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presents a feature article from Blitz martial arts magazine Vol 24 No 8 (August 2010):

Barrie Revell, Hanshi



AUSTRALIA'S #1 MARTIAL ARTS MAGAZINE

\$8.95 W35
BLITZ
201001034293
GG 26307
Kingsley Newsagency
002-000-002

Cov
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040810 3
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AUSTRALASIAN MARTIAL ARTS

AUSTRALIAN PUBLICATION
Vol. 24 No. 8
AUS. \$8.95 Inc. GST
NZ. \$10.50 Inc. GST

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Blitz magazine is published
by Blitz Publications
Pty Ltd ACN 083 149 286

Printed by

GRAPHIC
IMPRESSIONS
TOTAL PRINT SOLUTIONS

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Young Black-belt takes test in Okinawa

When 17-year-old Isshinryu karate and Ryukyu kobudo Black-belt Claudio Vidal was offered the opportunity to travel to Okinawa for intense training and a third Black-belt grading, he jumped at the chance.

While on the small island far off Japan's southern coast, known as 'the birthplace of karate', Vidal also met some of the grandmasters of Isshinryu and Ryukonkai, such as Angi Uezu, Tsuyoshi Uechi, Kotaro Iha and Tetsuhiro Hokama (who runs the Okinawa Martial Art Museum and is the author and producer of the movie *Kuro-Obi*, or *Black Belt*, among others). Following some intense training sessions, the young Aussie was also graded to Shodan (1st Dan Black-belt) by Grandmaster Iha of Ryukonkai Kobudo (a system of traditional Okinawan weaponry combat).

Vidal, a Year 12 student at Good Samaritan College in Hinchinbrook, NSW,



L-R: Slywa, Vidal, Iha & Shane Lehmann

said he was thankful for the support of his teachers and principal John Lo Cascio, and for the opportunity given him by his Sensei, Shihan Robert Slywa from Tactical Defence Studio in Sadleir, NSW.

"It was amazing to meet these great masters that for years I've been reading and learning about, but had only ever seen in photos and videos," said the teenager.

Vidal also got to train with a group from Isshinryu America, led by Sensei Ed Johnson, a first-generation student of the style's founder, Grandmaster Shimabuku.

The young Black-belt hopes to return to Okinawa in future to take part in a tournament, but for now is now focused on getting through his final year at high school.

"Finishing year 12 has been very hard; there's a lot of pressure with finishing all my assignments and getting good marks, as I am aware that my future depends on it," he said. "Because of this I've had to cut down my training hours and I also put off attending any tournaments this year."

AMAA chief awarded 10th Dan

Australian Martial Arts Association (AMAA) President Hanshi Barrie Revell was promoted to 10th Dan by a large gathering of senior instructors and students on 26 June. The ceremony, which took 15 months of planning by many people, was held at Rydges Hotel in Adelaide, SA.

Professor Steve Miranda, 8th Dan, of the National Karate Academies (NKA), presented the award on behalf of his own organisation, other AMAA clubs and Hanshi Revell's senior students from his club, Shin Gi Tai.

The promotion came as a great surprise to Hanshi Revell, who was both embarrassed and humbled by all the fuss. He had no idea that the gathering – supposedly to celebrate a huge grading of the students of the

NKA – was going to feature him.

The event commenced in the morning at the Unley High School in Netherby with the senior gradings. Matt Cutler and Steve Kleemann both passed their 3rd Dans, before 61-year-old Shihan Joe De Innocentis showed great skill in his sparring and advanced kata to be awarded his 5th Dan.

Kyoshi Craig Smith was then tested for his 7th Dan with numerous sparring drills and self-defence against a selection of weapons. The grading culminated in a number of sword kata and *bokken* techniques assisted by Andrew Quin from Shin Gi Tai.

Following the high Dan gradings were dozens of 1st and 2nd Dan gradings and several hundred coloured-belt gradings. All were watched carefully by NKA chief Professor Miranda and his

other senior Black-belts.

Once the gradings were finally over, everyone scrambled to get to the Rydges Hotel for the evening's presentation. The award to Hanshi Revell came first and several speeches were made outlining how much he has done for martial arts across Australia. Revell was presented with a red and gold embroidered Grandmaster's belt, plus a certificate with 27 signatures representing a total of 108 Dan grades. Not to be outdone, Revell then presented a certificate of proficiency in katana to Craig Smith for his outstanding display in that component of his 7th Dan grading earlier in the day. He also presented his two most senior students, Geoff Worden



Revell (right) receives his award

and Andrew Quin, with Renshi 5th and 4th Dan certificates, respectively.

Professor Miranda gave several awards, including promoting Shihan Chris Hutchinson to a provisional 6th Dan. "Chris is not a big man by any standard but he has the heart of a lion," said Gary Simpson, Chief Instructor of Zanshin Kai Karate Do and WA state rep for the AMAA.

SOMA can provide training, tournaments, gradings (after a qualifying period and assessment) and a whole host of other benefits. For more information about how you or your martial arts organisation can join the **Society of Martial Arts** please contact admin@societyofmartialarts.com