

The Philippine Lemons

By Rey Bajenting
RB Sugbo Gamefowl Technology



Sugbo Lemon

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The Path to a Legend

I found the various stories behind the Philippine lemons -- the origin, the history, the future, as well as some myth.

But most of all I have come face to face with the living legends—the remarkable gentlemen that breed them.

From these master breeders, I gained deeper knowledge and wisdom that will guide me as I go about with my journey, as breeder and writer, through the fascinating world of the lemons.

Moreover, from some of them,, I also got beautiful specimen of the lemons to breed and behold.

My thanks to Mayor Juancho Aguirre, Mr. Paeng Araneta, Mr. Lance de la Torre, Mr. Choy Ampil and, Mr Joe Laureño for granting me interviews and lessons in the art of breeding and cocking.

And, to Mr. Mark Aguirre, (deceased 2010) who since then, has become a friend and partner. As well as to his buddy and fellow breeder Bobot Chua, who had been very helpful in providing me practical insight into the character of the lemons.

Of course, to my friend Glen Lim and to my cocking partners Steve Sarmago and Raul Cbeo for being with me through the trips and the treks to the cold mountains of Negros.



Steve Sarmago, the author's
friend and partner.

The Philippine Lemons: The legend continues

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The sugbo lemon, a strain developed by RB Sugbo Gamefowl Technology.

The beginning

Yes, it was the great American cocker Duke Hulseley who, forty years ago, brought to the Philippines the seeds of the tree that was to become the Philippine lemons, but it were the Filipino breeders, mostly from Negros, who nurtured them into what they are now.

In the 60's the great American breeder Duke Hulseley brought over to the country the lemon hackled red battle fowl he used in competing on behalf of Don Amado Araneta and son Jorge "Nene" Araneta. Most of these battle fowl were of Duke's butcher-hatch-claret blend. They were the predecessors of the Philippine lemons.

Whether Duke had ever set them into a strain or just produced them as battle crosses was uncertain. Some of those he brought here might even be of different breeds as the late Duke Hulseley had many bloodlines.

No body could tell now with certainty, as nobody seemed to have asked then. What was important at the time was, no matter what they were, the hulseys were efficient killers.

Duke brought these fowl here in the 60's yet. Those years were then considered a new

era in Philippine cockfighting. It was the advent of imported roosters that came in from the United States.

Now, forty years later as the sport experienced a welcome transformation from an ordinary Filipino pastime to a full blown industry, the bloodline is still very much alive and in use by many Philippine breeders and cockers.

Thanks to the many Filipino breeders, mostly in Negros, who loved the bloodline and stuck with it, through the years.

The birth of the lemons

Lance de la Torre told this writer that in the sixties there was a certain Dr. Javelona who was importing and fighting with success the hulseys fowl.

A bit later, whether inspired by the impressive performances of the hulseys fought by Dr. Javelona, or for any other reason, Don Amado Araneta began sponsoring the campaign of Duke Hulseys here in the Philippines.

At that time derbies were not popular. The big timers then fought in hacks, conciertos and mains. Like many of their contemporaries such as Eddie Araneta and the Rivero brothers of Manila, the Plazas and Chiongbians of Mindanao, Amado Garcia of Davao, The Lacsons of Negros, Nyor Dorong Paulin and Cong. Ed Kintanar of Cebu, and others who fought imported chickens, Don Amado and son George Araneta opted to pin their hope on the imported hulseys.

The Duke brought with him here a number of his fowl. A great majority of these fowl were battle crosses. There were his lemon hackles. There were also some birds with white under hackles. He also had varieties called the cecils and even a line called miss u. And, of course, also his greys.

Perhaps the best performers were the lemon hackles as they became the most popular and a by-word in Philippine cocking. These were his butcher-hatch-claret blend, the ancestors of the Philippine lemons.

Again according to Lance de la Torre, it was Freddie Yulo, then a close associate of Amado Araneta, who was responsible for spreading out the hulseys lemon hackles to the breeders in Negros Occidental. Where and when the hulseys lemon hackles were called the lemons for the first time was not clear. It was believed however, that it was around this time that the name was shortened to lemons.

Was Hulseys' hatch-claret-butcher blend a strain or a cross?

American breeder Owen McGuinness was the man who bred for Duke Hulseys the butcher hatch claret blend that was to become the lemons.

For sure the blend started as a cross, as battle fowl. What was not certain was whether or not it was later set into a strain.

Some accounts, including that of Paeng Araneta himself, had them as a strain, others said they remained a cross.

But not all lemons, brought here by Hulseys were of the same butcher hatch claret blend. The lemon 84, for one, was supposed to be of a different bloodline.

The earlier fowl Hulsey brought in, that was in 1964, were mostly straight combs. They were the roots of the batchoy lemons.

The next big batch came in 1967. They were mostly pea combs, like the 84.

It was possible that Hulsey really had strains out of these blends. But at the same time he was also fighting triple crosses of his hatch, claret and butcher; or whatever other blood was contained in his battle fowl. American breeders at the time were fond of the three-way rotational cross method of breeding.

A rotational three-way cross is done by employing three blood lines. Let's say at first a hatch and a claret were bred to produce a 2-way hatch-claret blend. Then a butcher cock was thrown into the hatch-claret blend to produce a butcher x hatch-claret triple cross. Subsequently a hatch cock was again thrown in to increase the proportion of the hatch blood. The following year, another claret was mated into the cross, then next year a butcher, so forth and so on.

Breeders who desired to maintain this as a cross and not a set-strain took extra care not to resort to inbreeding by using unrelated hatches, clarets and butchers. However, those who desired otherwise could easily do it by resorting, at some point, to brother-sister mating or back to pa, grandpa or other inbreeding combinations.

Possibly, too, the hulsey blend started as a triple cross, and through subsequent inbreeding, ended up a strain.

However, what McGuinness and Hulsey did to their stock was their own.

Regardless, the fact was that the Negros breeders who first had the hulsey birds, whether they were inbred animals or not, really went to work and employed their own inbreeding methods for purposes of setting their own strains.

Most of these breeders because they only had battle cocks or the male of the specie, used the back-to-father method of line in-breeding.

What the different breeders had then were brood cocks of the hulsey lemon hackle variety, which, might have been not a breed or strain, but battle crosses that were not even closely related to one another.

It was when these birds came in the hands of responsible breeders, the likes; of Freddie Yulo, Nonoy Jalandoni, Paeng Araneta, Batchoy Alunan, Juancho Aguirre, Bob Cuenca, Tony Trebol, Lance dela Torre, the Maravillas and the Ampils, Joe Laureño, and others that the respective lines of lemons were created — different strains of Philippine lemons.

Whether or not Hulsey really got his lemon as a strain is now immaterial. Hulsey had his hulsey lemon, but, definitely we have got ours. Thanks to Filipino breeders who had put in so many years of frustration, inspiration, effort, and dedication, in order to create the various Philippine lemon strains.

The Negros breeders

The brothers Freddie and Mariano Yulo were among these Negros breeders who helped develop the lemon strains. Moreover, they were the ones credited for bringing to Negros most of the Hulsey cocks then in the hands of the Aranetas in Manila.

The brothers who were close to the Aranetas served as the pipeline of many Negros breeders to the hulsey fowl. They also had their own strain, the Hinigaran lemons, Hinigaran,

Negros Occidental being their hometown.

Another of these breeders was the late Mayor Nonoy Jalandoni of La Carlota, Negros Occidental. He created his own lemon strains which he fought, popularized, and later shared with the other members of the La Carlota group- Mayor Juancho Aguirre, Bob Cuenca and Tony Trebol. To these days these three remained top lemon breeders.

Mayor Aguirre confided to Pit Games that today, of the three of them Bob Cuenca possessed the purest of the lemons as Cuenca succeeded up to these days, in maintaining his line with no or just little infusion.

This was a confirmation of a claim by Richard Infante, a long time breeding and conditioning assistant to Bob Cuenca.

During an earlier interview with Pit Games Infante said his boss had, for more than 30 years, succeeded in maintaining the hulsey lemon almost in its original state.

At about the same time that the members of the La Carlota Group of Nonoy Jalandoni were breeding their own lemon strains, or even earlier as some accounts had it, Paeng Araneta and Batchoy Alunan also had their lemons.

Then in 1967, Paeng Araneta who already had acquired some of the Alunan lemons, imported a Duke Hulsey lemon hackled pea combed, yellow legged cock. It was rare as most of Duke's lemon hackles were straight comb. The cock, which was sporting leg band no. 84 became the founder of the historical lemon 84 line.

The coming of the 84s

In 1972 the 84s stunned the cocking world by winning the international, besting a field composed of all-imported line-ups. The popularity of the lemons in general, and the lemon 84s in particular, spread through out the land. Breeders from outside Negros started breeding the lemons.

One from Manila, Peter Uy, has for more than 30 years now maintained different lines of lemons infused with different imported bloods.

Renown cocker Francis Afable, considered an authority on bloodlines, said that Uy has succeeded in maintaining different lemon 84 lines infused with Billy Ruble blue face, Harry Lee Strouth butcher, Dad Gleezen whitehackle, and some sweaters, yellow legged hatches, and albanys. According to Afable, these blood lines gave the lemons the much needed shot in the arm.

Another Luzon breeder Tiny Meneses vouched for the blending prowess of the lemon and considered it one of the best base lines.

Meneses once wrote in a local magazine:

“ Lemon is one of the best bloodlines there is to produce good battlecrosses. Lemons are also good even when fought pure. Lemons are smart fowl, sometimes they are at their best when they are at their dullest. They simply kill their opponents very quickly without any fuss. Lemons cross very well.”

The lemons and the sweaters

Sources also told this writer that, at present, there are breeders who are breeding the lemons but are hiding the fact from the public. These breeders, for commercial reasons, prefer

to advertise their birds as sweaters or other imported breeds.

It is understandable. They want buyers to believe that their birds are American breeds over which they enjoy exclusive rights, and thus, are not easily accessible. Of course, on the contrary, the lemons are readily available in Negros and other parts of the country.

What they might not have realized is that the sweater which was originated by Harold Brown out of yellow-legged macleans might contain the blood of the hulsey lemon or vice versa.

Francis Atable wrote in Pit Games no. 3:

“. . . this popular strain (sweater) started in the United States inside the breeding farm of Harold Brown. He supposedly got a yellow legged mclean cock from Ted Mclean and bred it over a mclean-leiper hen with substantial success in the mating. After blending them the first year, breeding went back to the dad.”

“These $\frac{3}{4}$ mcleans made history. Some breeders I talked with were saying that the pea combed, yellow legged and lemon hackled Duke Hulsey lemon popular here is the same strain as Harold Brown’s. The late Robbie White was said to have confirmed this before he died.”

According to the distinguished Negros breeders I talked with, the lemon blends with most blood lines because it is a perfect combination of power in the hatch in it, speed in the claret in it, and cutting ability in the butcher in it.

Bob Cuenca crosses the lemon with hatch-claret to increase power and speed. In effect, Bob Cuenca was just adding more hatch-claret blood in proportion to the butcher blood.

Paeng Araneta blends it with the blue face, adding more hatch, to add gameness and also power to his already quick 84s.

Juancho Aguirre has for years been winning in style with his lemon-cecil greys and lately with lemon sweaters and lemon kelsos.

The Ampils have their own lemon-roundheads, lemon-dan grays, lemon-hatch blends. And, of course, Lance de la Torre has his formidable lemon-boston roundhead crosses.

Joe Laureño, has been doing pretty well with his lemon-dink fair crosses.

Truly, indeed, Lance de la Torre summed it up in so few a words when he said: “In Negros you’re not considered a breeder when you don’t breed the lemon.”

The talents of the Negros breeders

It could be the original hulsey lemons were not a breed but battle crosses that might not be even related to one another. Most likely, the Negros breeders who got them were not breeding seed fowls but battle cocks. It could be only because of the talent of some of these breeders that lemon strains were created.

These breeders created strains out of one individual brood cock. So the different lemon strains may not be related to one another as they are mostly products of line breeding to a single hulsey lemon battle cock. These individual cocks might have come from different families of lemon hackled hulsey fowl.

Definitely, the different lemon strains have different genetic composition as each of the breeders of the lemon strains used different bloodlines in the hen side of the original matings

from which they started the line breeding back to the cock.

As examples to illustrate this point Pit Games interviewed the originators of the lemon 84, the lemon guapo, and the main man behind the batchoy lemons.

The lemon 84

According to the personal account of Rafael “Paeng” C. Araneta (RCA) he got a pea comb fowl from Duke Hulsey in the mid sixties with leg band number 84. He bred this cock to his earlier hulsey lemon hens out of stock from his friend, the late Batchoy Alunan.

He then mated the female offspring of this mating back to the father to produce three-quarters of the original lemon 84 cock. The males of this generation, Paeng told this writer, just kept on winning and became so popular. These he called the lemon 84s in reference to the leg band number of the original cock.

From hereon, in almost every generation, he applied both the brother sister mating and the breeding back to the father methods. At some point, some green legged fowl were produced. Thus, he was able to create sub-families of green legged lemons, making the lemon 84 as, perhaps, the only lemon strain that formally has a sub-family of green legged fowl.

The 84’s come in both pea comb and straight comb. The straight combs do not look much different from some of the other lemon strains in Negros. And, according to Paeng, the old 84’s fought similar to the other lemons except that they were much quicker.

At the height of the popularity of the lemon 84 many Negros breeders claimed to have the strain when in fact what they got were lemons of other variety. Paeng, however, admitted to having lent 84’s to Mayor Jalandoni and Tony Trebol. Thus, these two top breeders might have really bred the 84’s in addition to the equally formidable lemon lines they already had. It was also possible that from these two gentlemen the lemon 84 bloodline was spread out to their friends and buyers.

Today the lemon 84 bloodline is very much alive not only in the hands of many breeders all over the country, but also in the farm of Paeng Araneta himself.

Better than ever lemon 84.

“My lemon 84 now is better than ever,” Paeng told this writer. “although, so is the competition,” he added.

When asked why, and what’s the difference between the 84 of the old and the present day 84, Mr. Araneta said:

“ The 84’s had always been quicker compared to the other lemons. Now they are even quicker and they pack more power with the infusion of my blue face hatch blood.”

Later, at RCA’s farm, this writer discovered that the present day 84 is also pretty by lemon standard. Lemons have never been known for being beautiful, but the new 84’s are. And, they are quick and agile, with some power to spare.

Yes, Paeng’s “ Better than Ever” lemon 84’s may have a future as much as they have a past.



Mayor Juancho Aguirre and his lemon guapo

The lemon guapo

Another strain of lemon that has been around for more than 30 years is the lemon guapo of Mayor Juancho Aguirre.

According to mayor Juancho in the sixties and the 70s Negros was full of so-called lemon lines. There were the 84, the batchoy, the togo, the massa, and the hinigaran, to name a few. The 84 was Paeng's creation. Batchoy and massa were name of the breeders who originated these lines, while Hinigaran is the place of Freddie Yulo, who had been the Negrenses' foremost source of hulsey lemon cocks.

At that time most Negros breeders, including the group of Mayor Juancho, did not have the technical knowledge and support that present day breeders enjoy. For them, it was, almost always a hit and miss affair. Thus, they really had a hard time producing good birds, much less maintain their winning lines.

Indeed, it was the reason, mayor Juancho said, that they sponsored the Duke himself to stay in Negros for a while to teach them the rudiments of breeding and fighting.

Because of this lack of scientific knowledge, coupled with the fact that the breeders also failed to assess accurately the value of these lemons, most of these lines either went to extinction or took the back seat.

The 84s and the batchoys are still around. The massa and togo are no longer heard of. The hinigaran has reincarnated as the Guapo line.

Here is the story:

At about the time, Paeng's 84s were making waves, disaster hit mayor Aguirre's stock. Avian pest wiped out his flock. Among, the very few survivors were a lemon brood cock and a baby stag that was suffering from a limber neck as result of barely surviving the epidemic.

Discouraged and decided to take a leave from breeding, the mayor gave the brood cock

to his brother-in-law Bob Cuenca who had a lot of the same lemon strain- the hinigaran variety.

Mayor Juancho also gave the surviving limber necked hinigaran lemon baby stag to a kumpadre who peddled chickens.

After a year, the mayor casually asked his kumpadre about the limber necked stag. To his surprise, the limber neck was not only fine but indeed was a very beautiful specimen of a cock.

They started calling it guapo. After a while they fought guapo. It won four fights practically unscathed. On its fifth win guapo was badly wounded.

Mayor Juancho, whose interest in breeding had been slowly revived, decided to breed guapo. He bred the erstwhile limber neck to some cecil hens and some hatch hens.

He kept breeding the best pullets back to guapo, at the same time employ some brother-to-sister matings, until he was able to set the strain he called lemon guapo.

“I continued to play around with many inbreeding variations of the guapo line, always keeping in mind absolute quality control,” Mayor Aguirre told this writer.

Eventually the line with the infusion of the cecil blood was discontinued because according to him the cecils tend to produce oversized offspring. (The cecils referred to were not of Cecil Davies bloodline but a line of Duke Hulse which Duke called as such. They were reds with white under hackles.)

The malatuba family of the guapo

After almost forty years of playing around with the guapo bloodline, suddenly a bunch of the present day guapos came out malatuba or pumpkin in plumage.

These pumpkins are direct descendants to a guapo lemon that had just recently died but not before reaching the age of nine. According to mayor juancho, this particular cock became a hennie or binabaye after its last moult.

He consulted veterinarians on the phenomenon. All they could say was that it could be a result of altered hormone balance as brood cocks were normally pumped with hormones to induce fertility.

How about the bunch of pumpkin guapos? They could not be result of hormone imbalance. They could only be throwbacks.

The pumpkins came out of a likewise pumpkin cock that is son to the old lemon-turned-binabaye brood cock. This pumpkin lemon broodcock could be a case of “throwback beyond the original.”

The original hulse cocks brought to the country in the sixties were not malatuba. The throw back must be way way back to their earlier predecessors. Perhaps, somewhere along the line long before the hatch-claret-butcher lines were blended by Duke Hulse, any one or more of the said bloodlines carried some pumpkin genes. I suspect it must have been the clarets.

According to the History of Game Strains (Johnson and Holcomb) in 1927, a Duryea cock which was thrown in to contribute to the development of the claret bloodline, produced many wonderful pumpkin cocks.

This could be the reason why Juancho’s lemon guapo is now producing pumpkin throwbacks. And, their fighting styles? Well, JGA’s pumpkin lemon guapos are the most powerful lemons I’ve seen. And, they still fight like lemons should—smart and quick.

Joe Laureño and the batchoys.

The batchoy lemons were among the first lemon lines that made it to the big time. They were straight combed, lemon hackled low stationed cocks and originated by the late Batchoy Alunan. Unknown to many then, there was one other man behind the success of the batchoys—Joe Laureño, Mr Alunan's trusted chickenman.

Batchoy Alunan died in 1980. Now 25 years after, the batchoys, in their original state, are very much alive in the farm of Joe Laureño.

Joe had been associated with Batchoy from 1968 to the latter's death in 1980. As a parting gift from the family, he was made to settle for some fowl instead of cash. From then on, the burden of preserving the batchoy lines fell upon Joe's shoulder.

According to Joe, he got 2 brood cocks and 13 hens. Out of these, he had managed to reconstruct the batchoy bloodlines.

Joe told Pit games that there were actually three kinds of lemon in the batchoy yards. There was the 84, the left ins and the line that was called the batchoys. Of course there were also other bloodlines such as the equally formidable batchoy greys.

The line called batchoy is low stationed and very barako. This particular batchoys were tough and they fought like hatches. The left ins were beautiful and were the smart ones. The blend of the two lines gave them numerous successes then, along with Francis de Borja and Jesse Cabalza, who were foremost chicken fighters of the time.

The 84s really came from the original 84 cock. The original 84 cock was with Batchoy Alunan for a while and Joe bred it to some of their own lemons.

With just the 2 cocks and 13 hens, Joe did not only manage to restore the batchoys, he was also able to discover blends that made his lemons comparable to the best of the best bloodlines of today.

How did he do it?

Joe did it with the time-honored method of back crossing to the purer parent, and other forms of in-breeding. Of course, he also resorted to the inevitable infusion of new blood at some point. New bloods that were eventually slowly bred out in order to once again purify the lemon blood.



The author, Rey
Baienting with a now
very rare Batchoy
lemon.

He has fought them crossed with several different bloodlines with same success-- in the bakbakan, in the world slasher, and in many great gathering of great feathered warriors.

As most of us know, Joe is very active in the big times nowadays. He is now among the country's big boys. Joe and his son Johnny have won the prestigious Balbina Breeders Cup twice already.

The entry JVL is always in the thick of the big fights. Where and when the best chickens of the land see action, Mang Joe and his fowl are there to reckon with.

In his very beautiful farm that this writer visited, there was an array of imported dink fairs sweaters, yellow legged hatches, Roger Robert's hatchets, mcleans and other hatches. Yes, there were some two thousand beauties on cord. Amid these jewels, still were the batchoy lemons of the old. Not so beautiful, but so precious.

**Lance: In negros you are not a breeder
if you have got no lemons**



*Lance de la Torre with Raul Ebeo (left) and the author
at Lance's farm in Talisay, Negros Occidental.*

Inasmuch as you cannot start a story about the lemons without mentioning Paeng Araneta, certainly, you could not end it without reference to Lance de la Torre.

Lance, the big boy who rose from the ranks. The former policeman who resigned from service to pursue a much greater love of his—cockfighting.

He went to Manila to condition, handle and tie the knife on the chickens of prominent cockers.

In due time, he proved his worth.

He found a partner and he was suddenly into breeding, and, became a world slasher

champion, the first to score 8 straight wins in the wsc.

Lance's lemons are of the Nonoy Jalandoni and Nene Velez variety. Not much different from those of Juancho Aguirre and the rest of the La Carlota group. His lemons are probably the most expensive around, but like the Rolls Royce, they are worth every penny, even more.

His lemons blend well with his roundheads, and with most of his other lines. Straight combed, and medium stationed, they come with some shades of malatuba in the breast. They look like the old time lemons but they pack more wallop and are quicker than most. They are really a wonder to behold.

When I was in Lance's farm, in Talisay, Negros Occ., I was treated to a long sparring session. The lemons were sparred along side his newly acquired bloodlines such as the much sought after Jr. Belt Cowan roundhead, as well as his old reliables such as his boston and his regular roundheads. There were also his hatches and his greys, the lance greys that sold for more than a hundred grand a trio.

Against this formidable array of distinguished bloodlines, Lance's lemons held their own.

The master breeder in lance has somehow managed to infuse the much needed booster to enable his lemons fight as fit for the modern times.

His lemons are intelligent, quick and powerful. Considering Lance's obsession with gameness, we can be rest assured too that his lemons are more than fairly game.

Lance, the man who said that: "you are not a breeder if you don't have the lemon," also admitted to this writer: "I am not an all out lemon fanatic, I know the limitations of the lemons but I know its blending value too."

The lemons' attributes and records

Known for its brainy fighting style, accurate cutting ability and excellent timing, the lemon is, without doubt, one of the great bloodlines in the history of cockfighting.

After forty years of remarkable presence in the Philippine cocking scene, the lemons have definitely passed the test of time, and with flying colors.

Despite the advent of the so-called modern yellow legged and green legged hatches, the super kelsos, the magnum and bonecrusher hatches, the numerous variations of the old time roundheads, and other newly created or revitalized old strains, the lemons are still sought after by top notch breeders who know of the lemons' value.

The lemons first caught the attention of the international cocking community in 1972. That year the lemon 84s of Paeng Araneta won the international derby. The 84s were the only local breed entered in that grand event.

Another high point of the lemons came in 1997 when Lance de la Torre, in tandem with Patrick Antonio, won solo that year's edition of the World Slasher Cup II. Lance de la Torre unveiled to the world the might and ring savvy of his lemon-roundhead crosses to score 8 straight victories. It was then an unprecedented feat.

Prior to that no one had ever scored 8 straight wins in the WSC. The record was eventually tied 7 years later by Rudy Salud and Lito Orillaza who copped the 2004 edition of world

slasher cup I. Salud and Orillaza showed cocks coming from bloodlines of another Negros stalwart, Danilo Hinlo.

In year 2000, Bob Cuenca, a member of the La Carlota, Negros lemon group, likewise in tandem with Patrick Antonio, won a share of that year's January edition of the world slasher.

That same year, Peping Ricafort scored a grand slam. He emerged co-champion in both the January and June editions of the world slasher cup. Ricafort later divulged in a magazine interview that he always made it a point that all cocks he bred have drops of the lemon 84 blood which he got directly from the originator Paeng Araneta.

In January 2001, Tony Trebol, another member of the La Carlota lemon group won another WSC title.

These series of major achievements by the lemons were no easy feats considering they came in the wake of perennial challenges from the sweaters of Carol Nesmith, Bruce Barnette, and Dink Fair, the Roger Roberts hatchets; and the birds of Johnny Jumper, Ray Alexander, and those of many other American and local breeders.

Brainy and quick

The lemons are medium to low station. They fight smart, cut well and have excellent timing. They come in plumage from red with lemon hackles to downright lemon like color. They come either in straight or pea combs, but mostly straight combs, except for the 84s which are basically pea combs. More than ninety percent of the lemons come in yellow legs. A few are green legged. Fewer still are white legged. They are not as beautiful as, say, the sweaters, but the lemons have a bearing of the royalty and confidence of a champion. The lemons exude an aura, so to say.

In the pit, they keep their cool under extreme pressure. Under attack, the lemon extricate itself by either gracefully side stepping or topping the opponent. When attacking, the lemon does not resort to fancy shuffles and multiple cutting. It simply hits with fatal single strokes.

The lemon may not look so fast in its movements but, in reality, it is quick to the draw and extremely accurate. There is rhythm to its blows that draws the opponent to its beat, and poetry in its motions that baffles the opponent into lowering its guards.

The lemons are patient and brainy. They are what is called "abang" in Tagalog and "kumpas" in Bisaya. They wait for the opponent to make the first move. They seem to know that, more often than not, the first move is a mistake.

Then the lemons are vertical flyers. When the other cock strikes the lemon goes up vertically to top the opponent, and not diagonally as most cocks do.

This is geometry and physics in action. When two birds go up together in the air vertically, the point of contact is prolonged and gravity more centered than when one of the birds breaks diagonally forward. Thus, breaking vertically, the bird on top will have more time to inflict damage; whereas, in a diagonal flight the inertia of the forward blow will likely prevent the blade from going deeper into the flesh.

On the ground, when evading blows, the lemon side steps or back pedals instead of ducking. And, it counters accurately. According to Mayor Juancho Aguirre, to him the ultimate maneuver of a cock is back pedaling at the same time "nagiiwan ng paa" or counter striking

effectively. “The lemon can do it, can do it in style,” he said.

Also the lemons are not bill holders. They strike with their feet not with their beaks. They have this staccato type of blows that seem to always beat the opponent to the draw. In breeding, too, the lemon blends well with almost any other bloodline.

The future

The Philippine lemons have a colorful past, and a solid present. What about the future stored for them?

The lemons should still be around for the years to come. Efforts by our best breeders to preserve the line, improve on them, and correct the weaknesses will guarantee that the lemons are here to stay for several decades more.

The lemon’s main drawbacks are the lack of station and power. Its gameness, according to some is also a suspect. But this has been disputed by others who swore that there are dead game lemons as well.

With the infusion of other bloodlines, and the respective breeders ability to perceive and foresee, these problems have been corrected.

The lemon guapo of mayor Juancho is an example of a new generation lemons. Lance’s lemons are comparable to, if not better than, most of the modern day sweaters, kelsos, and roundheads.

Also, there abound all over the country, new breeders that are out to continue breeding, improving and propagating the lemons.

Morover, the lemons have continued to prove their blending worth. A look at the winning crosses in the big fights nowadays will show the high percentage of fowl with lemon blood. The JVL dink-lemon crosses are example of these winning fowl, as well, as those of Dicky Lim’s and the Julao Bros.

Yes, the great Duke Hulsey brought his lemons to the Philippines, but the Filipino breeders, were the ones who created the lemons of today – The Philippine Lemons.

About RB Sugbo Gamefowl Technology (Visit rbscal.webs.com)

“Measured against the eternity, our time on earth is just a blink of an eye. But the consequence of it will last forever. The deeds of this life are destiny of the next” --- Rick Warren in his book the Purpose Driven Life.

The above quotation is in dedication to a friend who passed away a few years ago. Ernesto “Erning” Panuncillo. To us, who had known him well, he was more than just a dedicated sabungero. Ever helpful to anybody who needed his expertise; he was extremely honest; and selfless, almost to a fault, he was indeed an epitome of a Filipino cocker.

We called each other “Sanga”(partner in Cebuano). We were more than just cocking buddies. We were life-long friends— like brothers indeed.

He was always helping me in my cocking ventures. When I decided to go full blast with breeding some years back, he helped me sourced out top breeding materials.

It was because of him that I was able to acquire the patriarch of all the RB Sugbo ponkan lines -- my favorite brood cock “Ponkan,” an EDL/Excellence sweater, who at the time was otherwise, definitely not for sale in the hands of his brother Arthur, proprietor of the cockers and agrivet product distribution chain, Pacific Barato.

Most of all, he was the one who first mentioned my name to publisher Manny Berbano. It led to my writing for Pit Games and Llammodo magazines, an opportunity I cherished most.

Because of my knowing Manny I was able to acquire more top-quality imported and local materials; and, met in person, distinguished breeders, and legends of our time. And, because of Pit Games and Llammodo, I gained new friends and customers from as far as the Ilocos regions in the north, and Basilan in the south, not to mention the many others outside the country. These things, I owed to Sanga.

Erning was also instrumental to the mission-vision of RB Sugbo chicken venture. Sanga had repeatedly told me: **“Breed for the common sabungeros, the ordinary cockers and small time breeders who have neither the access nor the means to acquire expensive fowl. And, don’t just sell them chickens, also afford them technology.”**

His idea was that we will not just breed and sell fowl but also take active part in technology transfer, thus the name **RB Sugbo Gamefowl Technology**.

On our part, with right technology, we could produce more good chickens at much lower cost. Therefore, we could price our fowl at a level affordable to the common sabungeros.

Now, RB Sugbo Gamefowl Technology is committed to helping the common sabungeros.

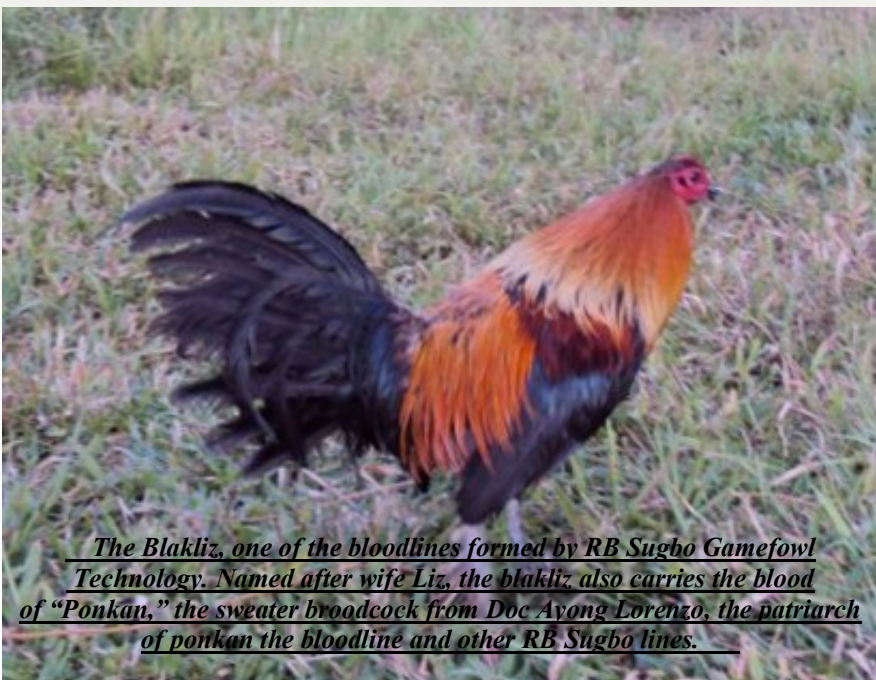
RB Sugbo breeds quality fowl affordable to the common sabungero. It is also engaged in the transfer of gamefowl technology, for as economically as possible. RB Sugbo GT has been doing this since 2003. RB Sugbo is constantly into research on the different aspects of cockfighting such as selection, handling, conditioning, pointing, and effective knife designs.

Since 2007, RB Sugbo GT has been totally committed to helping **Masang Nagmamanok (MANA) Inc.**, a nationwide movement championing the cause of the common sabungeros.

Sugbo bloodlines such as the Ponkans and Sugbo Lemons, priced well within the reach of the common sabungero, are holding their own against respectable opposition.

RB Sugbo publications are also well circulated among the common sabungeros, mainly through MANA. It also conducts seminars, trainings and at-farm-hands -on and/or on-line technology transfer.

RB Sugbo GT is also technical and marketing consultant to a number of upstart breeders in the Philippines. Founder Rey Bajenting is also founder of MANA, writer in Pit Games and Llammodo Magazines, Editor of Dyaryo Larga and founding director of Central Visayas Breeders Association (CVBA).



The Blakliz, one of the bloodlines formed by RB Sugbo Gamefowl Technology. Named after wife Liz, the blakliz also carries the blood of “Ponkan,” the sweater broodcock from Doc Ayong Lorenzo, the patriarch of ponkan the bloodline and other RB Sugbo lines.



The Blueface of RB Sugbo. This bloodline is a very good blender with most other bloodlines. The RBS blueface came from good friend Jason Garces, who in turn got this valuable bloodline from Gov. Arthur "Chongkee" Uy of Davao. This particular brood cock has also been loaned to another friend Ben Dimaano. This cock is the originator of the sugbo blueface.

The Philippine Lemons

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