

**T**he article titled 'Not Just A Smashing System' in the July 2004 edition of M.A.I saw me introduce the art of Pencak Silat Cimande to readers, presenting an overview of valuable and important insights into the origins and principles of the system. For the sake of repeating myself and boring the 'regulars', borrow or buy that back issue so you have the underpinning knowledge of what this effective system has to offer.

The proverb states 'unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will produce no fruit!' So it is in a sense with Cimande. All of my preliminary training with Guru Makmur was spent sat crossed legged on the floor in his humble home in Ciawi, West Java. This had nothing to do with being a lazy trainer but in fact traditional Cimande first trains it's jurus (upper body movements/shapes) in this seated position. This seated position trains, amongst other things, a very strong core (abdominals and lower back), which is fundamental to the system as much of the movement and external power is generated from the Galeh or coiling of the body. The first 2 jurus, Tonjok Subelani and Tonjok Ambreg are basically the same and only differ in their singular and double punch execution. These 2 basic jurus also serve as a warm up for the joints of the arm and help to develop a base 'flow', as one attribute Cimande is known by is its flowing arm movements. Once the jurus have been mastered from the seated position, they can then be performed in a Kuda Kuda, or horse-riding stance, which is guaranteed to develop both leg strength and of course power. As I have always stated, all real Silat is based on certain principles and it is only until you look beyond the mundaneness of seemingly boring movements do you realise that hours of practicing them opens you to so many possibilities!

The third and fourth jurus in Cimande Silat again are quite similar to each other in execution but all that differs is the hand positioning of each. They are called Kelid and Selup and can roughly be translated as evasion or dodging. One thing that you should bear in mind is that all traditional and authentic Silat should be able to transfer easily between empty-handed techniques and weapons. Kelid and Selup illustrate this principle beautifully, and actually seem to make much more sense when a pisau (short knife) is used. I remember feeling very awkward and uncomfortable sitting on the floor for hours at a time, my arms getting battered by Guru Makmur, while Steve (Benitez)

# Silat

## Column

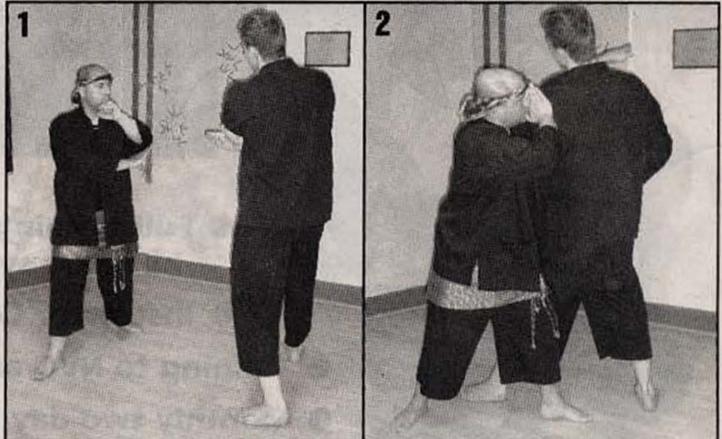
### Fundamentals Of Cimande Silat

By Johnny Silmon

looked on with a grin on his face. Kelid and Selup didn't feel right at all but I continued to press in. It was only until teacher told me to perform them from a standing position, using a specific foot pattern (lankah) did the light 'proverbially' switch on in my head. It now made sense - all those hours drilling from a seated position. I saw endless possibilities. From that simple Juru as an evasion and entry, I discovered that I had at least 10 possibilities using the elbows, forearms and fists in different guises. Of course it all depends on your range, who you are fighting against, the environment, possibility of more than 1 attacker and so on. Unfortunately, many techniques in some martial arts are taught from a 'one size fits all' principle but in the real world this does not work. Sure, it is important to at least establish a foundation and a good base, but there must be a level of flexibility and adaptation of those techniques according to the factors I have just mentioned.

This method of martial discovery, while staying within the parameters of the system, is not only more exciting in terms of variety but, from a practical viewpoint, enables you to really understand and 'own' what you are practicing. That way, should you need to defend yourself in a situation and you are not over-run by your adrenal glands, that which is in you will come out automatically, without excessive thought, which loses valuable time. Learning to drive is a good analogy. In the early stages there seems to be so much to remember and consider but 5 years after you pass all thought and action fuse together and become instinctive and automatic. Continuing with Kelid and Selup; they are drilled over and over using various scenarios and with other techniques added onto them. As Cimande is a pukulan (striking) based system, even every transitory movement must count and be considered as a potential strike. Once the movements become second nature, training is then geared towards targeting and hitting the vital points of the body. Some of these are lethal, others offer partial paralysis and others only result in a brief shock. As there is a big emphasis in Cimande for limb conditioning, with the arms and legs considered effective weapons, you can imagine the brutality and effectiveness of application when the above 2 points are combined!

I must mention that although the Cimande taught at EastWest Studios is very physical, there is also a more inner aspect to the whole art. In the latter stages, conditioning is emphasised from the inside out. The destruction of fully 'clothed' coconuts by Cimande exponents, is not only due to external limb conditioning but also to an internal 'iron palm' form of training. This is where the art comes into it's own. However, this all takes a process of time. I will shortly be returning to Java to continue my training to learn, amongst other things, this very thing. I wont make huge claims, stating that this art is the be all and end all, but it is traditional, effective and rare.



*Readers should be aware of, and adhere to, the law as it relates to the use of reasonable force.*