a junior bantamweight world title in 2006 and lost by decision. “You could say we were like a team.”

Percival and other female fighters who make California their home base are rooting for West to return with the title.

“I really like Kaliesha “Wild, Wild” West,” says Kina Malpartida the WBA junior lightweight titleholder from Peru who often spars with West. “She’s a very nice person.”

The people of Denmark will discover that nice person when she steps foot in that country next month.

You can bank on it.