

WINTER SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT REAL ESTATE

FREE

Issue 02 Jan 05 - Jan 18 2008

powderlife

NISEKO ニセコ



ANNUPURI
DARK HORSE OF NISEKO?

beyond hirafu

Real estate outside the village

neil hartmann

Hokkaido filmmaker on the rise

powder tools

Essential gear for Niseko

www.powderlife.co.jp

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.



St Moritz 1 Land

¥21,840,000 - 600m2



Located in sought after St Moritz area
- 210sqm with glass-facade from upper open-air lounge / dining kitchen area
- A shared storage garage
- Great return rental property

Hurry Slowly Townhouse

¥42,000,000



Fully furnished 3 floors - luxury finishes
- Internal elevator to garage
- 2nd storage & drying room
- Satellite TV & window blindset
- Each apart'nt comes with fully insured car in garage w/ navigation system

Hemming Bed

¥33,000,000



Development opportunity or family home.
- Located in middle Hirafu
- Open plan living, dining and kitchen
- House on 1000sqm of level ground
- Has a lock up garage

Yuki Yama 1 & 2

¥62,000,000



Cosily located, luxurious & spacious boutique apartments
- Top of middle Hirafu, only minutes walk to lifts, restaurants, bars, shops & shops
- Western style kitchen & bathrooms
- Split level design

Hirafu Village Land 1st fl.

¥35,700,000 - 337sqm block



Best prime location in quiet street
- Great for townhouse or private home
- Fantastic investment opportunity
- DCA's in place for townhouse development

Mountside Palace

¥37,700,000



Most quality furnished apartment in the heart of upper Hirafu village
- Great value & location
- Japanese design
- Hill Yohai views
- In house management

Kumajiro

¥45,000,000



Great value & great rental return with long-term development potential
- Lovely big house located in beautiful
- Only 1 min walk to restaurant & resort shuttle bus & 5 min walk to Hirafu Village & lift

publisher's note...

The New Year period in Japan is a very special time. The first five days of January are spent with family - eating drinking, reflecting on the past year and looking forward to the new one. As we move into 2008 it certainly is amazing to look back and see what has taken place in Niseko in the past five years, and even more interesting to wonder where it will be in another five. The response to the first issue was tremendous and we truly appreciate the support and encouragement we've received. This issue we take a closer look at the areas surrounding Hirafu. And of course we've got all our usual giveaways, nightlife, latest events, social pics, latest powder photos and more. We've made this magazine for you and we'd love to hear your feedback and ideas. Please drop us an email anytime - bevan@powderlife.co.jp.

お正月は日本でとても特別なお休みです。年始5日間は家族でおせちを食べ、お酒を飲み、過去を振り返りながら、新年を迎えます。2008年新年を迎え、ニセコが過去5年間どのように変わって来たか改めて振り返ってみると目を見張るものがありました。そして更にこの先5年間どのように変わっていくかとても興味深いものがあります。パウダーライフ創刊号への皆様の反応はすばらしいものでした。ご支援いただきました皆様には心より感謝申し上げます。今号では、読者プレゼント、ナイトライフ、最新のイベント情報、スナップ写真、最新のパウダーショットはもちろん、ヒラフを取り巻くエリアに焦点を当てております。パウダーライフは皆様の為のマガジンです。マガジンに関するご意見、ご感想を bevan@powderlife.co.jp までお気軽にお寄せください。

Bevan Colless
Publisher



photo of the week

woohoo... powder!!
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

January 05 - January 18

Saturdays January 5 and 12

Hanazono Saturday Entertainment
12 - 2 at Hanazono Cafe. Live DJ and there are free giveaways of Redbull and Soyjoy at the base of Hanazono #1.

1月 5日(土) 1 2 (土)

12:00~14:00 花園カフェにDJ参加!
花園第一リフトエリアでは Redbull と Soyjoy を無料配布。

Sundays January 6 and 13

Taiko Drum Performances
Free traditional Japanese drum performances. 3.30pm
Sundays outside Hokkaido Tracks office (next to Seicomart).

1月 6日(日) 1 3日(日)

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。15:30~

Mondays and Thursdays January 7 and 10

Higashiyama Prince Sushi Making Class
Learn how to make sushi the authentic way! 12pm-2pm
1F Otaru Restaurant, Japanese and English. ¥2500. Call 0136-44-1111 for the reservation until 17:00 the day before the class.

1月 7日(月) 1 0日(木)

東山プリンスホテルにて お寿司作り教室
海にも近いニセコ、新鮮なネタでお寿司作りを体験してみませんか。寿司の作り方がその日のうちに習得できます。日本語と英語でのレッスン 参加費 ¥ 2,500 12:00~14:00
すし処 小樽にて 予約はアクティビティカウンター tel:0136-44-1111 前日の17:00まで

Tuesdays January 8

Higashiyama Prince hotel
A Day in the Life of a Ski Patroller. Tuesday night 9pm to 10pm. 1F Tea Lounge Hamanasu. Japanese and English.

1月 8日(火)

スキーパトロールの一日
ゲレンデや早朝のアバランチコントロールの様子など、ニセコ東山パトロールの活動を、映像や写真とともにご紹介。
参加無料、21:00~ 新館 1F ティーラウンジ はまなす

Tuesdays and Thursdays January 8, 10, 15 and 17.

Niseko FC Gym Yoga Classes
"Forging elite fitness in the heart of Hirafu". ¥500 casual visit, ¥3,000 per month, personal training also available. From 7pm

1月 8日(火) 1 0日(木) 1 5日(火) 1 7日(木)

ニセコFCジムにてヨガクラス開催。19:00~ ビジター ¥500/回 ラフで最初に出来たフィットネスクラブです。会費 ¥3,000/月 個人トレーニングも承ります

Tuesday and Friday January 8 and 11

Higashiyama Prince Ito Mochi Making Class.
Learn how to make delicious traditional Japanese potato cake from Kutchan Potatoes! 2pm-4pm
3F Banquet hall. Japanese and English. ¥1500. Call 0136-44-1111 for the reservation until 17:00 the day before the class.

1月 8日(火) 1 1日(金)

東山プリンスホテルにて 料理教室(いも餅の作り方)
この地域のおいしいじゃがいもを使って、伝統のいも餅を作ってみませんか。日本語と英語でのレッスン 参加費 ¥1,500 14:00~16:00 3F 宴会場にて 予約はアクティビティカウンター tel:0136-44-1111 前日の17:00まで

Saturday January 12

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

1月 12日(土)

日本舞踊お披露目会
美しく着物に身を包んだ二人の女性が、お土産屋さん「ぼんぼり」内にて日本舞踊を踊ります。20:00~21:00
場所は黄色の建物オーストラリアハウス脇の坂下です。



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

in the loop @

Contents

- 03 **in the loop** what's on in niseko this week
- 07 **page seven** village news and information
- 08 **snap** faces and fashions on the mountain
- 09 **flash** niseko's social scene
- 10 **cross country** news from across japan
- 12 **powder tools** essentials for niseko powder
- 14 **feature** Annapuri: The Dark Horse of Niseko
- 18 **restaurant review** ichimura soba
- 19 **nightlife** the day really begins apres
- 20 **ten thousand words** photo gallery
- 22 **irasshaimase** great little local businesses
- 23 **shoukai** introducing niseko locals
- 24 **in focus** hokkaido filmmaker neil hartmann
- 25 **four seasons hokkaido** hidaka horse heaven
- 26 **kutchan** shunsai: rebel with a course
- 29 **real estate news** the latest property news
- 30 **real estate views** building in japan
- 32 **course map** and mountain information
- 34 **walking map** must have village directory
- 35 **where to...** eat, drink, stay, play, etc
- 36 **local info** essential tips and info on niseko
- 38 **the last word...** on health



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
publisher Bevan Colless **managing editor** Kristian Lund
contributors: Kaori Yasuda, Vanessa Gibson, Greg Lund, Liam Bartley, Tatsuyo Hayashida, Reg Dunlap, Marcus St.John Dawe, Magnus Alexander
photographers Eriko Mentzos (ideapark), Niseko Photography (Aaron Jamieson, Mathew Hollingsworth)
layout Metropolis Magazine Tokyo, Mojoworks, Aaron Jamieson
advertising inquiries email ads@powderlife.co.jp
subscriptions email subscribe@powderlife.co.jp
order past issues ¥1000 email info@powderlife.co.jp

powderlife magazine
170-5 Aza Yamada Kutchan-cho,
Abuta-gun, Hokkaido 044-0081
tel 0136 22 2000 fax 0136 22 2011
www.powderlife.co.jp

©2007 V&B Colless KK
Contents of Powderlife are subject to copyright. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher is prohibited. The publication of editorial does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of views or opinions expressed. The publisher does not accept responsibility for statements made by advertisers.

cover shot Eriko Mentzos

PROVIDED FREE IN ALL ACCOMMODATION MANAGED BY:
Hokkaido Tracks, NGS, Nisade, The Niseko Company, Annapuri 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

Annapuri
Annapuri Village, Ikinomura Hotel, The Nook Annapuri, 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

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

NISADE
NISEKO ALPINE DEVELOPMENTS



Local call 0136 22 0038 Outside Japan +81 136 22 0038 Skype [skype-nisade](https://www.skype.com/nisade) Accommodation reservations@nisade.com Sales enquiries@nisade.com

www.nisade.com



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

THANKS FOR THE SNOW SIS'

While it hasn't broken any records yet, signs are still good we'll have a bumper season this year.

The prevailing El Nino weather system of last year - which meteorologists blamed for what was believed to be the lowest snowfall in 80 years - has backed off and in exchange we've got its snow-friendly sibling.

El Nino is Spanish for little boy and describes a weather pattern that often severely affects the climates of countries in and around the Pacific Ocean - generally in the form of droughts, floods, and temperature extremes.

La Nina on the other hand, means little girl, and brings very different but similarly extreme weather patterns to the same areas.

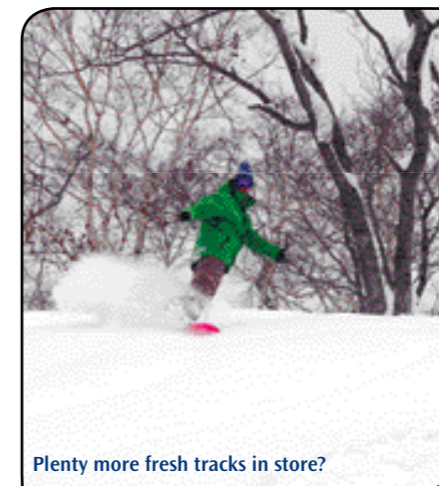
In Japan, cold northwest winds typically blow over the Sea of Japan and form snow clouds as they meet the warm water vapour off the ocean, thereby bringing heavy snowfall to areas along Japan's western coastline.

Last year's El Nino disrupted that pattern hence a lower than usual snowfall.

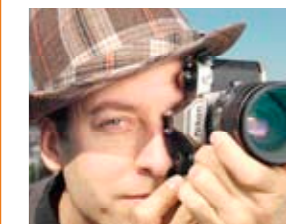
The Japan Meteorological Association says La Nina winters in Japan are generally colder than usual.

Associate that with higher than average precipitation and you have yourself a mouth-watering recipe for a lot of deep, dry powder snow.

We don't want to get your hopes up in case we're being overly optimistic, but we're feeling pretty good about what's in store.



Plenty more fresh tracks in store?



DVD giveaway

Powderlife has five copies of legendary Hokkaido-based filmmaker Neil Hartmann's epic snowboarding movie Cardanchi to give away. Read our interview with Neil on p24 to win.

HOKKAIDO RESORTS TRUCKING IN SNOW

While most of Niseko's slopes have been operational and enjoyable since 23 November, it seems that not all Hokkaido ski areas share winter's bounty to anywhere near the same extent.

In fact at least one slope - the Bankei Ski Area in Sapporo city - has been forced to truck in massive quantities of unwanted snow from other areas to provide a basic cover and permit delayed season's openings.

According to a recent report in the Hokkaido Shimbun - Hokkaido's leading daily newspaper - in an overnight exercise of military precision on 12 December, 415 ten-ton truckloads of snow scooped from the streets of Kutchan and Iwamizawa were delivered to Bankei and spread across the slopes to supplement three snow-making machines and create the bare minimum 40 centimetres of cover needed.

It worked, and the lifts duly began turning on 14 December, a full week later than scheduled. But better late than never.

The same report noted that the famed Teine Olympic Ski Course remained closed awaiting more snow falls, and that despite constant snow blowing at several other slopes in the Sapporo area prospects for an opening before year's end remain bleak.



MAZDA TO NAME MX5 'NISEKO'!

Mazda UK have introduced a special edition Mazda MX-5 Niseko model to leverage off the burgeoning global reputation of Niseko. Named after the ski resort, the MX-5 Niseko is meant to point out the cute roadster's all-weather abilities and warm up the gloomy winter for UK-based motorists. On sale from the beginning of 2008 for £17,995 on-the-road, the Niseko offers up to £2,000 worth of additional or exclusive extras over and above the equivalent standard models. Buyers are treated to Niseko badging on each front wing, and Niseko embroidered floor mats, front fog lamps, an icy blue limited edition colour, unique dark brown premium cloth for the fabric roof, dark brown heated leather seats, with matching door trim, steering wheel, gear knob, and hand-brake. Niseko owners will also enjoy a degree of exclusivity as production of this latest Mazda MX-5 model will be restricted to 800 units and will be released exclusively in the UK.

RESTAURATEURS BEEF IT UP

The recent opening of Kamimura, Dragon Bar and J Sekka has seen the local dining scene step up to another level this season.

Previously the top restaurants were still fairly casual and inexpensive. Now true fine dining is widely available.

Yoichi Kamimura's new restaurant in the Yama Shizen is one of the most talked about new arrivals of the season.

Kamimura-san worked at Tetsuya's in Sydney for five years before opening a small restaurant in Sapporo staffed by only himself and his wife.

Simon Robinson and Matt Denning from Hokkaido Tracks were avid fans of that restaurant and eventually persuaded Yoichi to set up in their latest major development, Yama Shizen.

Kamimura mirrors Tetsuya's style with a 12-course degustation menu. Another one to step things up this year is Wine and Food Bar Dragon.

Managing director and talented sommelier and chef Noriko Masubuchi opened a small establishment inside the Alpen Hotel last season but this year has upgraded to a two storey, refurbished pension in the middle village, which has received a great reception from Japanese and foreign guests alike.

J Sekka continues where the original Sekka left off with beautifully presented food in Shouya Grigg's signature classy style.



Wine and Food Bar Dragon's sister act Noriko and Fumie Masubuchi

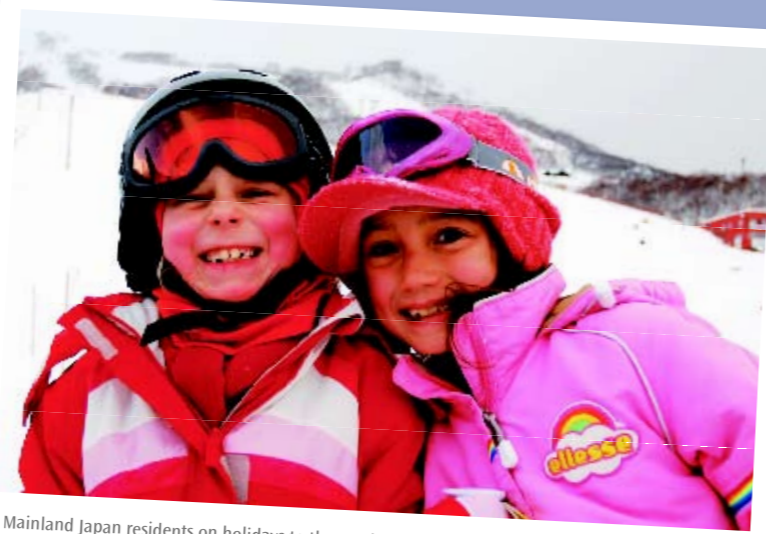
SNAP

by eriko mentzos

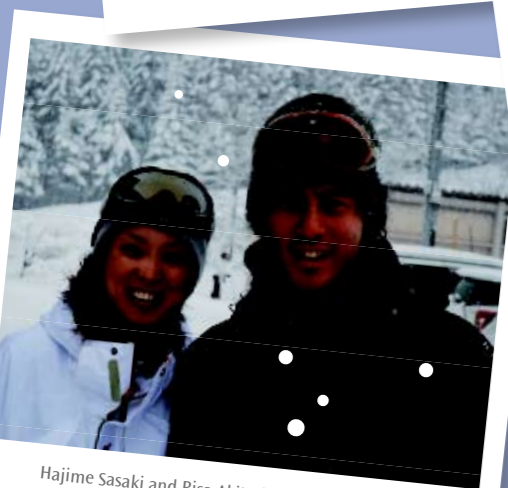
faces on the street



The Yamasaki clan all the way from Kyoto. Average age 27. Niseko needs: "A cabaret bar!"



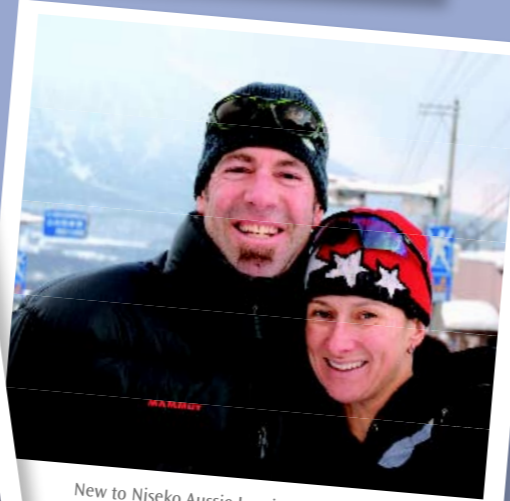
Mainland Japan residents on holidays to the north island. Philine and Allison reckon Niseko needs: "Races for kids, friends and covered chairlifts :)"



Hajime Sasaki and Risa Akita from Hakodate in southern Hokkaido: "Ima made ok! So far, so good!"



Aussies Samantha and Lisa can't fault Niseko: "It's our first time here and we love this place! The shuttle service is great."



New to Niseko Aussie Jennie Milton and Alaskan Steve Schumm: "All good so far!"



mountain style

Who said check pants were only for the golf course? Japanese snowboarder Manami Fujita proves they fit into Niseko's powder style scene as well as at St Andrew's. Love the mirrored purple goggles which contrast so well with the jacket. Green is THE colour of the season and the Burton jacket tops off the outfit to a tee. The ensemble sees her awarded a hole-in-one from Powderlife and a free Niseko fleece from Fusion.



Ippe, Shima, Kazuki, Kayo and Yohei from Nagoya, south of Tokyo. Niseko needs: "Music played out on the slopes!"

FLASH

niseko social scene

by jimmy edwards



Fresh off the plane and straight into a shot... we hope Sarah Connor, Peter Mollison and Nicole Daniel made it onto the slopes the next day.

Apres Bar Opening Party

Whether they had been skiing or not, locals and holidayers made their way to the Apres Bar for their 2007/08 opening party.



Kampai!! Big Cliff's Mari and Maiko toast the first of many more Apres drinks this year.



Post-ski drinks are in good hands... Kisato, Noriko, Koharu and Sam



Two RAD dudes and one cool chick... Derek, Lorne and Vanessa.



Team work. The heads behind new Dragon: John, and sisters Noriko and Fumie.



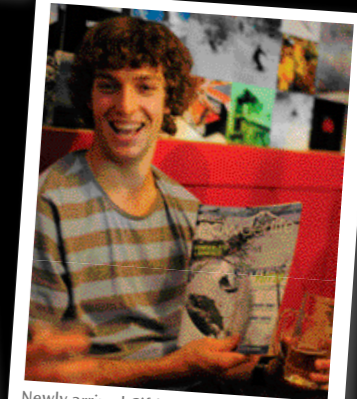
Pete, Phil, Lorea and Jo from Melbourne; Lorne 'Again' Calhoun and Michiko.

Dragon Bar Opening

A fantastic crowd of Japanese and foreign partygoers enjoyed the fantastic hospitality of the new dragon bar for its grand opening. It may have been the free wine, sake and beer, but the consensus was that the Dragon Bar is one of the coolest new bars in town.



It wasn't cold inside, but that didn't stop Lindel and Beth from cuddling up for the camera.



Newly arrived Gif looks like he's pretty stoked with the jpeg on the front cover.



Powderlife Launch

Kicking off with a traditional Taiko drum performance, and topped off with plenty of beer, wine and spirits, the Powderlife Launch was a hit. Thanks everyone for coming along!



That's the kind of smile we want to see! Hokkaido Tracks' Jon Barlow.

POLLING THE ELECTORATE

Popular Miyazaki Governor and former comedian Hideo Higashikokubaru said he was upset that an adult-entertainment company reproduced his image in a newspaper advertisement—even though the politician encourages the use of his likeness as a way of promoting local businesses.

It was announced that the Internal Affairs and Communications ministry has asked cellphone companies to do more to prevent minors from accessing adult content online, especially “matchmaking sites that are often used for sex crimes.”

Police arrested three people for growing 58 cannabis plants at a rented warehouse in Tokyo’s Musashi-Murayama City. The trio said they bought the seeds at a Shibuya gardening shop after ordering them from the US.

The Tokyo-based Hotel Okura chain announced that it would open a property in Macau in 2009.

YEAH, THAT MAKES SENSE

A Tokyo-based photographer for the Chunichi Shimbun who was arrested for molesting a 17-year-old girl on a train gave a novel defense: “On the internet, it said that you could freely grope people on the Saikyo line, so I did it.”

A 71-year-old bus driver in Miyagi Prefecture who was arrested for assaulting an elementary schoolgirl

while the two were alone in the vehicle said he was “only trying to be affectionate.”

A doctor from Saga who crossed prefectural lines to have sex with a 16-year-old prostitute said he “thought nobody would find out if I went to Fukuoka.”

In an attempt to justify his role as keynote speaker at Nagoya’s first-ever Wasabi Forum, famed Japanese sommelier Shinya Tazaki said that wine and wasabi “both start with W.”

A 13-year-old boy who bashed his sleeping father with a baseball bat said he wanted to kill his dad because “he’s always telling me off and [beats] me about once a month.”

A 26-year-old Tokyoite who was snowboarding in Hokkaido’s Furano Ski Ground apparently fell while “on a steep slope” and suffocated to death after being buried under a drift of snow.

Former Peru president Alberto Fujimori, who fled to Japan after his

government imploded in 2000, was sentenced to six years in prison by a court in Lima for “abuse of authority.”

The head of a local school board in Nara Prefecture found himself in hot water for claiming that the suicide of an elementary school principal in his district in 2004 was an issue that had “passed its expiration date.”

A karaoke bar operator in Kobe was sentenced to four years in jail for his role in a fire that killed three of his customers earlier last year.



OOPS

A court in Tokyo ordered the publishers of the Sankei newspaper to pay ¥3.3 million yen to a Bangladeshi man whom the paper claimed was “linked to Al Qaeda and plotting a terrorist attack.”

After cops in Aichi Prefecture arrested a Nagoya man for breaking into a koban, they found a horde of police paraphernalia in his home, including handcuffs, filing cabinets and notebooks—all of it believed stolen.

It was reported that a 23-year-old police officer used his service revolver to commit suicide at a koban in Tochigi Prefecture.

Police announced that a 50-year-old Osaka man already under arrest for possessing “lewd photographs” will be charged with illegally distributing the anti-impotency drug Tadalafil SX, which has not been cleared for use in Japan.

An 18-year-old construction worker and a 16-year-old high school dropout were charged with “inflicting bodily injury and extortion” after a high school student they had bullied into giving them money wound up killing himself.

Police were mystified over the death of a 61-year-old woman who was found pinned under the tires of her own car in Yokohama.

A prison guard in Gifu was busted for accepting ¥220,000 worth of bribes in exchange for providing drinks and snacks to three inmates with yakuza ties.

A 2-year-old Tokyo boy was believed to have been shot in the chest and

killed by his 5-year-old brother after their father left them alone in a room with his four rifles.

MOVING ON

Four young men in Yugawara, Kanagawa, were found dead in a car with sealed windows and a charcoal burner.

It was reported that pirates released all 22 crewmembers of the Japanese tanker Golden Nori, which had been attacked off the coast of Somalia in early November.

A passenger on the JR West train that crashed in 2005 in Hyogo Prefecture, killing 107 people and injuring 562, became the first person to sue the company over the incident.

The Supreme Court ruled that the government was justified in firing a 57-year-old man after learning that he had been arrested at an anti-war demonstration in 1972—even though the man had been employed by the feds without incident since 1973.

The Tokyo High Court threw out a lawsuit brought by 91 French and Japanese citizens against Governor Shintaro Ishihara over the politicians’ statement that French is a “language which cannot count numbers.”

RECENT ARRIVALS

It was announced that, for the third year in a row, “Hina” was the most popular name for baby girls in Japan. “Hirota” was the most popular for boys for the second consecutive year.

Osaka’s annual Loudest Voice

Contest was won by 36-year-old Koji Hasegawa, who shouted “Thanks!” to his wife. “I’m always too busy ... to thank her normally,” Hasegawa said of his spouse, who gave birth to twins last year.

A Gifu-based loan company, which last year began offering financial services for people who want to fund a divorce, has announced a loan plan for single mothers.

Claiming that its competitors were “laggards” for failing to establish themselves in the Middle East, Mizuho Financial Group announced that it will set up a bank in oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

Toshiba announced that it had developed an industrial battery that can be recharged in five minutes and has a life cycle of ten years.

Spying on your coworkers just got easier after NEC Japan announced a “security” camera that draws power directly from overhead fluorescent lights.

Nintendo announced that it will launch a movie download service for its DS Lite game console starting in March.

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)

STATS

62
Percent of people in Japan who support Tokyo’s bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games, according to the Tokyo Olympic Bidding Committee

¥30 million
Price of a 2008 calendar made of solid gold by jeweler Ginza Tanaka at one of its shops in Fukuoka

40
Percent of Japanese men who sit down while urinating, according to a survey by toilet manufacturer Matsushita Electric Works

1,500
Estimated members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult, a decrease of about 150 since May, according to the National Police Agency

¥70 million
Amount of back rent forked over by the US Embassy to cover the years 1998-2007, during which time it didn’t pay a dime due to a contractual dispute with the Japanese government

¥140 billion
Annual amount spent by Japan to host the 50,000 American troops on its soil, according to the Mainichi Shimbun

NISEKO HIGASHIYAMA BLACK ♦ DIAMOND

NISEKO AUTO

- ♦ RENTALS
- ♦ SALES
- ♦ EXPORT
- ♦ REPAIR

RENTALS from 45,000yen/1week

website: www.nisekoauto.com
phone: +81(0)90-2055-6074
e-mail: cars@bdlodge.com

RESTAURANT

serving our own mix of Japanese and western cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere.

DINNER from 900yen

OPEN 4-12
closed Monday

FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE
(when available)

website: www.bdlodge.com
phone: +81(0)136-44-1144
e-mail: reservations@bdlodge.com

BD TOURS

HOKKAIDO'S PREMIERE SNOW SPECIALISTS

- ♦ RUSUTSU TOURS
- ♦ NISEKO TOURS
- ♦ BACK COUNTRY
- ♦ SAPPORO TOURS

website: www.blackdiamondtours.com
phone: +81(0)90-2054-TOUR
e-mail: tours@bdlodge.com

FUSION HOMES
Quality, innovative building in the Alpine Region of Hakuba.

- Design
- Construction
- Renovations
- Project management

TEL: 399-9211
NAGANO-KEN
KITAAZUMIGUN
HAKUBA MURA OAZA
KAMISHIRO 27436-7

www.fusionhomes.jp
info@fusionhomes.jp

powderhouse

Boutique Lodge Located 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.

TEL: 399-9211
NAGANO-KEN
KITAAZUMIGUN
HAKUBA MURA OAZA
KAMISHIRO 27436-7

www.powderhouse.jp
info@powderhouse.jp

Powder tools

by bevan colless

Gentemstick Impossible

A 182cm swallow tail that turns a ¥10 piece? Impossible. Local legends Gentemstick have this year released this imposing number - a big mountain beast that will speed you through chutes at warp speed, but still allow you to navigate tight trees with the ease. Like everything from Gentem it's all about the camber - the bend in the board that lifts the centre or ends up slightly if laid flat on the floor. Compared to the effective edge, the camber is all in the tail 3/4 of the board; the board is flat through the top 1/4 of the length of the board. This makes the nose lift very easily in powder and helps it turn so sharply. If you love big mountain riding, deep powder, steep slopes, and are loaded, this should be in your quiver. Available from Gentemstick retail store. ¥178,500..

Burton Headphone Banie



There's nothing worse than having the last song you heard in the morning stuck in your head when the powder's untracked. Especially when it's Rick Astley. The Burton headphone banie produces great sound and unlike the bud style earphones, leaves your ears feeling decidedly unviolated at the end of the day. Available from Fusion. ¥7,500.

K2 Seths

Seth Morrison has pushed the revolution in big mountain skiing like no other skier, so when he puts his name to a ski, you know it's going to be good. The K2 Seth Alpine Ski is a fatty twin-tip big-mountain weapon that will plough through the deepest Hokkaido has to offer. A mini-rocker design helps this fat all-mountain ski rise to the top of soft snow. While the Seth ski's graphics are wild, it's what's underneath that counts. A 98mm waist keeps this all-mountain twin floating. A progressive sidecut and versatile flex pattern performs well on hard-pack so it won't chatter on the groomed, however you might get a shudder on variable terrain at superman speeds. Available from Niseko 343. ¥94,000.



Flexmetre Dual Glove

FOOSH! No it's not the sound of gliding through powder - it's the medical abbreviation for 'fall on out-stretched hand'. The abbreviation exists because it's the cause of so many injuries. Sure Niseko's snow is soft, but wrist fractures are still as common among learner snowboarders here as everywhere. While there are many wrist guards on the market, only the Flexmeter has a brace that flexes on impact. The designer, a doctor in the Frech Alps, noted people with rigid braces often had worse fractures than those without. Flexmeter's two-stage flex-zone not only redirects and spreads out force from falls, it also makes them more comfy to wear. Recently released for the first time in Japan and not yet available elsewhere in Asia or Japan, stocks are limited. In mitt and glove styles. Available at Niseko Physio. ¥16,500.



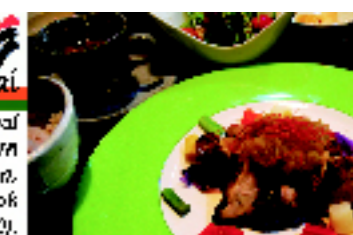
HRG Hokkaido Powder Guides
The 2 day **Avalanche Skills Training Course** developed by the Canadian Avalanche Association teaches basic avalanche awareness skills.
Courses on Jan 14/15 and 16/17
23,000 yen/person
<http://www.hokkaidopowderguides.com>
Ph: 0167-225655/ 080-3492-0433



Hours: 11:00-21:00
closed on Sundays
Tel: 0136-23-1852



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



NOASC ADVENTURE TOURS

"Hokkaido's Adventure Tour Specialists"

- ◆ HOKKAIDO SKIING LESSONS
- ◆ HOKKAIDO SNOWBOARDING LESSONS
- ◆ HOKKAIDO RAFTING
- ◆ HOKKAIDO ICE CREAM
- ◆ HOKKAIDO TUBING
- ◆ CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS
- ◆ WINTER DRIFTING
- ◆ HOKKAIDO SNOW ...

NOASC Co. Ltd.
170-138 Yamada Kutchan-cho
Aburatsubo-gun Hokkaido 044-0001
Tel: 0136-23-1852 Fax: 0136-23-1850
Email: info@noasc.com

www.noasc.com

Wine & Food For DRAGON

Inspired by the ancient art of Japanese temple cuisine, infused with a touch of the finest local ingredients... The Dragon Bar is an exquisite fusion of the cultural of Japan with the best of the West. First floor, of the restaurant on the second which serves each regularly making together with a menu prepared by our sous-chef. Enter the DRAGON.

Lunch 11am~3pm (1:30pm L.O.)
dinner 6pm~11pm (10pm L.O.), bar~2am

Tel: 0136-21-7700
<http://www.dragonbar.com>

Fusion is Niseko's premier retail store. Its breadth of product has something for everyone, a stylish fusion where both Japanese and International cos go come together to deliver a complete selection of the latest in gear and snow fashion for men, women and children.

Demo Equipment Hire has a diverse range of skis, ski boots, snowboards, snowboard boots and helmets for adults and kids. Demo is committed to being the best rental store in Niseko and strongly supports local trade by only buying Japanese supplied equipment. Demo's quality service will ensure customers are on the snow in minimum time and with the best equipment available.

FUSION & DEMO
Open 7 days
8:30am - 8:30pm

Fusion
Tel: (0136) 22-5633

Demo
Tel: (0136) 22-5677

skihanazone.com

LOCATION

"Over 16 years experience serving customers in Hokkaido Japan"

Niseko • Tomamae • Sapporo • Asahikawa • Moho • Lake Toya • Niseko • Tomamae • Sapporo • Asahikawa • Moho • Lake Toya

Ski & adventure travel specialists offering discount package holidays to destinations throughout Hokkaido Japan for individuals, families and small to large groups.

Outdoor Travel Japan
Tel: +81 (0)136-21-2171 Fax: +81 (0)136-21-2172
www.outdoortraveljapan.com

We are your guide to houses and property for sale in Niseko

Real Estate & Management

Niseko Life Plan Co., Ltd
27-1 1 Aza Higashiyama Niseko-cho Aburatsubo-gun Hokkaido
Tel: 0136-21-2000 Fax: 0136-21-2001
E-mail: e-info@nisekolifeplan.co.jp
www.nisekolifeplan.co.jp

NISEKO Powder Boards & Skis

Powder-boards are more fun!

Rent a powder board or skis!

Annupuri

– The Dark horse of Niseko?

by Bevan Colless

For most visitors to Niseko, Annupuri has always been a bit of a mystery. A cursory glance at the lines on the course map is as close as many people get. You either need to face the elements close to the peak or take a bus from Hirafu. But one thing is for sure - it's worth the effort. Partly because of its relative obscurity, and partly because of its vast and varied terrain, many of those in the know head straight to Annupuri for first lines after a dump. The whole of the Niseko United is actually located on Mt Annupuri, but only the one resort takes the mountain's name as its own.

Annupuri has long been a special place for me. I first came to Niseko in 1994 and by chance stumbled across it while my partner was earning her stripes on the Hirafu family double. After a few enjoyable but tame runs down the main slope, I spotted a group of three gaijin (foreigners) covered in powder - huge grins frozen across their faces - at the base of the Annupuri Gondola. After seeing the beaming trio bounding up the steps to get back on the gondie, I decided I'd sneak in the closing door behind them to have a chat. They turned out to be two Qantas pilots and a steward who had a three day layover in Sapporo. Qantas was flying to Sapporo long before mainstream Australian ski tourists were commonplace. The crew and I chatted they soon offered (or perhaps I persuaded them) to take me where they had been - into the Annupuri bowls. This was before the existence of the back country access gates so we ducked a rope and headed right. Not many people were heading off piste in those days and soon we were dropping into a steep, wide, untracked meadow of fluffy, white powder. It was my first ever taste of riding real powder and I'll never forget it. They say one hit of heroin and you're addicted, but I couldn't imagine any white substance more addictive than this powder. I was hooked and have been ever since. Fortunately for us junkies, regularly reaching the same high with every hit in Niseko is entirely possible.

Located furthest to the west (skier's right) of the four resorts that make up The Niseko United, Annupuri is actually often exposed to harsh winds and can suffer from low visibility. Nonetheless, when conditions are right there is no better place to be. The terrain in the bowls varies from gentle to really quite steep, and from open chutes to tight trees. To top it all off you finish every run with a natural half pipe. Despite riding the Annupuri bowls most winters since, to this day I can still find pockets of powder I haven't ridden before.

Annupuri is the only resort in Niseko that even low to intermediate skiers and boarders can ski from the top of the gondola to the bottom. Groups and families of all levels can ride all day together while ensuring everyone has a great time. From the top of the gondola, powder hounds can duck through the gates to get their off-piste fix, while others cruise down the main slope before meeting back at the base for a toilet break or hot drink from the vending machines. Everyone can then settle back into the gondie to warm up, exchange stories, prepare strategies for the next run and do it all again.

Although my guess is you'll be having so much fun you'll be tempted to skip lunch, the three restaurants at the base of the resort provide good quality affordable staple Japanese skiing fare – think pork cutlet on curry rice or pork ramen.. If you need a longer break and have a big appetite you won't regret taking a short walk to the Mokumoku-tei Barbecue House, to the right of the Nook Hotel bus stop, where you can indulge in all you can eat yakiniku (pan fried meat Korean-style) barbecue (¥1,890 for 60 minutes).

As Annupuri is somewhat difficult to access from Hirafu, particularly when the highest lifts are on wind hold, there are rarely queues and there's almost always fresh powder to be found in the three bowls (two to the skier's right and one to the left). Lest I should lead people astray and give away my gems, but to access the bowls to the skier's right take the Jumbo Pair Lift #4 from near the top of the gondola, pass through the highest gate - have a quick chat to the avalanche specialist often standing there - and walk up the hundred or so steps to near the top of the first bowl (a much shorter walk than to the peak from Hirafu side). From there you can traverse across as far as you like before dropping down into the first bowl, or keep traversing, cross the ridge and enter the second bowl. The beauty of these



NISEKO
real estate

Niseko's leading real estate agency

- Property sales
- Rental property management
- Preparation of Japanese and English contracts
- Property registration
- Legal advice

Niseko Real Estate Co., Ltd.
Email: info@nisekorealestate.com
Innate Business Hokkaido Governor Statute (1) No. 303

www.nisekorealestate.com



NMS
NISEKO MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Niseko's premier property management company

- Property maintenance/renovation
- Accounts/bookkeeping
- Cleaning services
- Tax management and consulting
- International and domestic promotion of properties

Book direct with Niseko's finest rental properties!

Niseko Management Service Co., Ltd.
Email: info@nisekomanagement.com
Travel Agent License Hokkaido Governor No. 3097

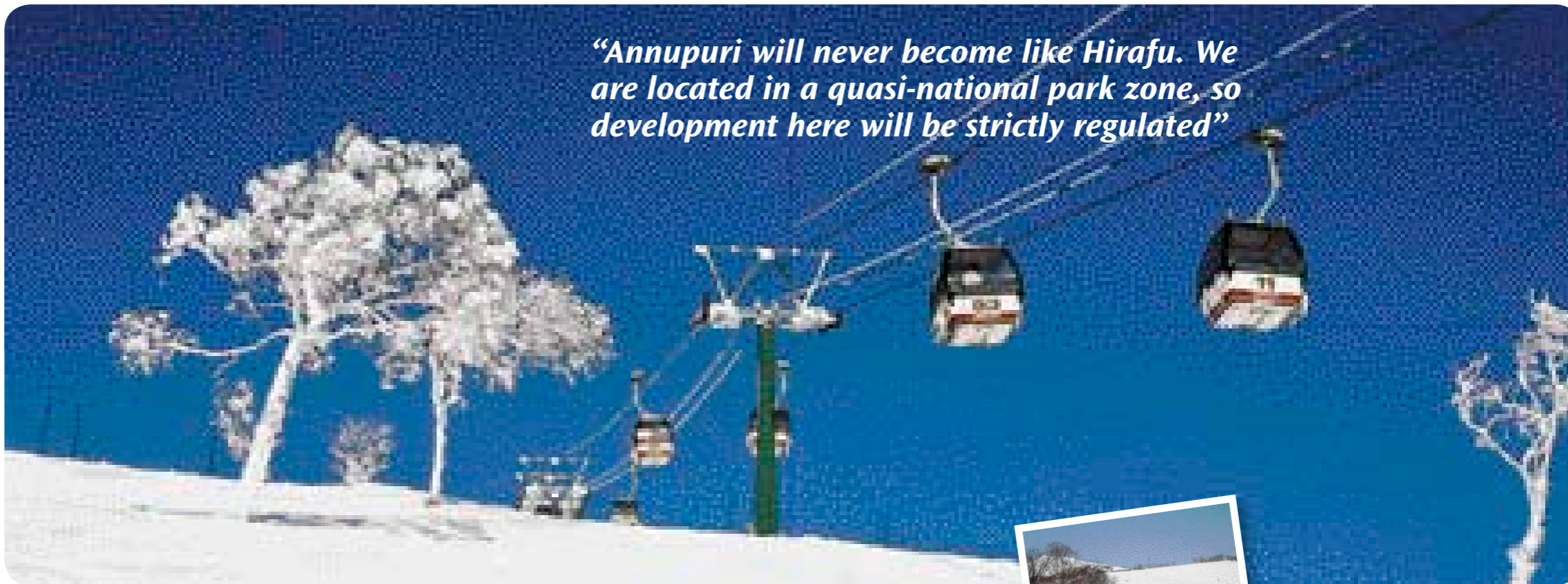
www.nisekomanagement.com



*Backcountry Adventures
Top Machines
Qualified Guides
Maximum Fun!*



For bookings call : 0909-757-4083
www.go-nsa.com



“Annupuri will never become like Hirafu. We are located in a quasi-national park zone, so development here will be strictly regulated”



areas is that you can go down almost anyway you like and you will be fed back out directly onto the main slope. No hike out. Some technical sections on the run back to the piste may test your tired legs and concentration but, for snowboarders in particular, it sure beats walking/skating back from the golf course in Hanazono.

Further across from the second bowl is the small resort of Moiwa which has changed hands a number of times over the years, but is on the cusp of some major developments. Although its tickets are not yet included on the all-mountain pass, you can ski between the two resorts easily enough, although I would recommend doing it with someone experienced.

Considering the investments that have been made in the other three base areas of the Niseko United resorts - Higashiyama (Citigroup), Hirafu (several Australian developers) and Hanazono (Richard Li's PCPD group) – it's interesting to note that the area with what many consider the best terrain seems to have almost sneaked under the radar of major investors.

The Annupuri lift system and all the land around the base are owned by Otaru-based Chuo Bus Company who established the resort in 1963 and continue to operate the lifts and some other businesses in the area. Although it may seem unusual for a bus company to own a ski resort, Annupuri CEO Toshio Fujisawa points out that the idea to establish Annupuri was to increase passenger numbers on the Niseko branch of their business. When asked what the future holds for Annupuri, Fujisawa says it won't follow in the steps of Hirafu. "We have no immediate plans to develop the base of the resort any further, but whatever we do we'd like to keep it a quiet haven that people of all nationalities can feel comfortable in". When pressed if there had been interest from investors in the resort, Fujisawa disclosed that they had received some approaches from companies interested in purchasing the resort, although nothing has yet tempted them to sell. "Annupuri will never become like Hirafu. We are located in a quasi-national park zone, so development here will be strictly regulated".

Annupuri has seen its share of investment, with the Annupuri Nikko hotel recently reopening its doors after being closed for several months for a complete refurbishment. All rooms, common areas

and restaurants have been redone and a new onsen has opened. One investor who has been very active in the Annupuri real estate market is Chris Peck, a former successful investment banker from Tokyo who began acquiring land in Annupuri in 2002 and now owns a substantial allotment of land at the base of the resort. Peck gave up his banking career in 2006 and relocated to Annupuri full time to oversee the development. Although reluctant to reveal the exact extent of his land it is known to be a large portion of the land from the main road up to the beginning of resort. Peck has built a series of impressive houses in 'Annupuri Village' that up until now he has sold only to friends and colleagues from Tokyo. "At Annupuri we have almost a blank slate to work with. We're in the process of planning exactly where it fits in the grand scheme of Niseko," states Peck.

Peck knows a good ski resort when he sees it. He's skied all over the world and worked in Colorado resorts for nine years as a student. "I actually met my wife on a weekend ski tour from Tokyo to Hokkaido. I'd been coming to Niseko for several years and found myself spending most of my time skiing and riding Annupuri," Peck recalls. "I always thought it had the best skiing on the mountain so I began to look at what land was available. As with the development of any major lifestyle resort, the natural environment is the first consideration. If the resort is then built to a high quality people will want to go there." The on and off mountain layout in Annupuri gives the feeling that a well developed resort at the base could be quite exceptional.

Almost all of the resort from the main road up is zoned quasi national park, the lowest tier of the three local national park classifications. Buildings are permissible, but only on minimum 600 tsubo lots (2000m2). These laws will likely define the area, and many see them as a positive for Annupuri's future. A combination of the zoning and the owner's vision should see that Annupuri Village is a long process of steady development.

Large single structure houses on big blocks will no doubt attract the family end of the market and it is this sector that has been investing in Annupuri Village to date. Peck is in the process of appointing a company to formulate the master plan with a view to create a thriving family friendly resort that he envisages could accommodate 2000 beds in 10 years.

Annupuri, like Higashiyama is located in the Niseko-cho (council) area, and hence under a different jurisdiction than Hirafu and Hanazono, which are in Kutchan-cho. Niseko-cho's 4500 residents are predominantly involved in farming and tourism and Peck is well aware of the need to incorporate the local community in his plans. He has initiated English lessons for the local elementary school and has installed the new rail in the terrain park complete with hand prints of local children.

Like the rest of the Niseko, ensuring the resort is popular year round is vital to long term success. All Annupuri lodge owners open their resorts year-round and some even claim to be busier in summer than winter. There is a healthy parasailing business through the summer once the gondola re-opens in June. Horse riding, hiking, golf and fly fishing are the major activities, and Shokutan beach is about 30 minutes drive away.

Although currently there are only a few restaurants at the base of Annupuri, a traditional German style micro-brewery, typical of the kind common in nearby Otaru, is slated for development in the near future. As construction continues it's likely that more restaurants and nightlife will inevitably follow. It will certainly be interesting to see where Annupuri eventually settles in the grand scheme of the Niseko United.

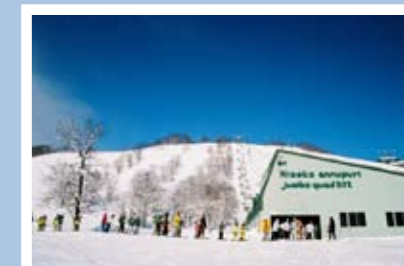
access information

To get to Annupuri from Hirafu you can ski, bus or drive.

To ski there from Hirafu take the Ace Pair lift #4 to the top of the mountain and traverse right. Keep traversing past the two side by side single chairs (Wonderland chairs A and B), which are part of Higashiyama. Once you reach the double chair you're in Annupuri and you can head down.

You can also take the Ace Pair lift #3 and traverse or walk to the top of the Higashiyama gondola, then ride down to the Wonderland Single Chairs A and B. Ride either of those up before traversing a short distance to the right before heading down.

If the lifts higher than Higashiyama Gondola or the King hooded Triple #3 in Hirafu are not running, you'll need to take the bus from the base of the Hirafu Gondola or Higashiyama Resort... these are the days everyone has trouble getting there so it's well worth the 45-minute trip.



Grabünden
 www.grabunden.jp
 11:00am-5:00pm
 "Grabünden" where quality is always guaranteed!
 Come in for lunch or dinner and choose from our amazing 30 plus variety of specialties and 140+ including original goods.
 This eat and drinkery
 specializes in Hira-fu area
 We are closed on Mondays
 TEL 0136-22-9371

Wine & Food Bar DRAGON
 Inspired by the ancient art of Japanese temple carpentry, infused with a love of the finest local ingredients... The Dragon Bar is an exquisite match the cultural of Japan. Visit the bar on the first floor, or the restaurant on the second which serves authentic Japanese cuisine. The DRAGON is supported by our soul sister. Enter the DRAGON.
 lunch 11am~3pm (1:30pm L.O.)
 dinner 6pm~11pm (10pm L.O.), bar~2am
 TEL 0136-22-7700
 http://www.dragon-ef.com

Java Bar
 Hira-fu's Coolest Lounge & Espresso Bar
 Best Espresso Coffee in Niseko!
 Bar open from 5pm til late
 FREE Internet Hotspot Open all day
 Live Music & DJs
 Sakura St. Mid Hira-fu Village, Shuttle Stop 4. t: 0136 23 0788
Java Massage
 Relaxation & Sports
 Relax after a day in the snow, Get your essential massage, Relaxation or sports remedial.
 Open 10am to 9pm. Cash only. t: 0136 23 0788 or Bookings essential. m: 080 33 888 962
 Upstairs @ Java Bar, Sakura St. Mid-Hira-fu. Shuttle Stop 4.

KAMIMURA
 FIRST FLOOR, YAMA SHIZEN WEST
 "A delectable blend of Japanese seasonal cuisine, and classic French technique"
 Head Chef Yuichi Kamimura, originally from Tetsuya's in Sydney
 reservations essential - 0136 21 22 88



ichimura soba

by Vanessa Gibson

No trip to Hokkaido would be complete without a bucket size bowl of its famous butter corn Ramen (Chinese style noodle). But they are so filling they leave you staggering out of the restaurant feeling like you've just been kicked in the stomach. In contrast the Japanese buckwheat noodle, Soba, is lighter, healthier and will warm you up in a cold climate just as well. Be sure to give it a try while you're here. Soba is a thin noodle made from buckwheat that is served in a hot, tasty soya based broth, but can also be enjoyed cold with a soy-negi-wasabi dipping sauce – perfect for a summer's lunch. In Japan's major cities, salary-men often slurp down a bowl standing at a bar in a train station or on street corner when they only have a few minutes to spare. The best soba, however, is generally savoured at a slow pace, and luckily for us we have one of the best soba restaurants in Japan, right here in Hira-fu - Ichimura.

Recently moved from Izumikiyo 1 to just out of Izumikiyo 2 on route 5, the building retains a river side location and natural warm atmosphere. The menu is clear with pictures and comprehensive English descriptions, all handwritten. The restaurant seats 24 with tatami room and stool seating for those tired of flopping on the floor. Ichimura cook all their soba teuchi style (handmade) using spring water from Mt Yotei. The buckwheat comes from the local area (Rankoshi) and is all prepared in the restaurant, grinded by millstone, and kneaded, folded and cut by hand.

The small but adequate menu selection differs from the standard soba fare and includes sansai (¥800) – a selection of mountain vegetables including the local wild warabi, the kamonanban duck, curry, and tempura. My dining companion plumped for the tempura soba (¥1,300). I couldn't resist the sansai (¥800) which was fresh fast and delicious. The service is quick and friendly and our waitress did her absolute best to help in English. Although not on the menu, if you ask the waitress, for an extra ¥150 you can opt for the juwari soba made from 100% buckwheat. It is quite rare to find 100% buckwheat soba so it's definitely worth a try. Normal soba (nihachi) is 80% buckwheat and 20% flour. When comparing juwari to nihachi, think cabernet sauvignon vs merlot. The juwari is darker, thicker and for more advanced appreciation. The thicker and chewier udon noodle is made from 100% udon and you can also order this from Ichimura. Also not on the menu but recommended, is to order a raw egg to throw in the broth -it cooks as you dine and gives you a protein fix if you need one.

The tempura batter is top quality and included eggplant, a huge prawn and pumpkin amongst others. If you can make the short trip out to Ichimura, you won't regret it.

Open 11am-3pm and 6pm – 8pm. Closed Tuesdays.
 Telephone 0136 23 0603
 Village map reference: D4

Hey powder and party lovers!

Nightlife News

New Years eve in Niseko – where else would you want to be?! Fireworks, torch runs and countdowns – yippee! I spent most of the night in the Dragon Bar – that place is so cool. It's so nice to see a real Japanese themed bar in Hira-fu. Late on you would have found me in Barunba – my late night venue of choice - it used to be a two car garage! We've also had so many opening parties. Dragon Bar, Red Bar, Splash, Gyu Bar (coke door), Apres, Barunba and Java bar all opened with a bang. Java has a new manager Tracey - and she has a different event on every night! Check it out.

The Ice Bar(s) are back! This year we have two ice bars in Hira-fu. The ice bar from last year is back, this time right behind the Northern Fox. For ¥1,000 you get a glass hand carved out of ice and your first drink. Further drinks are



Under construction!

¥500. Too cool for school church inspired design is the theme. The ice bar from two years ago has resurfaced, this time attached to Blo Blo bar just below the Alpen hotel. The designer, Hirohiko Takenaka is a true 'ice man' whose father began the Shikotsuko ice carving festival many years ago. His style is to create places of beauty that people can relax with a drink. The entrance leads you through a maze of natural icicles and various ice artists from the area have created ornaments to line the walls. The ceiling is being hosed every day to create a haven of icicles. Once opened around January 4 they will have a fire dancing show every night at 10pm. Don't miss this place while you are here.

The Red Bar has opened its doors again for its Friday night party. Curry house every other day and night, it hosts the coolest party in town every Friday night. They have a different DJs playing every week – Special guest DJ from Tokyo on Jan 11 and Mark Dynamics from Australia is playing his happy house on January 18. Get there.

Check back to me on Issue No. 3 for all the nightlife news – and you bar owners let me know about your events; or as Jerry McGuire says "Help me help you" nightlife@powderlife.co.jp or 222 000.



Saturday January 5 and 12
Java Bar – House and Party Night
 Guest DJs every week

January 5-14, Nightly
The Northern Fox
 Brad Holmes and the Hitmen
 Tokyo's favourite covers party band
 www.bradrockmusic.com

Sundays January 6 and 13
Java Bar cocktails and Jazz night
Tuesdays January 8 and 15
BBQ night at Blo Blo
 Fired dancing show at 10pm

Wednesdays January 9 and 16
Powderlife Kutchan Pub Crawl
 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.

Fridays January 11 and 18
Java Bar – DJ Mako
 Niseko's own resident female DJ

Java Bar Live Music Night
 Live acoustic sessions with Michael and other musicians.
 Free

Friday January 11
Red Bar Friday night party
 Special guest DJ from Tokyo
 1,000 with a free drink

Sat Dec 29
Java Bar Java House Sounds
 Funky house tunes that get the bar moving

January 15-18
The Northern Fox
 Refleins
 Sapporo Old Style Rock Band
 9pm – 12am ¥1,500

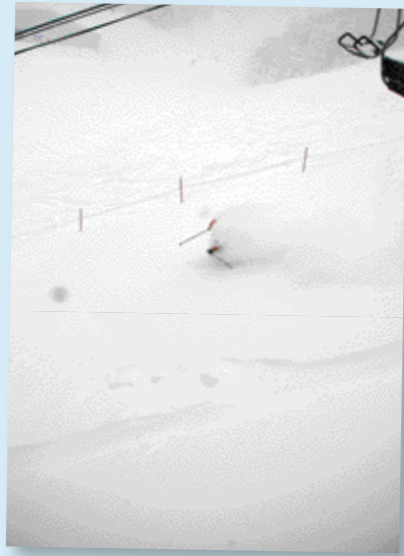
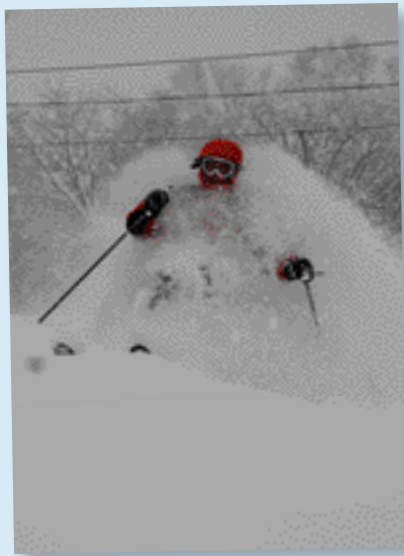
Friday January 18
The Red Bar, Part Night
 DJ MARK Dynamics from Sydney
 11pm – 3am ¥1,000 including one drink



Relaxation
 Open air hot spring bath
 Swimming pool
Grand HIRAFU
 http://www.grand-hirafu.jp

Nearest from old area!
Hotel Alpen
 TEL 0136-22-1105
 From ¥10,000 (for per person, per night)
 * including tax, breakfast, lift ticket.

Dinner at Alpen Hotel
NISEKO KOGEN HOTEL
 TEL 0136-22-0117
 From ¥8,000 (for per person, per night)
 * including : tax, breakfast, lift ticket.





Jyuu Okonomiyaki

Tetsuo Inoue, 58 came to Niseko six years ago because he loves snow. He used to come for snowboarding holidays but one day made it permanent. He closed his small business in Osaka and headed north. His friend was the owner of an Okonomiyaki restaurant in Osaka - okonomiyaki is Osaka's most famous dish and is best described as a pizza crossed with a pancake - and Tetsuo helped in the restaurant for two months, during which time he ate okonomiyaki everyday. So much so he's actually sick of it. But fortunately for visitors to Niseko, he still loves making it! After moving here he began thinking about opening his own Okonomiyaki restaurant but was warned off by people who told him Hokkaido people wouldn't go for it. He ignored the advice and went ahead with his plan - deciding on Annupuri because he thought he'd be too busy in Hirafu and wouldn't have time to ride. Just his luck, the restaurant was a hit and he's flat out anyway! He still rides Annupuri almost every morning. He's living his dream lifestyle and can never see himself leaving. Inoue-san you're a lucky guy.

Graubunden

Junko Watanabe is the owner of Graubunden café in Izumikyo 2. She's had a long association with the area - when she was little her family moved to Niseko because of her dad's work as an employee of a chair lift building company. She always loved skiing and spent most of her childhood on the mountain. The ski business was so big in Japan at that time that many tour companies came to Niseko and asked her to be a model on skis. She was seduced by the advertising game and moved to Tokyo. Success followed and she soon opened her own business as a stylist in Roppongi. However Niseko was always on her mind and she couldn't stay away. Jun-san returned and opened her little café. Most lunchtimes you'll find it full of seasonal staffers who love her fresh sandwiches. Don't let the locals have all the fun, pop in and say hi to Junko-san and grab a sandwich and cake!



Grove Cafe

Grove is a quaint little café in Annupuri. Owner Kumi Harima 38, is from Osaka and came here on a skiing holiday several years ago. She didn't think about moving here until returning to Osaka and felt that on reflection, Niseko was a great place to live. Her husband's job can be done on computers and they realised they could live anywhere they liked. So they bought land and built a house in Annupuri. Her husband had to return to Osaka for work, but she had already started her café and now has no time to miss him. The inspiration came from the urge to have somewhere to relax away from the pensions in Annupuri. A place you could just walk in a get a cup of coffee without needing to stay there. She is also a ski instructor, and most days teaches in the morning and runs the café in the afternoon. Harima-san's other passion is cats - she has three that keep her busy. Kumi is keen to try snowboarding in powder and her New Year's resolution is to learn English so she can talk to more visitors. Be sure to drop in when you're next in Annupuri!



Kumagorou

Kumagorou owner Kumiko Yamaguchi was born in Yamagata prefecture in northern Honshu but said she always felt the call of Hokkaido. Like so many others she was drawn by the open spaces, nature, and beauty. She lived in Sapporo for five or six years for university, and worked part-time at a restaurant. Kumiko-san doesn't know why she chose Niseko but she moved here eight years ago and found a job as a chef at JoJo's. She worked there for two years and snowboarded a lot. So much in fact, that she felt she needed something more and decided to start her own business. She opened next to the Seicomart, in the space that the police box is now. She found it good for business but a little noisy and busy, so she moved into a haven in middle Hirafu. The owner of the building has plans for an izakaya at night and gave her the use of the space for lunch. The izakaya has still yet to materialize but the lunches have gone from strength to strength.



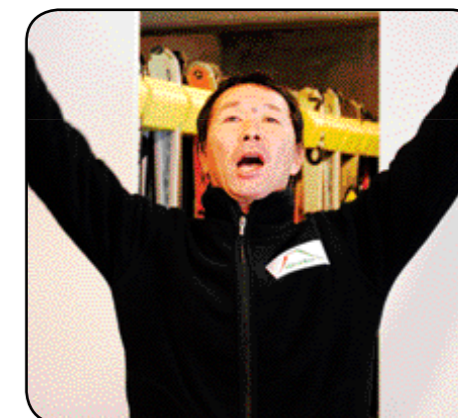
LIFTIE Norikatsu

name: Norikatsu Shimizu **名前:** シミズ ノリカツ
age: 35 **hometown:** Ishikawa **年齢:** 35 **出身地:** 石川県
time in niseko: 10 years **ニセコ来てどのくらい?:** 10年
ski/board: ski & telemark **スキーヤー?スノーボーダー?:** スキーとテレマーク
when did you start?: Ski 25 years ago, telemark 2 yrs **スキー/テレマーク歴:** スキー歴25年、テレマーク歴2年
why Niseko?: Japanese movie "Take me to ski" **なんでニセコに来たんですか?:** 私をスキーに連れてっての映画を見て
languages?: Japanese only **話す言語は?:** 日本語
trips overseas?: No **次はどこに行きたいですか?:** ハワイ、ニューカレドニア等あたりのところ。
where do you want to go next?: Warm place like Hawaii, New Caledonia, etc. **好きな...:** 色は? 黒と茶色
favourite...: **ブランドは?:** コロンビア、ハーリーハンソン
colour: Black & brown **食べ物?:** シシ
brand: Columbia, H/H **レストラン?:** 食彩比羅夫
food: sushi **バーは?:** ミナミナ
restaurant: Shokusai Hirafu **温泉は?:** 蘭泉閣
bar: Mina mina **コースは?:** 団体コース
onsen: Yusenkaku **ニセコ以外でこのスキー場に行きたいですか?:** ウィスラー、蔵王。
course: Kokutai course **ニセコについて自分だけが知っていると思う事?:** 倶知安の町、五色温泉も意外とおもしろい。
where else in the world do you want to go skiing?: Whistler, Zao Japan **ニセコで絶対必要だと思うアイテムは?:** 長靴
how long will you be in niseko?: Until I lose my job **あなたの人生観は?:** マイナスにならない。
what does Niseko need?: A lot of snow every year **What's your life philosophy?:** Be positive
niseko Secrets?: Kutchan town is pretty enjoyable too. Goshiki onsen is great.



SKI PATROL Boushi

name: Norihito Kanazawa **nickname:** boushi **Age:** 37
hometown: Saitama prefecture **Time in niseko:** 19 years
ski/board: Ski & telemark **when did you start?:** Ski 19 years ago, telemark 18 years ago
why did you move to niseko?: Snow & beautiful 4 seasons.
what languages do you speak?: So far Japanese only
trips overseas?: NZ, Asia **Where do you want to go next?:** Fiji
favourite...: **colour:** Green **food:** Fish (sashimi) **restaurant:** Bang bang
bar: Bz **onsen:** Koikawa, Weiss **course:** Sen-no-ki course, Alpen course
how long will you be in niseko for?: As long as I can
niseko secrets?: Sapporo (foot ball team) is strong!, There is an onsen spring on the slope (cannot bathe there...)
life philosophy?: enjoy nature, drinking -- silly talk with friends.
名前: カナザワ ノリヒト、**ニックネーム:** ぼうし、**年齢:** 37
出身地: 埼玉県、**ニセコ来てどのくらいですか?:** 19年
スキーヤー?スノーボーダー?: スキーとテレマーク
スキー/テレマーク歴: スキー歴19年、テレマーク歴18年
なんでニセコに来たんですか?: 雪、最高!四季、最高!
話す言語は?: 日本語
次はどこに行きたいですか?: フィジー
好きな...: 色は? 草色
ブランドは?: ノースフェイス、マーモット
食べ物は?: 魚(さしみ)
レストランは?: パンパン
バーは?: Bz
温泉は?: 鯉川温泉、ワイズ温泉
コースは?: せんの本コース、アルペンコース
ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか?: 居れる限り
ニセコに必要なものは?: 特になし
ニセコについて自分だけが知っていると思う事?: コンサドーレ札幌強し。ゲレンデ内に温泉が湧いている。



SKI HIRE Yasu

name: Yasushi Yoshioka **名前:** ヨシオカ ヤスシ
nickname: Yasu **Age:** 50 **ニックネーム:** ヤス
hometown: Niseko **年齢:** 50 **出身地:** ニセコ
do you like powder?: I love it! **スキーヤー?スノーボーダー?:** スキーヤー
ski/board: Ski **スキー歴:** 47年
when did you start?: 47 years ago **話す言語は?:** 日本語
what languages do you speak?: Japanese **海外に行った事はありますか?:** ない
trips overseas?: None **次はどこに行きたいですか?:** オーストラリア
where do you want to go next?: Australia **好きな...:** 色は? 黄色
favourite...: **レストランは?:** 花よし
colour: Yellow **バーは?:**アフターズバー
food: Natto **温泉は?:** 東山温泉
restaurant: Hanayoshi **コースは?:** シュノーケルコース
bar: Afters Bar 2nd floor of Higashiyama Tower Hotel **ニセコ以外でこのスキー場に行きたいですか?:** ウィスラー
onsen: Higashiyama onsen **ニセコにはどのくらいいる予定ですか?:** 死ぬまでずっと
course: Snorkel course **ニセコに必要なものは?:** もっとシンプルにオールシーズン最高!夏のラフティングの川からの景色も最高!
where else in the world do you want to go skiing?: Whistler **ニセコであんまり知られていない事は?:** 薬師温泉が穴場です
how long will you be in niseko for?: Until I die **ニセコで絶対必要だと思うアイテムは?:** 自然にとけ込む心
niseko secrets?: Niseko is great all seasons. Try rafting. view from the river is great too! Yakushi onsen **あなたの人生観は?:** 最悪を予想して、最善をつくる。
what's your life philosophy?: Presuppose the worst, do the best.

NISEKO BASE SPORTS SCHOOL & RENTAL

We will beat any genuine price of our competitors lessons!

KIDS CLUB

Rental prices start as low as **¥3580 per day***

*Conditions Apply

www.nisekibase.com - (0138) 21 5050

NEW TEMPORARY LOCATIONS
 Ski School Bus stop #17 (next door to The Park Hotel)
 Rental located Opposite SKJapan.com HQ Bus stop #11

Nathan's
 Business Hours from 7:30 to 23:00
 TANGIICENTRIF 1F 175-8
 Aza-Yamada Kitz Law-shie
 TEL:0136 21 3121

Nathan's
 Business Hours from 7:30 to 23:00
 TANGIICENTRIF 1F 175-8
 Aza-Yamada Kitz Law-shie
 TEL:0136 21 3121

WINTER ACTIVITIES

BACK COUNTRY (CLIMBING)
BACK COUNTRY (LIFT ACCESS)
SNOWSHOE
SKI, SNOWBOARDS AND TELEMARQUE (LAWSON)
CAT TOURS
X-COUNTRY SKI

NAC TEL:0136-23-2030 www.nac-web.com
 FAX:0136-23-2094 179-53 yamada kutchan
NISEKO ADVENTURE CENTRE aburahi-gun hokkaido JAPAN

in focus
neil hartmann

Long time Hokkaido resident Neil Hartmann shot to prominence with the release of snowboarding road trip movie Car Danchi in 2005. The sequel Car Danchi 2, including the classic footage of the epic 2006 New Year, has been ranked by some as one of the best good-time snowboarding movies ever made. Powderlife chats with Neil about the philosophy behind his movies and gets some recommendations for the best places to ride while we're at it.



How did you get interested in making snow movies?

It was a kind of dream of mine since I was in high school. At that time I didn't really think about setting up and running a snowboard-based production company, but I did want to make and direct movies. I was DJing on the radio in Japan until 1997 when I decided to quit and take a chance on making snowboard videos. My first effort was a video titled 'Introduction' and it's just snowballed from there.

How did you choose the name One Films

I thought about a lot of different names and ended up settling on One Films for the following reasons: snowboarding involves the use of only one board, it leaves only one track, and at that time I was one person working alone to make the film. Taking it a bit deeper I would add that everything in the universe comes from one and we are really all one in this together. As for the 'Films' part, I was shooting on Super 8mm film a lot of the time and wanted to make that an important part of the company image.

Who is involved in filming and editing your movies?

Well until the last year it had been just me working alone. As things have grown bigger and the projects I am working on more varied, I've started using some people to help me shoot on location sometimes. The editing process is pretty much solo even now. The movie I just finished this year called UE snowboarder featuring Uemura as the star, was a little different. Since he is the only one in the movie I made sure that we did all the editing together so as to make sure that he was happy with the end result.

What are your basic principles on workmanship?

I like to work hard. I have always been a bit of a workaholic and I like other people who are willing to put in the extra effort. I think that is why I have tried to keep One Films so small. I could do with five or even 10 staff helping out, but I tend to get frustrated with other people's working styles, or lack of work ethic. So in the end I find it faster to do things on my own. It is the tiny little details that the audience will probably never be aware of on a conscious level, but they are so important. And that is what really creates a distinctive style. I like films that grab you and don't let you blink or swallow or think about anything other than the film you're watching to the very end.

How do you select the riders for your movies?

For the Car Danchi films the only rule to being part of the crew is that you have to sleep in your car when we go filming! If you can't do that then you can't be in the movie, no matter how good you can ride!!

What is the secret of One Films' success?

I try to encapsulate the essence of fun. I want people to watch and go, 'wow that looks like super fun, I want to go there and ride like that'. Most snow films out there now are so high level and so hardcore that I think most people can't relate to them. But really I don't think One Films can be said to be a success yet. We are doing pretty good, but there is still a lot left to be done and it's going to take more major sales to truly be a player on a global level. You've got to aim high, right?

What are your top three tips for visitors to Niseko?

- 1 Try to ride/ski every course in the Niseko United in one day!
- 2 Then go to NAC, climb the wall and eat a brownie.
- 3 Go to the Loaf Cafe in Kutchan to meet and skate the bowl with the locals. All in one day if you can handle it!!

To win a copy of Car Danchi 2, tell us about your best ever snowboarding roadtrip. Email ed@powderlife.co.jp.



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

SUNLIGHT YOUTEI II
The town of sunshine filtering through foliage

Information MAP
Local guide chart

Block Map
All blocks with amazing view of Mt. Youtei

It has sold

Property Overview

- 1. Location: 114-12, Aomori-cho, Kamikawa-gun, Aomori
- 2. Access: 712 min. from JR Gakko station by car
- 3. Total floor area: 425.81㎡ (126.00tsubo)
- 4. Capacity: 12 units (120.00tsubo)
- 5. Completion: 2003.12.31
- 6. Price: 1,177.13million yen
- 7. Price: 1,177.13million yen
- 8. Price: 1,177.13million yen
- 9. Price: 1,177.13million yen
- 10. Price: 1,177.13million yen

Company overview
License No. 229966, certified by Governor of Ishikari 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, Sapporo-shi, Hokkaido, 065-0014 JAPAN
http://www.mz-cosmo.jp
email cosmo@hscb-jtd.com phone: (011) 733-6611

Local Business Partner
License No. 53455, Certified by Governor of Shiribeshi Prefecture

YUI HOME PLANNING CO., LTD.
Kita 2-jo Higashi 1-choume Kutchan-cho Abuta-gun, Hokkaido, 044-0002 JAPAN
email yuihome@extra.ocn.ne.jp phone: (0138) 22-2711

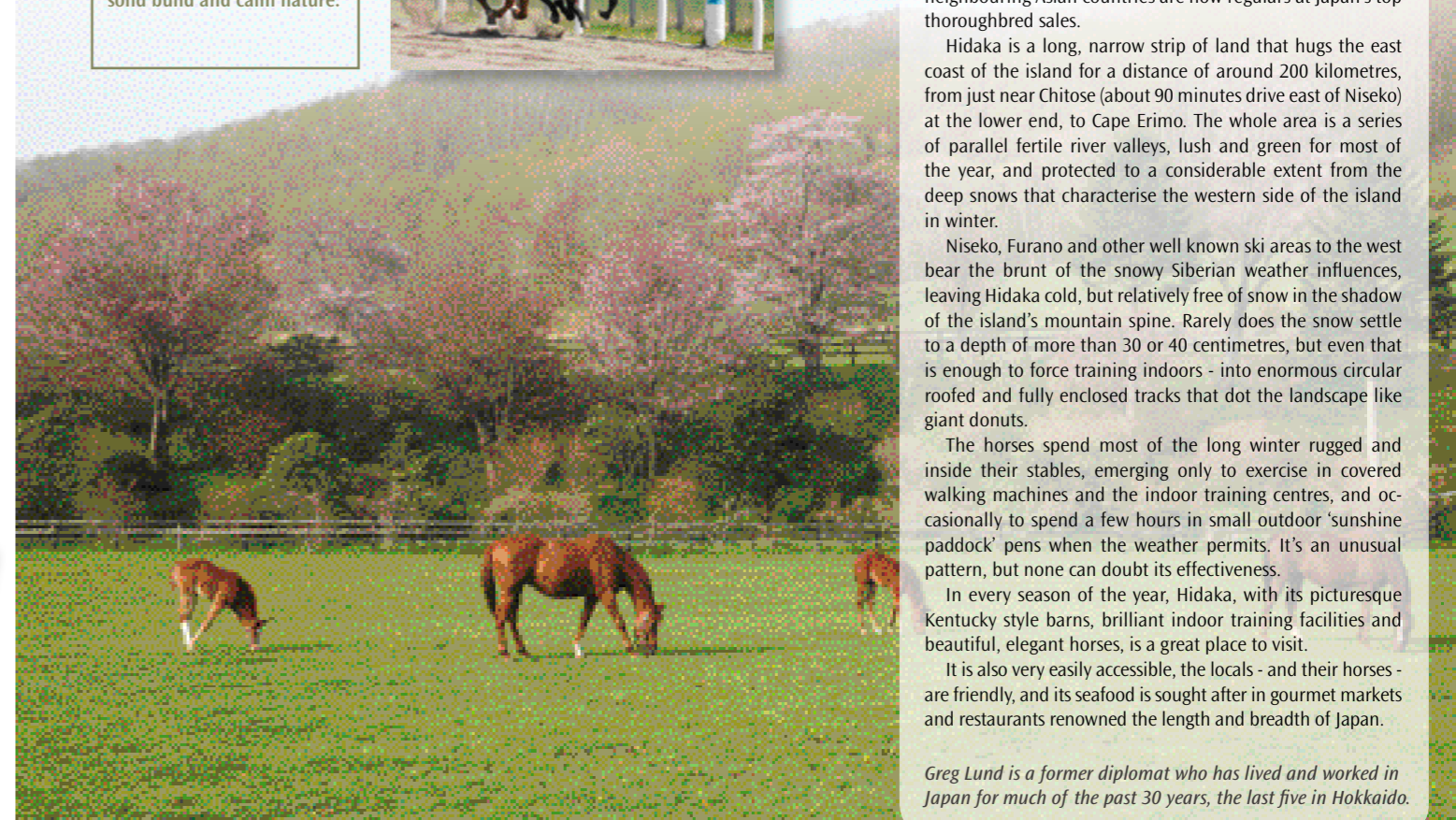
hidaka horse heaven
the ultimate breeding ground

by greg lund
photos tetsumi tanaka

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 unbearable 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'.

Winning hearts

A Hidaka horse is stealing hearts across Japan, thanks to a heart shaped blaze on its forehead. The yet-to-be-named one year old from the Monbetsu racecourse - in the heart of Hidaka throughbred region - is due to start racing next spring. Already he's attracted national media attention and his handler is confident he's got plenty of potential, citing his solid build and calm nature.



Delta Blues and Pop Rock. Almost all Australians will recognise these as the names of the two Japanese horses that burst from obscurity to take first and second places in the 2006 Melbourne Cup.

And they might well have done it again this year if it had not been for the Equine Influenza outbreak that has wreaked havoc on the racing industry in Australia.

What is not common knowledge is that both horses are from Hokkaido - born and bred within a stone's throw of Chitose Airport, itself now widely known as the gateway to Niseko and the world's best powder snow.

The world's best powder snow and the world's best horses are an unlikely mix, but the fact that they exist side by side throws just one more fascinating spotlight on Japan's amazing north island.

Hokkaido is home to approximately 25,000 thoroughbred horses, with around 7000 new foals born each year. They arrive from mid-January through till early spring, entering a cold, white world that some say starts the toughening up process which makes them magnificent racing 'machines'.

The thoroughbred industry is concentrated in the Hidaka region, chosen by the Japanese government in the late 19th century essentially to provide horses for Japan's then rapidly growing Imperial Army. Hokkaido in those days was largely unpopulated, and incentives were given to farmers from depressed rural areas of mainland Japan to populate, produce, and protect the island from possible foreign invasion.

Over the years, as the machinery of war evolved, so too did the horse industry, passing through a predominantly Arab breeding (and racing) era to become a thoroughbred producer that today aspires to overtake America's Kentucky, the UK's Newmarket, France's Chantilly and Australia's own Hunter Valley as the world's leading racehorse breeding and training ground.

In addition to the Melbourne Cup, Japanese horses have now won major races in the UK, come close in France and the USA, and regularly perform well on the Asian racing circuit in Singapore, Hong Kong and Macao. Owners and trainers from neighbouring Asian countries are now regulars at Japan's top thoroughbred sales.

Hidaka is a long, narrow strip of land that hugs the east coast of the island for a distance of around 200 kilometres, from just near Chitose (about 90 minutes drive east of Niseko) at the lower end, to Cape Erimo. The whole area is a series of parallel fertile river valleys, lush and green for most of the year, and protected to a considerable extent from the deep snows that characterise the western side of the island in winter.

Niseko, Furano and other well known ski areas to the west bear the brunt of the snowy Siberian weather influences, leaving Hidaka cold, but relatively free of snow in the shadow of the island's mountain spine. Rarely does the snow settle to a depth of more than 30 or 40 centimetres, but even that is enough to force training indoors - into enormous circular roofed and fully enclosed tracks that dot the landscape like giant donuts.

The horses spend most of the long winter rugged and inside their stables, emerging only to exercise in covered walking machines and the indoor training centres, and occasionally to spend a few hours in small outdoor 'sunshine paddock' pens when the weather permits. It's an unusual pattern, but none can doubt its effectiveness.

In every season of the year, Hidaka, with its picturesque Kentucky style barns, brilliant indoor training facilities and beautiful, elegant horses, is a great place to visit.

It is also very easily accessible, the locals - and their horses - are friendly, and its seafood is sought after in gourmet markets and restaurants renowned the length and breadth of Japan.

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.



Ads below correspond to the map in order from 1-6 from top to bottom.

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).

FUJII Confectionary Store

Don't miss Kutchan's famous Cream Puffs. With the Crispy Shell being baked here in the kitchen. We stuff 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. 8:00am - 8:00pm (closed on tuesdays)

波ちゃん家 NAM. CHAN CH.

Authentic traditional Japanese izakaya casual dining restaurant. Big servings, good prices. Serve with plenty of cold beer - on top of course!

1F. 1st Fl. Sun. hrs. tel: 0136-21-9158

Loaf Lounge

When it's establishment in 2006 the smiling LOAF LOUNGE has quickly established it's self as a local favorite. Catch all our early the great food, and a wide selection of cocktails. The lounge opens at 4:30. Day drop into the right living areas around the bar too. Please check the website for details of weekend events, and don't forget to try out some of the games. A hotspot that should not miss. <http://loafloounge.com/press.html>

Blue Cafe

Hours: 12:00-22:30
closed on Mondays
tel: 0136-22-3255

Feast on delicious Hokkaido fare prepared in an iron pot

- Seafood specialties, potato salad - ¥2,000
- Kaniwashi - ¥2,500
- Mikanuki Chicken - ¥2,000
- Hokkaido Beef Stew - ¥2,500
- Beef Stew - ¥2,000
- Beef Stew - ¥2,000

*No Room Available

Be. 7 PM-3 AM
tel: 090-7515-3328

pool, darts, dj, eat, drink, relax... be. Bring a friend or bring a party. Spend a night in Kutchan at Be. 1F of Oowaki Bldg. *No Cover Charge



rebel without a course

by magnus alexander

A rebellious, offbeat personality definitely seems to be a common character trait of talented chefs - Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsay, the two fat ladies - to name but a few well known examples.

Much less famous, arguably no less talented, and certainly as interesting, is Kutchan's Hirotsugu Hashimoto.

Hashimoto-san actually stumbled upon cooking after being expelled from his college where he was studying to become an architect.

When he was 18 he headed to Europe and trained as a chef for three and a half years in a hotel on the Austrian-German border.

Over the next 20 odd years he travelled the world dabbling in a variety of business and leisure pursuits.

Among a range of eclectic and impressive achievements, Hashimoto-san bought into 100 hamburger franchises in California; was briefly the all-Japan windsurfing champion; became a surf bum in Hawaii; owned a surfing wholesale company in Sapporo; and was involved in several restaurant, bar and coffee shop ventures.

About 20 years ago he settled down somewhat in Niseko. He bought the Village House pension in the middle village at a time when Hirafu was 'so quiet you could hear leaves falling on the roof in autumn'.

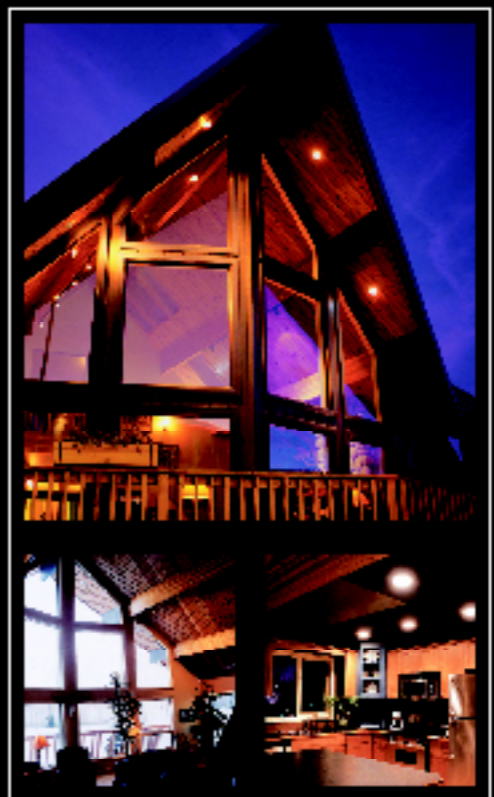
Always one to stray from the norm, Hashimoto-san was one of the pioneers of snowboarding in Hirafu. Still today he regularly boards, but also spends a lot of time taking people on guided fishing tours of local rivers and streams.

But what should be of most interest to Niseko visitors today is his unique brand of cooking, influenced by the years exploring the world and experimenting with food. He has his own small organic farm and, utilising his artistic flair, creates fresh, vibrant, unique dishes.

His restaurant's name, Shunsai, explains well what one can expect to find on the menu - shun means fresh, seasonal ingredients; sai means colour.

Located on Eki Mae Dori just near the train station, Shunsai is a culinary experience not to be missed.

Niseko Linwood Village



Nature Inspired Niseko Living

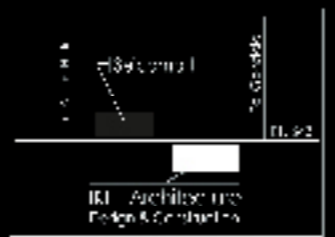
INFORMATION AND SALES

KEE Architecture
Design & Construction
170-138 Aza Yomuda
Suttsuga-cho, Hakkeiso
T044-0081 JAPAN

TEL: +81 (0)136.212.434
FAX: +81 (0)136.212.004

EMAIL:
Info@nisekolinwoodvillage.com

WEBSITE:
www.nisekolinwoodvillage.com



IKEE

LINWOOD



Grabünden www.grabunden.jp
11:00am-5:00pm
Swedish, Italian and Japanese...
"Grabünden" where quality is always guaranteed!
Come in for lunch or dinner and choose from our amazing 30 plus variety of specialties and fresh imported original goods.

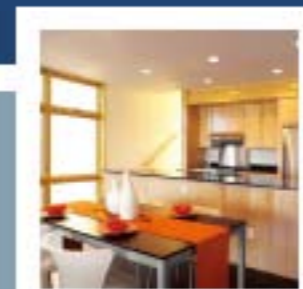


Take out and delivery
Specialties of Hiraifu area
We are proud to be here!

Tel: 0136-23-3371



Real Estate Land Sales
Apartments
Developments
New Home Construction
Architectural Services
Property Management
And More...



Niseko Realty Sales
170-138 Aza-Yamada, Kutchan-cho
Hokkaido, 044-0081 JAPAN
TEL: +81 (0)136-23-2221
FAX: +81 (0)136-23-3339
Info@nisekorealty.com
www.nisekorealty.com
Located in Niseko Hirafu across
from the seicomart.

Sky no longer the limit in Hirafu

Tough new restrictions governing condominium development are on the way in Hirafu and Hanazono, and soon could follow in Higashiyama and Annupuri as well.

The local Kutchan government has announced plans to introduce the new restrictions, which will fundamentally alter the height and scale of condominium developments from as early as next Spring, according to the Hokkaido Shimbun, the major local daily newspaper.

According to the Hokkaido Shimbun, the Kutchan authorities say they have decided to enact the new legislation out of frustration resulting from developers failing to abide by current guidelines, which are not legally enforceable, and because of increasing problems arising from snow clearing disputes on small building sites.

While full details are yet to be revealed, the newspaper indicates that while there could be a slight increase in the size of building footprints, overall floor area will be significantly reduced, and height limits will be set so that new buildings blend in with the surrounding forest vegetation, which suggests a 'treetop height' policy.

If introduced as planned, the new regulations would impact seriously on a large number of large-scale new projects currently in the planning stage, and developers are expressing concern that the changes are being rushed in by authorities with insufficient consultation.

They are warning that continued growth in the area, particularly in the Hirafu and Hanazono areas, could stall, with serious economic consequences for the whole Kutchan region.

Developers say they were invited to attend meetings in mid-December and presented with the outline of the new proposals 'fait accompli'.

Signs that the new policy could spread to other parts of the Niseko ski area during 2008 emerged in a further report in the Hokkaido Shimbun on 22 December.

It quoted the mayor of Niseko, which administers the remaining ski resort areas of Higashiyama, Annupuri and Moiva, who said that Niseko also placed a high value on preserving the local environment and was closely studying the Kutchan plans.

Last big Hirafu-fringe property for sale

A privately owned valley just several hundred metres from Hirafu is on the market for ¥700,000,000, or \$US7m.

Spring Valley is a 10,800sqm (3280 tsubo) estate which frames a postcard view of Mt Yotei out its mouth.

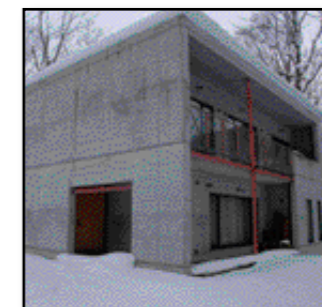
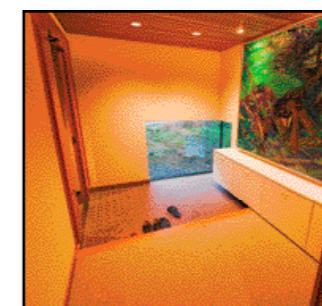
The property - situated just past the base of the family lift on the way to St Moritz - has four small log cabins with plenty of space to build more.

Listing agent Niseko Property director Ruskin McLennan said it would likely end up a redevelopment site and was good value.

"It has great views of Yotei, is only 5 minutes walk to the lifts and at that price is great value.

"It provides opportunity for development or subdivision. It would be ideal for a developer who wanted to create a unique estate."

McLennan said the land has been owned by the same family for about 20 years.



Kokage House

¥80,000,000

Kokage House was the first concrete style house in the village. The design ensures it stays cool in summer, warm in winter and low maintenance year round.

It's designed to maximise light during all seasons, which gives a spacious feel to all the rooms, especially the open plan living area on the ground floor.

It's within easy walking distance of the resort shuttle bus stop and Yukoro Onsen.

Listing agent Niseko Property says the 200 tsubo block could be immediately subdivided into two 100 tsubo blocks.

the facts

Lower Village
661.4 m2 (200 tsubo)
3 bedrooms
1 bathrooms
Walk to...
Shuttle 1 minutes
Lifts 15 minutes
Convenience store 7 min
Inquiries to Niseko Property

+81 (0)136 21 5060

Professional Sports Massage in Five Star Luxury

Come and visit Niseko Massage to soothe your tired muscles and revitalize your body and mind. Our highly qualified and experienced massage therapists will tone your body and prepare you for your next day on the mountains. Our rooms are luxuriously appointed with comfortable massage tables, all with arm rests. We are conveniently located on the second floor of Astoria 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 Services

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

90 minute, full body Oil Massage: ¥16,000

The total recovery package - think of it as having one with "The Doc". Relax and drift away as we help you enjoy the rest 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: ¥5,000

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 whilst still giving you time to make your restaurant reservation.

Please note:

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 21 0399 Fax: 0136 22 2011

www.NisekoMassage.com Info@NisekoMassage.com

beyond hirafu

interest expands outside the village

by prue tilley

Until recently, most of the local real estate focus has been on the small area of Hirafu. However, big plans are in the wings and many buyers are still unaware of the huge investment potential that lies in surrounding areas.

Individual investors and development companies alike are actively searching outside Hirafu in an effort to get more value for their yen. The reason for this disinterest can largely be attributed to the soaring value of Hirafu real estate over the past few years. Certain land areas in the village have enjoyed upwards of a 600% increase over the last five years* – great for early investors, not-so-great for those wishing to obtain their slice of Niseko in 2008.

Promising future growth areas can best be identified by acquisitions in the nearby ski resorts this year: Niseko Moiwa Resort by Zephyr; Nihon Harmony Resorts and subsequently the Hanazono resort area by Pacific Century Premium Developments (PCPD); and the Higashiyama Prince Hotel management being taken on by the Hilton Hotel chain.

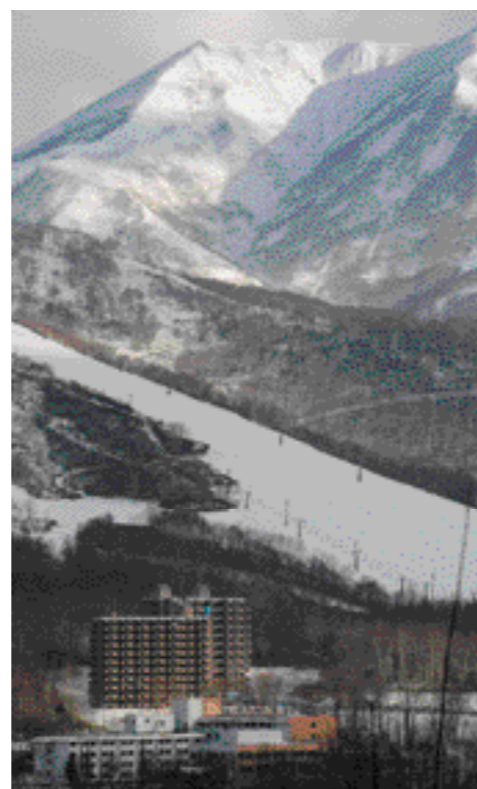


In what is a first for the region, Niseko Moiwa will be a master-planned ski resort community. Australian property group Citimark, together with Japanese development company Fox, plan to develop a ski-in, ski-out neighbourhood over the next three to five years. It will include holiday apartments, premium homes, forest condominiums and a retail precinct, with plans for access and connection to the nearby Annupuri ski runs. The first stages of this extensive development are currently a fraction of the price of comparable Hirafu developments.

The essence of this master-planned concept is in contrast to the eclectic style of the Hirafu area. While the boom that the village has experienced in recent years has been fantastic for both investors and local businesses, the lack of design guidelines in the Kutchan building code has resulted in an eclectic mix of styles. Although this certainly adds to the charm of Hirafu, the long term plans being brought to the table by developers starting from ground zero, offer the opportunity for buyers to invest with knowledge of the future direction of the area.

At the other end of the property spectrum, Annupuri Village Chalets represent a totally different development style to that of Hirafu, Moiwa and Higashiyama. This emerging community currently consists of half a dozen luxuriously expansive alpine-style houses. Cafes, pensions and restaurants are also within minutes from the Annupuri gondola in this developing region. To give a comparative indication of cost, for the price of a new condominium/apartment or townhouse in Hirafu, a buyer could purchase a fully-furnished alpine home on a sizeable chunk of land in Annupuri Village – which is only ten minutes drive from Hirafu.

In the Hanazono area, speculation and anticipation for future development plans continue since its acquisition earlier this year. This region is already showing the same promising investment potential as Hirafu, with the value of land in certain areas nearly doubling within this year alone*. At the time of the acquisition, PCPD informed the public that their



specific plans for development would be revealed in early 2008.

While the investment potential in the busy streets of Hirafu is obviously still plentiful, this is just the beginning for Niseko. Take the opportunity to investigate the investment potential in nearby areas before prices reflect that of their Hirafu neighbour.

Prue Tilley is marketing manager for Niseko Real Estate.

*Figures Niseko Real Estate.



HOKKAIDO REAL ESTATE

Expert property investment and sales advice in Niseko Japan - Asia's hottest skiing destination.

Hokkaido Real Estate is one of Niseko's market leaders, extremely professional and with a strong track record. Find out more about the lifestyle or investment opportunities of our diverse range of properties - please call us on 0136 21 6211 or drop by our office at 2F Mountain Side, 190-6 Aza Yamada (50 metres east of Seicomart - towards Kutchan).

Contact JASON KING for further information

Mobile: 080 6587 6052

Email: jason@hokkaidorealestate.com

Web: www.hokkaidorealestate.com



hakuba real estate

SALES & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

Property sales and building development in the Hakuba Valley.

World-class winter resort and year round activities at the site of the 1998 Winter Olympics.

TEL 399-9211
 INT.....81 261 75 3073
 LOCAL.....0261 75 3073
 FAX.....0261 75 7008
 MOBILE.....090 1345 9636

NAGANO-KEN
 KITA-AZUMIGUN
 HAKUBA MURA OAZA
 KAMISHIRO 27436-7

www.hakubarealestate.com
info@hakubarealestate.com

WEST CANADA PROPERTIES
 NISEKO JAPAN

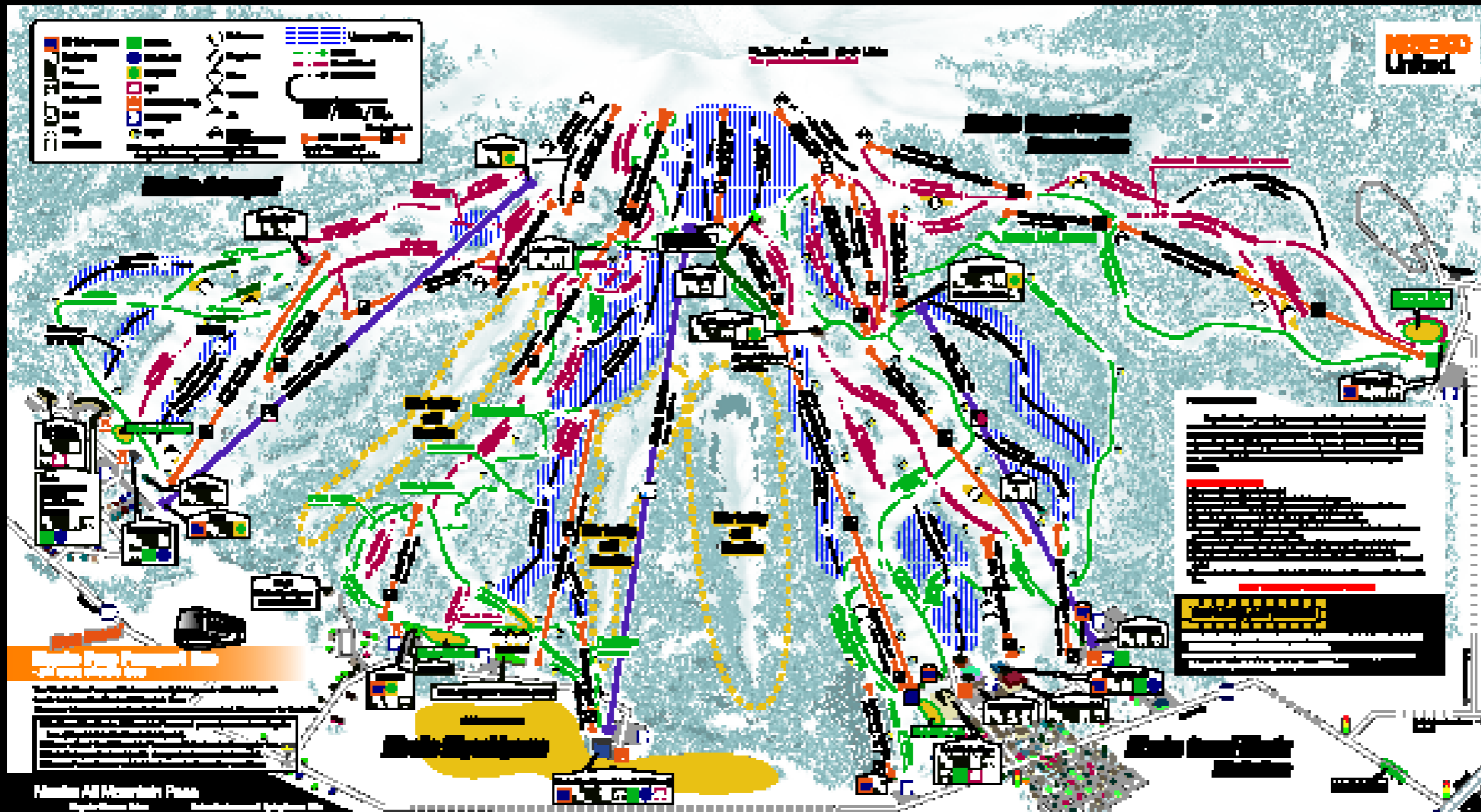
Niseko's Finest Properties

West Canada Properties offers the finest selection of land and Properties.

Real Estate
 西カナダプロパティーズニセコ

West Canada Properties
 西カナダプロパティーズニセコ

TEL: 0136(21)-7508
www.westcanadaproperties.com



Your mountain guide on-piste and off
We've had a good bit of snow since the launch of our first issue. At the time of going to print only Moiwa Gate #6 was opened, but avalanche expert Akio Shinya and his team reckon they are very close to opening all gates. Hopefully you've already had your backcountry fix by the time you read this.

The cover at high levels is quite good now. We are very fortunate to be able to use most areas of the back country freely in Niseko with the gate system so please make sure you follow the rules and always use these gates to enter the back country. Do not duck the ropes. At lower levels the cover is still a little bit patchy so you may encounter technical sections that are challenging on the way out of the back country. You will have a lot of fun on the way down.

Avalanche
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. But always keep in mind you should never stop at the bottom of the gully, as an avalanche will usually follow the gully line. Shinya-san has his daily avalanche report and blog available on-line and updated daily. Please see it at: <http://niseko.nadare.info> (does not work with www). Also remember to read the 'Local Rules' that are printed at the bottom of our course map. 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.

Surfanic Stack of the Week



Trenton Jamieson of Brisbane, Australia is this week's winner of the Surfanic Stack of the week... so elegant and he even thought to make sure he got Yotei beautifully framed in the background. Prove you're worthy and go in the running to win some tough new Surfanic gear. Submit your best stack pic at powderlife.co.jp.

Mountain All Mountain Pass

<p>1. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>2. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>3. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>4. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>5. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>6. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>7. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>8. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>9. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>10. All Mountain Pass</p>	<p>1. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>2. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>3. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>4. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>5. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>6. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>7. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>8. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>9. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>10. All Mountain Pass</p>	<p>1. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>2. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>3. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>4. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>5. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>6. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>7. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>8. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>9. All Mountain Pass</p> <p>10. All Mountain Pass</p>
--	--	--

Red Cross - In Case of Emergency

Red Cross is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, please contact your local Red Cross office. In Japan, the Red Cross is located at the Niseko Ski Resort. The phone number is 011-137-0000. The website is www.jrc.or.jp.

Mountain Level Pass

Mountain Level Pass is available for purchase at the Niseko Ski Resort. The price is 10,000 Yen. The pass is valid for 7 days. The pass is valid for all lifts and runs at the Niseko Ski Resort. The pass is valid for all lifts and runs at the Niseko Ski Resort.

Mountain Level Pass

Mountain Level Pass is available for purchase at the Niseko Ski Resort. The price is 10,000 Yen. The pass is valid for 7 days. The pass is valid for all lifts and runs at the Niseko Ski Resort. The pass is valid for all lifts and runs at the Niseko Ski Resort.



where to...



Eat & Drink



Stay



Play



Relax



Outside Hokkaido

Grand Hirafu Ski Hire



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

Niseko Hirafu Ski & 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: D 1
www.grand-hirafu.jp/en/mountain/school.html
T. 0136-22-0921

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 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. 09020544TOUR(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: B 2
www.sas-net.com T. 0136-21-3333

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

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お過ごしください。
5.00-11.30pm. Closed Wednesdays.
Map ref: C 1
http://www.niseko.or.jp/bangbang T. 0136-22-4292

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: E 3
www.NisekoMaru.web.fc2.com T. 0136-22-5020

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

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: D 3
www.Niseko-Info.com T. 0136 23 0788

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: D3 www.aacniseko.com T. 0136 22 3006

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

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.

www.powderhouse.jp T. 0261 75 3343
mobile 090 88921224

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.bdldodge.com T. 0136-44-1144

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

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 (arigato) 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. Kampai 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.

MOBILE PHONES

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:

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 turn 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 Salmonart.

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 tailor 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 revitalise 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.

Flower visits:

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

All major credit cards accepted.

Aexx, Visa, MasterCard, Diners



170-5 Aza Yarrada
Kutchan-cho
Aburatsubo-gun
Hokkaido 044-0081

Tel: 0136 22 0399 Fax: 0136 22 2011

www.NisekoMassage.com
info@NisekoMassage.com



the last word...

on health

by Bevan Colless



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

A couple of years ago I stumbled across an article in a sports medicine journal reporting that it had been almost conclusively proved that stretching does not prevent sports injuries. My initial reaction was firstly indignation and then, in all honesty, slight embarrassment. Along with almost every other health and fitness professional I had been extolling the importance of stretching before exercise and sport for many years. Then my mind wandered back to the cumulative hours of stretching I'd done during my years of weekly football training and games at Curtis Oval, in the suburbs of Sydney. They turn out to be nothing more than precious moments of my life that were wasted!! Hmmmph. I always knew our coach didn't know anything about fitness or football – how else could he have left me on the bench in the '84 Grand Final?

After the shock had subsided I looked into the article further and there it was a literature review of several previous studies on stretching virtually all coming to the conclusion that people who stretched before starting a game of sport had no decrease in incidence of injuries over those who did not stretch before the game. Researcher Dr Rob Herbert, a physiotherapist from the University of Sydney, stated that the belief that stretching reduced injury first came to prominence in the 1960s. "The theory was that muscles were more likely to spasm and tear if they were suddenly called into vigorous action," he says. "But like many good ideas, the muscle spasm theory of muscle soreness was wrong and has since been discredited, but the practice of stretching before exercise persists."

I was already familiar with a similar study proving that pre and/or post exercise stretching did not

prevent delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS). This is the achy muscles experienced after a bout of exercise that is greater than our body is accustomed to, such as our first game of sport or exercise back from a long break. DOMS peak at 48 hours post-exercise and subside soon after. Massage, ice, heat, salt baths and Jacuzzis were also proved to be ineffective. Apart from not exercising at an increased intensity, the only thing which was proven to decrease DOMS was to do the same amount of exercise again at which time our body will have adapted and be more prepared for the exercise. The only way to prevent soreness is to get soreness or if you like; get on with it.

So if stretching does not prevent injury or prevent DOMS is it a complete waste of time? Well let's take a look at the evidence a little closer. Firstly the review did not look at the importance of warming up, which is often confused with stretching. Warming up is still universally considered essential to redistribute the blood flow towards the muscles which are about to be used. This has been shown by several studies to be effective in preventing injuries. Warming up should involve some form of low intensity movement that resembles the activity for which you are about to perform.

The literature review only assessed the effect on stretching done immediately before and after exercise, without considering if a person has been undertaking a regular stretching program during the week. A flexible person may indeed be less likely to suffer an injury than an inflexible one. We can't expect to sit down for 120 hours a week, do a 10 second stretch on a few muscle groups before our weekly game of sport and expect to be exempt from the sins of the rest of the week and guaranteed an injury free experience.

So we need to stretch regularly away from our sports endeavors, and unfortunately those of us who are naturally inflexible need to work even harder on these stretches to improve our flexibility. Often the people who are attracted to regular stretching and yoga are naturally flexible and can even experience troubles by being too flexible, particularly with shoulder and ankle problems. When it comes to flexibility and most aspects of health, I reckon the Buddhists seem to have it right when they talk about the middle of the road being the best possible way of being, or whatever is they believe.



To sum up

Before trying big jumps and deep powder, do an easy warm up run down the main slope – if you're an early bird that may even be through powder!

When you stretch you should be aiming for an improvement in muscle length so hold your stretches for around 30 seconds and try and increase the stretch while breathing out. Feel free to continue to stretch before exercise but remember it does not guarantee that you'll be safe.

If you are inflexible stretch for a few minutes each day, the morning is preferable (it's a great way to start the day and makes you feel good that you've done it for the whole day). See a personal trainer or physiotherapist who can assess your flexibility in a number of areas and give you a program to address your weaknesses.

So next time you arrive ten minutes late for your aerobics class and the instructor won't let you in because you haven't done the stretching segment, you can tell them that you did yours in the morning!

THE NISEKO COMPANY
PREMIER ACCOMMODATION
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

DREAM DEEP...

www.thenisekocompany.com
+81-0136-21-7272

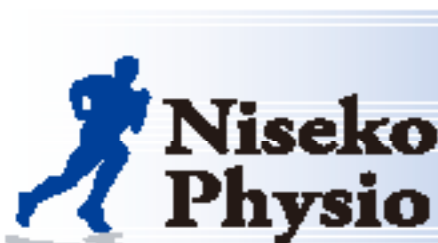


W

C

H

WEST CANADA HOMES
NISEKO JAPAN



We can help with

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



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.

2F Australia House, 17D - 5 Aza Yamada, Kitchun-cho, Aburatsubo-gun, Hida-koide 044-0081
Tel: 0136 22 0399 • Fax 0136 22 2011 • physio@niseko.com • www.NisekoPhysio.com

CUSTOM HOMES

www.westcanadahomes.com

Passion lives here

*Abundant champagne powder.
Perpetual seasonal beauty.
A lifestyle that ignites your sense of adventure and more.*

Owning a Hokkaido Tracks resort property in Niseko-Hirafu opens the door to new heights of freedom and possibility.

As the leading developer in Niseko, Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties continues to define – and refine – Japanese alpine elegance. With meticulous attention to style and detail, we provide unparalleled product quality and customer service backed by proven investment returns.

Current sales opportunities include Kirakira and Korakona, an ultra-chic collection of boutique two and three bedroom apartments in two buildings, and EZO365, a resort community of premium houses in a prominent central village location. The stylish Hirafu Houses, blending Tokyo style with western comforts, offer a range of build options and are available as house and land packages, or house only.

Every Hokkaido Tracks resort home is easily accessible to lifts and village amenities, and is fully furnished in our contemporary signature style.

For an appointment to see our display properties call Tom Barwick or Simon Robinson on (0945) 21 6946 or drop into our office next to Sakurawari.



PROPERTIES FOR PEOPLE WHO ENJOY THE DIFFERENCE

www.hokkaidotracks.com



HOKKAIDO TRACKS RESORT PROPERTIES