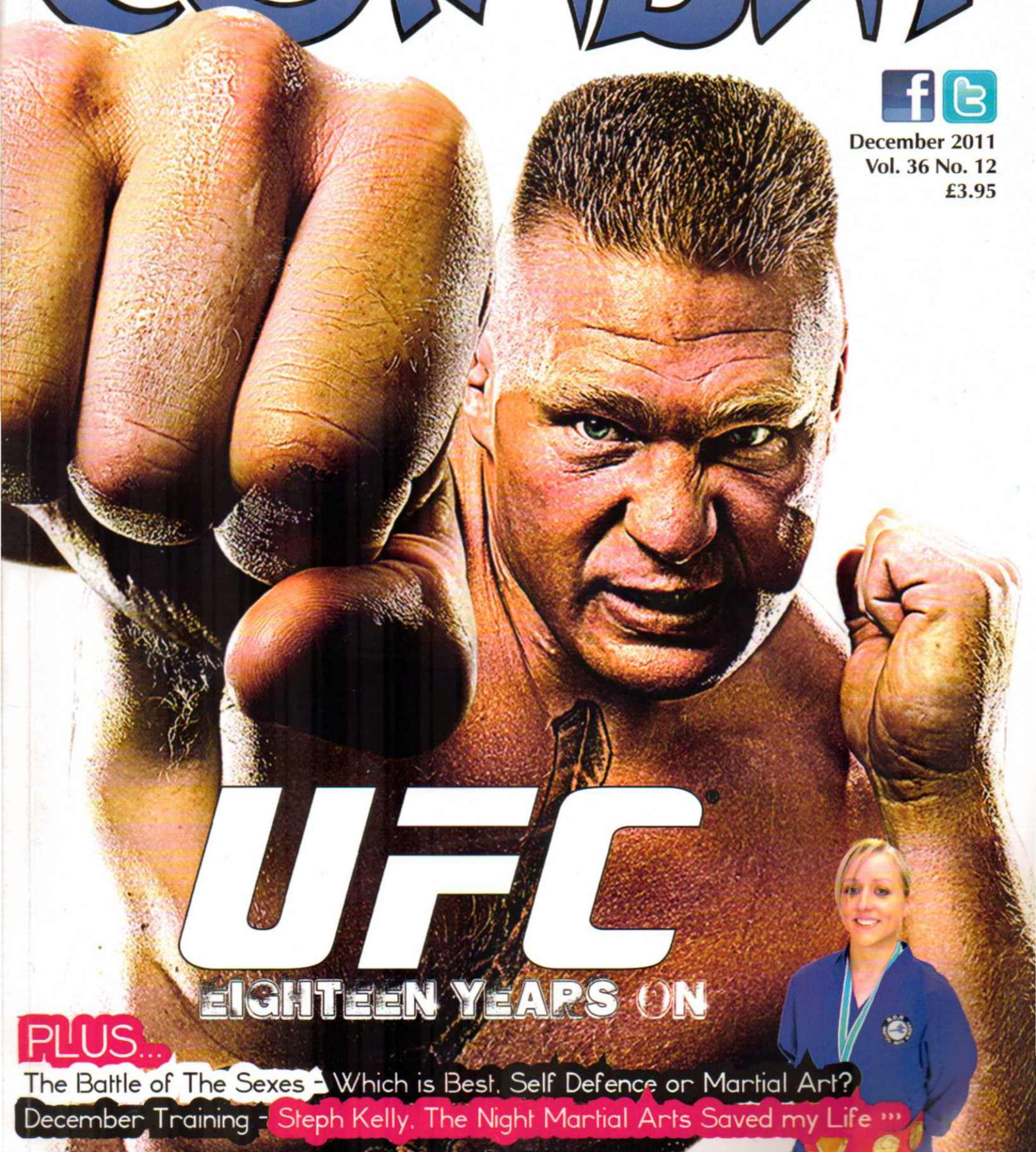


COMBAT



December 2011
Vol. 36 No. 12
£3.95



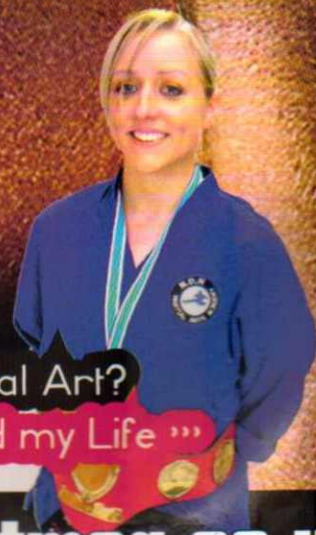
UFC

EIGHTEEN YEARS ON

PLUS...

The Battle of The Sexes - Which is Best, Self Defence or Martial Art?

December Training - Steph Kelly, The Night Martial Arts Saved my Life



visit us at www.combatmag.co.uk

which is best self defence or martial art?

by guy bloom - defiance combat self defense

Of course it's a question with a built in debate, which makes it great for a column, are they actually different, the same thing, so closely connected they can't be separated?

It's difficult for the average person off the street to know what it is they are really signing up for, and for most it is as simple as if you are teaching me to 'look after myself' and I am not wearing a white suit or similar attire and it's a set amount of sessions, then it's self-defence; whereas if it's one of the traditions: Karate, Judo, Kung Fu then it's a martial art.

It is for many people looking in, all in the advertising and the marketing, for most people if it says self defence then it is self defence, but it's not quite as simple as that, as we associate these two forms of study as being both separate and yet connected. So let me reflect on the layman's thinking and expectations

Martial arts are an end to end proposition, they are in their truest form a complete physical, emotional and spiritual (in the sense of facing ones own fears) form of study, they are about time spent in learning and reflection, the embodiment of the this for many people is the shaolin monk type level of focus and commitment to a way of being that encompasses one's life....it is the martial way. When people sign up to learn a martial art, they are more often than not connecting to a tradition that enables them, not just by the technique but by the history. For many learning a martial art is about being able to embark on a journey, that will take years and potentially be an area of study, personal challenge and contemplation for their whole life.

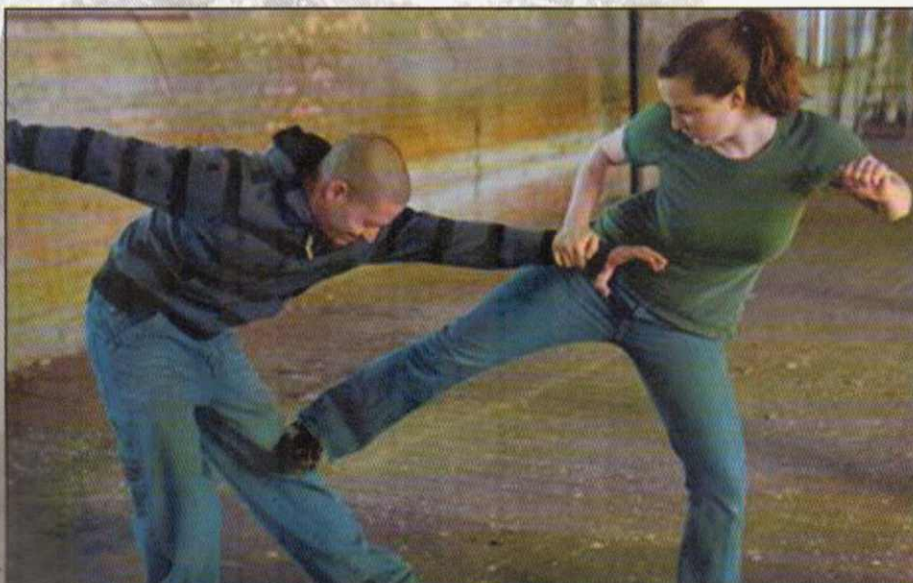
Self Defence on the other hand, for many is the distillation of a martial art, it is the 'bits that really work', it is the 'martial' and not the 'art', many people signing up to learn self defence are not interested in learning a martial art, they want to learn to 'protect themselves', they may even want their family to learn how to defend themselves, where as they might well be looking to martial arts to engender a way of approaching life, they look to self-defence as a 'safety tool', which you can liken to 'teaching your kids or yourself to swim'; it's just one of those you have to learn to do, just in case", this is more about making a visit, than making a journey.

Now this is a column and not a thesis, so feel free to volunteer any variable on this, as I have limited space, but you get the gist of it.

So which is best? (You know that's a trick question)

I'd like to offer the following as a start for some debate:

- * Martial arts give you a tradition and foundation that pulls on history, it demands focus, there are no short cuts and with dedication gives you a physical competence and a personal presence that is grounded in something that empowers you in your connection and dedication to it.



Self Defence gives you a confidence in the now! Competence of a set repertoire rather than mastery of an entire spectrum is required, it might not be as difficult to learn but it fulfils a requirement and in its own way adds huge value to a person's life in terms of confidence and control.

Of course there is the third way of thinking about this, they are both the same thing, they are if you like, different ends of the same stick, consider a hamburger or a rump steak, they are very different, and yet we recognise them as meat.

And so it is with self defence and the martial arts, they sit on a spectrum, they are brothers who have the same parents, but took different paths, and thus they are completely different and yet still the same.

Of course times are ever changing, self defence now has its own history, there was a time when you either learned a martial art or you learned nothing, though every martial artist that has been around for a while has been asked the immortal question, "Can you show me a few meat?" or

"Show my son/daughter etc a few moves as they are off to university or some such..." And maybe this is where self defence really began, with the martial artist thinking to themselves, "what do I show this person, if it's just a quick few hours in my friends kitchen teaching them

or their family?". You can look to the military and see their need to teach recruits in accelerated times, effective and repetitive techniques, in the World Wars, agents in the field were taught techniques to evade capture and defend themselves, the need to move from years of dedicated practise to relatively finite time lines has its own history, in fact entire martial arts such as Wing Chun share a history of the need for their creation from the melee of civil war and the need to again teach things at



an accelerated rate as new warriors had to take to the field sooner rather than later; from personal observation I am not sure there is such a thing as a self defence system/programme that has absolutely no connection to a martial art at some level, either rooted in technique, thinking or the experience of the instructor.

Can a self defence programme do what a martial art does? I'd say, "Yes", as I don't think it really is about the art, it's really about the knowledge base of the coach, the environment of you are training in, the honesty of conversation in as to what we are doing here (martial or art), the reality of the training that traditional or not faces 'real' truths.

Much of it sits squarely with the instructor and the intent of the learning experience, once you start to teach someone how to handle 'threat and fear' then you start to impact on the person themselves in a manner that will often live with them for the rest of their lives.

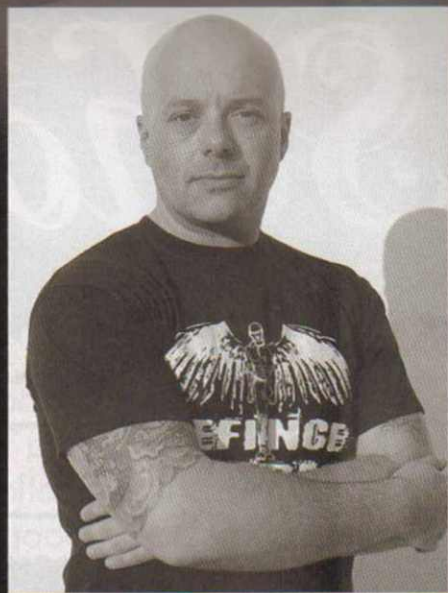
As much as I love the ambiguity of the intellectual debate, I do recognise that we live in a world of 'smoke and mirrors' where the great web site and slick video can sometimes outweigh

the competence of the individual. Does great flyer mean great tuition?

Why is this important? Because we are a community, let's be honest we aren't a big group and what damages one of us damages all of us. We really have to look out for the frauds. Now don't get confused with someone we don't like or don't agree with, that's just opinion. An example would be Krav Maga, which has really taken a beating lately with some of the most recognised names in the field turning out to be frauds; some really competent martial artists paid good money to go and learn Commando Krav Maga and got seriously stung, I was literally booking to go, when that bubble burst!

So it's tricky and we can't wage a war, but we can make sure that as practitioners of martial arts and/or self defence we talk, debate, don't become cult members, challenge what people are marketing and regardless of our area of preference we help each other seek out the best instruction and by helping each other, we help those who rely on us to know the difference.

Be well and Live Brave.



Guy Bloom is the Head Coach for the Defiance Combat Self Defense System, Combat Magazine columnist and an executive coach for a global consultancy. To find out more about the Defiance Combat Flinch Response(tm) Instructor Certification Programme and the Detect, Deter, Defuse, Disengage, Defend, Don't Die(tm) self defence approach: Web: www.defiancecombatselfdefense.com Email: info@defiancecombatselfdefense.com UK Mobile: 07824 542 069

