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# weekender

JULY 2012

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Service Satisfaction,  
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tokyo  
**weekender**

**JULY 2012**

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**Apology:** Tokyo Weekender wishes to apologise to Wipro for including certain information in an article that appeared in our June magazine (p. 40) that could potentially have been misconstrued to imply meanings other than those originally intended by our journalist.

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## YOUR GO-TO PLACE FOR APAC NEWS

**A** *Asia Daily Wire is your go-to place for all the latest news from across the Asia Pacific region. Covering business, culture, entertainment, sports and breaking news, Asia Daily Wire is updated round the clock in real time and picks and chooses the best headlines from sources across Asia—doing all the hard work for you. Here is a roundup of some of the ADW Editor's picks from the past month...*



### Fukushima seafood back on market

Octopus and whelk were among the

first seafood sold in the market after being tested for radioactive cesium on at market on June 24, while others, such as flounder and sea bass are not yet approved for sale. The government is presently testing for cesium and radioactive iodine in crabs and other kinds of fish, hoping to get the fishing industry moving again. Surprisingly for some, the fish sold out by 3 p.m.



### Whale meat demand drops in Japan

The Institute of Cetacean

Research, which is responsible for the organization of Japan's whaling, sold only 25% of 1,200 tons of whale meat last year, the rest failing to find a buyer at auction, AFP reports. Traders are blaming anti-whaling activists for the "disappointing" auction results, saying that consumers are intimidated into avoiding the cetacean meat. Anti-whaling activists again accuse Japan of masking their commercial whaling operation behind the guise of scientific research.



### China further isolates Tibet

China has decided to ban foreigners from traveling to Tibet.

China sent troops to Lhasa to maintain order and prevent further protests of any form from taking place. A US government report on human rights stated that there were "extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial detentions, and house arrests" in Tibet last year. Meanwhile, The Dalai Lama has claimed that the Chinese government was plotting to assassinate him.



### Pakistan "a bigger threat than Iran"

The West's "obsession" with Iran's nuclear

program could leave more room for Pakistan to get away with its own, the Wall Street Journal is reporting. The West's pursuit of Tehran's nuclear program leaves Pakistan's increasing production of nuclear weapons and technology, which it supplies to North Korea, Libya and Iran itself, unchecked. The Journal reported that the West may be concentrating on Iran exactly because Tehran's nuclear program is in its infancy and can still be stopped.



### Coca-Cola to invest in Myanmar

Coca-Cola is planning to open business operations

in Myanmar, and will make "significant" investments in the country over the next five years, reports the Financial Times. Despite escalating sectarian violence and mixed signals from the Obama administration, who have not given any official indications on business as yet, Coke – along with General Electric and Caterpillar – saw the new government's liberalization efforts as a go signal.



### Singapore bans unemployed from casinos

Singapore will ban its citizens, particularly low-

income and unemployed people, from casinos in an effort to curb gambling and its impact on society. The Singaporean government already bans people who have declared bankruptcy and recipients of long-term government financial aid. There has been widespread gambling addiction in the country but this move has its opponents, particularly those who feel it is simply ignoring the problem and not getting at its roots.



### N. Korea threatens attacks on S. Korean news

North Korea has warned that artillery

is aimed at the specific coordinates of a number of South Korean news agencies and that it would readily attack if media insults continue, an official statement reported by the Korean Central News Agency said. They are accusations of a children's festival being no more than a political show.



### Taiwan Clears China Landmines

China-friendly Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou has

expressed plans to boost ties with China through removing, over the next six months, landmines that served as barriers against Chinese communist forces, AFP reports. Two Taiwan-controlled islands off the southeastern coast of Xiamen province have been out-of-bounds due to the landmines since the 1950s, after the Chinese Civil War that separated Taiwan from the mainland.

 Asia Daily Wire

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*Photo by Alan Aboud*

# Paul Smith

## CUTS A DASH

Weekender chats with the British design icon in Tokyo

by Matthew Hernon

**H**e has designed clothes for some of the world's biggest stars, received a knighthood for his services to the fashion industry and played an important role in the Oscar nominated movie, 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy,' yet what really struck Weekender on meeting Sir Paul Smith was how normal he was, enjoying his cup of tea and chocolate; no airs or graces, just a down-to-earth guy from Nottingham.

"I just like people. I don't care if you're a road sweeper or the Prime Minister. Underneath it all, we're the same. Even the Queen goes to the loo, well at least I think she does!" This attitude is reflected in the clothes his company makes. "We cater to both the eccentric and business style," says Smith, "and my collections are so varied that you could be a 14 year old boy or a 70 year old man and still find something you like at Paul Smith."

The Paul Smith brand has become a global phenomenon, though it is in Japan that it has enjoyed perhaps its greatest success. It currently has more than 200 shops here, compared to just 15 in the UK. Sir Paul originally came in 1982 and has been a regular visitor ever since. He was "fascinated by the place" back then and believes the fact that he saw it as being more than simply a cash cow explains the company's longevity in Japan. "A lot of designers were invited to Japan during the bubble economy, but the majority of them were not in it for the long haul. It was a case of earning lots of

money and then going home as quickly as possible. We approached it a little more humbly than that, really embracing the culture and I think that is why it has worked so well for us."

Sir Paul has time for everyone and seems so at ease in Japan, "I always enjoy coming here. I like the people and the way they dress. Thirty years ago it was all very classical but they are much more fashionable now. Sometimes the way they put clothes together can seem eccentric to the European eye, but I think it's great that self expression can come through such a harmless route."

Paul Smith's love-affair with the country shows no sign of diminishing. Following last year's disaster he was soon on the plane to Tokyo in order to hug his staff and give them some reassuring words. The organizers of Tokyo Fashion Week were so impressed by his actions that they invited him over to stage a show last November. After working with the Red Cross here, he called it 'I Love Japan.'

The feeling seems mutual. As the biggest selling European designer in Japan, he is highly regarded and was even on the guestlist for a supper at Buckingham Palace for Emperor Akihito in May, after the pair had spoken at an official lunch.

Now aged 66, it would be easy for Paul to take a back seat approach and enjoy all the adulation. But that's not his style. He takes a very hands on approach to the

business and spends almost three quarters of the year traveling the world, promoting his brand and looking for new ideas and projects.

One of his most recent has been designing stamps for the London Olympics. In a specially designed book made to commemorate their release, he writes, "Of course, the Olympics are always special but this year, exceptionally so as they are in my home city of London." Sport is close to Sir Paul's heart, he says, "as a teenager, my dream was to be a professional cyclist."

The stamps "sold like crazy" at his shops around the world. He enjoyed doing it but admits it was a "big challenge, particularly trying to please the serious collectors."

Stepping out of his comfort zone, though, is something he clearly relishes. When asked by Tomas Alfredson to help out with the British movie, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, he jumped at the chance.

*"I just like people. I don't care if you're a road sweeper or the Prime Minister."*

"It was my job to give advice on the mood of the film. I suggested a monochrome style with traditional, bleak buildings, mixed in with highlights of colour. I chose red because I think it represents England well; double-decker buses, post boxes, that kind of thing. I got goosebumps when I saw the movie and realized he had taken notice of all I had said, particularly as we'd only met three times!"

Smith also dressed the film's stars, including good friend Gary Oldman. Tony Blair and David Cameron have both worn Paul Smith. So too, has Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, who Smith says he has had the pleasure of seeing in his underwear.

Sir Paul Smith takes just as much pleasure seeing a teenager or a housewife wear his clothes as he does a celebrity. Of course he enjoys the fame and money that comes with being a top designer but his main motivation is to "enjoy life and continue making nice clothes for as many people as possible.

Our philosophy is different to many other brands. We are real and our feet are firmly on the ground. I think in a world of falseness, sound-bites and commercial nonsense, people can appreciate our honesty."





GOLDEN BOY

# KOHEI UCHIMURA

**H**e has been called ‘the greatest gymnast of all-time.’ It’s a big claim but Kohei Uchimura, at just 23, consistently justifies his praise with multiple wins and world titles. He goes in to this summer’s Olympics as the red hot favourite in the AA (all-around) event. He has been so dominant over the past few years that many of his rivals have given up hope of beating him. For the man himself though, individual success will mean nothing if his team fails to deliver in London.

“My priority is always the team. I’m not thinking about the AA event at all,” he tells Weekender. “After the Beijing Olympics I started training for victory with my teammates, I really want to win that title.”

In the individual category, Uchimura hasn’t lost an event since the 2008 Games; it’s quite a streak. With his team however, he has yet to taste a major victory. They have finished runners-up behind China in the last three World Championships and in 2011

## Uchimura on his teammates....

### Kazuhito Tanaka

He is a solid athlete but still has some work to do

### Yusuke Tanaka

He goes at his own pace but when you need him to do something he will do it

### Koji Yamamuro

He creates a good atmosphere in the squad and carefully watches how others behave

### Rohei Kato

He is a daredevil. Like Koji, he has a big influence on the mood of the camp

Uchimura’s dramatic fall on the high bar competition cost them the gold medal. He was human, after all. He is desperate to make amends for that slip at the London Games by helping his country regain the gold that they won in Athens in 2004.

Uchimura leads a strong squad going in to the Games, including brothers, Yusuke and Kazuhito Tanaka, Ryohei Kato and Koji Yamamuro. They are expected to be one of the main contenders but know China will, once again, be difficult to beat. On top of that countries like America, Russia, Ukraine and Romania will provide tough opposition. It is a very open field: Uchimura says that, on July 30, “any country can win.”

The result of the AA final on August 1 is likely to be far more predictable though. Anything less than a gold medal for Uchimura would be considered a major upset. He has simply wiped the floor with the opposition in recent times, claiming an unprecedented three consecutive world titles.

He won the last one, his score the sum of points in two categories, by an incredible 3.101 points, with the runner-up, Philipp Boy of Germany, describing him as a “machine who nobody can beat,”

while 5th placed John Orozco, from the US, apparently “couldn’t find the words to describe him,” yet, did manage “incredible” and “amazing.”

Uchimura “appreciates the compliments,” from his rivals, but he refutes the claim that he is “unbeatable,” particularly in a sport where even the shortest lapse in concentration can prove so costly. Four years ago in Beijing he scored the highest marks on the floor and produced a stunning performance on the high bar routine, yet two falls on the pommel horse meant he had to settle for second place, behind Yang Wei of China, who has now retired. His routines in AA competitions have been almost flawless since but he knows there is no room for complacency. Staying mentally strong is the key to his success.

“I used to train with former Olympic gold medalist, Naoya Tsukahara,” says Uchimura. “He taught me that gymnasts are always fighting with themselves, rather than others. This message has stuck with me ever since.”

Uchimura watched on TV as Tsukahara led Japan to team victory at the 2004 Athens Games and dreamed of one day following in his footsteps. He couldn’t quite manage it in Beijing, but feels London could be the time for him and his teammates to shine. Despite the fact that he will be expected to provide a near perfect performance, he doesn’t seem to be feeling the pressure. His spirits are high as he gears up for what could be the defining competition of his career.

“I am really excited about going to London. I am particularly looking forward to trying many kinds of delicious food,” he says, although whether British fare will go down well with the coach and nutritionists’ routine remains to be seen. “While I am there I would also like to watch some other sports. Of course I am interested in seeing the athletics 100m final and the 100m and 200m breaststroke swimming finals, which should include Kosuke Kitajima.”

He is clearly determined to enjoy himself while he’s in London but, when it comes to the serious business, few athletes will be as well prepared as the gymnast known as ‘Superman’. He has worked all his life to be the best at his sport and should be too strong for the rest in the AA. To achieve his ultimate dream of a team gold, though, he will also need Kato, Yamamura and the Tanaka brothers to be at the top of their game.





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# BEYOND LIMITS

The ins and outs of Olympic sponsorship

**W**hat is so magnetic about the Olympics that companies from around the world are drawn to the Games? The events are so much more than simply a celebration of sporting excellence, it is a branding haven for some of the biggest businesses in the world.

The most well-known names from all industries get involved somehow; be they from a pharmaceutical, financial, food and drink or electronics and manufacturing background, they all want a piece of Olympic pie.

At the end of this month, all eyes will be on London and the likes of Coca Cola, BMW, McDonalds and Visa will be prominent amongst the logos emblazoned on our TV screens and, indeed, around the city itself. As the likes of Usain Bolt sprint towards the finishing line, sporting history could be made. Hundreds of athletes will capture the imagination of the crowds at the stadiums, velodromes, pools and their homes, wherever they are in the world. Records will be broken.

Marketing experts may believe that there is no better time to show off your logo but does the exposure justify the effort?

The head of Olympic sponsorship for ACER, the Taiwanese hardware and computer giant, tells us that the opportunity is too good to miss. Anton Mitsyuk, speaking from Italy, said that “it’s rewarding to be one of the top global brands able to go to the Olympics. The composite logo, for one thing, has a very big value to us. It shows the message of trust in our image and our products.”

Explaining the pressure that comes with the role, and illustrating the parallels with sport, Mitsyuk says, “this is a zero-tolerance-for-error environment. If our company can perform here, we can show that we are ready for any of the most challenging projects.”

It’s not only about increasing brand awareness and trust in the products. ACER is the fourth largest PC manufacturer in the world and has been an Olympic Worldwide Partner since before the Vancouver Games in 2010. From the consumer’s point of view, Acer is releasing special versions of its V3-571 laptop and in Europe an Iconia Tab, each with the famous five rings. So what will their role be in London?

Mitsyuk says, “well, for Acer, the fundamental aspect is building and maintaining a computer

infrastructure. But it is more than just being a sponsor, we hope. We can bring our experience and expertise. There will be 13,500 desktops, 13,000 monitors, 3,000 notebooks and almost 1,000 servers deployed to serve venues, the media and the Athlete’s Villages along with 350 engineers and technicians.”

Particular athletes to watch, for Acer, include ‘Sunrise Japan’. The name given to the Japan women’s team (remember what the name “nadeshiko” did for the ladies football stars in 2011?) who have been given a local campaign by Acer: the theme is “Surprise Yourself.” Embodying what could as easily be an either Olympian or business philosophy, Mitsyuk tells us even the global tagline the

company is using, ‘Explore Beyond Limits’, can be explained in sporting terms. He speaks enthusiastically about even the more technical aspects of his company’s involvement, but our conversation barely strays from his excitement for the Games.

“There are modern day explorers who explore their world,” Mitsyuk says, “they explore their capabilities and go ‘beyond limits’. We think athletes are a great example of this spirit - every day, they are searching for new approaches to training to go above and beyond.”

Come the end of July, after years of preparation and work with the organizing committees – it’s not only at the Games themselves but, Mitsyuk explains, work with the Olympic Movement supporting local committees that they get involved - he says it won’t all be business. Sport, of course, will take centre stage.

Mitsyuk will be ensuring that Acer engineers and equipment serve the Games well, and that his marketing activation duties are taken care of but he is looking forward to catching a few events from up close. The tennis at Wimbledon will be a “special” moment, for Mitsyuk. He is a big basketball fan, too, but jokes, “I think we are all dreaming of the beach volleyball!”

“If our company can perform here, we can show that we are ready for any of the most challenging projects”



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# Explore Beyond Limits



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**ASPIRE**

# Cath Kidston®

## Weekender talks with the inimitable British designer



by Matthew Herson

**R**esponsible for some of the most instantly recognizable product lines to come out of Great Britain in the past two decades, Cath Kidston's global empire is always expanding at a rapid rate. The 'new Laura Ashley', who in the early nineties described her business as a "glorified junk shop," currently has more than 75 stores worldwide, including over 30 in Asia. Japan, in particular, has become an increasingly important market for her company in recent times and Kidston is certain that there is a lot more potential for growth here.

"I believe there is a great synergy between England and Japan," Kidston tells Weekender. "Both countries very much appreciate tradition and all the quirky details that come with it. We also both have a lively sense of happiness, cuteness and humour; qualities I always have in mind when working on our product ranges. Perhaps that is why we have built up such a sound Japanese customer base."

It was music that first brought her out here back in the eighties. Her husband, Hugh Padgham, is one of the UK's most famous record producers (he has worked with Paul McCartney and The Police) and Kidston would often accompany him on his business trips to the Far East. She fell in love with the place back then and she now sees it as being "almost like a second home," which she visits once or twice a year. "I have huge admiration for Japan and always find my visits inspirational."

She is treated as a massive celebrity when in Japan, which is hardly surprising considering how popular her goods have become. Japanese ladies, mainly, from

all generations - though particularly the 30-somethings - have really taken to her polka-dot and floral designs. Licensed to Sanei International, there are currently around 20 Cath Kidston stores in the country, but she is looking to more than double that over the next few years.

"Japan has had a long association with my business, which is now nearly 20 years old - Japanese customers came to my first ever shop from the very early days. We have always grown our Japanese stores organically, looking at various locations across the country. Around 50 stores seems to be right but this will be a gradual process, based on demand."

The brand has become so big here that Kidston decided Japan would be the ideal country to launch her first café. Located in Tsujido-Shonan, in Kanagawa, it serves up a traditional English menu, including a cream tea set, scones and an English breakfast. Naturally, the décor is cute and colourful, while the plates and cups are all original Cath designs.

"I have always dreamed of having a café and was thrilled that we had the opportunity to create one in Shonan," she says. It's great to be near the sea, for Kidston. "It is the ideal location and we are delighted with the concept. It was exciting for me that the first Cath's Café opened in Japan and as it has been so popular we are now planning to take the idea over to the UK!"

Kidston is clearly very confident about the future of the company as it approaches its 20th anniversary, though that hasn't always been the case. She was originally

reluctant to start her own business but, after some some encouraging words

from interior designer Nicky Haslam, she decided to open her first shop in Notting Hill in 1993.

"Nicky was a real inspiration to me. Before I arrived in his studio I had only worked in other people's shops but he was very supportive of me and gave me tremendous encouragement to design. He is the person I credit with giving me the confidence to start my own business."



Operating without debt, progress was initially steady rather than spectacular. Things have certainly changed in recent years however, with sales exploding. Cath Kidston ended the financial year 2011 with a turnover of 69 million pounds, compared with just 12 million five years ago, an incredible increase at a time when many retailers have suffered losses due of the financial crisis and consumer uncertainties. Her success hasn't just been confined to the UK and Japan. She also has shops in Korea, Thailand and Taiwan, while she is hopeful of opening further outlets in China and Hong Kong. She is unlikely to stop there though as her empire continues to grow. In this age of economic uncertainty, it would seem that, for the queen of the floral print, the future is rosy.

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## Omotenashi - The Japanese art of impeccable service

**B**owing down, literally, to your every need and desire, service professionals in Japan are the first thing many foreign visitors notice. Some of us are even disconcerted – what did we do to deserve this?

Enter any department store, restaurant, airport, car dealership or office and your “host” will act with complete deference. It’s as if they have completely given themselves over to you, the embodiment of being ‘at your service’.

How did it get to be like this? How did it stay like this? In an advancing business world, often obsessed with economies of scale, with technological thinking often moving service to the automatic – how is Japan keeping hold of tradition?

Some companies look back as well as forward. They look to Japan’s ancient philosophy of *omotenashi* – the ‘selfless desire to take care of others’ – and find something that may explain just how they can create a relationship between service giver and ‘guest’ that is completely non-dominant. Muneyuki Joraku, an *omotenashi* researcher who works for the Mandarin Oriental says that “the host anticipates the

needs of the guest in advance and offers a service that guests don’t expect. They should not wait for instructions.”

When Toyota decided to bring its Lexus brand back from the US and launch at ‘home’ in Japan in 2005, executives sought something special that they hoped would give staff an edge. In the US, things had been easy. “I had heard that in the USA, Car Dealerships were said to be the least desirable place to go, behind dentists,” says Toyoshita Abe, Area Brand Manager of Lexus Japan Sales & Marketing, “I think that’s due to their terrible service.”



Toyohisa Abe

Frustrated, though, with what it saw as a lack of ability to distinguish itself in a Japanese market crowded with companies doing things right for the customers, Abe’s colleagues looked to *omotenashi*.

While even high street stores and other car companies would be seen by many as doing just fine – better than fine for many Westerners - the plan was to learn from the hospitality of the best luxury restaurants, the best manner schools, the best hotels, the best department stores and even those who deal with royalty and the Imperial family.

The discipline required to serve in such places, to serve such people, is in a different league.

All of the company’s managers took part in an overnight course at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Osaka, which had been ranked number one for customer satisfaction in the prestigious Nikkei Business Survey for six consecutive years.

*“The host anticipates the needs of the guest in advance and offers a service that guests don’t expect”*

They learned and practiced the intricacies of the Japanese tea ceremony. They received classes from the likes of Ogasawara Ryu Reihou, a 600 year old school of etiquette which specialises in “beautifying daily behaviour,” using teachings passed through the family with little change since the 1300s.

Among the new Lexus rules of etiquette – as well as serving tea (and coffee) in the most traditional way possible - is the so called “warriors waiting position”. This, the act of leaning between five and ten degrees forward when a customer is looking at a car, is not the only Samurai inspired detail. Apparently, a salesman will point with five fingers to the handle of a car before opening it, with both hands, right before left, sliding the handle gracefully in the way a screen door would have been opened in the 13th century. Even the closed mouth smile, known in some marketing circles as the “Lexus face”, is part of the regimented routine of what a 2007 Wall Street Journal piece called ‘The Samurai Sell’.

*Omotenashi* is here to stay, so hopefully we can all look on those serving us with a new found respect, having somewhat demystified quite the level of training they have gone through to hone their craft.





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# Here Comes the Summer

by Annamarie Sasagawa and Vivian Morelli

**R**ainy season is coming to an end, which means heat, humidity and stifling city air. Somehow, summer in Japan should not have to mean locking yourself in with the air-con blasting. Our city has lots to offer, in the summer especially, and it's possible to escape the mugginess and survive the summer without going too far.

## Sand in your hair:

At some of the beaches around Tokyo, you won't even be able to put your towel down but, there is always a party to be had. If having perhaps one too many drinks alongside half of Shibuya in the scorching sun is for you, you have options. Just watch where you step, those lifeguards police the beach with an iron fist - and a pretty noisy Tannoy!



**Hayama Isshiki** is the Emperor's beach of choice; he even has a winter holiday home there. It's popular for windsurfing and kayaking and you can often catch live music on the waterfront. To get there: Take the JR Shonan-Shinjuku Line to Zushi and change on to a Keikyū Bus.

**Onjuku** boasts some of the whitest of sand in the area and could just be the best option in Chiba prefecture. Rent a bike and ride through town but make sure you stop to try the town's specialties, spiny lobster and abalone. Also, check out the fully kitted out 'surfers', bobbing around in the 'swell'... To get there: Take the JR Sobu Line to Chiba and Change to JR Sotobo Line to Onjuku Station.

**Zushi** may sometimes seem like it brings together the entire youth culture of Shibuya 109 on a beach - and this one is more for partying than relaxation by the sea. To get there: Take the JR Shonan-Shinjuku Line to Zushi.



'**Sarushima**' literally means Monkey Island. Although there are no monkeys in sight (the

name, apparently, stems from the story of a local priest, led to the island by a white monkey), the sand is grey and grainy, perfect for sandcastles. Rent a barbecue and make sure to try the local brew, Sarushima Beer; or even climb up to the old WWII artillery positions for a great view of the bay. To get there: Keihin Kyūko Line to Yokosuka, then ferry to Sarushima.

## Cool kids:

If you're spending time with little ones this summer and don't fancy going near the sea, pay a visit to one of Tokyo's water parks - but beware: these places get seriously crowded!

Many public parks across the city open their *jyabu-jyabu* ponds (kids' splash and paddling pools) every summer.

Rishi-no-Mori park, in Meguro Ward, a former research forest turned public park, opens its splash pond in July and August from 10am to 3pm. Showa Kinen Park in Tachikawa also has a large water play plaza as well as a barbecue area, rental bikes, a bird sanctuary and a nature walk.

## Get your kit on:

Enjoying summer is not all about where you go; think about what you wear too and you will enjoy the season in style. Stay cool with lightweight fabrics such as linen and natural blends like cotton and pure silk, whilst keeping up with the style trends from the runways for summer 2012:

For women, summer attire is very feminine this year - think florals, candy pastel hues, sheer and lace - as opposed to last summer's boyish looks. Head-to-



toe prints are all over the runways and hopefully out on the streets; the keyword to keep in mind is overlay. Leather over lace, lace over sequins, plastic over everything. The twenties are also experiencing a revival, with palettes of white, gold and metallics. Neon nails, mint accents, sun-kissed glow, rose lips and braided hair are 2012 musts.

## From the cool box:

The borderline toxic combination of highly concentrated syrup and shaved ice, *kakigori*, will always be a favourite of some, but why not try a tapioca tea this summer? Hailing from Taiwan, it is popping up all over Tokyo. It's often dubbed 'pearl tea' due to the tapioca balls your jumbo straw will encounter at the bottom of the drink; try a classic milk tea with coloured tapioca for true effect but even this could be an 'acquired taste' - or indeed texture...

A few centuries ago, an enterprising eel restaurant owner in Tokyo began touting the energizing effects of eating the slithery creatures in summer. Soon enough, he had managed to establish the tradition of eating eel on a certain day every year.



That day, *douyou ushi no hi*, falls this year on July 27th. It may simply have been a marketing masterstroke but there could actually be something in the tradition: eel is rich in vitamin B1, easily lost through sweating.

Maybe grab some *somen* wheat noodles served with a cold dipping sauce - another food traditionally thought to be cooling. Wash it down with a glass of *hiyashi ame*, a summer drink made with iced black tea, sugar and ginger.

Enjoy the heat, embrace the summer and keep your spirits up. Look around you - Tokyo is resplendent in this season and there are so many exciting things to do. Don't just wish away the season, get out there!





# ALL YOU NEED IS KARUIZAWA



## How to get there:

### By Train

65-80mins by Nagano Shinkansen from Tokyo Station

### By Car

2-3 hour drive from Tokyo on the Jo-shin-etsu Highway

By Matthew Hernon

**I**t was Karuizawa's cool climate that first attracted Alexander Croft Shaw to the town back in 1888. Located roughly 1,000 metres above sea level, on the plateau of Mt. Asama, the British born, Canadian missionary discovered a place of natural beauty that was significantly cooler than Japan's capital. He spread the word to his fellow missionaries as well as other prominent foreigners and Karuizawa soon became well known as the ideal spot to get away from the heat and humidity of Tokyo - and that is still true today. Take a break and enjoy the crisp air and gorgeous green surroundings of this picturesque mountain resort.

### For the Outdoor Type:

Just a little over an hour away from Tokyo on the bullet train, Karuizawa is an idyllic setting to stroll or cycle around while taking in the sights. The temperature (averaging around 25 degrees Celsius in the summer) makes it possible to do both without getting too tired or sweaty!

One of the highlights of our trip was a hike through the woods. With many different kinds of birds chirping away, giant trees overhead and carpet of lush moss, it was a very pleasant walk. A recommended trail is from Mine-no-chaya (mountaintop tea house) to Mikasa, which

is around 10km. It is a 22 minute bus ride from Naka-Karuizawa station to Mine-no-chaya and from there the trail leads downhill through the forest towards Shiraito Falls (approx 70mins).

The name shiraito means 'white strings'; and with the water flowing like threads of white silk over the rock face, you can see why. Three metres tall, the falls are spread over a 70 metre wide arch; it really is a stunning view. If you can't face the hike, a bus takes roughly 30 minutes from Karuizawa station.

Continuing the descent along the river, our next stop was at the Ryugaeshi falls, about 90 minutes walk away. While the water drops delicately at Shiraito, here it gushes out a quite pace. They are two hugely contrasting views, both spectacular.

Just 10-15 minutes away from Ryugaeshi falls, you can stop off and recharge your batteries with a bath at the therapeutic Kose Onsen before walking around 70 minutes onwards to the final destination, Old Mikasa Hotel. An elegant, western style wooden hotel that was built during the Meiji period by Japanese architects and carpenters, it became a popular place to stay for cultural figures and intellectuals alike. After ceasing operations in 1970, Mikasa opened up to the public as a museum in 1983 and it is currently one of Japan's designated important cultural assets.



*“Take a break and enjoy the crisp air and gorgeous green surroundings of this picturesque mountain resort”*

The hike should take around four hours but, if you think that might be too much for you, the Usui Pass Yuranhodo trail is a lot gentler. It lasts around 90 minutes and arrives at a platform with fantastic views of Mt. Asama and down to Karuizawa. Or, you could rent a bicycle from one of the many shops in front of either Karuizawa or Naka-Karuizawa stations.

**For the Romantics:**

As well as being known for its natural beauty, Karuizawa is regarded as a romantic hot-spot in Japan, with some believing that there is a certain something powerful in the air. Princess Michiko became the first commoner to marry into the Imperial family, after meeting now Emperor Akihito at a tennis court in the town. John Lennon and Yoko Ono saw it as the perfect romantic retreat, visiting there every summer between 1976 and 1979. It is also the setting for Minae Mizumura’s novel, Honkaku Shosetsu, a much acclaimed retelling of Wuthering Heights.

Other places that may be of interest to couples are Sasayaki no Komichi, popularly known as ‘lovers’ path’ and Kofuku no Tani (Happy Valley). With so many lakes, rivers, trees and wildlife, the whole town has a romantic feel to it.

Kumoba pond, also known as ‘Swan Lake’ because of the birds that visit in winter, is a particularly popular place for lovebirds to visit. A serene environment where people can stroll around during any season, it is particularly beautiful in autumn, when the leaves change colour. It truly is an amazing sight, particularly when reflected in the the sparkling crystal surface of the water. Emperor Akihito is known to be a regular visitor to this particular spot.

**For the Sports Enthusiast:**

All that talk of romance doesn’t mean Karuizawa is solely a place for couples to enjoy the countryside. There are a variety of activities to keep all manner of people entertained throughout the year, particularly sports enthusiasts. The only town in the world to have hosted an event



at both the summer and winter Olympics – equestrian and curling, respectively - Karuizawa is known throughout Japan for its excellent sports facilities. There are a number of riding clubs, tennis courts and luscious green golf courses in the area. For when it gets colder, curling is an interesting option, while the ski slopes open between mid-October and early spring.

**For the Shopper:**

Before heading home after a nice relaxing trip, it is always a nice idea to get some souvenirs, an especially popular ‘pastime’ here in Japan. Karuizawa is famous for jam, as it has varieties that cannot be found elsewhere. The best place to look is at Kyu-Karuizawa Ginza Shopping Street, which has a large number of homemade jam stores as well as craft shops, boutiques, cafes and bakeries. It is a charming, old fashioned shopping area where the produce is, on the whole, locally made.

Karuizawa Prince Shopping Plaza is the complete opposite. It is a huge mall, boasting around 200 stores, including many luxury foreign brands like Burberry, Paul Smith and Gucci. Fashion is the main draw bringing customers to the Plaza, but there is also an Imax cinema, a bowling alley and a wide selection of restaurants. The area around Karuizawa station can get pretty crowded in the summer so for a more relaxing atmosphere, Harunire

Terrace is a good option. Just a short distance from the Hoshinoya Resort (featured on p.29), you can do a little shopping and eat lunch surrounded by spring elms, while listening to the soothing sound of the river below.

**Best of the Rest:**

Karuizawa is known as the ‘City of Churches’ in Japan. The influence that Priest Alexander Croft Shaw had on the Town is easy to see. Lying deep in the woods, his statue stands at the front of the Shaw Memorial Chapel, which is the oldest church in the area. Also, nearby is St. Paul’s Catholic Church, a distinctive structure - designed by American architect Antonin Raymond - that is often described as the symbol of Karuizawa.

Other highlights of the town include Yacho no Mori, a wild bird sanctuary where you can see over 80 species of birds and Lake Shiozawa, an ideal spot for boating in the summer and skating in the winter. There is a wide selection of museums and hot springs, so you should never get bored; for anyone looking to take a short break away from Tokyo but not looking to venture too far, Karuizawa might just be the ideal location.



**TRAVELLING IN STYLE WITH BMW**

Weekender’s trip to Karuizawa was powered by the new BMW 6 Series. Our writer drove a courtesy BMW from Tokyo to Nagano prefecture. Here in Japan, this new 640i Gran Coupe is available now with the 650i Gran Coupe following in October.



# MAMPEI HOTEL

History amongst the Hills

**O**ne of the most iconic buildings in Karuizawa, Mampei hotel is a comfortable place at which to stay, with friendly staff and a delicious selection of food. Visitors will find, though, that this is so much more than simply a hotel. You only have to look at the building to see that it is a place of historical importance and you can really feel that when you enter through the wooden arch and into the main building.

Opened in 1894, but with origins said to go back as far as 1764, Mampei was one of Japan's first Western style hotels and it quickly earned a reputation as the best. Here was a place where guests could relax in the knowledge that they would be treated like royalty. The hotel has attracted many prominent visitors, both from Japan and abroad. Celebrities and luminaries from the political world have long favoured Mampei for its traditional style and reputation, visiting all-year round.



*“We will always go that extra yard for our guests and I think that is why we have the reputation we have”*

room, starting with a crab meat salad. Made with seasonal vegetables, it was a delightfully refreshing start to the meal. That was followed by a cold tomato soup, before we moved on to the fish. Rainbow trout was pan-fried in butter, flavored with soy sauce and served with hot, seasonal vegetables. Cooked to perfection, the succulent texture of the trout was of such high quality it felt like it was melting in my mouth. For the meat dish we went with Hokkaido beef, stewed in red wine, before finishing with a wonderfully light but sharp sherbet for dessert.

After lunch it was time to take a look at some of the room options that Mampei Hotel provides. There are four types to choose from, all varying in size and style. The Alps-twin rooms, with beautiful freestanding clawfoot bathtubs, tend to be the most popular with guests as they have a truly classical look. The Usui-twin rooms, meanwhile, have a more modern feel yet still manage to look rather ‘retro’. Prices for both range between 17,000 and 30,000 yen per person per night. The more simple Atago-twin rooms offer a slightly cheaper alternative, while the Bekkan rooms were designed for groups and families searching for something which will please the whole crowd.

It is advisable to book as soon as you can, especially if you are planning to go in the summer. Many guests return year in year out, reserving their room a year in advance, with regulars giving the place a feel of real familiarity. According to Grand Managing Director, Toshihiko Yamada, it is the excellent level of service that keeps them coming back. “Basically we never say we can’t do it here. Sometimes we get a difficult request from a customer, but we see that as a good challenge. We will always go that extra yard for our guests and I think that is why we have the reputation we have.”

**Mampei Hotel Karuizawa**

**Web:** [www.mampei.co.jp](http://www.mampei.co.jp)

**Address:** 925 Karuizawa, Nagano, 389-0102

**Tel:** 0267-42-1234 | **Fax:** 0267-42-7766

The most famous visitor was undoubtedly John Lennon, who stayed with his wife Yoko Ono and son Sean every summer between 1976 and 1979. Proud reminders of his time can be seen throughout the hotel: his image adorns a poster hanging in the Cafe Terrace, where he is said to have sat every morning, drinking a Royal Milk Tea. There is also a signed family photograph next to room 128, in which he stayed, and the piano that he played during his visit – though, unfortunately, the keys are now out of tune. Lennon and Ono rode a tandem through the streets of the town and, after an iconic image of them doing so spread through the media, so did the trend with other visitors. It’s easy to spot them on the streets, or even parked up next to the hotel itself.

Other famous guests and historical moments that have taken place at the hotel are displayed in the gallery, including a shot of former Japanese Prime Minister, Kakuei Tanaka and the then US Presidential Assistant, Henry Kissinger, who had a meeting in the Sakura room. It is definitely worth having look here during your stay.

Along with the gallery, there is a pleasant garden in which to stroll - or while away the afternoon - a cocktail bar where the staff make original drinks and four restaurants, including the main dining room, a Chinese and two Japanese eateries. After hiking, playing sports or sightseeing in the town, there seems no better place to retire. Mampei’s restaurants and bar feel at one with the peaceful atmosphere of Karuizawa.

Weekender enjoyed a delicious lunch in the exquisitely decorated main dining



Chef Noriyuki Hamada



# BLESTON COURT

Serving up art on a plate

**H**aving only opened in March 2011 Bleston Court Karuizawa has already earned a reputation as one of the top fine-dining establishments in the country. Fusing French cuisine philosophies and a classical approach with local Nagano produce and Japanese traditions, hidden away in a charming, forested setting, it should have Michelin inspectors in the reservation book some day soon.

The focus is on seasonal food. Nagano has many rivers and forests rich with fresh ingredients that Executive Chef Noriyuki Hamada taps to create his dishes.

The creativity that has gone into the preparation, and plating, is clear from the moment our dishes come out of the kitchen. Hamada is the youngest winner of the Bocuse d'OR Japan and, along with the exquisite service we received – surrounded by elegant décor - this was a dining experience that we will never forget.

Having been driven to Belston Court by a member of staff at Hoshinoya (the Spa resort and the restaurant are under the same management), on arrival we were courteously escorted to our table and presented with a towel and a small flower. The small details all seemed right so far. Sommelier and Head Waiter, Hirofumi Kikuchi, then explained the provenance of our dishes and just how they would be prepared; and after bread and champagne, our appetizers arrived. Six tiny round dishes, imitating a full-course meal. We were told to eat them from left to right – all in the design it seems – and the miniature cabbage soup was a stop and think moment, it had a texture that melted into the background as the fresh flavours came through and acted to intrigue as to what could possibly come next.

Following the starters it was time for the Potage du Jour and then pan-fried *ayu*, a sweet fish that was nicely complemented by a cucumber and green pepper sauce.

Our entree, seasonal vegetables from Karuizawa Farm, needed nothing but a simple vinaigrette accent to show off their flavours. For the meat dish there were three options, Nagano style 'shinshu chicken', an assortment of roasted pork cuts and charcoal grilled wagyu beef. We opted for the chicken and were not disappointed. Served with a sake sauce and seasonal vegetables, this truly local delicacy was the highlight of the meal.

There was just about enough room for the cherry jubilee dessert, with a rich, fruity sauce cooked and poured, in a final act of theatre, at the table. That wasn't the end of it though, a huge platter of petit fours suddenly appeared, with a choice of tea or coffee. So intricate was the detail, it almost felt a shame to eat them; we did manage to get through some, though, before the waiter offered to wrap them as souvenirs.

This kind of service came as no surprise as we had experienced it all night. From the moment we walked in to the moment we left, all the staff at Bleston Court Yukawatan were extremely affable and attentive. Treated like royalty while being served food fit for kings, I just hope we have chance to go back.

**Bleston Court Yukawatan**

**Address:** Hoshino, Karuizawa-machi, Nagano 389-0194

**Tel:** 050-3786-0066

**Website:** [www.hoshinoya.com](http://www.hoshinoya.com)

## NAKA KARUIZAWA COUNTRY CLUB

An 18-hole course with breathtaking views of Mt. Asama from every hole, Naka Karuizawa Country Club is both visually stunning and enjoyable to play for golfers of all levels.

A short drive from Naka Karuizawa station, the par 72 course measures 6,785 yards. There are a variety of services available, including electric golf buggy hire, a golf shop, a bar, an outdoor deck and a restaurant with a delicious selection of Japanese dishes.

If one round isn't enough for you, it might be worth staying the night at the club's comfortable hotel. Prices range between 7,500 and 14,000 yen per night, depending on the day and season. Course prices, depending on time and season, range between 7,300 and 29,800 yen without a buggy, and 10,450 and 32,950 yen with.

**Address:** 1166 Nagakura, Karuizawa-machi, Kitasaku-gun, 389-0111

**Web:** [www.nakakaru-cc.com](http://www.nakakaru-cc.com)

**Tel:** 02-6746-5511



## Karuizawa Beef Stew

With boiled rice and pickled vegetables

Karuizawa Beef Stew has been famed for its tender meat and chunky vegetables since the Meiji period. Popular with West erners and local gourmets for its strong flavour and refreshing aftertaste, it is the talk of Karuizawa.



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## READER SURVEY WINNER!

Congratulations to Mr. Paul Dolan and his wife, Makiko, the winners of our Reader Survey prize draw. The couple have won return tickets to Vietnam courtesy of Vietnam Airlines, where they will stay at the New World Saigon Hotel. The prize was presented to Paul and Makiko by Mr. Hung of Vietnam Airlines in June.

Keep your eyes on [www.tokyoweekender.com](http://www.tokyoweekender.com) and take the survey, more prizes will follow and we would love to hear your feedback.



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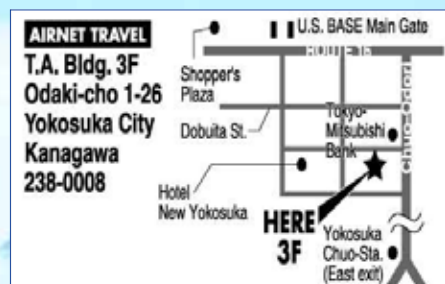


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# IS AN MBA STILL RELEVANT?

Dr. Kenneth Grossberg, Director of the Waseda Marketing Forum and Professor of Marketing, on the State of MBA Education Today

*Written by Dr. Kenneth Grossberg*

**T**he title of this piece, a question asked to me recently, implies that MBA education may somehow have lost its justification as a training ground for future business leaders. So first let me answer the question with a resounding (though qualified) YES. MBA education is still very relevant to what young people aiming for a business career (or even those who work for not-for-profits) need to know in order to be successful future leaders in their respective fields. Having said that, the best kind of an MBA education is the one that prepares you for the unexpected. Alvin Toffler, the futurist author of *Future Shock* and *The Third Wave*, put it this way: “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

In fact, those now going for their MBA are probably the third consecutive generation in world history who have been educated for an unknown future from childhood on. So they are very conscious of the fact that nobody has a crystal ball to tell them what life will be like twenty or thirty years from now. If nobody is sure what jobs or industries will still be fashionable and “hot” by 2030 then what should they be learning now to make their MBA degree relevant? First of all, they should be taught to ask questions rather than to look for easy answers. This is what Toffler meant by relearning, because it involves the willingness to question authority. Even in the best organizations there is a tendency for conventional wisdom to gel quickly and overstay its welcome. MBAs are warned about headquarters mentality, parochialism and ethnocentricity as the enemies of success in the global marketplace, but after they get their degree they must apply in the real world all of those lessons learned in the classroom. It’s easier said than done, which is why the superior MBA education stresses a flexible approach to problem-solving.



Another aspect of flexibility is cultural openness. MBA students who study outside of their home countries have an advantage over those who are strictly domestic in their education because they are more conscious of how cultural differences must be taken into account for a business strategy to work. The fact that many of these overseas MBA students are required to take courses in a language (usually English) that is not their native tongue is also useful in helping them sharpen the tools which will allow them to function effectively no matter where on the globe they are put. Bilingual and trilingual job candidates have become more sought after than ever before as multinationals exert efforts to break down the barriers between their different national "silo" subsidiaries in favour of cross-fertilization across the global organization. They are still not where they should be in terms of cross-border synergies that leverage capabilities everywhere, but the international MBA is a critical element in this strategic effort.

The grounding that empowers these MBA graduates includes learning about success and failure everywhere. Foreign companies that have failed in Japan and Japanese companies that have failed abroad, for example, give them equally useful case studies to teach them how not to fall into the same traps when their turn arrives to conquer new and unfamiliar markets.

The least relevant type of MBA education is the sort that prides itself on emulating a military boot camp, where enormous emphasis is put on a heavy workload and simulating a stressful environment instead of on instilling the ability to examine the business environment and derive insights from processing the data mentally. There are always times when one must work hard, but I much prefer the type of MBA education that stresses working smart, observing one's surroundings carefully and not being afraid to take risks or to choose an unconventional solution to a marketing or strategic challenge.


All organizations have bureaucracies, yet the relevant MBA education teaches how to thrive in spite of them and to overcome that.

One problem of all MBA programs is the fact that they define "relevant" by what is current or contemporary, whereas a truly relevant business education should also teach students how things used to be, since there are good lessons to be learned from the achievements and failures of the 20th century, a period I call the electro-mechanical age. By studying the development of the automobile industry or the department store boom or the rise of the Hollywood studio system in the early part of the last century, students get a better sense that the type of explosive growth which they think is unique to the past twenty years has happened before. Ironically, the pressure for MBA programs to stay relevant by constantly updating case studies and focusing on the flavour of the month, be it Google, Facebook, Groupon, or Apple, gives students the wrong impression about what is important in business and in strategy. If, on the other hand, students are taught that the rise of a company such as Sears, Roebuck & Co. more than 100 years ago was just as revolutionary in its time, they then have a better perspective on what exactly makes for a successful business.

If MBA programs do not adapt their curricula to give students this historical perspective, we are more likely to see these students end up repeating those famous 20th century failures in the fast-changing digital age we now live in. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.



*Dr. Grossberg is a professor at Waseda University and founder and director of the Waseda Marketing Forum. He specializes in global marketing innovation; transformational marketing; marketing strategies in the Asia-Pacific region; competitive strategy, disruptive innovation, customer service strategy & CRM*



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Founded in 1992 by President Yoshito Hori, GLOBIS is now the largest management educational institution in Japan, educating more than 7,000 students each year. Furthermore, GLOBIS' MBA program boasts over 414 students this year, making it once again the largest MBA School in the country.



President Yoshito Hori

*"With a personal mission, you will have a clear vision of what you want to achieve in your lifetime."*

The Graduate School of Management, GLOBIS University was established in 2006 and in 2009, a part-time International MBA program, taught entirely in English, was launched. A new one-year, full-time MBA will be launched in September, a program which has already attracted many globally-minded business professionals from all over the world.

Why have so many business professionals chosen GLOBIS over other business schools in Japan? The entrepreneurial spirit found in the school, the highly practical curriculum and the professional business

leaders teaching at GLOBIS are certainly factors that stand out. However, GLOBIS' focus on developing the "Personal Mission" of its students is truly exceptional for a business school.

According to President Yoshito Hori, "GLOBIS helps students find their personal mission in life and developing the skills and capacity to achieve it. A typical student in any MBA institute can gain the soft and hard skills of business necessary to succeed as a manager, and access a large network of classmates, faculty and alumni.

I believe, however, that the key to make optimal use of both the skills you will gain during your studies and the vast network of people you will meet, is having a personal mission in life.

With a personal mission, you will have a clear vision of what you want to achieve in your lifetime. And by knowing what you want, you will know exactly what you need. The focus on developing your personal mission during your studies, will be the key success factor for both a successful life and career."

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Winners, Team 1, who worked for project client, Brian Norton. (from left) Mitsuhiro Honda (GM, Corporate Comms, HP), Andrew Silberman (President, AMT Group), Karen Mattison, Stephen Parker, Jason Danielson, Masaki Sato, Kei Miyake, Hiromasa Yasuo

# JMEC AWARDS SUCCESS

## Creating Future Business Leaders in the Heart of Tokyo

**F**riendly but ruthless,” jokes Jason Danielson, a 2012 winner, about the rivalries between the teams that made up the Japan Marketing Expansion Competition.

JMEC comprises eight teams, made up of participants from 12 countries and a range of business or educational backgrounds who, Program Director Pierre Couret explains, “cooperate in small teams to analyze market opportunities for JMEC project clients.” The teams receive a brief from a real company and work, in real time, to provide a solution to the problems outlined therein. They then, Couret continues, “develop realistic business plans to crack the Japanese market.” The best plan is judged – after a process of presentations and deliberation, all of the work undertaken under strict confidentiality agreements – and winners are awarded prizes, including HP computers, return flights to the UK from British Airways and a stay in any luxurious resort belonging to SLH worldwide.

Past clients include Bang & Olufsen, Electrolux, Lloyds Bank, Sumitomo 3M, the Financial Times and Heineken, all of which had some desire to revitalize, enter new

market segments, enter Japan or perhaps revise distribution networks. Real business decisions needed to be made, and these companies called JMEC.

On June 8th, at the Tokyo American Club, around two hundred guests – including leaders of a number of foreign chambers of commerce and embassies in Japan, who take JMEC very seriously – came together to witness the award ceremony which was the culmination of half a year’s hard work and, of course, do a little networking.

Now in its 18th year, JMEC’s aim is to identify, train, mentor and challenge the “next generation of innovative business leaders,” and give them the skills to provide business plans worth using, for a fraction of the cost of those from outside consultants.

From November to January, participants go to lectures and workshops, using Temple University Japan facilities – most of them alongside their Monday to Friday jobs, with some even sent by employers hoping the experience would mould young employees into future managers. Then, between January and April the teams work independently to come up with a plan.

*“Now in its 18th year, JMEC’s aim is to identify, train, mentor and challenge the next generation of innovative business leaders”*

Originally founded in 1993 by the Australian and New Zealand chamber of Commerce, JMEC is a non-profit training program which, up until 2012, has produced 892 graduates from 54 countries. Its participants have written 167 business plans.

JMEC 18 winners, Team 1, were praised by their Project Client for the way they approached his dilemma, after an “agonizing” five years searching for answers. Brian Norton said “I read the plan and was very impressed with the way the team laid out the contrast between the potential for failure and the potential for success ... Now I have some objective analysis and extensive information to move towards some decisions.”

Working on a “real life plan for a real business is unique,” says JMEC lecturer and former mentor Dermot Killoran. “it’s not an academic case study like submitting a paper to your college professor.”

Killoran says, “JMEC plans can have real impact for businesses. That impact can result in large investments being made, new staff being hired, new businesses entering the market and in some cases restructuring and refocusing of existing business operations.”

It is not only the participants who benefit, Killoran adds, “The project clients see real value in the plans they receive from the JMEC teams. For the participants on the teams there is nothing like the kind of practical experience they get from participating in JMEC. They pick up a lot of technical knowledge and very importantly the self-confidence in their own skills and abilities.”

Project client Georg Löer, from NRW Invest, says he is drawn to JMEC not only for the chance to network but for the opportunity to “give something back. It’s like a mission.” Löer, who has spent 23 years in Japan, adds



**Second prize winners**, Team Mokuzai, representing UPM-Kymmene Japan KK. (from left) ... Hironobu Tsuji, Mika Matsunaga, Yu Udagawa, James Wadsworth and Christophe Simon.



**Third prize winners**, Team 6th Sense, whose project client was SIX Financial Information Japan Ltd. (from left) Yasushi Otomo, Ikuo Nakazawa, Maesu Matsushita, Michael Pelini and Kazuo Takeuchi

Job prospects may increase, too. "A lot of people," adds Danielson, speaking two weeks after the JMEC awards, "have taken their experience and made a more aggressive approach. It definitely impacts people's thinking about what they want to get out of their careers."

Danielson's career took a turn when he switched jobs during, not after, his JMEC experience and though he says it "wasn't directly involved, for me, JMEC definitely influenced skills that I have taken to my new role."

Now at Terra Sky, who are a software integration company which develops cloud services, Danielson tells me he gained not only research skills and introductions: "we are taking a product suite to the US market – in one sense exactly the same as the localization project we were doing in the project, only vice-versa."

Josh Temperman, a JMEC 17 participant, now an associate consultant at Icon Partners in Tokyo, told me that he got his job, essentially, through what he calls "an audience with CEOs" during the research stage of his project. And, at this stage in his career, he wondered, "how many times do you get that?"

that "it gives me a chance to bring younger people into a new circle of friends."

Having commissioned projects three years in a row, through JMEC 13, 14 and 15, Löer speaks positively about his experiences. In all three cases, including work with a client seeking to introduce a German lifestyle and advertising product to the Japanese market, Löer says, "we benefitted greatly from the work of the JMEC team, its ideas, its analytical skills, and its dedication to the projects. Each project and the results presented were different but each JMEC

team was special and delivered very good quality business plans."

Throughout the awards night, it seems that most people I talk with are positive about the networking aspect of JMEC. Was it fair to assume this was a major draw for participants? Team 1 member, Jason Danielson, thinks so. "Yes, I think that is fair. It's a major plus point of JMEC. The most valuable thing, personally, was making good friends and being able to make introductions to many people in business in Tokyo."

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# FIGHTING FAT

*Changing lives for the better at  
Yotsuya Medical Cube*





*“Don’t be afraid to believe that you deserve something better than what you have.”*

**O**nly a month ago, when James Rader was shopping at the military base, he sensed that a man, in his mid-20s, was staring at him. “The kid just kept staring and staring at me.”

James didn’t know the young man at all. “I turned to him and said out loud - do I know you?”

The young man was startled for a moment and then said in a quiet, puzzled way, “...Mr. Rader?”

Mrs. Leona Rader, who was also there, reminded James that he had met the young man, who was at the time 17 years old, ten years ago, when James had weighed 150 kg. James has lost 60 kg in last one and half years, after having gastric bypass surgery, and now weighs less than 90 kg, the dramatic change making him barely recognizable.

“The boy recognized me,” Rader says, “but he was not sure if I was James Rader himself.”

The couple was born and raised in the Midwest state of Illinois but met in Denver, Colorado. James worked for the US Air Force for more than 20 years and his very first experience in Japan was back in 1969, during the Vietnam War, when he was assigned to the Higashi Fuchu base.

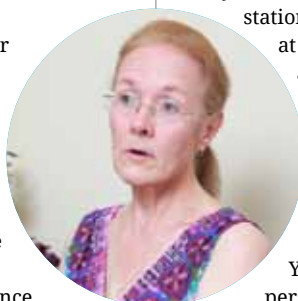
When James was in active military service, Leona always followed him to wherever he was assigned. After his retirement, though, it was going to be the other way around, with James following wherever Leona’s job, as a US civilian employee, took them. Just two weeks before they were to come

to Japan, she underwent gastric banding surgery in the US.

“Yes, it was a very big decision,” Leona remembers, “I enrolled in a Medical Weight Management program in the state of New Jersey. I did some research. I consulted with doctors, people who had experienced the surgery, searched the internet ... I worked nearly one year to just make a decision. It is a serious, life altering decision so I talked to my family about it and prayed about it.” Finally, she went ahead, “my surgery was done in the state of New Jersey and, at that point, I was supposed to be in Japan within two weeks time so I searched the net again and found Dr. Kasama and the Yotsuya Medical Cube for my aftercare.”



When Leona visited Yotsuya Medical Cube with James, he could not walk even the very short distance between Yotsuya train station and the clinic, having to rest at coffee shops in between. “It’s all related to my weight,” James says, “I could not keep up with my wife.”



“My aftercare was more than perfect,” Leona remembers, “the staff at Yotsuya Medical Cube are so personable. If I have questions, they will give me answers. If I have any concerns, they will advise me, earnestly. I have been in good hands at Yotsuya Medical Cube. They are attentive, gentle and very careful. So, I recommended to James that he consult with Dr. Kasama, but it took another year for him to go.”

“I was purely afraid,” James says. “But I was unhealthy, obviously. I had severe

sleep apnea - it’s a major illness. My two knees were replaced in 2008, all because of my weight. I was 150 kg. I was morbidly obese.”

Retiring from the US Air Force in 1989, he says “I would gain weight to 100 kg, 125 kg, and 150 kg. Then, I’d diet, exercise, I’d lose a bit but go back again. It’s like a yo-yo. It’s worse to gain and loose.”

Standard dieting is said to have only a 2% long-term success rate. Ninety-eight percent fail and return to a dangerous weight range. Morbid obesity is the fifth leading cause of death worldwide.

“I kept fooling myself. In my mind, I pretended that it was OK to be like that,” James continues. When Leona first encouraged him to consider surgery he said that he, “read so many testimonials from people but, the one that stood out was the one that said, ‘I wish I had done it sooner.’ Those words pushed me over the edge. When I read that I said to myself: ‘Don’t I deserve better?’”

Finally, after consulting with Dr. Kasama, James decided to choose a different course of action than Gastric Banding, which Leona had taken.

“Banding is one of the options,” Dr. Kasama added, “and it was right for Leona when she had it done in the US. However, as James was afraid of needles, which are an essential part of the aftercare in gastric banding, the better option for him was Gastric Bypass Surgery. It started in 1950s and the majority of surgery is still bypass.”

In December 2010, James finally obtained a smaller stomach. The one day operation was a success, was well explained in advance, and was recorded onto a DVD, which was given to Mr. Rader.

“I haven’t seen the DVD yet,” James says, “but I am happy to have a different life. I can walk, work and travel. I am currently working as a substitute teacher and am active in the community. Now my CT scans show my ribs and organs. My fat used to block those. It has been 540 days since I had the surgery and there has been no single day I have regretted my decision.”

When asked if he had a message to pass on, James expressed encouragingly, “don’t be afraid to believe that you deserve something better than what you have.”



In January 2012, Yotsuya Medical Cube was certified as an International Center of Excellence (ICE) for Bariatric Surgery by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC) in the US. This recognition was given to the facility and its physicians for providing safe and high quality care to patients, and also ensures higher possibility of medical coverage for bariatric care, by certain major health insurance companies.

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# PEOPLE, PARTIES, PLACES

TOKYO'S LONGEST RUNNING SOCIETY PAGE, WITH **BILL HERSEY**

**I** drive through Roppongi a lot and almost every day I'm surprised by the many changes happening in and around what I think of as the area of Tokyo with the hottest night life. Recently, we celebrated the 34th anniversary of a small funky club I've been affiliated with since it first opened. It started out as "The Lexington Queen" and the name was changed to the "New Lex Tokyo" four years ago. Anyway, thanks to good friends, from here and from all over the world, the club is still popular with the young Japanese and expat "in-crowd" and is a favorite amongst all kinds of celebs when they visit Tokyo. Katy Perry, Lady Gaga's dancers, the cast of the *In The Heights* musical, Marilyn Manson and Lenny Kravitz have all come along recently.

We're really lucky about our location, which is off the main drag, behind T.G.I. Friday's and beside the prestigious Seryna restaurant. The Nirvana dance club next to the New Lex Tokyo recently closed and has been replaced with yet another hostess bar. This is good for us as the many hostess bars in that area are mostly controlled by VIPs involved in the nightlife industry; they pretty much keep things under control. I have heard that like many businesses, hostess bars in many areas have hit a new low. This has happened before, though, and most seem resilient and tend to keep going until things get better.

Lots of relatively inexpensive new eateries are opening in and around Roppongi as well. When I'm not at a party, I usually eat

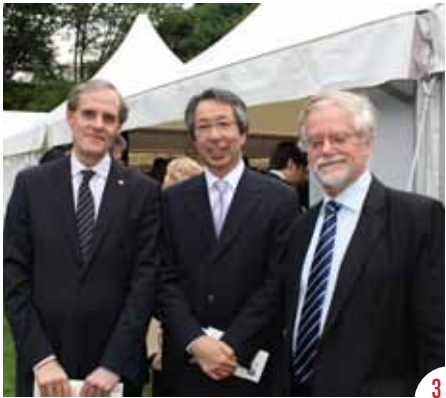
at one of the many small Japanese restaurants in Hatsudai or Tomigaya. Often I'm the only foreigner there and in addition to enjoying good wholesome food, I almost always make a few new friends. Before I move on, I'd like to suggest a couple of my favourite restaurants in Roppongi. First, there's the super popular Oakdoor, on the 6th floor of the Grand Hyatt. My favorite thing there is the soft shell crab sandwiches; everyone I have introduced to them has just loved them. They're not that expensive and, if you don't drink a lot, you can get a great meal for a couple of thousand yen. Also, it has a great atmosphere with good seating inside and out. For fast food, try R Burger, next to the Roppongi crossing police box. The soup, sandwiches and salad are all original, healthy and excellent. My favourite order is a sesame chicken burger with tofu chips. Anyway, enough on food it's time to move on to "old Edo's" super busy social scene.

## **Huge crowds at the Thai Festival at Yoyogi Park**

The annual Thai Food and Culture Festival at Yoyogi Park was colorful, fun and exciting. There was top Thai entertainment (with both traditional and pop music) and many restaurants serving Thai favorites at really reasonable prices. With all the Thai (and Japanese!) smiles, you could see that people there had two thoroughly enjoyable and memorable days.

I went early for the opening ceremony, which was Thai hospitality and it's best. My thanks to Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kazuyuki Hamada, for introducing me to former Japanese Prime





**The Warrens' special celebration for Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee and Birthday.**

1. Two more Westwood models with John V. Roos, the US ambassador, and his wife Susan 2. Kiyoko Fujii, the legendary Sadako Ogata, her husband Shijiro and hostess for the beautiful celebration, Pamela Warren 3. French ambassador, Christian Masset, director of protocol, Yoshitaka Akimoto and Norwegian ambassador Arne Walther 4. Kumiko Akimoto, Anita Walther and Helene Masset

**The Asian Pacific Ladies Friendship Society annual bazaar at the ANA Hotel**

5. Chairperson Maria Teresa Lopez, of the Philippines, with Princess Hitachi 6. Charo Ireton, Lynn Lai and showbiz personality Charito 7. Filipina entrepreneur Jen Mariano, the Lopez's daughter, Maita, and Jen's fiance, Enrique Olives 8. Manuel Lopez, the Philippine ambassador, popular politician Tenkoko Sonoda and Aumaporn Futrakul 9. Chinese attache, Zhang Junjie and his beautiful little friend 10. Aumaporn, the society's President, Haruko Komura and Yasuko Mori.



**Thai festival at Yoyogi Park; bigger and better than ever**

1. Thai ambassador Virasakdi Futrakul and his wife Aumaporn 2. Thai deputy minister of commerce Poom Sarapol, Kazuyuki Hamada, the Japanese vice-minister for foreign affairs, Kittirat Na Ranong, the Thai deputy prime minister and minister of finance, Yukio Hatoyama, the former Japanese prime minister, with his wife Miyuki and ambassador Futrakul 3. Belgian ambassador Luc Libaut his wife Karine

**Hotel Okura's 12th annual World Garden Extravaganza**

4. Landscaping professor, Nobuo Shirasuna, Princess Takamado and exhibitor, Olyvia Benter Ogotu, from Kenya 5. Mei Fang Stanzel with Anna and Olga Kamaidinova 6. Princess Takamado's mother, Fumiko Tottori, with exhibitor, wife of

the Finnish ambassador, Anna Gustafsson 7. Argentine ambassador, Raul Dejean, his wife Teresa, who was an exhibitor, their sons, Ignacio and John and Ignacio's girlfriend, Luz

**Kuwait National Day Celebration**

8. Albanian ambassador, Boujar Dida, Rwandan ambassador, Antoine Munyakazi-juri, vice-minister of foreign affairs, Kazuyuki Hamada, Zimbabwean ambassador, Stuart Harold Comberbach and successful businessman, Kimikazu Aida 9. Host couple, Kuwaiti ambassador, Abdul Rahman A R Al Otaibi, his wife, Jamilah, with Diet member, Toshiaki Koizumi and Moroccan ambassador, Dr. Samir Arrour 10. The al Otaibi boys, Jamal, Khalid and Mumood 11. Sisters Hissa and Hala al Otaibi with Lilo Maruyama

*“I really enjoyed watching the world celebrating the Diamond Jubilee with so many events for the much admired, truly remarkable Queen. God bless the great lady.”*

Minister, Yukio Hatayama, and several visiting Thai government officials. It was also nice meeting Belgian Ambassador, Luc Libaut, and his wife Karine for the first time. They were very busy a few weeks after we met, when the Prince Philippe and Princess Mathilde visited Japan.

The buffet, featuring my favourite, Thai sticky rice and mango, was delicious! The two day spectacular was absolutely packed with people - it's certainly the biggest and best of the many happenings in the park every year. The only downer for me was hearing that Thai ambassador, Virasakdi and his wife Aumaporn will be leaving Japan soon. We'll sure miss that super couple.

#### Wonderful World Garden Exhibit

A big *domo arigato* to Hotel Okura's Rajesh Paul for getting me back on the list for their annual world gardening fair. This was the 12th year for the always popular and truly extraordinary exhibition. The ten world gardens this year were from Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Finland, Germany, Fiji, Thailand, Kenya, Argentina, India and Hungary. The creativity, originality, time and effort each of the participants as well as artistic direction and help of Kobe University Professor, Nobuo Shirasuna (he's also a well known landscape designer), made all the gardens very special. It was relaxing and enjoyable to take half a day checking them all out.

Our sincerest congratulations to the Okura's President/G.M., Masahiro Kiyohara, the many Embassy wives who participated and the hotel staff on this truly special cultural event. At the same time, big congratulations go to the Okura, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

#### The British Embassy Jubilee Party

On June 6th we were happy to hear the weather forecast wasn't bad and, in fact, it turned out to be pretty good for British ambassador, Sir David Warren and his wife Pamela's big event. The occasion was held in celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's birthday and, importantly, her Diamond Jubilee, which marks the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

The entrance to the residence was very impressive, with a display of top notch British cars and a beautiful Triumph motorcycle. My favorite car was a black and white Bentley convertible - talk about style and class.

The residence was beautifully decorated with flowers and the buffet had been set up under white seats in the garden. I had some great fish and chips, cheese and Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

After a meaningful welcome speech by the ambassador, Embassy staff rolled out the red carpet for a fashion show. The much-anticipated event was the world premiere of the latest collection by legendary British designer, Vivienne Westwood. The designs and fabrics were outstanding. The models, who were mostly Russian, looked fantastic, their makeup was done by artists Vivienne had sent specially from London. Years ago, when she was visiting here, there was a party for her at the Lexington Queen. I remember how much fun she was and was so sorry she couldn't come to Tokyo for the Warrens' party.

I really enjoyed watching the world celebrating the Diamond Jubilee with so many events for the much admired, truly remarkable Queen. God bless the great lady.

#### Glittering Kuwait National Day Party

Kudos to Kuwait Ambassador, Abdul-Rahman al-Otobi, his wife, Jamilah, and their four children - not forgetting the Embassy staff - on the beautiful evening they hosted at the Imperial Hotel. The huge elevated field of cherry blossoms had a tall ice carving of the Kuwait Towers at one end and another of Tokyo's Skytree at the other. It was fantastic.

I had another work commitment so could only stay for a short time, which truly was a shame and I apologise for that. The huge reception hall was wall-to-wall with interesting people and the buffet looked a real feast. I did have time to check out a large traditional Arab style room where guests could sit on big pillows on the floor and enjoy dates, pastries, chocolates and Arabian coffee or tea. I'd love to have a relaxing room like that in my house!



SPONSORED CONTENT



Pia Vignaud, her Mother Nathalie Gorse and Pia's twin sons, Gaston and Edgar



Julie Matsui and former Tokyoite Ann Alkire, who now lives in San Francisco



Mynamar actor Win, Ceremony President Tsukasa Shiga and acting student Hide

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# FUJI ROCK 2012

## AGENDA: FESTIVAL SEASON HAS OFFICIALLY STARTED

Amongst the misty mountains of Nagano, just below the golf course and thawed out ski slopes of the Naeba resort, every July, something special happens.

Get yourself some boots, pack a tent in your bag, along with some mosquito repellent and a hat - Fuji Rock is here. If you've never been before, you're in for a treat, so put down your excuses - maybe even book time off work - and get ready.

Whatever the weather - it *will* rain, and you *will* get sunburn - the trip to Japan's number one summer music festival will

be worth it. As you leave behind the humid streets of Tokyo and set up your tent in the hills - or, for those with a mud phobia who want to actually get some *sleep* during the weekend, check in to a hotel - you could just be heading for the weekend of your life.

Radiohead, who play Sunday night after Jack White and Elvis Costello, stand out from a trio of straight-out-of-the-90s UK headline acts across the weekend, some having updated their sounds more than others. The Stone Roses reform for 2012 summer gigs, including their Friday



night turn here, with Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds (Saturday night) being the other Brits with unfinished business; Noel's brother Liam plays with Beady Eye on Friday, too, so things could get a little feisty back stage!

The Specials, Justice, At The Drive In, James Blake, Spiritualized and more will take you through on the main stages but do check out the other arenas.

A trip to Fuji Rock would not be complete without a ride on the 'Dragonbola', a cable-car which takes you over the mountains and through the next valley to a secluded stage in the sky. Save some energy for the nightlife; All Night Fuji and the Palace of Wonder, with DJs, surprise live performances, cabaret acts and general foolery in the early hours, will keep you going until the morning.

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. - late • **Tickets:** ¥42,800

**More info:** [www.fujirockfestival.com](http://www.fujirockfestival.com)

**Venue:** Naeba Ski Resort, Nagano

## AGENDA: THE WEEKENDER ROUNDUP OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JULY

JUL 7/8



### KRAFTWERK AT NO NUKES

True electronic music pioneers, Kraftwerk, join a multitude of local music legends, including Yellow Magic Orchestra, at this, the latest event arranged by the group who want to say "goodbye" to nuclear power for

good. Tokyo Electric Power Company and Yoshihiko Noda will not be welcome, but crowds will turn out in force as the organizers aim to move a step closer to ten million petition signatories.

**Time:** 10:30 - 21:00 • **Tickets:** ¥6,800 (¥13,000 for a 2-day ticket)

**More info:** [www.nonukes2012.jp/en/](http://www.nonukes2012.jp/en/)

**Venue:** Makuhari Messe, Chiba

JUL 6



### IBIZA X SHONAN

Bringing the beach to the city, with a hefty dose of music and fashion, this night even promises a bikini show with a Brazilian and Columbian connection. The real bonus, however, may come if you wear

blue - if you do come in the nights dress-code colour, and are judged to be the best dresser, KLM will fly you to Ibiza for some genuinely balaeric beachside beats. Not to be scoffed at.

**Time:** 23:00 - late • **Tickets:** ¥3,500

**More info:** [www.kenkuro.jp](http://www.kenkuro.jp)

**Venue:** XEX Nihonbashi

JUL 15



### COLOMBIAN DAY

A national day celebration from one of the most colourful countries in the world is guaranteed to be fun. The organizers promise concerts and dance shows with a carnival atmosphere -

hopefully the sun will shine and the party won't stop when the acts leave the stage. Roll up, let your hair down and enjoy the music. You might even pick up some new dance moves!

**Time:** 12:00 - 16:30 • **Tickets:** Free!

**More info:** [www.en.colombiaembassy.org](http://www.en.colombiaembassy.org)

**Venue:** Hibya Park, Tokyo

JUL 15



### TOKYO FASHION FUSE

Takkyu Ishino is the star DJ but he may not be the loudest thing at Fashion Fuse 6: Full Throttle. Sponsored by Ducati, the roaring bikes will compete with the music - and three fashion shows - for your attention. Miss

Universe Japan finalist Ayaka, along with celebrity model, Eri Tsukimoto, will help show off the hottest looks for summer 2012 in style; make no excuses, it's even the day before a public holiday.

**Time:** 21:00 - late • **Tickets:** ¥4,000

**More info:** [www.streetleveltokyo.com](http://www.streetleveltokyo.com)

**Venue:** Womb, Shibuya

JUL 6



### UNIT 8TH ANNIVERSARY

Long a favourite of many Tokyo gig- and club-goers, Unit goes from strength to strength. Legendary producer/collaborator/all-time techno hero Andrew Weatherall headlines Friday, the first of

two nights celebrating the club's anniversary. Tucked amongst the coolest streets in Tokyo but rarely pretentious, the weekend will have something to suit all of the crowds who keep coming back.

**Time:** 23:30 - late • **Tickets:** ¥3,500 adv (¥4,000 on the door)

**More info:** [www.tomiokoyamagallery.com](http://www.tomiokoyamagallery.com)

**Venue:** Unit/Unice, Daikanyama

JUL 27



### LONDON OLYMPICS!

How could we feature such British legends as Paul Smith and Cath Kidston without giving the London Games another plug? As if you needed reminding about the biggest sporting extravaganza of 2012.

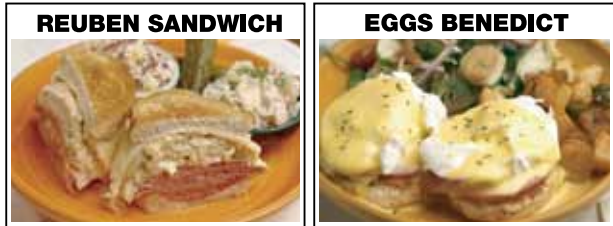
Hopefully the time difference won't cause too many weary eyes in the morning and you can enjoy the coverage on TV; good luck to all the Japanese medal hopes we have interviewed recently!

**Time:** Every waking hour?

**More info:** [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com)

**Venue:** Wonderful London!

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is its first fairy tale and the first film with a female protagonist. Set in a medieval-style Scotland, the story follows Merida, a feisty and headstrong young princess, skilled with a bow, who fights against her duty to marry the son of a Scottish lord and causes chaos in the kingdom. Seeking the help of an old witch, she is granted a wish, which inadvertently puts a curse on her family. The voice work is provided by a range of stars, Kelly MacDonald, of the TV series *Boardwalk Empire* (she also played schoolgirl, Diane, in *Trainspotting*), voices Merida, Billy Connolly and Emma Thompson star as the king and queen respectively and Robbie Coltrane and Julie Walters also have roles.

Also on release this month is **The Lady** (out July 21), a biopic covering the life of Nobel Peace Prize winner and political activist Aung San Suu Kyi. Somewhat timely given the pro-democracy leader's current tour of Europe, the film stars Michelle Yeoh in the title role. Aung San Suu Kyi is the daughter of Aung San, a legendary leader who fought for Burmese independence but who was assassinated when his daughter was just two years old. After moving to England, she falls in love with Oxford academic, Michael Aris, and the couple have two sons. It is on this relationship that the film focuses, with Aung San Suu Kyi's return to Burma to take up her father's position as leader and her subsequent imprisonment by the country's military regime providing a dramatic backdrop to the central love story. The film is directed by Luc Besson and is a fascinating portrait of an incredible woman.

One final film of interest, again timely with the sporting world focussing recently on football, with Euro 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, is **United** (out July 7). Set in the late 50s, this is the tale of Manchester United's 'Busby Babes', the youngest team ever to win the Football League and the Munich air disaster, a horrifying event in which the plane carrying the team crashed, claiming twenty-three lives. Eight of those killed were United players, the rest airline and tour company staff, crew and journalists. Starring Dougray Scott, as manager Matt Busby and the excellent David Tennant, as assistant manager Jimmy Murphy, this is a moving account of one of the worst disasters in English football history.

To watch HD trailers of the latest cinematic releases, visit: [www.tokyoweekender.com](http://www.tokyoweekender.com)

MOVIE PREVIEWS: COMING TO A CINEMA NEAR YOU IN JULY

## THIS MONTH'S NEW RELEASES



Written by Christopher O'Keefe

**T**his month sees what must be one of the biggest releases of the year, if not the decade, the final installment of Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy: **The Dark Knight Rises**. Along with the latest Pixar animation and a couple of smaller, though no less interesting films, this summer is going to be as hot in the cinema as it is on the streets of Tokyo.

Nestled between the release of Marvel comics' *The Amazing Spider-Man* last month and *The Avengers* in August comes **The Dark Knight Rises** (out July 28). It's been an agonizing four-year wait since *The Dark Knight* came to our screens and, with its intricate plot, vivid characters and a stunning performance by the late Heath Ledger, as *The Joker*, raised the bar on what we expect from a 'comic book' movie. The internet has been awash with news leaks and every nugget of information that could be found on the film and fans have watched and re-watched the trailers in search of more clues to the plot. All we know for certain is that its going to be huge. Christian Bale is returning to play the role of Bruce Wayne, the playboy socialite with the secret identity, Michael Caine is his faithful butler, Alfred, Gary Oldman plays Commissioner Gordon and

Morgan Freeman brings Lucius Fox to life. Added to that impressive list are newcomers Tom Hardy, as the monstrous Bane, who broke Batman's back in the comics, and Anne Hathaway as the seductive Catwoman. When the previous film ended, Batman had saved the city but, by taking the blame for a murder he didn't commit, he became an outlaw in doing so. Now, eight years on from those events, Batman must return once again to save Gotham from a new menace. Christopher Nolan has stated this will be his last film in the series and has promised a satisfying conclusion to the story arc; these are big words but, from a man who has never put a foot wrong during a career that includes the excellent *Memento* and oscar-winning *Inception*, as well as his two earlier Bat films, this final chapter looks set to be a triumphant ending.

**Brave** (out July 21) is the latest computer animation from Pixar Animation Studios. Everything made by Pixar is special - from its first film in 1995, *Toy Story*, up to the more recent successes of *WALL-E* and *Up*. *Brave* looks set to continue the trend of delightful, imaginative storytelling coupled with an enthusiasm to push current animation technology as far as it will go. This, the 13th film from the studio,

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we suppose, but you gotta admit Suzanne and Angie add a bit of color to the party. Sanae Yoshida, Jacques and Patricia really got into the Aloha Mood. Extreme left, top to bottom. That's the pretty and popular Alohalani getting a *sayonara* squeeze from pro wrestler Ricky Steamboat. It was also *sayonara* and

bye-bye to the lovely Lynda. Shakti brought down the house with her free improvisational modern dance. Charlene and one of Paris' top models, Gloria, added to

the fun. Column 2, from top: Ethan and Lex Manager Rynji Moriyama camp it up for the camera. *Sayonara*, too, for Brazilian student Celso Franca.

Bidding the gorgeous Hawaiian model Alohalani farewell were a gang of her chums. Above, from left: Joan Shepherd brought along some of the dancers and crew from her super-successful revue at The Crystal Room. Not quite Hawaiian,



## A bit of mea culpa Genevieve's fantastic 'snow job'

Genevieve. Oh, Genevieve! You snowed us, didn't you, doll! I must say it was a super job. Not only me, but a lot of other people — some older, many much wiser and more sophisticated than I and all much more important — were also taken in and fell victim to your charm, your wit and what we now realize is a fabricated story of your life.

Our readers must know this lady by now: "Genevieve de Vilmorin Giscard d'Estaing." This most fashionable, chic and extremely knowledgeable woman hit town about mid-May in company of an Italian Contessa and a young English hotel executive. Her entree into Tokyo's social, diplomatic and business world was launched at one of the Okura Hotel's 20th anniversary parties. I met her a few days later at a dinner party and, like many others, fell for her dynamic, outgoing personality. Believe it or not, the "name" meant very little to me.

As many of you know, I took her around town quite a bit and did my best to help her get established in the "social whirl" here.

I'm certainly no saint, but I do not condone dishonesty in any way. I'm really happy that no one was hurt by Genevieve's little masquerade. If you travel around the world a bit and get around in certain circles in other countries, I'm sure you've met people such as Genevieve — and some really do hurt others — financially and emotionally. I can think of an interior decorator, a restaurant owner, a magazine publisher, a PR person (or two) and a "fashion show producer" right now who surely did not do right by their fellow men. But they got away with it. Not only that, some of them are doing just fine right now — and still pulling the same old gambits and

ploys which get them through life a bit bogusly.

In my travels I've met dukes, duchesses, counts, countesses and the like whom I'm sure are about as "royal" as the rest of us. Then, of course, there's the famous and very successful Count Romanoff; everyone knew he was a phony "count," but went along with his scam and made his restaurant one of the most famous ever. He was a flop as royalty, but a smash as a restaurateur.

Regarding Genevieve, I can't figure out why she didn't accept the \$700 I offered her after her (alleged) jewelry robbery. She was sure welcome to it and since she's long gone from Japan by now, there is no way I could have recovered the loan if she had taken it.

I personally regret none of the time I spent with Genevieve nor am I sorry for having known her. It was a real experience! I do regret introducing her to some very good friends; identifying her as the sister-in-law of the former French president; I apologize to them for any inconvenience or embarrassment I may have caused them. So many have called me and said "not to worry; there's no way anyone could have known about her duplicity." I appreciate that. I also find it sad a lady with so much charm, personality and intelligence finds it necessary to live this way. It seems that if she had played it straight she could easily make it on her own.

I'm not making excuses for her; what she did is obviously wrong. But even though "Tout Tokyo" (and we all know what that means, don't we?) may be talking about her, in many ways she's much more of a warm, real woman and human being than a few who are so eager to condemn her. They know who I'm talking about.



## Happy Fourth, Yanks!

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