

powderlife

NISEKO ニセコ

Issue 34 // March 5 to March 18

WINTER SPORTS * ENTERTAINMENT * REAL ESTATE

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SHEESA

Local Gentem pro 'Sheesa' on her Niseko life

GASSAN

A ski resort in Japan with the 'strangest' season

RESORT GUIDE

Your guide to Niseko – page 42

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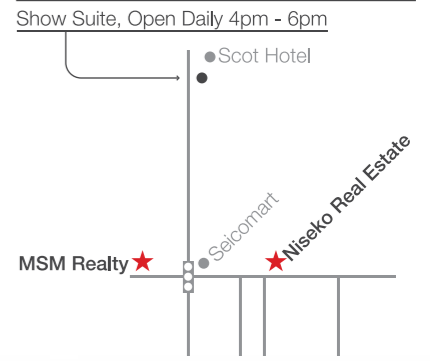
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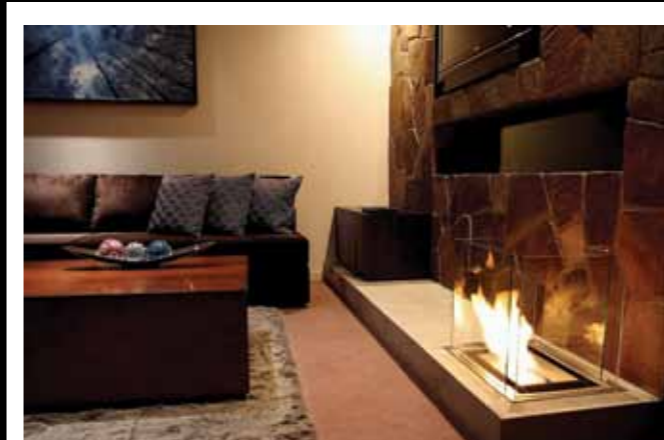
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powderlife
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* EDITOR'S NOTE



photography // glen claydon

SKI towns are frantic places for both visitors and locals. Taking a relaxing beach holiday to get over the exhaustion of a skiing holiday would be ideal. Heading for somewhere warm to soak up some Vitamin D is exactly what many locals do after the season. And whilst many who live here have already started to plan and ponder what they want to do after the season, there's still a lot more of Niseko's winter to enjoy.

March is probably one of the most idyllic times to be in Niseko. It's a little warmer, there's descent powder snow and hardly any lifts lines; it's when everyone takes a breather and uses the extra time to spend longer days on the mountain and perhaps even climb Mount Yotei.

The lifts in Niseko are usually open until sometime in May, but if you're a real diehard skier or snowboarder you may want to meet some others at Gassan (about 620km south of Niseko) – our travel destination for this issue (p. 57). As Niseko closes, Gassan will open up its lifts for the first time for its unusual April–July season.

Our feature story this issue is on Gentem rider 'Sheesa'. A well-respected member of Niseko's snowboarding community and with a Gentem board named after her, 'Sheesa' will probably head to Alaska for some spring riding. She is incredibly passionate about her sport and uses her time in winter to teach others about carving and enjoying Niseko's powder snow.

Well, sadly, this is goodbye from *Powderlife* for this season. For us, it's gone too quickly, but we have March to enjoy the uncrowded mountain and great weather. We hope you have enjoyed our updates this season.

Lizzy Hoo, Powderlife, Managing Editor, email lizzy@powderlife.com

『スキータウンは観光客とローカルの喜び、興奮があふれる場所です。ニセコで働くローカルたちがシーズン疲れた体を休めるには、何と言っても常夏リゾート地でのバケーションが理想的でしょう。ニセコの次は南半球でのスキーシーズンを楽しむという人々が多いため、その前にどこか暖かい場所で日光浴を楽しみ、ビタミンD摂取量を高め、少しでも日焼けをしようというのが彼らの大半がすることです。また、今の時期、このニセコに住む多くの人々がシーズン後について考え始めていることでしょう。しかし、楽しいスキーシーズンはまだ終わっていません。』

3月はニセコで一番おだやかな時期と言えるでしょう。暖かくなってきてはいますが、まだ十分な量のパウダースノーがありますし、何と言ってもリフト乗車の際の混雑がないのがうれしいです。また、皆さんの多くはニセコの街を探索したり、一日の長い時間をスキー/スノーボードに費やしたり、思い思いに残り少ないシーズンを楽しんでいることでしょう。中には羊蹄山登山に挑戦する人もいるかもしれません。

ニセコスキー場のリフトは通常、5月頃までオープンしています。今号の「Travel」特集(57ページ)でも紹介していますが、ハードコアなスキーヤー/スノーボーダーには、春から夏にかけてリフトがオープンされる山形県にある月山スキー場(ニセコより約620km南下)がお勧めです。

今号の特集記事では、Gentemプロスノーボーダーの一人である「シーサー」にスポットをあてています。今シーズンが終わる頃、彼女はアラスカへと雪を追いかけて旅立つことでしょう。ニセコのスノーボード・コミュニティの中で尊敬され、彼女の名前にちなんで名付けられたGentem製のボードを持つ「シーサー」はスノーボードに対して信じられないほどの情熱を傾けています。そして、冬季のニセコでは特に地元女性たちを対象にスノーボードを教えています。彼女自身がそうであるようにカービング、ニセコの有名なパウダースノーを楽しむ事が主なレッスン内容です。

パウダーライフは今号が最終号です。私たちにとって、シーズンはあっという間に終わったように感じられました。しかし、混雑していないリフト、良い天候に恵まれる3月はまだ十分に楽しめます。

皆様は今シーズンもパウダーライフを楽しみ読みましたことを願っています。皆さんが残り少ないシーズンを楽しめますように。

リズィー・フー, パウダーライフ, 編集長, lizzy@powderlife.com

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* VILLAGE NEWS



NISEKO INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE CENTER

NISEKO Town held an explanation evening on March 4 in the local community centre outlining the proposed Niseko International Exchange Centre, which is earmarked to be located next to the Niseko Elementary school in a refurbished building centre of Niseko Town. The proposed International Exchange Centre will be created with the aim of creating a stronger local economy that encourages improved growth and positive International relations in our town and district.

It is proposed that the Niseko International

Exchange Centre will house an international school – this is not 100% confirmed until the application for a license to operate in Niseko has been cleared, the results of this application are due to be released later in the year.

At the event, The Hokkaido International School outlined what an International School is and what sort of curriculum, what types of activities an international school would offer and what it would potentially mean to the community.

The evening offered a stage for Niseko Town to discuss international relations and education with members of the public.



WOMEN'S KNOW-HOW

SKIING with other like-minded women is a great way to enhance your mountain experiences. This year, NISS is offering a five-day course – two days of which are dedicated to video analysis so that you know what you are doing and how to make the exact change in your skiing. The week's end is celebrated with champagne and canapés at the Hanazono 308 restaurant facility. Spring dates are March 14–18 and 21–25. Groups of no more than seven ladies. It promises to be a spring-loaded week of fun. Contact NISS@Harmonyresorts.com.

BEST OF NISEKO

THIS is your only opportunity to tell us what you think about Niseko in Powderlife's 'Best of' awards. Visit www.powderlife.com and look on the right-hand side of the web site for the link. Rhythm Snowsports has kindly donated some great prizes. Enter to win either a Nomis jacket (¥48,500) and Nomis pants (¥31,500) OR Armada jacket (¥42,500) and Armada pants (¥29,000). Rhythm sale on now – 30% off retail and 2011 demo boards and skis.



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LOCAL VOICES

Name Tomomi Nishimura **Age** 29
Hometown Kochi **Company** Rhythm
Snowsports **Time in Niseko** Six years **Ski or board and for how long?** Snowboard, 8 years **Favourite restaurant?** Aburiya, Hirafu **Favourite bar?** Barunba **Favourite onsen?** Yugokorotei **Favourite ski run?** Miharashi **Local secret?** Bargain hunting at Rhythm clearance sale **Fortune cookie saying?** Health is the most important thing **Place to ski before you die?** Utah, America

名前 ニシムラトモミ **年齢** 29歳 **出身地** 高知県 職場 リズムスノースポーツ **ニセコ年数** 6年 **スキー、スノーボード歴** スノーボード8年 **お気に入りのレストラン** あぶり屋 **お気に入りのバー** バルンバ **お気に入りの温泉** 湯心亭 **好きなゲレンデコース** 見晴らしコース **ニセコの秘密** リズムのクリアランスセールはかなりお買い得です!

人生の格言 健康第一
死ぬ前にいきたい
スキー場 ユタ、
アメリカ



Name Dan Gallagher **Age** 27
Hometown Perth, Australia

Company Niseko Photography **Time in Niseko** 2 seasons **Ski or board and for how long?** Snowboard, 2 years **Favourite restaurant?** Rin **Favourite bar?** Gyu+ **Favourite onsen?** Niseko Grand Hotel **Favourite ski run?** Back bowls **Local secret?** Buy a Mitsubishi Delica and you'll find out **Fortune Cookie Saying?** Curls get the girls **Place to ski before you die?** Alaska **名前** ダン ガラガー **年齢** 27歳 **出身地** パース、オーストラリア **職場** ニセコフォトグラフィー **ニセコ年数** 2シーズン **スキー、スノーボード歴** スノーボード2年 **お気に入りのレストラン** リン **お気に入りのバー** キュータス **お気に入りの温泉** ニセコグランドホテル **好きなゲレンデコース** バックボール **ニセコの秘密** デリカを買ったら良さが分かります **人生の格言** 女の子は天然パーマの男が好き **死ぬ前にいきたいスキー場** アラスカ

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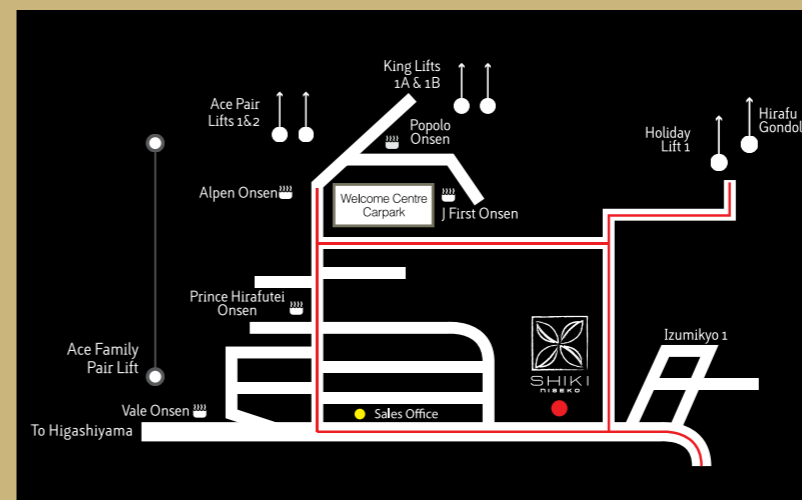
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* DISCOVER

EXPLORE HAKODATE

HAKODATE was one of the first areas in Hokkaido for people from mainland Japan to start inhabiting and, as such, it has some of the oldest buildings in Hokkaido. The city is about 4 hours south of Niseko, in south-west Hokkaido.

THERE is a lot of western influence in Hakodate, including several very impressive churches and warehouses. Hakodate is also famous for squid and even has an enormous squid festival during summer. There are many restaurants selling fresh squid, including a few specialising in squid that you can eat live.



01 EAT a delicious hamburger in one of Hakodate's famous Lucky Pierot restaurants. They are only in Hakodate, and each shop has a unique interior design.

02 WATCH some snow monkeys enjoy the simple pleasure of a hot bath in the Hakodate Monkey Park.

03 WALK around the old town, including the converted warehouses, Russian Orthodox church and several beautiful old embassies.

04 CATCH a ropeway to the top of Mt. Hakodate and accompany a few drinks with the night view of the city below. The view is often voted as one of the world's top night views.



SPRING PARKS

AS the weather warms and the powder reduces, the migration to Niseko's spring parks begins.

HANAZONO, undisputedly, has the biggest park area in Niseko, with a huge number of immaculately groomed kickers and rails to suit all levels as well as a FIS (Federation Internationale de Ski) specification half-pipe – the only one in Hokkaido. The park's features are constantly changing, but if this assortment

of terrain isn't enough to interest you, then maybe the bag jump will, which allows you to practise giant jumps without having to worry about bad landings.

Grand Hirafu also pushes snow towards the top of the mountain to create some truly enormous kickers in its purposely built spring park.

Niseko Village has its Wonderland Park at the top of the resort under the Wonderland Chair, featuring several challenging terrain features.

Work on that goggle tan in the park this spring – it's the perfect time to brush up on some old tricks.

LEISURE SPORTS IN SAPPORO



AN indoor amusement paradise of arcade games, indoor sports and leisure activities that you are free to use as much as you want for a cheap hourly rate. There are air-hockey tables, squash courts, baseball-batting areas, gladiator arenas, climbing walls, trampolines, karaoke rooms, band-practise rooms, massage chairs, bull riding, ten-pin bowling, Segway riding and hundreds of the latest and greatest arcade games. It's a little difficult to get there (札幌市東区東苗穂3条2丁目5-25) without a private car, though there is a shuttle bus that runs from Sapporo station.

YUKICHICHIBU ONSEN

A HIDDEN onsen, perfect for those seeking an escape from onsens in Hirafu, which can often become crowded. However, there is a reason that it's a quiet onsen: getting there can be very difficult and expensive without the use of a private vehicle. The highlight of Yukichichibu is the uninterrupted views out towards Chisenupuri and Iwaonupuri from the six (or seven if you're a lady) outdoor baths. The ladies also have the added bonus of a mud bath, which, after a bathe and a quick scrub, will make your skin exceptionally smooth.



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*** IRRASHAIMASSE // “welcome!” – great local businesses**



MARIPOSA, Hirafu, Satsuki Yamamoto

ACROSS from Jam Bar sits specialty muffin shop Mariposa. Named after an area in California's Yosemite National Park, Mariposa was created by Satsuki Yamamoto who first visited Niseko from her hometown in Kanagawa (near Tokyo) for a snow holiday more than 20 years ago. She came to Niseko to visit her future husband Yukio – the now chairman of the Telemark Ski Association of Japan; she eventually moved to Niseko so they could spend the rest of their lives together. Satsuki has always loved to make sweets. If you ever visit Satsuki's shop, she recommends the Apple and Caramel muffins and the interesting savoury muffin combinations.

マリポサ ヒラフ 山本さつきさん

Jamバーの向かいに今シーズンから新たに出来た、マフィン専門店Mariposaは、外国のスイーツ屋を想わせる可愛い佇まいだ。オーナーパティシェである山本さつきさんが、お気に入りの場所であるカリフォルニアのヨセミテ国立公園がある地域にちなんで名づけられた。神奈川県出身の山本さんが、初めて訪れたニセコの雪に感動したのが、20年以上も前のこと。神奈川で出会った地元ヒラフ出身の旦那さん由紀男は、テレマークスキーの日本における第一人者で、現在日本テレマーク協会の名誉会長をされている。そんなさつきさんの作るお菓子をみんなにも楽しんでもらいたいと由紀男さんが、自宅を改装して作られた小さなお店がMariposaだ。30種類もあるレパートリーの中から、日替わりで焼かれるマフィンは、いつ訪れても退屈させない。人気メニューのアップルキャラメルはすぐに売り切れてしまうほど、おかず系マフィンにもぜひ挑戦してほしいと山本さんは話した。

GROOVY, Kutchan, Katsumi Sasaki

BORN and raised in Kutchan, Katsumi Sasaki started his own salon above his parents hairdressing business 18 years ago, after living and training in Sapporo for 10 years. Before moving to Sapporo, Katsumi was a skier, but after moving back to Kutchan he met Gentem owner Taro Tamai and learned how to snowboard from the master. Katsumi's shop Groovy is decorated with pieces of his personality — there are skateboards, snowboards, books, art, cool pieces of furniture and his cute little dog Amu. Every morning Katsumi tries to snowboard, unless he has a customer. Snowboarding and enjoying the mountains will keep Katsumi near Niseko's mountains forever.

グルービー 倶知安 佐々木勝巳さん

正真正銘の倶知安ローカルである佐々木勝巳さんは、10年間の札幌での生活を終え、18年前に両親が営んでいる理容室の二階を利用してGROOVYをオープンした。以前スキーヤーだった佐々木さんは、倶知安に戻ってきた後に玄天スティックのオーナー玉井太郎さんと出会い、スノーサーフィンマスターから、滑る楽しさやニセコの雪の楽しみ方を学び、スノーボードにのめり込んだのだ。お店には、趣味であるスノーボード、スケートボードが無造作に置かれ、友人から手に入れているというREDIのサングラスやSmooch coffeeのコーヒー豆を販売、店中に飾られている本や小物、そして個性ある家具、一席づつ違った大きさの鏡など佐々木さんの人柄やセンスが光る飾りつけがされている。そして、そばにはいつも愛犬Amuがいるのだ。予約のない朝には毎日スノーボードに出掛けるという佐々木さん。ニセコの山と雪、スノーボードがある限り、佐々木さんは倶知安を離れることはないだろう。

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* IN THE LOOP

<h1>MAR</h1> <hr/> <h1>2011</h1>	5-6 Gentemstick Test Ride GENTEMSTICK 試乗会 Trial ride Gentemstick's 2011-12 model boards. At bottom of gondola station in Niseko Grand Hirafu. 開催地 ニセコグランヒラフ ゴンドラ降り場付近にて、試乗会開催します。 Start // 9:30 am to 15:00 pm Place // Niseko Grand Hirafu Contact // 0466 85 4010	06 Namara Ippatsu Big Air なまら一発 ビッグエア One of biggest local competitions in Hirafu, which is great fun to watch. 毎年恒例のなまら一発が今年も行なわれます。参加するもよし、観戦するもよし。 Start // 9:00 am Place // Niseko Grand Hirafu Contact // 0136 22 0109	★ Rhythm Snowsports Sale リズムスノースポーツセール 30% off all retail and ex-demo ski and snowboard equipment until the end of the season. レンタル料金 30% オフ、中古デモスキー、スノーボードがセールとなります。お見逃しなく。 Start // 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm Place // Rhythm Snowsports Contact // 0136 23 0164
	09 Kutchan Art Exhibition くっちゃんART展2011 Colourful exhibition featuring many artists gathering in this small museum. Exhibition period February 9th - March 27th. Admission fee: ¥500. 小さな美術館で、多くの作家が集う華やかな展覧会。展示期間2月9日から3月27日。入館料500円。 Start // 9:00 am to 5:00 pm // until Mar 27 Place // Shu Ogawara Museum of Art Contact // 0136 21 4141	★ End of season meat discount シーズンオフフードディスカウント We are closing on March 21, come in before then to get a discount as a thank-you for the season. 3月21日シーズン終了の閉店を予定しております。在庫がなくなり次第ディスカウント終了となりますので、お見逃しなく。 Start // 11:00am - 2:00pm 6:00-10:00pm Place // Wagyu Dining Sou Contact // 0136 23 3048	
12 Mercer Hassy Jazz Orchestra マーサー・ハッシー ジャズオーケストラ Yes! The BIG BAND! Performing live in Half Note. Enjoy its exciting, swinging music. ハーフノートでビッグバンドのジャズライブです!エキサイティングでインギーな演奏をお楽しみください! Start // 9:00 pm Place // Half Note Contact // 0136 23 2727	13 Reggae Night Party Tuff Rider stage 5@与作 Reggae dance hardcore night. Doraku, Myers's Zen sound and Dacta bird will make powerful sounds. ¥1,500 Entry. Guest sound にDoraku, Myers's Zen sound, Dacta birdとサウンド陣共に超豪華!楽しい夜になるでしょう! Start // 10:00 pm Place // Yosaku Contact // 0136 23 4390	16 Psychedelic Party Killers Night サイケデリックパーティー Killers Night Cyclecreation from Sapporo presents the party in famous Jam bar! Entry ¥1,500 includes one free drink. Do not miss it! サイケレイションfrom 札幌 プレゼンツ サイケデリックパーティー開催! 1500円/1ドリンクです。 Start // 8:00 pm - 3:00 am Place // Jam Bar Contact // 0136 23 0700	17 Saint Patrick's Day 聖パトリックデー Celebrate St. Patty's Day at Irish pub, Paddy McGinty's with ¥400 green beer, ¥700 pints of Guinness and ¥100 off Jameson Irish whiskey. 聖人パトリックの命日をアイリッシュパブで祝いましょう。グリーンビール400円、ギネス700円。 Start // 3:00-10:30 pm Place // Paddy McGinty's Contact // 080 4040 4470
19 Slope style competition スロープスタイル大会 Hanazono monthly freestyle competition series. Applications close 5:00 pm on March 3. Entry fee ¥2,000. 今シーズンのNo.1フリースタイラー決定戦!!「キング(クイーン)・オブ・フリースタイル」に輝くのは? 応募受付定員になり次第締め切り。 Start // 9:00 am Place // Hanazono Ski Resort Contact // 0136 23 0913			SKI & BOARD COMPETITIONS MAR & APR
NISEKO WINTER FESTIVAL Saturday 12 March - Monday 21 March This ten day event will feature a number of on mountain events as well as local restaurants and service providers giving special deals. For more information: www.nisekowinterfestival.com 'OYAJI' SKI COMPETITION Saturday 12 March @ Grand Hirafu FIREWORKS Saturday March 12 & 19 @ Grand Hirafu NISEKO ANNUPURI FESTIVAL	12-13, 19-21 March @ Annupuri LADIES DAY Wednesday 16 March @ Annupuri FAMILY SKI COMPETITION Sunday 20 March @ Grand Hirafu 	SKI & SNOWBOARD BATTLE Sunday March 13 @ Annupuri Ski cross and snowboard cross. OLD BOYS SLALOM Sunday March 27 @ Grand Hirafu For over 50 year old men. HOKKAIDO JNR SKI COMP March 29-30 @ Grand Hirafu For over 50 year old men. 2011 FIS JAPAN SKI CROSS Friday April 1 @ Hanazono 2011 FIS JAPAN BOARD CROSS	Saturday April 2 @ Hanazono 2011 FIS HOKKAIDO BOARD CROSS Sunday April 3 @ Hanazono SUPER BUMPS NISEKO CUP Sunday April 3 @ Grand Hirafu Freestyle ski mogul competition. HIRAFU CLASSIC Sunday April 10 @ Grand Hirafu Race for skiers, telemarkers and snowboarders.

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HANAZONO
 NISEKO JAPAN

* SNAP



Name // yasutomo kinoshita

WHAT are you wearing today? Yasutomo, from Hyogo, spent the day riding the Kogen Park in bright sunshine, and even brighter Gigi Rulf Volcom outerwear.



Name // ryosuke sato

WHAT are you wearing today? Ryosuke, from nearby Tomakomai has been hitting the parks in Hirafu and Hanazono in this great Yonex set. We love the leopard print details!



Name // ned hunter

WHAT are you wearing today? Ned is wearing a jacket from Burton's White Collection, which is possibly the shiniest jacket that we have ever seen.

* FLASH



KUTCHAN

YUKITOPIA //

Kutchan's winter festival, Yukitopia, was a hive of activity, with several fun events over the weekend-long festival, including snow ball fights, igloo making demonstrations, and our favourite, gliding across icy water.



HANAZONO NISEKO JAPAN

FOR your chance to win a Hanazono Powder Guides First Tracks Tours for two, valued at ¥32,000, answer the following:



"What tricks are you going to pull on the bag jump this spring?"

Send your entry to lizzy@powderlife.com

Get creative!

Question // What do you love about Niseko?



MARI Nagai from Tokyo loves night skiing, especially under the second light on the fourth pylon near Ace Quad.



GREG Hogan from Sydney, Australia loves the soft powder in Niseko, as well as the large size of the resort.

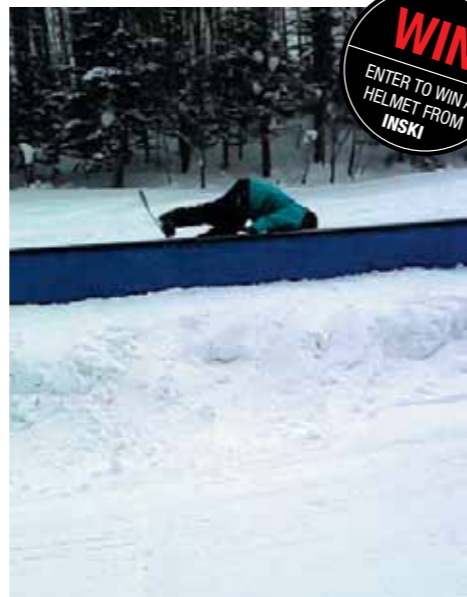


LEN and Linda Kilpatrick from Darwin, Australia love the wide variety of terrain to ride in Niseko



STEVEN Carrara from Guam loves the breathtaking beauty of the area on a sunny day.

INSKI STACK



ENTER TO WIN A HELMET FROM INSKI.

SUBMIT your gnarly crash story and the reason why you wear a helmet and/or need a new helmet to ross@powderlife.com. Entries are required to be 100 words or less and must be accompanied with valid contact information. We will be picking a winner every two weeks.



NISEKO HILTON

MTV JAPAN JAM //

MTV Australia came to town with a whole heap of talent, including Aussie rockers Art vs. Science, MTV VJs Erin McNaught and Darren McMullen, DJ Anna Lunoe and a heap of pro snowboarders for a massive series of parties and live shows.



* FEATURE // tomomi 'sheesa' kuwahara

words by // lizzy hoo translation by // yuri pangier photos by // ross cole-hunter

THE King of the Hill event in Alaska is one of those Holy Grail events made by snowboarding legends for hard-core enthusiasts. Nick Perata, the first snowboarder to ever ride Alaska, founded the event in 1994 and after the event's 10-year hiatus, he brought it back to its birthplace Valdez, Alaska in 2010 to see Travis Rice crowned as King. Thrilling, terrifying, big and deep, The King of the Hill event is for dedicated and passionate enthusiasts. Local Niseko Gentem rider Tomomi 'Sheesa' Kuwahara has been to Alaska more than eight times – and in 1996 she competed in The King of the Hill and placed 4th in the 'Extreme' category and 6th overall.



SHEESA turned pro in 1994 and has since won major competitions and has been featured in films and countless magazines. Today, she is still a sponsored rider and devotes everyday of her winter season to her sport. Her knowledge of carving is something she wants to share with everyone; she hosts ladies camps, instructs lessons, and guides during the winter. *Powderlife* caught up with Sheesa before she hosted one of her ladies camps. Here's what she has to say about life and living in Niseko.

When did you first come to Niseko?

In April of 1990.

How did you get your nickname Sheesa?

Before I started snowboarding, I lived in Okinawa. One of my friends told me I looked like a Shisa (a traditional Okinawan decoration, often in pairs, resembling a cross between a lion and a dog; from Okinawa mythology).

What do you do here in Niseko?

I teach private intermediate/ advanced snowboard lessons at 'SHEESA RIDING CAMP'. Lessons

アラスカで行われる『King of the Hill』(以下KOH)は、ハードコアなスノーボーダーのためのエクストリーム・フリーライドの大会である。1994年に同大会を創設したニック・ペラタ氏は初めてアラスカで滑ったスノーボーダーでもある。2010年には同大会誕生の地でもあるアラスカ・バルデズで10年ぶりにKOHが開催され、トラビス・ライスが優勝した。スリルと恐怖を目の前にアラスカの大自然を滑る同大会は、まさに情熱あふれる熱狂的なスノーボーダーのための大会と言ってもいいだろう。地元ニセコでGentemのライダーとして活躍する桑原"シーサー"知美さんは8回以上もアラスカの地を踏んでいる。そして、1996年にはKOHに挑戦し、エクストリーム4位、オーバーオール6位の成績を残している。

1994年にプロに転向した桑原さんは数々の主要な大会で優勝し、フィルムや多くの雑誌などに取り上げられた。現在でもスポンサー付きのプロライダーとして活躍し、冬シーズン中はスノーボードに集中している。そして、女性向けのスノーボードキャンプ、レッスン、ガイドなどを通して、彼女が得意とするカービングの知識を広めている。今回、パウダーライフはレディース・キャンプが始まる直前の桑原さんにお話をうかがった。インタビューの中で桑原さんは、彼女の人生観、ニセコでの生活について話されている。

are held in various locations in Honshu, as well as in Niseko. I also do some Alaskan tours in the spring.

What is it about snowboarding that you really love?

Sometimes I'm really focused on my riding and I feel the time goes by slowly. Snowboarding is a tool that gives me this kind of amazing moment, which you cannot experience in your everyday life.

You hold local ladies camps in winter – what is it that you want other people to get out of snowboarding?

The better you get, the more you can enjoy riding. I would like these girls to think how to ride better on any slope. If they do this, every run will be enjoyable.

How do you make a living – do you have sponsors?

I live off of the signing bonuses from my sponsors and the sales from my riding camp. My sponsors are GENTEMSTICK, HAGLOFS, HESTRA, POC, and KASK.

You have a Gentem board named after you – how does that make you feel?

初めてニセコに来たのはいつですか?

1990年4月

シーサーというニックネームの由来は何ですか?

スノーボードを始める前に沖縄に住んでいて、その時に友だちが「シーサー」に似ていると。

ニセコで主にどんな仕事をされているのですか?

「SHEESA RIDING CAMP」というプログラムで中・上級者向けのスノーボード・プライベートレッスンを受け持っています。ニセコ以外にも本州でもプログラムを開催しています。そのほか、春にはアラスカツアーなどを企画・運営しています。

スノーボードのどんなところに、それ程魅力を感じているのですか?

時に、時間がスローに感じるくらい集中して滑ります。このような普段の生活では味わえない最高の時間を与えてくれる道具がスノーボードです。

毎年冬にローカルの女性キャンプを開催していますが、他の人々にスノーボーディングから何を心得欲しいですか?

上達すればするほど気持ち良さのレベルも上がると思います。どんな斜面でも気持ちよく滑れるように、考えて滑る事の楽しさを知ってほしいですね。このような考え方を心得欲しいです。

どのようにしてスノーボードで生計を

* FEATURE // tomomi 'sheesa' kuwahara

I am thankful to produce my third signature board – TRINITY. I was involved with GENTEMSTICK for the development of new boards as a woman rider for many years. I researched a lot about making a comfortable women's board and we recently made one just for women, which is good for either

“ Snowboarding is a tool that gives me this kind of amazing moment, which you cannot experience in your everyday life. ”

backcountry or the groomers.

Would you call yourself a snow surfer?

I don't call myself a 'snow surfer', but I do like riding into the wall of snow just like I do when I surf.

立てているのですか。スポンサーはいますか? スポンサーからの契約金とRIDING CAMPの売り上げで生活しています。スポンサーは、GENTEMSTICK、HAGLOFS、HESTRA、POC、KASKです。Gentemstickに桑原さんのシグネチャーボードがありますが、その事についてどのように感じますか? シグネチャーボードが作られることになった経過について教えてください。

TRINITYは3度目のシグネチャーボードになります。新しいシグネチャーボードが出せる事はとてもありがたい事です。長年、GENTEMSTICK唯一のレディースライダーとしてボードの開発に携わり、どのようなボードが女性にとって乗りやすいのかを研究してきました。今回、レディースユーザーに向けてバックカントリーでもゲレンデでも自由に乗りこなせるボードができました。

自分をスノーサーファーと呼ぶことに対してはどう思われますか? あなたは、このスタイルがニセコで発展すると思いますか?

自分をスノーサーファーとは呼んでいま

At my riding camp, I teach girls things like this and they enjoy snowboarding more than before because now they know how to 'play' when they ride. But, it's not only my style that influences riders; Gentem riders influence a lot of snowboarders nationwide.

What has been your biggest snowboarding challenge?

When I entered the King of the Hill extreme snowboard contest.

What have been your greatest achievements?

Being a pro snowboarder for many years is a great accomplishment, and I still enjoy riding today. I hope this will inspire people.

Who or what inspires you?

That feeling when I ride. I never get bored riding because I see myself getting better every year.

Where do you find peace in life?

I feel peaceful everyday.

せんが、サーフィンの様に壁に当て込むスタイルは大好きです。私のキャンプに参加したほとんどの方に壁への入り方も教えています。彼女らは、「遊び方」を知って今までよりもスノーボードが楽しくなったと喜んでます。私だけでなくGENTEMライダー達のライディングに影

「 普段の生活では味わえない最高の時間を与えてくれる道具がスノーボードです。 」

響を受け、そのように言われる人たちが確実に全国へ広がっていると思います。プロ生活の中で最も大きい挑戦は何でしたか?

アラスカで行われたエクストリームコンテスト「KING OF THE HILL」に出場した事です。

最大といえる実績は何ですか?

長年プロとして活動を続けていますが、今もまだ元気に滑り続けている姿を皆さんに見せられる事です。

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sekkastyle.com

* FEATURE // tomomi 'sheesa' kuwahara

What do you do in the summer when there is no snow?

My hobby is picking mountain vegetables and planting different kinds of vegetables at my own garden. I also started surfing a few years ago.

Where is the best place you have ever snowboarded?

Niseko and Alaska.

What is your earliest snowboarding memory?

I remember that moment clearly. I was laughing all the time despite how hard and how many times I fell down.

What do you think about when you snowboard?

I concentrate on my riding so I don't think about any other things.

What advice would you give to other females trying to become professional

誰が、または、何があなたをそこまでスノーボードに奮い立たせるのですか？あの感覚が好きです。そして、毎年少しずつですが、うまくなっていると実感できるからです。だからスノーボードは飽きないし楽しいです。

あなたの人生で平和とを感じる時はいつどこですか？

毎日平和で幸せです。雪がまったくない夏には何をされていますか？

趣味の山菜採りと家庭菜園でいろんな野菜を作る事です。そして数年前に始めたサーフィンです。

今までに滑った中で、最も好きな場所はどこですか？

ニセコとアラスカ

初めてスノーボードをしたときの記憶、思い出はありますか？

はっきりと覚えています。どんなに転んでも楽しくてずっと笑っていました。

スノーボードをしている最中にどんなことを考えていますか？

集中してるのであんまり他の事は考えていません。

これから、プロのスノーボーダーになろう

snowboarders?

Find someone to follow and learn from that person.

Ride a lot and think about the best way to ride!

For more info visit Sheesa's website @ www.sheesa.com

と思っている他の女性になにか良いアドバイスをお願いします？

良い師匠を見つけて付いていきましょう。そしてたくさん滑る事、考えて滑る事です。

詳しくはwebでwww.sheesa.com



Sheesa - pictured center - with riders camp participants.

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⇒ **STAY**

⇒ **PLAY**

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* EAT & DRINK

we

Mick Nippard from Niseko Cellars (www.nisekocellars.com) gives us his favourite meals to eat when paired with the perfect glass of wine.

Diver scallops and TerraVin Sav Blanc - a perfect match at Sekka Dining
 Beef cheeks and Coates red at The Barn - another perfect match!
 The best Soba made before your own eyes at Rakuichi, Annupuri
 The best venison hands down at Shunsei, Kutechan
 An outside-the-box eatery, both French/Japanese cuisine, with great wine at Campagna, Sapporo
 Grilled smoked pork and Pandalowie Cab Sav at Gentem Cafe, Hirafu
 Fine Italian food with a great world wine list at Via Brera, Sapporo
 Tender duck with Ngeringa Pinot Noir at your place with Niseko Gourmet

RECIPE // vale bar & grill



SESAME CRUSTED TUNA

This dish is a VBG delicacy and now it can be at home made by the budding chef.

Ingredients:

- 120g Sashimi grade yellowfin tuna
- 1/2 cup white sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup black sesame seeds
- 1/4 cup yellow miso paste

Method:

1. Cut tuna into a 1"x1"x5" block
2. Place in bowl and marinade with miso paste overnight
3. Roll in sesame seeds and set in fridge
4. Lightly pan sear and serve with wasabi mayonnaise

Wasabi Mayonnaise:

- 30g fresh grated wasabi
- 1 egg yolk
- pinch of salt
- white pepper
- 30mls lemon juice
- 15mls white vinegar
- 10mls soy sauce
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 1 cup grapeseed oil

Method:

Place all ingredients into a bowl (besides oil) whisk together and gradually add the grapeseed oil very slowly until mixture thickens, add salt and pepper to finish.

BRICK BURGER WITH THE LOT

AT nearly 5 cm tall and 15cm in diameter, this hefty burger lives up to the reputation that The Brick has for its burgers; it will keep you going for the remainder of the evening. What measurements can't quantify though is the way that it tastes so adjectives will have to suffice. It's fresh, meaty and juicy. The taste brings back nostalgic memories of what a burger should be like. It's big, tasty, a little bit messy and very, very satisfying.



CHARLIE'S ORANGE BRÛLÉE

TAMASHII Bar's Charlie Harrison won a \$2,000 cocktail competition with this original creation of his. The drink features coconut infused rum, white chocolate liqueur, Aperol, orange juice, orange foam and palm sugar, which is then set ablaze, which caramelises the foam into a sugary delicacy that you can eat with a spoon. As you might expect from a drink infused with coconut, it has a very tropical and refreshing taste that even gruff men can enjoy. During the shoot, a group of Norwegian men laughed at it, then praised how delicious it was. As a special treat to Powderlife readers, Charlie is offering this drink for ¥1,200 (a ¥200 discount) if you mention you saw it in *Powderlife*.



MY HASHI

A GROUND-LEVEL environmental movement aiming to curb the use of disposable chopsticks by encouraging people to bring their own set of *hashi* (chopsticks) to restaurants. It's estimated that in a single year Japan uses an approximated 25,000,000,000 pairs of *wanibashi* (wooden disposable chopsticks), which is about 200 pairs per person. So, instead of aiding in deforestation, invest in a colourful set of chopsticks that are not only morally satisfying, they look better and are more comfortable to eat with. J-Sekka has a wide range of colours to choose from.



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* RESTAURANT REVIEW // wild bill's



WORDS BY // lizzy hoo PHOTOGRAPHY BY // ross cole-hunter

WHETHER you are or you're not a subscriber to organic and local food, you won't be able to resist the fresh izakaya-style menu at famous Niseko locale Wild Bill's.

WHEN locals found out that Dennis Van Den Brink, who tends to Niseko Green Farm in the summer, was taking over the Wild Bill's kitchen this winter, they knew he would use the opportunity to show the thousands who visit the area the things he cares most about – local and organic produce and really good quality food. His food philosophy is much deeper than this, and if you share his passion, he'll surely divulge this further over a few quiet ales.

Dennis' experience working on farms and in kitchens brings a sense of community to the table. Taking ingredients from farm to plate when he can, Dennis provides a menu that reaches well into Niseko's renowned agricultural community.

Tofu from nearby Makkari, for example, is used in several dishes

– Spinach and Tofu Salad, Tofu with Ginger and Bonito Flakes and the Fried Tofu with Eggplant and Daikon (*Agedashi Tofu*). Other locally branded meals include Mixed Local Vegetables, Makkari Mino San Lilly Root Croquettes, Butter Sauteed Hokkaido Scallops, Hokkaido Crab Cakes and Max The Hunter's Fresh Hokkaido Venison. In addition to this is Dennis' own brand of Niseko Green Farm menu items including Niseko Green Farm Organic Pumpkin Soup and his Roast Potatoes with Hokkaido Butter.

Tonight we order five dishes between the two of us. To start is the colourful and fresh Daikon Root Salad with Miso Sesame Dressing. This dish tastes as fresh as it looks. Shaved daikon root and crispy lettuce leaves topped with beetroot and a light creamy sesame dressing is the

perfect start. Following this is a grilled tsubodai fish. It's cooked much like the popular Hokkaido dish hokkei (grilled mackerel), but tsubodai, although it may look smaller, has more meat, more fat and therefore more taste. We also eat another standard *izakaya* dish – Fried Tofu with Eggplant and Daikon (*Aggedashi Tofu*). The tofu sits in a beautiful salty broth and is chewy on the outside and deliciously soft on the inside. Next are the Organic Chillis stuffed with Beef and topped with Red Onion Pickle, which is a spicy contrast to the tofu's sweetness. Last to try is the Korean Beef Tartare – diced raw beef topped with a farm fresh egg. For those that like raw beef and any sort of tartare, you will understand the excitement this dish evoked when it was brought to the table.

You'll need a few visits, or a really big group of people, to test out the menu in its entirety. After dinner, you could stay around for a few drinks and party well into the night, or you can go home or wander into the nightspots nearby.



Booking Information //
T. 0136 55 5774
Bar: 4:00 pm to late
Dinner: 6:00 pm to late

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* TASTE THE REGION // niseko fromage

THE owner of Niseko Fromage Noriaki Seki is a true craftsman who originates from Yoichi, a seaside town located between Niseko and Otaru. Noriaki started cheese manufacturing in Yoichi and operated a boutique factory there for five years before opening his boutique cheese factory in Higashiyama, Niseko in 2005.

Noriaki is a talented man – apart from being a cheese maker he was once the coach of Japanese Snowboarding team at the Nagano Winter Olympics. He has also participated in many Japan snowboarding national events.

Today, he skillfully handles the entire cheese-making process in person, from the mixing of raw products to the maturing of the

final products. He discovered the cheese-making process because his wife's family had a dairy farm and he was impressed by the fact that the more pedantic you are when making cheese the better the taste – a driving factor in the production for his high-quality cheeses.

Also, the cheese that is commonly available from Europe did not appeal to Japanese taste so the cheeses that are produced here are of a finely honed taste profile that appeals to a wider audience. Noriaki has won several accolades for his cheese-making efforts in Japan-wide competitions: 2003 All Japan Natural Cheese Contest – High Stake Awards – String Cheese; 2007 All Japan Natural Cheese Contest – Judges

Special Award – Washed Rind Award; 2009 All Japan Natural Cheese Contest – High Stake Award – Niseko Washed Rind Cheese and Yama no Cheese.

The Camembert Cheese Soft Serve Ice cream that he produces between Late April and Late November is absolutely incredible and just one of the many culinary treats you can sample in Niseko during summer.

Another local favorite is his Crispy Cheese, which a favorite snack enjoyed by everyone and a must in any cheese platter or broken in a fresh green salad, it doesn't matter what types of cheese you prefer, you are bound to find something here to appease your taste buds.



CONTACT // Tourism and Industry Division, Hokkaido, Niseko Town, Aza Fujimi47 Japan. T. 0136 44 2121. Ask for Paul.

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6:00pm - 10:30pm (last orders)

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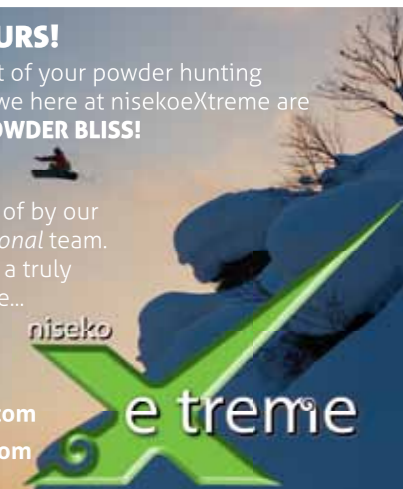
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photo glen claydon // location hirafu // month oct // rider/skier paul, nick



photo ross cole-hunter // location hirafu // month nov



photo yasu - niseko photography // location asahidake // month jan // skier toby



photo yasu - niseko photography // location niseko backcountry



photo ross cole-hunter // location hirafu // month dec // rider unknown



photo yasu - niseko photography // location chisenupuri // month feb // skier waikin

* 1000 WORDS

This issue, we have give you a brief recap - in pictures - of the season until now. In short, the season started late, January was epic and February was sunny.



photo glen claydon // location hirafu // month dec // skier ken shimizu



photo glen claydon // location hanazono // month jan // rider grover

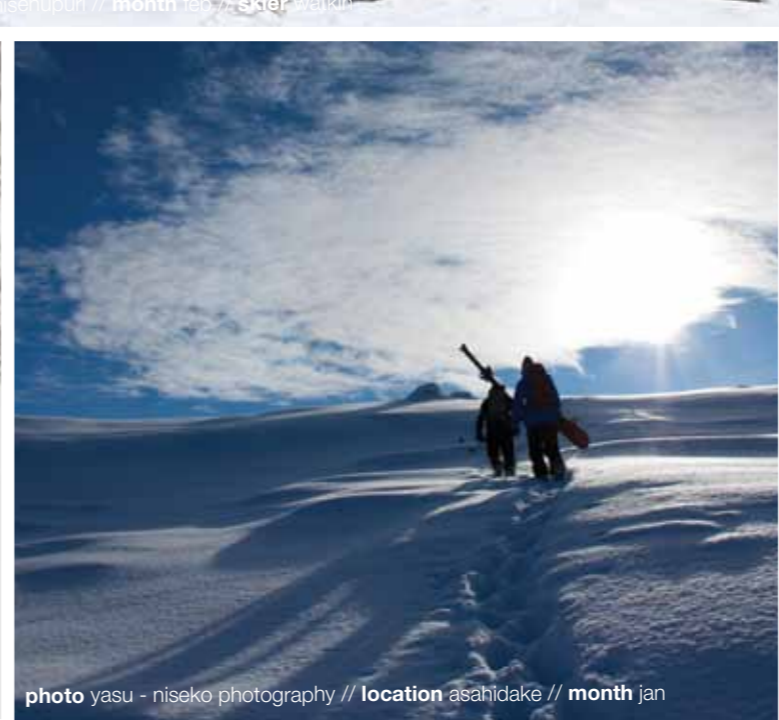


photo yasu - niseko photography // location asahidake // month jan



photo az - niseko photography // location kyogoku // month feb // skier cam

* SNOW CAVES // yasuragi

advertising promotion



YASURAGI BY ODIN

INSPIRED, spectacular, uncompromising, Yasuragi by Odin is five luxury apartments offering expansive loft-style living and breathtaking views.

YASURAGI – ‘peace and relaxation’ in Japanese – is set to become one of Niseko’s most exclusive addresses.

At the heart of each Yasuragi apartment is a spectacular personal spa concept – a sanctuary of peace and a haven for body and soul. Built as a space of screened privacy, using only natural materials and making the best of surrounding views, the personal spa recreates the very best of traditional Japanese onsen culture within the intimacy of your residence.

Retreating sliding glass walls turn the cedar tub into an exterior retreat sheltered from outside views by timber screens. A free-falling water stream, massage and full-height rain-canopy shower complete the spirit of ‘Yasuragi’.

The living areas frame the most inspiring views of Mount Yotei.

Two-bedroom apartments and three-bedroom duplexes are available for rental or sale.

Yasuragi is a new release and the fourth premium boutique project in Niseko bearing the signature of Odin.



Booking Information

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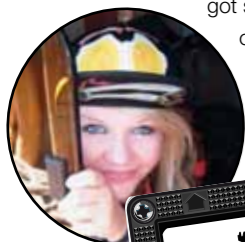


DEMON SHIELD UPPER BODY SHIELD
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WHAT'S ON YOUR PLAYLIST?

THERE was fierce competition for the final occurrence of the playlist competition this season. But just like Highlander, in this competition there can be only one, and Georgia took honours. This is the playlist that she always listens to while she's skiing, which she listens to simply because it's got some great tunes. Who can argue with that logic.

- 1// **Bon Iver** // Blindsided
- 2// **Band of Horses** // The Funeral
- 3// **MGMT** // Electric Feel
- 4// **Fake Blood** // Mars
- 5// **Kid Sister** // Right Hand Hi
- 6// **Stromae** // Alors On Danse
- 7// **Lloyd ft. Lil Wayne** // Pusha
- 8// **Passion Pit** // Sleepy Head
- 9// **Angus and Julia Stone** // Big Jet Plane
- 10// **La Roux** // In For The Kill



* EYE SPY // art and culture in japan



WORKS BY // honjo takashi

HONJO TAKASHI

LOCAL artist, Honjo Takashi will retire this year as head of art at Kutchan High School. He looks forward to devoting more of his time to his own painting.

PASSIONATE about the beauty of the environment in which he lives, Honjo's painting style is reflected in his sensitive approach he has and the subtle colours he uses. In preparation for the spare time he will have in the future, Honjo recently built a new art studio that looks out over Mount Yotei.

Although he paints the changing seasons, he is captivated by the changing lights and the many hues of the winter snow scape. He loves to paint everything from flowing local rivers and mountains, to towns in between Sapporo and Kutchan.

As well as being inspired by his surroundings, Honjo's greatest influence continues to be the 400-year-old works of the sumie (ink-painting) master Geijutsu Shincho.

Honjo is just one of many artists featured as part of the Kutchan Art Festival. Currently on now, the Kutchan Art Festival will run until March 27 and profiles various local artists. It is held at Shu Oguwara Art Museum, which can be easily accessed by public transport: From the Kutchan

Station take the Jagaringou bus and it will get you there in about 20 minutes.

If you don't have time to go to the art festival, you can view Honjo's works at Momiji Gallery in Momiji-zaka. This gallery is filled with a beautiful collection of art, local photography, paintings, clothing, antiques and collectables. This includes beautiful replicas of Hiroshige's One Hundred Famous Views of Edo – the famous artist's wood-block painting collection. Ask Margo for a view and she'll surely open up your eyes to the stunning colours and intricate patterns of wood-block painting.
@ www.momijinisekogallery.com

Kutchan Art Festival Details

- * **Until March 27**
- * **Featured artists:** Emily Meyer, Margo Bartly, Ian J Massie, Reinhard Artberg, Dam Dang Lai, Makoto Fugawa, Yoshitaka Fukuda, Takashi Honjo, Yuko Honjo

MANGA MUSEUM

ALMOST everyone reads manga in Japan; it's a national obsession.

WALK into any convenience store or bookstore in Japan and you're bound to find a few people casting their eyes over manga (Japanese comics). Manga is based on a wide range of subjects including action, romance, sports, history, fantasy, science fiction and business, to name a few, and since the 1950s, it's been a major contributor to Japan's publishing industry and represents, the equivalent of \$3.6 billion USD (approximately) in the market.

With over 300,000 manga, Kyoto's International Manga Museum (KIMM) is a must see for any one perplexed and intrigued or interested in one of Japan's biggest forms of entertainment. Housed in an old elementary school, this museum provides a great insight into the world of manga and its relevance in modern-day Japan.

The KIMM shows the colourful history of manga through a variety of galleries as well as beginner's workshops. There are even opportunities to have your portrait drawn by a manga artist. For those stopping by Kyoto during their travels to Japan, the KIMM is not to be missed. It provides, like Kyoto itself, a valuable history lesson in Japan's culture. The museum hosts various exhibitions during the year. Check the website (available in English too) for more details.

www.kyotomm.jp/english



japanese manga - detroit metal city

* REAL ESTATE NEWS

by lizzy hoo



photo // glen claydon



photo // glen claydon

INSIDE BLACKCOMB

AT night from the roadside just in front of NAC, you cannot miss Blackcomb – the latest grand chalet to be completed as part of the Ezo Views line from developer Yotei Capital.

Quality exudes from the outset as Blackcomb is designed to outlast and literally gives off a rock-solid impression with the entire structure constructed from reinforced concrete – a material typically used in much larger buildings. It is hewn out of poured stone, not wood nailed together. And the wrap-around cantilevered balconies on the top floors allow you to hear the pleasant gurgling sounds of the Oyaji River in the backyard during summer.

The front face of Blackcomb is mostly glass, affording simultaneous views of Mount Yotei and the ski hill. The single-plane concrete roof lets accumulated snow fall directly into the river, and allows for a spectacular living room with floor-to-ceiling sliding

glass doors.

Adding to the comfort of this stylish residence is the six-person elevator that makes all four levels accessible by wheelchair – and/or injured skiers and snowboarders. The building is eco-friendly, with bamboo flooring, power-saving electronics and an EcoSmart fireplace. Blackcomb has floor heating throughout the entire building, so there is no forced air that tends to be very dry. The practicality of a garage on the first floor along with a heated driveway makes egress very straightforward in the winter months.

Within its 340 sqm confines are four bedrooms and six bathrooms, along with a staff room, which will be useful for large families. Luxurious touches include authentic contemporary Italian furniture, Jacuzzi, a high-end kitchen and kitchen appliances offering contemporary sophistication.

HANGETSU FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP

WHEN Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties (HTRP) entered the Niseko market, it offered something new for investors in a Japanese ski resort. A pioneer in Niseko's alpine development, HTRP is at it again. For the first time in the area, HTRP is offering investors a 'fractional-ownership' option in a brand new two-bedroom resort condominium in Hirafu. This brings

the entry point for lifestyle investors down to a fraction of the cost that it would normally require to own a premium, turn-key, ski property in the Niseko area. Four-quarter shares are now selling for ¥12,000,000 with vendor finance packages for qualified buyers. This is a great option for those looking for their own piece of Niseko at a minimal cost.



AGENT PROFILE

Name Julian Bailey **Agency** Hokkaido Tracks Development **How is business in Niseko?**

Based on interest and sales in our own sphere, buyer confidence is obviously returning.

What's your forecast for 2011? Improved sales but only in 'unique and special' lifestyle homes at the top end or alternatively best-value holiday base for a cash budget. Anything in the middle looks tough. **What projects in Niseko are you excited about?**

The Escarpment Estate is my real passion because of the setting – I'm excited that we have a chance to make more Niseko dreams reality. **From what countries are interested buyers coming from?**

Hong Kong based Europeans, Americans and Australians seeking a lifestyle home in Asia. **What type of real-estate investment would you recommend to buy in Niseko?**

If a house, scrutinise its surroundings, Yotei views and neighbours and development. If an apartment, I like the plans at Niseko Village – spectacular location and fundamental year-round, long-term value. Raw land is a red herring for most people due to build costs, access and management. **What are your words of wisdom for potential buyers?**

Figure out what it's all about 'for you' and forget everyone else or 'the market'. Buying a property in Niseko is a lifestyle choice. **What do you think will make more people come to Niseko?**

Continued 'Kuchikomi' (word of mouth) and commitment to a year-round destination.

(Image: The Escarpment with a range of 4-bedroom home designs, from 150m JPY)

Our long term goal is more than selling property in Niseko. It is to build trust, a solid reputation and strong relationships.

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* REAL ESTATE NEWS // 10/11 review and projections

Powderlife spoke to several local real-estate figures to get their thoughts on the 10/11 season and their projections for the future. Most indicated strong seasons, perhaps better than expected with Asian buyers from Hong Kong and Singapore a mainstay. The map below shows the developments expected to start construction this summer.

Grant Mitchell, Tracks Real Estate

Review: The season, like the snow, started slowly but had moments of intensity. Properties away from the ski lifts came back in fashion. Hong Kong buyers stayed dominant, but hurting from the strong yen, and Australian buyers started returning to the market.

Projections: Growing strength in the property market and gathering interest in Niseko as the world continues to find out how great a place it is.

Brian Lysne, Niseko Real Estate

Review: Niseko Real Estate has assisted in welcoming the next wave of investors to the region, with 2010/11 sales including upper village proper-

ties Goodsports, Yamada Onsen, Scot Hotel, J-First, and Kogen sites. These transactions represent a new level of investment into Hirafu, and are likely to change the face of ski-in/ski-out Niseko. Land sales in Hirafu's lower village and around the outskirts of Niseko Village, Hanazono and Kutchan areas indicate that investors are prepared to look further afield for sound long-term investments. This bodes well for future summer as well as winter patronage.

Projections: 2011 promises to be a busy year with new properties and opportunities for buyers appearing. The international as well as domestic attention that Niseko enjoys is expected to increase.

John Barton, Meikle and Associates

Review: It has been good with a few sizeable sales and lots of enquiry. We are still a few weeks from the end of the season and would look to complete a few more deals in that time.

Projections: While the yen remains high, buyers are still quite wary and are looking for current levels to dip off slightly. It would also be good if finance was more readily available and we hear this may

be on the cards. Fundamentally, there are some great things to look forward to in Niseko as key developments take shape – 2011 should be an interesting year.

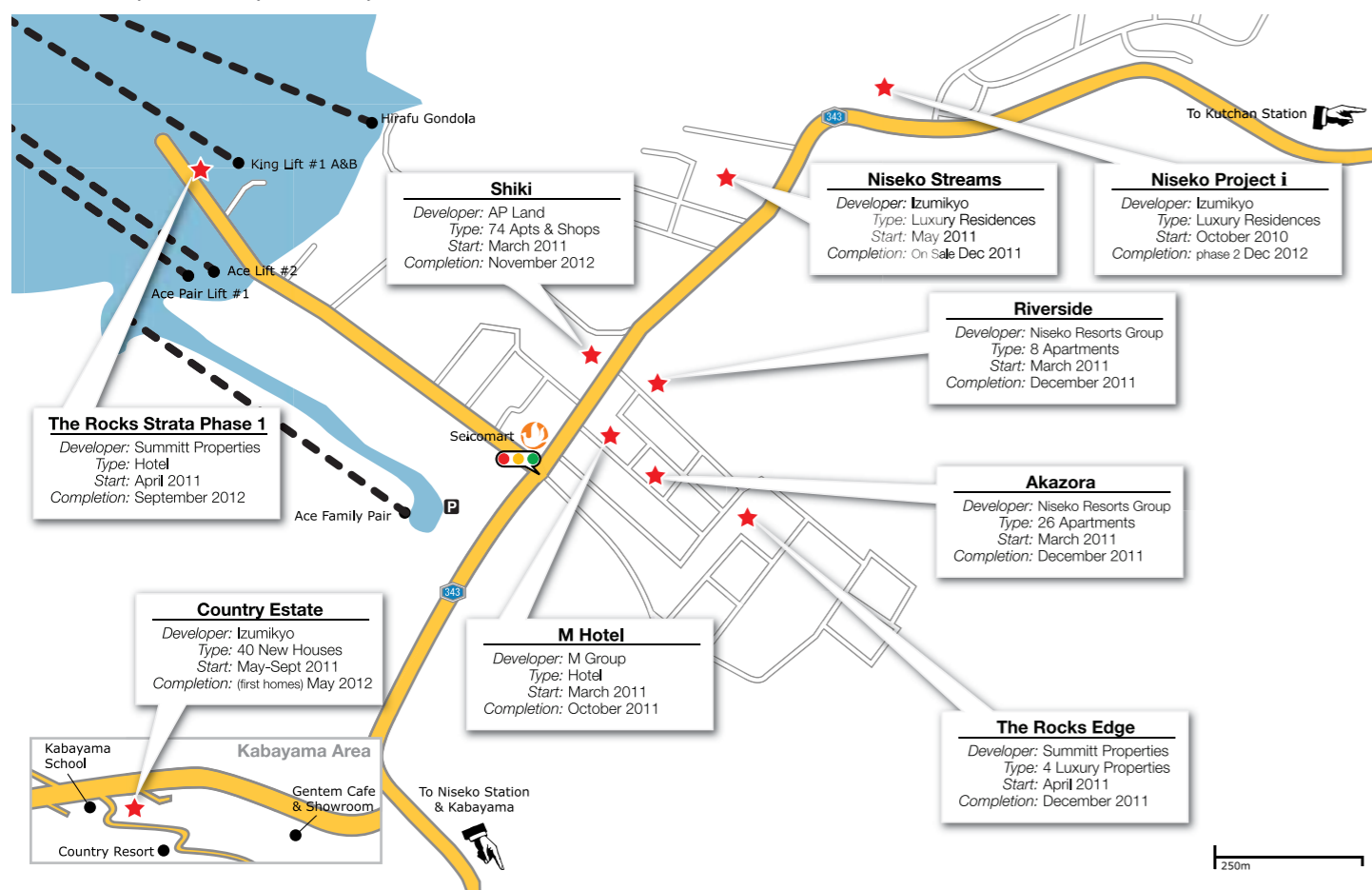
Ruskin McLennan

Review: The season was far better than I expected. Sales of over 10 million USD. Ski-in ski-out properties and Asian buyers are still dominating the market. **Projections:** More of the same! Hinode Hill and YTL to dominate the market, perhaps PCPD will come out of its shell.

Michael Davenport

Review: We saw the strongest sales period since 2007/2008 with a record number of enquiries. We sold a variety of properties from a spectacular 70,000 sqm development site to a 6-bedroom house in the Hirafu area. Interest outside of the ski villages for larger plots has been particularly high. **Projections:** Based on the growth this season, it is feasible to project continued interest and sales over the entire Niseko area, especially from Asian buyers. It is an exciting time to be in Niseko.

Below: map of developments expected to start construction this summer.



Niseko Property

193-7 Aza Yamada, Kutchan-cho, Hokkaido Japan 044-0081



Alpen Ridge 104
 ¥35,000,000 5 1 1 1

 Ski-in/Ski-out luxury apartment with village views and fantastic occupancies. This is the only studio apartment in the building and rents very well.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 31m²

Alpen Ridge 202
 ¥43,000,000 1.5 1 1 1

 Ski-in ski-out, luxury slope side, one bedroom apartment with spectacular views looking directly down on the Ace Family chairlift.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 47m²

Kira Kira 2nd Floor
 ¥85,000,000 4 3 1 1

 Spacious studio & 3 bedrooms apartment now offer an exclusive package deal. Fantastic opportunity to purchase an entire floor.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 160 m²

Alpine Apartments 2C
 ¥80,000,000 3 3 1 1

 Ski-in Ski-out. Western style bedrooms arranged over two levels with a large lounge and dining space. Has a large ski/snowboard storage on the ground floor.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 135m²

Alpen Estate
 from ¥5,000,000 LAND

 Two minutes drive to the Ace Family Chairlift. These blocks are ready for you to start building. All blocks have great view of Mt Yotei.
LOCATION: St Moritz 2
LAND SIZE: From 353m²

Alpine Apartments 2B
 ¥69,000,000 2 2 1 1

 Ski-in/Ski-out. Luxury & spacious 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom apartment. Great views from panoramic windows.
LOCATION: Lower Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 103m²

Berg House
 ¥250,000,000

 Located in the heart of Hirafu Village. This iconic house built 8 years ago has tremendous value for both rental and residential re-development.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 236m²

Seseragi Residences
 ¥130,000,000 4 4 1 1

 A new development, designed by Riccardo Tossani, consists of 2 beautiful four-bedroom homes with garages. Within walking distance of all Niseko amenities.
LOCATION: Middle Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 202m²

Snow Crystal 502
 ¥95,000,000 3 3 1 1

 Seconds walk from Ace Family Pair lift. Located in the most exclusive strip in Hirafu. Solid rental returns.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 107m²

Landmark View 501
 ¥68,000,000 3 2 0 1

 Price reduction. Supremely located adjacent to the Grand Hirafu Gondola base station. Strong annual rental returns with many repeat customers.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 120m²

Yuki Sawa
 ¥46,000,000 3 3 1 1

 Located in a quiet street in Lower Hirafu Village, offers superb views of Mt Yotei. Excellent returns, below replacement cost.
LOCATION: Lower Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 165m²

Yama Shizen West Penthouse
 ¥89,000,000 3 3 1 1

 Supremely located near the Grand Hirafu Gondola base. The apartment's views will never be built out. Significant long term capital appreciation.
LOCATION: Upper Hirafu Village
FLOOR AREA: 194m²

www.NisekoProperty.com - sales@NisekoProperty.com - Ph:+81 136 21 5060

* BACK COUNTRY



Name Jun Horie **Company** Hanazono Powder Guides, first year (15 years guide experience) **Ski or board** Ski and Telemark, 40 years **What's your best backcountry experience** Arlberg in Austria, I learned a lot there

Best tip for backcountry skiers/boarders visiting Niseko? It's an easy mountain, but you still need to respect nature. Take a guide, don't be stupid.

YOU have mastered the groomers, been on ski holidays several times all over the world, and you want to escape the crowds – chances are you're ready to go backcountry.

The satisfaction of hiking peaks and then making your way down in untracked, waste-deep snow is exhilarating.

In Japan, Niseko is renowned for its liberal stance toward backcountry skiing and snowboarding. With that freedom comes the responsibility to respect the mountain. Niseko's powder may look soft and friendly, but don't let its light and fluffy appearance fool you.

Powderlife has collected some tips from local experts to keep you safe on the mountain.

1. **Obey the Niseko Rules: Listed on the course map (p.52)**
2. Check weather and avalanche reports – www.niseko.nadare.info
3. **Respect Niseko's ski patrollers**
4. Use essential equipment:

A beacon, probe and shovel are the bare essentials. Make sure you know how to use them.

5. **Let someone know when you're planning to be back.**

6. If the gates are closed don't risk entering them.

7. **No-go zones include Yu no Sawa (between Annupuri and Niseko Village area), and Haru no Taki (cliff area west of Hirafu).**

8. Ducking ropes may result in you losing your lift pass.

9. **Hire a guide if you're not sure about going off-piste.**

10. Explore the backcountry with experienced riders and skiers.

AVALANCHE INFO //

Shinya-san's daily avalanche report: www.niseko.nadare.info
 Powderlife's Backcountry Guide is online – www.powderlife.com
 // 'Backcountry basics'
 // 'Inside a 2-day avalanche course'
 // 'Lost in the backcountry'
 // 'How to build a snowcave'

FREE BACKCOUNTRY INFORMATION SEMINAR //

Ever hiked the peak? Been through a gate in Niseko? Considered the consequences? Know what you're getting into with Black Diamond Tours free information seminar.

Location // Above Proski Demo shop, opposite The Vale Niseko

Time // 6–7pm every Tuesday during winter

RECIPE FOR LONGEVITY // by bevan colless

IN my short-lived career as a PE teacher, one of the lessons that has always stuck in my mind was on weight loss. I remember having a set of balance scales on a transparency and putting it up on the overhead projector (my writing is so bad I never wrote on the board) – on one side of the scales there was 'calories in' with a collection of food, and the other was 'calories out' with a cartoon of someone running.

Despite the message probably barely registering with my class – I recall a mulletted youth coughing out "Scales are for weighing dope!" In fact, that was probably the moment I decided I wanted to be a physio. But 20 years on and despite a plethora of weight-loss breakthroughs, from revolutionary exercise methods and diets; the simplicity of

those scales still rings true today. You should match your food intake with your energy expenditure – have one larger than the other and you'll lose or gain weight, guaranteed.

On the Japanese island of Okinawa residents enjoy one of the longest health expectancies in the world (the age that you can enjoy an active lifestyle – often well into the 90s). They have a saying *hara hachi bu*, which translates literally into "80% full". *Hara hachi bu* is sort of an insurance plan against feeling deprived, it takes about 20 minutes for the body to signal the brain that there's no need for more food, giving the brain a chance to catch up. Okinawans do eat fewer calories, but they also eat more food. Sound strange? The key is eating food that is nutrient rich and low in calorie density. Vegetables are the least calorically dense foods you can eat.

Fruits are runners-up, then whole grains, followed by lean meats. Sugars, starchy carbohydrates and fats are very high in calorie density. So if you want to keep your weight under control and be healthy at 100, there's no mystery on how to do it – keep your activity level side of the scales high with one hour of daily activity and keep the calories-in side full of low-calorie, high-nutrient

food and eat it until you're 80% full. I wonder if my mulletted student will get to 100?



- Eat food that is nutrient rich and low in calorie density
- Vegetables are the least calorically dense foods you can eat. Fruits are runners-up, then whole grains, followed by lean meats. Sugars, starchy carbohydrates and fats are very high in calorie density.
- You should match your food intake with your energy expenditure – have one larger than the other and you'll lose or gain weight, guaranteed.

RESORT GUIDE

POWDERLIFE is your Niseko Travel Guide – in print and online. With www.powderlife.com and Powderlife Niseko magazine, you'll discover the essential information for the perfect holiday.

During your stay, experience Niseko's restaurants, bars and cafes, where you can feast on anything – from the most authentic sushi to beautiful local sake. Make the most of your skiing and boarding with the specialist ski and snowboard stores and mountain guides around town. Inside you'll also find *Powderlife's* onsen guide, short history of the area and village maps. **For everything else visit www.powderlife.com/niseko-resort-guide.**



TOURIST INFO

Kutchan Information Centre

Plenty of brochures and English-speaking staff.
 Location: Main Street, Kutchan (map p.53, A4)
T: (0136) 22 1121.

The Niseko Grand Hirafu Welcome Centre

Wide range of brochures from the area and transport information.
 Location: Top of the main street (Hirafu Zaka) in Hirafu (map p.54, E1)
T: (0136) 22 0109.

GETTING HERE & THERE

New Chitose Airport.

For departure and arrival times.
T: (0123) 23 0111
W: www.new-chitose-airport.jp/language/english

Getting from New Chitose to Niseko

Bus: This is a cheap and efficient option. Buses leave every 30 minutes from the airport to Niseko and take about three hours (includes rest stop and drop off at Rusutsu). Companies providing this service: Whiteliner Buses, Chuo Bus, Donan Bus and Hokkaido Resort Liner. Visit the Welcome Centre for bus bookings back to Chitose. ¥2,300 approx. (one way) or ¥3850 approx. (roundtrip).

Door-to-Door Transfer

Skybus offers a door-to-door transfer service to and from the airport to Niseko, or Sapporo. See p.18 for details.
T: 011 788 4994
W: www.skybus.co.jp

Train This is the most scenic route to Niseko. There is no direct train from Chitose to Kutchan Station (closest major station to Hirafu), and all

trains run through Sapporo and Otaru. You will be required to change platforms. ¥2600 approx.

T: (0123) 45 7011 – Airport Station

T: (0136) 22 1310 – Kutchan station

W: www.japanrail.com

CAR RENTAL

Niseko Auto Rentals

Specialising in large 4wd 7-8 passenger vehicles: Delica Space Gear and Toyota Hiace.
T: (0136) 44 1144
W: www.bdlodge.com

Toyota Rent-a-Car ShinSapporo

One-way hire from Chitose to Hirafu is about ¥7000 for six people/24 hours. Pick up at Chitose airport, Sapporo or Kutchan
T: (0118) 15 0100 (English ok!)

The Powderlife website has some great tips on how to drive on snow as well as good contacts if you have an accident.
www.powderlife.com/niseko-travel-guide

TRANSPORT AROUND NISEKO

Taxis: Drivers probably won't speak English so you will need a business/place name and map for where you are going.
T: (0136) 22 1212 Kutchan Hire // (0136) 22 1171 Misora Hire // (0136) 44 2635 Niseko Hire.

Bus

Niseko United Shuttle: Connects Hirafu, Niseko Village and Annupuri resorts. Pickup/drop-off points in Hirafu include Hirafu Gondola and the bus stop near Hirafu intersection.
¥: Free if you have an all-mountain pass // 1 point if you have a 12-point mountain pass //

¥500 Adult and ¥300 for child.

Grand Hirafu Village shuttle bus:

Shuttle buses run throughout Hirafu every 15 minutes, all day, every day, until the end of night-skiing.
¥: Free

Hanazono Shuttle Bus: Travels throughout Hirafu Village and out to Hanazono from 7.50am to 6pm. Look out for the blue buses.
¥: Free

Kutchan Night Go Bus: Runs to and from Hirafu to Kutchan Station every night.
¥: ¥200 for 1 week pass/¥500 for a season pass

MONEY

ATM Locations

Hokkaido Tracks Holiday's Office, Hirafu
 Map: p.54, E2
 Accepts: All major cards

Kutchan Main Post Office
 Map: p.53, E3
 Accepts: All major cards

7 Eleven

Map: p.53, C1
 Accepts: Visa Plus, JCB, AMEX, Dinners Club, Discover, China Union Pay

Credit Cards Lift tickets, ski hire and ski lessons can all be paid for by credit. Most large restaurants offer credit card facilities too, however some small businesses are cash only. Check with your retailer before purchasing.

Currency Exchange Kutchan Post Office and Hokuyo Bank (Map p.53, B3)

SHOPPING

For everything from toothpaste to alcohol and late-night snacks try:

Seicomart – Hirafu

Location: At the main intersection in Hirafu

Lawson – Hirafu (24 hours)

Location: 5 minutes from Seicomart in the direction of Kutchan.

Piz Gloria and the **Alpen Hotel** offer a smaller range of snacks and drinks, and **Sekka Deli** provides gourmet items from Hokkaido.

Kutchan Shopping

For a big shopping trip, it's worth venturing into Kutchan Town. Here is a list of the major stores stocking the basics, but if you explore a little further you'll find small local fruit and vegetable retailers and great souvenir shops.

Try **Best Denki** for all your electrical and technical needs.

Location: p.53, B4

Rummage through **M-Pocket** for imported groceries and alcohol.

Location: p.53, B3

Visit **Homac**, which shelves basically every household product. Afterwards head next door to major supermarket **MaxValu** for all your food supplies as well as **Tsuruha Drug** (red signage) if you need a pharmacy.

Location: Route 5 and Route 343. (p.53, G3)

Take a trip to the **¥100 store** if you're on a budget.

Location: p.53, B4

SHOPPING

Internet

J-Sekka Deli and Downtown Café have free Internet terminals.

Mobile Phones

Only 3G phones will work in Japan. Some accommodation providers offer mobile phone hire.

Domestic Calls

Green and grey public phones take coins or pre-paid telephone cards. Local calls don't require the '0136', unless made from a public telephone.

International Calls

Dial (010) and then the code of the country you wish to call. If the number starts with 0 – drop the

0 and dial everything else.

Post Offices

Look for the red '〒' symbol. There are two post offices in Kutchan. In Hirafu, post-office boxes and stamps are located at Piz Gloria and Seicomart.

ELECTRICITY

Standard voltage is 100v AC. You can use most electronic items without a problem, but some high watt devices such as hairdryers may not run on full power. Plugs are the international standard (flat, two-blade type).

STAY SAFE AROUND TOWN

No skiing/boarding on roads or footpaths

While it may seem much quicker and easier than walking, skiing and snowboarding home from the hill is dangerous and is frowned upon by locals.

One third of all injuries in Hirafu are caused by people falling on the street. Wear shoes with a good grip or buy and attach rubber sole cleats with metal studs.

Be careful when walking or parking your car under roofs

Heavy snow slides from rooftops in Niseko. The snow slides can seriously damage your cars too.

Drinking Dangers

Make sure you leave the bar with someone else. Also make sure you rug up and stay warm – people have been known to fall asleep in the snow on the way home. If you do notice someone who is intoxicated, report them to the police or the safety hut located outside Seicomart.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Kutchan Kousei Hopsital

For anything you think is broken. X-ray, MRI and medical dispensary. No appointment necessary.

Location: p.53, A3

T: 0136 22 1141

Niseko Physio

The only acute sports injury specialist in the village.

Location: p.54, B2

T: 0136 22 0399

LOCAL LINGO

GREETINGS

Good morning	Ohaiyogozaimasu
Hello	Konichiwa
Good evening	Kon ban wa
Goodnight	Oyasuminasai
Goodbye	Sayonara
See you later	Mata ne
What's your name?	Onamae wa nan desu ka?
My name is ...	Watashi no namae wa (insert name) desu
(nice to meet you)	Dozo yoroshiku
How are you?	Genki desu ka?
I'm fine	Genki desu
How old are you?	Otoshi wa Ikutsu desu ka?

BASIC QUESTIONS

Where is ...?	... wa doko desu ka?
toilet	toire
Are you okay?	Daijoubu desu ka?

RESTAURANT TIPS

How many people?	Nan mei sama desu ka?
two people (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	'ni' mei desu (san, yon, go, roku, shichi, hachi)
What would you like to drink?	Onomimono wa okimari desu ka?
One beer please	biiru 'hitotsu' kudasai
Food counters	
one	hitotsu
two	futatsu
three	mitsu
four	yotsu
Before you eat say	Itadakimasu
After you eat say	Gochisosamadeshita
Cheers	Kanpai
Delicious	Oiishi

OUT AND ABOUT

Great snow	Sugoi yuki
Excuse me	Sumimasen
I don't understand	Nihongo ga
Japanese	wakarimasen
Do you speak English?	Eigo ga hanasemasu ka?
Cute	Kawaii
Japan's great!	Nihon wa sugoi

ONSEN GUIDE

GOING to the onsen for the first time can be a little daunting. *Powderlife's* guide and onsen etiquette tips will help you fall in love with this quintessential Japanese experience.

Yukoro Onsen

T: 0136 23 3434 (Hirafu map p.54 B4)

Hotel Niseko Alpen

T: 0136 22 1105 (Hirafu map p.54 E1)

Hot Spring Poporo

T: 0136 23 3291 (Hirafu map p.54 F1)

Yumoto Niseko Prince Hotel Hirafutei

T: 0136-23-2239 (Hirafu map p.54 D1)

Hilton Niseko Village

T: 0136 44 1111 (Higashiyama map p.53 G7)

Green Leaf Hotel Niseko Village

T: 0136 44 3311 (Higashiyama map p.53 G7)

Niseko Grand Hotel

T: 0136 58 2121 (Annupuri map p.53 A8)

ONSEN ETIQUETTE

What to bring?

Bath towel, modesty towel and toiletries. Most onsens provide body soap and shampoo, and sell modesty towels for about ¥200.

How much?

Most onsens range between ¥600 to ¥1000.

What to do?

1. Enter the changing room through the appropriate door: 女 for women, 男 for men.
2. Remove your clothes and put them in the basket or locker provided.
3. Have a shower before entering the onsen. Rinse yourself thoroughly and then your shower cubicle before going into the onsen.
4. Use the modesty towel when walking into the onsen then gracefully slide into the water – never jump.
5. Don't let your towel enter the onsen water – just rest it on your head or on a rock on the side of the onsen.
6. Soak, contemplate and relieve your sore muscles.
7. Dry yourself off before going back into the change room, as best you can.

Many onsen have rooms where you can relax, drink a cold beer or tea, or even sit in a massage chair.

LOCAL HISTORY

WHAT does Niseko mean?

'Niseko' was the name originally given to the area by the Ainu, Hokkaido's indigenous people, and means 'a cliff jutting over a riverbank deep in the mountains'. Meanwhile, Nupuri is a word commonly heard around these parts, namely because it's the Ainu word for 'mountain'. Put it all together and Mt Niseko Annupuri (the mountain that is home to the Niseko United resorts) means 'a mountain which has sheer cliffs and a river below'. Other nearby mountains which have carried their Ainu names until today include Chisenupuri and Iwaonupuri.

SKI RESORT HISTORY

1911	Theodore von Lerch ascends Mount Yotei
1949	Mount Yotei is designated a National Park
1956	Rope tow installed at Asahigaoka ski area
1961	First ski lift in Grand Hirafu ski area completed
1962	40th All Japan Ski Championships (Alpine)
1963	Niseko mountain range is designated a Quasi-National Park
1966	Taiheiyō Club Niseko Moiva International ski area opens
1970	Kutchan hosts the 25th National Ski Competition
1972	Niseko Annupuri ski area opens
1982	Niseko Higashiyama ski area (currently Niseko Village) opens
1993	Free Passport lift pass system valid at 4 ski resorts introduced
2002	Niseko starts to receive a large number of Australian tourists

Information courtesy of the Niseko Promotion Board



Jagata-kun: Little fat skiing potato boy



Jagako: Jagata-kun's snowboarding girlfriend

GOMI GUIDE

IF in doubt, don't just throw it out!

What is burnable rubbish? (燃えるゴミ moeru-gomi)

Contrary to what most of us are brought up to believe, burnable rubbish includes plastics, as well as paper and food scraps.

PET bottles and cans (ペット缶)

Plastic drink bottles (with lid/label removed) and aluminium/steel drink cans

Compost (生ゴミ nama-gomi)

When available, compost bins are for food scraps. Though be careful, tea bags are not considered compost.

Non-burnable rubbish (燃えないゴミ moenai-gomi)

Non-burnable rubbish is for rubbish that doesn't fit the other categories, including items such as broken glass, ceramics and metals.

What can you do to help keep Niseko beautiful?

Take a second to be sure you're throwing your garbage in the correct bin
For more information visit
www.town.kutchan.hokkaido.jp

C2 A-Bu-Cha 2
p54 UPPER HIRAFU

Try our popular Japanese dishes or hot-pots. Choice of 400 drinks! Japanese seating available. Families welcome. Lunch and Cafe: various lunch dishes, coffee, homemade dessert.



Lunch 11am – 4pm
Dinner 6pm – 2am
(LO 3pm/11.30pm)
☎ 0136 22 5620

www.abucha.net

A wide variety of meals and drinks – top marks

E7 Black Diamond Restaurant
p53 HIGASHIYAMA

Offering a wide variety of food and drink from around the world. Japanese daily specials, Western, Mexican and Italian dishes! Billiards, darts, happy hour and drink specials daily! Free pickup from The Hilton and The Green Leaf for groups of 6 or more.



4pm–midnight
(LO 11pm food // 11.30pm drink)
☎ 0136 44 1144

www.bdlodge.com

Free pick-up from The Hilton and The Green Leaf for 6 or more

A1 Country Grill
p54 COUNTRY RESORT

Unique flavours not found anywhere else in the area, with all local products by La Andy. From Hokkaido-grown beef, country roast chicken, and our specialty Hokkaido Venison, try the new Country Grill, just outside busy Hirafu in the quiet community of Country Resort.



Breakfast 7.30–10.30am
Dinner 17.00 to late
Free pick up and drop off
☎ 0136 55 5123

www.nisekocountryresort.com

Grilled favourites, relaxed dining, casual atmosphere

A4 Ebisutei
p54 LOWER HIRAFU

Finished skiing? Drop in for great food and a good time! Laugh and drink at this lively izakaya inn. Enjoy our assorted Japanese hotchpotch.



Open daily
5pm – midnight
☎ 0136 22 6544

www.ebcb.com

Have fun with our genki and laughing oden bar staff

C4 Half Note
p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Enjoy live weekend jazz nights as well as Dancing and other live music on weekdays. With, jazz, billiards and table tennis, there's always something going on at Half Note. Check out Half Note's regular jazz events at www.nisekohalfnote.com.



6pm–midnight
Open daily
☎ 0136 23 2727

www.nisekohalfnote.com

Hirafu's only jazz bar!

D2 Bang Bang
p54 UPPER HIRAFU

Ramen lunch at Bang 2 starting this season! We take great pride in our fresh seafood and look forward to offering you mouthwatering dishes from our wide-ranging menus.



Lunch 11am – 4pm
Dinner 5.30pm – 11.30 pm
Occasionally closed
☎ 0136 22 4292

www.niseko.jp/bangbang

We take great pride in our fresh seafood

C3 Cocoro Okonomiyaki
p53 KUTCHAN

Real Osaka-style okonomiyaki and yakisoba cooked by you on your teppan (hot plate). Try out takoyaki (octopus) and chicken balls. Japanese sweets also available.



11am – 9pm
☎ 0136 22 1528 (Jap)
☎ 0136 23 0008 (Eng)

Great Food, Great Value!

F5 Hana Jizoh
p54 IZUMIKYO 2

Amazing sweet and savoury breads and pastries from a friendly local family baker. You must try this! Get the free Hirafu Village shuttle to bus stop 27, near Unitas Log Village. Eat in or takeaway.



8.00am – 4.30pm
Closed Wednesdays
☎ 0136 23 0331

Creative and delicious breads from a local baker

D4 Java Lounge
p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Come and relax on the Java Lounge sofas, try our

- Italian coffee • Assorted Panini
- Home baked muffins and cakes • Hot soups
- Iced-cold beer • Daily special lunches
- Quiches or all day breakfast



Daily
7am to 8pm

Early morning breakfast, lunch and après drinks

B3 J-Sekka Café and Delicatessen
p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

For a hearty breakfast to get you ready for the slopes, or a lazy afternoon spent discovering the delicious Hokkaido produce used in our house-made delicacies.



open from 7am daily

☎ 0136 21 3088

www.j-sekka.com

A taste of Hokkaido

C3 Kabuki 1 and 2
p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

At Kabuki 1 you can do make-it-yourself Okonomiyaki and Teppanyaki. Kabuki 2 (next door) is a full-service Teppan Yaki Restaurant. Early bird 20% for all meals – in by 6pm out by 7pm.



Open 7 days
5–11pm
☎ 0136 21 2233 (Kabuki 1)
☎ 0136 21 2121 (Kabuki 2)

www.nisekokabuki.com

Okonomiyaki and Teppanyaki Restaurant

E8 M's Cafe (Saison Club)
p53 HIGASHIYAMA

Try our huge traditional Japanese nabe hotpots with meat, seafood and vegetables. We have shabu shabu, sukiyaki and chanko hot pots.



Day 10am–3pm
Evening 5.30–7.30pm
Open daily
☎ 0136 44 3380

www.saison-club.com

Warm your body with our big hearty hot-pots

E2 Kamimura
p54 UPPER HIRAFU

Trained by one of the world's top chefs, Tetsuya Wakuda, chef Kamimura uses the abundance of Hokkaido produce to create a memorable degustation dining experience.



Dinner 6pm – 11pm
Occasionally closed

☎ 0136 21 2288

www.kamimura-niseko.com

Blessed by land, sea and a creative chef

B3 Maki Lounge
p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

With an open fire and sweeping views of the Hirafu ski hill, unwind on our leather lounges. Apres drinks include an array of fine Japanese whiskey, sake, sho-chu and plum wine as well as classic and house-blend cocktails, spirits and glass wine.



Coffee, snacks and games from 10am // bar 2pm–late 7 days
☎ 0136 21 6133

www.j-sekka.com

Japanese whiskey, sake and shochu by the fire

B4 NICHII Shokudou
p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Specializing in Japanese food & Italian food cooked with wood-fired oven. Please enjoy our delicious food!



Open daily
4pm to midnight
☎ 0136 22 2161

http://nichii.pittore.jp/

Japanese and Italian food Iza-kaya with wood-fired oven.

D2 Niseko Pizza

p54 UPPER HIRAFU

Niseko Pizza is a family run restaurant offering a menu with lots of love and the best quality ingredients. You will be delighted by the smell, enticed by the flavours, pleased by the atmosphere and comforted by the staff



Open 4–11pm weekdays
11am to 11pm weekends,
holidays, Chinese New year
☎ 0136 55 5553

www.nisekopizza.jp

Dine in, Take-away and delivery

B2 Sekka Dining

p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Experience a taste of Hokkaido in style at Sekka Dining, with an impressive cellar and a menu that celebrates simplicity, innovation, and absolute delicacy in preparation.



Open daily
Dinner from 6pm
Occasionally closed
☎ 0136 21 5022

www.j-sekka.com

Showcasing the best of Hokkaido

A5 Shunsai

p53 KUTCHAN

Having trained in various countries, our expert chef creates a colourful array of dishes. Bread freshly baked after ordering. Vegetarian menu available. Chilean wines from ¥2,000.



Lunch 11am–3pm
Dinner 5–9pm
Closed Sundays
☎ 0136 23 1882

Creative fusion cuisine from land and sea

C3 Steak Rosso Rosso

p54 MIDDLE HIRAFU

Casual steak house with a contemporary flavour. Juicy, tender wagyu and Kobe beef and a variety of imported wines. Enjoy yourself to satiation with our stylish cuisine and refined hospitality.



Dinner 6pm–11pm
Occasionally closed

www.rossorosso.net

A must for steak lovers!

☎ 0136 21 7100

D2 Paddy McGinty's Irish Pub & Restaurant

p54

UPPER HIRAFU

Enjoy your perfect powder holiday at our popular pub and restaurant with its welcoming fun atmosphere, imported and local beers, wines, spirits and great value meals.



Open daily
1pm till Late

www.paddymcginthispub.com

Value Drinks, Hearty Meals, Live Sports and Music

☎ 0136 55 8020

D1 Senchou 2

p54

UPPER HIRAFU

Founded in 1996. While we have seen many changes, the quality of our fresh seafood remains as good as ever. Try us while you are here. The food is so fresh it will dance on your tongue.



Winter only
5pm–midnight
Open daily
☎ 0136 22 5454

www.senchou.com

Best choice for gourmet seafood

C3 Souan Genghis Khan Lamb BBQ

p54

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Goes perfectly with beer and makes a great party menu. Bring your family and friends for the ¥1700 all-you-can-eat for 60 minutes offer.



Open daily
5pm–2am
(LO 1am)
☎ 090 2059 6701

¥1700 all-you-can-eat barbecue for 60 minutes

F3 Taj Mahal

p54

IZUMIKYO 1

Experience the best of authentic Indian cuisine and courteous service. Enjoy an authentic Indian meal with Indian beer at our prestigious restaurant. 10% discount on takeaway orders. Vegetarian meals available. Free local delivery.



Open all year, 7 days
11.30am to 10.30pm
☎ 0136 22 4566

www.tajmahalgroup.com

Visit India in Taj Mahal Niseko

C4 The Barn

p54

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Come and enjoy our alpine food and wine in Hokkaido's warmest and authentic bistro atmosphere. Drop in on the way back from the slopes for a snack and hot wine in our friendly bar on the upper floor, or stay the evening for dinner in the main restaurant.



Open 7 days 6pm to late
(LO 9.30pm food //
drinks 11.30pm)
☎ 0136 23 0888

www.nisekobarn.com

Hokkaido's one and only alpine bistro

E4 Tsubara Tsubara

p54

IZUMIKYO 1

Everyone falls in love with our carefully prepared soup made from delicious ingredients. Restaurant recently renovated to give improved access and a larger seating area. Enjoy our famous Hokkaido soup curry.



Lunch 11.30am–3pm
Evening 6–10pm
Closed 2nd/4th Wednesdays
☎ 0136 23 1116

www.tsubaratsubara.com

Spicy, flavoursome and local Hokkaido curry soup

B2 Wabi Sabi

p54

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Quality prepared and cooked Yakitori (various skewered meats, seafood and vegetables barbecued). All food cooked in traditional Japanese style.



Open 7 days
5–10pm

www.nisekowabisabi.com

Specialty Yakitori restaurant

☎ 0136 21 5115

F3 Yakitori Yosaku

p54

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Hirafu locals' favourite yakitori restaurant. Come in after a day of powder and try some of our Japanese barbecue, sukyaki and hot sake.



Open daily
6pm to 3am

Serving yakitori every night until 3am

☎ 0136 23 4390

D2 Tozanken Asahikawa Ramen

p54

UPPER HIRAFU

Asahikawa ramen is made from 100% Hokkaido wheat noodles served in a smooth and rich soup. There is a wide selection of dishes to choose from including Donburi rice bowls. From Asahikawa's original ramen restaurant.



Open daily
10.30am–11pm
(LO 11pm)
☎ 0136 23 4549

New location this winter!

C2 VBG – Vale Bar and Grill

p54

UPPER HIRAFU

Full breakfast available from 7am. Serving an eclectic fusion-style menu all day. Daily Specials. Warm up with our VBG Ultimate Hot Chocolate or something a little stronger in our relaxed après lounge. Shots and cocktails. Live music events.



Open 7 days
7am to late
All-day dining
☎ 0136 21 5833

www.nisekoalpineaccommodation.com

Ski-in ski-out bar and dining

D3 WAGYU DINING SOU

p54

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Try our popular Japanese food nabe hotpot for your experience of Japanese culture. We recommended Sukiyaki, Shabushabu and Kimuchi hotpot to warm your body up in the cold Niseko winter. Lunch available with reservation – Shabushabu, Sukiyaki or Kimchi hotpot course from 11am to 2pm.



Dinner 6–10pm
Lunch 11am to 2pm
7 days
☎ 0136 23 3048

Closing March 21 – discount food until sold out

B3 Yummy's

p54

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Cesar Salad, Avocado Salsa Salad, Chicken Wings, Bacon Pepper Steak, Baked Cream Potato, Cheese Fondue, wines and of course various styles of pizza. And more more!



www.yummypizza.com

Yummy homemade crust pizza and western foods restaurant

5–11pm daily
Delivery available in the Hirafu area
☎ 0136 21 2239

TOURS & ACTIVITIES

C2 Black Diamond Tours

UPPER HIRAFU

Check out Niseko's incredible backcountry or visit Rusutsu, Sapporo Kokusai or Teine Highland. We also have a range of backcountry tours to suit your lung capacity.



www.blackdiamondtours.com

Niseko's backcountry powder specialists

8am-8pm daily
Above Proski Demo Shop
Opp. The Vale Niseko
☎ 090 2054 8687

B4 Japanese Cultural Tours

KUTCHAN/HIRAFU

Tours will take you to various cultural attractions in Kutchan: Tea ceremony, laido sword demo, Taiko drums, sake-brewery tour and Japanese dinner. ¥5000/¥3000. Departs Seicomart Hirafu, ends in Kutchan.



www.niseko.co.jp/plat/

"Experience Japan's cultural heritage"

3-7.30pm
Feb 3,18
Bookings essential
☎ 0136 23 0222

E1 Niseko Foot

UPPER HIRAFU

Visit this popular relaxation salon and sample some of our many treatments. All different styles of massage are available for body and feet. 30-minute, 60-minute and 90-minute courses available. Big groups welcome. Also osteopathy and sports injuries.



www.grand-hirafu.jp/nisekofoot

Closest healing relaxation therapy spot to Centre 4 lift

Open daily
11am-10pm
Free pickup available
☎ 0136 22 1224

F1 NISS

HIRAFU AND HANAZONO 308

Niseko International Snowsports School is designed to assist your Hanazono/Hirafu snow holiday. With two great locations and a suite of programs we'll help you learn new skills, gain confidence and above all enjoy your time in the powder of Niseko.



www.hanazononiseko.com

Kids are our speciality Hirafu and Hanazono

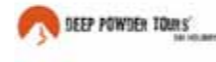
8.30am-4pm
Ticket sales/Kids Centre
Hirafu and Hanazono 308
☎ 0136 21 6688

RETAIL & SHOPPING

E2 Deep Powder Tours Ski Holidays

UPPER HIRAFU

A licensed I.A.T.A international travel agent. Check out our website for a broad overview of the many ski resorts in Japan that we offer.



www.deeppowdertours.com

The ultimate ski and snowboard experience

7 days
10am-6pm
☎ 0136 21 5827

D1 Niseko Photography Tours

UPPER HIRAFU

From the deepest powder pics to group tours and family shots - Niseko Photography are the local professionals. Book a private tour and we will capture your priceless holiday memories while you and your friends or family cruise the mountain.



www.nisekophotography.com

Niseko's professional photographers

Gallery: midday-8pm
On the mountain:
all day, everyday
☎ 0136 22 5764

B2 Niseko Massage

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Experienced massage therapists, specialising in oil massage for recovery and relaxation. Early bird special offers discounted rates for massages before 2pm. From ¥6,000 per hour. Gift vouchers available.



www.nisekomassage.com

Sports and relaxation massage in the middle of Hirafu

7 Days
8am to 8pm
☎ 0136 22 0399

E3 NOASC

MIDDLE HIRAFU

NOASC is Niseko's premier winter adventure company. We offer ski school (skiing/snowboarding/telemarking) lessons for kids through to advanced skiers, powder lessons, mountain guiding, snowshoe tours, CAT skiing, Niseko Explorer Private tours, kids adventure school, and backcountry tours.



www.noasc.com

Just Do It adventure tours - an experience you won't forget

8:00am to 7:00pm
All year round
☎ 0136 23 1688

B3 Cocoroya

KUTCHAN

Located on Kutchan high street, Cocoroya offers a wide range of Japanese antiques, furniture, Kimono and original handmade gifts. We also stock a selection of high-quality power stone jewellery.



www.cocoroya.jp

Take home a unique piece of Japan

11.00am-7.30pm
Open every day
☎ 0136 23 0008

D1 Fusion Sports Shop

HIRAFU AND HANAZONO

Great gear, good value, friendly staff. Fusion provides all your on mountain and après needs. Popular brands like Burton, Oakley, Dakine, The North Face, Volcom and more.



www.hanazononiseko.com

Gear for the elements at two locations in Niseko

Hirafu 8am-9pm
Hanazono 8.30am-5pm
☎ 0136 21 6633(Hirafu)
☎ 0136 23 0911(Hanazono)

D1 Niseko Photography Gallery

UPPER HIRAFU

Stunning prints and fine art canvas works. Niseko Photography's gallery is a showcase of beautiful photography from Niseko's stunning four seasons. We also stock t-shirts, handmade beanies and souvenirs as well.



www.nisekophotography.com

Photo gallery - fine-art prints and souvenirs

7 days
midday-8pm
☎ 0136 22 5764

B3 SEKKA STYLE Shop & Gallery

MIDDLE HIRAFU

A collection of unique photography, antiques and objects d'art selected by Shouya Grigg, the style-impresario behind the SEKKA projects.



www.sekkastyle.com

You can never get enough SEKKS

1-7pm
Closed Mondays
☎ 0908 274 4814

D3 Ezo Seafoods

MIDDLE HIRAFU

We stock seafood for takeout sourced daily from the coast - oysters, King Red Crab, salmon, and more. We also prepare seafood platters and fish and chips.



www.ezoseafoods.com

Niseko's seafood supplier

7 days
Open from 4pm
☎ 0136 22 3019

E3 Momiji Gallery

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Gallery is a mix of stunning photography, renowned Hokkaido artists, (working in paint, bronze and plastic), unique antiques and gifts, postcards and gourmet cookies.... An artful fusion of old and new, Japanese and Western.



Art and Photo gallery, gifts and antiques

Open 7 days
2-8.30pm
☎ 0136 55 8585

D2 Sakura

UPPER HIRAFU

Tucked in behind Paddy McGinty's, Sakura offers a wide selection of gifts including kimonos, geisha hairpins, pottery, paintings, traditional wooden furniture and more.



www.sakura-niseko.com

Your one-stop Japanese souvenir shop

Daily
1-7pm in winter
☎ 0136 21 7007

D2 Yukara

UPPER HIRAFU

Stocking a wide variety of souvenirs, original t-shirts, Hokkaido sweets and more. Remember your holiday and take home a souvenir with you.



Reopen on 2nd floor of Tozanken Asahikawa Ramen Restaurant

7 days
9am-10pm
0136 23 4546

RENTAL & SERVICES

D1 Demo Equipment Hire

UPPER HIRAFU/HANAZONO

New store at The Vale Niseko. Huge fleet of K2 and Salomon skis and boots, Burton snowboards and boots, helmets and snow shoes for adults and kids. Deep powder, park, groomed, off-piste, back country – we have equipment to suit all conditions and all levels.



www.hanazononiseko.com

Hirafu 8am–9pm
The Vale 8–10am, 4–8.30pm
Hanazono 8.30am–5pm
(0136 21 6677

Free drop off at Hirafu
Free O'night Storage 308

C3 Hermosa Angel Massage

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Offering both traditional shiatsu and relaxing oil massages either in your suite or at the J-Sekka massage space, Inka Rebeza's skilled practitioners provide truly exceptional service. Chida-sensei's team have a course to suit you, with flexible bookings and a variety of packages available.



www.j-sekka.com

Open 7 days
Appointments available from 3pm–midnight
(0136 21 6133

Relax and rejuvenate in the heart of hirafu

F7 Niseko Auto Rentals and Sales

HIGASHIYAMA

Complement your holiday or home with a 4WD vehicle. Local licensed dealer offering affordable rentals and sales IN ENGLISH. Short and long-term rentals available. English navigation available.



www.nisekoauto.com

9am–9pm
24hr Emergency English
Roadside Assistance
(0136 44 1144

4WD vans from ¥46,200/week or ¥135,000/month

E3 Niseko Realty Sales

UPPER HIRAFU

Dealing in real-estate sales, property management, and holiday lettings. Our staff are native to the area and know the property market. For trustworthy advice, sales, accommodation contact us at 0136-23-2221, info@nisekorealty.com, or drop by our Hirafu office across from the SPLASH bar.



www.nisekorealty.com

8:00am to 7:00pm
All year round
(0136 23 2221

Secure your future in Japan's premier powder ski area

D1 Travelplan

UPPER HIRAFU

Australia's #1 snow holiday specialist with 39 years' experience, offering a wide selection of pensions, hotels and quality apartments in Niseko and other resorts. CMH Heli Skiing in Canada – information night every Wednesday at J Sekka.

For more information contact Travelplan.

www.travelplan.com.au



7 days
8am–8pm
(0136 21 5354

The world's best ski holidays

E3 Glen Claydon Photography

HIRAFU

Complete photographic services including architectural, landscape, stock, prints and panoramic photography for online virtual tours.



www.glenclaydon.com

Complete photographic services

(080 6098 7244

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- Project Management
- New Homes
- Renovation
- Building Supplies

www.jbuildniseko.com



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18 years' experience in Japan

(090 9380 5729

B2 Niseko Physio

MIDDLE HIRAFU

Australian trained physiotherapists, sports injuries, back and neck pain, rehabilitation, taping, braces, pain relief, managed by Tokyo Physio (est 2002). Massage service also available. Hakuba clinic now open in Phoenix Hotel.



www.nisekophysio.com

Niseko's sports injury centre in the middle of Hirafu

7 days
8am–8pm
(0136 22 0399

D1 Niseko United

UPPER HIRAFU

Australia's #1 snow holiday specialist with 39 years' experience, offering a wide selection of pensions, hotels and quality apartments in Niseko and other resorts. CMH Heli Skiing in Canada – information night every Wednesday at J Sekka.

For more information contact Travelplan.

www.travelplan.com.au



7 days
8am–8pm
(0136 21 5354

The world's best ski holidays

www.powderlife.com

NISEKO UNITED

FOR YOUR SAFETY
Regardless of how you enjoy your snow sports, always show courtesy to others and be aware that THERE ARE INHERENT RISKS in all snow recreation activities. These risks include rapid weather changes, avalanches, collisions with other people as well as natural and artificial hazards such as rocks, trees, stumps, bare spots, lift towers and snowmaking equipment. Common sense and personal awareness can reduce such risks. Observe the ALPINE RESPONSIBILITY CODE and share with others the responsibility for a great experience.

ALPINE RESPONSIBILITY CODE
1. Know your ability and always stay in control.
2. Take lessons from qualified professional instructors to learn and progress.
3. Don't drink and ski. If you are impaired or overtake another person, you must avoid people below and beside you.
4. Do not stop where you could obstruct a trail, a run or are not visible from above.
5. When entering a trail, a run or starting downhill, look uphill and give way to others.
6. Always use chairlift restraining devices where provided and always use proper technique.
7. Observe and obey all safety warnings. Keep off closed trails or runs and keep out of closed areas.
8. Before using any lift you must have the knowledge and ability of how to load and unload safely.
9. Do not ski snowcovered, side lift or undertake any other alpine activity if you are under the influence of alcohol.
10. If you are involved in, or witness an accident, alert the Ski Patrol, remain at the scene and identify yourself to them.

KNOW THE CODE. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

BACK COUNTRY SKIING/RIDING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED WHEN GATES ARE CLOSED.
During temporary hazardous conditions, access to backcountry areas and out of bounds riding will be strictly prohibited.

AVANCEANCE CONDITION INFORMATION
The "Niseko Avalanche Information" is the official information posted by "Niseko Avalanche Institute". This information can be found at lift stations, access gates and on the internet.

BACK COUNTRY RESCUE FEE
YOU are responsible for the cost of your rescue from back country areas.

INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE OBEYED.

2. CROSSING ROPES IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.
Ducking the boundary ropes is prohibited. If you do, your lift pass will be confiscated. ONLY SKIERS WITH LIFT PASSES will result in lift pass confiscation.

3. NO SAFETY CONTROL BEYOND RESORT BOUNDARY.
The area outside the mountain resort boundaries (back country, including the peak) are National forests and parks, and are not controlled or supervised by the resort or the Ski Patrol. Niseko Rules proclaims that hiking and riding these areas is dangerous and if you choose to, you do AT YOUR OWN RISK.

4. BACK COUNTRY SKIING/RIDING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED WHEN GATES ARE CLOSED.
During temporary hazardous conditions, access to backcountry areas and out of bounds riding will be strictly prohibited.

5. AVANCEANCE CONDITION INFORMATION
The "Niseko Avalanche Information" is the official information posted by "Niseko Avalanche Institute". This information can be found at lift stations, access gates and on the internet.

6. BACK COUNTRY RESCUE FEE
YOU are responsible for the cost of your rescue from back country areas.

7. SKI AND MOUNTAIN PATROL
Niseko Rules insists that all resort users respect and obey the instructions of the Ski Patrol and the Niseko Mountain Patrol.

8. BACK COUNTRY RESCUE FEE
The Niseko Rules have been created with everyone's safety in mind. In order for everyone to remain safe, everyone must respect and follow these rules.

9. NISEKO RULES
Niseko Rules are official regulations, established by the Niseko Amupuri Avalanche Prevention Committee, the Niseko Mountain Resort Safety Committee, the Niseko Free Passport Committee and the Hokkaido Shirubeshi Alpine Accident Prevention Committee.

1. CERTAIN CLOSED AREAS WITHIN NISEKO ARE STRICTLY OFF LIMITS AND ARE NOT TO BE ENTERED AT ANY TIME.
You no Snow/Gully between Amupuri and Niseko Village area, and Han no Taki (golf area) west of Hirafu) are "STRICTLY OFF LIMITS" as stated by the Niseko Rules. Those riding these areas WILL have their lift pass confiscated.

The Niseko Rules are Niseko's official regulations created for the safety and freedom of everyone using the ski resort and riding beyond the ski area boundary.

AVANCEANCE CONTROL OPERATION AREA
Various methods of Avalanche Control are in use in this area in the interest of increasing avalanche awareness and safety. Only skiers and riders participating in the program are permitted to use this area.

Contact: Niseko Village 0136-44-2211

Niseko Annupuri
The Niseko UNITED Shuttle conveniently links each of the four ski resorts and is free to holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass. The bus timetable is on "Niseko Resort Map" at lift ticket counters etc. *Holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass must present pass on boarding the bus. (15-point ticket holders forfeit 1 point). *Those without the All Mountain Pass can ride the bus for the regular fare.

Niseko Village Ski Resort
Niseko Village Ski Resort

Niseko Grand Hirafu
Niseko Grand Hirafu

Niseko Annupuri
Niseko Annupuri

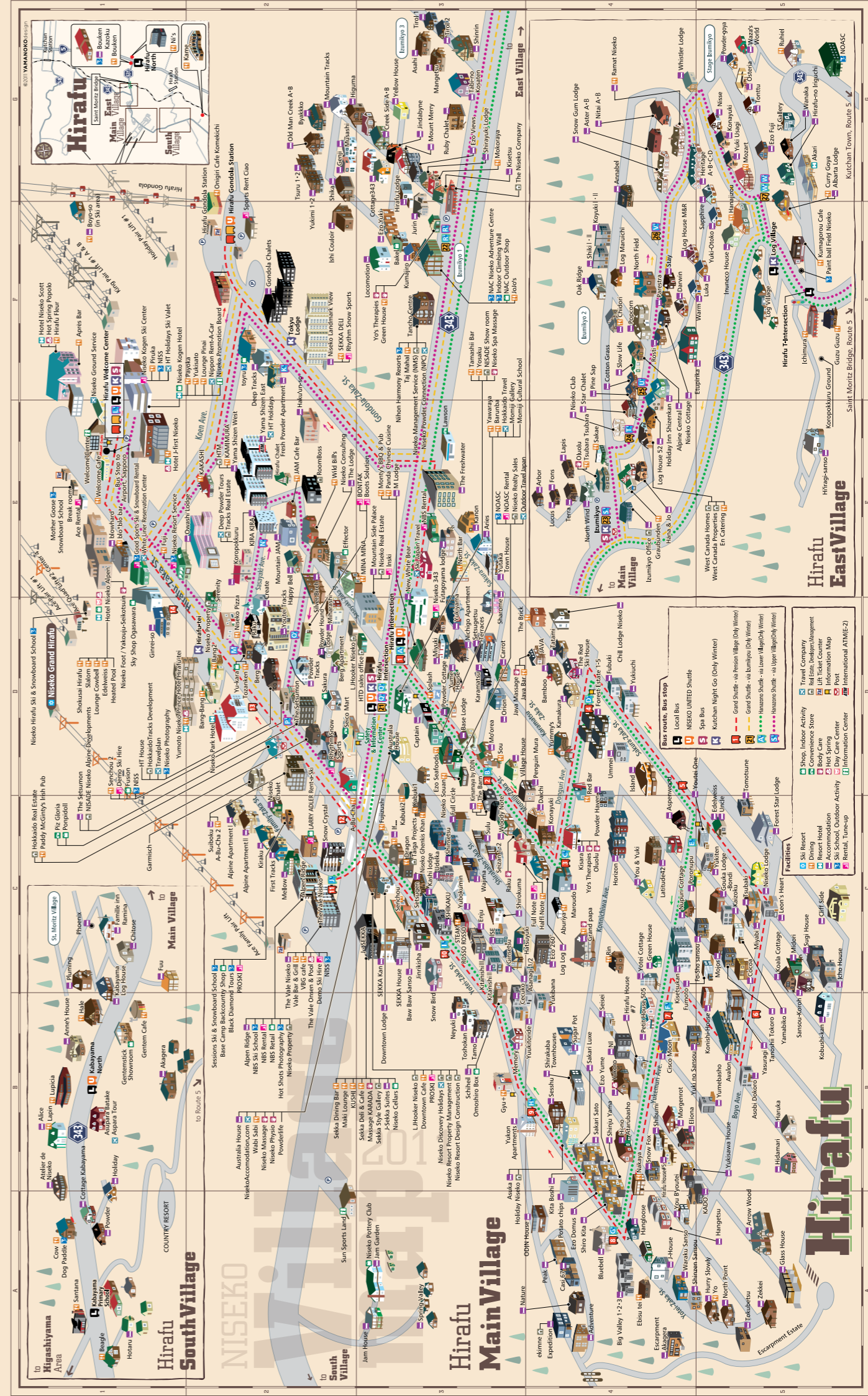
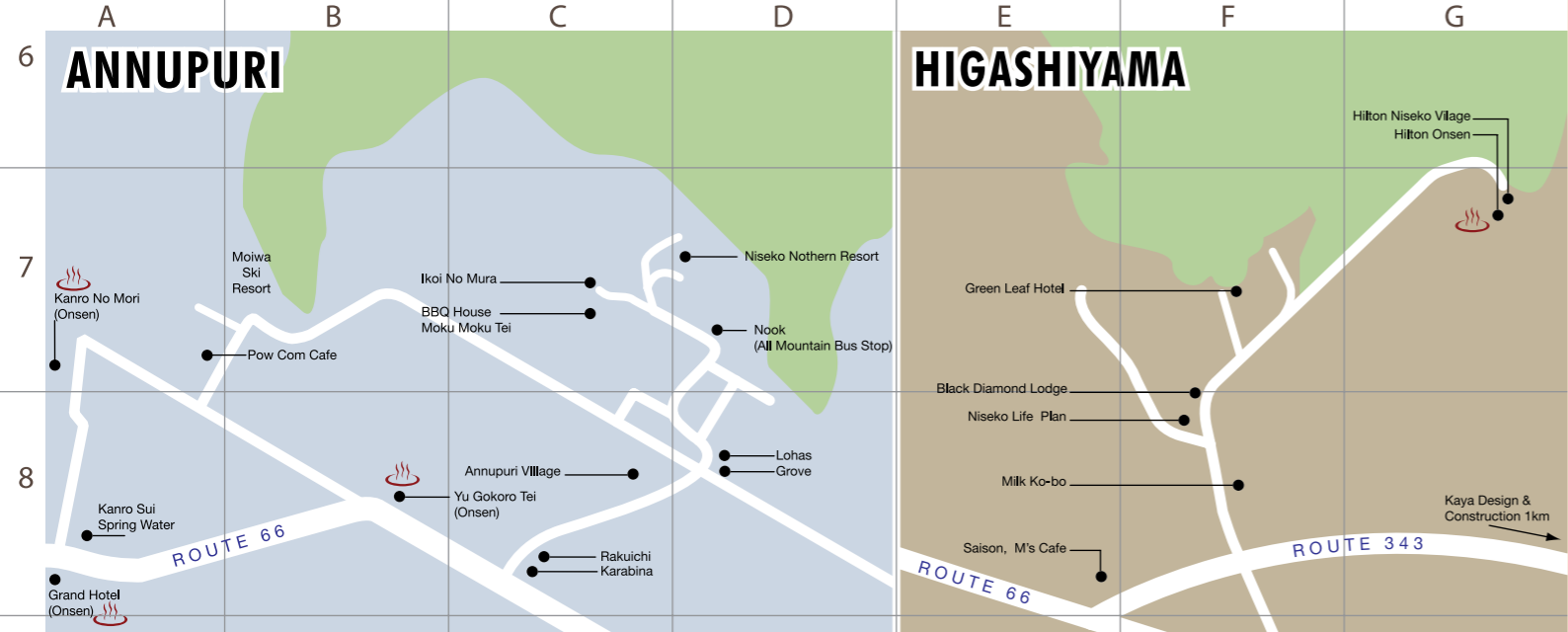
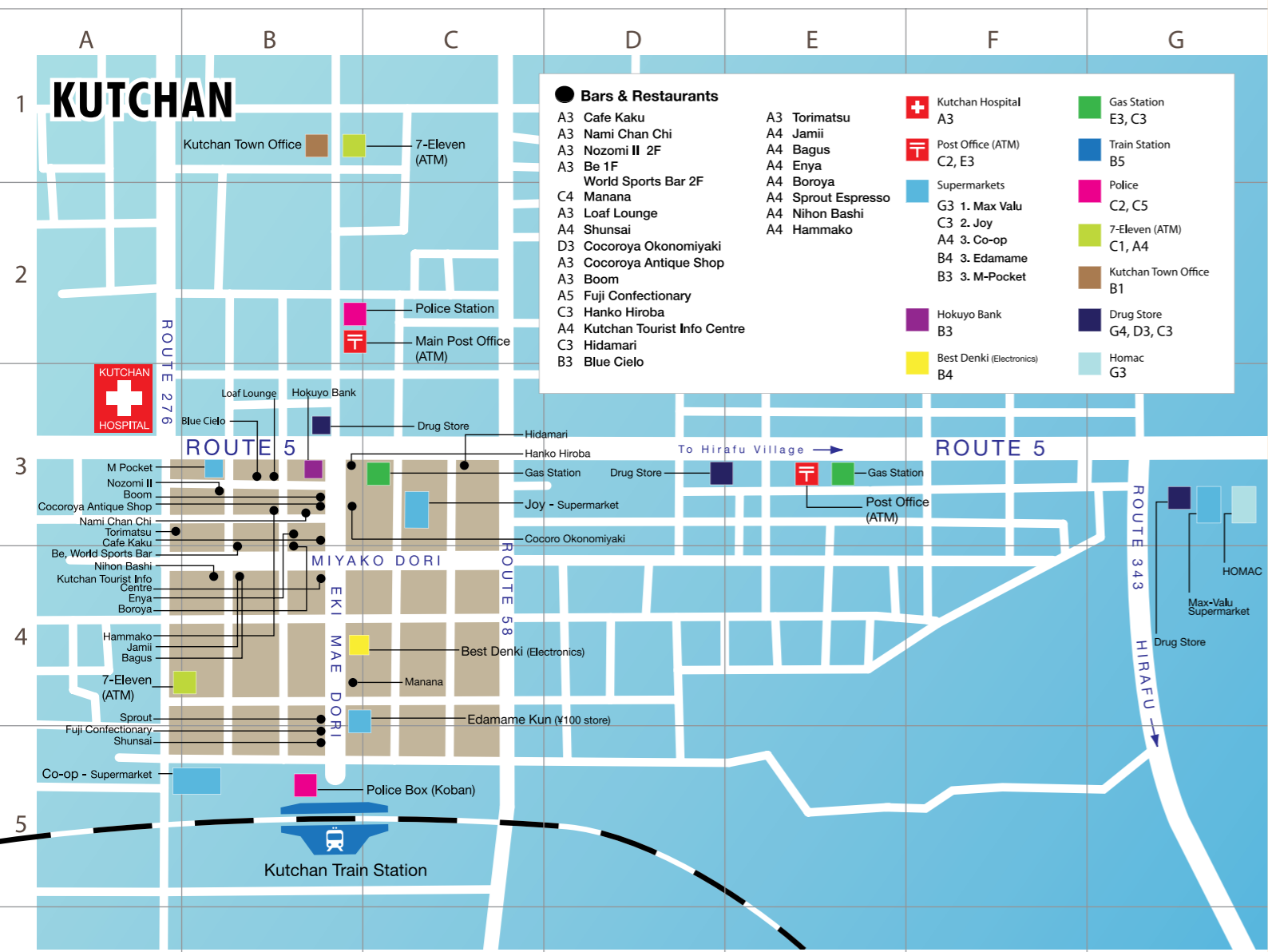
Niseko Amupuri
Niseko Amupuri

Legend
Ski lift counter, Rest room, Phone, Kids room, Restaurant, Café, Shop, Information, Rental, Ski school, Onsen (hot Spring), Shuttle bus stop, Parking lot.

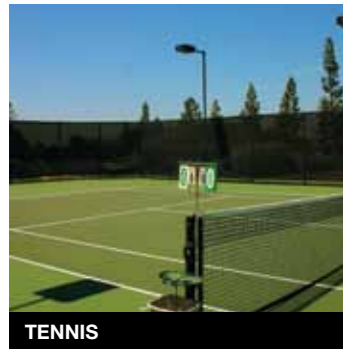
Legend
Ski patrol, AED, Light, Gate to controlled area, Mogul run, Wave, Half Pipe, Park/Kicker, jib, etc.)

Legend
Un-groomed Slope, Easiest, More Difficult, Most Difficult, Name of Slope, Maximum Gradient, Average Gradient, Length, Number of seats, Name of Lift, Length, Time required, Number of lift ticket points.

Legend
Ski area shuttle bus, Niseko UNITED Shuttle, The Niseko UNITED Shuttle conveniently links each of the four ski resorts and is free to holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass. The bus timetable is on "Niseko Resort Map" at lift ticket counters etc. *Holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass must present pass on boarding the bus. (15-point ticket holders forfeit 1 point). *Those without the All Mountain Pass can ride the bus for the regular fare.



* AFTER THE MELT



TENNIS



JAPAN BIKESTYLE TOUR

photo // niseko photography



JAGA MATSURI



NISEKO CAMP

photo // gien claydon

TRAVELLING around Niseko in winter, you'd be forgiven for not noticing the abundance of tennis courts. Tennis is a popular summer activity in Japan, though tennis courts are starting to become somewhat rare in Niseko due to the value of land that they occupy. There are a few options including the well-maintained courts in Izumikyō and Niseko Village. Racquet and balls can be rented with court hire, and fees are very reasonable.

INTERNATIONAL bicycling tour operators, Bikestyle (one of only a few official Tour de France tour operators), teamed up with Hokkaido Tracks last year and held its first tour in Niseko. There was seven days of daily rides in the hills and flats surrounding Niseko. Daily rides are catered to several levels – a 40–60 km ride is offered for beginners along with an 80–120 km ride for the more serious riders. The ride is planned again between September 4–11 this year.

THE Potato Festival is Kutchan's biggest summer festival and a huge taste of Japanese culture. There are many events over the weekend-long festival, including taiko-drum performances, fireworks, yosakoi dancing, giant illuminated paper floats, potato-bagging competitions, some traditional music and singing. To satisfy your non-aural/non-visual senses, there are dozens of street vendors selling an assortment of festival foods.

DESTINATION sleepover camps are a cornerstone of many North American kids summers. During August, the weekly Niseko Camp brings the same spirit of discovery and friendship to Hokkaido. Camp favourites like arts and crafts, sports and swimming to telling ghost stories round the campfire, and exciting specialties like ballooning and rafting are here. Professional camp staff and kids work together to make each weeklong camp unforgettable.

SUMMER // hokkaido's national parks

HOKKAIDO is a nature lover's paradise. Wide open areas, pristine national parks and a huge selection of topographies to explore and enjoy.

THERE are six national parks in Hokkaido and five quasi-national parks, one each of which are at Niseko's doorstep.

Shikotsu-Toya National Park is the area surrounding the two pristine lakes of Toya and Shikotsu. This national park has some amazing mountains to hike including Eniwa-dake and Tarumae-zan, as well as the two beautiful lakes to enjoy.

Niseko-Shakotan-Otaru Kaigan Quasi-National Park, which, aside from being a mouthful, is also the quasi-national park that surrounds the coastline from west of Niseko in Iwanai, all the way around to the coastline north of Niseko in Otaru. There are many beautiful places to spend a night or two camping along the rugged coastline, including some nice beaches.

A little further from Niseko is the

Daisetsuzan National Park, which is Japan's largest national park. The heart of the park is the giant Daisetsuzan mountain range, with a host of peaks that stretch above 2000 metres. There are numerous hiking options that range from a few hours (with the use of a cable car), to a grand traverse that visits many of the peaks and spans several days and over 55 kilometres.

Even further from Niseko is the Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park that has the beautiful and remote islands of Rishiri and Rebun, perfect for hiking and enjoying nature.

Last but not least is Shiretoko National Park in the far east of Hokkaido. It's known as being the most remote area of Japan, and is a refuge for deer and bears. It's stunningly beautiful and pristine and a showcase of Hokkaido's beauty.



photo // ross cole-hunter

Looking for a budget hotel in Sapporo?

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We have powder skis and boards, snow wear and accessories. We can pick you up from your accommodation, fit your gear and drop you back or deliver your gear to you.

INSKI
OPEN 8AM to 9PM

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photo: Glen Claydon

Java Massage

Sports Remedial Relaxation

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We accept CASH only. Bookings essential. From 12pm to 8pm daily.

Java Bar

Hirafu's Coolest Lounge Bar

Open from 7am til 9pm
FREE Internet Hotspot

Live Music & DJs

Best Espresso Coffee in Niseko!
Sakura-Zaki St. Mid Hirafu Village, Shuttle Stop 4. t: 0136 23 0788

* TRAVEL FEATURE // gassan – yamagata



PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS BY // hiroki yanagisawa – EDGY JAPAN

AS the 2011 winter season gradually winds down, skiers and snowboarders can be overheard saying, “What a great season it’s been!” But at Gassan Resort – a ski resort in Japan touted as having the ‘strangest’ season – the ski season is just about to kick off.

To many hard-core skiers and snowboarders, Gassan Snow Resort (620 km south of Niseko) is known as the mecca of spring/summer snow resorts. Located in the southern end of the Dewa Terrain and known for its overwhelmingly heavy snowfall, Gassan Snow Resort operates from April 10 until mid July. When the season began last year, the upper part of the slope still recorded eight metres of snow.

Aside from a spring/summer snow opportunity, a sense of freedom is something that attracts many hard-core skiers and snowboarders. Once you take the one-kilometre long pair lift from the bottom, you have three choices for your descent. The easiest

is to simply go down from the drop-off point, just like any other snow resort, but this ride isn’t the best option to fully enjoy the thrilling terrain of Gassan. Option number two is to take a T-bar lift from there and hike to the summit of Ubagatake, located 1,670 metres above sea level. (During early April, the T-bar lift is not running – requiring 40 minutes to hike the summit.) The third and hardest option is to conquer 1,984 metre-high Gassan itself. This path requires two hours of hiking from the

“When the season began last year, the upper part of the slope still recorded eight metres of snow.”

lift, but an incentive to this boot-camp type hike is a beautiful descent, which can stretch up to eight kilometres.

This sense of freedom in Gassan can be enjoyed by non-backcountry lovers as well. On the bottom of the slope, you can make your own kicker and practice tricks. As for lunch, a typical ‘Gassanist’ opens up a lunch box on the edge of the slope for

a mini-picnic. Some extra hard-core Gassanists bring in a portable barbecue and set it up on the flat and dry part of the slope, and throw a party in close proximity to the skiers racing past.

Gassan’s landscape changes week by week. Visiting Gassan in April is like hitting an early morning slope in Niseko. The snow is not powder, but remember, the mountain was left as it is for an entire winter, providing a heavenly experience when you ski

down the mountain. During May or June, the snow begins melting rapidly and it turns into a kind of snow sorbet. And at some point, you have to hold your ski/snowboard in your hand when riding a pair lift, and hike for five minutes to finally hit the snow-covered section of the slope.

Though the snow condition worsens week by week, there is a positive side:

During the summer season, Gassan is known for great trekking sites with an abundance of different kinds of flowers. As the snow begins to melt, these flowers begin to emerge from the surface, converting the usual lift ride to a little bit of *ohanami* (flower viewing).

Now, a few reminders – in terms of snow and facility – it’s important to stress that Gassan is nothing like Niseko. The snow is hardly powder, apres-snow activities are barely available, and hiking is essential before descending. In that sense, Gassan is not quite a resort, it’s simply a snow-mountain covered with some lifts.

But still, for those of you who still crave a chance for some snow riding while your friends are all wearing t-shirts and enjoying the surf, Gassan is a good place to be.

Where: Gassan, Yamagata Prefecture

Getting there: 1 hour drive from Yamagata Station

When: April to mid-July

Cost: Lift pass – ¥4,600/day
T-Bar lift – ¥200/ride



LAND

All locations

TRE has a large selection of land in all Niseko locations. These range from 50 tsubo blocks to much larger sites in and around the main resort areas. Many are stunning with unique ambience and panoramic views. We have close contact with many Japanese and foreign owners, and so can introduce land that will never be publicly marketed.



FREERIDE LODGE

Higashiyama

12 from ¥39,000,000

Spacious lodge with separate manager's house, well-located in Higashiyama Village and short distance to ski area. Total floor area approx 500sqm and land 993sqm. The property has been well maintained and was renovated by current owner five years ago with considerable timber finishings. Large parking at the front of the property. The options are considerable.



Featured Properties



EZO 4

Middle Hirafu

4 ¥89,000,000

Bold architectural residence with premium furnishings and fittings. Spacious, open plan living and kitchen areas. A private retreat close to fine dining.



MIHARASHI 1

Upper Hirafu

2 ¥32,000,000

Vendor finance available! One of Hirafu's most reasonable apartments. A funky, modern, central two bedroom unit. Light, airy and a popular rental.



IZUMIKYO LAND

Izumikyo II

¥33,600,000

Substantial 925 sqm block with panoramic Mt Youtei views and a quiet, natural environment. Adjacent 926 sqm block is also available to purchase.



MOUNTAIN TRACKS

Izumikyo I

6 ¥39,900,000

Large centrally located six-bedroom house with Mt Youtei Views. Options as holiday home, lodge or other commercial. Adjacent land available.



FUBUKI 2

Middle Hirafu

3 ¥80,000,000

Spacious and chic premium property with spectacular Mt Youtei and forest views through large picture windows. A short walk to hot spring and many dining options.



HIRAFU HOUSE 7

Lower Hirafu

2 ¥42,000,000

Stylish two bedroom home located in leafy, quiet Lower Hirafu. Close to restaurants and bars, with the hot spring across the road. Value for money.



FOREST STAR LODGE

Lower Hirafu

Price on Application

A popular ski lodge in a quiet setting with soothing forest views. Well-equipped for commercial guests but would be easy conversion to family residence.



ASAHI PLAZA 201

Chitose

2 ¥6,500,000

Tidy 51.6 sqm two bedroom apartment, rented at 66,000 JPY/pm- a 12.18% net return. Located very close to Chitose train station. Great investment.



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www.tracksrealestate.com

Big mountain. Big dream. Big picture.

A property investment in Niseko offers tremendous potential for both lifestyle and financial returns. But the market is complex and dynamic. To invest wisely you need to consider many factors. In other words, you need to accurately see the big picture.

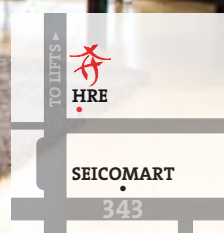
Led by long time realtor Jason King, the Hokkaido Real Estate team boasts over 60 exclusive listings, putting you ahead of the pack right from the start. Having focused on the Niseko market for over six years (a long time for this area), we have comprehensive knowledge from both local and international perspectives. We do not trade in the market, so we remain impartial, allowing us to always keep your best interests at heart.

In short, we'll objectively present you with a wide range of options and considerations so that you can make informed and intelligent investment decisions.

For a private discussion anytime, or to join a Wednesday evening 'Big Picture' seminar, call Jason on +(0136) 21 6211 or email jason@hokkaidorealestate.com



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