

SHE'S GOT THE POWER

57-year-old, **Hanne Bingle** is not content just being a doting grandmother of three. The six-time powerlifting world champion is looking to smash the Guinness World Record for truck pull at the Fitness Expo Dubai

BY SANAYA PAVRI

Like the idea of being strong, says Hanne Bingle MBE. And she certainly means it! After all Bingle has held the title of Danish Power Lifting World Champion six times and has competed in 35 Strong Woman competitions since 1997, including European and World Strongest Woman.

In an exclusive chat with *Better Health*, Bingle spoke about her passion for championing women's equality and the confidence she gets by being able to deadlift 130kgs, bench 90kgs and squat 120kgs, the impressive weights that Bingle lifted in the last championship she attended in Las Vegas.

This November will see the Danish strongwoman attempt to break a Guinness World Record for Truck Pull at the Fitness Expo Dubai that is poised to be the largest exhibition of fitness in the world. Organised in collaboration with the Dubai Sports Council, the expo will have over a 1,000 exhibitors with several major brands and athletes already roped in for exclusive appearances.

The main theme of the exhibition is health and wellness and will be accessible to all — amateurs as well as professionals. More than 100 live shows and competitions linked to Fitness, Wellness, Mixed Martial Arts, Parkour, Muay Thai, Kung Fu for Kids, Bodybuilding, and seminars by the top athletes such as Mike O'Hearn, Shawn Ray, Mona Muresan and many more.

But for 57-year-old Bingle the Expo is not just the "crowning achievement of her career" but also a platform to showcase every aspect of female strength, thus fulfilling a lifelong passion geared towards strength and women's rights.

NOTHING FEELS AS GOOD

Competing and breaking the world record for Bingle is about pushing yourself and more importantly inspiring other woman to get into some kind of strength training and possibly even competing.

"It's a very interesting jour-

DIET ADVICE

In terms of diet she stays away from refined sugar and concentrates on her protein intake, which is supplemented with a couple of protein shakes a day. "I think it is important for women who want to train to take responsibility for what they put in their bodies because there is a huge difference in where your calories come from and not just how many calories you eat. My protein is really good protein and very good fat and no carbs as carbs slows me down."

Hanne Bingle was honoured with an Honorary MBE for services to equality and public transport.

ney, you find a lot of things about yourself that you don't know," says the world champion. "I have always liked the feeling of being strong. And for me the fact that other people know this is not the goal, but the main thing is that I know I am strong. It gives you a confidence that you couldn't buy for money, it gives you a sense of wellbeing and is definitely a stressbuster."

For Bingle, strength isn't necessarily always physical. "Mental strength goes a long way and for me strength is about fulfilling the training goals. Mentally woman are much stronger than we give ourselves credit for. What drives me is that no one tells me it can't be done. Anything can be done with the right nutrition, right training, and also mental application."

Not only does Bingle absolutely love training and pushing her strength limits, competitions are like an added bonus, where she gets together with like-minded women and men to prove that all the training has been correct.

For the grandmother of three the never-say-die attitude has always been there. "Ever since I was a little girl I was strong headed, opinionated and had leadership qualities and never had problems expressing my opinions. Of course the strength comes with knowing when your opinions shouldn't be aired in public."

BREAKING BARRIERS

It's not just the joy of the sport or the thrill of being able to lift the equivalent of two grown adults that has all those endorphins racing in her system. "What drives me most is showing others and in many cases younger women that things can be done if you really apply yourself to it, whether it is career, training, competing. We have equal opportunities and breaking barriers is important for health and mental health but also for your health is later life."

But despite all the encouragement and support that Bingle does out, she is a firm believer in the fact that working out should not be a chore but

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HANNE BINGLE,
Six times Danish Powerlifting World Champion

should bring you joy. "Find out what you are comfortable with, what you want to achieve and stick with it - no matter what your goals there is a training programme for you."

I don't think women have to battle nature, I think it is society because it is not done thing that women show strength, if women can get over it then the sky is the limit, adds the lady who was a London Tube operator for 14 years and knows all about being woman in a man's world.

But Bingle didn't start training till she was 30. "I saw pictures of two body builders in a magazine and I thought they

looked fantastic and that was 1990. I thought they were toned, fantastic looking, very female looking and oozed confidence and I thought I wanted some of that," says the current oldest competitor for Strong Woman. From being a tubby teenager to weighing over a 100kgs in her mid-20, Bingle decided to "get a hold of herself," as she approached the big three-oh.

"But like most people I didn't have a clue where to begin and did the worst diets possible, including taking pills from a doctor that made me hardly eat anything. So I went to the gym and I still didn't have a clue what I was doing and did so many push-ups that my belly was sore and I could hardly walk the other day. And even though I was bent over like an 80 year old I was hooked."

In 2009 Bingle was awarded an honorary MBE. She has been an active member of Transport for London's women's group network and promotes equality issues through the international Women's Transportation Seminar. "I try and support many women who are entering the sport, be it power lifting or

The Danish strongwoman continues to train regularly

even body building and totally appreciate what they go through. Anything that gets women into the front door of a gym and to train with weights is a fantastic achievement."

Today, Bingle has a 38-year old son who calls her Super Mom and in between 2002 up until 2011 she has taken part in 35-40 competitions all over England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Poland.

FITNESS REGIME

She continues to train regularly and her training schedule is split into two parts. She does three days in the gym for about an hour and a half. Each day is different body part, with one day focusing on legs, basically

Bingle has deadlifted 155kg in competitions, and in the Strong Woman contest the Silver Dollar Deadlift is about 210kg

squats and leg curls and calf extensions, another day is upper body where she does shoulder press and bench press, works her triceps and biceps and the third day is for deadlift. "At the most I have deadlifted 155kgs in a competitions. In Strong Woman it's a little more it's about 210kg and its called a Silver Dollar Deadlift because it starts around your knees." ■

TIPS ON STAYING STRONG

1. Develop a training programme to suit your goal.
2. Set realistic training goals that are weekly, monthly and long term and use consistency to achieve them.
3. Take responsibility for what you put in your bodies.
4. Be conscious of not just calorie intake, but where your calories are coming from.
5. Never be afraid or ashamed to ask for help.



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