ALEX OGNAYON carved this piece, “Ifugao Custom,” from bamboo, a new medium for woodcarvers on Asin Road in Baguio City. RICHARD BALONGLONG

BAGUIO CITY—There was no doubt about one of woodcarver Nestor Anabon’s favorite things. When Edgardo Manda, head of the Philippine Bamboo Foundation, handed bayog bamboo to woodcarvers in Barangay Asin in Baguio City two months ago, Anabon knew what to carve.

He made a huge replica of a Ginebra San Miguel bilog (round gin bottle), complete with bottle cap and the familiar label, originally made by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo, of Saint Michael spearing the Devil.

It earned Anabon a special prize from another artist, Peter Pinder, who judged the 1st Philippine Bamboo Carving Festival last week.

National Artist Benedicto “BenCab” Cabrera, who chaired the judging, said he was very appreciative of the local artists’ output. “I was impressed with the workmanship. They did not carve something commercial like ashtrays. Their works are cultural and personal,” he said.

Joefelo Apuggad, 32, said he was so excited about the competition that he carved from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. for two weeks. His three works were intricate: he was able to cram dozens of hunters in 43 inches of bamboo.

With “Snake Hunting,” he created a spiral showing six hunters in various phases of hunting pythons. His other works are “Deer Hunting” and “Ethnic Weaving.”
ANOTHER intricately designed bamboo figure. RICHARD BALONGLONG

Winners’ circle

To show the intensity of the competition, only one of Apuggad’s works made it to the winners’ circle.

The grand prize was won by veteran woodcarver Fernando Tabayan, whose work, “Ifugao and Benguet Festival,” is a bas relief of various festivals in the two provinces.

Manda, BenCab and Apuggad were one in saying that bamboo would save the woodcarving industry.

“Many are leaving [Asin] for La Union and Tagaytay,” said BenCab. “This will give them enough curiosity and interest to stay.”

Manda said he sourced the bamboo from Porac, Pampanga. With lahar as medium, this bamboo variety is especially tough. Its hardness is so much that Apuggad noted that he had to sharpen his carving tools more often while working with the Porac bayog.

Ref.: [http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/145599/bamboo-seen-as-savior-of-woodcarving-industry](http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/145599/bamboo-seen-as-savior-of-woodcarving-industry)