

issue 04 Feb 02 - Feb 15 2008

# powderlife

NISEKO ニセコ

**white january**

A photographic essay

**snowmobiling**

Exploring Niseko's wilderness

**ROKU-SAN**

92 years and still drumming

**GENTLEMISTICK**  
**SURFING MIT ANNUPURI**





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.

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**Fully furnished 3 floors - luxury inclusions**  
- Internal elevator to garage  
- Ski storage & drying room  
- Satellite TV & wireless internet  
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**Humming Bird**

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- Located in middle Hirafu.  
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**Yuki Yama 1 & 3**

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**Centrally located, luxurious & spacious boutique apartments**  
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- Western style kitchen & bathrooms  
- Split level design

**Freedom Inn**

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**This elegant Inn has great views over Hanazono and offers a wise investor a great opportunity.**  
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- Potential to convert into a boutique hotel

**Mountainside Palace**

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**New quality constructed apartment in the heart of upper Hirafu village**  
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- Japanese design  
- MT Yotel views  
- Hurry, last apartment available

**Kumajiro**

¥45,000,000



**Great value & great rental returns with tremendous redevelopment potential**  
- Lovely big house located in zumikyō 1  
- Only 1 min walk to restaurant & resort shuttle bus & 5 min walk to Hirafu Village & lifts

**publisher's note...**

Happy Chinese New Year!

Along with the Christmas/New Year boom, Chinese New Year is fast becoming the most important period on the Niseko winter calendar. Powderlife, and I'm sure the entire Niseko community, extend a warm welcome to everyone in Niseko to mark the occasion this week. This issue, along with our regular look at small businesses and local faces, we have a feature on local snowboard-makers and café owners Gentem, who locally design the most sought after snowboards in Japan. We have added a new section to the magazine this week - Niseko News - to bring all the latest news on this rapidly changing little corner of the world. Thanks to Hotel Kanronomori for the great Scenic Night Candle display pic (right). Keep them coming! Bevan@powderlife.co.jp.

ハッピー チャイニーズ ニューイヤー!  
クリスマスや正月に続き、旧正月もニセコの冬の行事として欠かせないものとなってきています。パウダーライフはもちろんの事、ニセコ在住の皆様もきっとこの期間を楽しみにしているでしょう。この号ではスモールビジネスやローカルフェイスに加え、日本で大人気のパウダーボードを造り上げているローカスノーボードメーカー&カフェ Gentem を特集しております。また、今号からニセコニュースというコーナーを設け、日々急速に変わりゆくニセコの最新情報をお届けいたします。皆様からの情報や写真、マガジンに対するご意見、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**

**Hotel Kanronomori's Scenic Night Display**  
by kyoko matsuhashi

Two nights every year residents and businesses make candle-lit snow sculptures along the roadside from Chitose to Niseko. The second display will be February 9. Can we suggest a trip to Moiwa where you can have an onsen and dinner at traditional Hotel Kanronomori?

**in the loop**

what's on in niseko this week

**february 2 - february 15**

**Saturdays February 2 and 9**  
**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.

**2月2日(土)9(土)**  
12:00~14:00 花園カフェにDJ参上!  
花園第一リフトエリアでは Redbull と Soyjoy を無料配布。

**Sundays February 3 and 10**  
**Taiko Drum Performances**  
Free traditional Japanese drum performances. 3.30pm  
Sundays outside Hokkaido Tracks office (next to Seicomart).

**2月3日(日)10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。場所はセイコマート横、北海道トラックズ前にて。15:30~

**Mondays and Thursdays February 4, 7, 11, 14**  
**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 reservations until 5pm the day before the class.

**2月4, 11日(月)7, 14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

**イベント情報をお寄せください! Tell us about your event!**  
ed@powderlife.co.jp 0136 222 000

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 February 5, 12**  
**A Day in the Life of a Ski Patroller**  
Higashiyama Prince Hotel, Tuesday night 9pm to 10pm. 1F Tea Lounge Hamanasu. Japanese and English.

**2月5, 12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

**Tuesday and Friday February 5, 8, 12, 15**  
**Higashiyama Prince Imo Mochi Making Class.**  
Learn how to make delicious traditional Japanese potato cake from Kutchan potatoes! 2pm-4pm. 3F Banquet hall. Japanese and English. ¥1500. For reservations call 0136-44-1111.

**2月5, 12日(火) 8, 15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

**Thursday February 14**  
**Graubunden Valentines Day Dinner Izumikyō**  
Your favourite Graubunden sandwich or the day's special dinner plus dessert. Special menu for men or someone with a man. 6-8pm. Reservation required. Call 0136 23 3371 for reservations or more information.

**2月14日(木)**  
**グラウブunden バレンタインディナー (泉郷)**  
男性又は男性ご同伴の方にスペシャルメニュー有り!  
好きなサンドウィッチ又は晚ごはん+デザート+coffee or tea ¥2000ほか 6pm~8pm(要予約) 0136 23 3371

**Saturday and Sunday February 16 and 17**  
**Kutchan Yukitopia Snow Festival**  
Races, competitions, activities. Skiing over a cold pool competition (register on the day). Potato sled pulling competition, register by Feb 15 on 0136 22 1108. Most events held behind the Kutchan Public Hall.

**2月16日(土)10:30~18:30, 17日(日)10:30~15:30**  
**雪トピア フェスティバル**  
ゲームやアトラクションあり、屋台も並ぶ冬のイベント。ソリでジャガイモを運ぶ雪上ばんば 申込 2/15 まで phone 22-1108 自慢の鍋を50人分作る鍋大将。申込 2/4 まで phone 22-1121 内線#242 恒例水面滑走トライアルと今年も土曜日にも爆笑滑走トライアルをやりませ。申込みは当日本部にて。倶知安公民館裏 中央公園にて



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 Travel Japan, Hokkaido Travel, Annupuri Village and Scott  
 Adventure Sports.**

### PICK UP POINTS

**Hirafu** Australia House, 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, Java Bar, Woody Note Pension, Barunba, Dragon Wine Bar, Gentemstick Retail Store, NGS, Deep Powder Tours, Ski Japan, Downtown Cafe, NAC, Nathan's, Jo Jo's, Yuki Bar, Fusion, 343, Apres Bar... and more **Higashiyama** Higashiyama Prince Hotel, Black Diamond Lodge **Annupuri** Annupuri Village, Nikko Hotel, Ikoinomura Hotel, The Nook Annupuri, Mokumokutei BBQ House **Moiwa** Hotel Kanronomori **Kutchan** Kutchan Tourist Information Centre, Loaf Lounge, Be, Blue Cielo, Nami Chan Chi, Fuji Confectionary, Shunsai **Sapporo** Sapporo Tourist Information Centre, Sapporo Clock Tower Information Centre **Tokyo** Paddy Foley's, Legend's, National Azabu International Supermarket, Nissin International Supermarket, Khaosan Asakusa Backpackers Hostel **Hakuba** Hakuba Real Estate, The Powderhouse



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**cover shot** Aaron Jamieson **rider** Joel Graham

apartment sales  
 luxury accommodation



the vale niseko



nisade luxury apartments

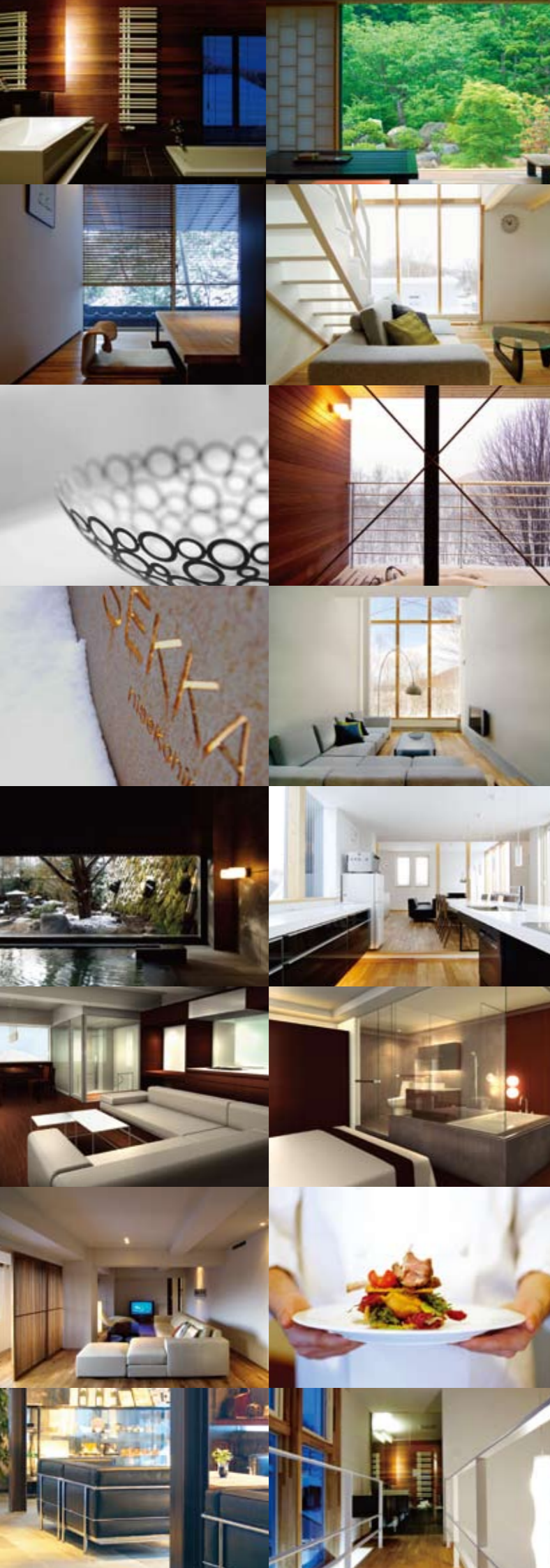
The Vale Niseko - luxury ski-in ski-out, swimming pool & onsen ON SALE NOW  
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EACH VENUE REFLECTS THE HIP DICHOTOMY OF HARD SUMPTUOUSNESS THAT IS THE CALLING CARD OF THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF JAPANESE STAR-ARCHITECT NAKAYAMA MAKOTO AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR SHOUYA GRIGG

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\*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



## White January and some rare blue

As soon as the calendar flicked over to 2008, the real Niseko finally returned.

Non-stop storms buffeted us throughout most of January, giving us a good amount of snowfall almost everyday. If there wasn't 10 or 20cm of snow deposited on top of cars overnight, it usually came down during the day.

We were even treated to a perfect bluebird day with a couple of clear morning and afternoon sessions thrown in. As soon as the sun came out, the local photographers dropped everything and hit the slopes. They snapped by far the best images of the season and we've put together a collection of their work on pages 21 and 22.

## 'Best powder trip ever': Armada skis founder

In case you were wondering if January was actually *that* good, a couple of pros whose job it is to travel the world in search of the best snow, testify they've just had their best powder trip ever.

Armada Skis co-founder JP Auclair of Quebec, and California's Chris Benchetler have been coming to Niseko every year for the past few years – including the bumper season 05/06 – and say they've never had such a consistent run of such good quality powder. "I've been skiing for 25 years and this is the best ever – every single day has been epic," Auclair told Powderlife. "It never really stopped snowing and every day it was getting deeper – it was so deep it was ridiculous. I was amazed at how fresh the snow actually stays – skiing through the trees you do lap after lap and keep getting fresh runs. That doesn't happen much in America or Canada."

He said his best ever trip before this was cat-skiing in Ritalic in BC two years ago. After two weeks here he decided this trip was as good. That was before it snowed nonstop for the following five days.

The crew stayed at Black Diamond Lodge in Higashiyama and wanted to make special mention of owner Clayton Kernaghan's hospitality and for guiding them into such good powder. "He made this trip the best powder trip ever – the snow is one thing but for him to be so on top of it and take us to all these spots that were so good was awesome," Benchetler said.

Montreal cameraman Phillipe Benjamin documented the trip and said it would feature in a dedicated Niseko segment in his production company Poor Boyz Productions' video Reasons coming out in September. And how do the pro's describe the quality of Niseko's powder? "It's like skiing through butter... or cream."



Chris and JP Auclair on location, Niseko.

Photo: levinmedia.com

## Nicked plough returned

A happy ending for Liam Bartley, Captain Hirafu Pension owner and author of epic Issue 1 feature article 'Surviving Yotei', who woke up to find someone had stolen the \$30,000 front end loader he was leasing. With all the snow it couldn't have happened at a worse time and police said there was no guarantee insurance would cover it.

Investigators initially thought it was a professional job - the Hitachi model is highly sought after and they believed it was probably on its way to Russia or somewhere else in Asia. But a few days later it turned up parked at an apartment building in the upper village, lending weight to the theory it was a tourist's idea of a good prank.

We hope it was cold and the offender was wearing gloves - police have fingerprinted the machine and if it was a foreigner who has entered the country after November 20, their prints will be on record thanks to Japan's new immigration laws.

Last season two foreign seasonal workers spent three weeks in jail without representation after they were accused of drink driving, and were subsequently deported. By all reports they were very shaken up when they came out.

A stint in a very cold jail cell should serve as a good lesson to the offender, and hopefully send a message to other tourists they really need to leave such immature behaviour at home and show their gracious hosts some respect.



Armada Skis co-founder JP Auclair is coming back for more of this.

Photo: levinmedia.com



## Big Day Out comes to Niseko

Fresh from playing two of Australia's premier summer music festivals - the Big Day Out and Woodford Folk Festival - blues and roots crooner Christopher Ernst is set to soothe Niseko. Minus band - Black Market Rhythm Company - Ernst will play Java Bar's Sunday Sessions with Christian on February 10. Free Entry.

Powderlife has five copies of his latest solo album Little Pieces to give away to readers. Email [ed@powderlife.co.jp](mailto:ed@powderlife.co.jp) to win.

## Please don't ski in the village

Not only is it stupidly dangerous, skiing on public roads could land you in trouble with the law. "It's an illegal act based on the road traffic regulations," said Grand Hirafu public information manager Fumio Sato.

"If the police see you skiing on the road, they will stop you." It has to be said that a legal situation in Japan is something you don't want to experience.

While it might seem harmless, roads aren't designed to be skied on and are almost always very icy.

Ordinary skis and boards won't react the same as they will on a soft, groomed slope, so you could get into real trouble if you need to stop quickly as a bus rounds a bend.

Grand Hirafu's shuttle bus drivers are very concerned as they spend their days rounding corners and being confronted by out-of-control skiers.

"Because the roads are very slippery, it's difficult for the bus drivers to deal with unexpected skiers' movements," Sato-san said. Signs are being put up but does it really need to be said?



THE EVILS OF ALCOHOL

An 18-year-old Aomori youth who went on a killing spree later said he was **irked by his mother's booze habit**. After stabbing and torching his mother, brother and sister to death, the young man told cops that he tried to cut off his mom's head but failed. Geez, with kids like that, what parent wouldn't tip a few back!?!?

A drunk 20-year-old man who was celebrating Coming-of-Age Day was arrested after **jumping on the hoods of two taxis** in Yokohama. Of course, he couldn't remember a thing about the incident.

In a bizarre ceremony in Toyama, local villagers **fed sake to a bunch of carp** before releasing them into a river. The tipsy fish are supposed to stave off 'calamities' in humans.

In another fish tale, this one sans liquor, a woman in Ibaraki was **hospitalized after eating poisonous blowfish**. The victim apparently bought the fugu at a shop that wasn't licensed to sell it and didn't remove the poison.

GUN PLAY

A sports club in Sasebo, Nagasaki, where two people were shot to death and six others injured in December, reopened with **extra security measures**.

A Tochigi police officer **left his loaded gun in a convenience store restroom** during a patrol. He also forgot his handcuffs, baton and other items.

A 32-year-old policeman committed suicide by **shooting himself at a koban at Tokyo Station**.

São Paulo state prosecutors, acting on a Japanese request, **indicted a fugitive Brazilian man** on charges of murdering

a Brazilian woman and her two sons in Shizuoka in 2006. The accused returned to Brazil after the murders, but remains at large.

SAY WHAT?

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura announced that the government may institute a **Japanese language requirement for foreign nationals** seeking entry visas for long-term residency and when renewing their visas.

**Pop princess Ayumi Hama-saki** revealed she has lost nearly all the hearing in her left ear, a condition doctors claim cannot be remedied. She has, however, vowed to soldier on, which sent floods of relief throughout the streets of Shibuya.

**The driver of a bus carrying 26 passengers nodded off** while driving through a tunnel in Yamagata Prefecture, but no one was hurt because a quick-thinking passenger took the steering wheel and pulled the vehicle over. "I dozed off after I took cold medicine yesterday and this morning," said the 52-year-old driver.

Japan Rail East decided that posters promoting a festival were inappropriate and refused to let them be put up in their train stations. The posters show a **bunch of guys wearing only loincloths**, but what really got the goats of JR East officials was the hairy chest visible on one guy.

A Fukuoka man and his two sisters were arrested on fraud charges for receiving their dead parents' pensions for 15 years. **The mummified bodies of the parents**, and those of three other siblings, were found at their home.

A father and son were arrested after they smuggled rare lorises into Japan by **hiding the animals in their pants**.

ATHLETIC SUPPORTERS

Former members of a **biker gang took part in a futsal match** against a team made up of Kamagaya police officers to celebrate the disbandment of the gang, which had been active for about 30 years. As many soccer games do, this one ended in a draw.

Organizers of **Tokyo's bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics** revealed that, if selected, nearly all of the venues would be within an 8km radius of downtown. The IOC will announce the 2016 host city on October 2, 2009.

The International Handball Federation ordered the Asian Olympic qualifiers to be replayed after **several suspect refereeing decisions favored Middle Eastern teams** over Japan and South Korea. Talk about a handjob!

**Aussie rugby star Stephen Larkham**, now 33, signed a three-year contract with Tokyo club Ricoh Black Rams which starts in April.

WHALE OF A TIME

Two anti-whaling activists from the environmental group Sea Shepherd were **detained onboard a Japanese whaling ship in the Antarctic**, but the crew denied a report that the pair had been bound to a mast by rope.

Women at an onsen in Akita said they were **molested by men dressed as namahage (bogeymen)**. The women said their assailants went into the female-only bathing area and fondled them during a traditional festival on New Year's Eve.

A man suspected of **filming up a young woman's skirt** on a Tokyo train eluded capture by jumping onto the tracks near JR Asagaya Station and hightailing it. The sordid affair caused delays for about 13,000 commuters.

STATS

**46** People sentenced to death by Japanese courts in 2007, the most since 1980

**60** Number of countries that currently employ the death penalty, according to Amnesty International

**130-plus** Countries that have either abolished the death penalty or have not executed anyone for at least 10 years, according to AI

**13** Number of hospitals that rejected a 77-year-old woman in Osaka, who later died of cardio-respiratory arrest

**34 percent** The approval rating for Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's Cabinet, according to a poll cited in the Asahi Shimbun

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)



Commonwealth Bank offering Niseko Loans

In a promising development for buyers and the local real estate market, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia is believed to be very close to finalising a deal to allow Niseko property to be used as security for loans. Previously Yen loans had been available to non-residents of Japan, but lenders have had to use their overseas property as security. This effectively ruled out buyers who did not have significant equity in other property. Banks have been reluctant to use Niseko-based property as security because of problems with local valuations and a lack of experience with Japanese laws should the lender default. The Commonwealth Bank is believed to be prepared to lend at a maximum 50/50 loan to value ratio.

Luxury resorts news

While no formal announcements have been made, there's no doubt several big names in the luxury resort world are set to invest in Niseko. It's no longer a secret that Four Seasons resort plans to setup at Richard Li's newly acquired Hanazono Resort. Aman Resorts – whose first ever resort 20 years ago was interestingly called Amanpuri - is known to be searching for a site to build a luxury retreat. Another big name known to be investigating potential sites in the area is Banyan Tree. A Hong Kong based company registered as Annupuri Land Holdings Ltd own a 40,000 tsubo (13.2ha) block on route 343 opposite the new Niseko 148 restaurant. They are believed to be closing in on a deal with Capella Resorts, another high level low density resort chain.



Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Coming soon to Hanazono.

Seicomart sold

The land upon which the Seicomart currently occupies has been sold. Often considered the village hub, the Seicomart is a long-time favourite with tourists and locals alike. Owner Kazuhisa Takiguchi is believed to have been tempted by a massive offer from the owner of the adjoining property, currently the site of the A Bu Cha restaurant. Although plans for land are not concrete, it's rumoured that both businesses will make way for an apartment complex.

Celebrities hit Niseko

Powderlife caught up with television personality Kerrie-Anne Kennerley on her recent trip to Niseko. A keen skier KAK said she had visited resorts all over the world but rated the snow in Niseko as the best. "The village is so quaint and the people are so friendly," Kerri-Anne told Powderlife. Kerri-Anne stayed at Yotei Tracks in the upper village while she was here. Another television personality to visit this season was another keen skier George Negus. Off-contract AFL player Ben Cousins also made the most of his opportunity to snowboard, an activity previously forbidden under the terms of his contract.



Kerrie-Anne Kennerley

Waza opens the brick

Popular local identity Waza and business partner Jeremy have opened their new venue The Brick ¥500 Bar and Takeaway. The invite only opening night saw guests treated to complementary drinks and tasty food from the western-style takeaway. The verdict was a big thumbs-up to the reformation of one of the area's most unusual buildings. The Brick is a welcome addition to Niseko's food and beverage landscape.

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# SNAP

by eriko mentzos

## faces on the street

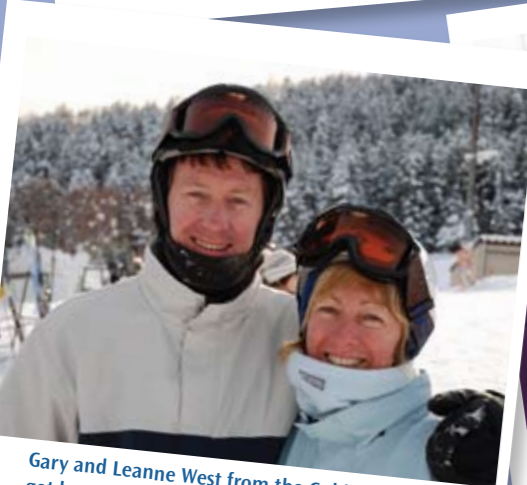
How many times have you been to Niseko?  
What's your favourite thing about Niseko??



Katsumi, Makoto and Akio. We live here! Our favourite thing is the Powder snow!!



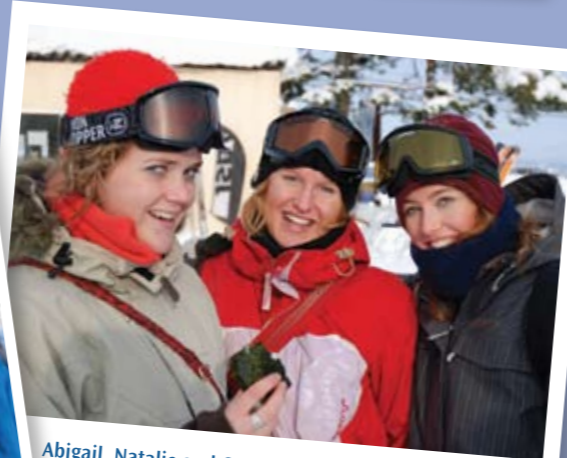
Emiko, Kumi and Miho from Kanagawa, near Tokyo. We've been here three times and we love the terrain and love meeting foreigners.!



Gary and Leanne West from the Gold Coast. We've got lots of favourites: Annapuri's Milky House, the food and, of course, the powder.



Hitomi, Yoko and Mayuko Nurses from Nara, near Kyoto. We've been here three times and we love the soft snow. There is so much of it!



Abigail, Natalie and Cassie from Melbourne. It's our first time here, we love the Food, the people and the powder.



Dai-chan, Midori, Chizu, Sei-chan, Yatchin and Hick from Kyoto and Fukuoka on Kyushu. We've been five or six times - we can't get enough of the beautiful women, great food, powder snow and the local people's warm hearts. We'll be back again for sure.

## mountain style

This issue's outfit of the week winner is Sam Stewart from Australia. How can bright pants be so cool on the mountain but so 'not' everywhere else? We don't know, but they are! We loved the 4 Square bright yellow pants, but they could only work with a muted jacket and Sam has matched them to a tee with his black Analog jacket. Even the Salomon board's base colours come along for the ride. For being such a stylin' dude Sam wins a Niseko fleece from Fusion.



Even Japanese and Kiwis got swept up in the Australia day spirit: Seiko & Kat at the Brick

## Australia Day Celebrations

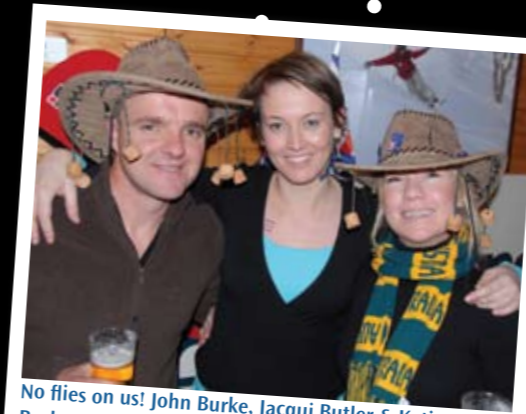
It's no secret that Niseko is sometimes dubbed 'Little Australia'. So Australia Day is one of the biggest events on the Niseko nightlife calendar. Australians were dressed up and out in force to celebrate their national day. Venues kept their bars stocked with Coopers and VB to make the Aussies feel right at home.



Dave has his hands full with J-Sekka sisters Rachel (left) and Nicola at Red Bar's Australia Day party.



Kaminohashi unmasked! Vicki (Kaminohashi) and Charlie (Niseko Company) @ Splash on Australia Day



No flies on us! John Burke, Jacqui Butler & Katie Burke get into the swing of things @ Northwind



Patriotic sisters Vanessa and Prue (Ski Japan) having a ball on Oz day



Beauty therapist Bella Lund and ex Japan national ski team member Kuni Hosoi enjoy the vibe at the Brick's opening party



Kat-Licked! What a cool boss Waza must be! Kyra, Waza and Kat behind the bar



## The Brick Opening Party

Popular local identity Waza and business partner Jeremy have opened their new venue "The Brick ¥500 Bar and Takeaway." The invite only opening night saw guests treated to complementary drinks and tasty food from the western style takeaway.



Powder.TV producer Chris Abbott, Shannon from Wild Bills and Yuka from Harmony.

# FLASH

## niseko social scene

by jimmy edwards



# Powder tools

by bevan colless



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This innovative Swedish brand is taking Europe and Japan by storm, but has yet to expand to Australasia or North America. Haglofs make top quality winter gear and this husky fleece is no exception. Constructed with two of the best fleece materials: Polartec Thermal Pro High Loft, the warmest fleece combining high thermal properties with low weight and small pack volume and Polartec Power Stretch in key areas for increased durability and mobility. Drawstring collar for simple heat control. Full front zipper, two spacious, ventilated handwarmer pockets and one napoleon pocket. The furry front makes people want to give you a hug and it won't pill. ¥28,000 Available at Niseko 343.



## Armada JP vs Julien

JP Auclair is one of the best freeskiers in the world and he just spent three weeks in Niseko throwing everything he could at his Armada quiver. Together with Julien Regnier they created this superb all-rounder. "Super light, wide, low side cut, twin tipped... it's the ski that suits best my style of riding backcountry - my favourite," says JP. I'm not so aggressive on my edges. I just love to get going fast and throw them sideways." The 'JJ' is the ultimate backcountry freestyle tool, designed from the ground up to perform when the only grooming for miles is provided by the shovel in your hands. JP and Julien insisted that the 188cm ski possess a fat 103mm waist and minimal side-cut to create a super stable landing platform. This shape, along with a tail that sits 10mm higher than the tip, provides better control when you're rolling switch. Lightweight construction ensures you'll be able to float in the air and through the pow facing any direction you choose. 188 & 178cm. Available for hire, demo and purchase at Rhythm and Beats in J Sekka. ¥90,000.



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by Eriko Mentzos



**LIFTIE Chi-chan**

**name** Chiharu Matsufuji  
**age** 29  
**hometown** Osaka  
**time in niseko** Second season  
**do you like powder?** Hai!  
**ski/board** Snowboard  
**when did you start?** Four years ago  
**why did you move to niseko?** I wanted to snowboard in powder!  
**what languages do you speak?** Just nihongo (Japanese)  
**trips overseas** Australia  
**where do you want to go next?** NZ  
**favourite...**  
**colour** Blue **brand** Hammer **food** Sushi **restaurant** Hanakichi **bar** never went to a bar **onsen** Ikoi-no-mura **course** Junior course  
**where else in the world do you want to go skiing?** Japanese Alps  
**how long will you be in niseko for?** Half a year  
**what does niseko need?** Fast food  
**niseko secret?** Gorgeous sunset view from the peak of Annupuri in Spring. Famous Hokkaido food 'Genghis Khan' at Loft Club is super.  
**what's a must have item for niseko?** A car  
**What's your life philosophy?** have a fun life!



**SKI PATROL Hide450**

**name** Hideki Yokoo  
**age** 40  
**hometown** Tokyo  
**time in niseko** 15th year  
**do you like powder?** Yep, love it.  
**when did you start?** 25 years ago  
**why did you move to niseko?** I wanted to ski Hirafu's moguls  
**what languages do you speak?** Japanese and a little bit of English  
**trips overseas** America, Canada, NZ, Switzerland  
**where do you want to go next?** Wanaka in NZ  
**favourite...**  
**colour** white **brand** Mujirushi **food** Kaiten Sushi (sushi train) **restaurant** Hanakura **bar** After's Cafe & Bar **onsen** Yusenkaku **course** Superstition  
**where else in the world do you want to go skiing?** Blackcomb  
**how long will you be in niseko for?** ntil I die.  
**what does niseko need?** We don't need anything more  
**niseko secret?** I have kicker in my backyard  
**what's a must have item for niseko?** a shovel  
**what's the most important thing in life?** Your family's health



**TICKET BOOTH Yoshie-chan**

**name** Yoshie Kato  
**age** 32  
**hometown** Chitose, Hokkaido  
**time in niseko** 10 years  
**do you like powder?** Yes!  
**ski/board** These days I only ski  
**when did you start?** 2 or 3 years ago  
**why did you move to niseko?** I got a job in Higashiyama.  
**what languages do you speak?** Just Japanese  
**trips overseas** None  
**where do you want to go next?** A warm place  
**favourite...**  
**colour** Green  
**brand** Haffer  
**food** Meat  
**restaurant** Yawaraya  
**bar** I don't go out drinking, I like drinking at home!  
**onsen** Kanronomori  
**course** Final Fling  
**where else in the world do you want to go skiing?** Furano  
**how long will you be in niseko for?** Maybe for a long long time  
**what does niseko need?** Places or parks that kids can play  
**niseko secret?** I think Kanro's (Moiwa's) water is No1 natural water in Niseko area  
**what's a must have item for Niseko?** Engine starter for car  
**what's your life philosophy?** Have fun, be cheerful, and energetic!



Photos: Glen Claydon

Powder turns in Niseko's backcountry.

**powering through powder**

by kristian lund

Scott Bowman has spent the last three seasons in Niseko without strapping a snowboard to his feet. "Once you've been snowmobiling you won't want to go back," he says with no hint of doubt. Drawn to Niseko eight years ago by the lure of powder, Bowman's no longer interested in letting gravity dictate the lines he can draw. Instead, behind 150hp of snowmobile he forges his paths wherever he pleases. He's so hooked he ditched the ski fields altogether, bought a base at Kanbetsu, 15 minutes drive from Niseko, sought permission from three levels of government, and started introducing people to his world – Hokkaido's alpine wilderness courtesy of a go-anywhere snowmobile. Rather than being constrained by ski resort boundaries with thousands of others, Niseko Snowmobile Adventures takes small groups into rarely seen countryside. The investment in both effort and financial terms has been enormous – as a fleet of high powered machines, snow grooming cat and a dedicated professional staff attest.

"At the moment we're closer to Sapporo than we are to Hirafu," our guide Nick Gutry, NSA co-founder, says as we enjoy a hot cup of coffee at the halfway point of our journey. "Sapporo is 30km that way as the crow flies," he says pointing north. We're at 'The Basin', a football field-sized patch of pristine powder, surrounded by forest and mountain ridges, 18km out from base. We're truly in the middle of nowhere. Without a snowmobile there would be no hope of making it back to civilization alive as the deep snow would prohibit walking more than several hundred metres an hour.

Nick kicks over the engine and roars off, hitting about 100km an hour in a matter of seconds. He draws a circle out towards the perimeter of The Basin before cutting across field at full pace. The bike wheelies for 20m before the nose of the sled lands and he veers sharply to the left, the whole 200kg sled virtually laying down on its side, almost burying itself in snow. He straightens it up and with another burst of power, lurches out of the cloud of powder, wheelies into line and returns: "Now it's your turn".

We take off, cautiously at first, unsure how our steeds will negotiate the deep powder. Swinging the far leg over on the right side gunnel to aid our turns we lean hard, putting all our weight to the front. The nose dips into the powder and slowly resurfaces. With 100m of untouched powder now straight ahead it's time to give it some. I squeeze the throttle and take off, only topping 50km an hour but feeling like it's twice that.

It's time to head back. The 18km trip out took about an hour through an untouched, snow-bound landscape - a revelation for a native of the sub-tropics. It's one thing to be in a car driving through winter Hokkaido on bitumen roads, but it's something else to be ploughing through half a metre of snow, over ridges and through gullies, weaving through forests for mile upon mile, without a building, car or power pole in sight.

While it might sound like a thrillseekers-only experience, NSA will tailor tours to individual needs. Our tour included a trio less adventurous customers so NSA provided two guides with each group. All staff are trained in avalanche and backcountry safety and first aid. While the Powderlife crew was eager to get deep into the countryside - and the powder - as we could, the other group was happy to stay seated and cruise along the groomed track while taking in the unique winter scenery at their own relaxed pace.

I can't call snowmobiling a spiritual experience, but without the roar of the engine I think it would be. While my snowboard's not for sale just yet, I can't deny I am thinking about how I can afford to add a snowmobile to collection.

Powderlife was guest on a half-day Niseko Snowmobile Adventure.

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Dear Mum,  
 I've been in Japan for 5 days now.  
 Here's what I've been up to:  
 Monday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.  
 Tuesday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.  
 Wednesday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.  
 Thursday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.  
 Friday: Ski, Onsen, Massage, Eat, Drink, Sleep.  
 I think I might extend my stay another week!  
 See you soon,  
 Love, Johnnie

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# GENTEMSTICK

## surfing mt annupuri

by bevan colless

A recent poll listed experiencing the local food as the main drawcard for 71% of tourists to Japan. But what ends up leaving the most lasting impression for so many is the Japanese people themselves. They're impressed by their courtesy, consideration for other people and space, and in particular their absolute commitment to excellence. This unwavering attention to detail has seen Japanese companies triumph internationally in manufacturing and create clockwork precision in running a country of 120 million people living in a space smaller than California. Most visitors to Niseko have either heard of, or dined at, the Gentem Café – or as it's commonly know: the 'Mongolian Tent'. What most people don't know is that the café is an offshoot business for Gentem's raison d'être – Gentemstick, - the most innovative and, many would say, best snowboards in the world.

photo: niseko photography, aaron jamieson



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Photos © Glen Claydon Photography



On cloud nine... Rusutsu, photo Niseko Photography



Toru Tamai... Gentem founder, photo ideapark



Enviably lineup... Hamazono, photo Niseko Photography

2009 Gentemstick Impossible, photo Gentemstick



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Gentem means 'things that exist in northern space', and also 'the natural way', perfectly summing the philosophy of the company. The company exemplifies the Japanese commitment to excellence. Gentem is the brainchild of Toru Tamai, a surfer from Tokyo who relocated to Niseko in 1991. Tamai-san began snowboarding in 1983, when the nascent sport attracted a nucleus of surfers experimenting with ways to slide down a snow covered hill on a piece of wood. "When I was surfing I used to think 'why can't we do this on the snow,'" says Tamai. "And then I found out people were already snow-surfing in the US, so I wanted to try it."

One grass roots snowboarder; US-based surfer Dimitrije Milovich, teamed up with Wayne Stoveken, a New Jersey-based snowboard shaper (believed to be the first person ever to snowboard), to develop his idea of "surfing on snow". Milovich created one of the first snowboard manufacturing companies, Winterstick. Together Milovich & Stoveken created the classic 'Winterstick Swallowtail' snowboard, shaped very much like a surfboard, complete with pointed nose and flat or slightly reverse camber. The Winterstick swallowtail is still much sought-after and is completely at home in Niseko's powder.

In the mid-80s a worldwide skateboard boom exploded which greatly influenced the way snowboards were designed, ridden and shaped. Snowboards no longer looked like surfboards and the pointed nose, swallow tails and flat or reverse cambers were abandoned. Snowboards began to look like large skateboards with the wheels taken off. Spinning, rails and half-pipes became all the rage as snowboarding somewhat distanced itself from its surfing roots. Winterstick kept making their surfboard-inspired boards but eventually, because of the shift to skateboard-influenced snowboarding, buyers dried up and they fell into serious financial trouble in 1998.

Meanwhile in 1998 Tamai-san felt stronger than ever that for him snowboarding was still about surfing and the feeling of making a surfing-style slash or cutback through powder. So he decided if that he owed it to himself, his friends and Milovich, to revive the tradition of snow-surfing. So he shaped and released the first ever Gentemstick. Tamai-san had previously worked for Japanese brand MOSS snowboards as a tester and designer but had always wanted the chance to release his own snowboards. Niseko was the perfect place for snow surfing's revival. As any surfer would know, ploughing through powder is like surfing on an almost endless wave, and there are so many powder days the parks in Niseko often see little use.

Through good timing, marketing or - most likely - the Japanese dedication to design and attention to detail, the Gentemstick was a big hit with riders the length and breadth of Japan. The graphics are understated, each model has only one colour on the deck which varies from season to season. Every board has a solid black base with a red teardrop shaped dot on the underside of the nose. The shape varies widely across their line up, with the only constant being that they do not look like any other boards. The Gentem freestyle board Indystick has a cut-off nose to keep it light and, make it look cool. The larger boards have a pointed nose designed to direct the dry powder away from the rider's face when turning. Face shots are fun, but it's not ideal having your vision taken away in tight trees. A wide variance in the camber of the board makes turning a unique experience all over again. Perhaps because of the image of a surfer on a Malibu

**"When I was surfing I used to think 'why can't we do this on the snow', says Tamai. "And then I found out people were already snow-surfing in the US, so I wanted to try it."**

turning extra slowly, there is a common fallacy among snowboarders that the longer the board, the more difficult it is to turn. But in reality rapid manoeuvrability in a board is a combination of many factors. Gentem pays stringent attention to camber, shape and flex-pattern so even their longest boards can be whipped around easily.

Gentemstick's resident pro-rider Tomoki Takaku has been living in Niseko for 10 years since relocating from Kanagawa, near Tokyo. Considered one of the best riders in Japan, Tomoki has roamed the world for the past nine years, riding Alaska every spring after the Niseko season. His weapon of choice is the flat-camber TT model, named after Tamai-san. He loves the way flat-camber boards turn. "I now find myself looking for mountains that suit the flat camber board and returning to those places again and again," he says.

As skiers and snowboarders the world over are starting to appreciate the sheer joy of riding powder snow, the equipment is still catching up with the powder phenomenon. Many skiers riding through Niseko powder soon discover their skis are too thin under foot and can't get through the snow, just as many snowboarders unfamiliar with local conditions soon work out their boards are too short. Because of the rapid change in ski technology with the carving ski revolution, and the associated acceptance of new design, skiers have actually been somewhat faster than snowboarders to adopt powder-specific equipment. This can be witnessed by the number of skiers now clutching their fat-skis inside Niseko's gondolas because they don't fit in the racks on the outside. Conversely it's not difficult to find non-local snowboarders riding freestyle boards through Niseko powder having to lean so far back in deep snow

turning to give their back legs a break every few hundred metres.

Many Gentemsticks are designed specifically with Niseko's snow conditions and terrain in mind, but they aren't exclusively powder boards. Tamai-san and his riders have travelled the world searching for the best conditions. "Each Gentem board is made for a different situation," Tamai-san says. "Our team has been travelling the world studying the snow in each different location. Some of them are perfect for Niseko powder but we also have one perfect for Alaskan conditions."

Gentem's underground purist image sees them only advertise in one publication – a premium quality Japanese pictorial publication 'Fall Line' and that ad generally features an artistic or panoramic picture with only a small Gentemstick logo alluding to the brand. Whether it's their marketing campaign or the boards themselves, they sell out of their line-up every season.

Gentem's meaning lends itself perfectly to Tamai's business philosophy. The Gentem café first opened in 1999 just after the Gentemstick was released. "When I travelled to Mongolia for a snowboarding trip with Tomoki in the mid-90s we stayed in yurts and thought it was a great environment to be in with a group of people," Tamai recalls. "Then we found a company in the States that sells them and decided to set up the Gentem Café." The selection of south-east Asian food is not available elsewhere in Niseko and Hugo Weaving, among many others, have enjoyed dining there in the past.

Gentemsticks are, as they say, reassuringly expensive – prices begin at ¥100,000 for the board alone. The largest board, the Impossible, retailing for ¥178,500. Is one of the most expensive boards in the world.

Tamai-san reasons: "I think the material and labour prices in Japan add to the expense. But most of the expense comes from the demands we put on our manufacturer and the quality of the finish."

Japanese consumers have a fascination with products that are made in limited numbers and Gentem buyers can be assured that only around 50 of each model will make it on the mountain. "We asked factories in Austria, Canada and other places if they could produce our boards, but they couldn't meet our specific demands," says Tamai. "The normal design process for making a snowboard is for the board engineer and designer to work together, but we think about the shape, flex, camber and other specs first. We then bring the idea to the engineer, who may not know how to construct it the way we'd like. So we need to research how to make the ideal board."

All Gentemsticks are handmade in a factory in Niigata by craftsmen who select only the finest wood and pay the strictest attention to detail. The boards do not contain any high-tech equipment but as each board has varying flex and camber specifications, each board requires extensive individual attention.

The renowned Japanese attention to detail has seen the Gentemstick draw fans from across Japan, but the boards have yet to penetrate the international market. Type in 'Gentemstick' into a search engine and you'll be lucky to find any matches in English. Some Alaskan and Canadian riders in the know order them over the internet but, by and large, they are a Japan-only secret. Plans are a-foot to expand their export market and a bilingual web site will be up and running soon. As Niseko's international reputation grows it is likely that this unique snowboard brand will continue to grow too.



# ...A THOUSAND WORDS

local photographers document  
White January 2008. niseko.



Mick Davis.



Levi Ratapu.



Unidentified.



Unidentified.



Mick Davis.



Alex Lee.



Koppa.



Brett... Rusutsu.

Photo: Randy Wieman, HotShots

Photo: Glen Claydon

Photo: Mark Tsukasa, HotShots

Photo: Glen Claydon

Photo: Randy Wieman, HotShots

Photo: Aaron Jamieson, Niseko Photography

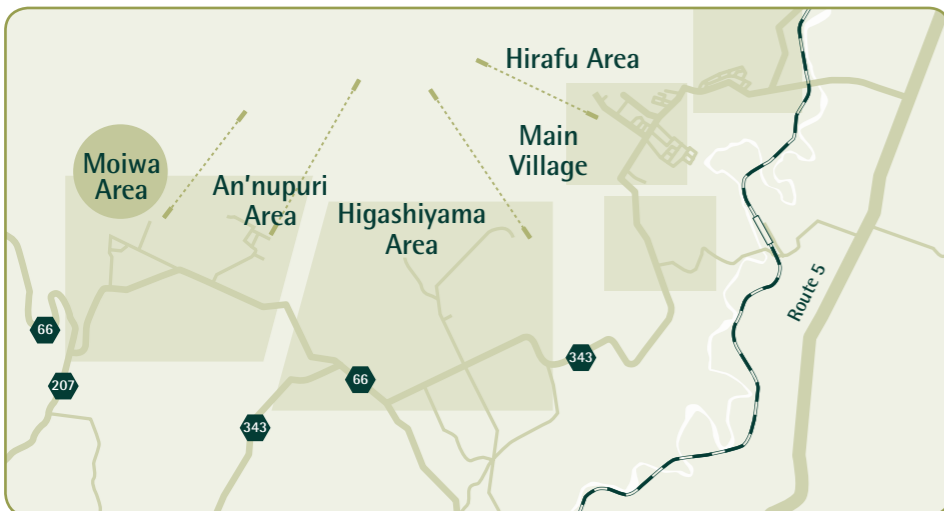
Photo: Matt Hallingsworth, Niseko Photography

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- Uncrowded slopes promising an unrivalled ski experience
- Niseko's best powder
- One pair lift, one quad lift
- Over 15 ski runs
- Three-minute shuttle bus to Annupuri resort, with access to over 57 runs and 48km of groomed trails.



## Moiwa Wonderland

Imagine a skiing wonderland – only recently discovered by tourists with an abundance of fresh powder snow as far as the eye can see. Imagine Niseko Moiwa.

The Moiwa region has long been the best kept secret of Japanese locals. Located on the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan, the region is experiencing a growth in tourism accompanied by a continued growth in accommodation choices.

Niseko boasts three main ski areas: Grand Hirafu, Higashiyama and Annupuri, with most activity centred around the village of Hirafu, approximately ten minute's drive from Kutchan, and overlooked by Mount Yotei. Niseko Moiwa is one of three smaller, more exclusive resorts located within 15 minutes drive from Hirafu.

Over the past few years, there has been a large amount of real estate investment in Niseko – mostly foreign lead. As property prices rise in Hirafu, investors are discovering the regions key underdeveloped areas outside Hirafu – Moiwa and neighbouring Annupuri Resort in particular have been identified as the next areas for future expansion and growth.

While you may dream of owning a piece of this skiing perfection, you can now make it a reality. Niseko Moiwa is the first master-planned resort in Niseko, and represents an unmatched skiing and snowboarding experience in Japan. Connected to the Niseko United resorts by regular shuttle bus during winter and only 3 minutes from Annupuri resort, Moiwa offers uncrowded powder runs, and local Japanese culture and cuisine. Stage One, the Niseko Moiwa Resort Towers, encompasses 109 strata-titled holiday apartments across two 11-storey towers, with uninterrupted forest and mountain views.

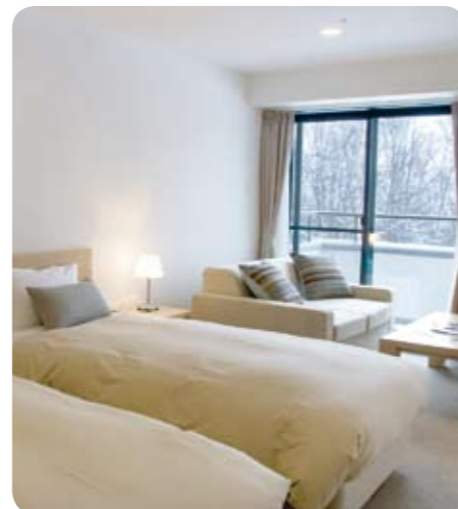
Niseko Moiwa has an exclusive future ski-in ski-out access to fresh powder runs and provides an authentic Japanese experience with a Western flavour. This stage represents your only chance to secure a ground-level investment in the first master-planned resort in Niseko, and realise the growth potential of this burgeoning region.

The apartments feature large picture windows to maximise stunning mountain views, Western finishes and appliances, Japanese-style bath suites, traditional tatami rooms and lockable storage for owners and visitors. There is a rooftop restaurant and conference room with panoramic alpine views – one of the largest restaurants in Niseko, a Wellness Centre including indoor/outdoor hot mineral Onsens, and ground floor lobby bar.

Niseko is designated a 'Special Heavy Snowfall Region' with average of 15 metres of powder snow each year. Niseko receives 6 metres more snow than Whistler in Canada. The resort represents excellent value compared to international ski resorts like Vail and Aspen (new apartments selling from approximately US\$16,690/sqm – Niseko Moiwa is an emerging market and pricing for the Resort apartments start from approximately US\$4,100/sqm).

The fully refurbished and fully furnished Studio, 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments across the two 11-storey towers are ready now for settlement and occupancy. For those concerned about foreign ownership – 100% foreign ownership is allowed in Japan.

[www.nisekomoiwa.com](http://www.nisekomoiwa.com)



Ski in – Ski out<sup>^</sup> apartments from JPY23,900,000 in Niseko's Best Powder



Niseko Moiwa Resort Towers is the first stage of an exclusive master-planned resort in the world's best deep-powder region. With apartments now ready for occupation, buy now and ski this season!

*Ski in – ski out<sup>^</sup> access to the world's best powder • Four season income potential*  
 • *Niseko's first master planned community*

Studio, 1 bedroom, 1 bedroom + tatami and 2 bedroom apartments with stunning mountain views and ski in – ski out access.

- Solid investment returns
  - Brand new furniture and window packages
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  - YEN Finance packages for Australians available at low interest rates from 2.25%
  - Expert onsite building operator to manage your investment!
- Ready for occupation now – **buy now and ski this season!**

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Sales office: Ground Floor, Mountainside Palace Apartments (near Seicomart)

Email: [sales.niseko@nisekomoiwa.com](mailto:sales.niseko@nisekomoiwa.com)

or call +81 136 21 7722 or 0136 21 7722

\*Conditions apply. Future ski in – ski out access from 08/09 season. Subject to change.



[www.nisekomoiwa.com](http://www.nisekomoiwa.com)

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**niseko cuisine**

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seven menus available with wine to complement  
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**Wine & Food Bar DRAGON**

Inspired by the ancient art of Japanese temple carpentry, infused with a menu of the finest local ingredients... The Dragon Bar is an experience into the culture of Japan. Visit the bar on the first floor, or the restaurant on the second which serves contemporary cuisine together with wines selected by our sommelier. Enter the DRAGON.

dinner 6pm~11pm (10pm L.O.), bar~2am **tel:0136-21-7700**

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FIRST FLOOR, YAMA SHIZEN WEST



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**dragon**

by greg lund

Because Hokkaido was only settled by Japanese from the mainland in the very recent past, it lacks a lot of the traditional architecture and history usually associated with Japan.

But diner's at the Dragon Restaurant, just below the main intersection in the centre of Hirafu, can savour - in addition to a superb culinary treat - a glimpse of Japan as it was in the days of the samurai. Just 50 metres down the hill from the Seicomart intersection, but 200 years back in time.

Dragon creator and food and wine whiz Noriko Masubuchi and her partners have cleverly re-created an old, run-down pension (anyone remember Pension Ibox?) into a slick restaurant and bar complex which offers totally up-to-date fusion cuisine in an elegant Edo Period atmosphere. For a chance to see Japan as it was once, as well as to enjoy an excellent, well-priced meal, Dragon is one restaurant not to miss.

Noriko san and her sister, Fumie, first burst onto the Niseko food and wine scene in the 2006/07 winter season at the Dragon Wine Bar - a cosy, bright little gathering place overlooking the main ski slope from the second floor of the Alpen Hotel.

But with their new offering this year, they have moved downhill and upmarket in a most impressive way.

Noriko san is a real Niseko veteran - she began visiting as a fanatical snowboarder at age 21 - and it was a boarding injury six years later that set her on the path to her current vocation. Unable to indulge her passion for powder any more, she turned just as enthusiastically to wine and food, gaining the rare distinction in Japan of becoming a sommelier, with a strong background in Italian cuisine.

This expertise - the ability to pair good food with just the right wine - is the first thing that sets Noriko san and Dragon apart in Niseko's night dining scene.

The other is her meticulous attention to using only the best of natural ingredients that Hokkaido can offer. With the exception of the lamb (the grilled rosemary lamb in an original Noriko-san green sauce is one of the highlights of the menu) all other main ingredients are locally sourced, including the beef, chicken and fish, and the superb Ezo Shika (Hokkaido Venison) that is Dragon's signature dish.

It goes without saying that all vegetables are organically grown, and the sauces they are served in are masterpieces - blending as many as 30 ingredients to produce exquisite flavours.

Our table voted the venison dish the outstanding favourite among the main dishes, but followed closely by the grilled Bifuka beef (a Hokkaido specialty). The standout appetiser was the scallop (as only Hokkaido can produce them) with prawn and crab sauce, but for sheer creativity, the simple salad, with what the menu describes only as 'Dragon's special dressing' is unbeatable. If you can persuade Noriko-san to reveal the recipe for that dressing, PLEASE let us know.

And finally, don't even think about trying to select your own wine from the small, but very well-chosen wine list. Just ask Noriko-san.

We thought the Dusty Road pinot noir from New Zealand was as good an accompaniment to the meat dishes as we have found anywhere in Niseko, but only drank it because Noriko-san the sommelier gently but firmly vetoed our original choice. That is the way to really enjoy the Dragon experience. Relax, and let Noriko san take care of it all for you. (And DO try the magic wine she produces to go with dessert)!!  
Dinner 6-11pm. Bookings recommended 0136 21 7700.

**night life**

by Kaori-chan

イベント情報をお寄せください!  
Tell us about your event!  
nightlife@powderlife.co.jp 0136 222 000

**Saturday February 2**

**Java Bar DJ maco and MJ ELEMENT**  
Funky beats to drink and dance to. Free.  
**Blo Blo's Spud bake**  
¥100 Kutchan potatoes, straight from the fire with sour cream and butter. From 7pm.

**Sunday January 3**

**Java Bar Sunday Sessions**  
Christian plays his mellow tunes.

**Monday February 4**

**Java Bar Karaoke and Toss the Boss**  
Toss Tracey for every drink - call it right & your drink is free + Karaoke with a twist.

**Tuesday February 5**

**BBQ night at Blo Blo**  
¥1000 for plate of BBQ, salads, a beer and free Fire dancing show from 10pm

**Niseko Darts @ Wild Bills**

Bill's always becomes lively after dart.

**Wednesday February 6**

**POWDERLIFE KUTCHAN PUB CRAWL**  
¥1,000. Pay at Powderlife office 2F Australia house. Girls free. See the quirky places that make K-Town great. Leaves from Seicomart bus station at 7.30 sharp. Includes some free drinks and more.

**Thursday February 7**

**Java Bar Live Music: Micko & Christian**  
Two great local musos playing all your favourite tunes in a relaxed environ.  
**SYNX at Saison Club**  
Top venue just outside Hirafu, great

sound, comfy couches, free karaoe, dancing and more. ¥1,500 includes one drink, snack & shuttle from Seicomart leaving 8.30. Returns 10.30 or Midnight.

**Friday February 8**

**Red Bar Dance Party from 10pm**  
¥1,000 including free drink.  
**Java Bar Mystery music mix - DJ maco**

**Saturday February 9**

**Java Bar DJ maco and DJ Massah**

**Sunday February 10**

**Java Bar Sunday Sessions with Christian and special guest Chris Ernst**  
Fresh from the Big Day Out this is a special chance to see this up and coming Australian performer free! This will be the best live gig of the season.

**Monday February 11**

**Java Bar Karaoke and Toss the Boss.**

**Tuesday February 12**

**BBQ night at Blo Blo**  
**Niseko Darts @ Wild Bills**

**Wednesday February 13**

**POWDERLIFE KUTCHAN PUB CRAWL**  
¥1,000 leaves 7.30. Seicomart bus stop

**Thursday February 14**

**Java Bar: Live Music: Micko & Christian**  
**SYNX at Saison Club** (see Feb 7 listing)

**Friday February 15**

**Red Bar Party Night**  
¥1,000 including free drink.



100% fresh local ingredients  
come alone or bring your friends everyone can enjoy their time here!

**Happy Hour 5pm~7pm**  
All drinks ¥100 off

**JAM cafe bar 5pm~2am**  
tel: 0136-23-0700

**Java Bar**  
Hirafu's Lounge & Cocktail Bar



Open from 4pm til late  
FREE Internet Hotspot

Live Music, DJs & Events

Check daily events in Niseko Powderlife Gig Guide

**Best Cocktails & Espresso in Niseko!**

**Sakura St. Mid Hirafu Village, Shuttle Stop 4. t: 0136 23 0788**



**Nearest from ski area!**

ひらふ温泉郷  
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TEL 0136-22-1105  
From ¥10,650 (for per person, per night)  
\* including : tax, breakfast, lift ticket.

**Relaxation**



Open air hot spring bath



Swimming pool

**NISEKO Mt. RESORT**  
**Grand HIRAFU**

<http://www.grand-hirafu.jp>

**Dinner at Alpen Hotel**



Restaurant Slalom Restaurant Supur

**Ski in! Ski out!**

**NISEKO KOGEN HOTEL**  
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Relax after a day in the snow, Get your essential massage, Eastern or Western style. Men & women are most welcome. Simultaneous bookings available.



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Village Shuttle Stop No 4. (walk up 50m)

**Prices:** 30 mins 4500 yen  
60 mins 8000 yen

We accept CASH only. Bookings are essential.  
From 10am to 9pm daily. Dec-March only.

## in focus

# roku-san

interview by eriko mentzos

Ninety two years old and still going strong, Rokurou Takada - affectionately known as Roku-san - is a local institution. Roku-san used to be the only active player of the traditional Taiko drum in the area - now the local Yotei Daiko drumming troupe he created boasts more than 200 members. Roku-san shares a truly spiritual bond with the Taiko and Eriko Mentzos was lucky enough to hear about it from the man himself.



### When did you start playing the Taiko?

When I was still in my mother's stomach. My family's religion is the Nichiren sect of Buddhism. While we chant a sutra, we play a fan drum. So I always heard those rhythms when my mother was chanting, and probably drumming in her stomach!

### What is the best thing about the Taiko?

Well, people say I am too crazy about it but I just love it! I could overcome anything because the Taiko was always with me and encouraged me in a great way. I think I forget everything while I'm playing. Now I go to schools, and teach Taiko to children. I'm so happy to see them enjoying themselves. Taiko is a simple instrument - anyone from a child to an adult - even an old one like me - can play the Taiko. Four generations of my family now play the Taiko. Isn't that great?

### Do you ever get tired after playing the Taiko?

No, not at all. I never get tired from playing the Taiko. I get energy from that. People tell me my hands are moving even when I am sleeping.

### How many members are there in your group?

We have over 200 members in this town. But it wasn't big from the beginning. I used to play by myself. I brought my Taiko to many events and played. In summer to cheer baseball teams, in winter to cheer skiers in competitions. My children didn't like me doing that. They said they were ashamed. But I kept doing it and over time my children came to understand my passion. They started to play the Taiko with me, and now we have so many people encouraging us to continue.

### How much does a Taiko cost?

It depends on the size and who makes it... but ours were about ¥25 million (\$250,000) for 60 drums (about \$4000 each!). And that was about half price!

### Is there any meaning behind the rhythms?

Yotei Daiko's 'Arashi' is about people climbing Mt Yotei during a storm, then seeing a beautiful sunrise at the end. Niseko Renzan describes Niseko's scenes - starting with peaceful nature in spring, then festivals in summer, skiing in winter, then thinking about the approaching spring. We've been working on a new one called 'Daichi' (the earth) for about 10 years. It's almost ready. We're practicing it now.

### Do you have any big plan with Taiko?

Well, we would like to do Sennin Taiko (drumming with 1000 people) when I turn 95 years old. I will be 93 soon in March. So 95 is not so far from now.

### What are your top three tips for visitors to Niseko?

- 1 I think everyone should try the Taiko. Like I said before, it's a very simple instrument. There are some events you can actually try our taikos.
- 2 As you know, Niseko gets great snow in winter. So I would like everyone to enjoy this wonderful snow while they are in Niseko.
- 3 The colours are amazing here in autumn. Many people from all over Japan visit to see Niseko's autumn. I would like many people to come back in autumn.

## irasshaimase < welcome >

by Eriko Mentzos



Kondou Takashi

### Niseko Cheese Factory

Kondou Takashi was born in Monbetsu in the very north of Hokkaido. So far north you can actually see icebergs off the coast. He used to work for supermarket giant Daiei in the deli section. Eventually he became bored of selling somebody else's product and loved cheese, so he decided he'd learn how to make his own. Takashi-san went to school in France for two months to learn how to make cheese. He then spent a whole year looking for a place where he could make cheese - he chose Niseko because he was still close to Sapporo so it would be good for his business. Also, the dairy farms in the area are small which means quality of the milk is better. The business is fairly quiet during the winter, so he says it's a good time to make his gouda cheese. In summer he makes camembert in between serving the multitude of Japanese on holidaying in Hokkaido. He has a wide range of cheeses, and wants to add at least one new product a year to increase his range. The store is closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays... but even when it's closed, he's inside making cheese!

### ST Gallery

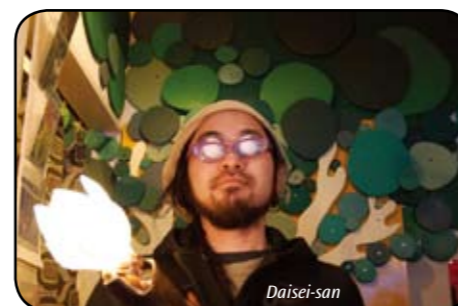
Shigeru Tokumaru, 73, is a talented local painter who was born in Obihiro in central Hokkaido. He stayed there until he was 32 and worked in a busy bank before asking to be transferred to a branch where he could ski. He ended up in Niseko where business was very quiet, so he had a lot of time to paint. Because the scenery was so beautiful in the surrounding area he changed from painting portraits to nature. Then he was transferred back to a city branch which was busy. He soon decided that Niseko was calling, so at 43 he quit and moved back. His son was working in Tokyo designing bridges but decided to join his father. He designed the gallery, the first floor is for the father's gallery, the second floor is the son's gallery - he still designs bridges in Niseko to this day. Shigeru-san feels lucky because he gets to paint everyday and he is still skiing.



Shigeru Tokumaru

### Beatniks Apartment Sasurai

Beatniks apartment is a funky store in Kutchan right next to Takiguchi sports. The owner Daisei-san sells a range of unique artwork, cool t-shirts and jumpers, and unique jewellery he's collected from his travels all over the world, and some he made himself. You can even find lamps, unique furniture and calligraphy. This place is full of surprises. Daisei-san was born in Sapporo and grew up wanting to be an explorer or an archeologist. He never became one but lives his life like he had. He decides where he wants to go next by looking at a map and finding a place that he's never heard of and going there. He once went to a tiny island in Micronesia and ended up being taken in by a family because they told him it was dangerous to be there by himself. Daisei-san is a talented artist and designer who designed a Yonex snowboard and did the artwork for the Shimano test centre in Moiwa and the Loaf Lounge in Kutchan. His artwork was also once displayed in Italy.



Daisei-san

### Red Bar

Kyoichi Okamoto was a trading company employee until his early 30s when he began working in the promotions department for an outdoor clothing maker. He then worked for his friend's rafting business in west Japan, before starting his own rafting company - The Tanken club - in Nara 15 years ago.

He was always having trouble recruiting guides and finding a winter job for them - so he thought Niseko would be a good area to find and keep staff. He opened the Red Bar and now most of his staff travel between the two places every season. The Red Bar has lots of repeat customers from around town. All the spices in the restaurant are from Nepal or India. Resham is the Nepalese manager and his wife Prema is the main chef. Okamoto-san, has been a skier, telemarker and snowboarder but he ruptured his ankle ligaments falling off a rock while rafting so he can't telemark anymore.



Kyoichi Okamoto

Business Hours from 7:30 to 23:00

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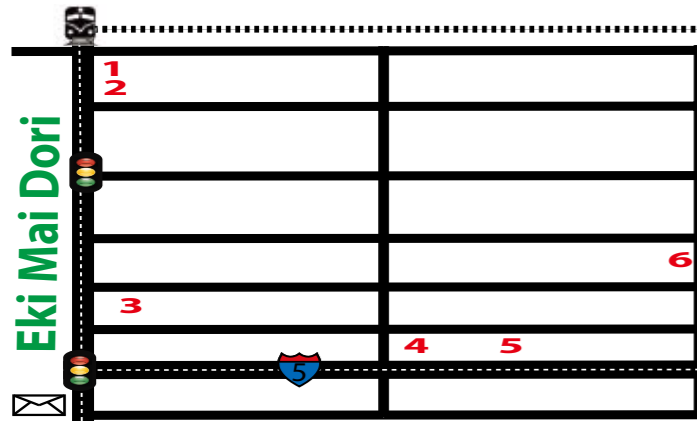
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**NBS**

Map showing locations: NBS Ski School, NBS Rental, Seicomart, Lawsons, To Kutchan, To Higashiyama.

**HOTSHOTS** photography & video  
**SkiJapan.com**





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

hours:11:00~21:00  
closed on Sundays  
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Pick up service available if you book the dinner course (from ¥3000).

**FUJII Confectionary Store**

Don't miss Kutchan's famous Cream Puff. 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 NAMI CHAN CHI**

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**Blue Cielo** hours:12:00~22:00  
closed on Mondays  
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Feast on delicious Hokkaido fare prepared in an iron pot

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- Bottle Wine...¥2,000~

\*get 1 free drink on 2/9 candle night

**Be.** 7 PM ~ 3 AM  
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pool, darts, dj, eat, drink, relax... be.  
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Spend a night in Kutchan at Be.  
1F of Oowaki Bldg  
\*No Cover Charge



Chiaki and Takayoshi

## sweet love in kutchan

by magnus alexander

Fujii Confectionary houses a love story so sweet it has literally rotted teeth. The 60-year-old family-run business was started by current manager Chiaki Fujii's grandfather, possibly as sweet a tooth Hokkaido has ever seen. So strong was his love of sugar as a kid, his teeth completely rotted away and he had to get dentures while he was still a teenager. While his lack of chompers meant he didn't have to go to war, it didn't warn him off getting a job at the local sweet factory, where he also fell in love with the owner's daughter. They later married and together started their own store, the current Fujii Confectionary.

But the love story doesn't end there. Chiaki-san herself found love behind the confectionary counter. After working for a few years and learning the trade in one of Sapporo's most well known confectionary companies, Chiaki-san too met the man of her dreams. They married and moved back to Kutchan to take over the day to day running of Fujii confectionary from Chiaki's parents who are looking towards retirement.

Chiaki-san specialises in all sorts of western-style cakes and bread and dairy-based sweets, while husband Takayoshi-san is an expert in Japanese-style sweets - 'wagashi'. The intricately designed sweets are tiny recreations of all sorts of fruits, flowers, and other traditional Japanalia, often associated with the seasons. They're to be enjoyed with the eyes as well as the tastebuds. Be sure to try the Roku-san sweet!

Fujii Confectionary is located on Kutchan's main street, Eki Mae Dori, right near the train station.

Buses to Kutchan leave from the main street near Seicomart. The bus stop is a few small signs on the roadside opposite PowPow. Buses leave every half hour or so during the day and cost ¥380. The night bus is free and leaves every hour or so from 5pm. Timetable on the back of the resort's course map.

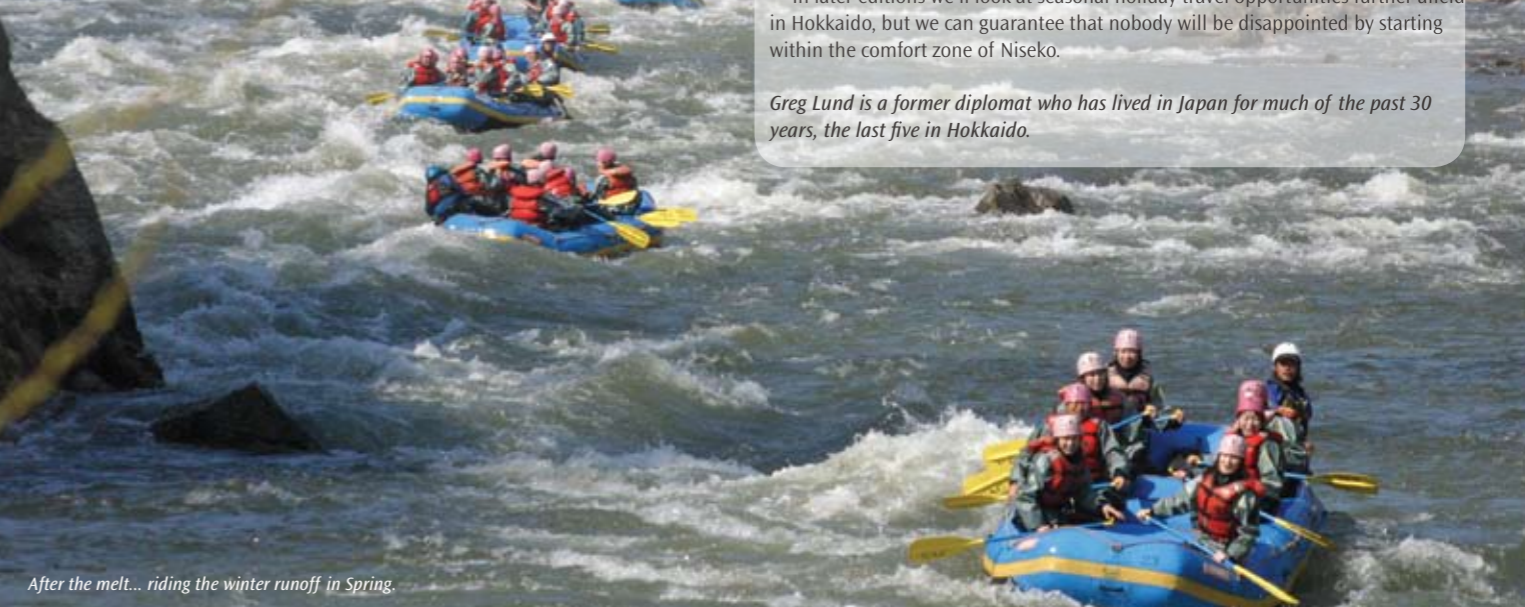


Wagashi... Japanese sweets.

## niseko after the melt

Enchanting year round  
by greg lund

Hokkaido is one of the world's great undiscovered tourist treasures. As global warming increasingly impacts on popular tourist destinations around the globe, Hokkaido is just starting to come into its own. The powder snow that blankets the ski resorts in winter is one legacy of its location off the coast of Siberia, but in addition, it is just far enough north of the equator to escape the humidity which makes mainland Japan almost unbearable in summer. In short, it's 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'.



After the melt... riding the winter runoff in Spring.

There are probably lots of very technical ways to measure the maturity of holiday resort areas.

But in the case of ski resorts, the simplest - and most accurate - test is to look at how many visitors they attract in the period between winters. Whistler, it is now said, has more visitors in the summer than in the winter.

In Niseko, the non-summer period is shorter than many competing ski areas, with snow sports generally possible from mid-to-late November right through to late April. And with phase-in and phase-out periods at either end, the Spring/Summer/Autumn period offers a very exciting range of leisure possibilities that are at last being well promoted - and recognised by holidaymakers looking for a vacation with a difference.

Some adventure businesses based in Niseko are now reporting annual growth in the summer visitor market of more than 15%. So it is safe to say that Niseko really is now on its way to real year-round international resort status. It is the volume of off-season business which really inspires investors to put money into infrastructural development that in turn reinforces the winter season and completes the cycle of success.

Niseko built its well deserved reputation among foreign visitors because of its seemingly endless supply of magical powder snow, which is a commodity not normally associated with images of Asia. But it is Niseko's proximity to Siberia - sort of like standing in front of a giant refrigerator with the door open - that makes it so unique. When the north-west monsoon blows outwards in winter over the narrow stretch of water that separates Hokkaido from the Asian mainland, it picks up just the subtlest amount of moisture which falls as that all that wonderful, fluffy white stuff out there.

In the summer time, the reverse weather pattern occurs, with the Asian mainland sucking in cool air from the North Pacific Ocean, passing right over Hokkaido and dramatically moderating the stifling humidity that characterises most of Asia in during the warmer months of the year.

The Japanese have known this for a long time, and have made Hokkaido the number one domestic summer holiday destination during the period from June to August. They travel all over the island, of course, but for anyone reading this who'd like to put a toe in the water and

try Hokkaido out of ski season, you don't have to go very far from the comfort of Hirafu, Higashiyama, Annupuri or Hanazono to experience a holiday filled with fun, adventure, and sheer scenic beauty.

With such a great supply of excellent accommodation now available in the area, it is possible to enjoy rafting, fishing and swimming in pristine, crystal clear streams in the summer, go mountain biking or trail riding - or simply road cycling - on safe, low-traffic roads in cool clean air, paraglide from some of Mt Annupuri's higher points, simply relax in the areas many outdoor onsen (hot spring) baths, or go exploring local fishing villages and traditional port towns like Iwanai and Otaru.

In spring, which brings an explosion of amazingly fresh shades of the surrounding forests, most of these activities overlap with the end of the snow. So you can seriously contemplate having an early morning ski/board, a raft ride down the river early afternoon, and a mountain bike ride and soothing onsen to round out the day.

Between summer and winter, you can take out the skiing out of the equation, but all the rest can be indulged in one of the most spectacular red, yellow and gold autumn environments to be found in this part of the world.

The local Japanese are the same friendly, helpful people all year round, and with seasonal variations - the food is the 'icing on the cake', as it were.

In later editions we'll look at seasonal holiday travel opportunities further afield in Hokkaido, but we can guarantee that nobody will be disappointed by starting within the comfort zone of Niseko.

Greg Lund is a former diplomat who has lived in Japan for much of the past 30 years, the last five in Hokkaido.



# Captivated by Niseko

HOKKAIDO TRACKS SURVEY REVEALS INSIGHTS INTO THE NISEKO MARKET

by James Gallagher

Niseko captivates – or captures – people in several stages. The first stage is the fun and excitement of the fabulous holiday experience. The second stage can very quickly follow the first – an initial investment in a Niseko-Hirafu resort property. And the third stage is where someone truly believes in Niseko – a second or third investment, or the development of a Niseko investment strategy.

These were some of the findings that emerged from a survey that Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties conducted in May 2007 among its 100-plus investor base. The survey revealed hints into the purchasing habits of investors, which in turn yielded some clues into the true depth of the Niseko investment market.

For example, we asked how many times respondents had visited Niseko before purchasing, it seems the ‘best skiing holiday of their lives’ is the trigger for an investment with 42% deciding to purchase after a single visit. Interestingly, about 23% of investors purchase without even visiting Niseko, relying on research and/or recommendations.

When asked why they invested in Niseko, a majority of respondents replied ‘for long-term appreciation’ (67%), evidence that investors also clearly believe Niseko represents a good long-term investment proposition. But lifestyle is also a strong motivator, with 59% of people selecting ‘quality of skiing and boarding’ and 44% indicating that ‘a family retreat’ was a primary factor. Yield was a motivating factor for fewer investors (36%).

When asked ‘what do you intend to do with your property?’ a majority of buyers responded they would hold for 10 years or more (41%). They are presumably looking forward to enjoying the apartment or house for many years to come.

And that is where Niseko works its charms. The more these people visit, the more they are drawn into the wonderful world of Niseko and start building a Niseko portfolio. A remarkable 43% of investors indicated in the survey that they were ‘considering a second purchase or have actually

purchased a second property.’

Some pursue an upper village and lower village strategy, hedging their bets between the condominium and the housing market. Some pursue ‘premium only’ strategy, seeking out only the highest end of the market – penthouses or premium houses. Some others pursue a property and land acquisition strategy.

The people at the ‘third stage’ are definitely the most astute investors. Convinced that the area is destined for long term growth and buoyed by earlier successes, they are more adventurous in their investment choices. They have strong connections in Niseko real estate circles.

So what are the third stagers shopping for at the moment? From where I sit the answer is simple – they look at everything, but are focusing on capital appreciation opportunities in locations not currently on the resort shuttle bus route. But whether it is location, selection of property, or investment advice, the third stagers understand that the driver of the best financial (and lifestyle) returns is quality real estate.

*James Gallagher is sales and marketing manager for Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties*



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# big ideas

## SHOUYA GRIGG SHARES HIS VISION

interview by kristian lund

While Hirafu has come a long way in the past five years, the realisation five-star luxury is needed to attract the upper end of the international ski market is starting to become apparent. One man who has taken it upon himself to get the ball rolling is J-Sekka creator Shouya Grigg. Stepping inside the refurbished hotel, formerly J-Second, one can get an idea of the luxury and attention to detail Grigg has in mind. Listening to him speak, you can almost see the pictures he's painting with his passion. We gave him an open mic to get an insight into his vision and what he's got in store for Niseko.

"Niseko has a lot of potential and it's still very much early days. In Hirafu over the past four or five years things have been improving on the one hand, but there's still plenty of room for infrastructure and accommodation. There are now lots of self-contained condominiums and townhouses. But as far as the high-end, fully serviced style of accommodation, whether it be a five star hotel or a high-end resort, there's nothing really along those lines locally.

With the people Niseko is starting to attract - high flyers and very wealthy people who have travelled the world to other ski resorts - who think the place is great, but don't want to stay in a condominium or self-contained apartment. They want to stay somewhere with all the luxuries, all the services. They want to check in, get to their room, order room service. Within the hotel there's restaurants, you don't have to go shopping and bring stuff back to cook. I'm not the one who has to do all these things, there are other big guys coming to town to international resorts looking at the area, but for a long time, even before Niseko started, I'd always been interested in the high end of the market. Whether it was fashion or architecture, or hotels, or resorts, I always had in mind I'd love to produce, design, create my own high-end retreat.

With the Sekka brand, back when I first made the

original restaurant, the plan was it would be a brand, not just a restaurant. I then did the houses (several small-scale, up-market houses in the lower village), now I've bought this small hotel (J-Second) that's been rebranded, with new restaurants and a lounge bar. Generally what I like to do is I'm not only interested in commercial, only doing something so that it's profitable. I don't see myself as a businessman. For me it's more from inspiration - I see these things are needed and it's what I love anyway personally. Generally I think if you're passionate about something and you believe in it, and it's a good idea, it will work out in the end.

I'm involved in some very large parcels of land both near Hanazono and very close to Hirafu. At the base of Hirafu village we have two blocks that are basically 100,000 tsubos (33 hectares). It's got views of Yotei and backs onto the river and got great views of Hirafu. It feels as though it's about the size of Hirafu. With one of the blocks we're in negotiations with some very famous, high-end international resort groups, two specifically. One of them is basically the top of the market.

There's also a need for large homes. Talking about the retreat that I've always wanted to do, the other block next door I'm looking at doing a private residence, a village. So I'll probably put 20 to 25 large homes in there, ranging from 600-800sqm homes. These will probably have an indoor lap pool. There will be a caretaker there looking after the overall village. We'll drill for a hot spring and pipe it to all the homes so they'll all have their own private hot spring. We'll have a communal area - a central place where if people want to mingle they can. Maybe within that central building there might be a bit of a gym or fitness centre, spa facilities, massage, library, a lounge, there might be a wine cellar there. This year I'm building a 650sqm model home on a block at Hanazono that will be finished by next winter.



Shouya Grigg in J-Sekka

I'm building a very big house in the lower village which is almost finished. I call it Project Four. It will be absolute top end. The reason I thought of Project Four is it's trying to push the boundaries - things that are spacious and luxurious and hopefully appealing to that type of market, like J-Sekka, the restaurants and suites (six spacious rooms in J-Sekka in a space that formerly contained 30 rooms).

Why do I do it? Because it's needed. The area has a lot of potential and it's still very much early days so there's still a long way to go. But to make it successful in the long term, some of these things need to come online sooner than later for the longevity of this resort. We all know the snow is good, better than most places out there, and there's a whole range of other things it has going for it. But to really bring it on to that international level we need not just one but a few different styles of really big-end resorts, accommodation, hotels, restaurants and shops."



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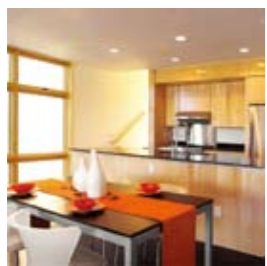


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## feature property

### Annupuri Village Creekside House

¥120 million

This recently constructed house is located in the burgeoning new development of Annupuri Village. Currently featuring a handful of large properties, Annupuri Village is an area of Niseko that is on the rise. This property has one of the best locations, directly beside a creek and with floor to ceiling windows making the most of the view from the lounge area. Recently constructed this property has just come onto the market.

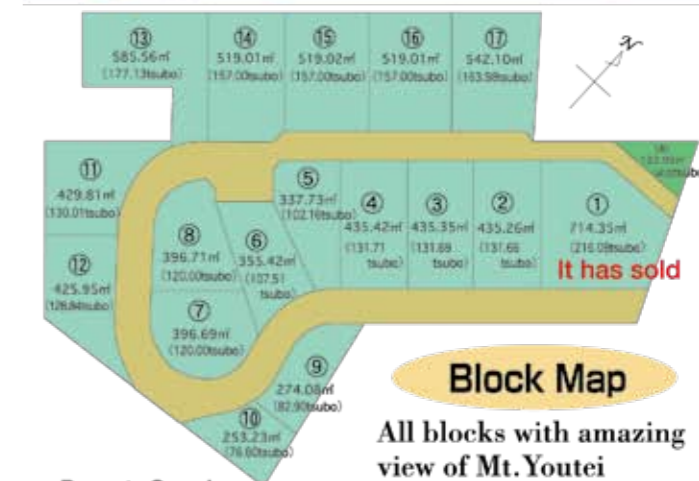
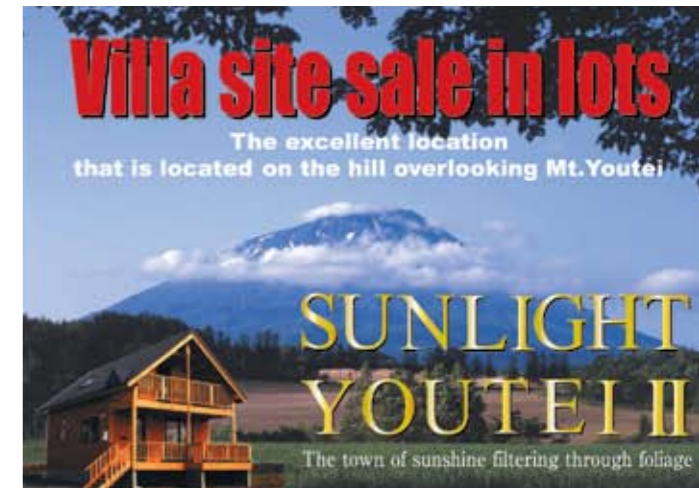
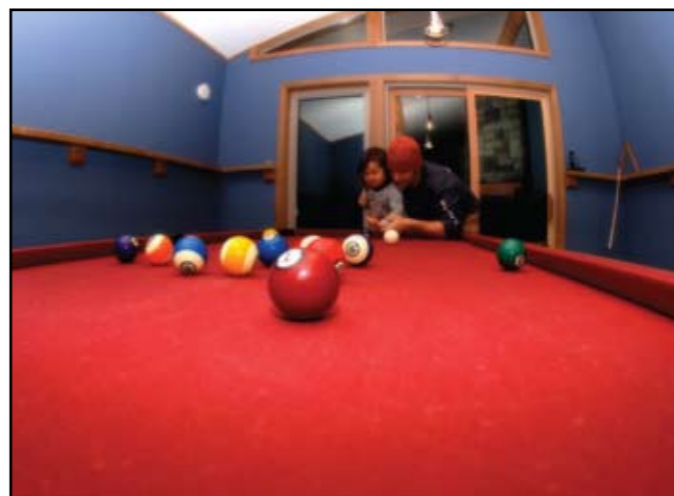
#### Annupuri

- Three bedrooms - one queen, one double, one twin, plus loft
- Two bathrooms
- Full size kitchen and dining room
- Billiards room
- Double height ceilings
- Dual fireplace between living room and billiards room
- Large outdoor deck, with removable railings for easy snow clearing in winter
- Large basement
- Fully furnished

Land Size 575.75 tsubo (1900sqm)  
Building Size 186sqm

Access  
Ski lifts: 5-10 minute walk

Inquiries to Niseko Real Estate  
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- Property Overview**
- Location/114-12 Aza Kabayama Kutchan-cho Abuta-gun,etc
  - Access/12 min from JR Kutchan station by car
  - Building coverage/40%
  - Total floor-area ratio/150%
  - Tsubo unit price/50,000~73,000 yen/Per tsubo
  - Electricity and telephone facilities load money/250,000 yen~350,000 yen One division (Type of laying underground)
  - Water service load money/250,000~300,000 yen
  - Facility/Water supply-Public management water service, Electricity: Hokkaido Electric Power Co.,Inc, Telephone:NTT, gas:Individual propane, Drainage: U-type side ditch(set up septic tank)

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## AIRPORT

New Chitose Airport 0123 23 0111  
[www.new-chitose-airport.jp/language/english](http://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](http://www.whitelinerbuses.com).....011-242-2040

### Chuo Buses

[www.chuo-bus.co.jp/kikan/ski](http://www.chuo-bus.co.jp/kikan/ski).....011-231-0500

### Donan buses

[www.donanbus.co.jp/ski](http://www.donanbus.co.jp/ski).....0123-46-5701

### Hokkaido Resort Liner

[www.access-n.jp/ski\\_info.html](http://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, Izumikyō (Hirafu) 0134-25-0543, Black Diamond Lodge : 0136-44-1144

## TAXI

A standard taxi from Chitose to Hirafu will cost about ¥30,000. Prai Taxi charges 20,000 for a small taxi (3-4 people) or ¥33,000 for a jumbo (8-10 people). Call 011 207 5166 or [www.prai.co.jp](http://www.prai.co.jp).

## 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](http://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](http://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, Hi-

gashiyama 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

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 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 from North Sydney Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Centre (Australia's leading knee clinic). Primary care also available. Sports injuries, back and neck pain, braces and taping. Appointments preferred but not essential. [www.NisekoPhysio.com](http://www.NisekoPhysio.com) Telephone 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](http://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.



## Nature Inspired Niseko Living



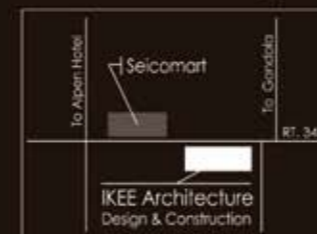
## INFORMATION AND SALES

IKEE Architecture  
 Design & Construction  
 170-138 Aza-Yamada  
 Kutchan-cho, Hokkaido  
 〒044-0081 JAPAN

TEL: +81 (0)136.21.2333  
 FAX: +81 (0)136.21.2334

EMAIL:  
[info@nisekolinwoodvillage.com](mailto:info@nisekolinwoodvillage.com)

WEBSITE:  
[www.nisekolinwoodvillage.com](http://www.nisekolinwoodvillage.com)







## on piste and off

We are now moving into the peak avalanche period. After our 'white January' the faces are carrying a lot of snow and there are new layers of snow developing. Read the avalanche information report every day. Carry avalanche safety equipment and do not duck ropes. Read and obey the local rules which are printed below.

### Higashiyama Yunosawa Bowl open next season

It is understood that the Yu No Sawa bowl between Higashiyama and An'nupuri is scheduled to open next season. A Canadian avalanche expert has been advising the resort operators and they seem to have decided that they will be OK to open from next season. REMEMBER DO NOT GO INTO THE AREA THIS SEASON. YOUR LIFT PASS WILL BE TAKEN AWAY.

### Powder ski and board hire

Made a last minute decision to head into the pow? Never been an off-piste kind of skier, but been convinced to give it a try? Don't go in there without the right skis or board - it's no fun sinking in the middle of a flat spot and hiking/swimming out for 45 minutes. Restaurant King Bell at the top of the Hirafu Gondola and bottom of the triple hooded, have recently opened their on-mountain ski hire specialising in powder skis and boards. They hire for as short as 2 hours and you can get skis with >90cm waist and Gentemstick boards, made especially for Niseko snow. You can even have your own skis tuned while you're out on their board. If you've planned your adventure early you can try Niseko Powder Boards & Skis under the Java bar. They also have a great selection of powder boards and skis.

### Surfanic Stack of the Week



Koji Takahashi from Tokyo is this week's Surfanic Stack of the Week winner for this beautiful face plant. He had two friends below him on the hill and one above who, unluckily for him, was clutching a camera. They all awarded him a 10 out of 10 for effort and Powderlife award him a top quality Surfanic jacket. Prove you're worthy and be in the running to win some tough new Surfanic gear. Submit your best stack pic at powderlife.co.jp.

### Niseko Free Passport Bus - ski area shuttle bus

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

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

### Niseko All Mountain Pass

Use days (valid)	Regular Season Price			Reduced-rate season & Spring Season Price		
	Adult	Senior (Age 65+)	Age 7-12	Adult	Senior (Age 65+)	Age 7-12
12-point	¥3,000	¥2,800	¥2,400	¥3,000	¥2,800	¥2,400
8-hour	¥4,800	¥3,600	¥2,800	¥4,800	¥3,600	¥2,800
12-hour	¥6,200	¥4,800	¥3,600	¥6,200	¥4,800	¥3,600
24-hour	¥9,400	¥6,800	¥5,300	¥9,400	¥6,800	¥5,300
3-Day	¥13,800	¥9,900	¥7,800	¥13,800	¥9,900	¥7,800
4-Day	¥18,400	¥13,200	¥10,400	¥18,400	¥13,200	¥10,400
5-Day	¥23,000	¥16,500	¥13,000	¥23,000	¥16,500	¥13,000
6-Day	¥27,600	¥19,800	¥15,600	¥27,600	¥19,800	¥15,600
7-Day	¥32,200	¥23,100	¥18,200	¥32,200	¥23,100	¥18,200
8-Day (10 Days)	¥36,800	¥26,400	¥20,800	¥36,800	¥26,400	¥20,800
9-Day (11 Days)	¥41,400	¥29,700	¥23,400	¥41,400	¥29,700	¥23,400
10-Day (12 Days)	¥46,000	¥33,000	¥26,000	¥46,000	¥33,000	¥26,000
11-Day (13 Days)	¥50,600	¥36,300	¥28,600	¥50,600	¥36,300	¥28,600
12-Day (14 Days)	¥55,200	¥39,600	¥31,200	¥55,200	¥39,600	¥31,200
13-Day (15 Days)	¥59,800	¥42,900	¥33,800	¥59,800	¥42,900	¥33,800
14-Day (16 Days)	¥64,400	¥46,200	¥36,400	¥64,400	¥46,200	¥36,400
15-Day (17 Days)	¥69,000	¥49,500	¥39,000	¥69,000	¥49,500	¥39,000
16-Day (18 Days)	¥73,600	¥52,800	¥41,600	¥73,600	¥52,800	¥41,600
17-Day (20 Days)	¥78,200	¥56,100	¥44,200	¥78,200	¥56,100	¥44,200
18-Day (21 Days)	¥82,800	¥59,400	¥46,800	¥82,800	¥59,400	¥46,800
19-Day (22 Days)	¥87,400	¥62,700	¥49,400	¥87,400	¥62,700	¥49,400
20-Day (23 Days)	¥92,000	¥66,000	¥52,000	¥92,000	¥66,000	¥52,000
21-Day (24 Days)	¥96,600	¥69,300	¥54,600	¥96,600	¥69,300	¥54,600
50-hour	¥45,000	-	-	¥45,000	-	-
Season Pass	¥150,000	¥120,000	¥75,000	¥150,000	¥120,000	¥75,000

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

※A deposit is required for the key card.

※All day tickets are good for night skiing on the final day of the ticket.

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

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

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

### Deposit for Niseko All Mountain Pass Keycard

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

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

### In Case of Emergency

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

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

\*Niseko Mountain Patrol will immediately come to your assistance.

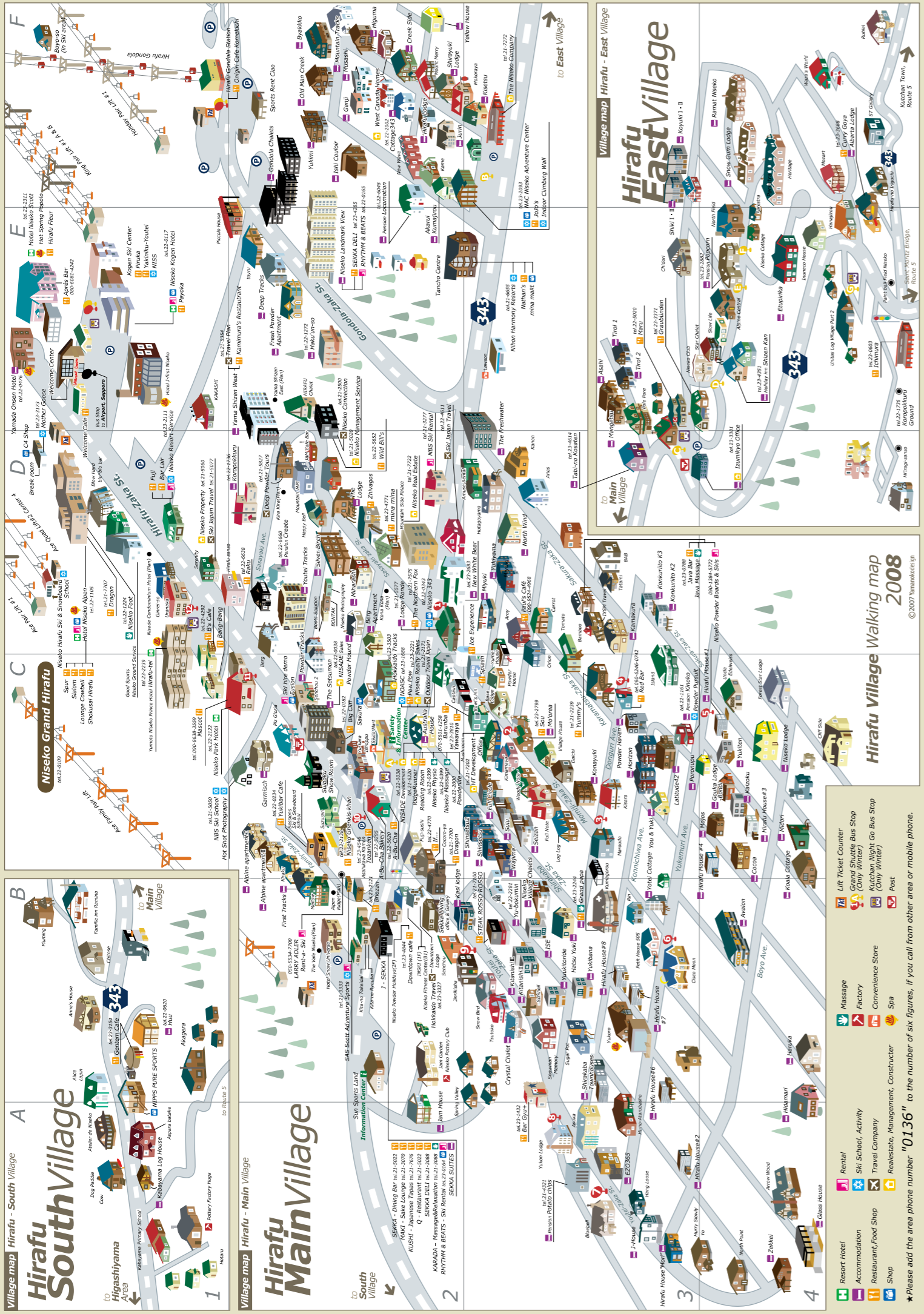
**N.F.P.P Niseko Mountain Patrol**  
Rescue Patrol crews are identified by their black or red uniforms with NFPP on the back.

### Niseko Local Rules

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

- Yunosawa (Gully between An'nupuri & Higashiyama area), Mizuno no Sawa (Gully under earth Higashiyama Prince Gondola) and Haru no Taki (Gully/Gully west of Hirafu area) are designated "strictly off limits areas" by the Niseko Local Rules. Whoever riding these areas WILL have their lift pass confiscated.
- Ducking the boundary ropes is prohibited. If you do, your lift pass WILL be confiscated. Use designated access gates to go out of bounds. These gates are the gateways to the Back Country.
- The area outside the mountain resort boundaries (Back Country, including the Peak) are National Forests & Parks, and are not controlled or supervised by the resort. Niseko Local Rule proclaims that hiking & riding these area involves danger and if you do, do it AT YOUR OWN RISK.
- During hazardous conditions, the gates will be closed and out of bounds riding will be strictly restricted.
- The "Niseko Avalanche Information" is the official information posted by the "Niseko Avalanche Research Center". These info can be found at lift stations and access gates.
- You will be responsible for the cost of your rescue in the back country area.
- Niseko Local Rules insist that all resort users respect the instructions of the Ski Patrol and Shiribeshi Mountain Patrol.
- The Mountain resort and the locals respect the freedom of the visitors, are concerned about their safety, and in turn, expect the visitors to respect the Niseko Local Rules.





# where to...

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

### Captain Hirafu Pension

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

Map ref: C2  
www.CaptainHirafu.com T. 0136 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

### Niseko's Black Diamond Lodge and Restaurant

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

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

### Java Bar & Java Massage

The Java Bar has some of the best coffee & cocktails in Hirafu. A relaxing lounge bar that is perfect for 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. Java Massage has qualified Australian massage therapists for your essential massage. Open 10am to 9pm daily. Simultaneous massage available.

Map ref: C3 www.Niseko-Info.com T. 0136 23 0788

### 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: E3  
www.NisekoMaru.web.fc2.com T. 0136-22-5020

### Paul's Café Niseko

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: D3  
www.paulscafe.jp T. 090-9524-4968

### Bang Bang

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

アフタースキーの楽しいひと時を厳選食材で創る料理と飲み物で過ごしてください。  
5.00-11.30pm. Closed Wednesdays.  
Map ref: C1  
http://www.niseko.or.jp/bangbang T. 0136-22-4292

### Ichimura Soba

Ichimura soba serves top quality soba (buck wheat noodles) that are made fresh on the premises. A beautiful wooden premises looking out towards Mt Yotei is the perfect location to enjoy some of the best soba you will find anywhere in Japan. Tempura Soba ¥1,300

11.00-15.00, 18.00-20.00 Closed Tuesdays  
Map ref: E4  
www.Niseko-Ichimura.com T. 0136-23-0603

### SAS Snowsports

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: B2  
www.sas-net.com T. 0136-21-3333

### 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: C1  
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: D1  
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 tours, snowmobile adventures, lessons, backcountry gear rental and car rentals.

BDのバックカントリーツアーは、自分のレベルに合わせてツアーを組み、ツアー後は五色温泉も楽しめます  
www.blackdiamondtours.com T. 090205410UR(8687)

### 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

### 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: B2  
T. 0136 21 2366

### Niseko Massage

Sports and relaxation massage in five star luxury. Niseko Massage has highly qualified Australian massage therapists using a range of essential oils in beautifully appointed rooms. Conveniently located in Australia house opposite to Seicomart. Amy and Carmen will assist your recovery from skiing and revitalise your body and mind.

Map ref: C2  
www.NisekoMassage.com T. 0136 22 0399

### 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

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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

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  - Rental
  - Ski School/Activity
  - Travel Company
  - Real Estate, Management, Constructor
- ★ Please add the area phone number "0136" to the number of six figures, if you call from other area or mobile phone.



# the last word...

## on health: fat

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.

everybody could understand and most of us took it on board as a truism. The problem is that fat doesn't really make you fat. It's your body's reaction to excess carbohydrates that does.

When it comes down to the nitty gritty of digesting foods in your body, everything you eat can be broken down into three types of food: protein, fat and carbohydrates. You eat. Food is broken down into its basic components – protein into amino acids, carbohydrates into glucose and fats into fatty acids. Our body needs all of these to function normally. The problem comes with fats when we eat too much of the wrong kind. We all know that we should avoid saturated fats but the processing of foods has created an even worse type of fat which is starting to gain infamy across the world – trans fat. Trans fats are created during the processing of some food to increase their shelf lives – great for the food industry but trans fats are unstable, unrecognizable and extremely bad for your body. Despite receiving wide coverage in the US they have skated under the radar in many countries. In 2006, the US FDA finally succeeded in making trans fat labeling mandatory after a legal case against Kraft's Oreo. Currently in Australia foods are only required to have trans fat content listed on the label if it claims to be "low in saturated fat" or have "no cholesterol." Denmark banned food with more than 2 percent trans fats two years ago, but thus far has been the only country to impose such a severe restriction. Many companies that are able to process foods without trans-fat are trumpeting the fact on their labels – check out the Pringles in the Seicomart.

Some fats will help you lose weight! That's right: eat fat to lose fat. Our brains and hearts are crying out for omega 3 fatty acids and alpha linolenic acid (a fat that keeps our cholesterol in check). Flaxseed oil and fish oils are fats so good we could drink them by the spoonful and our body would love us for it. Omega 6s were touted as being good for us for a while, but we convert excess Omega 3's to Omega 6's as we need them so just load up on the Omega 3s and live longer.

Our body needs glucose for energy to function, but we often get too much glucose when we don't need it. The rate that carbohydrates (including sugar) are broken down into the bloodstream to be used by the body is called the glycemic index (GI). Low GI foods are broken down slowly and the body can generally use the energy as it becomes available to perform its required functions. High GI foods are starchy



carbohydrates like white rice, pasta and the highest of all; sugar is broken down into glucose very quickly for the body to use as energy. The problem comes when glucose is delivered to our bodies quickly when we're sitting (or even worse sleeping) and we've not been moving around previously. Our body doesn't really know what to do with that excess energy. "I don't really need this energy now" thinks the brain, "so I might just stash some over here, here and here (thighs/stomach/chin) in case I need it later on". When that "later on" never eventuates that excess 'energy' (read fat) stays there waiting for the day it might be needed. Some high GI foods have redeeming features such high vitamin or antioxidant content, but unfortunately for sugar, aside from keeping some Bundaberg based battlers in work, sugar doesn't really have much going for it. Sugar in your mouth=Fat on your body is much closer to the truth.

### To sum up

Try to split your food intake roughly 40/30/30. 40% carbohydrates, 30% fat and 30% protein. Avoid sugar, saturated fats and particularly trans-fat as much as possible.

Eat lots of fruits and vegetables of all different colours.

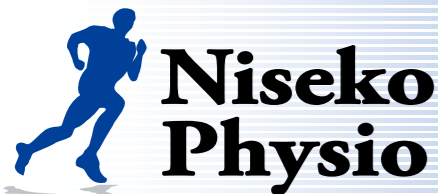
Take Omega 3 supplements daily: a fish oil capsule from cold water fish. Splash some flaxseed oil over a salad – or just slurp down a spoonful when you're staring into the fridge looking for ideas.

Avoid eating large quantities of High GI, starchy carbohydrates such as pasta and potatoes in large quantities in a single meal.

If you're here for the season hike the peak a few times a week – it's the best exercise in town and you get the pay off of almost guaranteed fresh powder turns at the end!

free. Winter sports aficionados are generally a pretty health conscious bunch, but how do we take all the information on board when we're making our dietary decisions..... Bang Bang's Wagyu beef looks oh so good but I shouldn't really eat all that fat.....I'll save myself for a Seicomart ice-cream and mini-pack of Oreos for dessert later. In reality for our health, we probably should skip both, but which is the lesser of two evils Sugar or Fat? Millions of years of evolution have trained our taste buds that sweet things are great; as up until recently the equation was sweet=fruits=vitamins=longer life=more chance to pro-create.

In the 1990's fat took a bad rap. Why? Because the food industry created a new market called low-fat. Even some well meaning doctors, dieticians and personal trainers fell for the trend. I can recall watching a presentation done by a dietician who put a picture of a packet of French fries next to a picture of an avocado; making the point that they contained about the same amount of fat, and we should be very wary of the poor old avocado which is monounsaturated fat, have 60% more potassium than bananas, the highest fibre content of any fruit and are rich in vitamins B E and K! Certainly an improvement over the French fries. The penny dropped for me that day that much like Georg W's version, the global war on fat had gone too far. Fat in your mouth=fat on your body was a nice simple sell that



### We can help with

- ✓ Sports Injuries
- ✓ Neck and Back 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, 170 - 5 Aza Yamada, Kutchan-cho, Abuta-gun, Hokkaido 044-0081  
Tel: 0136 22 0399 • Fax: 0136 22 2011 • physio@gol.com • www.NisekoPhysio.com

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# W

# C

# H



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www.westcanadahomes.com

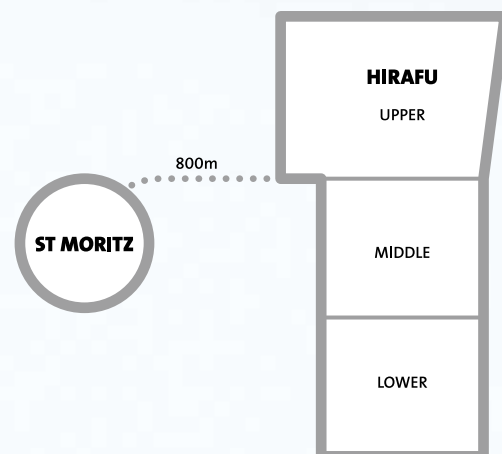


# Niseko. Like heaven. With houses for sale.

Available for under 50 million yen, Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties' house and land packages in St. Moritz offer an excellent entry point into the thriving Niseko market. Choose from nine luxurious, fully furnished packages located in the tranquil forest right next to Hirafu village. Each lot boasts:

- Breathtaking scenery with views of Mt. Youtei
- Extraordinary value in an upscale area
- Easy access via shuttle bus to ski slopes, golf courses, and the best Niseko hot springs
- A minimum size of 59 tsubo (considerably larger than the smaller blocks in Hirafu village).

Hokkaido Tracks Resort Properties is the leading western developer in Niseko, known for its innovative market insight, distinctive style and high levels of investor confidence. For more information contact Tom Rourke or Paul Butkovich at (0136) 21 6960 or email [sales@hokkaidotracks.com](mailto:sales@hokkaidotracks.com)



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