Guerrero (left) wants a signature bout after beating Aydin. (Hogan)

California's sprouting boxing gyms are like the wild weeds that cover the hills and deserts from the San Francisco Bay Area to the southern borders of San Diego County.

A number of those noisy gyms are heating up with the 100-degree temperatures.

Robert “The Ghost” Guerrero, John Molina, Antonio DeMarco, Paul Malignaggi, and Saul “Canelo” Alvarez are among the many prizefighters visiting or training in the Los Angeles area.

Right now we’ll concentrate on Guerrero, Molina and DeMarco.

Guerrero visited L.A. last week and stopped by L.A. Live where he talked about his recent performance as a welterweight against pressure fighting Selcuk Aydin and future expectations as a full fledged 147-pounder.

The former featherweight, junior lightweight, and lightweight titleholder stopped by with his wife and children and brought advisor Luis DeCubas Jr. along on a warm day. We met inside El Cholo’s restaurant across the street from ESPNZone in the patio area where he described his last fight.

“A lot of people were saying that I was not ready to fight at welterweight but I felt stronger than ever,” said Guerrero, while sipping ice tea in the Mexican restaurant that had automatic water sprays cooling off customers. “It was just another day at work.”

Many critics and boxing writers wondered why Guerrero skipped over the 140-pound junior welterweight division. It seemed like the natural order of steps for a normal top flight boxer, but the Gilroy native doesn’t aspire to normal.

“I want to fight the best fighters out there,” said Guerrero, who didn’t show any visible welts or cuts from his last fight that took place less than two weeks before meeting with TheSweetScience.com. “Start lining them up.”

Guerrero said he jumped to the welterweight division because it’s packed with the most talent and it’s his goal to prove his place as a top Pound for Pound fighter is valid. Before the fight

against Aydin many doubted he belonged among the elite. There are still doubters but they're thinning out.

Among the welterweights he seeks is Floyd Mayweather Jr., who reigns as the top Pound for Pound fighter today.

"I heard that Aydin sparred with Floyd Mayweather a couple of times," Guerrero said. "He knows Aydin is a tough guy."

DeCubas, who also works with a number of top Cuban fighters such as Erislandy Lara, said Guerrero has broken through the barrier of doubt with his win against Aydin.

"A lot of people were saying he's crazy to want to fight Floyd Mayweather," DeCubas said. "The Ghost took a fight with a lot of risk and no reward. He let them (Aydin) use any gloves they wanted."

The Ghost said that he intends to fight welterweights without giving handicaps to opponents such as demands to fight at 143 when the welterweight limit is actually 147.

"When you're the welterweight champion you shouldn't have stipulations to fight at 143 or 145. You got to man up."

Guerrero is part of a Northern California movement that has seen not just himself, but Nonito Donaire and Andre Ward rise to grab recognition as top Pound for Pound fighters and world championships.

"Andre Ward was the first world champion from the Bay Area in 100 years," said Guerrero. The first world champion from San Francisco was Gentleman Jim Corbett, who defeated John L. Sullivan in 1892. It was the first world title bout under the Marquis of Queensbury rules and to include boxing gloves.

Guerrero said that Ward came into his locker room before the fight on July 28, to wish him luck and to say he admired the Gilroy fighter for many years.

“He said I was his idol growing up,” Guerrero said. “I’ll be at his fight.”

Ward defends his super middleweight world championship against light heavyweight world champion Chad Dawson, who is dropping down in weight when they fight in Oakland, on Sept. 8.

“My brother Randy (Guerrero) makes his pro debut too,” Guerrero said.

Aside from a fight with Mayweather, other fighters Guerrero would like to meet in the ring are Juan Manuel Marquez, Manny Pacquiao and any other welterweight holding a world title.

“Line them up,” said Guerrero.

Molina vs. DeMarco

The co-main event on Sept. 8 at Oracle Arena in Oakland will be John Molina (24-1, 19 KOs) challenging Mexico’s Antonio DeMarco (27-2-1, 20 KOs) for the WBC lightweight world title.

Both appeared at a press conference in Sherman Oaks at Sisley’s Restaurant to talk about their title match.

Molina, a wiry knockout punching machine out of Covina, didn’t have much amateur experience before turning professional at age 23. In fact, his amateur experience was maybe a year or so

of fights here and there. But whatever he lacked in long time boxing apprenticeship he made up with mind numbing power. His punch is the big equalizer whenever he fights.

Now nearing 30, Molina knows that his dreams of winning a world title must come immediately.

Last year, when Brandon Rios appeared at a press conference in Los Angeles to talk about defending the lightweight world title against Urbano Antillon, the Covina fighter showed up too. He asked Rios in person if he would be willing to fight.

“I don’t mean disrespect but how about fighting me next?” asked Molina to the shock of Rios and his team.

That’s Molina. He’s very eloquent and respectful outside of the ring but has full confidence in his abilities as a prizefighter.

Rios commented that he had no idea who Molina is and recently has moved up to the welterweight division and is scheduled to fight Mike Alvarado at the Home Depot on Oct. 13, in Carson, California.

Molina has no problem fighting DeMarco, who showed against Jorge Linares last year that he’s quite a handful.

Dan Goossen, president of Goossen-Tutor Promotions, which guides Molina, says that the challenger has never wavered from any fight presented.

“He’s got that heart,” said Goossen, who’s promoted hundreds of prizefighters. “He’s also got that determination to go out there and give it all he has.”

Molina has only one defeat and that occurred three years ago.

“This fight does have all the trimmings to be Fight of the Year,” admits Molina.

DeMarco is a lanky southpaw with staying power from Tijuana, Mexico. His come-from-behind knockout victory over Venezuela’s highly-touted Linares was jaw dropping. Few expected the Mexican to overcome the boxing clinic that Linares gave him the first five rounds. But he rallied and proved that his toughness is another aspect that should be considered by all challengers.

Gary Shaw promotes DeMarco and says the Mexican never loses that hunger to overcome obstacles place in his path.

“This is a kid that never gives up,” said Shaw.

The always humble DeMarco doesn’t offer challenging words.

“I’m very excited and thankful to John Molina and Goossen for this fight,” DeMarco said. “It’s for me another dream come true to be able to get another world title fight.”

Just another day in L.A.

Comment on this article

ali says:

The ghost needs to beat somebody who is actually good at 147 before he gets a shot at the top dogs.

brownsugar says:

I like Guerrero's style. he's about 30 years old and he's calling out guys who should be able to shred him like fresh lettuce.

A boxers life is finite,... nobody can last forever.

why not give it the best shot possible even although the odds loom over you like a forrest full of towering Redwoods?
Anyone who's ever been in the ring knows that boxing is not terrifying to those who ply the craft on a consistant basis.

sound fundamentals minimizes risk .....

but the window of opportunity is fleeting at best and can't be depended upon to linger indefinitely.

It'll be difficult for Guerrerro to snag a mega fight with the 2 or 3 guys left in the business who can still pull down the MEGA BUCKs.

If he were my guy I'd advise him to take the next best thing. Broner, Broner, Broner....
Dispite the fact that some observers twist their heads in concentric 360 degree circle at the mere mention of his name.

HBO loves the guy,... viewer ratings are through the roof.
and fans want to see him lose as bad as they'd like to see Mayweather break a leg getting out of his many Bentleys.

He's a naturall 140 pounder and he acts like he knows Guerrerro's weaknesses like he knows the ingredients of his favorite breakfast cereal.

The payday would be ample and the winner captures the imagination of the world.

It's a fight that's potentially winnable by Guerrerro,... and the win would spell PPV Mega-Bucks for Robert against the last trio of Cash Cows left in boxing.

Exit the incessant medical bills and enter the properous life that he's always wanted for his family.

Whatdoya'say Guerrerro...? it beats a blank.

the Roast says:

I like your idea Sug. Guerrero vs Broner. Winner gets a shot, loser goes to the back of the line.

ali says:

B-Sug sounds good to me..

Radam G says:

The Cali Ghost spooks Broner and knock him da double fudge OUT! Broner is superhyped, though very talented, but BADLY, BADLY FLAWED and mentally immature to handle the tricks of the trade of a ghostly boxer like Guerrero.

Broner will never get into the Cali Ghost's head in a benefical way. Broner posing tough and acting Mayweather-like would set da Cali Ghost off on a spook-and-beat-yo-@ss fire.

It would scare da hebejeebeez outta da "Problem Child." He'd start asking for "The bottle." Ya kno!' Da one dat Panama Lewis fixed for "Hawk Time" Pryor back in da day. And we all know that the Problem Child would be able to get a kick with water mixed with water. Hehehehe! Holla!

DaveB says:

Good match making B-Sug, but Broner wants no part of this guy. Broner called out Guerrero and when Guerrero answered his call or tweet Broner tucked his tail between his legs and ran off into the sunset. Broner said he must be bad if 147 pounders want to fight him. He was the one mouthing off calling out the Ghost. Broner must have forgotten this match can actually be made. Guerrero reminded him he is the one who called him out. Also Broner is down playing the fact that Guerrero jumped up two weight classes to fight the bigger guys. In actuality these two are the same size. Man up Broner. You two have the same promoter and this guy can shut your mouth. Or you could shut his. Let's see if you have the guts to find out.