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## **SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2007**

I was given a great opportunity to view a new book entitled The First International Rock Auctions of Beijing 2007. It was given to me to peruse by Kingston Wang, the owner of Bonsai Environment Retail and Wholesale Nursery at Vineyard in Sydney, New South Wales.

Because it was all written in Chinese I couldn't quite understand whether it was a showcase of new stones or photos of a recent show. A friend of mine translated a few pages for me and indeed these stones are up for auction by the way of written bids. Bidding on the stones, complete with daizas, started from \$A1,000 up to \$A50,000. As it was an auction of course they would also have a reserve price on them.

The photography in the book was superb and the clear detail on the stones as well as the daizas was excellent. There were about 180 pages of some very unusual stones, some of which would have been classed as 'beautiful stones' and these included Peacock Stone and Brazilian Jade. The colours on these were absolutely magnificent. The other coloured stones were not that easy to identify. Mineral and gem specimens featured the most and they were beyond belief with their brightly coloured and lustrous hues. Stones other than these were classed as scholar, picture, animal, mountain, conglomerates and object stones and these were oiled to highlight their fine features. The last few pages were of fossils of flowers, fish, crustaceans, shells and of some brightly coloured gemstones.

Now, on the subject of the daizas – what masterpieces!!! Intricately carved to perfection with a lot of detail and telling a story in their own right. The artisans that carry out this carving must be so patient to achieve such fabulous stands that suit the stones. To my liking, I found them a bit too busy in contrast to the stone they were supporting but for art's sake, they really are spectacular. They had carved trees, animals, steps, houses, tree roots, flowers, waterfalls, leaves, bamboo, birds and bridges. Some of the larger stones were actually incorporated on a stand very similar to a bonsai cascade stand with tall legs. I could see these used to decorate a home as a piece of art – most unusual.

I know that the rules I learnt about suiseki many years ago were to let the stone dominate and the daiza was purely there to lift the stone to its own importance. On perusing this book it made me look outside the square – so to speak. There would be purists completely against these new thoughts but I say – why not? Let's use different stones and specimens; after all they were all created in much the same way and along side of each other. In a formal show though, I would still keep gems and specimens in a section on their own and the more traditional stones in a more simplistic display.

Kingston Wang imports a lot of very high quality suiseki with or without daizas and they are reasonably priced. To contact him you can phone on (02) 9627 6688, fax (02) 9627 7927, email: [bonsaiw@optusnet.com.au](mailto:bonsaiw@optusnet.com.au) or visit his site at [www.bonsainet.com.au](http://www.bonsainet.com.au). The address of the nursery is 70 O'Connell Street, Vineyard. N.S.W. 2765

If you would also like to contact the company who is conducting this auction go to-  
Beijing Jia Xin International Auction Co. Ltd.  
Email: [jxpm\\_y5@yahoo.com.cn](mailto:jxpm_y5@yahoo.com.cn)  
<http://www.jxpm-art.com>

If anyone can identify some of the mineral specimens on these sites, I would appreciate some correspondence on the subject. Let's share it. Contact me on [brendap7@bigpond.com](mailto:brendap7@bigpond.com)

Happy Hunting,  
Brenda

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

'Rocks are the pages of Earth's diary, and fossils are the words on the pages, recounting surprising details of the history of life. – Anon

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

September 2007

Hello 'Rock hounds'

A small but dedicated group of craftspeople made it to the August workshop and once more a productive day was had by all. Remember, 'Practice Makes Perfect' (Daizas).

This month we'll continue 'Keeping it Clean' with some tips about your **POWER** tools. Most of you will have at least one rotary tool of some type. These can be either **rotary action** i.e. spins around like a drill or **reciprocating action**, these are power carving tools with a variety of chisel blades. Hopefully the following tips will give you some guidance into the use and maintenance of these tools.

1. Don't expect your rotary tool to have the same performance as an 800 watt die grinder (*Die Grinder = the tool that bonsai enthusiasts use for carving those incredible Jins and things*). Slow and steady is the way to go.
2. If your rotary has variable speed, choose the speed that is correct for the job that you are doing. Routing needs to be carried out at a higher speed, sanding and timber removal with burrs should be done at low to medium speed. If the tool starts to labor (slow down excessively) while you are using it, you're probably going to hard. Some signs of this are;
  - a. Smoke coming from the work piece or black scorch marks on the timber and the tool bit. *Slow down, the speed is too high, you are forcing the tool or the bit / sander is blunt or smooth. Change the bit / sander.*
  - b. Smoke and / or smell coming from the rotary tool, or the tool are too hot handle. **Turn the tool off immediately.** If this occurs, there is a problem with the electrical part of the tool. This could be caused by any of the above reasons or a problem with the tool itself, i.e. overheating due to prolonged use, blocking the air flow through the tool and possible build up of dust in the motor section of the tool. Let the tool cool down, try to clean the inside of the tool (see below) and restart. If the problem persists, you need to have the tool checked out by a service centre or replace the tool.
  - c. Smoke coming from your ears. Be patient, Rome wasn't built in a day. Go have a coffee and smell the roses, come back to your work later.
3. After using your rotary tool, try to clean the dust from inside the casing. You can do this in a number of ways; if you have access to an air compressor, blow the dust out. If you have a vacuum cleaner, try to vacuum the dust or possibly connect the hose to the output end of the

cleaner and blow the dust out. (This is also good for blowing up balloons if you're having a party).

4. As with last month's hand tool tips, all router bits and other cutters need to be kept as sharp as possible for the best results. Keep your bits and burrs clean, remove any accumulated wood as you go, this will help to stop clogging and burning. A small steel or brass wire brush (available from Bunnings and Two dollar shops) is a good piece of equipment to keep in your tool box.

We'll bring you more on power tool techniques and specific cleaning methods in coming newsletters. Next month we'll go 'Back to Basics', essentials items for the beginner's tool box. So long till next time,  
G&J

#### **WHERE AND WHEN**

Our meetings are held at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks, N.S.W. on the third Wednesday of every month except at school holiday time to start at 7.30 p.m. sharp.

You can contact me at [brendap7@bigpond.com](mailto:brendap7@bigpond.com) if you require any further information. Alternatively you can contact me on my mobile 0412 384 834 or at (W) 02 9522 9399.

### **A TALE OF TWO ROCK SHOPS**

Some time ago I was fortunate to spend time in Japan soaking up the bonsai atmosphere which can be almost overwhelming. Being interested in rocks as well as trees I made a point on two separate occasions to seek out small shops devoted entirely to the sale of the most wondrous collection of suiseki and beautiful stones.

The first was situated on the outskirts of Kyoto, so it gave my husband and I a chance to see a little of everyday life away from the tourist areas. Owned by elderly Japanese who spoke only a little English this proved to be no problem. Our apparent enthusiasm for everything we viewed was infectious so for an hour we became firm friends through a mutual interest.

Limited by space and the need to watch luggage weight I stuck to the premise that big is not always beautiful and selected a long black mountain range measuring 16.5 x 5 cm which had been cut across the bottom and a black mountain 8.5 x 8 cm with two jutting peaks and a border of grey.

We were invited to enjoy tea with the owner which led to a very interesting discussion. How, you ask when we all had none or little command of each other's language? Not a problem. No matter where I go in the world I suffer from the unfailing expectation that I will survive happily without a phrase book. Not so Rolf, however, who just as well always carries one.

We were fascinated with the blackness of many of the rocks which led the owner to fetch a glass jar with a dark liquid and the outer casing of what turned out to be walnut shells. He said it was “BIG SHECRET”. Through pantomime he demonstrated that this concoction was painted on the rock to produce the blackness!! So much for natural suiseki as found in Japan!

He tried valiantly to make us understand what the liquid was but no matter how many times he repeated the word, the phrase book was too small to help.

On returning home the small mountain sustained a chip in the black section and sure enough, where this occurred the stone was grey. The longer mountain range had not been treated.

The next trip I left Rolf at home to water the bonsai and I set off with two friends to the 1st World Bonsai Convention in Omiya. After that mind numbing experience we set off to Takeyama at the foot of the Japan Alps where a festival was just beginning. We enjoyed the happy atmosphere for a day and night and then my friends headed south while I set out for Kanazawa on the North Coast.

Because my train was not leaving until midday I made inquiries and found another rock shop about 10 minute’s walk away from the hotel. This shop was another Aladdin’s Cave of the most beautiful suiseki, some of enormous proportions.

Still without a phrase book (I never learn) the elderly owner – it’s obviously not a young man’s business – saw that I was interested in Chrysanthemum Stones. They must have been very dear to his heart because he showed me everything he had in the shop then took me down a flight of stairs to where he had boxes of small stones and helped me pick out two tiny pieces, one polished with a large flower and one unpolished with a small flower. Both have a red pattern in their flowers. They are not a wonderful shape but a great memento just the same.

I had already selected a dark slightly polished stone complete with daiza, 6.5 x 8 cm with a cluster of three close flowers complete with stems and a separate single flower.

Clutching my treasures I glanced at the time and discovered I had just fifteen minutes to board the only train leaving that day for Kanazawa. No taxi in sight I ran all the way to the hotel, asked for my bag and a taxi which fortunately arrived at the same time.

I made the train with just a minute to spare. Had I missed it I would have been either sleeping in the hotel foyer or at the station as every available room had been

rented well in advance for the rest of the festival. Had that happened it would have been worth it because I would not have missed that suiseki experience no matter what had happened!

Georgina Kretschmar

### **PROPOSED FOSSICKING & DAIZA MAKING WEEKEND**



At our last meeting the group agreed to undertake a fossicking and daiza making weekend at the Rectory (an Anglican Youthworks conference centre in Kangaroo Valley). The proposed dates are Anzac day, Friday 25 April 2008 (in after 4pm) to Sunday 27 April (out before 6pm). The Rectory is a beautiful heritage sandstone building listed with the National Trust and was designed by Horbury Hunt the parish of Kangaroo Valley was established in 1882. The verandah has scenic views of the Valley. Travelling time from Sydney CBD is approximately 2 hours. Details of the weekend are as follows:

- Current accommodation costs (depending on numbers) would be approx \$24 per night per person (based on 14 people). Youthworks has foreshadowed an increase of approximately 4% for 2008.
- This is a self-catered facility so meals are not provided. If the group wishes we could have a food kitty as we have done with our previous Oallen weekends.
- A barbecue is available and there are also many excellent restaurants in Kangaroo Valley, the Thai restaurant being recommended by Youthworks staff.
- The facility caters for up to 20 people in single and trundle beds; however a possible combination for room allocations could be 4 women, 4 men and 3 couples, or depending on response we could split the rooms half women and half men.
- A possible itinerary for the weekend would be for Day 1 to travel to Oallen for fossicking (approximately 1½ hour drive), and Day 2 to have a daiza making workshop. There is also the possibility of visiting Wade and Roger Hinrichsen at Cambewarra Bonsai Nursery. Roger has a large collection of excellent suiseki and usually has many stones for sale.

A deposit has been paid for the above dates, so all we need now is an indication of who would like to join us at this great location. Please let me know your interest **as soon as possible**. You can do this by email: [jan.briggs@bigpond.com](mailto:jan.briggs@bigpond.com) or by phoning 9528.5749 or mail C/- PO Box 294, Jannali 2226. Please advise me:

- Your name, phone number, email address
- Number of people
- Whether you are interested, or are **definitely interested**

On previous weekends at Oallen everyone (without exception) have found a great variety of good stones The usual group of members who are able to attend meetings would very much like the opportunity to meet and get to know those out-of-towners who are unable to come to our regular meetings, and what better way than over a rock hunt. Please check out the Rectory on Youthworks website [www.youthworks.net](http://www.youthworks.net)

Regards, Jan Briggs

## **PROPOSED FOSSICKING & DAIZA MAKING WEEKEND**

### **NEXT MEETING**

There was no meeting in September due to the school holidays.

Our next meeting will be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2007 and the theme for the night will be coastal stones.

On the following Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2007 there will be another daiza making workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural.

Bring your lunch and all the stones, tools and wood you need to create some masterpieces.

See you all then.