

# Filipino Martial Arts Garimot System

Gat Puno Abon "Garimot" Baet

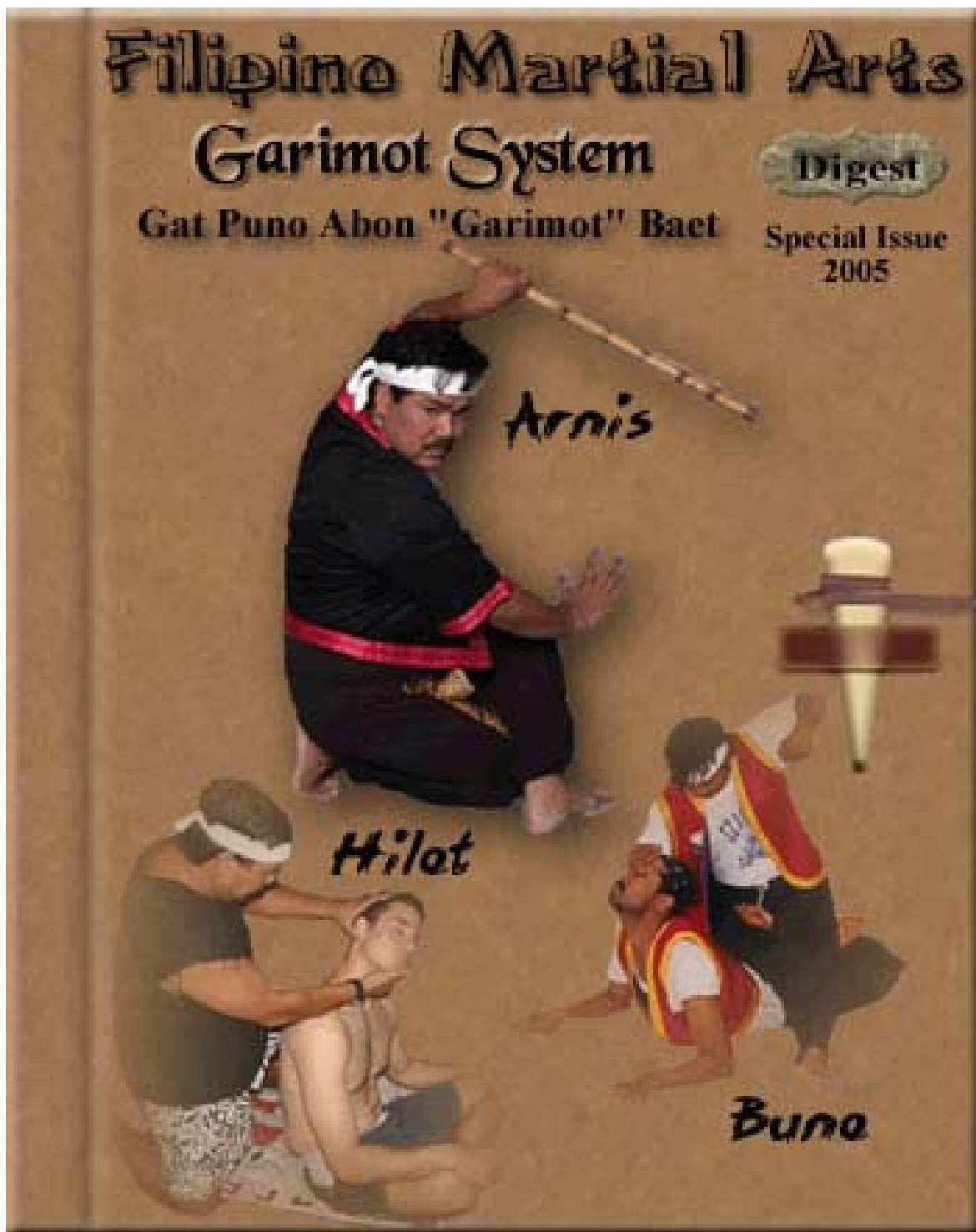
Digest

Special Issue  
2005

*Arnis*

*Hilot*

*Buno*



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The FMAdigest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

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.

The authors and publisher of this digest are not responsible for any injury, which may result from following the instructions contained in the digest. Before embarking on any of the physical activities described in the digest, the reader should consult his or her physician for advice regarding their individual suitability for performing such activity.

## **From the Publishers Desk**

Kumusta

This Special Issue is about the Garimot System. Gat Puno Abon “Garimot” Baet is a Filipino Martial Arts practitioner that is truly an amazing individual. He is the inheritor of his family system from Laguna province, Philippines, called “Garimot” arnis. What makes Gat Puno Abon Baet’s system unique is in addition to his weapons system of Arnis, he has two other subsystems. One is “Harimaw Buno,” and the other is the healing art called “Hilot.”

Instead of splitting up the articles in the special issue into several regular issues, I thought it would be better to show the Garimot System and the man behind it in a single issue.

I thank Jay deLeon very much for his research and his excellent capabilities in writing the articles in this issue. If you get a chance attend his function “Tipunan Sa Disneyland” (Gathering at Disneyland) being held on August 12 – 14 2005. He will have many of the most skilled Filipino Martial Artists in attendance. Jay deLeon has combined his event with Punong Guro Myrlino Hufana’s, 3rd WFMAA Expo & Laban Laro. This will be 3 days that a Filipino martial arts practitioner would not want to miss. And Gat Puno Abon Baet will be there in person demonstrating Hilot, and holding a workshop and personal sessions.

Maraming Salamat Po



**Laguna Arnisadors**

## Gat Puno Abon Baet and Garimot Arnis

By Jay de Leon

Gat Puno (Chieftain) Abon Baet is the fifth generation grandmaster of the Garimot Arnis System, a family system more than 150 years old from the province of Laguna, in the Philippines. He is the fourth son of the legendary arnisador and buno master, Grandmaster Felipe “Garimot” Baet. When his father passed away, Abon took on the fighting name of “Garimot” to honor his father, hence his fighting name of Gat Puno Abon “Garimot” Baet.



Felipe Baet and the former Marcelina Villegas Salazar, parents of Abon Baet.

Christians and Moors (Moro). When the Spaniards banned the practice of arnis in the late 1600's, Filipino arnisadors created these dances to preserve their martial arts knowledge and, in the modern era, to demonstrate their cultural past



Gat Puno Abon Baet with Prof. Remy Presas (right), Father of Modern Arnis. under the banner of the Paete Arnis Club in Laguna, Philippines. For a brief time also,



Abon began his arnis training under the tutelage of his father at the tender age of seven. In addition to arnis stick techniques, his training included the bladed arts, mano-mano (empty hands) and sikaran (kicking techniques.) His martial arts education is rounded out by intensive training in “Harimaw Buno” (King Tiger Wrestling).

A unique aspect of the Garimot system is its practice of Moro-Moro training. The Moro-Moro is a socio-religious stylized play that dramatizes the armed conflict between



Arnisadors from Paete, Laguna, Philippines dressed as Roman centurions spar in the streets as part of Holy Week celebration.

and heritage. This carries over even to religious observances, as in during Holy Week, when Laguna arnisadors dressed as Roman centurions roam the streets and, upon encountering one another, spar lightly to demonstrate their skill.

Abon began active competition at the age of sixteen. He competed in live stick competition (no padding) in several towns in his province of Laguna, the Philippines. This led to his reign as an undefeated arnis champion for seven years from 1978 to 1985.

He started teaching the family system

Abon taught Modern Arnis in Laguna at the behest and under the authority of Prof. Remy Presas, founder of Modern Arnis. The two would eventually reunite many years later in the United States.

In 1986, Abon accepted an opportunity to work in the United States, and in a few years began to teach arnis in the United States. By 1989, he had founded his organization Philippine Martial Arts, Garimot System International, U.S.A. that taught a total system that encompassed the complete range of Philippine fighting and healing arts of arnis, buno and hilot.

The Garimot System now has chapters all over the United States, as well as in Sweden, Germany and Venezuela. In addition to his full-time job as a chef, Gat Puno Abon is busy with the seminar circuit; including prestigious senior masters training camps.

His major upcoming seminars include the following:



Gat Puno Abon Baet

- June 24 -26, 2005, the 2005 Annual Garimot Summer Retreat in Hollywood, Florida – three days of stick fighting, knife fighting and buno (Filipino wrestling) matches.
- July 16 - 26, 2005 Laguna, Philippines. Ten days of training, including live stick fighting in the tournaments of Magdalena and Paete, Laguna.
- Aug. 12 - 14, 2005, the International Modern Arnis Federation of the Phil. (IMAFP) Tipunan sa Disneyland at the Anaheim Hilton in front of Disneyland in Anaheim, California. Three days of training with world-class arnis instructors, tournament and hilot demonstration, workshop and treatment.

## Harimaw Buno (Filipino Wrestling)

By Jay de Leon



By now, most Filipino martial arts (FMA) practitioners are familiar with the term “dumog.” “Dumog” is the Visayan word for wrestling. It is also called “buno” which is the Tagalog word for wrestling. It is rare for a Filipino martial arts system to have a separate subsystem of “dumog” or “buno” in addition to its weapons arts. For some FMA systems, it is another component of their empty hands system, together with punches, kicks or other striking techniques. For most systems, it is simply an integral part of their overall weapons system, used in conjunction with their weapons, or used by itself (that is, empty hands) against an armed or unarmed opponent.

In some FMA systems, either term is now used loosely to mean any type of throwing, wrestling, locking or control technique, regardless of origin. For some, the origin of the technique might really be judo, jiu-jitsu, aikido or some form of wrestling,



and therefore, might be Japanese or even Greek in origin. Technically, it is not “dumog” or “buno” as real “dumog” or “buno” is Filipino in origin.



Gat Puno Abon “Garimot” Baet (left)  
“play-fights” with double sticks.

And that is what makes Gat Puno Abon Baet’s system unique. Gat Puno (Chieftain) Abon is the inheritor of his family system from Laguna province, Philippines, called “Garimot” arnis. In addition to his weapons system, he has two other subsystems. One is “Harimaw Buno,” and the other is the healing arts called “Hilot.”

“Harimaw” means “tiger” in Indonesian. Just like karate and arnis, there are hundreds of styles of “buno” or “dumog” practiced by native Filipinos. “Harimaw Buno” or “King Tiger

Wrestling” refers to the kind of wrestling practiced by the indigenous tribes of Luzon, specifically the Mangyan and Aeta tribes of Mindoro province.

For the indigenous people, “buno” is both a sport as well as a warrior art. “Buno” is claimed as the oldest Filipino form of sport entertainment, as it was often performed during large gatherings and fiestas, much the same way sumo wrestlers, Roman gladiators, Greek wrestlers and Muay Thai boxers entertained royalty and their guests in olden times. As a warrior art, it permeated the tribesman’s daily life, including hunting, rites of passage and warfare. It had the same goals and utilized the same weapons—disarm, subdue and control humans as well as animals, barehanded as well as with bladed weapons, sticks and specialty weapons such as the “lubid” or rope, spear and bow and arrow.

Gat Puno Abon has written a book about buno entitled “Harimaw Buno: The Art of Filipino Wrestling.” In the book, he traces how his forbears learned the art from Aeta and Mangyan tribesmen. His grandfather Jose lived among the Aetas for many years, learning their system of ground combat and becoming the top native wrestler of his time. Abon’s father Felipe learned from his own father, and trained in a neighboring province with two Mangyan Buno masters. At the same time, Felipe became an active stick fighter, undefeated in full contact matches in his province as well as the neighboring provinces, earning the title “King of the Seven Mountains.”

A very interesting section of the book is the description of the conditioning methods employed by the tribesmen, who were a hardy lot to begin with. The drills are extremely demanding and strenuous. Just the names will make you pass out from fatigue—water training, mud training, canoe training, “tamaraw”

A Northern tribesman  
On the hunt.



A Southern tribesman  
Practices his barong  
warrior craft.



A Philippine tamaraw, up close and  
personal. How would you like to wrestle  
a few rounds with this guy?

(pygmy carabao or water buffalo) wrestling, logrolling, bamboo training, and tree climbing. You will need to buy the book to find out what these unique conditioning drills are. And you thought your wrestling coach was tough on you.

What then constitutes “buno?” From the description of types of competition and techniques allowed or utilized, it appears “buno” is judo, jiu-jitsu, Greco-Roman wrestling and shoot fighting rolled into one. Its techniques include hand and elbow strikes, knee and low kicks, throws, sweeps, limb locks, joint locks, choke holds, head cranks, pressure-point tactics and come-along techniques.



Gat Puno Abon Baet (left), with a come-along technique and a strike at the ready...



Some groundwork with a neck and shoulder crank and possible strike...

Will reading this book, and trying to learn and apply the techniques shown, make you a “buno” expert? Hardly, even if you get past that part about wrestling a pygmy water buffalo. Just wrestling or ground fighting with an instructor barking at you is hard enough as it is, much less learning groundwork from a book.

But I strongly recommend this book to all FMA instructors, and serious, advanced students of FMA for a different reason. Read it so you can have guidelines for the smell test for “dumog” or “buno.” Before you go around advertising you are an expert on “dumog” or “buno,” or that your FMA includes the deadly techniques of “dumog” or “buno,” at least have an idea what real “dumog” or “buno” looks like.

I agree with the saying that a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet. I agree that a well-executed major outer reaping should bring an opponent down, whether you call it “osotogari” in Japanese in judo, or “talapid labas” in Tagalog in Harimaw Buno. Sure, if it works, use it. But it would be disingenuous to teach the Japanese throws you learned in judo or jiu-jitsu with your FMA techniques and proclaim it “dumog.”

So at least learn on paper what constitutes “dumog” or “buno”. Better still; learn “Harimaw Buno” from Gat Puno Abon or from another “buno” or “dumog” expert. Just pray that neither “tamaraw” nor river bamboo are to be found in your area.



You may purchase Gat Puno Abon’s book at his website at [www.garimot.com](http://www.garimot.com).



## Hilot: The Healing Arts of Filipino Martial Arts

By Jay de Leon

I was writing to my friend Jake about Gat Puno (Chieftain) Abon Baet's prowess as a hilot master, and wrote facetiously, "He is the only guy I know who can beat a guy to an inch of his life, and then restore him back to health."

I hasten to explain that my good friend and brother-in-arms Abon does not go around beating up people, except in full-contact stickfighting competition. But he does restore people back to health using hilot, the healing arts of the Philippines. And Jake was indeed looking for a hilot who could cure some recurring knee, shoulder and elbow problems.

Just what is hilot and what is its connection with Filipino martial arts (FMA)?

First of all, the term hilot refers both to the art and the practitioner of the art. The term itself is Tagalog, and for those of you fond of terminology, it has its equivalent in many of the dialects, including ablon in Ilocano, ilot or ilut in Zambal or Pampango, and agod in Maguindanao or Maranao.

My late father was originally from the province of Pangasinan, and he had a ritual for my newborn siblings, massaging and gently pulling at their legs, saying that it helped strengthen and straighten their legs more quickly. He called it kemkem, and it is only recently that I have come to find out that he was referring to the art of hilot, not his particular ritual.

Hilot is part of the Philippine traditional folk medicine that has survived the ages despite the omnipresence of modern technology. The hilot is just one of the various folk doctors (arbolario) in the community which include the herbalist, the bonesetter, the obstetrician, the snake- or animal-bite curers and shamans or spiritual healers. All of these practices have common roots with other healing arts in Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and other outlying islands.

On a metaphysical level, illness may be caused by spiritual and moral imbalances. Certain persons with extraordinary powers are thought to be able to cast spells which cause sickness. A person may become ill if someone, like a witch sorcerer, casts "the evil eye" upon them. Sickness may also be caused by several factors including bad spirits, which may dwell in animate or inanimate objects. For example, you may offend a spirit dweller by cutting down a tree without asking permission and get sick.

In this case, a hilot uses three forms of treatment: faith healing through prayer, herbal medicines, and massage and body manipulation to drive away the bad spirit that



A Filipino "hilot" at work.



has lodged itself in the victim. Religion and prayer also play an important role in Filipino folk medicine.

When we lived in the Philippines, my son Mitch, about three years old then, was diagnosed with an unknown stomach illness. Mitch could not hold down his food and was rapidly losing weight. I took him to a spiritual healer after going to several doctors who were unable to figure out what ailed him.

The healer said Mitch had offended a spirit dweller in a tree by striking the tree with his (arnis) stick. She learned this by reading lighted candle droppings in a bowl of water. She instructed us to take the candle droppings, lay it by the tree that was struck, and offer prayers and apologies to the spirit dweller, which we did. Mitch was back to normal the following day.



“Ayurveda” massage

On a physical level, hilot is governed by the belief in spiritual energetic channels. These channels affect nerves, veins, tendons, arteries, sinews, ligaments, muscles, intestines, windpipes, and many others organs. This concept is reflected in many native scientific theories of neighboring countries. In the Ayurvedic and yogic traditions of India and in Thai massage, the channels carry prana or life force energy, as well as blood, air, food, water, plasma, sweat, lymph, etc. The concept of these physical and spiritual channels is also acknowledged in many outlying islands, such as Bali, Guam, Micronesia and the Polynesian islands.

Now, as I have alluded to initially, many hilot experts are also experts in native martial arts. My arnis instructor, Master Godofredo Fajardo, a practicing hilot, learned both arnis and hilot from his father. Much folklore attests to these hilot masters who can cause attackers to fall unconscious, collapse with temporary paralyses, or become disoriented, and cause internal hemorrhage or bleeding among other things. In the light of what we know now about channels and life force energy, we are simply looking at two arts, which are two sides of the same coin. If you know which points to attack, you also know which body parts to heal.

In the Philippines today, in the rural areas as well as in some populated cities, traditional healing methods are still sought despite the presence of doctors, hospitals, and medical clinics. People seek hilots and other folk doctors not only because they are less expensive, but also because they get desired results. Some visit a folk doctor for certain ailments (such as sprains, dislocations, etc.) before going to a medical doctor, or vice versa, when one would go to a folk doctor after finding no relief from a medical doctor (like Mitch’s case.) Some are able to enjoy the best of both worlds.



Grandmaster Filemon “Momoy” Canete  
Known equally well for his healing powers and medical skills as well as his eskrima prowess.

My former classmate and high school judo sparring partner, Dr. Juan Nanagas, at one time Undersecretary of Health in the Philippines, recently informed me that the

Department of Health is initiating steps to institutionalize and recognize hilot as a medical science, on the same level as Ayurveda, Thai massage and Shiatsu, among others. Ayurveda, which means “the science of life”, offers rejuvenating, preventive and curative treatments through herbal oils, massages, diet plans and other ethnic health care techniques. Thai massage is a unique blend of deep tissue massage using pressure point and stretching techniques to reduce stress and muscle soreness.



Thai massage

An article in the March 14, 2005 issue of Time Magazine claims that “massage therapy is on a roll” and that 12% of adult Americans got a massage last year, a number predicted to increase as the population gets increasingly bone-weary.

In the Philippines, in a district called Malate in the heart of Manila, an upscale spa opened last year that caters to women as well as what we now call the metro sexual men, or men who love to pamper themselves with beauty and fitness regimens. Named Sanctuario, it offers massages, body wraps, body scrubs, bath treatments, facials, hair and scalp treatments and fitness regimens like yoga, tai chi, Pilates and aqua aerobics. The massages include the traditional hilot with coconut oil treatment, as well as a coffee body scrub using Batangas coffee, the carabao milk bath, believed to make the skin baby-soft smooth, and a Turkish bath which includes a full body coco butter massage.

The concept of mind-body medicine may be new to many in the Western world, but not to the folk doctors of the Philippines who were naturally holistic in their approach to life and healing—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Hilot, or the healing arts of the Philippines, is a testimony to the total wellness that many seek to achieve.

## **HILOT Seminar and Consultation**

**International Modern Arnis of the Philippines (IMAFP)** is proud to present its Indigenous Arts of the Philippines Series, featuring Hilot Master Gat Puno (Grand Master) Abon Baet of Florida.



**Gat Puno Abon Baet (right) conducts a hilot session.**

Hilot is one of the indigenous medical healing arts of the Philippines, characterized by massage and chiropractic manipulations. Gat Puno Abon Baet is a famed arnisador and hilot master and inheritor of his family style of Garimot arnis from Laguna, Philippines, which teaches the complete spectrum of the indigenous arts of arnis, buno and hilot.

IMAFP's first presentation of its Indigenous Arts of the Philippines Series will be held in conjunction with its **Modern Arnis** training camp **Tipunan sa Disneyland**. In addition to the public forum, Gat Puno Abon Baet will be available for private hilot consultations and sessions. Private consultations by appointment only. Blocks of rooms at the Hilton available at discounted rates. Call 951-894-1452 for appointment and accommodations.

### **Hilot Demo, Workshop and Sessions**

#### **Tipunan sa Disneyland**

Anaheim Hilton

Anaheim, California in front of Disneyland

August 12, 13 and 14, 2005

Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Want to learn more about **Gat Puno Abon Baet**?  
Visit



[www.garimot.com](http://www.garimot.com)

### **Gat Puno Abon "Garimot Baet**

Gatpuno@aol.com  
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Pembroke Pines, FL 33024  
(954) 423-4433

### **International Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines (IMAFP)**

North America

### **Tipunan Sa Disneyland**

(Gathering at Disneyland)

August 12 – 14 2005

Aug. 12, 2005 Friday - Modern Arnis symposium

Aug. 13, 2005 Saturday - WFMAA Expo 2005

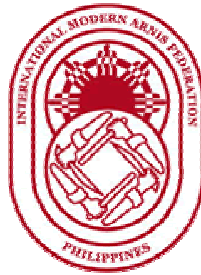
Aug. 14, 2005 Sunday - Hilot Expo and Demo

### **Filipino Martial Arts Seminar**

Open to all ages, styles and levels

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\$ 100.00/Day



#### **Instructors Scheduled:**

Master Samuel Dulay & Dayang Edessa Ramos

Samuel Dulay – Modern Arnis, Manila, Philippines

Godofredo Fajardo – Modern Arnis, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Edessa Ramos – Modern Arnis, Zurich, Switzerland

Abon Baet – Modern Arnis, Garimot Arnis, Pembroke Pines, FL, USA

Tom Bolden – American Modern Arnis, New York, NY, USA

Jerome Barber – Modern Arnis, Kenpo Escrima, New York, NY, USA

Roger Agbulos – Lameco Eskrima, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Larry Alcuizar – Durex Arnis, Doce Pares Eskrima, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Jay de Leon – Modern Arnis, Murrieta, CA, USA

**Accommodations:**

Anaheim Hilton  
In front of Disneyland  
Anaheim, CA.

Blocks of rooms are available at Anaheim Hilton to event participants at discounted prices. Quads and triples are available.

Call Jay de Leon for details and reservations.

**Registration and Contact Info:**

**Jay de Leon** - [951] 894-1452

**World Filipino Martial Arts Association  
3rd WFMAA Expo & Laban Laro**

August 12 - 14, 2005  
The Coast Anaheim Hotel  
Anaheim, California  
[www.worldfma.com](http://www.worldfma.com)



The World Filipino Martial Arts Association (WFMAA) was founded to promote and propagate the Philippine Martial Arts, Culture and Tradition. The annual gathering of Grandmasters, Punong Guros, Masters and Guros represents a variety of systems and styles of the combative Filipino martial arts.

This gathering includes the Masters Seminar Series spanning two days, followed by an awards banquet in the evening of each day. The festivities include Philippine cultural performances and martial arts demonstrations by local schools. On the third day of the event, students from a variety of fighting systems and styles compete in the WFMAA Laban Laro Tournament.

The annual gathering is a truly historical, legendary and most memorable event.

**Featuring Event Instructors:**

- Hufana Traditional Arnis International - Punong Guro Myrlino P. Hufana
- Estalilla Kabaroan Eskrima - Grandmaster Ramiro U. Estalilla
- Balintawak Arnis Escrima Cuentada - Grandmaster Bobby Taboada & Maestro Jorge V. Penafiel
- Manaois Systems International - Grandmaster Conrad Manaois, Master Ariel F. Mosses
- Babao Arnis Academy - Grandmaster Narrie Babao
- Pambuan Arnis Tulisan Caballero - Ama Guro Raffy Pambuan



Grandmaster Estalilla Jr.



- Sikaran Mano Mano Arnis - Amang Guro Vic Ferrer
- International Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines (IMAFP) –  
Master Samuel Dulay, Dayang Edessa Ramos, Master Godofredo Fajardo & Master Tom Bolden
- Garimot Arnis and Harimaw Buno - Gat Puno Abon Baet
- Filipino Combat Eskrima - Master Ed Goco Galang
- Ocho Kantos Kali - Punong Guro Tito Jon Cuenca
- Bakbakan International - Master Rey S. Galang, Master Christopher Ricketts, Guro John Jacobo

#### **Guest Instructors:**

- Guro Jay De Leon - IMAFP & Inosanto Kali (Murrieta, CA)
- Guro Arturo "Dino" Flores, Guro Hospecio "Bud" Balani, Jr. & Guro Arnold A. Noche - Kapisanang Mandirigma, Lameco SOG (Los Angeles, CA)
- Punong Guro Brian "Spunk" Triel - Filipino Fighting Arts Academy (Virginia Beach, VA)
- Guro Roger Agbulos - De Campo Eskrima, JDC-10 (North Hills, CA)
- Guro Scott Brennan - Lucay Lucay Kali (Friday Harbor, WA)
- Punong Guro Steven Dowd – Arnis Balite\_(Fallon, NV)



Master Rey Galang shows block and counter with double baston.

#### **More TBA!**



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Mention - **World Filipino Martial Arts Association**



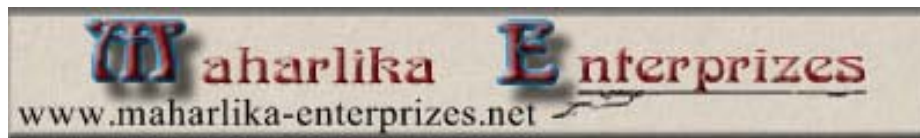
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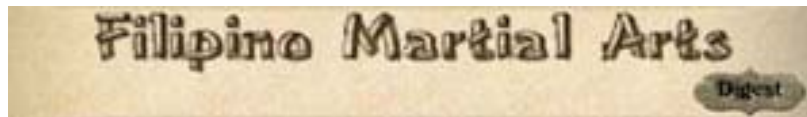
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