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'Suiseki Australia'**

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Our first suiseki workshop for this year will be on the 21st February, 2026 at the normal place of Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery. Hope to see you all there starting at 9am

ALSO, A GENTLE REMINDER – If you haven't paid your membership fees for this year you can do so at our first gathering as listed above.

Dear Members,

I hope you have all survived all that rain and horrible weather we had over the Christmas holidays. Good for our gardens but not good for us to get out and about, especially looking for new stones.

I must admit I was 'fossicking' under my covered driveway at some point during the heavy rains looking at some storage boxes to do a bit of a tidy up, when I came across 2 beautiful large stones that I put there ages ago and completely forgot that I had them. They were covered in thick dust and normal 'grime' that accumulated over time, so with the heavy deluges that we have had, I put them out to get a 'hosing' down from the rain. Looking at them today, they have this amazing gleam to them, and I am thrilled to bits. I am already thinking of the daizas for them. I was like a kid in a toy shop discovering something that I had completely forgotten about.

My New Year's wish for this year is for me to experiment a little further to make more interesting daizas for my stones. I think a lot of us when we first start out making these wooden bases for our stones, we want quantity rather than quality. I think we are all a little like that and now that I have mastered the electric honing tools much better, I am on a mission to improve for more quality than quantity! When I browse the internet and see some of the daizas that others make, I am in awe of their artistic prowess. I also admire the beautiful timbers they use, which a lot of them are not available here and if they are, they are horribly expensive.

We are really lucky at our club where we have 3 or 4 guys who have amazing talents in honing the wood for their stones. So, this year I will be taking more notice and asking more questions with a chance for them to help me to improve my skills with wood!

I have many nice stones now, and I think they deserve a nice or more professional daiza. Wish me luck and keep posted for an update.

Till next time,
Brenda

SPECIAL THOUGHT

A fellow called Frank from Eumundi,
went out to collect rocks on a 'Sundi'
from all of those collected,
only a few were selected,
when he sorted his 'treasures' on 'Mondi'.

By Frank Bryant 2005

All around the world there are many examples of natural stone bridges, arches, caves and tunnels that we are all interested in photographing when on sightseeing trips. They always look precarious as if they are being supported by only thin layers of soft stone.

These stones to use for suiseki are not as popular as the more recognizable mountain stones, human stones; animal stones etc. so I thought it would be a good idea to visit this style and try to give you some information as to their formation and how to display them.

Bridge stones are usually formed in a couple of ways – by water or waves undermining the softer layers of stone when exposed to the ocean, rivers and streams. The other way is caused by the chemical and physical weathering from wind, ice or heat of the sun from the constant contracting and expanding on the rock surface. The latter is more evident in arid desert regions. In the Sahara Desert there is a bipod arch, Aloba Arch, which is only 1.9 mts high and one of the legs of the arch is only 15cms thick. How much longer will that stand? See photo below. Bridge stones to be true have a wider top as opposed to arch stones that are much thinner and look as if they would collapse at any time.

Deep cracks penetrate into a sandstone layer. When erosion wears away the layers, surface cracks deepen and form narrow sandstone walls. Alternating frosts and thawing in the heat of the day causes crumbling and flaking of the sandstone leaving behind arches and bridges which eventually collapse leaving buttresses that will also disintegrate in time. Like all rock formations, natural bridges, arches and caves are subject to continued erosion and will eventually collapse and disappear. One perfect example of this is the double-arched Victorian (Aus) coastal rock formation, London Bridge, which lost an arch from increased storm erosion. Time will march on and the same forces that built these exquisite natural wonders will someday sweep them all away. Wow! The forces of Nature!

Tunnel stones must have a hole going right through the stone to be in this category. Some tunnel stones were formed millions of years ago when groundwater percolated through the crevices and slowly dissolved the limestone and dolomite bed rock. At Jenolan Caves, just 175 kms west of Sydney, the road from Sydney passes through the Grand Arch Tunnel which takes you to the entrance of the caves and surrounding tourists spots. Scientists have determined the age of the clay in the caves to be approximately 340 million years old, making this cave and tunnel complex the world's oldest known and dated open cave system.

Cave stones are formed in much the same way as the bridge and tunnel stones, but caves have the added factor of water seepage through the many rock and soil layers over many millions of years. A good cave stone doesn't just have to have a large opening in the front of the stone, rather it would be more interesting if the opening meandered its way to the back of the cave to add that element of mystery of where the cave leads the eye.

Displaying these stones can either be on a daiza or in a sand-filled suiban. The suiban option would be a good choice, especially if the stone was the colour appropriate to a desert scene. If you wanted to display it in a coastal environment, then a suiban filled with water would give you the feeling of a coastal area reminiscent of say the Great Ocean Road along Victoria's coastline where the Twelve Apostles are situated just off the coast. The hardness of the stone and the natural patina is still a critical factor when displaying these stones. To give the stone perspective to give the viewer an idea of the size of your display maybe the finest boat figurine would give

the idea of great proportions. Cave stones, I think, look better in a daiza if in fact it is only one cave but if the stone has many caves, then a suiban could give it the justice it deserves.

When you are out and about on holidays and visiting such picturesque landmarks take note of the structure of the formations and this will help you to understand how over many millions of years they were formed and this will give you the insight to fully understand the requirements needed when choosing a stone to display.

Good Luck!
Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Observe always that everything is the result of change, and get used to thinking that there is nothing

Nature loves so well as to change existing forms and to make new ones like them.'

- Marcus Aurelius (121-180AD)



Above:
Aloba Arch in the Sahara Desert



Above:
an arch stone in the desert in America.



Above:
A good example of a tunnel stone.



Above:
The 'before and after' of London Bridge in Victoria, Aus

THIS MONTH'S ROCK FEATURE

Crater Lake National Park in southern Oregon and as the name suggests it is a remnant of a destroyed volcano, Mount Mazama and the surrounding hills and forests.

About 400,000 years ago Mount Mazama began its existence by alternating layers of lava flow and pyroclastic flows built Mazama's overlapping cones until it reached 11,000 feet in height.

After a period of dormancy Mazama became active again and around 5700BC, the mountain collapsed into itself during a tremendous volcanic explosion. This caused a large caldera to form and took 740 years to fill with water, forming a beautiful deep blue lake as known today as Crater Lake.

There is a very thick Pumice Desert that is evident of the eruption all those years ago. Even after thousands of years this area is devoid of plants due to the excessive porosity (the water drains quickly away) from the area. When the hot ash and pumice came to rest near the volcano, it formed a 200-300 foot thick gas-charged deposit. After many years the hot gas moved to the surface to slowly cement the ash and pumice together. Later erosion removed most of the loose ash and pumice, leaving tall pinnacles and spires.



Above: The Pumice Pinnacles and aerial views of Crater Lake.

THEME DISPLAY

At our first workshop back for this year can we bring a nice display of a stone or stones to discuss them. Maybe it may be a new addition to the collection? Or some different daizas that you have created?

Looking forward to getting back to our workshops and seeing you on the 21st of February at Ray's.
