

A FEW GOOD PENS

Anuj Poddar agrees that a pen is a pen and there isn't really a need for a good pen. So why did he start his own pen brand offering highly collectible luxury fountain pens?

By Timmy Tan

No one needs a good pen just as they do not need a good car or a good watch," says pen collector and enthusiast Anuj Poddar. "However, they may desire a good car, watch or even a pen if they appreciate what it does for them. This is personal and not something I would argue about. We need very little in life but yet we desire a lot and desires are personal to the individual."

With that, it is easy to understand Poddar's deep appreciation for pens, fountain pens in particular. Given a choice, he'd rather opt for the fountain pen as opposed to a rollerball. Why? Use a fountain pen and observe "... the difference in your handwriting. A rollerball is a means to an end, like a car that simply gets you from A to B. But a good fountain pen makes writing fun and can help you create art in the way your handwriting shows up if you practice and learn to write well.

A beautifully written note brings great joy to the person receiving the note. Fountain pens bring pleasure to writing and for those who enjoy writing. A handwritten note is personal; it conveys the effort the person has gone through [there is always some thought given

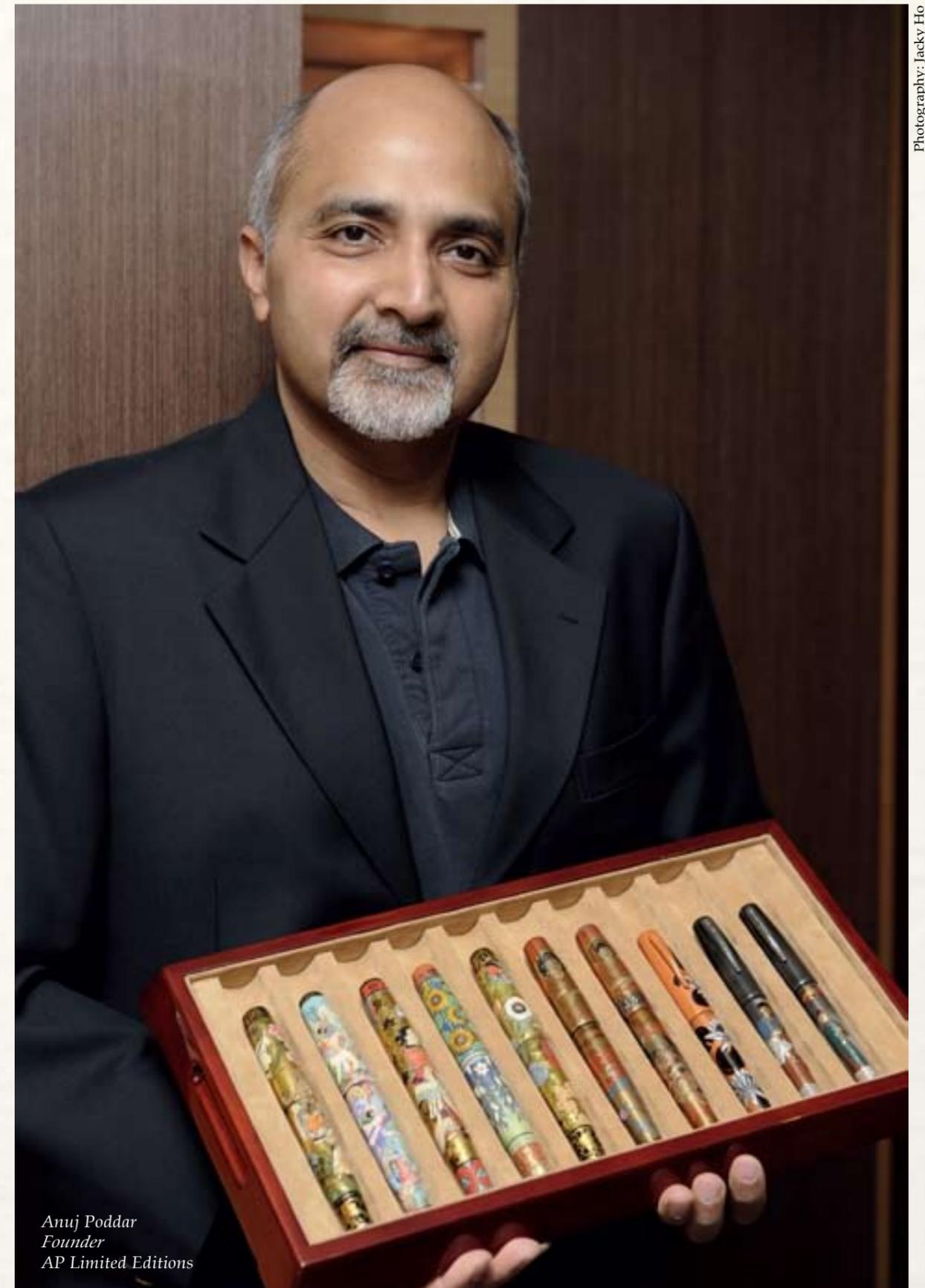
AP Limited Editions
Lotus

behind the written word]. Moreover, it cannot be duplicated by anyone else," Poddar continues. "It is you and only you who have written the note and can create another.

Furthermore, it brings forth an emotion in the person reading it as well, depending on how well the note has been written. The world around us is becoming sterile – everything is mechanized and in times such as these, a handwritten note means a great deal more than it did 40 years ago," notes Poddar, whose interest in collecting fountain pens began before he reached the age of 10.

In fact, his very first fountain pen, a Sheaffer, was a gift celebrating his eighth birthday from his mother. The attraction in such a writing instrument stemmed from his observation that his handwriting improved and how smooth the nib was. "I enjoy writing very much; I discovered how enjoyable it is to use a fountain pen and thus, a quest began that never seems to end," says Poddar.

His "quest" was what eventually led him to found his very own pen brand bearing his own initials – AP Limited Editions. However, it was not a straightforward task nor a quick start-up. While work began on his AP Limited Editions in the year 2000; the collection was only officially launched in February 2006. There are no set numbers of pieces created in any given year but the aim is to introduce between four and eight new limited editions each year.



Anuj Poddar
Founder
AP Limited Editions

Have a good hard look at his beautiful creations – all are truly works of art

Photography: Jacky Ho

“... some of pens have been inspired by religions of the East. We find that miniature art renders itself beautifully in the depiction of religious themes.”

- Anuj Poddar



To work with a fountain pen is an absolute pleasure!

Written by Anuj Poddar with his personal AP Limited Editions fountain pen

The Maki-e pens require between six and 12 months to produce while the fountain pens bearing Russian miniature art can be completed in around three-to-four months. “I usually work on our limited edition pens first with my wife and designer. We then create a few one-of-a-kind pens with ideas which are not always our own but those of the artists we work with. This keeps the artists interested and they derive great pleasure when an idea presented by them is rendered on a pen and appreciated by a collector,” reveals Poddar.

The very first introduction to Poddar (before meeting him personally) was through an article entitled ‘A Dream Come True’ in the well-known pen magazine ‘Stylus’. What grabbed my attention was the very stunning Ganesha and Hanuman AP Limited Editions writing instrument pictured in its full glory.

Another unforgettable sight was Buddha – The Enlightened One. Somehow, I had the impression that religion seemed to play a key role. One of the very first questions thrown to Poddar was therefore the reason for his focus on religion. However, Poddar clarified that religion isn’t his brand’s focus. “It just so happens that some of pens have been inspired by religions of the East. We find that miniature art renders itself beautifully in the depiction of religious themes. But we have ideas from nature, wildlife and religion, to depictions from old fables,” he explains.

Apart from the artwork on the pen, Poddar figures that demand isn’t there for “... a high tech fountain pen... but if we could use a new technique to fill ink and house a larger volume of ink in the pen, that would be a welcome innovation,” surmises Poddar.

Given the breath-taking art on his pens, it isn’t a surprise that AP Limited Editions writing instruments don’t come cheap. While Poddar notes that most collectors of his pens would rather not use them, he wishes that more of them would use these writing instruments as he himself does for his own private collection.

Even then, at the end of the day, whether or not his clients use his pens will be a matter of individual choice; what is more important is the deep appreciation they have for his ideas as seen through the hand-painted pens produced and what such fine writing instruments can possibly do in terms of handwritten notes. **P**



AP Limited Editions
Buddha – The Enlightened One