

# Honoring the man behind the Malu grape

Qiu Shi and Gan Zhongcheng

"These grapes are really tasty!" said Tang Zhengming from Xuhui District, a visitor at the Malu Grape Theme Park in Jiading District. The park is a planting base of Malu grapes, a species that has just been honored as "China's Famous Brand of Agricultural Products" and will be served at the Olympics.

In the early June, the Malu grape festival opened in the theme park and for three months visitors can taste the well-known sweet grapes and wines.

The history of Malu grapes in Shanghai goes back to an enterprising man, Shan Chuanlun, from Shandong Province.

Hired as an agricultural technician, Shan left his hometown for Shanghai in 1976. He took fruit samples with him and found that the grapes once planted in Shandong (Jufeng grapes), adapted very well to Shanghai's climate. The vines did better than other transplanted Shandong fruit.

Though locals treated him as an outsider at first, Shan was not discouraged. He conducted research on planting techniques, disease and pest prevention, soil and climate. He experimented and concluded that Jufeng grapes were the right species for Malu Town and that the planting area should be enlarged.

The Malu government agreed and the plan was implemented. The planting area soon reached 400 hectares, 10 times larger than the first experimental plots.

In 20 years, Malu grapes became a well-known brand and brought the farmers 500 million yuan (US\$73.3 million).

Malu grapes are distinctive for their high sugar content, greenish-purple color and large seeds. They soon became Shanghai locals' favorite.

Malu is praised as the "Town of Grapes," while the Malu brand has been named a "Famous Brand of Shanghai."

Malu gave full support to talented innovators like Shan Chuanlun.

Wang Zhongming, former Party secretary of Malu Town, helped Shan with his new residence registration. Not only have the town leaders helped Shan greatly, but also the Jiading District government spared no efforts in advancing Shan's agriculture plans.

"The government gives my staff everything we need," said Shan.

With the support of Malu government, Shan realized his dream: he founded the Shanghai Malu Grape Development Co Ltd in 2003.

In 2006, the grape theme park was established, combining



Shan Chuanlun checks Malu grapes.

planting, researching and agricultural tourism. It offers spots like the Lovers' Garden, Grape Gallery and the popular Grape Restaurant.

Though Shan's Malu grapes are several times more costly than ordinary grapes, the demand far exceeds the supply.

Shan never stops innovating. He has developed new species — a grape enriched with microelements, a milk grape, and soilless cultivated grape. His enterprising spirit has won him fame and wealth.

"The local government backs me all the time and I shall never let them down. I will make their support worthwhile," said Shan.



Mou Zunkai makes an aircraft kite.

## MiG-29 kites take to the skies

Cindy Chen

You may spot a MiG-29 jet fighter, an SU-27 or an SU-37 in the sky over Anting Citizens Square in Jiading District. If you're lucky, you may catch sight of China's Shenzhou VI rocket. They're all model "aircraft kites" meticulously made by Mou Zunkai.

Every day when it doesn't rain, Mou, who is in his middle years, goes to the park from his home in Waigang to fly his aircraft kites.

Mou has always liked model planes, so he decided to put his planes in the air. Ten years ago, his first was a MiG-29, a Russian fighter in service with the Chinese Air Force.

At first, he didn't know how to use a handwheel to control the kite and the MiG crashed and broke into pieces. Mou learned the handwheel techniques and his second MiG-29 flew like a dream.

The joy of success spurred

Mou on. He not only produces but designs his plane kites, such as other attack aircraft, the SU-27 and SU-37, even China's space rocket the Shenzhou VI.

Mou is now an expert in flying plane kites.

"There are three tricks," he says. "First, use Anji bamboo over six years old because it's the most flexible. Second, the plane should have unbalanced big wings, so that the kite can circle. Third, it's important to handle the kite string with skill. Practice is necessary."

Mou says flying kites is good for the health and offers a chance to make friends.

Last month, it took only three days for Mou to design and make a simple glider, costing less than 100 yuan (US\$14.64).

The aircraft kites, however, cost considerably more and are complicated to make.

They're not too popular yet, but Mou hopes someday they will bring joy to many people.

# Jiading cyclist pins his hopes on next big games

Xing Yizhou, Wang Weiguo and Chen Qianqing

Xu Gang, a 25-year-old cyclist from the national team, has been training intensively with Hong Kong coach Shen Jinkang in Yunnan Province. Xu is training together with Wong Kampo, a well-known cyclist of the Hong Kong team, who will compete in cycling events at the Beijing Olympics next month.

Xu, however, is not eligible to compete this time, but he remains positive.

"I'm determined to win the championship in next year's National Games," he said. He also plans to compete in the cycling tournament in South Korea next June. "Right now I am putting my shoulder to the wheel preparing for track point races and road races. I believe that one day I will make it to the Olympics."

Xu is from Jumen Village, Waigang Town in Jiading District. He has been away from his hometown for eight years.

According to Xu's first coach Gao Dexing, Xu was selected to be an amateur athlete by the Juvenile Sports School in Jiading District when he was in fifth grade. In 1998 Xu entered the Juvenile Sports School of Shanghai and in 2003 he became a member of the national team.

Back then, when Xu started to try out for the team, his parents thought the training was too tough for a boy so they told him to quit. Xu persisted, saying: "Sports is my strong point and I love cycling. I am willing to take the hardships." The tough training with 170 peers lasted for a whole month and Xu made the team.

Cycling can be a dangerous sport. Injuries are common

during training and races. When Xu was training at Yellow Mountain, Anhui Province, he was once hit by a truck; his arm was broken and a steel pin was needed for reconstruction. It took years for him to recover and get the pin taken out.

Last year, when training in Anji, Zhejiang Province, Xu broke his collarbone. After five days, he rushed back to training.

Spring training is very important in cycling. Therefore every Spring Festival when other families are gathering and celebrating, Xu stays at the training center in Kunming. He has been there almost eight years.

When Xu's father had a car accident, and when his mother was hospitalized, all Xu could do was to make phone calls. Sadly, when his grandmother was dying after a cerebral hemorrhage, he was racing in Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province. When he arrived home, he stood in front of her casket and burst into tears.

These years, Xu has been making greater cycling achievements and gaining popularity. He won the championship of Shanghai Bike Race in 1998. In May 2006, he won two awards, "China Individual General Classification" and "Best Young Rider Individual General Classification" in the first Tour of Hong Kong to Shanghai.

Last year, he took part in the Male Masters of the "Giant Cup" Tour of Mt Zipeng National Road Cycling Tournament. He won the individual's 182.8-km race event.

No sweat, no sweet. Through unremitting efforts, Xu got what he is today.

Experts say a cyclist's prime appears to be 35 years. Xu definitely will bring more surprises to the people of Jiading.



Xu Gang has been making greater cycling achievements, and gaining popularity these days.