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Clear-Moon Lake, just 20 kilometers to the southeast of downtown Changchun. The lake brings a sparkle to a 96-square-kilometer park that surrounds it.

Lake adds beauty to growing area

By **RAYMOND ZHOU** in Changchun
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Every city has a downtown, but not every city has a nature reserve so pristine that many wish their homes were there.

Only 20 kilometers to the southeast of downtown Changchun, capital of Jilin province, is Jingyuetan, or Clear-Moon Lake. The lake itself is only 4.3 square kilometers, but it brings a sparkle — or sparkling water to be exact — to the 96 sq km park that surrounds it. It is Asia's largest manmade forest.

The trees were planted in the early and mid-1930s after the puppet government of Manchukuo set up its capital in the city. Now, they have added a rich texture of green to the landscape. As the seasons change, the place shimmers with wondrous serenity.

However, this is also a place where sports aficionados indulge themselves. You can ski in winter and go boating in summer. An 18-hole golf course is also being expanded.

Vasaloppet, a ski event licensed from Sweden, has been held here for a decade. On a stone obelisk imported from the Scandinavian country, one side has been carved with the names — mostly Swedish and Chinese — of competition champions.

But you do not have to be a professional athlete to enjoy the park. Most of the 1 million visitors who came here in 2011 went for something as simple as a stroll around the lake.

There are many scenic spots, akin to a city park, where you can wind down and take photos. But there are also wilder areas with less traffic.

The park is building a boardwalk that will eventually encircle the whole lake, extending 18 km and separating motor traffic from pedestrians and hikers.

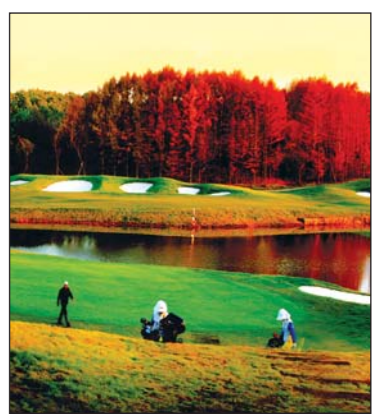
The elderly like to come here for exercise, while some fitness-conscious citizens visit as often as three times a week.

The district government, which is awash with tax revenue from its high-tech businesses, has invested 300 to 500 million yuan (\$47.79 million) into infrastructure, including the relocation of villagers who used to live in the reserve. Out of 55 villages within its parameter, 44 have relocated.

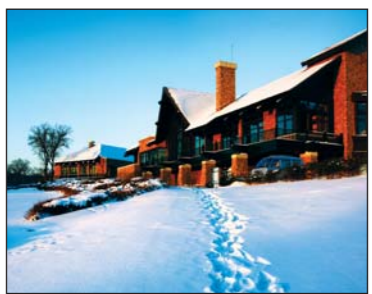
Some projects still need more funding, such as the purchase and installation of surveillance cameras. Tourists are advised to stick to the trails. Still, a few adventurous souls will go off the beaten track and sometimes get lost in the wilderness. In addition to outdoor activities,



A lotus pond is among the lake's attractions.



Autumnal colors grace a golf course near Clear-Moon Lake.



When the snows come, the park is a popular site for winter sports.



A high-quality residential community in the Jingyue zone.

like hiking and dragon-boat racing, the area has a lot to offer for meditative types, who will love the park for its romantic aura. You can find a scene to fit every mood.

Health-conscious people can take a respite from the hurly-burly of urban life to enjoy fresh air and a Zen-like peacefulness.

Those fond of fauna and flora will have a field day.

Jingyuetan is a cross between an urban central park and a national park. It is accessible by Changchun's light rail, yet it is a world away from the high-rises and traffic.

“Urban construction does not just mean high-rises of steel and concrete. It is more important to inject culture, soft power and soul into the city.”

GUAN SHUSEN
DIRECTOR OF THE JINGYUE DEVELOPMENT ZONE

The Jingyue development zone, where the park, a first-class national scenic site, is situated, boasts an appealing ecological environment, with more than half of its total area covered by forests and water.

In addition to being a park, it also includes a vast reservoir in the south, the 13.3 km long Yitong River in the west and green belts in the north, not to mention five streams and eight smaller reservoirs.

“Such an ecological advantage is rare in the country,” says Guan Shusen, director of the zone's administrative committee. No wonder a number of renowned property developers, including Vanke, CITIC Real Estate and Sino-Ocean Land have been drawn to the zone and undertook construction projects there.

The zone aims to be the core eco-friendly area of the city, where residents can lead a healthy lifestyle and high-end industries will flourish, local authorities say.

The National Reform and Development Commission designated the zone as a national pilot area for comprehensive reforms in the service industry in 2010, a move spurring the growth of a local modern service sector.

The development zone has witnessed marked achievements in economic growth, urban construction, environmental protection and industrial restructuring over the past few years.

“Urban construction does not just mean high-rises of steel and concrete. It is more important to inject culture, soft power and soul into the city,” Guan says.

“A sculpture exhibition can be seen as a soul-building move,” he noted, adding that the theme of this year's international sculpture show — sports, health and life — dovetails with the zone's goals of being an eco-friendly area that combines leisure and clusters of high-tech industries.

You may not find every piece to your fancy, but on the other hand

Sculpting the perfect city in Changchun

Artists have begun large-scale sculpting for the 13th China Changchun International Sculpture Exhibition



There are many sculpture parks throughout China, but nowhere are people more passionate about this form of artwork than in Changchun, the capital city of Jilin province. Nor is any other locale as diverse in style. **Raymond Zhou** and **Liu Mingtai** report in Changchun.

“We need to hold high-level exhibitions to set trends in and contribute works, ideas and masters to the world's sculpture art, thus making Changchun a real art resort that is prolific in sculpture creation and gathering masters from around the globe.”

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There is the statue of Apollo on Culture Square, an natural in the style of ancient Greece, yet his arms are outstretched in a pose representing Soviet athleticism. He sits with his back against a reclining Goddess of the Moon and together they form a yin and yang arrangement.

There is a silhouette of two cyclists in stainless steel, which has been appropriately positioned outside the city stadium. Casts of Auguste Rodin's *Thinker* and *The Age of Bronze* greet visitors to the Changchun World Sculpture Park.

The 92-hectare park is the natural choice for most people, locals and tourists because it is conveniently located at the southern end of the axis road.

Since it opened in 2003, it has been graced by more than 1 million visitors, who can either browse the exhibition halls where 300-plus pieces are on display (with 1,000 in the collection) or wander along the quiet paths to discover the 448 more that accentuate the tapestry of nature.

You may not find every piece to your fancy, but on the other hand

you'll surely find something to your liking.

I was fascinated by a bronze bust of Shakespeare, who was portrayed sitting with his left hand holding a quill pen and his face wearing an expression half pensive, half roguish.

The centerpiece of the park is a 23.5-meter obelisk with three maidens, respectively representing peace, friendship and springtime. It sits on a 6-meter platform in the shape of a blossoming flower.

The five petals point to five smaller statues portraying the themes of music from the five continents, forming a square 48 meters in diameter.

This study in global union is quite typical of the Chinese aesthetic, combining Western classicism with Chinese touches. It is also a blending of State-sanctioned ideology with mass appeal.

However, personal visions do have their place here and in other parts of the city.

I was taken on a tour of the 30 sq km wetland park in northeastern Changchun. The park is so vast that we had to use a cart and got just a glimpse of most of the 107 statues chosen for the annual sculpture show last year.

The international exhibition of this

year, which opened at a new sculpture park in Changchun Jingyue Economic Development Zone on Aug 6, “will reach an unprecedented height, both in quality and quantity,” according to organizers.

Out of more than 1,500 designs by some 400 sculptors in 102 countries and regions — far exceeding the participating entries and countries in previous sessions — 47 selected sculptures are being displayed, including 21 exhibits from abroad.

Among the sculptures submitted for display, which mainly used such materials as metal, cast copper and stone, those selected tended to

focus on the theme of sports, health and life, a reflection of diversity and compatibility of culture, local critics say.

The annual event is expected to boost sculpture creation and reinforce the host city's leading position in the country in the art, says Guan Shusen, director of the zone's administrative committee.

It also helps boost the host city's culture industry and introduce it to the world, Guan noted, adding that hosting such an event will help improve the cultural literacy and taste in art among local people.

Changchun has hosted 12 inter-

national sculpture exhibitions and three world sculpture conferences since 1997.

“We need to hold high-level exhibitions to set trends in and contribute works, ideas and masters to the world's sculpture art, thus making Changchun a real art resort that is prolific in sculpture creation and gathering masters from around the globe,” Guan says.

“We feel honored to host the 13th sculpture show this year and consider it a priority task in terms of promoting the city's cultural industry and advancing the construction of the Jingyue zone into a national pilot area

for comprehensive reforms in the service industry,” he says.

City officials estimate that the zone's service sector will realize 75 billion yuan in industrial output in 2015, with the cultural industry expected to take the lion's share, reaching 50 billion yuan.

It is obvious that Changchun wants all regions of the world represented in its sampling of sculptural styles and themes. That policy gives its sculpture selections a cosmopolitan flair.

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