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If you've been following Kickboxing and Muay Thai over the past few years you'll be no stranger to the name of Yokkao. Yokkao has become one of the premier brands worldwide when it comes to muay thai equipment and has been doing a lion's share to help spread the sport beyond the borders of Thailand in a big way. You may not be familiar with the name Stefania Picelli, but the truth is, at this point you won't have a choice but to know her name as she has worked hard to both push the Yokkao label as well as to promote the sport of muay thai

internationally through the Yokkao Extreme brand, Muay Thai Combat and now through the Yokkao Angels
project.

She's a very, very busy woman and we caught up with her to ask her a few questions as she prepares for Yokkao Extreme 2013.

LK: *Muay Thai is still a sport that is still somewhat exotic outside of Thailand, what kind of challenges have you seen as a promoter and entrepreneur within the sport?*

SP: It's hard to understand for people that don't know anything about combat sports. Muay Thai has the luxury to be an ancient art, so you can approach to these people in that way, explaining the meaning of practicing Muay Thai and involving as many people as possible.

This is my purpose as a promoter because if I'll be able to involve different kinds of people, in the future Muay Thai and all combat sports can grow.

As an entrepreneur: it's hard to find the right balance between promotion, business and love for Muay Thai, but I think to be on the right way.

LK: *What sort of vision do you have for Muay Thai internationally in the future?*

SP: What I would like to see is that a mother doesn't cover her son's eye during a fight, that children can approach Muay Thai with the right mindset and that the Muay Thai can be recognized as a valid alternative to soccer, tennis, volleyball or whatever.

I'm sure that all the people that are supporting me are helping me to reach this goal and I'm very grateful for this.

LK: *You've seen a great deal of success with both the Yokkao brand and the Yokkao Extreme events, what are your plans for them in the future?*

SP: As I like to think...future is the future and after Yokkao Extreme 2013 will be a great new year with new projects.

LK: *Do you find it difficult being a woman in an industry full of men?*

SP: It's difficult to work just with men: fighters are really nice and well-mannered and I feel like to be a sister for them, helping them with their problems but when is the time to pull out their claws, I'm not the one who pulls back ... not for nothing I grew up with a naughty brother!

LK: *What sort of obstacles have you had to overcome as a female promoter, specifically?*

SP: The biggest obstacles were that the people really weren't used to dealing with it when they usually just deal with men....but I'm a smart person and I think that the people who worked with me really appreciated what I've done.

LK: *Does Yokkao Extreme have any further plans involving the United States?*

SP: Yes as I went to New York to see how the Muay Thai was present in the country and I was really happy to see how many Muay Thai fans there are and the potential of working in your country.

LK: *You've put in a ton of work to become a success, what were you doing before promoting events and running a label like Yokkao?*

SP: I was modeling since 20. It was a period of my life during university but it allowed me to

grow very quickly. I'm happy to had this experience because I'm using it also right now (Yokkao Angels)

LK: *What do you see your role as in the sport of Muay Thai internationally?*

SP: As a real promoter who support Muay Thai in the right way

LK: *Who is your all-time favorite fighter?*

SP: In the past Samart, now definetely Saenchai

LK: *Who is your biggest inspiration?*

SP: When I work hard and I don't have time except to work for Muay Thai promotion I think that I'm bringing something of my family in everything I do. I'm half Thai and I think that Muay Thai is in my DNA. I lived Muay Thai as a Thai person and this is what I like to transmitted to people.

Yokkao Extreme 2013 goes down on January 26th, for more information check out the official site, also follow Stefania and Yokkao on twitter.