

Bonsai Exotique

MEDIA RELEASE

26 November 2005

World's first Wollemi Pine bonsai!

Following the first limited commercial release of Wollemi Pines in October 2005, well known Sydney bonsai artist, Thor Beowulf, has created a bonsai from one of these "Collectors Edition" trees. The Wollemi Pine, *Wollemia nobilis*, was discovered in a canyon of the Wollemi National Park, north west of Sydney, by park ranger, David Noble, in 1994. This ancient and unique tree has been recognized as being the oldest species of tree ever discovered and dates back to the time of dinosaurs.

The Wollemi Pine is not only a living fossil but, through the bonsai expertise of Thor Beowulf, is now also a living sculpture.

"The Collector's Edition" of Wollemi Pine saplings was auctioned by Sotheby's on October 23, 2005, on behalf of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. All Wollemi saplings from the "Collector's Edition" were grown from cuttings taken from natural stock growing in the Wollemi National Park and can all be directly traced back to their parent trees growing in the wild. Some of these trees have been named. One of these, "The Kiccoro", from Lot 71, means "forest child" in Japanese and with its natural shape seemed the most appropriate tree to bonsai.

With deep respect to the Wollemi Pine's natural elegance and form, Beowulf says "...I have initially shaped "The Kiccoro" in a style which would provide aesthetic movement to the tree while retaining its vertical grace. The roots and much of the foliage were heavily pruned and two of this tree's three main branches were removed and trunk extensively wired. Though only temporary, structural pruning and wiring are necessary measures through which the bonsai artist styles a tree. It is of great importance that these processes must be done with complete care and respect to enhance the intrinsic qualities of the tree, not to dominate or grotesquely deform it in a manner unnatural to its natural form".

"Of course, as living dynamic organisms, all bonsai are never-ending works-in-progress and future care of this Wollemi bonsai will see its branch canopy, trunk and root system further developed over the next several years. Most significant will be the appearance of the Wollemi Pine's unique "chocolate crackle" bark as it matures."

Beowulf owns and manages the only bonsai nursery in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. This is known as Bonsai Exotique and is located at 23 Queen Street, Woollahra. The business also maintains growing nurseries in the Southern Highlands and the ACT.

Beowulf has been working with bonsai nearly all his life as his mother's family grew bonsai in China before emigrating to Australia in the 1950s. His eldest son, Thorsten, is a student at the University of Sydney, enrolled in Bachelor of Horticultural Science, and brings growing enthusiasm and horticultural expertise to Bonsai Exotique.

In September 2003, Thor Beowulf curated the first ever bonsai exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW and has been interviewed about bonsai for the arts section of the Australian Financial Review and for other publications. These are important milestones because, though bonsai is founded upon botanical and horticultural principles, Thor Beowulf is advocating that bonsai be recognized as a legitimate art form in its own right, as it is in China and Japan.

More information and a full technical report on the Wollemi Pine bonsai, including photos, can be sourced on our website:

www.bonsaiexotique.com.au

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