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Gary Hanick
President

NATUREMAKER
a California Corporation
International Museum Division
6225 El Camino Real
Carlsbad, California 92009
USA

1-800-USA-1889
1-800-995-5533 Fax
001-760-438-4244
001-760-438-4344 Fax
E-mail: gary@naturemaker.com
www.naturemaker.com
619-520-5915 Cellular

BREAKING BIG

Bennett Abrams

CO-FOUNDER • NATUREMAKER

Breakthrough Since revamping its steel-tree-art company in 1997, NatureMaker, based in Carlsbad, Calif., has seen revenues double to more than \$4 million.

Putting down roots Sculptor Bennett Abrams had just incorporated NatureMaker in 1984 when one of his saplings at a Macy's in San Francisco caught the eye of a casino designer. Soon Abrams was building trees for the hottest casinos in Las Vegas, including Caesars Palace, the MGM Grand, and the Paris.

Branching out The casino projects were on a different scale—full forests instead of the lone saplings NatureMaker was used to building—and the company had to rethink the way it made its trees. In late 1997, NatureMaker became the only company to use steel-based construction instead of concrete, wax, wood, or fiberglass. The enhanced level of detail and flexibility made it the de facto industry standard. "A hundred years from now, our work will still be around," says Abrams.

—MAGGIE OVERFELT

