

Filipino Martial Arts

The Balisong

" Broken Horn "

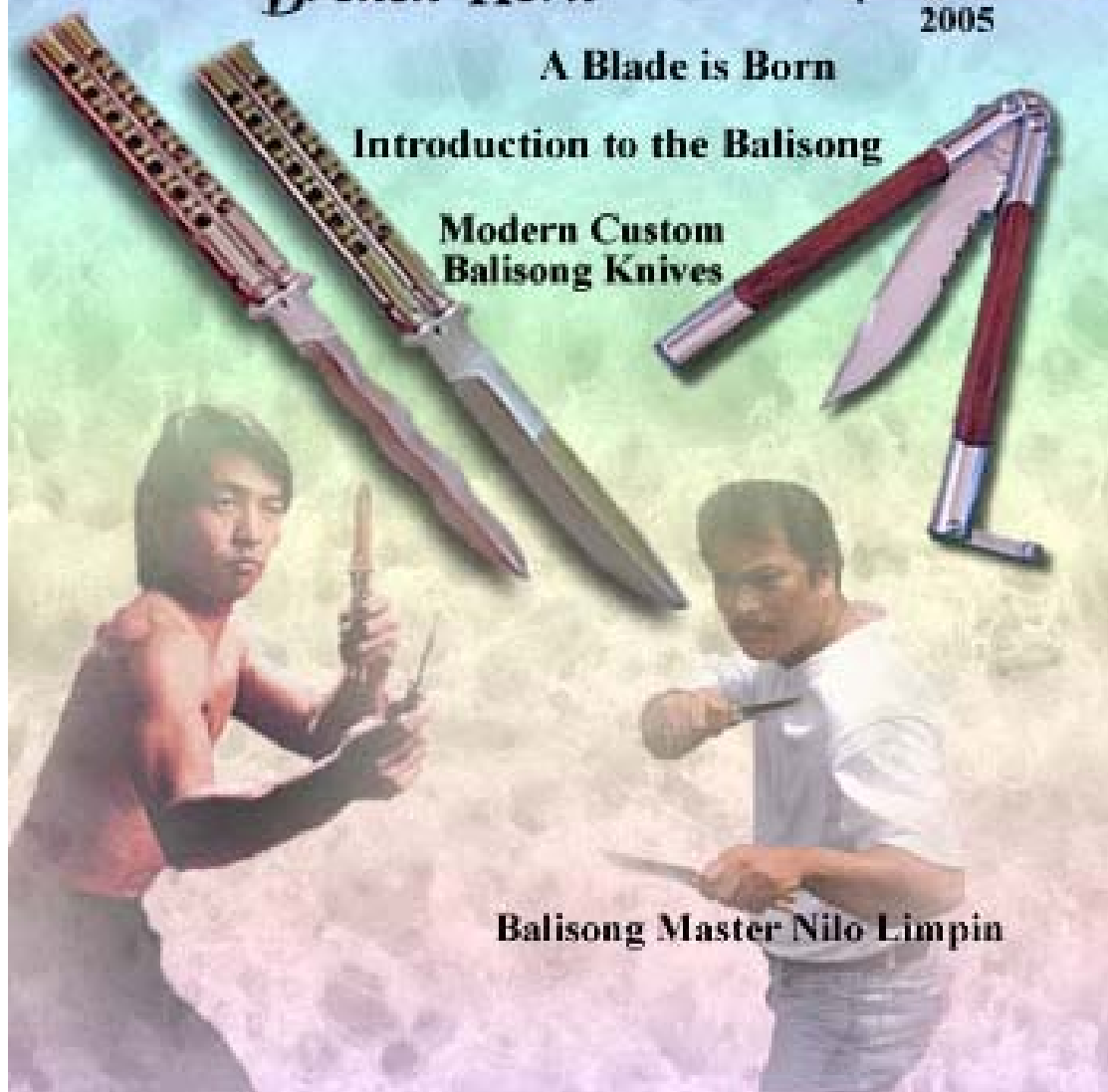
Digest

Special Edition
2005

A Blade is Born

Introduction to the Balisong

Modern Custom
Balisong Knives



Balisong Master Nilo Limpin

Publisher

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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

I personally have been intrigued with the Balisong ever since first visiting the Philippines in the early 70's. I have seen some Masters of the balisong do very amazing things with the balisong. And have a small collection that I obtained through the years while being in the Philippines.

In this Special Edition on the Balisong, **Chuck Gollnick**, **Stacey K. Sawa**, a.k.a. ZENGHOST, and **Leslie Buck** bring you some insights and valuable information on the balisong. Information that the experienced balisong practitioner knows, and is valuable in purchasing a balisong and especially in obtaining one that will fit you personally.

The majority of Balisong knives come from Barrio Balisong in Batangas province in the Philippines. However as with everything the balisong has progressed in its development and design. And is manufactured throughout the world.

Leslie Buck of the Texas Kali Association tells of the traditional way the balisong is made. Stacey K. Sawa continues explaining about the different styles made by companies and quality that is being made outside of the Philippines. Chuck Gollnick breaks down the balisong further and in depth.

All three articles are rewarding in the knowledge that is put forth. So I hope you will enjoy and gain knowledge in the balisong whether just a beginner or an expert with this weapon.

Maraming Salamat Po

History

The balisong, as history tells us, traces its ancestry to as far back as 800 A.D., as one of the ancient weapons of the mystic art of the Malaya-Polynesian fighting systems -- Kali. The Balisong or Butterfly knife, occasionally called the Batangas knife, is a deadly weapon that is in the hand of an expert can be opened as fast as, if not faster, than a Western switch blade. The majority of Balisong knives come from Barrio Balisong in Batangas province Philippines.

For centuries, the Filipino warrior has been noted in the handling of clubs, spear, and bladed weapons. In the Southern Philippines, the Muslims were known not only for the courage and ferocity in battle, but also in their craftsmanship of bladed weaponry. The Kris, Kampilan, Barong and the likes were held in synonym with Muslim warriors.

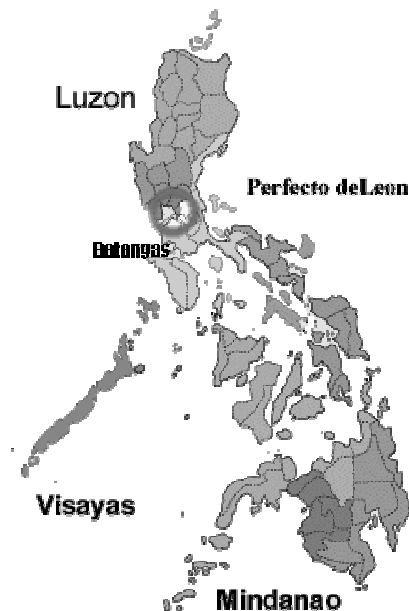
When one thinks of Muslim warriors one automatically equates them as warriors with Kris in their hands. In general; this is true, as no Southern warriors would feel properly dressed without this weapon.

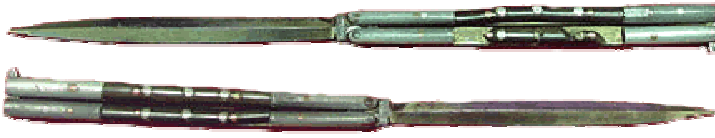
In the Northern and Visayan provinces, the same is true. The itak (Chopping Knife) is part of the daily life. In the Philippines, being a primarily agricultural country, this is an essential farming implement and when the situation calls for it, can be utilized for it's primary being, known as a deadly weapon. The craftsmen who created this bladed weapons appeared at various times and places. In Batangas province, Philippines, there developed an industry that concentrate on making of deadly weapons like balisong knives.



It is claimed that "Perfecto de Leon" is the father of Balisong and records have it that the first one was made in 1905. With the advent of the Industrial revolution, requirements for the lowly "Itak" or bolo decreased and Perfecto de Leon turned to manufacturing knives and eventually to development and propagation of the balisong as a weapon truly Filipino Barrio Balisong shares the industry with the other near by barrios such as Pook, Buli, and Tolo.

It is common for families to do piecework for the main manufacturer. This helps supplement their regular income and provides the general populace with a cottage industry. The average balisong maker can finish three to four knives a day. In properly managed balisong factory, the process is divided into specialized areas of labor. There is a blacksmith who forges and prepares the blade; the handle maker prepares the rough frames of the balisong. Another individual concentrates



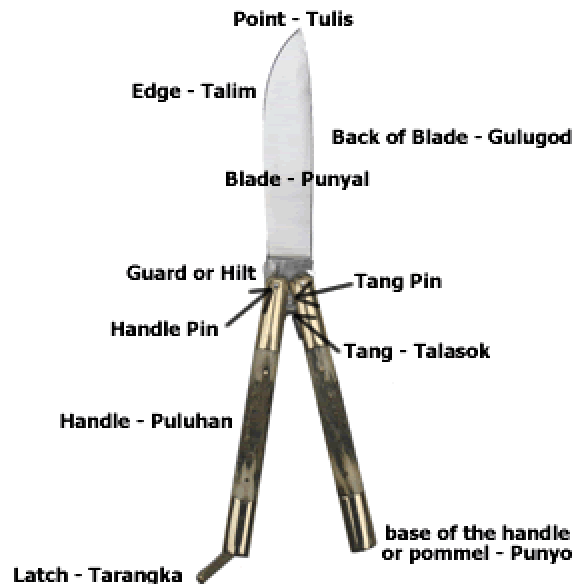


Original Batangas Balisong - 1910

and the latches. The blade of a balisong is made from several materials depending on the quality required by the manufacturers. Ordinary balisongs are usually made from scrap iron, automotive leaf springs, and ball bearing housings or used steel files. The official size of a balisong knife is 29 centimeters in overall length. There are balisongs made to order with sixteen to twenty four inches blades, but these are not of the standard type but more of novelty.

After World War II, during what is known as the liberation period, balisong knives became popular among the American soldiers who bought them back with them to the Western World. Today, the balisong is again receiving an even greater popularity with the revival of martial arts and the impact of modern communications media such as print publications and features films. In some cases, the balisong is even referred to as "Ninja Knife", possibly the product of western creative mind, attributing to the right application but the wrong country of origin.

on preparing the latches for the balisong. Several people are employed to prepare and insert the various inlays used to decorate a balisong and put together the blade, the handle



A Blade is Born

By Leslie Buck

The balisong has long been known as a beautiful and unique weapon of the Philippines. Also known as the Batangas knife, butterfly knife, klik klik knife and more, the balisong gets its common name from two words. The first is 'bali' which means to bend or to break in Pilipino, and the second is 'song' derived from sungay, the horn of the water buffalo. The balisong was once entirely made from the easily carved, plastic-like buffalo horn. Because the knife folds or bends and was made of this horn, the combination of words, balisong, became its name.

Legends of the balisong also tell of a Filipino warrior who once killed twenty-nine opponents with his balisong. From this story comes another popular name for the blade – veintinueve, twenty-nine. The actual origin of the blade design is unknown, but it is the Philippines that made it famous. Some attribute Perfecto de Leon for having made the first Filipino design in the early 1900's. Today, balisong are made in the Batangas province of Luzon in the northern Philippines.



Not far away from the beautiful views of Taal Volcano, famous for its "island within a lake, within an island, within a lake," is the small dusty municipality, barangay, Balisong. Families produce the knives in small workshops found in this small town named after the blade itself. Both there as well as in a few nearby neighborhoods are several workshops that make the balisong knife. Often, these workshops are dedicated to production or assembly of only one part of

the balisong. A panday, blacksmith, will produce the blade, another artisan will sharpen it. Someone else will produce the handles, and others will polish the final product.

Although some balisong are made from pure ingots or billets of stainless steel or other high-grade steels, the blade of the balisong is often made of recycled tool steel or other carbon steels. Car parts such as bearings or leaf springs often serve as raw materials. When procuring the materials, the panday considers the hardness of the metal, as steel that is too hard will result in a brittle rather than a tough blade.

Usually, the actual blades themselves are smithed in a small barrio, neighborhood, just outside of Barangay Balisong. There, the typical forge and bellows used by a panday is the same as it has been for centuries. Piston bellows are pumped to drive the air. The air is channeled into the forge in order to fuel the charcoal fire. This must be done to produce a fire hot enough to bring the metal to a temperature above its recrystallization point and therefore suitable for hot forging.



Bellows

The panday will heat several pieces of steel at a time to prepare them for forging. As each piece is ready, the panday will remove them from the fire, scrape off any impurities and hammer away. During heavy forging, the panday's smaller hammer is supported by an assistant with a large, two-handed hammer. In order to initially shape the blade from the stock metal blank, the panday guides his assistant to cut the blank by wedging another steel piece through the malleable, hot metal. They then flatten and compact the remaining piece. While pounding, the panday moves the metal stock over the anvil shaping and conditioning the blade. Both men time their careful strikes together in a rhythmic succession of blows. Each part of the process requires repeated heat-treating so that the blade can be fashioned properly.

Eventually, the blank is fully shaped into a blade, and tempered in either oil or water. An edge is ground and later sharpened. The new blade is drilled and assembled with handles and decoration by another craftsman or group of craftsmen back in Barangay Balisong.

Handle materials for the balisong include, but are not limited to brass, wood, bone, ivory and horn from the carabao, water buffalo. One artisan cuts the raw bone or wood stock to be used as the base of the handle. Another artisan shapes brass liners for the inside of the handle, which houses the swinging mechanism that allows the balisong to open and close. Brass is often used for ferrules at both ends of the handle.



Decorative elements are also inlaid or laminated on the handle surface. Eventually, all the parts are assembled and the entire piece is filed and ground into a unified shape. This final blade and its handle are then polished and ready to be displayed for sale in one of the many shops along the small roads of Barangay Balisong and neighboring towns in Batangas.

In selecting a balisong, there are many blade styles and decorative designs from which to choose. One often tests the strength of the blade itself by raising the weapon in an ice pick grip and hammering it forcefully into a one-peso coin. If the blade is made properly, there will be no damage to its tip. This



test is a demonstration of the blade quality, craftsmanship and ruggedness. The authentic balisongs from Batangas are strong, functional blades that are beautiful by design and capable of igniting a fire in any who hold them.

Of course, this is just the beginning, or merely the birth of the blade. It is when it reaches the hands of an expert that it really comes to life. Dancing between the fingers and seemingly moving on its own, the balisong clicks rhythmically when handled smoothly. Much like the fascination of playing with fire, manipulating the balisong in graceful and quick maneuvers has a mesmerizing effect to both the holder and those who watch. Yet one does not need to be an expert to enjoy the balisong. The balisong is simply a folding knife, but its design offers countless methods of opening, closing, spinning and rolling that can be learned merely with imitation and experimentation. In time, movements become intuitive and creativity rewards one with discovery. Ultimately, the balisong offers more to than other knives. It can be used not only for combat and utility, but also art and entertainment. From its creation to its application, the balisong is a beautiful, unique knife and truly an icon of the Philippines.

Leslie L. Buck, Jr. is an instructor of Filipino and Indonesian martial arts and President of the Texas Kali Association. Visit his websites at www.TexasKali.org or www.KaliGear.org



www.kaligear.com

Introduction to the Balisong

By Stacey K. Sawa, a.k.a. ZENGHOST

Email
Website

While balisongs have existed for many years (some evidence shows centuries), they are currently seeing a boom in popularity Benchmade Knife Co., who is seen by many balisong enthusiasts as the leading balisong manufacturer in the United States—if not the world—and who have been making quality balisongs for over two decades now, have been joined by companies such as Microtech, Cold Steel, and most recently, Spyderco. These large production knife companies in conjunction with the growing number of custom knife makers, has added to the increasing number of quality balisongs available to the general public. Add to this, the balisong's appearance in popular mainstream movies such as Face Off with John Travolta and Nicholas Cage, Tomb Raider II with



Spyderco Spyderfly

Angelina Jolie, and the most recent Punisher movie and you could say that the balisong is at the height of its popularity.

Unfortunately, not all of the attention given to the balisong is positive. Like knives in general, balisongs are seen strictly as “weapons” by many regardless of its practicality. The balisong is still outlawed in many countries and it is currently illegal to import a balisong into the United States so careful attention should be paid to local laws. It is due to this negative attention that many balisong enthusiasts have strived to show the balisong in a positive light and it is also why I was happy to have an opportunity to write this article and try to do just that.



Benchmade Models 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, and 49

Up until a few years ago, quality production balisongs were few and far between. While there were a few other production knife companies making balisongs, the Benchmade Knife Company, formerly Pacific Cutlery and Bali-Song U.S.A., was (and still is) seen as the top of the production balisong food chain. Their BM42 model balisong is recognized by balisong enthusiasts as the standard that all other production balisongs are measured against. Later, Microtech

Knives entered the balisong arena with their Tachyon model and the Cold Steel Arc-Angel and Spyderco Spyderfly followed soon after. Classic Knife Kits has even put out a balisong kit named the Typhoon that allows the user to personally assemble their knife and leaves lots of room for customization. These current production models in conjunction with the many limited edition balisongs that are offered combine to form quite a long list of models, variations and editions. To keep track of all these different models, there are a couple of websites that were created to track them. Two such websites are the Balisong Times (www.balisongtimes.com) and my own BalisongInfo.com (www.balisonginfo.com).



Benchmade Model 49-03;
double-edged Kris blade
with stainless steel handles



Top - Benchmade Model 46
spear point blade
Bottom - Cold Steel Arc-
Angel Double Edge



Pacific Cutlery Model 68

The Balisong Times is an extensive website that lists many models of both production and custom balisongs accompanied by photographs. The Times also allows

for users to keep track of their own balisongs in personalized user accounts as well as post comments about different knives. BalisongInfo.com tracks production balisongs and includes a list of custom balisong makers along with general information about the balisong itself, including terminology, maintenance and frequently asked questions. The Balisong Collector (www.balisongcollector.com) website also offers a wealth of knowledge about the balisong. Chuck Gollnick, the site's creator, is a well-known balisong collector and enthusiast and has posted a great deal of information about the balisong. The quick start guide on the Balisong Collector website is an especially useful feature of the site that gives novices a quick introduction to the balisong knife. If you are looking for a lot of information and want to talk to other balisong enthusiasts, you may want to look into one of the many balisong forums out there.

The Balisong Forum (www.bladeforums.com) is the most popular balisong forum and there you can talk to many knowledgeable people and read about personal experiences with individual models and you will often hear about new balisong models before they come out. A large part of the attraction to balisongs is, the vast amounts of opening and closing techniques available for the balisong. These techniques also referred to as “flipping” or “manipulation” techniques range from simple and practical to “flashy” and extreme. In the past, balisong flippers used to learn how to flip by trial and error or by following static images in books. Later, there were videos made by martial artists like Jeff Imada and Michael Janich. The Imada and Janich videos — The Balisong Knife and Mastering the Balisong Knife respectively — also include some balisong martial arts techniques and are still available today. Michael Janich has just recently released an updated version of Mastering the Balisong Knife which is the first professionally produced balisong video released on DVD and you can find it at paladinpress.com while the Imada video can be found on www.iisports.com.

In addition to the commercially available videos, instructional videos on the World Wide Web are widely available to the public free of charge and sites like Balisong Xtreme (www.balisongxtreme.com) have taught many of this generation's balisong enthusiasts how to flip their balisongs. Currently Balisong Xtreme is no longer being updated but still has over a hundred videos demonstrating manipulation and exercise techniques. In addition to Balisong Xtreme, BalisongInfo.com currently has approximately 50 instructional videos and continues to be updated with more videos. All of these instructional videos range from beginner to advanced but should be approached with caution regardless of what level you are at.



Standard Spyderfly (back)

Rainbow Spyderfly (front)

be able to find one in your local knife store. For those of you who are allowed to possess

So now that you know where to go for information about the balisong, you want to know where to get one? The first thing you need to do before going out and buying a balisong is to check your local laws. Balisong laws vary from country to country, state to state and even city to city. Even if your state allows the possession and carry of a balisong, there is still the possibility that your particular city does not. If your state does allow for the possession of a balisong, you will most likely

a balisong but do not live near a brick and mortar store, there are many Internet knife stores that carry balisongs. Two popular ones are New Graham Knives (www.newgraham.com) and EDC Knives (www.edcknives.com). Both of these sites carry a wide selection of balisongs and other knives.

Like anything, it pays to research before you buy and hopefully this article steers you in the right direction to find that information. The balisong is a great tool (a knife is always a tool first) with a lot of history behind it and like any knife it should be treated with respect. Be aware of the knife laws in your area and if you can, go out and try one to see if they're right for you. Happy flipping.



Limited Edition - Benchmade Model 43 with Damasteel blade and stainless steel handles

To learn more visit

BalisongInfo.com

www.balisonginfo.com

Modern Custom Balisong Knives

By Chuck Gollnick
Balisong Collector

Benchmade, Spyderco, Coldsteel, and Microtech all offer excellent production balisong knives. But, a custom-made knife can be tailored to your exact needs and wants.

A Filipino martial artist, for example, might want longer handles for more punyo. Someone with smaller hands may want a shorter knife for better grip changes. If your style includes back-cuts, you'll want a sharpened false edge or even a fully double-edged blade. But if your style features reinforced cuts, you'll want a full spine.

A custom knife can have a re-curved blade or a tanto blade or whatever profile fits your system. But if you want a knife that will also work for day-to-day utility, you may select a more conventional profile.

If your style emphasizes speed, you may want a lighter knife with skeletonized Titanium, Aluminum, or even Magnesium alloy handles. More strength-oriented fighters may want a heavier knife with solid steel or brass handles.

Many martial artists, especially Filipino martial artists, are also knife collectors who appreciate the beauty of fine art knives too. Custom makers can combine exotic materials with the finest techniques and beautiful designs to produce remarkable showpieces. Of course, it's possible to combine a bit of each and produce a custom balisong that is as beautiful as it is functional, equally at home in a board room and in a back alley.

When you order a custom knife, the options are endless: different styles, different materials, different features, different finishes, and different quality levels. Quality custom balisong knives begin at about \$350. Of course, the price can go as high as you want to from there. Generally speaking, a good balisong for defensive carry purposes starts at about \$400.

And, of course, any serious martial artist is likely to want a trainer version of whatever his carry knife is. Custom makers can provide those too.



Solid handles such as those on this custom balisong by Pabu Knife are milled out of solid pieces of metal, brass in this case. This makes them very strong.



Custom balisongs can feature exotic materials. The first of these two by Brazilian maker Mario Dobruski has stag inserts and a spearpoint blade of Damascus steel by Devon Thomas. The second has black ebony inserts; both the blade and handles are made of Bob Eggerling Damascus steel. While beautiful, both are sturdy, practical knives.

virtually rustproof... a great advantage if you might leave the training blade in your gym bag.

Some custom makers who are not martial artists themselves may try to save additional money on a trainer by not heat-treating the blade. Since a trainer blade doesn't have to take an edge, this seems like a sensible economy. However, if you train blade-to-blade, an unhardened trainer will quickly pick up chips and nicks on the edge and essentially become serrated and a hazard to you and your partners.

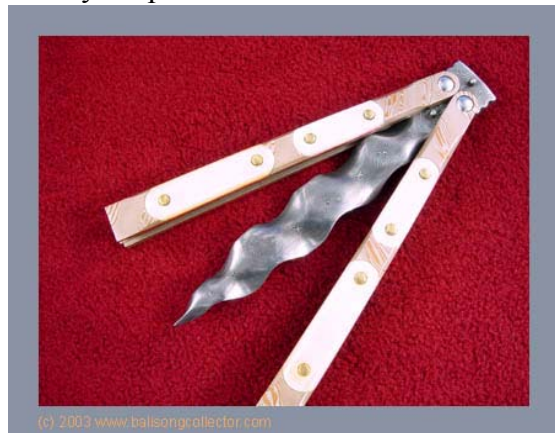
Speaking of serrated blades, most custom makers just don't offer this option. Some martial artists advocate serrated blades to rip through clothing and leave particularly bad wounds. Other martial artists argue that serrated blades can bind up on tough materials and actually pull the knife out of your hand. Serrated blades are also very practical for day-to-day work, cutting rope, cardboard, and plants. Very few custom makers, though, are set up to make them. So, if you insist on a serrated blade, it will complicate your search for a knife maker.

Many custom makers offer a choice of blade steel. It's tempting to go with the latest alloy du jour, but you'll be much better off asking the maker what steel alloy he's most comfortable working with and gets best results from. The quality of a finished blade

If you also order a training version of your carry knife, keep in mind that all the same materials will be used and that most of the work is the same. The only thing missing on a trainer is some of the final grinding work. As a result, expect a trainer to cost no more than about \$50-\$75 less than the actual knife. Many makers will give a slight discount if you order your trainer at the same time you order your live blade since the two can be made in parallel saving setup-time.

Some balisong designs have blades that can be removed from the handles with a hex-key or screwdriver. In this case, you can order a training blade as well as a live blade and just switch blades to train. This is a great economy.

To save even more money, training blades can be made from less expensive steel alloys. There's no need to waste S30V steel on a blade that isn't going to be sharpened. While it doesn't retain a very good edge, 420A steel is



The handles of this Pabu Custom balisong are made of mokome gane with Mother of Pearl inserts. The Devon Thomas Damascus steel blade is an exotic 3D Kris.

actually depends more on the handling of the steel, especially the heat-treatment, than the alloy itself.

For a variety of reasons, some practical, some traditional, some spiritual, many martial artists prefer hand-forged blades. The pivot holes and tang pin(s) on a balisong blade demand exact positioning. Therefore, most custom balisong makers use stock-removal techniques to shape their blades. A few makers though, Audra Draper, M.S., Bruce Evans, and Wendal Fox, for example, hand-forge balisong blades.

Most balisong designs fall into two broad categories: solid handles and sandwich handles. Solid handles are cut from a solid piece of metal. With the exception of inserts added, the latch, and other minor bits, each handle is a single, solid piece of metal. This gives maximum strength, but also maximum weight. This custom balisong by Pabu Knife in the first picture above perfectly illustrates solid-handle construction. While the inserts and latch are separate, the major body of each handle is milled out of a solid piece of brass.

Sandwich-style handles are made of three or more pieces which are held together with screws. This makes the knife lighter overall and, in many cases, allows the knife to be totally disassembled. But, as the picture below shows, sandwich-style handles can be weaker.

Sandwich-style balisongs just about always have adjustable pivot pins like the one shown above. Solid-handle balisongs can have either adjustable or solid pins. Adjustable pins obviously permit adjustment. With solid pins, the knife must be made properly to begin with. On the other hand, even the best-built knife with solid pins will loosen with wear. A well-built balisong with solid pins should stand up to years of heavy use and manipulation. Finally, many adjustable-pin designs allow the knife to be taken apart. Disassembling a balisong is generally not necessary. The openness of balisong joints allows any dirt to be flushed out with a solvent rinse. But, if you spill paint or some such material into your knife, disassembly may be necessary.



The handles of a sandwich-style balisong such as this Microtech Tachyon are classically made of three pieces held together with screws.



There is a serious potential problem with sandwich-style construction. On many sandwich-style balisongs, compressing the two sides of the handle can cause the blade to bind. The knife in this picture is a prototype made by a custom maker who is now famous for excellent balisongs. I've blacked-out the maker's marks. Notice how the opposite handle has dropped, but the blade has not. Compressing the two beams of the handle together binds the blade.

Latches: some love them, others don't. A balisong will not achieve its full potential strength unless latched. An unlatched balisong is only as strong as its user's grip. Some martial artists, though, prefer latch less balisongs since they're faster to deploy. Omitting the latch rules out a whole class of manipulation techniques, latch tricks. But latch tricks aren't combative techniques; so pure martial artists won't miss their loss.

Custom makers can offer a wider variety of latch styles. Here is a classic T-latch by Ralph Turnbull and an exotic L-latch by Pabu Knife.



Here is a classic T-latch on a custom balisong by Ralph Turnbull. The handles are made of brass with Micarta inserts.

Here is an exotic L-Latch, which is exclusive to Pabu Knife. This Pabu Custom balisong also has a pocket clip. The inserts are genuine ivory.



At first glance, this custom balisong by Terry Guinn looks latch less. But, each handle has a powerful magnet. It's a magnetic latch. The inserts are amber. They're very beautiful, but they don't give much grip.



Handle shape and inserts greatly affect grip. Skeletonized handles are lighter and also give better grip. They also help the knife dry if it gets wet. The hole patterns can be quite decorative.



Skeletonized handles such as these by two by Terry Guinn are not only lighter, but give a better grip.



The textured wood inserts on this modern Filipino balisong give just the right grip. If the inserts are too rough and give too much grip, the knife may be difficult to manipulate.

Inserts can be durable materials such as carbon-fiber and G10 fiberglass, or beautiful and exotic materials such as ivory and shell. As with blade steel, it's best to ask your maker what materials he is comfortable working with. If you manipulate your balisong or spar with it, you'll likely drop it occasionally -- even the best balisong artists do -- so you may wish to avoid delicate insert materials such as Mother of Pearl or Abalone.



With its modified spearpoint blade, pronounced fullers, and stylistically-skeletonized titanium handles, this Darrel Ralph custom balisong looks very futuristic.



It's even more futuristic in the dark. The inserts are about as exotic as you can get: tritium gas! Tritium is a slightly-radioactive gas that glows naturally. No batteries required.

When you order a custom balisong, you can even pick the shape of the tang.



The pointed tang on this Larry Davidson Hornet is particularly suitable for use as an impact weapon with gunting techniques when the knife is closed.



This customized Typhoon by Dennis Greenbaum features an elaborately-carved decorative tang that evokes a bird's wings.

As a final touch, your custom balisong can be embellished with file work, carving, engraving, or scrimshaw. Some custom makers offer this sort of work. But these arts are very specialized, so you may be better off hiring a specialist just to tackle that aspect of the project. Pulling together a multi-artist project is more difficult, but the result can be even more rewarding.

From sturdy fighters to fabulous art knives, today's custom balisong makers can offer you the knife of your dreams. The wait for a custom knife varies from a few months to a few years depending on the maker's backlog and your requirements. The cost is higher than a factory knife, true. But the knife will be exclusively yours and something that you helped create.

Most of today's custom makers have websites where would-be customers can see examples of their work. That's the best way to start. Find something that's similar to what you want. And then approach that maker with your specifications.

Here is a mostly-complete list of recommended custom knife makers currently accepting orders for custom balisong knives.

Anso, Jens	Hankins, Robert
Basket, Gene	Hara, Koji
Begg, Todd	Hicks, Gary
Blackwood, Neil	Hinderer, Rick
Broadwell, David	Ikoma, Flavio
Brunner, David	Irie, Mike
Cates, Allen	Jarvis, Paul
Chua, Danny (DBA Windsong)	Keller, Bill
Clark, R.W.	Lala, Ricardo and Roberto (DBA Korth)
Conil, Xavier	Lanusa, Noel
Davidson, Larry	Marlowe, Charles
De Leeuw, Filip	Monroe, DC
Descy, Alain	Morgan, Jeff
Dobruski, Mauricio	Onetto, Martín
Draper, Audra, M.S.	Pabu Knife
Erickson, Walter	Perrin, Fred
Evans, Bruce (DBA BeKnives)	Ralph, Darrel
Fairall, Bradford	Salsi, Alex

Ferguson, Jim
Fox, Wendell
Gedraitis, Chuck
Greenbaum, Dennis
Guinn, Terry

Smith, Adam
Smith & Bolton Knives
Thomas, Warren
Turnbull, Ralph

Most of these makers are in the United States, but Danny Chua stands out because he makes his excellent custom balisongs in the Philippines. Filipino martial artists may especially appreciate a truly Filipino balisong... and some of the best Mother of Pearl comes from the Philippines.

Commissioning a custom knife is a rewarding experience. You'll work with a talented knife maker. You'll learn about the process of making knives. You'll think about knives in a new way. And the ultimate reward will be to hold a knife that was made for you to your exact specifications.

To learn more visit



The Balisong Collector's Page

www.balisongcollector.com

Balisong Master Nilo Limpin



Master Limpin became intrigued with the balisong at the age of 10. During his practice he went beyond the normal opening and closing of the knife, he started to experiment and developed other ways of opening and closing the balisong which amazed others and demonstrated that besides his unique opening and closing techniques he could wield the knife defensively and offensively with little to no effort.

In the 80's, a friend introduced him to Punong Guro Edgar Sulite a well-known Arnis practitioner. In seeing Master Limpin demonstrate his unique style with the balisong Punong Guro Sulite asked Master Limpin to teach him the balisong. Through this meeting Master

Limpin and Punong Guro Sulite exchanged their knowledge. Upon acquiring this knowledge Master Sulite added this art to his art of arnis and has introduced the art of the balisong outside of the Philippines.

Grandmaster Leo Gaje being a close friend of Punong Guro Edgar Sulite was soon approached by Punong Guro Sulite and was told to go visit Master Limpin, who was an expert in the balisong. Upon seeing Master Limpin's demonstration Grandmaster Gaje became very interested and it was that Grandmaster Gaje also learned and adopted some of the techniques of the balisong as demonstrated by Master Limpin into his style of the Filipino martial arts.

As his reputation grew he was introduced and became an instructor and stuntman in the famous Filipino SOS Dare Devils (Son of Stunts), an organization most famous for their work in the films, doing stunts that were unique and beyond the norm. It was in the first meetings that the SOS Dare Devils were so impressed with his techniques with the balisong that Nilo became an instructor to the others in its use and they made him a part of their organization.

As his reputation continued to grow in the use of the balisong and while working in the SOS Dare Devils. He was asked to perform in foreign films such as Chuck Norris's 'Delta Force' and 'Missing in Action'. In trying out for the movie '9 Deaths of the Ninja, with Sho Kosugi, Master Limpin was chosen over 20 other martial arts experts for a role, due to his expert skill with the balisong and the martial arts.

In an interview with a humble Master Nilo Limpin about his views on the Balisong:

Questions: In obtaining a balisong what do you recommend?

Master Limpin: Well size is important to an individual, as for myself I use a Bene Webe (a famous style of balisong) it measures 29 centimeters from the tip of the blade to the end of the handle when open and 15 centimeters closed. Now let it be understood also that blades use to be made from ball bearings, however due to the difficulty in obtaining the material and cost factor, now most the time vehicle springs are used, like from cars and jeepneys.

Question: What about flexibility of the balisong?

Master Limpin: Flexibility is important in being able to handle and control the balisong. Most balisong's that one buys now a days are rather stiff. One must adjust the handle so that the balisong reacts freely, this is important in executing the techniques.

Question: What are you looking for in an individual that wants to commence training with the balisong?

Master Limpin: I am careful in sharing my knowledge. Of course there must be a desire to learn and gain the knowledge of the balisong. Also my personal requirement is that the individual has no criminal background.

Question: How do you start you beginning students off with the balisong?

Master Limpin: Using a progressive syllabus I first start off the students with a balisong that has no edges on it. Since it is impractical to have a balisong made out of wood (a laugh). Once the student becomes proficient with the balisong they obtain an edged balisong to perfect their skills.

Question: Is exercise essential for the balisong?

Master Limpin: Well, first exercise of the hands, wrist, arm, and elbow are important. The joints in the hand must be limber; strength should be built up in the wrist, arm and elbow. Just simple exercises will do, nothing elaborate.

Question: Which do you think is best to use a single edge or double edge balisong?

Master Limpin: I believe that the double edge is the best; a true balisong expert always prefers and uses the double edge balisong.

In a continuous search for knowledge on the balisong, Master Limpin has traveled extensively throughout the Philippines seeking any and all that practice the balisong. In trying to find out the history of the balisong, Master Limpin found that the balisong was introduced in 1903 in Batangas, however in his extensive search he cannot find it recorded anywhere as to who it was that introduced the balisong.



Left - Master Limpin faces off to his opponent with his balisong ready for action.

Center. - As the opponent executes a thrust Master Limpin, parries the opponents' knife hand then shifts the body forward, stabbing the opponent.

Right - In a continuous motion, Master Limpin twists the opponents' hand disarming the opponent and follows up with a slashing strike to the opponents' throat.

There are many online resources about balisong knives. Here are a few of the key sites. Aside from having a lot of information themselves, each of these sites has extensive links to other sites:



www.bladeforums.com



www.knifeforums.com



www.balisongtimes.com



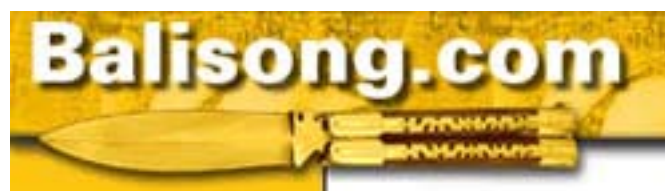
www.balisongxtreme.com



www.balisongworld.com



www.balisong.net



www.balisong.com

The Balisong Collector's Page

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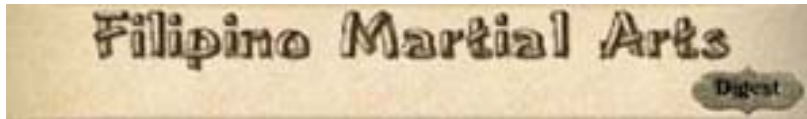
Rapid Journal



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