



Da Lai Time Museum in Anting Town boasts a remarkable collection of around 2,000 intricate timepieces, ranging from clocks and watches to phonographs, music boxes and even mechanical pianos. — Photos by Hu Min

# Expatriate volunteer helps make Time Museum tick

Hu Min

When stepping into the Da Lai Time Museum in Anting Town, of Jiading District, people will obviously marvel at the rich collection of about 2,000 intricate clocks, watches, phonographs, music boxes and mechanical pianos of all styles and spanning all ages.

Amidst the ticking of clocks and watches, there was the beautiful melodies of a piano, creating an euphonious symphony and offering a soothing delight to the ears.

It came from Brendan Carroll, an Australian who serves as a volunteer at the museum. He is truly another marvel of the museum, explaining the timepieces and the stories behind them.

Carroll from Sydney, in his 50s, arrived in Shanghai about seven months ago. He has a unique bond with China. His parents have been to China three times over 20 years and they often told Carroll how



Brendan Carroll leads a tour at Da Lai Time Museum with great expertise and knowledge about many of the pieces, including their cultural significance, historical background and fascinating stories.

it has grown over the past decades.

As a result he has been fascinated and curious about China since his childhood.

His friend in Sydney, who is a clock maker, recommended the museum to him.

"I love science and technology, and education, and it was a great opportunity to come

here as I want to learn more about China, Chinese culture and Chinese people," he said.

In Australia, Carroll has a lot of Chinese friends.

"I knew what to expect as I saw a lot of photos, but when I came here, I thought it was more amazing, especially Shanghai," he said.

"Initially I came just to

have a look, but I was really surprised when I saw how fantastic Shanghai is and how wonderful China is, and I just love it. I said okay, I will give this a long term go."

At the museum, Carroll has a busy schedule. He serves as a guide, sometimes for international schools' students. He has also participated in video programs to promote the museum and Anting to the world.

He has a good knowledge of many pieces including their culture, history and stories.

As a gifted musician and knowledgeable guide, he is a star of the museum, welcomed by visitors and staff alike.

"We are still researching the stories of some of the pieces, and the process will never stop," he said.

Carroll enjoys the local lifestyle in Shanghai. He has visited Jiangnan-style (lower parts of the south Yangtze River) gardens in Jiading and tried various local foods.

In his spare time, he cycles to different places.

"I ride my bike to work in the morning, and there are so many restaurants and the smell is great," said Carroll.

He likes bullfrog and also hotpot.

"I have been to many places, and I still want to explore so many places," he said.

The museum at Shanghai International Automobile City of Anting features some 2,000 exhibits of different ages from different countries.

It is a real journey through time and all exhibits come from Li Dalai, a collector of clocks and watches who was born in Anting, hence the name of the museum.

Unlike many other antique collectors, who collect as investment, Li collects clocks because he is intrigued by the mechanical systems that make the timepieces work so accurately.

The museum, free to visit, is a treasury of clocks and watches with the oldest exhibit, a lantern clock from the United Kingdom, dating back to 1675.