



# BERNAS ESTOCADAS



## A COMPREHENSIVE FILIPINO MARTIAL ART

He might be in his sixties, but Grandmaster William Bernas' strength and fitness puts many younger men to shame.

When he isn't swinging a stick or sword, he'll be at the gym lifting weights, or sitting down to a healthy meal he's prepared from fresh ingredients growing wild around his local neighbourhood.

Get the Grandmaster talking about his art, and his passion is palpable. Show interest in his art, and he will train you all day if you have the stamina to keep up with him.

All the Grandmaster asks is that you *follow in his footsteps*, quite literally, so you can master the Bernas way of fighting!

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GRANDMASTER

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This article was written by Manunudlo Robert Parkes, an Instructor in Bernas Estocadas, and a direct student of Grandmaster William Bernas and Manunudlo Paolo Pagaling.

### WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

If, after reading this article you are interested in reading more, check out the new book *Bernas Estocadas (Vol. 1 Abesedario)*, available now:

<https://eskrimamedia.com>

Or sign up for the online course, featuring Grandmaster William Bernas and Manunudlo Paolo Pagaling, by following the link here:

<https://estocadas.com>

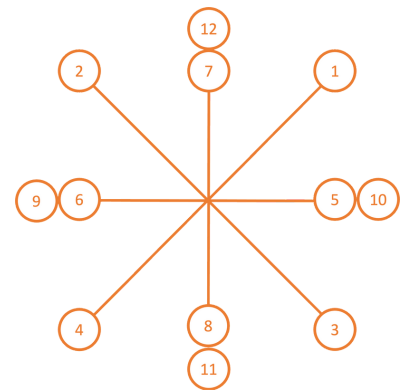


# ABESEDARIO

## LEARNING THE CORE OF BERNAS ESTOCADAS

### OPENSA

Bernas Estocadas has 12 Strikes that follow specific angles of attack (see diagram opposite), and are aimed at particular targets. These form a core aspect of the system.



### DEPENSA

For every striking angle there is a matching block. However, the astute practitioner will quickly realise that the blocks are really like counterstrikes to the opponent's weapon, knocking it off course, while one's free hand applies pressure (Pigar) or secures the opponent's weapon hand with a technique known as the crocodile mouth (Ngangáng Buáya).

### PANÍNDOG

Bernas Estocadas has 5 stances (back, forward, cat, horse, & cross), that are combined with footwork, and ensure correct alignment during blocking and striking.

### PALAKÁT

From the very beginning strikes and blocks are combined with footwork, underscoring the focus on naturalistic movement.

### PÁRES PÁRES

Forming the foundation of Bernas Estocadas, the 12 Strikes and 12 Blocks are practiced in pairs, combining the footwork (Palakát) and stances (Paníndog).

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## PANG-ÁWAY

### CORE COMBATIVES OF BERNAS ESTOCADAS

#### PASUNÓD PÁRES PÁRES

Once you have a handle on the Páres Páres, the 12 strikes are then mounted into an ever-growing series of consecutive sequences starting at the combination of 1-2 followed by 3-4, then combining 1-4, and continuing with that structure until you reach the final combination of 1-12. As you move through repetitions of the combinations, your first set starts slow and smooth, the second set slow and hard, then finish with a fast and hard set, building power and stamina.

#### PASUNÓD TAGDUHÁ

In Pasunód Tagduhá, the 12 Strikes are combined in consecutive pairs so that each strike is combined with the next strike in the sequence: 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, etc. or in mirrored pairs 1-2, 2-1, 2-3, 3-2, etc. The combinations are practiced side-to-side and advancing and retreating. Learning to strike while moving in any direction is a key feature of Bernas Estocadas.

#### PASUNÓD TAGTÁTLO

In Pasunód Tagtátlo, the 12 Strikes are again combined in consecutive sequences, but this time in three strike combinations: 1-2-3, 2-3-4, 3-4-5, 4-5-6 etc. This time, however, combinations starting with an odd number are practiced while advancing, while combinations starting with an even number are practiced while retreating.

#### LAKÓT (TAGDUHÁ & TAGTÁTLO)

After you have developed a capacity to perform the Pasunód (consecutive) series of drills, you move on to the Lakót (mixing) series. In Lakót Tagduhá and Lakot Tagtátlo, you combine the Páres Páres pairs with each strike that is launched from the open (Abierta) side (1,3,5,7,8,10), with each strike from the closed (Serrada) side (2,4,6,9,11,12), and vice versa. Again, footwork is a key aspect of these drills, as is developing your ability to strike while advancing and retreating.



## THE CORE CURRICULUM OF BERNAS ESTOCADAS INCLUDES:

**ABESEDARIO** (SINGLE STICK CORE)  
**PANG-ÁWAY** (SINGLE STICK COMBATIVES)  
**DOBLE BASTÓN** (DOUBLE STICK)  
**ESPADA Y DAGA** (SWORD & DAGGER)  
**DAGASÓ** (KNIFE FIGHTING)

*At advanced levels there are special long stick and unarmed methods*

# OPENSA-DEPENSA

## ATTACK & DEFENCE PARTNER DRILLS ARE ANOTHER KEY ASPECT OF THE PANG-ÁWAY COMBATIVES CURRICULUM

The Opensa-Depensa are the core attack and defence drills of Bernas Estocadas; and are essential for developing one's capacity to fluidly and effectively intercept and counter an opponent's attacks.

### 1: BLOCKING

In the first stage of Opensa-Depensa one person feeds the 12 strikes, while the other defends with the matching 12 blocks, building their capacity to read and respond appropriately to each angle of attack.

### 2: COUNTERS

In the second stage, the defender blocks the feeder's attack, and adds a single counterstrike.

### 3: MULTIPLE COUNTERS

In the third stage of Opensa-Depensa the defender blocks the feeder's attack, then adds multiple pre-set counters (for most angles this amounts to three counterstrikes after the block combining Abierta and Serrada strikes, and high and low strikes).

### 4: EVASION

In the fourth stage of Opensa-Depensa the defender blocks the feeder's attack, then adds multiple pre-set counters. However, at a specific point in the exchange, the feeder will throw a second attack, and the defender will need to evade, parry and counter fluidly.

### 5: DISARMS

In this fifth stage of the Opensa-Depensa drill, after the defender has intercepted the initial attack from the feeder with an appropriate block, they immediately apply a disarming technique.

### 6: DISARMS WITH MULTIPLE COUNTERS

In this final stage of the Opensa-Depensa drill, disarms are combined with multiple counters.

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## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GRANDMASTER

### THE FINAL COMPONENTS OF PANG-ÁWAY

#### PALABÚLAK

The Palabúlak are the "flower" strikes of Bernas Estocadas. They are performed in combination with the 12 Strikes to create formidable combative combinations.

#### REDONDA

Means "round" and is a circular strike executed from a Serrada (closed) or Abierta (Open) position.

#### PÁLPAL

Means something like "peg". The Palpal strike hits downwards onto the opponent's head or hands.

#### WASIWAS

Means something like "wag" and involves a low back and forth horizontal strike, powered by twisting your torso.

#### ABANÍKO

Means "fan" and is a striking technique that targets both sides of the opponent's head using a fanning motion.

#### DÁGWAY

The Dágway (forms) are the multi-directional engine room for generating improvised movement. While the Dágway start as pre-set forms combining the 12 Strikes or the 12 Blocks while advancing and retreating, or following a cross formation, these same patterns become the basis for formulating your own natural expression of the Estocadas.

The naturalistic movement of the Dágway is multi-directional, left and right, high and low, advancing and retreating.

**Few Filipino Martial Arts have been designed so well to handle multiple opponents.**

When you use the Dágway structures as a basis for your improvised self-expression (Karenza) you truly start to see how you have been coached into following in the footsteps of the Grandmaster!