

WINTER SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT REAL ESTATE

FREE

Issue 01 www.powderlife.co.jp

powderlife

NISEKO ニセコ

**POWDERLIFE
LAUNCHES!**

SURVIVING YOTEI

A near death experience
on Niseko's favourite landmark

real estate news

2007: Niseko enters big league

swapping boards

Surf champ hits Niseko

Niseko's powder lifestyle magazine fresh every two weeks



Niseko Property are the experts in finding the perfect lifestyle or investment property in Asia's premier snow resort destination. Our professional and experienced staff will show you how simple and exciting it can be finding a property to suit your needs.


Niseko has been Japan's fastest growing property market for the last three years. Niseko is now also appearing on the horizon of European and Hong Kong investors. Join the many Australian and international investors who are a part of this exciting market.

Our website is updated weekly and features a wide variety of quality listings. A complete step by step guide to buying property in Niseko is available online. Our team will guide you through every step of your purchase. Our comprehensive listings give you the inside edge on the latest developments in Japan's most dynamic property market.

Make an appointment to meet us or visit our office and let the Niseko Property team show you the potential and rewards of owning a piece of Niseko today.




Yuki Yama 1 & 3
¥52,000,000 🏠 3 🚗 2 🚗 1



Centrally located, luxurious & spacious boutique apartments

- Top of middle Hirafu, only minutes walk to lifts, restaurants, bars, onsens & shops
- Western style kitchen & bathrooms
- Split level design


Hirafu Village-land 167-32
¥35,700,000 - 337m2 block



Rare prime location in quiet street

- Great for townhouse or private home
- Fantastic investment opportunity
- DA's in place for townhouse development


Mountainside Palace
¥37,700,000 🏠 2 🚗 2 🚗 1



New quality constructed apartment in the heart of upper Hirafu village

- Great value & location
- Japanese design
- Mt Yotei views
- In house management

Kumajiro
¥45,000,000 🏠 3 🚗 1 🚗 2



Great value & great rental returns with tremendous redevelopment potential

- Lovely big house located in Izumikyō 1
- Only 1 min walk to restaurant & resort shuttle bus & 5 min walk to Hirafu Village & lifts

St Moritz 1 Land 65-11, 65-21 & 65-22
¥21,840,000 - 600m2



Located in sought after St Moritz area

- 2 floors with glorious views from upper open lounge / dining kitchen area
- A stand alone garage
- Great return rental property

Hurry Slowly Townhouses
¥42,000,000 🏠 3 🚗 2 🚗 1



Fully furnished 3 floors - luxury inclusions

- Internal elevator to garage
- Ski storage & drying room
- Satellite TV & wireless internet
- Each app't comes with fully insured car in garage w/ navigation system

Humming Bird
¥53,000,000 🏠 2 🚗 1 🚗 3+



Development opportunity or family home.

- Located in middle Hirafu.
- Open plan living, dining and kitchen
- House on 100 tsubo's of level ground
- Has a lock up garage



publisher's note...

Welcome to the very first issue of Powderlife!

It's no secret Niseko has the best powder in the world, but there's a lot you didn't know about this amazing little corner of the world as well. Powderlife's crew of local Japanese and foreign powderhounds are resident experts. Pick up your Powderlife when you want to get up to speed with what's going on in the village and on piste - we don't want you to waste a minute of your holiday. Powderlife is printed every second week throughout the season so no matter when you arrive pick up a copy and you're in the loop. We hope you enjoy your Powderlife!

ようこそ、パウダーライフ創刊号へ!ニセコは世界で一番いい雪があると知られています。そして、空白のひとつを埋め、あらゆる意味でワールド・クラスのスキー・リゾートに仕立て上げることを目指しています。冬季に隔週発刊で、街や山で何が起きているか必要な情報を届けます。どこで誰が見つかるかとか、コンペに参加や、アフター・スキーを楽しむ場所を見つけたいなら、パウダーライフを見てください。パウダーライフにニセコ情報全てあります。

Bevan Colless
Publisher



photo of the week

one night's snow...
by Eriko Mentzos

Taken a great snap in Niseko? Get it published for the world to see. For submission guidelines go to powderlife.co.jp

in the loop what's on in niseko this week

december 22 - january 04

Mondays and Thursdays December 24, 27
Higashiyama Prince Sushi Making Class.
Learn how to make Sushi the authentic way! 12pm-2pm
1F Otaru Restaurant. Japanese with some English. ¥2500 for the lesson.

12月24日(月)、27日(木)、
東山プリンスホテルにて 寿司づくり教室
寿司の作り方がその日のうちに習えます!時間は12時から14時まで。場所はレストラン1階にて。日本語と英語でのレッスンになります。料金は2500円

Saturday - Tuesday December 22 - 25
Annapuri Snow Candle Display
Around the bottom of the quad chair lift. Free. From when it starts getting dark, about 4pm.

12月22日~25日(土~火)
アンヌプリスキー場 スノーキャンドル点灯
第一ジャンボクワッドリフトにてスノーキャンドルをクリスマスシーズン中(25日まで)毎晩点灯します。時間は16時くらいから点灯します。

Saturday - Monday December 22 - 24
Annapuri Skiing Santa
Take the kids across to Annapuri to meet Santa and Niseko town's mascot Nikki handing out sweets on the mountain.

12月22日~24日(土~月)
アンヌプリスキー場 クリスマスプレゼント
お子様を是非この機会にスキーに連れて行きましょう!!サンターとニセコの Mascot ニッキーがお菓子を配り歩いています!!

Saturday December 22 - January 4 (except for Tuesday)
Higashiyama Daily Entertainment
Live music everyday (except for Tuesday) Niseko Higashiyama Prince Tower Hotel 1F Lobby. Free. From 9pm.

12月22日~29日(火曜を除く毎日)
東山プリンスホテル ライブイベント
火曜を除く毎日、ジャズ、アカペラ、日本舞踊などのライブミュージックがご覧いただけます。場所はホテル1階ロビーにて。料金は無料。時間は21時から22時くらいまで。

Sundays December 23, 29
Taiko Drum Performances
Free traditional Japanese drum performances. 4.30pm
Sundays outside Hokkaido Tracks office (next to Seicomart).

12月23日(日)29日(土)
太鼓演奏会
地元太鼓演奏グループによる太鼓演奏会。場所はセイコーマート横北海道トラックス前にて。時間は16時30分から。

Sunday December 23
Japanese Traditional Dance Performance
Bonbori Souvenir Shop, just below Australia House (which is opposite Seicomart). Free. 8 - 9pm.

12月23日(日)
日本舞踊披露目会
美しく着物を身に包んだ二人の女性が、お土産さん"ぼんぼり"前にて日本舞踊を踊ります。時間は20時から21時まで、場所は黄色の建物オーストラリアハウスのすぐ下にあります

Sunday December 23 and January 2, 3
Annapuri Super Early Lifts
Gondola opening 7am. ¥1000 per ride.

12月23日(日)1月2日~3日(水~木)
アンヌプリスキー場 ファーストラン(早朝ゴンドラ運行)
ゴンドラが朝の7:00からOPEN。料金は1回利用につき1000円

Sunday December 23
Bhozan Opening Party
Nepalese cuisine restaurant Bhozan opening night special 20% off all meals. 6 - 9.30pm. New location next to Snow Universe. Booking appreciated 0136 21 21 21.

12月23日(日)
ボーザン オープニングパーティー
ネパール料理レストラン ボーザンがオープン価格としてこの日限り全てメニューを20%OFFを実施。時間は18時から21時30分まで。要予約 0136-21-2121。場所はスノーユニバース横にあります。



Tell us about your event!
Email kris@powderlife.co.jp or fax 0136 222 011

in the loop.jp @

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Christmas Eve and Day クリスマスイブとクリスマスの日のイベント

Hirafu Christmas Candle Street Lighting
Check out the candles set in the snow wall from Kogen Hotel to Alpen Hotel. Free. Starting around 6 pm.

比羅夫 クリスマスキャンドルナイト
高原ホテルからアルペンホテルまでの道のりのクリスマスキャンドルをチェックしに行こう!午後6時ごろのスタート。

Hotel Kanronomori French Themed Roast Turkey Dinner (Moiwa) December 23 - 25
Enjoy a 12-dish Christmas dinner by Kanronomori's new French/Japanese cuisine chef. Cost ¥13,000 per person. Transport available by prior arrangement. Bookings 0136 58 3800. From 6pm.

ホテル寒露の森 ロースターキーディナー
クリスマスはホテル寒露の森のレストランでスペシャルディナーはいかがですか?料金は大人13000円。要予約 0136-58-3800

Hirafu Xmas Eve Fireworks
Celebrate the night before Christmas with a bonanza fireworks display outside the Alpen Hotel. From 9.30pm.

比羅夫スキー場 クリスマスイブセレモニー
クリスマスイブにみんなで花火を見に行こう!場所はアルペンホテル前。時間は21:30から

PROVIDED FREE IN ALL ACCOMMODATION MANAGED BY:
Hokkaido Tracks, NGS, Nisade, The Niseko Company, Annupuri Village, Outdoor Travel Japan and more.

PICK UP POINTS

Hirafu
Bang Bang, B's Café, A Bu Cha, Senchou 1, Senchou 2, Hotel Niseko Alpen, Komekichi Onigiri Cafe, King Bell Restaurant, Hotel Niseko Scott, Hotel Snow Universe, Niseko Kogen Hotel, Niseko Prince Hotel, Captain Hirafu, Grand Papa Pension, J-Sekka, Barumba, Gentem Café, Welcome Center, Wild Bill's, Hurry Slowly, Niseko Lodge (Ru Ru), Woody Note Pension, Half Note Bar and Pension, Barunba, Dragon Wine Bar, Gentemstick Retail Store... and many more.

Higashiyama
Higashiyama Prince Hotel, Black Diamond Lodge

Annupuri
Annupuri Village, Ikoinomura Hotel, The Nook Annupuri, Mokumokutei BBQ House,

Kutchan
Kutchan Tourist Information Centre, Loaf Lounge, Be, Blue Cielo, Nami Chan Chi, Fuji Confectionary, Shunsai

Sapporo
Sapporo Tourist Information Centre

Tokyo
Tokyo Paddy Foley's, Legend's, National Azabu Supermarket, Nissin Supermarket, Khaosan Asakusa Backpackers Hostel

Hakuba
Hakuba Real Estate, The Powderhouse

New Years Eve and Day ニューイヤーズイブとお正月のイベント

Hirafu NYE Countdown On-Piste
Live music, fireworks and the annual torch run at the base of the mountain above the Kogen Hotel. From 10pm.

比羅夫スキー場 ニューイヤーズイブ カウントダウン
ライブミュージック、毎年恒例のたいまつ滑走で新しい年を迎えましょう!場所は高原ホテルの上、スキースクールN1SS近辺にて。時間は22時からです。

Higashiyama NYE Countdown
Countdown to New Year 2008 at the After Cafe and Bar. Just before midnight.

東山スキー場 ニューイヤーズイブ カウントダウン
2008年へのカウントダウンはアフターカフェ&BARにておこなわれる予定です。

Annupuri NYE Free Night Skiing
Day pass expired? Ski for free!! 9-11:30pm

アンヌプリスキー場 ニューイヤーズイブ 無料スキー
1日券が切れちゃった人でもこの日だけはスキーができる!? 無料の時間は21時から23時30分まで。

Annupuri NYE Countdown Fireworks
See the New Year in around the annual Annupuri bonfire.

アンヌプリスキー場 たいまつ滑走・新年カウントダウン花火
アンヌプリスキー場でボランティアの方たちによるたいまつ滑走&60発の花火が見えます!たいまつ滑走のあとはキャンプファイヤーをつくる予定です。

Hirafu NY Day Ceremony at King Bell Hut
King Bell on-mountain at Hirafu. Opening a cask of sake which will be handed out free from 10am.

比羅夫スキー場 ニューイヤーズイブセレモニー@ヒュッテキング ベル
比羅夫スキー場 ヒュッテ キングベルにて鏡割りの行事あり。時間は10時から。

Hirafu NY Day Ceremony at Alpen Hotel
Alpen Hotel, rice cake (mochi pounding) display.100-200 fresh mochi (rice cakes) will be handed out. Opening a cask of sake. Try the sake for free, around 2pm.

比羅夫 ニューイヤーズセレモニー@アルペンホテル
アルペンホテルにて、つきたてのおもち数百個が配られます!鏡割りの行事も開催される予定です。時間は14時から。

Annupuri First Run NY Day
Be the first to descend Annupuri in 2008. First lift 6.45am. ¥1000 per ride.

アンヌプリスキー場 新年初滑り
2008年の朝一リフトに乗るのは誰か!? ゴンドラはなんと朝の6:45分からオープン予定。料金は1000円。ひよつとしたら初日の出がみれるかも??



Niseko's first periodical magazine - published every two weeks from December 22, 2007 to March 29, 2008.

Circulation: 3000 copies per issue / 24,000 copies per season

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powderlife magazine

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www.powderlife.co.jp

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cover shot eriko mentzos

apartment sales
luxury accommodation



the vale niseko



nisade luxury apartments

The Vale Niseko - luxury ski-in ski-out, swimming pool & onsen ON SALE NOW
The Setsumon - boutique luxury in a superb location, opening Jan 08
The Freshwater - boutique excellence, central location, opening Jan 08
New Project - prestigious ski-in ski-out upper village location, coming soon

For Sales and Accommodation visit us at The Setsumon main street Hirafu
OR opposite Seicomart in the Australia House building

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J-SEKKA

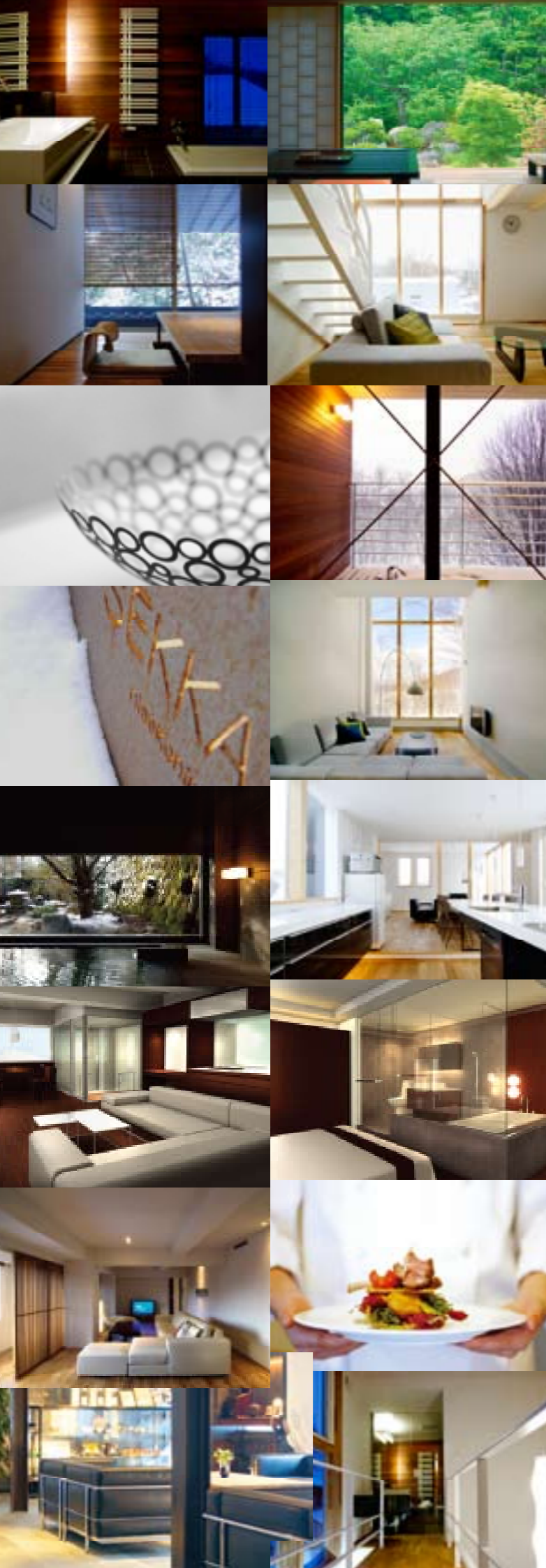
inspired living

THE J-SEKKA BUILDING IS A ONE-STOP COMFORT ZONE IN CENTRAL HIRAFU THAT INCLUDES INSPIRED LIVING WITHIN THE SEKKA SUITES, GOURMET TREATS @ SEKKA DELI, ITALIAN FUSION DINING & FINE WINES @ THE ORIGINAL SEKKA DINING BAR, JAPANESE TAPAS @ KUSHI (DOWNSTAIRS), A TASTE OF FRANCE @ RESTAURANT Q (UPSTAIRS), MYSTERIOUS COCKTAILS AND SHOTS BESIDE AN OPEN FIRE IN THE MAKI SAKE LOUNGE, BODY TREATMENT WITHIN THE MASSAGE ROOM KARADA AND SKI RENTAL FROM RHYTHM AND BEATS -- ALL NESTLED IN THE CENTRE OF HIRAFU VILLAGE ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE ACE FAMILY PAIR CHAIRLIFT

EACH VENUE REFLECTS THE HIP DICHOTOMY OF HARD SUMPTUOUSNESS THAT IS THE CALLING CARD OF THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF JAPANESE STAR-ARCHITECT NAKAYAMA MAKOTO AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR SHOUYA GRIGG

THERE ARE ONLY SIX SEKKA SUITES @ THE J-SEKKA BUILDING

TO GET A SEKKA LIFE VISIT WWW.SEKKANISEKO.COM



*The life-style photographs depicted in this advertisement are from previous projects by the J-Sekka team and are indicative of the overall appearance to be achieved in J-Sekka but remain subject to change



BUMPER SEASON FORECAST

After a low snowfall season (only 12m!?) an early start to winter 07/08 was an omen locals had been praying for - if history is anything to go by, early starts in Hokkaido equate to bumper seasons. And so far it's right on track with over 2m before the end of the year. The resort opened on 23 November, the equal second earliest since the whiteout season of 02/03. In fact that year, it also opened on the 23rd, while at the start of all-time season 05/06 the lifts started turning on the 19th. Last year the resort opened on December 1, as it did in 01 and 04, while in 03 it opened on December 7.



UK BRAND SURFANIC ARRIVES IN NISEKO

Upcoming UK snowboard outfit Surfanic were so impressed with Niseko they plan to make the Japanese powder haven an integral part of their global marketing campaign. Surfanic pride themselves on making stylish gear for the hardcore boarder who's going to go out and give it a damn good thrashing. They also reckon the most memorable and enjoyable snowboarding moments generally occur when your mates have major stacks - hence their advertising campaign heavily focused on big wipeouts. They've chosen the Niseko Photography team to be their official product testers because they spend most of their days jacket deep in powder and need a solid set of threads on their backs. Surfanic are giving away a complete outfit in return for a good stack pic. Email pics to ed@powderlife.co.jp



SHOUYA REBRANDING HIRAFU

After creating one of the most talked about restaurants in Hirafu, and building a few elegant but low key developments in the lower village, Shouya Grigg appears to have officially launched the beginnings of 'Empire Sekka'. At the forefront is the refurbishment of the old J-Second hotel on the lower side of the traffic lights next to Downtown Café - rebranded J-Sekka.

The chic new exterior is just the beginning - the huge old building houses the new Sekka restaurant, a Japanese tapas restaurant, a high end lounge bar in the old hotel foyer, a french bistro in what was originally a huge disco hall, a massage space, four luxury holiday apartments, and the new Rhythm and Beats ski hire retail store. On the street front Sekka Deli is a much needed alternative to the local *konbini* - providing gourmet local fare predominantly from across Hokkaido.

He's also busy working on the development arm of the business and what promises to be one of the more spectacular homes Hirafu has seen. And what of the ingeniously stylish space of the old Sekka restaurant? This year it will be a Sekka office and project gallery, before being knocked down in spring to make way for a much more utilitarian space.



SWAPPING BOARDS

Newly crowned world surfing champion Mick Fanning is headed for Niseko. But can he be headed for Niseko. But can he be headed for Niseko. But can he be headed for Niseko. Silly question... turn to page 23 to find out.



DEADLY REMINDER

The avalanche deaths of four people in Hokkaido already this winter highlights the ever present - although too often underestimated - danger the region's powder stacked mountains are hiding.

Niseko Snowmobile Adventures held a two-day Canadian Avalanche Association accredited course last week at its Kanbetsu base, 15 minutes drive from Niseko.

One day was spent boning up on theory in the classroom followed by a day in field checking out the real deal.

Says NSA president Scott Bowman, "Once you do a course like that you have a much healthier respect for places like the An-nupuri back bowl - suddenly you're aware of what sort of terrain can be potentially deadly. If the whole mountain slides, the bowl is like a funnel - it all goes into the one place."

Contact Scott on scott@go-nsa.com or Chuck Olbery on info@hokkaidopowderguides.com for upcoming course details. And for some basic theory check out the CAA website at www.avalanche.ca.

SNAP

by eriko mentzos

faces on the street

Powderlife asks Niseko visitors what they're doing for Christmas and New Years



Yukako Ijima, 25 Osaka. Sam Coppock, 23 Australia. Mika Satake, 23 Osaka. Paul Craig, 31 Newcastle England. "Eating, drinking, snowboarding and we'll also visit a shrine."



Yoshimi Noguchi, 30, Niseko. "Dinner with my family and work, work on New Years." Miho Fukuoka, 25. "Snowboarding, barbecue and eating mochi on New Years!" -



Osamu, 26, Sapporo. "No plans for Xmas, working over New Years!" Shizuka, 25, Sapporo: "Working for both!"



Stephen Duffie, 40 Townsville, Australia: "Going back to my family." Donna Maxwell, 45, Townsville: "Ditto."

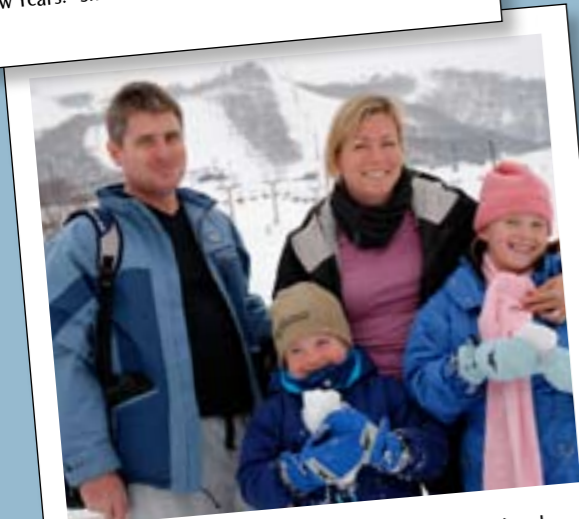


Tomoko Ishii, 24, and Yuki Furuka, 29, from Tokyo: "I work at a restaurant so I'll be working on both Christmas and NYE!" - Yuki



mountain style

This week's best outfit goes to Niigata snowboarder Shouji Ito. The 'Escape' jacket reminds you of a school raincoat and it's perfectly matched with yellow framed goggles and red pants which are going on where it counts - at the ankle. Even the bindings and Japanese domestic BTM board match Shouji wins a Niseko fleece from Fusion.



Mark Rodda, 39, Catherine Murphy, 39, Edward and Sophie Rodda, 6 and 8, Sydney: "Back home for Xmas! NY in Adelaide."

FLASH

niseko social scene

by jimmy edwards



Checking out the competition... Yoko 'Hachi' Hachiya and Izumi Kano from Wild Bills



The coolest lodge owners/managers in town... David Mills from Kinoko, Nick Brunner from Blohard, and Steve Roth from Slowlife.



Marion Smart from Hard Rock, while Emi Ashida from Fox shows us what she thinks of the new bar.

Northern Fox VIP Opening Party

Hirafu's first live music venue had its pre-opening party attended by a lot of very jovial locals. Everybody's looking forward to hearing which bands will be playing throughout the season.



The lovely Yoshiko and jovial Julian Bailey.



Bubbly Powder TV reporters Samara Tanton and Chika Matsuda.



Carly Rollnik from Niseko Real Estate and Jo Westerman from Downtown lodge



"I'm talking to you!" 'Koppa' from Downtown Lodge and Jessica Grant from Fusion.

Fusion Demo Opening Party

Locals were keen to make it to the popular ski store to check out the latest gear and eye off the skis and boards they plan to demo this year.



Wow, I'm coming back to Niseko! Kyoko, Takayo, Fumie & Noriko



Even the Sekka Staff look great! Miranda Powell & George Calligeros.



Girl power! Morag Kerr, Joasia Robinson and Emma Donohue

J-Sekka Launch Party

What was last year a rundown old hotel is now J-Sekka, the most talked about new food and entertainment venue in town. Invitation only guests were very chuffed to be among the first to check it out.

WINTER WONDERLAND

Four members of a climbing group were **killed in an avalanche** on a mountain called Kamihorokamettoku in Hokkaido. Seven fellow climbers escaped without injury.

Also in Hokkaido a snowboarder was confirmed dead after being found buried under snow at Furano ski ground. A skier found the man who **doctors believed suffocated**.

The National Institute of Infectious Diseases announced that **this winter's flu epidemic** may be spreading faster than at any time during the past two decades.

A 38-year-old Chiba man hiking in the Western Tokyo area of Okutama was **mistaken for a wild boar** and shot in the arm by a hunter.

Japan and Mexico announced that they would engage in high-level talks to address the issue of global warming.

THOSE IRRESISTIBLE SCHOOLGIRLS

After being arrested for "**fondling the private parts**" of a schoolgirl on the Chuo line, the chief of Tokyo's Sugunami Fire Station said he "just couldn't resist the urge."

A junior high school English teacher in Okayama was arrested for **exchanging private lessons for sex** with one of his 14-year-old female students at her home.

A 40-year-old PE teacher in Nagasaki who denied **fondling one of his 15-year-old student's breasts** was arrested over the incident anyway.

A security guard at an elementary school in Osaka who tried to blackmail a teacher with **photos of naked schoolgirls**

supposedly found in the instructor's desk was found to have "dozens of tapes featuring images of little girls" in his home.

A Tokyo Fire Department deputy chief was suspended for two months for surreptitiously **filming up a woman's skirt** at a bookstore in Chiyoda-ku.

Hiroshima police arrested a man for breaking into an 18-year-old woman's apartment, stealing ¥20,000, and **fondling her breasts while she slept**.

and his assistant wife were **arrested for starving their 4-week-old daughter** to death.

A Gunma man was arrested for murder after **bashing his wife's head with an iron bar**, dousing her body with kerosene, and lighting her on fire.

The 72-year-old widow of a wealthy Gifu physician was arrested for violating the Inheritance Tax Law after officials discovered some **¥1.7 billion stashed under the tatami mats** of her home.

pocket knife. The woman's mother was injured trying to stop the assault.

STOP BLUBBERING!

A whaling fleet set sail from the Yamaguchi port of Shimomoseki to take part in what the Japanese Fisheries Agency describes as "**the largest-ever scientific whale hunt**."

In response, the UK-based Sea Life aquarium group has removed Japanese goods from its shops and urged its customers to **boycott Japanese products**.

Perhaps in response to that, a street vendor called Asian Lunch has begun offering **whale curry lunches at 14 locations around Tokyo**.

An 83-year-old Ibaraki woman was **killed by a 23.1m-tall zelkova tree** that toppled down a cliff onto her home after being cut down by workers who meant for it to fall the other way.

Cops in Fukuoka arrested a yakuza boss for **murdering a hospital patient** who may have been mistaken for a member of a rival gang.

Police in Miyazaki arrested a woman for **stashing the corpse of her newborn baby in her refrigerator**. The cops found the body of a second infant in the same refrigerator.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

A police officer in Hokkaido who was on suspension for leaking the personal information of 330 people is in trouble again after being **caught peeping through the blinds** of a woman's apartment.

A city official in Shiga Prefecture was arrested for **helping a stalker search public records** in an effort to locate his ex-wife.

A female detainee at a police station in Yokohama hanged herself after she was allowed to go to the bathroom alone because there were **no female staff to accompany her**.

After keeping a homeless woman suspected of abusing drugs locked up for over a month, cops in Taito-ku **discovered stimulants in her pajama bottoms**, which had been in a storage locker ever since her arrest.

The head of Japan's National Police Agency said that cops around the nation should **make interrogations more "transparent"** by drilling peepholes in interrogation room doors and fitting the rooms with microphones.

A 47-year-old professor at Osaka University was given the heave-ho for "**performing indecent acts**" on a female medical researcher under his supervision.

GOING TO EXTREMES

Toyota unveiled the **world's largest driving simulator** at its research center in Shizuoka. The machine, housed inside a 7m-diameter dome, features 360-degree video screens and can move up to 35m on it's built-in rails.

A team of archaeologists announced that the 1,200-year-old paintings discovered in a tomb in Nara **may have first been sketched on washi paper** and then transferred to the stone walls.

Scientists at Kyoto's Ritsumeikan University have developed a bipedal **robot that can change direction without lifting its feet**—a breakthrough that has "major implications for the tasks future machines will be able to perform."

A man who was injured along with four others in a gas explosion at an apartment

“A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE WISHING TO DO SOMETHING WITH KOCHI. I'D LIKE TO JOIN FORCES WITH THOSE PEOPLE AND WORK IN THE FOREFRONT”

—Newly elected Kochi governor Masanao Ozaki, who at 40 years old is the youngest prefectural leader in Japan

complex in Aichi admitted that he **deliberately ignited the gas** in an effort to kill himself. Cops plan to arrest the 34-year-old as soon as he recovers from his burns.

All 32 stations of the Yokohama municipal subway have been fitted with signs asking commuters **not to walk up and down escalators**. Part of the problem is that it's customary to stand on the left side and walk on the right in Kanto, while in Kansai it's the opposite.

Former comedian and current Miyazaki governor Hideo Higashi-kokubaru announced that the SDF should **enact a conscription system**, citing a "lack of ethics and morality [that] has led to the loss of discipline."

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry announced that it intends to forge **closer ties to resource-rich African countries** in a bid to supply Japan's energy needs.

THE WORLD'S SAFEST CITY

Cops arrested 16 people at an **illegal gambling den in Shibuya**, including one man who fell five stories while trying to escape through a bathroom window.

Celebrated Korean enka singer and longtime Japan resident Kye Eun Sook was

busted for possessing speed at her home in Minato-ku.

The Diet toughened penalties for violating the Firearms and Swords Control and Weapons Manufacture Laws, boosting the **maximum fine to ¥30 million**.

It was reported that officials in the Kagoshima Prefecture city of Tanegashima are expecting an onslaught of visitors to see a **two-headed ratsnake** that was discovered in a local man's garden. Two-headed snakes are considered lucky in Japan.

The Softbank-owned Cyber University, which offers certified bachelors degrees for internet-only classes, has begun a **course for cellphone users**.

STATS

935 Number of minke whales that crews on Japan's whaling expedition to Antarctica "hope to kill"

¥157,500 Cost of a Louis Vuitton-designed jewelry box manufactured by Japanese lacquerware company Kirimoto Mokkojo. The proceeds will be donated to victims of the March 2007 Noto Peninsula Earthquake

100,000 baht Reward offered by police in Sukhothai, Thailand, to help solve the murder of a 27-year-old female Japanese tourist who was found with her throat slashed in a local park

2.6 million Estimated number of South Korean tourists to visit Japan this year, the first time in almost 40 years that this total has exceeded the number of Japanese tourists traveling to South Korea

154 Number of countries in which Docomo's new 905i line of mobile phones can be used

Compiled by Reg Dunlap from reports by Japan Today, The Japan Times, The International Herald Tribune/Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Daily News, AP, Kyodo and Digital World Tokyo (www.digitalworldtokyo.com)



POLICE BLOTTER

The brother-in-law of a 58-year-old woman who went missing along with her 3- and 5-year-old grand-daughters **confessed to killing the three** but offered no motive.

A 19-year-old magician in Fukuoka

A **shirtless man in Osaka** robbed a post office at knifepoint and then stabbed three people, but was arrested soon after by a policeman on a subway car.

A 22-year-old man pulled a former college classmate out of her car in Hokkaido and **stabbed her to death with a 10cm**

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K2 Cinch binding

Although Niseko's dry powder means sitting down to strap in to your bindings won't leave you with a damp rear, your skiing buddies DO mind waiting. Despite a plethora of attempts at the perfect step in no company has really cracked it. But now it seems K2 has. The Cinch offers the performance of a strap system combined with the effortless entry and exit system of a step in and as a bonus it can be used with any boot. Like the FLOW, the high back reclines but the Cinch's straps open out making a nice opening to slide your foot in. The strap bindings can also be opened manually if needed. Available from Fusion in white and black, men's and ladies ¥35,000.



Armada ARGs

A very limited number of ARGs hit stores last year and within weeks they were gone. On the mountain, they forever changed how their owners skied deep powder. The ARG remains a limited-production model for the 07/08 season. Its patent-pending design stands alone among a plethora of reverse-camber, reverse-sidecut skis hitting the market. A surfboard-inspired rocker and slight sidecut under foot allow this ski to cruise over powder, while still allowing you to make it back to the lift on the groomers. Available for demo at Rhythm and Beats and for purchase at 343. ¥130,000.



Smith Phenom Turbo Fan

Many claim floating through powder is almost a spiritual experience... until you take a tumble, your goggles fill with snow and you spend the rest of the day cursing that they keep fogging. Solution? By a pair with a two-speed micro-electric fan built in ensuring vapour vanishes before it turns to steam and ruins your day. Smith are so confident of their Phenom Turbo Fan Goggle they've given it a lifetime manufacturer's warranty, and the US military has even implemented the technology. The fan does emit a hum which is just audible when in a totally silent environment – exactly where you want to be – fortunately it can be switched off even with your gloves on. Available at Fusion. ¥32,000.

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SURVIVING YOTEI

A near death experience on Niseko's favorite landmark.

by Liam Bartley



Yotei's crater on arrival at the peak.

'Baka'. It's Japanese for stupid. Early March 2005, walking into the Kyogoku Lawsons convenience store a little after daybreak frozen to the marrow, up to my ankles in blood and frostbite, I knew I was going to be hearing baka a lot. But being in civilization again, I knew I was still alive, and being called baka wasn't going to wipe the beaming smile off my face for being so.

The plan had been to climb Mt Yotei, the local semi-dormant volcano, on the Saturday, set up camp on the ridge, live a little decadently basking in the amazing views with some cheese and olives, before an exploration of the crater rim and then bed. We would wake up before dawn on top of the world to catch the sunrise from the peak on film, then ski down the caldera, climb out, pack up, and ski home.

We checked the weather report and avalanche conditions before heading out: blue skies expected until late Sunday, with a storm front expected to hit

after dark (long after we would be safely off the mountain), warm conditions and moderate instability in the snow pack for both afternoons. At any rate Jonn, my Canadian friend, was a veteran of the Rocky Mountains and comparatively, Mt Yotei isn't really much more than a little hill with a hole at the top.

Saturday morning and we arrive at the trail head on the Kyogoku side, which when you look at Yoteizan from Hirafu, is the ridge on your left. We skin up through beautiful birch trees and blue skies. The weather is even hotter than predicted and I'm down to a T-shirt within minutes.

After about two hours we break clear of the tree line and although the sun is still hot, the altitude keeps the ground cold and the snow gradually turns to ice. Soon we can no longer use the skins so we pack them and the skis away and begin to kick step our way up over the ice and around the pockets of wind-blown powder. For some people, ski-mountaineering is as much about the climb as the ride down. To be honest, I am not one of those people. Without the thrill of

It's everything I imagine a tornado to be, but on top of a mountain.

the descent as the dangling carrot - and here puritans might scoff - I probably wouldn't bother. My passion is the ride down through untracked at break-neck speed, with just you, your friends, and the mountain.

Eventually we make it to the top. The sky is still looking positively Mediterranean it's so blue. Not a cloud in sight in any direction and not a breath of wind. After we find a nice perch overlooking the crater we crack open the cheese and other delicacies that others might claim weren't worth the weight. I can safely say however that sun-dried tomatoes, olives, and artichokes on a cracker never tasted so good.

This is about when our luck starts to turn.

We fall asleep, waking not long before sun down. We notice dark clouds far off to the west and set up camp. At that altitude and at that exposure, anything you plan on sleeping in should be very well protected and secured. A snow cave is best. What convinced us to do such a mediocre job of securing our tent to some exposed rocks and barricading it with a flimsy wall we dug out of snow and hoarfrost, I will never know. Whatever it was, it was obviously foolish and the start of a chain reaction of peril that had us fighting for our lives.

The dark clouds are still a long way off and after a brief discussion we decide to explore the crater rim. We haven't gone more than 200 metres across the jagged ridge when we become painfully aware of our dire situation. The wind has come up strong and we are very suddenly in danger of being blown either into the crater or off the edge of the rim down the valleys and cliffs on the other side. We clamber back and by the time we reach the tent, one of the

tie downs has snapped under the strain, and one has come loose of its anchor and is flapping about. The clouds have closed in around us and the wind is so strong it's hard to stand. We manage to get the tent anchored. Inside things seem pretty calm again and after a bit of a nervous chuckle we set up the stove and start making tea.

A few hours later we've settled into our sleeping bags with the full mountain storm raging around us, gusts harmlessly knocking at the sides of the tent. It seems we're safe. I get to sleep. But soon I'm woken by something akin to cannon fire. The tent lurches out towards the edge of the platform we set it up on. I look at Jonn and he has his nervous smile back again. He doesn't say anything. Another blast of wind accompanied by cannon fire and we're sent sprawling as the tent gets airborne, lands and drags further out over the ledge despite our weight. Frantically we claw at the snow through the fabric of the floor. Instinctively we dive towards the windward side and plant it to the ground. "Now what?" yells Jonn. Right on cue, another gust hits us from the other direction and sends us spinning. "We gotta get out there and get this thing tied down somehow!" He's yelling in my ear. I unzip the hatch a fraction and poke my nose and an eye outside. For the first time I realise there's



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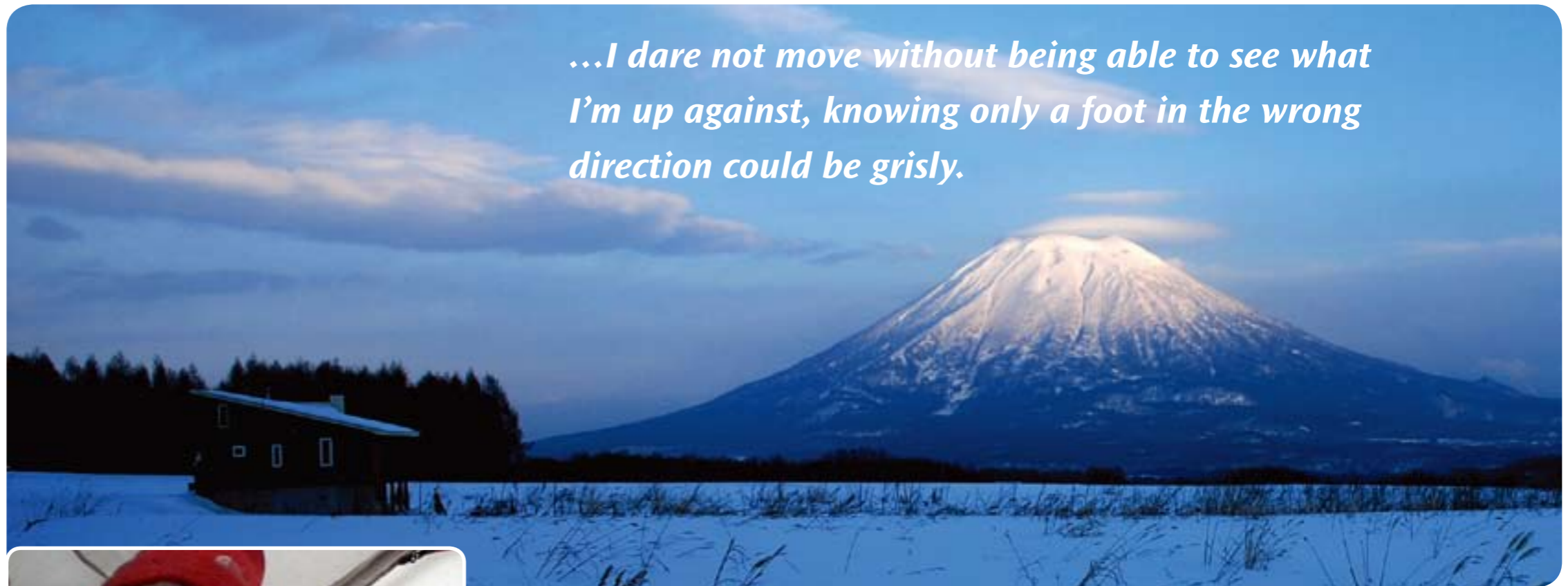
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...I dare not move without being able to see what I'm up against, knowing only a foot in the wrong direction could be grisly.



Jonn only minutes before the tent rips completely open.

a good chance I won't live to see dawn. It's pitch black, but there are flecks of grey streaming past and around. Shards of ice, like bits of broken crockery, are tearing overhead. The snow sucks down over the rim, then another round of cannon fire as compressed gale force wind blows everything back out again. It's everything I imagine a tornado to be, but on top of a mountain.

"I don't think we're going to get much sleep tonight, eh?" Jonn says. I grin back at him. The adrenaline is up and I can feel the mania setting in telling me to enjoy it.

"So, should we start thinking about abandoning ship?" Jonn looks at me and shouts "No, mate, we don't want to do that. We've at least got some kind of shelter here. I don't like our chances of climbing down with packs on." "What if we ski down?"

"Last resort. Our best bet is to stay put. Descending through this in the dark, in the middle of a storm of this magnitude is suicide"

About now, as I reach to put my ski boots back on, another blast hits. This time though, it doesn't relent. As we sit there doubled over with the tent pushing our faces into the floor, we suddenly hear a ripping sound. The wind stops for just a moment. We grimace at each other then the next gust hits us. Within seconds I'm staring up at the night sky and driving snow.

The next few minutes are chaos as everything that isn't held down or strong enough to hold itself down is blown off the side of the mountain. I take a metal shovel to the back of the head and through my subsequent haze, see one of my brand new skis disappear into oblivion. There go my hopes of skiing down. The wind rests for a second. I grab what I can and try to stuff my frozen feet into my boots. I've been in socks till now and they are caked in snow and ice and my feet hardly fit in for the snow already blown into the boots. With a vicious screech I jam my last boot on, grab my pack and turn to Jonn. If ever we really had a choice, there was now, irrevocably, only one option left: get off the mountain.

For the first hundred feet or so we negotiate a slightly inclined ledge, but it ends in a very steep ridge of rock and ice that is our path home. Jonn backs over the edge. Momentarily the lamp shines in my face and then he's gone, and I'm enveloped in blackness again. I turn on my hands and feet and follow Jonn over, no more than five or so steps behind. "What a waste," I think, "after climbing all the way up here just to have to climb back down again."

Another blast shoots out of the crater, across the ledge and hits me square in the chest. I'm ripped off the ridge and suddenly I'm in mid air, free falling. Time slows, and the enormity of my predicament becomes all too apparent. Jonn's screaming my name. I crash onto ice and bounce off the ridge into a steep chute of hard, wind-packed snow and ice. I hurtle down headfirst on my back, looking up the mountain where Jonn's light and shouts quickly disappear. After sliding about 100 metres, I come to rest on a slight ledge of fine, wind blown snow. I'm okay. Unbelievably, I'm okay. But I can't see a thing. I crawl forward blindly on my hands and hear the unmistakable 'whump' of unstable snow breaking underneath me. Best stay put. I have no light so all I can do is wait and hope I see Jonn as he climbs down past me. Icicles form in my nostrils and off my eyelashes and I start getting sleepy. I try to think warm thoughts and wave my arms in circles to both stay awake and get warmer blood flowing to the extremities. It is a battle I am quickly losing but I dare not move without being able to see what I'm up against, knowing only a foot in the wrong direction could be grisly.

Finally, out of the darkness, Jonn's ghostly glow begins to take shape. He can't hear me because of the wind, even though he is now within ten metres of me, and of course can't see me because I don't have a light. Miraculously, he has climbed right down on top of me. I crawl up and, grabbing him in a huge hug, scare the life out of him.

"I thought you were dead," he cries, frozen tears stuck across his face.

"N-n-nah, I w-w-was jus sick-gov w-walking, thought I'd catch the rickshaw."

"You realise how lucky you are? Oh man, I really thought you were dead."

With Jonn's light we peer over the ledge I stopped on, but we can't see the bottom.

We regain awareness we're still a long way from Kansas. We down climb. The process becomes routine and finally I gain some hope. The wall of night is now occasionally shattered by lightning, which affords brief, terrifying glimpses of our surroundings. Jonn sets off ahead, delicately picking his way across the steep face, each lightning strike revealing numerous, deep fracture lines in the snow above. No words are spoken between us. I kick a boot repeatedly into the ice to make a toe-hold, shift my weight down half a foot or so to the new leg, then do it again. Then again. And again thousands of times over. Occasionally a delicious, warm, sleepy feeling comes over me and it's so nice. It would be so wonderful to close my eyes and take a nap. Just a little one. Alarm bells ring, I jerk awake, and bash the next foot hold into the side of the mountain.

Hours pass.

Finally we climb our way out under the storm and down into the cover below the tree line. I can see the storm still raging above, but it's distant and I'm confident the worst is over. Here it's calm and the slope is gentler. For about a kilometre everything is so easy. There's almost a spring in my step as the air warms and the snow turns to rain. I begin to thaw as we eat up the distance. We're practically bounding. But in our rush we head down the wrong contour. The snow pack turns completely isothermic in just a few paces. Suddenly, every step sends us post-holing up to our waists. Lost, frustrated and exhausted, I do

the only thing that is left for a sane person to do. I lie down face first on the snow and try to swim. When that fails, I get back up and clamber on again. We're post holing with every step so it takes hours to gain a few hundred metres. Yet somehow we manage.

Eventually, miraculously, we fall out on to a farming road from where we can see the heavenly blue glow of the Kyogoku Lawsons. It can't be further than a kilometre away... and has chocolate and hot stuff.

By the time we get there, dawn has broken. Unfortunately, the lone staff member doesn't have time to drive two zombies who have dripped water, mud and blood (which is leaking out of my boots) over his erstwhile spotless floor to Jonn's house. He did give us some free chocolate and hot stuff in exchange for our story though, for which he is eternally a major beneficiary in my will.

Clumping back to Jonn's from the Lawsons still in our ski boots, towards the main street of Kyogoku, the sun is shining on our faces from across the distant hills over the town and people are starting their day. We have spent 24 hours on the mountain, the last 10 just trying to survive. As I glance back at Yoteizan I notice the Lawsons clerk watching us, and I know exactly what he's thinking – baka.



Liam is a retired mountain climber, mad as buckets skier, terrible snowboarder, and owner of the sensational Captain Hirafu B&B www.captainhirafu.com



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bang bang

by Vanessa Gibson

Mention Hokkaido to most Japanese from "the south" and the first thing they think about is not snow. It's food. For them, a trip to Hokkaido is not complete without indulging in Hokkaido's famous foods: salmon sashimi and roe, ramen noodles, hairy crab, and wagyu beef. You can knock a few of these off your list in one visit to Bang Bang. Masanobu Sato's iconic restaurant has been a feature on the Niseko dining landscape for 22 years. Masa's passion in life is telemark skiing, as you could probably ascertain given his decision to set up shop in the world's powder capital and the fabulous photos dotted about the restaurant. Such is its popularity in winter that seasoned Nisekophiles know to book well in advance of their arrival.

As you walk in you can see yakitori being carefully turned on the counter grill by a sharply attired chef, a feature pot belly stove warming the room, natural wooden tables with windows looking out on the snow and trees. Don't think you're in a completely isolated bubble in Hirafu, aside from the English on the menu; this is a slice of real Japan.

Bang Bang is a notch above the typical Japanese Izakaya (casual dining pub/restaurant) and has some dishes that would not be out of place in a fine dining restaurant. The marbled wagyu beef steak will set you back about ¥10,000, but you'll want to close your eyes to help you savour every bite. The tenderness and juiciness of this beef is astounding. Despite stories of Wagyu beef being fed beer and regular massages being a fallacy started by a misinformed journalist several years ago, the Wagyu- cattle do lead a life of comfort and are often kept in small farms of as few as four cows.

Although the beef is extraordinary make sure you don't miss out on the fantastic range of fresh fish. You can choose between five grades of salmon sashimi. Top of the pops is the rare keiji salmon found only in the northern Hokkaido waters. Only one in 10,000 salmon caught are true keiji salmon. The fisherman can never be 100% sure a fish is actually a genuine keiji until the fish is cut open, which you can't do unless you buy it from them. They sell for about ¥50-60,000 each, and Masa estimates that about 1 in 10-15 he buys is not actually keiji, and he loses money on them. Caveat emptor indeed! Similar to the Penfolds Grange to the Australian wine lover, Keiji salmon is almost a right of passage for a sea-food lover to try one at least once in their careers

Signature Bang Bang fare also includes the fresh Hokkaido Oysters, char grilled king crab and pork spare rib. The crab is slightly costly but delectable and the ribs are tasty but may be a little heavy in fat for western tastes. The meal can be balanced with a few Japanese salads, yakitori vegetable or rice dishes. Most dishes range from ¥700-1500. A word of warning – split bills often vary from ¥3,000 to ¥12,000 per head depending on how you order. They have increased their range of wines to include a great Australian selection, predominantly from the Margaret River. Luckily for you and me, Masa loves food almost as much as he loves his telemark.

Bang Bang is open evenings from 5:30-11pm. Closed on Wednesdays. Bookings are essential, seats 30-50 people. Tel. 0136 22 4292

Hey powder and party lovers!

What's New?

I can't leave you guys for a minute! Go away for a few months and everything changes! Luckily all my ol' favourite places are back, but there's been so many refurb's and new venues popping up – I can't wait to 'test' them all out!

The summer saw semi-trailer bar Fatty's finally drive off into the sunset. It used to be THE place but it had become tired and it'll be happier in the big parking space in the sky. Of the new kids on the block, The Northern Fox is the live music venue we've been wanting. Think cool interior, dinner and jazz and no smoking! Splash is a new alternative reggae and DJ bar right opposite Barunba. Darts, DJs and graffiti covered walls – smoking is OK – hopefully the high ceiling helps. I can see that little corner of the world being a bit messy after midnight. The Dragon Bar has moved into a cool new shrine-themed venue just below the traffic lights - and you thought Temple Bar was in Dublin! J Sekka is the new place to be seen – they've got a different bar for every mood as long as it includes stylin'.

And those hard-working cuties at Niseko Photography are organising a season long darts competition every Tuesday at Wild Bill's. See www.NisekoDarts.com for details.

Check back with me in Issue 2 for all the nightlife news – and you bar owners email me! I'm too lazy to do my own research: nightlife@powderlife.co.jp.



Check this guy out!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sat Dec 22**
Java Bar – DJ Maco
Niseko's own resident female DJ
- Sun Dec 23-24**
The Northern Fox- Christmas Dinner show with Ryo Kukui Jazz Trio 7pm
¥6,500 dinner and show

- Tues Dec 25**
Java Bar Staff Chillout
Resort staff night - open to all - discounts for staff.
- Wed Dec 26**
Powderlife Kutchan Pub Crawl ¥2,000
Leaves from the Seicomart bus stop at 7.30 sharp.
¥2,000 pre-paid tickets only, free entry and some extras!
Pay at Powderlife 2F Australia House. Maximum 20 - girls free.
Leaves from bus stop at 7.30.
- Thurs Dec 27**
Java Bar Live Music Night
Live acoustic sessions with Michael and other musicians.
Free
- Fri Dec 27**
Red Bar Friday night
House Party with guest DJs
- Sat Dec 29**
Java Bar Java House Sounds
Funky house tunes that get the bar moving
- Dec 29 – 31**
The Northern Fox
Duck & friends. Cool Tokyo band.
Dec 29 – 30 10pm-12pm ¥2,000
Dec 31 10pm -2am ¥3,000



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- Jan 2 – 14**
The Northern Fox
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www.bradrockmusic.com
- NYE Party Apres Bar**
Sapporo DJs ¥1,000 entry. Pre-booked tickets only. Sam and the boys lock the doors and party until 2am.
Tickets only available at the bar.
- NYE Party Java Bar**
Sapporo DJs ¥1,000 entry. Pre-booked tickets only.
- NYE Party at Red Bar**
Sapporo DJs ¥1,000 entry.



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Kashi - Lift operator

name Tomoyuki Kashiwaya **nickname** Kashi **age** 34 **hometown** Ono (southern Hokkaido) **time in niseko** Eight years **do you like powder?** Yep **ski/board?** Snow scooter **when did you start?** Six years ago **why did you move to niseko?** Mountain bike riding in summer. **what languages do you speak?** Japanese and I'm learning English now. **trips overseas?** I did a tour around America. **favourite... colour** Black **brand** Adidas **food** Yakiniku BBQ restaurant Inakanoa Jagata **bar** Fatty's **onsen** Yukichichibu **course** Super Course **how long will you be in niseko for?** The rest of my life **niseko secrets?** There is a hidden dirt jump... and the summers are great here. **what's a must have item for Niseko?** Shoe spikes **what's your life philosophy?** Play hard. **favourite resort in... niseko?** Hirafu **hokkaido?** Hirafu **japan?** Hirafu

名前 カシワヤ トモユキ **年齢** 34. **出身地** 大野町 (函館の隣) ニセコ来てどのくらいですか? 8年 **パウダースノー**は好きですか? はい **いつ始めましたか?** 6年前 **スキー? スノーボード? スノースクート.** なぜニセコに来たんですか? 夏のMTB. **話す言語は?:** 英語は勉強中. **海外に行った事はありますか?:** アメリカ周遊. **好きな色は?:** 黒. **好きなブランドは?** Adidas. **好きな食べ物**は?: 焼肉 **好きなレストラン**は 田舎の洋食屋 **じゃが太** **好きなバー**は Fatty's **好きな温泉**は 雪杖父 **好きなコース**は スーパーコース **ニセコ以外でどのスキー場に行きたいですか?** 旭岳. **ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか?** 一生. **ニセコについて自分だけが知っていると思う事は?:** 穴場のダートジャンプがある. **実は夏がいい.** **ニセコで絶対必要だと思うアイテムは?:** スパイク **あなたの人生観は?:** 遊びが一番好きなスキーリゾートは ヒラフ北海道では? ヒラフ 日本では? ヒラフ.

Mi-chan Hirafu Ski Patrol

name? Michiko Aoki **nickname?** Mi-chan **hometown** Tokyo. **time in niseko?** Eight years **do you like powder?** Yes~?! **Ski/board?** Ski & telemark **when did you start?** ski 20 years ago, telemark eight years ago **why did you move to niseko?** Nature and to become a ski patroller **what languages do you speak?** Japanese & English **trips overseas?** America, Philippines, Thailand, Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Finland, Canada, Singapore, Hawaii... I think that's all! **favourite... colour?** Sky-blue **brand?** Blizzard **food?** Fruit **restaurant?** Chidori **bar?** Mokoraya **onsen?** Popolo **course?** Konayuki **how long will you be in Niseko for?** Till May 08. I will be back next season too. **what does niseko need?** A great big book store! **niseko secrets?** Mt Yotei can be seen pink if you're lucky. There is a fox's lair on the mountain... many animals here. **what's a must have item for Niseko?** Warm socks and spirits **what's your life philosophy?** Make today bright, enjoy tomorrow, smile everyday. **favourite resort in... niseko?** Hirafu **hokkaido?** Niseko **japan?** Niseko

名前? アオキ ミチコ **ニックネーム?** ベチ **年齢???** 34 **出身地?** 東京 **ニセコ来てどのくらいですか?** 8年 **パウダースノー**は好きですか? はい! **スキーヤー? スノーボーダー?** スキー & テレマーク **いつ始めましたか?** スキーは20年前, テレマークは8年前 **なぜニセコに来たんですか?:** 自然が厳しく, 仕事としてやりがいがあるから. **話す言語は?:** 日本語と英語. **海外に行った事はありますか?** アメリカ, フィリピン, タイ, 韓国, ニュージーランド, フィンランド, カナダ, シンガポール, ハワイなど **好きな色は?:** 空色. **ブランドは?** BLIZZARD. **食べ物は?** フルーツ **好きなレストラン**は? 千鳥 **好きなバー**は? もこら **温泉**は? ぼほろ **好きなコース**は? 粉雪コース 旭岳 **ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか?** 08 5月まで. もちろん来年も! **ニセコに必要なものは?:** 大きな書店 **セコで絶対必要だと思うアイテムは?** あたたい靴下と寒さに負けないガッツ! **あなたの人生観は?:** 今日を明るく, 明日を楽しみ, 毎日笑顔で! **ニセコエリアで一番好きなスキーリゾートは?** ヒラフ. **北海道で? ニセコ 日本では? ニセコ**

Betty - Barista

name? Tomomi Okabe **nickname** Betty **Age** 34 **hometown** Tokyo **time in niseko** Three years **ski/board?** Used to Ski **when did you start?** More than 10 years ago for 5 or 6 years. **why did you move to niseko?** I wanted to communicate with foreigners **what languages do you speak?** Japanese, learning English **trips overseas?** America, Saipan, Thailand, Australia, Hong Kong, Canada, Singapore, Hawaii **where do you want to go next?** A southern country **favourite... colour?** Orange, pink **brand?** None **food?** Chocolate. **restaurant?** Blue Cielo. **bar?** A-Bu-Cha and Jirocho. **onsen?** Konbu Onsen **where else in the world do you want to go skiing?** Whistler. **how long will you be in niseko for?** As long as I'm still enjoying it **what does Niseko need?** A family restaurant. **niseko secrets?** Bears walk through this mountain. Lavazza coffee is in Higashiyama **what's your life philosophy?** Meet lots of new people **favourite resort in... niseko?** Higashiyama. **hokkaido?** Niseko, Kiroro. **japan?** Niseko

名前? オカベ トモミ **ニックネーム?** ベチ **年齢** 34 **出身地?** 東京. **ニセコ来てどのくらいですか?** 3年 **スキーヤー? スノーボーダー?** 昔スキーヤーでした **いつ始めましたか?** 10年以上 (5~6年間) **なぜニセコに来たんですか?** 外国の方の多いリゾート地を仕事場としたかったから. **話す言語は?** 日本語と英語は勉強中. **海外に行った事はありますか?** アメリカ, サイパン, タイ, オーストラリア, 香港, カナダ, シンガポール, ハワイなど. **次は?** 南国. **好きな...色は?** オレンジ, ピンク. **ブランド**は? **食べ物**は? チョコレート. **レストラン**は? ブルー チェーロ **バー**は? 阿武茶, 次郎長. **温泉**は? 昆布温泉 **ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか?** いたいだけ. **ニセコに必要なものは?** ファミリーレストラン **ニセコであんまり知られていない事は?** 熊が通ること. **あの有名なLAVAZZA コーヒー**が東山で飲めること. **あなたの人生観は?** たくさん新しい人と出会う **ニセコエリアで一番好きなスキーリゾートは?** 東山. **北海道は? ニセコとキロロ日本は? ニセコ.**



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I've been in Japan for 5 days now.
Here's what I've been up to:

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Tuesday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.
Wednesday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.
Thursday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.
Friday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.

I think I might extend my stay another week!
See you soon,
Love Johnnie



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Hana Jizoh Bakery

Inoue and Keiko Tsuyoshi decided on a tree change in 2002 and moved to Niseko. They chose Hokkaido for its pristine environment, temperate climate and slow pace of life... little did they know a boom was just around the corner. Inoue-san was an English teacher in mainland Japan. His vision to start a bakery came from a desire to have 100% control over something and produce a perfect end product – impossible to do with a student! However, he's certainly succeeded with bread. He bakes a wide range of products that is all super tasty, very well priced, always fresh and - because they're baking constantly throughout the day - often still warm when you buy it. They're located on the main street (route 343) in Izumikyō 2. In summer their main business is domestic sightseers while in winter their bread is in demand from pensions and hotels. You may well have eaten a Hana Jizoh creation for breakfast at your place today!

Bonbori Souvenir Shop

Bonbori is a charming little souvenir shop just down the hill from Australia House, opposite the Seciomart. It's jointly owned by three ladies – Mukai-san, Takahashi-san (pictured) and Nagahama-san who met while working as reflexologists at Makkari Onsen. The inspiration for their shop came from Takahashi-san who had always wanted to communicate with foreigners through calligraphy. They look into their dictionaries and print names and other messages in Japanese/Chinese characters (Kanji) on T-shirts, cloth or cardboard for wall hangings. Previously they had a service for foreigners where they could have their photo taken wearing kimonos and are wondering if they should do it again. If you think so, let them know! Takahashi-san thinks it's interesting to see Hirafu grow so fast – her husband believes that to run a successful business in Hirafu now you need 'yosomono, wakamono, and bakamono' (outside people, young people and crazy people).



Mina Mina

Manager Matsuura Shougo (pictured) and owner Outa Mitsuaki are good friends who met in Niseko about 11 years ago. Matsu was born in Tomamu – near the famous ski resort of the same name and moved to Furano when he was 18, before making the move to Niseko. A few years ago they decided to open Mina Mina as a place to hang out and spend time with friends in a happy environment. The name is actually a play on words – in Japanese Mina means 'everyone' and in the language of Hokkaido's indigenous Ainu people it means smile. Drop into this popular Izakaya on any night and there's a good chance everyone will be smiling. Their *osusume* (recommended dishes) are their gobo (plant root) chips which present as extra long potato chips, and their *jayjya-men* – Asian noodles topped with spicy minced pork and egg. Powderlife's tip: try the Karaage – Japanese style fried chicken – a big improvement on the western style.

BonTak

It's hard to tell whether Takeshi 'Bon' Nakahara is more Japanese or Kiwi. The talented ski tuner is the owner of BonTak Ski and Board Tuning and Repair. He grew up in Nagano, the well known mainland Japanese mountainous prefecture, and moved to a boarding school in New Zealand when he was 14. Although he has a degree in Physics and Chinese, the now sponsored skier did a lot of time on the mountains of New Zealand, and learned to tune by watching the owner of the ski shop he was working at part time. These days he chases the winters tuning in the northern and southern hemispheres. His part time job in NZ is being paid to ski off cliffs and be photographed - the bigger the 'huck', the fatter the pay cheque. Bontak worked at Hirafu ski shop Niseko 343 for six years before opening his own business last season. "I love seeing the perfect finish and it's good to see people stoked and having a better time on the mountain because of it".



new surf champ swaps boards

by kristian lund interview by marcus st.john dawe

After claiming his maiden surfing world crown in the the best waves on the planet, Mick Fanning is headed for Hokkaido for the world's best powder.

The freakishly talented 26-year old from Australia's Gold Coast – the first Aussie to win a world title since Mark Occhilupo in 1999 - is also mad keen on snowboarding.

Had he grown up in Cooma rather than Coolangatta, there's a damn good chance Mick would be gracing the covers of snowboarding magazines rather than surfing ones.

"I think if I got into snowboarding before surfing I would've been a snow boarder," says Mick.

"I love snow boarding, it's so much fun. I try to do a trip every year because I love it so much. It's like surfing, but it does hurt more."

On his first trip to Japan's famous powder-covered mountains, Mick will stay at Niseko's Jam House.

Owner Marcus St.John Dawe had the opportunity to ask him a few questions about surfing, snowboarding, and life in general.



Mick doing what he does best

Is this your first trip to Niseko? Yeah this will be the first time. I heard the powder is insane but I'm there just for the fun so I'll wait and see what happens.

How long have you been snowboarding, and where do you usually go? I've been doing one week snowboarding holidays probably every year since 2003. I've been to California, Whistler, Colorado and Australia. I've had all conditions but I think the best day was when Red Bull sent me heli-boarding in Whistler. It was so insane, like surfing down a hill.

How do the pro snowboarding and pro surfing lifestyles compare? I've hung out with Andy Finch (US pro snowboarder and keen surfer) and met a few others and we have similar lifestyles. Except they chase the winters, we chase the summers.

Who do you look up to? Who are your major influences in life? I have so many, but the qualities I look for in heroes are down to earth, happy go lucky people.

What do you think of Japanese food? Love it. I eat sushi at least twice a week.

Do you play any instruments? No musical instruments but love music. I think music influences surfers and snowboarders to how they act and develop their styles.

What really makes you laugh? My mates are the funniest humans on earth. I love good pranks. There's nothing better.

Fanning has been at the forefront of world surfing for the past 10 years, but after several injuries, and domination by eight-time world champ Kelly Slater, the coveted title had always been elusive.

After watching Fanning's victory on the internet, Australian surfing legend and 1999 world champ Marc Occhilupo jumped into his car and reversed into a tree.

"It was really emotional - I felt like I'd won too," Occy told The Gold Coast Bulletin.

Under coach Phil McNamara, Fanning has worked hard on his mental approach and perceived weaknesses, travelling to get days of extra practice at the challenging Teahupoo and Pipeline breaks where his world title challenge had collapsed in the past.

That sheer determination may have stemmed from the tough times in his life, including the death of older brother Sean - also a gifted surfer - in a car accident in 1998, and a horrific hamstring injury in 2004.

His proud mother and manager Liz Osborne admitted Mick could have easily gone off the rails following the death of Sean as a teenager but instead he found inner strength.

"When you lose someone like your dearest hero who was going to do the world tour with you, and the plans and dreams were there, to lose him was devastating for Mick," said Liz.

"The tragedy of Sean and his injury, people sort of doubted him maybe after that saying 'this will turn him the wrong way'. But it just made him stronger."

Keep an eye on Powderlife for the first ever pics of Mick slicing through waist deep Hokkaido pow.

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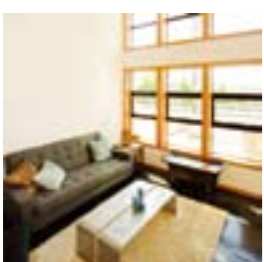
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in focus
Jiro Kamiharako



Niseko has a number of residents who have achieved great feats in their chosen field. One of these is Higashiyama Prince Hotel manager Jiro Kamiharako, who was one of the pioneers of the V ski jump and represented Japan at the 1992 Albertville Olympics. We find out his story and try to convince him to open the restricted areas at Higashiyama while we're at it.

Why did you decide to move to Niseko?

My company, the Seibu Group, transferred me here eight years ago as manager of the Higashiyama Prince Hotel.

When did you start skiing?

I think I must have been about three. Growing up in Sapporo, right from the start, I was always attracted to skiing and was confident on skis. I loved the sense of speed. Then when I was seven we had the Sapporo Olympics in 1972 – right in our back yard - my friends and I went ski crazy. I started to become interested in the ski jump and there was a boys' ski jump club in the area. So I joined the Sapporo "Boys Jump Club" and got started on my ski jump career.

How did you begin ski jumping?

I started to practice the ski jump on small jumps when I was about 10. I started the normal hill (70m high) when I was 13, and the large hill (90m high) when I was 15.

How often did you train?

I always loved the training, so I usually trained more than the other boys.

We understand you were one of the first to do the V shaped ski jump. How did you begin doing the V ski jump? Who was the first to realise it was better?

I initially used the simple parallel style, like everyone else in those days. Then in the summer of 1991, I thought that if I was going to be selected for the Albertville Olympic six months later, I had to do something different. Myself and another younger jumper who I trained regularly with decided to make 1/8 miniature model skis and traveled to the wind tunnel laboratory at Tokyo University to test the aerodynamics of different jump styles. The results showed quite conclusively that the V Jump was better than the traditional parallel style. After that the national team began doing it also.

Japan has a long history of ski jumpers. Did you feel a heavy pressure to perform?

When I was in the starting position for my jump at the Olympics, I imagined that the entire world was watching me on television. Of course I felt pressure then. However for me I felt more pressure at the selection for the Japanese team.

Did the team come close to a medal?

We got 4th in the team event. We never got close to challenging for the bronze.

Do you ever do a full ski jump? When was the last time you did one?

I have not jumped since February 1994.

Are there any plans to open the restricted areas in the Higashiyama bowls?

So far, we have no plan for opening Mizunosawa this winter. We still need to investigate this further.

Drats. Pretty please?

No.

What three things would you recommend all visitors to Higashiyama do?

- 1) Enjoy the best powder snow on the planet. I have seen so many ski resorts all over the world when I was a ski jump athlete. I think this place Niseko is the No.1 ski area that gets powder snow constantly. I like skiing down from Limited 1 to the course where Natural Half Pipe Masters is held, near the old Gondola.
- 2) Enjoy the beautiful view of Mt Yotei. My favorite view of Mt Yotei is from Higashiyama, half way down the hill.
- 3) Enjoy the food. Niseko is lucky; we get fresh seafood and tasty vegetables from the beautiful local environment. People from all over Japan envy the food we get here, so enjoy!



Shiretoko Peninsula

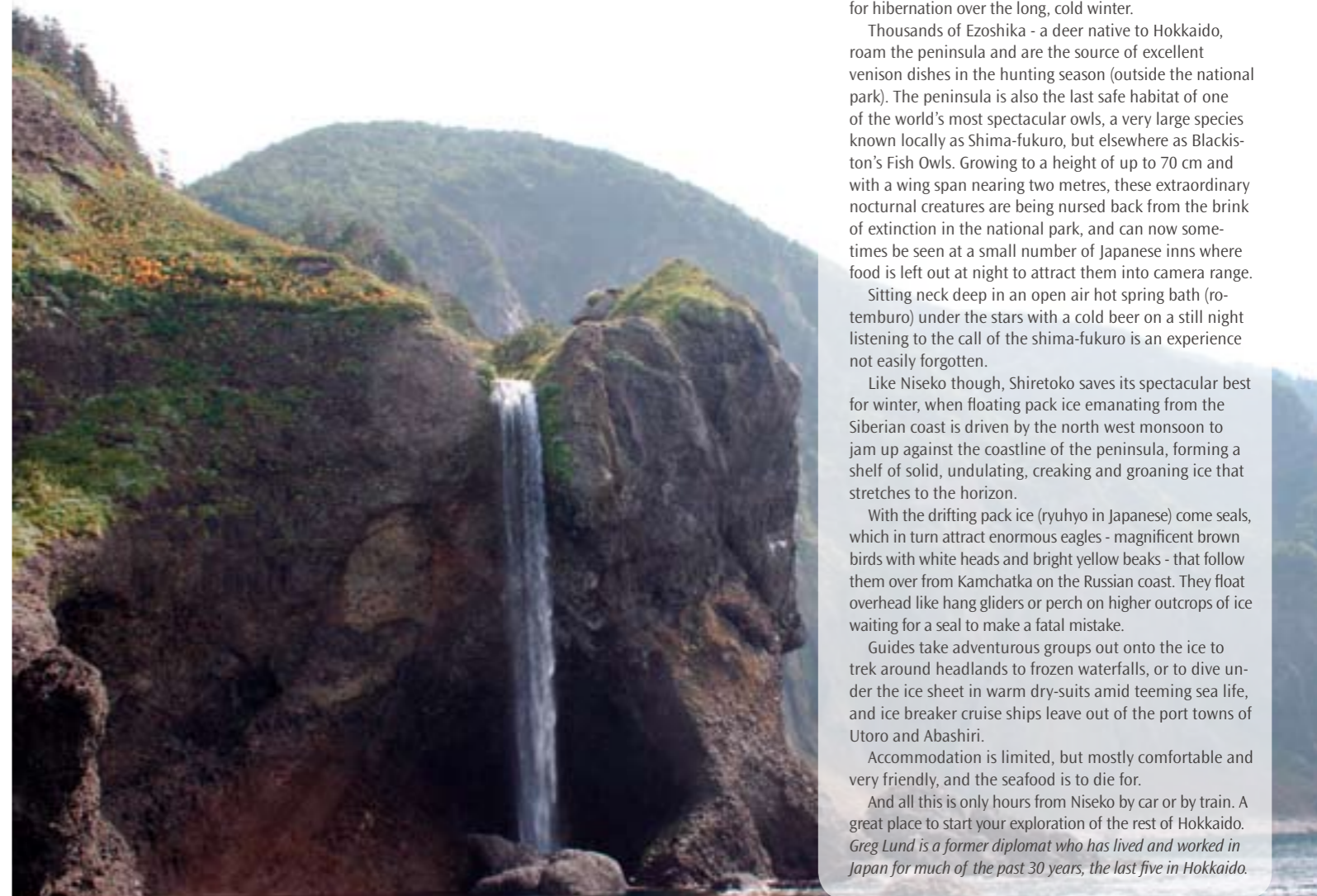
the end of the earth

by greg lund

Hokkaido is one of the world's great undiscovered tourist treasures. As global warming increasingly impacts on popular tourist destinations around the globe, Hokkaido is just starting to come into its own. The powder snow that blankets the ski resorts in winter is one legacy of its location off the coast of Siberia, but in addition, it is just far enough north of the equator to escape the humidity which makes mainland Japan quite hot in summer. In short, it is the ideal all-year round holiday destination. As more foreign ski visitors come to feel comfortable with Niseko, they might think about spreading their wings and taking in the best of the rest of this magic island – 'The Garden of The Gods'.



Higuma bears enjoy freshwater salmon at Shiretoko



A Shiretoko waterfall cascades into the sea.

four seasons hokkaido

So highly regarded is Shiretoko as a unique wilderness area that in 2006 it was formally designated a World Heritage site - only the third one in Japan to be so recognised by UNESCO.

Shiretoko in the language of the native Ainu inhabitants of Hokkaido means 'the end of the earth'. And once experienced, it is easy to imagine how it got its name.

If you take a map of Hokkaido and draw a line from Niseko, close to the west coast, diagonally across the island to the north-east coast, your attention is drawn to a long, thin, sliver of land that juts - dagger-like - out into the North Pacific.

Less than 100 kilometres long, and unpopulated for most of its length, it is one of the most remote, and spectacularly rugged places in Japan. A high mountainous spine rears sharply up from a very narrow coastal plain characterised by weathered basalt cliffs over which numerous rivers and hot spring waterfalls tumble down into almost impossibly clear, aqua ocean. About half of the peninsula is national park.

It is home to very few people, but to a wonderful variety of exotic flora and fauna. The star inhabitants are an estimated 300 or more Brown Bears. Growing to a weight of 400 kilograms and related to the North American Grizzly, these wonderful creatures can be seen at close quarters in their natural habitat for most of the year except winter.

In Autumn, when the salmon run up the streams to spawn, the bears delight visitors with their fish-catching skills as they seek to stack on protein and fat in preparation for hibernation over the long, cold winter.

Thousands of Ezoshika - a deer native to Hokkaido, roam the peninsula and are the source of excellent venison dishes in the hunting season (outside the national park). The peninsula is also the last safe habitat of one of the world's most spectacular owls, a very large species known locally as Shima-fukuro, but elsewhere as Blackiston's Fish Owls. Growing to a height of up to 70 cm and with a wing span nearing two metres, these extraordinary nocturnal creatures are being nursed back from the brink of extinction in the national park, and can now sometimes be seen at a small number of Japanese inns where food is left out at night to attract them into camera range.

Sitting neck deep in an open air hot spring bath (rotemburo) under the stars with a cold beer on a still night listening to the call of the shima-fukuro is an experience not easily forgotten.

Like Niseko though, Shiretoko saves its spectacular best for winter, when floating pack ice emanating from the Siberian coast is driven by the north west monsoon to jam up against the coastline of the peninsula, forming a shelf of solid, undulating, creaking and groaning ice that stretches to the horizon.

With the drifting pack ice (ryuhyo in Japanese) come seals, which in turn attract enormous eagles - magnificent brown birds with white heads and bright yellow beaks - that follow them over from Kamchatka on the Russian coast. They float overhead like hang gliders or perch on higher outcrops of ice waiting for a seal to make a fatal mistake.

Guides take adventurous groups out onto the ice to trek around headlands to frozen waterfalls, or to dive under the ice sheet in warm dry-suits amid teeming sea life, and ice breaker cruise ships leave out of the port towns of Utoro and Abashiri.

Accommodation is limited, but mostly comfortable and very friendly, and the seafood is to die for.

And all this is only hours from Niseko by car or by train. A great place to start your exploration of the rest of Hokkaido. Greg Lund is a former diplomat who has lived and worked in Japan for much of the past 30 years, the last five in Hokkaido.



leaf
life style concept store

Since it's inception in 2008 the LEAF LOUNGE has quickly established it's self as a local favorite. Come out and enjoy the good food, and a wide selection of cocktails. The lounge opens at 4:30. Stay deep into the night with starts around the fire.

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 22: Live Natural Video Premier Event
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 29: Mexican Ping Pong Tournament
 31: Countdown Party

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- Cappuccino...¥450
- Draft Beer...¥500
- Bottle Wine...¥2,000~

*Christmas Dinner 24th&25th ¥4,000

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Don't miss Kutchan's famous Cream Puffs. With the Creps (shell being baked here in the kitchen, We shall fresh cream into every order just before we serve you. You will also find authentic Japanese sweets that are unique to the area. Come and enjoy the flavours with us.
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Authentic traditional Japanese irakaya casual dining restaurant. Big servings, good prices. Serve with plenty of cold beer... on top of course!
6pm ~ closed on Sundays tel:0136-21-2258

hours:11:00~21:00
closed on Sundays
tel:0136-23-1882

旬彩 Shunsai

Top local Japanese chef, seasonal Hokkaido ingredients, Western flavour... the ultimate fusion.
Pick up service available if you book the dinner course (from ¥3000).



lounging around in K-town

by magnus alexander

The Loaf Lounge is so cool. The Japanese are known for being at the cutting edge of innovation, and most often it surfaces in the form of the high tech gadgets that, for a long time now, have been standard features in homes around the world.

But with the innovation comes inbuilt style.

Yo Amagai, former pro 'boarder cross' racer, and business partner Nobu Ooe, came across an old rice storage shed (formerly a supermarket and movie cinema) in the back streets of Kutchan a few years ago and envisioned a place they could eat, drink, and hang with friends. They went on to create one of the most interesting little spaces Niseko has seen.

The Loaf Lounge's defining feature is its full size inbuilt skateboard bowl. Especially in summer, local skaters – Japanese and increasingly foreign – head to the Lounge for their daily or weekly fix. Throw in a small retail shop stocking nothing but the hippest, underground Japanese fashion around, and a simple but spacious little restaurant/bar, and you've got the ultimate hangout that also pays the bills.

But it's not the amenities that really make it. The whole place is an ever-evolving work of art. Random, retro paraphernalia adorns the walls and floors and ceilings wherever you look. It's obvious they're not trained interior designers - nothing they've done could be learned from a text book. For one of 100 examples, two rows of 80s style truckers caps sit on top of each other in the top corner of one wall. Beside it there's a clock that looks like it's come out of the original Charlie and the Chocolate Factory movie. They've even got an old 70s style camper home beside the bowl that they rent for ¥1000 to friends and acquaintances visiting Niseko.

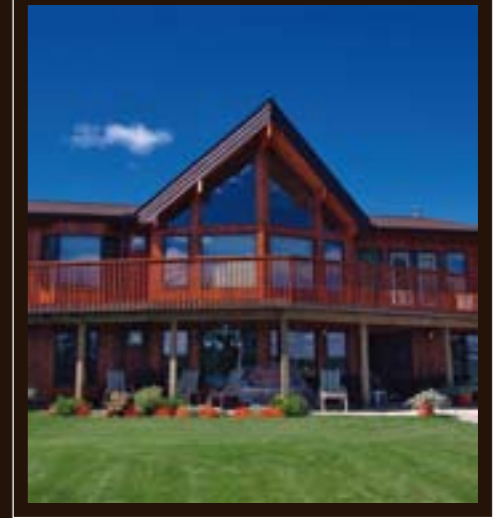
Yo, Nobu and their mates now spend their days skating, snowboarding, surfing, and catering to their range of regular customers of all ages, who want to eat, drink, skate and live life like it should be – full of friends, movement and good times.

If you manage to spare a half a day to check out Kutchan, spare a good few moments to hang out in the Loaf Lounge. It really is very, very cool!

Niseko Linwood Village



Nature Inspired Niseko Living



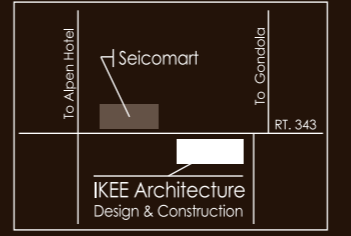
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Villa site sale in lots
The excellent location that is located on the hill overlooking Mt. Youtei

SUNLIGHT YOUTEII
The town of sunshine filtering through foliage

Information MAP
Local guide chart

SUNLIGHT YOUTEII
SUNLIGHT YOUTEII II

Block Map
All blocks with amazing view of Mt. Youtei

It has sold

Property Overview

- Location: 114-12 Aza Kabayama Kutchan-cho Abuta-gun, etc.
- Access: 12 min from JR Kutchan station by car
- Total floor-area ratio: 150%
- Electricity and telephone facilities load money: 250,000 yen ~ 350,000 yen One division (Type of laying underground)
- Facility/Water supply: Public management water service, Electricity: Hokkaido Electric Power Co., Inc. Telephone: NTT, gas: Individual propane, Drainage: U-type side ditch (set up septic tank)

Company overview

License No. 026660, certified by Governor of Ishikawa Prefecture in Hokkaido
Member of the whole country Corp. Business Society Housing Land and building

COSMO Maruzen Cosmo Firm limited liability company
2-2 Kita 14 Higashi 5 Higashi-ku, Saippono-ishi, Hokkaido, 095-0014 JAPAN
http://www.mz-cosmo.jp
e-mail: cosmo@hscb-jst.com phone: (011) 733-6611

Local Business Partner
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e-mail: yuihome@extra.ocn.ne.jp phone: (0136) 22-2711



Hanazono under the watchful eye of Yotei

Big business backs Niseko

WHEN the history of Niseko is written, the latter half of 2007 will be seen as a major turning point in its transformation as a truly international winter resort.

In the run-up to the season this year, the judgement of the pioneer Australian developers has been well and truly vindicated, with significant international players moving in to stake their claims on the area's future.

Simon Robinson, Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties president, puts it simply: "The difference is now it's moved out of the league of the private entrepreneur to big corporate companies, which should be underpinning everybody's confidence. These guys don't come in to markets that are speculative or if they have doubts about growth potential."

Niseko Property director Ruskin McLennan is similarly positive about the significance of recent months.

"2007 was the year Niseko went from a funky, quirky little ski village to an international resort."

While Hiraifu remains firmly in the grip of Australian entrepreneurs, in the short space of a few months this year:

- Citigroup - themselves new owners of the Higashiyama Prince Hotel - appointed Hilton Hotels Corporation to manage its conversion, re-branding and operations into the Hilton Niseko Village, to be launched in July next year;

- Hong Kong IT mega-company Pacific Century bought out Nihon Harmony's interest in the Hanazono ski area and has hinted at a substantial development;

- And Major Japanese developer Zephyr bought the Moiwa ski resort and is proceeding rapidly with redevelopment and marketing plans.

Persistent rumors continue to link the Four Seasons group to Hanazono's future, and similarly, rumors about an upcoming Aman Resorts development in the Niseko area are not going away. Aman first ventured into winter resorts with the spectacular Amangani, in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and will bring a real touch of international class.

With underpinning like this, it is no wonder the voices of the sceptics are at last being silenced.

\$7m forest sold

THE Forest – a huge tract of treed land in upper Hiraifu - has sold for what's believed to be a Hiraifu/Niseko record for a single sale.

The final sale price is confidential but it was on the market for ¥700 million (approx \$US7 million),

The new owner is an Australian businessman from Brisbane who plans to build a 'super luxury, all penthouse development'.

It will include day spa and wellness centre and commercial space.

"This development will bring a level of sophistication and luxury unseen in Niseko and will be the cornerstone of the maturation of Niseko into a true world class four seasons resorts," he said.

The 3,825sqm (1,159 tsubo) lies just below the J-First hotel and one minute's walk from the Grand Hiraifu Gondola in Upper Hiraifu Village.

The back and left boundaries border onto national parkland and the right boundary is a creek-line.



A sale a day at Moiwa

IMPRESSIVE sales at the recently released Moiwa Resort Towers is another sign buyers are increasingly confident investing outside Hiraifu.

NRE agent Keith Rodgers said close to 30 of 109 apartments under refurbishment in the twin towers had already been sold.

"They're going at a rate of one or more a day which is pretty interesting given it's still early season," he said.

"It's indicative of a larger trend - people are definitely expanding their horizons and looking outside the village."

"Niseko is now regional, it's not just Hiraifu.

"Izumikyō 2 used to be outside the village, now it's definitely inside the village."

Mt Moiwa is about 15 minutes drive from Hiraifu and, despite standing right beside Mt Annupuri, the resort's lifts are independent of Niseko United – another reason it's interesting there's such strong interest.

Although there don't appear to be any firm plans to run a lift up to Annupuri at this stage, perhaps investors think it's a given.

Rodgers said there was obviously strong interest from Australia, but a majority was actually from Hong Kong, where buyers tended to buy with capital growth in mind.

"There's not fewer Aussies buying, but Hong Kong buyers have gone from around 20 percent to about 50 or 60," he said.

"Australian buyers tend to buy for rental return whereas Hong Kong buyers go for capital growth."

The development is the first stage of an exclusive master planned resort and is set to open mid January.

feature property



Higuma House

Higuma is an alpine chalet offering exclusive accommodation for families or groups seeking a luxurious, contemporary mountain retreat.

Fully self-contained, it caters to families and groups of up to 10 adults.

The high-end property features a gourmet kitchen, games room with home theatre system, spacious living and dining areas, a cozy fireplace, vaulted ceilings and cathedral windows.

Located in upper Izumikyō, just behind NAC, it's a short walk to the village centre and convenient to some of the best restaurants in Hiraifu and the free ski shuttle bus.

The facts

Izumikyō 1
242m²
5 bedrooms
3 bathrooms
Walk to:
Shuttle 2 minutes
Lifts 15 minutes
Convenience store 5 min
Inquiries to West Canada Properties

+81 (0)136 21 7500

developing and building in Japan

a developer's viewpoint

by kal bragg

Anyone considering building, developing or renovating in Niseko must be acutely aware of the pitfalls and differences between Japan and their 'home' country. Many underlying considerations need to be taken into account to achieve the project efficiency Japan is renowned for.

Product and design expectations need to be flexible, and with more inevitable 'unknowns' arising, professional on-ground management is essential to ensure design style is localised for snow conditions, and project viability attained.

Investment returns need to be analysed carefully, and, just as anywhere else in the world, the risk versus return ratio needs careful review.

Japanese v Western Construction Viewpoints

Starting with the contractual relationship between client and architect, newcomers to Japanese construction need to be aware of the actual role of the architect. Typically, and contractually, the architect acts as the participant responsible for design, authority approvals and on-site supervision. While Japanese architects are generally diligent in carrying out the design and approvals, careful scrutiny of their on-site management role is paramount, as the final build quality stems from on site diligence.

The struggle between western design and Japanese construction becomes evident where items mass-produced in Japan (kitchens, whole bathrooms, joinery, etc.) need to be custom made to suit western design. If not managed properly, over-detailing can double, or even triple, cost. Developers and renovators alike can be caught out in these areas. Costs can also easily over-run on items Westerners considers standard - like downlights, timber, baths and tiles - which tend to be surprisingly expensive in Japan.



The tendency in Japan is to do the construction work the Japanese way, then deal with inconsistencies or mistakes later. Westerners, on the other hand, generally go to greater lengths to understand the work prior to starting, to try to reducing later re-work. Anyone undertaking construction work must appreciate this critical difference.

Joint Venturing

Aside from council development guidelines, investors purchasing land with the idea of doing their own development need to research the specific local community requirements under the Real Estate Law and Hotel / Fire Laws. As a general rule of thumb, any de-

velopment of two or more apartments requires the developer / land owner / investor to have a Japanese Real Estate License. This cannot be a partial ownership either - say a land owner contributes the land and the developer contributes the construction; it must be 100% owned by the Real Estate License holder. This can be rather unnerving for the land owner, who essentially has to hand over land title to a licenced real estate entity to develop it.

Insurance Challenges

Earthquake insurance and professional indemnity are important and normal insurances required on any site. Both are very difficult to obtain in Japan. Construction insurance is generally managed by the builder, but commonly earthquake insurance is not included. It is possible to insure construction against earthquakes, but full coverage is extraordinarily high. Professional indemnity is also available, though not easily. Again, it is not the norm in Japan. Most architects and managers do not take out such policies, and anyone new to construction in Japan needs to be aware of these important (and risk impacting) differences.

Community and Development Control

The general community is a powerful factor in regulation of development controls. To date they have implemented guidelines which local developers have been bound to follow, even though they are not strictly enshrined in law. This is a very positive outcome for local groups, compared with elsewhere in the world, where local councils tend to be the supreme controlling entity.

The way Western developers treat and manage the community can make or break a Niseko development. Forming an alliance with the community and gaining trust takes time. But even then, developers cannot expect automatic acceptance, even where they obey the local laws.

Kal Bragg is joint president of Niseko Alpine Developments [Nisade].



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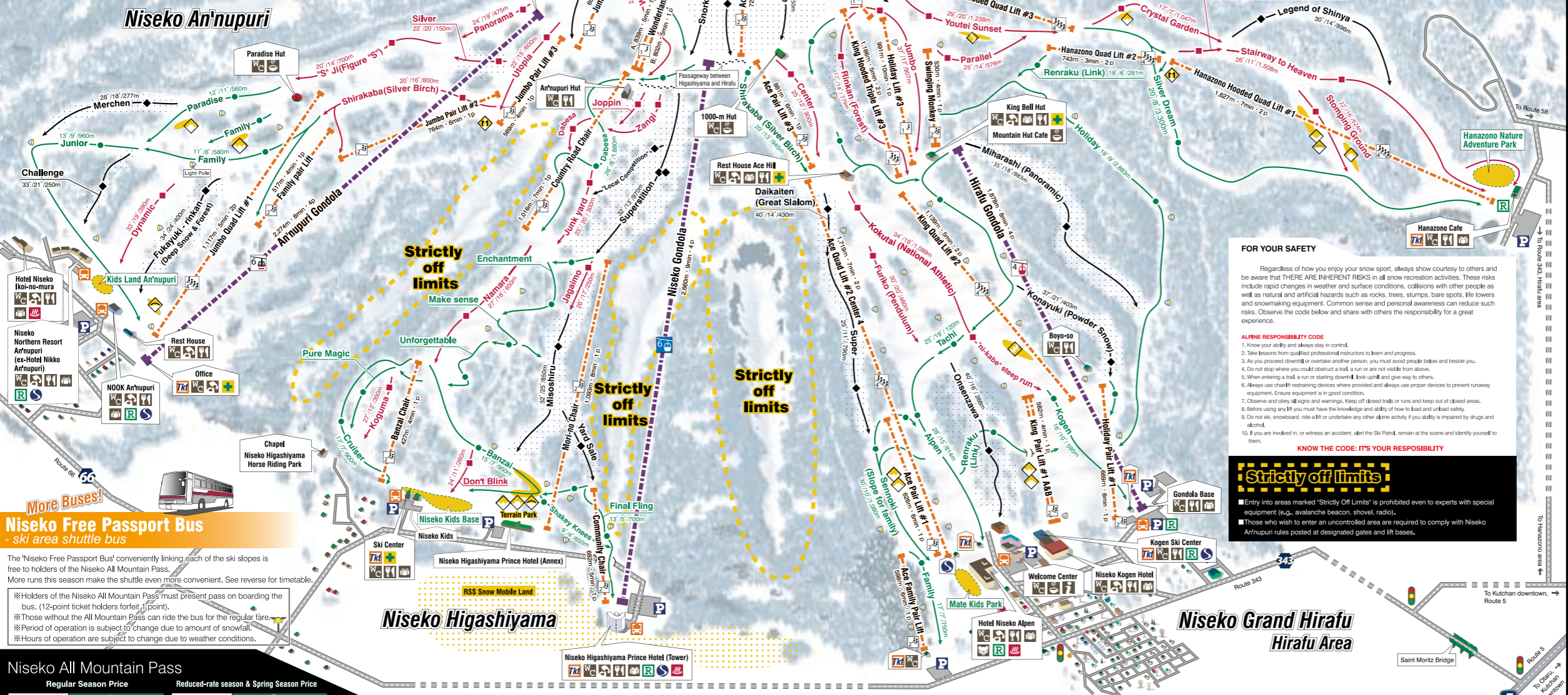
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- Jib
- Gate to uncontrolled area
- Un-groomed Slope
- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Most Difficult
- Name of Slope
- Maximum / Average Gradient / Run Length
- Name of Lift
- Number of seats
- Length - Time required
- Number of lift points

*Lift operating times and courses are subject to change due to weather, snow and light conditions etc.



Niseko Free Passport Bus
- ski area shuttle bus

The 'Niseko Free Passport Bus' conveniently linking each of the ski slopes is free to holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass. More runs this season make the shuttle even more convenient. See reverse for timetable.

*Holders of the Niseko All Mountain Pass must present pass on boarding the bus. (12-point ticket holders forfeit 1 point).
*Those without the All Mountain Pass can ride the bus for the regular fare.
*Period of operation is subject to change due to amount of snowfall.
*Hours of operation are subject to change due to weather conditions.

Niseko All Mountain Pass

Use days (valid)	Regular Season Price			Reduced-rate season & Spring Season Price		
	Adult	Senior (Age 65+)	Age 7-12	Adult	Senior (Age 65+)	Age 7-12
12-point	¥3,000	¥2,800	¥2,400	¥3,000	¥2,800	¥2,400
8-hour	¥4,800	¥4,600	¥3,800	¥4,800	¥4,600	¥3,800
1-Day	¥5,200	¥5,000	¥4,200	¥5,200	¥5,000	¥4,200
2-Day	¥9,400	¥9,200	¥7,600	¥9,400	¥9,200	¥7,600
3-Day	¥13,800	¥13,600	¥11,200	¥13,800	¥13,600	¥11,200
4-Day	¥18,400	¥18,200	¥14,800	¥18,400	¥18,200	¥14,800
5-Day	¥23,000	¥22,800	¥18,400	¥23,000	¥22,800	¥18,400
6-Day	¥27,600	¥27,400	¥22,000	¥27,600	¥27,400	¥22,000
7-Day	¥32,200	¥32,000	¥25,600	¥32,200	¥32,000	¥25,600
8-Day (10 Days)	¥36,800	¥36,600	¥29,200	¥36,800	¥36,600	¥29,200
9-Day (11 Days)	¥41,400	¥41,200	¥32,800	¥41,400	¥41,200	¥32,800
10-Day (12 Days)	¥46,000	¥45,800	¥36,400	¥46,000	¥45,800	¥36,400
11-Day (13 Days)	¥50,600	¥50,400	¥40,000	¥50,600	¥50,400	¥40,000
12-Day (14 Days)	¥55,200	¥55,000	¥43,600	¥55,200	¥55,000	¥43,600
13-Day (15 Days)	¥59,800	¥59,600	¥47,200	¥59,800	¥59,600	¥47,200
14-Day (16 Days)	¥64,400	¥64,200	¥50,800	¥64,400	¥64,200	¥50,800
15-Day (17 Days)	¥69,000	¥68,800	¥54,400	¥69,000	¥68,800	¥54,400
16-Day (18 Days)	¥73,600	¥73,400	¥58,000	¥73,600	¥73,400	¥58,000
17-Day (19 Days)	¥78,200	¥78,000	¥61,600	¥78,200	¥78,000	¥61,600
18-Day (20 Days)	¥82,800	¥82,600	¥65,200	¥82,800	¥82,600	¥65,200
19-Day (21 Days)	¥87,400	¥87,200	¥68,800	¥87,400	¥87,200	¥68,800
20-Day (22 Days)	¥92,000	¥91,800	¥72,400	¥92,000	¥91,800	¥72,400
21-Day (23 Days)	¥96,600	¥96,400	¥76,000	¥96,600	¥96,400	¥76,000
22-Day (24 Days)	¥101,200	¥101,000	¥79,600	¥101,200	¥101,000	¥79,600
30-hour	¥45,000	¥44,800	¥37,000	¥45,000	¥44,800	¥37,000
Season Pass	¥150,000	¥149,000	¥120,000	¥150,000	¥149,000	¥120,000

8-hour tickets are valid for 8 hours after entry through the gate on the day of purchase.

*A deposit is required for the key card.

Regular Season
December 15 (Sat), 2007 - March 16 (Sun), 2008

Reduced-rate Season
November 23 (Thu) - December 14 (Fri), 2007
March 17 (Mon) - April 6 (Sun), 2008

Spring Season
April 7 (Mon) - May 6 (Tue), 2008
*Spring Season: 8-hour Ticket ¥3,500

*Hours and days of operation are subject to change according to snow and weather conditions.
*The seniors' rate applies to patrons age 60 and over. (Preschoolers go free of charge).
*Proof (student card, driver's license) is required for age 13 - 15 and seniors' discounts.
*For Point Ticket holders each gondola ride costs 4 points, each high-speed lift, 2 points, and other lifts, 1 point.
*Night skiing tickets are available at each ski area.
*Lift rates are subject to change.
*Business hours in night ski season are 8:30 to 21:00 (8:00 to 16:00 in Hanazono Area). On other days 8:30 to 16:30 (9:00 to 16:00 in Hanazono Area).

Deposit for Niseko All Mountain Pass Keycard

A deposit of 1000 yen is added to the lift fee when the ticket is purchased. The deposit is refunded when you insert the key card to a refund machine.

*Refunding machines are located at each ski area.
*The deposit will not be refunded for damaged or expired cards.
*For more information, please contact our staff.

In Case of Emergency

Should you require assistance as a result of illness or injury, or discover someone in need of help, contact a nearby member of staff or phone one of the emergency numbers below:

Niseko An'nupuri TEL.0136-58-2080
Niseko Higashiyama TEL.0136-44-1111
Niseko Grand Hirafu TEL.0136-22-2167

'Niseko Mountain Patrol' will immediately come to your assistance.

Niseko Mountain Patrol
Rescue Patrol crews are identified by their black or red uniforms with NFPF on the back.

Niseko Local Rules

Niseko Local Rules are official rules that stipulate the freedom and the safety of all skiers, snowboarders and hikers. These rules have been officially established by the Niseko An'nupuri Avalanche Prevention Committee, the Niseko Mountain Resort Committee, the Niseko Free Passport Committee and the Hokkaido Shirebeshi Alpine Accident Prevention Committee.

- Yunosawa (Gully between An'nupuri & Higashiyama area), Mizuno no sawa (Gully under earth Higashiyama Prince Gondola) and Haru no Taki (Gully/Cleft west of Hirafu area) are designated 'strictly off limits areas' by the Niseko Local Rules. Whoever riding these areas WILL have their lift pass confiscated.
- Ducking the boundary ropes is prohibited. If you do, your lift pass WILL be confiscated. Use designated access gates to go out of bounds. These gates are the gateways to the Back Country.
- The area outside the mountain resort boundaries (Back Country, including the Peak) are National Forests & Parks, and are not controlled or supervised by the resort. Niseko Local Rule proclaims that hiking & riding these areas involves

danger and if you do, do it AT YOUR OWN RISK.

- During hazardous conditions, the gates will be closed and out of bounds riding will be strictly restricted.
- The 'Niseko Avalanche Information' is the official information posted by the 'Niseko Avalanche Research Center'. This info can be found at lift stations and access gates.
- You will be responsible for the cost of your rescue in the back country area.
- Niseko Local Rules insist that all resort users respect the instructions of the Ski Patrol and Shirebeshi Mountain Patrol.
- The Mountain resort and the locals respect the freedom of the visitors, are concerned about their safety, and in turn, expect the visitors to respect the Niseko Local Rules.

Surfanic Stack of the Week

Prove you're worthy and win some Surfanic gear. Submit your best stack pic at powderlife.co.jp.

Your mountain guide on-piste and off

Powderlife will bring you the latest information on what's happening on the mountain every issue. We'll tap into local avalanche guru Akio Shinya's unrivalled knowledge of the mountain to spread the word on possible dangers. Shinya-san will post his avalanche information in English and Japanese at most lifts around the Niseko United daily. Make sure you read it - every day.

Shinya-san tells us there's not too much risk of avalanche at this early stage of the season while there's still not too much snow. Accidents are more likely to come from exposed rocks and plants fatigue as your legs may not be ski-ready. And a note to take it easy at the end of runs - Grand Hirafu reports two people have already injured themselves badly as they've come unstuck at the bottom of the main runs where they flatten out. And Julian, we're glad you've still got a smile on your face! Get well soon mate.

If they haven't been opened by the time you read this, the gates to the back country will be open soon. Get the newest local rule map and read it well. Snow and mountains can be a deadly mix for the inexperienced.

Higashiyama Bowls

The bowls in Higashiyama are still closed for the season. If you go in there you WILL have your lift pass taken. There may be some tracks leading into the bowls but these are from Ski Patrol who will be investigating the possibility of opening them. Every time a skier/boarder is caught in there, the further away we get from having them opened. DO NOT GO IN THERE.

Hanazono Park

Although it's not open yet the park is not far away. Snowboard supervisor Levi Ratapu from Hanazono tells us: "The rails are up but we just need more snow to push up any features. Taikisan, the park manager, is trying to get whatever he can up and running. The rollers at the bottom of Hana 1 are up - but it's looking like early New Years until we can build some decent jumps. The boxes and new rails will be in as soon as we can - we are looking at possibly purchasing two C-boxes so they join up to make an S-box."

FOR YOUR SAFETY

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

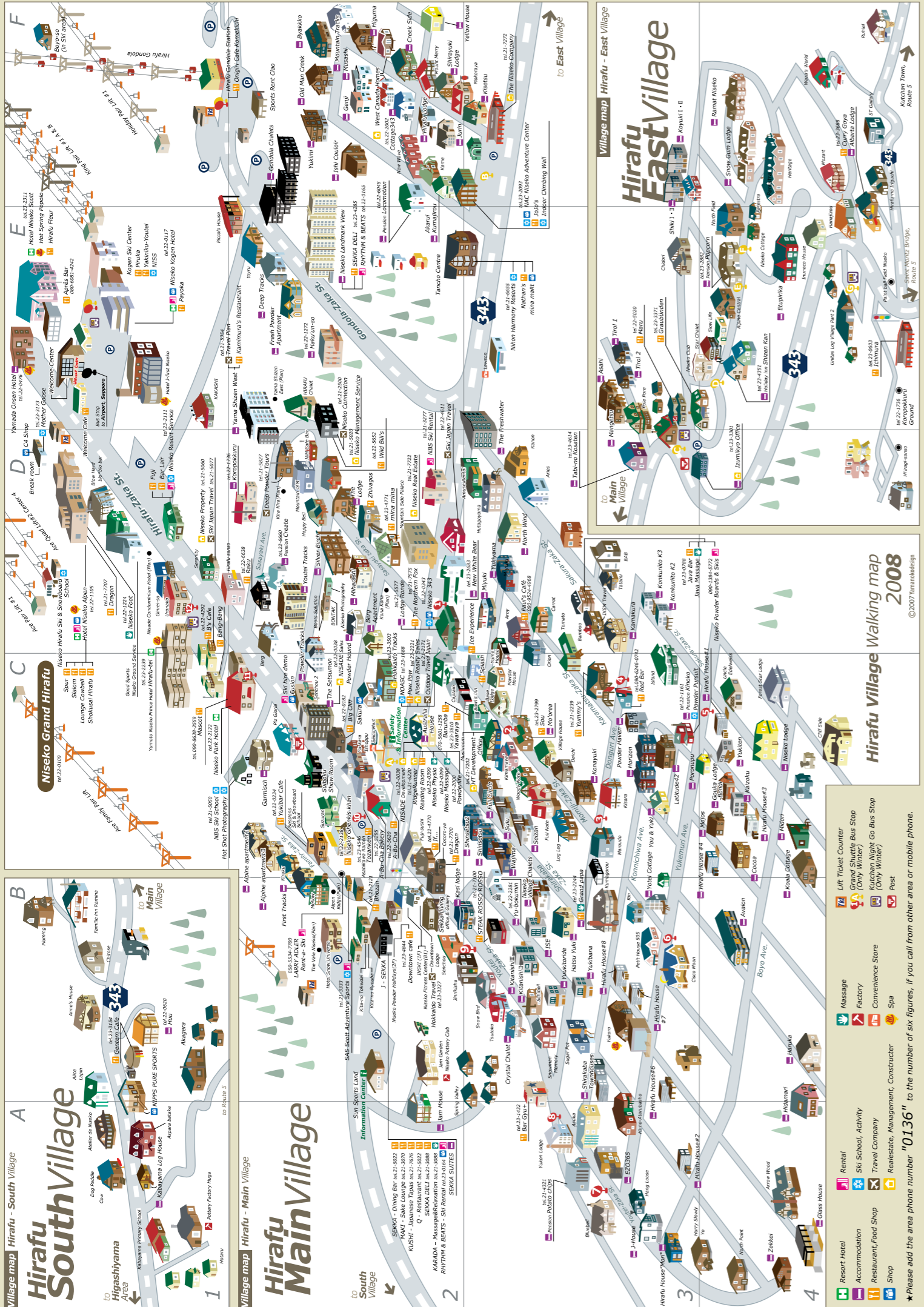
ALPINE RESPONSIBILITY CODE

1. Know your ability and always stay in control.
2. Take lessons from qualified professional instructors to learn and progress.
3. As you proceed downhill 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 devices to prevent runaway equipment. Ensure equipment is in good condition.
7. Observe and obey all signs and 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, snowboard, ride a lift or undertake any other alpine activity if you are impaired by drugs and 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

Strictly off limits

- Entry into areas marked 'Strictly Off Limits' is prohibited even to experts with special equipment (e.g., avalanche beacon, shovel, radio).
- Those who wish to enter an uncontrolled area are required to comply with Niseko An'nupuri rules posted at designated gates and lift bases.



where to...

- Eat & Drink
- Stay
- Play
- Relax
- Outside Hokkaido

Captain Hirafu Pension



Captain Hirafu B&B is one of a kind. Liam & Mika have created a beautiful "home in the heart of Hirafu" for their guests with their great hospitality. Warm, cozy and comfortable with outstanding Japanese service.

Map ref: C 2
www.CaptainHirafu.com T. 0 136 22 60 28

Australian Alpine Club Niseko



The Australian snowsports club with its own Niseko lodge. The lodge has eight western style guest rooms (with ensuites), dining, bar and kitchen facilities. Membership is available (to all nationalities) for A\$6,500 and members also enjoy reciprocal rights at five other Australian Alpine Club lodges. Commercial bookings are available.

Map ref: E3 www.aacniseko.com T. 0136 22 3006

Niseko's Black Diamond Lodge and Restaurant



Located just a short 300m from the Higashiyama resort lift the Black Diamond Lodge is a local favourite. Ski to the lodge or take the free shuttle bus and come and check out our great Western and Japanese menu or our private snow park. Meals from 900yen, rooms from 5500yen.

www.bdodge.com T. 0136-44-1144

Bang Bang




Owner Masa Saito chooses some of the best ingredients in Japan for his extensive menu. Wagyu beef, Hokkaido crab, 5 types of salmon and yakitori are the highlights.

アフタースキーの楽しいひと時を厳選食材で創る料理と飲み物で過ごしてください。5.00-11.30pm. Closed Wednesdays.

Map ref: C 1
http://www.niseko.or.jp/bangbang T. 0136-22-4292

Ichimura Soba



Ichimura soba serves top quality soba (buck wheat noodles) that are made fresh on the premises. A beautiful wooden premises looking out towards Mt Yotei is the perfect location to enjoy some of the best soba you will find

anywhere in Japan. Tempura Soba ¥1,300
11.00-15.00, 18.00-20.00 Closed Tuesdays

Map ref: E 4
www.Niseko-Ichimura.com T. 0136-23-0603

Java Bar Cafe



The Java Bar has some of the best coffee & cocktails in Hirafu. A relaxing lounge bar that is perfect for enjoying a quiet drink after a long day's skiing. Mix of local & overseas visitors. Live music, reggae and local DJ Maco.

Open till late. Wireless Internet Hotspot during the day.

Map ref: C 3
www.Niseko-Info.com T. 0136 23 0788

Paul's Café Sapporo



The only Belgium beer café in Japan owned by a Belgian, comes to Niseko. Specializing in Belgium beers and rotisserie chicken. More than 30 beers on tap and on bottles. Real Belgium waffles and more...A full meal or just a beer, don't hesitate and come in.

Map ref: C 2
www.paulscafe.jp T. 090-9524-4968

Restaurant Maru



We are a traditional Japanese "Don Buri" restaurant with a great atmosphere. Expect huge servings of pork, tempura, sashimi, seafood and more on rice. We have set menu or 'Izakaya' style to share dishes with your friends.

11.30-15.00, 17.00-21.00
ボリューム満点の丼物、定食、居酒屋メニュー
ヒラフ近郊は送迎有り(要予約)
Map ref: D 3
www.NisekoMaru.web.fc2.com T. 0136-22-5020

Black Diamond Tours



We offer Hokkaido's best ski and snowboard trips period. Our guides will take you straight to the best lines, hidden zones and secret stashes wherever we go. Choices range from resort tours, multi-day trips, backcountry tours, snowmobile adventures, lessons, backcountry gear rental and car rentals.

BDのバックカントリーツアーは、自分のレベルに合わせてツアーを組め。ツアー後は五色温泉も楽しめます
www.blackdiamondtours.com T. 0902054TOUR(8687)

Scott Adventure Sports



Scott Adventure Sports (SAS) provides Ski and Snowboard Lessons in English and Japanese. Kids semi private lessons, Mountain Guiding and Snowshoeing Tours are favourites. SAS Hire provides a range of ski and snowboard gear from beginner to powder skis and boards. Summer activities are exciting - rafting, ducky, canyoning and mountain bike tours. Our office is next to Hotel Snow Universe.

Map ref: A 2
www.sas-net.com T. 0136-21-3333

Alpen Ski and Snowboard School



Ski & Snowboard school in Niseko mountain resort Grand HIRAFU. From beginner to expert. Our specially trained ski pros who speak English help you to improve your skiing or riding!

Map ref: C 1
www.grand-hirafu.jp/en/mountain/school.html
T. 0136-22-0921

Niseko Auto



Niseko Auto is a licensed auto and auction dealer offering weekly and monthly 4wd rentals, sales and repair as well as exporting overseas. Add a vehicle to your rental property or take the ultimate souvenir home and save thousands of dollars by letting us locate and send you your dream car.

www.nisekoauto.com T. 090-2055-6074

Alpen Ski Rental



Try on Japan made skis! Japan made high performance skis are available at Niseko Alpen Rental corner and Niseko Kogen Ski Centre Rental. We select Ogasaka skis which are popular in Japan. Ogasaka is available only in Japan. Let's have a trial run to see difference.

Map ref: C 1
www.grand-hirafu.jp/en/mountain/rental.html
T. 0136-22-0109


Bonbori Souvenirs & Foot Massage



The perfect souvenir shop also does foot massage during the day! We specialise in original Japanese character calligraphy based souvenirs including 3,500 T-Shirts and much more. We also offer foot massages from 1pm - 3pm.

Souvenir shop opens from 3pm - 8pm.
Map ref: B 2
T. 0136 21 2366

Java Massage



Java Massage has qualified Australian massage therapists for your essential massage. To help soothe your sore muscles, feet, neck, back or whole body. Relaxation or sports massage. Open 10am to 9pm daily. Simultaneous massage available.

Map ref: C 3
www.Niseko-Info.com T. 0136 23 0788


Khaosan Tokyo Guesthouse



"Tokyo expensive?" No way! Stay at No.1 hostel group, Khaosan Tokyo Guesthouse for just ¥2000/night! Located at a central part of Tokyo, Easy access to Narita Airport and a big bonus of FREE 24 hour internet! Just one minute from Asakusa station with great riverside view from the rooftop. If you come once, you'll be hooked!"

www.khaosan-tokyo.com T. 03-3842-8286

POWDERHOUSE



Powderhouse is a boutique lodge at the base of Hakuba 47 resort. Magnificent views of the Hakuba Valley and surrounding mountains. Fabulous food, personalized service, transfers to and from Nagano.

Map ref: XXXX
www.powderhouse.jp T. 0261 75 3343
mobile 090 88921224

HAKUBA REAL ESTATE



Property sales and development in the Hakuba Valley and surrounding area. Hakuba Real Estate provides a professional and experienced service to our valued foreign clients. We offer the best selection of local properties and guarantee you trouble free results.

www.hakubarealestate.com T. 0261 75 3073
mobile 090 13459636

Hirafu Village Walking map 2008
©2007 NisekoInfo.jp

- Resort Hotel
 - Accommodation
 - Restaurant, Food Shop
 - Shop
 - Rental
 - Ski School, Activity
 - Travel Company
 - Real Estate, Management, Constructor
 - Massage
 - Factory
 - Convenience Store
 - Spa
 - Lift Ticket Counter
 - Grand Shirasawa Bus Stop
 - Kichijiro Night Go Bus Stop (Only Winter)
 - Post
- ★ Please add the area phone number "0136" to the number of six figures, if you call from other area or mobile phone.

AIRPORT

New Chitose Airport 0123 23 0111
www.new-chitose-airport.jp/language/english

New Chitose was opened in 1991 and became Japan's first 24-hour airport in 1994. It services Sapporo and Niseko with direct international flights from various Asian cities and Australia. The Tokyo to Chitose route is the busiest domestic route in the world. It is the largest airport in Japan by land mass.

Getting From New Chitose To Niseko

On arrival at Chitose international airport, visitors not on a full travel package have a few options to complete this last leg of their journey to Niseko and back. Although the trip is only 110kms, due to icy roads and no direct train route, it takes two to three hours.

BUS

The bus is the most convenient and commonly used form of transport from the airport. Buses depart about every 30 minutes from the airport to Niseko. They take about three hours, including a rest stop halfway and a dropoff at Rusutsu. ¥2,300 - one way and ¥3,850 for a round trip.

The buses disembark at six designated bus stops within the greater Niseko United Resort. You will find two different points to get off at each of the main ski areas.

Whiteliner Buses

www.whitelinerbuses.com.....011-242-2040

Chuo Buses

www.chuo-bus.co.jp/kikan/ski...011-231-0500

Donan buses

www.donanbus.co.jp/ski.....0123-46-5701

Hokkaido Resort Liner

www.access-n.jp/ski_info.html.011-219-4411

CAR RENTAL

If you are comfortable driving in the snow, renting can be convenient as it allows you to take a trip to Kutchan to stock up the fridge before returning the car. One way hire from Chitose to Hirafu is about ¥7,000 for six - 24 hours. Nippon Rentacar, Mazda and Orix have offices in the Niseko area. If you want a car only in Niseko, you can contact Black Diamond Lodge in Higashiyama.

Mazda Rent a Car : Chitose airport 0123-45-8756, Niseko 011-231-0118 (drop off and pick up in Niseko only available on weekdays)

Nippon Rent a Car : Chitose airport 0123-26-0919, Niseko 0136-43-2929

Orix Rent a Car : Chitose airport 0123-22-0543, Izumikyo (Hirafu) 0134-25-0543, Black Diamond Lodge : 0136-44-1144

TAXI

Don't get a taxi from Chitose to Hirafu unless you're prepared to pay \$250-\$300.

TRAIN

This is the most scenic way to get to Niseko. Unfortunately there is no direct train from Chitose to Kutchan station (the closest major station). All trains run through Sapporo and Otaru. The journey takes about three hours and the cost is about ¥2,600 for an unreserved seat. If you want a reserved seat, you can ask at JR information desk, B1 Chitose airport. www2.jrhokkaido.co.jp/global/index.html The train schedules are subject to change so it is best to call the numbers below or visit: www.japanrail.com.

Airport.....	0123-45-7011
Sapporo.....	011-222-7111
Otaru.....	0134-22-0771
Kutchan station.....	0136-22-1310
Niseko station.....	0135-44-2104

INTER-RESORT TRANSPORT

A shuttle bus connects the Grand Hirafu, Higashiyama and Annupuri ski areas. There is a private company bus which costs ¥500 and a free shuttle bus which is included in your

all mountain pass. See the timetable on the course map for more information. If you have a 12-point ticket, one point per trip is needed. Others need ¥500 for adult and ¥300 for child per ride.

Kutchan Night Bus

A free bus runs from Grand Hirafu ski area to Kutchan station every night. Step out from Hirafu village and enjoy shopping, eating, and drinking in Kutchan.

Taxis

Kutchan hire.....	0136 22 1212
Misora hire.....	0136 22 1171
Niseko hire.....	0136 44 2635

AIRLINES

ANA.....	0120 029 222
British Airways.....	03 3570 8657
Cathay Pacific.....	03 5159 1700
China Airlines.....	03 5520 0333
JAL.....	0120 255 971
Korean Air.....	0088 21 2001
Qantas.....	0120 207 020
Singapore Airlines.....	03 3213 1174
Thai Airways.....	03 3503 3311
United Airlines.....	0120 114 466

BANKING

Yes, we all know Hirafu needs an international ATM! Until then, use the post office in Kutchan open 8.45am to 7pm on weekdays, 9am to 5pm on weekends and holidays. You can also withdraw from the 24-hour Citibank ATM at 3F Chitose airport and the 7-Eleven near Kutchan station. Most of the cards with Cirrus and PLUS marks are accepted at these places, but round cornered cards are not.

CREDIT CARDS

Japan is still a predominantly cash society. Most small bars and restaurants in Niseko do not accept credit cards, but larger hotels, restaurants and hotels often do.

American Express.....	0120 020 120
MasterCard.....	03 5728 5200
Visa Card.....	00531 44 0022

CURRENCY

You can exchange your money into Yen at the bank, post office, and most inbound travel operators. Please bring your passport - it may be more convenient to change with your hotel. You can also exchange USD travellers cheques at banks or at Kutchan post office.

DRIVING

When driving on icy roads the number one thing to remember is to drive slowly. Make sure the windscreen and back and side windows are thoroughly de-iced on the outside and de-steamed on the inside before setting off - don't simply clear a 'porthole' to look through. Maintain at least a five-second gap between you and the vehicle in front. Use a high gear to avoid wheel spin, but take care not to let your speed creep up. Brake gently to avoid locking the wheels. Never brake if the vehicle skids, instead, ease off the accelerator and steer slightly into the direction of the skid until you gain control.

ELECTRICITY

Standard voltage is 100v AC. You can use many higher watt items without a problem but higher wattage devices such as hair dryers may not run on full power. Plugs are the flat two blades type. Many recent buildings have 240v with Australian shaped plugs.

EARTHQUAKES

In the event of an earthquake, stay out of elevators, stand in a door frame and watch for falling objects. The safest places are in large open areas such as parking lots of ski areas, schools, parks etc. Your accommodation is likely to have an emergency earthquake pack.

EMERGENCIES

Police	110
Ambulance and Fire.....	119
Emergency Interpretation.....	03-5285-8185

Japan English Helpline (nationwide emergency assistance).....0570-000-911

ETIQUETTE

Japan is perhaps the most courteous country in the world. Say excuse me (sumimasen) and thank you (arrigato) regularly. Do not eat while walking, or wear your shoes on tatami mats or in most indoor residences. A bow can be used to say thank you, sorry, hello, goodbye and excuse me. It is impolite not to return a bow. The deeper the bow, the more polite it becomes.

EATING

At most casual dining Japanese restaurants (izakaya) meals are ordered for the table and shared. You will often receive a small snack with your first drink which may or may not be billed. Rest your chopsticks across the top of the bowl or plate - never leave them sticking out of the rice!

DRINKING

It is tradition in Japan to pour from a bottle into your guest's small glass regularly. Kam-pai is the Japanese word for cheers - use it readily! Also please remember to stay well behaved when under the influence. Poor behaviour by drunken Australians in Niseko has received national media attention in Japan. Remember you are an ambassador for your country at all times while you are abroad.

TIPPING

Although tipping is not generally done in Japan, some restaurants and bars will include a service fee for groups.

GARBAGE

Hokkaido has some of the strictest garbage separation rules in the world. Please try to follow them, follow the signs on the bins to the letter.

ONSEN (HOT SPRING BATH)

Buy a ticket, strip down - no swim suits allowed, keep your clothes in a basket, your valuables in a locker. Take a little towel only into the onsen with you, wash and scrub your body well before you go in to the bath. You can fill your towel with cold water before you enter the onsen. Do not put your towel into the onsen water - leave it on your head and squeeze the cold water out when you get too hot (it's best not to bring drinks into the onsen). After bathing rinse off under the shower. Finally dry your body well before you walk back into the changing room.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Although there are rumours of an English speaking clinic opening in Hirafu in 2008/9 season presently you will need to go to Kutchan for most medical services. If you can't speak Japanese you will need to bring a translator, or one may be provided at the hospital.

Kutchan Kousei Hospital

The major hospital servicing the area is located 4 blocks from the main intersection of Kutchan. They have an X-ray, a slightly ageing MRI and medical dispensary. No appointment necessary, orthopaedics cases taken in the morning only. It will take you most of the day. Address: North 4 East 1-2, Kutchan-cho Tel: 0136-22-1141

Niseko Physio

Located on the second floor of Australia House, staffed with Australian physiotherapy graduates. Primary care is OK. Sports injuries, back and neck pain, braces and taping. Appointments preferred but not essential. www.NisekoPhysio.com Tel: 0136 22 0399

Ueda Orthopedic Clinic

A privately run orthopaedic clinic providing more time efficient service than the hospital. X-ray, medical dispensary. 1-4, South 3-jo West3, Kutchan 0136-22-1386

INTERNET

Most accommodation in Niseko will have internet access. If you have a laptop, you can try finding the free wireless hotspots in cafes and bars around the village. Try Pow Pow, the Java Bar or B's cafe.

3G phones only will work in Japan. You can hire a phone from IXSM travel 0136 21 5855 or Go Mobile 03 4496 4344. For longer term stays the three big carriers have stores in Kutchan:

MOBILE PHONES

au.....	0136-21-5616
Soft Bank.....	0136-21-2588
NTT DoCoMo.....	0136-21-6868

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Domestic Calls

Green and grey public phones take coins or pre paid telephone cards, available from convenience stores or at some phone card dispensers in some booths. Local calls don't require the "0136", unless made from a mobile phone.

Directory Assistance

Dial 104 (toll call) and then ask for an English speaker. You must know the location and name to get a number.

International Calls

International direct dial can be made using any of the following prefixes, 001 (KDDI), 0041 (ITJ) and 0061 (IDC). They will cost you.

Calling Cards

Brastel The most popular international calling card service is available in Niseko. Known for its flat 24 hour rates as low ¥6 per minute to Australia from any type of phone using a non-toll free access number. Brastel has excellent customer service available in over 20 languages and the card is available at several locations in Hirafu and can be recharged at IXSM travel or by your credit card. New subscribers get five free minutes. Toll-free: 0120 659 534. www.brastel.com

Kazak Rates from ¥20 for one minute to Australia. The kazak card is the highest selling card in the Niseko area. Kazak card is available from your hotel front desk, Piz Gloria convenience store and from most inbound tour operators. 0123 36 4000

POST OFFICES

Look for the red "T" symbol. Stamps and the post office box are at Piz Gloria convenience store. For other services you will need to go to the post office in Kutchan.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Kutchan Tourism Information centre

Located on Eki-mae Dori opposite Best Denki, the newly opened tourist information centre provides an excellent English speaking service for visitors. They dispense brochures and can help you book accommodation. 0136 22 1121

The Niseko Grand Hirafu Welcome Centre

At the main bus stop in Hirafu parking lot the Welcome Centre has a wide range of brochures and transport information. They can also help with booking accommodation if you've arrived without a booking - you risk taker you. 0136 22 0109.

WALKING ON ICY ROADS

About 1/3 of all injuries in Hirafu are caused by people falling on the street. Wear shoes with good grip, buy and attach rubber sole covers with metal studs. Take small steps, walk slowly and never run, keep both hands out of your pockets and free for balance. Walking with two ski stocks is a great idea and protect yourself instead of the objects being carried.



Professional Sports Massage in Five Star Luxury

Come and visit Niseko Massage to soothe your tired muscles and revitalise your body and mind. Our highly qualified and experienced massage therapists will tune your body and prepare you for your next day on the mountain.

Our rooms are luxuriously appointed with comfortable massage tables, all with arm rests. We are conveniently located on the second floor of Australia house, opposite the Seicomart.

If you prefer we can visit your hotel and perform the massage in the comfort of your own accommodation. Appointments are preferred but not essential.

Our Sessions

We can cater each massage to suit your specific requests. We perform oil massages using a combination of Swedish, Remedial and Sports Massage techniques. We can also perform a range of assisted stretches to aid your recovery.

90 minute, full body Oil Massage: ¥14,000

The total recovery package - think of it as having one with "The Lot". Relax and drift away as we invigorate every last one of your tired muscles. The 90 minute massage is the ultimate in relaxation and recovery. Perfect for when you have pure indulgence in mind.



60 minute, full body Oil Massage: ¥10,000

The perfect remedy to revive your whole body. We can concentrate on any problem areas whilst still ensuring your legs are rejuvenated.

30 minute: "Leg recovery" massage: ¥6,000

We will use our extensive experience to revitalize your tired legs. If you are not sure your legs are up to another day on the slopes, pop in for one of these. Fast, affordable and effective.

45 minute, full body massage: ¥8,000

A little bit of everything while still giving you time to make your restaurant reservation.

Home visits:

All services are available in your hotel for an extra ¥2,000.

All major credit cards accepted.

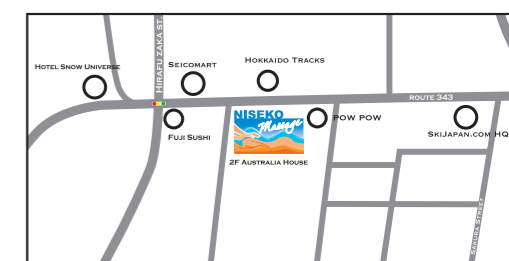
Amex, Visa, MasterCard, Diners



170-5 Aza Yamada
Kutchan-cho
Abuta-gun
Hokkaido 044-0081

Tel: 0136 22 0399 Fax: 0136 22 2011

www.NisekoMassage.com
info@NisekoMassage.com





Bevan Colless is a physiotherapist exercise physiologist who has spent six years in Japan operating Tokyo Physio and as of 2006, Niseko Physio.

ACL INJURIES: FROM TEAR TO REPAIR

I have an interest in knees and while staffing Niseko Physio in the 2006/7 season, decided to begin an extended research program into the biomechanics of snowboarding and the strength of the knee ligaments. As part of this study, I decided to further test the ability of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and the medial co-lateral ligament (MCL) to withstand a blunt force blow - delivered by a tree - to the lateral aspect of the shin while travelling over 30km/h. As I suspected in my hypothesis; the ACL and MCL were unable to withstand this force. The research has continued through the surgical reconstruction phase and now into the end stage rehabilitation. This has been an invaluable research experience for all concerned.

Although some readers may have been diagnosed with a partially torn ACL, experienced knee surgeons know that tearing an ACL is virtually like being pregnant: you've either done it completely, or not at all. When the ligament is torn, the knee joint is unstable, and people often complain of a 'wobbly knee'. If the ACL has been torn, you need to decide whether to have an operation or not. Most active people opt for an operation to replace the ligament. This procedure is commonly known as a knee reconstruction. It involves harvesting a tendon or ligament from another source and inserting it into the bones to replace the torn ACL. There are three main sources for the new ligament: patella tendon (the tendon under the knee cap); hamstring tendon (the rope-like tendon behind the knee); and a patella or Achilles' tendon allograft (using a cadaver).

The pros and cons of each technique are numerous

and orthopaedic surgeons are renowned for heated debates on which is the best source of the graft.

Many experts consider the patella tendon to be the strongest graft because it is less elastic and the graft includes bone plugs on either end from the knee cap and the shin bone. Some ongoing anterior knee pain is not an uncommon side effect. Smaller people may not have the substance in the patella tendon to supply the graft without compromising the knee.

The hamstring tendon is more flexible and hence may take more time to change its structure to be the same as the original ACL. The loss of substance in the hamstring requires rehabilitation akin to that of a hamstring tear, but the tendon has enough volume to withstand the loss of the graft well.

The allograft is used extensively in the US however it is still not approved in many countries. The obvious advantage is that there is no additional injury to the body. As the ligament is often harvested and frozen before use, the freezing and time out of the body may

Research shows women are between two and seven times more likely to suffer an ACL tear as men

result in it not being as healthy as a ligament that has been harvested immediately before the procedure. Let's hope we never see live ACL donors become a growth market in the transplant tourism business - there are enough people in developing countries getting around with one kidney and half a liver, without having the poor blighters hobbling about with half of their patella tendons missing. The allograft donor is usually reserved for athletes with a special event looming (such as Alisa Camplin before the Winter Olympics) or busy individuals who wish to have minimal time off work and minimum pain.

When it comes to ACL ruptures, women are indeed the weaker sex. Research shows women are between two and seven times more likely to suffer an ACL tear as men. The width of the female pelvis results in a sharper angle at the knee (known as the 'Q' angle).

The larger the Q angle, the greater the stress placed on the knee. The muscles that support the knee may not be as strong in women, which can leave the knee somewhat unsupported and at risk of injury.

Recent research has shown that fluctuations in hormonal concentrations may be the most important predisposing factor. High estrogen levels can cause



Mind your knees please!

ligaments and other supporting structures to be more lax and unstable. Interestingly, one study indicated that taking the contraceptive pill decreased the incidence of knee injuries among female athletes - thereby preventing ruptured ACL pain and labour pains - a wonder drug indeed!

Although choosing a surgeon and hospital you are comfortable with is very important, the key to the success of the procedure is how much effort is put into the extended rehabilitation that can take up to 12 months after the operation. Many people begin their rehabilitation with great diligence and gusto, but experience 'rehab burn out' three months post-op, give up on the rehabilitation process and never regain full knee function.

Prevention of ACL injuries is difficult. Stretching and generic knee braces do not work. Some motocross riders and extreme skiers find a special brace helps with prevention but it is quite bulky and expensive (\$US1500). Strengthening the hip and knee stabilizing muscles will help. Make sure your ski bindings release quickly and of course, try not to hit a tree.



Niseko Physio

Niseko Physio was established as a branch office of Tokyo Physio, to provide quality physiotherapy care for the English speaking residents and visitors to Niseko. We are committed to providing a standard of care that is up with the best in the world. Our Australian trained physiotherapists specialise in winter sports injuries, and are experienced in accelerated rehabilitation techniques to get you back on the slopes as soon as possible. We also stock a large range of braces to further assist your recovery.

We can help with

- ✓ Sports Injuries
- ✓ Back and Back Pain
- ✓ Braces
- ✓ Taping
- ✓ Post-operative rehabilitation



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