

tokyo

weekender

JULY 2015

Japan's number one English language magazine



UFC ROAD TO UFC JAPAN

JUVENILE JUSTICE

*Should School-Age Killers
Be Tried as Adults?*

MAKING A CASE FOR BEAUTY

*Former DA Gil Garcetti
Provides Photo Evidence*

SUMMER IN AKITA

*Traditions and Travel
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JULY 2015



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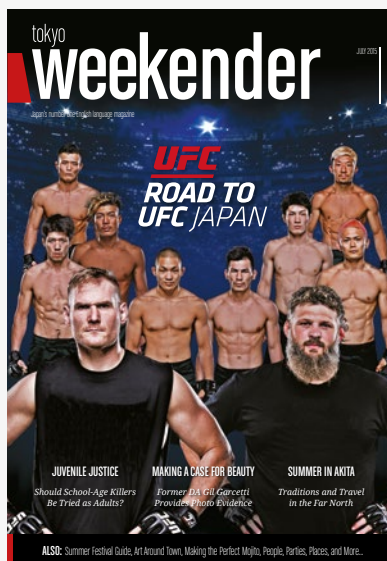
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THIS MONTH IN THE WEEKENDER



After a bit of June drench comes the summer swelter, and with it another round of the colorful traditional festivals that light up the nights and put the city to new hues. From star-crossed Tanabata to the raucous Koenji Awaodori, each celebration livens up Tokyo and its inhabitants in its own unique way, and we've compiled a guide to the season's fests that we hope will put you in a summer frame of mind.

However, as lively as old estival Edo can be, there are times when we just want things to cool down—and no amount of beer garden evenings or kaki gori days can really get the mercury to drop. So with that in mind, we head north again to Akita, where

the prefecture's cities keep centuries-old traditions alive and share them with visitors from around the country and across the seas.

As you might have guessed from the presence of our cover toughs, a big event is on its way, looming just off the edge of the summer season. The UFC is coming back to town for another night of no-holds-barred MMA throwdown, but this time with a twist: leading up to "UFC Fight Night Japan: Nelson vs Barnett" at Saitama Super Arena, eight of Japan's top brawlers will be battling it out for a chance to compete under the bright lights on September 27. Read up, and we'll hope to see you there.

Chief in features is a hard look at a tough topic, but one that sadly keeps making headlines. The acts of school-aged murderers shock, but the legal system has traditionally given these young criminals lighter sentences than those allotted to their older counterparts. But recent cases and the advocacy of victims' families are influencing policy and bringing the issue of juvenile justice into the court of public opinion.

Plenty more to check out in these pages, but it's up to you to turn them: so as always, thank you for reading and we'll look forward to seeing you come August.

Editor

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digital edition

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FIGHT OFF STRESS THE ISRAELI WAY AT MAGAGYM

Tucked in amongst the clubs and bars of Roppongi Central, MagaGYM is two floors of no-nonsense workout space. This makes sense, as the bread and butter (or pita and hummus) of the gym is Krav Maga, the “official” martial art of the Israeli Army. It’s a fighting style that focuses on fighting effectiveness over fancy forms, but as we found out over the course of an hour-long workout, it will definitely get you into shape.

There are a variety of classes available, with levels geared to everyone from fighting newbie to experienced grappler, as well as pure fitness classes based on the popular TRX system. We went in for the basic class, and it offered a good challenge. Starting off with a light warmup, the course moves quickly into high and low punch combinations—including a routine that will make burpees feel like kids’ stuff—pad work with kicks and punches, and finally a chance to practice blocking punches and attacks with a rubber knife. But, to be honest, by that point we had already developed a sweat-generated defense coating...

The time flies by, and because the techniques are simple to follow, even people with limited Japanese ability will have an easy time catching the drift. The workouts can be tough and martial arts-based, but the environment at MagaGYM is friendly and welcoming for men and women alike.

For the most part, Tokyo’s a safe enough city, and you may not need to be defending yourself in the streets that often, but as MagaGYM owner Atsuhiko Kumagai, or “Kuma,” points out, the heart-pumping workouts will help you keep the stresses of busy city life at more than an arm’s length away.

MagaGYM will be opening a second location in Akasaka at the beginning of July.

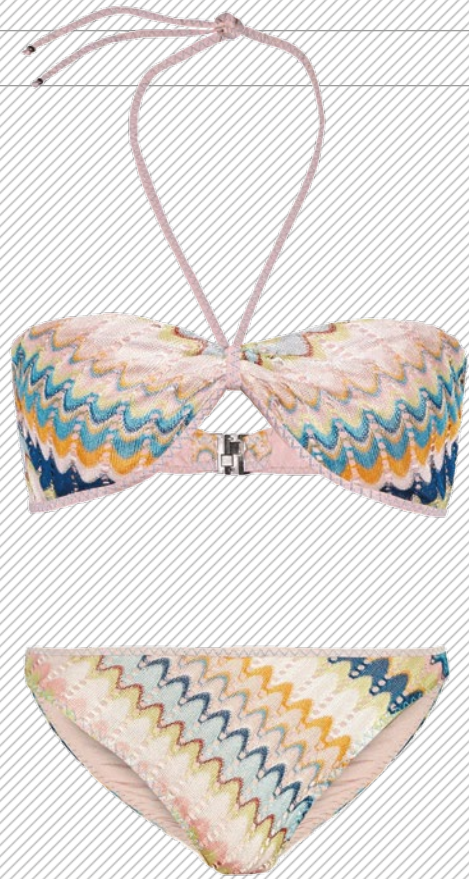
Roppongi

Tokyo, Minato-ku
Roppongi 3-14-7
Arrow Building 4F
Tel: 03-6432-9794

Akasaka (Opening July 4)

Tokyo, Minato-ku
Akasaka 3-7-13
Akasaka HM Building B1
Tel: 03-5793-3377

For more information please visit the official website:
www.magagym.com/en



MISSONI-ELISABETTA CROCHET-KNIT BIKINI

Forget about the frilly, over-padded suits that populate Japan’s beaches and kick off summer in style with sleek Italian swimwear. Adorned with the signature Missoni zig zag knit motif, this bandeau bikini is simple and sexy. The strap can be removed, so it can be worn in two different ways, and it comes with a matching crochet-knit pouch to carry it—a small detail that makes us covet it even more. Accessorize your suit with gold bangles, a wide-brim hat and a chic cover-up to pretend you’re in the south of France and not on an overcrowded Tokyo beach...

www.missoni.com



RAY-BAN WAYFARER SUNGLASSES

Nothing screams summer more than a pair of Ray-Ban Wayfarer glasses, a cult classic fashion item. They apparently flatter pretty much every face shape (they haven’t failed to disappoint yet), and they’re in the affordable range of name-brand accessories. The must-have item is not only practical and indispensable in the summer months, but it’s the ideal stylish touch to spruce up any ensemble. We like the tortoiseshell version, which is a sophisticated change from the ubiquitous black pairs and too-trendy colored frames.

www.ray-ban.com

ASUS ZENFONE SELFIE

One of the most touted features on modern smartphones is the camera. Manufacturers are engaged in an arms race of Cold War proportions—adding megapixels, widening apertures and continually improving their abilities to capture high quality images—which consumers completely ignore in favor of the tiny, terrible quality afterthought of a happy snapper on the front to satisfy their narcissism. Asus' new ZenFone Selfie is their push to expand into the duck-face market. Sporting a 13-megapixel self-shooter with a wide angle F2.2 lens, it promises to bring hitherto unknown levels of quality to your Instagram feed. If you're worried the vastly improved image capabilities will also bring out some of the more unflattering aspects of your visage, there are new digital makeup tools to give you that freshly photoshopped model look. www.asus.com



Something for the weekend...A cocktail guide for the most discerning of drinkers

In this month's edition of the Mixologist's guide we take a trip to Havana, the city responsible for creating the Mojito, the drink that has come to dominate the summer cocktail scene the world over.

The drink owes much of its popularity to American writer Ernest Hemingway, a gentleman who knew a few things about the art of the cocktail. Hemingway famously wrote "All things truly wicked start from innocence": a very appropriate quote given the origins of the modern day Mojito. The drink can trace its lineage all the way back to a 16th Century tippale known as "El Draque," which was named after the famous English sea captain and privateer Sir Francis Drake. Legend has it that after his successful raid at Cartagena de Indias, Drake's ships sailed towards Havana but with an epidemic of dysentery and scurvy on board. A small boarding party went ashore on Cuba to find a remedy and came back with ingredients for a medicine which proved not only incredibly effective, but also rather delicious. The ingredients were *aguardiente de caña* (a crude form of rum), lime, sugarcane juice, and mint.

Since those days the recipe has become rather more refined, but the unmistakable Caribbean flavor remains as deliciously refreshing as ever—and as likely to lead towards a bit of summer wickedness.

Method:

Place the lime wedges, mint, and sugar into a sturdy highball glass and "muddle" with the end of a clean rolling pin to bruise the mint and release the lime juice. Add a handful of crushed ice and pour over the rum. We'd recommend Havana Club Añejo 3 años for that truly authentic Cuban taste. Add soda water to taste and stir well. Garnish with a mint sprig and serve.

Ingredients:

- 2 shots of Havana Club Añejo 3 años
- 4 wedges of fresh lime
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- Splash of soda water



ASWY AIR SPEAKER

With every established audio brand putting out their take on the Bluetooth speaker, to really stand out above the crowd would almost require a force of nature, and this is precisely what ASWY have harnessed with their levitating air speaker. The base station and speaker unit both have powerful magnets inside, whose magnetic repulsion makes for a pretty neat party trick. When not pulling off a Casper, the speaker can also use its attractive behind to attach to any metal object in your home, expanding its portability possibilities. www.aswystore.com



NOODOE WATCH

These smartwatches: They can do everything! But do you really need them to? The Noodoe gives you simple gives you simple notifications about email and the like, letting you minimize distraction and save time, rather than wasting more of it. It has a simple display, it doesn't come in gold, and its battery lasts seven days. Yes, the Pebble smartwatch has been around for longer and essentially does the same thing, but it lacks the looks and is more than twice the price. Currently Android only but Apple support is said to be on the way. www.noodoe.com



WHAT AGE FOR JUSTICE?

The Japanese legal system is being forced to reconsider how it handles children who kill

A bright young boy who enjoyed playing baseball, making plastic models and doing jigsaws, Satoshi Takamatsu appeared to have a bright future ahead of him. Tragically, though, at the age of just 15 his life was cut short after he was tortured and savagely beaten to death. The ten boys who committed the crime then casually went off to sing at a karaoke booth. That was back in 1997; yet, for his mother Yumiko Takamatsu the pain and anger remains.

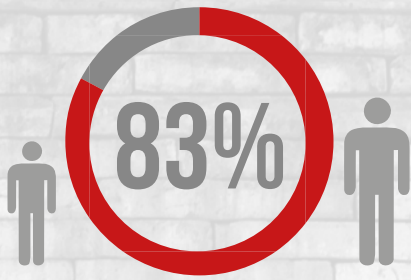
"Satoshi was such a friendly young lad," she tells *Weekender*. "He was devoted to his family and had so many friends. Some of those involved in the incident were supposed to be his pals. I can never forgive them for what they

did. Even after they came out of the juvenile training school I felt they never showed any real remorse. Eight of them were sentenced to 20 months while the other two were given 15 months. It was too short."

The same year Satoshi was killed, a 14-year-old boy who called himself Seito Sakakibara (his real name has never been revealed) was arrested for the murder of Ayaka Yamashita, aged 10 and Jun Hase, aged 11. The latter's head was discovered in front of the school gates. A note was found in his mouth that read, "This is the beginning of the game ... Try to stop me if you can you stupid police ... I desperately want to see people die; it's a thrill for me to commit murder. A bloody judgment is needed for my years of great bitterness."

Despite the horrific nature of the crime Sakakibara was released after spending less than eight years in a medical reformatory for juveniles. Another boy who hijacked a bus in Fukuoka in 2000—killing one of the passengers—was freed from the medical reformatory within six years. Also in 2000, 16-year-old Yukio Yamaji was arrested for matricide, but was paroled after just three years. He went on to rape and murder two sisters. Teens were committing abhorrent acts, but the punishment never seemed to match the crime. Family members of victims, including Yumiko Yamashita, urged the government to act, demanding revisions to the Juvenile Act which had been in place since 1948.





BELIEVE THE AGE OF PROSECUTION SHOULD BE LOWERED FROM 20 TO 18

The first modification came in 2000 when the punishable age for a crime was reduced from 16 to 14. Six years later it was decided that children from the age of 12 could be sent to juvenile training schools. Adversary proceedings in Juvenile Courts also became more open, with victims' families being given permission to attend court hearings, while prosecutors were effectively handed more power. The latest amendment came last year when the Diet enabled a law extending the maximum limit a minor under the age of 20, who was being tried in an adult court, could serve in prison. It was raised from 15 to 20 years for crimes punishable by life in prison and from 10 to 15 years for less severe offenses.

These changes have largely been welcomed by the general public; however, there are many that feel they still haven't gone far enough. According to a nationwide survey conducted by The Yomiuri Shimbun in March of this year, 83% of the respondents said that 18 rather than 20 would be a more appropriate age at which to try criminals as adults. The poll took place shortly after the brutal murder of 13-year-old Ryota Uemura by three teens in Kawasaki which angered many and could have, therefore, affected their answers. (The Family Court judge decided in May that the perpetrators of this crime will face trial in adult criminal court, though this wouldn't have been known at the time of the survey).

Another factor which is likely to have impacted on the survey results is the lowering of the voting age in Japan from 20 to 18, which is expected to be confirmed next year. A lot of people believe that if you're old enough to have a say in who governs this country then you are also old

enough to be seen as an adult in the eyes of the law. This is not an opinion shared by Hiroko Goto – a professor of Law at Chiba University.

“Lowering the voting age is a positive step that will expand the electorate, but I don't think it should have any impact on the Juvenile Act,” she tells Weekender. “Minors, that is to say people under the age of 20, are fundamentally different to adults as their brains are not fully developed. Sending them to an adult prison would only make matters worse. In most cases involving children, crimes are committed because of problems at home. Family courts try to discover what that problem is in order to prevent further offenses. In extreme cases, such as the killing of Ryota Uemura, juveniles can be referred to adult criminal courts.

“More often than not, though, teenagers that are found guilty are sent to juvenile training schools where they are taught how to behave properly. An emphasis is placed on education and rehabilitation. Upon entering many think

“You have gang members using teens to carry out vicious acts for them because they will avoid prison.”

that violence is the only way to solve a problem. Some don't even know how to brush their own teeth. At these institutions they can learn all kinds of skills that will help them when they get out, like how to write a resume or operate a forklift truck. Of course I realize the families of victims don't care about any of this. They just want retribution. I believe it is important to consider both sides.”

She makes a rational argument that is backed up by statistics. In 2013 the recidivism rate of juvenile offenders in Japan was 34.3%: more than 10% lower than that of adult offenders here and a much smaller number than in many Western countries. Also the arrest rate of minors has more than halved over the past decade, falling to below 100,000 a year. Mariko Fujiwara—a research director at Hakuodo Institute of Life and Living—feels those statistics would be even lower if more teens were tried as adults.

“I think it would make more of them think before they acted,” she says. “Crimes committed by juveniles are often premeditated. Occasionally they will be

tried as adults, but in most cases they know they will avoid that and effectively get away with it. You then also have gang members using teens to carry out vicious acts for them because they will avoid prison. Lowering the age at which a criminal can be tried as an adult would, in my view, encourage more youngsters to stay away from violence.”

For bereaved family members it is about more than reducing crimes rates and recidivism in the future—their main goal is to get justice for innocent children who have needlessly lost their lives. Yumiko Takamatsu believes the only way that can be accomplished is by punishing criminals based on the severity of their actions and not their age. “Lengthier sentences,” she says “would give serious offenders more time to think deeply about what they've done.” In her eyes the boys responsible for Satoshi's death were released far too soon, but she's hopeful that as they get older they will at least show some repentance for their actions. “They come to pray on the anniversary of his death every year. Most of them are married now and some have kids. As they become parents themselves maybe they'll have a greater understanding of what I went through. I want to continue monitoring their progress.”

She also feels greater assistance should be given to family members who've lost loved ones as a result of a crime. Wanting to help after the death of her own son, she became a board member of the Hyogo Victims Support Center in 2002. “The most important thing is just to be there for those people who are suffering—listening to their story,” she says. “When someone so close to you has been murdered it's easy to lose faith in humanity: we want to help restore that faith. I've been volunteering for a number of years and I've always felt that Satoshi has been right there with me as I've been doing it.”



ARREST RATE OF MINORS HAS MORE THAN HALVED OVER THE PAST DECADE

TOKYO GALLERY GUIDE

OUR PICKS FROM THE EXHIBITIONS AROUND TOWN

by Sarah Custen

PIKA*BOKO: AN ONOMATOPOETIC GUIDE TO CRAFTS

No talking! No touching! No wonder most kids aren't clamoring for more museum visits. The Crafts Gallery at MOMAT turns this model on its head with "Pika*Boko," an interactive exhibition featuring tactile delights and teachable talking points, encouraging parents and children to connect over modern and classic Japanese crafts.

Divided into six sections, "Pika*Boko" uses the resonance and rhythms of "childish" onomatopoeia to convey the essence of the crafts' textures and materials. Visitors explore *Tsuya-Tsuya!* (Glossy), *Pika-Pika!* (Sparkly), *Suke-Suke!* (See-Through), *Boko-Boko, Gotsu-Gotsu!* (Lumpy, Rugged), *Zara-Zara, Sara-Sara!* (Rough, Smooth), and *Darari, Jiwari, Sube-Sube!* (Limp, Oozy, Satiny) with reading

guides for children and adults.

"Adults can give kids some hints to understand or enjoy works," explained Yukako Takahashi, MOMAT PR representative, adding that kids are encouraged to create new onomatopoeic descriptors and draw pictures about works they find impressive. These drawings will then be exhibited in the museum for the duration of the show. "Then not only their parents but also other visitors can share the kids' impression or joy," said Takahashi.

There is also a "Touch and Talk" program held Wednesdays and Saturdays through the period of exhibition, as well as a "Gallery Talk" for children and several workshops with artists as guest lecturers.



Takahashi Yoshihiko, "Bottle with Dots," 2010.

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT)—Crafts Gallery

Dates: July 14–September 27, 2015

Open: Open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00–17:00; closed Mondays

Web: www.momat.go.jp/english/cg/exhibition/kids_adults2015/#section1-1



©2015 Pokémon. ©1995-2015 Nintendo/Creatures Inc. / GAME FREAK inc.

POKÉMON LAB: YOU DO IT! YOU DISCOVER!

Pokémon is a household name, cutting across cultures, crossing borders, and uniting generations of fans. This exhibition puts a scientific spin on friendly, familiar characters, pairing education with entertainment to teach visitors about scientific methods, observation, and classifications.

Inside the "Pokémon Lab," visitors are transformed into junior researchers, challenging themselves with different character-based experiments, which are arranged by difficulty level. Visitors can also learn about the history and worldwide appeal of Pokémon, witnessing how these characters have influenced—and been influenced by—the continual evolution of gaming consoles and technology.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg—Miraikan is a multi-faceted exploratory

wonderland, with activities suitable for any age group. From the tactile "Curiosity Field" (for pre-schoolers), to the geo-planetary "Tsunagari" and "Explore the Frontiers," to the head-turning Dome Theater, Miraikan's events and exhibitions are produced in conjunction with leading scientists and engineers. "It's a cool building," said Adrienne Stacy, a Chiba resident. "You enter and it's open, mostly glass. So the atrium area is really bright."

And let's not forget the robots. Want to meet the robot that played soccer with President Obama? Talk to an android? Ride around on a "personal mobility device"? Now is your chance!

"The robotic stuff is the main draw," said Stacey's partner, Luca Eandi. "And it doesn't disappoint."

Miraikan National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation

Dates: July 8–October 12, 2015

Open: Wednesday through Monday, 10:00–17:00; closed Tuesdays

Web: fujifilmsquare.jp/en/detail/15050104.html



The voices of a distant star (©Makoto Shinkai / CoMIX Wave Films)

MANGA*ANIME*GAMES FROM JAPAN

Manga is a loaded word, eliciting either cries of disgust or coos of delight: it's not for everyone. But with the addition of familiar video games, arcade attractions, and unparalleled original artwork, the "Manga*Anime*Games from Japan" exhibit at NACT appeals to even the most reluctant fans.

The exhibition traces the evolution of manga and anime techniques, trends, and technology (going from 1989 to the present), and incorporates video, computers, and gaming systems, as well as hand-drawn sketches, some ripped directly from the artists' notebooks. Visitors are encouraged to try out video and computer games, as well as virtual reality goggles, making the experience equal parts art and entertainment.

"We present the relationship between society, technology, and works of the same era," said exhibition curator Taizo Muroya, describing it as "a chance for visitors to recognize the

cultural value of manga, anime and games." For younger visitors, he says, it can be "an opportunity to discover new things by studying the past works with which their parents have been familiar."

Familiar artists and characters include Naruto, Sailor Moon, Detective Conan and Super Mario Brothers, though the full list is truly comprehensive. Throughout the exhibit, examples of final, published products are paired with sketches and storyboards, illustrating the creative process. Fans can discover new dimensions within their favorite characters or series, by seeing them develop from lines on paper into cartoons, video games and books.

Nowhere is this more striking than in the final portion of the exhibition, where works in watercolors, charcoal and pastels create eye-popping art, sure to leave an impression. English signage is limited and adult-oriented, but reading isn't necessary to enjoy this experience: this is an exhibition about storytelling and the art of play.

National Art Center Tokyo (NACT)

Dates: June 24–August 31, 2015

Open: Wednesday through Monday, 10:00–18:00, Fridays until 20:00; closed Tuesdays

Web: www.nact.jp/english/exhibitions/2015/magj/index.html

HandMade In Japan Fes 2015

July 25 sat – 26 sun 11:00am – 7:00pm at Tokyo Big Sight

The largest hand craft festival in Japan

- Up to 5,000 creators representing various regions in Japan sell their unique handmade items such as fashion accessories, art, interior goods and furniture.
- 30 themed workshops will be held, you can learn how to make traditional Japanese craft works and accessories using a variety of materials such as embroidery, silver, wood and Japanese paper.
- Large-scale live-painting sessions by art painters and illustrators.
- Live concerts and powerful performances by 13 popular artists and professional wrestlers.
- Various tasty foods, drinks, vegetables and fruits made from natural ingredients.

Advance Ticket ¥1,000 <http://yahoo.jp/OcY0Q3>

www.hmj-fes.jp

f "handmade in japan fes"



AN ADVOCATE FOR BEAUTY

The former district attorney of Los Angeles uses the power of photography to challenge, persuade, and connect

by Alec Jordan

One of the first phrases that comes to mind when considering the arc of Gil Garcetti's career is "beating swords into ploughshares." Although the Los Angeles native now spends many of his days as a globe-trotting photographer, for the majority of his professional life, he worked as a public prosecutor, and was the District Attorney for Los Angeles County for eight years. He garnered the most public attention as a D.A. during the O.J. Simpson trial in the mid-90s, but the tough-on-crime prosecutor was also known for being equally hard on his police force. According to an L.A. Times story, Garcetti, while working on a D.A. unit that was looking into police brutality, heard the following from an officer, on hearing that he was going to be investigated: "You know what, Mr. Garcetti, if you were dying in the street and I saw you, I would step right over you."

Looking at his new body of work, it is hard to imagine those hard-fought political battles that marked his prior decades. His first two books of photographs—"Iron" and "Frozen Music"—are tributes to the metalworkers who built L.A.'s Walt Disney Concert Hall and to the striking curves of the Geary-designed structure, respectively. Subsequent projects were of a more international bent: "Dance in Cuba" is an observation of the rhythms that accompany life on the island nation, while "Water Is Key" takes on the topic of providing safe drinking water to the people who live in the nations of West Africa. His most recent book, "Japan: A Reverence for Beauty," is a window into what Garcetti sees as the country's unique approach to aesthetics, and the product of more than 10 visits to Japan over the course of nearly five years.

Garcetti was in Tokyo last month as a part of a delegation with Los Angeles's Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, and Weekender caught up with him to learn more about the inspiration behind his latest book, how images can be as powerful as legal arguments, and what he sees as the future of the relationship between the City of Angels—where his son, Eric, is now mayor—and one of the largest cities in the world.

The former lawyer and his wife had been coming to Japan since the 1960s, but inspiration for the project dates back very recently, to moments on a trip just a few years before. Garcetti describes the most powerful as follows: "I was taking photographs in a moss garden in Kyoto when I come around the corner and I see in the distance a maple leaf that I think is falling, but it's staying there, suspended in midair. I noticed there was a group of about five or six youngish Japanese, and they were looking at it and I could tell that they were wondering the same thing as I was: 'How in the world is that being held up?' Then, as soon as the clouds parted, the sun came through and it caught the spider web that was holding it up. We all said 'ah,' and smiled





and laughed...And as I'm walking away, I say to myself, 'Where in America would this have taken place? Where you'd have some people who would stop to examine what's going on with this one leaf.' It was just extraordinary."

The book is a collection of moments like these, whether capturing the natural beauty of landscapes, examples of traditional craftsmanship, or in the most Japanese of instances, nature that has been, in some small way, affected

“I view almost every one of my books as being a calling card: this is just opening the door, I hope, to a discussion.”

by a human touch. But they are also marked by a photographic technique Garcetti had been developing since his days as a prosecutor, when he would always carry a small camera with him to take shots during the day. He credits Warren King, a photography teacher from early in his life, for teaching him to be willing to shoot from different angles—lying face up, or standing on a ladder—but most importantly, “actually seeing. Not just looking, but seeing.”



His goal with the book, as he explains, is to awaken in Westerners a similar ability to recognize those small aesthetic moments in daily life, and to kindle in them an interest to find out more about Japan. While his enthusiastic appreciation of the attractive aspects of the country might run counter to what many of us see as the uglier sides to Japanese city life, Garcetti argues that he sees beauty there too, in the combination of older architecture and the new, for example, and in the endless fashion show that presents itself around town. But in the end, the lawyer-turned-photographer doesn't mind if people disagree with him, just as long as they start thinking: “There's no question that's what I'm trying to do. My photographs are really photographic essays, and I view almost every one of my books as being a calling card: this is just opening the door, I hope, to a discussion.”

Garcetti opens the door for discussion, but he admits that his images are presented and arranged with a specific intent to convince his readers—something that “pure” art photographers might not be able to do. “This is what distinguishes me from most photographers: I'm a trained advocate. I was trained in the courtroom to try and persuade jurors to come to a certain conclusion. And that's based on me being able to get all of the facts, understand as much as can about the subject matter of the lawsuit, and then to put it together in a coherent way, and in a persuasive way.” He

has also amassed a strong group of essayists to collaborate with on the book, from famed travel writer and long-term Japan resident Pico Iyer and scholars Kendall H. Brown, Hitoshi Abe, and Atsuko Tanaka.

Seen from the perspective of a photographic “argument,” then, many of his books start to take on another life. “Iron” and “Frozen Music” can be seen both as paying respect to an influential architectural project and the skilled workers who made it happen, but

perhaps as a unique way of reconnecting with the city after a difficult political battle put him out of office in 2000. His depictions of Cuban dancers, opening an aperture into a nation that U.S. policies had shut away from most citizens for decades. Another book, “Paris: Women & Bicycles,” can be seen as a photographic push toward getting

notoriously car-infatuated Angelenos away from their steering wheels and behind pairs of handlebars.

And the deep appreciation for Japanese aesthetics can also be seen as a means of strengthening the bridge between Japan and the city that has long been one of the major centers of Japanese immigration to the States. It is certainly a link that Mayor Eric Garcetti is planning to bolster. As the elder Garcetti pointed out, his son, who studied here as a high schooler, has been clear about making a strong relationship with Japan a priority in his administration. He already came on an official visit last November, and has pledged to do so again every 18 months, rather than the four years that is traditional for L.A. mayors. In turn, Abe's visit to the city was marked by close interactions between Mayor and Prime Minister. In the years to come, Garcetti predicts, “you're going to see a closer relationship than you've had in the past with Japan and Los Angeles,” and the pictures in his latest book may serve as ambassadors towards that end.

Regardless of their potential deeper meaning, the photographs would not have their



power were they not visually arresting—a quality that has grown not just from his practice as a cameraman, but as a public prosecutor. Garcetti recalls a conversation he had with another mentor, the celebrated architectural photographer Julius Shulman: “He told me that when he saw my photographs, he asked me why I was the D.A. in the first place, because he thought that photography was what I should have been doing all along! I said ‘maybe so, but I see today based on all of my experiences of life. If I'd gone into photography when I was 21 years of age, I wouldn't be seeing with the same eyes that I see with today.’”

To find out more about ordering a copy of Gil Garcetti's “Japan: A Reverence for Beauty,” visit www.garcetti.com

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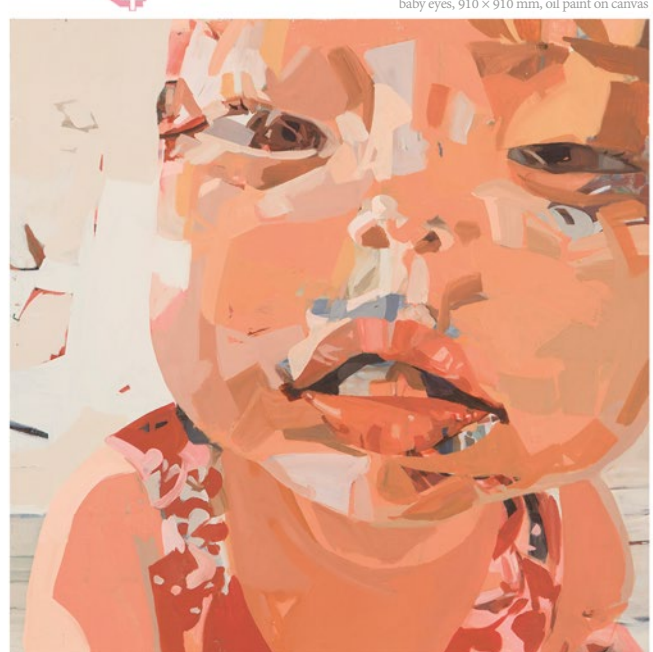
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AKITA

INTO THE “DEEP NORTH”



and Aomori for the most northern prefecture, much of the Japanese wilderness still holds its magical allure for adventurous travelers. Incredible ravines, such as the Oyasukyo, featured this month, which bellows incredible steam clouds from natural hot springs across the River Minase; long winding, mountain paths; and dense, ancient forests await the visitor.

And naturally, with all those mountains, and that hot water rising from deep underground, the area is an onsen lover's haven. Traditional ryokan with ever-inviting hot baths are sprinkled throughout Yuzawa City (a city only by name—this is no metropolis, as you'll soon realize upon arrival) and provide the perfect antidote to the stress of the Tokyo streets. The “city” is also famous for its beautiful women, said to be the “fairest” in Japan, and this is even used in promoting it as a tourist destination.

The north of Japan once held a reputation in Japan as a wild place filled with danger for the people of Yamato, the dominant ethnic group who came to be known the traditional Japanese people. Even as late as the 17th century the famous mendicant poet Matsuo Basho ventured to the north with a concern for his well-being—and a sense among his peers that his journey was a little bit crazy. He survived the long, long walk and composed his celebrated “Narrow Road to the Deep North,” among other works inspired by his wanderings.

Of course, those days are long gone but the northern prefectures are still much less populated than the more southern parts of Japan's main island of Honshu, thanks to coastal difficulties for port building and the climate—it's an area known for its long, harsh winters. And because of this they've been able to maintain much of their original beauty and traditional way of life (mixed, of course, with the modern conveniences that 21st century Japan provides).

In Akita, topped only by Hokkaido

Tradition doesn't stop with the bathing, either. Akita is a festival goer's bonanza. Later in these pages you can read about the incredible Kanto Festival where dozens of large lanterns hang from 12-meter bamboo poles carried by enthusiastic men showing their physical prowess. This impressive event, which takes place in the city of Akita itself, attracts spectators from all across the country and is best attended at night when the passing lanterns light the streets.

But it isn't the only festival to be pulled in the crowds. Akita is a prefecture where festivals thrive, as you'll be able to read



Getting There

From Tokyo to Akita City (Kanto Festival)
By Shinkansen: 3 hours, By Air: 2 hours, From
Tokyo to Yuzawa City By Shinkansen: 4 hours

here over the coming months as part of our special series. In future editions we'll also be looking at the Sasara dance of picturesque Kakunodate, a former samurai stronghold and popular hanami (cherry blossom viewing) spot. Sasara is the local dialect word for the traditional lion dance and this event goes back 400 years—so a feature, at least, not to be missed. And you can also read about the exciting Tsuchizaki Shinmeisha Shrine Float Festival, also in Akita City, where giant figures are paraded through the streets on some 20 floats. This festival also has some pedigree and celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2013.

But with so much going on you may want to find out who can help you make the most of it. With that in mind, we're also highlighting the work of a company that prides itself on putting visitors, primarily from overseas, into places truly connected to the traditional Akita way of life. Travel Design is a tour operator that sets up rural tours where visitors even get to stay with a family and get a taste of Japan's countryside living, and maybe even a taste of the inspiration behind some of the country's most beloved animated films.

So, best to get out your walking boots and follow in the footsteps of that wandering monk because the north is where it's all at this month.



A WARM WELCOME TO YUZAWA

A group of Akita locals are looking to share the centuries-old appeal of this onsen city with a new generation



Located near the staggeringly scenic Kurikoma Quasi-National Park, Yuzawa City benefits from the presence of hot spring waters that fuel a variety of onsen—some just for looking, as their temperatures can run close to boiling, but many others that have made this region a favorite amongst travelers and long-term residents of Japan’s north. Even a brief visit will make it clear why it has been attracting visitors, and legends, for centuries.

For example, one story finds the legendary warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune and his troops traveling through this deeply northern region—which was once known as the Mutsu, or Michinoku Province—during the Gosannen War, in the late 11th century. While the fabled general was attempting to quell the disturbances within the ancient Kiyohara clan, he was said to have found relief in the warm waters around Yuzawa. Even

back then, the area had attracted enough settlers to be cultivating rice at the same levels as they are today. Among those living in the area, the hot springs were a place for villagers and hunters, and later silver mine workers, to escape the cold of those long “snow country” winters. The springs were even said to have a curative effect and as some tales have it, it was a place where animals went to be healed.

Such is the reputation of this spectacular corner of Japan’s main island of Honshu. But Yuzawa (which means ‘hot water marsh’) has an even more flattering addition to its image of possessing magical powers. It also has become known, and “supported” by a report in 1966 by Yuzawa’s own Dr. Sugimoto, for the whiteness, and with it good looks, of the Akita women, who are known as *Akita bijin*, or Akita’s beauties. In his research, published in the *Bungei Shunju* magazine, the doctor claimed that the women were

“Even dating back to the 11th century, Yuzawa’s hot springs were a place for villagers and hunters to cure their ills; it was even said to be a place where animals went to be healed.”

blessed with a “beauty that was due to their mixed race (perhaps with the indigenous Emishi people of the north), short daylight hours and the remoteness from other prefectures due to the mountains.” Well, true or not, such impressions take hold on the imagination and the women of the region can still enjoy the reputation of beauty the doctor granted them. But it’s those hot springs and their magical waters, again, which are also said to play their part in this natural “Akita beauty.” So much is this engrained as part of Yuzawa’s identity that the landladies of the local onsen wear a deep blue short winter coat called a *hanten*, which is known as a symbol of the Akita bijin.

And it’s to these much-admired onsen, or ryokan with onsen, that most visitors will, and should, head in order to really soak up the atmosphere of the region. There are many of these traditional, and luxurious, inns where you can sit in a natural bath that opens out into the forest overlooking a river before enjoying the tasty Akita cuisine, such as its Inaniwa Udon noodles, *nabe* (traditional hot pot), or even a high-grade wagyu steak, cooked teppanyaki style.

One recently formed group has dedicated itself to continuing this centuries-old tradition of hospitality and relaxation. Made up of the owners of seven different onsen ryokan and one shop, the “Oyasukyō Glamor Girls’ Club” has been finding new ways to appeal to younger women travelers and visitors from overseas.



The members of the Oyasukyō Girls’ Glamor Group take a collective dip in an *ashiyu*, or onsen footbath



Although the group just got off the ground in 2012, they’ve already managed to influence local businesses to create products that will appeal to young women, from a special brand of sake to a new line of sweets. The rise in international tourism to Japan has not been lost on the group either: they have been rapidly bringing their English up to a better level, thanks to the help of a local Canadian friend’s dedication to teaching them English. Tomoko Sato, the chairwoman of the group laughs, as she warns, “we may not become fluent speakers immediately, but the most important thing we want our guests to understand is this feeling of hospitality, which truly goes beyond words.”

But, as much as steamy clouds rising from rocks in a ravine and peered over by steep cliffs—and beautiful hot bath accommodation tucked into valleys—are reason for a visit alone, the district around Oyasukyō has a lot more to offer, depending on the season you elect for making your journey north. The four seasons each offer their own unique cultural experiences, for example: in spring, the *shidarezakura* (weeping cherry trees) of Oshirasama come into bloom, adding a fleeting pink to the region’s varied foliage; the summer’s highlight is the 300-year-old Tanabata celebration that features huge, collectively drawn canvases that decorate the main streets during the early part of August. Mother Nature displays the range of her own palette during autumn, when the maple, beech, and other trees of the region transform the local peaks and ravines into riots of color. Outdoor activities include skiing—even grass

skiing if you don’t like it too cold—and hiking along the nearby ravine path, snapping endlessly at the stunning scenery along the way. Finally, nothing is more traditional in winter than a soak in a *rotemburo*—an outdoor bath—as you gaze out at a snow country landscape. Speaking in the local dialect known as *Akita-ben*, Sato and the group offer a hearty greeting to those guests who are looking to sample the attractions that have been drawing people to Yuzawa for centuries: *Kitanse!* (Come on down!)



Tomoko Sato, the chairwoman of the group

More information about the Oyasukyō Onsen Girls’ Glamor Group can be found inside the Minase Branch Office for Yuzawa City Tourism.

Tel: 0183-47-5080 | **Web:** www.oyasukyo.jp

Member businesses of the Group are Shop Oyasu, Matsubakan, Motoyukurabu, Komakusa, Shusen, Kakuhoan, Ootori, and Abe Ryokan

BEARING A BRIGHT TRADITION

In the middle of summer, participants in Akita's Kanto Festival set the night aglow with lantern towers that reach for the skies

Legs tensed and set apart, the performer looks up, gauging the wind, feeling the sway of the long bamboo pole balanced in his open palm. The pole moves with the breeze, its 46 lanterns dangling like heavy-headed stalks of rice, golden before the harvest. Slowly the performer raises his hand, elevating the 12-meter-tall stalk of glowing lights higher into the air. As he smoothly shifts the base of the pole to his shoulder, lower back, and forehead, it is hard to tell whether or not the 50-kg pole has become an extension of the performer, or part of him. For a few minutes of pure concentration, there is just this one man and the tall lattice of bamboo and light—the Kanto. And then, as if able to sense the performer is at his limit, a teammate comes up for a turn. The Kanto is passed and the dance begins again.

Every summer in the city of Akita, 10,000 candle-lit lanterns rise into the air, shimmering globes of light swaying in the night sky. Every year the air echoes with the rhythm of drums, chanting, and cheering. Crowds flock to see the array of lights and the feats of strength and skill that make the Kanto Festival. One of Tohoku's

most famous events, the Kanto Festival is a combination of showmanship, competition, and pure spectacle. Symbolizing stalks of rice, the Kanto are paraded to pray for a good harvest, but also to bring good luck and ward off disease and misfortune.

The Kanto (the two kanji in the Japanese word mean “pole” and “lantern”) are made of a long vertical bamboo pole with lanterns hanging from thin horizontal crosspieces. At the top is the *gohei*. These paper strips act both as an offering to the gods and, more practically, a way for the performers to gauge the wind. Each Kanto's lanterns are painted with a symbol of the community it comes from: some are simple ink calligraphy, while others depict colorful scenes, a number of which date back to feudal times. There are four categories of Kanto varying in size from the 5-kilogram, 5-meter-tall *Yowaka* to the towering 46-lantern *Owaka*, which stretches 12 meters into the air and weighs 50 kilograms. Yet using only one hand, the performer's balance and move the Kanto with precision and grace.





It is unclear exactly when or how this 300-year-old festival took its current form, but it likely evolved from Akita's traditional Neburi Nagashi Festival. Originally, children paraded through town with bamboo poles hung with wooden tablets inked with wishes, but as candles became more common the wishes were written on paper lanterns. Another theory is that it was influenced by Akita's tradition of hanging tall lanterns outside of homes during the Obon holiday. However it originated, by the late 18th century there were illustrations of Kanto that looked like those used today. By the early 1900s, Kanto was popular enough that groups from Akita traveled to perform in Tokyo and other parts of Japan. Around this time, the name "Kanto," the uniforms, and the performance style became more unified. More recently, the Kanto Festival's popularity has increased dramatically, drawing in over a million visitors to the city each year.



“Every year the air echoes with the rhythm of drums, chanting, and cheering. Crowds flock to see the array of lights and the feats of strength and skill that make the Kanto Festival.”

TESTS OF SKILL AND TOWERS OF LIGHTS

Harvest festivals in Japan often contain a strong element of competition, with different groups trying to outdo each other, and the Kanto Festival is no exception. In the daytime, teams of Kanto performers compete in a show of skill, balance, and strength. Watching the performers merely balance the massive Owaka is impressive, but that is only the beginning. Moving with a fluidity and grace honed from many years of practice, and using only their balance and the Kanto's weight, participants in the festival finesse the flexible bamboo pole into different curves. At its greatest flexion, the Kanto curls almost in half, nearly horizontal over the ground lanterns hanging down. Seeing the Kanto like this, bent like stalks of rice, heavy with grain, the connection to the harvest is clear.

While the daytime is a show of technique and mastery, at night the performance takes on a mysterious feeling. After sunset the Kanto are carried out once more. One by one the lanterns are lit. And then, to the sound of drums and flutes, more than 200 Kanto are slowly lifted into the air. These clusters of lanterns stretch down the length of Kanto Dori. Spectators line the streets, shouting praise and encouragement. The main event



BEYOND THE FESTIVAL

The Kanto Festival may be the highlight of a getaway to Akita, but there is enough to see in the city that it is worth spending an extra day to see the sights.

Senshu Park, on the grounds of the former Akita Castle, makes for a pleasant escape from the crowds around the station and Kanto Odori. In addition to all the greenery, the park has a small museum done up as a faux castle housing antiques and armor.

Designed by renowned architect Ando Tadao, the new **Akita Museum of Art** is one of the most impressive indoor spaces in the city. In addition to its permanent exhibit—the centerpiece of which is a massive painting depicting Akita life through the seasons—it hosts a variety of rotating exhibitions. Art aside, having a drink in the café that overlooks Akita's Senshu Park and the old castle moat is a great way to escape the August heat.

To learn more about Akita's Kanto, and try balancing one yourself, stop in the **Neburi Nagashi Hall**, a museum dedicated to the festival.

Akita's **baba-hera** ice may sound odd—the word “baba” means grandma and “hera” means scoop—but this dish, made in the shape of a rose fashioned from strawberry and banana ice cream, has become a local favorite. Why it is always an old lady is unclear—but the colorful beach umbrellas usually draw the queues for this sweet Akita tradition.

of the festival has begun. For the next hour and a half, the air is filled with music, shouts and cries of “*Dokkoisho! Dokkoisho!*” (Heave, heave!) as the performers maneuver and pass off the Kanto to one another. Looking up it is as if the Kanto are mysterious illuminated reeds blowing and shifting in the wind.

SEEING THE FESTIVAL

The festival, held from August 3 to 6, is located an easy walk from Akita Station. Just follow the flow of people. In addition to the competition and nighttime parade, take time to wander around the festival area and witness some of the music and dance performances, and of course, sample some local Akita cuisine.

The easiest way to get to Akita is to hop on the Akita Komachi Shinkansen. The scenic ride through rural valleys and tall stalks of rice swaying in the breeze is a perfect way to put Tokyo behind you and get in the mood for the festival.

IN SEARCH OF GIBLI'S JAPAN

A budding tourism agency in Akita is connecting foreign travelers with the anime-inspiring heart of the country



You could say Ghibli's movies were responsible for the founding of Akita's Travel Design. At least the world-famous Japanese animation studio and its award-winning creations inspired so many foreign visitors to come to Japan that the travel company's founder decided there was a need for his agency.

It was back when Hiroshi Susaki was working in a hotel in Tokyo that he realized something was missing in the Japanese tourism industry. Overseas tourists would often ask for his help in getting to those remote places like those in Ghibli's anime, particularly the forests and mountains seen in the legendary Hayao Miyazaki's animated masterpieces such as "My Neighbor Totoro," "Princess Mononoke" and "Spirited Away." But, much to Susaki's personal frustration, there was little he could do to help his curious customers and he was unable to set up tours into the "deep" countryside.

But the germ of an idea was sown and later, when he started actually working in a rural hotel, the same theme kept recurring:

"Where is that Japan I see in Ghibli?" In his new working environment, the Osaka-born man was able to provide more help, and send the tourists into inspiring countryside so they could at least get a taste of landscapes like those that inspired Hayao Miyazaki. But still it wasn't enough for him.

"I could come up with several places which would fit those people's needs," he recalls. "However, there wasn't much information in English about those remote areas—they were unknown. And if one could go there, there would be no support or assistance for foreigners. I was frustrated. I then made a determined resolution: 'I would love to globalize a local region!'"

It was at this point that Hiroshi headed to Akita and his ideas really began to find a home. "When I came to Akita I understood the attraction and charm of the area. It's that people are living close to nature," he explains. "The four seasons are very clear in Akita. During winter, the accumulated snow reaches two meters. When spring comes, the snow will melt and many different sorts, and colors, of new leaves start to appear one by one.

"People become livelier; they climb mountains and collect edible wild plants to fill the dining table. And as the temperature gets warmer, people irrigate the rice fields to prepare for rice planting. It may not be visible at first sight—the country view simply looks like an area surrounded by mountains and rivers—but if you look more clearly at the rice fields you can see the everyday human endeavor that is part of this life. This is the right mix of nature and people."

Susaki also points out that each village has kept its own traditional festival and these offer valuable insights into the heritage

of Japan's rural world, if you're lucky enough to be around at the right time. And, of course, you can thank Travel Design, which was founded last April.

The company has made it its mission to unearth the hidden elements in Japanese rural culture and introduce them to people from other countries in a way that benefits the small communities. In the same way, the company hopes the learning process can be mutual as foreigners share their culture with their village hosts. Meanwhile Travel Design itself makes it a duty for its staff to learn about both parties involved—hosts and guests, and their "cultures and values"—so as to keep the tourism a richer experience for all concerned.

"We offer our visitors the opportunity to live with local people," Susaki says. "Not to simply touch the surface of the site, but to really live with the community. Tourism in these places is not developed, so you can feel the 'real' Japan. We create very original plans with local travel agencies, and English speaking Akita locals help visitors to experience the deep, true Akita."

As he reflects on his fledgling enterprise, Susaki already has a sense that a bit of his dream has been accomplished: "I think we can finally offer a glimpse into that 'Ghibli' Japan that so many of my hotel guests wanted."



A NOODLE FIT FOR KINGS

In a country where noodle dishes are a daily affair, Akita's Inaniwa Udon offers an extraordinary experience

“Quite simply, Inaniwa Udon is a purist's dream, and a treat for the eyes as well—the cream-white noodles give off a nearly translucent shine.”

celebrated Hinai chickens, and served with local nameko mushrooms or pickled plums as a topping—or cold, with a choice of soy sauce or sesame-based dipping sauces. For a slightly more exotic flavor, Sato Yousuke offers a cold Thai green curry dipping sauce as well. For hearty eaters, a variety of set meals are available, which feature the meat, fish and produce from around Akita.

After a visit to the home of this culinary wonder, we had to consider ourselves fortunate that the tradition of excellence that goes into making Inaniwa Udon has not changed over the centuries, but that the tradition of limiting it strictly to those of high birth has. This is a taste that the entire country deserves to share, and with three Sato Yousuke locations to be found in Tokyo, it's one that you've no excuse to miss.

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www.sato-yoske.co.jp/shop/index.html



Given the simplicity of the ingredients—wheat flour and water—that go into the dish, it may come as a surprise that Akita's celebrated Inaniwa Udon were once a meal that could only be enjoyed by nobility.

The techniques that were developed by the Sato family to create the refined interpretation of this Japanese staple are still a family secret, one that stretches back over 12 generations, from Sato Ichibee in the 7th century to Sato Yousuke now. Because of the time and effort that go into making the udon, it was once strictly a luxury item, and was even given as tribute to local shogun. With the coming of the Meiji Period, the noodles were presented to the Imperial Household Agency, and the rest of the country took notice. They won awards in Meiji era expositions, and are recognized as being among the best udon that Japan has to offer. In modern times, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries awarded Inaniwa Udon with a spot among the country's top representations of rural cuisine.

Curious to try it out for ourselves when we traveled to Akita, we paid a visit to the Sato Yousuke Honten in Yuzawa City. At the shop, visitors can see the intensive noodle making process first hand. The current production method dates back to 1665, and yields a truly unique noodle, one that is thinner and flatter than most udon, with a consistency that is firm, yet chewy. It involves a rigorous hand-kneading over a flour-covered board, followed by an aging process: both are repeated three times during the making of the udon. This laborious process introduces

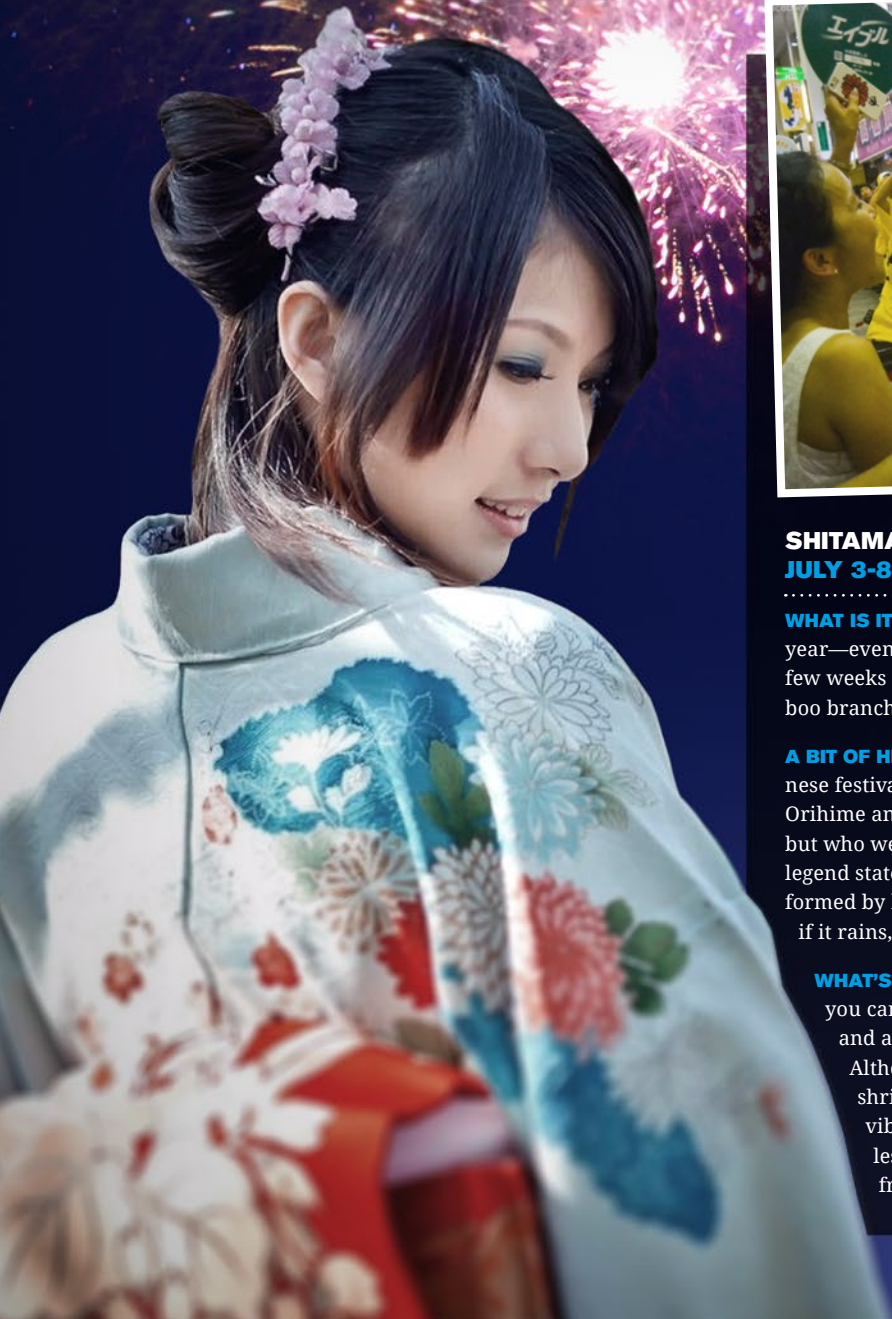
many air bubbles into the noodles, which give them their unique consistency, and according to the Akita Research Institute of Food and Brewing, means that they can still be served, even a few hours after they have been cooked.

Of course, after seeing the artistry and care that go into crafting Inaniwa Udon, the next step, of course, is tasting it. Quite simply, Inaniwa Udon is a purist's dream, and a treat for the eyes as well—the cream-white noodles give off a nearly translucent shine. Sato Yousuke serves the noodles in a variety of different ways. They can be served hot—with a light, yet savory broth made from Akita's



Summer Season

TOKYO'S SUMMER FESTIVALS



SHITAMACHI TANABATA FESTIVAL JULY 3-8

WHAT IS IT? Tanabata is perhaps the most colorful time of the year—even more so than cherry blossom season in Tokyo. For a few weeks in early July, strips of paper in bright tones adorn bamboo branches and trees all across the city.

A BIT OF HISTORY Tanabata is a star festival, and like most Japanese festivals, it's based on a legend. The story is about two lovers, Orihime and Hikoboshi, who were separated by the Milky Way, but who were allowed to see each other once a year, on July 7. The legend states that if the sky is clear on Tanabata, there is a bridge formed by birds across the Milky Way and the lovers can meet, but if it rains, they won't...

WHAT'S HAPPENING? Tanabata falls on July 7 every year, but you can catch the colorful strips of paper for a few days before and after the 7th, and even write your own wish on them. Although you can find the bamboo wish trees at most local shrines and temples, the best way to soak up the festival vibe is to head out to Asakusa's Kappabashi, where countless vendors and stalls are awaiting you with trinkets and fried foods.

Photos: Natalie Jacobsen



SUMIDA FIREWORKS JULY 25

WHAT IS IT? By far the oldest and largest (not to mention busiest) fireworks display in Tokyo, the Sumida River Fireworks Festival is one of the most popular events in summer. The last Saturday of July is always synonymous with a night sky filled with dazzling shades, and packed crowds below trying to get the best spot to view them. Nearly a million spectators gather every year to see the colorful explosions, which come in an array of patterns, shapes and sizes.

A BIT OF HISTORY Apparently, the tradition of the Sumidagawa fireworks festival can be traced back to 1732, when fireworks were launched as part of festivals for the dead.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? The best spots to view the fireworks are along Sumida River and from the various bridges across it, but unless you want to get squashed by the other Tokyoites who had the same idea, we recommend sticking around Asakusa, and even further away as the fireworks can be seen from numerous areas of the city, especially in tall buildings. The show starts at 19:05. The event will be cancelled in case of rain.

SHINJUKU EISA FESTIVAL JULY 25

WHAT IS IT? This cheery festival has all kinds of flavors from Okinawa—with dancing, drumming, and of course, food. *Eisa* is a form of folk dance from the southern islands, and is usually performed by young men and women accompanied by song, fancy footwork and percussion, and even folk songs played on the *sanshin*—a three-stringed Okinawan instrument.

A BIT OF HISTORY *Eisa* was traditionally performed around obon to honor ancestral spirits, but these days it's just another excuse to celebrate.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? The parade will feature dancers swaying across the Shinjuku roads wearing eye-catching, bright costumes, and playing portable taiko drums. The matsuri is expecting over 20 dance troupes from all over the country (Okinawa and Tohoku included) to take part in this noisy, intoxicating celebration. Thousands of people should be in attendance as it's one of the summer's most popular events, so get there early to snag a prime spot to view the procession (and crowd-watch, which is always interesting in Shinjuku), which will continue on well after sunset.

KOENJI AWAODORI AUGUST 29-30

WHAT IS IT? Just about the biggest party in Tokyo, Koenji's annual street dance festival crams the streets to capacity for a weekend of raucous revelry.

A BIT OF HISTORY The origins of Awaodori (400 years ago in Tokushima, Shikoku) are unclear, but some of the moves the older guys still pull hint at some kind of alcohol having been involved...

WHAT'S HAPPENING? Around 12,000 Awa dancers and countless more members of the public will descend upon the neighborhood to take in the parades that snake through nine different routes along the thin, atmospheric streets. JR Koenji Station is particularly busy but you're better off heading for Shin Koenji Station—head out of the subway entrance and right into the action, but get there early for the best views. Youngsters are in on the action too, though, and the sight of many of the troupes' multigenerational casts may just inspire you to join in!

ASAKUSA SAMBA MATSURI AUGUST 29

WHAT IS IT? The annual Asakusa Samba Carnival sees dancers wiggling their way through downtown Tokyo and shaking their feathers to the beat in what is possibly the city's sexiest summer festival. Troupes of dancers will parade through the traditional quarters of Asakusa, going from Sensoji Temple to Tawaramachi Station. The whole event is modeled on the iconic Rio de Janeiro Carnival, and will hold a contest for the dance performers. Samba beats, churrasco grills and some Brazilian exuberance are sure to spice up the end of the summer.

A BIT OF HISTORY The Asakusa Samba Carnival was first held back in 1981, in an effort to revitalize what was then a somewhat run-down area.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? The Asakusa Samba Carnival may not have much in common with other festivals you've seen throughout the summer, but it might be one of the liveliest. Expect plenty of tropical vibes, shaking hips, exposed stomachs, glitter and sequins, and hordes of Japanese men with zoom lenses...



by Vivian Morelli

UFC

ROAD TO UFC JAPAN



For the contestants who take part, reality TV talent shows offer a chance to make dreams come true. A promising newcomer can be plucked from obscurity and placed in the limelight, while the figure who you've been rooting for may stumble unexpectedly. The stakes are high, and the drama comes naturally.

The fighters who are taking part in the "Road to UFC: Japan" TV series are gearing up for their own reality show roller coaster ride this summer, and it will be leading them to an opportunity to fight at the highest level in their sport: as headliners at "UFC Fight Night Japan: Nelson vs Barnett."

Although mixed martial arts (MMA), and particularly UFC, has been taking the world by storm, many Japanese MMA fighters find themselves in tough financial times. PRIDE, the Japanese fighting organization that used to draw audiences of nearly 100,000 fans—closed down

some eight years earlier, and no strong league has risen to take its place. Even champion-level Japanese MMA fighters are forced to take on second jobs in order to support themselves as they manage to squeeze in the time to train for their next fight.

For "Road to UFC: Japan," eight of Japan's toughest featherweights (up to 66.3 kg) have been chosen by the UFC organization to train in Las Vegas, the home of UFC, all for a shot at a contract as a professional fighter with the world's top MMA league—and the chance to put their skill, speed, and toughness on display at Saitama Super Arena on September 27.

Because each MMA fighter brings a different mix of martial arts disciplines—jiu-jitsu, kick boxing, boxing, wrestling, and kung fu, just to name a few—to the match, no battle is ever the same. And fighters

are always training relentlessly in their gyms and against sparring partners to continue to improve strength, focus, skill, and power. In the lead-up to September's Fight Night, you can see them putting their techniques and determination to the test each week, as they try to make it to a head-to-head battle at the Super Arena.

UFC fans will recognize the format of the show, as it is very similar to the long-running, and highly popular "The Ultimate Fighter," which has launched the career of many a fighter back in the U.S. Once the Japanese fighters arrive in Las Vegas, they will begin training with their coaches—UFC heavyweights Roy Nelson and Josh Barnett, who will take charge of a team of four fighters each. Over the course of the season, audiences will see these hopefuls run through the gamut of emotions—from fighters being psyched up before a fight to their raw tears as they push themselves to the limit, training thousands of miles away from home. One fighter from each team will be chosen to fight under the bright lights in Saitama—but only time will tell which two they will be.

COACHES' CORNER



ROY NELSON

Fighting out of the U.S. state of Nevada, Roy "Big Country" Nelson is himself a veteran of "The Ultimate Fighter: Heavyweights," which he won back in 2009. He has trained in the legendary Gracie Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu system, and holds a black belt in the art. Since entering the UFC octagon as a rostered fighter in 2010, he has been known for his show-stopping knockout punch. However, his 21–11 record reflects UFC CEO Dana White's sentiment that he is the "ultimate underachiever." Ranked 11th in the heavyweight division, the 39-year-old weighs in at 119 kg and stands 182 cm.



JOSH BARNETT

Josh "The Warmaster" Barnett was a one-time holder of the UFC heavyweight championship title, which he won over Randy Couture in 2002. The California-based fighter has a background in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, wrestling, and jiu-jitsu, and has fought in other MMA organizations such as PRIDE, King of Pancrase, and Strikeforce. Weighing in at 113 kg and standing 190 cm, Barnett is known to submit his opponents with a variety of chokes and holds, but isn't afraid to get into a striking brawl if need be. The 37-year-old is now ranked number 6 in the heavyweight division.

Road to UFC: Japan

Channel: TV Tokyo (Kanto Local) | Every Monday 25:00–25:30

First Episode: Monday, July 6

Channel: BS Japan | Every Saturday 24:00–24:30

First Episode: Saturday, July 11



BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW!

The event is to be held at the Saitama Super Arena on Sunday, September 27. Tickets can now be purchased at ufc.tokyoweekender.com

MEET THE CONTESTANTS



AKIYO "WICKY" NISHIURA

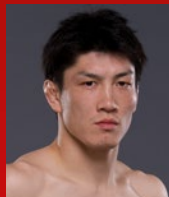
This painter and new father of twins makes just ¥100,000 a month

Stats: 65kg, 172cm, 31 y.o.

Record: 13 wins / 8 losses / 1 draw

Fighting out of: Yokohama

Style: Kickboxing



DAIKI "DJ TAIKI" HATA

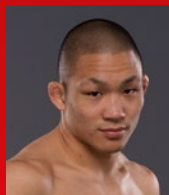
He's a die-hard fan of the voice actress, Yukari Tamura, and works at a restaurant

61kg, 172cm, 32 y.o.

17 wins / 9 losses / 7 draws

Fighting out of Chiba

Style: Wrestling



TATSUYA ANDO

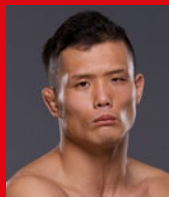
Grew up watching PRIDE, and is currently training with the Ryo Chonan

65kg, 167cm, 25 y.o.

3 wins / 0 losses

Fighting out of Tokyo

Styles: Shooto, Wrestling



NOBUMITSU "TYSON" OSAWA

This tough, hard-nosed fighter lives with his grandmother in Tsudanuma

69kg, 170cm, 28 y.o.

8 wins / 3 losses

Fighting out of Chiba

Style: Shooto



TERUTO "YASHABO" ISHIHARA

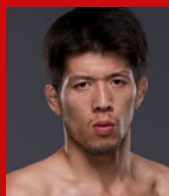
Youngest of the lot, he's known for being a party animal—and a ladies' man

59kg, 162cm, 23 y.o.

7 wins / 2 losses / 1 draw

Fighting out of Osaka

Styles: Vale tudo, Shooto



HIROTO UESAKO

A veteran of the DEEP MMA organization and pupil of the legendary Yoshihiro Akiyama

65kg, 175cm, 28 y.o.

10 wins / 5 losses

Fighting out of Tokyo

Style: Judo



MIZUTO "PUGNUS" HIROTA

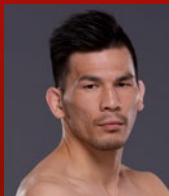
One of Japan's top fighters, but struggled during his first time in the UFC

65kg, 170cm, 34 y.o.

17 wins / 7 losses / 1 draw

Fights out of Nagasaki

Styles: Sumo, Boxing, Judo



TATSUNAO NAGAKURA

Owns his own consulting firm and developed his grit as a rugby player

65kg, 170cm, 31 y.o.

11 wins / 5 losses

Fighting out of Osaka

Styles: Judo, Mixed



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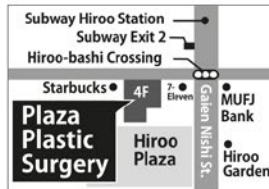


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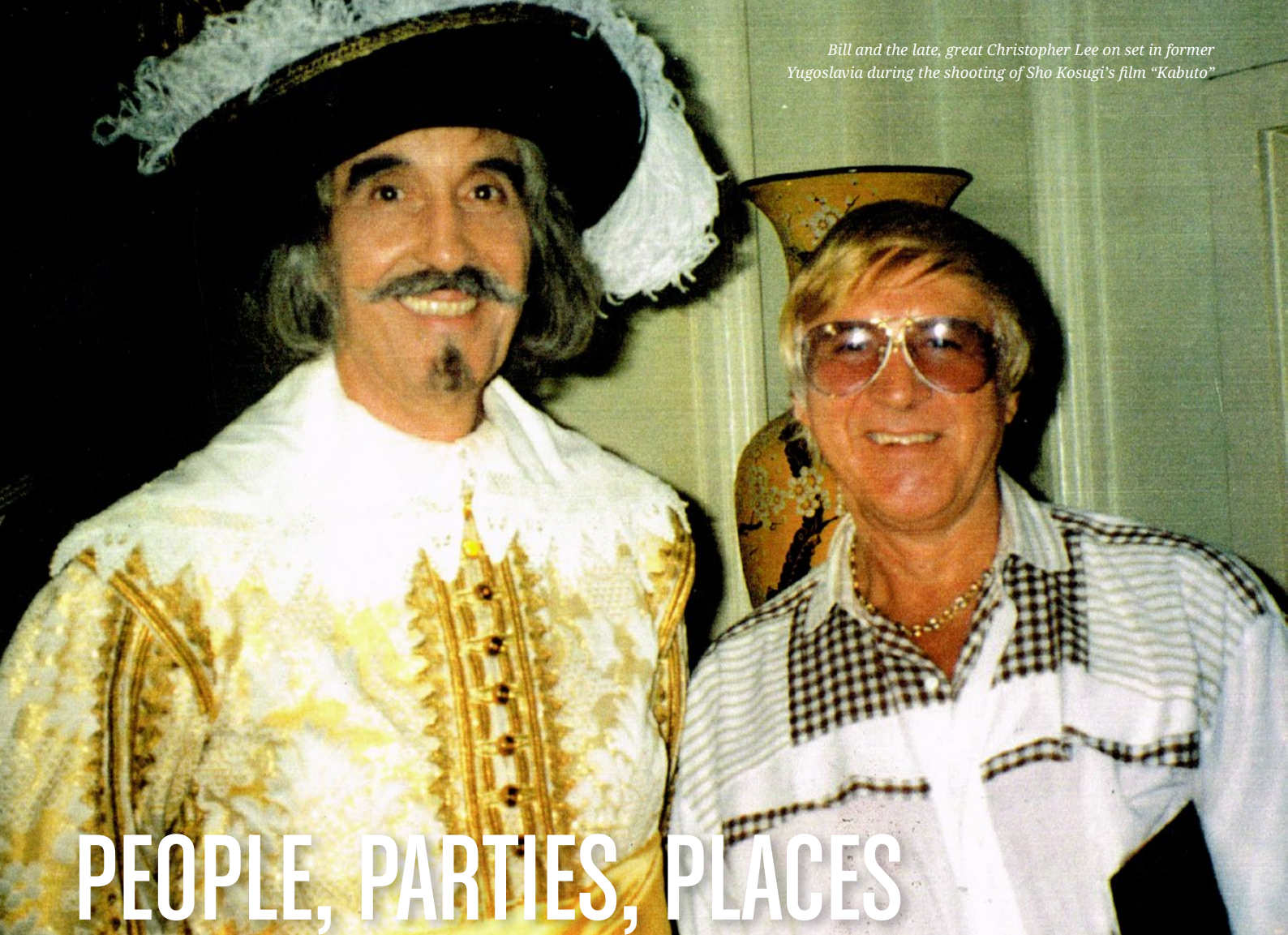
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Bill and the late, great Christopher Lee on set in former Yugoslavia during the shooting of Sho Kosugi's film "Kabuto"



PEOPLE, PARTIES, PLACES

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

This great old city of ours has really been super busy the last few months. Much of this is the tearing down or renovation of old buildings and the building of all kinds of new buildings, parks, and malls just about anywhere you go in and around Tokyo. I'm sure you see this every day.

With the exchange rates being what they are, there have also been more and more tourists from all over the world visiting. In addition to seeing the many wonders of Japan, a lot of them are shopping till they drop. Check it out: there are lots of bargains everywhere.

All kinds of cultural events have been on as well: rock and classical concerts, ethnic shows, art exhibits, Broadway musicals, Yoyogi Park's weekend happenings that have included really rocking Jamaica, Thai, Laos, and Vietnam festivals—not to mention the Salsa Contest. In addition to all that there's the Farmers' Market every weekend in front of the U.N. University and always a few other flea markets here and there.

Looking ahead you should really try and see one of the DRUM TAO group's shows at the Galaxy Theater from July 16 to July 26. They've performed all over the world and their color, choreography, and energy have to be seen to be believed. Please go see and hear them. Enough about happenings recent and on the way—let's move on to one of my favorite topics: interesting people.

Over at the Grand Hyatt I ran into photographer Hiroyuki Suzuki and his wife Junko, the renowned fashion designer. They were both chic, and Junko was right out of Vogue—in a black dress trimmed in red and wearing dangling red earrings, even more special than usual. She's just back from her big show in Beijing, and just put out a beautiful collection of both women's kimonos and men's yukatas. She also had some fun funky black T-shirts that feature a caricature of her in silver and gold on the front in the big windows in her big building on Kotodori. I should also mention the busy lady did the

fantastic costumes for DRUM TAO's show.

Going through old pictures for "my book" and found one of Junko, a man I didn't recognize, and me. Checked with her and she told me he was the late great French artist César, who's second only to Picasso. Thanks to the multi-talented Raymond Johnson, I got to meet and have breakfast with the Three-Time Nobel Peace Prize nominee Yank Barry at the big and really well-decorated VIP lounge in the ANA Hotel. Yank's really a miracle man and I will have more about him in the near future.

Super star George Clooney, whom we featured on our June cover, was in town to promote the film "Tomorrowland" for Disney. I first met this great actor and nice guy at the big "Batman Returns" film premiere and party in Hollywood. Got to know him better when he was here to promote "The Perfect Storm" for Warner Bros. I remember riding around Osaka with him and a couple guys from his entourage. We were in a small van and I was sitting by him. By this time, I was used to his sense of humor, but I was still really surprised when he started to sing "Tomorrow" from the Broadway show "Annie." When he got to "Tomorrow, Tomorrow," I belted out "It's only a day away," and we ended up singing the whole song together! While we're talking Disney we'd like to congratulate all the good people there. They just moved their offices from Meguro to Mori Toranomon Towers, and have many more big films coming up.

TIPS FOR A SAFE NIGHT IN TOKYO

On June 1, the U.S. Embassy put out their periodic security message for U.S. citizens. They were really honest when they said the crime rate here is really low compared to so many places in this old world of ours. They went on to say that crimes against U.S. citizens often involve theft or fraud and are increasing—especially in the Roppongi and Kabukicho areas. Seems like the Embassy receives reports of drink spiking, credit card fraud, extortion, and even assault in these districts.



Arab Art by Japanese Artists – Oman Embassy

1. Oman Amb. Khalid Al-Muslahi, his wife Abeer, HIH Princess Takamado 2. Maria Anderson, Bill, Lilibeth Dabdob, Mary Aida, her husband Kimikazu 3. Maria, Princess Takamado, Lilibeth 4. Maria, Fumiko Tottori 5. Jamila al-Gunaid (Yemen), Samera Abdelazez (Sudan), Monira Khelif (Tunisia), Shifa Haddad (Jordan)

In and Around

6. Dante and his partner, William Greenawalt at their exhibition at their exhibition at Shibuya 109 7. National Azabu staff—Hiroyuki Kashina & Atomu Kanbe—show off their new uniforms, with their friend Brendon Borroni 8. Going back a bit: Film director Taylor Hackford, Bill Hersey and acclaimed British actress Helen Merrin.

She just won the Tony Award for her Broadway performances as the Queen in the play “The Audience” 9. HealthyIM CEO Michael Bobrove, Nat’l Azabu’s Dale Toriumi, Father Grimm, HealthyIM Project Manager David Israelsson

Sakura Time at the Indian Embassy

10. Recently arrived Indian Deputy Head of Mission and Mrs. Amit Kumar. 11. Indian Amb. Deepa Wadhwa with a group of her many friends

Relaxing at Midtown Oakwood

12. Urs Kingelfuss, Oakwoods Japan’s top man—Martin Fluck 13. Kevin Brown, Oakwood’s Eric Ishimaru, Marcus Fishenden, Norihiro Matsushita, Martin



Tolman's Busy Booth at the Art Fair

1. Art lover Jerri Donovan, Artist Daniel Kelly, Norman Tolman, Noted "Lemon" Artist Yosuke Funasaka 2. Dewi Sukarno, Andaz Hotel GM Arnaud de Saint Exupéry, his wife Aode, Norman 3. Dewi and Daniel

Brunei Nat'l Day

4. Gochi Hamada, Jordan Amb. Demiye Haddad, his wife Shifa, Popular Politician Kazuyuki Hamada 5. The hosting couple, Brunei Amb. and Mrs. Mahamud Ahmad 6. Tongan Amb. Tania Tupou, Lilo Maruyama, Le Nguyet Hung (Vietnam)

Hotel Okura's Garden Fair

7. Irish Amb. Anne Barrington and Fumiko Tottori (mother of Princess Takamado) 8. Belgium Amb. Luc Liebaut, his wife Karina, Rita Giorgi (Italy) 9. Tamayo Odano, Marianne Ashcroft (Great Britain) 10. Turkish Amb. Ahmet Meric, his wife Kumiko 11. Polish Amb. Cyryl Kocaczewski, his wife Iwana, their daughter Marta, Margot Carrington (U.S.) 12. Slovak Republic Ambassador Michal Kottman, his wife Iveta.

A couple I know from the States were threatened in the sort of dirty basement area of the old Roi building in Roppongi. They were lucky a couple of Japanese came out of a café there and the “foreign thug ran away, without getting anything.” They were leaving the next morning, so they didn’t want to file a police report.

Here are the principal rules they recommend when you go out to enjoy Tokyo night life. Leave your credit and debit cards in the hotel safe. Take cash—only the amount you are willing to spend. Don’t go clubbing alone, don’t enter a bar or club that has a street hawker to get you in, don’t accept an offer of a free drink, keep an eye on your drink, don’t get too intoxicated, and obey the law—possession of illegal drugs is a serious crime here. I know it sounds like a lot of rules and regulations, but as they say it’s better to be safe than sorry. Japan’s a great country—enjoy.

I just recently met up with Michael Bobrove, CEO of HealthyIM, which has just launched a new project called HealthyTokyo.com. It’s a health and wellness support service for the English speaking community in Japan. They offer a long-overdue live concierge service that finds what you need to get healthy and stay healthy and make appointments for you as well. Members get access to a growing network of medical partners (including English-speaking doctors and dentists), wellness coaches (personal trainers and others) and healthy partners (spas, gyms, organic retailers, yoga, Pilates, beauty, etc.). Many of the health and wellness providers also give members’ discounts and special offers on everything from cancer screenings at top medical facilities to yoga lessons in Tokyo. You can learn more about all of it at HealthyTokyo.com.

In fact, I wish I had heard of this service a little earlier, as I had some back pains lately and a friend gave me the name of a Japanese medicine that was very popular here. Dropped by that super-busy pharmacy across from Shibuya Station. A young girl working there who spoke English asked me what I was looking for. I gave her the card my friend had written the name of the medicine in Japanese on. She asked me to please wait a minute and went over to ask an older man working there about it. She came back and in perfect English told me “We used to have that s___ but don’t carry it any more.” I asked her where she learned her English and taught her a few words she could use for s___. As Hiroko who used to teach English on FEN radio used to say, a little language goes a long way. With that, I think it’s time to move on to the party scene.

THE AHMADS’ 31ST NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION

I spent a fantastic night with Brunei Darussalam Ambassador, Mrs. Mahamud Ahmad, and their many guests at the New Otani. The occasion was to celebrate their country’s 31st National Day. The variety of people there, the excellent buffet, and the ambiance added up to an unforgettable event.

Over the years, I’ve had to decline three invitations to visit Brunei. I’m really sorry about that, as friends who have vacationed there tell me it’s a beautiful getaway. I did have several hours in the airport there on the way and a Gurka officer I first met in Hong Kong who was posted in Brunei took me on a whirlwind tour of Bandar Seri

Begawan on the way to Malaysia. I would really like to spend a week or so there.

SAKURA VIEWING DAYS—INDIAN EMBASSY

Mother Nature was kind here in Japan this year and we had nice weather for cherry blossom viewing. Thanks to Indian Ambassador Deepa Wadhwa, I had the privilege of viewing some of the most beautiful blossoms in Japan. The embassy near Yasukuni Shrine in front of the Yazawa River was open three days for guests to view the cherry blossoms from their roof. It was magnificent. Every day was a wonderful party with Indian food, a bazaar and the Ambassador and her staff’s warm hospitality.

Amb. Deepa Wadhwa, whose husband is India’s Ambassador to Thailand, has been super busy since her posting here. She told me they are having a full schedule of cultural events currently coming up, and these are always well worth checking out.

BEAUTIFUL INT’L GARDENS AT OKURA

Happy I got up early and over to HIH Princess Takamado’s ribbon cutting for the truly spectacular 15th Annual World Gardening Fair at Hotel Okura. Participants this year included the U.S.’s Margot Carrington (Ambassador Kennedy was in the U.S. for Prime Minister Abe’s visit there.), Irish Ambassador Anne Barrington, Ambassadors’ wives Marianne Ashcrof (U.K., Northern Ireland) Iwona Kozaczewska (Poland), Karme Lizbaut (Belgium), Rita Mannella Giorgi (Italy), Iveta Kottmanova (Slovak Republic), Kumiko Meric (Turkey), Michele Roback (Sweden), and Iida Xavier Esteves (Portugal). Each of the gardens was beautiful, original, and memorable for the creativity of the participants working with the Japanese style, and each one providing a reflection of the countries they represented. Kudos to all concerned.

This was the last of the gardening events at the Okura for a while. They’ve already started tearing down the main building, for as is always happening in Tokyo, they’re building a new one. The south wing, which is very nice, will remain open. Part of the proceeds this year went to the charity organization Tomodachi.

AT THE 10TH ART FAIR TOKYO

Art Fair Tokyo celebrated its 10th anniversary in late March. This year’s fair featured over 140 galleries and partners from around across the world. It presented exhibits and art works from a range of genres and periods including antiques, crafts and the latest contemporary art. After checking out some of the galleries, I relaxed with Norman Tolman and his staff at their super-busy booth. Artists, they exhibited included the always popular Daniel Kelly and Yoshio Imamura. The Tolman booth had to be one of the most popular at the fair, and I spent a good two hours there seeing long time friends and meeting some other very interesting people for the first time.

Since the fair, Norman, who really knows what he’s doing had very successful exhibits in Singapore and Hong Kong. My thanks to model-artist Mayumi Goto for her painting of a blue tiger—my favorite animal—on a card she sent me.



Udo Artists’ Tommy Shigetomi, Ceremony Pres.
Tsukasa Shiga, Shiga’s son Christophe



Ukraine fashion model Yana
and her mom Irina at Hiroo Segafredo



Takako Iwamura and Daniele Yoshikoshi
at Hiroo Segafredo

MOVIES

COMING TO A CINEMA NEAR YOU IN JULY



JUL 4

SHAUN THE SHEEP MOVIE

Shaun, the little sheep with a penchant for getting into, and out of, mischief made his screen debut in the 1995 Wallace and Gromit adventure “A Close Shave.” Created by Aardman Studios—the talented people known for their stop-motion clay animation and quintessentially English characters and situations—Shaun subsequently found a new lease of life in his own self-titled series. Spanning multiple episodes and having aired in over 180 countries since 2007, the children’s favorite is finally making its way to cinema screens in “Shaun the Sheep Movie.” In the little lamb’s first big-screen solo adventure, we find our hero headed off to the city with sheepdog Blitzler and the rest of the flock in tow. They’re on a search for the Farmer who appears to be suffering from an unfortunate spot of amnesia and has quite forgotten just who he is. Lovingly animated and full of witty sight gags and visual fun, this charming adventure is just as much fun for parents as it is for the little lambs it’s aimed at.



JUL 18

INSIDE OUT

Studio Pixar is back with what looks set to be another modern animated classic. “Inside Out” is a comedy drama that revolves around young Riley Anderson, whose life is uprooted when her dad gets a new job and the family relocates to San Francisco. Inside Riley’s head, in an area known as Headquarters, the emotions Joy, Fear, Disgust, Anger, and Sadness are thrown into turmoil by the move. While Joy, Riley’s most important emotion, tries to make the first day at her new school a happy experience, Sadness has other ideas, and the pair are catapulted on an adventure through the inner workings of Riley’s mind. Directed by Pete Doctor, the director behind “Up” and “Monsters, Inc.,” the voice cast features Amy Poehler as Joy, “The Office”’s Phyllis Smith as Sadness and comedian Lewis Black as Anger.

TUSK

“Tusk” is written and directed by Kevin Smith, the man who made his name with 90s indie slacker-comedy classics “Clerks” and “Mallrats.” He’s maintained a loyal following thanks to a regular podcast and it’s from there that the idea for this odd tale came about. It stars Justin Long as Wallace Bryton, a sarcastic podcast host who travels up to northern Canada in search of material for his human oddity-based show. Having entered the house of mysterious former seaman Howard Howe, Bryton hears the story of how the old salt was once rescued at sea by a walrus. During the yarn, Bryton loses consciousness as the result of some drugged tea and awakes to a nightmare of some rather unpleasant surgery and a horrific insight into the extent of Howe’s obsession with the tuskly sea-mammals...



JUL 18



JUL 4

THE LOOK OF SILENCE

Joshua Oppenheimer’s 2012 documentary “The Act of Killing” detailed the Indonesian communist killings of 1965–66 by having one of the leaders of the infamous death squads reenact some of his brutal killings for the cameras. Sweeping to worldwide acclaim the innovative film ended its phenomenal run at the Oscars where it walked away with the Academy Award for Best Documentary. Companion piece “The Look of Silence” treads similar ground, following a family as they discover the identities of their son’s killers. In a country where the perpetrators of these evil acts remain in power, youngest son Adi makes the brave decision to end the years of silence as he confronting his brother’s murderers. A profound follow-up to one of the most powerful documentaries of modern times and an astonishing journey into lives shattered by violence.

AGENDA



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

1 JUL 24-26
24 **Fuji Rock Festival 2015**
 Foo Fighters, Muse, Aqualung, Belle and Sebastian, Flume, Happy Mondays, Johnny Marr, Ryan Adams, and a few days camping in the mountains.
Where: Naeba Ski Resort, Yuzawa, Niigata
How Much: ¥16,800 - ¥39,800
More info: www.fujirockfestival.com

2 JUL 25
25 **Shinjuku Eisa Festival**
 This colorful festival parading in the streets of Shinjuku has all kinds of flavors from Okinawa—with dancing, drumming, and of course, food.
Where: Shinjuku station East exit
How Much: Free
More info: www.shinjuku-eisa.com

3 JUL 25
25 **Sumida River Fireworks Festival**
 Don your yukata for the oldest and largest (not to mention busiest) fireworks display in Tokyo.
Where: Sumida Park, Asakusa
How Much: Free
More info: www.sumidagawa-hanabi.com

4 JUL 11-12
11 **Nippon Craft Beer Festival in Shonan 2015**
 Head over to Kamakura for some beer on the beach: around 20 breweries will be showcasing their products.
Where: Koshigoe Beach, Kamakura
How Much: ¥3,900 adv, ¥4,500 door
More info: www.craftbeerfestival.org

5 JUL 11-12
11 **Ocean Peoples '15 Ocean**
 lovers unite in this music and art-filled festival to raise awareness for environmental issues on both land and sea.
Where: Yoyogi Park, Shibuya-ku
How Much: Free
More info: www.oceanpeoples.com

6 JUL 25-26
25 **HandMade in Japan Fes 2015** This two-day extravaganza presents everything DIY—arts, fashion, crafts, you name it—with over 3000 creators displaying and selling.
Where: Tokyo Big Sight, Koto-ku
How Much: ¥1,200 (¥1,000 adv.)
More info: <https://hmj-fes.jp>

7 JUL 18-19
18 **Brazil Festival 2015**
 Dubbed as the most “intoxicating” event of the summer at Yoyogi for the copious amount of South American booze swilled and dance performances. Don't miss it!
Where: Yoyogi Park, Shibuya-ku
How Much: Free
More info: www.tokyoweekender.com

8 JUL 11-12
11 **Africa Hibiya Festival**
 An assortment of foods, drinks, traditional handicrafts, workshops, music and non-profit organizations will represent the diverse nations of Africa.
Where: Hibiya Park, Chiyoda-ku
How much: Free | **More info:** www.hibiyafesfrica.web.fc2.com

JULY

9

AUDIO 2015

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| | | Nagoya Sakae
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www.outbacksteakhouse.co.jp/en

9 JUL 19

Audio Tokyo 2015

Get on board at Harumi Passenger Terminal for a Sunday afternoon and evening filled with some of the world's top talent in Electro, Techno, EDM, and House.

Where: Harumi Port Terminal, Chuo-ku
How Much: ¥6,800 - ¥13,000
More info: www.audiotokyo.com

10 JUL 13

Denki Groove

Ebisu's Liquid Room is turning 11 years old, and is celebrating with veterans Denki Groove and their techno-pop sounds.

Where: Liquid Room, Shibuya-ku
How Much: ¥5,800
More info: www.liquidroom.net

11 JUL 22-25

Kagurazaka Matsuri

A local street festival will take over the streets and help bring back some of the old Edo atmosphere; the area was, after all, once at the edge of Edo Castle.

Where: Kagurazaka-dori and surroundings
How much: Free
More info: www.kagurazaka.in/matsuri/

12 JUL 18-19

Yokohama Sparkling Twilight 2015

Illuminated boats and fireworks in the sparkling city backdrop make for a pretty magical scene in this festival's fourth edition.

Where: Yamashita Koen, Yokohama
How Much: Free
More info: www.y-artist.co.jp/sparkling/

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TOKYO WEEKENDER

July 12, 1974

"A Forum for Foreigners in Japan"

Vol. V, No. 27

**SUMMER COOLING TIP:
GET
INTO A DRAFT**

It is not a subject of note in historical records, but Commodore Matthew C. Perry brought a great deal more than just black ships and a letter from the President when he arrived on the then-lovely shores of Old Nippon.

Yessir.

Old Matt, the books show, also poured the very first round of that nectar of the hop, the common (roof) garden variety beer, that Japan had ever seen.

He set 'em up as a gesture of appreciation

for a gathering of Tokugawa Shogunate officials, and the Land of the Rising Sun has been sipping suds ever since.

At home in front of The Eye, from corner can-machines, while watching the baseball game, in the cabarets playing a different kind of game—and now, while cooling off on those rooftop islands-in-the-smog—the Japanese in the first six months of this year alone quaffed a quenching 1.67 million kiloliters of beer.

BACK IN THE DAY: JULY 1974

Check out the scene in Tokyo from 1974! You can read the rest of this issue (No.27 1974) and view Weekender's 45-year archive online. www.tokyoweekender.com/weekender-archives/

ROBERT DOWNEY JR. CHRIS HEMSWORTH MARK RUFFALO CHRIS EVANS SCARLETT JOHANSSON JEREMY RENNER WITH JAMES SPADER AS ULTRON AND SAMUEL L. JACKSON AS NICK FURY



MARVEL

AVENGERS

AGE OF ULTRON

MARVEL STUDIOS PRESENTS A JOSS WHEDON FILM ROBERT DOWNEY JR. "AVENGERS- AGE OF ULTRON" CHRIS HEMSWORTH MARK RUFFALO CHRIS EVANS SCARLETT JOHANSSON JEREMY RENNER DON CHEADLE AARON TAYLOR-JOHNSON ELIZABETH OLSEN PAUL BETTANY COBIE SMULDERS ANTHONY MACKIE HAYLEY ATWELL IDRIS ELBA STELLAN SKARSGARD WITH JAMES SPADER AS ULTRON AND SAMUEL L. JACKSON AS NICK FURY CASTING BY SARAH HALLEY FINN, C.S.A. MUSIC BY BRIAN TYLER DANNY ELFMAN HEAD OF VISUAL DEVELOPMENT RYAN MEINERDING CO-HEAD OF VISUAL DEVELOPMENT CHARLIE WEN VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR CHRISTOPHER TOWNSEND AND ANIMATION BY INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC SPECIAL THANKS TO MARVEL STUDIOS FOUNDRING CHAIRMAN DAVID MASEL CUSTOM DESIGNER ALEXANDRA BYRNE EDITED BY JEFFREY FORD, A.C.E. LISA LASSEK PRODUCTION DESIGNER CHARLES WOOD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BEN DAVIS, BSC CO-PRODUCER MITCH BELL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JON FAVREAU STAN LEE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS VICTORIA ALONSO JEREMY LATCHAM PATRICIA WHITCHER EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ALAN FINE PRODUCED BY KEVIN FEIGE, P.G.A. WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JOSS WHEDON



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