

Made-to-order arts and crafts

Two unique stone sculptures from India.



JACK OOVTHESUN

by **Sharmini Angela**

DR Premendra Y Verma holds a fascination for objects of art both ancient and contemporary, which reflect the culture and origins of their makers.

The professor from Washington moved to Malaysia when he married a local. He immediately knew what he wanted to venture into here and went ahead with his plans to set up an outfit called Sacred Citadel in 2004. Located in Bangsar, it specialises in Tibetan, Himalayan arts and exquisite tribal crafts.

According to Premendra, who hailed from Delhi, the idea of opening this outlet had to do with his father's friendship with the Dalai Lama. This gave him the opportunity of visiting Tibet to gather contacts of local artisans.

His aim was to seek genuine artists to produce unique and exclusive pieces for the Malaysian market.

"Sacred Citadel is a place for art connoisseurs or anyone looking for something interesting for

any occasion.

"The main concept was to obtain genuine quality products with good workmanship that is one-of-a-kind," he said.

Many think that antique art is priceless or expensive but in the international market, modern art done by contemporary artists could be also of similar value.

Premendra has loyal customers who appreciate the intricate workmanship and exclusive pieces he brings in.

"We have a combination of items - religious pieces and many other arts and crafts as well," he explained.

There are exclusively designed carpets, customised furniture, stone sculptures, paintings, knick-knacks and more from Tibet, Himalaya and India.

"An order for an authentic and handmade carpet would usually take three months and my regulars don't mind the wait for something exclusive," he said.

As for paintings, the master artists would usually take at least three months. These pieces are rare in the market.

The master artists' paintings are done traditionally with stone colours and 24-carat gold leaves.

"Customers look out for quality art pieces and each of the them are handcrafted to produce a unique work of art," he said.

The knick-knacks include picture frames, jewellery boxes, clocks and paper mache, passport bags and singing bowls used for meditation. The smaller items start from RM50 whereas the carpets are priced from RM5,000 onwards.

"Many people have the notion that this kind of art pieces are available everywhere but they can rest assured that the items available here are unique," he said.

Visit No. 44-A, 1st Floor, Jalan Telawi 5, Bangsar Baru, KL daily except for Mondays from 10am to 7pm or call 05-2284 8412