

promoting
international friendship
through bonsai



bci

Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2022
Q2

Juniperus chinensis, 82 cm. This very enjoyable and successful bonsai creation is in past BCI President, IC Su's Bonsai Collection. IC Su is one of the hosts and organizers of BCI's 60th Year Anniversary Convention in Taiwan.



OF EXCELLENCE

September 24
& September 30, 2022

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“Critical to any world-class Bonsai are the tools and other supporting elements.” – Ryan Neil

From Ryan Neil: “The Artisans Cup is the beginning of a movement to reveal the beauty of the ongoing collaboration between humans and nature that occurs during the process of training a tree. This process, currently experiencing surging growth in North America, is symbolic of the struggle for life in which all living things take part, and highlights the similarities and differences between people and trees. It is a poignant representation of life itself, with all of its challenges and successes, its hardship and joy.”

Read more about The Artisans Cup movement at theartisanscup.com

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President's Message

Welcome to Q2, 2022 of the BCI Magazine. Well, again, no good news on the COVID front, with a new Omicron subvariant BA.2 raising its ugly head since the last issue. The only good news is it is not as deadly as the Delta and Omicron variants but much more transmissible.

While now, in March, the COVID regulations in the USA and Australia have started to relax, South Korea, China, and Belgium are at the peak of the virus.

The 2022 Bonsai season started with the California Shohin Bonsai and the Belgium Bonsai Association's Trophy shows, both canceled in February.

Bonsai Shows in the USA are slowly starting to open up. There are shows still scheduled for:

April - Mid Atlantic Bonsai Society show in New Jersey.

May - Midwest Bonsai show in Chicago, Illinois.

May - American Bonsai Society show in Memphis, Tennessee.

August - Midwest Bonsai show in Chicago, Illinois.

October - Golden State Bonsai show in Santa Nella, California.

2022 BCI 60th Anniversary Convention

The 60th Anniversary BCI convention in Taiwan is in its final stages of preparation. It is scheduled for September 24 to 30th, 2022. More details are on page 4 and 51 of this issue.

South Korea is still hopeful of having a regional show in September 16-22, at the Suncheon Bay National Park.

A 2023 Regional show is being finalized for the summer in Indonesia.

Let's hope we can all get back to normal bonsai life soon!

Want To Host a BCI Convention?

We are on the lookout for upcoming BCI convention possibilities for 2023, 2024, and 2025. If you are interested in the possibility of hosting the BCI yearly convention or a regional convention, please contact the convention committee at [www.bonsai-bci.com/BCI Conventions/BCI Convention Committee](http://www.bonsai-bci.com/BCI_Conventions/BCI_Convention_Committee).

BCI Annual Fundraiser Auction

We are discussing the dates for our 2022 BCI fundraiser auction on Facebook. So please look around and see what bonsai items you have to donate. We have not set dates yet, but we are thinking of some time in September. Every item counts to support BCI's future!

60th Anniversary BCI logo coffee cups are for sale. Order from the BCI online store or see the ad on page 72 for more details!

Take time to support all of our advertisers in this magazine. These advertisers help make this magazine possible. Please give them your support!

New BCI Award

This year brings a new BCI award to be given out only at BCI sanctioned conventions. The process of making this award is on page 46. I hope you enjoy the painstaking process it took to make them.

Please be safe in 2022 and get vaccinated, so we can end this horrible virus already!

Bonsai people spread love, not hate... Don't take life for granted. Make the most of every day we have!

Please say a prayer for the people in Ukraine...

Frank Mihalic 



See making the BCI Excellence Award, page 46.

60th Anniversary BCI Cup

\$20.00 (plus shipping)

See page 72.



You are invited to be a part of the BCI Vision.

**We are raising funds for the future of BCI!
Any donation you can make, will help.**

Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!

For more information contact:

Frank Mihalic, president@bonsai-bci.com

Message from the Editor

The big news in this edition is the announcement of BCI's 60 Year Anniversary Convention in Taiwan. It will be a virtual convention, including the annual BCI Board Meeting, where BCI member clubs can participate. Watch for an invitation to a Zoom meeting later this year. The best part is that the convention will be free to BCI members and the general public, thanks to the generosity of Helen and IC Su. See page 4 and page 51 in this issue for more details and how to register.

Helen and IC have recruited four top Taiwan bonsai masters to give demonstrations on bonsai that will be delivered over Youtube to those who have the link to the videos. A top-notch exhibit of 60 viewing stones and 60 trees will be chosen for the exhibition. They will be featured in a commemorative album about the anniversary convention. Register for all these activities and events, and spread the word to all your bonsai and viewing stone friends.

Living up to its slogan, *promoting international friendship through bonsai*, BCI has been at the forefront of championing bonsai and viewing stones since 1962. This edition has reports and articles from Taiwan, Mexico and Latin America, the USA, Czechia, Indonesia, Italy, and Korea. Many of the trees and stones in this issue are simply breathtaking, and I hope they inspire you.

Our feature report is of the 60-Year Anniversary Convention, which provides a glimpse of the Su's outstanding collections. BCI Director Václav Novák presents an article by Herbert Obermayer on the Czech National exhibit featuring beautiful European pines. In a second article, he shares the story of his yamadori Mugo pine and its journey from mountain to top prizes in European exhibits. Enrique Castaño, BCI Director and President of FELAB (Latin-American bonsai federation), presents a gallery of prized bonsai from Latin America. It proves the excellence of this art form there. Past BCI president Glenis Bebb was one of the judges. Her pick was a distinctive *Juniperus foemina* forest planting that is truly unique. Enrique also tells us about Bonsai's three enemies! One of them is bound to surprise.

Massimo Bandera, another BCI director and bonsai teacher, presents the work of one of his students Antonio Pizzato and the transformation of a pine over time.

A passion for bonsai is what propels the art forward. Two people have significantly contributed to their respective countries. One is Ucak Dedin from Java, a bonsai farmer showcased by BCI Director Budi Sulisty. The other, presented by BCI Director Sae Won Kim, and written by Won Hoe Sik, is about bonsai pioneer, collector, and artist Lee Chang-Gil in Korea and his lifetime pursuit of excellence in bonsai.

Speaking of excellence, BCI has promoted excellence in bonsai and stones by awarding a special medal created by Guillermo Castaño. Many awards have been given over the last 10 years, exhausting BCI's inventory of medallions. Luckily, BCI President Frank Mihalic is a master jeweler. He shows us the meticulous process of creating a new medal with the lost wax casting method. I hope you qualify for one of these soon. 🌲

—Joe Grande, Canada

MISSION STATEMENT

BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Bonsai Clubs International, a not-for-profit educational organization, advances the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and solidify world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organizations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

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The Magazine reserves the right to edit all materials accepted for publication. Articles requiring extensive editing will be returned to the author with suggestions from the editorial staff. Manuscripts, drawings & photographs, with clear identification for captions, should be provided in digital format, on disk, or by e-mail or internet. Digital images must be provided at 300 dpi resolution for an 8 x 10 inch size minimum.

Authors are requested not to submit articles simultaneously to another publication.

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

| Issue | Month | Closing Date |
|-------|-------|--------------|
| Q1 | J/F/M | December 1 |
| Q2 | A/M/J | March 1 |
| Q3 | J/A/S | June 1 |
| Q4 | O/N/D | September 1 |



Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

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APRIL/MAY/JUNE

inside Q2 2022

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FEATURED ON THE COVER: *Juniperus chinensis*, 82 cm. This species can be planted in any condition whether it be cold, hot, dry or wet. It grows in boreal, tropical, and subtropical climates. It is widely used in Bonsai because of its versatility. Since it has characteristics of high plasticity, bonsai masters use the deadwood to style natural snowy scenery, using brown, white and green colors in the presentation. It is a very enjoyable and successful bonsai creation in IC Su's Bonsai Collection. IC Su is the host and organizer of BCI's 60th Year Anniversary Convention in Taiwan.



OF EXCELLENCE

September 24
& September 30, 2022

BCI 60 Years Anniversary Convention in Taiwan Hosted by Helen and IC Su

Organized by I C Su and Helen Su,
Taiwan Bonsai Masters, and BCI Life Members
Changhua County Government
National Bonsai Association, Taiwan, ROC

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- Hinds, Horace 1964-1965
- Luekins, Wes 1965-1966
- Berryman, Frances 1966-1967
- Johnstone, Jim 1967-1968
- Bob Krohn, 1969-1970
- Keith Scott, 1971-1972
- Bev Oliver, 1973-1974
- Jim Barrett, 1975-1976
- Ray Boardman, 1977-1978
- John Hinds, 1979-1980
- Tom Heitkamp, 1981-1982
- Wilma Swain, 1983-1984
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- Solita Tafur Rosade, 1999-2002
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- I-Chi Su, 2006-2010
- Robert Kempinski, 2011-2012
- Thomas S Elias, 2012-2015
- Glenis Bebb, 2015-2021
- Frank Mihalic, 2021

Bonsai Clubs International (BCI), a not-for-profit organization established in 1962, is totally funded by membership dues, revenue from the annual convention, and generous donations from our members worldwide.

BCI Board of Directors and the BCI Executive Directors are non-paid volunteer positions. BCI Directors traveling to the annual convention pay their own expenses for travel, accommodation, and convention registration fees.

BCI is governed according to its bylaws, reviewed annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes and improvements to the way BCI is managed.

BCI members benefit from an international perspective of Bonsai and Viewing Stone Appreciation. They find inspiration to help their bonsai practice and collections grow. They learn from other members and their achievements. They share knowledge and experiences of their trees and stones with all our members in *BCI Bonsai & Stone Appreciation* magazine and on the BCI website, www.bonsai-bci.com.

BCI's 60 years of excellence is due primarily to the people who volunteer to lead and manage the organization to benefit the worldwide bonsai community. Many presidents have left an indelible mark on BCI through innovative contributions to the organization and the bonsai and viewing stone community.

IC Su, host and co-organizer of this year's convention, is a prime example. During his tenure as BCI president from 2006 to 2010, IC raised the status of viewing stones, featuring them alongside bonsai. The name of BCI's magazine was changed from *Bonsai, The Official Publication of Bonsai Clubs International*, to *Bonsai & Stone Appreciation* magazine.



IC Su also was BCI's principal benefactor during BCI's financial difficulties. He and his wife Helen are again making a significant contribution by organizing and hosting BCI 60th Anniversary. It has been several years during which the annual convention could not be held because of the Corona Virus Pandemic.

This feature article introduces you to IC Su and his wife, Helen Su. It provides glimpses of what you can expect from this year's annual convention in Taiwan, a country synonymous with Bonsai Excellence.

BCI's 60 Year Convention will be virtual and free to BCI members and the public. The highlights are the Bonsai and Suiseki exhibit, demonstrations by leading Taiwanese bonsai masters, and intimate tours of IC Su's garden and collections.

Be sure to register on the BCI website so you can receive links to all the videos of the events. **The description and registration form can be found at this link: www.bonsai-bci.com/60years.**

Su's Garden



Su's Garden is this year's convention venue.

Su's Garden is located on Lake Chihu in Taoyuan. Situated tastefully by the mountains and the lake, the manor reminds Mr. I C Su of sceneries of southern France, which he loves and remembers very well. With the crows, the Lamborghini roosters, the lake water shimmers in the morning sun to start the day. Strolling and listening to the sound of the running lake while tending livestock and vegetations, the farm life of Mr. Su's dear childhood comes back to life. In the evening, under a breathtaking sunset, Mr. Su sits in Si En (Thanksgiving) pavilion with a glass of cool champagne, enjoying the beautiful symphony only nature can play for us.

Words from founder Mr. I C Su

Su Family Manor is a project I started as I began retirement from my company. It's a culmination of my life's collections and an indication that no matter how my status changes in life, the farmer boy is always within my heart. The boy who grew up on the farm, living off what mother nature had so graciously offered, and enjoying the faithful companionship of all the dear creatures of the farm. I grew up and moved to Taipei City to work. Far from home, I found comforts and companionship reading the timeless works of the great poets of the Tang and Song dynasty. The ancient language of the great artists placed the beautiful sceneries of my childhood clearly in front of me. In the building of my manor, I tried to recreate the landscapes described in these beautiful poems and the memories of my beloved childhood home.

I would like to thank my friends from Hualien, Changhua, and Tianwei for accompanying and helping me select and transport the landscape stones, trees, and plants. I thank my wife and children for supporting me and making great contributions to the design and construction of the manor. The friendship and support of these people made the whole project possible.



Su's Bonsai Collection

Bonsai is an art long rooted in Chinese culture. The practice originated in the East Han Dynasty (25-220 C.E.), fostered in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.) and prevailed by the Ming and the Qing (1368-1911 C.E.). Bonsai is lauded as “wordless poetry; art in the garden.”

Although the art of Bonsai was born in China, it prospered in Japan, and spread everywhere. Bonsai Clubs International is the main association founded to propel the art across the world, whereas Asia-Pacific Bonsai & Suiseki Federation is a regional proponent. Every year from spring until winter the community of bonsai hosts numerous shows and fairs, demonstrations, academic exchanges and workshops. Potted botany has become an integral part of human lives.

Situated in the subtropical belt, Taiwan's climate is warm and humid, and hence propitious to a wide array of botanical proliferation ranging from colder evergreens like pines and cedars to tropical varieties. These together with many shrubs and flowering plants enable enormous possibility of bonsai creations. Exuding from my personal passion for the art and for fellow enthusiasts I have built the Su Family Garden in the suburb of Taipei. This garden not only houses representative varieties of my hobbies but also brings pleasure to my life.

Buddhist Pine, 96 cm

Podocarpus macrophyllus, also known as Buddhist Pine, is an evergreen conifer. It has oval shaped seeds, like a human head and its receptacle resembles something of a cassock. The cone looks like a hat worn by Buddha. Therefore, it is also named “Lo Han Kuo.”

The *Podocarpus macrophyllus* in this picture is over a hundred years old, and has been potted for over thirty years. Botanically, this tree grows strong and vigorously. The trunk is grayish brown in color with shallow cracks, hyper-trophic smooth leaves, and a solid layout of the branches. In June and July, purple LoHan Kuo beautifully hang under the full green leaves.





***Ficus retusa*, 79 cm**

Ficus retusa, also known as Chinese Banyan, is the most popular bonsai species in Taiwan. It is called the “longevity tree” because of its adaptability, and because its growth force is strong, resistant to moisture and cold, pest-resistant, and anti-pollutant. It can be cultivated in almost any kind of soil. It has excellent plasticity, so it is ideal for bonsai beginners.

This old ficus tree is one of the oldest Banyan in Taiwan. Please enjoy it slowly.



***Eurya emarginata*, 73 cm**

Jade rice tea, Theaceae, is a small evergreen shrub with small round, green leaves, and shiny white flowers, leaf axils, and green, purplish black fruit. It grows in coastal regions of northern Taiwan, prospering in warm and humid climate. For this reason, bonsai cultivation has seen much success in Taiwan over the last two decades.

This Theaceae bonsai is an early work which was awarded the Taiwan Provincial Governor Award and was published in the 1985 edition of “Taiwan Bonsai Selections.” It is easy to maintain, needing only a change in soil every three years and a trim once a year to maintain the present appearance. It is always ready for any bonsai exhibition.

***Murraya paniculata*, 91 cm**

Murraya paniculata, or Orange Jasmine, belongs to the rutaceae category. Its leaves are all green, obovate shaped, about 3 cm in length, and are glabrous and glossy, appearing in oddly pinnate leaflets. It bears small white scented flowers and lovely ovate petite fruit. Fruits become orange-red in color when mature. It is closely related to citrus fruits, also called "moon orange." The fragrance of the flowers can be smelled from a far distance. Therefore, it is commonly known as "Qi Li Xiang" literally meaning seven miles of fragrance.

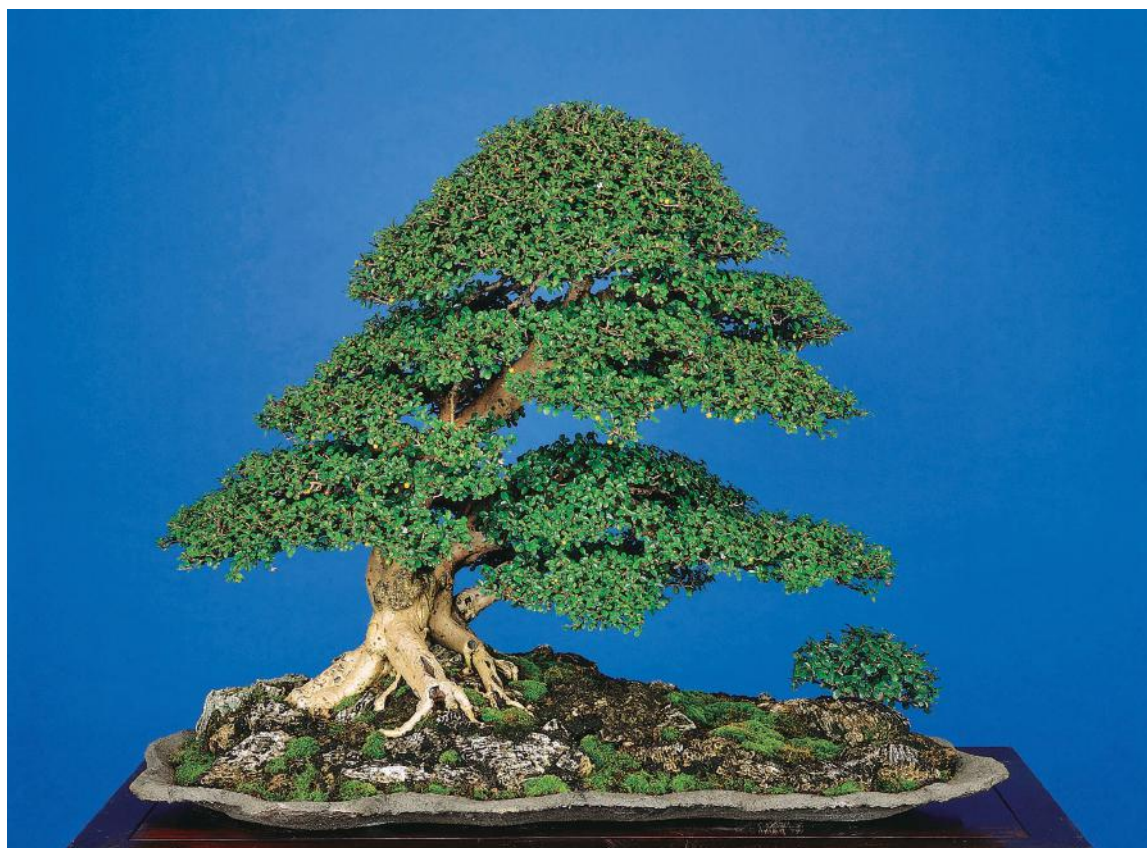


***Ehretia microphylla*, 78 cm x 95 cm**

Ehretia microphylla, also known as the Fukien Tea tree, is very popular in southern China.

It is a species of evergreen shrub, with small alternating leaves. It has tiny white flowers and round fruits, which become red when ripe. The plant grows slowly on mountainous terrain. It is popular in bonsai, but requires quite a long time to form and take shape.

This unique Fukien Tea Bonsai is the early work of Mr. Kuo Ching Shan of Kaohsiung.





***Juniperus procumbens*, 90 cm**

Juniperus is a type of coniferous shrub. Its creation and ecology is similar to that of a cypress. Comparatively, Juniperus is more difficult to work with because of its kashhiwaba thorns.

The Juniperus that was used for this piece is from a mountain in Japan. Ten years ago, I used the backside of the tree as the focal point. Thus, this tree is double-sided and can be viewed from multiple angles. The picture was taken after the recreation of the tree. This is a very creative piece of bonsai art that boasts mystery and intrigue.

Su's Suiseki Collection

China is the motherland to Viewing Stone culture. Documents trace the practice back to more than three thousand years ago in the Chwen Chio period. The Book of History has many entries of Viewing Stone tribute offerings including "Pine Rocks" from Kueizhou and "Floats" from Xuzhou. The practice of collecting Viewing Stone has undergone rise and fall along with the political and economic tides throughout history beginning from the Tang and the Sung periods (618-1129 C.E.) to the flourishing Ming and the Ching periods (1368-1911 C.E.) all the way until the modern age with the intermingling of cultures from the East and the West. Viewing Stone appreciation is now a ubiquitous art.

Larger stones are used for garden landscape; the aesthetics are largely influenced by the criteria set by the Sung Dynasty Mi Fei, namely narrow, transparent, penetration and texture, whereas smaller ones are made into decorative objects. The rudimentary standards of the art are emphatic of shape/form, color, texture and pattern. Personally, I was first intrigued by bonsai which subsequently led to collecting Suiseki; from the yellow wax stone "Pithecanthropus Peknensis" of Canton to meteorites from South Africa, and I have been completely enthralled. I store my collections acquired over many years on the ground floor of my home; these magnificent wonders of nature have brought solitary pleasure as well as delight with friends.

Venus / Moore Stone, China,
30 × 73 × 32 cm

The Ma-an stone is produced in the depths of the Red River, located in the Ma-an Village of Liuzhou city. This stone requires a long erosion period to become a smooth and delicate piece of rock, varied in patterns and sizes. From the western sculptural aesthetic point of view, the shape of this piece of work is very similar to the statue "Venus." Half of a long skirt is washed away with the flow of the rapid waters. She looks shy and tries to pull back the residual skirt to cover her body. From her elegant and pure beauty, to the slightly fatigued expression on her face, we gather that by no means is this an ordinary stone, but a rare treasured artwork.





**Pithecanthropus 18 thousand years ago:
Golden Melon Stone, Taiwan**

The Pithecanthropus was found in the Longgu Mountain located 50 kilometers from Southwest Beijing, which is a little northward of where Pithecanthropus Peknensis was buried. In 1993, archaeologists Pei Wen-Zhong and Jia Lan-Bo found 3 complete cranium fossils that dated a group of third-generation Pithecanthropus who existed 18 thousand years ago. The Pithecanthropus had a flat maxilla, bulging brow bones, slanted mandible, and strong teeth. They looked very different from Caucasians but similar to Mongolians, and lived in the upper layer of the caves leaving the bottom layer for burial. They also had funerals and religious beliefs. The Pithecanthropus used stone needles, stone knives, and stone hammers to gather, hunt, and to fish. This is a piece of Hualien Golden Melon stone with a peculiar skin tone, flat maxilla, orbital bones, and chin that mark the traits of Pithecanthropus.



**Pithecanthropus Dali 230-180 thousand years ago:
Jiulong bi stone, China**

In March 1978, geologist Liu Shun-Tan found a human cranium fossil on a slope of Duanjia Village in Dali County. This piece of fossil was first handed to the geologist and paleontologist of Northwest University, Wang Yong-Yan and Xue Xiang-Xi, and then transferred to Anthropology Professor, Wu Xin-Zhi for confirmation of its identification: a male Pithecanthropus Dali of a little less than 30-years-old. Its traits are obvious sagittal crest, bulging cranial bone, flat cheekbones, thick bone layers, huge brow bones and occipital bones. Professor Wu Xin-Zhi thinks it is of an earlier age. The Pithecanthropus Dali fossil dates back 230 to 180 thousand years ago, and this period overlaps with the earlier Pithecanthropus Peknensis period, which explains that Pithecanthropus Peknensis existed when Pithecanthropus Dali emerged. This Jiulong bi stone in Tanchou of Fukien Province marks the traits of the Pithecanthropus Dali.

Pithecanthropus Peknensis 300-500 thousand years ago: Yellow Wax Stone, China

The first complete Pithecanthropus cranium fossil was the Pithecanthropus Peknensis found in 1929 by archaeologist Pei Wen-Zhong. Professor Bou Lean Vallais later named it Pithecanthropus Peknensis in 1946.

The location where this complete human cranium fossil was found is the Longgu Mountain in the Zhoukoudian Village of Fangshan County, 50 kilometers away from Beijing. Pithecanthropus Peknensis is about 300 to 500 thousand years old, they mainly lived on hunting and gathering, and used stone tools and fire. Males averaged about 150 centimeters tall and females 144 centimeters.

This piece of Cantonese yellow wax stone has Pithecanthropus Peknensis characteristics of heavy cranial bone, flat forehead, clear contouring and balanced proportion of nose, eyes, and chin, and the yellow skin color.



Pithecanthropus Lantian 700-800 thousand years ago: Golden Melon Stone, Taiwan

During 1963 and 1964, Chinese archaeologists found fossils of human cranium in Chengjiawo and Gongwangling of Lantian Town in the Shensi Province. Lantian Town is nicknamed the "Home of Beautiful Jade." Their bone structures are similar to the Peknensis ape of about 700 to 800 thousand years ago.

The Pithecanthropus fossils mark characteristics of thicker cranial bones, flat maxilla, huge brow bones, deep furrow above the eye sockets, and a cranium that tilts backward. When I found this black Golden Melon stone in Chisingtan, Hualien, I was stunned from it's almost impossible similarity to the Lantian ape.

The Pithecanthropus Lantian mainly lived in Chengjiawo and the basin of Gongwangling with rich forests that is similar to the current warm and humid subtropical weather. It was evident from the fossils that Pithecanthropus Lantian utilized stones as their utensils and tools. They mainly lived on hunting and gathering, and used fire to cook food. They are second-generation Pithecanthropus.



Su's Pot Collection

Yi Sing Bonsai Pots

It was called Jing Si in the Epoch of Warring States, Yang Sien in the Chin and Han Dynasties. Since 976-983 C.E. of the Sung Dynasty, it has been named Yi Sing. This is the capital of ceramics and it is famous for producing ceramic wares. Yi Sing clay can be found underneath rock layers, and its color ranges from bright red, crimson, blue, green, yellow, purple, brown, white and so on. After the clay is mined, it will go through processes of selection, development, refinement, and baked in kilns at very high temperatures to form various ceramic wares. The Bonsai community distinguishes its colors shown after firing in the kiln into pitch-dark,

purple, bright red, white, peach pink, persimmon red, and black. Because this clay is of good plasticity and permeability, and is excellent at absorbing water and keeping warmth, the roots of plants can grow well in ceramic containers. Since the Ming and Ching Dynasties, it has been widely used in bonsai wares. The texture of Yi Sing ceramic pots is delicate, unsophisticated, and is of classic elegance, which brings bonsai into full play. The bonsai community call ceramic bonsai pots of over 100 years of history "antique pots," and I display my collection of classical antique Yi Sing ceramic bonsai pots for your appreciation.

Gray Clay pot (Ming Dynasty) 44.8 × 29.9 × 25.7 cm

Chen Wenqing lived in the town of Zushan and was born during the Ming Dynasty. He specialized in the creation of Yixing pots and was among the famous Yixing purple clay artists, along with Xi Dabin, Lee Zhongfon, and Xu Youquan, etc. Since much time has passed, it is nearly impossible to find traces of their art now, especially large pieces of works. Therefore, this pair of basin is a very rare piece to have in my collection.

This pair of rectangular grey clay basin is very elegant and simple in style. Though it is comprised of dark colors, there are minor yet visible spots on the surface, which shows the traces of its history. At the bottom of the basin, it is engraved: "made by Chen Wenqing" along with a line from a poem, "jin wu bien xin xon," meaning "meditation produces fragrance of the heart." It describes the insights and feeling of the artist so clearly. This precious work was selected as the "Memorial Piece" at the fifth WBFF.



Gray Clay Pot (Ming Dynasty) 33 × 22 × 9.5 cm

Xu Youquan, also known as XuShiHen, lived in Yixing Shushan, and was born during the Ming Dynasty. He was a student of the famous potter, ShiDa Bin. He specialized in color matching and innovative creations.

Xu Youquan's oval Yixing pot utilized similar clay material as a teapot. He made this pot in a very balanced oval shaped with four rounded corners. It has beautiful detailed designs in the front and his signature aptly placed on the bottom. Through almost four hundred years, it has remained in very good shape. Needless to say, this is a very precious pot from the Ming Dynasty.





Red Clay Pot (Qing Dynasty) 54 × 34 × 16.5 cm

'Red clay' and 'black clay' are considered the best materials to use in creating YiXing pots, but these raw materials are not easy to obtain. The washing procedures are extremely rigorous and red clay contains high traces of copper so control of the kiln's temperature is crucial. To produce a solid piece of red clay, every aspect of the execution must be precise, from material picking, to temperature control, to production. Therefore, excellent red clay pots are extremely rare and valuable.

This red clay pot is a very rare piece of work in the recent years - the arch shape is considerably even and balanced which is very difficult to create. Another difficult and intriguing aspect is how the bottom of the work will not hold excess water. The most characteristic feature is this pot's color - the distinctive yellowish red clay. This piece is originally a museum exhibition item.



Black Clay Pot (Ming Dynasty) 40 × 22 × 40 cm

The black clay is high in iron content. It is naturally formed in a high temperature kiln. During the Ming Dynasty, there were many royal kilns and they would use the smoke from burning pine needle and weeds to achieve the black color we see in this clay. It would be coated with a layer of resin before completely cooled down, causing the surface to be both brighter and darker. The sheer intelligence and experience derived from the ancient times of clay changing is amazing and so interesting.

This copper-type black clay bronze basin imitation is wide open on top, with twelve dragon belts around the waist, three stands, and a rounded body that is bronzed in color.

It is a very elegant and unique piece of work.



Peach Bloom Clay Pot (Ming Dynasty) 52 × 25 × 32 cm

Peach blossoms are naturally very charming. Peach Bloom clay is also called Begonia Red, "Zhun Hwa" color, "Yang Fei" color, and the "color of beauty." These are all names to describe beauty, but we always refer to it as Peach Bloom Clay in the Bonsai community.

Peach bloom clay is one of the Yixing mixed color clays, combining light red with red and scarlet clay. It achieves these various reds from being burned in a kiln of 1000°C ~ 1250°C. Early potters like to use ZhaoZhuang mountain's pink clay to burn at different temperatures to obtain different red color clays, therefore every Peach Bloom Clay product is only similar, but not consistent.

This sunflower pot Peach Bloom Clay is used as a base and has a sunflower design using white, brown and black color clays to produce the image. In Chinese paintings, using original clay to paint is a unique skill that is very valuable and respected.

Gray Clay Bonsai Pot (Qinglong, Qing Dynasty) 32 × 23.5 × 13 cm

Black clay is characterized as calm and elegant. The sophistication of this bonsai pot is seen through the Chinese landscape painting that appears on it. It is one of the most elegant pots ever created.

Landscape painting plays an important part in Chinese painting history. When you look at a Chinese landscape painting, one seems to be among the mountainous scenery. One can almost walk, see, travel, live, and experience the wonders of creations.

At that moment, we witness the beauty of the journey. Bonsai is the art microcosm of nature, making it the perfect symbol to put into this landscape painting pot.



Gray Clay Carved Bonsai Pot (Qing Dynasty) 40 × 40 × 20 cm

The relief is a sculptural technique, one often used in Chinese sculpture. However, it is quite rarely seen in Yixing pots. Bonsai masters used this carving skill to emphasize the track of the years in plants. It has a very interesting and special effect.

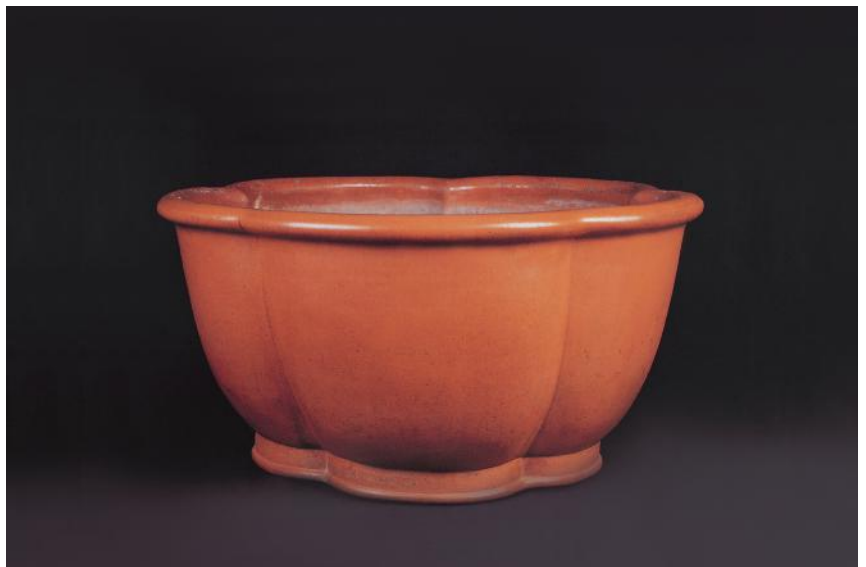
This pot created in relief with round mirrors is purely for ornamental purpose. Among all gray clay pots, this one consists of very fine clay and beautiful carvings leading many imitations to follow. But compared with the genuine piece, all of the replicas wane in comparison to the authentic.



Persimmons Clay Bonsai Pot (Ming Dynasty) 75 × 38 cm

“SiNi” is a mud compound created for Yi Xin clay colors. In the book “Yong Shin Ming Hu Lu” by KaoChi, there is record of nearly every kind of clay material and the colors they become after high temperature kiln burning. BanShan green clay, originally green, becomes light yellow in color after burning. YiXin used their plentiful experience to combine BanShan green clay, stone-yellow clay, red clay and white clay in different ratios into a mixture together, with specific temperature control. With these different proportions of elements and different temperature, came different colors and tones of SiNi clay pots. The difficulty and high failure rates result in the extreme rarity of Sini clay pots.

This sunflower pot is a large SiNi pot from the Ming Dynasty. Its shape, color and style resemble a persimmon, a “SiZi.” It is so similar to a ripened persimmon representing the YiXin potters’ skill and superb level of artistic creation.





White Clay Pot (Qing Dynasty) 37.5 × 23 × 14.5 cm

“White clay is produced from the DaZou mountain used specifically for pottery making...,” the DaZou mountain mentioned in this old quote is located in the southern region of the town, YiXin, between the ‘Din’ and ‘Zhu’ mountains, also known as “South Mountain.” It is known as an easy and accessible mining area, so it is very popular for potters throughout the country. Among them, the famous potter, ShiDaBin produced a large amount of white clay large pots, bottles, and small tea pots. His famous work, “Gou Lin Gi Shu,” the white clay teapot, is well known. This quote also conveys to us a message that white clay was extremely important to the early stages of YiXin pottery. This particular piece has a very skillful relief and is regarded as a successful piece among famous white clay works

As time has passed, people now appreciate the aesthetics of that time through the pieces of art works we have obtained from that time period. This piece has passed through the hands of many art connoisseurs, and is now in my collection.

Imperial Ware Fine Chinese Ceramics

The production of ceramic pots in the Neolithic Period (approximately 8000 years ago) was for utilitarian purposes. The production of pots had its true beginning during the reign of Sung Hue Ts’ung (C.E.

1101-1124). The kiln site was situated in the Bakua Cave of Yu County in the Honan Province and was for the exclusive use of the imperial emperor. These were the first instances of pots called “Imperial Ware.” In the following dynasties, ceramic pots from Yuan (C.E. 1279-1368), Ming (C.E. 1368-1644), and Qing (C.E. 1644-1911) presented different art forms due to their special culture backgrounds and the preference of the emperors. The style, glaze, and color were varied in different period of time. “Imperial Ware” are avidly sought after for museums and collectors, and creates astonishing market records in international auctions.



Very Rare Gilt-Bronze and White Jade Inlaid Jardiniere
Qianlong, Qing Dynasty

The slightly tapered sides inlaid with three rows of white jade plaques carved in openwork with full-faced dragons along the centre row between two registers of Shou symbols are separated by gilt-bronze dividers interspersed with semi-precious stones and glass beads and incised with feathery scrolls. The gilt-bronze rim with a key-fret band, all raised on a pedestal-stand decorated below the waisted platform with champlevé enamel lotus scroll and lappets, stand on ruyi feet on a circular base (minor losses).

7-3/4 in. (19.7 cm.) high.

(Christie’s, Hong Kong)

Junyao Jardiniere Stand (Song / Jin Dynasty) 19 × 15 × 5.5 cm

A Junyao Jardiniere stand of shallow rectangular shape, is characterized by a flat projecting moulded rim with indented corners, four ruyi shaped feet, and a stunning lavender blue glaze, with the character jiu (nine) incised into the base. A group of Junyao jardiniere stands and their stands, of various shapes and incised numerals on the base have been recovered from the Baguadong kiln sites in Yuxian, Henan Province, China. Compare three similar purple-glazed stands of slightly smaller size, one from the Schiller collection now in the Bristol City Art Gallery, illustrated in Hobson and Hetherington, *The Art of the Chinese Potter*, 1923; another in the Percival David Foundation, London, complete with matching flowerpot, illustrated in *Oriental Ceramics, The World's Great Collections*, vol.6, 1982.



Rare Large Hexagonal Famille Verte Jardiniere (Qing Dynasty) 57 x 34 x 40 cm

Raised on four ruyi feet, the flared sides rise toward an everted bracket-lobed rim. The exterior is finely enamelled with cranes, exotic finches, a frog and butterflies flying or perched among prunus, magnolia, bamboo, peony, and lotus. The rim is decorated with cranes flying among peaches and soft clouds. (Christie's London)



Rare Ju Ware Pot (Qing Dynasty) 28 x 18 x 7 cm

In the history of Chinese ceramics, porcelain created during the Song Dynasty is considered the most representative of the period, the golden age of ceramics. Ru kiln is one of the five famous kilns used in the Song Dynasty. The kiln is located in LinRu, Henan, which is where Ru Ware comes from. From 1106 to 1086, within these 20 years, it was used solely for the Song palace.

Day Celadon glaze is the basic glaze color used in the Ru kiln. The Ru area produced an abundant amount of agate, which is used as glaze colorant to generate dull and opaque glazes. The Ru kiln established a unique style for potters in the world of ceramics. The Song Emperor, Huizong was in pursuit of refined culture, art, and philosophy, and the Ru kiln became one of the top five famous kilns because of the works it produced. This piece was sold at the Sotheby's New York Auction.





Large Ming FAHUA Jardiniere (Ming Dynasty), 39.5 cm

The exterior with groups of cranes wading in a pond, flying and perched on rockwork, amidst large blossoming lotus plants and weeds in white, orange and turquoise, reserved on an aubergine ground, all below a classic scroll below the rim, the rim with a key-fret band, the interior covered in a turquoise glaze, glaze flakes to interior. (Christie's, London)



A Fine Doucai Jardiniere Gang (Qing Dynasty), 27 x 19 cm

Finely potted with full swelling sides rising continuously from the foot to the slightly lipped rim, this pot is painted with five large floral roundels, each centred on a red lotus flower surrounded by other flowers and leaves, enclosed within interlocking leaves and stems, all between a border of colored lappets below. A border of multi-colored ruyi-clouds sit above, and the rim is encircled by a border of flowers and leaves each enclosed by a shaped panel on a blue ground, the mark written within a glazed countersunk circle in the centre of the wide unglazed base. A "Qianlong doucai gang" of this pattern in the Shanghai Museum, is illustrated in "Selected Ceramics from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Hu," 1989; in "Ceramics of the World," Vol.15, 1983, with details of the base showing the Qianlong seal mark; compare also an unmarked gang of this design, illustrated in "China Ceramics in the Idemitsu Collection," 1987, no. 947. (Sotheby's, Hong Kong)



Tea-Dust Glazed Pot (Yongzhen, Qing Dynasty), 22 x 17 x 22 cm

Tea Dust was considered the "iron" of crystalline glazing in ancient China. This glaze is formed in the melting process, during the heating and cooling contraction of the molten mass. The composition contains iron, magnesium, and silicate, and the color is yellow-green, similar to the color of tea. During the Ming Dynasty, Tea Dust is also called "TzunKuan Kiln" glaze. The main glaze colors were eel yellow, snakeskin green, and yellow-spot. In the years of Yongzhen and Qianlong, Tea Dust was developed to reach its full potential. Artworks created during the Yongzhen years were green glaze pieces, described as "crab green." Due to the aged hue of the green color of Tea Dust, it was widely used in antique imitation work. This piece is a product of the Yongzhen imperial kiln, marked "Made during Yongzhen years" at the bottom. It is characterized by both "crab celadon" and "purple glaze." It is an extremely rare and valuable piece.

Powder Blue Slag Pot Basin, Qing Dynasty - Emperor Yongzheng, 22 x 14 cm

The powder blue color first appeared in the Song Dynasty in the Longquan kiln. There were many masterpieces from both the Song Imperial kiln and the Jingdezhen kiln. This color is very elegant, cool like ice or jade; described “green as jade, clear as a mirror, sound as a chime.” It is considered a fine treasure in the porcelain world

The Slag Pot has an open bell shape with wide a brim and a deep belly. The shape is similar to that of an urn, round and full. The slag pot was first used in the Jin Dynasty, and popularly produced during the Song Dynasty. The Ming and Qing Dynasties produced slag pots in various colored glazes. Collectors like to place this slag pot on a large desk to appreciate its distinctive form. This piece of art work has features of southern celadon. This clay is delicate, yet strong and the glaze is crystal clear. (Christie’s, London)



Longquan Celadon Pot (Yuan Dynasty), 27 x 11 x 27 cm

Since the Song Dynasty moved its capital to Hangzhou, all the political, cultural and economic activity was centered there. This is one of the greatest reasons for the Longquan kiln’s prosperity. Due to the demand of high quality pottery by the officials and the wealthy, the Longquan kiln greatly increased the quality of the pottery produced in that time. They improved the glaze color formula and changed the portion of oxygen and calcium from 16% to below 10%, so that during the burning process, large amounts of hydrogen would not escape from the thick glaze, but would be surrounded in the glaze layer. This creates a warm and smooth, but not overly shiny surface, which resulted in the Longquan Celadon jade stone, green as emerald. I obtained this piece at the 1998 Christie’s Auction in London.



Imperial Ware Iron Sand Glaze Pot (Yongzhen, Qing Dynasty), 20 x 21 cm

In Chinese porcelain, if the piece is marked “neifu,” it literally means “inside the palace,” and was used exclusively for the Imperial palace, created specifically for Imperial use.

This work contrasts the presentation of Black glaze and Iron Sand glaze. The upper and lower portions, originally made from the same material, underwent a new integration, and the middle region of the structure was recreated using black glaze. The Iron Sand glaze is not regularly formed from crystal glaze. We can see from the middle area, that the glaze is less of a “ShiTien” and dark glaze spread, but rather more of a very high viscosity glaze blowing the ink.

The surface has a few tiny bumps because of the black light phenomenon during the blowing technique. This is precisely why the imperial ceramic of Yongzhen can be described as unique and priceless treasures.



Su's Imperial Diet Collection

The Imperial Diet is the collection of meals prepared for the emperor or empress in the palace. The Imperial Kitchen of each dynasty managed its own dynastic characteristic of food inside their respective royal palace. The Imperial Household was further divided into sections during the Qing dynasty, including the Imperial Kitchen, the Imperial Tea Room, and the Imperial Tea Kitchen. These divisions worked together harmoniously for the common goal of satisfying the emperor's requests.

Qing Dynasty Emperors have fixed schedules for all of their meals during the day but not set locations for where they eat those meals. An Emperor could have meals in his bedroom or in the garden, depending on where and what activities he was doing. Or when his body tells him, he is hungry. Therefore, wherever the emperor goes, there too goes a waiter carrying a table on his back. Servants always follow the emperor with a dining table that can be set at any place and time to satiate his hunger whenever and wherever it may arise.

Although every royal chef uses only the finest ingredients and food materials, and each chef's cooking is considered the best, every emperor has his own particular food preferences. The Imperial Diet focuses on the emperors of the Qing Dynasty and the foods

they ate during that time. Mainly, the foods of the Manchu and the Han people were both highly valued and favored. Everyone believed the Man-Han dishes formed the most lavish banquet in Chinese food history.

For years, I collected rocks as a personal hobby, and the organic essence of rocks intrigued me. Soon, my collection grew to include an outstanding array of the most beautiful and unique rocks nature had to offer. I slowly began to see a resemblance between some of my rocks and traditional Chinese dishes. The shapes and colors of the rocks, unaltered in color or finish, depicted these foods almost identically. Based on the book *Records of Yangzhou Painting Boats* by Qing Li Douzhu from the Qing Dynasty, we recreated these dishes using my rock collection into this Imperial Diet for your appreciation.

Some of the rocks I collected—particularly for their shape and color— can be arranged almost identically to a course of the Imperial Banquet. These rocks are all natural—sans carving, cutting, or grinding. Even the size of these rocks is proportionately accurate to the actual dish. To achieve the best demonstration of my rocks in the banquet setting, I have studied and tasted all kinds of Chinese cuisines, especially the ancient imperial banquet cuisine.





Yi Ping Abalone – “A Product of Abalone”

Since ancient times, emperors regarded abalone as exceptional food. It fully embodied the wealth and nobility of aristocrats.

Because it is so highly esteemed, abalone is one of “the finest eight ingredients” for cooking the Man-Han Banquet. “Yi Ping” stands for the highest and most privileged ranking government officials. Here, “Yi Ping” represents the ultimate cooking preparation of abalone.

Abalone is undoubtedly a treasure of the sea. Not only is the texture unique, but the taste is like none other. From stabilizing blood pressure to strengthening organs, the health benefits of abalone are countless.



Braised Shark Fin

In the Qing Dynasty, shark fin was one of the eight ingredients for the imperial kitchen. In the 16th century, the *Compendium of Materia Medica*, a highly regarded book of Chinese herbal medicine, mentioned the shark fin, indicating its value in health and nutrition. Shark fin is rich in chondroitin, collagen, phosphorus, iron, and other organic substances. It readily promotes blood circulation, prevents bone degeneration and diabetes, and contains anti-aging properties.

Shark fin itself has no particular taste but is usually braised with chicken soup and other ingredients until it is cooked to a near-transparent tendency, making it a great addition to soups.

Phoenix in the Nest

This is the third dish served in the Man-Han Banquet. During the birthday celebration feast, the dish “Phoenix in the Nest” was actually a display of a whole chicken surrounded by smaller quail eggs. The Emperor asked the royal chef about the curious display. He explained that the Ming Dynasty Emperor compared chicken to the treasured phoenix and deemed it a symbol of “wealth and good fortune.” Chicken was always considered the “king of nutrition,” and quail eggs, the acclaimed egg above all other eggs, according to the *Compendium of Materia Medica*. The Emperor was satisfied with the answer and agreed that Phoenix in the Nest was the most appropriate description for this delicious dish.



Bird's Nest Soup

Another course of the Man-Han Banquet is the “Bird's Nest Soup,” a delicacy long appreciated in Chinese culture. Bird's Nest itself is abundant in protein, sugar, inorganic salts, and other nutrients. However, the health benefits exceed internal advantages, and it has also been known to work miracles for the complexion and elasticity of the skin. Because of its rarity, Bird's Nest is costly and precious.

All emperors appreciated bird's Nest Soup throughout history. They enjoy a bowl every morning by habit and tradition, regardless of its rarity. The Emperor had the luxury of enjoying this soup daily, and the Qing Dynasty Emperor, Qianlong, even enjoyed it at every meal.





WanShou Pork

In the Ming and the Qing dynasties, this dish was served during the birthday celebrations of those older. Younger children usually created it for their seniors to wish the elder a respectful “long life.”

Emperor Qianlong and Empress Cixi particularly liked this dish because when their chefs prepared it, they would especially display the meat to illustrate the Chinese word for “shou,” meaning “life.” Because of its great taste and significant meaning, this dish has enjoyed its own long life within the imperial palace.



Bear Paw

For more than three thousand years, the Chinese considered bear paw the most valuable health food. Mencius once said, “I want fish, and I also want bear paw. If I can’t have both, I’ll give up fish and take bear paw.”

Throughout every dynasty in history, bear paw has been one of the greatest dishes served at the imperial banquet. Bear Paw Stew is a very well-known dish around Northeastern China. Bears live in the forest of the “ChangBai” mountain region. They hibernate in their caves throughout the snowstorms and wait for the cold to pass every winter season. The *Compendium of Materia Medica* stated that bears don’t eat anything during their winter hibernation. They simply lick their paws when they are hungry. Therefore, their front paws are the most tender portion.

Lo Han Lobster

Lobster, in Chinese, is translated in two words as “dragon shrimp.” Throughout thousands of years of Chinese culture, the “Long,” or dragon, has been highly regarded as this country’s noble symbol. So, in ancient times, dragons and emperors were synonymous and highly praised. In the Qing Dynasty, they even avoided using the word “dragon” on the Man-Han Banquet menu not to offend the emperor. So they used the word “prawn” instead of “Long Xia” (lobster). The chef created a new presentation to distinguish lobster from prawn, where he carved the lobster meat into the popular public figure “Lo Han.” Emperor Qianlong was delighted with the new dish and named it “Lo Han Lobster.”



Yellow Croaker on Snow

It has been said that Emperor Qianlong once had a major disagreement with his mother. In an attempt to appease her and reconcile with her, the emperor told his head chef to cook a special dish for her, the “yellow croaker on snow.” The dish was meant to portray an ancient story of a son who caught a fish for his sick mother in the severe, cold winter. The ailing mother had only one wish—to eat live, fresh fish. So, being a son who respected his mother and wanted to please her, he laid his warm body on the sheet of ice, melting the snow just enough to catch one fish. Emperor Qianlong hoped this dish would not only satisfy her taste buds but would also touch her heart and warrant her forgiveness.





The Juniper Pioneer of Java

By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

Contributing editor, José L. Rodríguez Macias,
Puerto Rico

Photos by Budi Sulisty

Top: Ucak Dedin in his juniper field.

Inset: Visitors in Ucak's greenhouse where he grows paprika using automated irrigation in a controlled environment.

Ucak Dedin was born in 1968 and hails from Giri Jaya, Cikajang, Garut West Java. The village is in a mountainous area about 800 meters above sea level. Ucak's family background was farming, and Cikajang is a fertile land where much horticulture and crop planting are present. Thus many families, including his,

focus on farming and ornamental plant production as a means of income.

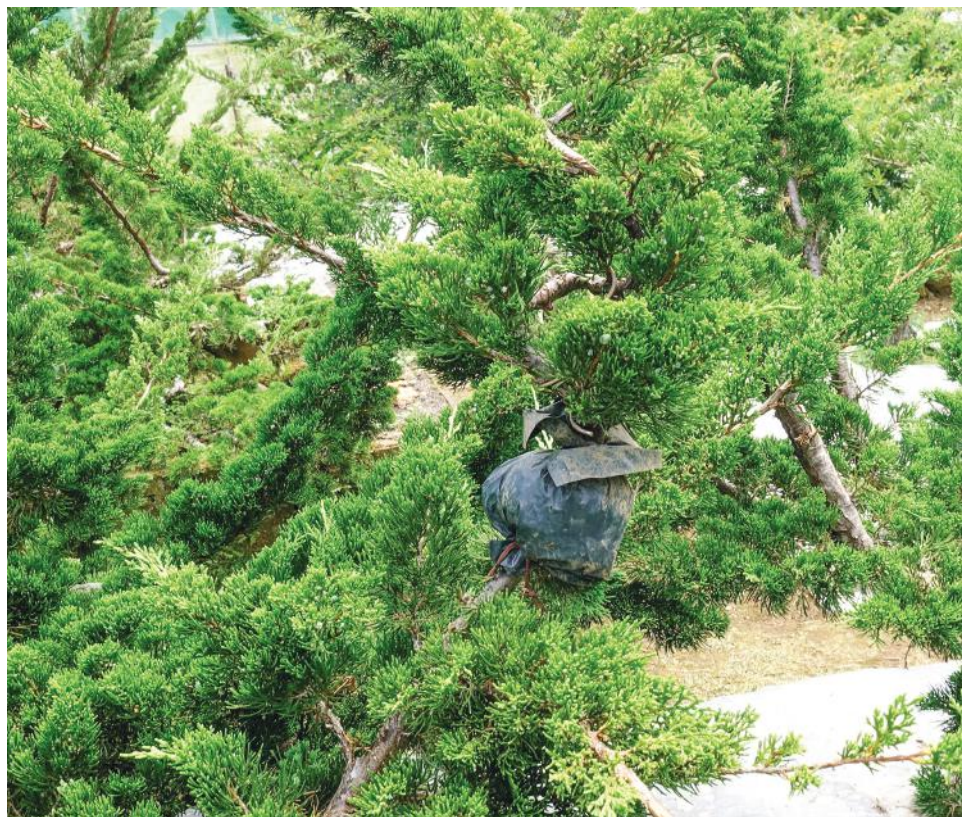
At a young age, Ucak Dedin worked with a Dutch company whose primary business focus was the development of modern horticultural technology. Years later, Ucak started his own business by growing paprika using automated irrigation and controlled greenhouse environments. His success in growing paprika and the quality of his product were coveted by exclusive clientele, which meant that his product was reserved and sold before being ready for market.

In 2011, Ucak was part of the Indonesian Bonsai Society (PPBI) delegation that attended the Asia Pacific

Top: Black pine field in Japan, which sparked an idea to emulate the same back home.

Middle left and right: After removing the bark, he lets the wound sit without covering it for two weeks. Afterward, he covers the air layer with moss and plastic. Rooting time is around two months.

Bottom: Once the rooted air-layers are removed, he wraps them in 40 by 40 cm poly bags



Bonsai Convention in Japan. He witnessed countless black pines planted there in the ground for training as bonsai, which sparked an idea to emulate the same back home.

After returning from Japan, Ucak immediately bought three Taiwanese *Juniperus chinensis* brought to Indonesia by a friend from Taiwan. After planting them on the ground, these plants became the foundation for his new venture. They became the mother plants to numerous juniper specimens planted on his fields, propagated mainly through air-layering. As of now, he has thousands of juniper stock, which are mainly shaped by twisting limbs into interesting shapes.

To gather medium-sized materials with an average thickness of around 10 cm, he uproots the plant after three to four years. To produce larger stock, more than



Top: Ucak's raised beds around two meters wide and 50 cm high. Before planting the junipers, the terrain is carefully prepared by incorporating manure and humus.

Bottom: Ucak prepares a specimen juniper for planting in a training pot.

seven years is needed. He only focuses on raw stock, so after digging, he establishes the plants in training pots to allow the customers to perform the styling process. His prices are moderate. For example, \$350USD for medium-sized pre-bonsai and up to \$3,500USD for larger ones. His primary focus is to produce affordable, high-quality, and accessible materials for all to enjoy.

Restricted movement during the covid pandemic allowed bonsai lovers all over the globe to work harder on their bonsai. Formerly, *Juniperus chinensis* could

only be attained in Indonesia by importing, as no local offer was available on the market. Tackling this uncharted niche, making juniper materials with an affordable process and in quantity, has helped Ucak maintain a steady flow of customers to even out the ups and downs of the paprika business.

The development of the project was carefully planned. First, Ucak cleared the land and created raised beds around two meters wide and 50 cm high. The raised beds are dedicated exclusively to the junipers. Before





planting the junipers, the terrain is carefully prepared by incorporating manure and humus. As a tribute to his former business, he uses decomposed paprika and juniper by-product humus, developed from the numerous clippings that result from the shaping process. These preliminary steps allow the juniper plants to grow a root mass, after which runner roots find their own nutrients, promoting steady and faster growth. The junipers are planted in soil covered with plastic. He uses two layers of plastic; the first is a normal ground-cover used in the landscape business. The second is a re purposed UV-resistant plastic material that can last up to seven or eight years. The advantages of covering the soil with plastic are preventing water evaporation, inhibiting the growth of weeds, protecting low branches from rot, and quickening plant growth.

Watering can be performed up to once every two weeks during the dry season instead of daily.

Top: Ucak harvests the plants when they attain the desired thickness. Before uprooting, he cuts off all unnecessary roots, leaving one main root to ensure the tree's survival. He then adds soil mix to the rootball and places it in a polybag.

Middle and bottom: After two months, numerous fine roots have grown. The lifeline root can now be safely severed, and the tree can be transferred to a pot without problems.

Facing page:

Top: Large juniper planted in a brick enclosure to help it grow more quickly into premium starting material.

Middle: Budi and Ucak with a prized juniper specimen.

Bottom: Constant attention and wiring helps twist limbs into interesting shapes.

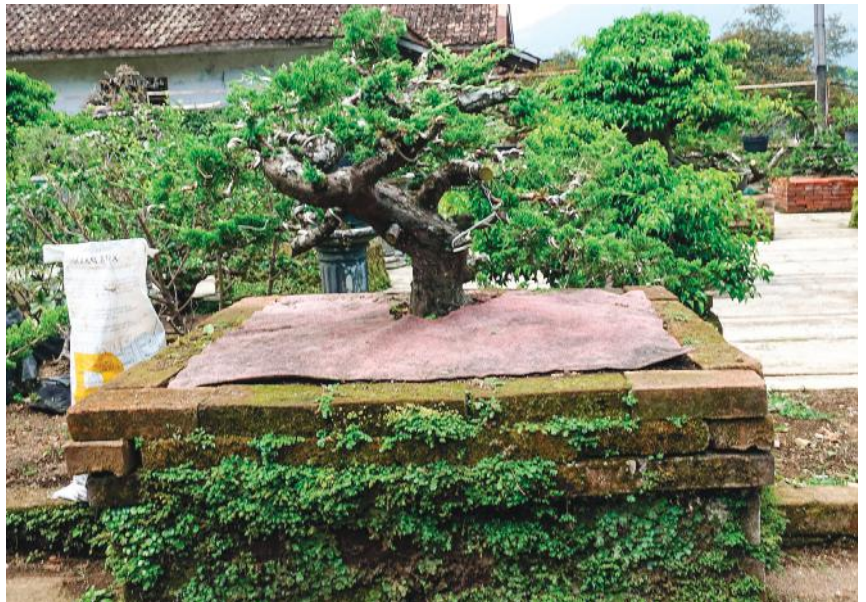


For air layering, he peels off the bark in five to ten centimeters around the stem, depending on the thickness of the plant. After removing the bark, he lets the wound sit without covering it for two weeks. This allows for the cambium to die off naturally and increases the chances of rooting without the added nuisance of creating a bridge. Afterward, he covers the air layer with moss and plastic. Rooting time is around two months. Once the rooted air-layers are removed, he wraps them in 40 by 40 cm polybags and lets them rest for two additional months before planting them in the ground.

He harvests the plants when they attain the desired thickness. Before uprooting, he cuts off all unnecessary roots, leaving one main root to ensure the tree's survival. He then adds soil mix to the rootball and places it in a polybag.

After two months, numerous fine roots have grown. The lifeline root can now be safely severed, and the tree can be transferred to a pot without problems. Basically, this encompasses what has become the Ucak Process. The tree is now a pre-bonsai with a good form, ready for the next steps!

Ucak is an inspiration to all and is living proof that humble beginnings can produce tremendous results. Hopefully, many can emulate his techniques and produce the same, or even better, within their respective countries and using other species. As necessity is the mother of all inventions, the COVID pandemic has enticed the world's bonsai community to become more creative, both spiritually and physically. While this pandemic has been a burden to many, others have sparked their creative muse to entertain their souls with bonsai. This, in my opinion, has been a positive outlook on an otherwise tumultuous time. Be inspired, and don't be afraid to pioneer! That's the truest spirit of creative bonsai art. 🌲



The Pine That Teaches

By Antonio Pizzato, Italy

Photos courtesy Antonio Pizzato and Massimo Bandera



started my Bonsai journey in 2012 with the registration to the “Scuola Fuji Kyookai Bonsai.”

I had already come to the world of bonsai in previous years when my sister gave me a *Zelkova nire*. My passion in the following years continues, but always in a very approximate and informal way.

In 2012 I decided to undertake a study to bring me closer to this art. Among the various possibilities present in my area, I looked for the most qualified. Inevitably the choice fell on that of Sensei Bandera.

I discovered that this prestigious master who taught near me had studied with Kimura, graduated in Biology, and had an excellent knowledge of Eastern art and culture. I considered myself very lucky and honored to become his pupil.

2012, the choice:

One thing that surprised me seeing the school's museum was the significant size of some specimens. Accustomed to the smaller Shohin-size category, I was fascinated by the strength and respect these large Omono-size plants emanated. The desire was born in me to engage myself with a plant that, although small, was so majestic.

In June 2012, I asked the master for advice for a plant with those standards. I remember that he proposed choosing a pine because its construction as a bonsai required more study, technique, and patience than other plants. I accepted his proposal, and among the suitable plants offered by a collector of Yamadori, there were six if I remember correctly. I chose a Mountain pine, *Pinus mugo*, with an estimated age of over 200 years. A powerful trunk and harmonious movement, even if pronounced, emanated strength and welcome at the same time.

In February 2015, the tree was wired by Sensei Bandera, then until 2021 by me.

2016, the bonsai container:

This bonsai deserved a pot that satisfactorily represented it. I had a precise idea of how it should be; round with curved edges, without feet (to make it soberer), with material and ferrous appearance practically unobtainable. The solution was to have it done by Jo (Joanne Carter), a ceramist with excellent technical and artistic skills that I had known for years. She had already made teapots for me on commission.

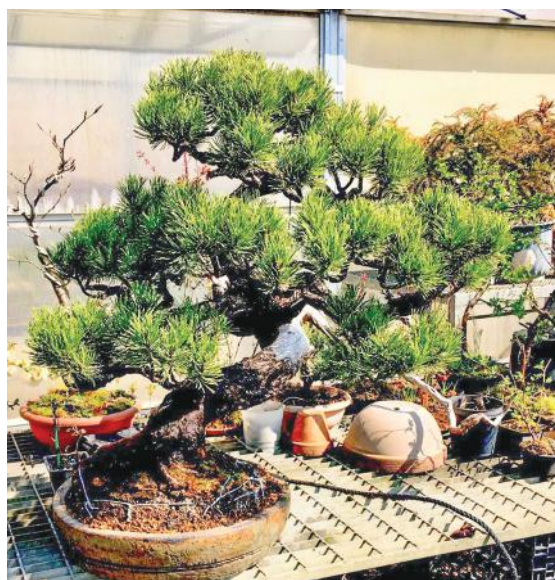
Jo had doubts about making such a large pot. Still, in the end, the result was truly amazing, more beautiful than I could imagine. Above all, the combination of the bonsai pot and the tree was perfect.



Top: 2012, Antonio Pizzato wires the Mountain pine under the tutelage of Massimo Bandera.



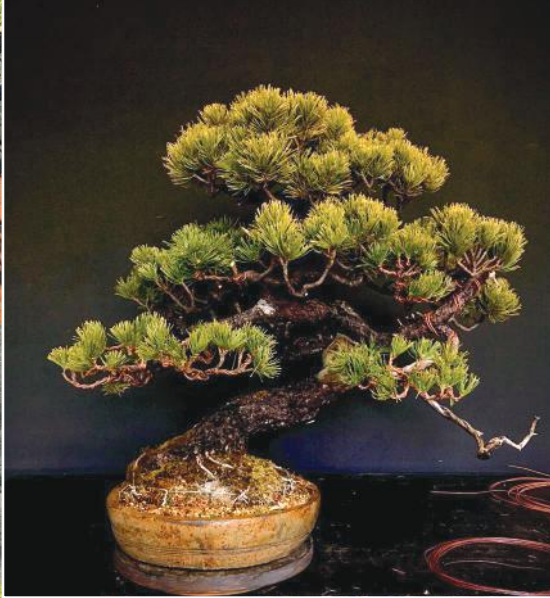
Middle: 2015, the Mountain pine is wired by Massimo Bandera. The crown is taking shape.

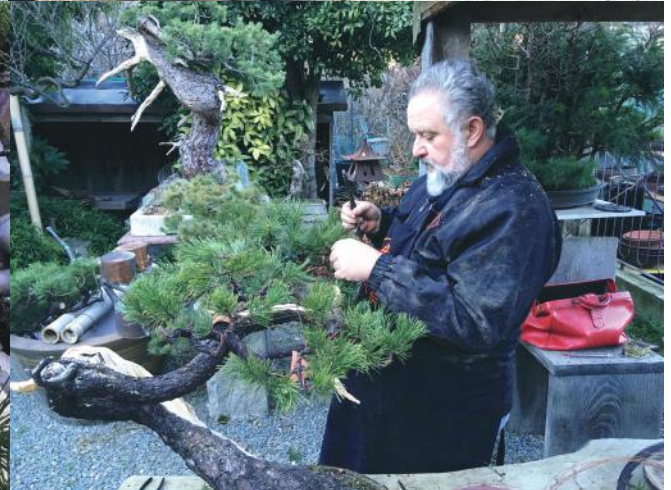


Bottom: 2019, Antonio plants the pine in a bespoke container that he commissioned Jo the Potter, also known as Joanne Carter, to create with his collaboration.



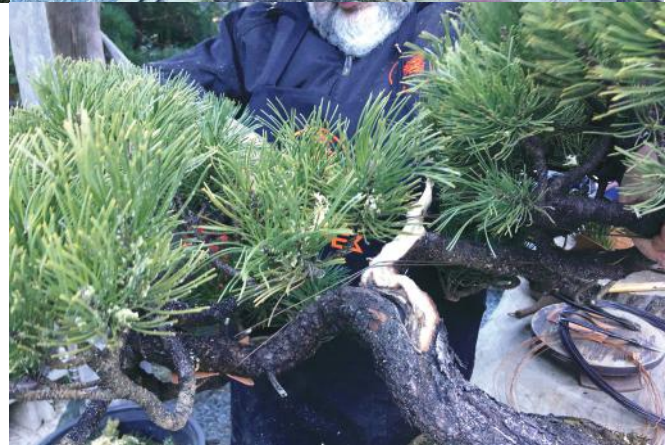
Above: 2016, the pine is growing well.
Below: 2022, after a decade of growth and loving care, Antonio is ready to call upon his master for a major restyling to compact the crown and enhance the deadwood.





2022, styling and carving:

Another critical process entrusted to the hands and inspiration of Bandera transforms the pine by improving its characteristics. Strength, essence, and magnetism where the seductive curves of the trunk allow observation from all sides to discover those details that a large tree conceals and at the same time reveals to the observer. In this last process, I wanted compact foliage and an enhanced sculptural character in the deadwood, typical of Bandera's works: a signature bonsai.



The Mountain pine after styling and carving. Now, all this tree needs is the passage of time for the deadwood to weather and the crown to grow and be further refined.



The seven values captured by this tree are Asymmetry, Simplicity, Austerity, Naturalness, Subtle Depth, Freedom of Action, Tranquility.

They are all present in equal measure, making the composition very harmonious and balanced. Even the sculpture of the jin is in harmony, fully reflecting the evolution of the deadwood in the pines.

My Sensei Bandera's Statement:

Bonsai. What a magnificent experience.

Since the late '70s, I collected small spruces from forests next to my home without knowing about the ancient Bonsai Japanese art that existed. That passion made me choose botanical studies, find collectors, and this profession. I have always been encouraged and supported by my family. After finding my Master, my unique and special idea was to grow vanguard bonsai.

My idea about bonsai consists of three different points. Art: comprising technique, horticulture, science and creativity, and famous masterpieces. Nature: made of monumental trees, fantastic mountains, and travels around the world. Human experience: spirit, philosophy, zen, religion, learnings, and masters.

For me, knowing nature is mainly an "emotion of admiration," a divine master creation where we enjoy life in freedom and happiness.

Vanguard and contemporary bonsai art has found the maximum technical and natural expression and creates new beautiful bonsai. For me, knowing how to do them is an "emotion of creativity," an epiphany of beauty and a vibrating feeling with which God, in the dawn of creation, created everything.

The human experience opens the doors to interior life and spirituality. The disciple, pupils, and collectors mark the union between my teachings and my work: the experience of a life of learning at "bonsai's rhythm" is, in my opinion, above all the "feeling of love."

Jo the Potter's Statement:

I'm a stoneware potter striving to do good personal work that quietly and gracefully inhabits the home and sometimes the garden. I'm continuously searching to meet the delicate intersection between thought and act. Making ceramic objects is my way of thinking about living and what to live for. It engages my mind and my body. It connects me with my community and gives me a sense of identity and purpose. I adore the low-tech approach of this craft and its calm and cyclical nature. Clay constantly challenges me to reach a higher level of skill and knowledge. The transformation from the soft, forgiving clay to the resilient and durable pot never fails to thrill me. I genuinely believe that handmade objects can provide connections in this increasingly disconnected world.

See more at www.letterredijo.com.

Bonsai pot:

This custom-made bonsai pot (44 cm d., 8 cm h.) was hand thrown on a potter's wheel and fired in a gas kiln for 12 hours to 1280 degrees centigrade. Jo used a coarse-textured, black stoneware clay from England. The pot was glazed with her own personal green moss glaze consisting of potash, feldspar, kaolin, mixed wood ash, and iron oxide. 🌲



Top-Class European Pines

Czech National Exhibition Bonsai on a high level worth seeing

By Herbert Obermayer, Germany

Photos by Willy Evenepoel
and Herbert Obermayer

Translation by Gudrun Benz

Once more, the Moravian little town Kroměříž was the venue of the Czech National Bonsai Exhibition. Kroměříž is one of the most beautiful historical cities of the Czech Republic and was rightly declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Mainly worth seeing is the Archbishop's Chateau (Castle), the Great Square with its citizen residences and arcade galleries, and the flower garden (Květná zahrada). The garden was built from 1665-1675 by Filiberto Luccese and Giovanni Pietro Tencalla according to the model of the palace garden of Versailles.

The Czech Bonsai Association (ČBA) show, was initially planned to include the EBA (European Bonsai Association) Convention, which was canceled in 2020 because of the corona pandemic. However, the main sponsor withdrew his support, so the Czech bonsai friends and



The flower garden, Květná zahrada, was built from 1665-1675 by Filiberto Luccese and Giovanni Pietro Tencalla according to the model of the palace garden of Versailles. Photo by Michael Bjalek.



"Tree of the Year," was awarded to an excellent *Pinus mugo* of Roman Neslanik.



Top: Visitors to the Japanese garden of the exhibition area enter through a Torii gate.

Middle: A quiet place for recreation.

Bottom: Many remarkable trees were seen in the exhibition.



Top: Rafael Torres from Majorca, Spain, demonstration.

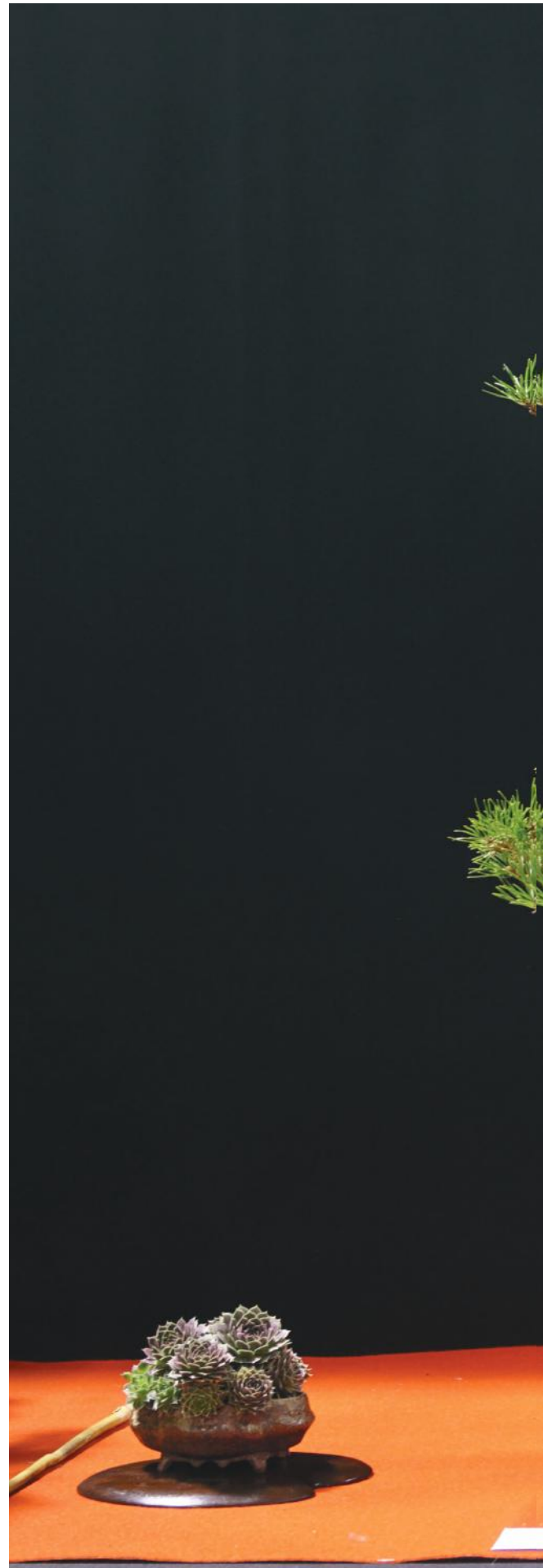
Above: Václav Novák, Czech Republic, demonstration.

their president Ivan Machacek had no other choice but to make it “XXIV Národní Výstava” (24th National Exhibition).

Despite this fact, the trip to the Floria exhibition ground was worthwhile. The exhibitors mainly brought fine and often excellent bonsai to Kroměříž, where they met perfect conditions as years before. Floria, the exhibition company, provided the halls to the ČBA free of charge, took care of the set up of the show, and in addition, paid a financial reimbursement. Exhibitors only had to put their trees in place.

With this arrangement, the bonsai exhibition acts as an additional attraction to the autumn garden fair, which takes place at the same time. This represents a classical win-win situation for both Floria and ČBA.

Visitors enjoyed about 105 bonsai and about 38 suiseki. The main focus was on European pine species; imported pines were the exception. Only two Japanese red pines were shown, and no chance for *Pinus thunbergii* and *Pinus parviflora*. *Pinus sylvestris*, *mugo*, and *uncinata* were clearly favored at the evaluation, reflected in the number of accepted trees for the exhibition.





Pinus sylvestris, Herbert Obermayer
Nomination Tree of the Year,
Rafael Torres Best Conifer,
Honorary Award, Prague
Botanical Garden.

Top: *Pinus mugo*, Oldrich Kaspar, Chinese container, Nomination Tree of the Year



Larix decidua, Jan Bucil, Slab by Isabela, Tree of the Year Nomination.





“Strom Roku,” meaning “Tree of the Year,” was awarded to an excellent pine of Roman Neslanik, closely followed by two *Pinus mugo* of Oldrich Kaspar and Wlodzimierz Pietraszko.

The most numerous awards were collected by a *Pinus sylvestris* from Germany. It was nominated as “Tree of the Year,” received in addition, a certificate as “Best Conifer” and an award of honor of the Botanical Garden of Prague. The favorite bonsai of the author was a cascade of a *Pinus sylvestris* of the collection of Josef Valuch—it was of international level but out of competition.

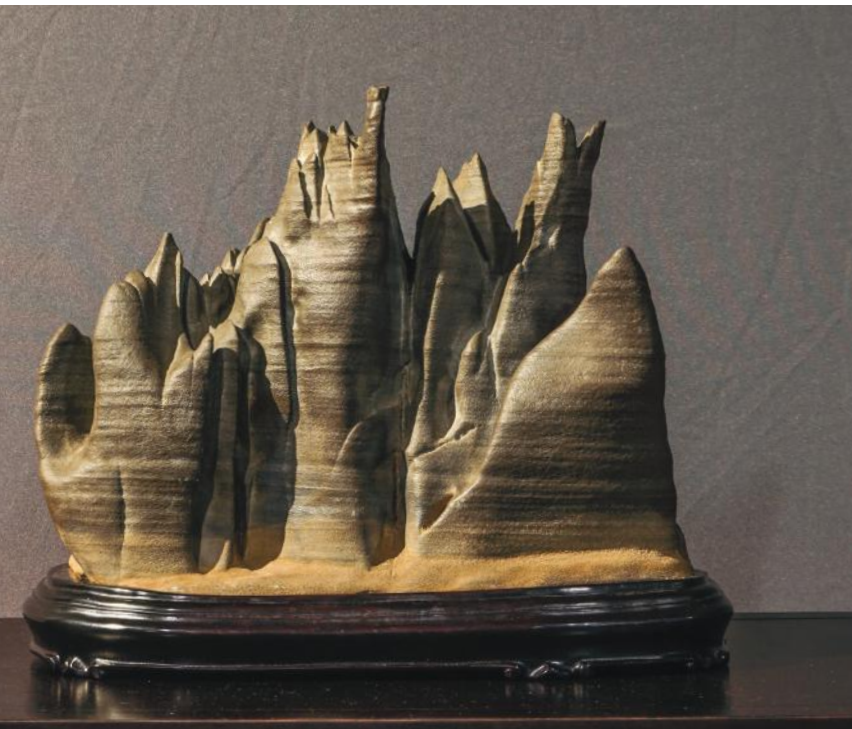
ČBA invited international demonstrator and Spaniard Rafael Torres. After a workshop with eleven participants on Friday, the Majorcan gave demonstrations on the stage during the following two days. He styled in a convincing manner two high-quality pines. Both are now on the way to becoming outstanding prized bonsai in the future.



Top left: *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, Adela Kraijova, Funkansan, Special Prize Shohin and Mame Club.

Top right: *Vitex negundo*, Botanical Garden Prague, Klika&Kuratkova container.

Bottom: *Pinus mugo*, Wlodzinierz Pietraszko, Japanese container.



Top left: Suiseki of the Year: Sarka Blazkova, Object Stone, China.

Top right: Jaroslav Poupa, "Icebreaker," Czech Republic.

Middle left: Igor Barta, Mountain Stone, Japan.

The “old master” Václav Novák represented the Czech bonsai school. The BCI director laid the foundation for two bonsai pines with great potential in an impressive and composed way.

This year’s New Talent’s Contest included five participants. Chinese junipers at Kifu size were put at disposal as material, the same kind used at the competitions in other European countries. Vladislav Boudny won the contest; he will represent Czech Republic at the next EBA convention.

For many years, suiseki friends have been firmly included in the exhibition of ČBA. Also, in 2021 it was evident that one can find viewing stones of high quality in rivers and other areas in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, the title “Suiseki of the Year” was given to a fascinating stone from China belonging to Šarka Blažková.

There were not any important changes at the ČBA annual assembly. Ivan Machacek was confirmed as president for a further term. New on the board is Lukas Nehyba, who will update the homepage and take care of the social media. Look for the Czech bonsai association on Facebook. 🌲

Pinus sylvestris, Václav Novák



Pinus sylvestris, Josef Valuch,
Japanese container.





Three Enemies of Bonsai Art

A Philosophical Discussion and Some Advice

By Enrique Castaño, Mexico

Recently, I created a new series of events to promote Bonsai across Latin American countries. As head of FELAB (Federación Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Bonsai) one of the crucial tasks is to get people involved and help them improve. I made a series of talks to get people more interested in the art and get the understanding required to continue in the art and move forward. The technical aspects are the usual subject. Currently, the art and design is being taught by some, but how do we understand that connection that we have to our bonsai? Not acknowledging this connection often leads to a dismissal of the art, and people move to another subject.

During my trip to the Dominican Republic, besides physiology and design, I decided to implement a small section of philosophy to get the people motivated and question their role in the art of bonsai.

To improve ourselves in the art of bonsai and create art, we have to move out of our comfort zone. We can only do that if we have a solid fundamental base, not only on techniques but also on understanding why we actually do bonsai. We commonly hear things like “we love bonsai,” and that bonsai is our passion!

However, rarely do people think much on the subject. I seldom find people who can really express what they love about bonsai, and usually, it is very superficial. Some speak of loving nature and having it within the palm of our hands!

In reality, when people do bonsai, they expose their hearts without much protection. This is particularly relevant in bonsai art. If we want to advance, it is not only techniques that we must learn but also the different philosophical branches that this art encompasses. I often tell people only a strong heart can continue with bonsai.

Here in Latin countries, criticism is a common way of life. With Bonsai Art, we usually encounter three different types of enemies. We can manage all of them with a solid foundation in our understanding of bonsai:

1 The first enemy is people close to us who don't understand the art of bonsai—usually family members, friends, coworkers, etc. This group of people we cherish for other reasons tends to undermine us with messages about why we do this or that to a tree. Even though it is in small bits and pieces, it can make us doubt why we do bonsai. I believe this is the main reason why people stop doing bonsai and why they become afraid of their own trees. It is a fear that affects us from continuing to do some work at particular times. One simple solution for this group is to think about how many things we do that affect other plants. Everyone is perfectly happy eating live lettuce, boiling potatoes, or cutting the grass, and nobody pays attention or worries about those acts. But they tend to be very harsh when it comes to a tree whose life we are trying to improve. However, most of us do conquer this part and move on.

2 We find the second type of enemy in our bonsai community. Here we have people with some knowledge of bonsai but do not necessarily understand their role and how their comments affect others. This is very relevant in exhibitions and bonsai gatherings where critics are not often kind. Their comments can affect people who are not used to having something they “love” be criticized. Here we have to remember that art is very subjective and that bonsai is not a simple art to be evaluated. Unlike painting or sculpture, the work is not finished, and the feeling associated with those trees is personal. We can only see what is presented and can only judge that. However, we should exercise caution when commenting to others as we only see a small part of the story.

3 The third enemy it's our own self-doubt. Self-doubt comes in cycles. In the beginning, as new bonsai practitioners, they tend to be very worried—in most cases suffering from their first dying tree. It's enough to crush their joy of bonsai and, in their own mind, makes them believe that they are not good at bonsai or they don't have a “green thumb” or other excuses that our mind invents. Other cycles include self-doubt and lack of progress. Our high expectations tend to move at the rhythm of the world, and currently, it is moving very fast. Small changes are not appreciated, and setting unrealistic objectives makes us wary that we are on the right path. It is not different from doing some exercise and wanting to look like a bodybuilder (obviously, if you are not one already).

So the part to improve is the fundamental objective for our plants. Over time other challenges have to be faced, from economics, time consumption, to traveling, etc. But in reality, we can solve these if we so desire.

Bonsai is a challenging art, and we have to master techniques and learn artistic design and basic biology to create bonsai. But we must also understand nature and our connection to the environment to make us move forward. 🌳

BCI Director, President of FELAB, Biologist and Second Generation Bonsai Artist, Enrique Castaño promoted bonsai and gave a series of lectures and demonstration to the Club Bonsai Nativo and the Club Dominicano de Bonsai in a recent trip to the Dominican Republic.





BCI Excellence Award

Making the New Medal

Text and Photos by Frank Mihalic, USA

In an ongoing effort to recognize excellence in bonsai and stone art worldwide, BCI Directors can award a beautiful medal and certificate to deserving trees and stones at major exhibits. For many years, the medal, designed by my dear friend BCI Director Guillermo Ramirez Castaño of Mexico, was awarded at the discretion of the BCI Directors in attendance. After our dear friend passed away, BCI could no longer replenish the supply of these medallions. So BCI decided to create a new award to recognize excellence in bonsai and viewing stones.

Then-President of BCI, Glenis Bebb, asked if I would take on the challenge of creating a new BCI award. So here is what I did in creating the new BCI award, which will now be given out at BCI-sanctioned events.

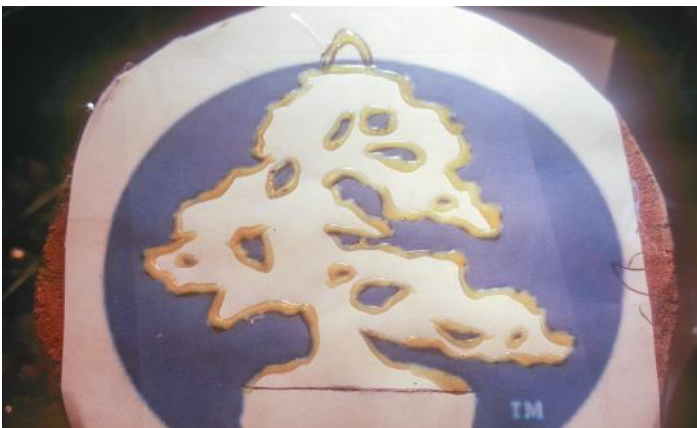
In this demonstration, we will be building up the wax object with one drop of wax at a time. Building up the design from the back to the front. This advanced technique is sometimes tough to do. So many times, we use different color waxes for the different parts. In this case, we will use a different color wax for the outline, trunk, branch pads, and pot.



The first thing that we must do is make a scale drawing or photo of the shape of the award.



Then, start with a picture of the award, in this case, the BCI tree logo. Then mark or select which foliage pads are front branches and back branches. By making the height of the back and front branches different, we create a 3-D look to the carving.



Using a hot wax pen and adding one drop of wax at a time, we draw a wax outline around the whole award.



Then we outline the foliage pads in blue.



Then we change to a brown color wax to fill in the trunk.



One of the hardest parts is giving the illusion of 3-D.



Again it is by staggering the height or thickness of the foliage pads.



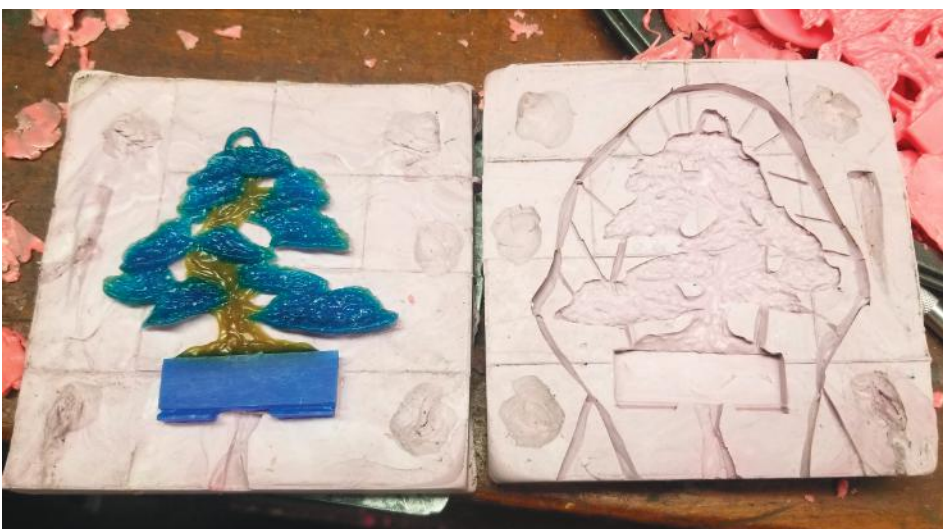
After all of this, we carve the texture in the foliage pads and the trunk.



Lastly, I used a block of wax and cut out a bonsai pot for this award. Using my hot knife, I fuse the two pieces together.



Then you have your finished carved lost-wax master for the award.



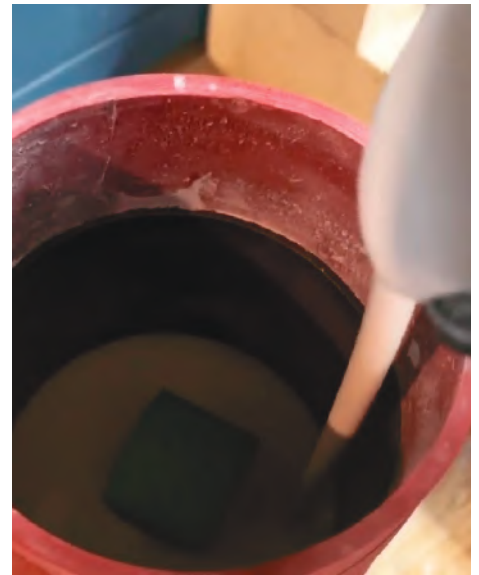
Now we have one wax master of our logo, but we want to create more than one award. So we take our wax master and make a rubber mold of it to make more copies of our award. The mold will be a two-part rubber mold.



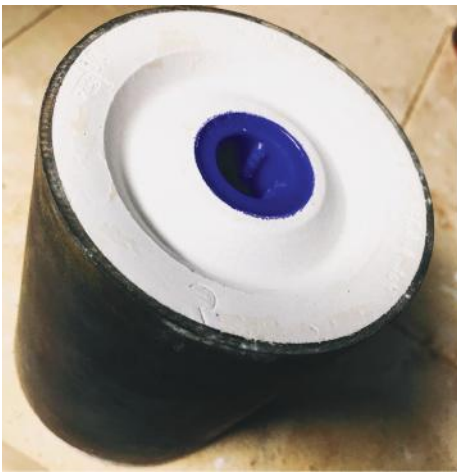
After we have a rubber mold, we can shoot hot wax under pressure into this rubber mold and duplicate our creation, as you see above.



It will take about 30 minutes to clean up and detail each new wax award that comes out of our mold, and we need to ensure each is as highly detailed as the original creation.



Filling the metal flask containing the wax awards with a special plaster.



Flask with the hardened plaster. Note the blue wax gateway is visible.



The flasks are placed in a hot oven with the wax end down. The wax is heated overnight, so all of the wax melts out.



Bronze pellets are measured to the exact amount needed to fill the negative impression created by the wax melting out of the flask.



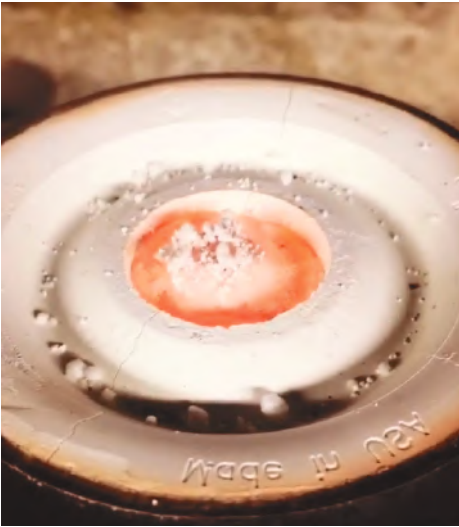
Now the bronze pellets are heated to a glowing red color.



Once the molten metal is ready, the hot flask is removed from the oven and placed on the vacuum table with the hole upwards.



The molten metal is poured into the hot flask filling the plaster void where the wax has melted.



The hot metal is visible inside the plaster flask.



The hot flask is then placed in a tub of water to cool down.



The plaster will liquefy, and the metal casting will fall out.



Then each casting is cleaned up using a Dremel with wire brushes and abrasive wheels.



The final stage is polishing each medal with a cloth wheel.



Each medal is accurate in detail to the original wax master.



It was a pleasure to create a new BCI Award of Excellence. I hope you enjoyed the process of how this award was created as much as we did! And I hope your tree or stone will be recognized by this special award one day soon! 🌲

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Frank Mihalic is a 2nd generation bonsai artist, sculptor, and jeweler from Chardon, Ohio, USA. He is president of Bonsai Clubs International.



OF EXCELLENCE

BCI 60 Years Anniversary Convention in Taiwan

September 24 & September 30, 2022

Sept. 24: Exhibition in Changhua



This exhibition will show the best 60 Bonsai trees and the best 60 Suiseki selected by BCI 2022 Convention Committee in honor of BCI's 60th Anniversary. Committee organizers are Taiwan Bonsai Masters and BCI Life Members. We will use YouTube to share with everyone. A Commemorative Book of the exhibit will be available as well.

Demonstrations by Bonsai Masters:



Cheng Cheng-Kung

Lo Min-Hsuan

Hsu Sung-Chan

Ho Chih-Hsung

Four Taiwan bonsai masters will demonstrate their creative concepts on YouTube during the exhibition period.

Free Admittance:

Free for everyone! Go to www.bonsai-bci.com/60years to register. BCI members and registered guests will receive links by email to all convention activities and events on YouTube.

Sponsors and Supporters:

Organized by I C Su and Helen Su,
Taiwan Bonsai Masters, and BCI Life Members
Changhua County Government
National Bonsai Association, Taiwan, ROC



Sept. 30: Su's Garden Taoyuan City, Taiwan

The exhibition in Su's garden will feature Bonsai, Suiseki, Imperial Diet, and Pot collection in a very natural environment.



Su's Bonsai
Collection

Su's Bonsai Pot
Collection

Su's Suiseki
Collection

Su's Imperial Diet
Collection

REGISTRATION & INFORMATION

www.bonsai-bci.com/60years



A Lucky Juniper and a Lifetime of Bonsai

Presenting Korean Bonsai Artist and Collector, Chairman Lee Chang-Gil

Photos and Text
by Won Hoe Sik, Korea

Busan, the second-largest city in Korea, also called the gateway to the sea, is on the southeast coast of the Korean Peninsula.

It is home to Cheomseongdae, the world's first astronomical observatory, Dabotap Tower, famous for its beauty, Bulguksa Temple, and Seokguram Hermitage, well known as historical and cultural sites.

There is another famous city north of Busan and Gyeongju; Pohang, a city of industry and steel that has contributed to the development of modern Korea. Pohang is the city where Pohang Steel, the world's No. 1 steelmaker, is located. Although there are many things to be proud of in Pohang, Chairman Lee Chang-Gil, a well-known bonsai collector in Korea, is also from here and is currently spending his retirement life with bonsai as his friend.

Chairman Lee Chang-Gil is an orthodox bonsai collector among Korean bonsai collectors. Having been engaged in various cultural and artistic activities since his youth, he developed bonsai as a hobby by being fascinated by ornamental rocks and bonsai. He devoted himself to his artwork by growing the bonsai of various types of trees. In particular, he was engaged in the education and exhibition of bonsai and various cultural events related to bonsai. Gradually gaining knowledge and artistic impression of bonsai, he held an individual exhibition on November 15, 2014, of his collection of bonsai and ornamental rocks.

When he was a child, his mother who especially liked flowers, influenced him. Then, he was fascinated by the strange appearance of a small juniper tree at the foot of the mountain that he accidentally encountered. So, he brought it home and grew it. This was when he became interested in bonsai.



Chairman Lee Chang-Gil and his wife



Top left: Cheomseongdae, the world's first astronomical observatory, Busan.

Top right: Seokguram Hermitage, Busan. Photo by eimoberg

Middle right: Bulguksa Temple, Busan.

Bottom: Dabotap Tower, Busan

Background: Pohang city, photo by kwonjunho.



Chairman Lee Chang-Gil and his wife in their beautiful garden. He spends his time here decorating his garden, directing and cultivating bonsai.



Bottom: *Taxus cuspidata*

Facing page:

Top left: *Carpinus coreana*

Top right: *Pseudocydonia sinensis*

Bottom: *Chaenomeles japonica*



The juniper tree was the size of chopsticks. It was planted well, watered, and taken care of every day. It had already grown to the young boy's chest height about five years later. Intending to make it into a pretty shape, he secretly brought out a basket in the kitchen placed it around a tree, pushing the branches down to make a tree shape.

He believes that the juniper tree, which stayed with him for 60 years without dying, brought luck to him. After marriage, he built a new house on the site next to him and moved in. The juniper tree was also planted in the new house. However, after his family moved to the city, the juniper tree remained alone to protect his hometown and later moved to the current site when he built another new house.

After growing up, he forgot about it because he got busy with his business and various social activities. But when he learned about flower arrangements and bonsai from Professor Moon Yong-Taek, a famous bonsai master in nearby Busan, he started working on bonsai purposefully.

The late Professor Moon Yong-Taek is a person who is known as the pioneer of art by introducing Korean flower arrangements in earnest and establishing a theory. He passed on flower arrangements and bonsai art to his students. He was a comprehensive cultural artist who had a reputation as a painter with excellent painting styles.

Chairman Lee Chang-Gil also learned calligraphy when he was young, watched ink paintings drawn by teachers, and understood the composition. He observed many aesthetic elements emanating from the tip of a small brush. He made efforts to apply the techniques of calligraphy and ink painting that express beauty with only black ink and brush tips to works with bonsai materials.



As a result, he was able to learn the teachers' lessons faster than others and speed up moving to his own creation.

According to the literature, Korean bonsai has a long history. Of course, there is no doubt that Koreans enjoyed growing plants in the pot long before.

Since then, many efforts have been handed down through various literature and historical books that show appreciation for trees and plants in the environment. This beautiful scenery developed in the mountains and fields was miniaturized and brought into the house. It may be natural for the Korean people to like music, but hobbies and games would have been possible only if they had enough leisure time.

So the tradition of bonsai and plant cultivation was enjoyed by aristocrats in the past, and many bonsai artists still live in Seoul, Busan, Cheongju, Gwangju, and Pohang. Therefore, various cultural events related to bonsai are held around here.

Lee Chang-Gil dreams of a small festival where he can share food and tell stories to others with bonsai artworks and calligraphy.



Taxus cuspidata

Facing page: Juniperus chinensis

He followed the path of bonsai masters such as Lee Kang-Soo, Moon Yong-Taek, and Kim Ki-Hwan. They were the first generation of bonsai artists, and he actively pursued a bonsai career as the second generation artist.

In the initial days, he participated in various exhibitions held in Korea, particularly at the 3rd World Competition held at the Seoul Trade Center in 1978. He served as the head of the Pohang-si branch of the Korean Bonsai Association. He demonstrated bonsai styling as a Korean representative. At this time, Park Sang-Deuk, the branch manager of Miryang, and Lee Seong-Moon, the branch manager of Daegu, participated in demonstrating the styling of pine trees. Masahiko Kimura, the famous Japanese bonsai artist, demonstrated right next

to him. At that time, many visitors flocked to see the styling demonstration, creating a rare scene.

He also promoted and introduced Korean bonsai as a delegate of Korean bonsai at the 2nd World Bonsai Competition (1990) in Hawaii, the Seoul Competition (1997), Puerto Rico Competition (2004), Taiwan Competition (2008), Dakamas Competition (2011), and Beijing Competition (2013).

Chairman Lee Chang-Gil maintains strong relationships with domestic artists and international bonsai artists.

Moon Yong-Taek recommended that he learn about advanced Japanese bonsai at his weekly visits over five years. Moon introduced him to Ko Yoshida, who had authority in Japan at the time in pine tree bonsai. Lee





invited Kimura, a world-class bonsai artist, to his house to learn about pine tree life and adaptation. He helped Kimura interact with major figures in the Korean bonsai community. Since their meeting, they have remained close friends.

Iwasaki, another Japanese bonsai artist who greatly influenced the bonsai culture, was also invited to his house twice. He, too, helped Lee Chang-Gil form a great network in the bonsai community. Then Mr. Moon also invited Furubae, a famous Japanese bonsai artist, to Chang-Gil's home as an instructor to create a place to learn for three days and two nights.

Chairman Lee Chang-Gil served as the head of the Pohang-si branch of the Korean Bonsai Association, the association's director, the association's vice-chairman, and is currently an advisor.

Chairman Lee Chang-Gil claims that bonsai has been popular at home and abroad for a long time because it is an art that continuously changes and deals with live plants, unlike other arts.

Good bonsai artwork is to stick to the basics/foundation. Sticking to basics might seem like a long and boring process. Still, the process of realizing through various trials and errors is the fastest shortcut in bonsai. So, Chairman Lee Chang-Gil always emphasizes that works are completed with time, not technology.

Whenever Lee Chang-Gil conceives a work in a relaxed manner, he emphasizes to others that bonsai should be based on reduction. This was not an excuse for the work but a process of conceiving a future complete form to secure space and plant the artist's soul. This shows how his lifestyle or directions of life are expressed in art.

Top left: *Juniperus rigida*

Facing page: *Juniperus chinensis*

Top right: *Juniperus chinensis*

Bottom: *Taxus cuspidata*



He welcomes passers-by without discrimination and warmly receives those who visit his garden.



Pinus densiflora

They live with a positive perception that continues by transforming the end of everything. “Such a value/ thought is revealed as a person’s composure in his life. His artwork appears as the beauty of the outer margin,” said Professor Kim Woo-Dal, his long-time *Bunwoo* (bonsai friend).

A few years ago, Chairman Lee moved near Gimpo. Passing through the production site of cotton and the vast cultivation fields, the house was built on a site with a view of the distant mountains.

Chairman Lee Chang-Gil newly built a beautiful *Hanok*, a traditional Korean house, that resembles the world of his artwork. He spends his later years decorating gardens, directing and cultivating bonsai there. Many bonsai artists visit the place because his life and site look great. He welcomes passers-by without

discrimination and warmly receives those who visit his garden.

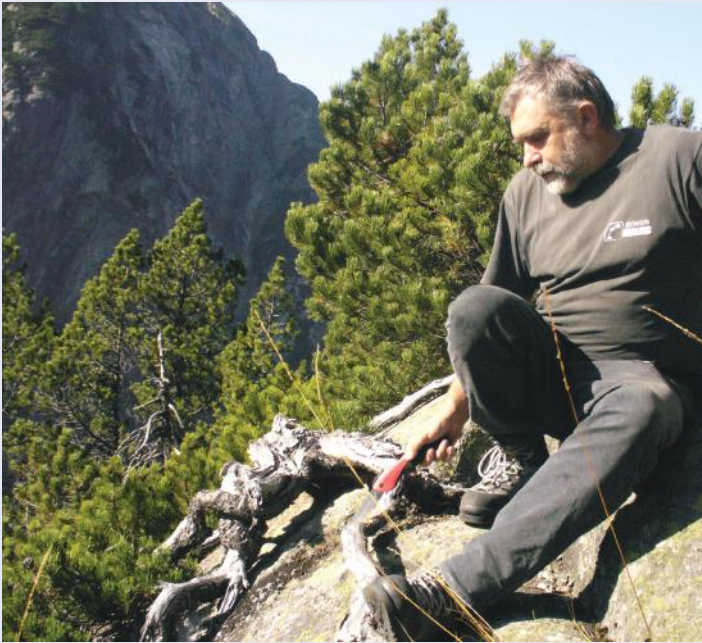
Occasionally, he holds a brush and expresses his feelings on *Hwaseonji* (rice paper). He resumed the calligraphy he learned when he was young. He had talent in calligraphy, but even at a late age, he met a good teacher, learned, and improved to a point where he could proudly present his work. Now, the signboard of the mansion can be decorated with his own calligraphy.

Chairman Lee will reach his 80th birthday in two years. Now he is preparing for the last exhibition. With the beautiful *Hanok* mansion as the background, he dreams of a small festival where he can share food and tell stories to others with bonsai artworks and calligraphy. 🌲

From the highest mountains to the highest exhibition awards



At an altitude of about 2,500 m, we found a very interesting mountain pine—*Pinus mugo*.



By Václav Novák, Czechia

Photos by Václav Novák and Willy Evenepoel

In October 2007, my friend Juraj Marcínko invited me to hunt for yamadori in the Alps. At an altitude of about 2,500 m, we found a very interesting mountain pine – *Pinus mugo*. Upon detailed examination, we decided to pick up the pine. First, I cut the root that was too long. Then Juraj exposed the edge of the opening where most of the root bundle was. After pulling out the pine, a very small compact root ball appeared. Juraj, who has extensive experience picking up trees, assured me that everything would be fine. We wrapped the ball and the lower part in plastic wrap.

The strenuous way down waited for us.



We washed the pine with water at Juraj's home and then placed it in a deep plastic container. We used a mixture of akadama and pumice as a substrate. The tree was fixed in the container using wires. The crown was spread over the largest possible area with strong wires to expose it to the most sunlight. All the care paid off, and the tree survived. Within five years, it developed into an excellent condition.



In 2012 I was invited to do a demonstration at the National exhibition in Denmark. And I chose precisely this pine for the demo. My intention was to shape the pine as a cascade, use the sharp angle on the trunk and exhibit the beautiful natural shari at the top of the cascade. The tree had enough branches to form a crown. Final result after the first shaping is shown below.

After further cultivation, transplanting into the final pot from the Klika&Kuratkova studio, I exhibited the cascade. First, in Poland in 2019 at the international exhibition of the three countries of the Triennial (Germany, Poland, and the Czechia), where I won the main prize. In 2020, I won the main prize—Tree of the Year—at the National Exhibition of the Czech Bonsai Association (CBA). 🌲



My assistant Jiří Procházka and me after the demonstration at the National exhibition in Denmark.



The cascade *Pinus mugo* displayed in a Tokonoma at the Triennial, in Poland, 2019, and the CBA National Exhibition in 2020.

Photos by Willy Evenepoel.





FELAB 2021 BONSAI PHOTO COMPETITION

Latin America promotes international relations with organizations and individuals who love bonsai

By Enrique Castaño, Mexico

Photos courtesy FELAB

Here at the Latin-American bonsai federation (FELAB), we hold a photo contest every two years. The contest is created to encourage all from the Latin-American countries that do bonsai to show their work. This friendly competition helps us improve our designs by learning what everyone is doing. Also, it allows us to see the current work of all bonsai teachers in these countries and can help groups and clubs assess the quality of their work. Sometimes knowing how some artists evolve can be seen over time. This last 2021 edition was a great success. 558 trees were shown in the competition under different categories that took 27 international judges to define the winners. The main organizers of this event are Nicolas Lara and Nacho Marin. Christian Rasse developed a webpage where all the trees can be seen. Older editions are also included.

The website, www.felab.net, has all the links and includes more information about FELAB. The direct link to the competition is <https://concursobonsaifelab.com>. Look under Concurso 2021.

Several organizations were asked to collaborate, including BCI, WBFF, Bonsai Empire, and Ryuga, among others. These organizations also helped with some of the prizes for the winners shown in this article.

But before we get into the pictures, I would like to provide more information about FELAB. FELAB is one of the regions of the WBFF (World Bonsai Friendship Federation). This federation includes 17 countries and many clubs and federations from those clubs. FELAB's mission is to promote bonsai for all, focusing on Latin Americans but including people from other parts of the world. However, the trees need to be from the region to qualify for the contest itself.

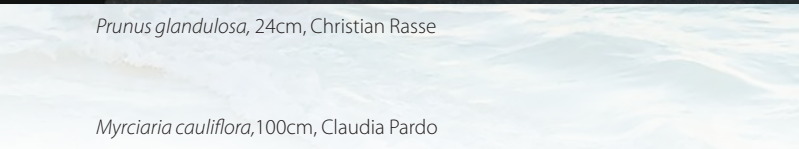
As with any of these contests, the quality begins to improve over time. I hope that these photos of some of the winners may help you see some of the species that we work with. I particularly enjoy the diversity of species and styles, from very traditional shapes to some more modern forms. 🌳



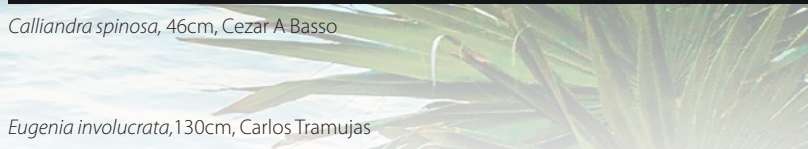
Prunus glandulosa, 24cm, Christian Rasse



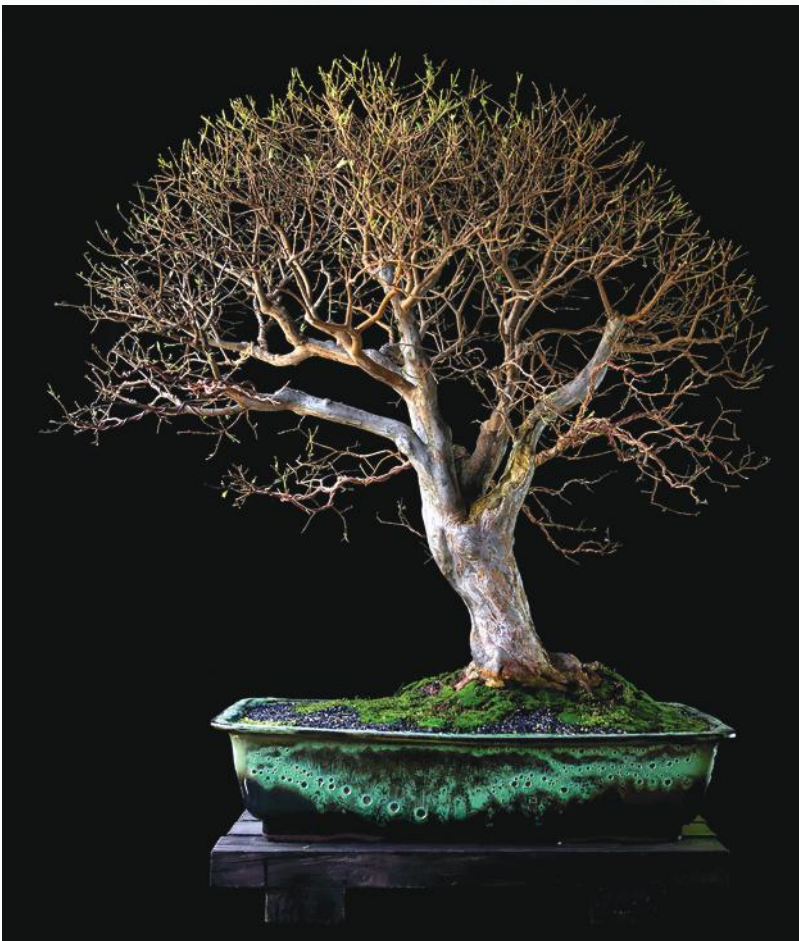
Calliandra spinosa, 46cm, Cezar A Basso



Myrciaria cauliflora, 100cm, Claudia Pardo



Eugenia involucrata, 130cm, Carlos Tramujas





Juniperus chinensis, 90cm, Nicolas Lara



Terminalia molineti, 101cm, Enrique Castaño



Ficus tigerbark, 90cm, Freddy Vivero



Eysenhardtia polystachya, 90cm, Felipe Gonzalez



Plinia cauliflora, 80cm, Jenny Mosquera



Juniperus depeanna, 94cm, Felipe Gonzalez



Juniperus foemina, 130cm, Felipe Gonzalez



Caesalpinia ferrea, 90cm, Nacho Marin



Ceiba speciosa, 85cm, Nacho Marin



Ficus microcarpa, 90cm, Julio Rivera

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