



Two straw-knitted Winter Games mascots, which were made by Shanxi's artists, stand at the entrance of the main media center. LIU JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Clockwise from top: Su Yiming celebrates securing his silver medal for snowboard slopestyle on Feb 7. XUE YUBIN / XINHUA Su Yiming (left) on the podium with gold medalist Max Parrot (center) and bronze medalist Mark McMorris. FEI MAOHUA / XINHUA Su Yiming competes during the men's snowboard slopestyle qualification at Genting Snow Park in Zhangjiakou. XU CHANG / XINHUA

Shanxi teenager enters record book with Olympic silver medal



Athlete recently won gold at FIS Freeski and Snowboard World Cup event

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Su Yiming, an athlete from North China's Shanxi province, won a silver for snowboard slopestyle on Feb 7 during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, marking the first time that someone from Shanxi has secured a Winter Olympics medal.

It was also the first snowboarding medal won by a Chinese athlete during the Games.

Su's performance was hailed by many as "flawless," as he scored 88.70 points in his second of three runs, becoming the only competitor to perform a triple cork 1800 in Winter Olympics history.

Canada's Max Parrot won the gold

medal, scoring 90.96 points overall. Mark McMorris, a fellow Canadian, won the bronze.

Su said it was a precious moment to be able to take part in the Winter Olympics in his home country, to compete with his childhood idols and to stand with them on the podium.

But for the 17-year-old, the sport is never about scores, but rather about having as much fun as possible.

"When I was on the podium hugging Max Parrot and Mark McMorris, it felt unreal. Being able to win a silver medal at my first Winter Olympics on home soil is just unbelievable," Su said after the men's snowboard slopestyle final at Genting Snow Park in Zhangjiakou, Hebei province.

"When I stood at the starting point up on the mountain and saw everyone was cheering for me, I felt there was nothing to worry about. I knew I had my homeland behind my back."

In the final competition, Su was challenged by global stars that included Canada's Sebastien Toutant, champion of the men's big air at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games, and Redmond Gerald from the United States, who was the slopestyle champion of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Slopestyle, also known as snow-

board freestyle competition, is an extreme sport. Among the various types of snowboarding competitions, the slopestyle competition has become one of the most enjoyable events due to the long trails and execution of breathtaking tricks.

Snowboarding is a young event in the family of the Winter Olympics. It only entered the Nagano Winter Olympics in 1998, when there were only four individual events.

At Genting Snow Park, the course is designed in the shape of the Great Wall, which helps to block the high winds from athletes during the events. The top of the course consists of three jib sections where riders show their stylish rail tricks before giving way to three jump sections.

The medal won by Su, the youngest athlete taking part in the slopestyle competition, is a breakthrough for the host country, since it was the first time a Chinese athlete has competed in the event at the Olympics. Su only made his snowboarding World Cup slopestyle debut on Jan 1.

Influenced by his parents, who are skiing enthusiasts, Su began to snowboard when he was just 4 years old.

Su became a professional snowboarder when he was 14 and joined the national team in the same year.

He participated in the second National Youth Games in 2019 on behalf of Shanxi, taking home two gold medals. He won a gold medal during the US leg of the FIS Freeski and Snowboard World Cup in January. FIS is short for the International Ski Federation.

Su is known for his performance with difficult tricks and agility. In December 2021, he soared to big air gold at Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in the United States, landing a backside 1800 tail grab in his first two runs, which had never been done at a FIS competition.

In addition, he was the first to complete a backside 1980 Indy Crai on a snowboard and was certified by Guinness World Records for setting a record in January.

Su will also pose a threat to the top snowboarders at Big Air Shougang, which will start on Feb 14. "I will surely use my best and most difficult tricks at the Big Air," Su said.

The athlete will celebrate his 18th birthday on Feb 18. He said he regards the silver medal he won as his best birthday gift.

Han Linfang contributed to this story.

Fenjiu launches two new shops in Hong Kong

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Xinghuacun Fenjiu Group, a renowned producer of *baijiu*, or white liquor, in Shanxi province, recently opened two new outlets in the southern Chinese metropolis of Hong Kong, dedicated to the sales of its Silk Road limited edition of *baijiu*.

Wang Wenqing, a *baijiu* researcher and deputy secretary-general of the Shanxi Federation of Industry and Commerce, said this move marked Xinghuacun Fenjiu's reiteration of the importance of Hong Kong, which is seen by the company as a springboard for global expansion.

According to the researcher, the distiller first set foot in Hong Kong at the beginning of the 20th century. From Hong Kong, the Fenjiu-branded *baijiu* products were sold to Japan, Southeast Asia and other regions.

Wing Lee Wai has been the most important dealer of Fenjiu-branded products in Hong Kong for more than 100 years.

Fenjiu began to attract the attention of international buyers in 1915 after it won a first prize at the Pana-



Customers sample Fenjiu products at one of the company's new outlets in Hong Kong. WEN ZHAOYAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

ma Pacific International Exposition, which was held in San Francisco in the United States. Seeing its market potential, Wing Lee Wai signed a franchise agreement with Jinyu Fenjiu, the predecessor of Xinghuacun Fenjiu, in 1919, to be responsible for the *baijiu* brand's sales in Hong Kong, Macao and overseas markets.

"Since then, several Fenjiu brands, including Fenjiu and Zhuyeqing, have become popular in

Hong Kong and overseas markets," Wang said.

The popularity was demonstrated in an auction in August 2018, where a bottle of Fenjiu produced in 1927, with a Wing Lee Wai label on the bottle, was sold for 8.64 million yuan (\$1.36 million), according to Wang.

Since the 1950s, Zhuyeqing has been the most popular Xinghuacun Fenjiu variety on the Hong Kong market. Its sales volume increased

from several metric tons in the 1950s to more than 600 tons in the 1980s.

Wang said the growing popularity of Xinghuacun Fenjiu brands is the result of the company's constant innovation to suit local market demands.

"To meet Hong Kong people's demand for a healthy life, the sugar content of Zhuyeqing in Hong Kong was decreased from 10 percent to 8 percent in the late 1970s," Wang said. "And the company also presented the Zhuyeqing variety that can be mixed with ice or water to further lower its sugar and alcohol content without sacrificing its taste."

Xinghuacun Fenjiu launched its Silk Road edition in Hong Kong in June 2019. It is tailored to not only Hong Kong but overseas markets, according to Zhang Weidong, general manager for international trade at Xinghuacun Fenjiu.

"We made its debut in Hong Kong as we view the city as a hub of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and a gateway to the international market," Zhang said.

Zhao Qingyuan contributed to this story.

Artistic endeavors add local color to Games

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Artists in Shanxi have contributed to the ongoing 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games by designing artworks for the sports gala.

One of the most remarkable creations by Shanxi's artists were a group of bronze sculptures called *Olympic Flame*.

During the Olympic flame-collecting ceremony in Greece on Oct 18, Yu Zaiqing, vice-president of the International Olympic Committee and vice-president of the Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, brought the sculptures as national gifts to Greek and IOC officials.

They included Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou, IOC President Thomas Bach, Hellenic Olympic Committee President Spyros Capralos and Mayor of Ancient Olympia Georgios Georgiopoulos.

The sculpture, featuring a goddess of victory and peace raising a lit torch in her right hand and holding in her left hand a pigeon with an olive branch in its beak, was created by renowned sculptor Huang Jian and produced by Yuda Bronze Culture and Art based in the southern Shanxi city of Yuncheng.

The sculpture stands on a marble foundation, which has the inscription "Faster, Higher, Stronger, Together", the new Olympic motto proposed by IOC President Bach. Beneath the motto is the inscription "Carry on the Olympic Flame to Illuminate a Bright Future", showing Shanxi people's best wishes to the Winter Olympic Games.

According to Wei Enke, board chairman of Yuda Bronze Culture and Art, the sculpture also functions as a bridge connecting the ancient societies of China and Greece, and the ancient and modern Olympics.

"The sculpture features elements of both China and Greece, of both the ancient and modern," Wei said.

These elements include the images of the Great Wall and Olympia Mountains, the ancient Greek arena and the Bird's Nest stadium — the main venue for the Beijing 2008 Olympics — as well as lotus leaf and olive branch patterns.

In addition to the Olympic Flame, Yuda has also manufactured a set of bronze ritual vessels called the *Zun of Olympics*. *Zun* was a kind of sacrificial vessel in ancient China more than 2,000 years ago.

"Designed by famed Chinese handicraft master Sun Hong, the *Zun of Olympics* is now exhibited at the Beijing Olympics Museum," Wei said.

Another artwork that Shanxi presented to the Beijing Winter Olympics was the *Winter Olympic Flame* sword. It was designed and crafted by Liu Wentao, the sixth-generation successor of the intangible cultural heritage of ancient sword manufacturing.

"In China, a sword is a symbol of victory," Liu said. "I hope this sword can bring good luck to all athletes competing in the Games."

The artist said the sword incorporates both ancient Chinese and Olympic cultural elements, which include the Olympic flame and medal patterns on its handle. The body is manufactured using Tang Dynasty (618-907) forging techniques and the sheath is made with a Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) lacquer technique.

In addition, Shanxi's folk artists have created their own version of Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon, the mascots of the Games.

The Shanxi version of the mascots, exhibited at the main media center of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, are knitted with straw by six artists in the city of Linfen.

Guo Suqin, one of the artists, said she was proud of a detail during the making of the mascots.

"We have put a map of Shanxi in the right hand of the mascots as an ornament," Guo said. "We hope this can help our friends from across the world better understand Shanxi."

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.



The *Olympic Flame* sculpture created by Huang Jian. DONG XINHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Seeing red



Red lanterns produced in the village of Yangzhao in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, are ready for delivery to markets before Spring Festival, or Chinese Lunar New Year. According to records, the hanging of lanterns in China has been a tradition to celebrate Lunar New Year for more than 1,800 years. Yangzhao is a renowned lantern production site in Shanxi with a history of more than 800 years. It now has more than 300 households engaged in lantern production. Their products are sold across the country and have generated a combined annual sales revenue of about 200 million yuan (\$31.44 million) in recent years.

GAO XINSHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY