

## 2011 BONSAI IN THE BLUEGRASS INSTRUCTORS PROFILES

### **ENRIQUE CASTANO**

Growing up in a bonsai household, Enrique Castano was introduced to bonsai and the horticultural world at an early age. His love for nature led to his studies in biology, and he subsequently received a PhD in Biochemistry and Biophysics from the University of Rochester (NY) in 1997. He has done post doctoral research in molecular and cell biology and gene regulation. He currently is a professor at the plant research center in Merida, Mexico and uses his educational background to promote bonsai both in the US and the Latin American world.

Sharing his knowledge in bonsai, he teaches and gives demonstrations in various locations around the world. His trees were selected by The World Bonsai Friendship Federation (2005) and as a gold award penjing in China (2006), and the BCI named his bonsai articles as one of the 100 best in the world. His book "Botany for Bonsai: The Science Behind the Art" serves as a basic building block for bonsai horticulture.

Website: The Bonsai Blog of Enrique Castano

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### **JIM DOYLE**

In 1973, with a B.S. degree in horticulture from Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture, Jim started Nature's Way Nursery and developed an early interest in Asian culture and plants. By 1980, through the influence of Chase Rosade, bonsai passed from being a hobby to a business/life-style. Jim attends many symposia, teaches year round to both adults and children at his studio and travels extensively. After a brief visit to Japan, Jim started a quest for new information. He was involved in founding the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, boasting membership of over 100, and co-chaired the 1992 ABS Convention in Hershey. He has written articles for national publication and consulted regionally in Japanese garden design.

Today, along with his teaching, Jim continues to import bonsai, pots, tools and related garden items. Other interests include conifers, Japanese maples, writing haiku, volleyball, fishing and spending time with his wife Mary Kay and children Sarah and Max (not to be confused with his other hobbies). Jim's favorite tree is, of course, the one he is working on.

Website: Nature's Way Nursery

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### **ROBERT KEMPINSKI**

Bonsai are like potato chips, no one can have just one. Unfortunately I found this out too late. Now my yard in my home in Melbourne, Florida is full of potato chips, rather bonsai trees. It started innocently enough when I first spied bonsai trees in person in 1982 at the Seoul House in Korea. The small microcosms of nature planted a seed, but I was a US Army officer then and couldn't pursue the art. Years later after starting a family and working closely with the Japanese Space Agency, I got acquainted with Japanese language and culture. The seed finally sprouted. My first was a Live Oak acorn that had sprouted in my yard. Years later it is still alive and in a bonsai pot although due for a major restyle to fix some errors made way back then. Many other trees have joined the oak as I have seriously pursued the art.

Neighbors frequently spy me working by flashlight in the dark on my trees as I spend my daylight hours as a Director in CSC Business Development Department. The tranquil pruning and shaping of bonsai serves as a perfect antidote to the business induced stress of proposals.

Living in central Florida, USA, my collection is a mix of tropical and temperate trees that can take the heat of our summers and very mild winters. I especially like Buttonwood, Japanese Black Pine and Willow Leaf Ficus trees. I've had the good fortune to travel extensively around

the US and the world visiting bonsai gardens and exhibitions. Lately I have been traveling sharing my knowledge and approach to bonsai, which as you can tell from my opening is both light hearted but earnest.

When the opportunity arises I show my trees, as I enjoy sharing my art. I've had trees on display at the World Bonsai Show in Washington DC in 2005, at the BCI Conventions in Saint Louis 2004, and Orlando 2002, at the American Bonsai Society Show in Saratoga NY in 2006, at the first ever North American Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY, and at several Bonsai Society of Florida Shows. For the past many years I have displayed trees at the Walt Disney World EPCOT Bonsai display. The trees remain at the display for several weeks and as a result millions of people see the bonsai next to the Japan and China pavilions. I also enter trees at our local club show and serve as curator for the Bonsai Society of Brevard permanent exhibit at the Brevard Zoo. Judges have seen fit to grant my trees several awards including three times having trees selected in the JAL/WBFF Annual Top 100 Trees in the World Photograph Competition, winner of the American Bonsai Society 2002 North American New Talent Competition and runner up in the BCI Ben Oki award. I've provided several articles to bonsai magazines and have published an introductory book about the art of bonsai.

Due to my career I have had lots of leadership experience and have applied that to various bonsai organizations. Presently I am the 1st Vice President of Bonsai Clubs International. It is my desire to apply professional business acumen to improve BCI operations and subsequently the value of BCI membership. In doing so BCI will be able to help promote and elevate the art of bonsai across the globe.

Website: Mahogany Row Studio

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## **MIN HSUAN LO**

Min Hsuan Lo was born in 1956 in China. His family bonsai nursery was built by his father in 1947. As a child, Lo was at his father's side learning the art of bonsai. After graduating from the Chinese University with a degree in Chinese literature, Lo returned home to work in the family bonsai business to develop his bonsai skills.

He began teaching bonsai in Taiwan in 1992, and in 2001 he joined the Ken Kuo Technical University as a bonsai instructor. In 2004, he became the bonsai teacher at Pei Tou Community University. He was one of the founders of the Taiwan Bonsai Creator Association which was started in 1998, and became its Chairman in 2007-2008, and he is currently its Honorary Chairman. TBCA is the most active & powerful bonsai association in Taiwan. Every member must pass a rigorous bonsai competition. Currently TBCA has 134 professional bonsai artists.

Lo has had a number of articles published in BCI, International Bonsai, Bonsai Focus and other international Bonsai magazines. He became a member of the BCI editorial staff and was elected to the BCI Board of Directors in 2007. He was given the BCI's 2007 Artist, Writer & Photographer's award; the Art of Bonsai Grand prize; and the TBCA grand prize in 2008. He served as the General Chairman of the 10th Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention & Exhibition in Taiwan 2009. He is also the Technical Consultant of the National Bonsai Association of Taiwan.

Lo is famous for the so called "LO'S STYLE", with lots of vertical curves that appear in large old trees. This unique style was developed from a combination of collected old trees, along with the beauty line from the Chinese calligraphy and life philosophy of ancient Chinese philosophers.

Min Hsuan Lo received the grand prize of the JAL world bonsai contest in 1999, and he has won countless other honors since then. He works with all bonsai sizes and species. He has traveled to many parts of the world for bonsai demonstrations, lectures, and workshops.

Website: The Bonsai Blog of Min Hsuan Lo

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### **BOON MANAKITIVIPART**

Boon's start in bonsai was the result of a birthday gift: a small juniper bonsai. Before long, he joined the Bonsai Society of San Francisco, the club through which he took his first beginner class in the spring of 1989. Anxious to learn as much as possible about bonsai, Boon studied with as many teachers as he could find in California.

Serious study began when he hosted Akio Kondo, Kihachiro Kamiya's first apprentice. Mr. Kondo arrived as what the Japanese call a first-year professional, and stayed at Boon's home for one year.

In 1993, the Golden State Bonsai Federation awarded Boon a Teacher Development Scholarship; two years later, he received the Ben Oki International Design Award for styling a Sierra juniper. In 1995, Boon received several informal offers to study bonsai in Japan. Months later he traveled to Japan where he studied bonsai for his first year as an apprentice with Yasuo Mitsuya.

Later, his "bonsai home" became Kihachi-En and his master became Kihachiro Kamiya, a great bonsai master with multiple national awards. Boon said once, "He showed me bonsai standards through his amazing talent and deep personal integrity." Boon returned repeatedly to Japan for prolonged periods of bonsai study until his master's passing in January, 2004.

In 1998, Boon founded and became the teacher of Bay Island Bonsai, and started his business, Bonsai Boon.

In April 2000, Boon won the Grand Prize in the Kindai Bonsai Styling Contest in Japan (sponsored by Kindai Bonsai Magazine). Contestants styled large Japanese white pines. Boon was the only non-Japanese in the contest.

The World Bonsai Contest recognized Boon's trees in 2000, 2001, and 2002 as among the world's top 100 entries, and his students' trees have been recognized in every contest to date.

Today Boon makes his living as a full-time bonsai artist in Northern California. He styles client trees, lectures, puts on demonstrations, holds workshops, and finds show-quality bonsai for clients.

Website: Bonsai Boon

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### **JONATHAN MAPLES**

Jonathan Maples works as a 表装師 Hyousoushi. Hyousou is the Japanese word for framing or mounting. He has trained for 5 years in the art of Hyousou and been a direct student under Sagawa Taishin in Tokyo, Japan. Hyousou is craftsmanship in paper, cloth, glue and wood to create traditional Japanese products such as shoji (sliding paper doors), fusuma (Sliding Doors made with Hardened Paper), and kakejiku (Wall Scrolls). A hyousoushi is a person that works in these arts. He operates Custom Japanese Calligraphy.

Website: Custom Japanese Calligraphy

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### **RYAN NEIL**

Ryan Neil was born and raised in Colorado, on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. Throughout his youth the fantastic array of tortured and stunted trees surrounding his home created a deep appreciation and fascination with nature and the resilient nature of plants. Upon graduating high school, Ryan decided to pursue an education in horticulture at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. He already had the intention of

pursuing bonsai professionally and apprenticing in Japan, however, it wasn't until he was introduced to Ben Oki of Los Angeles, California that his dream of apprenticing with Mr. Kimura would become a reality.

Ryan is now in his fifth year of his apprenticeship under the guidance of world renowned Masahiko Kimura. His five years in Japan have been dauntingly challenging and full of triumph and failure. However, all of his experiences have allowed him to grow and develop as a bonsai professional. Ryan's objective and interest upon returning to the United States is to continue to help promote the art of bonsai throughout the United States, and more importantly to raise the level and knowledge of bonsai in the U.S.

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### **CHIARA PADRINI**

Chiara developed an interest in bonsai in 1988 and suiseki in 1990. She became the first Italian on the Board of Directors of the European Bonsai Association and served 4 years as its treasurer. In 2003 she was elected to the Board of directors of BCI and was placed in charge of suiseki for Europe. Among her many accomplishments in both bonsai and suiseki: founding member of Bonsai and Suiseki Clubs and Associations, President of the National College of Bonsai and Suiseki Instructors (which she help found), and author of articles that have appeared in French, English, Spanish, Swiss and Chinese magazines. She has won many awards including the BCI 2008 excellence award and the 2009 Gold medal of the World Bonsai Congress.

Website: Suiseki Art

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### **DOUG PHILIPS**

Doug Philips received his initial introduction to bonsai in 1986. After finding and reading the Sunset book on bonsai, he began practicing what was written, and was suffering much frustration. As a result, Doug went looking for more information and in 1989 was directed to the Midori Bonsai club. At that time the club was the home to Kathy Shaner, John Thompson, and Les Steele. All of who were very instrumental in Doug's early exposure to bonsai knowledge, politics and hands on experience.

The years following until the present have been filled with as much bonsai exposure and learning as possible, attending all GSBF conventions and taking classes and workshops with visiting bonsai masters and teachers. Doug has been active in club politics, taught beginner classes and has given several club demonstrations.

In 1991 Doug was the recipient of a GSBF educational grant, and was also a member of an import group that brought premier bonsai pots into the U.S. from Japan.

In 1996 Doug started specializing in several species of plant material that were of particular interest to him. These were personally collected Sierra and California junipers, local Olive trees, and Bald Cypress from Louisiana, also San Jose Junipers, small leaf Olives and Prostrata Junipers from cuttings, and last but not least fused trunk Trident Maples. If there were two real favorites of his, they would have to be Tridents and Olives.

Website: Dugz Bonsai

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### **MARTIN SCHMALENBERG**

Martin Schmalenberg has been involved in bonsai and stone appreciation for over 30 years and has been an avid collector of native tree material throughout North America, and stones from all over the world. He has traveled and studied extensively in Asia, Africa, and Europe to further his knowledge of bonsai and viewing stone art. Martin has lived and studied in Japan,

and offers Asian Studies courses on the history and culture of Japan and China at Blair Academy in New Jersey. Mr. Schmalenberg has been a prolific write of articles pertaining to these art forms and has combined his many decades of bonsai, viewing stone appreciation and Asian culture studies into stimulating and educational programs at bonsai gatherings throughout North America. He currently resides in Stillwater, New Jersey, and operates Stillwater Studio.

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### **ANDY SMITH**

In 1994, Andy and his wife Judy were doing a timber survey in the Black Hills National Forest when Judy found what Andy calls an ancient pine. They both liked the uniqueness of these small trees and began hunting for them. The Forest Service gave Andy a contract to collect core samples from the old trees to use for drought/climate research. During this research, pine seedlings were sampled to get a better estimate of their growth habits during their juvenile years. Using this data, it was determined that some of these dwarfed trees were over 100 years old. Andy planned on collecting one of these trees and putting it in a bucket on his porch when his wife presented him with a small present - a bonsai tree purchased from K-Mart. From then on, Andy was hooked on bonsai. In the years since then, he focused on collecting stunted conifers from rock outcrops for bonsai training. He has collected several hundred trees per year, with the help of his collecting partner, Mike. Over the years he has been able to supply excellent demo material to most of the world's foremost bonsai artists. As time goes on, he continues to collect and learn about new species. Andy shares his knowledge of these old trees in workshops, demonstrations and lectures around North America.

Website: Golden Arrow Bonsai

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### **JOHN THOMPSON**

John Thompson (JT) is a bonsai enthusiast, lecturer, demonstrator and artist who lives in San Jose, California. Nature, Kathy Shaner, Harunobu Tokita, and a list too long for this, have influenced his eye and passion for Bonsai. He has served on the board of directors for ABS and the board of trustees for GSBF. He writes a monthly care column for several Bay Area clubs and has authored articles for ABS and other publications. In his workshops and demonstrations, he tries to utilize the unique characteristics or flaws in each tree that will set it apart from others of the same species. JT's experience and bonsai collection encompass a wide range of species and styles. He is, perhaps, best known for his driving passion for oak bonsai, Sierra junipers, boxwoods and other collected trees. Touching and enjoying his trees, if only for a few moments, is an essential part of each day.

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### **ED TROUT**

Ed's love of nature, which he attributes to having grown up in Key West, Florida, inspired him to become interested in bonsai when first introduced to it in the early 70's.

A member of many of the clubs in the area, he has served three terms as president, and is a lifetime member of his local club, Gold Coast Bonsai Society, one of the oldest clubs in Florida. He is a charter member of Chishiki Gawa Study Group. He is past president, and a lifetime member of Bonsai Societies of Florida, a board member of the National Bonsai Foundation, at the National Arboretum in Washington D.C. as well as a board member of Bonsai Clubs International, and volunteers to handle BCI's audio, visual program. He is also a board member of The American Bonsai Society.

Ed has traveled the USA, Canada and the Caribbean, lecturing and teaching his art. He has been asked, each year since its inception in 1994 to exhibit his trees in "Japan" at EPCOT's Flower & Garden Festival. His trees were exhibited in the 1993 World Convention, in Orlando, the 2005 World Convention in Washington, D.C. and at many other Florida conventions.

Ed was extremely honored to have had one of his trees selected in the top 100 of the world in the JAL World bonsai contest, not only for 1999, but for 2001, 2002, 2005, and 2006 as well. He was also a finalist in 1994 for the coveted Ben Oki International Design Award. Ed has appeared on several local television programs and was asked to do a bonsai program for PBS-TV, "At Gardens Gate", filmed at Cypress Gardens, in 1999.

An avid writer, he has contributed numerous articles over the years to many different bonsai publications. Several of his trees were used as examples of tropical bonsai in the new Sunset Bonsai book edition.

Ed considers it an honor to be asked to share his knowledge with others and travels to programs, whenever time allows, too promote his passionate hobby.

He specializes in Tropical material like Buttonwood, Ficus, Bald Cypress, Bucida, and also works with Pines, Junipers & various deciduous species. His personal collection of 50 or so trees contains 25 different species. Ed is continually searching for new and interesting stock.

He & his wife, Tina, are very active in many Bonsai activities.

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## **WILLIAM VALAVANIS**

Bill became interested in bonsai and horticulture at age 11 and perused his interest by studying Ornamental Horticulture at SUNY Farmingdale and Cornell University. He has made over 50 trips to Japan and formally apprenticed with Kyuzo Murata and Kakutaro Komuro in Omiya Bonsai Village in Japan. Additionally a 30-year study and association with Yuji Yoshimura combined with his formal horticultural degrees, apprenticeships in Japan and his artistic talent provide Bill with the solid background to promote and teach classical bonsai art around the world.

He is the proprietor of the International Bonsai Arboretum in Rochester, New York where he maintains a fine personal collection of classical bonsai. He offers introductory and advanced classes as well as seminars and symposia in Rochester, New York. He also maintains a busy teaching schedule for bonsai and horticultural organizations worldwide. In order to further promote the artistic and horticultural expression of Classical bonsai art around the world he began publishing International BONSAI magazine 31 years ago. He has authored two books and many articles published in English, Japanese and other European languages and organized the First U. S. National Bonsai Exhibition.

Bill is an active member and officer of numerous local, national and international bonsai and horticultural organizations. His distinctive bonsai and displays have received many awards both in the United States and abroad.

He freely shares his 45 plus years of dedicated bonsai study, experiences and discoveries with students and serious bonsai fanciers through International BONSAI and his educational bonsai programs.

Website: International Bonsai