

Luis Sedano, a long career in Cristalería Española – Saint Gobain

Abstract: *Luis Sedano began his career at Cristalería Española, a Saint Gobain subsidiary, after his family relocated to Avilés in search of better opportunities. Initially studying Technical Engineering, he switched to Industrial Mastery and joined the Apprentice School at Cristalería Española at 14. Excelling in his field, Luis represented his company in national competitions, winning the Champion title in Vigo in 1969 and subsequently competing in Japan in 1970. Despite a scoring controversy, he earned a Bronze medal in the International Vocational Training Competition. Luis's achievements in Japan were a source of pride, and he cherished the experience throughout his life. His family retains his medals, competition piece, and related memorabilia. Luis dedicated his entire career to Cristalería Española until retiring in 2008 due to illness, and passed away in 2011, remembered for his craftsmanship and mechanical skills.*

Luis Sedano's family hailed from Arijia, a quaint village in the Burgos province, deep within Spain. His father, a tailor, moved the family to Palencia due to the scarcity of work in Arijia. The family stayed in Palencia until Luis turned 8. Interestingly, Arijia was home to Saint Gobain's "Cristalería Española," which set up its first Spanish factory there in 1906. Although not the only glass industry in the Campoo region, it was likely the most significant, employing over 1,000 workers.

When the factory closed in 1953, citing that part of its facilities had been submerged by the Ebro Reservoir, a mass exodus ensued. Workers and professionals relocated to Avilés, Tarragona, Zaragoza, or Madrid throughout the 1950s. Coinciding with this, Luis's family also moved from Palencia to Avilés, an industrial area promising better job opportunities for his father.

Luis began studying Technical Engineering, but frequent illnesses and a lack of interest led him to switch to Industrial Mastery. At 14, he joined the Apprentice School at Cristalería Española, a Saint Gobain subsidiary where his uncle worked.

At that time, Apprentices signed a contract to complete their studies, transitioning to work in the company while continuing their education after passing an initial level called "Oficialía." After 4 years and a final exam, they earned their title as Industrial Masters. Luis, of course, achieved this and spent his entire career at Cristalería Española until he retired due to illness in 2008 at the age of 57.

His family remembers him as a skilled craftsman who loved working with his hands and mechanics.

In 1969, his instructors selected him to represent the company in the provincial phase of the 12th national VET and Artisan Competition. He advanced to the sector phase, competing against other provinces, and eventually reached the national final in Tarragona, where he finished as the runner-up. The following year, he won the national title in Vigo, earning his place to compete in Japan in 1970.

Luis often recounted the impressive award ceremonies. In interviews, he always expressed gratitude to his teachers and Cristalería Española. The Saint Gobain president even welcomed him in Madrid.

The Japanese Organizing Committee provided three DC-8 planes from Japanese Airlines for all participants, organized by the General Secretariat, to fly them from their countries to Tokyo.

Luis's family keeps the ticket from Amsterdam to Tokyo, though they don't recall how he travelled from Madrid to Amsterdam. He was accompanied by someone from the company.

In Tokyo, Luis competed in "Fitting" against apprentices from 13 countries. An unusual situation arose with the results. The works were displayed with the author's name and their position. Germany was first, the UK second, and Japan third. However, Luis's work was showcased as the third-place winner but credited to the Japanese Competitor. The Spanish delegation protested, and although they couldn't change the scores—Luis had 89.28



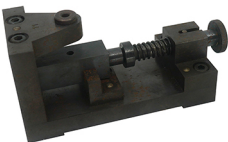
points and the Japanese competitor 90.06—they succeeded in having Luis also awarded a bronze medal "ex aequo."

The Technical Committee's meeting minutes from 17th November 1970 included two notes about the Fitting skill competition, which could be related to that unusual situation:

First: *"The marking system signed by the Chairman of the Jury and two experts was subsequently corrected by Mr. Reeves. Mr. Reeves explained that the correction was due to a mistake in the allocation of marks, altering the order. These corrections were accepted and remained as shown in the appendix."*

Second: *"Mr. Serrano proposed awarding an ex aequo Bronze medal to the Spanish competitor, Luis Sedano, who had 89.28 marks, given that the Japanese competitor awarded this medal had 90.06 marks. Mr. Serrano's proposal was unanimously approved."*

The family still has the medals Luis won, the piece he made during the competition in Tokyo, and press clippings documenting his achievements. Luis proudly remembered his experience in Japan for the rest of his life. He passed away in 2011.

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19th International Vocational Training Competition, Tokyo 1970. Photos of a ceremony.


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19th International Vocational Training Competition, Tokyo 1970. Fitting workshop, Luis Sedano working during the Competition.


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19th International Vocational Training Competition, Tokyo 1970. Luis Sedano with the piece he made during the Competition.

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Medal won by Luis Sedano at the Spanish national competition 1969, Skill of Fitting.


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Bronze medal won by Luis Sedano in Fitting, at the 19th International Vocational Training Competition, Tokyo 1970.