

I

HAVE

A

DREAM



MAURO STEMBERGER
www.italianbonsaidream.com

MAURO STEMBERGER

was born 1978 in Feltre, Italy,
and works as Architect and Bonsai artist.

At the age of **14** was fascinated about Bonsai Art and started his passion with the local Bonsai club Feltre. During period from **1994-2001** he had the chance to join workshops with important European bonsai masters like, Hotsumi Terakawa, Marc Noelander, Horst Crekler, Edoardo Rossi, Salvatore Liporace and much more. In **2002** during a meeting in Arco hi has the chance to meet Alfiero Suardi and Enrico Savini thanks to them he could improve his technique and in the main time studied architecture at IUAV university in Venice. In **2005** founded the Italian Bonsai Dream workshop place with a group of enthusiast to work and enjoy bonsai art 360°: www.italianbonsaidream.com

In 2006 graduated as Architect and start working in his own town. From **2007** he's writing articles for the most important bonsai magazines like Bonsai Focus, UBI bonsai and BCI bonsai & stone appreciation magazine. From **2008** he's recognized BCI bonsai instructor. <http://www.bonsai-bci.com/bci-artists/180-mauro-stemberger-italy>. From **2008** to **2010** was President of UBI (Italian Bonsai association) and director of UBI bonsai magazine. Currently and for the last four years he's doing demonstrations and workshops for bonsai clubs and Associations (Mexico-USA-Belgium-Germany-Holland-Italy-Croatia-England-Austria-France-Portugal-Czek Republic-Lithuania and many more).



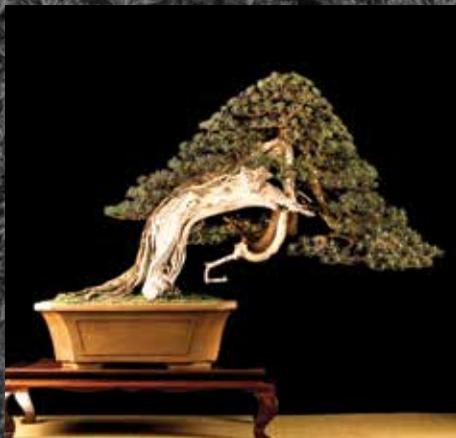
JUNIPERUS C. KISHU H 23 cm - Koovatarj, Cina



TAXUS CUSPIDATA H 83 cm - John Pitt, Uk



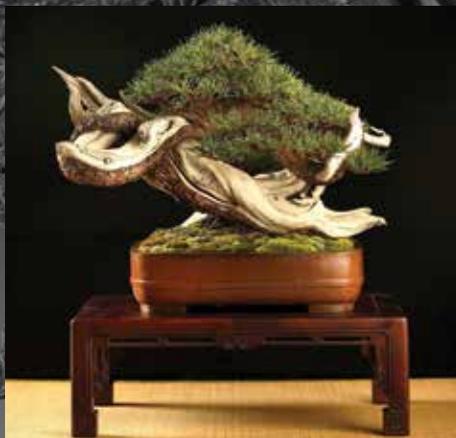
PINUS NIGRA L H 50 cm - Certre, Italy



PINUS MUGUS H 92 cm - Albright Bryan, Uk



JUNIPERUS C. ITOIGAWA H 70 cm - Certrè, Italy



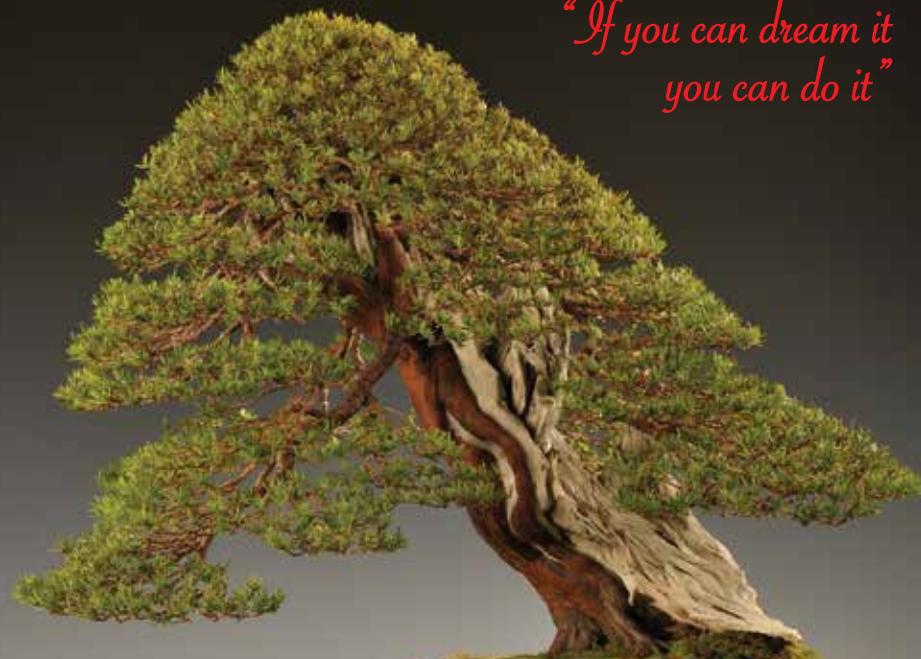
PINUS MUGUS H 50 cm - Tokoname, Japan



OLEA OLEASTER H 45 cm - Isabela, R. Ceca

TAXUS CUSPIDATA
H 85 cm - Tokoname, Japan

*“If you can dream it
you can do it”*





THERE IS A
PLACE WHERE
THE DREAM
COME TRUE

SYLVESTRIS PINE

THE BEAUTY FACE OF UGLY

“For every beauty there is an eye
somewhere to see it.”

Ivan Panin

It's amusing how sometimes what in nature would be considered bizarre and grotesque, to us in bonsai, is something beautiful that gives our plants a special charm.

In 2006 I had the opportunity to purchase this very interesting araki pine, (*Pinus sylvestris*), collected the previous year in France. The plant had successfully overcome the stress of harvesting and was already showing signs of strong apical buds with excellent vigor, and as a result of pruning, buds were developing back on the branches now exposed to light and air. The material impressed me immediately for its distinctive features were almost like a juniper tree—the twisting trunk with many interesting curves from the base to the apex. Additionally, pine trees from this plateau in the center of France have a very rough bark, grayish in color, and green/blue needles—very different from their Italian cousins, with bark and needles of darker color.

In the spring of the following year the conditions

were favorable to work on the tree and to compact the long branches. In nature, these plants grow in a soil composed primarily of clay, so poor in nutrients that growth develops in a mushroom shape, entirely covering the branches, and creeping low as possible to the ground to decrease the evaporation of moisture from the surrounding soil area during the summer. What is important then, as the first step, is to bring back the long branches closer to the trunk so that in the future, by working with secondary and tertiary branching, you can easily rebuild the foliage on your bonsai. In these cases, I prefer the use of raffia, because during the bending phase, when the branch is subjected to considerable stress and tension, thoroughly soaked, wet raffia helps protect the bark, and in post-bending, keeps the branch from the dehydration that could be caused by micro-cracks of the bark that naturally occur during this delicate operation.

In the fall of 2008 after the plant had produced abundant vegetation over two growing seasons, it



The scots pine the year after collection 2006.



First step is to make primary bending to compact the green using raphia and wire.

All the small branches are wired to make the pads.



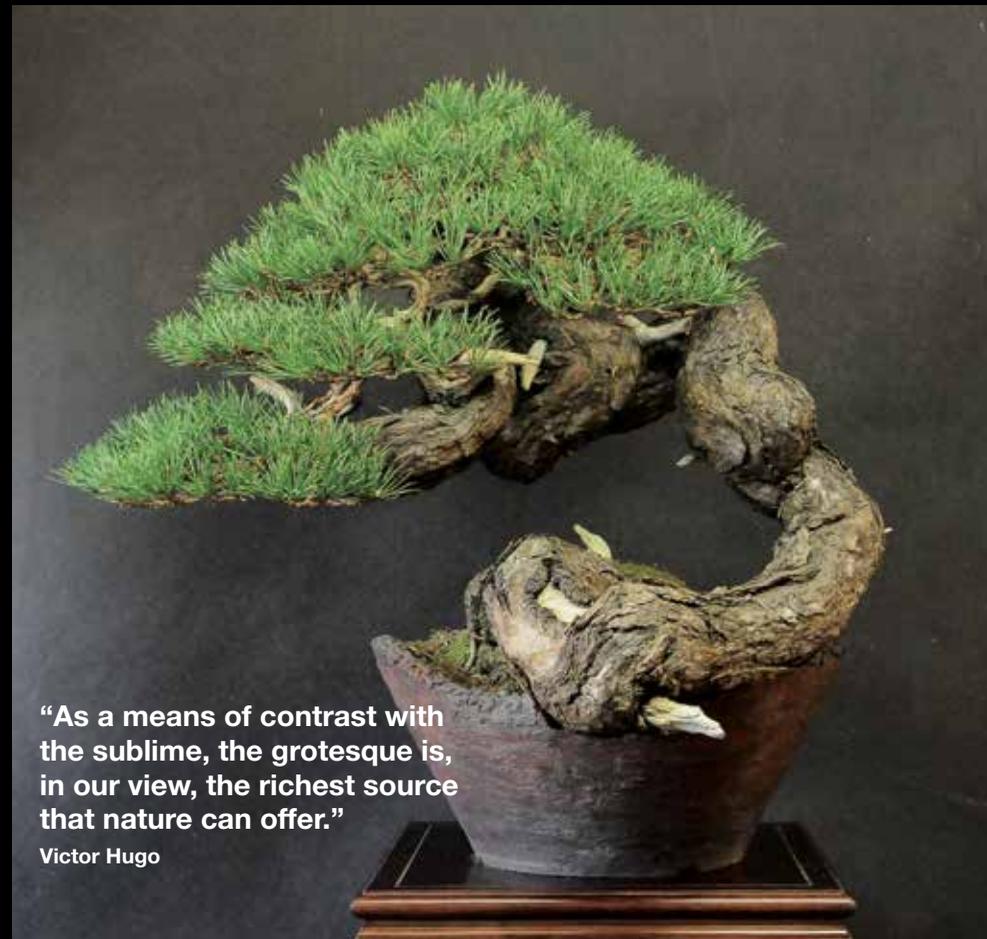
Mauro working to compact the apex of the tree.

was time to work on the fine structure of the branching and to finally bring out the whole movement of the trunk, that until then had been partially hidden by vegetation. Each individual branch is carefully wired and bent into place to create orderly foliage pads and create an overall plan consisting of negative and positive space that shape the movement of the plant. A close-up detail shows the branches completely wired and put in the correct position. The secondary branch opens up like a hand, while the small buds of tertiary branching are raised in order to receive the light correctly and in order to provide three-dimensionality and depth.

The tree, shown in the fall of 2009 after further development, and how it looks now on next page, expresses the full potential of this bonsai. It's funny to think how I'm always attracted to these twisted, ugly, broken trees in my search for the tree of my dreams. To my eyes, features in nature that are commonly regarded as a rather bizarre can be turned into something beautiful, something to highlight in creating bonsai art.



The scots pine relaxing after some more work in 2009.



“As a means of contrast with the sublime, the grotesque is, in our view, the richest source that nature can offer.”

Victor Hugo

The final result, autumn 2011.

MUGO PINE

ICE FALLING WATER

The search for plants with a strong character is one of the things that fascinates me in the art of bonsai. For me, Yamadori is the best material that has excellent potential for the creation of a bonsai. The opportunity to work with materials of this kind gives me great satisfaction and I use all my energy to pursue this passion.

The subject of this article is a mugo pine (*Pinus mugo* var. *uncinata*) from the Swiss Alps harvested in 2006. The mugo pine is among the varieties of pine with a growth habit like the Scots pine: vigorous growth produces buds on old wood, needles can be made shorter and the foliage can be compacted. This variety suffers much less stress when worked on or transplanted. Mugo pine, in its different has the characteristics of deadwood and veins that are so enviable in junipers.

The mugo pine grows in areas that go up to the rocky peaks above two thousand meters in altitude, in inaccessible areas, where the natural elements

sculpt the trunks of trees creating twisted and bizarre shapes, with much deadwood due to landslides and the movement of thawing snow that tears the bark creating natural jin and shari. The trees are adapted to these conditions and create live veins that run down the trunk to feed the foliage and escape death. Our subject tree shows the typical characteristics listed above, an extreme movement of the trunk that spirals many times on itself and a live vein that follows the shari for its entire length. Definitely a yamadori with a strong character.

Growing in extreme environments where the struggle for survival is played on a napkin-sized patch of soil, the mountain pine has evolved to develop new shoots instead of normal propagation from seed. Therefore much of the time, many interior areas of the trunk and branches sprout roots to create secondary trees. They more often tend to abandon the original root mass encouraging new roots that have developed in strategic locations of growth.

This pine originally had two root systems, the original



Swiss mugo pine 80cm long ready for the first styling.

base and the second node where the trunk touched the ground and produced abundant roots. The original root mass, now inactive allowed the plant to be repotted in an inclined position to raise the first part of the trunk and the foliage to cascade down. The first part of the trunk was cleared of branches to carve the big jin and highlight the movement of the twisting deadwood. A large branch that was cut when harvested is also transformed into jin following the spiral pattern of the wood grain. In this case, I worked only with hand tools to respect the nature of the wood. Often the inner wood of mugo pines rots. This is a stratagem for survival for it is common for these plants to send roots from the same trunk to feed on the decaying wood. In nature, every resource is used in the struggle for life. After the cleaning the live vein that starts from the roots to the foliage is well marked. The cleaned deadwood is treated with fire to remove tool marks, then brushed

clean, sprayed with water and protected with liquid jin. The double spiral movement of the trunk is well appreciated and gives the plant drama typical of the extreme environment it comes from. In late August 2009, I was invited as a demonstrator to the "Late Summer Meeting" in the garden of the well-known German bonsai master, Walter Pall. During the day, I carried out the first work on the foliage of this dwarf pine. With the application of raffia and wire, the two large branches that make up the messy canopy are brought together to build the primary branch and apex in the final design for a future cascading bonsai. The wired branches are put in place to create a fluid movement between the deadwood and the living parts. The final image 2011 shows the tree after further styling the foliage. I think in this pine can be found all the features previously described, making it an excellent species for bonsai, always respecting its physiological essence.



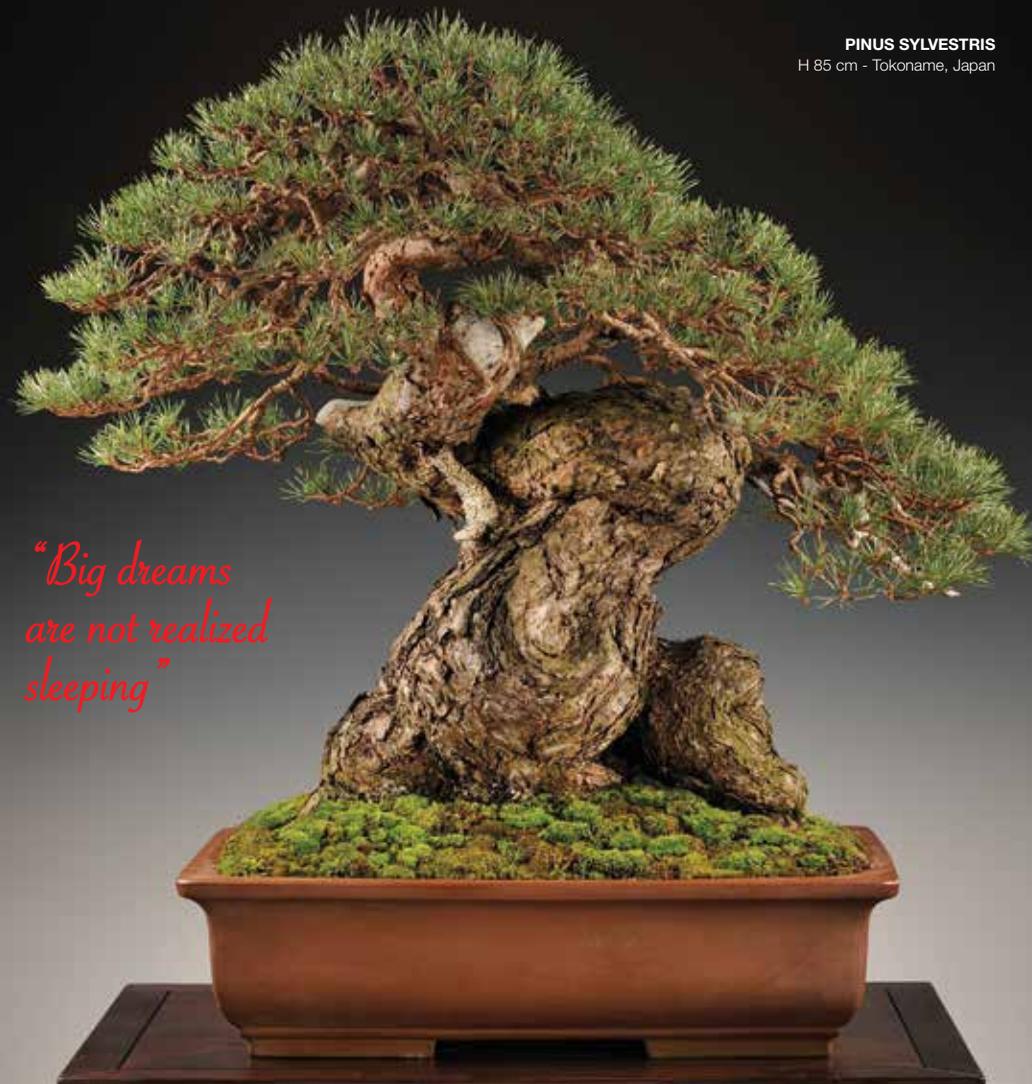
Burning the deadwood to hide tools signs.

Demo in W. Pall's summer meeting.



2011 the tree after some more developing.

PINUS SYLVESTRIS
H 85 cm - Tokoname, Japan



*"Big dreams
are not realized
sleeping"*

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JUNIPER

THE AMERICAN

A trip is to leave searching new answers
and get back with thousand other questions.

During my stay in USA in May 2012 I had the chance to work in Harrisburg (Pensilvania) at Jim and Mary K. Doile bonsai nursery "Nature's way".

The pick for my work was a really interesting Rocky Mountain Juniper collected some years earlier by collector Randy Knight in Oregon. At the moment of the work the tree was strong and ready for the first styling ,showing compact green ,growing upward.

The work started with some life veins and dead-wood cleaning. The tree has 3 life veins that support 3 different branches. Its always really important to visualize the final shape before cutting any branch , this help us to preserve important life part of the tree, especially some frontal life veins that can be basical for the final shape of the tree.

The 2 frontal life veins go to the top part and the back life vein goes the right branch. As mostly of the times happen branches should be bend to compact the green to the trunk. On junipers often happen

that as the trunk also branches has death parts that helps us for the bending.

The technique is to remove the death part so the live one will be flexible enough to be bend in the final position. I apply tutor wires and raphya to protect and ménage the branch during the bending and I place the branches in the correct position to my final idea.



Image of the future back.



Image of the future front.



Carving, placement inner wire, raphya and protection with black tape.



At this point , thinking at the final positions of secondary branch I wire the entire tree. It's always very important to think where a branch will be placed to position the wire on the perfect direction. So when we bend the branch the wire will tighten the branch and support the wood fibres.

All the small ones are wired as well and placed to form the green pads .

At the end of the work the tree shows character of an old specimen developed on extreme nature conditions , thanks to life veins movement , deadwood and ramification compact with a good balance between full and empty spaces to put in evidence focal points on the trunk.



two images showing the result of the primary bending.



The tree after first styling.

MEXICAN JUNIPER

EL DRAGON DE ORIZABA

During my last tour in Central Mexico I had the chance to work and to visit the beautiful Tatsugoro bonsai museum in Fortin de las flores - Veracruz. The owner of the museum is Don Miguel Ross a big bonsai lover who decided to open a place to teach people how to appreciate bonsai art.

The tree selected for my work is a Juniperus Chinensis cultivated for many many years in a local nursery with very good compact foliage and nice trunk with interesting movement. This variety of this juniper is very similar to Taiwanese ones but with softer wood and little bit delicate branches for bending. The work starts choosing the best front considering movement of the trunk and position of the branches. The 'S' line from the front is very elegant and also the trunk comes on the observer helping the 3th dimensional view of the tree. It's always important on the first styling on a material to choose a front that gives tree kind of depth also on a trunk with nice curves always important not to put them in a parallel angle to the observer view also for the same reason.

On this first approach I always try to visualize on my mind a final image I want to obtain at the end of the work so I'm able to decide which branches are useless for the styling.

All the cutted branches are worked as jins to donate the trunk more character and to give it an ancient final vision. Mostly I work deadwood with hands tools because on my opinion the result is more natural, ripping the wood mostly when it's still green is easy to respect wood fibers and obtain a more natural effect. After creating jins I sign on the trunk with a marker the lines to create sharis. Usually on junipers is easy to distinguish part of the trunk more active from other with less energy and this helps to select life veins. I usually place wet raphia on the branches that I've to bend and cover it with plastic tape to keep humid the bark, this helps a lot the branch to overcome after the bend. Of course wet wood fibers are more flexible than dry ones.

Now that all the main work is done I can start wiring



The tree in full explosion before the styling.



Work starts with deadwood cleaning and selecting life veins making some sharis.

the branches and put them in the proper position, starting from the bottom and going up to the top. I usually use two wiring techniques when I work on a fresh material: -wire branch by branch from the bottom to the top like in this case-wire tree for wire sizes from the biggest down to the smallest. Always depend on how you decide to operate but working on this way helps you not to forget any branch and to work clear wiring always from the inside of a branch, outside. As much as the tree is well prepared and wired as much easy is to style it at the end of the work.

I already open up worked branches to have a vision of what I want to obtain from my work. Only at the end I go and move pads to create the final composition before empty and full spaces. After a full day of work this is the final image of the tree, vegetation is still too much dense and expanded but I don't like to cut too much at the first styling because I like to respect the material and gives light to all the green. After only six months I had the chance to work again on the juniper and repeat it. The final image shows all the potential of the specimen.

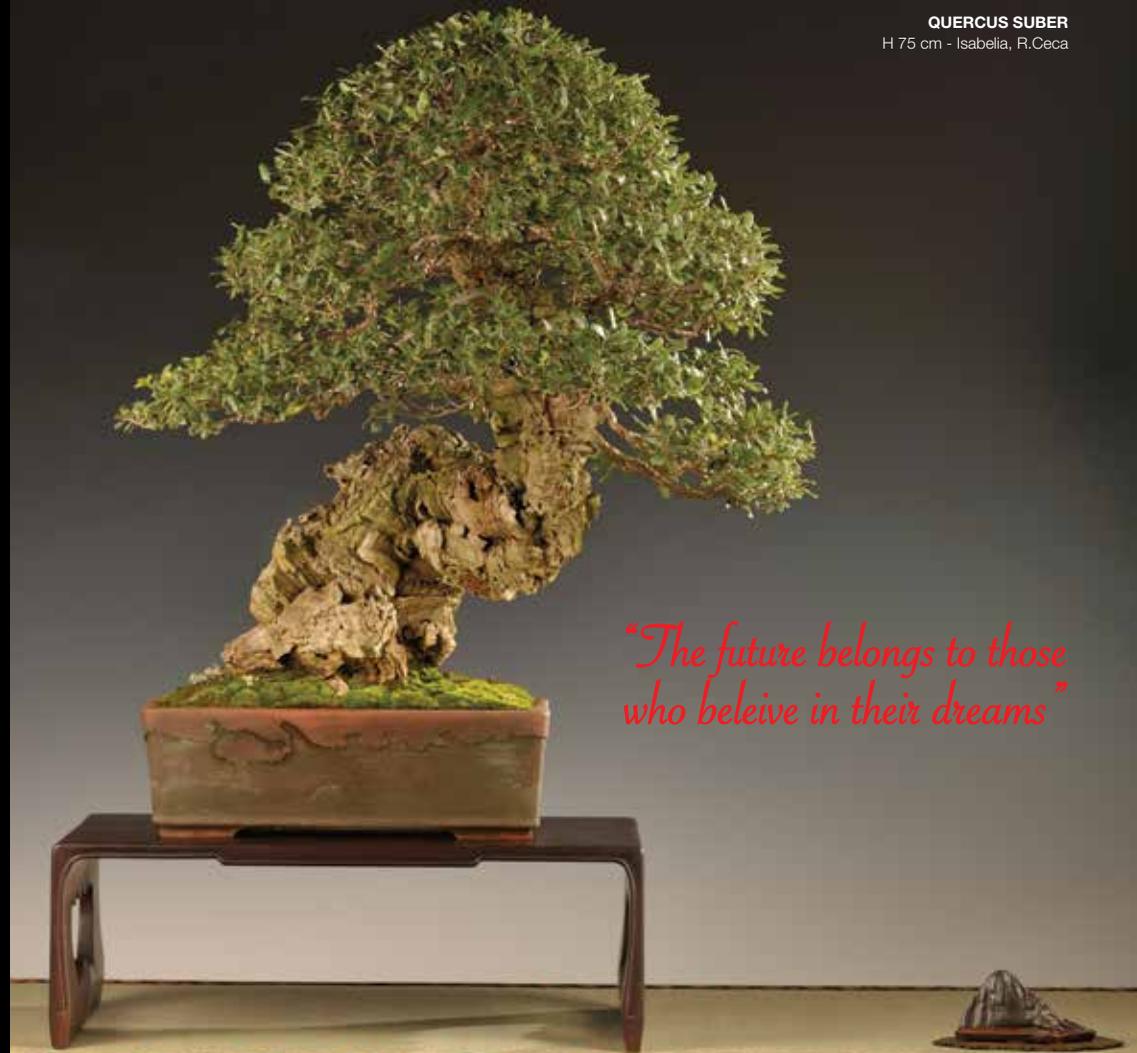


The first styling is done all the green is wired to receive good light and develop backbudding.



Same tree May 2012, only six months after first styling, repotted and rewired.

QUERCUS SUBER
H 75 cm - Isabella, R.Ceca



*"The future belongs to those
who believe in their dreams"*

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AND MY DREAM IS

NOW

