



Bodybuilder turns pro



STRIKE AS POSE: Dan Gerrard posed on stage to win an international competition after only one year on the circuit.

■ **By Annabelle Dick**

A FERRYMEAD fitness model has graduated from amateur to professional competitions after taking out his category at an international bodybuilding event.

F45 Training Ferrymead manager Dan Gerrard, 23, won the fitness category at the Pan Pacific Championships/NZ International Pro Am and received a pro-card, meaning he's now considered a World Fitness Federation pro athlete.

"It was really interesting. I did things a bit differently; I had a big focus on work and the stuff I was doing for F45 so I was just trying to enjoy the process a lot more and it paid off," he said.

The competition incorporated bodybuilding, figure and fitness and was held in Auckland recently.

The win now means Gerrard will be able to compete alongside top bodybuilders from around the world.

"Competing as an amateur, it's all self-funded and you're doing it for yourself. Whereas, as a pro athlete, I would only be able to enter against other professionals in shows and there's more monetary value involved," he said.

Gerrard has been training in

the gym since he was 16 and has spent the last year prepping and competing in bodybuilding, figure and fitness events as a male sports model.

Gerrard initially trained in karate but an injury put him out of practice so he decided to use fitness bodybuilding as a competitive outlet.

"It was never a goal to get on stage and compete, but I was competing in karate and I got injured in 2014 and that ended my competing. So when I was going through the rehab process, setting goals to do a competition, that was what got me motivated and back on track," he said.

His first show was the Christchurch Grand Prix, where he won his category and qualified for the Southern Hemisphere Championships earlier this year.

Gerrard also qualified for Mr Universe but didn't have the freedom or support to go to the United States for the competition.

His also competed in the Southern Hemisphere Championships on the Gold Coast in June this year, where he came second overall.

Gerrard plans to travel to Asia and Australia to follow the bodybuilding circuit.