

Taiwan's Penlux:

A Bright New Name

BY BARRY GABAY

Kevin Hsu goes step by step to attain writing instrument excellence.

Kevin Hsu, principal of Penlux of Taiwan, knows his field well. He plans, experiments, tests, and if something goes poorly with a design or prototype, he moves ever forward, learning also from the work that does not reach the public. Only the very tip of this writing instruments iceberg is visible to customers. Such attention to quality has allowed Penlux to produce world-class fountain pens for appreciative customers in a rather short period of time.

Hsu is quite fortunate to count several highly respected members of the pen community as mentors and friends, manufacturers and designers who guided him in his formative period and continue to serve as sounding boards for him during these, his creative years.

Bernard Lyn, founder of Danitrio, hired a young Hsu. "I didn't have any manufacturing background before, just my college degree in finance from a U.S. university. He offered me my first pen-related job," Hsu says. At Danitrio, Kevin learned the North American pen market. During this time, he also began visiting and absorbing all he could from pen manufacturers in his native Taiwan.

Since his initiation into the pen industry with Lyn and Danitrio, Hsu experienced a continuous evolution. In 2004, Hsu started his first partnership with Taccia in California, learning much from founder Shu-Jen Lin. Also in 2004, Hsu began representing Sailor in the Taiwanese market. Since 2015, Hsu and his team have offered Penlux products under its own name.

As Hsu says with his wide and characteristic grin, "We bring the artwork used for writing from our hands to your hands." Shun Takemura, founder of Itoya of America, was Kevin's first customer. Later he became a guiding friend.

Hsu's mentors have been demanding yet kind. While sharing their personal expertise, they independently put Hsu through his paces, always insisting that he improve a design, prototype, or finished model. With each new pen, Hsu learned to look beyond his current work, to envision where he was headed next and how every step in his journey contributed to another concept.

Left—Penlux Great Natural Cloudybay semi-transparent fountain pen with gold-plated trim and specially-cut 14 karat gold flexible nib.
Right—Great Natural Cloudybay and Blue Lake (rhodium-plated trim) fountain pens on a Penlux box display featuring a Penlux MO ink bottle.

