

# EURO BIZ JAPAN

NOVEMBER 2018

JASON EVANS,  
GENERAL MANAGER AT  
O&M HALYARD JAPAN G.K.

JIVAGO MATSUOKA,  
CEO OF ADVISORY GROUP

## CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

*Advisory Group  
helps businesses  
see differently*



A large indoor swimming pool with a glass and steel roof. The pool is divided into lanes by green and yellow lane lines. A swimmer is visible in the water in the foreground. The pool deck is lined with lounge chairs. The background shows a cityscape through the glass walls.

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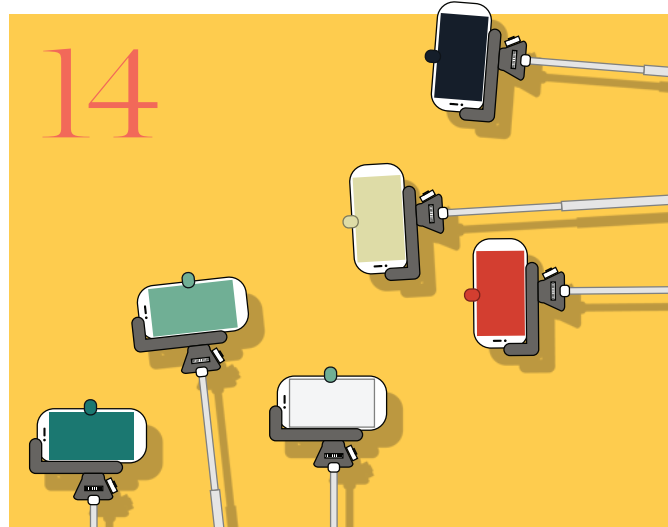
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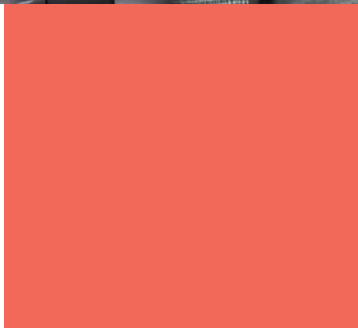
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To promote an impediment-free environment for European business in Japan.



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# Changing with the times

By Toby Waters





# First Focus

In Chinese characters, Rikugien Garden means "six poems garden", and the garden itself reproduces scenes from famous *waka*, which are brief Japanese poems of 31 syllables. More than 300 years old, Rikugien is one of Tokyo's most beautiful landscape gardens and a popular spot for viewing autumn leaves — particularly in the evenings, throughout November and in early December, when the foliage is illuminated.

Perhaps this young woman is taking a moment to share with the world her experience of Rikugien in a 21st century poem, 140 characters long.

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**Justin McCurry** is the Japan and Korea correspondent for *The Guardian* and *The Observer* newspapers. He graduated from the London School of Economics and later gained a Master's degree in Japanese studies from London University.

➔ *"I have mixed feelings about Japan's tourism boom. I'm glad more people are visiting this wonderful country, and the economic benefits are clear. But is Japan ready to accommodate 40 million people by 2020? Will overcrowding and other problems of mass tourism become a feature here? Possibly, but residents — Japanese and otherwise — are going to have to adapt."*



Tokyo journalist **Tim Hornyak** has covered technology in Japan for IDG News, CNET, Scientific American and other media, and is the author of *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*. He has also co-authored Lonely Planet's guidebooks to Japan and Tokyo.

➔ *"The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been sounding the alarm about rising temperatures, but our response may be too little, too late. Removing carbon from both the atmosphere and industrial processes is a workable solution, but can it be scaled to put a dent in climate change?"*



**Dr David McNeill** writes for *The Economist* and *The Irish Times* and teaches political science at Hosei and Sophia universities. He lives in Tokyo with his Japanese wife and three children.

➔ *"Demand forecasting is one of those subjects that sounds obscure until you realise how vital it is. Managing inventories and balancing supply and demand have never been more complex. Luckily, help is at hand from artificial intelligence and machine learning. European firms are working to implement new forecasting systems, but Japan still lags behind."*



**Dan Sloan** has covered Japan and Asia as a journalist, author and corporate content chief for over 20 years, seeing more governments than he can count. He is a former president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, and an unrepentant Yokohama BayStars fan.

➔ *"Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is set to become Japan's longest-serving premier, although critics say his tenure has been long on days and short on achievements. What does he have to do in his final three years to ensure he's remembered for more than just tenure?"*

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# Demand satisfaction

**Greek shipping entrepreneur** Yiannis Carras was the first person to place an order for a Japanese ship for export following the Second World War, and Hitachi Zosen delivered the steam turbine tanker — called Tini — to Carras in 1952. This prompted a surge in demand from other Greek firms, galvanising Japan’s post-war shipbuilding industry and helping Greece establish itself as a world leader in merchant marine shipping.

In “Deepening knowledge to deepen bonds” (page 25), Greek Ambassador to Japan Constantin Cakioussis speaks about how Greek demand for Japanese ships has remained high to this day. Based on this long-standing relationship, he is encouraging increased cooperation and trade between the two nations.

The Japanese government has set a goal of welcoming 40 million visitors to Japan

in 2020, and European and Japanese firms are striving to meet the rising demands caused by the tourism boom. Justin McCurry’s “Big ambitions” (page 14) looks at how airlines and hotels are increasing capacity to accommodate the greater influx of travellers from under-tapped markets such as Europe.

AI is helping companies forecast, and respond to, demand better than ever before. In “Perfecting predictions” (page 18), David McNeill shows how businesses that have adopted AI-enabled demand forecasting systems can more accurately balance supply and demand, and, in turn, curb the losses of

underestimating and the waste of overestimating.

On the cover is Jivago Matsuo of Advisory Group. As Japan’s population ages and declines, and the country’s labour market begins to feel the strain, Advisory Group is helping to meet the growing demand for capable talent by focusing on candidates typically overlooked for positions — and finding treasure (page 10).

Clearly, meeting demand well is a win-win proposition. ●

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Jason Evans,  
General Manager at  
O&M Halyard Japan G.K.

Jivago Matsuoka,  
CEO of Advisory Group



## “If you’re faced with non-traditional challenges, you can’t use a traditional approach to hiring”

“**T**he times change, and we change with them.”

While the truth of this proverb is evident, Japan can sometimes seem determined to stay the same. Even as the government promotes the idea of an “ageless society” — in which workers are encouraged not to retire at 60, but to continue as long as they are healthy and want to work — businesses in Japan are reluctant to think beyond their longstanding hiring practices, rooted in the lifetime employment system. For many job-seekers today, this is a frustration. But for Jivago Matsuoka, CEO of Advisory Group, it is an opportunity for his clients, his candidates, and for meaningful change.

Matsuoka, who has more than 10 years of recruiting experience, founded Advisory Group in 2015 as an agency for temporary, contract and project-based employment, but with a difference. The firm focuses on the skills and experience of each individual candidate and what they can bring to a client, brushing aside traditional concerns — such as age or gaps on a CV — that businesses might have.

“I’ve previously worked with two major recruitment firms here, and they have reach and big databases,” Matsuoka observes. “But when their recruiters get a request, they often find someone who’s perfect, but who’s 55, and they don’t try to sell their potential.”

One of Matsuoka’s clients is Jason Evans — general manager at O&M Halyard Japan G.K., part of the Owens & Minor family — who has extensive success in creating productive company cultures. He agrees that typical Japanese attitudes are leading to a wealth of talent going underutilised or overlooked.

“Japan is sitting on a pot of gold: people 50 to 55 years old,” he says. “And Advisory Group is ahead of the curve in recognising this. Some of my situations have been unique, but Jivago’s been flexible and able to solve any challenge I’ve thrown at him. For example, we needed to fill two senior finance roles — immediately — and he helped us

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fill them with people we would not have found through other recruiters.”

In addition to the effects of Japan’s ageing society, today’s job market is changing in another way. According to Matsuoka, there has been an explosion of those who are choosing to be contract workers or specialists.

“When I started out, maybe one in 100 wanted to be a contractor — now it’s one in 10,” he says. “I call these flexible workers ‘portfolio career specialists’. They have specific skill sets and can go from one company to another because they’re really good at what they do.”



The Advisory Group advisors (left to right): Roy David Cheung, Taisuke Takahashi, Rosbelle Sagum, Luca Hatton-Ward, Jivago Matsuoka, Alexandre Ngo, Milan Pham, Yumiko Eislely, Justin Connor Chao

Many of the candidates Advisory Group puts forward are in the 45 to 55 age-range or are working mothers who are looking for some flexibility in their work schedules. While this approach flies in the face of how Japanese firms typically hire, Matsuoka has seen that when he can persuade clients to think outside the box, it means a win for everyone involved.

“The real issue that companies are struggling with is to have a flexible mindset for hiring people, regardless of age, gender, education and so on,” he observes. “It’s the recruiter’s

responsibility to educate clients on the value of a candidate, but they’re not. We drive the process, where most others follow it.”

Matsuoka gives the example of a bilingual certified public accountant who recently was looking to return to work after taking a five-year break to raise her children.

“The recruitment firms all told her, ‘Sorry, you have a five-year gap, we can’t help’. No one met her, let alone heard her story,” he says. “I brought her in, told a company about her value, and she got an offer in one week — at the same salary as five years ago.”

As an employer, Evans knows that gaps on a CV are sometimes unavoidable realities, but he believes they should never automatically disqualify a prospective employee.

“I don’t care that much about the past; I care about a good fit and what an employee

can do for us going forward,” he says. “If you’re faced with non-traditional challenges, you can’t use a traditional approach to hiring. The obsession with perfect employment records is detrimental to the process and, in my mind, they’re a meaningless measure of a person’s worth or success in a position.”

Evans notes that Advisory Group’s process is more effective than that of other recruitment firms, and that it allows him to make decisions quickly.

“They don’t just throw résumés at you,” he says. “When you give them a request, they’ll dig and make sure they truly understand what you’re looking for. Then we get two or three résumés of people who are very close to what we need.”

## “Japan is sitting on a pot of gold”

Other points about the firm’s service that Evans highlights include speed, regular communication and timely feedback.

“Jason sees the value of bringing in highly skilled professionals, and he doesn’t question the process,” Matsuoka adds. “That’s why we have such a successful track record working together.”

Advisory Group is also changing with the times by implementing new technology to help its clients. One such innovation is CVideo.

“It’s an online meeting room where the client manager can meet the candidate and have a quick chat,” Matsuoka explains. “It takes five to 10 minutes and can be done on your mobile phone. If you get a good feeling about the candidate, we’ll send a résumé and set up a proper face to face meeting.”

Evans adds: “With CVideo you can cut to the chase. If, once you start talking to a candidate, you realise they’ll be a good fit, you end up taking a chance on them.”

Both Matsuoka and Evans are watch aficionados, and they liken the value of vintage timepieces to recruitment.

“Hiring some of the people I hire is like finding a watch from the 1960s or 1970s in perfect condition,” Evans says. “These people can do a fantastic job — regardless of age.”

“It’s not true that people’s value goes down as they grow older,” Matsuoka adds. “With their experience and achievements, they appreciate in value.” ●



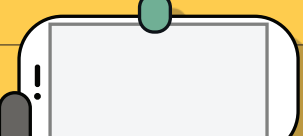
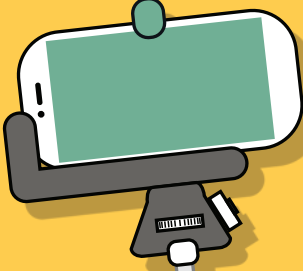
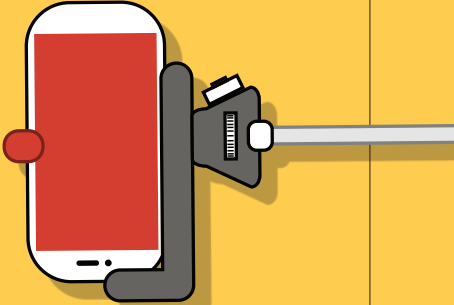
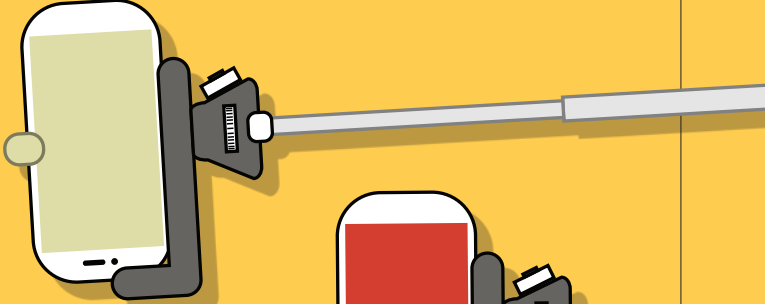
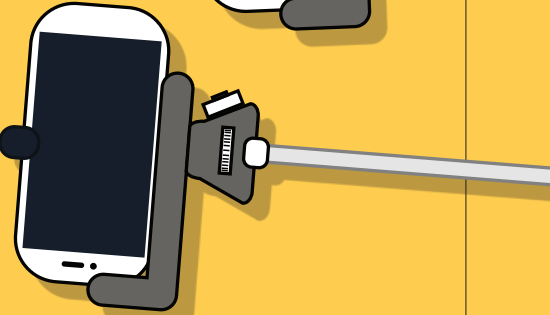
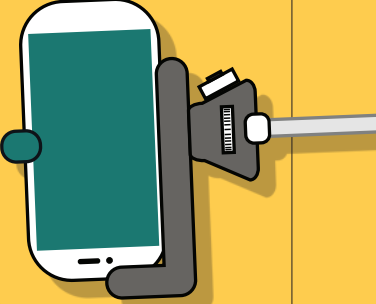
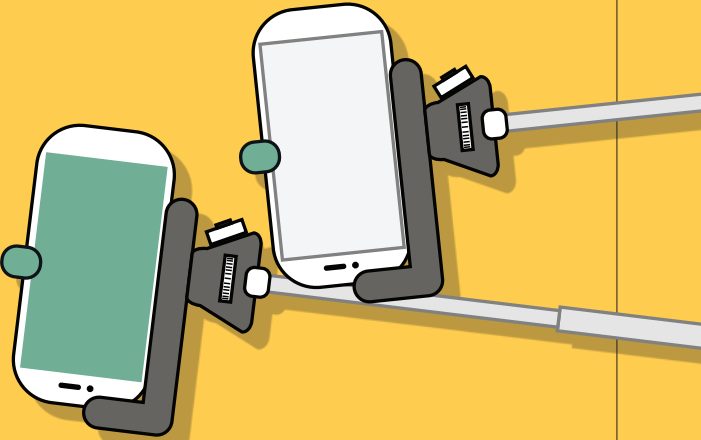
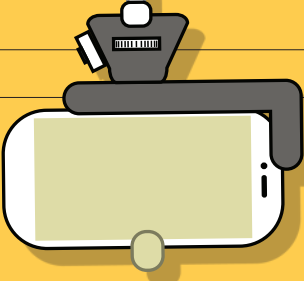
# BIG AMBITIONS

How realistic is Japan's goal of 40 million tourists in 2020?

It has taken a while to get used to the idea that Japan — long considered an expensive destination only for the truly adventurous traveller — is now a global tourism hotspot.

**T**he evidence is impossible to ignore: the fleets of coaches depositing parties of travellers outside their hotels, the proliferation of English-language menus, and the stream of business initiatives aimed at luring even more visitors. From the well-trodden avenues of Ginza to the backstreets of Shinjuku, the tourist yen reigns supreme.





Faced with a shrinking, ageing population and mixed returns from attempts to kick-start the economy from within, Japan's government is pinning its hopes on ambitious overseas tourism targets to spur growth.

The strategy appears to be working. A record 28.7 million people visited Japan in 2017, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), compared with 10.4 million in 2013 and just 4.76 million in 2000. The majority, around 85%, were from Asia — mainly China, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and, increasingly, Southeast Asia. The government has set a target of welcoming 40 million tourists in 2020, the year Tokyo hosts the Summer Olympics and Paralympics, and 60 million by 2030.

But compared with the influx of visitors from Asia, European tourists are still relatively rare. Preliminary figures provided by the JNTO showed that in December 2017, South Koreans were the single biggest group, accounting for about 678,900 of the total 2.52 million arrivals that month, followed by 564,300 Chinese. By comparison, Japan welcomed 20,801 British visitors, 15,499 from France and 10,713 from Germany.

But efforts are being made to reach out to far-flung markets. In February, the Japan Tourism Agency launched the “Enjoy My Japan” campaign — targeting long-haul travellers from Europe, North America, and Australia — with TV commercials, digital advertising and online platforms. The agency points out that “there is plenty of room

**“there is plenty of room for growth with travellers from the West”**

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for growth with travellers from the West,” who currently make up just 11% of overseas visitors.

However, per capita, they are more generous contributors to the Japanese economy. A recent survey showed that, as spending by Chinese tourists has slowed, their European counterparts are happily parting with greater quantities of cash, with British tourists the biggest spenders.

The hotel and airline industries are facing a race against time to accommodate the expected increase in visitors. The number of available hotel rooms stood at 1,561,772 as of March last year, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. That figure does not include private lodgings, and the teething problems experienced by home-sharing schemes such as Airbnb have given extra urgency to the need to build more accommodations.

David Atkinson, president of Konishi Decorative Arts & Crafts Co. and a special adviser to the JNTO, attributes the explosion in tourism to a relaxing of visa requirements, first for Chinese visitors and, more recently, for people coming from Southeast Asia. But he is quick to play down the Olympic factor.

“The Olympics haven’t had a direct impact on the growth in tourism, since no one visits a venue two years ahead of the Games,” he observes. “But, indirectly, the Olympics have made an enormous difference. They have nudged the Japanese into doing things — like improving Wi-Fi coverage and relaxing visa requirements — that they should have done years ago.”

Atkinson, who is confident that Japan will be able to accommodate the additional 11

million expected visitors, said the industry’s focus was widening to include people from farther afield, such as Europe.

“You’re seeing the impact of that coming through now,” he says.

Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo has spotted the potential in courting long-haul travellers who are willing to pay extra for a longer, more comfortable stay. It opened its luxury Premier Grand Club Floors in December 2016, while the Keio Group has plans to open a new hotel in Kyoto this year and in Sapporo next year, according to Junko Saito, deputy director of marketing PR at Keio Plaza Hotel.

“We are ready to accommodate the luxury market and are expecting to welcome more guests from Europe,” Saito says. “The Keio Group is expanding, in both the budget and luxury sectors.”

European airlines are seeing a steady growth in passengers from the Continent on their Japan services.

“Traditionally, European airlines have a bigger proportion of Japanese travellers on our flights,” says Leif Nilsson, regional general manager for Asia-Pacific at Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), which operates a daily flight between Narita and Copenhagen.

“Since 2015, SAS has focused on marketing Japan in Scandinavia and gradually shifting the mix onboard closer to a fifty-fifty split — that means we are getting more people travelling to Japan from the three Scandinavian

countries and other parts of northern Europe,” he explains, adding that Japan’s airport authorities were supportive of requests to accommodate more flights to different airports as 2020 draws nearer. “To handle the increased number of travellers, we would like to add another daily flight between Haneda and Copenhagen, and move the Narita flight to Stockholm.”

The Lufthansa Group, which comprises Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian Airlines, is planning a steady increase in capacity to Japan over the next years to meet the expected rise in demand, according to Donald Bunkenburg, senior director in the group’s Japan and Korea office.

Bunkenburg says the four airports it uses in Japan — Tokyo’s Narita and Haneda, Nagoya’s Chubu Centrair and Osaka’s KIX — “have all been cooperative and flexible”, adding that the group expects the number of passengers visiting Japan from Europe to rise by 12% next year, when it will add flights servicing Frankfurt-Nagoya and Frankfurt-Osaka, along with additional Austrian Airlines frequencies between Narita and Vienna.

Saito, however, warns against complacency, especially when targeting tourists from the relatively untapped European market.

“When I talk to people in Europe, I get the sense that they are aware Japan is an attractive destination but, on the other hand, there isn’t enough information for them,” she says. “We have to improve our communication and address the specific needs of people from Europe. We’re doing well, but there is always room for improvement.” ●



Travellers from the West currently make up just 11% of overseas visitors to Japan



# PERFECTING PREDICTIONS

## How AI-enabled demand forecasting is changing business

Forget the Shinkansen and the Toyota Corolla — the convenience store is the true symbol of modern Japanese life. A 24-hour dispenser of food and whiskey, business socks and concert tickets, the *konbini* has become ubiquitous in Japan since being transported from the US in the 1970s. With more than 50,000 outlets across the country, this import has all but obliterated Japan's mom-and-pop stores.

“The convenience store industry is one of a handful of growth models in Japan's retail market today,” says Ming Li, spokesperson for Lawson, which runs 14,000 branches.

That makes them a victim of their own success. When workers were plentiful and cheap, older staff manned the tills, checked inventory and forecast demand for new products, notes Li. Today, Japan is struggling with its worst labour crunch since the 1970s, and it's forcing the big chains to innovate: Lawson, for example, has introduced a smartphone app at some Tokyo outlets that allows customers to buy goods from unattended counters. Crucially, the demographic crisis is also fuelling the need for more accurate predictions of what customers want.

Demand forecasting today uses machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) to manage inventory. It's not hard to see why this would be an asset. Convenience stores are often cramped and stock hundreds of different products, including shelves full of

perishable food. Profit margins are razor thin, so overstocking and undersupply are constant problems to avoid.

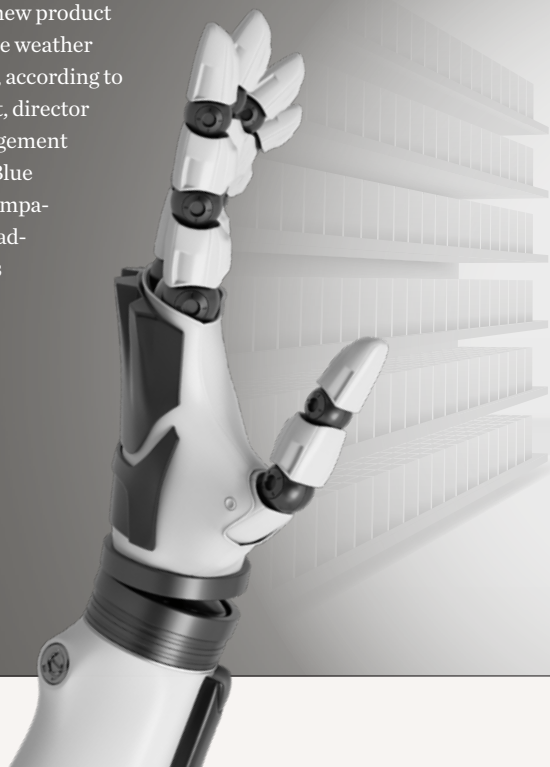
Stores must calculate the myriad factors that might influence customer demand, including, “weekends, seasonality, promotions, price changes, public holidays, new product introductions, the weather and many more”, according to Andreas Schmidt, director of product management at German firm Blue Yonder, a JDA company, the market leader in AI solutions for retail and supply chains.

AI is revolutionising this struggle to optimise supply and demand. Machine learning algorithms

can now analyse vast quantities of data, including the history of individual purchases and the time it takes to clear stock. They crunch numbers on inventory movement then automatically calculate tailored orders for each store.

NEC, one of the leading suppliers of AI technology to Japan's convenience store industry, says one retailer has “reduced losses in perishables and fresh products” by about 40%.

For retail, this is serious business. Underestimating demand not only leaves gaps on the shelves, it reduces sales revenue, observes Schmidt of Blue Yonder.



“Overestimating leads to waste and markdowns for perishable products, to residual stock at season-end for fashion products, and to inefficient store and supply chain processes,” he adds. And the quality and efficiency of a supply chain hinges on the precision of demand predictions, “especially in a mature market of high competition and low margins”.

Yet, Japan has lagged behind the EU and the US in adopting the best solutions to forecast demand, laments Maths Lundin, a Swedish businessman who has written a report on AI business in Japan for the EU–Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation. He cites a lack of people trained in AI, low levels of investment in AI start-ups, and an over-reliance on tried and tested human skills.

50,000

There are more than 50,000 convenience store outlets across the country

“Japanese companies are not so quick to try out new trends,” he says, adding that this has created opportunities for foreign companies.

The Japanese subsidiary of German firm Bosch, for example, has successfully marketed a proprietary algorithm that predicts disease in greenhouse tomatoes with an accuracy of 92%. Bosch says the algorithm was developed “based on data collected from over 100 greenhouses.”

Google, meanwhile, is lending its machine-learning technology to the aptly named Fast Retailing to more accurately predict customer demand at its sprawling network of Uniqlo clothing stores.

European companies are also employing increasingly sophisticated AI tools to match supply and demand in the Japanese market. IKEA is building models and testing algorithms to ensure less waste and lower costs — “and, hence, lower prices to our customers,” says Peter Grimvall, the IKEA Group’s global supply chain design and planning manager.

Japan’s notoriously short product cycles make it even more important to be nimble, explains Arnaud Leveque, CTO and IT senior director for DHL Supply Chain, the logistics firm owned by Deutsche Post of Germany. In his business, he notes, clients’ daily forecasts for B2C or e-commerce demand can sometimes be up to 200% off target, resulting in a shortage (or surplus) of warehouse operators, forklifts or drivers.

“There are multiple factors,” he states. “It could be changes in weather, social media buzz, or that clients give us a bullish demand but we end up either having an excess of human resources or we need to add a shift in the evening.”

DHL is working with a Japanese tech firm to design a system to better forecast demand and move towards predictive logistics.

“We aim to use AI as a way of analysing data, to see patterns of our clients and specific events, such as the weather, that can influence demand accuracy,” Leveque says.

While he accepts that Japan is not a world leader in developing software packages, he believes local partners are better at understanding specific local needs.

“I take with a pinch of salt the idea that you can take AI algorithms off the shelf from

## “Overestimating leads to waste and markdowns for perishable products”

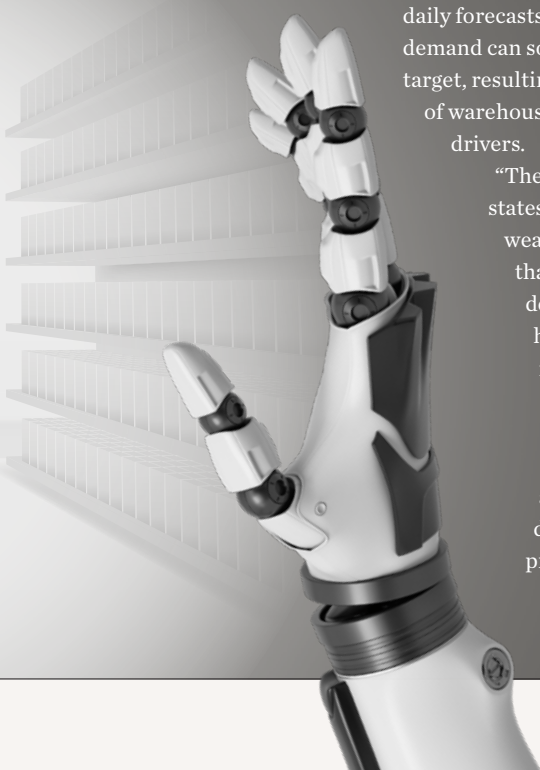
somewhere in Silicon Valley and use them as-is in Japan,” says Leveque.

“It may not be a leading-edge place for software, especially if you’re thinking of global solutions,” but Japan can lead the way in new areas, he adds, citing the advances in robotic process automation.

Japan’s government has taken note. A recent report by the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization — a public organisation that promotes the deployment of industrial technologies — notes the need for better solutions for matching supply and demand.

“The AI strategy is supported by Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe and the government,” says Swedish businessman Lundin.

And as Japanese companies struggle to create AI solutions, he adds, “I believe there should be business opportunities for European companies in related areas, including supply and demand matching.” ●





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# Poland

## In pole position for growth

One of the fastest-growing economies in the EU, Poland has seen steady annual growth for 26 consecutive years. The nation is classified by the World Bank as a high-income society, and FTSE Russell upgraded Poland's status from emerging market to developed economy in 2017.

Polish businesses with interests in Japan range from players in the high-tech sector, including the gaming companies CD Projekt Red and 11 bit Studios, to food and beverage firms, such as Hortex, and Kompania Piwowarska, which is part of the Asahi Breweries group.

Next year, Poland will celebrate the centenary of its official diplomatic relations with Japan. The Polish Embassy in Japan has many events planned, including the Polish Culture Festival — organised in collaboration with Japan Arts — which will feature concerts by well-known Polish artists, theatre plays and a Chopin exhibition.



### Trade with Japan

Exports to Japan: **\$1.2 billion**  
Imports from Japan: **\$2 billion**

SOURCE: JETRO, 2017

**Area**

312,685 km<sup>2</sup>.  
Coastline: 440km.

**Climate**

Temperate with cold, cloudy, moderately severe winters with frequent precipitation; and mild summers with frequent showers and thunderstorms.

**Major cities**

Warsaw (capital), Lodz, Krakow and Wroclaw.

**Population**

38,476,269 (July 2017, estimate).  
Urban population: 60.1% (2018). 43.48% are 25–54 years of age.

**60.1%**

Urban population

**Natural resources**

Coal, sulphur, copper, natural gas, silver, lead, salt, amber and arable land.



### Poland







# Grounds for celebration

## Polish Ambassador to Japan Jacek Izydorczyk

In 2005, after passing the national judge's exam, Jacek Izydorczyk went on scholarship to Kyushu University where he studied Japanese and began a research programme on criminal law, criminal proceedings and white-collar crimes. He has also worked as a professor of law and as head of the Department of Special Criminal Proceedings at the University of Lodz in Poland, and has written more than 100 articles in Polish, English and Japanese. Additionally, he has had several books published, including *Hanzai Means Crime: Prosecution of common crimes and white-collar-crimes in Japan*. In 2017, Izydorczyk was appointed ambassador to Japan.

### What has the embassy's focus been this year?

This year is very special for Polish people, as Poland celebrates its 100th anniversary of regaining independence. Japan was one of the first countries to have recognised the Republic of Poland. Among the many cultural and business events the embassy is holding to boost the image of Poland in Japan, the major one will be the arrival of the Polish sailing ship *Dar Młodzieży* in Osaka on Independence Day, 11 November. This constitutes a part of a trip around the world to commemorate the centenary. Of importance to our Japanese friends is that the ship will be open to the public.

### What are some key areas of collaboration between Poland and Japan?



During the visit of Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski to Tokyo in May 2017, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategic Partnership between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Poland for the years 2017–2020 was signed. It reflects our ongoing cooperation and maps out new initiatives in energy, climate change policy and security policy, among many other areas. The next COP24 forum in December in Katowice, Poland, will likely serve as an opportunity for new bilateral developments in the areas of energy and the environment.

### Could you tell me about trade between Poland and Japan?

As the largest economy in central and eastern Europe and the sixth-biggest market in the European Union, Poland is one of the key markets for Japan in Europe. And Japan is one of Poland's biggest economic partners in Asia, both in terms of trade and investment. Polish–Japanese trade turnover amounted to almost \$3.1 billion in 2017.

We highly appreciate the Japanese investment in our country due to its high level of innovation and applied technology. In keeping with the Polish government's Plan for Responsible Development, we are encouraging Japanese companies to further invest in sectors such as infrastructure, energy and

shipbuilding. Innovation will be a key focus, so cooperation with Japan will become even more important.

### What was discussed at the meeting in July between Japan's foreign minister, Taro Kono, and Poland's foreign minister, Jacek Czaputowicz?

The ministers reaffirmed that Poland and Japan are friendly partners who share many values such as human rights, democracy, the rule of law and respect for international law. The foreign ministers of Poland and Japan concluded that they will cooperate closely in the UN Security Council and at the European Union level to strengthen security in their regions. They also discussed and agreed to cooperate on global security and intensify cooperation in trade, business, science and clean energy. This visit probably had a special, nostalgic meaning for Foreign Minister Kono, who said he has warm memories from his days studying in Warsaw 30 years ago.

### How do you feel about being back in Japan?

I appreciate the fact that Polish people are similar to Japanese people in many ways. Apart from both loving Chopin's music, we are respectful of tradition, we appreciate aesthetic beauty and we are very polite – if you talk to a stranger in Poland, you always say “sir” or “madam”. I'm very lucky to be serving my country in a country I'm very fond of. ●



# Greece

## Resilience rewarded

Japan and Greece have enjoyed close diplomatic relations since 1899. Greece, the birthplace of the Olympics, will celebrate the 60th anniversary of its embassy's presence in Japan in 2020 – the year Tokyo hosts the next Summer Games.

Although Japan's trade with Greece has historically been relatively low, Greece continues to play an important role in sectors such as shipping, having a large number of its ships built in Japanese shipyards. The Japan–Greece Action Plan for the promotion of bilateral relations, which was signed in 2002, has helped to increase cooperation politically, economically and culturally.

Greece's ties with Japan have remained strong even through the economic difficulties that followed the 2007 global financial crisis, so the recovery of its economy augurs even closer ties ahead.



### Trade with Japan

Exports to Japan: **¥10.8 billion**  
Imports from Japan: **¥27 billion**

SOURCE:  
JAPAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS (2017)



#### Area

131,957 km<sup>2</sup>.  
Coastline: 13,676km.

#### Climate

Temperate; mild, wet winters;  
and hot, dry summers.

#### Major cities

Athens (capital), Thessaloniki,  
Pátrai, Piraeus and Larissa.

#### Population

10,768,477 (July 2017,  
estimate).

Urban population: 79.1%  
(2018). 42.45% are 25–54  
years of age.

#### Natural resources

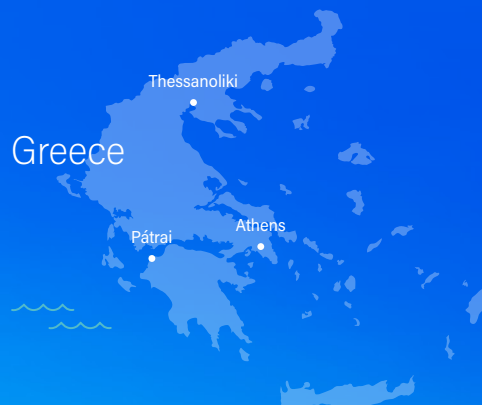
Lignite, petroleum, iron ore,  
bauxite, lead, zinc, nickel,  
magnetite, marble, salt and  
hydropower potential.



79.1%

Urban population

### Greece



# Deepening knowledge to deepen bonds

Greek Ambassador to Japan  
Constantin Cakioussis

Since joining Greece's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1984, Constantin Cakioussis has had a variety of roles within the ministry, as well as postings to Finland, Croatia, Albania, Germany and China. He arrived in Japan in September to begin his appointment as Greece's ambassador.

**What are your plans to celebrate the 120th anniversary of bilateral relations between Greece and Japan next year?**

We have a number of events in the pipeline. There will be a musical dialogue between a Japanese jazz pianist and a Greek soprano; and we're planning the visit of a Greek painter who, with the help of a nanotech laboratory, created a new shade of blue.

We'll also be bringing Greek folk dance and dresses to Japan in collaboration with the Lyceum Club of Greek Women. With all the silk and gold thread embroidery, it has become expensive and difficult to make these dresses — the same as with Japanese kimono. They will be on display, and we will put on performances of Greek folk dance where the dancers will wear these traditional dresses.

**What is the current state of trade between Greece and Japan?**

Bilateral trade totals ¥38 billion and foreign direct invest-

ment by Japan in Greece is €16.5 million. In both cases, it can only go up.

The future is in creating, not copying: industries making the same thing a million times need very little labour. They become more capital and high-tech intensive. We have potential here — 170,000 scientists from Greece work abroad. If they're good enough to work in Germany and France, there's no reason they can't work with Japanese partners.

**Are there particularly active sectors you'd like to highlight?**

One sector is merchant marine shipping. We have a lot of cooperation in shipbuilding. One of the first to place an order with Japanese shipbuilders after the Second World War was the Greek shipowner, Yiannis Carras. That opened the door for other shipowners, and this cooperation has never stopped.

Now we're trying to push education, through the cooperation of Greek universities and Japanese institutions. We are encouraging Greek students to come to Japan on exchange programmes. Language is a barrier, but it's not that great. I don't see why French or Americans can do it and not Greeks.

**Can you tell me about some of the embassy's recent accomplishments?**

We've done a lot of work. My predecessor was quite active. We had an exhibition of Olympic torches in two towns, at three universities. This was a private collection, which the embassy was instrumental in coordinating together with the Greek Chamber of Commerce in Japan — and it met with great success; it attracted over 140,000 people.

We were also able to develop leaflets about Greece in Japanese. We have a lot of



material in English, but until recently these Japanese leaflets didn't exist in the market. And we're working on programmes with many high schools, so students can learn about Greece.

**What are your goals for your time in Japan?**

My ambition is to promote R&D cooperation and, as much as possible, to match knowledge and capital on the Japanese side with the existing highly qualified human capital in Greece.

I also want to make Greece a tourist destination for Japan again. We don't have a direct flight, something the embassy will have to look into.

In Greece we have a saying: "By knowing you come to love, and by loving you come to know". I explain Greece to Japan and vice-versa, and if I have a real ambition, this is it: learn more about Japan and promote greater knowledge of each other — and everything else will fall into place. And learn to compose *haiku*! ●

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# Marco Zoli

Only the best conditions

Picture a sunny, cloudless day at the beach with a steady breeze blowing along the shore and waves rolling across the water. These are the ideal conditions for kiteboarding, a water sport in which you are harnessed to a kite and pulled along on a small surfboard by the wind.

**“T**he wind drives how often I go,” says Marco

Zoli, president of Marposs K.K. “I would go every weekend — twice in a weekend — if there was wind. I often check [the weather app] Windguru to see if it’s going to be windy.”

An amateur kiteboarder, Zoli — from Forli, near Bologna — decided to give the sport a try in 2005, after having watched some friends kiteboarding in Italy. At first, it was a struggle to control the kite and maintain balance on the board. He was also acutely aware of the danger of losing control of his kite and being dragged somewhere he didn’t want to go. But today, even after a hiatus between 2009 and 2017, he is an adept kiteboarder.

“You don’t just want to ride, going here and there, but you

want to do some jumps and tricks,” he notes. “You can jump using the waves, but the kite can also lift you. The really good guys can fly for several seconds.”

Kiteboarding doesn’t only dictate how Zoli spends many of his weekends, it also determines where he goes on vacation. He’s travelled to places such as Maui, the Philippines, Cape Verde and Greece to kiteboard — and he always appreciates that the sport is a great way to meet people.

“When I go on kiteboarding vacations, within 10 minutes you’re friends with everyone there,” he says. “You just go on the beach and talk to people; it’s easy since you all want to know what the conditions are.”

In his work, Zoli is the one with the information. Marposs, a precision measurement and process control firm, helps businesses keep track of the condition of all their machinery. Although Marposs’s direct customers are in the machine tool market, its products are ultimately for end-users that mass produce high-precision mechanical parts, in the automotive, aerospace, IT and medical sectors, among others.

“We can provide process-monitoring software to keep machines under control, but also to upload machine data to a higher server to do data analysis and use AI to enhance the process,” Zoli explains. “If you

## Do you like natto?

### Time spent working in Japan?

Ten years in total.

### Career regrets?

I wish I had learned to play the drums. In another life, I’d probably be a drummer in a rock band, and not an engineer.

### Do you have a favourite saying?

“Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose” — Master Yoda from Star Wars.

### Do you have a favourite book?

*Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse. It changed how I think and helped me put things in the right perspective.

### What’s something you can’t live without?

Physical exercise — I have to do something. And my morning espresso.

### What’s something you’ve learned in Japan?

Patience. And that you have to look at the details, but without forgetting the bigger picture.

### What’s your secret to success in business?

By far, it’s motivating the people you work with.

### What’s your favourite place to dine?

Elio’s near Hanzomon station, dj giorgio in Azabu-juban, and Mamma Luisa’s Table in Shibuya.

### Do you like natto?

I tried it a long time ago and didn’t like it. I’ve changed a lot in the last 15 years, so I should probably give it another try.

have 1,000 machine tools in your plant, and you want to keep track of them all on one computer, we have software that can do that.”

Founded in Italy in 1952 by Mario Possati, Marposs today employs 3,500 people worldwide. It came to Japan in 1970.

“Japan is one of the biggest markets worldwide for machine tools,” states Zoli. “Japan’s top import from Italy is precision



## “I would go [kiteboarding] every weekend – twice in a weekend – if there was wind”

machinery – more than fashion or food.”

With the electrification of vehicles and a greater push towards automation, Marposs’s business will change, but the firm is already beginning to diversify into new markets.

“Everyone is talking about robotic operators being the future, but this is what we do – making and controlling machines, putting sensors in

them to know if they’re working properly or if they’re about to break,” Zoli observes.

“This new trend matches Marposs’s DNA.”

Zoli’s DNA, meanwhile, includes the motorbike racing gene, having grown up in a region where it seems everyone is passionate about the sport. Many famous racers are from the area, including record-holding world champion Valentino Rossi.

As a Ducati owner, Zoli doesn’t only care about the conditions on the water, he also cares about the conditions on the road. He often takes trips around Japan with his wife

on his Multistrada touring bike.

“I love the freedom it gives you, just to grab your stuff and go for a weekend to a ryokan,” he says. “Japan has great roads for bikes that lead to nice places. There’s a lot of nice scenery.”

But at the first stirrings of a breeze, it’s back on the water. ●

---

Marco Zoli is president of Marposs K.K. and represents Italy on the EBC’s Executive Operating Board.



# Airlines

## Favourable tailwinds

The EBC Airlines Committee is generally happy with Japan's current business climate. The number of passengers coming to, and departing from, Japan is rising steadily and this is expected to continue. To a certain extent, the credit should go to Japanese government officials.

**"They've done a** very good job of promoting Japan as a tourist destination," committee chair Donald Bunkenburg says. "They've invested funds with the Japan National Tourist Organization to do promotion around the world."

The tailwinds bringing a growing number of people in Europe to Japan include the country's tourism boom, excitement ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and the recently sealed Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and Japan — with "the additional traffic that [the EPA] will bring on the business side," explains Bunkenburg, who is also senior director for the Lufthansa Group, representing Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian Airlines.

Even so, the situation in Japan is not entirely rosy. The committee still has a host of advocacy issues, including a new tourism tax, high landing fees at

Japanese airports and insufficient facilities at the country's busiest airport, Haneda.

The Tourism Promotion Tax is unfair for three reasons, according to the committee. First, the levy will be added to passengers' tickets.

"We feel that any additional fees or taxes that are levied on tickets is something that could reduce demand overall," Bunkenburg explains.

Then, there's the administrative burden. Airlines will be tasked with charging the fee, collecting the revenue from passengers and then handing it over to the Japanese government.

"That means the airlines have to build it into whatever IT platform or process for ticketing they have," he says.

Clarity and disclosure are the third concern.

"There is not a lot of transparency yet as to how they're going to use this tax," the committee chair adds.

Another major advocacy issue is the money airports charge carriers for landing and using their services and facilities. Japan's airports are among the world's most expensive.

### Advocacy issues

#### ✈️ Tourism tax

The job of collecting revenue for the new Tourism Promotion Tax should not be up to the airlines.

#### ✈️ Airport fees

All airport fees should be lowered to encourage airlines to raise their capacity.

#### ✈️ Haneda Airport

More space should be created at Haneda Airport to handle catering, cargo and other services.

"Increased airport fees threaten to make operations unprofitable and could dampen airline willingness to add extra capacity, even if there is demand," the committee states in the 2017 EBC white paper.

A degree of progress was seen this year when the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism agreed in negotiations with the International

Air Transport Association (IATA) not to raise fees for the next several years at Narita International Airport.

"That was considered a win," Bunkenburg laughs, adding, "At least the fees didn't go up."

Haneda may be the country's busiest airport, but it also suffers from insufficient service facilities. A lack of space for trucks means that when cargo is unloaded from overseas aircraft at Haneda, it must be trucked to Narita where it clears customs, according to the committee chair.

Work to prepare inflight meals involves a similar logistical issue. Catering is done off-site and then trucked into Haneda. The solution is to find or create the space where the needed facilities can be built.

It's a key issue, given how coveted Haneda is by the carriers.

Another committee member, Leif Nilsson, regional general manager of Asia-Pacific at Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), says Haneda is attractive not only for its central Tokyo location, but also for its potential for connections. His airline currently has no slots there but is keen to secure some so that its passengers flying in from Europe can quickly get to destinations throughout Japan via SAS's Japanese partner ANA.

"That would give the opportunity for business people to easily transfer to other parts of Japan, especially now, after the European trade agreement," Nilsson explains.

Japan's inbound and outbound traffic is continuing to expand. With more reasonable fees and improvements to airport infrastructure, business could fly even higher. ●

Donald Bunkenburg is chairperson of the EBC Airlines Committee and senior director for Japan and South Korea at the Lufthansa Group.



# The new bell-ringer

Francesco Formiconi, the EBC's new executive director

There's a familiar face in a new role at the EBC. Francesco Formiconi first came to Japan in 1989 on a Monbusho scholarship, to study business at Hitotsubashi University. After returning to Italy in 1992, he joined an Italian bank where he worked for 15 years — holding posts in Italy, Germany and Hong Kong. Formiconi came back to Japan in 2007 and has since held senior roles at Safilo, Giorgio Armani and Japan Europe Trading. He joined the EBC as executive director at the beginning of October.

## Could you tell me about your past involvement with the EBC?

I joined the EBC's Board of Governors in 2010 when I became president of the Italian Chamber of Commerce, where I was president for four years. I later became a representative of the chamber on the Executive Operating Board. Then I was chairman of the EBC Retail and Wholesale Committee in 2015 and 2016. Now I'm seeing the EBC from



the executive director's point of view. Since I've been in almost every position, I think I have a unique perspective.

## What are your goals for the EBC?

Our mission will need to be reshaped in view of the changes going on in the business environment. Just five years ago, the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) seemed to be a dream. Now we're here thinking about how we're going to monitor it. The world has changed. The EBC is changing: there's a new executive director, there will be a new chairman, the EPA is coming into force next year. I think it's a great time to be involved.

My first goal is to speak with all the stakeholders — the national chambers of commerce, the national embassies and trade sections — and understand their wishes, so I can define a mission that is widely accepted. The second step is to clearly understand how the EBC fits in with all the other

European forces on the ground in Japan: the EU Delegation, the chambers, the embassies, the EU–Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation. Everyone has a role to play, and

I'd really like to have a map that allows me to be effective and efficient.

The EBC also represents European businesses in Japan to Japanese authorities and different organisations, so I need the strength of the chambers and of the member companies behind me. We need to speak in the same voice, as much as possible.

## How will the EBC need to change in the coming years?

It's in the DNA of the EBC to be a bell-ringer. Whenever there's a problem, we ring the bell and say, "This isn't going the way it should". Now, with the framework of the EPA to refer to, we will need to ring the bell when something is not being done in accordance with the agreement, or not being interpreted appropriately.

Also, the EBC has, for many years, been publishing the white paper, which is a great tool for drawing the attention of the Japanese authorities to the problems European businesses are facing here in Japan. But, as the EPA comes into force, I think we should start having a more positive mindset. The white paper should become a guide for European businesses to be successful in Japan, emphasising opportunities the EPA offers.

## Could you tell me a little about yourself?

I enjoy going for walks with my dog — an eight-year-old Shiba called Coco — which keep me healthy and in touch with nature. I start and end my day with a walk.

I also love Japanese temples. I'm thinking about writing a guidebook for Italian tourists that will encourage them to see the countryside, stay in temples and eat the food that monks eat — for peace and some spiritual healing. ●

**"The EBC is changing ... I think it's a great time to be involved"**



# Ready for a breakthrough

## Advancing LGBT Rights seminar

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations 70 years ago, in 1948. Article 1 of the document states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

in her introductory remarks. "My hope for our event today is to ... [identify] how we can best advocate and foster change in the minds of our fellow citizens."

Ambassador-designate of Ireland to Japan Paul Kavanaugh also spoke before the panellists began their discussion.

"Attitudes in Ireland towards gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people have been transformed in my lifetime," he said, noting that Ireland only

decriminalised homosexual acts between men in 1993, but that in May 2015, it became the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage nationally by popular vote.

"We have seen in recent years increasing interest in LGBTI+ issues in Japan, and we believe that Ireland, though small, can contribute to the debate," Kavanaugh added.

On the panel was Rory O'Neill, an Irish LGBT activist and drag performer. He came to Tokyo in 1990 to get out of the then-repressive atmosphere in Ireland and lived here for four years.

"It is remarkable and surprising and unexpected to me that 25 years later the Irish government sends me around the world to talk about being gay, including to Japan, which now lags behind Ireland in attitudes to LGBTI+ citizens," he stated.

According to O'Neill, one of the most important ways for members of the LGBTI community to advance their rights in Japan, or elsewhere, is to come out.

"It's very easy to hold prejudices against people that you don't know," he observed. "It's only when a society reaches a point where the general population all know LGBTI people ... that society deeply changes its opinion of this group."

Robert Campbell, director-general of the National Institute of Japanese Literature and a popular TV personality, was the moderator for the event. Responding to O'Neill's comment, he cited findings of a survey that showed 70% of Japanese people believe there isn't anyone from the LGBTI community among people they know.

Japanese cultural norms were identified as one reason people here are reluctant to come out.

"We have a unique culture in Japan: the nail that sticks up gets hammered down — unless you are the same, you are excluded," said panellist Gon Matsunaka, president of the NPO Good Aging Yells, through an interpreter. "Coming out is not just about sexuality, it's related to identity."

Panellist Kanako Otsuji, the only member of Japan's House of Representatives to have come out as LGBTI, stressed the need for debate both in the Diet and among the public.

"A movement needs a breakthrough by being talked about," she stated. "Our party [the Constitutional Democratic Party] wants to have an anti-discrimination bill submitted in the next session of the Diet, and we are preparing a bill for same-sex marriage to be recognised."

Once these bills are put forward, widespread discussion in Japan — leading to change — may finally begin. ●



**On 4 October** 2018, a panel at the seminar "Advancing LGBT Rights: Sharing Perspectives from the EU and Japan" discussed how this spirit has come to apply to LGBTI rights in both the EU and Japan, and what more needs to be done. The Embassy of Ireland in Japan organised the event, which took place at the EU Delegation.

"Having it in writing from the UN doesn't mean it's put into practice," said EU Ambassador-designate to Japan Patricia Flor



# The Agenda

NOV  
22SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND  
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

## SCCIJ & Swiss Club Tokyo — Year End Party 2018

**TIME:** 18:00 to 23:00**VENUE:** Hilton Tokyo, Kiku Ballroom**FEES:** ¥15,000 (for members and guests),  
¥8,000 (for students under 18, with  
valid student ID)**CONTACT:** info@sccij.jpDEC  
11CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
IN JAPAN

## Joint Chamber Bonenkai 2018

**TIME:** 18:00 to 20:30**VENUE:** Embassy of Canada to Japan**FEES:** ¥8,500 (for members), ¥10,000  
(for non-members)**NOTE:** Find a list of participating Europe-  
an chambers at [www.cccj.or.jp/events/](http://www.cccj.or.jp/events/)**CONTACT:** Your chamberNOV  
22IRELAND JAPAN CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

## Ireland Japan Business Awards 2018

**TIME:** 19:00 to 22:00**VENUE:** Conrad Tokyo**DRESS CODE:** Business**FEES:** ¥22,000 (for members), ¥24,000  
(for non-members); table: ¥21,000 per  
person**CONTACT:** secretariat@ijcc.jpDEC  
13CZECH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

## 10th Czech Business & Culture Networking Christmas Event

**TIME:** 18:00 to 20:30 (doors open  
at 17:30)**VENUE:** Czech Embassy in Tokyo,  
Reception Hall, near Hiroo Station**FEES:** ¥5,000 (for members), ¥7,000  
(for non-members)**CONTACT:** event@cccij.comDEC  
4BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN  
JAPAN

## Mini-masterclass: LinkedIn

**TIME:** 18:00 to 20:00**VENUE:** Oakwood Premier Tokyo  
Midtown**FEES:** ¥4,500 (for members), ¥7,000  
(for non-members)**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.comDEC  
7

AUSTRIA BUSINESS COUNCIL JAPAN

## ABC Christmas Party

**TIME:** 19:00 to 21:00**VENUE:** Residence of the Austrian Com-  
mercial Counsellor, Moto-azabu**FEES:** ¥3,500 (for members and first  
guest), ¥7,000 (for additional guests)**CONTACT:** tokio@advantageaustria.orgDEC  
14FINNISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN  
JAPAN

## FCCJ Christmas Luncheon

**TIME:** 12:00 to 14:00**VENUE:** Embassy of Finland**FEES:** ¥7,000 (for members), ¥9,000  
(for non-members)**CONTACT:** fccj@gol.comDEC  
10GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND  
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

## Charity Christmas Dinner 2018

**TIME:** 18:30 to 22:00**VENUE:** Grand Hyatt Tokyo,  
Grand Ballroom (3F), Roppongi**FEES:** ¥20,000 (for members), ¥25,000  
(for non-members)**CONTACT:** events@dihkj.or.jpJAN  
26

AUSTRIA BUSINESS COUNCIL JAPAN

## Inter-Chamber Ski-Race 2019

**TIME:** Race: 9:30 to 12:30;  
Awards party: 18:00 to 21:00**VENUE:** Hakuba Happo-one,  
Tokyu Hotel**FEES:** Visit the event URL for details**EVENT URL:** [www.abc-jpn.net/  
events/4th-inter-chamber-ski-race/](http://www.abc-jpn.net/events/4th-inter-chamber-ski-race/)



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# From premier to eternity

Japan's prime minister needs deeds to cement his legacy

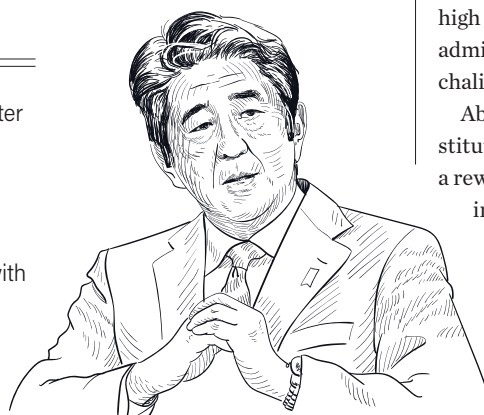
Unlike another world leader, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe refrained from telling United Nations delegates in September that his six-year tenure had been the greatest in his country's history. Instead, he detailed what remained to be done, particularly with regard to global trade.

**Honest Abe's humility** could serve the premier well over his final three years in office, as critics say his actual achievements — even with the contribution of Abenomics to the economy — are relatively limited. His legacy as prime minister now depends more on deeds than tenure.

His immediate goal, as he told the UN, is trade, particularly negotiations to keep 25% US auto tariffs at bay. More than one-third of Japanese exports to the US are automobiles and auto parts, worth an estimated \$40 billion. The prime minister had previously rejected two-way talks after Washington pulled out of the regional Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) pact, but backtracked on the threat of a tariff war.

To his credit, though, Abe has closed a TPP deal with other Pacific Rim nations and concluded the historic Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU. Multiple pacts are also still on the table that would increase trade participation and geographies covered. Further progress in this vein would raise hopes about economic gains, which are imperative as the Bank of Japan's latest Tankan survey showed that Japanese business optimism was decreasing.

Abenomics' "three arrows" of ultra-low interest rates, fiscal stimulus and struc-



tural reform have kept Japan's growth reasonably steady — if unremarkable — for over two years. Unemployment is at a 25-year low and the participation of women in the workforce at a record high. However, many are employed in part-time jobs, and despite pledges of greater female corporate leadership, Japan's actual numbers are among the lowest of any developed nation. In what may be his last government reshuffle, Abe showed words speak louder than actions, tapping a sole woman as a minister in his 19-member Cabinet.

Japan is set to raise its sales tax next October from 8% to 10%, a move likely to spark public and political pushback, but necessary to address a variety of social infrastructure needs. Despite a credit rating below the EU and slightly above Greece, Japan has historically struggled with keeping tax promises. Also

on tap are the possibilities of raising the retirement age to 70 and delaying social security payouts, which could prove unpalatable to voters and want-to-be pensioners. With three three-year terms his limit as Liberal Democratic Party leader, Abe does not have another party election to survive, but the odds of him playing a political kick-the-can on these decisions are high and could leave the next administration with a poisoned chalice.

Abe has also long touted constitutional reform, particularly a rewrite of the war-renouncing Article 9, to legitimise Japan's Self Defense Forces, but public support remains limited.

A meeting in Beijing with Chinese President Xi Jinping last month to commemorate the 40th anni-

versary of normalised ties was the first such visit in seven years. Despite fears that the China relationship would deteriorate under the more nationalistic Abe, trade grew 20.5% in 2017, and Tokyo has acted as a voice of calm in an escalating Beijing-Washington tariff spat.

Moreover, after a raft of one-year premiers until he took office in 2012, Abe's stability has been crucial for global partners to take Japan more seriously. His approval rating stood at 46.5% after naming his new Cabinet; and, barring incident or accident, Abe will become the nation's longest-serving head of state in 2021.

If his final term is punctuated by a successful Group of 20 Osaka Summit and Rugby World Cup next year, then expect a victory lap to start with the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, possibly culminating in the chance to tap a successor as his tenure ends. ●



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# Vacuuuming the planet

European firms work to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from industrial emissions and the air

Abnormal weather has become normal in recent years, with hellish droughts, forest fires and storms intensifying around the world as climate change continues. The year 2018 is set to be one of the top five warmest on record, according to UK-based Carbon Brief, an award-winning climate science website.

**If that wasn't** bad enough, in October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that we only have 12 years to keep global warming to a maximum of between 1.5°C and 2°C above pre-industrial levels, beyond which the effects will be far more severe. The panel, established in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, said it would take “rapid and far-reaching” changes in how we use energy, industry and transport to meet this goal.

Warming beyond 1.5°C would necessitate removing carbon from the atmosphere to contain climate change. While the IPCC cautioned that carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology has never been proven at scale, several European firms are pushing the envelope in this field.

A spinoff of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Climeworks built the first carbon capture facility that takes CO<sub>2</sub> directly from the air. With 18 collectors, each with a capacity of 50 tonnes, the plant at Hinwil, Switzerland, can remove 900 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere per year. That's the annual carbon output of only 195 cars. But Climeworks is building a new facility in Iceland that will capture “several thousand” tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, and then store it as carbonate in basalt formations deep underground. The company is aiming to capture 1% of global emissions by 2025.

“Climeworks plants can be scaled up without restrictions, due to their modular design,” says spokesperson Martin Jendrischik. “Costs are dependent on many factors, such as economies of scale, location of plant, and energy — waste or renewable — available. At the moment, capital expenditures and operating expenditures are the main cost-drivers — as larger plants are built, costs will decrease.”

Climeworks isn't alone in its quest. Norwegian energy firm Equinor has been working on CCS technology since the 1990s and has stored more than 23 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> so far. In one example, Equinor captures about one million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually from the Sleipner West natural gas drilling platform in the North Sea; the carbon is stored 1km below the seabed. The company is also working with Norway's Ministry of Petroleum and Energy to study the potential for storing CO<sub>2</sub> on the country's continental shelf.

These moves are a drop in the bucket in the race to curb climate change, but CCS is a promising technology that can complement other efforts to reduce emissions.

“CCS is vital to meet the ambitious Paris [Agreement's] climate targets. Per most analyses, CCS needs to play a significant role in decarbonising the energy market and industrial processes,” says Equinor spokesperson Elin Isaksen. “There are 21 full-scale CCS projects worldwide in the construction or operation phase. The wider CCS community agrees that CCS technology is proven. However, policy and incentives to enable viable business models and commercial value chains are needed.” ●



# MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

The key to success on your business trip is taking it easy

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

As the seasoned professional knows, travelling for business is a completely different experience to a holiday or a family get-away. But just because you're handling briefs more than you're on the beach, it doesn't mean you can't have a comfortable trip or a luxurious stay. Japan is home to many conveniently located hotels that offer excellent accommodation and impeccable service. Let them take the stress out of travel so you can focus on making your business trip a success.

## RESTING UP

In the heart of Tokyo, the **Capitol Hotel Tokyu** is a landmark of Japan's hotel industry, with an illustrious heritage dating back to 1963. Situated within walking distance from the iconic Imperial Palace, it is adored by VIPs — including international music greats, and film and pop stars — for its exceptional service and care. Incorporating traditional Japanese architectural styles together with refined interior design creates an atmosphere perfect for relaxation, whether you're visiting Tokyo for business or leisure.

Those looking to find a relaxing space to stay just outside Tokyo should consider the **Yokohama Bay Sheraton Hotel & Towers**. Centrally located — and with convenient access to nearly every mode of public transportation — the hotel

was designed to be a retreat from Tokyo's high energy and fast pace. Guest rooms and suites overlooking the bay include those in the newly renovated, four-floor Sheraton Club. All our guests can enjoy the comfort of the Sheraton Signature Sleep Experience.

After a day of business in Japan's ancient capital, **Hotel Granvia Kyoto** is the perfect place for a good night's rest. Elegant, luxurious rooms on the Granvia Floor provide guests with comfort, space and uniquely Japanese aesthetics. The hotel is located within the JR Kyoto railway station complex, easy to access for those travelling from outside Kyoto, and convenient for transport across the city itself.

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If your business trip is taking you out of Japan and all the way to Europe, a convenient flight is a necessity — and Helsinki is closer than you think! Not many people realise that the Finnish capital is only a little over a nine-hour flight from Japan, and that it is a hub for smooth transfers to over 100 European cities. **Finnair** operates out of Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka all year round, and seasonally from Fukuoka. This summer, Finnair operated up to 31 flights a week and it will be adding three new midnight flights weekly from Osaka next summer, bringing the total to 34 flights a week. Enjoy flying with the Nordic touch!

With a smooth flight and a great place to stay, your next business trip is sure to be a success. ●

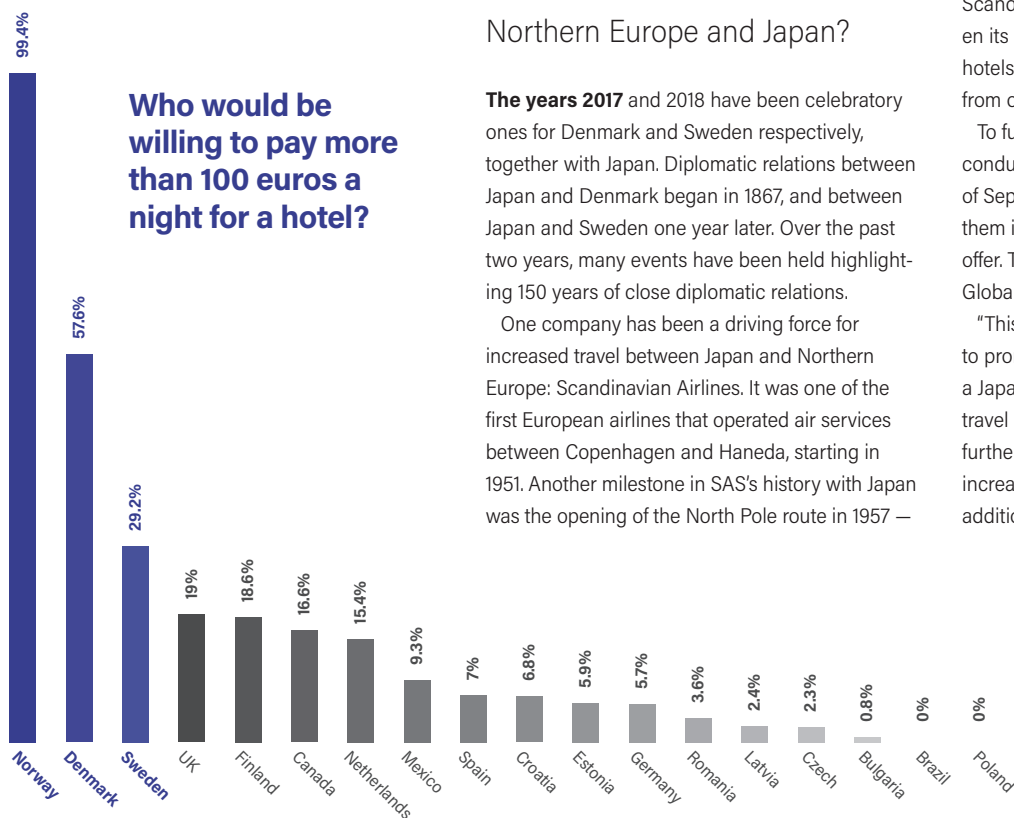






# SUPPORTING JAPAN'S TARGET FOR TOURISM

How do you create more opportunities, more urgency and more demand for travel between Northern Europe and Japan?



**Who would be willing to pay more than 100 euros a night for a hotel?**

The years 2017 and 2018 have been celebratory ones for Denmark and Sweden respectively, together with Japan. Diplomatic relations between Japan and Denmark began in 1867, and between Japan and Sweden one year later. Over the past two years, many events have been held highlighting 150 years of close diplomatic relations.

One company has been a driving force for increased travel between Japan and Northern Europe: Scandinavian Airlines. It was one of the first European airlines that operated air services between Copenhagen and Haneda, starting in 1951. Another milestone in SAS's history with Japan was the opening of the North Pole route in 1957 —

SAS was the first airline to fly over the North Pole, significantly reducing travel time.

For many years, the route between Tokyo and Scandinavia was mainly for Japanese tourists wanting to explore Northern Europe. Since 2014, SAS's strategy has been to bring more Scandinavians, and Europeans in general, to Japan to explore this unique country.

The mix between Japanese and European travellers has been changing thanks to this strategy, increasing from 35% Europeans on SAS flights to more than 50% this year alone. Bringing more Scandinavian tourists to Japan will help strengthen its economy, as they generally spend more on hotels, transportation and dining than travellers from other countries, as shown in the graphs.

To further improve the traffic to Japan, SAS conducted the Agent Educational Tour at the end of September, bringing in travel agents and giving them inspiration and advice on what Japan has to offer. The tour was headed by SAS Vice President Global Sales, Mr. Markus Ek.

"This is only one of many activities we are doing to promote Japan," he says. "Next in line will be a Japan workshop in November for around 50 travel agents in Scandinavia. Our ambition is to further grow the Japanese market and, if possible, increase capacity, bringing in more than 150,000 additional passengers on an annual basis."





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# 110,000 helping hands

The search for volunteers for the 2020 Tokyo Games has begun

The hunt is on for 110,000 willing souls to help the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics run smoothly. The application window opened on 26 September and will run to 5 December, with organisers hoping for a diverse army of volunteers.

**The Tokyo Organising Committee** of the Olympic and Paralympic Games is aiming for 80,000 recruits and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is hoping to have 30,000 City Volunteers. The Games Volunteers will be expected to work up to 10 eight-hour days and their City counterparts for five less demanding five-hour days. People can apply to be both Games and City volunteers, for both the Olympics and Paralympics, meaning a potential total of 25 days, plus training and orientation.

Every host city for the Games depends heavily on the goodwill of legions of people prepared to give their time gratis, despite these being huge commercial events that bring in billions of euros in broadcasting fees, sponsorships and merchandise sales.

As of 22 October, just over 6,000 people had applied to be City Volunteers and more than 52,000 on the Games side. This puts recruitment broadly on schedule, according to Maki Kobayashi-Terada, executive director of communications for the Tokyo Organising Committee.

An analysis of applicants is yet to be completed, but initial figures show that 60% are female and that the average age of Games Volunteers is somewhat younger

than for City Volunteers. In addition to the more onerous schedule for Games Volunteers, the younger demographic may be partly due to organisers visiting universities as an element of their recruitment drive, explains Kobayashi-Terada.

The organisers have made a point of welcoming applications from a wide demographic range, including those with disabilities and non-Japanese with visas allowing them to be in Japan during the Games. No data is yet available on these categories among applications received thus far.

“We’re not asking whether people are disabled on the applications – that would be an improper question – but we are asking if people need to be accompanied by someone,” says Kobayashi-Terada. “We’ll discover more at the interviews,

but there are a lot of positions where some impairments won’t affect their work.”

In addition to the number of applications announced, there are tens of thousands more who have begun the online application process but are yet to finish, according to Kobayashi-Terada.

One such prospective volunteer is Chizuru Yokogawa, who is still in the process of applying.

“I’ve had a deep affection for sport since I was a child, so I want to be involved in the Olympics. Rather than watching on TV, I want to support hands-on,” says Yokogawa, who has a nursing licence and is applying

## “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime chance”

for both the healthcare and general categories.

“As I’m applying for healthcare, I’m worried about the dangers of heatstroke and dehydration [for athletes], as well as whether I will be okay for 10 days,” says Yokogawa.

Her concerns are shared by another applicant, Yukari Sasaki, her friend and tennis partner: “If it is as hot as this year, taking measures against heatstroke will be an issue.”

She adds, “I’m also worried about my English conversation ability, so I’m planning to study until the Games.”

Kobayashi-Terada acknowledges that language may be a point of concern for some, but she believes smartphone apps can provide enough basic phrases for many situations.

“I want to help create a comfortable environment so that the athletes can focus fully on their events,” says Sasaki. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime chance and I’d like to be useful.” ●



# LINKING ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY



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The increase in the number of Internet of Things (IoT) devices is transforming our world. Drones, automobiles, appliances and many other technologies have much greater potential once they are connected to the internet. IHS Markit analysis predicts the number of connected IoT devices worldwide will rise by an average of 12% annually, from nearly 27 billion in 2017 to 125 billion in 2030. How can these resources be used effectively in a rapidly changing business world?

Most importantly, this major transformation needs to be integrated into our children's education. Partnership between academia and industry is nothing new, but this is becoming ever more important as collaborations can produce research and innovation that can solve complex problems, drive economic growth, and create skilled workforces. As for students, they can gain insight into the needs of the industry and understand the ongoing issues and challenges at an early stage.

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# By design

## Courses made for the Japanese golfer

In the aftermath of the US team's poor display in the 42nd Ryder Cup in September, Phil Mickelson said he didn't want to play courses that were, basically, too difficult for him. He was unhappy with the setup and design of France's Le Golf National course, where this year's Ryder Cup was held. The rough was "brutal" and the fairways too narrow, he said.

**The problem with** golf courses, as Phil should probably know, is that one size doesn't fit all. Growing up in Arizona or Scotland or Japan, your concept of what a golf course should offer is likely to be different and the type of golf you play will evolve differently. The emergence of big

hitters such as John Daly and Tiger Woods necessitated longer holes for professional tournaments, but even with technological advancements in club and ball development, the requirements for amateurs are different.

"The ball has been a big issue for golf design," says Tim Lobb of UK-based golf design firm Lobb & Partners. "Yes, the ball flies further, but that isn't reflected in the scores for amateurs. Amateurs aren't hitting it much further and they don't appear to be getting any better."

So, golfers in Japan, you're not alone.

Mickelson's and Lobb's comments beg the question: How should a golf course best be designed? That would require a book-long answer but, in short, a links course in Scotland is obviously going to be very different from a desert course in Arizona or a mountain course in Japan.

When legendary Japanese golf course designer Seiichi Inoue described the design process for Ibaraki Prefecture's Ryugasaki Golf Club — one of his masterpieces, which opened in 1958 — he set the template for Japanese golf courses in the following way:

- A course should be designed to be friendly for players.

- Holes should be laid out so they can be tackled by players through strategy and planning.
- Every hole must be different. Holes should not be boring; they must always give players a taste of something new.
- In a beautiful natural setting, the course should not only have great form but should also transport the player to a kind of paradise.
- A course should require golfers to master every type of shot.

Inoue is essentially telling off the type of player — Hello, Phil! — who thinks golf consists of a big drive, a high wedge shot and a putt. He's saying that you should be using every club in your bag and understand every type of shot you could encounter.

Inoue, who also designed the Kasumigaseki Country Club course where the 2020 Tokyo Olympic golf tournament will be held, rightly targets the customer — not the golf club, but the golfer. And in Japan, where both golf and karaoke allow the lamest of performers to take the stage without prejudice, this means it's an everyman's game. Make it too tough and Japanese players (and Phil) don't want to go there.

As an example, Manna Country Club in Chiba has two courses: one designed by top Japanese designer Ichisuke Izumi, the other by golf legend Gary Player. Player's courses are notoriously tough, so it's little surprise that Manna charges more than ¥4,000 less to play his layout.

With the golfing population in Japan ageing and declining, golf courses would do well to heed Inoue's wise words. Make the golfer think rather than sweat. ●





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# Thinking inside the box

## Examining the growing popularity of bag-in-a-box wines

We'd all like to think that we're above judging a book by its cover. But ask us to pick a bottle of wine off the shelf, and where our eyes go, so too does our wallet. It's the reason that, in recent years, bottles have been made thicker and taller, seducing the customer into thinking that they're getting a heftier, higher quality wine. In reality, the consumer ends up paying more for excess packaging and not a better beverage. The solution? Think inside the box.

**Bag-in-a-box wine** was once relegated to the kitchen, where chefs use bottom-shelf wine solely for the purpose of cooking. But in today's food-obsessed world, people are increasingly consuming wine at home on a daily basis and can't necessarily afford a decent bottle every night of the week. Here's where boxed wine steps in as a formidable contender for the everyday wine drinker's repertoire.

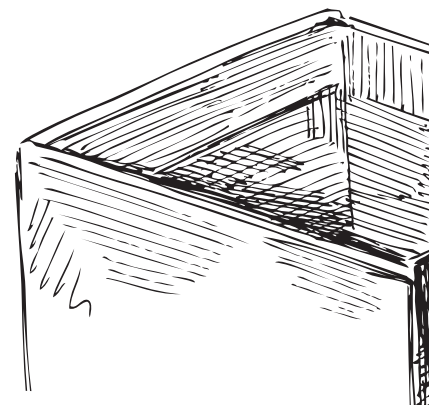
Most boxed wine comes in three-litre containers, the equivalent of four regular bottles of wine. This cuts down on packaging costs for the producer and, therefore, the retail cost of the wine. And because the bags inside collapse on themselves after a glass is poured, you don't have to worry about the wine oxidising nearly as quickly as it does in a bottle — it can easily last for three weeks or more. Think about the success of beer on tap; when you purchase boxed wine, you're

essentially buying yourself a miniature keg of wine for your home.

Not only does boxed wine make financial sense, it also makes environmental sense. In an op-ed in *The New York Times*, Tyler Colman reveals that a standard bottle produces about 5.2 pounds of carbon-dioxide emissions during transportation between California and New York. Boxed wine, on the other hand, produces roughly half those emissions per 750ml of wine. With lighter packaging that also stacks more easily than bottles, boxed wine could significantly help reduce carbon emissions.

Colman says that "switching to wine in a box for the 97% of wines that are made to be consumed within a year would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about two million tons, or the equivalent of retiring 400,000 cars."

That's a very optimistic goal, though — most producers are still leery of the screw cap. But as an ethical consumer, it would certainly be worth considering



boxed wine as a more environmentally friendly means of wine consumption.

Most important, however, is how they taste. The common assumption is that boxed wine is inferior to wine that comes in bottles. But the quality of boxed wine has improved exponentially since the first boxed wines hit the shelves in the 1960s. While it may be a long time before you can find the world's finest in a box, there are many highly regarded options.

Although it might be a challenge to find some of these here, a few of the better boxed wines to try include Le Grappin's Blanc du Grappin Mâcon-Villages (a higher-end white Burgundy); Domaine de la Patience's From the Tank (a Syrah/Grenache rosé from Coteaux du Pont du Gard in the Languedoc); Cosimo Maria Masini's Organic Red (a biodynamic Sangiovese from Tuscany); and Bodegas Borsao's Viña Borgia (a Grenache from the Campo de Borja region in Zaragoza, Spain).

For the everyday drinker, bag-in-a-box wines seem to tick all the right boxes. ●



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# Genji Tamura

**Company:** Lima Japan K.K.  
**Official title:** Representative Director, Commercial Operation Director  
**Originally from:** Tokyo, Japan

**Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?**

Komakata Dozeu in Asakusa. You can get a taste of authentic Japanese cuisine and culture from the Edo period.

**What do you do to stay in shape?**

Go for walks in the park in my neighbourhood.

**Name a favorite movie:**

*White Nights.*

**Favorite musician/band:** Boøwy.

**Favorite album:** *Last Gigs* by Boøwy.

**Favorite TV show:** *Another Sky.*

**Favorite book:** *Ryoma Goes His Way* by Ryotaro Shiba.

**What's something a lot of people don't know about you?**

My great-grandfather was a composer, and many Japanese school-

children still sing his songs, such as "Kintaro" and "Hanasaka Jiji".

**Cats or dogs?**

Dogs.

**Summer or winter?**

Summer.

**What's your ideal weekend?**

Working on my Mazda Roadster NA6CE and my Subaru Impreza WRX GC8, customising and doing repairs on them. It's a good way for me to relax.

**Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?**

I like to have dinner at home with my family.



# Simon Collins

**Company:** White & Case  
**Official title:** Partner  
**Originally from:** Yorkshire, England  
**Length of time in Japan:** 14 years

**Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?**

Elio Locanda Italiana near Hanzomon station. Great Italian food, great atmosphere.

**What do you do to stay in shape?**

I have a gym membership, and I lose weight by worrying about not going enough.

**Name a favourite movie:**

*Memento*, directed by Christopher Nolan.

**Favourite band:** The Stone Roses.

**Favourite album:** *Whatever People Say I am, That's What I'm Not* by Arctic Monkeys.

**Favourite TV show:** *The Wire.*

**Favourite book:** *Barbarians at the Gate: The Fall of RJR Nabisco* by Bryan Burrough and John Helyar.

**What's something a lot of people don't know about you?**

I'm a "third-culture kid", having grown up in Singapore.

**Cats or dogs?**

Cats — but only by a whisker.

**Summer or winter?**

In Japan, winter, but summer back home.

**What's your ideal weekend?**

Golfing with friends.

**Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?**

Hobgoblin Roppongi, usually for the live football matches.

**"I have a gym membership, and I lose weight by worrying about not going enough."**

HANS WERNER BURG,  
REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTOR

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