

# CARVED E IN TIME

WITH STUNNING CREATIONS, THE RED SANDALWOOD ART EXHIBITION OF OLD BEIJING CITY GATES EXPLORES THE MAJESTY OF THIS PREMIUM MATERIAL IN THE MGM MACAU ART SPACE.

澳门美高梅「老北京城紫檀雕刻展」展示紫檀这木材贵族无可媲美的地位以及中国都城内各标志性建筑。

BY MAT GALLAGHER



## TEMPLE OF HEAVEN

First built in 1420 at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the Temple of Heaven covers a 273ha area to the south of Beijing city. The temple was visited by emperors to worship their ancestors and pray for a good harvest the following year and includes temples, palaces and an altar. Its focal point, however, is the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvest, a huge circular building made entirely of wood, without nails, sitting on a marble stone base. Though it was destroyed by fire in 1889 after it was struck by lightning, the structure was rebuilt just years later.

### 天坛

始建于1420年的明初，佔地273公顷，位于北京市南面。是中国明清两代皇家专门祭天祈禱丰收的场所，更是中国古代等级最高的礼制建筑。众多建筑中以祈年殿最为注目，圆形的祈年殿在云石地台上全以木材建造，没有一根钢钉。虽然在1889年被雷击后烧毁，但在短短之后数年被重建。



**THE WOODS**

*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Imperial wood or red sandalwood as it is more commonly known, has been a popular wood for Chinese carvings since the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing dynasties (1644-1912). Unlike white sandalwood, which grows in various forms across Asia, Australia and the Pacific islands, red sandalwood grows in the Eastern Ghats of South India. It's extremely rare and now considered endangered due to its slow growth and the high demand for its use as timber. Consequently the price for the wood is now extremely high, and it's considered a true luxury item.

Yinchen is carbonised wood that has been buried in the Sichuan region of China through years of earthquakes and floods. Over time, due to lack of oxygen, high pressure and chemical reactions with bacteria the wood becomes blackened and carbonised.

**木中皇者**

小叶紫檀，或称紫檀，由明清时期已是受欢迎的实用木材。与亚洲、澳洲及太平洋岛国常见的白檀不同，紫檀生长于印度南部东高止山脉。紫檀是极罕有的木材，因生长缓慢及需求过高，现已是濒危物种，继而售价高涨，现在更是极致奢华的代表。

阴沉木是因地震或水灾而被埋在地下多年碳化的四川木材。长年在地下高压及缺氧的环境加上与微生物的化学作用，木材便会变黑及碳化。

THE MIXTURE OF RED SANDALWOOD AND YINCHEN WOOD TRUELY REPRESENT THE BRICK WORK AND WOODEN STRUCTURES

采用紫檀木和阴沉木制作，  
细部造型花饰准确精致



为庆祝澳门回归祖国十五周年，传承中华文化，澳门美高梅以「天造地创」为主题，荣邀中国紫檀博物馆以巧夺天工之紫檀雕刻技艺，重塑北京古城地标风貌，隆重呈献「澳门美高梅老北京城紫檀雕刻展」。是次展览将展出「天坛祈年殿」及「永定门」两大主题作品，期望透过传统紫檀雕刻工艺和古建筑微缩景观的结合，藉此唤起人们对老北京的往昔记忆，重温它的古韵风貌，让祖国丰富的遗产能够传承给下一代透过澳门向世界展示这些民族精粹。

「中国紫檀大王」全国政协港澳台侨委员会副主任、富华国际集团主席陈丽华女士在1999年于北京成立中国紫檀博物馆，是研究和珍藏紫檀雕刻艺术品规模最大的主题博物馆，收藏并展示逾千件以紫檀制作的明清古典家具和故宫典藏，以传承这门濒临失传的艺术。更曾获邀到法国、德国、日本及美国等地展出。

澳门美高梅的展览将直至2015年三月，期间会展出多件紫檀家具及两座雕塑。在五个展区中介绍所用的紫檀及雕刻过程，以及雕塑作品所依据的原建筑的结构。更可与这庞大的立体紫檀建筑雕塑拍照留念。

In celebration of the 15th anniversary of Macau returning to Chinese sovereignty and the establishment of the SAR, MGM MACAU is holding a special exhibition that brings together two of the most prominent symbols of China: red sandalwood, or Imperial wood as it is known in China, and the ancient city walls of Beijing. The 'Red Sandalwood Art Exhibition of Old Beijing City Gates' is the product of a collaboration between MGM MACAU and the China Red Sandalwood Museum, and sees some stunning pieces exhibited in the MGM Art Space. The standout pieces are huge scale models of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests from the Temple of Heaven and the Yongding Gate, both skilfully recreated using red sandalwood.

The China Red Sandalwood Museum was founded by Madam Chan Laiwa in 1999 and has toured the world displaying its works to audiences in France, Germany, Japan and the USA. The museum researches, collects and displays red sandalwood works, many of which are from the Ming and Qing dynasties, to preserve the history and tradition of the craft. Chan, a self-made billionaire from Beijing, attributes her love of the traditional Chinese carvings to her childhood in Beijing's Summer Palace. Her red sandalwood sculpture has gained recognition from the state council of the PRC.

The MGM MACAU exhibition runs until March 2015 and contains the finest examples of the intricately carved red sandalwood furniture in addition to the two main sculptures. Divided into five zones, the exhibition explains the origins and heritage of the wood used and the carving process, provides information about the original structures the sculptures are based on, and even offers an opportunity for some photos in the 3D scene.

THE YONGDING GATE TOOK A YEAR TO BUILD  
BY A TEAM OF 100 MASTER CARVERS

永定门模型由过百位手艺精湛的工艺大师雕制，  
历时一年完成



BEIJING CITY WALLS

Beijing's city walls once surrounded the city keeping the population safe from invasions from the north. A series of gates allowed access, nine inner gates, seven outer gates and four imperial gates. Though the walls are largely demolished, some of the gates remain or have in recent times been rebuilt, including Qianmen at the south of the inner wall and Yongdingmen to the south of that on the outer wall, not far from the Temple of Heaven. Originally built in 1553, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Yongding gate was torn down in 1956, during Beijing's road constructions. The gate was rebuilt in 2004 and forms the centre piece of Yongding Park.

北京城牆

北京城牆曾經包圍整個北京市，保卫人民免受北方入侵。设有九道内城門、七道外城門及皇城四門。虽然城牆曾被破坏，但近年得以復建，如永定門和西便門部分城門。始建于1553年，在明朝时期，永定門于1956年因道路建設而被拆毀。于2004年重建，成为永定園的地標。

展区A备有精彩的灯光效果，营造全日不同时段的光影变化，让观众欣赏紫檀在不同光线下的各种美态。在中式凉亭内，雕刻大师即场示范传统技艺和介绍作品，同时配以投影展示，让每一个细节都可一覽无遺，详述这项源自明清的紫檀雕刻工艺如何世代相传。而每个图案都蕴含着如意吉祥、多子多福、万寿无疆、官运亨通等传统美好祝愿。

永定門雕制参照北京永定門以1:10比例雕成的微缩景观，采用紫檀木和阴沉木制作，细节造型花饰准确精致，将永定門「微缩」成一道集历史、建筑、技艺、文化为一体的景观，完美再现老城原貌，见证昔日古韵。长度达10米，纵深7.52米，高2.6米，总重量6.5吨的永定門模型历时一年完成，由百位手艺精湛的工艺大师费约三万个工时雕制。

展览内的另一焦点同样是北京著名地标的模型-天坛祈年殿微缩景观。同样以1:10比例制作。天坛祈年殿在中国北京，是中国明清两代皇家专门祭天祈祷丰收的场所。作品直径9米，高3.8米，总重量近12吨；是北京中国紫檀博物馆馆藏的最大紫檀艺术珍品，其艺术水平亦属出类拔萃的上乘之作，耗时两年多的时间才制作完成。

天坛祈年殿同样是在立体视觉效果拍照区内，设立立体视觉效果的布景，配以珍贵紫檀家具，可让参观者拍照留念。

展览内亦设有阴沉木的原木展示区，展出这种源自四川地区的珍贵木材。阴沉木亦是永定門的主要建材。就算你不是中国家具的热衷者，仍然会为展品的精细、庞大及那阵阵香气而着迷。■

The lighting effects in Zone A create a dusk-to-dawn ambience as visitors take in the array of red sandalwood furniture on display. Master wood carvers are also on hand to demonstrate their skills. The techniques have been passed down through the generations, with origins in the Ming and Qing periods. The various engraved patterns represent wishes for happiness, fertility, health and success.

The Yongding Gate piece is a 1:10 scale replica of the original Beijing city gate, making it a sizeable piece. It's made of a mixture of red sandalwood and yinchen wood, allowing the piece to truly represent the brick work and the original wooden structures accurately. Measuring 10 metres in length, 7.5 metres in width, 2.6 metres in height and weighing 6.5 tons, it took a year to build by a team of 100 master carvers. Additional material in the exhibition explains the history of the gate and the original construction of the capital's walls.

The second grand structure on display is one of Beijing's most iconic buildings. Also built to 1:10 scale, the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvest is an impressive reproduction of the original, which sits within the Temple of Heaven. Made from red sandalwood, the circular construction measures nine metres in diameter, 3.8 metres in height and weighs a breathtaking 12 tons. With such intricate detail, this piece took 100 master carvers two years to complete and can be easily assembled and disassembled for transport.

The Temple of Heaven also appears in the 3D photo spot, with a projection of the famous Hall of Prayer for the Good Harvest behind the 3D depiction of the main path that leads into the temple. The furniture here includes more stunning examples of red sandalwood carvings.

To tie up the exhibition, there is a showcase of the raw materials used, with samples of raw yinchen wood, the ancient wood from the Sichuan region that forms a large part of the Yongding Gate structure. Whether or not you're a fan of Chinese furniture, the pieces in this exhibition are truly stunning in both level of detail and sheer scale. Even the smell of the wood adds to the atmosphere of the gallery space. ■

展期至2015年3月22日。  
逢星期二至星期日(及公众假期)，  
中午至晚上9时。  
澳门美高梅展览空间二楼。

The exhibition runs until March 22, 2015  
Midday-9pm, Tue-Sun (and public holidays)  
Level 2 MGM Art Space (via Grand Praça)  
Entrance is free