

Filipino Martial Arts

Taboada Balintawak *Arnis Cuentada*

Digest

Special Edition
2007



Teofilo Velez and Bobby Taboada



Inside the Mind of a Modern Day Warrior
Interview with Grandmaster Bobby Taboada

Publisher

Steven K. Dowd

Contributing Writers

Rick Mitchell
Dr. Patrick Schmitt
Sharon Infante-LoParo
Garth Dicker
Robert Klampfer
Bill Thurston
Richard Cotterill
Jorge V. Penafiel

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

When I first met Grandmaster Bobby Taboada we talked about a Special Edition on him and his style, and after a year it has finally come about.

A serious practitioner with a big heart and a sense of humor, Grandmaster Taboada is a serious, dedicated, professional practitioner that will amaze you in person. Though he has a unique way of teaching and has an easy going personality and he has tailored his teaching style to fit into today's society. Do not be fooled for he still possesses his abilities of his hard training that he grew up with and for the asking can very well demonstrate it.

His students are dedicated practitioners of Balintawak Arnis Cuentada Method and talk very highly of Grandmaster Taboada and are proud and professional practitioners.

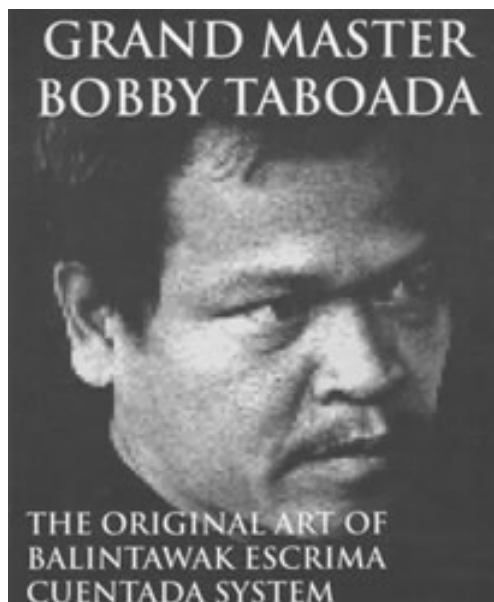
So even though this is a small issue, it is very informative about Grandmaster Taboada and his interview is honest and to the point about his points of view and philosophy, so enjoy.

If you ever have the chance to attend one of his seminars or are able to receive training from him or one of his instructors, it is highly suggested you do.

Maraming Salamat Po



www.internationalbalintawak.com



Introduction to Grandmaster Bobby Taboada



Bobby Taboada was born in Cebu, Philippines on November 6, 1948, the oldest of the five children of Sergio and Gabriela Taboada. He grew up fighting in the streets of Cebu, not because he was a troublemaker but because it was the only means of survival on the streets. He in fact is soft-spoken and very slow to anger except when he rises up in defense of himself which is almost nil and infrequent. Bobby was first introduced to eskrima by his father.

Bobby left home when he was twelve and lived with Grandmaster Teofilo Velez like an adopted son as well as a student of eskrima. That literally meant sitting at the foot of the master in full obedience and loyalty in his search for knowledge and wisdom. That was also when he had the opportunity to learn from Grandmaster Jose Villacin and Great Grandmaster Venancio "Ansiong" Bacon the secrets of Balintawak Eskrima. Bobby discovered that the art was deadly, effective and sophisticated. As a fearless and undaunted volunteer for fights and tournaments, Bobby was trained by all the Balintawak Masters in the practical aspects of combat fighting. In this light, it must be emphasized that in the Philippines, Eskrima is not a sport in the traditional sense of the word governed by rules of safety. It means combat fighting and sometimes a fight to the finish. Only lately have there been efforts to make it safe as a sport. Bobby is a long way from the street battles in Cebu, where he has experienced street battles and deadly fights, some with multiple opponents. He has also witnessed "fights to the finish" until one either surrendered or died. Now he is on a mission to promote Balintawak Eskrima worldwide with primary emphasis on self-defense techniques, which he has continuously researched, tested, retested and improved on his own.



Teofilo Velez



Teofilo Velez and Bobby Taboada



Inside the Mind of a Modern Day Warrior

Balintawak Eskrima Grandmaster Bobby Taboada

By Rick Mitchell

It was mid October 2005, when I flew from Los Angeles to Charlotte, North Carolina to attend a “Gathering of Disciples” of Balintawak Grandmaster Bobby Taboada. The event was held at Irwin Carmichael’s Martial Art Training Institute, the same site I first saw Bobby demonstrate during the late Grandmaster Remy Presas’s Modern Arnis training camp back in October 1992. Over twenty qualified instructors and advanced students participated in Bobby’s special training sessions and testing, and then everybody received awards for their dedication and loyalty to the art.

Three weeks later, I was off to Melbourne, Australia, where I met up again with Bobby. Along with his fully-qualified instructors and their highly enthusiastic and well-trained students there, I engaged in another bout of intensive training and testing.

After three weeks of enjoying the sites and sounds of the land “Down Under,” Bobby and I soared off to the Philippines for a reunion with many of his Balintawak compadres in Manila and Cebu. Among those we visited were Masters Bobby “Silver” Tabimina, Nick Elizar, Peloy Roma, Eddie Velez, Ben Marapao and Ben Jaima. It was a pleasure and honor for me to receive personalized instruction from a few of them. Bobby and I also had the opportunity to teach over 150 students at the University of Cebu. Then a few days later, we attended the World Invitational Arnis Championship at Camp Crame in Manila.



University of Cebu Seminar



Bobby “Silver” Tabimina and Grandmaster Taboada

On December 12, 2005, Bobby and I arrived in L.A., my native stomping grounds. It was the end of the line for me, but a short stop-over for Bobby before he had to head back to his home in Charlotte. I drove him to the home of Master Nene Gaabucayan, another one of his Balintawak compadres, who I currently train with in L.A. While Bobby and Nene conversed in their native tongue, I pondered the experience of my recent travels. I couldn’t stop wondering why it was that wherever in the world I went with Bobby, we were so well-received. What was it about him that made people hold him in such high esteem? When we got back to my house, I discussed with him in depth his past

experiences, thoughts, beliefs, fears, concerns, values, plans, goals, and other subject matter, which I'd like to share with you at this time. So sit back, relax, and I'll take you on a tour inside the creative mind of this truly remarkable man.

Rick Mitchell: *What motivated the late Great Grandmaster Anciong Bacon to create Balintawak?*

Bobby Taboada: I don't know exactly what motivated him to create Balintawak. Before he created it, he was in the Labangon Fencing Club. I know that Anciong dropped their old style of sometimes practicing with two sticks, which he thought was impractical, and used only one stick instead. Maybe he was dissatisfied with the group and wanted to do his own thing...



Anciong Bacon and Teofilo Velez

There are other people who were original students of Anciong, such as Ted Buot who lives in Detroit, Michigan and Sam Buot, in Phoenix, Arizona. They probably know more about the history on that subject than me. There is already a lot of information out there about the history of Balintawak. If you want more info about it, go to Sam Buot's website. (www.buot.net)

RM: *You've benefited much from learning from your masters...*

BT: Yes, I learned a great deal from my masters and developed a solid foundation based on strong principles. As a result of this foundation, I was able to take what they taught me to higher levels and created

a lot of things that has never been released before. Let's put it this way, in the past, we used an ordinary typewriter, now obsolete. We've now evolved to more sophisticated technology: computers and printers.

RM: *Tell me something about your personal history?*

BT: When I was a beginner in the early '70s, I told my master (Teofilo Velez) before that I will be the one who will promote this art throughout the world. But everybody just laughed at me because I was nothing before. I scrubbed the floor at my master's house just to get my lessons. I stayed there, I worked there, I was my master's practice dummy, and I did whatever he wanted. I gave full obedience and loyalty. Martial arts was my education because I didn't have much formal education. I only went to public school up to grade six.

When I left the Philippines and went to New Zealand (1979), it was very difficult for me because I didn't know how to speak or understand English. I wanted to teach Balintawak there, but I didn't even know how to say "twelve basic strikes." Also, back in the Philippines, we only taught one on one. We didn't know how to teach groups of two or more people. In New Zealand, I suddenly had to teach group classes. It was very hard, but it forced me to think and create.

RM: *Back then, although you were afraid and unsure of yourself, you knew how to fight, correct?*

BT: Yes, martial arts was my education and I could perform it well. But the thing I was most scared about was when I began teaching in New Zealand, if someone asked me a question, I wouldn't know how to answer it. I was there by myself, uneducated, with only 45 centavos in my pocket.



Bobby Taboada and Nene Gaabucayan demonstrating at the Cebu YMCA in 1979.

RM: *What was the thing that motivated you to succeed?*

BT: It was just luck. Peter Ball, a New Zealander who came to the Philippines and trained with me, invited me to his country to train him and his class for three to six months. After five months, I was ready to go back home. But I thought about what I was going to do when I went back to my country. I had no job - no nothing. So I forced myself to teach even though I felt very uncomfortable about not knowing how to speak English. At first, I taught by counting out the numbers in Filipino language and the students followed. When I saw that the students were learning, it gave me encouragement. But when it came to one on one instruction, it was very hard. So I would just work my arm and show them how to do it without saying anything. Then when I saw that they were getting it, it also gave me encouragement.

Because I was teaching, I was able to arrange to have my visa extended up to one year. It was a matter of survival. I had a vision and the desire to succeed and I didn't want to give up on that.

RM: *Was there anyone who gave you encouragement to succeed?*



Grandmaster Taboada with Australia qualified instructors. From left to right: Jim Sakkis, Paul Gale, GM Taboada, Dr. Garth Dicker, and Gary Rowlands.

BT: Yes, my dear friend Remy Presas. Remy was a former member of the Balintawak group before he developed his own style, Modern Arnis. My situation was similar to what happened with him when he left the Philippines and moved to the United States and eventually went on to promote Modern Arnis worldwide. Years ago, I met Remy while he was on a promotional tour in New Zealand. He gave me courage to promote the art of Balintawak. I was shy and embarrassed because I couldn't speak English and I thought I couldn't do it. But after I saw how Remy completely controlled his classes by using his loud, commanding voice when counting out the strikes, I followed his example and found I could do it.

RM: *Who else encouraged your advancement?*

BT: Another person who helped me was Professor Wally Jay, Founder of Small Circle Jujitsu. In 1991, we both were invited to perform at *Masters of the South Pacific* martial arts event hosted by Goju Karate Master Tino Ceberano (original student of Gogen “The Cat” Yamaguchi), in Melbourne, Australia. After Wally saw my demonstration, he came up to me and said that there was plenty of room for me in the United States.

RM: *Undoubtedly, Wally’s suggestion to come to the U.S. was a major challenge for you.*

BT: That’s right. At first when I arrived in the U.S. it was really hard for me to promote by myself. There was no money involved and I just demonstrated continuously for free everywhere I got the opportunity. Eventually, I had seminars, but only about three to six people would participate. But I didn’t care - I just kept going. Then next time I returned to those same places to give another seminar, the attendance was double, triple, or more.

The whole time I’ve been in the U.S., I focused on trying to make it work. I’m glad that certain people were helping me, such as Sam Buot, who let me live at his house, Jorge Penafiel and Tom Federly, who helped me build up a following in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Irwin Carmichael, who helped me establish my worldwide organization, Balintawak International, in Charlotte, North Carolina. I owe these guys a lot, especially Irwin!



Bobby Taboada, Sam Buot and Rick Mitchell



Bobby Taboada, Rick Mitchell and Irwin Carmichael in Charlotte, NC. - 1995

RM: *Would you please explain your art’s curriculum?*

BT: Sure. My curriculum has six levels for completion of the art.

- **Level One is:** *12 basic strikes with control and with full-power, shadow fighting and basic blocks.*
- **Level Two is:** *Defense and counter with control (stop at target) and no control (with recoil), semi-hitting while in the defensive stage (strike one to three times before blocking and*

countering).

- **Level Three is:** *The Grouping System, which is made up of five drills for developing different essential fighting skills and proper body mechanics.*
 - Group One is: *lifting and clearing*
 - Group Two is: *lifting and clearing with head movement*
 - Group Three is: *preparation for body flexibility*
 - Group Four is: *speed and reflex development and*
 - Group Five is: *defending against punches while in a stick fighting motion*

These five groups only train the basics. It is not a fight yet. Jose Villasin, who was the president of our club and instructor of my instructor, Teofilo Velez, created it as a safe way to practice the basic skills needed for a real fight. For example, in the early days, Balintawak training included *punta y daga*. While using a stick in one hand, they would use a knife in the other hand and there were lots of injuries. It was too damaging so he changed thrusting with a knife to punching with an empty hand. This made it simple and easy to do without damage to the students. Originally, these moves didn't have names. We just played with the movements, but they weren't defined.

- **Level Four is:** *Basic butting technique and pushing and pulling techniques*. The students do these techniques on and guided by the instructor.
- **Level Five is:** *Disarming techniques*: 12 forehand side, 12 backhand side applied individually and while in a stick fighting motion
- **Level Six is:** *12 semi- advanced techniques* that I created for basic strikes 1-12 applied individually and while in a stick fighting motion using groupings. The applications of the semi-advanced techniques are immediately followed up by a series of more than ten continuous free-flowing strikes.

During an examination for Completion of the Art, I want to see that you can clearly demonstrate and explain the material learned. And most importantly, I want to see your character - that you are a good example: not arrogant, egotistical, abusive, or undisciplined. When you complete the art, it doesn't mean that you are a good fighter - you only have a compulsory knowledge of the basics. You are always defending yourself and must maintain discipline and control while your instructor is guiding you.

RM: *How does someone qualify as an instructor in your system?*

BT: After you completed the art, you go for the fully qualified instructor. As part of your test, you are allowed to teach and guide a student in the completion of the art. At this stage, your knowledge and skill will grow because you will have to answer all of the student's difficult questions and you will have to teach them without hurting them. You will learn to control yourself by attacking and controlling them all the time and you make sure that the student knows all requirements for completion of the art.

When the student can successfully demonstrate those requirements and pass a formal test, it means you pass your test for a qualified instructor. You have proven that you know how to teach because I saw your product. If the student fails, then you also fail.

You also have to create twenty-four of your own techniques taken from your martial arts background (i.e. kenpo, karate, kung-fu, taekwondo, grappling, etc.) and demonstrate them for me while in a stick fighting motion. During the test, you must constantly show that you are a good example: you are not allowed to curse, abusively hit your partner or drop your stick. Once you show lack of physical or emotional control or drop your stick, you automatically fail. The reason is that the audience watching the test (parents, spouses, friends, other students, etc.) can see that you don't have control and won't want to have you teach them or anyone they know. They can see that you aren't a good example for



Balintawak Instructor Tattoo
Symbol of Brotherhood

others to follow.

At the conclusion of the test, the instructors on the testing panel and anybody in the audience (parents, kids, police, the mayor of the city, etc.) can ask you questions such as: *How can you help the community? How will you promote the art? Why do you want to be an instructor of this art?* This further shows that you are responsible; you know what you are doing. You have good character and good intentions and will be a benefit to the community.

RM: *You mentioned that one of your requirements for completion is “semi-advanced techniques.” Why do you call your techniques “semi-advanced” rather than “advanced?”*

BT: I don't want students to get stuck with advanced techniques. If I show students advanced techniques, they might think that is the end of the techniques if I say “advanced,” and they won't create anymore and make their knowledge grow. I want to give freedom to students to create their own techniques.

For me, the techniques I create are advanced because I created them. But when I pass my techniques on to my students, I call them “semi-advanced.” This gives students the opportunity and freedom to think about how to counter them.

Some students say that it is very difficult to create their own techniques. But I tell them to keep practicing and working on them. When they learn techniques from somebody they should think about how to counter those techniques. Once they have a good countermove, they can put it into their own curriculum. Those counter techniques are that student's advanced techniques, which will become semi-advanced once passed on to others. I encourage students to continually think about the counter because countering never ends. That is what *cuentada* means: “counter the counter.”

RM: *Why do you have it as a requirement that students who want to become instructors create their own techniques?*

BT: So their knowledge will grow and so they can utilize and expand on whatever martial arts knowledge they've previously learned, karate, kung-fu, grappling, etc. Sometimes students come to me and tell me that they've been training, for example, in karate for many, many years. When I teach them Balintawak, I always tell them not to let go of their previously learned martial arts training so that it's not wasted. They can use their previously learned styles or they can explore new arts when thinking about counters to my techniques or other techniques. I show my students everything I have and encourage them to come up with counters for the techniques I have showed them.



If I like the counters my students came up with, I may use those counters myself and give those students credit for creating them. I just want to promote and expose the art so everybody will grow.

RM: *How did you come up with the idea of creating your own techniques?*

BT: By practicing the styles I already learned before I began Balintawak: the Indangan system that my father's taught me, karate, kung-fu, jiu-jitsu, and boxing, and then coming up with counters for good techniques from each style. I didn't forget the techniques my instructor's taught me. I kept them, practiced them and then thought about how to counter them. Then those counters became my own personal techniques.

Also, I learned to create new techniques from my experiences in actual fights and when I practice with other people and they counter my moves. Then later I'd figure out how you can defend against those situations for the next time around. That's what I heard the Gracie's do. If someone gets them into a lock and they can't get out of it, the whole family works together to come up with workable solutions to the problem and create new moves - kind of like "brainstorm sessions" or "think tanks." These new moves help complete the puzzle.

RM: *Isn't teaching helpful in the development of martial arts strategy and skill?*

BT: Yes it is. Actually, the most important thing for me is to teach because I already know the counters for the moves I teach. Then when the student counters my counters, I need to create even more counters. It develops my mind because before the student counters, I already know what his next possible moves can be - I know what he can do with his feet, his knees, elbows, if he punches or head butts. It's like a chess game. I can bait him and if he takes the bait, he'll be in trouble.

Another thing is I find I can improve my speed and reflexes by teaching my student the moves and developing their speed. Then I have them teach me and make me develop my speed. If I teach my students well, and if they teach me well, then I'll continue to be good also.



RM: *Were there any events that happened to you in the past and had big impact on you?*

BT: For a long time, I was used as a dummy during classes and was abused by my instructors. I really appreciate the dummies because (they make) the instructors look good and get recognition. I was one of them before...kneeling down on the ground while my instructor is whacking and pounding on me and I'm begging for him to stop. It was tough back then, man. If I taught this same way, I would be in jail by now.

RM: *What is your perspective on that now?*

BT: I believe the most important thing is that the people who teach self-defense do it in a good way. They must do it without hurting others. The hardest thing to learn is how to defend your self. The easiest thing to do is to hit somebody. Anybody can do that, but in the street they just hit in the wrong way. In the school, you learn the correct way to defend yourself with speed, flexibility and power. The best defense is to react fast and be aware of threatening situations before they happen.

RM: *How has this perspective changed you?*

BT: I just wanted to change everything: reorganize the teaching methodology, make friends, and bring different martial arts groups together so there would be no more competitions of “who’s who?” I really appreciate all kinds of martial arts and like to learn from and explore them all. I’m always learning. When I go to watch, for example, my friend Pat Strong’s (one of Bruce Lee’s original students) group train, I see things I already know...but I get many new ideas that I can add into my training. When I learn something from other instructors, in my mind all I think about is how to counter it.

RM: *Would you say that this is a means for people to develop themselves and to grow as individuals in the martial arts?*

BT: Yes, it can help people from all martial arts grow and be happy. I hope in the future people (from other styles) can say “This is what I have to offer” without fighting over whose style is best anymore. I don’t put down anybody else’s style. I like to encourage people from different martial arts to come together in harmony. I’m always supportive of what you’re doing. I just want people to be a good example, that’s it. This way you can work with people from other styles and everyone can improve. And this way there can be better quality and people can learn to make their own arts more effective. It is all about improving people on a personal level. The style is not as important as the person.

Everybody has something to offer. If someone from another style gives you something, take it. Then practice it and think about how to counter it. Then that counter is yours. It does not belong to the person who gave you the technique. They didn’t teach it to you, you created it yourself. That means you’re making yourself grow and it’s what makes you an advanced student.

RM: *I assume, at least in part, that is why the Great Grandmaster developed Balintawak - he saw a need to change the old, outdated techniques, correct?*

BT: Yeah, I’m sure that’s why he created it. Now that the art was passed on to me and other Balintawak disciples, I understand that there is more to put into it. I like the original way I was taught because it gave me a chance to think. The brutal way of training made me realize that there is a better way to teach people without hurting them. It made me think deeply and helped free my mind to create more. For me, the freedom to create, change and grow as a person is what martial arts is all about. But the most important thing is friendship. If there is a legacy I wish leave behind, that is it.



Grandmaster Taboada and Rick Mitchell
during Los Angeles, CA seminar
1994



Nunchaku expert Damien Romero,
Grandmaster Taboada, Master Nene
Gaabucayan and Rick Mitchell after
seminar and demonstrations at California
State University, Los Angeles - 2003



Grandmaster Taboada's first seminar at Rick Mitchell's school at the Santa Monica
YMCA - 1993

The Balintawak Arnis Cuentada Method

Balintawak Arnis Cuentada Focuses on the use of a single stick and empty hands, concentrating on close range fighting tactics, and can be classified as a "modern system", a composite of several fighting methods, as opposed to the ancient and classical methods. The "Cuentada" system (from the Spanish word, "cuentar" or "to counter") follows a basic principle of physics and mechanics: the equality of force and counterforce. For every resultant force, there is an equal and opposite reacting force. As applied to the practice of Balintawak arnis cuentada, this mastery of the offensive and defensive movements requires a series of well planned movements, wherein the opponent cannot but reply with a corresponding set of forced movements and reactions. In this way, the

opponent is always kept under complete control. A true master of the art can therefore predict with precision, which part of the body of the opponent he will target and hit.

In the Balintawak Eskrima style the stick is used as the primary training tool to familiarize the students with weapons and blows. It is believed that familiarity in confronting weapons reduces fear and panic in actual combat. It is a combat both with weapons and bare hands. The theory is that the stick is only an extension of the arm and that the human body can only move in so many normal ways.

This is the development of certain basic blows to illustrate the source and direction of blows. Beneath the wide swinging, flashy and visible blows are the sophisticated secret moves, dynamics in balancing, holds, parries, clips, ruses, feigns, tripping, sweeping, kicking, trapping, reversals of motion and direction, blows with simultaneous offense and defense and a myriad of combination blows with the stick, fist, elbow, knee, foot or head butt. It is easy to hit but difficult to defend. Thus an emphasis is on a strong defense for all beginners, mastery of the defensive stage of the art and then the incorporation of speed in the hand-eye coordination through reflex and flexibility in the body movement.

There is no limit on where and what to hit except in friendly workouts where injury is avoided and safety is imposed. As a matter of fact, what is considered foul in many arts is what is taught and mastered in Balintawak. It is combat, street fighting and self-defense.

The Real Deal

By Dr. Patrick Schmitt

I first met Grandmaster Bobby Taboada in 1997 while looking for a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) school in Charlotte, NC. I had just moved to South Carolina from Texas to work as a Physician, subsequently becoming a Medical Director for a Spartanburg Rehabilitation Hospital for the next 10 years.

I started my Martial Arts training in 1972 at the age of 12. Growing up in Erie, PA., I had my first exposure to Karate with Sensei Tom Myers, staying with his school until I left Erie to attend Medical School. Sensei Myers became an early role model and mentor for me, affecting my character to this day. He had practical experience from working in the prison system and brought this knowledge to his Karate School where training was tough, but rewarding. This is where I met Billy Blanks. He had just been promoted to black belt soon after I started. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to train with both Sensei Myers and Billy Blanks while in Erie. During these early years I recognized that a good street fighter could defeat most martial artists, so I tried to gain knowledge and experience in as many different systems as possible. After I left Erie, Pa., I continued with my Medical School and Residency training until finished in 1992, then moving to Colorado Springs, CO. to work as a Physician. Here I met Sifu Joseph Simonet. After taking some private lessons with Sifu Simonet he introduced me to Guru Bob Vanatta where I began to train in Tongkat Silat. Although my time training with Guru Vanatta was relatively brief, the principles that he taught me continue to influence my thinking

and practice to this day. My job then took me to West Texas in 1994 and on to the Carolinas in 1997.

So, it was 1997 when I walked into the Martial Arts school that offered Brazilian Ju-Jitsu and I saw a flyer for Balintawak. When I asked one of the Brazilian Ju-Jitsu students about it he said, "This guy is the real deal". I thought I better check it out and came back to watch and try a class. A noticed that a Filipino gentleman came in and sat down and watched patiently. It was only after the instructors taught for some time that Bobby Taboada walked out onto the floor and I then realized who he was. After seeing Bobby Taboada in action both as teacher and fighter, I knew that I wanted to learn from him.

After spending a few months in the group class, I asked Grandmaster Taboada if he would take me as a private student. So then began 10 years of intense, focused and physically demanding training with an expectation in giving a 100%. Sometimes Grandmaster Taboada would take me to other Martial Arts

schools to train, and at other times different Martial Artists of varying backgrounds would come to his house to train with me, and the other students if present. In training with Grandmaster Taboada, you always began with a review of the basics and if your "check up" is sub-standard then fundamentals are reviewed until acceptable. To this day the procedure is the same regardless of your training experience. When you see Grandmaster Taboada perform a so called "basic movement," it is soon realized that execution at his skill level makes basic movements highly advanced.



Grandmaster Taboada and Patrick Schmitt

Bobby Taboada has the understanding and ability to push to student to the edge of their aerobic, anaerobic, and mental capacity without overloading their ability to learn. He forces the student to train under pressure, off balance, just staying slightly ahead of the student, pushing him or her to their limit. Bobby trains the student to harness his or her maximum power with an un-telegraphed delivery on offense as well as defense. Balintawak, as taught by Bobby Taboada is strong and direct without leaving your stick out in a position of vulnerability. Through thousands of strikes and counters, the student learns to be able to block and strike with power and control in an automatic motor learned engram, or as Bobby would simply say "React Quick." Many Balintawak students have the misconception that when they pass Bobby's "Completion of the Art Level" or "Full

Qualified Instructor Level," that they have learned most everything in the system.

Nothing could be father from the truth. There is much more to learn and understand, and reality training to experience. In addition there is always a focus on teaching as well. Bobby will not advance you past a certain level unless you demonstrate that your own student(s) can understand and perform the movements correctly. Being a competent instructor is required.

The life mission of Grand Master Bobby Taboada is to promote Balintawak. There are no hidden agendas. Bobby does what he deems necessary to promote the Art. This is his personal passion. He has an unending enthusiasm for training and teaching not only advanced students but also has the same energy for beginners. It is rare to find a practitioner that has the knowledge and experience both as a master level fighter as well as a master teacher.

Outside of the training arena, Bobby Taboada is humble, kind, and frankly just fun to be around. He loves to cook, eat, and tell stories about his days as a young man in the Philippines. He understands the importance and priority of family. He is easy to talk to and always has an ear to listen. I must say that I feel blessed that a chance meeting would turn out to be the best martial arts training that I could have hoped for, not to mention developing a lifelong friendship.

Dr. Patrick Schmitt now resides in Albuquerque, NM, and returns to North Carolina to train with Grandmaster Taboada as often as possible. Dr. Schmitt has a private Balintawak school here in Corrales, New Mexico. Anyone interested, feel free to contact him.

Dr. Patrick Schmitt
Full Qualified Instructor
(505) 890-5921
Email

Friendship and Brotherhood

By Sharon Infante-LoParo



Sharon Infante-LoParo

I am a practitioner of Balintawak and one of Grandmaster Bobby Taboada's qualified instructors. I was introduced to Grandmaster Bobby Taboada in August 1995 through my involvement with martial arts in my family's after-school program. At this time I had had no real experience with martial arts and had just begun to take Karate lessons with my two young sons. I was impressed by Bobby's talent right away. I was amazed at how effortlessly he moved and how much power he exhibited at the same time. Once I had met Bobby I did continue with my Kempo Karate training but also started to focus on Balintawak. I felt a quick bond with Bobby and the art. I was impressed with Bobby's ability to teach a large group as well as private lessons. I am very fortunate to live just a few miles away from our Grandmaster Bobby and the dojo where we were training. It was and is very easy to have a lesson with him. Bobby is always available to teach. Some days the training would

leave us dripping with sweat and with bleeding calluses on our hands. We always started with and finish with a feeling of brotherhood, a close friendship.

Through the years I have met and trained with people from all over the world. Not only have my talents and knowledge increased but also my family. I have traveled all over the U.S. and the world, and many of times I have been greeted by another member of our Balintawak family. Balintawak has taught me how to be a teacher and a leader. People recognize me all around our home town of Charlotte, North Carolina in the United States. Many of



Grandmaster Bobby Taboada, Patrick Schmitt, Robert Klampfer, and Sharon Infante-LoParo



Sharon Infante-LoParo and Wendy Weeks

times people recognize me first over my husband who is a leading dentist in our area.

One of the things I love the most about Balintawak is the way it makes us teach what we have learned in order to move up in our rankings. What better way to become a great teacher than to be a teacher? We are sent out right away to teach as soon as we learn something. Bobby loves to teach and for us to share our knowledge and talents with our peers. I can not express enough how talented this Grandmaster Bobby Taboada is. There is always something new to learn from him, hence Cuentada "counter for the next move". I only hope that I do justice to the art when I teach my students. We love our new students as well as the old ones. Bobby has taught me to be patient with all

of our students through his great patience with me. I will continue to promote the art of Balintawak and our Grandmaster Bobby Taboada wherever and whenever I can.



Sharon Infante-LoParo
Charlotte, NC. USA

I bow to you, from my heart, you are welcome, and with respect.

One of the Main Features that Distinguish Balintawak Cuentada

By Garth Dicker

I first met Grandmaster Bobby Taboada at a training seminar he was conducting in Australia in 1990. From the first time I met Bobby Taboada I was impressed both with his character and martial arts skill. Since 1997 I have trained regularly under Grandmaster Taboada both in Australia and the USA.

I try to visit Grandmaster Taboada at his headquarters in Charlotte, NC., each year and arrange for Grandmaster Taboada to visit Australia every second year for intensive training. This serves to maintain and update my skills as well as inspire and grade the next generation of instructors of Balintawak. I have come to regard Bobby as not only an instructor and mentor of the highest caliber but more importantly a good friend. I continue to be amazed at Grandmaster Taboada's ability to inspire further learning and recommend his system of Balintawak Cuentada to any serious martial artist.

One of the main philosophical features that distinguish Balintawak Cuentada from other weapon based systems I have come across is the inclusive rather than exclusive nature of the art. Practitioners are actively encouraged to integrate techniques from other martial arts and try to apply them during training; this for example may involve applying punches, kicks, head butts, takedowns, chokes, locks etc. whilst in stickfighting motion.

This serves the dual function of developing an awareness of the limitations of certain techniques and also allows for a continuing evolution of the body of knowledge

within the system. Balintawak should not be viewed in isolation as a separate art in which you forget other martial arts skills but it instead provides a method of training that can complement and enhance any other martial art.

Garth Dicker is a medical practitioner based in Melbourne, Australia. He commenced his martial arts training when he was 14 years old and has trained with and under many instructors in Australia, Europe, Japan, Philippines and the USA. Garth

Training in Charlotte, NC.



1998



2003



Australian Instructors in Melbourne 2004

Dicker holds Black belt rankings in Japanese Goju Karate and Modern Arnis. He has trained extensively in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Grappling, and has also trained in Boxing and Tae Kwon Do.

If You Want to be a Good Fighter, Become a Good Teacher

By Robert Klampfer

“If you want to be a good fighter, become a good teacher.” I’m fairly certain that I’ll always remember that phrase which Grandmaster Bobby Taboada said to me several years ago. It’s one of many great pieces of wisdom that I’ve been fortunate to have picked up over the past several years of studying Balintawak under him. “How so”, I asked. He went on to explain that given the way Balintawak is taught, the teacher is always attacking, controlling, and guiding the student. If done properly, the teacher is training themselves while teaching the student at the same time. I remember him growling at me during my early lessons: “Move faster! If you move slowly it makes me slow... and I don’t want to be slow”. At the time, I thought that he was simply encouraging me to move faster for my own benefit. It wasn’t until later that I fully realized that he was also using me to train himself. By pushing me to move faster, he also had to move faster and be efficient in his movements in order to compensate for my speed because, in Balintawak the teacher has to be ahead of the student every step of the way.

This concept of developing teachers as a way of producing fighters is fairly unique, even amongst the Balintawak family. Balintawak has produced many great fighters but relatively few great teachers. Grandmaster Taboada recognized that in order for the art to continue to propagate, a new generation of teachers needed to be cultivated. To that end, he places great emphasis on developing not only fighters, but teachers who can continue to develop and promote the art after he’s gone.

That theme permeates just about everything in his curriculum. For example, he explains that he never refers to any techniques as “advanced”. He instead refers to techniques only as basic or semi-advanced, saying *“I don’t want students and instructors to get stuck on my techniques. If I call them ‘advanced techniques’, people will often think that that’s all there is to them because they’re ‘advanced’ already. If I create a technique, it’s ‘advanced’ only to me because I had to develop it. When I teach it to someone else, it’s only ‘semi-advanced’ to them. They didn’t create it. I want them to think about how to counter that technique. Once they develop a counter, that counter is their own and is ‘advanced’ to them. If they pass it to their students, it becomes ‘semi-*



Grandmaster Taboada executing the final movement of one of his "semi-advanced" techniques. This strike is signature Balintawak.

advanced' to the students". And so the cycle continues and the art grows.

One of the things that has kept me so interested in Balintawak is the unique training methodology that it employs. Unlike many fighting arts, Balintawak isn't heavily oriented towards specific drills or pre-defined techniques. It instead emphasizes the learning of attributes: reflexes, timing, hand speed, weaving of the shoulders and torso, defensive movement of the head, and so on. Techniques take second seat to the development of those attributes deemed necessary to be a good fighter. Grandmaster Taboada has taken this methodology and refined it beyond the way he was taught as a



Grandmaster Taboada and I training pushing and pulling exercises to put an opponent off balance.

student *"For over 40 years, I've never stopped teaching and thinking about this [Balintawak]"*, he says.

An example of this methodology is found in the use of the grouping system (or grouping method) of teaching. Balintawak was not originally taught using a curriculum. The late Attorney Jose Villasin developed the grouping system as a way to systemize many important lessons that were taught inconsistently. The grouping system consists of a series of exercises designed to develop fighting attributes such as the use of the left ("alive") hand, defensive head movement, flexibility of the torso to defend against thrusts, speed and reflexes, and defense against punches.

As a young student, Grandmaster Taboada was taught the grouping system and he continues to use it in his teaching method today. He still follows the spirit and purpose of the grouping system but, has further developed it to be more easily taught. When they see it in application, many people mistake the grouping system for sparring or fighting techniques. Grandmaster Taboada is adamant in saying that the grouping system is not fighting; it's a training method.

I've always held that the mark of a great teacher, regardless of the subject, is found in their depth of knowledge in their subject area. They know more than just how something is done; they also know why it's done in any particular way. Grandmaster Taboada certainly makes it easy for me to support my position in that regard. He's known to joke laughingly that he has practically no formal education yet he teaches his art to lawyers, doctors, engineers, and other highly-educated people worldwide. *"My education is the stick"*, he says.

Robert Klampfer is a Qualified Instructor of Balintawak Arnis Cuentada under Grandmaster Bobby Taboada. He resides in Charlotte, North Carolina where he is employed as the Director of Corporate Security for a multi-national Fortune 500 company headquartered there. He is a former U.S. Marine Staff Sergeant and was an original member of the U.S. military's first dedicated anti-terrorism force. Robert is an accomplished martial artist and international hall of fame award recipient. He regularly travels within the U.S. and abroad to conduct exhibitions and workshops with Grandmaster Taboada.

Balintawak Training with Grandmaster Bobby Taboada

By Richard Cotterill

I was introduced to the Balintawak of Grandmaster Bobby Taboada back in 1993, by chance or destiny I guess. This came about from meeting a friend of Bobby's who had previously trained at some length in the Balintawak system in New Zealand where at the time both he and Bobby resided. This was Master Willie Lim.

It was around 1992 in the UK we first met Willie Lim who was conducting a series of workshops on Kata Bunkai and pressure points. This had relevance for me at the time as I was so disillusioned by the BS surrounding the traditional based systems.

Myself, and a friend decided to go and train in Arizona with Willie Lim in 1993 mainly looking to increase our knowledge of Tai Chi and Kata/form interpretation.

At the time I knew my friend Alan was interested in weapons but I wasn't keen until he called me in from training outside in Willie's back garden. He was watching a video demo tape of Grandmaster Bobby Taboada training Balintawak, my jaw dropped and I knew from that moment on I wanted to train in this system. We then asked Willie if he would show us the basics of Balintawak before we came back to the United Kingdom.

When we left the states we brought back Grandmaster Taboada's early instructional videos and then came the fun. Alan and I embarked on an intensive training routine in Balintawak, copying as best we could and drawing on our previous martial arts experience we learnt to the best of our abilities at that time.

After a while we decided to start a Balintawak class thereby creating self pressure to learn how to teach and train correctly. Private tuition also became available to students. The first private student that asked me for lessons was Bill Murray who I had met previously at one of Willie Lim's seminars.

Although Bill was my student, he perhaps didn't know it at the time but he taught me as much as I taught him. This method of the Instructor learning from the student and vice versa is I believe entrenched in Grandmaster Taboada's Balintawak.

Bill traveled twice a week some 80 mile roundtrip and still does today. He is now and has long been my fellow instructor and equal, without him I could not have helped to promote the art of Balintawak in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe.



Richard and Bill Murray practicing empty hands



Grandmaster Taboada training with Willie Lim, Richard Cotterill in England - 1995

The next year we decided to invite Grandmaster Taboada over to the UK for a series of workshops, these were a great success. Over subsequent years “completion of the art” and recognition of instructor status has meant us proudly representing Grandmaster Bobby Taboada’s Balintawak here in the UK and Europe.

My personal training with Grandmaster Taboada was to take place again in 1996 when I left England to work for 4 Months in the USA. This was in upstate New York teaching Balintawak and self defense.

After my work assignment was completed I left New York state and traveled down to North Carolina to train and stay with Grandmaster Taboada at his residence in Charlotte. I trained with Grandmaster Taboada and his instructors every day which was so invaluable for me to practice with different structures and strengths. I will never forget this visit for two main reasons, one the training and two the friendship. Training wise I learnt so much from Grandmaster Taboada, especially how the left hand was utilized in such a destructive and disruptive fashion.

Also further advancing my understanding on teaching methods. Visual observations for me at the time were focused on Grandmaster Taboada’s body movement (and not his stick).

Friendship wise was the other reason. I felt so privileged when Grandmaster Taboada had to leave (the last weekend I was there for vacation with his wife Luz to Myrtle Beach), but instead of asking me to find alternative accommodation he left me the keys to his house, the use of his car and arranged teaching for me with his own private students, including a small workshop at Irwin Carmichaels training Institute. I will never forget Bobby and Luz’s hospitality and kindness. Bobby has a big heart and that’s what makes respecting him such an easy “two way street” and natural response.

My visit then continued on through to Arizona where I stayed with Willie Lim, he had arranged me two seminars one in Scottsdale the other in Mesa. The time over in the USA and Grandmaster Taboada’s teachings gave me new insights into not only my own training but also how best to teach others at the same time displaying a sense of the Balintawak community that Grandmaster Taboada has built around him.



Training in Grandmaster Taboada's Back Garden in Charlotte - 1996

In 2003 Grandmaster Taboada was invited over to England by the Fighting Arts Organization of Great Britain. I was very proudly asked to accompany him as guest instructor to the event held in the heart of London. Unfortunately Grandmaster Taboada didn't make it over so I was even more humbled when he asked me and Bill to represent him at this 2 Day event. There were around 250 martial artists attending over the duration and the Balintawak sessions were very well received by all.

In April 2006 Bill and myself; brought Grandmaster Taboada over to the UK for a 4 day event cementing still further our friendship and progressing our skills for the Balintawak group here. We are shortly looking forward to Grandmaster Taboada's visit late September 2007.

We continue to give seminars up and down the UK and also internationally including Germany, Spain, Canada and the USA and we are looking forward to teaching in Switzerland in 2008.

My restitution lies in teaching the art of Balintawak, encompassing the ideology that the human brain and the thought process is the most powerful weapon which needs to be channeled into areas such as intent, enhanced body movement and many other combative related facets including the timing of response, whether that be defensive or offensive, this I believe is more important than speed alone.

For me Balintawak is primarily trying to understand yourself and how you have developed and will need to develop still further, this is true progression. I distinctly remember Bobby saying take a technique practice it, find the counter and then make it your own.

How can “art” be all the same? We shouldn’t treat our training like a manufactured product that is assembled the same for everyone in a factory. As an instructor my output of knowledge is built around the input from my students using the Balintawak teaching method as a tool to break both my own and my student’s impasse in the progression of the art. Personally the acquisition of knowledge in the system is largely brought about through this teaching process.

There have been many highlights for me along the journey of Balintawak. I realize more so now than ever that accolades are not trophies or grades but the steps I have taken, paths walked and throughout the journey the people I have met. This is what has influenced and helped me to get where I am today, of which I particularly thank Grandmaster Bobby Taboada for his guidance and friendship.

On a final note I would like to say I am proud and honored to be a part of Grandmaster Bobby Taboada’s International Balintawak Team. Our legacy here in the UK and Europe is to continually endeavor to propagate the dynamic art of Balintawak Cuentada Arnis and ensure people are given the knowledge and skills to develop the art in a fashion befitting to Grandmaster Bobby Taboada, the grandmasters and great grandmasters before him. Hopefully we will not let them down.



www.balintawak.co.uk

www.balintawakarnis.eu

My Time with Grandmaster Bobby Taboada

By Bill Thurston

Regional Instructor for Balintawak-International



I first met Grandmaster Bobby Taboada in the mid 1990's while studying Modern Arnis at Cyclone Fighting Arts. The owner of Cyclone, Fred Shadian, had brought Bobby to Vancouver to teach a seminar. This seminar was held in North Vancouver.

As students at Cyclone, we were all very impressed by Bobby's quiet professional manner, his calm, approachable teaching style and his remarkable skill with a stick. He always presented a manner best explained as "grace under pressure." The drills, we undertook during that seminar, were fun but demanding and required focus, attention and stamina.

Later, when Fred moved to Victoria, I continued my training with Wayne Maksylewicz while opening my own part-time school in Port Moody, B.C. I called it DarkStar Martial Arts and taught the mixed Filipino martial arts that I had studied for years while continuing to attend as many seminars as I could from visiting Masters and Guro's. With Wayne's support, I was able to acquire my first Black Belt in Arnis - Canada, under Wayne and Wayne's instructor Maestro Rudy Cosigo.

Around this time, Wayne and I decided to focus our training in Grandmaster Bobby Taboada's Balintawak-International and go for our Level-6 "Completion of the Art." As Grandmaster Bobby lived in Charlotte North Carolina, personal training and testing in Levels 1 thru to 6 became rather challenging. We pooled our resources, purchased a set of Bobby's tapes, and then proceeded to study and practice with them every Saturday morning. Once we felt competent enough, we invited Grandmaster Bobby to return to Vancouver to conduct seminars and give us the additional training, we required, to obtain our new goal. In this manner we were able to meet Irwin Carmichael and reconnect with our friend in Filipino martial arts, Rick Mitchell. During these meetings, Grandmaster Bobby impressed upon us that we must learn how to teach Balintawak in order to advance in Balintawak. Originally, I had opened up DarkStar Martial Arts to teach only Arnis. In 1994, the guidance from Bobby now gave Wayne and I a new venue to expand and to teach Balintawak-Arnis, while moving my school from the St John's church hall in Port Moody to the local recreation and fitness centers in West Vancouver and North Vancouver, until finally finding a more permanent home in North Vancouver at the North Shore Fun & Fitness Centre.

I called this new stick-fighting, that I was learning and teaching, Arnis-Balintawak only for the marketing, as "A" came before "B" in the various advertising media that we utilized which would give us an alphabetical edge to promote Balintawak-Arnis.

With the aid of Rick Mitchell, Wayne and I continued teaching and practicing Balintawak, bringing Grandmaster Bobby to Vancouver several times until we were ready to successfully test for our Level-6 "Completion of the Art." Irwin Carmichael, Rick Mitchell, then later Eric Lawrence and Grandmaster Jorge Penafiel accompanied Grandmaster Bobby on later trips.

To promote Grandmaster Bobby's Balintawak-International, through teaching, participating in the VKSA - Vancouver Kali Silat Arnis group and attending numerous

seminars, Wayne and I were able to respectfully spread Bobby's art and share it with the Filipino martial arts community of BC, Alberta and the American Pacific Northwest.

In 1996, Wayne and I became the first in Canada to have passed Grandmaster Bobby Taboada's Balintawak-International Level-6 "Completion of the Art" test. We tested in Vancouver. With our passing, we gave credit to Rick Mitchell as our teacher. Rick could then test for (and pass) his Level-7, "Fully Qualified Instructor."

Shortly after that testing, Wayne moved to New Zealand and then Singapore. Wayne and I continue to communicate, with Wayne promoting Balintawak-Singapore and I continued promoting Balintawak-Canada.

With the aid of another colleague, 'Swordmaster' F. Braun McAsh, we were able to introduce Balintawak to the television series, "The Highlander," by being the personal trainer to the star, Adrian Paul and also assisting Swordmaster Braun with fight scenes for the show's seasons five and six.

In order to get beyond Level-6, I started to make trips to Charlotte N.C. to learn more about Balintawak from Grandmaster Bobby. Bobby was most kind in allowing me to stay in his home, while I attended his seminars. His skills as a mentor, friend and teacher remain extraordinary. While I stayed in Charlotte, he would, most generously, give of his time to aid me in personal tutoring - not only to help hone my skills in Balintawak -- but also guide me in becoming a better human being and professional teacher. He quietly sets high standards with a demanding professional code of ethics. It is not enforced as much as offered as a working accomplishment towards achieving a remarkable goal - that of a Fully Qualified Instructor in Balintawak-International.

There are few, in the world, with that title but it is something to be proud of. I was most honored to be among my peers in Charlotte, whenever I could visit. They are all truly unique, wonderful people. My main profession is that of a teacher of Electronics and Mechanical to trades-people for Vancouver's bus company, CMBC. Yet, in all the years of intensive training with various disciplines, I never had a test so challenging as when I tested for my Level-7 "Fully Qualified Instructor" in Balintawak-International with Grandmaster Bobby Taboada, in North Vancouver on November, 1999.

With one of my first generation students passing his Level-6 "Completion of the Art", I could then demonstrate 24 techniques that I had created and use them within the Balintawak-International structure of the Grouping Systems. I developed my 24 techniques utilizing the skills learned from many years of martial arts training and acupressure therapy. I had to present my techniques demonstrating the full power, full control and a respectful professional manner, while maintaining a presence of grace-under-pressure that Grandmaster Bobby had impressed upon me many years earlier. I failed the test! I was not in control of my environment and I accidentally hit my student on his hand. In front of my family, my friends and my martial art colleagues I had failed.



After the 2001 Seminar: 'Swordmaster' Braun McAsh, Grandmaster Bobby Taboada, Bill Thurston, Ama Maestro Bernardo Salinas

No excuse is warranted, one must be in control at all times as a teacher; there are no accidents.

This is more challenging than one would think. At that time of the testing in North Vancouver, my test for FQI was at the end of a very long day of testing. I was a 44-year-old, type-one Diabetic. With Juvenile Onset Diabetes, my number was up at the age of 36. But I would not quit. If one were to study history for examples; I think that a quote from Winston Churchill sums it up best, especially with one's travels in the world of Balintawak-International: "*Never, Never, Never Quit.*" With Grandmaster Bobby's wise counsel, I was able to redo my test in Charlotte two months later. I was judged, by a larger panel of my Balintawak peers, this time. This time I did not fail. Cross-country jet lag, time zone changes and diabetes would not interfere. Quietly and patiently, by setting a good example, Bobby had taught me that.

After that event, almost every two years Rick Mitchell and Grandmaster Bobby Taboada would return to Vancouver to test a new group of Canadian students. 2001 also brought Eric Lawrence, Grandmaster Bobby's wife Luz, plus Master-of-Balintawak Jorge Penafiel and his wife, Amy. In June 2007, Rick Mitchell and Grandmaster Bobby Taboada returned to Vancouver to preside over the third generation of "Completion of the Art" graduates in Balintawak-International.

I am very proud of all my students and their accomplishments. With Rick and Bobby as mentors I continue to learn and try to instill the best in my students, by setting a good example. This 'best,' as impressed upon me by Grandmaster Bobby and my fellow Fully Qualified Instructors, is not just techniques and skill, but the important tenants of: Respect, Honesty, Loyalty, Honor, Integrity and, the most important, Humility.



Rick Mitchell at DarkStar Martial Arts, June 2004

Back Row L-R: Todd Packer, Dave Westerman, Jason Bennett, Teresa Sullivan, Darren Wilson, Rob Quinn, Sandra Harvey

Front Row L- R: Derek Lowe, Sean Bishop, Gavin Oliver, Bill Thurston, Rick Mitchell, Patrick Nepomucino, Erik MacDonald



2006-Park training with Wayne Makswlewich

Back Row: Rouz Youssefi, Erik MacDonald, Gavin Oliver, Wayne, Darren Wilson, Sandra Harvey, Sean Strome

Kneeling: Rob Quinn, Patrick Nepomucino



After the 2007 Balintawak testing

Back Row L-R: Chet Galpin, Randy Hanlon, Rob Quinn, John Soriano, Steve Salem, Erik MacDonald, Gavin Oliver, Rouz Youssefi, Pat Reiffeling, Steve Ayer, Darren Wilson, Chris Bustedo

Front Row (judges) L-R: Braun McAsh, John Holt, Rick Mitchell, Grandmaster Bobby Taboada, Charles Martin, Doug Klinger, Bill Thurston



2007 - DarkStar celebrating the gift from our German Balintawak colleague Astrid Sprubb

Rear L-R: Rouz Youssefi, Maestro Doug Klinger, Chris Bustedo, Erik MacDonald, Rob Quinn, Todd Arnold, Randy Hanlon

Front L-R: Andy Lim, Bill Thurston, Graeme Page, Doriann Cox, Carl Smith



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Email

Bobby Taboada - Insight of a Friend

By Jorge V. Penafiel

Grandmaster Bobby Taboada definitely is in my "Fab Five" Call list of individuals deemed most influential personally and specifically martial arts involvement. He is one of the valued people that come but once in your lifetime you may refer to as a "Keeper". He is my Mentor, Kumpadre (Godfather), Best Friend, Confidant, and favorite Karaoke Singer. Humbly honored, simply Bobby or fondly "Bai" in Cebuano dialect is my "Main Man".

In our Lifetime many memorable events come and go that are accounted at best as god's gift or at times by sheer luck. Also, "fate" absolutely often plays an integral role for why some of these things happen. Indeed, as this was how I came to know and meet Bobby Taboada. Back when Bobby



was a resident of New Zealand, his long time best friend down under was my brother Alan Penafiel. As with all Filipinos living in other countries, both got close by cultural heritage and as neighbors in a seaside town of Tauranga. It was thru our communications with each other that paved my acquaintance with Bobby. Well, as fate should have it again, Alan and family eventually were granted permanent resident status to America. Unexpectedly, Bobby also followed suit later as well, he came by surprise and called from Phoenix, Arizona.

Up until then, I was diligently involved in the Classical Korean Art of Tang Soo Do. One Balintawak demonstration and a first meeting with Bobby at my parents' house in Cincinnati undoubtedly transfixed and hooked me up to Filipino martial arts. I became his first official student. The rest is a martial arts journey and quest that I was so aspired to be known and identified as Filipino by ancestral roots and heart.

Year 2008 will soon be upon us shortly and so as I sit down alone to just lull time to pass by, I get to reflect and ponder on how time really has zipped by so quickly nowadays. Wow, almost 18 years has gone by and looking back, it seemed just yesterday, when I started training and became associated with Bobby Taboada and his World Balintawak.

Indeed a fast but productive time span

filled with Filipino martial arts activities, rewards, honors, and cherished stories destined to be long remembered. To the other Balintawak disciples prompted the task to get our thoughts written regards to Bobby Taboada, we are indeed privileged for the chance handed to us. We are all similarly enthused for Bobby, as a token of appreciation and a chip of his mold from the original Balintawak Arnis Great Grandmaster Anciong Bacon.

Grandmaster Bobby Taboada is a martial artist extraordinaire and an exceptional ambassador of a Filipino martial arts system. We are all proud of the daunting task he has done and dreams full filled to spread his art worldwide. With this, there are countless legacies associated with him from around the martial arts community and especially within his students. That said, the one legacy I have in mind that best fits Bobby is this favorite Chinese paradigm of: "Harmony of Time, Space, and Energy".

"When it comes to reality of combat, only one thing counts- efficiency" Just watch Bobby do his thing. Collectively, he epitomized the efficient use of the above concept in his combative prowess. His delivery is the quickest of time with less space and with explosive energy - End of fight!



Grandmaster Bobby yearly visit to CBC for seminar and training.

While the man is fortuitously awesome and scary to say the least, much can also be said about his other persona. He is street honed but also savvy and mindful within his circle of friends and family. Those close to him know his multi-faceted talent in music and culinary aptitude. Overall a nice man but be warned - don't provoke nor touch him with malice and the tiger awakens.

Last, I want it be known to all that I give Grandmaster Bobby Taboada the credit, gratitude, and thanks for my Filipino martial arts journey and accomplishments. It was his words "*be yourself and set an example to others*" that was engraved in my heart which allowed me to achieved my life long dream of becoming a "Grandmaster" in the Arts.

Today, I am Head Instructor for Cincinnati Balintawak Club/Putakti System.
Daghan salamat (many thanks) Bai!!



**Cincinnati Balintawak Club
Putakti System**

Grandmaster Jorge V. Penafiel
7705 Hamilton Ave
Mount Healthy, OH. 45231

Website

Qualified Balintawak Arnis Cuentada System Instructors

The following individuals have completed the Qualified Instructor program under Grandmaster Bobby Taboada and are certified to teach his Balintawak Arnis Cuentada system. This is only a partial list and will continually be updated as information is available. If you know of a Qualified Instructor not included on this list, or have a correction, please contact Balintawak International. **Click Here**

USA

Eric Lawrence - Albemarle, NC
Jorge Penafiel - Cincinnati, OH
Raymond Asuncion - Cincinnati, OH
Sharon LoParo - Charlotte, NC
Frank Hesse - Charlotte, NC
Glenda Wolfe - Charlotte, NC
Irwin Carmichael - Charlotte, NC
George Mandrapilas - Charlotte, NC
Bob Sullen - Highland, NY
Randy Cornell - Rock Hill, SC
David Eudy - Midland, NC
Shane Murray - Knoxville, TN
Jonathan Grimes - Greensboro, NC
David Russell - Greensboro, NC
Ryan Brooks - Raleigh, NC
Rick Mitchell - Los Angeles, CA
Dr. Patrick Schmitt - Corrales, NM
Dr. Dean O'Hare - Charlotte, NC
Robert Klampfer - Charlotte, NC
Kevin Mannion - Rock Hill, SC
Paul Falcon - Rock Hill, SC / Las Vegas, NV
Michael Malanyaon - Cincinnati, OH
Robert Hicks - Cincinnati, OH

U.K.

Richard Cotterill
Alan Jones

Canada

Bill Thurston, Vancouver BC

New Zealand

John Wheaton, Hamilton
Stephen Pellow, Auckland

Australia

Dr. Garth Dicker, Melbourne
Paul Gale, Melbourne
Gary Rowland, Merimbula
Jim Sakkas

International Balintawak Community Links

Balintawak United Kingdom - www.balintawak.co.uk

Balintawak Arnis, Bob Silver C. Tabimina - balintawak.s5.com/home.html

Teovel Balintawak Self-Defense Club, Inc. - e.domaindlx.com/teovelbalintawak

Nickelstick Balintawak Eskrima - www.nickelstickeskrima.com

Balintawak, Sam Buot Sr. - www.buot.net

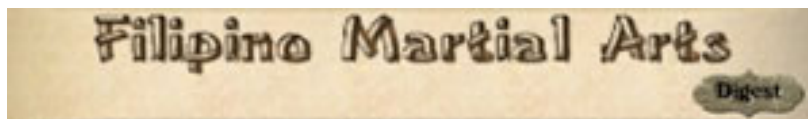
Teovel Balintawak Gold Chapter - www.myspace.com/gold_chapter



www.internationalbalintawak.com



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