



IVAN SALAVERRY MMA, SEATTLE, WASH.

Seattle's best

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE FOR IVAN SALAVERRY AS HE OPENS HIS BRAND-NEW TRAINING CENTER.

by Kelly Crigger

In a city known for coffee, grunge music, rainy weather and "Frasier," Ivan Salaverry MMA, which stands literally in the shadow of the Space Needle, offers a focused MMA training experience with world-class credentials and a clean, family-friendly atmosphere.

Although encompassing a mere 3,000 square feet, 1,200 of which are mats, Salaverry's MMA studio in downtown Seattle provides what gets MMA enthusiasts more excited than the president of the high-school chess club during a Brooke Burke lap dance: one-on-one focused attention from fighters and grapplers with renowned pedigrees.

Opening in October 2006, Salaverry has created a learning environment open to both men and women with himself as the chief instructor, adding a personal touch hard to find in many training facilities. Preferring to teach small classes of no more than 20 students, he provides three hours of sequential training in boxing, kickboxing and submission wrestling. The demanding classes, which include tough physical conditioning, afford the student a focused regimen of MMA fundamentals that's worth the price of admission.

"I've wanted to do this for four years," admits Salaverry. "But I didn't want some rat-infested Rocky Balboa-style gym. I wanted to give my guys a nice place to train."



Salaverry takes pride in giving his students personal, hands-on instruction in an inviting and clean environment.

IVAN THE NOT-SO-TERRIBLE

Walking through the doors of Salaverry's studio is like climbing into a shiny vehicle still replete with the new-car smell. And what it lacks in size, it makes up for in quality instruction. "The classes are as full as I like them to be. I don't want more than two guys on a heavy bag at a time, otherwise they don't get the full experience and I can't watch them," Salaverry says.

"I love coming here. It's exactly what I wanted," says Paul Coy, the first student to walk through the doors when it opened. "I've trained in other places, but there was never any sparring like here. Here we get up close and personal instruction that we might actually use someday."

But prospective members wishing to blend into the crowd should steer clear of Salaverry MMA. Vocal and hands-on, Salaverry concentrates on each student, barking out on-the-spot corrections with the precision and exactitude that would make an Army drill sergeant proud.

Salaverry's classes are not for the faint of heart. His pupils, adorned in matching beige T-shirts, drill relentlessly on boxing, kickboxing and submission wrestling to the tune of Salaverry's Chilean accent-inflected commands. The hour-long sessions are

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completely void of music, unlike many gyms where death-metal blares through megawatt sound systems. The only melody in the gym is the dominating shouts of "mount, dismount, side control, head control, leg ride."

While his instruction is intense, Salaverry's wit is equally quick and cutting. "Stop being a flounder," and "What the hell is that?" are a few of his favorites utterances, offering a break from the routine and reminding everyone that it's OK to have fun. It's even inscribed on the wall in his four-point mantra, which reads, "Focus on



Eschewing music in the gym, Salaverry's instructions and quips are the most audible sounds as he gets down in the trenches with students. Below: Ivan Junior guards the mats as George the bulldog guards Ivan Junior.





Left: Intense sparring is a hallmark of Salaverry's training center.
Below: Women receive the same level of world-class instruction as the male students from Salaverry and his staff.

Ivan Salaverry MMA

OWNER: Ivan Salaverry

OPENED: October 2006

LOCATION: 230 8th Ave. N., Seattle, Wash. 98109

FLOOR SPACE: 3,000 sq ft

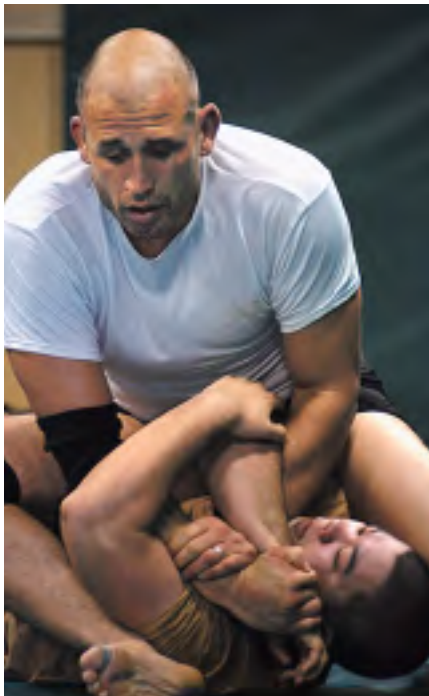
RING OR CAGE?: Ring under construction

EQUIPMENT: 7 heavy bags, brand-new pads, protective gear, various training devices and one French bulldog

CLASSES OFFERED: wrestling, submission wrestling, kickboxing, boxing, pankration (MMA)

NUMBER OF PHOTOS OF SALAVERRY WITH FELLOW BADASS FIGHTERS: 6

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the fundamentals, keep good technique, listen to your body, relax and have fun.”

“Ivan’s attitude is great,” confirms assistant instructor Brad Kertson, who has spent considerable time at both AMC Pankration in Seattle and with Team Punishment in Southern California. “He’s focused, dedicated and works with guys long after he has to. He has lots of energy and is very vocal.”

MEET THE FAMILY

Lending to the family appeal of the gym is Salaverry’s very own family. Ivan’s wife, Britt, and six-month-old Ivan Junior guard the front desk with their spunky, bat-eared French bulldog, George. “We only have one real employee,” says Britt, “so I kind of manage the place when he’s not here.”

The heart of Salaverry MMA is his dedicated core of male and female students who train nightly. Salaverry is aided in his

teaching duties by Kertson, MMA fighter Brandon Dudley (3-0) and BJJ Pan-Am Gold Medalist Cindy Hales. Although the cadre’s credentials are as good as you can find, the icing on the cake is the focused instruction they provide. All of the instructors seem willing to go the extra mile for their students. During grappling class, Salaverry doesn’t hesitate a second to put himself into a submissive position to show students how to execute a move or gain an advantage. “I love watching them grow,” he admits. “I think it’s great to see a beginner come in here and learn and mature.”

It all adds up to focused, disciplined MMA training in an environment ripe with the dichotomy of intense dedication and jovial sarcastic barbs that are the hallmark of a team. Salaverry’s MMA studio is packed with credentials and equipment. Just remember that it’s in the heart of Seattle, so bring an umbrella. ☔