



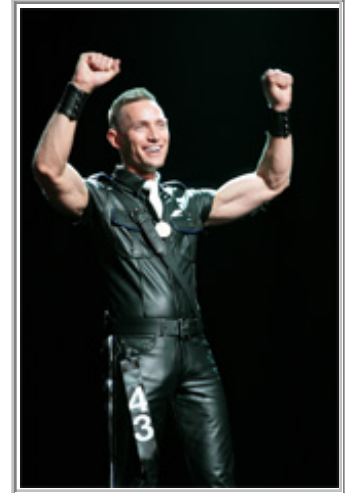
Mikel Gerle Named International Mr. Leather 2007

IML Contest Held in Chicago Memorial Day Weekend

Chicago, IL - Mikel Gerle, Mr. Los Angeles Leather 2007, has been named International Mr. Leather 2007, winning over a field of 52 contestants from five countries, including Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the United States. He is sponsored by the Los Angeles Leather Coalition and Oil Can Harry's. Residing in West Hollywood, California, Mikel works as a Management Specialist with the city. His community involvement includes annual fundraisers for a variety of organizations including AID for AIDS, Van Ness Recovery House, West Hollywood Recovery Center and Hot n Dry. He is also dedicated to raising awareness in the West Hollywood community about the dangers of crystal meth, as well as other issues that affect the GLBT community there. Other affiliations include the Los Angeles Leather Coalition, Southern California Gay Sports Bikers, LA Frontrunners and the AIDS LifeCycle Ride.

The 29th annual International Mr. Leather Contest was held Sunday, May 27 – its second consecutive year at The Legendary Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St.

As the International Mr. Leather 2007 titleholder, Mikel Gerle will represent IML and the leather community over the next year. He also receives a prize package consisting of donations from businesses and organizations supporting the leather community.



Rob Grant, Washington State Mr. Leather 2006, was named first runner up. He is sponsored by the Washington State Mr. & Ms. Leather Organization. Bill Hoepfner, Mr. Ramrod 2006, was named second runner up. He is sponsored by The Ramrod Bar.

Contestants are judged on a variety of criteria, including community involvement, speech, presentation and overall presence. The IML 2007 Judges included: Bo Ladashevskia, Matt Foreman, Master Jim Glass, Scott Bloom, Ted Lassen, Gil Kessler, Glenda Rider, Joe Reusch, and Matthew Johnson. The Tally Masters were: Blackkat and Jim Kiley-Zufelt.

The winner of the 15th annual International Mr. Bootblack Competition is Spot, winning over a pool of five contestants. He is sponsored by the Great Lakes Leather Alliance.

This year's entertainment was provided by actor and comedian Hal Sparks. Brad Balof returned for his third consecutive year as IML emcee.

More than 1,700 leatherfolk attended the 29th annual International Mr. Leather Contest. The weekend kicked off on Thursday, May 24 with Opening Ceremonies at the Palmer House Hilton, where all 52 contestants were introduced. On Saturday, May 26, contestants returned to the stage at the Palmer House for the Physique Competition (Pecs & Personality). Sunday's Contest was followed by Salute! – IML Closing Ceremonies at the Palmer House Hilton and the annual IML Victory Celebration Party at Chicago's House of Blues. The high-energy Black and Blue Ball caps-off the IML weekend on Monday, May 28th at Excalibur, 632 N. Dearborn St. in Chicago. This year's Leather Market at the Palmer House Hilton, which celebrated its 20th year, featured more than 100 leather and fetish vendors, clubs and organizations.

International Mr. Leather is proud to celebrate its 30th anniversary, May 22 through 26, 2008 in Chicago. The Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St., will be the official host hotel of IML 2008. Hotel reservations can be made after July 1, 2007 on the official IML website at www.imrl.com or by calling (877) 865-5321. Weekend packages can be purchased online at www.boxofficetickets.com or by calling (800) 494-TIX. Updates on International Mr. Leather 2008 will be posted frequently on the official IML website.