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MAY 2016

weekender

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*Other Top Reasons
to Visit Hakone*

ALSO: M83 Interview, Sake Beauty Secrets, Faces of Tokyo's LGBT Community, Hiromi Miyake Lifts for Gold, Best New Restaurants



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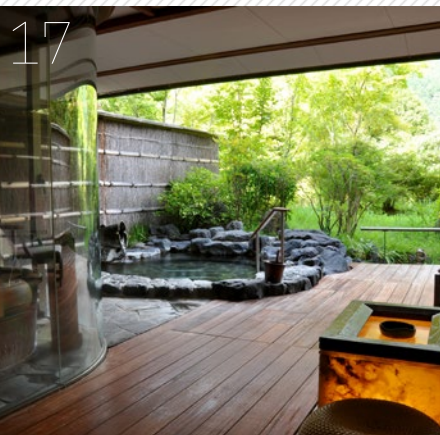
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ROBERT WALTERS

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MAY 2016

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THIS MONTH IN THE WEEKENDER



To go along with the fast-growing show along the train lines, walkways, and parks of the city, there are big new things afoot at the Weekender. All you need to do is turn a few pages and you'll see them, but because we're helpful types, here are three reasons why this issue is looking better than ever:

New look From fonts to layout styles, we've worked out several approaches that add a contemporary feel to the Weekender (we're hoping to bring similar changes to our website in the months to come). Kudos to designer Liam Ramshaw, a fellow who doesn't get to see his name in print that often.

Easier navigation Keep an eye out for a new set of sections that let you, the reader, have a clear set of what's going where. Looking to get in touch with the latest trends around town? Check out the radar. Events and culture on your mind? Then it's the guide you seek.

Joining the team We're happy to have editor Annemarie Luck on board. She's bringing years of experience with magazines such as Marie Claire and Rolling Stone to our magazine, and she is already making her presence felt in the best of ways.

Along with our makeover, you'll find the same great features that you've come to expect from us. For a bit of insight into what makes the city tick, we've got an interview with several members of Tokyo's LGBT community and a profile of one of the city's most innovative flower designers. And, should you find yourself in vacation withdrawal after Golden Week, a weekend or a day trip out to Hakone just might do the trick over the months to come. We keep finding new things to explore at this getaway favorite.

As you can see from our cover – and what lies inside – things are looking up, and we're looking forward to even better things to come. See you next month.

Editor



WRITERS WANTED

Tokyo Weekender is looking for a few good writers. If you've got a travel story you want to share, a gift for the written word, or have a unique take on life in Tokyo, we'd like to hear from you. To join our team of freelancers, please send us an email at editor@tokyoweekender.com



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EBISU TOKYO, JAPAN

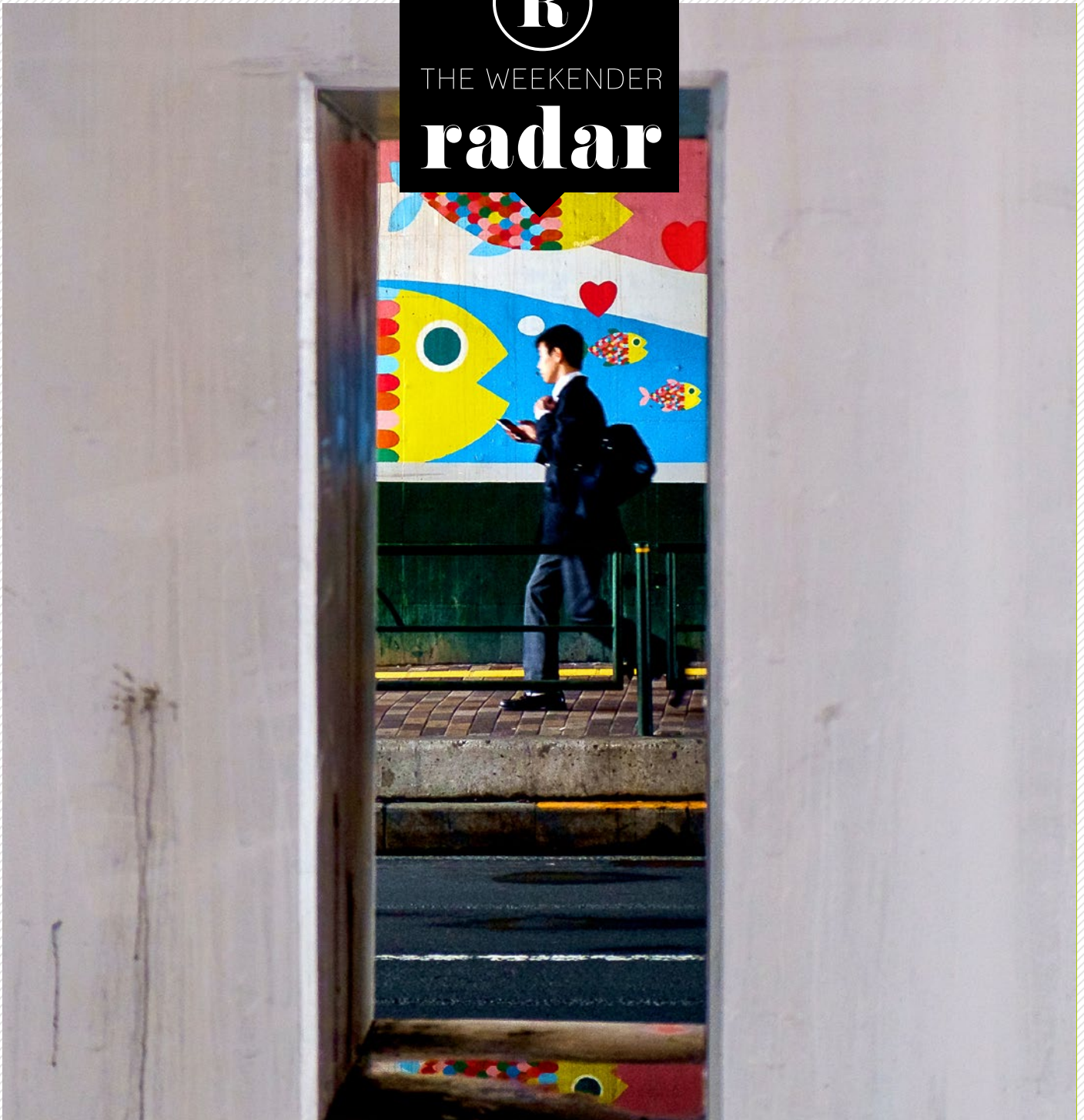
Ebisu-Minami, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo atré EBISU West 1F

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THE WEEKENDER

radar



WHAT'S ON OUR RADAR THIS MONTH...

Ebisu comes into focus with the launch of a brand-new shopping mall featuring Tokyo's second branch of NYC burger chain Shake Shack. Also, compile your spring style wish list, and prepare to indulge in British pies, German beers, and Italian orecchiette.



8 AREA GUIDE



10 STYLE



12 TRENDS

SHARING A NAME WITH THE GOD OF FORTUNE AND FOUNDED BY A COMMUNITY OF BREWERS, THIS NEIGHBORHOOD JUST SOUTH OF SHIBUYA IS FULL OF HIP SPOTS AND QUIRKY HIDEAWAYS

Photos and words by Luca Eandi

THE WEEKENDER AREA GUIDE BREWING UP GOOD TIMES IN EBISU



EAT THE WORLD

Ebisu is not only home to a ton of izakayas and sumibiyaki restaurants, it also features international cuisine. For tasty burgers, look no further than the newly opened **Shake Shack** (full review on page 13), just outside Ebisu JR Station's West exit, although expect a line for a couple of months. **Tio Danjo** deals in Spanish tapas and wine, but you'll have to get there early as it's standing only. For Korean, **Suragan** has bulgogi and other marinated beef specialties. A godsend for taco lovers, **El Rincon de Sam** is one of the best Mexican places in Tokyo, complete with performances from a mariachi band. For a cheap route, **Voco Pizza** serves up ¥500 pies as well as other Italian fare. **Khumbila** specializes in Nepalese/Tibetan food and features a funky dining space. **Ta'im** serves Israeli lamb-heavy favorites. And finally, **Hainan Jeefan Shokudo** is the place to go for your Singaporean hawker-style food needs.

HEAD TOWARDS THE LANTERNS

Ebisu Yokocho, a food arcade running through the ground floor of a building northeast of the station, is a delightfully bustling thoroughfare full of *akachochin* (red lantern)-adorned little bars and eateries. Inside, all the seating areas overflow into each other, so you can easily have a chat with people dining at a different restaurant. Chicken skewers, oden, nabe – there's a bit of everything being served up in this lively space. It can get crowded in the evenings, but sharing narrow spaces with strangers is part of the fun.





ONCE A BREWERY

Formerly occupied by the Japan Beer Brewery Company facilities – brewers of Yebisu Beer since 1890 and namesake of the neighborhood – **Yebisu Garden Place** now fills up this large open space in between skyscrapers. A vast array of restaurants and shops, including a **Mitsukoshi** department store, are located on the sloped promenade covered by a wide glass arch. The **Westin** Tokyo hotel sits just beyond the shopping area, right by the Michelin 3-star **Joël Robuchon Restaurant**, which is housed elegantly in a replica of a Louis XVI chateau. Offices, residential space and the excellent **Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography** are also located here. Another highlight of the area is the **Yebisu Beer Museum** – the exhibit is free to visit, while the tasting room features Sapporo-branded beers, including Yebisu, which can be sampled for a reasonable price.



STAND AND DRINK

The culture of *tachinomi*, standing and drinking, is alive and well in Ebisu in the form of dozens of tiny bars where you can grab a quick drink without formalities like taking your shoes off. The tachinomi hub is north of the station, where places like **Buri** serve up sake and beer, as well as tasty pork-wrapped asparagus skewers. For a different vibe, **What the Dickens** offers up live music and pub grub catering to Westerners. Sample local brews at **Yebisu Beer Hall** near the station, or sip craft imports at **Hops125**. One of the best bars in the area, **Bar Martha**, is hidden behind an austere cement block façade. Inside, impressive McIntosh tube amps power the vinyl being spun. The DJ is always open to requests (one per table, please) and bartenders mix mean cocktails. Another great spot for drinks and tunes is **Liquid Room**, a live music and club venue that's been around for decades.



THE OTHER BREW

All the drinking and eating is sure to take its toll on your vigor, but luckily Ebisu is also home to a slew of fine coffee shops to perk you right up. A late-night rarity, **Sarutahiko Coffee** serves the black elixir of creativity until midnight, ensuring you keep churning till morning.

For more casual daytime sipping and people watching, **Miyakoshiya Coffee** provides a break for shoppers at Yebisu Garden Place. **Bar Tram** is possibly the best of both worlds, as it makes fresh-roasted coffee until 7 pm, and then casually shifts into an absinthe bar for the night.

RED VALENTINO DRESS

Channel your inner ballerina with this beautiful Red Valentino dress. The skirt is crafted from the label's signature tulle, and the bodice is a stretch knit. We love the delicate straps and the gathered skirt, which is lined and topped with an extra layer of tulle for added volume. Wear it on its own for an elegant soiree or cocktail party, or pair it with a cropped cardigan or jumper to go casual/contemporary. No matter how you style it, this piece should earn you plenty of admiring glances. redvalentino.com



MIU MIU PUMPS

This season is all about the block heel, and these Miu Miu pumps are a subtle way to incorporate the trend into your wardrobe. The velvety blush and pale blue shoe is crafted in Italy, and features a silver trim that sets it apart from their solid-hue models. The heel is embellished with crystals and features a zig-zag pattern that is repeated at the toe. Pair them with a classic shift dress for a conservative look or jazz things up by wearing this colorful item with dark-washed jeans and a simple tee. miumiu.com



THE IN-BETWEENERS

MAY MEANS THE MERCURY IS ON THE RISE, BUT THE MONTH'S STRONG BREEZES AND CHILLY NIGHTS WON'T LET YOU PUT UP THE JACKETS JUST YET

Compiled by Vivian Morelli

IRO LEATHER JACKET

A leather jacket is a staple for any wardrobe: it's timeless, it can be paired with practically anything, and it adds an edge to any look. And while the best leather jackets can be found at secondhand and vintage shops, this Iro number is too good to pass up. The French brand is the embodiment of Parisian street style's elusive *je ne sais quoi*, and this soft pale taupe jacket is all you need this spring. Wear it over a striped tee and black skinny jeans, or over a ruffly dress and sneakers. iroparis.com





MONCLER BOMBER JACKET

When it comes to outerwear, trust seasoned expert Moncler, the French-Italian label and lifestyle brand. Once the official supplier for the French national skiing team, Moncler can now be found adorning the backs of Hollywood celebrities and fashionistas. This tailored bomber jacket is the perfect item to keep you warm until summer shows up, and the army green outer shell is durable, comfortable and stylish. moncler.com



GUCCI LOAFERS

While sneakers are all the rage this season with the whole “athleisure” trend, good shoes are a must for any wardrobe. And when we think of good shoes, Gucci immediately comes to mind. Supple leather? Check. Italian craftsmanship? Check. These loafers are adorned with brass metal horse bits, as a nod to the brand’s equestrian heritage. They look equally sharp paired with a smart suit or deconstructed jeans, and they’re so comfortable you might forget all about the trainers. gucci.com



DRIES VAN NOTEN SCARF

Leopard print is a hit or miss, but this discreet leopard pattern (you almost have to squint to see it) is perfectly tasteful. After all, it’s Dries Van Noten, the celebrated Belgian couturier who’s known for his innovative approach with a variety of textiles. For this item, the master artist used a gauzy wool with frayed edges. This lightweight scarf is ideal for spring, and its inky tones look great against rich colors – try pairing it with a burgundy blazer or a white shirt. driesvannoten.be



GOOD FOODIE NEWS

Tokyo has seen a spate of new restaurants opening recently. Here's our pick of four favorites with international flavors

SCHMATZ

THE SPECIALITY Juicy German sausages served with authentic sauerkraut and German draft beer.

THE STORY German founders Markus, Marc and Christopher started their business as a food truck at Aoyama's Farmer's Market, then opened a stall at 246 Common before officially launching their first restaurant. Who knew the demand for hearty German cuisine was so strong in Tokyo.

THE FOOD Pop by their Akasaka beerhaus for signature dishes including a variety of nine sausages, produced by a Japanese butcher who trained in Germany. Or opt for extra large schnitzel served with cranberry and apple sauce. Pair all of it with one of eight German draft beers, three of which (Bergbaum, Hafenstoff, Edelweiss) they produce locally with a craft beer brewer. All their beers are brewed under the German Beer Purity Law. And definitely don't leave without trying the spaghetti ice cream.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? "Schmatz" is a German expression for the sound you make when eating something truly delicious.
3-19-8 Akasaka, Minato-ku. www.schmatz.jp



FROM TOP
A Schmatz feast, the restaurant serves eight German draft beers — three of which are brewed locally

ROSEMARY'S TOKYO

THE SPECIALITY Farm-to-table Italian cuisine that highlights tradition, simplicity and freshness.

THE STORY A neighborhood restaurant originally founded in the heart of New York's Greenwich Village, Rosemary's is known for sourcing ingredients from the on-site vegetable garden. Their first international branch opened in Tokyo on March 25 inside the brand-new shopping complex Newoman. They plan to cultivate an urban garden and work closely with local farmers.

THE FOOD Chef Wade Moises has worked with the Japanese team to ensure the restaurant's classics are all on the menu. Look forward to homemade mozzarella, freshly baked focaccia, and handmade orecchiette pasta with broccoli rabe. For dessert? Tiramisu, natch.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? Rosemary's is named after owner Carlos Suarez's mother and is inspired by the warmth and comfort of her home in Lucca with its beautiful garden that overlooks the Tuscan valley.
Newoman 6F, 5-24-55 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku. rosemarystyo.com





SWAN & LION

THE SPECIALITY British chutneys, meat pies, cakes and sweets.

THE STORY Ian Gibbins already had a fanbase when he opened this shop – he’s been selling his home-made chutneys at Aoyama Farmer’s Market for two years. But now you can dig into other British comforts too.

THE FOOD Stop by for a lunch-set takeaway (online ordering service coming soon) that includes delicious daily salads. We tucked into a pulled pork stew, which was rich, spicy, and made us wish our office was in Kudan-Minami so we could eat it every day.

WHAT’S IN A NAME? Swan & Lion will make Britons nostalgic for quirky pub names, but it also refers to the lion as a symbol of Britain, and the Sydney Swans because Gibbins became a fan after living in Australia. 3-5-4 Kudan-Minami, Chiyoda-ku. www.swanandlion.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Swan & Lion's British fare,
Shake Shack's "concrete" desserts,
basic ShackBurger with fries,
Rosemary's Tokyo



WE DON'T
SEE THIS
AS JUST A
HAMBURGER,
THIS IS AN
EXPERIENCE



SHAKE SHACK EBISU

THE SPECIALTY American-style casual food with artisanal attention to detail for every item on the menu.

THE STORY The Shake Shack phenomenon started off with a hot dog cart in New York City's Madison Square Park. Twelve years later, they have opened Shake Shack Ebisu – the 90th shop worldwide, and the company's second in Japan.

THE FOOD As Mark Rosati, Shake Shack's culinary director, explains, "We don't see this as just a hamburger, this is an experience." If you've never been experienced, start out with the basic ShackBurger, or a double if you're feeling hungry. A relatively new item on the menu is the SmokeShack, which adds bacon and the spicy kick of cherry peppers. Ready to splurge? Go for the Shack Stack, a delicious beast made from a hamburger patty topped with a roasted portobello mushroom, which has been stuffed with melted cheese, and then deep fried. Rosati explains that when the shops open in new locations, "we want them to be 'Shake Shack,' but also reflect the culinary heritage of the community or city we're moving to." This translates to beers like Yebisu and Hitachino White on tap and desserts like the Black Sesame Shake and the restaurant's "concretes." These custard concoctions include two Ebisu-specific varieties: The Third Man's Mix, which features Dominique Ansel brownies, and the E-bean-su, which is made with caramel and *azuki* (Japanese red beans).

WHAT'S IN A NAME? They started off with hot dogs and are now famous for their burgers, but they wouldn't be Shake Shack without a callback to the American casual food joints of old – and the promise of some mighty tasty frozen offerings.

Ebisu-Minami 1-6, Shibuya-ku,
www.shakeshack.com/location/ebisu-atre-west-tokyo





OLYMPIAN MODERN

The restaurateurs behind The Apollo have followed their muses to success in Sydney. Is Tokyo ready for its taste of the Mediterranean?

If you're expecting the hoary clichés that the phrase “Greek restaurant” brings to mind – bouzouki music in the background and plenty of blue and white in the color scheme – The Apollo Tokyo is proudly not going to fit the bill. Located on the 11th floor of the newly redesigned Tokyu Plaza Ginza building, it's a sleek establishment that refuses to wear its Hellenic identity on its sleeve. However, what it does do is combine traditional Greek concepts with a contemporary twist and a dedication to quality ingredients.

This recipe has worked well for The Apollo since 2012, when Sydney-based restaurateurs Jonathan Barthelme and Sam Christie teamed up to open the eatery. Before their collaboration, the duo had already established themselves as leaders in the bustling Sydney restaurant scene. Christie



FROM TOP
Take in city views while you dine,
Greek-style barbecue chicken and
homemade pita bread

launched the extremely successful Longrain, which has been running for 17 years, after managing several bars. Barthelme had been a head chef at two of the city's top restaurants – Darling Harbour and Manly Pavilion. It's no surprise that The Apollo was earning accolades in short time.

In addition to their extensive restaurant experience, Barthelme and Christie come from Greek backgrounds, and are familiar with the country's best-known dishes, but neither of them wanted a place that fit easily into a stereotype. Christie explains, “There are plenty of Greek restaurants in Sydney, but they're all very traditional and they're all almost the same ... you know before you walk in there what's on the menu. We wanted to do the opposite of that, and have a really smart, casual place and let it shine on Greek food and let people learn about another cuisine that has been overlooked.”



HEAD CHEF Say hello to Jonathan Barthelmess

Although bringing Mediterranean food to the Far East might seem like a stretch, Barthelmess sees a common spirit linking the two cuisines. It's something he first noticed while researching the Japanese restaurant scene in preparation for his second joint venture with Christie, the izakaya-inspired Cho Cho San. Barthelmess sees the relaxed environment and the simplicity of preparation as a common link between the two kinds of restaurants. "To me, The Apollo is very izakaya style ... Our food is very simple. Like Japanese food, it's about the produce – just seasoning it appropriately and cooking it perfectly and leaving it alone. We have that same philosophy with Greek food."

The Apollo Tokyo has only been open since the end of March, but we didn't want to waste any time to make our first visit. We started off our meal with a sampling of Kalamata olives and The Apollo's version of hummus, which has a pleasingly mild flavor. The restaurant's dips, including their signature taramasalata, made from mullet roe, lemon juice and olive oil, are all served with handmade pita bread, presented in the restaurant's signature "pizza style" cardboard boxes. (If you're a healthy eater, we'd definitely recommend getting a second order – they run out quickly.)

Our appetizers were followed by their Greek salad, a traditional favorite that highlights one of the most important things for Barthelmess: locally sourced ingredients. In fact, after spending time in the markets around Tokyo, the chef is even more excited about what's available in Japan. "The produce here is so inspiring ... it's creeping into the menu in ways that we don't use in Sydney."

But in this seemingly simple dish, there is also a detail that has offended more than a few purists: instead of topping the salad with traditional Greek feta, known for its saltiness and its crumbly texture, Barthelmess goes with Danish feta, a milder, softer version of the cheese. It's a small point that may seem insignificant, but it's a detail that the chef has considered deeply: "[The Danish feta] is a lot milder, it's not as harsh. You've got olives

in the salad, you've got vinegar in the salad, you've got all these harsh things already. I don't want to add more harshness or saltiness; I want to turn it down and be more delicate."

The next dish was the oven baked lamb shoulder – The Apollo's signature main dish. Grilled for ten hours over a low flame and then finished in the oven for one more hour, the lamb is superbly tender and soft enough to cut with a fork. It's served with tzatziki, a sauce made with yogurt, dill, and garlic, which serves as a perfect complement to the meat's rich flavor.

We finished our meal with a dish that lets Barthelmess display a bit of inventiveness: the Avgolemono Pie. Fans of Greek cuisine will know avgolemono in soup, or as a sauce that goes best with savory dishes, but here it's a clever take on the traditional meringue pie. The dessert features a rich lemon curd topped with dollops of meringue and crumbled pie crust. All we'll say about this is leave room for dessert – you'll regret it if you miss this one.



Accompanying the food menu is an impressive wine list that ranges from Australia to Greece itself, a region that produces more than its fair share of fine wines. (Christie, a trained sommelier, curates the wine list.) Cocktail aficionados won't be disappointed, either: with choices like the Pearsephone, which is made with vodka, pear juice, and coriander, the ominously named Tears of Chios, featuring liqueur made from the sap of a rare tree, gin, and cucumber, and the Apollo Smash, there is something for everyone.

Although The Apollo offers fine dining-quality cuisine, both Christie and Barthelmess want their restaurant to be a place where guests can feel at ease, and each area of the floor offers a different atmosphere, from the table seating to the bar space, and a small counter that faces out on a city view. Like the menu, the restaurant is a space that calls to be revisited. And that's the point, Barthelmess says. "We want people to come in, smile, have a good time, walk away, and come back."

With a restaurant experience like this on offer, we think that's an easy plan to follow.

The Apollo Tokyo: Tokyu Plaza Ginza 11F, 5-2-1 Ginza, Chuo-ku

Hours: 11:00–23:00 | **Web:** theapollo.jp

“
OUR FOOD IS
VERY SIMPLE ...
IT'S ABOUT THE
PRODUCE – JUST
SEASONING IT
APPROPRIATELY
AND COOKING IT
PERFECTLY AND
LEAVING IT ALONE
”



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D

THE WEEKENDER
in-depth

ART THAT GROWS ON TREES

You could say that Hakone's best known handicraft is a natural outgrowth of the environment. *Yosegi zaiku* is a form of parquetry that puts the many different trees of the region – which include cedar, mulberry, and camphor – in center stage. It is made by gluing long strips of wood into complex patterns, and then shaving off paper-thin sheets of the mosaics, which can then be attached to almost anything: jewelry boxes, coasters, and pens featuring the geometric motifs are popular items, but truly skilled artisans can depict landscapes and more with the multicolored wood.

Turn the page and go deep into the rest of Hakone's many charms – from luxurious ryokan to museums filled with whimsy.



A WARM WELCOME TO HAKONE

Whether they were itinerant priests or traveling daimyo on the Tokaido road system then, or the millions of tourists who come every year now, the visitors have been flocking to Hakone for more than a millennium



MUST SEE, MUST DO

Black eggs may be off the menu, but there is still plenty to do in Hakone...

HAKONE OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

The word "museum" doesn't really do this outdoor art experience justice. Founded in 1969, it allows you to enjoy not only spectacular scenery (the garden is 70,000 m²) but interactive installation art, larger-than-life sculptures, and even an onsen foot bath.

www.hakone-oam.or.jp

Also go to: Pola Museum of Art

OLD TOKAIDO HIGHWAY

Be grateful you're not a wary pilgrim wearing straw sandals and fending off bandits as you navigate this rocky road that was once the route connecting Tokyo (then Edo) with Kyoto (then the capital city).

Start your walk from the Hakone Checkpoint: www.hakonesekisyo.jp.

Stop off at: Amazake Chaya tea house

IT'S ONLY NATURAL

The varied landscape of Hakone owes a debt to the natural forces that shaped the region. The scenic Lake Ashi, which you can stroll around or boat across, was created some 3,000 years back as a result of an eruption by Mt. Hakone. Forests of varied trees grow from the rich soil, and trails among the peaks await avid hikers.

And of course, the volcanic energy underneath the earth at Hakone is what heats the water that makes the area's onsen ryokan and public baths such a popular draw. According to tradition, and perhaps a bit of science, the different minerals – including sulfates, calcium carbonate, and magnesium – can cure ailments ranging from diabetes to high blood pressure. We wouldn't expect that you could replace a visit to the doctor with a soak in the onsen, but their power to help you relax just can't be beat. A wide range of hot spring ryokan do brisk business in helping Tokyoites and tourists unwind with a combination of luxurious baths, carefully prepared meals, and legendary hospitality.

Although some of the ryokan – you can read more about two in the pages that follow – might be so comfortable that you wouldn't want to step away from them, there is far more than a weekend's worth of things to do around Hakone, from museums of all shapes and sizes to a broad selection of restaurants serving everything from Japanese favorites to Western cuisine.

WHILE THE VOLCANO SLEEPS

Last year, a small eruption of Mt. Hakone brought a brief lull to the tourism business in the region. Alert levels have been lowered for months, but there have been some changes.

The famous ropeway, one of most popular forms of transportation in Hakone, doesn't run its full course yet, and it may be some time before you can get your hands on the famous "black eggs" of Owakudani, whose shells get their unique color from being boiled in sulfur-rich water.

However, the event has inspired Hakone's business owners to team up in order to share information about volcanic activity among themselves and with their visitors. In March, the First Hakone Volcano Tourism Summit was held, which allowed tourism business owners to take part in workshops and listen to lectures by experts in the field of volcanology and tourism. In places like Hawaii, it has been possible to strike a balance between safety and allowing tourists to gain a deeper appreciation for nature's power, and the same may be possible here too. As Yohichi Tamura, commissioner of the Hakone Volcano Tourism Summit and owner of Tamura Ginkatsutei explains, there's more curiosity than worry about the volcanic activity from foreign travelers. "Many people who have come into the restaurant have asked about ways to get close to the more active areas!"

Building on this new commitment to sharing information, Hakone business owners should be able to make sure that the region's long history of hospitality will keep going strong for many years to come. In the pages that follow, you'll find plenty of reasons why Hakone remains one of the region's favorite getaways.

“THERE IS FAR MORE THAN A WEEKEND'S WORTH OF THINGS TO DO AROUND HAKONE”



CHOANJI TEMPLE

Established in 1356 and surrounded by forest and walking trails, this temple features over 200 statues of rakan (disciples of Buddha) all with unique facial expressions. Take the Hakone Tozan Bus (T Route) from Hakone-Yumoto Station to Sengoku bus stop. 82 Sengokuhara, Hakone, Ashigarashimo District, Kanagawa.

Also visit: Hakone Shrine



HAKONE FOREST ILLUMINATION

For a couple of weeks during autumn, the forest next to Lake Ashi will be lit up. A perfect way to end off a stroll, this event will be held from 5:30 pm to 8 pm at the Forest Experience Center. 381-4 Hakone, Hakonemachi. ¥500. Dates TBA.

Don't miss: Hakone Sightseeing Cruise around Lake Ashi



HOME COOKING

Tonkatsu – breaded pork cutlet – has an unchallenged spot on the Japanese comfort food roster, but Tamura Ginkatsutei's signature version of the dish is a unique and healthy twist on the old favorite. They wrap the pork in a layer of tofu that gives the dish an even softer consistency; served with a flavorful broth and simmered egg, it is a delightfully satisfying way to refuel after a morning or afternoon exploring Hakone's sites.

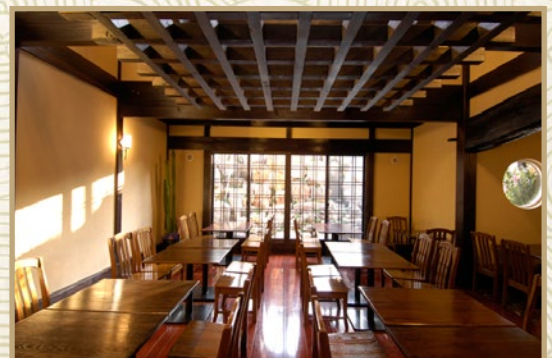
It's hardly an exaggeration to call Tamura Ginkatsutei's tofu katsu "home cooking," as it was born from a family affair. President Yoichi Tamura wanted to make a dish for his elderly mother, who found it difficult to eat standard tonkatsu as she grew older. Tamura's mother loved it, and as the lines stretching far out the door go to show, many others do, too – it's safe to say that Tamura, who takes an active role in associations that promote Hakone tourism, is doing more than his fair share to bring visitors to the area. Fans of traditional-style tonkatsu will not be disappointed either, as the restaurant also serves an excellent fried pork cutlet. A smaller, more casual annex serves tonkatsu sandwiches and other light fare.

Fancy giving it a try? We recommend getting there early, checking in on the waiting list, and working up a bit of an appetite as you explore the area around Gora Station.

Tamura Ginkatsutei

1300-739 Gora, Hakone, Ashigarashimo-gun, Kanagawa-ken

Tel: 0460 82 1440 | Web: ginkatsutei.jp



Looking up at the stained glass windows of Gabriel Loire's "Symphonic Sculpture" in the Hakone Open-Air Museum

GLASS FROM THE PAST
The pieces at this temporary exhibit are a testament to the centuries-old art of Venetian glassmaking



THE ART OF FLAMES AND TECHNIQUES

The current exhibit is called “The Art of Flames and Techniques,” and it marks two important anniversaries for the Venetian Glass Museum. One is the 150th anniversary of the beginning of diplomatic relations between Japan and Italy, and the other is the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Hakone Glass Museum.

This exhibit delves into the centuries of technical and artistic developments in Venetian glass since the form developed around the 10th century, focusing on enameling, lace glass, applied decoration, bright and varied colors, and the nearly photorealistic quality of images created with mosaic glass.

The exhibit will be on display until November 23.

Fragile Forest

Take a glittering tour of one of Hakone's classic museums

Like the art form of glassmaking itself, the Hakone Glass no Mori (Glass Forest Museum) is a study in elegance. The entire complex, which includes two separate museum galleries, a restaurant and café, and a large garden space, is an area where you could easily spend an entire afternoon exploring.

The heart of the complex are the galleries. Walking into the Venetian Glass Museum, which houses about 100 pieces of traditional Venetian glasswork, feels a bit like stepping into a small corner of Venice itself. The rooms feature high, vaulted ceilings, elaborate stained glass panels, and hidden alcoves with display cases.

The Venetian Modern Glass Museum, on the other hand, features pieces by contemporary glass artists, whose pieces come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and brilliant colors. A museum store that sprawls over a few floors gives guests the chance to browse a wide variety of items from around the world, some of which are nearly as impressive as the glasswork in the museum galleries themselves.

Should you be inspired by the array of world-class pieces on show, there are studios that offer adults and children the opportunity



“
THE HAKONE
GLASS NO MORI
IS A STUDY IN
ELEGANCE
”

to craft their own works of art. But don't set your sights too high on your first attempts: while you can have a go at making your own glass accessory or sandblasting a take-home trinket, you've got your work cut out for you if you're trying to match up to the level of what you'll see in the gallery.

Heading out into open air, you can find a series of outdoor glass creations that are as impressive as the art you can find inside. A garden filled with trees

and flowers that come into bloom throughout the seasons is an impressive thing in itself, but in keeping with the theme of the museum, seasonal outdoor art comes into flower as well. Art objects that are meant to represent the changing seasons are placed in the garden, from glass creations that resemble cherry blossoms to those that look like autumn leaves. All of them sparkle in the changing light of day. The panoramic view beyond the garden ground – over the Haya River and on to the peaks of the Owakudani – is a perfect foil for the glittering treasures of this glass forest, waiting to be explored.



Hakone no Mori Museum

940-48 Sengokuhara, Hakone-machi, Ashigarashimo-gun, Kanagawa-ken **Hours:** 9:00 am–5:30 pm
Admission: Adults: ¥1,500 University/HS Students: ¥1,100 Elementary/JHS Students: ¥600

Web: www.ciao3.com

Starchild

The Museum of the Little Prince in Hakone offers a trip into outer space – and the inner workings of the human heart

Since its publication in 1943, “The Little Prince” has captivated readers young and old with its charming illustrations, its wistful, tragic story, and its words of

timeless wisdom, mostly delivered by a young boy who hails from a distant asteroid. The novella has been translated into more than 250 languages and has spawned dozens of movie and TV adaptations – as well as several ballets.

But, don’t judge this book by its cover: behind this “children’s tale for adults” is the compelling narrative of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the man who brought the story to life, and it is one that you can explore at The Museum of the Little Prince in Hakone.

As you enter the museum grounds you will find yourself in front of a reproduction of a Provençal manor like the one where Saint-Exupéry lived during his youth. It is also home to an expansive garden, created

by the European-trained designer Keiko Yoshiya. It is known for its impressive rose garden and its collection of hydrangeas, but it has been planned to feature a variety of flowers throughout the year. During the winter months, the main building is illuminated with a whimsical projection mapping that recounts stories from the novel. As you make your way to a replica street scene with cobblestones and storefronts, you can find

“ALL GROWN-UPS WERE ONCE CHILDREN ... BUT ONLY FEW OF THEM REMEMBER IT.”

statues of the characters who populate the author’s best-known book.

The museum’s main exhibit is dedicated to the biography of Saint-Exupéry, whose life took him from an aristocratic birth to a career as a commercial and military pilot, and from the French city of Lyon to South America and North Africa. Room after room in the building depicts the many spaces around the world where the pilot and writer lived and worked: an office in Morocco, a bar in Buenos Aires, and a hotel room in New York, where Saint-Exupéry wrote “The Little



Prince.” There is even a room meant to recreate the fuselage of one of the mail planes the Frenchman flew in the 1920s and 30s.

The exhibits contain reproductions of correspondence, juvenile drawings that bear a resemblance to the illustrations that would come to be known around the world, and displays that give insights into the real people and events that inspired “The Little Prince.” These include a profile of Consuelo Suncin de Sandoval, the Salvadoran woman Exupéry married in 1930; their tumultuous relationship was one of the most powerful dynamics in the Frenchman’s life.

The delightful Le Petit Prince restaurant serves French cuisine made from organic vegetables and fresh local produce at reasonable prices. Meanwhile, a wide range of gifts for the young – and the young at heart – can be found in the museum shop.

As one of the most cherished lines in Saint-Exupéry’s book goes, “All grown-ups were once children ... but only few of them remember it.” A visit to The Museum of the Little Prince is likely to rekindle those youthful memories for months to come.

The Museum of the Little Prince
909 Sengokuhara, Hakone-machi,
Ashigarashimo-gun, Kanagawa-ken
Admission: Adults: ¥1,500 Seniors/Students: ¥1,000 Juniors (6-15): ¥700
Hours: 9:00 am–6:00 pm
Web: www.tbs.co.jp/l-prince/en/

A LUXURY HIDEAWAY

Known as one of Japan's top ryokans, Hakone Ginyu is the perfect combination of modern and traditional. Here are five reasons to hang your hat up here for a few nights



As you stroll down the short hill from Miyanoshita Station towards Ginyu, the little village you pass through belies the natural wonders that await. Although Hakone is known for offering respite from Tokyo's concrete jungle, there are few places that offer the kind of exquisite, romantic escape you'll experience at Ginyu. After being welcomed by attentive staff who'll hand you a delicious cocktail, step inside your uniquely decorated room and out onto the expansive balcony, and prepare to say "Ahhh." Here's why...

THE VIEWS ARE UNFORGETTABLE

Ginyu is perched on the edge of a mountain overlooking a steep valley that drops into the Haya River. Beyond this, there are rows of lush slopes that flirt with the sunset and transform into a canvas of red

and orange during autumn. Haven't booked a room on one of the upper floors? Don't worry – in place of valley views you'll have the pleasure of looking directly onto a beautifully manicured traditional Japanese garden.



**ROWS OF
LUSH SLOPES
FLIRT WITH
THE SUNSET**



YOU CAN BATHE ON YOUR BALCONY

Because why would you want to take a soak inside when you have this beautiful view to admire? Ginyu ensures that every moment of your stay is maximized, and bathtime becomes an indulgent relaxation session as you unwind in your private *rotenburo* (outdoor hot spring bath). If you find the water is a little too steamy, they've even provided a handy button on the side of the tub that you can press to add cool water.

Can't get enough of mineral-rich hot springs? Make sure you also try out the ryokan's three public onsen, each of which has its own ambience. Two of them also have saunas attached, while the Tsukishiro bath

features an impressive infinity pool. The baths are open from 5 am to 1 am, with a two-hour break for cleaning between 1 pm and 3 pm.

THERE ARE FOUR ROOM STYLES

Kaze, Hoshi, Sora and Tsuki. These four words mean, respectively, Wind, Star, Sky and Moon, and they form the basis of the four different styles of room décor that you can choose from. Clearly inspired by the natural surroundings, the 20 rooms are divided up onto four different floors, each of which has its own distinct charm.

Heading down from the fifth-floor lobby and main lounge area, the Kaze rooms are on the fourth floor, and all provide remarkable views across the valley. The third floor is home to the Hoshi rooms, which are themed with touches of exotic Balinese memorabilia. The Sora rooms, found on the second floor, are bright and breezy, and boast traditional Japanese décor – ideal if you're keen to experience a more classic ryokan atmosphere. Finally, the first-floor Tsuki rooms could very easily be called a home away from home as they flow out onto the balcony and garden, providing a cozy yet sophisticated setting.

Despite their differing aesthetics, all the rooms are imbued with a stylish, traditional feel while not forgoing modern essentials including widescreen TV, DVD player, music system and mini bar. Each has a comfortable lounge/dining area for breakfast and dinner, spacious bed, a pull out futon, and a large shower with sliding doors that lead out onto the balcony.

KAISEKI IS ON THE MENU

This traditional multi-course Japanese dinner is one of the highlights at Ginyu. Meticulously prepared and served in the comfort of your room, kaiseki-ryori is a feast of fresh, seasonal and artfully presented ingredients. Courses include fish, meat and vegetables, served in perfect portions that help to pace the meal out for a leisurely evening. After dinner, head up to one of the ryokan's bars and sip on a cocktail as



you gaze out at the view or, if seated inside, at one of the exotic fish tanks that serve as lounge centerpieces.

Breakfast is also served in your room and you have the choice of Western or Japanese fare. Western style includes cereal, croissants, French bread, fruits and yogurt. If you order the Japanese menu, you'll enjoy a set featuring fish, rice and miso soup.

THE SPA IS HEAVENLY

For an extra dose of pampering, Ginyu Spa welcomes you for soothing massages, facial treatments and reflexology. In keeping with the ryokan's superb service, spa therapists will treat you like royalty. Although every treatment is bound to be blissful, we'd recommend the 120-minute body massage, which incorporates original techniques and is the ultimate way to unwind before hopping into one of the private stone baths.

The best way to end off your evening at Ginyu? Take a night stroll around the grounds, breathing in fresh mountain air and making every moment at this romantic hideaway count.

NEED TO KNOW

Hakone Ginyu won a Travelers' Choice Award in 2012 and, according to managing director Akihiro Ota, it's a popular venue for marriage proposals. Room prices range from ¥31,000 to ¥66,000 per person for a one-night stay.

HOW TO GET THERE

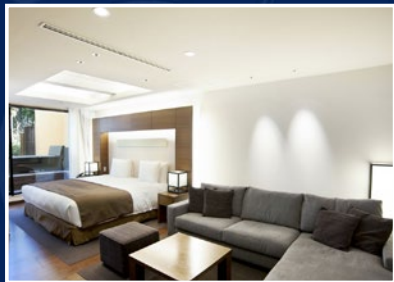
Take the Hakone Tozan Rail Line to Miyanoshita Station and it's just a two-minute walk to the ryokan. Alternatively, arrive at Hakone Yumoto Station and it's a 15-minute taxi ride.

100-1 Miyanoshita, Hakone-machi, Ashigarashimo-gun, Kanagawa

Phone: 0460 82 3355

Web: www.hakoneginyu.co.jp





HAKONE-SUISHOEN

Located in a former aristocratic villa, the Hakone-Suishoen Ryokan offers a rare experience of truly personalized luxury. From the attentive service that you will receive as soon as you enter the inn and expertly prepared meals, to relaxing spa treatments and a variety of hot spring baths and saunas, every element of your stay has been tailored to make your stay as pleasant as possible.

Each of Hakone Suishoen's 23 rooms offers an entirely different experience. Whether you stay in the opulent and secluded splendor of the Negau Luxury Suite or in any other of the hotel's finely appointed rooms, each room features a unique design and layout. What the rooms have in common are the private outdoor onsens, and an array of fully modern amenities, such as high-speed internet access and high-definition TVs. If you're looking for a little more pampering, drop in at the Suishoen Spa for a full range of

relaxing massage and beauty treatments, which will rejuvenate you, mind, body, and spirit.

Throughout the day you can partake of a tasteful array of seasonal delicacies. After a relaxing soak in one of Suishoen's hot spring baths, you can begin your day with either a traditional Japanese breakfast set made from the bounties of the local land and sea, or a hearty Western-style breakfast that consists of seasonal fruit, yogurt, freshly baked bread, and the hotel's signature soy milk omelets. Following a light lunch, a spectacular combination of tastefully chosen ingredients awaits you, in the form of a traditional Japanese gourmet kaiseki meal or teppanyaki meal, featuring the succulent flavors of grilled meat, vegetables, and seafood. And for a refreshing drink during the afternoon or a nightcap, the bar "Ito" offers elegance and a full range of wines, cocktails, and Japanese sake.

HAKONE-SUISHOEN

ADDRESS: KANAGAWA-KEN, ASHIGARASHIMO-GUN, HAKONE-MACHI, KOWAKIDANI 519-9

WEB: WWW.HAKONESUISHOEN.JP/ENG | TEL: 0460-86-0852



Getting Around Is Half the Fun

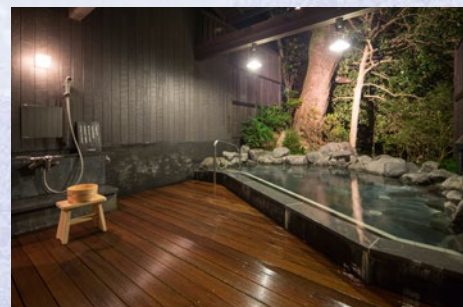
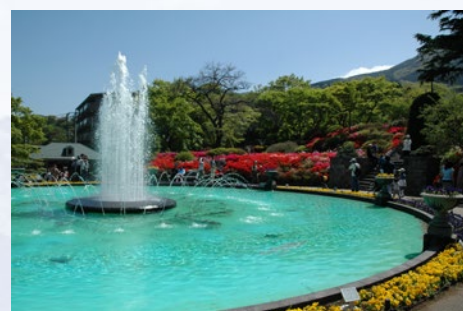
Making your way in Hakone is an escape from the everyday, and you can feel the difference from the very first leg of your journey.

Boarding the Hakone Tozan Line train at Hakone Yumoto, you then wend your way up the scenic course, making switchbacks and emerging from tunnels onto views so stunning that even repeat visitors can't help but marvel at them. Throughout the year, whether the area is filled with the hues of autumn or spring or shrouded in fog, the surrounding landscape is breathtaking.

Of course, the switchback train is only part of an unforgettable Hakone experience. Once you reach Gora Station, your journey continues with a cable car, a ropeway gondola, and finally a sightseeing cruise that crosses the picturesque Lake Ashi – an exercise in relaxing variety. Bus service is in place between Sounzan and Owakudani, but travelers will be happy to know that service between Togendai and Owakudani Stations is once again available on the ropeway.

All of these travel options are

included with the Hakone Freepass, which gives you a deep discount over standard ticket prices from Hakone-Yumoto Station on. The pass comes in two and three-day versions, and they also give holders access to special deals at more than 50 locations, including hot springs, museums, and restaurants. Two new dining options that have opened up recently along the Freepass routes are the Hotoriya restaurant in Hakone-machi Port, which includes a cafe and charming souvenir shop, and Isshikido, an eatery in Gora Park that elevates the sandwich to an art form. And when it comes to luxury accommodation, Hakone Yuryo is a lovely inn that shouldn't be missed. Even if you're not staying at the ryokan, you can stop in for a soak in the large public onsen or reserve one of 19 private baths, some of which offer stunning views of the surrounding forests. Hakone Yuryo can easily be reached by shuttle from Hakone-Yumoto Station, making it a perfect way to begin your trip or a final session of relaxation before heading back to the city.



Odakyu Hakone

Odakyu Hakone Holdings



The FLOWER GUY

By Matthew Herton

Floral artist Nicolai Bergmann has come a long way since he rocked up in Japan two decades ago. We met up with the 39-year-old to talk about his upcoming exhibition – and those famous flower boxes

It was a slightly peculiar request, but one that Nicolai Bergmann was determined to get right. A PR lady turned up at the shop he was working at – in the days before he ran his own stores – to ask for 60 flower gifts tightly stacked within a confined space for a press event. Being unlike any order he’d ever received, the floral artist decided the best idea would be to arrange everything into small boxes. After working for two days solid, he presented the items to the customer.

“She thought they looked great,” he tells Weekender. “She then told me she’d found someone else to do the job, turned around and walked out. I couldn’t believe it. It was our biggest-ever order at the time and I’d gone over budget trying to make it look as

alluring as possible. Now I was stuck with all these boxes of flowers.”

Fortunately he wasn’t “stuck” with them for too long. The boxes went on sale at the start of the century and immediately

proved a big hit. Seen as a new and innovative way of displaying flowers, as well as a more convenient gift idea than bouquets, they have exploded in popularity over the past few years. Other florists have jumped on the bandwagon, too, and now the boxes can be found all over the place.

“You have the PR lady to thank for that,” Bergmann says, laughing. “Unfortunately it’s not something I could get a patent

for; however I do have some protection in terms of branding. It’s certainly a product that has had a huge impact on my career, particularly in terms of my male clientele.

“
A LOT OF
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”



The café has helped to raise Bergmann's profile and he's gone on to become something of a TV celebrity, featuring on a number of NHK shows. One program he did for the in-flight entertainment of ANA led to him doing an exhibition at the renowned Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine in Fukuoka two years ago. "A man who owned a taxi firm in Kyushu saw it when he was flying to Tokyo and felt really inspired," says the Dane. "Instead of going to his meetings, he came to one of our stores and asked me to do a speech in Fukuoka. During my trip to the city we visited Dazaifu Tenmangu and I mentioned how good it

A lot of guys are embarrassed to walk around with bouquets here, so it makes it a lot easier for them. I remember one man who must have been in his 60s coming up to tell me he was buying his wife flowers for the first time ever. Hearing comments like that is of course very satisfying."

Since coming to Japan, Bergmann has been keen to develop his own style, which he describes as "East meets West." His arrangements are European-like in terms of their compactness and simplicity, but the color combinations and attention to detail give them a Japanese feel.

Initially told he'd be "crazy" to open a shop in the men's section of Seibu department store, Bergmann went ahead with the idea anyway because he believed the number of males buying flowers was increasing. Like many of his ventures, it has so far proved a success. Both he and his wife Amanda – who is the joint director of the company – seem to have the Midas touch when it comes to finding gaps in the market. One of their most creative endeavors has been the flower shop/café they set up in the heart of Omotesando in 2009.

"From the beginning we knew it had to be more than just a flower shop," he says. "It's very trendy around here yet Amanda and I felt the area didn't have a place you could go to sit down and enjoy a reasonably priced sandwich and coffee. We always went to Subway. We decided to provide a setting where customers could have a light lunch for around ¥1,000 in a colorful environment surrounded by plants. From a personal perspective it's given me the chance to be more inventive."

would be to do an exhibition there."

Shortly afterwards, he did exactly that. Around 8,000 guests turned up to see his flowers at the historic shrine despite a typhoon wiping out the last day. This June, he's set to return to the city for three exhibitions at Shikaumi Shrine, Houmangu Kamado Shrine and Dazaifu Tenmangu. "It's a truly extraordinary location with over 1,400 years of history," says Bergmann of the latter. "Yet despite the traditions, the monks there have a modern outlook, wanting to move the place forward. They also have a genuine appreciation of art. I'm really excited about going back there. A lot of my arrangements are done behind a desk now so it feels like this is going back to my roots."



THE BACK STORY



Nicolai Bergmann was born and raised in Dragør near Copenhagen, a small town famed for its 18th century yellow houses. Bergmann, though, was more interested in flowers than old buildings and at the age of 16 enrolled in a three-year floristry course. After that, the next step on his journey was to come to Japan, a country he chose because his father – who worked in the potted plant industry – had done business here and had plenty of useful contacts.

It proved a wise choice. After establishing himself at Hama Florist, the gifted Dane persuaded bosses to open the first Nicolai Bergmann shop in 2001. Four years later, he decided to go it alone and launched his own company. He now runs seven boutiques internationally as well as a café, a chocolate shop selling 100 percent organic chocolates from his native Denmark, and a flower design school. Bergmann recently opened his first store in Korea and has three new flower establishments on the cards for this year.

"We're always looking for new ideas and ways to be innovative," he says. "One big project we are currently working on is a three-hectare botanical park near Mt. Fuji in Hakone. It's very ambitious and is going to be a huge challenge, but that is what this company is all about."

www.nicolaibergmann.com

JUNK ROCK

*M83 frontman Anthony Gonzalez is all about the journey.
Where will he take audiences next?*

By Kyle Mullin

In 2011 M83 won over throngs of indie rock fans with the panoramic ambient anthem “Midnight City.” And while the song helped its corresponding album “Hurry Up, We’re Dreaming” earn a Grammy nomination, the band’s frontman, Anthony Gonzalez, felt no obligation to mimic its successful, widescreen aesthetic on its follow up. Instead he opted for a narrow, deeply intimate vibe throughout the band’s next album, the recently released “Junk.” Ahead of M83’s show at Studio Coast, Weekender spoke to Gonzalez about his aversion to repetition, the joy of working with his heroes, and his earliest supporters.

HOW ARE THINGS SINCE YOU RELEASED YOUR NEW ALBUM?

Quite good. I’m really looking forward to touring it, and especially coming to play in Tokyo. We’ve only played there once, Fuji Rock almost 10 years ago. I’m a fan of Japanese animation, and all things related to Japan, so it’s always a pleasure to go there.

YOU’RE NOT ONLY A BIG FAN OF ANIME, BUT ALSO 70S AND 80S POP AND ROCK. I’VE READ THAT STEVE VAI WAS A PARTICULARLY BIG INFLUENCE ON YOU, AND YOU EVEN GOT TO COLLABORATE WITH HIM ON YOUR NEW ALBUM, “JUNK.” WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

Yes, when I started to learn guitar at the age of 12, I was listening to a lot of metal and he was one of my favorite guitar heroes. I like artists that have a voice of their own, and he was one of them. Every time I heard one of his solos, I knew it was him. That’s the kind of artist I want to work with.

DO YOU TRY TO MAKE A DISTINCTIVE SOUND OF YOUR OWN?

I’m trying to. People know me for a more cinematic sound. But on “Junk”

I wanted to show a different side of me, something more 70s and something more human. It’s a new direction, but I feel that people who loved M83 since the beginning will find it surprising, but still recognize the old M83 sound deep within as well.

YOU ALSO WORKED WITH ANOTHER HERO OF YOURS, BECK, ON THE NEW SONG “TIME WIND.”

Yes, I’ve been a huge fan of Beck for so long. I love that he tried to take his fans on different journeys with each album. That’s the kind of career that I’m always looking for. When I was a kid and listening to a new artist, I wanted them to take me on a journey. Repetition is the death of the artist. Some fans want the same sound over and over, but I

think it’s better to get a little crazy and try new sounds. It’s a better way to approach music.

“
**REPETITION
IS THE
DEATH OF
THE ARTIST**
”

WHAT ABOUT THE SONG “SUNDAY NIGHT 1987”? WHAT JOURNEY DO YOU TAKE LISTENERS ON WITH THAT SONG?

I just wanted to end the album with a ballad that was very melancholic. It’s meant to evoke

my childhood and the friends I lost. It’s simple and heartfelt, and brings emotions to the end of the album. It’s also a tribute to the moments I spent with my family and my grandparents in particular when I was a child. They played such an important part in my life, so I wanted to honor them.

HAVE THEY RETURNED THE FAVOR, AND BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR CAREER?

My parents always pushed me to do something I was passionate about. And when you’re a kid it’s important to have their support. Even when things got hard with my career, they always supported me. Music is not reliable, but who cares? I was happy, and that was the most important thing for my parents.

M83 will play Studio Coast on Thursday, May 26.



RAINBOW LIFE

By Natalie Jacobsen

To celebrate this month's Tokyo Rainbow Pride (TRP), we invited a handful of prominent personalities representing different voices of Japan's LGBT community to share their experiences with us

TOKYO RAINBOW PRIDE



WHAT: This annual event celebrates LGBT pride with a week-long program ending in a fancy dress-filled parade.

WHEN: April 29-May 8

WHERE: Yoyogi Park and surrounding areas

WEB: tokyorainbowpride.com

MORE INFO

If you or someone you know is seeking counsel or information about the community, reach out to the following groups: TELL Japan, Work with Pride, Human Rights Watch Tokyo, Out in Japan, Closet Ball.



To read these interviews in full or listen to a podcast of the conversation, visit www.tokyoweekender.com.

BRYCE

What are you doing for TRP 2016?

I helped assemble an internal program at my company of 5,000 employees to bring awareness and protection to LGBT employees. This year, we are setting up a booth and will be marching in the parade; I'm so thrilled to be joining.

How does Japan compare to other countries in terms of LGBT rights?

When I moved here, I felt a great sense of relief and sudden freedom. People care so little that I can almost be all of myself here, unlike when I was growing up within the "Bible Belt" of the US. Here, I found places to go, and there's even an LGBT-friendly sign language group.

AMI

What are you doing for TRP 2016?

I will be performing in the Rainbow Fest. The first time I participated was down in Osaka and it was really emotional. We [released] balloons at the end, and it was so beautiful, it left such an impression.

Any advice for those in Japan who feel they can't be open yet?

They say you need to change yourself to change others. But I say – you know what – it's okay to run away. If you feel different from others and don't think you fit in, change your environment, and find "your place." It gets better.

SHOGO

What does TRP mean to you?

I'll be with my company in the parade and at a booth, and I'll get to sing. There was no true Pride Week in Tokyo for a long time. But now, as we get more attention, we can get a bigger reaction. It's a good opportunity for all of us.

What has the transitioning process been like for you?

It was fairly easy to find a good doctor here, but in Japan there are so many steps you need to go through to finish the process. In London, if you have made up your mind, you tell your doctor and you'll be given a permission slip to change your gender, and you give it to the government. Here, you need to be diagnosed and do the operation first. Appearance changing comes last. It took me years before I was able to get the right medicine to help. My insurance has finally been sorted out, but the prescription recently [tripled] in price. Really, I'm so relieved now. I'm literally buying my happiness, but I don't mind, because I was finally able to do it.

KAN

What does TRP mean to you?

When I first went to Pride Week here, I was able to bring all my friends, even straight friends, and we had a ton of fun, and they wrote about it on social media. Posts get shared, and it causes a chain reaction, and now the event is bigger. That's so important.



BRYCE

(stage name: Anaphiel), born in the "Bible Belt" of the US, lives in Tokyo, works in HR for a pharmaceutical company, performs as a drag queen on occasion.

AMI

(of music band Ayen), works for Apple, has lived in several cities across the US, is focusing on a music career.

SHOGO,

born in Japan, lived in Beijing, works for China Airlines and is a singer, is opening a Taiwanese restaurant in Nishi Shinjuku.

““

CASUAL HOMOPHOBIA AND COMMENTARY DISAPPEAR NATURALLY AFTER ENOUGH EXPOSURE

””

Do you think the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympics is having a positive influence?

We are working on opening a Pride House for athletes and volunteers who are LGBT and will participate in the Olympics. Work with Pride is helping to organize; the government will have to accept some facts! Japan is scared of being different, so we have to train companies and implement programs. I feel positive, because we are learning to share more inside and outside the community.

TAYLOR

What does TRP mean to you?

We constantly push for laws, but it can't happen all at once. Sometimes the best thing for our community is simply to be seen. Casual homophobia and commentary disappear naturally after enough exposure. This kind of event is a great way to help push that energy away.

How does performing drag in Tokyo compare to other countries?

The scene here is more old school, and it's hard to establish yourself. That's why I started the Closet Ball – a safe place to say, “Hey, can I borrow your wig?” I wanted to make drag performing more accessible within the community.

MIKY

What does TRP mean to you?

It's very light in Tokyo. In Kobe, the event is smaller, but I feel it makes a larger impact. In Tokyo, we are just high-fiving and having fun, but it doesn't talk about the bigger issues – like [the fact that] many still have to hide in public, even among other LGBT members.

How do you feel about the community these days – has there been progress within society?

Everyone goes to Nichome [a predominantly LGBT district in Shinjuku], but it's changed so much. You used to be able to go to the bars and feel included in the culture. It was so [tight knit]. It was small, too, but crowded. Today, it's crowded [for different reasons]. Everyone wants to find a partner just for sex. There are no real friends. There are too many apps for hookups. It's ruined the place that used to be sacred to us. We have more [progress], because there are fewer suicides thanks to online support and access to help, but it also feels like we have less.

YOGINI

What does TRP mean to you?

I'm actually not a huge fan of Pride Week in Japan. It's a lot of fun, sure, but I feel that there is not enough integration. Japan needs to work on progression before we can truly be celebrating, and we within our LGBT community need to work on our own acceptance before we celebrate anything.

Have you ever been a victim of severe discrimination in Tokyo?

When I've had issues – with stalkers or violence – and have called the police, they've never shown that they were bothered by my status. There aren't strong religious implications instilled in the population here, which I think makes for less judgment.



KAN KIKUMOTO,
born and raised in Japan, recent Sophia University graduate, works with Human Rights Watch to raise awareness at local schools, pursuing a Master's in Sexuality in Media.



TAYLOR WANSTALL
(stage name: Tatianna), from the Pacific Northwest, teaches English in Tokyo, started the Tokyo Closet Ball, participates in improv comedy groups.



MIKY KING,
born in Okinawa, lived in London for a decade, has been a graphic and fashion designer, currently freelances and works at Rainbow Burrito.



YOGINI,
born in Taiwan, lived in New Zealand for many years, moved to Tokyo and performs as a drag queen while juggling a full time job and volunteer work at nearby temples.



BEAUTY KIT

HERE ARE TWO LOCAL SAKE-BASED PRODUCTS TO TRY

MARUBISHI SEKKEN

Using Japanese sake from Kobe along with other natural ingredients such as honey, goat's milk, lavender, sakura, and rice bran, this handmade travel soap contains no fragrances, stabilizers, preservatives or pigments. One box contains 16 bars, each of which weighs only 60g and provides just the right amount of lather to wash face, hair and body up to three times. Six different varieties are available, with each one catering to different skin types and preferences. ¥1,080 from tinyurl.com/marubishi

KOUJI HADA CREAM

This light and airy meringue-like cream was created in collaboration with Furumachi Kouji Manufacturing and uses koji extracts to help soften and moisturize skin. It was developed specifically with Japanese women in mind, paying attention to nutritional content, a slight hint of koji aroma, and pretty packaging that features a motif of the rice plant flower. Use it as a lotion, emulsion and serum all in one. ¥4,629 from www.koujihada.jp

HOW DO JAPANESE WOMEN MAINTAIN THEIR BEAUTIFUL SKIN?

By Annemarie Luck

Aside from just having good genes and spending hours soaking in mineral-rich onsen, we mean. Well, turns out they've also been soaking in sake. The simplest way to introduce the tradition into your lifestyle is by adding a cup or two of sake into your bath water, but there are also plenty of products on offer that allow you to slather yourself in rice wine-derived ingredients and reap the benefits. Speaking of which, here's what the good stuff can do for your skin...



SLATHER YOUR SKIN IN SAKE AND REAP THE BENEFITS

GIVE A GEISHA-LIKE GLOW

Even with all that heavy daily make-up, geisha are known for having radiant skin. And it's reportedly largely thanks to their custom of drinking a couple of small glasses of sake every day. Victoria Tsai, founder of Japanese beauty brand Tatcha, writes on Tatcha.com: "Sake warms the body internally while simultaneously stimulating circulation." She also explains that the geisha beauty ritual includes soaking in a sake-filled bath for 30 minutes.

TURN BACK TIME

Toji, or sake master brewers, are famously known for having baby-soft, wrinkle-free hands well into old age. The reason?

Making sake involves working with *koji* (cultivated mold that helps to ferment the rice), which is packed with enzymes and amino acids that help to moisturize and nourish skin.

REPAIR SUN DAMAGE

Asian women are known for using sake as a natural skin lightener thanks to the kojic acid, which is a potent compound produced during the fermentation process that reduces the amount of melanin your skin produces. For those of us who've spent too many years basking on beaches without proper sun protection, this means that sake skincare could effectively even out age spots and pigmentation.

BESPOKE BEAUTY

TAILOR-MAKE YOUR TREATMENT AT ANDAZ TOKYO'S AO SPA, WHOSE BRAND-NEW MENU FEATURES THREE LUXURY LINES

“How about a combination of yuzu, green tea, rosemary and salt?” We're standing at AO Spa & Club's Blend Bar, picking out a cocktail of ingredients – not to drink but to use as a foot scrub. Spa director Rachael McCrory is taking us through the assortment of locally sourced seasonal fruits, herbs and essential oils, recommending a mix that's ideal for detoxing. “We felt there was a gap in the market in terms of providing a unique experience that's highly personalized,” says McCrory. “As a result, we came up with the Jiyujizai experience, where customers can pick out their own selection of fresh ingredients from the Blend Bar and then opt for two or more treatments.”

This luxurious apothecary approach is just one example of how AO Spa tailors its treatments to suit each customer's personal style and needs. The Spa, which is on the 37th floor of Andaz Tokyo Toranomon Hills, has also just launched a new range of facial and body treatments incorporating three different skincare lines: Kotoshina, Biologique Recherche, and Elemental Herbology. Each range is packed with pure, concentrated nutrients, offering a wide range of benefits – so many, in fact, that you might find it difficult to choose between them. To help you decide, here are three of our recommended treatments...



TRADITIONAL HEALING MASSAGE WITH KOTOSHINA

“We chose this brand because we wanted to add something local,” says McCrory. Kotoshina creates products from extracts of premium organic green tea grown on a farm in Uji, Kyoto. The range they came up with for AO Spa is exclusive, and can be enjoyed as part of the spa's massage and body therapies – take it from us, there is something very special about knowing your body is slathered in green tea goodness. And just how does the green tea facilitate healing? “It's rich in antioxidants, which wards off free radicals and helps to prevent premature ageing,” says McCrory.

SECOND SKIN FACIAL WITH BIOLOGIQUE RECHERCHE

Featuring high concentrations of raw and active ingredients, Biologique Recherche is a French brand that's entirely free of artificial fragrances and colorings. “I love that every treatment with this range begins with a skin analysis,” says McCrory. “This allows us to tailor the program precisely for each customer.” The Second Skin facial goes a step further by using revolutionary electrospinning technology (similar to 3D printing) to create fiber patches comprised of 86 percent hyaluronic acid that firm and plump the skin. AO Spa is the first in Japan to begin offering this treatment.

JET LAG REVIVAL WITH ELEMENTAL HERBOLOGY

This holistic British brand's products are based on the five-element theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine. “Since each person is naturally drawn to one element, depending on your body's current needs, this philosophy allows us to customize the treatment,” says McCrory. Enjoy the range of botanical skincare formulas as part of the spa's post-travel remedies, which include an exfoliation and thermal wrap, a hydrating facial, and a scalp and body massage – perfect for recharging after long-haul journeys.



FROM TOP
Room with a view, enjoy luxury product lines and natural ingredients, the Blend Bar (right)

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GIRL POWER

By Matthew Herson



SHE'S THE ONLY JAPANESE FEMALE WEIGHTLIFTER TO WIN A MEDAL AT THE OLYMPICS, AND SHE'S EVEN OUTDONE HER FATHER'S BRONZE AWARD. COULD HIROMI MIYAKE BE THE COUNTRY'S NEXT CHAMPION IN THE SPORT?

Following in the footsteps of a parent is never easy. When that parent happens to be an Olympic bronze medalist it's even more difficult, yet Hiromi Miyake has done more than follow her father, Yoshiyuki Miyake. In 2012 she managed to surpass him by claiming a silver medal in the 48 kg weightlifting division at the London Games.

Now aged 30, she doesn't have too long left in what is a physically demanding sport and as a result she's unlikely to better her uncle, Yoshinobu Miyake, who won two Olympic golds and a silver. She is, however, capable of nabbing another medal this summer. Continuing our build up to the Rio Games, Weekender met with the Saitama-born weightlifter and her dad to talk about their careers, Olympic experiences, and hopes for Brazil.

"Growing up I thought weightlifting was too masculine for girls," Hiromi tells us. "I focused on playing the piano as my mother was a teacher, but then in my mid-teens I realized it wasn't for me. I watched the 2000 Sydney Olympics and just had this urge to compete even though I'd never done any sports before. Naively I thought anyone could take part [laughs]. Despite not initially being interested in weightlifting, I felt it would be the best option given the family connection."

Hiromi was hoping her father would help, but he was initially against the idea of her taking up the sport. "I'd been in weightlifting for around half a century so I knew all about the hardships," says Yoshiyuki. "I didn't want Hiromi to go through that. After some convincing I eventually agreed upon one condition – that she never give up halfway."

Yoshiyuki, who competed in the 60 kg division, suffered a number of injuries at key times during his career, most notably just before the Munich Games in 1972. World and Asian champion at the time, he believes the gold medal would have been his had he been fit enough to perform in Germany. His one and only appearance

A full set: Hiromi Miyake flanked by her father Yoshiyuki (left) and uncle Yoshinobu (right)



at the Olympics came four years earlier in Mexico when he finished third behind Dito Shanidze of the Soviet Union and his brother Yoshinobu, who took the gold.

“Being six years younger, I decided to let him win out of respect,” Yoshiyuki says laughing. “No, seriously, having your main rival that close makes such a difference. We really pushed each other. I managed

to get the better of him sometimes, but he was a really tough opponent who broke 27 world records during his career. We looked so much alike that we’d often trick people by swapping ID cards. The greatest experience of my career was standing next to him in Mexico as the Japanese flags were raised and the national anthem played. What a moment that was!”

Hiromi had seen black and white footage of her father and uncle weightlifting during her youth, but didn’t fully appreciate their achievements until she began training and competing herself. A late starter in the sport, her initial goal was to become a high school champion, then to compete at the Olympics. Within four years she had achieved both.

“Hiromi was in the gym every day training harder than any athlete I’d seen,” says Yoshiyuki. “As a coach I had to stop her from overdoing things. You get injuries when you’re in peak condition and continue to push yourself. Everything you do must be geared towards competition. A weightlifting event takes so much out of you physically – that is when you need to be at your best, not months earlier when nobody’s watching. Hiromi has learned this over the years and will go to Rio in top condition.”

The two of them clearly have a close bond, with Yoshiyuki spending several hours a day observing his daughter as she

trains. The thought of working so closely with a family member would be considered too stressful for some, yet Hiromi takes it all in her stride. In fact, like wrestler Kyoko Hamaguchi, she seems to thrive under the tutelage of her father. “I wouldn’t have reached the level I have without my dad,” says the

Olympic silver medalist. “It’s comfortable working with him as there’s a real trust between us. He’s taken me to three Olympics already and I couldn’t imagine going to Brazil with anyone else.”

Making her Olympic debut at the Athens Games in 2004, Hiromi was competing against far more experienced lifters, but still managed a top 10 finish in the 48 kg category. Four years later

expectations had risen. Having won bronze at the 2006 World Weightlifting Championships she was seen as a genuine medal contender in Beijing, but her father feels she peaked two months early and her lifts of 80 kg in the snatch and 105 kg in the clean and jerk were only good enough for sixth place. In London she improved those totals by seven kilograms in the snatch and five kilograms in the clean and jerk to claim a silver medal.

The 149 cm (4’9”) athlete finished 8 kg behind eventual winner Wang Mingjuan. It was the second successive victory for China in the competition following Chen Xiexia’s triumph

in Beijing four years earlier. At the 2015 World Weightlifting Championships in Houston it was yet another Chinese competitor, Jiang Huihua (just 17 at the time), who took the gold ahead of silver medalist Thi Huyen Vuong of Vietnam and Hiromi who finished third.

So where does Hiromi think her biggest threat will come from in Rio? “Myself,” she says immediately. “Of course there are many strong rivals, particularly from China, but I can’t afford to think about them. In weightlifting you’re out there on your own, competing against yourself. Worrying about opponents leads to hesitation which means you won’t be able to lift properly. I have just three attempts in the snatch and three in the clean and jerk; that is my focus. What the other girls do is out of my control.”

“
IN WEIGHT-
LIFTING
YOU’RE OUT
THERE ON
YOUR OWN,
COMPETING
AGAINST
YOURSELF
”

BORN TO LIFT

Japan has won a total of 13 Olympic medals in weightlifting, five of which belong to the Miyake family. Yoshinobu Miyake won the country’s first back in 1960, finishing as the runner-up behind America’s Charles Vinci in the Bantamweight division. Moving up a weight four years later he managed to take home the gold at the Tokyo Games and then defended his title in Mexico in 1968 – defeating his brother in the process.

A major general in the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, Yoshinobu was known for his signature “frog style,” which was also called the “Miyake pull.” Imitating the amphibian, he adopted a wide grip on the bar, kept his heels together and spread out his knees at a 60-degree angle. He remains the country’s most decorated weightlifting Olympian with three medals, ahead of Masashi Ouchi who won a silver and bronze in the 60s. He is Japan’s only Olympic champion in the sport.

The second could well be his niece Hiromi Miyake. The only Japanese weightlifting female to win a medal at the Olympics, she once again represents the team’s best chance of a podium finish in Rio. As well as training for the Games, she also works as a coach and mentor to Honami Mizuochi (48 kg) and Mikiko Ando (58 kg), both of whom may have an outside chance of a medal in Brazil. First they have to qualify at the Japan National Weightlifting Championships, which take place in Yamanashi from May 21 to 23. Hiromi has already booked her place in the team.

THE COMPETITION

Each competitor has three attempts at the snatch and the clean and jerk. The objective of the snatch is to lift the barbell from ground to overhead in one continuous movement. The clean and jerk is two movements, first to the shoulder, then once settled the lifter will attempt to raise the bar overhead in a controlled state. The total weight of the best snatch and the best clean and jerk (out of the six lifts) will be the competitor’s total. Three judges are present to decide whether a lift has been successful or not.



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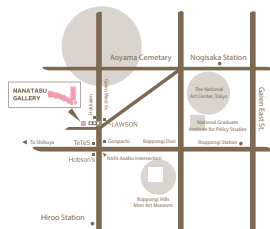
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SUMMER

(JULY 18-AUGUST 19, 2016)

Providing memorable experiences for kids aged 5 to 18, this camp, held on our safe and gated Hikarigaoka campus, also features numerous fun excursions around Tokyo. Facilities include a gymnasium, an outdoor pool, basketball courts, a soccer field, science labs, and an art studio. Themes encourage international awareness, sharing, and discovery.

WINTER

(JANUARY 2-6, 2017)

During this season, people gather to celebrate shared social and cultural values. The AJE Winter Camp allows students to learn about different beliefs that influence winter activities in different parts of the world. They discover how various nationalities celebrate in unique ways, yet for many of the same reasons.

AJE CAMPS

As young people grow up, they learn to live within a world of opportunity and challenge. Aoba-Japan Extension (AJE) offers exciting, experiential, and educational programs that help kids from around the globe to meet, create friendships and discover new things about themselves and the world.

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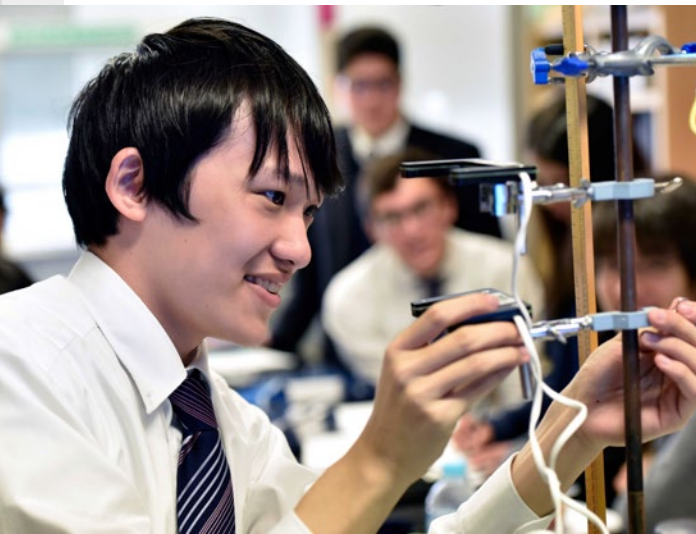
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For almost thirty years since first opening its doors in Shibuya, the British School in Tokyo has enjoyed an enviable reputation as a provider of international education of the very highest quality. A long-standing member of the Council of British International Schools and one of a select few to have been independently inspected and accredited under the new standards for British Schools Overseas, BST now caters for well over 900 students: boys and girls, young men and women from the ages of 3 through to 18 who represent 60 different nationalities.

Our A level graduates now regularly win places – and plaudits – at some of the top universities in the UK and all around the world; just a few weeks ago, for example, we learned that one of this year’s cohort will soon begin her undergraduate studies at Tokyo University on a full scholarship. Remarkably, in 2015 more than half of all A level entries were graded A*/A, and three out of four were awarded a B grade or better. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that so many BST students have now embarked upon extremely competitive courses at prestigious UK Russell Group universities, including Imperial, LSE, King’s and UCL. This year, for the first time, the school is represented at both the Royal College of

Music and Trinity College, while for the fourth year running one of our talented A Level artists is studying at St Martin’s. Emphasising our international outlook, in 2015 our students also won places at universities in Canada, India and the United States and, closer to home, at Doshisha in Kyoto.

The very successful introduction of A levels at BST has led to a dramatic increase in inquiries from ambitious students of all nationalities who are keen to progress to some of the best universities in the world. The UK remains a popular option but it is certainly not the only destination of choice. Young people today see themselves as global citizens and they recognize that A levels offer an academic passport that can take them almost anywhere. There is certainly increasing interest in the USA and a number of students are looking towards mainland Europe as well as universities here in Japan.

Most universities world-wide are very familiar with

Britain’s public examination system and are more than happy to accept students with A levels or their equivalent. In fact, the specialist nature of British Sixth Form courses means that students with better grades can expect to earn significant credit – sometimes up to a whole year’s worth of study. At Harvard, for example, you will need to have at least three A/B grades to matriculate (earn a place) but three A grades will merit a full year’s academic credit; it is a similar story across the world.

BST is, of course, much more than an A Level school. All examinations are important, and many parents are impressed by the rigor and structured progression of the English National Curriculum and our carefully tailored version of an independent British education. That said, students here learn so much more than how to pass exams. Sport, music and drama are woven into the fabric of school life, and both community service and adventurous activity are real strengths. From their early years in our Nursery and Reception classes, children are given countless opportunities to develop the independence and resilience that will enable them to take the next step in their education – wherever it might take them, with confidence – and a smile.

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Unpicking a Paradox

By Brian Christian

After the recent earthquakes in Kumamoto, Brian Christian reflects on Japan's bond with nature



bench occupied by a cloth-capped senior citizen soaking up the springtime sunshine. The photographers were there too, of course: professional tripod-wielding types with their horribly expensive lenses, shoulder to shoulder with the smartphone paparazzi trying to capture that special sakura moment to post on Facebook or to Snapchat all over the world to less

There are many good reasons to enjoy life in Japan, but foremost among them must be its four distinct and very different seasons, each celebrated with its own food, festivities and traditions. There cannot be many other countries where even the beer is seasonal!

I know that in early May some days can still bring an occasional untimely reminder of winter's chill but here in Tokyo the hanami parties are now a fading memory and the freshness of springtime is already beginning to give way to summer's early warmth.

Last week I enjoyed a walk in Shinjuku Gyoen, the beautiful national garden next to Sendagaya Station. If you haven't been, it is well worth a visit and for most of the year it is the most tranquil of the city's green spaces. A month ago it was a very different place – crowds milling on the footpaths, families with their picnics sprawled out on the lawns, every park

fortunate friends.

The delicate candy-floss clouds of cherry blossom have long gone now; even the deeper shades of the double-flowered yaezakura and the false flowers of the hanamizuki are no more than a fading memory. But that simply means that the azaleas must be in bloom and that soon we can look forward to the wisteria and the lace-capped hydrangeas.

The Japanese do love their blossoms. In fact, they love their trees. Note how caringly the ginkgos lining the streets have been pruned and cossetted to preserve and enhance that instantly recognizable cone of green (and autumnal yellow). Think back to the October crowds enjoying the reds and golds of autumn, and take note of how many Tokyo apartments make room for a lovingly tended bonsai. For even the most committed city dweller there is in Japan a remarkably vivid sense of connection with the natural world.

“ IT SEEMS PERVERSE THAT A COUNTRY SO THREATENED BY NATURE CAN TAKE SUCH CHILD-LIKE DELIGHT IN ITS BOUNTY ”

Some may sense an irony in this, particularly so soon after the tragic events in Kumamoto and while the graphic TV coverage of the devastating impact of the 2011 tsunami remains seared into our memories. It seems perverse that the inhabitants of a country so threatened by forces of nature can take such child-like delight in its bounty. I prefer to see the simple logic in their attitude.

The Tohoku triple disaster was a violent 21st century tragedy shared globally through the extensive reach of modern media but Japan has always had to live with its geological vulnerability. The Great Hakuho Earthquake in November 684, which triggered a huge tsunami, is the first such recorded event in Japanese history but this is a country that has always endured in the shadow of nature's grim destructive power. No wonder then, that its people derive such innocent pleasure from its gentler, more appealing face.

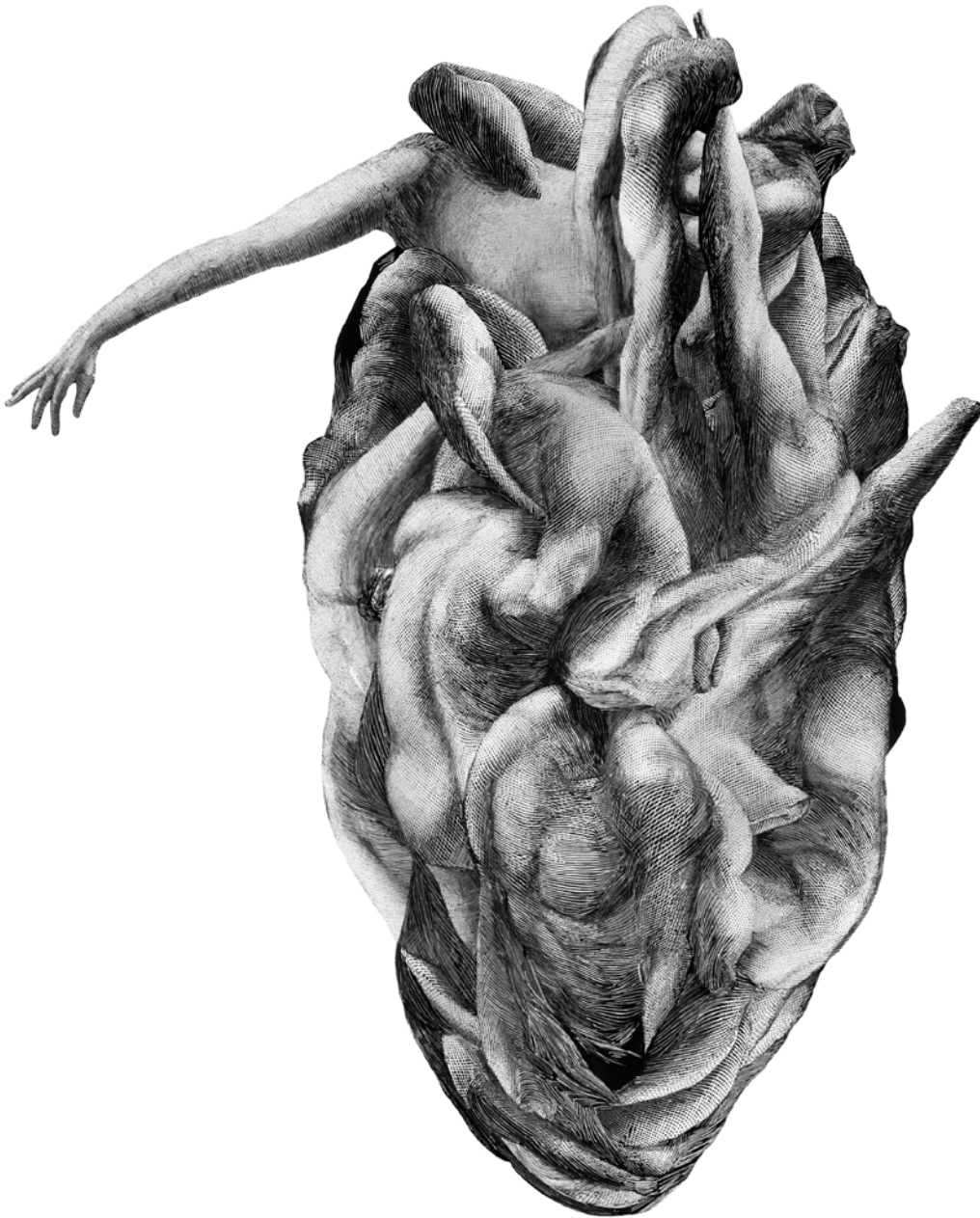
This is a country where it seems right to give thanks for all the good things that nature gives us, where we are constantly reminded of our responsibilities as custodians of the natural world – and where respect for a power far beyond our control comes easily. In other words, a country where the paradox of the earthquake and the cherry blossom makes perfect sense.

Brian Christian is the Principal of the British School in Tokyo.



THE WEEKENDER

guide



Lifeblood, 2013 © Ville Andersson

BE INSPIRED

From Finnish visual artist Ville Andersson's black, white and grey works, to a gripping documentary following Edward Snowden as his NSA leaks first went public, May is packed with plenty of art, film, music and matsuri.

Jacob (Red Blueberry), C-print, 2015, © Ryan McGinley



RYAN MCGINLEY: BODY LOUD!

One of the things that Ryan McGinley is celebrated for is photographing his wide circle of friends. And to put it bluntly, McGinley's friends – who include artists, musicians, and models – are probably cooler than yours. Captured in various states of undress, cavorting through nature, the subjects are vulnerable and compelling. See whether you agree with the 2014 GQ article that dubbed McGinley “the most important photographer in America.” **Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery** Until July 10, www.operacity.jp/en/ag

THE ART WORLD

OUR PICK OF THE CITY'S BEST EXHIBITIONS



GAME ON: WHY ARE VIDEOGAMES SO INTERESTING?

The special exhibitions at Miraikan always make another visit to the innovative Odaiba museum worth your while, and this exploration of the evolution of videogames is no exception. Didactically, the social and cultural impact of games is analyzed, and visitors are given a look into the gaming future. But, most notably, over 120 titles from the history of computer games are fully playable within the exhibition, making the most out of the interactive component of the museum.

Miraikan National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation Until May 30, www.miraikan.jst.go.jp/en/spexhibition/gameon

© 2016 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Design and specifications are subject to change without notice. Note: PlayStation® VR play tickets are limited and will be distributed every operating day at the time of opening on a first-come first-served basis.

VILLE ANDERSSON: AN INTRODUCTION

In reference to the exclusive use of black, white and grey in his works, Finnish visual artist Ville Andersson says, "I want to reduce things I find unnecessary. I deal a lot with silence in my art. For me, a whisper can sometimes be more powerful than a loud shout." This nominal aesthetic is on display in this anthology spanning his much-lauded career, with his carefully staged and costumed photographs being a highlight.

Diesel Art Gallery Until May 20, www.diesel.co.jp/art/en/ville_andersson



The Wave, 2015 © Ville Andersson

ROPPONGI CROSSING 2016: MY BODY, YOUR VOICE

This triennial series is a survey of Japan's contemporary art scene. For its fifth edition, the concept of identity is explored through a sequence of introspective installations by Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese artists. Using contemplative mixed media, the artists highlight their differences – in terms of origin, gender, context, or generation – in an attempt to find commonality through individuality. Disclaimer: diving into a different psyche every few minutes may prove taxing, so take your time.

Mori Art Museum Until July 10, www.mori.art.museum/english



Matsukawa Tomona, Please wait for me until 4:00 am, 2015, Oil on wood panel, 130.3 x 194 cm, Courtesy: Yuka Tsuruno Gallery, Tokyo

MOVIES

These three films will be hitting Japanese screens this year, brought to you by Japanese distributor Gaga



CITIZENFOUR

A gripping documentary that recounts the eight-day period when journalists Laura Poitras (who directed the film) and Glenn Greenwald met with Edward Snowden, planning their strategy for going public with a story that is still making waves. *June*



THE VIOLIN TEACHER

After Laerte (Lazaro Ramos) flubs an audition for São Paulo's elite orchestra, he decides to give music lessons to students in the slums of the city. Sérgio Machado is the director behind this film that refuses to resort to easy clichés. *August*



LOOK WHO'S BACK

Hitler inexplicably wakes up in modern-day Berlin, eventually making his way – through humorous circumstances – to become a performance artist and eventually a TV star. Should we be surprised that he makes his way back into the world of politics? *June*

"Citizenfour": © Praxis Films © Laura Poitras
"The Violin Teacher": Copyright © gullane, Photo copyright © Bia Lefevre
"Look Who's Back": Film copyright: © 2015 Mythos Film Produktions GmbH & Co. KG Constantin Film Produktion GmbH Claussen & Wöbke & Putz Filmproduktion GmbH, Photo copyright: © Constantin Film, 2015



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

1 MAY 26

26 M83

Get your nicest pair of kicks on and prepare for some shoegazing as you listen to the sounds of this French-raised, LA-based troop.

Where: Studio Coast

How much: ¥6,500

More info: tokyoweekender.com

2 MAY 27-29

27 RE:BIRTH MUSIC FESTIVAL

A three-day electronic music escape from Tokyo on the beaches of Chiba might be just what the doctor ordered.

Where: Sodegaura Seaside Park

How much: TBA

More info: tokyoweekender.com

3 MAY 14-15

14 DESIGN FESTA VOL. 43

It's back! The unfathomably large art-centric event is taking over the weekend, featuring thousands of local and international artists from all walks and styles.

Where: Tokyo Big Sight

How much: ¥1,000-1,800

More info: tokyoweekender.com

4 MAY 28

28 TELL RUNATHON

Work up a sweat and show your support for one of Tokyo's leading advocates for mental health awareness by participating in their charity run.

Where: Furuichiba Track and Field Stadium |

How much: ¥3,500

More info: telljp.com

5 MAY 16

16 LITTLE MIX 2016 WORLD TOUR

One of the latest all-female British groups to captivate audiences is performing their number one hits in Tokyo for the first time.

Where: Akasaka Blitz

How much: ¥8,000-9,000

More info: tokyoweekender.com

6 MAY 13-15

13 ASAKUSA SANJA MATSURI

Said to be one of the largest and wildest of the three major Shinto festivals in Tokyo. People flock yearly to Senso-ji for rowdy music and dancing.

Where: Senso-ji

How much: Free

More info: tokyoweekender.com

7 MAY 14-15

14 THAI FESTIVAL 2016

Yoyogi's outdoor party scene kicks off with plenty of Thai culture, cuisine, and entertainment.

Where: Yoyogi Park Event Space

How much: Free

More info: tokyoweekender.com

8 MAY 21-22

21 GREENROOM FESTIVAL

Even Japan digs the hippie vibe. Catch indie films, listen to blues music, and mingle with others who appreciate a different lifestyle.

Where: Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse, Waterfront

How much: ¥9,800/one day

More info: tokyoweekender.com

DISCOVER KABUKI

歌舞伎がぶき 2016

KABUKI Guidance

How to Appreciate Kabuki in English



Guide:
Nakamura
Mantaro



Guide:
Kisa Ayako



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and the lyrics

English 한국어
中文 日本語

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Nakamura Hashinosuke / Nakamura Baishi / Nakamura Muneo
Ichimura Kitsutarō / Nakamura Mantaro / Nakamura Matsue

Friday, June 17

2:30PM, 7:00PM

Sogoro:
Nakamura
Hashinosuke

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www.outbacksteakhouse.co.jp/en



PEOPLE, PARTIES, PLACES

Tokyo's Longest Running  Society Page with **Bill Hersey**

Starting this month's column on March 31 in the luxurious lounge of Oakwood in Midtown. Thanks to the always helpful staff here I have a table with a panoramic view of the beautiful sakura in Midtown's spacious gardens.

Tokyo, as I'm sure you know, has really been busy, and with all the tourists coming to see the cherry blossoms, friends in the hotel business tell me most hotels are fully booked. It's always a nice time of the year and I'm really looking forward to the arrival of Ron and Maria Anderson who are flying in from New York tomorrow and will be staying at the Grand Hyatt. Ron ran AIG operations in Japan for 10 years and still does many things for them out of the Big Apple, and often comes to the Far East on business. While they were living in Tokyo, Maria was active in many worthwhile charity activities that included being president of the prestigious International Ladies Benevolent Society (ILBS).

In addition to seeing many of their friends, the Andersons are here for one of city's biggest social events: the annual ILBS Cherry Blossom Ball at the Okura Hotel on April 8. Maria Teresa Lopez, wife of the Philippine ambassador, is the honorary chairman of the ILBS. The Lopezes, who have done so much in their all-too-short two years in Japan, will return to the Philippines this summer, where the ambassador will continue running their many businesses. Maria did a fantastic job at the ball this year, and people have been talking about it ever since.

DEWI AND HER DOGS

Left Oakwood and headed for Yoyogi Park where Dewi Sukarno had gathered a group of interesting friends (many in showbiz) to join her and her 14 beautiful little dogs for a really fun sakura viewing party. It was four fun hours of good food, interesting people, and, thanks to Dewi, our picnic area attracted much attention – so much, in fact that half a dozen friends called the next day to say they saw us on TV. There's no business like show business.

BRUNEI NATIONAL DAY AT IMPERIAL HOTEL

On the 32nd anniversary of Brunei Darussalam's national day, Ambassador Mahamud Ahmad and his wife Hadijeh Idris hosted a reception to celebrate at the Imperial Hotel on February 23. It was an interesting, laid-back evening and I really enjoyed meeting a very cool young Prince Muqtaadir. The buffet, as always at the Imperial, was excellent, and I especially enjoyed the table of Brunei favorites.

I once had the opportunity to spend four hours in Brunei when I had a layover on a flight to Kuala Lumpur. A Gurkha military officer I knew from Hong Kong was posted in Brunei and took me on a 3.5-hour tour of the city in a military car. It was great and I saw enough to make me want to go back and see more of beautiful Brunei.



Turkish Amb. Bülent Meric, his wife, Kumiko



Brunei Amb. Mahamud Ahmad, his wife Hadijah Idris, Kuwaiti Amb. Abdul-Rahman Al-Otaibi, his wife Jamilah



Amb. Ahmad, Bill, Prince, outgoing Argentine Amb. Raul Dejean

**BRUNEI NAT'L DAY –
IMPERIAL HOTEL**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
IMAN**



Egyptian Deputy Chief of Mission Hamdy Shaolon, his wife Moyssa Hamada, their daughters Nada and Lina



Oman Amb. Khalid, his wife Abeer, their 15-year-old daughter Iman, Dutch clown Rene Boseman, Iman's nanny Jocelyn



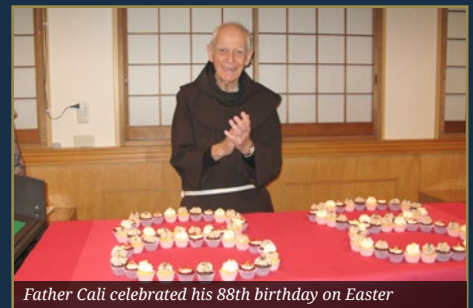
Super Chef Abid Rashid, his daughter Aiza



Asian Tigers' Andy Olea, his wife Miwa, their daughter Keala



Peter Mckeown, Muriell Castillo; their two daughters, Maya and Bianca; and son, Simon



Father Cali celebrated his 88th birthday on Easter

**BEAUTIFUL EASTER –
FRANCISCAN CHAPEL**

**PNG COMMISSIONING
CEREMONY**



Palau Amb. Francis Mariur Matsutaro, PNG Amb. Gabriel Dusava



Fiji Counsellor Julia Korovan, Tongan Amb. Tania Tupou



Federated States of Micronesia Amb. and Mrs. John Fritz, Kyoko Spector



Dr. Nadia El Borai Yamato, Ikebana Master, Tamaki Morii



Gaimusho's Katsuhiko Takahashi, Maali Siam, Mayssa Handi, Mami Takahashi, Palestine Rep. Waleed Siam



Hisanaga Shimazu, Actress/Dancer Hattori Mako, Takako Shimazu (sister of the Empress), Conductor Robert Ryker, his wife Mari

KUWAIT
RECEPTION



Grand Hyatt GM Steve Dewire, Papua New Guinea Amb. Gabriel JK Dusava



Jamilah, Aramco's Iman Al Radi and Saad Amin



Hisanaga Shimazu, Hala Al-Otaibi, her mother Jamilah, Takako Shimazu, Hattori Mako



Two of Dewi's dogs: Tender and Gatsby



Two members of Dewi's staff with a few of the dogs



Actor Hide Kusakari, Aoi, her husband Dan (holding Mita)

IN AND AROUND
DEWI'S HANAMI IN
YOYOGI



Comedian Nambu Torata and a partygoer



The hanami gang's all here



Maria and Ron Anderson (Maria in blue Ralph Lauren off to ILBS ball)

KUWAIT RECEPTION – PALACE HOTEL

My dear friends Ambassador Abdul-Rahman Al-Otaibi, his wife Jamilah and their children hosted their national day party this year at the luxurious Palace Hotel. The occasion was Kuwait's 55th national day and the 25th anniversary of the Liberation of Kuwait from Iraq. I've had the privilege of visiting Kuwait three times. The first time was during the celebration of the first year of their liberation and, as an American, I was treated royally.

Jamilah has a marvelous sense of color and décor and she worked with the embassy and hotel staff to create a magical atmosphere at the hotel. The highlight was an island of trees, plants and tables of pastries, international chocolate delights and Arabic desserts – all artistically arranged.

It was great seeing Katsuhiko and his wife Mami who looked wonderful in a kimono. Katsuhiko has returned from overseas to his new post as deputy director general for the Middle East and Africa for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was also nice talking with noted conductor Robert Ryker and his wife Mari. Robert organizes and conducts monthly concerts by his orchestra Tokyo Sinfonia, and from what I hear it's classical music at its best.

Other than a few legendary party crashers and a couple of loud people trying to look important, it was a beautiful evening in every way. Big congratulations to Abdul and Jamilah on the engagement of their daughter Hala to young Kuwaiti Hamad al-Anjari. The wedding will be in August in Kuwait.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

Papua New Guinea Ambassador Gabriel Dusava, his wife and his staff went all out at the New Otani. The occasion was the formal commissioning of Kazunori Kuribayashi as honorary consul of Papua New Guinea for the Hokkaido region. The ceremony included the traditional breaking of the sake barrel after which guests enjoyed an excellent buffet.

It was an enjoyable evening and I was happy to learn that Papua New Guinea's economic situation is improving, and that they have good relations with Japan. I have had the privilege of traveling to this beautiful country twice – once for the awesome annual festival in Mt. Hagen, and once for the equally awesome festival in Goroka. I have great memories of both trips, and loved the village hopping in a dug-out canoe on the Sepik River. The scenery, the people, the handicrafts and the culture add up to an unbelievable travel experience you'll never forget.

PEOPLE

Oscar winner Leonardo DiCaprio was in town for three days to promote the award-winning film "The Revenant" for 20th Century Fox. Talked with him before his press conference at the Ritz Carlton. He looked very business-like in a dark suit with dress shirt and tie. He also looked very thin. When you see the film – and you really should – you'll

understand why he told me that director Alejandro González Iñárritu spent months preparing for each shot, all done in natural light. It was a real challenge for the actor, often in remote locations (Argentina, Alaska, etc.) in sub-zero weather. It's a great film by a winning director and a super-talented cast.

I just bought the soundtrack for the film and loved the music, much of which was composed by Ryuichi Sakamoto. I first met Ryuichi about 35 years ago when he wrote a theme song for the opening of a Roppongi club I ran for about 32 years. Got to know him better when he was here with Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci to promote "The Last Emperor." He won an Academy Award for that film's soundtrack in 1988. He was recently back in Japan from New York, where he lives, to perform his first concert since undergoing treatment for throat cancer in 2014. Besides being a musical genius, he's involved in so many worthwhile projects – many of the same ones as Leonardo.

Missed the sayonara for a very popular diplomatic couple, Albanian Ambassador Bujar Dida and his wife Reko, who returned to Albania a while back. So it was great to run into Bujar in Hiroo – he and his wife had returned to Japan for their son Besar's graduation from Seikei University. Another long-time friend Sharon Yamano joined us for coffee at Hiroo Segafredo. Sharon's husband Emile was my business partner for a funky little boutique we had on Aoyama-dori way back when.

If you've met Omani Ambassador Khalid Al-Muslahi and his wife Abeer, you'll know what an outgoing, hard-working couple they are. Abeer is involved in all kinds of worthwhile charity projects, and the couple open their beautiful embassy/home to art shows, political seminars, and cultural events in addition to fun parties for their children as well as orphans and other friends. Recently they hosted a holiday party for their 15-year-old daughter Iman. It was a relaxed, fun evening with great decorations, food, and entertainment by Dutch actor Rene Boseman who turned up as a clown, balloon artist and magician. I'd really recommend Rene if you need entertainment for almost any kind of party (especially for kids). You can contact him at 090-4959-0160.

Years ago, I met world-famous photographer Annie Leibovitz at a party in New York City, and I remember thinking what a great lady she was. Unfortunately, our schedules conflicted when she was here recently for an exhibition. She was well known for capturing a nude and pregnant Demi Moore for the cover of Vanity Fair. More recently, she has made waves with her photos of one-time Olympic winner Bruce Jenner – once a macho-looking guy who is now far prettier after his highly publicized sex change last year. I also loved the portrait of 83-year-old Yoko Ono that Annie shot for the latest Pirelli Calendar.

While she was in this part of the world, she was interviewed by another of my favorite ladies, Christiane Amanpour, for CNN. When asked about her financial troubles a few years back, her response – "It was a good kick in the butt" – was so very Annie.



Former Albanian Amb. Bujar Dida, Sharon Yamano at Hiroo Segafredo



Swiss Trade & Commerce Counsellor, Dr. Roger Zbinden, Embermedia's Andres Fehr, Outgoing Hilton Tokyo Odaiba GM Christian Baudat



Leonardo's Press Conference: 20th Century Fox – Ritz Carlton

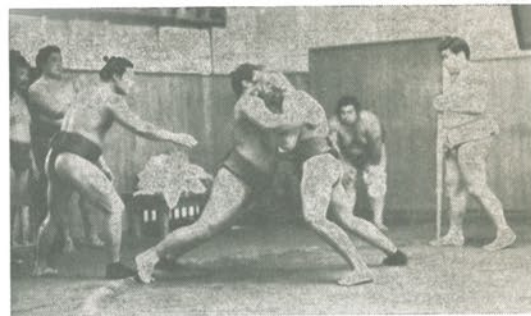
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TOKYO WEEKENDER

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"A Forum for Foreigners in Japan"

May 8, 1981



Young Texan becomes sumodom's 1st Caucasian tryout

By Tod McAvoy

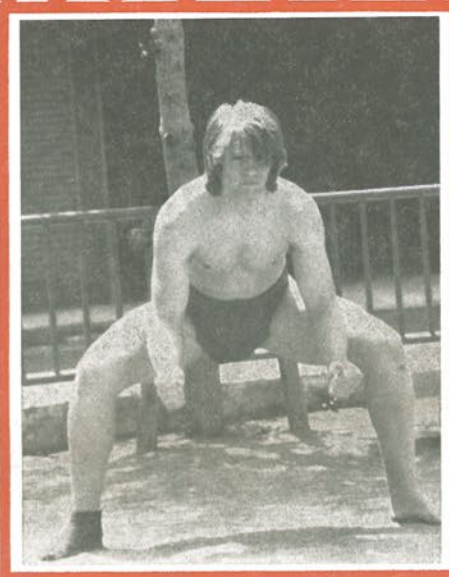
TWO BEHEMOTHS SPRING INTO THE AIR, flesh strikes flesh with a resounding smack as they collide. Each of the giants grunts and wheezes and pants as he contracts all his tired muscles, buried in layers of carefully cultivated fat, to the end of pushing the other out of a small circle.

Phillip Smock, known as Takanoumi here at the stable of retired *sumo* grand champion Taiho, takes all this in with a studious eye. Newly arrived from San Antonio, Texas, he is the first Caucasian to join the ranks of *sumo*, one of the world's oldest sports. He seems eager to learn his way around the *dohyo*. One of the stable's coaches—watching Takanoumi pay close attention to the goings-on in the ring and to another wrestler practicing his rhythm on a slapping post—seem optimistic about the young blond's chances.

Takanoumi's decision to join the stable is noteworthy because he is the first Caucasian to totally immerse himself into the world of *sumo* and in so doing he has cut himself off from virtually all remnants of Western society.

Now just why would an 18-year old Texan just out of high school do such a thing? "I don't know," says Takanoumi. "I've wanted to do this for a long time. I watched *sumo* on

相撲



TV when we were stationed here (at Yokota Air Base), and soon it got to where I didn't want to watch it anymore — I wanted to do it."

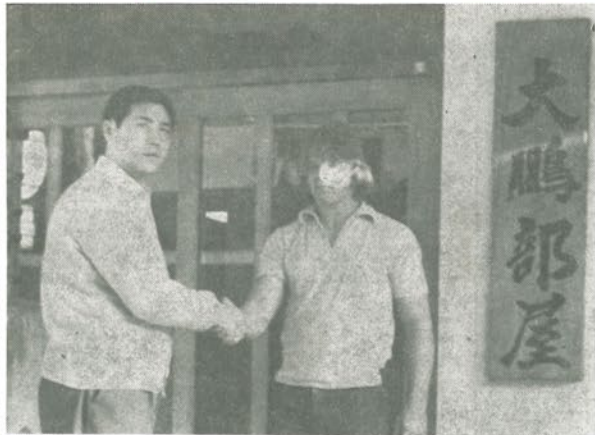
Just as he cannot explain his reasons for transplanting himself around the world, nor does Takanoumi know just what attracted him to his chosen sport to begin with. "I just watched it and it was appealing," he says. "It's a strange feeling. It seems God gave this feeling to the wrong person, a guy who lives 8,000 miles away." Apparently, however, he has found a home for himself, or at least part of himself, in Japan. And so he has come.

What is surprising is that after a five-year absence from the land of *sumo* Takanoumi still felt something calling him to the sport. Whereas during his stay here he watched *sumo* incessantly and practiced it with friends, all of whom he beat regularly, his only Stateside contact with *sumo* was through back issues of *Sumo World*, the English language *sumo* magazine. It was, in fact, the September 1976 issue, Takanoumi recalls, that got him back into *sumo* seriously. He found in this issue descriptions of the formal motions wrestlers go through before their matches and, in other issues, of the different techniques wrestlers use. Practicing these with dedication and weight training helped him get ready somewhat for the real thing.

As for reaction to his decision back in his home town of San Antonio, Takanoumi ran into some problems, especially with his parents who vehemently opposed his joining the stable. "For two years," says Takanoumi, "they've been asking Andy Adams (editor of *Sumo World* and one of Takanoumi's three guarantors in Japan) to try to discourage me. Finally they gave in. Then my dad told everybody about it, and all the local newspapers did stories on it."

His friends also tried to discourage Takanoumi, though they were worried about his size. Having seen pictures of only the bigger wrestlers, they tried to tell the trim (though not for long) 200-or-so pounder that he was too small for the sport. "My friends didn't know enough about *sumo*," he says. "Just what they had seen in some documentaries where they only show all the big guys like Takamiyama and Kitanoumi. I wish they would have included Chiyonofuji or somebody smaller like that. They kept telling me you have to be 400 or 500 pounds for this sport."

(Continued on Page 4)



Phil Smock arrives at Narita in Texas hat, boots, ready to try his luck as *sumo*'s first Caucasian practitioner. At right he's greeted by former Yokozuna Taiho, stable boss and one of the all-time greats of the sport. Top, Phil—now known as Takanoumi—puts his strength and cunning against another young *sumo* hopeful. (PHOTOS BY ANDY ADAMS)

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BACK IN THE DAY: MAY 1981

Check out the scene in Tokyo from 1974! You can read the rest of this issue (No.18 1981) and view Weekender's 45-year archive online. www.tokyoweekender.com/weekender-archives/



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