



Press release – Paris 1st September 2014

Japanese corporation KAI receives the Leonardo de Vinci Prize in Tokyo

Now in its 4th year, The Leonardo de Vinci Prize is an international award given to family businesses for their exceptional capacity to pass down knowledge and values from generation to generation, and this year it has come to Japan. Japan is often ahead of its time, and is also a place where family tradition and cultural heritage is highly valued. KAI CORPORATION, a market leader in blade manufacturing, will be awarded the prize in Tokyo on the 24th September.

KAI, combining tradition and technology to create excellence

KAI was founded in 1908 by Saijiro Endo in the town of Seki (Japan), a town renowned for sword production for over 800 years. They started out by making pocket knives and soon became the number 1 blade manufacturer in Japan. KAI entered the European market in the 1980s, and also has branches in the US, Germany, Korea, Hong Kong, Vietnam, India and China. The company has invested a lot in its international expansion, and has a range of products specialised for countries all around the world.

KAI's catalogue has more than 10 000 products available in the cookery sector (knives, graters, moulds...), the hairdressing and beauty sector (razors, scissors, nail clippers...), as well as in the medical sector (scalpels for ophthalmology and dermatology...).

KAI uses the latest technology as well as its wealth of experience in blade manufacturing in order to make knives of the highest quality.

KAI CORPORATION figures:

- 2013 turnover: 429.3 million euros with a profit of 12.9 million euros
- Company capital 100% owned by the Endo family
- 2946 employees worldwide
- Created over 100 years ago
- Operating in 8 different countries

KAI and the Leonardo de Vinci prize : shared values

KAI CORPORATION has been selected to receive the Leonardo de Vinci award as it meets all the different criteria:

Enterprise and Family – Saijiro Endo founded his company as a pocketknife manufacturer in the city of Seki (Gifu Prefecture), known as the largest city of blades in Japan with a history of 800 years. His son Saijiro Endo Jr. and his grandson Koji Endo will give it its today dimension with the development of numerous ranges of products and a worldwide presence. The company, in which works already the 4th generation, is 100% owned by the founding family.

Fidelity and Commitment – Since its inception, the company has remained faithful to the «3 thanks» that form the basis of its philosophy: «Thanks to the predecessors», «Thanks to the customers and partners» and «Thanks to family and between employees». This fidelity to its original commitment translates a strong determination to bring satisfaction to consumer, pride to employees, pride and happiness to society through tireless learning in close collaboration with its partners.

Memory and Handing down – KAI has always been advocating for «humanity rather than productivity» and for that follows the spiritual guidance of the old priest of Shogenji Temple where the company recruits receive a Zen practice every year. These human principles are particularly apparent internally by many training programs and information material in which each one can propose ideas and suggestions inspired by the five commitments of the company: «Global focus - Adaptation to changes - Spirit of challenge - Teamwork built on trust - Prompt actions».

Innovation and Modernity – The founder of KAI and his successors are born innovators. They were each recognized and honored in their time by the Japanese Nation. Saijiro Endo was awarded the Medal of “Yellow Ribbon” in Japan in 1958 for his replacement blades. His successor, Saijiro Endo Jr., received the same in 1985 for the introduction of original compact razors. The third president, Koji Endo, was the first to introduce triple-blade razors in 1998 and, more recently, the brand has been awarded the highest honor of “Overall Knife of the year” for three years in a row. Besides, KAI has created “Couteaux Bijoux” the cutting edge jewelry under the collaboration with Michel Bras, the French 3-stars Chef.

KAI CORPORATION, more than 100 years of history...

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| 1908 - Saijiro Endo set up its business in Seiki (Gifu Prefecture), city of blades since 800 years. | 1984 - Start production of scalpels. |
| 1920 - Start production of pocket knives. | 1990 - Launch of K-II, blade-replaceable disposable razor. |
| 1932 - Start production of the first replaceable razors in Japan. | 2005 - Launch of “Michel Bras” kitchen knife line up in Europe and United States. |
| 1947 - Start of wholesaling razors. | 2008 - The company celebrate its 100th birthday. |
| 1971 - Start production of kitchen knives. | |

Partnership with Michel Bras : a strong link with France

Since 2005, KAI CORPORATION has been developing a partnership with the chef Michel Bras. Based on the need for excellence, having this commitment in common has inspired a range of high precision kitchen knives: Michel Bras Tools.

Born in Aveyron, Michel Bras began his career Laguiole in Aubrac, working alongside his mother in the kitchen of the family hotel, The Lou Muzac. Unlike many other top chefs, he has remained loyal to his region and his country, where he has developed his own style of cooking. Having received his first Michelin Star in 1992, he opened his eponymous restaurant 10 years later and received his third Michelin Star in 1999. In 2002, he opened his second restaurant ‘Michel Bras Toya Japan’ in Hokkaido in Japan.

This partnership and this link with France and its gastronomy underlines the KAI group’s commitment to France as well as their desire to continue to establish themselves here.

**The 5th Leonardo de Vinci Prize
will be held on the 18th June 2015 in Mantoue, Italy.**

About the Leonardo de Vinci Prize :

The Leonardo de Vinci Prize was created in 2011 in partnership with the Henokiens Association and the Château du Clos Lucé. Inspired by the great inventor, the Prize awards the ability of family businesses to reinvent themselves, renew their image and pass down knowledge from generation to generation. Three major companies have received this award so far: Salvatore Ferragamo (Italy - 2011), Otto Bock Healthcare (Germany - 2012) et Daher (France - 2013). It should be remembered that the Leonardo de Vinci Trophy was created by Mellerio dits Meller, a member of the Henokiens. http://www.henokiens.com/index_event_gb.php

About the Château du Clos Lucé - Parc Leonardo da Vinci:

The Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise is the residence where Leonardo da Vinci spent the last three years of his life as 'Prime Painter, Engineer and Architect to the King'. Leonardo da Vinci brought with him from Rome three

of his major works: *Mona Lisa*, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* and *Saint John the Baptist*, as well as all his notebooks and sketches. The Château du Clos Lucé has been owned by the Saint Bris family since 1854, and its vocation is to pass on the heritage, records and work of Leonardo da Vinci. An innovative cultural company, the Château du Clos Lucé organises a host of activities, events and workshops and offers exhibition spaces dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci and a cultural attraction as well as three restaurants, one of which serves Renaissance cuisine. <http://www.vinci-closluce.com>

About the Henokiens Association:

Founded in 1981, the Henokiens Association represents family companies from all over the world that have been in existence for more than two hundred years. Its aim is to bring together companies whose owners or majority shareholders are descended from that company's founders. To date there are 40 members from seven European countries and Japan. The association champions the concept of the family business as the guarantor of continuity. The name 'The Henokiens' is a reference to the patriarch Henok (or Enoch), father of Methuselah, who lived for 365 years and did not die but was taken up to heaven. <http://www.henokiens.com>

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