



WILD GEESE MARTIAL ARTS



Wild Geese train at the Doce Pares HQ, Nov-Dec 2006

On November 24th 2006, Paul Cox and Dave Hedges of Wild Geese Martial Arts travelled to the Doce Pares Headquarters in Cebu City in the Philippines, for 3 weeks of what turned out to be incredibly intense training.

Also on the agenda were 3 days in Manila for the 2nd World Kali Sports Championships (padded stick), where Dave came away with a bronze medal in the open weight division.



The first week was spent in Cebu city, training 6 hours daily. To be able to train under one Grandmaster is an amazing experience, but on instruction from Grandmaster Danny Guba in England, Paul and Dave had the honour and privilege to be put through their paces by Master Val Pableo, GM Rudy Reyes AND GM Albert Sales.

It was in at the deep end when GM Albert taught his version of the famous San Miguel form from the late GM Filemon "Momoy" Canete, something of a holy grail for Espada y Daga enthusiasts.

Also during the first week the son and heir to Momoy's San Miguel system, Grand Master Cano Canete took time to take Paul and Dave through some of the finer points of his father's style. GM Joe Borces came in a couple of hours before his scheduled class in order to show his Eskrido method, a combination of Aikido with Doce Pares. GM Joe's power and ability to disarm and throw are to be seen to be believed.

The second week was spent in the resort of Moalboal, a scuba diving paradise, not that we were given time to try it out! Training now was moved from 10am to the uncivilised hour of 8am daily.

The week began with Master Val style of single stick Tapi, we now know how he earned the title of the world's fastest eskrimador. He also took us through Corto or close range sparring, again an area of particular expertise. Val has the uncanny ability to disarm at will.

We went on then to spend much of the time sparring in the WEKAF format. This is the full contact sparring that Doce Pares dominates; Val himself has multiple world titles.



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At the end of the week Paul and Dave travelled up to Manila to compete in the World Championships in a completely different format, full contact using padded sticks and minimal armour, only a groin guard and helmet.

Wild Geese Martial Arts don't do sport martial arts and were unclear of the rules, so rather than worry about points they decided to just do what they do and have fun. This attitude certainly won the crowd over, at one point a chant of "Ireland, Ireland" went up. Dave also managed to win the bronze medal in the Men's Open Weight division.

Reactions from Masters watching from around the room were all positive and supportive, but GM Jon Escudero of Lightning Scientific gave possibly the best compliment when he said "Their style is very good street Arnis, although they need to adjust it for completion."

The Wild Geese would like to thank GM Pat O'Malley of Rapid Arnis and San Miguel Eskrima for inviting us to the competition

and taking time to coach them in their fights, despite also coaching his own fighters from England, Scotland and New Zealand AND looking after his two children. Even before the final presentations were over it was a mad dash to the airport to catch our flight back to Cebu for our final 4 days at the Doce Pares Headquarters.

The Last few days were given over to training 9 of the 12 Doce Pares forms under the watchful eye of GM Dionisio Canete.





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The final day of training was a particular treat. All the Grandmasters that had trained the Wild Geese over the 3 weeks turned up. The day started with GM Cano reviewing the San Miguel drills and showing some of the “Serra Todo” or locking techniques.

The rest of the afternoon was spent Corto sparring with GM’s Rudy Reyes, Albert Sales, Joe Borces, Cano Canete, Val Pableo and world champion Ely Gamboa.

This was an opportunity to experience the different styles of Doce Pares, from the modern world champion to the aggression of San Miguel, the evasiveness of Rudy’s old style and the locking of Joe’s eskrido.

The final session was truly an honour, one that will not be forgotten.

As a special bonus Paul and Dave were introduced to Grand master Nick Elizar, founder of the World Nickelstick Eskrima system. Nick and his son Norman gave a total of 4 days training throughout the tree week trip, showing the aggressive close range system that is usually trained through a free play called palakow, usually one on one with an instructor. To have had such an opportunity would have been unheard of until quite recently as Balintawak splintered from Doce Pares in the 50’s when Bacon left the organisation.

This lead to an era of “Juego Todo” grudge matches and challenge fights between the two, now rival, organisations. However the newer generation of Masters are banding together to promote the Philippine Martial Arts as a whole.

One result of this was the formation of the Philippine Council of Kali Eskrima Arnis Masters, headed up by GM Roland Dantes, and many national councils world wide. Ireland has been invited to form an Irish Council of Philippine Martial Arts, a non political, non fee paying organisation with the purpose of promoting all styles of FMA practiced here.

